



Islamabad POST

Friday, June 17, 2022

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Detailed News On Page-07

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Detailed News On Page-08



European football is in danger

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Naval chief calls on PM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday. During the meeting, they discussed the matters pertaining to professional affairs regarding the Pakistan Navy. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated that the government's decision to raise petroleum prices was a direct result of the deal Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) signed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

PTI not to get another chance

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday ruled out return of the 'PTI's incompetent and corrupt' leaders to power in future. She was responding to the statement of PTI leader Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on his Twitter handle. "Pockets of Imran Khan, cartels and mafias were only filled in the last four years of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government. The country was run like the Imran Khan Limited company and the power of prime minister was used to render the people poor and hungry, and for causing economic devastation and selling the Kashmir cause," the information minister tweeted.

Government dropping inflation bomb

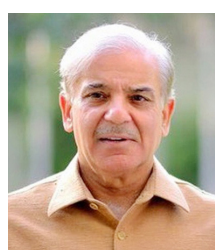
ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi while declaring the recent hike in petroleum prices tyrannical said that the government couldn't give relief to the masses in the budget and now dropping inflation bomb on public every week. He said this in his meeting with Opposition leader in Punjab Assembly Sibtain Khan, Parliamentary leader Mian Mahmood-ur-Rasheed who called on him on Thursday.

IMF deal details to be made public

PM Shehbaz Sharif says govt was left with no option but to raise the fuel prices after PTI govt deal with the IMF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday promised the nation that his government would release "details soon" regarding the previous PTI regime's deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). His message on Twitter comes a day after the government raised fuel prices by as much as nearly Rs60, with petrol reaching Rs233.89 – unprecedented in the country's history. "Acutely aware of the impact that a fuel price hike causes. Govt is left with no choice but to raise the prices due to IMF deal that PTI govt signed. Will take the nation into confidence on the specifics of the IMF-PTI deal soon," wrote the prime minister. "We will get out of these economic difficulties, InshaAllah," he added. PM Shehbaz followed by criticising the past government's

Continued on Page 06

Pak-IMF to ink deal within two weeks: Ahsan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday said that the much-awaited deal with International Monetary Fund (IMF) will be reached in next 10-12 days. He said this while talking to the media informally after addressing a press conference at the Press Information Department (PID). The minister said the agreement will be signed, for \$1 billion tranche, will be signed within two weeks as apparently, Pakistan has acceded to demands of the global lender and no big hindrance is in place. Iqbal said the IMF objected to income tax exemption to those earning Rs1.2 million per annum in the fiscal year 2022-23.

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Engagement with US, India significant: Bilawal

FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari delivers speech at the Institute of Strategic Studies



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party and the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the Founding Day ceremony of the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad has said that we have to find new ways for Pakistan to conduct itself internally and externally. Following is the full text of his speech. "Nowadays, all over the world, the prevalence of think tanks and their impact on policy-making is obvious to all but surely in the 1970s it was perhaps not obvious to all.

It shows the vision and the foresight behind the establishment of this institution. Pakistan is blessed with incredible intellectual capacity. Our intelligentsia, our civil society, our educational institutions produced a metaphorical army of thinkers. Pakistanis have a unique advantage over so many other countries because our presence, our population is not confined to Pakistan. I would say that Pakistanis are present in every nook and corner of the globe and we contribute to all walks of life internationally as well but there too, Pakistani students-I was one far more recently to much of you, are a large segment of the population of international students at any given university in the United Kingdom, United States and even in many universities in the East.

That means that if we were to effectively engage the intellectual capital of Pakistan within and without the country, particularly with the youth who have a stake in our future but also those who have reached the pinnacle of their careers and have gained a lifetime of experience, if Pakistan was to conduct informed policy-making in general, that was a result of a healthy and open debate and dialogue. We would be better for it as a country. I would very much want for the Foreign Office to at least

Continued on Page 06

Imran gives countrywide protest call on sunday

"Everyone has to come out against this imported govt", says US Embassy contributed to his ouster

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has announced a countrywide protest on Sunday against rising inflation and hike in prices of petroleum products, media reported on Thursday. In a video message, the former premier has called on the people of Pakistan to hold a countrywide protest on Sunday at 9 pm against the 'rising inflation' and petrol price hike "Everyone has to come out against this imported government, otherwise inflation will further increase," Imran Khan said, adding that he will address the protesters at 10 pm. The PTI chairman further said that he will announce a plan of action for the future. "As a nation, we have to raise our voice against the rising inflation and this imported government, he added. The former premier reiterated that the no-confidence motion was brought against him with the help of the US. "Our people became turncoats and our allies left us," Imran Khan Speaking about inflation,



IHC nullifies ruling on wrapping up PTI's funding case

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) Thursday nullified an earlier ruling of the higher court that ordered the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to wrap up PTI's prohibited funding case within a month. A day earlier, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja had directed the ECP staff to list the foreign funding case as prohibited funding – accepting the PTI's stance that the matter pertained to illicit procurement of funds. In its order, a two-member IHC bench – comprising IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Babar Sattar – partially allowed the PTI's intra-court appeal challenging the earlier decision and directed the ECP to wrap up the matter in a month. The court disposed of the PTI's petition, noting that ECP has informed the IHC that it has initiated proceedings against PTI and other political parties under

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ISLAMABAD: Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

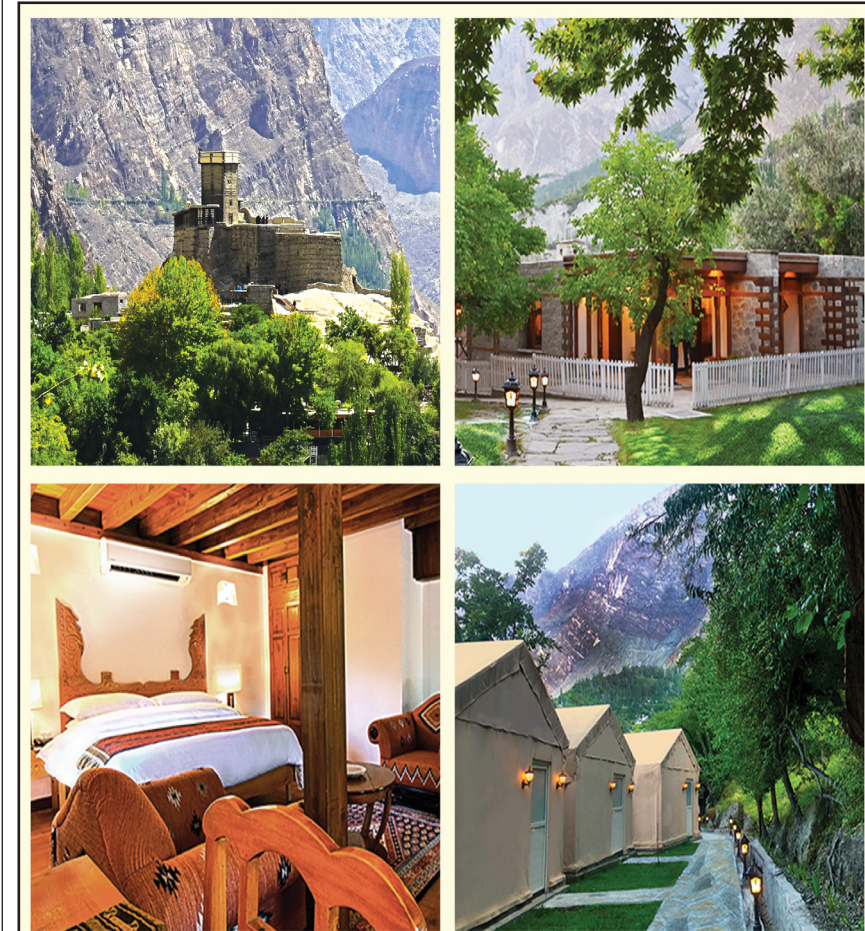
PM thanks Saudi leadership for 'Road to Makkah' initiative

Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed expressed the desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday thanking the Saudi leadership for 'Road to Makkah' project, expressed his satisfaction that thousands of Pakistani pilgrims would be facilitated under this initiative. The prime minister was talking to 'Road to Makkah' project team, which led by Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy called on him here. Mansour Shahad S. Alotaibi from the Saudi Department of the General Directorate of Passports was also present in the meeting. Welcoming the Saudi delegation, the prime minister reaffirmed that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy historic fraternal relations, which are marked by common understanding on all issues of mutual interest at regional and international level. He shared that the people and leadership of Pakistan hold the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in high esteem, and conveyed warm greetings to King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown

Prince Muhammad bin Salman. While recalling consistent support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, the PM stated that the two countries have stood with each other through the vicissitudes of time. He assured full cooperation and support to the Saudi team for making the 'Road to Makkah' initiative a great success. He also expressed the hope that the initiative would be extended to other cities of Pakistan in future. Thanking the Prime Minister for his government's assistance to the Saudi team for the effective implementation of the initiative, the Saudi Ambassador expressed the desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries, especially in the realms of trade, development and investment. The 'Road to Makkah' is a Saudi initiative aimed at the completion of Saudi immigration and customs-related formalities before the departure of the pilgrims to perform Hajj, at the Islamabad International Airport. The Saudi team is in Pakistan for the facilitation of such pilgrims, prior to their departure to the Kingdom.



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PM wants to further boost relations with UAE – Page 03

'Pakistan-Kazakhstan bilateral ties could reach higher level' – Page 04

Polio on the rise – Page 05

Key laws to be adopted by year-end: Kazakh President – Page 06

FPCCI & Portugal desire to expand the bilateral trade – Page 07

EU leaders visit Ukraine after criticism, offer hope – Page 08

Pak, Switzerland, JICA sign debt servicing accords



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Government of Pakistan signs Agreements with the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Government of the Swiss Confederation under the G-20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative. Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq witnessed the signing ceremony at Ministry. Due to the support extended by the development partners of Pakistan, including JICA and Government of the Swiss Confederation, the G-20 DSSI has provided the fiscal space which was necessary to deal with the urgent health and economic needs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The total amount of debt that has been suspended and rescheduled under the DSSI framework, covering the period from May 2020 to December 2021, stands at USD 3,688 million.

Political instability cause of economic recession: Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD: Senator Irfan-ul-Haq Siddiqui of Pakistan Muslim League-N has said that the political instability and disintegration were the main factors of economic recession in the country. Taking part in the budget debate in Senate on Thursday, he said because of this bitter reality, Pakistan is lagging behind its neighboring countries including China, India and Bangladesh. Siddiqui said Pakistan's foreign exchange was 8 to 9 billion dollars, on the contrary, China had \$3,300 billion, India had \$601 billion and Bangladesh had \$45 billion. We should mend our ways and make concerted efforts for political stability in the country as only this would help steer the country out of economic crisis and put on the path of progress and prosperity. He lamented that Pakistan was serving the purposes of a laboratory as it witnessed democratic, dictatorial and technocratic regimes. He said after experiencing all these modes of governments, a new concept of third party was coined in Pa-

kistan terming the two-party system as monopoly. Shedding light on the two-party system, he said there were two parties both in the United States and the United Kingdom contesting elections for years but no one raised any objection. Siddiqui while expressing his amazement said that the same system was not suitable for Pakistan in the eyes of some critics. In a bid to promote this novel idea, a number of attempts were made to destroy the image of two biggest parties of the country in the shape of sit-ins, protest demonstrations, rallies and Panama Papers and as a result, a new government was formed in 2018 which governed the country almost for four years but did not yield the desired results. He said the previous government instead of accepting its failure and sitting on the opposition benches, hatched a conspiracy story of 'regime change' to the nation for face-saving. Referring the history of Pakistan, he said there was a crystal-clear conspiracy against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

who was hanged to death, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in the broad daylight and Liaquat Ali Khan was also shot dead publicly. He said even a story of renowned journalist M J Akbar, which was published in Sunday Guardian Live on November 6, 2016, had disclosed a solid conspiracy with all possible clues against the government of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. Siddiqui claimed that he categorically stated in mid 2017 that Nawaz Sharif would be sent back to pavilion. This time; the government would be changed through judiciary instead of military coup and the reason would be Panama Papers. All these things proved conspiracy and this was called conspiracy, he maintained. He said in 2018, when the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government was at the helm of affairs, all economic indicators were showing upward trend but the previous government had brought the national economy at the brink of destruction in the last four years. - APP

OCCI organizes industry dialog

KARACHI: The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) organized the first series of Industry Dialogues to debate the various climate actions needed for Pakistan to achieve the Nationally Determined Commitments (NDCs) made at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26). The Industry Dialogue was built on the effort started by the OICCI earlier this year through the Pakistan Climate Conference, which built on learning from COP26 to identify and implement efforts needed to promote positive climate actions and reduce climate change impact in Pakistan, said OICCI release on Thursday. The Industry Dialogue brought together local climate experts, policy makers and corporate decision-makers to share their experiences, learning and best practices to help Pakistan reduce climate impact. The keynote speakers at the event included Focal Person Department of Climate Change, Government of Sindh Waqar Hussain Phulpoto, and prominent environment lawyer Ahmad Rafay Alam. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov presenting a souvenir to Aun Chaudhry, Adviser to Prime Minister on Sports and Tourism during a meeting on Thursday. - DNA

Pharma manufacturers demand increase in MRP of medicines

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Local pharmaceutical manufacturers have expressed outcry over the non-increase in maximum retail prices (MRP) of medicines/lifesaving drugs and not paying serious attention towards resolution of their issues, demanding of the government, ministry of health and other relevant authorities to increase in MPR by 20 to 30 per cent and immediately abolishment of 17 per cent sale tax on pharma sector. The issue was taken up during a meeting of a delegation of local pharmaceutical manufacturers with Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Hasnain Khurshid Ahmad here at the chamber's house on Wednesday. The delegation was led by Chairman SCCI's Standing Committee, and former vice president JunaidAltaf. Owners of different pharma manufacturing units were present during the meeting.

The meeting demanded an increase in MRP by 20 and 30 per cent and abolishment of 17 per cent sale tax on pharma sector to prevent destruction and shortages of medicines and price hike as result of closure of many units of this crucial pharma industry. JunaidAltaf told the meeting that it would be completely unjust to not increase maximum retail price (MPR) after rising oil and raw materials prices in global and local markets. He continued to say that prices of raw materials have gradually increased in the global market, especially the pharma companies have been confronted with enormous difficulties and issues after the novel coronavirus pandemic situations. Altaf informed the forum that the government is collecting 17 per cent sale tax from the pharma sector, whereas cost of production has remarkably increased following rapid depreciation of Pakistani rupee against US dollar. On the other hand, the SCCI's com-

mittee chairman said the cap of MRP of medicines and drugs is not only making it hard for them to run industries, but it has been made completely impossible. Hasnain Khurshid assured the visiting delegation on the occasion that the chamber would take up issues relating to the Pharma sector with federal and provincial relevant authorities in an efficient manner. The SCCI chief while highlighting different issues of the business community said that excessive power outages have badly affected the industrial production while losses were also increased inordinately. Over 70 to 80 pharmaceutical manufacturing units in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are near to closure which is a prime source of employment for many people, JunaidAltaf told the meeting. He warned that if the pharma sector issues were not resolved seriously then a large number of people would be employed after closure of many units in the province.

Sikh yatrees attend 'Akhand Bhog Sahib'

The ETPB Chairman said Pakistani minorities enjoyed all rights in the light of the constitution of Pakistan

LAHORE: Thousands of Sikh yatrees from across the world attended 'Akhand Bhog Sahib' rites to mark martyrdom day of Guru Arjun Dev G at Gurdwara Shri Dera sahib here on Thursday. 144 Sikh yatrees, including Sikhs from Canada, United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) had travelled from India to attend JorrMela. A 16-member Raagi group led by SardarSukhwinder Singh, 144

Indian Sikh yatrees and a large number of pilgrims from Pakistan attended the ceremony. Chairman Roet e Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad and Chairman Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Habib-ur-RehmanGillani attended the ceremony held under the auspices of the ETPB. Bhog of Akhad Path was offered on this occasion after recitation from the Gurur Granth Sahib to mark death anniversary of the fifth master Guru Arjun Dev. Hymns were also sung by the Raagi Group. Speaking on the occasion, Maulana Syed Abdul Kha-beer Azad said Islam puts

special emphasis on the rights of minorities, adding that: "All minorities enjoy complete religious freedom and opportunities to self-aggrandize in Pakistan". He said his father started the mission of promoting inter-faith harmony from the platform of the Badshahi Mosque. He said: "It is our collective responsibility to promote inter-faith harmony and human dignity in the face of various challenges faced by the world". Maulana Syed Abdul Kha-beer said Pakistan is a bouquet made up of different flowers, adding that the white colour in the Pakistan flag represents

minorities. The ETPB Chairman Habib urRehmanGillani said Pakistani minorities enjoyed all rights in the light of the constitution of Pakistan. He welcomed the followers of Sikh and Hindu religions across the world to Pakistan, adding that: "Our doors are always open for the pilgrims". The chairman ETPB wished that more and more Sikh yatrees arrive from the neighbouring India and perform their religious rites at the shrines and gurdwaras. Sardar Sukhwinder Singh said: "Pakistan is our second home and love and affection, we have been accorded, cannot be expressed in words". - APP

Foreigner delegation visits Mardan

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: A delegation from Korea and Laos People Democratic Republic visited Mardan. The delegation led by Vietnamese Urban Development Administration Authority Director General Bounchanh Keositamma and Green Growth Planning and Implementation Program Leader Shomi Kim under the South Knowledge Exchange Program. Chief Executive Officer Engineer Amir Khan briefed the delegates on wscm operations and conversion of organic waste into organic fertilizers. He briefed the participant that this integrated Resource Recovery Center is the only established center in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the technical support of Akhtar Hameed Khan Memorial Trust and Financial support of Norwegian Church Aid. This is a multi-Purpose facility which will contribute towards clean and green environment, promote organic farming in the province and will also put a positive impact in employment generation in this particular field as the slogan of the project is "Trash is Cash". He further added that Integrated Resource Recovery Center in Mardan has been set up for the purpose that waste in Mardan is no longer a problem but it is converted into organic fertilizer through scientific methods which is useful for agricultural crops, increased productivity and yields. He highlighted that the company has formulated an integrated strategy to make Mardan city clean and One hundred Eighty tons of waste is safely disposed off. Under the IRRC system five tons of kitchen waste is converted into organic fertilizers on a daily basis. The establishment of IRRC Mardan will definitely reduce the volume of garbage and will decrease the environmental pollution as well as less burden on landfill sites.

Minister invites D-8

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Board of Investment and Special Initiative, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Thursday said invited the Developing-8 countries for exploring the investment opportunities in Pakistan Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The Minister interacted with the delegates from the Developing 8 countries and welcomed them to explore the immense investment, especially in Pakistan's SEZs, said a press release issued by BOI here. Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain, and Secretary BOI, Fareena Mazhar are in Istanbul to participate in the D-8 Investment Conference on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the D-8 Organization. The minister said the government of Pakistan was working with a vision to transform Pakistan into a high-end commercial, technology and manufacturing hub. - APP

Education Minister welcomes World Bank delegation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain Rana Tanveer said that the challenge of out of school children (OOSC) was the top priority and the government was making efforts to gather in-depth data on OOSC to design effective and efficient strategies to tackle this challenge. He made these remarks during a meeting with a delegation led by Practice Managers World Bank Christian Aedo and Keiko Inoue. The meeting was also attended by Federal Secretary Naheed S. Durrani. Tanveer welcomed the delegation and praised the work being done by the World Bank in Pakistan. He said that critical projects were underway in collaboration with World Bank that needed to be expedited on emergency basis. Rana Tanveer said that the issue of OOSC was a top priority that needed urgent focus. He continued that the challenge of OOSC cannot be efficiently tackled unless we have accurate and relevant data. Rana Tanveer said that we needed in-depth data on OOSC in order to design effective and efficient strategies. He emphasized the need to form a body that was able to gather data and convert it into actionable information. He said that distance learning should be embedded in the formal education system and the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic had already set ground for this development. The minister said that it should not be treated as an alternate in the COVID era but rather as a permanent system to allow students to gain education. He said that it was a cost-effective way in comparison to the traditional system of schools and thus allows much greater reach. He gave the example of learning-based channels developed by Saudi Arabia. He said that a special team has been sent there to learn from the experience of KSA. Christian Aedo acknowledged the role of Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in the implementation of the on-going World Bank funded projects such as Response, Recovery and Resilience in Education (RRREP), Actions to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education Program (ASPIRE), Pandemic Response Effectiveness Project for COVID-19 (PREP), and Data and Research in Education (DARE). He thanked the minister for his relentless support and said that the priorities of World Bank and the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training align. He assured Rana Tanveer that the issues raised by him would be addressed on priority. Rana Tanveer also assured the delegation of full cooperation and support. He said that it is imperative to work together to ensure progress. "We should leverage the global knowledge base and experience of World Bank and use it to our advantage." - APP

Afridi calls for long, short-term measures to tackle economic issues

ISLAMABAD: Senate Deputy Chairman Mirza Muhammad Afridi on Thursday said that long and short-term measures were needed to tackle inflation, unemployment and other economic problems of the country. He expressed these views while addressing a seminar titled "Post-Budget Analysis of the Federal Budget 2022-23", jointly organized by Senate and Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) here at Parliament House. He further said that today's seminar was very important as it would help the members of the Upper House to review all the aspects and formulate recommendations during the debate on the budget in the House. The deputy chairman said that the role of every member of the society was crucial in improving the economy, adding that "we all have to play our role so that the economy can be supported and the problems faced at the economic level can be overcome". He said that one per cent population was paying taxes but now it had become important for all people to join the tax net and become taxpayers and contribute to the economy. - APP

Court Notice

In the Court of
Umar Rizwan
Civil Judge Gujrat

Title: Muhammad Anwar
Versus Arshad Mehmood
etc.

Notice to:

4. Asjad Iqbal S/O Muhammad Akram Cast Gujjar R/O Saray Dhing Tehsil and District Gujrat.

Suit for Contempt of Court

Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 18-06-2022, otherwise case will be decided ex parte.

Court Reporter Gujrat

FBR employees announce pen down strike

It should be noted over here that recently Prime Minister has de-frozen the allowance of all employees of the president house and prime Minister's secretariat, but the government denied the right to FBR employees

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The all Pakistan FBR employees have announced a pen down strike all over the country on 17th June 2022 to highlight their demand for a pay raise and increase in fuel allowance. The employees have been demanding to de-freeze their ijp allowance since many years, but the same has not been approved even in this budget. The officers are demanding a pay raise in terms of special Revenue allowance and increased fuel allowance, being the sole federal breadwinning organization that has been achieving its budgetary targets for quite a few years. The aggrieved informed that all

the demands have been forwarded to Chairman FBR through proper channel. The officials of FBR were ensured a pay raise in this budget but the same was removed from the bill at the eleventh hour, which caused distress among the employees. It should be noted over here that recently Prime Minister has de-frozen the allowance of all employees of the president house and prime Minister's secretariat, but the government denied the right to FBR employees. Several other Federal Government institutions I have been given a pay raise and increase in various allowances in the recent budget but the same has been denied to the FBR workforce despite the fact that they have been show-

ing exceptional performance, with regards to achieving their budgetary targets. Though finance minister Miftah Ismail has congratulated the Federal Board of Revenue and its chief Asim Ahmed for collecting Rs490 billion revenue in May 2022 through his twitter account, yet the long standing demand of de-freezing the IJP allowance of the officials, and that of pay raise was overlooked in the budget. It should be noted that the federal budget 2020-2021 clearly stated that FBR revenues increased by 17% and the government was on track to achieve the revised target of Rs 4,800 billion, which was then achieved accordingly. Likewise in this financial year 2021-22, the

net revenue collection grew to Rs. 5,349 billion during July-May (2021-22) as against the collection of Rs.4,164 billion during July-May (2020-21) with a 28.4 percent growth. This highlights the efforts put in by the officials of FBR in achieving their budgetary targets. It shall also be highlighted that the FBR employees have been observing Saturday as a working day for the past six months unlike all the other federal and provincial government organizations, and these employees always go an extra mile to perform their duties. It is because of FBR's efforts that the government exchequer receives all the needed revenues, and the importance of this organization cannot be denied at all.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

June 02 / Italy	National Day/ Independence Day
June 04 / Finland	Armed Forces Day
June 07 / Sweden	Natioal Day
June 10 / Portugal	Portugal Day (Natioal Day)
June 10 / Jordan	Arab Revolution & Army Day
June 11 / United Kingdom	Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth
June 12 / Philippines	Independence Day
June 12 / Russian Federation	Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation (National Day)
June 13 / Zambia	Armed Forces Day
June 17 / Iceland	National Day
June 18 / Seychells	National Day
June 25 / Croatia	National Day
June 25 / Mozambique	National Day
June 26 / Azerbaijan	Army Day



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PM wants to further boost relations with UAE

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Thursday that Pakistan in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wanted to further strengthen relations with United Arab Emirates in all fields including trade and business. During a meeting with Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al Zaabi who called on her, they discussed issues of mutual interest and the development of bilateral relations between the two countries.

She expressed heartfelt condolences on behalf of Pakistani people on the demise of former UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Paying tributes to the late UAE leader she said late Sheikh Khalifa was a friend of Pakistan, his death was a great loss for both the countries.

The minister said that the new President of UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan was a visionary and progressive leader and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed have a revolutionary vision for the development and prosperity of future generations. The two leaders sought to promote strong ties between the two countries in all areas of mutual interest, including economy, trade and social sector, she remarked. "Our government has started implementing a new film and culture policy," she said and invited UAE filmmakers and investors for joint ventures and investments in film and drama.

Congratulating the UAE leadership and organizers on hosting the successful Dubai Expo, she said that apart from highlighting



ISLAMABAD: Hamad Obaid Alzaabi, UAE Ambassador in Islamic Republic of Pakistan, called on Marriyum Aurangzeb, Federal Minister of Information & Broadcasting and discussed latest regional & international developments, ways & mechanisms for developing bilateral cooperation between the two countries. – DNA

the positive identity, the Dubai exhibition also increased economic opportunities and promoted the culture of different countries.

The UAE ambassador congratulated Marriyum Aurangzeb on assuming charge as Information Minister. The UAE ambassador

said that according to the vision of the leadership of both the countries, they believe in further enhancement of bilateral relations.

Ombudsman directs facilities for overseas Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has directed the agencies concerned to improve facilitation for the Overseas Pakistanis at the One Window Facilitation Desks (OWFD) of all eight International airports in Pakistan. He expressed these views while chairing a high level meeting to resolve the grievances of Overseas Pakistanis and to review the functioning of One Window Facilitation Desks (OWFD) at International Airports in Pakistan.

The meeting was attended by the Special Secretary Foreign Affairs Mr. Khalid H. Memon, Acting Chairman NADRA Brig. Khalid Latif, D.G. Bureau of Immigration Dr. Tahir Noor, DG OPF, Director Immigration, FIA Masood Bangash, Director ASF Ehsanullah, Director CAA, Sadiq ur Rehman,

AC Customs Islamabad Int. Airport, Dr. Shaista Director Central Health Services, GM (Coord) PIA, senior representatives of other relevant departments and senior officers of WMS. He said that more than 09 million Overseas Pakistanis are making great contribution by helping their families back home and also taking part in the socio-economic uplift of the country by remitting around 30 billion dollars annually to the country. He said that being a public servant we are duty bound to serve the Overseas Pakistanis with utmost zeal. He directed the Special Secretary Foreign Affairs to start Khuli Kacheries once a month in the Pakistan Missions abroad to resolve grievances of Overseas Pakistanis. He also directed all the partici-

pants to appoint an officer of BS-20 as Focal Person in their respective department for liaison with the WMS. He took a serious note of non-functioning of OWFD at Quetta International Airport and directed the concerned authorities to ensure its functioning within a week. The Director CAA assured that the OWFD would be revived in the shortest possible time. The Ombudsman further directed all the heads of departments to constitute monitoring team to randomly check the functioning of OWFDs. Taking cognizance of delay in submission of monthly progress reports by the Pakistan missions, the Ombudsman directed that an Online Interface with the Foreign Office should be established through the CMIS system of WMS to avoid delays. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Adviser on Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira posing for a picture with the students of Kohat Cadet College, during their visit to the Pakistan Sweet Homes. Zamurad Khan is also seen in the picture. – DNA

OICCI holds industry dialog on climate actions

ISLAMABAD: The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) organized the first of a series of industry dialogs to debate the various climate actions needed for Pakistan to achieve the Nationally Determined Commitments made at COP 26. The industry dialog builds on the effort started by the OICCI earlier this year through the Pakistan Climate Conference, which built on learnings from COP 26 to identify and implement efforts needed to promote positive climate actions and reduce climate change impact in Pakistan, said a press release issued on Thursday.

The dialog brought together local climate experts, policy makers and corporate decision-makers to share learning and best practices to help Pakistan reduce climate impact. The main speakers at the event include; Waqar Hussain Phulpoto, focal person, Department of Climate Change, Government of Sindh and Ahmad Rafay Alam, prominent Environment Lawyer. Since the beginning of 2022, the OICCI has taken a leading role to organize a national discourse on several critical areas to support Pakistan's efforts for the commitments made at COP 26. The OICCI has committed to organizing multiple Industry Dialogs to get national alignment on actions needed and will also be releasing a detailed white paper in Q3 2022 on learnings from global climate experts, policy makers and corporate decision makers to help Pakistan craft its climate journey. – APP

297,444 applications for domestic pilgrims

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah announced that 297,444 applications have been registered through the electronic draw by citizens with valid residency in the Kingdom for the 1443H/2022 Hajj season, comprising of 62 percent men and 38 percent of women.

The ministry stated that the total number of completed applications exceeded 217,000 through both the Eatmarna app and the e-portal for domestic pilgrims. As a result, SMS messages will be sent to qualifying applicants to submit payment within 48 hours through accepted payment methods. The highest percentage of applicants (38 percent) belongs to the age group of 31-40, followed by those in the age group of 21-30, representing 23 percent. It also includes 21 percent applicants between the ages 41 and 50 and 12 percent in the age group of 51-65. The least number of applicants belong to the under 20 years of age category, Saudi Press Agency reported. Saudi Arabia's deputy Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr. Abdul-Fattah Mashat attended the e-draw and the announcement of the qualified pilgrims. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the e-draw system has set several conditions for the selection process, most notably that the applicant's age shall be under 65 years. In addition, they must also have a fully vaccinated status on the Tawakkalna application. The minister noted that the number of disqualified applicants constituted a tiny percentage of the total requests. The reasons for the disqualification included failure to fulfill the stated conditions; submission of information not matching to the applicant's status on file, or the failure of one of the individuals within a single application in meeting some of the conditions. – APP

ICCI protests against hike in petroleum prices

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that the government has made yet another historic hike in the prices of petroleum products, which could prove destructive as it would unleash a new wave of high inflation and cause great increase in the cost of doing business. He said that the third hike in POL prices within a period of just three weeks would badly squeeze the purchasing power of the common man leading to a sharp decline in the business activities. He said that the government has already increased the electricity and gas tariffs that would push up production costs and inflation for the common man. He urged that the government

should immediately reconsider such harsh decisions as their consequences would be devastating for the businesses and the general public. He said this while addressing a meeting of the business community. Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Zubair Ahmed Malik former President ICCI & PPCI, Muhammad Naveed Malik and Tauseef Zaman former Senior Vice Presidents ICCI were present at the occasion. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that the price of petrol has now jumped to almost Rs.234/litre and diesel to around Rs.264/litre taking these prices to the record highest level in the country's history. He said that these massive hikes in the utility tariffs and POL prices would multiply the cost of doing business due to which trade and industrial activities would badly suffer.

ICCI President said that the environment for doing business in Pakistan was becoming more difficult as SBP has already increased the policy interest rate to 13.75 percent making credit cost unaffordable for the business community. He cautioned that such harsh measures would make our industry more uncompetitive in the international market and reduce our exports. He wondered who would do business and invest in Pakistan in an environment of repeated hikes in utility tariffs and POL prices. He stressed that the government should make drastic cuts in all non-development expenditures and reduce the profit margins of OMCs instead of putting an unbearable burden on the businesses and masses. He urged that in these difficult times, the government should focus on promoting ease of doing business to

improve exports and steer the economy out of current challenges. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI said that petrol price has gone up from Rs.108.56/litre to around Rs.234/litre and diesel from Rs.110.76/litre to around Rs.264/litre from 1st June 2021 to 16th June 2022, which shows an increase of almost 115 percent and 138 percent respectively in a period of just one year. They said that the frequent hikes in POL prices and utility tariffs would shatter the confidence of investors who needed consistent prices and tariffs to make long-term investments in Pakistan. They urged that the government should reconsider the latest hikes in POL prices and utility tariffs to save the masses, businesses and the economy from deep troubles.

Gold price increases by Rs 1,000 to Rs 144,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold on Thursday witnessed an increase of Rs 1,000 in the local market to Rs 144,000 from Rs 143,000 the previous day. The price of 10 gram 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 857 from Rs 122,600 last day to Rs 123,457 and that of 10 gram 22 karat from Rs 112,383 to Rs 113,168, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver rose by Rs 20 to Rs 1,560 and that of 10 gram silver by Rs 17.14 to Rs 1337.44. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$14 to \$1,819, the association said. – APP

RWMC 'Saaf Punjab' cleanliness drive in full swing

RAWALPINDI: The four-month "Saaf Punjab" cleanliness drive by the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) is in full swing. The drive was launched throughout the district on May 15. According to the RWMC spokesman, all-out efforts were being made to remove hundreds of tonnes of waste on daily basis in which 230 vehicles, including mini dumpers, compactors, arm rollers, tractors, trolleys, and dumpers, were taking part.

He added that waste containers were repaired while mechanical sweeping of roads, metro bus stations, and washing was carried out during the campaign. In addition, the spokesman informed that RWMC communication teams conducted its door-to-door campaign in the area of New Malpur Union Council-19 on Thursday and distributed waste bags and pamphlets about the importance of cleanliness and prevention of dengue. Furthermore, he urged the residents to keep an eye on junkyards, schools and under-construction buildings, which led to the spread of dengue larvae. The spokesman also appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the sanitation staff to keep the city clean and urged the residents to throw garbage in waste containers and avoid dumping it on roads, drains and open plots. – APP

Deputy UNHCR calls on the Foreign Minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy UN High Commissioner for Refugees Kelly T. Clements called on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari today during her visit to Pakistan. Discussions were focused on the Afghan refugee situation and the longstanding cooperation between Pakistan and UNHCR.

The Foreign Minister emphasized the importance of sustained engagement by the international community in support of Afghan refugees as well as for the provision of humanitarian and economic assistance to the people of Afghanistan. He underscored that the new humanitarian situations emerging around the world must not divert the global attention away from the needs of millions of Afghans. While appreciating the assistance by UNHCR over the years in looking after millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the Foreign Minister stressed the need for adequate, predictable, regular and sustained financial support from the international community for sustainable returns as well as for the host communities on the principle of international burden and responsibility-sharing. The Deputy High Commissioner thanked Pakistan for being an incredible host to millions of Afghan refugees over the past several decades. Both sides agreed to continue working closely for the provision of necessary assistance to Afghan refugees, and the implementation of sustainable solutions for their well-resourced, safe and dignified return.

Briefs

NPPs capacity shows 39% increase

ISLAMABAD: The gross capacity of nuclear power plants (NPPs) witnessed 39 per cent increase during a period of July-March (fiscal year 2021-22) as compared to the last fiscal year 2020-21. According to the official data, the total generation from various nuclear plants stood at 3,530 MW which supplied 12,885 million units of electricity to the national grid during July-March FY2022.

"This shows an increase of 39 per cent in terms of MW and 82 per cent increase in terms of units supplied," it further said. During a period of July-March (FY 2020/21), the gross capacity of the nuclear power plants was 2,530 MW which transmitted about 7,076 million units to the national grid. The government has formulated several policies for the development of the power sector in the past which aimed at eliminating inefficiencies in existing generation, transmission and distribution systems, as well as diversification of the energy generation mix with maximum utilization of indigenous energy resources to supply reliable, affordable and clean electricity.

Despite COVID-19 difficulties, the nuclear power plants performed effectively by supplying uninterrupted and continuous power at highest capacity factors. One of these plants, K-2 has made a new record in Pakistan's history by operating for 100 days continuously since its commercial operation date, becoming the first nuclear power generation plant to achieve this milestone. - APP

'Imran promoting negative attitude'

ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader Mohammad Zubair on Thursday said that former prime minister Imran Khan was promoting negative attitudes to keep his politics alive. Talking to a private news channel, he said that PTI leadership wants political instability and social anarchy in the country. He said that Imran Khan always targeted the national institutions, his baseless allegations were an attempt to put pressure on the institutions. He said that the PML-N government has full confidence in the judiciary, Election Commission of Pakistan, and other state institutions. Responding to a question, he said that the next general elections would be free and fair and state institutions would not be made controversial for a single person. He further said that the PTI government was responsible for inflation and unstable economic situation. - APP

Lawmakers for more incentives to agriculture sector

ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers both from treasury and opposition benches in the National Assembly on Thursday suggested the government to announce more incentives in the budget 2022-23 for the agriculture sector to make the country self-sufficient in agrarian products. Participating in the budget 2022-23 debate, independent MNA Muhammad Aslam Bhoonani said the government had announced a good budget in the difficult economic situation. He expressed concern over withdrawal of the subsidies on electricity that would affect the farming community of his constituency. He also appreciated the incentive package for the areas of Gwadar and said that it would help uplift the lives of local people. Mir Muhammad Khan Jamali of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) made it clear that he never tendered resignation from the membership of National Assembly. He criticized the government for increasing the price of petroleum products as it would trigger a new wave of inflation. He said the incumbent coalition government while coming into power had claimed to provide relief to inflation-hit people but they acted otherwise. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to PM on Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira is addressing to the press conference along with Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif Mehmood, Minister of State for Petroleum Musadiq Malik and Federal Minister for Communication Asad Mehmood at Press Information Department. - APP

'Pakistan-Kazakhstan bilateral ties could reach higher level'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador from Kazakhstan Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin called on Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari. Ambassador proposed that there are various areas of cooperation between the two brotherly countries specifically in tourism and sports which could bring two nations even closer. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin told the Federal Minister that recently a large exhibition of Pakistan (Gilgit-Baltistan) products was arranged in the largest metropolis Almaty. Moreover, various business groups, tourist groups visited Pakistan and Kazakhstan is keen to sign a MoU regarding tourism with Pakistan.

Federal Minister Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari welcomed the proposals and said that we are also looking forward to take these friendly relations to new heights



specifically in sphere of sports involving youth from both the nations. He also said that both nations enjoy 30 years of diplomatic relations and we have to work mutually for extending these beyond the current status. Federal Minister further said that Pakistan is a home to the world's second highest mountain in the world K-2 along with other high peaks, this could be a greatest attraction for mountaineers from Kazakhstan. Moreover, both agreed to work at their respective ends for enhancing the bilateral trade and expand its volume which is currently not very high. Federal Minister also welcomed the start of direct flights from Karachi to Almaty which is going to start this year, he said this will boost people to people contact between two friendly countries. The ambassador told that initially 2 flights in a week will be started and the number will increase up to 5 in coming months.

'Handicrafts can help alleviate abject poverty'

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq Thursday said that promotion of handicrafts can help alleviating abject poverty and earn badly needed foreign exchange for the country. Chairing a seminar organised by Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) to celebrate "World Handicrafts Day" on Thursday, CEO said artisans should be encouraged by offering plenty of opportunities and financial support to display their art and products in exhibitions for effective and result-oriented marketing. He said Pakistan comes at the bottom of the list of developing countries with an annual handicrafts exports of \$300 million only. He said art and creativity have no boundaries and handicrafts sector plays a significant role in economy which also provides employment to vast segments in rural and semi urban areas besides preserving its rich culture.

He said it represents the culture and traditions of any country or region which is also a substantial medium to preserve traditional art, skills, culture and heritage which are associated with people's lifestyle and history. - APP

ICT Police to provide CPEC-level security to Chinese nationals

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General (IG) of Islamabad Police Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan chaired a meeting to chalk out a security plan for Chinese nationals residing in the federal capital, a statement said. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, Islamabad Police has recently established a dedicated Foreigners Security Cell to ensure the safety of all Chinese nationals working on the CPEC and non-CPEC projects in the capital on the pattern of CPEC security. It was decided that Chinese-speaking Pakistani citizens will be hired to assist

the Chinese nationals working on non-CPEC projects for their security. On this occasion, the IG directed Deputy IG (Security) Hassan Raza to regularly monitor the implementation of the decisions made in the meeting. It was decided that a special desk will be established at the Safe City and Police Services Centre for Chinese nationals. The respective station house officers (SHOs) will maintain a record of all Chinese nationals residing in their jurisdictions. The Chinese nationals were requested to provide details regarding their residences and movement to the respective police stations and register on arrival in Islamabad with the special desk.

The IG also directed the DIG (Security) to visit the areas where the Chinese nationals are residing and meet them in person. Additional guards will be deputed in such areas along with the installation of CCTV cameras. Personnel of Eagle Squad of Islamabad Police will also ensure regular patrolling in such areas, who will also ensure scrutiny of the private guards hired by Chinese nationals or their employers, the statement said. When contacted on phone, an inspector of Islamabad Police told Gwadar Pro that the Foreigners Security Cell had already been operationalized, headed by a Superintendent of Police (SP).

Dry ponds at F-9 Park pose threat to thirsty birds' lives

ISLAMABAD: Water ponds at the Fatima Jinnah Park F-9 sector can play life-saving role for the thirsty birds amid the scorching heat, but ironically there was no respite for these little creatures as ponds have been dried out due to sheer negligence of the CDA. Daily visitors to the park on Thursday made a passionate appeal to the Capital Development Authority

(CDA) to keep the ponds filled with fresh water so that the thirsty birds could quench their thirst amid such extremely hot weather. According to a frequent visitor to the park, Muhammad Afzal, the ponds needed to be cleaned and filled with fresh water every day as it was extremely painful to see the thirsty birds flying in and around the dry ponds in search of water.

He said the vast greenery at the park attracted many a local species of birds who gather there to beat the scorching heat. However, the empty ponds failed to suffice their thirst. He said birds did not only use water to quench their thirst, but also for preening and bathing to regulate their body processes which improved metabolism and kept them healthy. - APP

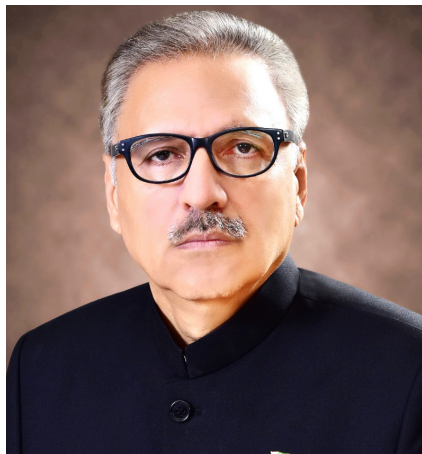
Chaudhry The Martyr' gets date

ISLAMABAD: Based on a true story of a brave police officer, 'Chaudhry The Martyr' will hit the cinemas this June 24, 2022. The film by Laaj Productions is a tale honoring the heroes of the motherland who are always ready to sacrifice their lives in order to safeguard their country from perpetrators, terrorists & all evils. DSP Tariq Islam Khan playing the lead role of SSP Chaudhry Aslam Khan (Shaheed) will showcase the exemplary story of the fierce & valiant police officer who devoted his life to fighting the criminals and terrorists without any fear. In an official description shared via Facebook, the promotional statement of the film portrays the true essence of this praise-worthy tale stating. - APP

President reprimands FBR for harassing a complainant

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has reprimanded the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for harassing a taxpayer who filed a complaint with the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) against FBR on the non-issuance of a genuine refund. The President rejected the representation of FBR against the order of the Federal Tax Ombudsman by observing that the case had repeatedly been mishandled and the conduct of FBR officers amounted to harassment. He regretted observing that the refund application filed in 2015, which by law was required to be disposed of within 60 days, remained pending due to inaction by FBR for almost 5 years and was taken up only after the complaint was filed with FTO, and that too in a vindictive manner. However, the FBR once again charged the complainant on the same issue under an



other section of the Income Tax Ordinance. The FTO, once again, reprimanded FBR on account of harassing the Taxpayer. Instead of implementing the FTO's decision, FBR once again filed a representation with the

President. The President, while rejecting the representation, observed that the conduct of FBR officers was tantamount to maladministration, adding that neglect, inattention, incompetence, inefficiency, ineptitude, arbitrariness and administrative excess in the discharge of duties were also the acts of maladministration. He regretted that due care had not been taken in processing the case and further asked FBR to deal with the matter in accordance with the law and take a holistic view without any prejudice/bias and personal grudges. As per details, Mst Rukhsana Kanwal (the complainant) had filed complaints for Tax Years 2015 to 2019 against the non-issuance of tax refund with FTO. The Mohtasib through its consolidated order dated 20.03.2020 had recommended disposing of the complainant's refund applications for all the years as per law after providing her with the opportunity of hearing. The tax officers instead of issuing the

refund, first charged the complainant arbitrarily without giving the taxpayer the opportunity of being heard with turnover tax under section 113 of the Income Tax Ordinance and when this charge was annulled by the Commissioner Inland Revenue-CIR (Appeals), the officer again charged the complainant disregarding the order of CIR (Appeal) under section 122(5A) on the ground that a gift was received through the non-banking channel while deliberately ignoring the irrefutable evidence filed by the complainant of banking transaction. The President upheld the order of FTO wherein FBR was ordered to hold an internal inquiry into the glaring incidence of maladministration by the concerned officers on account of creating problems for those who seek justice at the forum of FTO. He further directed FBR to ensure cooperation and discourage such typical vindictive reactions by its officers.

Senate observes silence over Gopi Chand's death

ISLAMABAD: Senate on Thursday observed one-minute silence on the sad demise of Gopi Chand Narang, an eminent Urdu literature's scholar from Balochistan. On the appeal of Senator Danesh Kumar of Balochistan Awami Party, the upper house of the parliament observed one-minute silence to pay tribute the services of renowned writer for the promotion of Urdu literature. Offering condolence over the sad demise of Gopi, who was born in Balochistan on February 11, 1931, Senator Irfan-ul-Haq Siddiqui of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz said he was a big name in the Urdu literature but most of people had no knowledge about this towering figure in the literature's world. He said he was conferred upon civil awards by the both Pakistan and Indian governments to acknowledge his marvelous services in the promotion of Urdu literature. - APP

Senate directs ECP to postpone election on Mandhro seat

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani on Thursday directed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to postpone the election schedule of the Senate seat which fell vacant due to the death of Senator Dr. Sikandar Mandhro as his burial has not yet taken place. Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Dr. Shahzad Waseem drew the attention of the Senate Chairman saying that ECP has issued a schedule for election on the seat that fell vacant due to the demise of Dr. Sikandar Mandhro. He said indeed, the dead body of the deceased member of the Senate Dr. Sikandar Mandhro was still in the United States of America and arrangements were underway to bring his dead body for onward burial in Pakistan. But surprisingly showing undue haste, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued an election schedule for the seat of Dr. Sikandar. Bahramand Khan Tangi asked ECP to stop the electioneering process on the vacant seat of Dr. Sikandar as the deceased Senator has not yet been buried. Mushtaq Ahmed said ECP has overstepped from its mandate by announcing the election schedule and ECP should be directed to postpone the schedule.

REAP delegation to meet Governor

ISLAMABAD: A high level delegation of Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) led by its Chairman Ali Hussam Asghar will meet Governor Punjab Baligh ur Rehman on Friday, said a press release. Group leader and founder Chairman REAP Shahzad Ali Malik Sitara-I-Imtiaz will also accompany the delegation to apprise the governor about its contribution towards exports of rice in several countries of the world for earning badly needed foreign exchange. All REAP regional and local leaders drawn across the country will also take part in discussion with Governor and seek government support in early addressing the genuine grievances being confronted by the rice growers and farmers. Rice is second cash crop of Pakistan. Group leaders Shahzad Ali Malik who is also Chairman Pakistan Hi Tech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) and United Business Group (UBG) in the federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry on behalf of all rice growers and farmers will express his highest degree of gratitude to Governor Punjab for exercising his sphere of influence for withdrawal of 17% Sale Tax on agriculture seeds. It mentioned here that PHHSA delegation called on Governor to apprise his unjustified sale tax on seeds who took up matter with Prime Minister, Federal Finance Minister and Federal Food Security Minister which ultimately resulted its withdrawal providing solace to aggrieved farmers. - APP

Polio on the rise

In a shocking development, Pakistan has reported the tenth polio case of 2022 as the health authorities diagnosed two more poliovirus in the North Waziristan district of KP. The health ministry confirmed the detection of two polio cases in North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). After the detection of two fresh cases, the number of poliovirus cases reached 10 in 2022.

Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel said in a statement that the polio cases were reported from the areas declared sensitive. He said that effective steps are being taken to curb poliovirus cases in North Waziristan.

He said an anti-polio drive is underway in South KP and it is the third drive after the detection of crippling disease cases in North Waziristan. After staying in a polio-free country for almost 15 months, Pakistan has reported the tenth case of poliovirus in 2022 so far. Almost all cases have been reported in North Waziristan. Experts say that vaccine skepticism is one of the biggest contributors to the spread of the illness, as people increasingly use fake vaccination markings.

"The outbreak in North Waziristan appears to be following the same pattern as that witnessed in 2014 and 2019, when there was a surge in cases in the same area. We are working tirelessly to ensure that we break this pattern," Federal Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel had told DW.

"Over 99% of the world is now polio-free. Our children also deserve a life free from this incurable disease," Patel added.

The disease, which mainly affects children under the age of five, can infect the spinal cord, causing paralysis.

When polio vaccine administrators go through communities vaccinating children, they mark a finger of children to show they've been vaccinated. However, parents who are opposed to the vaccine have been falsely marking their children's fingers to skip the jab. The government has launched an investigation into the recent outbreak in North Waziristan, bordering Afghanistan. It is high time the government and relevant authorities act in a befitting manner so that people are educated on vaccine benefits and country could get rid of this virus.

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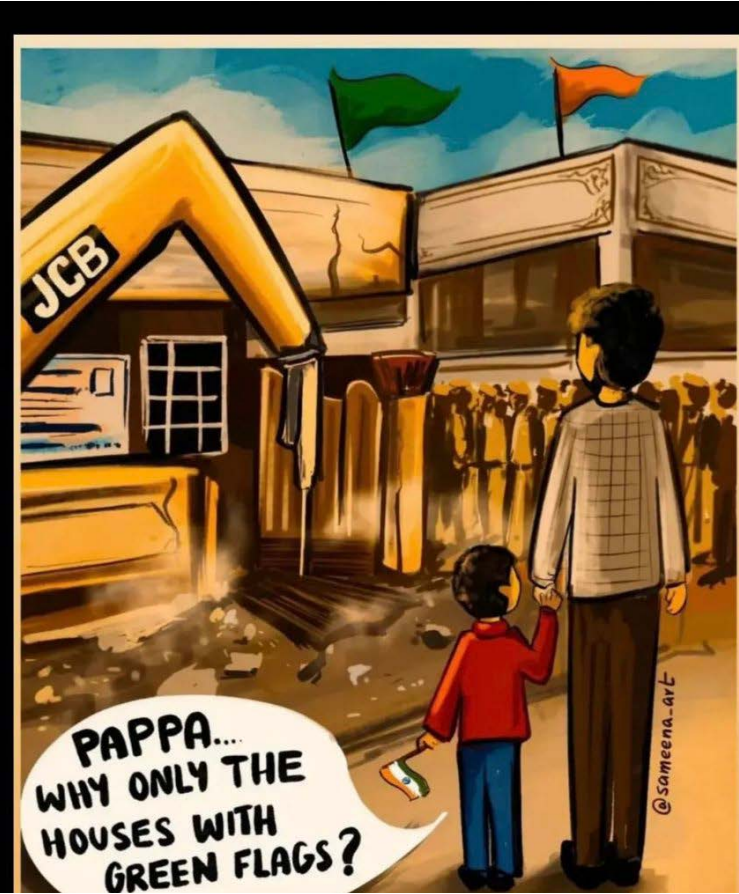
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UK, EU on collision course

After months of talks between European Union officials and representatives of the United Kingdom, the government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson published a Bill on Monday that plans to redraw some of the terms of the Brexit agreement covering how goods move between the main nations of England, Scotland and Wales, across the Irish Sea to Northern Ireland.

While officials in London say the legal changes are needed to ensure Northern Ireland's trade is protected and makes good some of the anomalies of the existing so-called 'protocol', the many opponents to the move say that the Bill effectively means the UK is ripping up a negotiated international treaty and is acting unilaterally to protect a small but vocal community in the province. The European Commission – the Cabinet-like body that oversees the day-to-day running of the bloc that represents 500 million people in a common market across 27 nations of western Europe – has warned it will take "proportionate action" to secure the legal implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol after the UK government published the legislation that will override the mechanism. The Commission has already signalled it would begin with the resumption of legal proceedings against the UK, which it suspended in September, over breaching the withdrawal treaty of 2020.

Unless both sides can reach an agreement, there is the prospect of a trade war across the English Channel, the consequences of which would exacerbate the fragile economic situation where high inflation, high energy prices and the aftermaths of Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic are weighing on UK consumers. The prospect of a trade war, however, seems somewhat distant that critics within the Conservative party have already indicated that they will vote against the Bill when it comes before Parliament. The Bill will also face opposition in the House of Lords, and a majority of Northern Ireland's Assembly, or regional parliament, have already said they are opposed to the Bill. For Johnson, who leads a party when 42 per cent of its MPs lack confidence in the Prime Minister, the timing of the Bill is not coincidental. He has staked his reputation on 'Getting Brexit Done'. He did so, but willingly endorsed a Brexit deal that drew the customs border down the Irish Sea. The underlying principle here, however, is that the UK agreed to a deal, now is seen as reneging. That is an unwelcome development now, when the focus should be on dealing with the real problems faced by Britons in this cost-of-living crisis.

Iran-Turkey strategic competition in Caucasus region

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The economic dimensions are also very significant as well to the Iranian-Turkish strategic competition in the South Caucasus. It is said that Iran's central location allows it to serve as a land bridge for transit routes connecting West Asia with Europe and East Asia. This is a fact that no one can deny at the map. What cannot be denied is that the United States and Israel have opposed and continue to oppose Iran's involvement in regional projects, which would benefit it economically

According to new realities, but Iran hopes that post Biden regime may diminish its pressure then Tehran could build up its regional influence. On the other hand regional states are shifting their policies and entering into new alignments to limit Iran. Turkey also has entered in to a new phase of competition with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since the end of September 2021, Tehran and Baku have been working to reduce tensions. Iran and Azerbaijan started focus on promoting economic cooperation and advancing plans to establish regional transport links, such as the North-South Railway Corridor, which connects India with Russia through Iran and Azerbaijan. In the meantime, the improvement of the collective economic well-being of the South Caucasus region in the interest of all regional states, such efforts are welcomed and encouraged. Basic geopolitical tensions may derail economic integration efforts at any time.

In this context, the Iran-Turkey confrontation is the most important issue in the South Caucasus to increase influence. Some scholars think that Azerbaijan's victory in the 2020 war against Armenia could not have been achieved without the support of Turkey and Israel. In this context, Baku is encouraged and has proved that its military diplomacy as well as Turkey and Israel were on the right side as its main foreign partners. In this sense of political rationality in Baku has to face its own challenges because Israel is Iran's biggest regional rival. Since the mid-1990s, Iran has had to engage in a delicate balancing act not to let the close military and security cooperation between Baku and Jerusalem affect Tehran-Azerbaijan cordial relations. However, it alarms Iran about Turkey's plans to expand its influence in Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus that can spark new tensions and a new chapter in the region's history. Meanwhile, Russia, which has its main Turkish minorities and shares Iran's fears about pan-Turkism, has invaded in Ukraine that cast negative impact on Moscow's ability to play a historic role in the region. Along these lines, Iranian officials often argue that the Turkish-Azerbaijani agreement to use the pan-Turkish card against Iran is a strong support to Israel. Tehran always has been complaining to Baku that it provides "safe havens" to ethnic Azerbaijani separatists. On the other hand, Russia's-Ukraine war, hope that Ankara and Baku will increase their support for Pan-Turkism, and this will put them on the brink of an unending confrontation with Tehran. The economic dimensions are also very significant as well to the Iranian-Turkish strategic competition in the South Caucasus. It is said that Iran's central location allows it to serve as a land bridge for transit routes connecting West Asia

with Europe and East Asia. This is a fact that no one can deny at the map. What cannot be denied is that the United States and Israel have opposed and continue to oppose Iran's involvement in regional projects, which would benefit it economically. Tehran has done little to find ways to reduce that opposition, as this would require reshuffling its overall foreign policy and easing tensions with the United States and Israel. Instead, Tehran's focus is on those countries that recognize Iran's as a regional hub for trade and transit. Although the Iranians acknowledge that they are slow to rectify the situation and regret for not given its speed with which Turkey is moving towards becoming the hub of a regional corridor for the whole of West Asia, including the South Caucasus and Central Asia. As a result, Turkey's recent efforts, including the unveiling of plans to connect Central Asia through the Caspian Sea, is a direct challenge to Iranian interests. Turkey's Trans-Caspian Corridor Initiative, which Ankara also refers to as the "Middle Corridor". It connects Turkey to the Caucasus via Georgia and Azerbaijan, and then through a sea link across the Caspian Sea to Central Asia and China. Turkish marketing calls it the "renaissance" of the Silk Road. A sub-component of Turkey's efforts is the Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan-Afghanistan Transit Corridor Agreement, also known as the "Lapis Lazuli Agreement". The net loss in the development of the connecting route is Iran, which would potentially be excluded from the important regional transit network, which would also jeopardize Iran's trade relations with Afghanistan and the Central Asian states, as more trade flows. This means more

competition for the export markets on which Tehran currently depends. Despite such realities, Iran is slow to act. Tehran needs to review its transit policy for the regional trade. In October 2021, when two Pakistani trucks were carrying goods to Turkey via Iran, they encountered a bureaucratic delay at the border, which was resolved only after mediation by senior customs officials in Tehran. The incident revealed a weak system that is not attractive to large-scale international trade. Iran needs to sign bilateral and multilateral transit agreements with its neighbors and beyond to become a major transit route. In short, Iran and Turkey are currently engaged in a delicate but intense competition for influence in the South Caucasus, including in the realm of possible new transit projects. Iranians know that lifting sanctions is crucial to their ability to be the center of regional transit. It is a source of income that Iran would welcome. According to reports, the revenue of goods exported through Iran is the same as that per barrel of oil exported. But Tehran's dilemma is so great that it cannot turn its geography into a transit hub and a source of income. Despite recent efforts by Baku and Tehran to focus on mutually beneficial economic cooperation wherever possible, a broader political dialogue is needed. Above all, Iran needs to do more to promote the constructive role as a mediator between Azerbaijan and Armenia. There is no doubt that a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over control of the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region in late 2020 had blinded Tehran. Iran was equally shocked by the involvement of Turkey and Israel during the fighting and after the Moscow-brokered ceasefire, but unlike Tehran, Ankara was part of the talks.

Since the administration of President Joe Biden, the US alignment in Asia and in the Middle East has entered in a new phase. All regional states are revising their pol-

provement of the collective economic well-being of the South Caucasus region in the interest of all regional states, such efforts are welcomed and encouraged. Basic geopolitical tensions may derail economic integration efforts at any time.

Breaking the Taboos!!

Iqra Munawar



The protagonist in the drama is a brave warrior of his time and the father of Osman who founded the Ottoman Empire. He is in a conflict with the Crusaders on one side, the eastern Roman Empire on another side as well as the brutality shown by Mongols who killed a lot of Turks on another side

Creativity implies imagination that can transcend traditional ideas, and patterns, and create something new which is meaningful. It is a mental process that involves the generation of new imaginations and ideas by which we utilize our creative ability. It is something that is related to connecting dots. It is putting your imagination to work and coming up with developing the most extraordinary results. The basic aim of creativity is to think beyond boundaries. Every individual born has some cre-

Likewise, creative industries are growing fast, among them are advertisements, Television (Drama), architecture, craft, design performing fashion, film and video, music, performing arts, radio, publishing, etc. Creativity and television are closely linked. Creative and meaningful content on any mainstream media can help bring the changes in a society. Our mainstream media plays a vital role in such regard. The TV industry in the form of entertainment dramas has al-

ways stepped forward to bring about social change and bring some positive impact on society. We have many such examples where social taboos were challenged and the TV industry brought the issue to discussion tables. 70% of the understanding and behavior of the masses are influenced by the mainstream media. Following are some of the examples of dramas that have triggered a debate within our society based on gender roles and gender differences. Not only the driver of joy and shaper of our culture but such examples have been a catalyst for opening up a dialogue on issues we are generally reluctant to speak about. Starting from an extraordinary drama named SANG-E-MARMAR which is written by Mustafa Arifi is one of the masterpieces of the small screen in raising awareness about suppressing and controlling both genders in our society. It raised questions about how parents and our society control behaviors and mindsets; how boys and girls are directed by them. Another masterpiece AKHRI STATION is Sarmad Khoosats direction with seven tales of seven women who were being forced into prostitution and ended up being in depression. In the story, the writer Anna Mufti has highlighted the struggles of women in Pakistani society. ZUN MUREED is another such piece of Anna Mufti, highlighting the domestic violence that laws must be passed for the protection of women in our society against such violence. The drama unfolded how a girl survived after reporting domestic violence against her husband. She tried to create awareness regarding subtle differences between a wife and a servant who cooks and do household chores. ULLU BARAY FAROKHT NAHI talked about the men's power over women in our society. How

they abuse their power with impunity. How can we forget BAAGHI? Indeed, a true story of Qandeel Baloch who was murdered by her brother in the name of honor. Honor killing is an old and a common thing in remote and backward areas of Pakistan. ROAG, another drama that was raised against a taboo, dared to be different while addressing the sensitive issue of child rape. The drama reflected the dark reality of our society where parents keep it hidden from people and do not let their children talk about it. CHUP RAHO was a brilliant play with the same subject of child molestation and physical abuse. Moreover, other dramas like and MUQABIL, GHAYAL, and UDAARI have raised awareness in Pakistan to talk openly and freely about physical abuse if they are facing and charged with the culprit. Before, people used to hide it and didn't feel talking about it openly. KHUDA MERA BHI HAI stated the life of a transgender being raised in Pakistan. It highlighted gender third-gender thirteen being by the society just because he is not of specified sex. Before this drama, third gender wasn't discussed explicitly as it was considered a taboo. After the penetration of drama culture in our society, people have started looking up to this subject differently. It had impacted immensely. Third gender should be treated as a respectable gender in our society. Mimicking them and calling them with weird names is not acceptable any more. So, we can easily see that creative industry has the potential to be driver of joy, shaper of culture and catalyst for positive change. How can we forget the out-of-the-box Turkish series Ertugrul which is one of the most famous dramas ever? The protagonist in the drama is a brave warrior of his time and the

father of Osman who founded the Ottoman Empire. He is in a conflict with the Crusaders on one side, the eastern Roman Empire on another side as well as the brutality shown by Mongols who killed a lot of Turks on another side. In the middle of this, he is in a psychological conflict between his love and predestination. This serial depicts the actual picture of a true Muslim who wants to bring justice and peace to his subjects. This may not depict true history but at least it is an educative drama, which lays the foundation for how to up bring one's children in line with Islamic and cultural teachings. In general, if we talk about the content shows that are being shown, are becoming rich now. These are more towards highlighting social issues and taboos. No doubt they are playing a key role in changing our society for the betterment. We should be really concerned about our content and structure. Pakistani Drama industry with the help of the government needs to give opportunities to new entrants, take a risk and create something new in the film industry as well. In a crux, we have seen that people like different perspectives and distinct stories. Cliché plots of dramas are not a big hit. This region what we call Pakistan has a plethora of ideas for new content that is very distinct from the content produced across the world. We are a melting pot of cultures; with thousands of stories to be told. It only takes one to be bold enough to do challenging stuff.

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Briefs

IMF deal details to be made public

FROM PAGE 01
handling of negotiations with the global lender, saying: "I wonder whether those who struck the worst ever deal with IMF and took patently bad economic decisions have the conscience to face the truth. How can they pretend to be innocent when what the nation is going through is clearly their doing?" The surge in prices, although a highly unpopular move that has the nation fuming, had been a key demand of the IMF for a long time. Finance Minister Miftah Ismail on Monday said that if the government does not abolish the subsidies on petroleum products by July (in effect raising the prices), then the country will default. Speaking on Geo News programme "Capital Talk", the finance minister said the IMF has "insisted" on abolishing the subsidies on petroleum products. In a bid to bring economic stability and revive the stalled multi-billion-dollar IMF programme, the government had increased the price of petrol by a whopping Rs60 per litre last month. Pakistan had signed a 39-month, \$6 billion Extended Fund Facility with the IMF in July 2019. It received disbursements of about \$3bn but further tranches were stopped when an agreement could not be reached with the previous government. The lender had expressed concerns over the status of some of its objectives, including fiscal consolidation. IMF's resident representative on Monday said that additional measures will be needed to bring Pakistan's budget for FY2022-23 in line with the key objectives of its IMF programme. The next tranche that Pakistan is to receive upon a successful review is \$900 million, and a green light from the IMF would also open up other global funding avenues.

Pak-IMF to ink deal...

FROM PAGE 01
To a question, the minister said his suggestion of less tea consumption was taken as a joke and asked what would happen if a person drinks two cups of tea instead of four daily. He emphasized that less consumption of tea would save Pakistan billions of rupees every year. Earlier, while addressing the media at PID, the federal minister said the rise in petrol price is due to the global oil prices citing that the government is selling the commodity at breakeven price. He added that the prices of daily-use commodities including oil are rising in the global market. He added that the government has already slashed all kinds of taxes and duties on the oil to keep its price lower. Iqbal said that the wheel of economy runs with the development budget but in the past, the defense, and development budgets were kept equivalent. However, the PML-N government has reserved Rs450 billion for the development in the budget 2022-23 after years.

IHC nullifies...

FROM PAGE 01
the Political Parties Order, 2002, and the Political Parties Rules, 2002. "...the commission is empowered to regulate its own proceedings and while doing so, it is expected that the proceedings against all the political parties, including the appellant (PTI), will be completed with due diligence," the order said. The order noted that the commission has "unequivocally" stated before the court that cases of all the political parties are being dealt with in a fair and transparent manner. "There is nothing on record to indicate that the appellant (PTI) has been treated differently. It would not be appropriate for this Court to give a direction to the Commission on the basis of unsubstantiated apprehensions," it said. It further noted that the court was satisfied that neither an adverse order has been passed by the commission nor it is likely to be passed in derogation of the procedure prescribed under rule 6 of the Rules of 2002.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate, Mirza Muhammad Afridi inaugurating a photo exhibition on the occasion of 30th anniversary of Pakistan-Azerbaijan diplomatic relations at Parliament House. - DNA

Key laws to be adopted by year-end: Kazakh President

NEWS DESK

ULYTAU: The referendum allowed the amendments to the Basic Law to come into force, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said during the first meeting of the Ulytyq Qurultay, Kazinform correspondent reports. «Real changes are in anticipation from the people who supported our initiative in the referendum and gave the mandate of trust. It is essential to promptly and fully carry out the constitutional reform. Significant changes are already underway,» said Tokayev. He went on to recall that he withdrew from the AMANAT party way before the referendum took place, which is now a constitutional norm. «The Head of State must not be dependent from all political powers. His every action should serve the interests of the country. On June 8, three new regions were created. Their heads were appointed in accordance with the new Constitution. Maslikhat deputies voted for and elected heads out of the candidates proposed by myself. The constitutional changes are to enter our lives in this way, that is, gradually,» said the Head of State. The Kazakh President pointed out that a lot is ahead for the new Constitution to fully enter into force. «Over 20 new draft laws are to be developed and adopted. Laws on elections, political parties, and others will be amended. It is very essential for the country's successful upgrading. Adoption of laws requires time, sometimes several months or even half a year. However, the reform should not be delayed. The people need real changes now.



Therefore, our deputies need to begin developing key draft laws, which should be submitted to Parliament at the beginning of the autumn session. The key laws have

to be adopted by the end of the year. Only then, the comprehensive modernization can be carried out at a high pace,» concluded Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Turkish, British, Ukrainian defense chiefs discuss Ukraine

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: Turkish, British, and Ukrainian defense chiefs met on Thursday to discuss the latest situation in Ukraine, as well as the transportation of grain from the in-war country to the rest of the world. Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar met with British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace and his Ukrainian counterpart Oleksii Reznikov on the sidelines of the NATO Defense Ministers Meeting in Brussels to discuss regional defense and security issues, as well as the latest developments in Ukraine, facing war from Russia that started on Feb. 24. They also discussed the safe transportation of grain to Türkiye and other parts of the world through ships and A400M aircraft. Up to 25 million tons of grain are currently stuck in Ukraine, according to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who recently stated that he is seeking a secure corridor for Ukrainian ships to carry it out to ease food



shortages in some regions of the world. Ukraine can export its grain through safe corridors that can be opened from its ports, without needing to engage in a time-consuming demining effort, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told reporters in the Turkish capital Ankara on Wednesday. Food-laden ships are currently unable to leave Ukrainian ports due to

blockades of areas off the coast of the southern port city of Odessa, causing a global grain crisis. Sea mines placed around the port have exacerbated the situation. "According to the UN's latest plan, it would take a certain amount of time to clear these mines. Since the locations of the mines are known, safe corridors will be established to the three ports (in

Ukraine),» he added. Under such a plan, ships would have safe access to the ports and will be guided by Ukrainian search and rescue vessels, he said, adding that ships entering the safe zone would be searched. Ankara keeps an eye on maritime activities in its territorial waters in light of the ongoing war and restricted access for Russian warships to its waterways.

Five days COAS Regional Hockey C'ship ends

DNA

KARACHI: 5 days Chief of Army Staff Regional Hockey Championship Karachi Division 2022 ended at Karachi Hockey Association (KHA) Ground in great fervour. The final was played between Youth Hockey Club and Karachi Gladiators. Youth Hockey Club defeated Karachi Gladiators by a solitary goal scored by Ali Afridi in 23 minute through penalty corner. Youth Hockey Club sustained the lead taken by them at half time till end of final match. Centre Forward Abdul Rafay was

declared best player of the tournament.

Patron in Chief KHA Major General (R) Muhammad Tariq Hakim Suri, HI(M) was chief guest during the occasion which was sponsored by Karachi Port Trust. Umpires Irfan Tahir and Asghar Ali officiated the match which was witnessed by guest of honour Olympians Players like Nasir Ali, Hanif Khan, Muhammad Shafique, Waseem Froze, Sameer Hussain; and International Players like Abuzar Umrao, Pervaiz Iqbal, Laique Lashari, A sad Qureshi and M Khalid Junior besides famous anchors and senior sports journalists.



European football 'in danger', says La Liga boss

Speaking at a European Leagues meeting in Amsterdam, president of Spain's top league says: "We've made official complaints about PSG for financial doping."

WEB DESK

LONDON: European football is in "danger" unless "state-owned" clubs such as Manchester City and Paris St-Germain can be controlled, the president of Spain's top league says. La Liga has filed a complaint to Uefa about what it believes to be Financial Fair Play breaches by the two clubs. "We think European football is in danger. [We have] not been able to design a system to control the state-owned clubs." He has strongly criticised PSG over the new mul-

ti-million pound contract they gave star striker Kylian Mbappe. Speaking at a European Leagues meeting in Amsterdam, he added: "We've made official complaints about PSG for financial doping. "Uefa have allowed losses because clubs reduced their turnover, but PSG increased their wage bill by an incredible amount



during Covid. "Their wages for 2021-22 were 600m euros. It is impossible. That is without including Mbappe. It is obvious they are not applying FFP [Financial Fair Play] rules. It is endangering the entire financial eco-system in Europe." The complaint against PSG was made last week and the one against City in April, although La Liga says it reserves the right to extend these complaints. In July 2020, the Court of Arbitration for Sport overturned a two-year Champions League ban imposed

on City by Uefa for FFP breaches. Tebas added: "At one point, Man City had 68% of their revenue from commercial income. Real Madrid was 54%. That is impossible. Man City as a brand is not worth that much. They were sanctioned but it was reversed. PSG is even more obvious. It is totally impossible. Contracts were inflated. "The majority of people in football try to control their financial status. It is not a problem they are owned by the state. It is the financial side."

Engagement with US, India significant: Bilawal

FROM PAGE 01

work in close coordination with your institute and engage the hardworking individuals over here, not necessarily saying that everybody will agree on all topics but surely with your contribution and input, we can conduct a far more informed foreign policy. The importance of foreign policy, I don't need to remind all of you. It not only is a question of Pakistan's national interests, our security interests or our economic interests as a theoretical subject but it is a direct impact on the lives of every single Pakistani. Pakistan's discourse on foreign policy unfortunately does not rise to the level that is necessary particularly in the public domain to educate the people of Pakistan, to explain to the people of Pakistan the actual context of our foreign policy, what is happening in the world today and how it affects your lives.

We like to paint the world in black and white, in good and evil and perceived concepts of what is in our national interest based on a narrow perception of nationalism and patriotism. What one must understand is if one is truly patriotic, then one is ready to do whatever is necessary to safeguard the people of Pakistan, to advocate for the interests of the people of Pakistan and achieve what is strategically necessary in your country's interest.

I would argue that recently, we have continued to go down this path in an extremely unhealthy manner that has actually had a direct negative impact on Pakistan's foreign policy, national security or national interest but also on the health of our economy and the lives of the average Pakistani.

If I was to sum up the political conduct of our foreign policy and frankly quite a lot of policies, has been one of cutting one's nose to spite one's face. It requires all of us to have a deep rethink about where we stand in the world today and where we would like to see ourselves in the next ten years, twenty years, fifty years and the next hundred years. Are we as a nation, are we as a country, doing all we can to position Pakistan in not today then tomorrow, in the best place for its people. I would argue, unfortunately that we are not. As stated in your presentation, Pakistan's foreign policy is far more effective by the development of geostrategic and geopolitical events than many other countries. Pakistan's geographical location is such that we are positioned in a place that means that the developments of geopolitical effects have affected us, have effected Pakistan directly in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Imran gives nationwide protest...

FROM PAGE 01

the PTI chairman pointed out that every other political party staged protests during his tenure against inflation. "These people were used to criticised us for rising inflation and incompetence," he noted. "During our three-and-a-half-year tenure, the petrol price increased by Rs50 only and was being sold at Rs150 per litre. We had given a subsidy of Rs200 billion on oil prices," he added, Imran Khan said, "We were also asked by International Monetary Fund (IMF) to end subsidies, but we provided relief to the people from rising inflation."

He noted that the incumbent government has so far increased the price of petrol by Rs 85 in just two months. "We had kept diesel prices lower deliberately in our tenure and was being sold at Rs145 per liter," Imran Khan added. "When diesel prices increase all transport becomes more expensive," he said, pointing out that farmers usually face more problems due to the increase in diesel prices. Earlier in the day, PTI Chairman Imran Khan said that no Pakistani prime minister can run an independent foreign policy. Addressing a press conference at the Islamabad High Court Bar Association on Thursday, the former premier gave a list of PTI's achievements during its tenure and heavily criticised the coalition government's handling of the economy.

Briefs

Ulytq
Qurultay
kicks off
in Ulytau
region

DNA

NUR-SULTAN: The first meeting of the Ulytq Qurultay (National Congress) with the participation of Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev kicked off, Kazinform correspondent reports. The first meeting of the Ulytq Qurultay under the Kazakh President is taking place in Ulytau region which received the status of a region after a quarter of a century. As was reported earlier the President arrived in Ulytau region for a working visit. The presidential decree establishing the Ulytq Qurultay was published the other day.

Germany to
deliver rocket
launchers to
Ukraine

BRUSSELS: German multiple rocket launchers can be delivered to Ukraine as of July, the country's defense minister said on Thursday. Speaking to reporters on the way to the second day of the NATO defense ministerial meeting, German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht confirmed that her country can start delivering the promised three multiple rocket launchers "at the end of July or the start of August" to Ukraine. "The training on these multiple rocket launchers can begin at the end of June," Lambrecht added. - Agencies

Iran receives
\$1.6b in gas
debt from Iraq

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran has received \$1.6 billion in arrears from the Iraqi government for imports of natural gas, Oil Minister Javad Owji announced late Wednesday. In a Twitter post, Owji said the debt from previous years was received "a few hours ago" following "several months of negotiations" between the two sides, crediting it to "active energy diplomacy."

FPCCI & Portugal desire to
expand the bilateral trade

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Umar Masood ur Rehman, Vice President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, visited the Embassy of Portugal in Islamabad and met H.E Paulo Neves Pocinho Portugal's Ambassador to Pakistan. Both discussed the matters of mutual interest and talk over regarding wide-ranging trade, industry and commercial avenues of cooperation, investments and joint ventures, On behalf of business and trading community, Mr. Umar Masood ur Rehman VP FPCCI, has expressed his desire to elevate and expand bilateral trade relations of Pakistan and Portugal as there are many untapped potential in a number of sectors and accordingly exports and trade will be increase. Umar Masood ur Rehman, Vice President FPCCI said that Pakistan wishes to increase trade ties with Portugal as both countries have the potential to improve bilateral trade in different sectors. The trade potential between the countries far exceeds the current trade volume and both countries need to work on realizing that potential. He said that Pakistan is producing quality products at affordable costs and highlighted that Portugal can get benefit of this situation. Trade volume between Pakistan and Portugal is not encouraging and it is essential that both



countries should promote strong connectivity between private sectors to identify untapped sectors of mutual cooperation. He also stated that Portugal should enhance the import of Pakistani products including textiles, garments, surgical instruments, sports goods, leather products, fruits & vegetables and other required products to attained full benefits of GSP Plus. Mr. Umar Masood ur Rehman, Vice President FPCCI, has invited the Portugal companies to expand their presence in Pakistan; and,

look into the joint ventures and strategic partners to extend their interests. Portugal has enormous opportunities in Pakistan to invest in poultry, dairy, animal feed, modern agriculture, food processing, and industrial collaborations. Investment cooperation are other area in which both countries could collaborate for mutual benefits. Bilateral trade between the two brotherly countries can be increased manifold. He said that frequent exchange of business delegations are the options that can bring people of

both the countries closer to each other that would eventually enhance the mutual cooperation between Pakistan and Portugal. H.E Paulo Neves Pocinho said to Mr. Umar Masood ur Rehman to Organize a Webinar Between the Portuguese and Pakistan Businessmen in October or November 2022, in which presentations on the Portugal and Pakistan Culture and Trade will be given to get to know each other. H.E Paulo Neves Pocinho said that Portugal wants to enhance bilateral trade with Pakistan in view of the high potential between the two countries. Portugal and Pakistan should develop close cooperation with it to get better market access to European and African regions. He said that both countries have room to strengthen bilateral collaboration for mutual benefit. He emphasized the need of Exchange of Trade delegations between both the countries.

He said Portugal has PTAs with many countries and by investing in Portugal; Pakistani investors can promote exports to Europe, Africa, Canada and other regions. Portugal can serve as a gateway to Europe for Pakistan. He said the FPCCI should form a delegation for Portugal to explore new business opportunities. He offered to expedite the visa processing for the business, industry, and trade community's representatives of Pakistan to create an enabling environment for them to forge business-to-business and people-to-people relationships.

Biden
says US to
overcome
inflation

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden said the American economy is well positioned to overcome inflation, a day after criticizing the financial industry and major oil corporations. "When I took office, the economy had stalled and COVID was out of control. Since then, we've achieved the most robust recovery in modern history," Biden wrote on Twitter on Wednesday. "Because of that foundation, we're better positioned to overcome global inflation and reach a new chapter of stable and steady growth," he added. Stressing that unions built the middle class in the US, Biden emphasized that they provide democracy in the workplace. "When we invest in strengthening workers and the middle class, the poor have a ladder up, and those at the top still do just fine. That's how we can increase opportunity and decrease persistent inequity," he wrote.

Bank of
England
raises interest
rates

LONDON: The Bank of England raised interest rates for the fifth consecutive month to 1.25%, from 1%, as the inflation hit a 40-year high of 9% in April. The bank's Monetary Policy Committee also voted to raise UK interest rates to a fresh 13-year high. Policymakers now projected inflation to be over 9% during the next few months and to rise to slightly above 11% in October while the GDP growth is slowing sharply over the first half of the forecast period. The bank said the surge in inflation is partly due to rising global energy and other tradable goods prices amid the Russia-Ukraine war, adding that there are also domestic factors, such as "the tight labour market and the pricing strategies of firms." It also noted that it "will take the actions necessary to return inflation to the 2% target sustainably in the medium term."

NATO
preparing for
'transformative'
summit

WEB DESK

BRUSSELS: The upcoming NATO leaders' summit will be "transformative" for Euro-Atlantic security, the alliance's chief said on Thursday. Jens Stoltenberg spoke to reporters on the way to the second day of the NATO defense ministerial meeting, a precursor to the NATO leaders' summit scheduled for June 29-30 in Madrid. At Thursday's reunion, they will discuss how to modernize NATO and the need to increase defense spending, as well as strengthening partnerships with Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand. The ministers will also talk about the NATO membership application of Sweden and Finland.

800 mosques
attacked in
Germany
since 2014

AGENCIES

COLOGNE: More than 800 mosques in Germany have been the targets of threats and attacks since 2014, but in most of the cases, the crimes were not properly investigated, according to Brandeilig, an initiative of rights group FAIR International. The group, which has founded Germany's first reporting center for attacks on mosques, recorded nearly 840 incidents of attacks, vandalism and threats between 2014 and 2022. A detailed analysis of the crimes in 2018 revealed that the perpetrators remained unidentified in most of the attacks, fueling further attacks against Muslim worship sites by neo-Nazis or left-wing extremists. Among the 120 attacks recorded against mosques in 2018, only in nine cases perpetrators could be identified. "This rate is a cause for concern," Brandeilig's experts stressed, pointing out that in at least 20 cases, which included arson attacks, suspects intended to cause death or great bodily harm.

Exhibition titled 'Contemporary
Art of Pakistan' held in Belarus

DNA

MINSK: The Embassy of Pakistan in Minsk in collaboration with the National Library of Belarus held the opening ceremony of the exhibition titled "Contemporary Art of Pakistan", at the library premises on 15 June 2022. The exhibition which will continue till 6 July 2022, is being as part of 75th Anniversary of the Independence Day of Pakistan celebrations.

The event was attended by around 150 guests representing dignitaries, from the Belarusian side, members of Diplomatic Corps, academia, cultural organisations and the media houses. Welcoming to the esteemed guests on this occasion, Ambassador of Pakistan to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan highlighted the cordial bilateral relations between Pakistan and Belarus which has developed apace to become a multifaceted partnership over a relatively short span of time. He further added that for further strengthening these ties, both the countries have increasingly endeavored to rev up cooperation, with particular focus on building synergies in the domains of industry, agriculture, education, health & pharmaceuticals and science & technology. Underscoring the importance of cultural cooperation, the Ambassador shared with the audience the several Art & Cultural Exhibitions held in different cities of



Belarus during the past one year. The Ambassador noted that "Pakistan is a multi-cultural, multi ethnic and multi lingual society. Situated at the ever-shifting fault lines between empires, the land of modern day Pakistan has remained at the heart of regional geopolitics, and a melting pot, with cross fertilization among cultures over many a millennia. It has a rich history in all the visual arts including painting, architecture, textiles, decorative arts, and sculptures". The exhibition features the artworks by three Pakistani artists; the contemporary calligraphic works by a promising Pakistani calligrapher, Ayesha Kamal, who participated in the event, masterpieces of world-renowned Pakistani artist Sadequian and paintings of Noreen Sajid reflecting the hues and forms of everyday life in Pakistan. The exhibitions also included handcrafts made of wood, onyx, silver, embroidered wall hangings, cushion covers and bronze items alongwith Pakistani dresses from different regions. A few dozen photographs by Hamid Hussain providing glimpses of Pakistan's diverse and iconic landscapes were also exhibited on this occasion. The colourful opening ceremony included live Pakistani instrumental played by a Belarusian violinist and vocal song performed by Tatiana Kremis and Vlada Troshko.

Pakistani mango
tasting salon held

BEIJING: A special salon themed "Pakistani Mango Tasting & Idea Exchange on Business Development" was held in Guangzhou, China to promote communication and trade between Pakistan and Guangzhou, a busy trade hub that knotted friendship city ties with Lahore, China Economic Net (CEN) reported it on Thursday. Enjoying the taste and aroma of Pakistan's Sindhri Mango, one of the world's top available varieties, guests including

government officers and entrepreneurs from both countries tapped the market potential between China and Pakistan. On the occasion, Muhammad Irfan, Commercial Counsellor of Consulate-General of Pakistan in Guangzhou, China, presented Pakistan's industries and the geographical advantages of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Pakistan and China enjoy a long history of economic and trade relations. - APP

Registration for Astana
Finance Day opens

DNA

NUR SULTAN: We are happy to announce that the registration to the annual ASTANA FINANCE DAYS 2022 conference is now open! Astana Finance Days (AFD) is one of the largest financial conferences in the region annually hosted by the Astana International Financial Centre. Over 2018-2021, the AFD attracted over 15,000 participants from 100 countries of the world. This year the topic of the conference will be Sustainability, Social Responsibility, and Growth. For the convenience of participants and speakers, this year the conference will be held in a hybrid format - allowing for both in-person and online participation. Participation at the event is free of charge, registration is compulsory. In-person participation



In-person attendees are required to obtain a name badge for admission to all conference sessions. Badges will be issued to AFD registered participants at the Accreditation Centre located at the AIFC premises.

UN: Pakistan calls
for raising funds for
handicapped

NEW YORK: Pakistan urged the world community to mobilize financial resources to provide assistive technology devices, products and services to the more than 1 billion persons with disabilities in an effort to improve their living standards, independence and social inclusion. "Recognition of right to development of persons with disabilities can provide a formidable foundation for international cooperation and solidarity," Pakistani delegate Saima Saleem told a meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on Wednesday. Ms Saleem, a councillor at the Pakistan Mission to the UN who is herself visually impaired, said the coronavirus pandemic has posed greater challenges for persons with disabilities, and, apart from mobilization of funds for assistive technology devices for them, she made a series of proposals for staging a "resilient" recovery. The proposals included: The international community step up its efforts to fulfill sustainable development needs of persons with disabilities by implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Member states, United Nations and business enterprises create employment opportunities by providing reasonable accommodations, as also reservation of employment quotas for persons with disabilities; Developing and Least Developed Countries be provided necessary funding through International Financial Institutions, ODA (official devel-

opment assistance) and donor assistance to help persons with disabilities improve their living standards. Ensure inclusion and access to social protection programmes and universal health coverage; Member states and the United Nations re-double their efforts to make infrastructure accessible; and, Urgently deal with Human rights violations of persons with disabilities in conflict settings and situations of foreign occupation. "Addressing developmental needs and ensuring human rights of persons with disabilities is crucial for creating inclusive and participatory societies," the Pakistani delegate said at the outset of her remarks. "As a State Party to Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities since 2011, Ms. Saleem said, the Pakistani government continues to promote and protect human rights and developmental needs of persons with disabilities, through a wide range of legal, policy and administrative measures. These included: formulation of ICT Act for Persons with Disabilities 2021; reservation of 2% quota across the board in public sector employment; integration of the rights of persons with disabilities in all programs and activities related to relief and rehabilitation during disasters by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA); inclusion in universal health coverage and social protection schemes; and introduction of inclusive education. - APP

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Briefs

NZ removes pre-departure Covid tests for inbound travelers

WELLINGTON: Travelers to New Zealand will no longer need a COVID-19 pre-departure test from 11:59 pm, June 20, COVID-19 Response Minister Ayesha Verrall said on Thursday. "We've taken a careful and staged approach to reopening our borders to ensure we aren't overwhelmed with an influx of COVID-19 cases. Our strategy has worked and as a result, it's safe to lift pre-departure test requirements much sooner than planned," Verrall said in a statement.

Around 90 percent of international arrivals undertake their required testing once they are in the country, with only a 2-3 percent positivity rate, she said, adding they don't anticipate a significant increase in border cases once the requirement is lifted.

"Factors such as the availability of and cost of getting a test are increasingly becoming a barrier for people intending to travel here, especially as other countries wind back testing availability or the requirement for a test on entry themselves," the minister said. While the pre-departure test requirements are being removed, a set of border surveillance measures are kept in place for detecting any possible new variants of COVID-19, she said. - APP

Hariri killers sentenced to life imprisonment

WEB DESK

BEIRUT: A UN-backed court sentenced two Hezbollah members in their absence to life imprisonment on Thursday for a huge Beirut bombing in 2005 that killed Lebanon's ex-premier Rafic Hariri. Habib Merhi and Hussein Oneissi were found guilty on appeal in March by the Dutch-based Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) over the attack, which killed 21 other people and injured 226.

The court found Merhi and Oneissi distributed a video in which a fictitious group claimed responsibility for the attack, in a bid to protect the "real perpetrators" from a covert network in the Lebanese Shiite militia Hezbollah. But the pair are unlikely to ever spend time behind bars as Hezbollah has refused to hand them over, as it has refused to surrender a third man, Salim Ayyash, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2020. Presiding judge Ivana Hrdlickova said both Merhi and Oneissi were aware that Hariri would be killed in the attack, adding that the sentences reflected the "evil nature of terrorism".

"The appeals chamber therefore unanimously decides to sentence Mr Merhi and Mr Oneissi to life imprisonment, the heaviest sentence under the statute and the rules for each of the five counts on which they were convicted," she said.

PIA to launch Islamabad-Chengdu flights from July 6

BEIJING: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) will operate its weekly commercial passenger flights between Islamabad and Chengdu, the capital of China's Sichuan province from July 6.

In this regard, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) has accorded a formal approval to PIA to operate its flights on Islamabad-Chengdu route in addition to Islamabad-Xi'an section, well informed sources told APP here on Thursday. The final decision on resumption of direct flights between Pakistan and China operated by PIA was taken at a meeting between Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and China's State Councilor, Wang Yi held in Guangzhou, China last month. - APP



Cap: A
Cap

EU leaders visit Ukraine after criticism, offer hope

"Ukraine belongs to the European family," he said, after talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and the other leaders

NEWS DESK

KYIV: The leaders of Germany, France and Italy, all criticised in the past by Kyiv for support viewed as too cautious, visited Ukraine on Thursday and offered the hope of EU membership to a country pleading for weapons to fend off Russia's invasion. "It's a message of unity we're sending to the Ukrainians," French President Emmanuel Macron said after pulling into Kyiv on an overnight train along with Germany's Olaf Scholz and Italy's Mario Draghi. They were joined by Romanian President Klaus Iohannis. Macron later said all four leaders supported the idea of granting "immediate" European Union candidate status to Ukraine, adding that France would step up arms deliveries to Kyiv. Scholz said Germany had taken in 800,000 Ukrainian refugees who had fled the conflict and would continue to support Ukraine as long as it needs.

"Ukraine belongs to the European family," he said, after talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and the other leaders. On the battlefield, Ukrainian officials said their troops were still holding out against massive Russian bombardment in the eastern city of Sievierodonetsk, and described new progress in a counteroffensive in the south. But they said battles on both main fronts depended on receiving more aid from the West, especially artillery to counter Russia's big advantage in firepower. Air raid sirens had blared in Kyiv as the European leaders' visit got under way. They toured Irpin, a town northeast of the capital devastated early in the war, where withdrawing Russian forces left behind bodies littering the streets. Noting graffiti on a wall that read "Make Europe, not war", Macron said: "It's very moving to see that. This is the right message." The visit had taken weeks to organise, while the three most powerful EU leaders all fended off criticism over positions de-

scribed as too deferential to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Critics compared Macron and Scholz to Britain's Boris Johnson, who visited Kyiv more than two months ago. NATO defence ministers meeting in Brussels were also expected to promise more weapons for Kyiv. U.S. President Joe Biden pledged \$1 billion worth of new aid on Wednesday, including anti-ship rocket systems, artillery rockets and rounds for howitzers. Scholz, Macron and Draghi all say they are strong supporters of Ukraine who have taken practical steps to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian energy and find weapons to help Kyiv. But Ukraine has long criticised Scholz over what it regards as Germany's slow delivery of weapons and reluctance to sever economic ties with Moscow, and was furious this month at Macron for saying in an interview that Russia must not be "humiliated". Italy has also proposed a peace plan, which Ukrainians fear could lead to pressure on them to give up territory. "They will say that we need to end the war

that is causing food problems and economic problems...that we need to save Mr Putin's face," Oleksiy Arestovych, an adviser to Zelenskiy, told German newspaper Bild prior to the visit. The war has caused global economic disruption and surging prices for food and energy, forcing central banks around the world to jack up borrowing costs even while their economies stumble. read more Despite sanctions, Europe still depends on Russia for natural gas. Deliveries through a major pipeline to Germany have declined in recent days, raising concern about storing supplies for winter, with Moscow blaming sanctions that have held up delivery of equipment sent abroad for repair. read more Ukraine is taking hundreds of casualties a day as the war has entered a brutal attritional phase in the east. After Moscow launched its "special military operation" claiming its aim was to disarm and "denazify" its neighbour, Ukraine repelled an armoured assault on Kyiv in March.

Pak, Azerbaijan enjoy brotherly ties, says Afridi

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A special event dedicated to the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan was held at the Parliament House Islamabad. While addressing the gathering Deputy Chairman Senate, Mirza Muhammad Afridi congratulated the government and the brotherly people of Azerbaijan on 3 decades of independence. "What makes this moment special is that it also marks 30 years of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. This is indeed a milestone that will only further strengthen the friendly ties between our two nations." Said the Deputy Chairman Senate. He said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan have always displayed very close cooperation in all areas and our frequent high-level parliamentary exchanges show that our nations greatly value this partnership. He said that Pakistan stood shoulder to shoulder with Azerbaijan in its engagements with Armenia, and we will continue to lend our full support to Azerbaijan in other areas. He also commended President Ilham's efforts in pushing for peace and mutual development. He extended his sincere gratitude to Azerbaijan for its support to Pakistan on the Jammu and Kashmir issue. He emphasized that trade and economic cooperation are Pakistan's top priority. "We must work closely to enhance our trade volume which has a lot of potential, particularly in the fields of energy, defence, agriculture and natural resources," he underscored.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Dr. Christian Turner calls on Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. DNA

CM led meeting review development projects

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: An important meeting held here on Thursday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair, reviewed progress so far made on the development projects under various provincial departments. The forum was informed that at present, hundreds of development projects worth billions of rupees were in the final stages of completion whereas a number of new projects were also ready for implementation on ground. Special Assistant to Chief Minister for Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Additional Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, Administrative Secretaries of the concerned

departments and other relevant officials attended the meeting. Briefing about the details of development projects in various sectors, the participants were informed that important projects under the Irrigation Department include construction of Shaktu Dam and Latmber Dam, Barwai Irrigation Scheme, raising of Baran Dam and others. Similarly, under the Energy & Power Department various projects were of vital importance including 11 MW Karora Hydro Power Project, 10 MW Jabori Hydro Power Project and 40 MW Koto Hydro Power Project. The forum was also briefed about the dozens of development projects in education sector including Government Girls Degree College Rojaya, Government Degree College Baka Khel, Degree College Gadizai Pir Baba, Girls Degree College Shabqadar, Girls Degree College Mandani, Girls Degree College Khal, Degree College Latambar, Public Library Karak, Girls Degree College Bara, Girls Degree College Shakardar, Degree College Parachinar, Girls Degree College Jalaka Aorakzai and others. Besides, important projects of Sports & Tourism Sector include upgradation and rehabilitation of Sports Complex Khar, provision of Hockey Turf in the various sports complex and upgradation of Tirah Cricket Stadium.

India: Thousands protest 'bulldozer justice'

The party suspended one of them and expelled the other, issuing a rare statement saying it "strongly denounces insults of any religious personalities."

MONITORING DESK

LUCKNOW: Protests have been erupting in many Indian cities to condemn the demolition of homes and businesses belonging to Muslims, in what critics call a growing pattern of "bulldozer justice" aimed at punishing activists from the minority group. On Sunday, authorities in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh rode on a bulldozer to raze the home of Javed Ahmad, who they said was connected to Muslim religious protests that turned violent last Friday. Police arrested Ahmad on Saturday. The protests were sparked by derogatory remarks about Islam and the Prophet Muhammed made recently by two spokespersons of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata

Party. The party suspended one of them and expelled the other, issuing a rare statement saying it "strongly denounces insults of any religious personalities." Bulldozers also crushed the properties of protesters in two other cities in Uttar Pradesh last week. In April, authorities in New Delhi used bulldozers to destroy Muslim-owned shops days after communal violence in which dozens were arrested. Similar incidents have been reported in other states. "The demolitions are a gross violation of constitutional norms and ethics," said Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, a specialist on Hindu nationalist politics and biographer of Modi. On Tuesday, 12 prominent people, including former Supreme Court and High Court judges and lawyers, sent a letter to India's chief justice urg-

ing him to hold a hearing on the demolitions, calling them illegal and "a form of collective extrajudicial punishment." They accused the Uttar Pradesh government of suppressing dissent by using violence against protesters. Two people who were protesting the remarks by the governing party spokesperson died of gunshot injuries in clashes with police on Friday in Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand state. Several Muslim-majority countries have also criticized the remarks, and protesters in Bangladesh called for a boycott of Indian products, leaving India's government scrambling to contain the diplomatic backlash. Violence has been increasing against Muslims by Hindu nationalists emboldened by Modi's regular silence on such attacks since he was elected

prime minister in 2014. Muslims have been targeted for their food or clothing, or over inter-religious marriages. The rights groups Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have accused Modi's party of looking the other way and sometimes enabling hate speech against Muslims, who comprise 14% of India's 1.4 billion people, but are the second-largest Muslim population of any nation. Modi's party denies the accusations. Over the weekend, Uttar Pradesh's chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, a Hindu monk-turned-governing party politician, told state authorities to demolish illegal buildings belonging to people linked to Friday's protests, in which more than 300 people were arrested. On Sunday, bulldozers turned Ahmad's house into rubble after authorities claimed it was built il-

legally, which Ahmad's lawyer and family denied. "If the construction was illegal, why was no action taken earlier? Why did the government wait until the riot took place?" asked Shaikat Ali of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, a political party. Officials say the demolitions only target illegal buildings, but rights groups and critics say they are an attempt to harass and marginalize Muslims, pointing to a wave of rising religious polarization under Modi's rule. On Saturday, Adityanath's media adviser tweeted a photo of a bulldozer and wrote, "To the rioters, remember every Friday is followed by a Saturday," suggesting there would be repercussions. His words sparked an immediate reaction, with many calling the demolitions a clear punishment.

US dollar crushes rupee to new historic high

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The US dollar wasted no time in striking back at the spineless Pakistani rupee as the trading in intrabank opened on Thursday. The Pakistani currency which demonstrated some resistance in the morning, later succumbed to pressure in face of the mighty US dollar.

As the business started, Pakistani rupee quickly gained 46 paisas but the US dollar within hours struck back and smashed another historic barrier of Rs207. As the trading progressed, the greenback overall gained Rs1.29 and was being traded at the record level of Rs207.75.

As the trading opens on Thursday, forex dealers reported that the rupee resisted the US dollar's rise but the greenback roared back. On Wednesday, the US dollar had also demonstrated its prowess and marched to a new historic high, sinking the Pakistani rupee to a new record low. The US dollar thrashed Pakistani currency hard and appreciated by Rs1.30 and ended the day at a new record level of Rs206.46. In the open market, the situation was no different as the US dollar appreciated by Rs1.50 and ended the day at Rs208.

US airborne raid captures top IS operative in Syria

AL-HUMAYRAH: US coalition forces said they captured a senior Islamic State group bomb maker in a pre-dawn raid Thursday that, witnesses stated, saw troops in helicopters swoop down on an isolated house in rebel-held northwestern Syria. A war monitor and AFP correspondents said two military helicopters touched down for only a few minutes, and several shots were fired, in a village in an area controlled by Turkish-backed rebel groups.

"The captured individual is an experienced bomb maker and operational facilitator who became one of the top leaders of Daesh's Syrian branch," said the US-led coalition battling the militant group in Syria and Iraq, using another name for IS. The coalition did not name the target in the statement, but a coalition official told AFP the man captured was Hani Ahmed Al-Kurdi, who was the IS leader of Raqa when it was the de facto capital of IS in Syria. Such operations by US forces are rare in parts of northwestern Syria that are under the control of Turkish-backed rebels and non-IS militant groups.

A previous special forces raid in early February led to the death of the group's leader Abu Ibrahim al-Kurashi, who detonated a bomb vest to avoid capture. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitoring group with a vast network of sources on the ground, could not confirm the identity of the IS operative captured on Thursday. - APP

US health expert Fauci tests positive for Covid-19

WASHINGTON: Top U.S. health expert Anthony Fauci tested positive for COVID-19 on a rapid antigen test on Wednesday.

Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), is "fully vaccinated and has been boosted twice" and "is currently experiencing mild symptoms," according to a statement. "Dr. Fauci will isolate and continue to work from his home," the statement read, adding that he has not recently been in close contact with U.S. President Joe Biden or other senior government officials. Fauci, 81, will follow the COVID-19 guidelines of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and medical advice from his physician and return to work when he tests negative. Fauci has been the face of the U.S. fight against COVID-19 since the virus was detected in the country. - APP