



# Islamabad POST

Tuesday, June 07, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**UK announces to provide Ukraine with long range missiles**

Detailed News On Page-07

**Insult to our Prophet is not acceptable**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Pak truck art unveiled in heart of Ottawa**

Detailed News On Page-07



## Briefs

### Imran sold national interests

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb on Monday said that PTI chairman Imran Khan sold the national interests for the sake of five-carat diamond rings, referring to the alleged leaked audio of property tycoon with his daughter in which both were talking about some diamond ring in exchange for getting some benefits. The information minister said that Imran Khan was busy in his era to make money in the nexus of Farah Gogi and former first lady Bushra bibi.

### Modi's India dangerous for Muslims

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Information Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry has asserted that India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become a dangerous territory for Muslims. Taking to Twitter, the former federal minister wrote: "Modi's India has become a dangerous territory for Muslims; extremists are now openly using religious hatred as weapon of destruction for political opponents." "Recent blasphemous remarks are part of agenda every sane human must condemn the politics of hatred," Fawad Chaudhry added.

### Government mocking law, constitution

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PTI Central Leader Hamid Azhar lashed out at the imported government for making a mockery of constitution and law, as mismanagement, lawlessness ruled the roost in the country. He said that the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who enjoyed razor-thin majority in the national assembly destroyed all the sectors. "The official date of the unscheduled prolonged power outages speaks volume of incompetent and mismanagement of the imported government," he added.

## Govt gears up for reducing loadshedding

Abbasi says that the govt apologises to the people for current loadshedding

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader and former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said on Monday that the duration of loadshedding would be reduced to three-and-a-half hours from today (Tuesday). He made the announcement while addressing a press conference alongside State Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik, Minister for Power Khurram Dastgir Khan and Information Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb. Abbasi began the press conference by presenting the reasons for the energy shortfall, holding the former government responsible. The country's electricity demand has exceeded 25,000MW during the summer, he said. He highlighted that when the current government assumed charge, the electricity generation capacity was at 17,000MW which was increased to more than 21,000MW over the past three weeks. He went on to say that the government and cabinet apologised to the people for the current loadshedding, but asked for time to resolve the existing issues. "Today, we are producing 21,000MW which means we have a shortfall of 4,000MW," he said, adding that this translated into a little more than four hours of loadshedding to fill the supply and demand gap. We have decided that from tomorrow (Tuesday) we will reduce loadshedding to three-and-a-half hours, he said, adding that additional money had been paid while oil had also been arranged to ensure this.

## Miftah rules out financial emergency

KHAYAM ABBASI



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail Monday ruled out the possibility of a financial emergency in the country after the government took steps to rectify the ongoing economic turmoil. In a tweet, Ismail said the country was not facing a financial emergency as the price of petrol had been increased twice – and hiked up to Rs209.86, while there has also been a massive increase in other petroleum products. The finance minister, without specifying a date, added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would at some point announce austerity measures to save government expenditure. In a bid to bring economic stability and revive the stalled multi-billion dollars International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, the government had increased the price of petrol by a whopping Rs60 per litre.

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## Direct flights between Baku, Islamabad started

Initially, flights will be operated from Islamabad on Mondays, and from Baku on Fridays



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Direct flights from Pakistan's capital Islamabad to Baku have started from Monday. On this occasion, an official event was held at Islamabad International Airport. The event was attended by Azerbaijani Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov, Director General of Pa-

kistan International Airlines (PIA) Mohammed Amiri, PIA officials, as well as the first passengers of the direct flight. Initially, flights will be operated from Islamabad on Mondays, and from Baku on Fridays. It should be noted that in addition to Islamabad, since March 2022, PIA has launched direct flights to Baku from two other major cities in Pakistan - Karachi (once a week) and Lahore (twice a week).



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with a delegation of Japanese investors and representatives of Japanese companies operating in Pakistan. – DNA

## No compromise on nuclear programme: CJCSC

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Na-deem Raza Monday stressed avoiding baseless and unnecessary comments on Pakistan's nuclear programme. "Pakistan is a responsible and confident nuclear country," the deputy chairman of the National Command Authority said during a seminar at the NUST in the federal capital. Pakistan's nuclear capability guarantees the defence of the homeland as well as its integrity; it also has the complete support of the political parties and the masses, he noted. Civil and military leadership stands like an iron wall with the country's strategic programme, General Raza said, adding: "National security is indivisible." "Pakistan will not compromise on its nuclear programme."

## Farrukh lashes out at Maryam

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PTI Central Secretary Information Farrukh Habib lashed out at the imported government for its timid and weak reaction over the blasphemous remarks by the Indian ruling party's MPs. Addressing a press conference here on Monday, he said that the government willfully adopted such a cautious approach on the issue of BJP's lawmakers disrespecting remarks against the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to safeguard and protect Sharif family personal and business interests with Narendra Modi-led Indian government.

## Pak summons Indian diplomat to condemn derogatory remarks

Pakistan is deeply concerned at the alarming rise in communal violence and hatred against the Muslims in India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Indian Charge d' Affaires was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and conveyed the Government of Pakistan's categorical rejection and strong condemnation of the highly derogatory remarks made by two senior officials of India's ruling party BJP about the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He was told that these remarks are totally unacceptable and have not only deeply hurt the sentiments of the people of Pakistan but of Muslims across the world. The Indian diplomat was further told that Pakistan deplores the belated and perfunctory disciplinary actions taken by the BJP government against the said officials, which cannot assuage the pain caused to the Muslims. Pakistan is deeply concerned at the alarming rise in communal violence and hatred against the Muslims in India. Muslims are being systematically stigmatized, marginalized and subjected to a

## OIC, Muslim world come together

NEWS DESK

JEDDAH: The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation strongly condemned and denounced the recent denigration of Prophet Muhammad by an official of India's ruling party. These cases of defamation are part of a growing spate of hatred and defamation of Islam in India and systematic practices against Indian Muslims, particularly in light of a set of decisions to prohibit the use of hijab in educational institutions in some Indian states, including demolition of Muslims' properties and growing violence against them. The OIC calls on the Indian authorities to decisively address these incidents of defamation and all forms of insult to the noble Prophet and Islam and to bring those who incite and perpetrate violence against

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## 'Imran ready to burn country in power lust'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz said Imran Khan is ready to burn and vandalize Pakistan in the lust for power. She was speaking to the social media team of PML-N in Lahore. She said that the governments willing to work are never allowed to continue. Maryam said that PML-N is often asked why it embraced the government knowing that the country was on the brink of default. PML-N leader said it is the distinction of her party that it had always taken Pakistan

out of crises. She claimed that the country's growth rate was around 6% when Nawaz Sharif was deposed as he was enthusiastic to serve Pakistan. She said the previous government 'annihilated' Pakistan's economy and claimed there was factual proof of it. She said that Pakistan was on the verge of default and the country didn't have money to open LCs for oil import.

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Türkiye, Azerbaijan hail 30 years of strong ties – Page 06

Pakistan's iconic truck art unveiled in the heart of Ottawa – Page 07

BJP's leaders' remarks: Bilawal must raise issue with Indian FM – Page 08

## Successful referendum sets basis for a new Kazakhstan

77.18 per cent say yes; SCO, other observers declare the entire drill transparent; President's relatives cannot hold positions in govt depts

ANSAR M BHATTI IN KAZAKHSTAN

NUR SULTAN: The people of Kazakhstan ostensibly set the basis for a new Kazakhstan when they voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Referendum that took place on Sunday, June 05, 2022 to determine whether the people wanted to have a new look-country with more powers to the parliament and the people. As announced by the Central Election Commissioner 77.18 per cent of the population voted in favour of the referendum. The officials of the Central Election Commission further told the media that over out of 11 million eligible voters over 7 million voters took part in the exercise. The turnout thus re-

mained at 68.6 per cent. Those who voted against stood at 18.6 percent while 2.58 votes were declared invalid. The election commission officials termed the entire election drill as satisfactory and according to them no issues whatsoever were reported from anywhere. The commission also praised the government for extending its full support to all those conducting the election. The Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Zhang Ming in his briefing lauded the role of the Kazakh authorities for making befitting arrangements for the successful holding of the referendum. He said his mission visited. The SCO Secretary General further said the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs spared no efforts in facilitating the foreign dele-



gates for efficient performances of their duties such as monitoring and physical visits to the polling stations. The Russian representative was also all praise for the Kazakh authorities for making excellent arrangements. He said

he visited a number of polling stations located outside of Nur Sultan randomly. He was happy to see the enthusiasm and interest with which people thronged to the stations to cast their votes. The referendum exercise drew

huge interest from all and sundry. This scribe visited a number of polling stations in the Capital Nur Sultan and the suburban areas. A brief chat with the people at each polling station showed how keen were the people to have the new system in place. After the referendum the Kazakh constitution will see a lot of changes with a view to turning the current super-presidential system into an inclusive presidential system. The changes seek to grant more powers to the parliament and the people of Kazakhstan. 33 out of 99 Articles shall be amended plus two new articles shall be introduced. The amendments are aimed at a significant transformation of Kazakhstan's political system. Their objective is to expand citizen participation in state governance

and ensure substantial democratization of political processes. After these reforms Kazakhstan will now become a Presidential system from a super-presidential form of government. They will enhance the multi-party system and create new opportunities for the participation of all citizens in the electoral processes. The emergence of new political parties is expected to cover almost the entire electoral landscape. The creation of the new Kazakhstan goes side by side with the concept of building a Second Republic, which envisions the modernization of the model of state governance. These measures make it clear that Kazakhstan's leadership is well aware of the problems in society and is

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# Work on Rawal Dam Chowk Interchange in full pace: CDA

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Construction work on Rawal Dam Chowk Interchange is in full swing on the direction of Federal Development Agency (Capital Development Authority) management. According to details, work on laying of overhead deck slab on Rawal Dam Chowk project is in progress while concrete laying work is being completed expeditiously. The Rawal Dam Chowk Interchange project had three deck

slabs for the flyover, one of which had already been completed while the other was completed yesterday. The last deck slab will also be completed in the next two weeks. Similarly, other works including filling on the walls of the project are in full swing which will be completed by the end of August and opened for traffic. Similarly construction work on underpasses and other loops is also in full swing. It may be recalled that the Prime Minister of Pakistan had recently visited the project and directed the

CDA to complete the project by September 2022. However, work on the project is in full swing and it is expected that the project will be open to traffic by the end of August 2022. On this occasion, the management of Capital Development Authority, while instructing the concerned departments, said that the pace of work should be further accelerated and high quality of work should be ensured in all cases and all should be done to complete the project ahead of schedule. Use available resources.



## PPP KP condemns blasphemous statement

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) President Najamuddin Khan has expressed his displeasure over the blasphemous statement made by BJP spokesperson in honor of Holy Prophet (PBUH). What about the blasphemous statement in honor of the Holy Prophet (sws)? He further said that Narendra Modi and his entire party have forbidden the life of all Muslim, Sikh and Christian minorities living all over India which is a blatant violation of international law. The international community must take strong action against this heinous act. This statement

has hurt the feelings of Muslims all over the world which needs to be addressed. By summoning the Indian High Commissioner to the Foreign Office on the instructions of Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and sending a letter of protest, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed the hearts of the people of Pakistan. Narendra Modi, like a rogue elephant, sometimes openly plays with the religious places and religions of Sikhs, Christians or Muslims. Narendra Modi will have to put his nose now. India has erected mountains of oppression in occupied Jammu and Kashmir which the soul trembles to remember but the courage of Kashmiris is like sand in the face of these atrocities. The whole world should boycott India by all means.

## Civil officers protest against lawyers, official work remain on half

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: All Pakistan PCS & PMS officers are extremely concerned about the happenings in KP where an awkward situation has been created due to mishandling of the events. We respect and safeguard the rights of all the citizens from all walks of life. During discharge of complicated administrative duties, at times unfortunate events occur which are not supposed to happen yet they

are managed accordingly through various legal cum administrative measures. In the instant case, an FIR was lodged against an AC unilaterally without getting approval of the provincial Govt. Even if any person or group is aggrieved there are E&D Rules for managing discipline of the civil servants. If such inquiry recommends any legal action, that is proceeded accordingly. Besides, attack on DC office who is principal representative of the state amounts to attack on state directly and

must be discouraged in order to pre-empt such acts in the future and stop further waning of the states' writ. Civil Servants are not against any group and respect is foremost in mutual relationships with all quarters. We appeal the Govt to resolve these matters, de-escalate such situations since the ultimate victims are general public in such tussles. Besides, all the Officers of KP be assured of future protection which includes regulatory force, civil admin Act, no FIR on any civil servant without approval of the CS and declaring them Justice of Peace on the analogy of other provinces. If such protections are not guaranteed to the Civil servants, they won't be able to perform their duties aptly and the same will result in diminished writ of the state & social disorder. We look upto the provincial government of KP to resolve the same. If not, PMS officers of other provinces will also join in accordingly for strengthening Rule of Law!

## 4,290 patients checked at free eye camp in Kabul

ISLAMABAD: Around 4,290 patients were checked and 1,033 went through different surgeries at weeklong free eye camp held at Al Noor Eye Hospital in Afghan capital Kabul. The free eye camp was held by Al-Khidmat Foundation and Pak-Afghan Cooperation Forum where Pakistani doctors provided free of charge services to the people of the war-hit country. The camp was started on May 30 and culminated on June 5, 2022. At the facility, the Pakistani doctors checked 4,290 patients, 932 went through cataract surgeries, 51 had vitreoretinal surgeries and 50 went through ophthalmology surgeries. After successfully holding of free eye camp, the medical team of Al-Khidmat Foundation has returned to Pakistan. The Forum had also held similar eye camps in Kabul as well as Khost where the Pakistani doctors had treated the Afghan patients coming from remote areas, without any cost. - APP

## DDWP approves five uplift schemes costing Rs 300m

ISLAMABAD: Divisional Development Working Party (DDWP) approved five uplift schemes costing Rs 300 million of district development package-II in the district. The approval was granted in a DDWP meeting held with Commissioner Zahid Hussain here on Monday. Director Development Dr Naveed Itfikh Olakh, Deputy Director Rana Tahir and other officers were present in the meeting. Earlier, Director Development Dr Naveed Itfikh Olakh briefed the meeting about uplift schemes. - APP

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Facilitation cell will be established in Deputy Commissioner Office to resolve the problems of taxpayers in a dignified and on top priority basis, said Deputy Commissioner Lieutenant (Retired) Sohail Ashraf. Addressing a gathering of the business community in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he appreciated the role of taxpayers and said that government should acknowledge their services by providing them silver, gold and platinum card in according to their tax liability. He asked President FCCI Atif Mumir Sheikh to nominate focal persons for this facilitation cell to manage its affairs. He said that this cell should work on the pattern of portal system clearly providing time line to each applicant. The Deputy Commissioner termed private sector as engine of growth and said that

all government departments are bound to facilitate them. He also suggested that President FCCI should formulate a comprehensive strategy for the productive working of the facilitation cell. He said that Faisalabad is an iconic city of Pakistan. He had already visited it but in a casual manner, Sohail Ashraf said, adding that this time being Deputy Commissioner he is critically scanning each and every aspect of the city. He identified cleanliness and drainage of waste water and said that these issues would be resolved very soon. He said, "Community support is imperative to resolve the civic problems and in this connection, we must pool our energies and try to solve the emerging problems." He said that all problems excluding shifting of Khurrianwala toll plaza are in his notice and would be resolved very soon. He was impressed by the cooperation of the local industrialists and said that Kashmir Ghee Mill and Sadaqat Mill have taken their responsibility to beautify the Kashmir and

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan underpasses. He further told that local ghee mills have announced to provide additional subsidy of Rs. 10 per kilogram of ghee in addition to subsidy of Rs. 25 announced by the government. "Thus, the local inhabitants would get subsidy of Rs. 35", he added. Responding to a question about FIEDMC, he said that business community has genuine grievances and he would hold a meeting in presence of FCCI members to sort out the issues of NOCs. Earlier Atif Mumir Sheikh President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) welcomed the Deputy Commissioner and said that Faisalabad is contributing 22% share in GDP in addition to catering 80% domestic needs of cloths and clothing. "Similarly, its share in total textile export is around 45%", he added. He also underlined the importance of FCCI and said that in addition to facilitating its members, it played a major role in resolving local civic problems. He added, "FCCI played an instrumental

role in starting direct international flights from Faisalabad and now we are trying to develop an independent civilian airport in this city." He said that originally Pindi-Bhatian-Faisalabad motorway was designed with six lanes which was later on trimmed to four due to financial constraints. He stressed the need for restoring it with six lanes as it has become imperative due to heavy traffic load on this motorway as it has been expanded up to Gojra. He also demanded that Faisalabad should be linked with Lahore-Kot-Abdul Hakeem motorway as it would reduce travel timing between Faisalabad and Lahore to one hour and ten minutes only. He also demanded expansion in Allied Hospital and Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology in addition to the repair and maintenance of Faisalabad-Chiniot Road. He also demanded that Chiniot dam should be built on priority basis to meet future needs of drinking water for this entire region.



ISLAMABAD: Wives of diplomats posing for photo during a breakfast event organised by the wife of the Turkish ambassador at the Turkish residence. - DNA

## UAF marks World Environment Day

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: The University of Agriculture Faisalabad marked World Environment Day and arranged a seminar and poster competition. The event was arranged by Institute of Soil and Environment Sciences, UAF at New Senate Hall. Chairing the session, UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that humans are deteriorating the environment from its own hands in term of irrational usage of natural resources, deforestation and pollution, resulting in changing climate that have pushed the world into many disasters. He said that the at the time of participation, per capita water availability was 5000 cubic meter which has now shrunk to 900 cubic metre that is a real challenges for us. He said that world had paced up efforts to fight the climate changes. He said it was the need of hour to sensitize the people about the environmental issues. He urged the agricultural scientists to address the issue of decreasing organic matter in the soil. Institute of Soil and Environmental Sciences Director Dr Ghulam Murtaza said that we have to create public momentum to mit-



igate greenhouse emissions, soil degradation, water wastage and pollution, increase tree cover. He said that the decreasing soil fertility has emerged a threat. To overcome these, we have to jack up the efforts. Director ORIC Dr Zahir Ahmad Zahir said that the university was making tangible research works especially for the agriculture sector that will help

revolutionize the sector. Dr Anwarul Haq said young generation should also be encouraged to participate actively through awareness campaigns, and discussions, and plantation campaign. Dr Anwarul Hassan, Dr Muhammad Arshad from NUST, Dr Muhammad Afzal Nigbe, Dr Amir Maqsood, Dr Waseem Ashraf from WWF Dr Bilal Yusuf and other notables also spoke.

## Muslim countries urged to devise grand strategy against Islamophobia

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Spokesman Faisal Karim Kundi Monday urged all the Muslim countries to devise a grand strategy to curb Islamophobia and blasphemy about the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Attra Marri, he said that the PPP condemned blasphemous remarks about the Holy Prophet (PBUH) by the Indian extremist Spokesperson of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the strongest terms. Faisal Kundi said that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should take some practical steps and work out the punishment to discourage such types of incidents. He said the BJP's spokesperson blasphemous remarks received strong reaction from every nook and cranny of the world as it was totally unacceptable to the entire Ummah whose sentiments got hurt with the blasphemy of the Prophet (PBUH). As regards the official foreign visits of

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Kundi said the PPP Chairman would soon take the Parliament and the nation into confidence in this regard. He said that Bilawal Bhutto recently had visited two major and powerful countries including United States of America and China, and other neighboring countries to improve the cordial relations which were damaged by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership. "Imran Khan had compared himself with Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto on different occasions, but ironically he had taken refuge at the Chief Minister House in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa out of his fear of arrest," he said. He said that PTI chief should refrain from using resources of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for his personal and political gains. The PTI Members of National Assembly should return to the Parliament and play a constructive role as opposition for progress and development of the country. - APP

## CPO holds open court

FAISALABAD: City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Monday held an open court (Khuli Kutcheri) at Kotwali police station and listened to the problems of the people. A large number of people thronged in the Khuli Kutcheri and presented 18 applications, complaining against police department. **FESCO issues shutdown notice:** The power supply from the following feeders will remain suspended on June 8, Wednesday on account of necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the schedule, power supply from Lylpur Chemical, al-Habib, Islampur, Canal Road, ATM, Barala, 240 Morh, Lahore Road, Dana Abad and Ashiq Ali Shaheed feeders linked with 132-KV Jaranwala grid station will remain suspended from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. - APP



Mr. Thomas Seiler, charge d' affaires, delegation of the European union (EU) to Pakistan called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar at Ministry of Law in Islamabad. - DNA

## Facilitation cell to be established at DC Office

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**National Days and Armed Forces Days**

**JUNE**

- June 02 / **Italy**  
National/ Independence Day
- June 04 / **Finland**  
Armed Forces Day
- June 06 / **Sweden**  
National Day
- June 10 / **Portugal**  
Portugal Day (National 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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- Rescue (Police).....15
- Bomb Disposal.....15
- Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
- Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
- Motorway Police.....9266044
- Motorway Police.....9270601-20
- Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
- Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



**Enquiry**

- Edhi Ambulance.....115
- PIA Flight Info.....114
- PIA Cargo.....9280979
- Railway Inquiry.....117
- Railway Exchange 9270831-5
- WASA Rawalpindi.....555489
- CAA.....9281092



**Hospitals**

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- MH.....5611116
- Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
- DHQ.....5556311-4
- RGH.....9290301-7
- Holy Family.....9290322-7
- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
- Shifa International.4603666



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- CDA.....9221334-43
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- Met Office.....9250360-6
- RDA.....5555864
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**Islamabad Metropolitan**

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- Potohar Town.....9209224
- Rawal Town.....5773343

**Water Tank**

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480



**ISLAMABAD:** President Dr. Arif Alvi met with Ali Sohaib, the volunteer of Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), who saved the life of a Chinese National in Karachi Blast, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Chairman PRCS, Abrar ul Haq and Secretary General PRCS, Dr. Adeel Nawaz were also present in the meeting. – DNA

## Ministry responsible for non use of donation: Alvi

The President stated that the donation which was given 30 years ago for purchase of paper to enable printing of cheap text books remained unutilized until today, while the government is asking for grants and loans internationally

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The President held Ministry of Education responsible for criminal waste, inefficiency and irresponsibility for non utilization of Government of Germany's donation of Rs. 13.707 million since 1993-94. He stated that the donation which was given 30 years ago for purchase of paper to enable printing of cheap text books remained unutilized until today, while the government is asking for grants and loans internationally to meet its immediate needs. The President directed the hitherto defunct Ministry of Education and now Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training to conduct an inquiry, hold specific people responsible, and take action against them according to law.

The President cautioned the Ministry of Education to not shift the burden of such inquiries on the retired and expired people and directed it to submit the compliance report to FTO within 45 days. The President observed this in his decision announced today on the appeal preferred by the Central Directorate of National Saving (CDNS) against the decision of the Federal Tax Ombudsman. The president highlighted that the said money remained in non-profit bearing account for 6 years, nobody cared about it. Had it been any officers personal money, he would have not allowed even one day to lapse and would have deposited in a profit scheme, he added. He pointed out that the loss incurred due to keeping the money idle accumulated to Rs 17,490,730 which even exceeded the principle

sum of Rs 13.707 million. Moreover, even this loss could have been greater had it not been pointed out by the audit. The President said that the forgotten money was deposited in Special Savings Certificate on 23-07-1999 to 23-07-2014. During this time the government policy for SSC was for automatic roll over every three years that did not require investor's prompting. The President further observed that after 23-03-2014 when automatic roll over of investment stopped, there was not a single individual in the Ministry of Education who cared about this money and the ministry let the entire amount remained idle without earning any profit. The President termed the act of Ministry of Education for non-utilization of principle amount and

profit thereof which had increased to Rs 54,265,500 as shameful as the money that was supposed to be used for purchase of papers to make cheaper school text books was parked in an investment scheme without any utilization it was intended to. Later when in 2020, the Government ordered that all funds of Ministries lying in different banks be deposited in the National Treasury the audit revealed this gross negligence of keeping the German Grant in non profit account. However, when the Ministry withdrew the money in response to audit objection, the matter of deduction of Zakat and Withholding Tax came to surface. The President concluded while deploring and condemning the Ministry of education on mainly two accounts. One that the said

Ministry did not bother, did not care, and totally forgot about a foreign grant given for paper for cheaper text books 30 years ago and secondly, due this criminal negligence, the people of Pakistan were deprived of Rs 36,357,051 as profit that could have been earned if the money was properly invested. The President observed that Ministry of Education also failed to obtain the Income Tax and Zakat deduction Exemption certificates to claim exemption from deduction of withholding Tax and Zakat which as per policy in vogue was admissible to the Ministry. As a result CDNS deducted both Withholding Tax & Zakat on account of non furnishing of exemption certificate which again reflect poorly on Ministry of Education's ability to handle government investment prudently and efficiently.

## RCCI, WCCI ink MOU to promote women empowerment

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and Rawalpindi Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) aiming to provide a platform to improve their networking and excel in the field of entrepreneurship. President RCCI Ch Nadeem A Rauf and President WCCI Ms. Uzma Shahid signed and exchanged MOU documents at a ceremony held at chamber house Rawalpindi. Senior Vice President RCCI Asim Mahmood Malik, Vice President Tallat Awan, Founder President WCCI Asma Kanwal, former President Neelum Khalid, Vice President Noreen Tariq and General Secretary Junaid Yousaf were also present on the occasion. Under the agreement both organizations will provide all kinds of support and cooperation to facilitate and empower women members a platform to connect in Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) meetings. RCCI President Nadeem Rauf said that creating opportunities and empowering women in entrepreneurship had always been the Chamber's priority. He said RCCI, being a proactive business facilitation entity, always took the lead for women entrepreneurs to get into the mainstream of the economy. Under the agreement both chambers will strengthen mutual cooperation to help women entrepreneurs in business development, he said. We will work together to develop recommendations for the government to accelerate business activities and exports, he added. President WCCI Ms. Uzma Shahid said that we will make joint efforts for promoting a positive image of Pakistan and enhancing SMEs, trade, investment, exports and tourism. – DNA

## Action against traders unjustified: Ajmal Baloch

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ajmal Baloch President of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajirun and Traders Action Committee Islamabad, Secretary and Convenor Traders Committee ICCI Khalid Chaudhry has said that the government has increased the price of petrol, gas, electricity and dollar and Due to high prices, traders are under threat of the administration and their shops have been raided and jailed and heavy fines have been imposed. The administration should take action against the government responsible for the rise in prices. Even after flour and gas became expensive, the administration did not increase the rate of bread but arrested several traders and sent them to jail. Which makes the shopkeepers angry.

## 'EFP taking steps for welfare of workers'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Steering Committee Pakistan Workers Federation Zahoar Awan during a meeting with Acting President of Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP) M. Akram Farid said that Acting President of Employers Federation of Pakistan M. Akram Farid said that Zahoar Awan has been instrumental in securing the rights of Pakistani workers and he has been representing Pakistani workers at the international level for the rights of the workers. Elected as a member of the body for the third time. It is a matter of great pride for Pakistan to have the representation of Pakistani workers in the world's largest organization. He said that Mohammad Zahoar Awan has raised his voice for the rights

of the workers of Pakistan and the world in every forum of the world which is appreciated by the whole world. Participating and always representing Pakistan and the working class, and raising voice for their rights at every forum, IL and the world is taking the best steps for the protection and welfare of workers' rights. The Acting President said that his organization, the Employers Federation of Pakistan, has come up with a number of schemes for the betterment of employers and workers and in collaboration with the International Labor Organization, EOBI, Workers Welfare Fund and various other organizations and the government. Working for the betterment of the working class, and giving them modern training and courses so that they can get a decent job - the work-

ing class is the lifeblood of a country's economy, he said. The main part is young people are frustrated by the lack of jobs employers. The Federation of Pakistan has made a number of suggestions regarding its employment. He said that women can achieve their unique position in the world by hiring services. He said that C-Pack would provide the best employment opportunities to the workers. Initiate training and various training programs for the young generation so that they can get decent employment. On the occasion, Zahoar Awan, Member, IL and Governing Body and Chairman, Steering Committee, Pakistan Workers Federation, said that the Employers Federation of Pakistan We are grateful for the steps that KEFP has taken for the training and welfare of labor.



**ISLAMABAD:** Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council & Special Representative Prime Minister of Pakistan for Middle East and Interfaith Harmony, Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Asharfi addresses press conference. – APP

## ECP fully prepared for general elections in October: Secretary

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Secretary Omar Hameed Khan said on Monday while addressing a press conference that different institutions assisted in the preparation of electoral rolls. He said that the constituencies were demarcated according to Article 219, adding that the ECP was an independent and autonomous body. "It is the job of the ECP to hold free and fair elections," he pointed out. He also informed the media that appointments had been made for reviewing voter lists. Omar Hameed Khan said that the ECP was carrying out delimitation of constituencies on the final report of the census. "The delimitation of constituencies will be completed in August this year. The general will be full general elections declared. "If there is a new census, its report must come by December 31. New delimitation is necessary in case the report comes by August 2023," he stated. – DNA

## Gold price witnesses whooping hike

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The price of gold on Monday witnessed a huge increase, due to the depreciation in the value of Pakistani rupees. The price of per tola gold spiked by Rs2800 per tola. With this increase, the price of per tola gold reached Rs142,000. According to Sindh Sarafa Bazar Association, the price of 10-gram gold reached Rs121,742. In the international market, the price of gold per ounce increased by \$3. The international rate for gold per ounce has now reached \$1854.

## Commission should probe conspiracy against PTI govt

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Babar Awan on Monday said that National Security Committee (NSC) accepted that a conspiracy was hatched against PTI government and now a commission should be formed to probe it. Talking to media persons in federal capital, Babar Awan said that his party cannot accept 'imported' government under any circumstances and no lawmaker who has resigned from assembly membership will return to the House. He further said that they have received new evidence of security threats to former prime minister Imran Khan. PTI Chairman wants to save country while the incumbent government wants Pakistan in Sri Lanka like situation, he added. The PTI leader asked government to withdraw terrorism cases against lawyers and Shehbaz Sharif should apologize from nation.

## 30 Corona patients quarantine at home

DNA

RAWALPINDI: As many as 30 people who tested positive for Coronavirus were quarantined at home, while three more people were diagnosed with the fatal virus during the last 24 hours. According to the latest data released by the District Health Authority (DHA) here on Monday, the total infected cases included 43,135 from Rawalpindi, while 3,507 from other districts. Among the news cases, two were residents of the Rawalpindi Cantonment and another of the Rawal town area. The report further said that 6,881,819 people across the district, including 44,791 health workers, had jabbed themselves against the lethal Coronavirus (COVID-19) since the vaccination drive was launched. DHA shared that during the last 24 hours, 533 samples were collected, out of which 530 were declared negative, while the positivity rate was recorded at 0.56 per cent.

## Senate passes one bill, refers two to committees

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate passed one private member's bill and referred two other bills to the relevant committees after their introduction in the House. The House passed the Smart Institute of Sciences and Technology Bill, 2022 which was sponsored by the Senators Dilawar Khan (Independent), Naseebullah Bazai (Independent) and Prince Ahmed Umer Ahmedzai (BAP). A PTI lawmaker Senator Fawzia Arshad moved two bills including the Islamabad Capital Territory Prohibition on Employment of Children Bill, 2022 and the Capital Development Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2022.



## Briefs

## 8 touts caught red-handed outside excise office

ISLAMABAD: At least eight touts were caught red-handed outside the excise office here on Monday who minted money off the public in lieu of helping them. Assistant Commissioner (Industrial Area) Awaid Bhatti conducted a raid following public complaints against the agents. Talking to the media, he said the arrested persons were shifted to the Industrial Area Police Station where cases will be registered against them. An effective and comprehensive crackdown against tout mafia would continue for the cleansing of the department, he added. The Excise and Taxation Office collects prescribed taxes and duties on behalf of the government, including entertainment duty, liquor permits, spirit permits, professional tax, property dealer's tax, tobacco vend fee and the registration and transfer of vehicles. - APP

## EU Charged' Affaires calls on Federal Minister for Law &amp; Justice

ISLAMABAD: Thomas Seiler, Charge d' Affaires, Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Pakistan called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar here on Monday. According to the spokesman of the ministry, matters of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting. Federal Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said that Pakistan had strong social and political bond with the European Union and it had always played its role for the welfare of the people of Pakistan and for the betterment of the system.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to further enhance bilateral relations. Thomas Seiler praised the legislation for human rights and women's rights in Pakistan. The Law Minister highlighted the importance of a strong justice system for building a fair and just society. He also highlighted the importance of ongoing training of young lawyers at the bar level. Thomas Seiler assured full cooperation of EU in training young lawyers at the bar level. It was also agreed to set up a Center for Excellence in the Lahore High Court Bar with mutual cooperation. The Center for Excellence would provide technical and professional support to young lawyers. This would be the first pilot project in Lahore High Court Bar which would be further extended in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and remote areas of Pakistan. - APP

## Immunization drive kicks off

RAWALPINDI: A nine-day long immunization campaign kicked off in the entire district on Monday to administer the vaccinations, under the Extended Programme on Immunization (EPI), to children under the age of two years. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Health Authority Dr Faiza Kanwal said that around 229 outreach teams, 86 area in-charge officers, 315 medical officers, as well as allied and teshil headquarters hospitals were participating in the campaign to take preventive measures and effectively fight chronic diseases like Polio, Measles, Pertussis, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis-B and Tuberculosis. She further said that vaccinations were also being given at 86 fixed centres. The CEO said that injections were also being administered to those who missed it during the last two to three years, adding that Tetanus Toxoid (TT) injections were administered to pregnant women. "Children 18 months to five years are also being immunized with the DTP vaccine", she said. The Punjab government, she said, was actively following EPI, a disease prevention programme to reduce illness, disability and mortality rate to achieve 100 percent results set for the health sector. - APP

## FPCCI, Greece agree to improve commercial and economic ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Greece need to improve their commercial and economic relations to promote bilateral trade and investment by taking advantage of new business opportunities. This was stated by the Ambassador of Greece to Pakistan H.E. MR. KONSTANTINOS MOATSOS visited the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), Capital House, Islamabad to meet the Vice President of FPCCI Umar Masood-ur-Rehman and Mirza Abdul Rehman, Chief Coordinator, Brig Iftikhar Opel, SI (MI) Retd, Secretary General FPCCI and other prominent members of FPCCI. The Greek ambassador further said that cooperation in solar energy, tourism, agriculture and infrastructure could help strengthen economic relations between the two countries as current annual bilateral trade between Greece and Pakistan was very low that needs to be enhanced by exploring areas of common interest. He said his country greatly valued ties with Pakistan and looks forward to further boosting these ties. Umar Masood-ur-Rehman & Mirza Abdul Rehman was of the view that investment



cooperation was another area in which both countries could collaborate for mutual benefits. Information technology, telecommunication, construction, automobile parts, food processing, fisheries, agriculture, hotel industry and real estate offer tremendous opportunities and potential for cooperation, he added. He said that organising of joint cultural shows and frequent exchange of business dele-

gations are the options which can bring people of both the countries closer to each other that would eventually enhance the mutual cooperation between Pakistan and Greece. He further said that Pakistani investors in Greece may be encouraged through incentives and security. He pointed out that the immigration policy of Greece should be further liberalized for Pakistani people. The FPCCI always

recommends filtered business people for visa to Greece Embassy so they should be given priority for visa, he added.

The Vice President FPCCI also proposed that a joint platform should be established between Pakistan and Greece, like FPCCI have Joint Business Councils with various countries which are functioning under the recognized national chambers of both countries. He further expressed that, if Pak-Greece Joint Business Council is established, the bilateral economic relations between both the countries will be further enhanced and strengthened.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice President FPCCI, Umar Masood UR Rehman & Chairman Coordination Mirza Abdul Rehman both expressed that this is the right time to focus on non-traditional markets, adding that frequent exchange of business delegations and establishing direct B2B contacts are the options, which should be used to exploit untapped bilateral trade and investment potential in both countries.

He said that olive oil is one of the major and well-known products of Greece and is known to be the finest in the world. Pakistan is successfully exploring the opportunities in Olive oil production and Pakistan can take benefit from the experience of Greece.

## Govt to provide maximum relief to Overseas

ISLAMABAD: The government was fully committed to provide maximum relief and taking various steps to provide facilities to expatriates and their dependents in the country. An official source told APP here on Monday said that a series of projects and schemes have been launched for the welfare and development of the Overseas Pakistanis in different sectors including health, education and social welfare by the current government and some projects in pipelines.

He said that all the projects which were launched in previous democratic tenure would be remained continue including Sohni Dharti, schemes of Modern Luxury Apartments, Roshan Digital Account, Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit, Call Sarzameen, Naya Pakistan Calling Project, Visit Pakistan, internship, Complaint Cell, Ambulance Service, Investment Facilities Centre, Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers and Foreign Exchange Remittance Card. He added that the government has directed to all provincial governments to upgrade all facilities at provincial airports to facilitate the Overseas Pakistanis. - APP

## AIU to start MA/MSc exams from 13

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Final exams of MA/M.Sc, M.Com, MBA, Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) MPA/MBA, MLIS, M.Ed (ODL) and postgraduate diploma programs offered in the semester Autumn 2021 of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) will begin across the country on June 13 (Monday) and will continue till July 18. The date sheet is updated on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) whereas roll number slips are being dispatched to all the students at their postal addresses and also uploaded on students' CMS accounts. Almost 600 exam centers have been set up at the nearest places to the students' residences or workplaces.

Moreover, admissions in MA/M.Sc programs are open till 15th June. Admission forms and prospectuses are available on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk). According to director admissions, the date of admissions will not be extended anymore. It is pertinent to mention here that as per the policy of HEC, university will not offer admissions in these programs so this is the last chance for interested candidates to take admission in MA/M.Sc programs.

## ITMinds inks agreement with PQAMCL, PQFTL

ISLAMABAD: ITMinds Limited (ITMinds), a wholly owned subsidiary of Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDCPL), entered into outsourcing arrangement with Pak Qatar Asset Management Company Limited (PQAMCL) and Pak Qatar Family Takaful Limited (PQFTL) to provide back office accounting services to these companies. Badiuddin Akber, Director ITMinds and CEO-CDCPL, said that the concept of outsourcing non-core critical business activities had proved to be efficient and cost-effective in the modern business world. "We have commissioned ITMinds with this aim to enable AMC's and other organizations to outsource their back office functions to a competent and reliable BPO partner, thus facilitating them to augment the focus of their management on the core business which is more integral to their commercial success while achieving efficiency, scalability & transparency of processes", he said. - APP

## Experts call for development of renewable energy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Energy experts stressed the need for exploring potential of renewable energy through green financing guidelines of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). According to Gwadar Pro, China's potential in renewable energy generation can potentially drive a massive shift in Pakistan's energy sector. It could also serve as a viable solution for Pakistan's energy crisis which has been deepening over the years. Experts from energy and development sector said this during a Capacity Building Workshop on the 'Green Financing Guidelines for CPEC Energy Projects' organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). Dr Hasan Daud Butt, CEO, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BOIT) was of the view that CPEC can provide stimulus to Paki-

stan's economic growth. This could be done through infrastructure development, improving intra-national connectivity and creating opportunities for investment and employment, he added.

However, the youth of the country face low skill development and low productivity challenge which reduces their job prospects in the CPEC projects, he highlighted. Dr Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, SDPI, termed the green financing guidelines extremely critical to design a pathway for achieving Nationally Determined Contributions targets of Pakistan. "There is a need to design a predictable and certain fiscal policy for increased international investments, particularly under CPEC," Dr Ahmed said and suggested that private banks need to introduce innovative financing models and rating mechanisms to ensure loaning for greener initiatives.

## WB mission visits BISP HQs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: World Bank's Implementation Support Mission for CRISP and NSPP, led by Mr. Amjad Zafar Khan, Senior Social Protection Specialist/Task Team Leader, visited BISP HQs today and held meeting with Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Ms. Shazia Marri. During the inaugural session, the mission leader Mr. Amjad Zafar Khan apprised Federal Minister about the main objectives of the Mission. He said that the main purpose of their visit was to review status of progress during the last joint implementation support mission for CRISP and NSPP, identify new challenges, review plans for implementation during next six months and to initiate the process for holding preliminary discussions related to preparation of report for NSPP. Ms. Shazia Marri welcomed the WB's mission. She appreciated the role of World Bank, as a major development partner, in providing continuous and valuable support to BISP.

## Pak to follow China for positive role of women

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Syed Muraza Mahmood said that Pakistan, like China, will encourage women to play a positive role in society, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. He announced that the government would provide relief to the industrial sector, especially women entrepreneurs in the federal budget. Talking to a delegation led by Riffat Malik - Vice President of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), he urged women entrepreneurs to play their due role in boosting economic activities for achieving sustainable economic growth and social prosperity in the country. Mahmood cited the example of China where women had played role in every sector for the development of the country. "We will follow China in this regard," he added. The minister further said that the private sector was the catalyst for economic growth and the government would facilitate them in promoting business activities which would help in reviving the economy.

"We intend to take the country forward by ensuring sustainable economic growth", he maintained, adding that Pakistan needed a big increase in exports to meet its economic challenges and reduce pressure on its foreign exchange reserves.

He urged the business community, especially women entrepreneurs to play their role in the economic development of the country as the government was working hard for an economic turnaround, and rupee stability against the dollar.

Mahmood stressed the need for productivity enhancement and competitiveness of SMEs in the local and global market to achieve sustainable development in Pakistan. "The federal budget will be a business-friendly budget", he said, adding that the government would take solid initiatives to utilize the potential of women entrepreneurs through relevant organizations so that women entrepreneurs could excel in their relevant fields.

Speaking on the occasion, Riffat Malik, said that women have been playing a pivotal role in the growth of the export-oriented industries and all other sectors of the national economy. She urged the government to support them to help encourage entrepreneurship among women entrepreneurs.

## 'Junior Cultural Ambassadors' event launched

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In order to promote cultural exchanges and mutual learning, and tighten people-to-people bonds between different countries, China Soong Ching Ling Foundation launched here the 2022 "Junior Cultural Ambassadors" Event, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. The event is expected to build a platform for young people all over the world to make acquaintance with each other both online and offline, and bring out more junior cultural ambassadors who would make their

own share of contribution to people-to-people exchanges. The 2022 event, under the theme of "Get Connected Through Art: My Favorite Chinese Arts", encourages young people to exchange ideas and tell stories about Chinese culture through videos. With the support of the Bureau of International Exchange and Cooperation of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China and Guangming Online, the event is hosted by the China Soong Ching Ling Science & Culture Center for Young People and China Cultural Centers Overseas.



Rawalpindi: President RCCI, Nadeem Rauf and President WCCI Uzma Shahid Butt signing MoU. - DNA

## COMSTECH launches forum on ecosystem restoration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH Launched Forum on Environment and Ecosystem Restoration and organized COMSTECH International Seminar on Land Degradation, and commemorated World Environment Day on June 6, at COMSTECH Secretariat. The event was hybrid which was attended by in-person and online participants. The message of the Secretary General of OIC, H. E. Hissein Ibrahim Taha, was delivered by the Assistant Secretary General of S&T OIC, Ambassador Askar Musinov. Mr. Taha said that the world environment day is an important international day for world environment. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) joins the international community in celebrating this day. He said this year's theme "Only one Earth" with the focus on "living sustainably in harmony with nature" gives us opportunity to protect our earth and adopt green technologies. He said the developed countries must encourage and support developing countries to develop green technologies. He said the OIC attaches high importance to the concerns related to environment, climate change and biodiversity. He urged the integrated measures to reduce effects of climate change and natural disasters. He stressed the need of incorporating environmental concerns in the international strategies for sustainable development. He suggested that the international and regional cooperation needs to be strengthened in areas of climate change in order to protecting the nature for wellbeing of our future generations. The Coordinator General, COMSTECH said

in his welcome address that based on the central importance of the fast emerging environmental and ecosystem challenges and their impact on the livelihood of people in OIC region, we have decided to launch a permanent forum to deliberate upon collective actions to meet these ecological challenges. In the Muslim lands urban expansion continues, whereas desertification, soil erosion, low

vegetation covers, and depletion of fresh water bodies has created an alarming situation which demands urgent and collective actions to avoid fast approaching major human tragedies. Prof. Choudhary said that the COMSTECH Forum of Environment and Ecosystem Restoration will be working in the Framework of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2033, as well as the UN Framework on

UN 2030 SDG Agenda. He informed that the importance of the environment for sustainable social and economic development is well stipulated in the OIC-2025 Programme of Action as well as STI agenda, which guides member countries to protect and preserve the environment, promote sustainable production and consumption patterns and enhance capacities for disaster risk reduction as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation. Prof. Choudhary hoped that COMSTECH Forum on Environment and Ecosystem Restoration will strengthen the work of the OIC in these areas. Advisor Climate Change COMSTECH, Ambassador Shahid Kamal said in his opening remarks that today's event is taking place in the backdrop of the World Environment Day which calls for collective global action to protect and restore our planet. He said today COMSTECH launching the forum on environment and ecosystem restoration to provide a collaborative platform to address challenges of climate change.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Dr. Dechen Tsering, regional director and representative for Asia and the Pacific, UN environment programme, Bangkok, Dr. Barron Joseph Orr, Lead scientist at United Nations convention to combat desertification, Bonn, and Dr. Djime Adoum, representative of the Sahel coalition, and Dr. Paul Ouedraogo, Deputy executive secretary, CILSS-permanent interstate committee for drought control in the Sahel.

Eight international experts participated in the international seminar on land degradation and delivered talks on land degradation, food systems, crop modelling, and the activities performed in Tanzania, Tunisia and The Gambia to address this phenomenon.





## Ukraine war: Optimism fades

AS the war in Ukraine crossed its 100-day mark, it is becoming harder by the day to be optimistic. The Russian offensive continues unabated in the east of Ukraine with a clear objective of gaining total control of those areas with Russian speaking majority. There was a brief optimism that talks might resume soon after the weekend's statement by French President Emmanuel Macron of his intention to resume mediation, urging the West to stop "humiliating Russia". But his offer was snubbed two hours later by the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba who slammed Macron's position. "Russia humiliates itself. We all better focus on how to put Russia in its place. This will bring peace and save lives." The optimism faded quickly leading Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov to predict that the war would last for another six months. "My optimistic projection is that it may end by the end of the year." Not very optimistic at all. Another six months of war in the heart of Europe cannot be tolerated by a world order that has seemingly collapsed politically and economically. The meteoric rise in oil prices, the severe shortage in food supply, particularly wheat, and the world's inability to get the two sides to talk have already led to the biggest humanitarian crisis since World War II and an economic recession in most of the major economies – just few months after the world thought the global economy was solidly on a recovery path following the decline of the Covid-19 pandemic which devastated the economy since early 2020. The purported attack, the most serious on the Ukrainian capital in weeks, came after a stark warning by Russian President Vladimir Putin against the United States' shipment of long-range missiles to Ukraine last week. Putin said Russia "will draw appropriate conclusions from this and use our own weapons, of which we have enough, in order to strike at those facilities we are not targeting yet." The American move led many Western analysts to say that President Joe Biden has in fact condemned Ukraine to a prolonged war by continuing to supply offensive arms. However, Russia continues to press in the east, thus gaining control of at least 20 per cent of Ukraine's territory, according to officials in Kyiv. After 100 days of war, and almost 14 million of refugees and displaced, it is hard to see an imminent end to the conflict. We can only hope that the two sides, and of course the US, listen to reasonable voices worldwide and put an end to an absurd war that has all the signs of turning into another world war.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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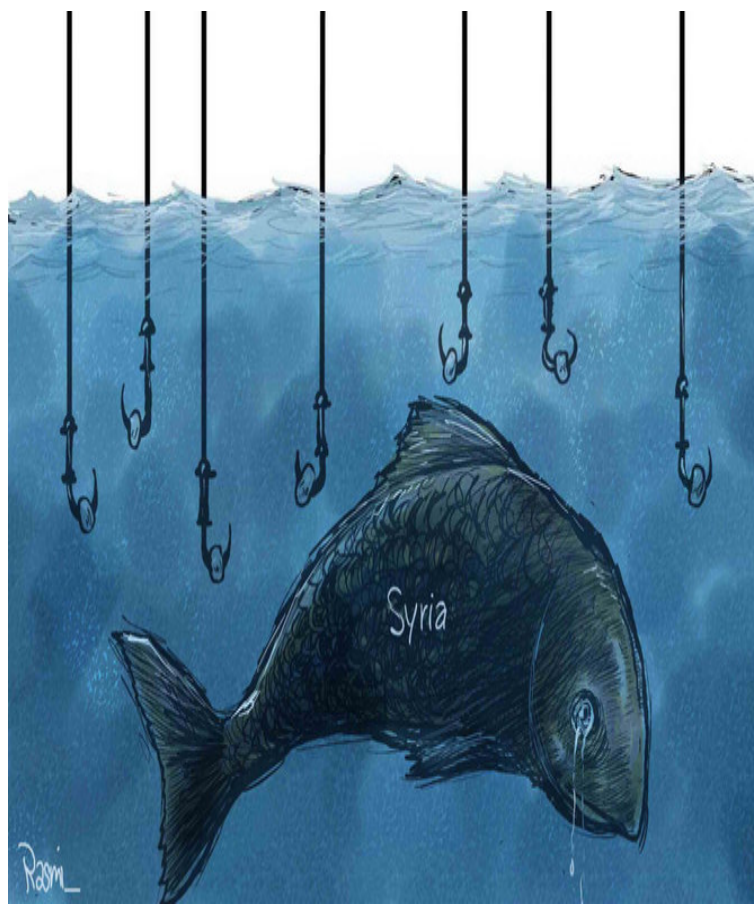
Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 330

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## Price hike and the common man

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

THE country went into an utter state of shock when the petrol prices touched Rs. 209. The prices of electricity have also soared. These indicate that the worst is yet to come. The inflationary impact caused by the rise of fuel and electricity prices will be an added burden on the shoulders of the public – especially those living in the middle, middle-lower, and lower strata of the population. The rise in fuel prices is also a major part of the equation between Pakistan and the IMF. Were the prices remained unchanged, Pakistan would have to depend on the foreign exchange reserves that were to last for not more than six weeks. The price hike of food items and staple food is because of a condition imposed by the IMF to resume the loan program. The impact of such a rise will be intense given the current economic situation of the country. Those who are working 9-5 jobs have to look after the monthly expenditure incurred at home. They also have to pay the school/college fees of their children. The population living in rented homes has to set aside a fixed amount for the landlord. The middle and lower class will need to restructure their monthly budgeting to make their ends meet. The price hike is so severe that a ride-sharing service halted its operations across various cities of Karachi. The business sector will also bear the brunt of these fuel and electricity hikes. The manufacturing sector will have to sell prices at a higher rate while the street vendors will also need to do the same. There needs to be a mutual consensus among all private and public organizations and concerned government offices to effectively create strategies to reduce inflation. However, this can only be done once the country is out of the IMF trap that is not likely to happen anytime soon.

# Double standards haunt US and Europe in NATO dispute with Turkey

James M. Dorsey

Mr. Biden and Europe's problem is that their credibility rides on cleaning up at home and ensuring that they are seen as sincere rather than hypocritical. That's a tall order amid assertions of structural racism on both sides of the Atlantic; controversy over gun ownership in the US; preferential arrangements for Ukrainian refugees as opposed to non-Europeans and non-whites fleeing war, persecution, and destruction; and foreign policies that treat violations of human and political rights differently depending on who commits them

US and European acquiescence in Turkey's long-standing refusal to honour Kurdish ethnic, cultural, and political rights has come home to roost with Turkish opposition to Finnish and Swedish NATO membership. The opposition has sparked debates about Turkey's controversial place in the North Atlantic defense alliance. Turkey's detractors point to its problematic military intervention in Syria, relations with Russia, refusal to sanction Moscow, and alleged fuelling of tension in the eastern Mediterranean, calling the country's NATO membership into question. Its defenders note that Turkey, NATO's second-largest standing military, is key to maintaining the alliance's southern flank. Also, Turkey's geography, population size, economy, military power, and cultural links to a Turkic world make it a critical link between Europe and Asia. In addition, Turkish drones have been vital in Ukraine's war with Russia, while Turkey has been a mediator in the conflict, albeit with limited success. Kurdish rights hardly figure in the debates, and if they do, only as a prop for taking Turkey to task for its slide into authoritarianism. An ethnic group spread across southeastern Turkey, northern Iraq, northern Syria, and western Iran, Kurds are seen at best as assets in the fight against the Islamic State and at worst a threat to Turkish security and territorial integrity. Turkey's estimated 16 million Kurds account for up to 20 per cent of the country's population. Turkey, or Turkiye as it wants to be known going forward, has used the security argument to make its agreement to Swedish and Finnish NATO membership dependent on the two Nordic countries effectively accepting its definition of terrorism as including any national expression of Kurdish identity. Turkey has demanded that Sweden and Finland extradite 33 people, some of whom are Swedish or Finnish nationals, because of their alleged support for the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) or exiled preacher Fethullah Gulen, whom President Recep Tayyip Erdogan holds responsible for a failed military coup in 2016. Turkey accuses the two Nordic coun-

tries of allowing the PKK to organize on their territory. Alongside the United States and the European Union, Turkey has designated the PKK as a terrorist organisation. The PKK has waged a decades-long insurgency against Turkey in which tens of thousands have been killed. Turkey also wants Sweden and Finland to support its military operation against the People's Protection Units (YPG), a US-backed Syrian Kurdish group that played a crucial role in defeating the Islamic State. Turkey asserts that the YPG is an extension of the PKK.

Mr. Erdogan recently announced that Turkey would launch a new military operation to extend the Turkish armed forces' areas of control in Syria to a 30-kilometer swath of land along the two countries shared border. The offensive would target the YPG in the towns of Tel Rifaat and Manbij and possibly Kobani, Ain Issa, and Tell Tamer. Past US and European failure to stand up for Kurdish rights, as part of Turkey's need to meet the criteria for NATO membership that include "fair treatment of minority populations," has complicated the fight against the Islamic State, stymied Kurdish aspirations beyond Turkey's borders and enabled repression of Kurdish rights in Turkey. More immediately, the failure to hold Turkey accountable for its repression of Kurdish ethnic and political rights within the framework of the Turkish state has enabled Ankara to establish Turkish policies as a condition for NATO membership even if they violate NATO membership criteria.

Those policies include defining the peaceful expression of Kurdish identity as terrorism and the rolling back of Kurdish language and cultural rights since the collapse in 2015 of peace talks with the PKK. Turkey lifted the ban on Kurdish languages and the word Kurd in 1991. Until then, Kurds were referred to as 'mountain Turks.' The governor of the southeastern Turkish province of Diyarbakir, widely seen as a hub of Kurdish cultural and political activity, forced this writer under threat of death to leave the region for using the word Kurd rather than mountain Turk in interviews in the

1980s. Kurdish language programs in universities have dwindled in recent years amid administrative hurdles, while Kurdish parents complain of pressure not to enroll their children in elective Kurdish courses.

Most Kurdish-language services and activities created by local administrations were terminated by government-appointed trustees who replaced dozens of Kurdish mayors ousted by Ankara for alleged links to the PKK. Many of the ousted mayors and other leading Kurdish politicians remain behind bars. The failure to take Turkey to task early on takes on added significance at a time when NATO casts the war in Ukraine as a battle of values and of democracy versus autocracy that will shape the contours of a 21st-century world order. For his part, US President Joe Biden has sought to regain the moral high ground in the wake of the Trump presidency that broke with American liberalism by declaring "America is back" in the struggle for democratic and human rights.

Mr. Biden and Europe's problem is that their credibility rides on cleaning up at home and ensuring that they are seen as sincere rather than hypocritical.

That's a tall order amid assertions of structural racism on both sides of the Atlantic; controversy over gun ownership in the United States; preferential arrangements for Ukrainian refugees as opposed to non-Europeans and non-whites fleeing war, persecution, and destruction; and foreign policies that treat violations of human and political rights differently depending on who commits them. The obvious place to start is at home. Kurds could be another starting point, with Finnish and Swedish NATO membership on the front burner. Meeting Turkish demands regarding perpetrators of political violence is one thing; acquiescing in the criminalization of legitimate Kurdish political and cultural expression is another. That may be a tough bargain to drive home in Ankara. However, it would offer a compromise formula that could serve everyone's interest and help Turkey solve a problem that promises to be one of the Middle East's multiple exploding powder kegs.

# Enhancing SCO across Eurasia through Sino-Russo-Pak regional cooperation

Musaib Manzoor

China has pushed hard for the Shanghai Spirit to be implemented to create a more peaceful area. China is the SCO's major financial sponsor, having contributed over \$85 billion to the organisation. China campaigned for and practised a new security vision, supported the completion of the Convention Against Extremism, and assisted in the establishment of a training facility...

Asia's regional security and political architecture.

The SCO is a transcontinental political, economic, and security alliance that covers nearly 60% of Eurasia's geographical area, 40% of the world's population, and more than 20% of global GDP. Because of their territorial size, economic capability, military power, and role as permanent members of the UN Security Council, Russia and China are two of the most influential governments in the international system. Regional developments such as the SCO have deepened the alliance between Pakistan, China, and Russia. This trilateral collaboration might have implications for US strategy in the Eurasian region if this coalition emerges to be effective. Many Western experts see the SCO as a combined Russian-Chinese geopolitical tool formed in reaction to the United States' expanding involvement in Central Asia. As a result, it is believed that the SCO is largely a geopolitical counterbalance to the US. Security is the primary motivator for collaboration in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and as cooperation has progressed, so has the SCO's security priority. The SCO emphasises the 'three evil forces' - terrorism, separatism, and extremism – as the region's key security issues, but cooperation also includes organised crime and illegal drug trafficking. Despite the SCO's focus on non-state actors rather than interstate rivalry, the member states' leaders believe that, like conventional security alliances, the SCO will help to maintain the stability of existing governments. Recognizing the transnational nature of today's terrorism and being at the forefront of the fight against its practical manifestations, SCO member states have embarked on a path of cooperation and active participation in global efforts to combat terrorism, particularly in the fight against its financing channels. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) has created a unified legislative framework for the SCO's actions that applies to all of the SCO's member states' territories. This is crucial for the formation of a coordinated strategy among the member nations. The SCO's objective has included cooperation among its members in the areas of security, economics, culture, and humanitarian aid. Many of these security dynamics are non-traditional in character, in that they are not triggered by other states, and hence do not operate on a typical state-to-state basis. As a result, they provide a unique set of challenges compared to typical interstate security ties. The SCO Forum was established in 2006 as a consulta-

tive-expert mechanism that brings together the research and development and political science circles of the SCO member states. On 26 May 2022, Russia chaired the 17th SCO Forum meeting during which the participants discussed three main subjects in detail, namely, more intensive interaction between the SCO states in the field of international security, economic cooperation matters and expanded cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

China has pushed hard for the Shanghai Spirit to be implemented to create a more peaceful area. China is the SCO's major financial sponsor, having contributed over \$85 billion to the organisation. China campaigned for and practised a new security vision, supported the completion of the Convention Against Extremism, and assisted in the establishment of a training facility for international judicial exchanges between China and the SCO. In Yangling City, Shaanxi Province, China established an SCO demonstration base for agricultural technology training and exchange, as well as a China-SCO economic demonstration zone and a technology transfer centre in Qingdao, Shandong Province.

Russia, which is a major contributor has hosted five SCO summits. During Russia's leadership, the SCO charter was prepared and signed. Russia contributed to the Three Evil Forces Convention, the 2004 Anti-Terrorist Agency, the 2009 Terrorism Convention, and the 2015-2025 development strategy. Russia contributed to the formation of the Council of Businessmen and the Inter-bank Association, as well as a planned energy club and currency swaps. Russia was the driving force behind the establishment of the SCO University and advocated for increased environmental protection. Russia pushed for the SCO's initial expansion, convened multiple international summits to resolve the Afghan conflict, and pushed for SCO-BRICS collaboration. China is hopeful to reduce oil imports from the Middle East to half by 2030 under SCO's "Energy Club". Thus, the SCO platform provides the People's Republic of China to maintain its firm cooperation with Russia, Kazakhstan, and other Central Asian countries in the energy sector. Beijing has also signed multiple gas and oil pipeline projects with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. The Sino-Russian East Line natural gas pipeline is under construction and was partially completed and brought into operation in 2020. This project is considered one of China's largest gas pipeline projects starting from Russia and ending in Shanghai,

passing through eight Chinese regions that cover a total of 3,371 km. It may enhance and deepen the production chain at all levels of energy production and develop diverse methods of industrial collaboration by drawing on better models of energy cooperation between China and Russia and Central Asian nations.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which plays a vital role in Asia's geopolitics, exemplifies the two countries' ironclad relationship. At present, China is operating Gwadar Deep Sea Port located in Pakistan. The geographical location of Gwadar Deep Sea Port is important and far-reaching from China and BRI perspectives because it not only shortens China's transportation routes but also reduces China's dependence on the Malacca Strait. The interconnected projects of the "Belt and Road" will facilitate the linking and harmonizing of the development strategies of neighbouring states, freeing up the potential of the intraregional market, and stimulating investment and consumption, demand, and employment. Pakistan could become an energy and trade corridor to China if Islamabad can stabilize the country and safeguard the CPEC infrastructure from all possible threats and misadventures of its adversaries.

To achieve integrated development, the SCO should stick to win-win collaboration to advance regional cooperation. The plans shall include: upgrading cooperation rules and regulations from soft to hard constraints and establishing a rule-based platform for regional cooperation; guiding the transformation of project cooperation from government-led to market-led to upgrade the Belt and Road cooperation model; developing a diversified, multilateral financing and investment model; leveraging members' comparative advantages for integrated Central and South Asian development; and increasing cooperation on terrorism. It should increase non-governmental exchanges and personnel exchanges; strengthen educational cooperation and promote the SCO University; strengthen media and youth exchange to increase mutual understanding and trust; and cooperate in environmental protection, technology, and poverty alleviation while enhancing cultural and people-to-people cooperation.

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TO achieve integrated development, the SCO should stick to win-win collaboration to advance regional cooperation. Since its inception in 2001, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has emerged as a multilateral association to ensure security and stability in the Eurasian region. Targeting the region's transnational security concerns and promoting economic cooperation among its members to contribute to regional stability are the two main areas of agreement. The SCO's agenda has proven to be significant enough to its member nations' leaders for it to become an integral aspect of Central



## Briefs

## Govt gears up for reducing...

FROM PAGE 01  
"We are hopeful that by tomorrow loadshedding will be reduced to 3.5 hours." In the next phase when coal is imported, the duration of loadshedding will further reduce by June 16. "By June 30, the duration will be less than two hours, close to an hour-and-a-half." He expressed the hope that the government would be able to reduce this further during the month of July. The PML-N leader further said that the government was not interested in making excuses and was focused on fixing the issues plaguing the country. He lashed out at the former government for the lies it told regarding establishing power plants, saying that Pakistan was unable to fulfil its electricity demand for the summer. The press conference comes days after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed authorities to come up with an "emergency plan" within 24 hours that was aimed at reducing electricity loadshedding.

## Successful referendum sets basis...

FROM PAGE 01  
making every effort to address thorny issues through reforms in the political and economic spheres of the country. During our briefing with the Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Roman Vassilenko when I asked him as to how the Referendum may impact upon the foreign policy of the country, he said, the reforms will lead to a new level of democratization in the country, never seen before adding reforms matter outside of Kazakhstan because through these reforms the country has demonstrated that it is embracing political principles that are most respected and valued in the international community; particularly by counties with developed democracies. It means that Kazakhstan can be counted upon to stand on the side of political progress, to show respect for international law, and to contribute to global security and development.

The amendments would also cut the powers of the president and ban the membership of the President in political parties for the period of his presidency. Similarly a ban at the constitutional level for the close relatives of the President on holding managerial positions in state and quasi state structures has also been introduced. As per the new changes a constitutional court shall also be established. Anyone who finds that legal acts violate their constitutional rights would be able to apply to the court and get protection. Death penalty has also been prohibited through there were hardly any death penalties in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan has experienced significant challenges in the first half of 2022, predominantly the tragic events in January, when Kazakhstan suffered the worst violence in its thirty years as an independence state following an armed coup attempt by terrorist and criminal groups. Yet rather than look inward, the government of Kazakhstan has used these challenges as an opportunity to transform the country into a new Kazakhstan.

It is also true that establishment of a new Kazakhstan will not happen overnight. It is indeed a deep and long process of social transformation, but as it goes, where it is, there is a way. The Kazakh government under the leadership of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has taken upon it the onus of building a new Kazakhstan and that too in a very short span of time. As the SCO Secretary General said in his briefing, the Kazakh government is doing excellent job by empowering its people and giving them their rights with the ultimate goal of true democratization of the country.

## 'Imran ready to burn...

FROM PAGE 01  
Criticizing Imran Khan, Maryam said there has never been a political leader in Pakistan who is ready to burn and vandalize Pakistan in the lust for power. Speaking on the audiotape of a telephonic conversation between Malik Riaz and his daughter - which has already been termed fake by the former, Maryam Nawaz said that Farah Gogi was the front person of Imran Khan, adding that it is just the tip of the iceberg.

## Türkiye, Azerbaijan hail 30 years of strong ties

Turkish Foreign Ministry hosted the reception marking "the 30th Anniversary of Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Türkiye and Brotherly Countries"

## FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: The Turkish and Azerbaijani foreign ministers on Monday praised the strong relations between the two states as they celebrate 30 years of diplomatic ties. "Contributing to the prosperity and welfare in the Eurasian region is one of our priorities in our foreign policy. "The level of our relations with friendly Azerbaijan is exemplary," said Türkiye's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu during a reception held in the Turkish capital Ankara for the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry hosted the reception marking "the 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Türkiye and Friendly and Brotherly Countries." The reception was attended by Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov as well as many ambassadors as guests of honor. Citing Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's upcoming visit to



Ankara on Wednesday, Cavusoglu also said: "To make sure that our European friends are less affected by the energy crisis, we are showing our utmost effort. Our dear, friendly, and brotherly country

Azerbaijan is also undertaking a huge responsibility in that regard." "In the upcoming days and weeks, we will convene trilateral meetings with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to tackle those issues regarding energy and logistics," Cavusoglu added.

The Trans-Caspian East-West Middle Corridor Initiative is of strategic importance, Cavusoglu said, noting that the foreign and transportation

ministers of Türkiye, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan will meet in the Azerbaijani capital Baku on June 27. Bayramov congratulated his Turkish counterpart on changing the name of the country to Türkiye in the international arena, noting that the name reflects the "most beautiful expression of the Turkish civilization, culture, and values." He recalled that Türkiye was the first state ever to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan, which was restored in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Azerbaijan's top diplomat underlined that the current level of relations between Baku and Ankara is based on the "will of people and the brotherly ties" between the two states. "The alliance between Azerbaijan and Türkiye has great political and economic potential and serves for further strengthening of peace and development in the region," he said. Speaking on the political and moral support of Türkiye to Azerbaijan during the 2020 Karabakh war, Bayramov thanked Türkiye for its "rightful" support during the 44-day conflict.

## Miftah rules out financial emergency

FROM PAGE 01  
Moreover, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) last week raised the basic power tariff by Rs7.9078/kWh for the next fiscal year 2022-23 - increasing the burden of inflation on the people. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) had also last Friday approved an increase in gas prices - a hike of 45% was approved for the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) while 44% for the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC).

## Pakistan summons Indian...

FROM PAGE 01  
well-orchestrated onslaught from radical Hindu mobs with full connivance and support of the security apparatus across various states in India. The growing mainstreaming of the reprehensible anti-Muslim sentiment and the increasing attempts at depriving the Muslims of their centuries-old places of worship citing frivolous historical claims, are nothing but the obvious outcomes of the deep-seated Islamophobia in the Indian society. Pakistan strongly urges the BJP leadership and the government of India to unequivocally condemn the sacrilegious comments of the BJP officials and ensure that they are held accountable through decisive and demonstrable action against them for attacking the dignity of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The government of India is also reminded of its obligations under international law to take immediate steps to protect its minorities from human rights violations, ensure their safety, security and well-being and allow them to profess and practice their faiths in peace. Pakistan calls upon the international community, including the United Nations and OIC, especially their human rights machinery, to take cognizance of and stop the dangerously rising 'Hindutva' inspired Islamophobia in India, and prevail upon the Indian authorities to prevent the systematic human rights violations against minorities in the country.

## OIC, Muslim world come together

FROM PAGE 01  
Muslims to justice and hold those behind them accountable. It also calls on the Indian authorities to ensure the safety, security and well-being Muslims in India and protect their rights as well as religious and cultural identity, dignity and places of worship. The General Secretariat calls on the international community, in particular, the United Nations mechanisms and the Human Rights Council's special measures, to take necessary measures to challenge practices targeting Muslims in India. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia joined a host of Muslim countries - including Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Iran and Pakistan - that took strong exception to derogatory remarks made against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by leaders of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Qatar, Kuwait and Iran summoned India's envoy to register their protest on Sunday, while Pakistan issued a strong demarche to the Indian charge d'affaires on Monday. Qatar has sought a public apology from India for allowing such "Islamophobic" views without retribution. Kuwait, in a statement, said it had handed over an "official protest note expressing the State of Kuwait's categorical rejection and condemnation of the insulting statements against the Holy Prophet (PBUH), Islam and Muslims issued by one of the officials in the ruling party". Saudi Arabia also issued a statement condemning the remarks and called for respect for religions. President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also called out the comments made by the BJP leaders. In a statement, Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry said it "reaffirms its permanent rejection of prejudice against the symbols of the Islamic religion and refuses to prejudice all religious figures and symbols". The country also welcomed the BJP's decision to suspend Sharma, the statement added.

## Ronaldo steers Portugal past Switzerland

## DNA

PARIS: Cristiano Ronaldo marshalled Portugal past Switzerland in the Nations League on Sunday as Gavi made history becoming Spain's youngest ever scorer. Ronaldo scored two goals in four first half minutes and had a third ruled offside by VAR as Portugal crushed Switzerland 4-0 in Lisbon. The Manchester United striker had set up William Carvalho for the opener with Joao Cancelo completing the rout to fire Portugal to the top of League A, Group 2, on goal difference from the Czech Republic.

In Prague, Jakub Pekutsek put the hosts in front before Gavi levelled with a low curling



left-footer at the record age of 17 years and 304 days just before halftime.

Jan Kuchta had the Czechs back in control with a delicate chip but Athletic Bilbao defender Inigo Martinez headed home in the final minute to salvage a 2-2 draw. "It is wonderful to be able to say that we are disappointed to lose points against Spain," said Czech captain Tomas Soucek. "We showed heart and great teamwork. If somebody told us that we would have four points before these two games, we would have taken it. We have started well and look forward to the next games." "We lacked energy so the game was very tough" shrugged coach Luis Enrique. "I conceded it wasn't

Spain's "finest" match. "We came away with a point, but the aim was to win. When you don't win, when you have great difficulties, you come away disappointed."

Spain reached the final of last year's Nations League, beating European champions Italy in the semis before losing to France, and they enjoyed a relatively smooth qualification for the World Cup. But they are now on the back foot in this competition and after their opening 1-1 stalemate with Portugal on Thursday are placed third in the group, two points adrift. Elsewhere Northern Ireland extended their winless run in the competition to 12 with a drab goalless draw in Cyprus and Georgia are in command at the top of League C Group 4 after dishing out a 5-2 drubbing to Bulgaria while Manchester City's new headline signing Erling Haaland produced the goals in Norway's 2-1 win in Sweden. The Norwegians top League B, Group 4 after two wins from Serbia, 4-1 winners over Slovenia.

## West Indies team arrives in Pakistan



## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: West Indies men's cricket team has arrived in Pakistan for the three ICC Cricket World Cup Super League matches at the Multan Cricket Stadium from Wednesday. Men in Maroon arrived at Islamabad airport in the morning and were welcomed by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officials. After resting in the lounge of Islamabad airport for some time, the visitors departed for Multan on a special chartered flight. After reaching Multan, the players will rest today and start training at Multan Stadium from tomorrow. It must be noted that the Pakistan team arrived in Multan yesterday via bus. The players took part in a pool session to beat the scorching heat of Multan. They also gathered for dinner later at night. The first match of the ODI series will be played on June 8 followed by final two matches on June 10 and 12.

## Neymar strikes from penalty spot to see off Japan

TOKYO: Neymar's penalty 13 minutes from time earned Brazil a 1-0 win over fellow World Cup qualifiers Japan at Tokyo's National Stadium on Monday as the Paris St Germain striker moved to within three goals of Pele's all-time national scoring record. The forward coolly slotted the ball past Shuichi Gonda to hit his 74th goal in 119 internationals after being frustrated on several occasions by the Japanese goalkeeper in front of a rain-soaked crowd of 63,638 fans. Brazil's win came off the back of their 5-1 thrashing of South Korea on Thursday as Tite's side prepare for their assault on the World Cup in Qatar in November.

The visitors threatened early, with Lucas Paqueta hitting the post inside the first two minutes when he latched on to Neymar's instinctive backheel pass inside the area. Fred fired over from distance soon after and Raphinha forced Shuichi Gonda to save with his feet before Neymar's firmly-struck, curling effort from outside the area was palmed to safety by the goalkeeper after flying through a crowd of players. Gonda was on hand again to keep out the visitors three minutes before the end of the half, with Paqueta slipping the ball through to Neymar, but the Paris St Germain man was denied. Neymar continued to probe, seeing a shot blocked by Endo's head eight minutes after the restart, while Koltakura made a perfectly timed intervention to put himself between the Brazilian striker's volley and the Japan goal. The pressure eventually told, however, with Neymar at the heart of the action once more. The 30-year-old's initial effort was well saved by Gonda but as substitute Richarlison attempted to collect possession he was brought down by Endo and referee Alireza Paghani pointed to the spot. - DNA



BAKU: Business delegation from ICCI led by President Shakeel Munir is visiting Baku. Meetings of business leaders are planned over the next few days. - DNA

## Australian PM pledges strong ties with Indonesia

"Indonesia is on track to be one of the world's five largest economies," Albanese said. "Revitalising our trade and investment relationship is a priority for my government"

## DNA

JAKARTA: Prime Minister Anthony Albanese seeks to reboot Australia's ties as he visits Indonesia on his first bilateral trip since taking the job last month. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has heralded a deepened relationship with close neighbour Indonesia, pledging stronger cooperation on trade, security and climate crisis during his first bilateral visit. Before the formal talks began on Monday, Albanese accompanied his host, President Joko Widodo, for a ride through the presidential palace in Bogor on bamboo bicycles. Stressing the importance of engaging with Southeast Asia's largest economy, Australia's new prime

minister brought a high-profile business delegation to Indonesia, along with Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Trade Minister Don Farrell. "Indonesia is on track to be one of the world's five largest economies," Albanese said. "Revitalising our trade and investment relationship is a pri-

ority for my government," he added. The Australian delegation includes high-level business leaders, Trade Minister Don Farrell and Por-

file eign Minister government er to realise Indone- sive Agree-

Penny Wong. The would work together the potential of the sia-Australia Comprehensive Partnership ment (IA-CEPA), he said, and also offer technical expertise for the development of Indonesia's planned new green and high-tech capital,

and the creation of a new Southeast Asia office in Australia's department of foreign affairs. "True to my government's ambitious climate targets, I want better access to affordable, reliable and secure clean energy right across our region, as we transition to a net zero world together," he said. The trip comes as Australia's new Labor government, which ended almost a decade of conservative rule in a May 21 election, signals a greater emphasis on relations with Southeast Asia and climate crisis. Australia's new Malaysian-born foreign minister, who previously said Indonesia did not get the attention it deserved under the former administration, met with Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi on Sunday. President Jokowi, as the Indonesian leader is commonly known, emphasised the importance of the two nations strengthening their bilateral commitments amid current global challenges. Jokowi reiterated the importance of the strategic economic partnership and IA-CEPA, which will allow more Indonesians to work in Australia, the recent opening of a Monash University campus in greater Jakarta, and the importance of food security and sustainability. Albanese is also scheduled to meet Lim Jock Hoi, the Jakarta-based secretary general of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), before heading to Makassar in eastern Indonesia.





## Briefs

**China slams Canada, Australia for 'provocative' flights**

## FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China has defended its military pilots, saying they acted properly and were protecting its sovereignty, following a spate of Canadian and Australian military aircraft traveling near Chinese territory. Canada and Australia say that Chinese planes engaged in risky manoeuvres with their aircraft over the Pacific. Defence Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian said on Monday that China "swiftly took reasonable, forceful and professional measures in response to Canada's provocative acts and unfriendly and unprofessional operations." Last week, the Canadian military accused Chinese planes of not following international safety norms on several occasions and putting a Canadian crew at risk. A June 1 statement said the Chinese planes tried to divert a Canadian long-range patrol aircraft from its path, and that the crew had to change direction quickly to avoid a potential collision. "Such interactions ... are of concern and of increasing frequency," the statement said. The Canadian plane was deployed from April 26 to May 26 to join other countries in watching for fuel transfers between ships at sea that could be helping North Korea evade UN sanctions over its missile and nuclear tests. Wu said in a statement that Canada has stepped up close reconnaissance of China under the pretext of implementing UN sanctions.

**TKA reaches out to Afghan children**

## MONITORING DESK

ISTANBUL: The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) delivered 2,000 aid kits to help Afghanistan fight malnutrition plaguing the country's children. The aid, donated by the Kabul office of Turkey's leading development aid agency, aims to prevent illnesses aggravated by malnutrition. Organized under the coordination of Afghanistan's Healthy Ministry, the kits were sent to the provinces of Helmand and Zabul in ceremonies on Monday.

**Nigeria: 21 killed in church attack**

## NEWS DESK

ABUJA: At least 21 people were killed when gunmen opened fire on churchgoers and detonated explosives at a Catholic church in southwestern Nigeria on Sunday. The attackers targeted the St. Francis Catholic Church in Ondo state as worshippers gathered on Pentecost. State lawmakers had said up to 50 people died in the attack. On Monday, an initial assessment from local authorities put the death toll at 21. "Dynamite exploded in the church (...) the attackers didn't even enter the church, they shot through the windows," Ondo State Governor Richard Olatunde's spokesman told AFP. Videos appearing to be from the scene of the attack showed church worshippers lying in pools of blood while people around them wailed. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said "only fiends from the nether region could have conceived and carried out such dastardly act", according to a statement from his spokesman. "No matter what, this country shall never give in to evil and wicked people, and darkness will never overcome light. Nigeria will eventually win," said Buhari, who was elected after vowing to end Nigeria's prolonged security crisis. In Rome, Pope Francis responded to news of the attack - condemning the barbarous acts. A statement issued by the Vatican press office said: "The pope has learned of the attack on the church in Ondo, Nigeria and the deaths of worshippers, many children, during the celebration of Pentecost."

# Pakistan's iconic truck art unveiled in heart of Ottawa

DNA

OTTAWA: Canadians were treated to a colourful display of Pakistan's traditional truck art in downtown Ottawa where a wall on the main street was painted live by a team of artists from Pakistan. Held at the busy Bank Street in the Canadian capital, the event brought together members of the Pakistani diaspora, Canadian government officials, city and public representatives and people from all walks of life to witness a live exhibition of Pakistan's iconic and vibrant truck art. Pakistan's High Commissioner Zaheer A. Janjua, Mayor of Ottawa Jim Watson, City Councillor Catherine McKenney and officials of Global Affairs Canada were also present. High Commissioner Zaheer A. Janjua told the audience Pakistan's vibrant truck art was deeply entrenched in its culture and had become part of our social fabric. Pakistan's truck art has moved from trucks and buses to walls and galleries and now it is doing the rounds around the globe, manifesting its vibrancy and colours, he said. He said Pakistan High Commis-



sion had arranged the exhibition and other events to commemorate 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Canada. He said Pakistan's relations with Canada are vibrant, very close and cordial, and this cultural event is a manifestation and demonstration

of our friendship. He also praised the Pakistani diaspora in Canada, calling them a strategic asset and real ambassadors of Pakistan for playing a very positive role in the development of their adopted home and the country of their origin. They are the representatives

of both our countries, and a bridge for people-to-people contacts, he said. Mayor of Ottawa Jim Watson thanked the Pakistan High Commission and the truck artists flown from Pakistan for turning a white wall in the city into a beautiful attraction for the people to come and see Pakistan's truck art. He welcomed the High Commissioner to Canada, saying Canada enjoys "a very strong, positive relationship with Pakistan". Earlier, a similar exhibition was arranged at the Senate of Canada where nearly two dozen Senators and MPs attended the event hosted by Senator Salma Atallahajian of Pakistan origin from Toronto and Chair of Senate Human Rights Committee, in collaboration with Pakistan High Commission. The Senators not only watched the artists work on the easel with rapt attention but also tried their hand at painting during the exhibition. During their stay in Ottawa, the truck artists from Pakistan would also display their artwork in the Parliament of Canada before heading to Toronto for similar exhibitions and events in the bustling Canadian metropolis.

## 3 Baltic countries ban Russian FM's flight to Serbia

## FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Three Baltic countries have closed their airspace to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's plane, preventing him from traveling to Serbia, amid heightened tensions over the Ukraine war. As a result of sanctions against Moscow over its military operation in Ukraine, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Montenegro in an unprecedented move banned Lavrov's Monday flight to Belgrade, marking a fresh escalation between Russia and the West. Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova confirmed that the countries bordering Serbia closed their airspace to Lavrov's aircraft, as reported by Russia's TASS news agency. "The countries bordering Serbia have closed the only air route to the aircraft of Sergei Lavrov who was to depart for Serbia. The Russian delegation was scheduled to hold talks in Belgrade, while the EU and NATO member countries have closed their airspace," Zakharova said late on Sunday. Earlier, the Serbian daily Danas cited Prime Minister Ana Brnabic saying that the situation around the top Russian diplomat's visit was "extremely complicated" and that President Aleksan-

dar Vucic was dealing with the logistics of his trip. Interfax cited a senior Russian foreign ministry source confirming the cancellation of the visit and stressing that diplomacy "has yet to master teleportation." It would have been the first visit of a high-ranking Russian official to Serbia since the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis and at a time when the European Union is preparing a new package of sanctions against Moscow. Serbia, a candidate for EU accession, has developed close relations with Russia over the years and has managed to fend off the West's pressure to condemn Russia's military operation in Ukraine. The country has also been successful in securing its Russian natural gas supplies while other countries were cut off from the sources. Last Sunday, the Serbian leader announced a new three-year gas supply contract with Russia. Russia launched a military operation in Ukraine in late February, following Kiev's failure to implement the terms of the Minsk agreements and Moscow's recognition of the breakaway regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. At the time, Russian President Vladimir Putin said one of the goals of what he called a "special military operation" was to "de-Nazify" Ukraine.

## President Tokayev receives Saudi FM



## WEB DESK

NURSULTAN: Kassym-Jomart Tokayev received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, who arrived in Kazakhstan on an official visit, Kazinform cites the president's press service. During the meeting, they discussed prospects for the development of Kazakh-Saudi relations with an emphasis on strengthening political, trade, economic, investment, cultural and humanitarian cooperation. Welcoming the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister, the Head of State noted that his visit coincided with pivotal moment of Kazakhstan's national history - the holding of a nationwide referendum, the results of which will embark us on building a New Kazakhstan. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev stressed that Saudi Arabia is one of Kazakhstan's key partners in the Arab and Islamic

world. «Our countries have been consistently developing political dialogue in the spirit of friendship and mutual trust based on shared values. I would be very glad to continue maintaining fruitful cooperation with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman», the President underscored. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev focused on favorable investment opportunities for the implementation of joint projects in Kazakhstan in the agricultural, petrochemical, tourism, mining and metallurgical and financial areas. The President noted the importance of strengthening the Kazakh-Saudi Intergovernmental Commission and the Business Council. He also announced his readiness to send a representative government delegation to Riyadh to conduct relevant negotiations. In addition, President Tokayev thanked the Saudi leadership

for creating the necessary conditions and traditional hospitality provided to Kazakh pilgrims in Mecca and Medina. In turn, Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud conveyed the greetings of the King of Saudi Arabia and the Crown Prince to the President and the people of Kazakhstan. The Minister noted the progressive development of bilateral relations, stressing that the leadership of the Kingdom highly values the success of comprehensive cooperation between the two countries over the years of establishing diplomatic relations. The Saudi diplomat congratulated President Tokayev on the successful holding of the referendum in Kazakhstan. «The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes all success to the Second Republic and to continuing journey of reforms under your leadership the implementation of largescale reforms aimed at prosperous future of Kazakhstan», he stressed.

## British embassy reopens in Tripoli

## AGENCIES

Tripoli: Britain reopened its embassy in Tripoli. The reopening was announced by British ambassador Caroline Hurdall at yesterday's event celebrating Queen Elizabeth II's official birthday and the queen's Jubilee (70 years as queen) at the old embassy compound in Tripoli. The British embassy, like a majority of embassies, has been operating out of Tunis. Due to Libya's security and political instability, it is the first time the embassy has celebrated the Queen's Birthday Party in Tripoli in 8 years. The compound has not been in official use as it had been damaged by the Qaddafi regime during the 2011 revolution - in revenge for the British recognizing the new anti-Qaddafi regime at the time.

## UK to deliver long-range missiles to Ukraine

## NEWS DESK

LONDON: Britain plans to send Ukraine long-range missiles for the first time, the country's defense secretary said on Monday. Ben Wallace said the UK would take a leading role in supplying the Ukrainian army with the "vital weapons they need to defend their country from unprovoked invasion," referring to Russia's war on the country. "As Russia's tactics change, so must our support to Ukraine," Wallace added. "These highly capable multiple-launch rocket systems will enable our Ukrainian friends to better protect themselves against the brutal use of long-range artillery, which Putin's forces have used indiscriminately to flatten cities." Wallace's remarks came as Russian President Vladimir Putin vowed that Moscow would hit more targets in Ukraine if the West delivered more weapons. "If it now comes to rockets and they are supplied, we will draw conclusions from that and employ our weapons that we have in sufficient quantities to strike those facilities that we are not attacking so far," Putin said in an interview with the Rossiya-1 TV Channel.

## Russian major general killed in Luhansk

## WEB DESK

KIEV: Russian Major General Roman Kutuzov was killed in fighting in eastern Ukraine, local media reported Sunday. Kutuzov died during a battle in the village of Nikolaevka in the Luhansk region, reports said, citing a post by Russian state television correspondent Alexander Sladkov on Telegram. Later, the Military Information Telegram channel confirmed the killing of the general. According to UN estimates, at least 4,183 civilians have been killed and 5,014 injured in Ukraine since the war began with Russia, with the true toll believed to be much higher. More than 6.9 million people have fled to other countries, while more than 7.7 million have been internally displaced, according to the UN refugee agency.

## 32 journalists killed in Ukraine since war began

## AGENCIES

KIEV: At least 32 journalists have been killed in Russia's ongoing war on Ukraine, the Ukrainian culture and information policy minister said on Monday. As Ukraine marks its annual Journalists Day, Oleksandr Tkachenko hailed all journalists working in the war-ravaged country as "heroes." "Eternal memory to our fighters of information front. All journalists today who work 24/7 are heroes. Our information front is strong thanks

to all of you," he said on Twitter. His tweet also included a montage of video clips and pictures of all media personnel killed in Ukraine since Russia launched the war on Feb. 24. According to the latest UN estimates, at least 4,183 civilians have been killed and 5,014 injured in Ukraine, with the true toll believed to be much higher. More than 6.9 million people have fled to other countries, while more than 7.7 million have been internally displaced, according to UN figures.



NUR SULTAN: The Chairman of the Central Election Commission announces the results of the referendum. A related news on the front page - DNA

## Biohealth agri co-op to promote wheat production

## FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: Pakistan and China have further enhanced their cooperation in Biohealth Agriculture to promote wheat production, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday. The report says, China-Pakistan wheat cooperation is of great significance. With the world's population expected to increase to 9 billion by 2050, populous countries like China and Pakistan needed to develop areas such as saline-alkali land to further meet food needs. It is imperative to develop drought-tolerant and saline-alkali-tolerant wheat varieties and improve the existing saline-alkali soil environment." Prof. Zhang Lixin from Northwest A&F University, China in an interview with CEN hoped that per unit yield of wheat in Pakistan will be increased from the current 200-300 kilograms to more than 400 kilograms through technologies, such as, biohealth agriculture. According to the report, "It is expected that by 2040, due to the global warming, local temperature in Pakistan will increase by 3-4 degrees on the existing basis. It will lead to evaporation of water, which will bring soil drought, while rainfall

will be further concentrated. This means that droughts and floods will occur at the same time. Climate change is enough to reduce Pakistan's wheat production by 15-20 percent. Therefore, if our wheat breeding doesn't advance against climate change, a huge food crisis will pose a serious threat to human existence", said Prof. Zhang Lixin. Currently, water shortage and temperature extremes are affecting crop production and quality in Pakistan. As for wheat, statistics from Pakistan Bureau of Statistics show that wheat accounts for about 9 percent of the national agricultural added value. About 80 percent of farmers in Pakistan are engaged in wheat production, and the total area of wheat cultivation occupies as much as 40 percent of the total agricultural land in Pakistan. The importance of wheat production in Pakistan cannot be overstated. However, this year, Pakistan is expected to harvest about 28 million tonnes of wheat, while overall demand is about 30 million tonnes, which means a 2 million tonnes gap to be filled by imports, in other words, Pakistan is yet self-sufficient in this vital crop. It is learned that Pakistan's wheat planting area is about 16.2 million acres this year, down a bit compared with 16.6 million acres

last year. The concept of "Biohealth Agriculture" (BHA) was put forward by Prof. Zhang Lixin in 2017 at the first International Symposium on the Belt and Road Biohealth. "Germplasm improvement must be our primary goal. Prof. Habib-ur-Rehman Athar from Bahauddin Zakariya University has worked with our researchers to hybridize the Chinese wheat variety S-24 with high yield and salt tolerance, which has been verified by research institutes such as the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), with the Pakistani variety Fd-08, and the new varieties have been successfully cultivated. According to our theoretical prediction, once put into industrialization, the cost can be reduced by 13 percent, and the income of farmers can be increased by 25-27 percent. Besides germplasm, bilateral researchers in Pak-China Biohealth Agriculture Demonstration Park have applied three core technologies to the wheat experimental field in Pakistan, and remarkable results have been achieved. "First of all, we are working with Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Honorary Chairman of Pak-China biohealth cooperation project and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lahore, to improve local soil with

bio-nanotechnology, which can greatly increase local wheat production. Currently, new wheat varieties have the potential to increase the yield by 2.7 percent per annum have accounted for 3 percent of the total in Punjab. The role of nano-materials such as nano-biochar and nano-nutrients (zinc, potassium, iron oxide, etc.) cannot be underestimated," Prof. Zhang introduced. "Secondly, University of Agriculture Faisalabad has introduced our vermiculture technology to produce high quality vermicompost as bio-organic fertilizer. The nano-fertilizer and vermicompost fertilizer can be used in combination to further achieve the goal of increasing wheat production. Thirdly, our biological immunity technology can effectively improve the immunity of the plant. The nano-nutrient solution, as a 'plant vaccine', will greatly reduce the impact of diseases and insect pests to a minimum threshold. Taking wheat as an example, biological immunity can protect the grain, the economic organ of the plant, from pests and diseases to the greatest extent." At present, Pakistani wheat growers are suffering from a lack of high-quality germplasm resources, and the high price of chemical fertilizers makes their predicament worse.

## Briton jailed 15 years in Iraq

## AGENCIES

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi court on Monday sentenced a British retiree to 15 years' prison for trying to smuggle antiquities out of the country, but acquitted his German co-accused. The maximum penalty for the offence is death by hanging but the court decided on a lesser sentence for James Fitton, 66, "because of the advanced age of the accused," the judge said. Fitton's lawyer said that he would appeal. The court found "insufficient evidence" to convict co-accused Volker Waldmann, 60, who was visiting Iraq with Fitton on an organised tour when they were arrested in March at Baghdad airport. War-ravaged Iraq's tourism infrastructure is almost non-existent but the country is timidly opening to visitors.



**Briefs**

**Lebanon seeks US mediation after Israel gas ship move**

BEIRUT: Lebanon on Monday called for US mediation after Israel moved a gas production vessel into an off-shore field, a part of which is claimed by Beirut. The ship operated by London-listed Energen Plc arrived in the Karish gas field on Sunday and will immediately commence operations, Energen said in a statement. The move immediately drew condemnation from Lebanon's president and prime minister who held talks on Monday to discuss next steps. The two agreed to "invite US envoy Amos Hochstein to Beirut to look into restarting negotiations to demarcate Lebanon's southern maritime border" which stalled last May, said a statement by Prime Minister Najib Mikati. "Any exploration, drilling or extraction carried out by Israel in the disputed areas constitutes a provocation and an act of aggression," the statement said. Lebanon and Israel last fought a war in 2006, have no diplomatic relations and are separated by a UN-controlled border. - Agencies

**SHC accepts Dua Zehra's marriage, disposes of case**

DNA

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court has accepted the marriage of Dua Zehra and declared Zaheer Ahmad as her husband. Dua Zehra on Monday appeared before the Sindh High Court and recorded her statement under oath saying that she was not kidnapped. Rather she contracted Nikah with Zaheer Ahmad with her free will. She said she was an adult, 18-year-old and had attained the legal age to contract marriage. After hearing Dua's statement, Justice Junaid Ghaffar accepted her union with Zaheer and pronounced that Dua Zehra's kidnapping case had been disposed of. Dua Zehra requested the court that she wanted to go with her husband Zaheer. She refused to meet her parents.

**Two PML-N former lawmakers jump ship to PTI**

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: In a major setback to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Monday welcomed two senior leaders from South Punjab. Former PML-N MNA Pir Iqbal Shah from Lodhran and former MPA Pir Amir Iqbal Shah formally joined PTI during their meeting with Chairman PTI Imran Khan. During the meeting, they discussed the current political and the worst economic situation in the country. Pir Iqbal Shah and Pir Amir Iqbal Shah expressed full confidence in Imran Khan's leadership. Both the leaders vowed that they would play active role in Imran Khan's struggle for real independence. They were of the view that the imported government was fast leading the country towards destruction, putting the national security at risk. At present circumstances, they admitted the reality that Imran Khan was the only leader who solely had the solution of all Pakistan's problems.

**Don't close the embassy, US envoy tells Russia**

AGENCIES

MOSCOW: Russia should not close the U.S. embassy despite the crisis triggered by the war in Ukraine because the world's two biggest nuclear powers must continue to talk, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow was quoted as saying on Monday. President Vladimir Putin has cast the invasion of Ukraine as a turning point in Russian history: a revolt against the hegemony of the United States, which the Kremlin chief says has humiliated Russia since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union. Ukraine - and its Western backers - says it is fighting for its survival against a reckless imperial-style land grab which has killed thousands, displaced more than 10 million people and reduced swathes of the country to wasteland. In a clear attempt to send a message to the Kremlin, John J. Sullivan, the U.S. ambassador appointed by President Donald Trump, told Russia's state TASS news agency that Washington and Moscow should not simply break off diplomatic relations. "We must preserve the ability to speak to each other," Sullivan told TASS in an interview. He cautioned against the removal of the works of Leo Tolstoy

from Western bookshelves or refusing to play the music of Pyotr Tchaikovsky. His remarks were reported by TASS in Russian and translated into English by Reuters. Despite the crises, spy scandals and brinkmanship of the Cold War, relations between Moscow and Washington have not been broken off since the United States established ties with the Soviet Union in 1933. Now, though, Russia says its post-Soviet dalliance with the West is over and that it will turn eastwards. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken last month quipped that he would like to dedicate Taylor Swift's "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" to Putin. Asked about that remark, Sullivan said: "We also will never break up entirely." When asked by TASS if the analogy meant that the embassies could be closed, Sullivan said: "They can - there is that possibility, although I think it would be a big mistake. "As I understand it, the Russian government has mentioned the variant of severing diplomatic relations," he said. "We can't just break off diplomatic relations and stop talking to each other." Russia's foreign ministry has called in the Moscow bureau chiefs of U.S. media outlets to discuss on Monday what it says are the repercussions of the United States' unfriendly actions.

**BJP's leaders' remarks**

**'Bilawal must raise issue with Indian Foreign Minister'**

Qureshi says that the BJP's two leaders' remarks hurt the sentiments of the Muslims worldwide and Pakistan should talk up the issue with Indian government vociferously

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi said the nation was expecting that Foreign Minister Bilawal Zardari Bhutto would talk to his Indian counterpart pertaining to the blasphemous and condemnable remarks made against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by leaders of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Talking to media, after a delegation level meeting between PTI and Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen here on Monday, Qureshi said that the BJP's two leaders' remarks hurt the sentiments of the Muslims worldwide and Pakistan should talk up the issue with Indian government vociferously. However, PTI Vice Chairman expressed his surprise over the silence of Pakistan Foreign Office in this regard, as Pakistan should register a strong protest to India. He said that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) should also take a clear stand on it and should protest strongly against it so as no one could ever think of

**Insult to our beloved Prophet is not acceptable, says Shujat**

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League (PML) President and former Prime Minister Ch Shujat Hussain, Speaker Punjab Assembly Ch Parvez Elahi and former Federal Minister Moonis Elahi have condemned the insulting statements of BJP leaders in respect of Khatam-un-Nabiyeen Hazrat Mohammad (P.B.U.H) in the strongest words and said that unless the culprit who committed blasphemy is not punished Muslims will continue their protest till such time, our bodies, wealth and everything is sacrificed on Khatam-un-Nabiyeen Hazrat Mohammad, in every tenure we have rebelled against strong winds of time for sanctity of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H), we cannot tolerate insult to the Khatam-un-Nabiyeen Hazrat Mohammad (P.B.U.H) in any case.

Ch Parvez Elahi said that eyes of the Arab world should be opened with the insulting statements of BJP leaders, particularly UAE and other Arab countries should not only immediately boycott Indian products but also send their labour back. He said that in India, all minorities including Muslims, Sikhs, Christians are victims of Hindu extremism, because of Hindutva extremism in India is at its peak. Ch Parvez Elahi said that OIC and United Nations should immediately take notice of insulting statements from India, BJP leaders' insulting statements have hurt the sentiments of Muslims. Former Federal Minister Moonis Elahi said that if humiliating statements were not stopped then the hatred may spread at the international level, this heinous act of India has endangered the peace of the region, Modi government's hatred against Muslims stands exposed to the entire world.

committing such a reprehensible act. Qureshi said that Dr. Shereen Mazari and he was representing the PTI delegation and the current situation in the country were discussed in detail. He said that during the meeting, both the sides also discussed strategies for moving forward. Talking about the water crisis, Qureshi said that there was severe water crisis in Sindh, South Punjab and Balochistan; however, the government was oblivious to the looming water crisis. Qureshi went to say that due to unfair distribution of water, the right of South Punjab was being compromised, demanding Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz to resolve the issue immediately. "The most valuable crop of South Punjab is mango orchards, which are ruined because of scarcity of water," he added. PTI Vice Chairman said that PML-N's voters were questioning their leadership as to why turncoats were imposed on them, adding that PML-N in connivance with Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was planning to rig the by-polls. Qureshi made it clear that the by-election on 20 vacant seats in Punjab were being held for a specific purpose and the people were well-aware of this game.

**PTI MPs fail to turn up to confirm resignations**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's members of National Assembly did not turn up at the Speaker's chamber to personally confirm their resignations. National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has summoned 30 PTI MNAs at his chamber at 11am for the confirmation of their resignations submitted on April 11 ahead of the election of new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The speaker waited for more than an hour for the PTI MNAs but not a single lawmaker showed up. Every MNA was supposed to be given 5 minutes for the confirmation or rejection of his resignation. However, the PTI leadership has directed its lawmakers not to appear before the speaker, who is set to start verifying the resignations of 131 PTI lawmakers from today.

**Islamabad Court grants bail to Rasheed, Murad Saeed**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad court has granted bail to Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rasheed and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Murad Saeed in separate cases. The district and sessions court of Islamabad granted interim bail to Sheikh Rasheed in a case that had been registered at the I-9 police station. Rasheed has been directed to submit Rs5,000 surety bonds. The court ordered the police to present the records of cases lodged against the AML chief. The hearing was adjourned till June 20.

**UK PM braced for Tory no-confidence vote**

WEB DESK

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson faced a no-confidence vote Monday among his Conservative MPs after dozens rebelled over a string of scandals that have left the party's public standing in tatters. The beleaguered leader has spent months battling to maintain his grip on power after the "Partygate" controversy saw him become the first serving UK prime minister found to have broken the law. If he loses the evening vote, he must step down as Conservative party leader and prime minister. The result is expected after 1900 GMT. Writing to his MPs, Johnson defended his governing record, including on delivering Brexit, fighting the Covid pandemic and supporting Ukraine.

**Azerbaijan language, culture center inaugurated**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan University of Languages established the Azerbaijan Language & Cultural Center at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad. Ambassador of Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov along with Vice Rectors Azerbaijan Language University Tamam Jafarova, and Novruz inaugurated the Azerbaijan Language & Culture Center. Rector NUML Major General Muhammad Jaffar (Retd) also attended the ceremony. Speaking on the occasion Khazar Farhadov said that establishment of Azerbaijan Language & Cultural Center at NUML will help to promote Azeri language and culture in Pakistan and an Urdu Language & Culture Chair will be set up at Azerbaijan Languages University to endorse Pakistani culture and language in Azerbaijan. He said that both countries were enjoying good bilateral relations and the purpose of establishing these chairs was to bring the masses of both countries closer to further enhance the relations. He said that a direct flight from Islamabad to Baku started recently to maximize the relations at mass level. Vice Rectors of Azerbaijan University of Languages Novruz and Tamam Jafarova briefed the audience about the university and highlighted the importance of establishing Azeri language and culture center. They said that both the countries enjoyed great bilateral relations and Pakistan supported Azerbaijan during war and Azerbaijan supported Pakistan's stance on occupied Kashmir. Rector NUML Maj General Muhammad Jaffar, while expressing his views, said that NUML was offering 26 national and international languages and had eight regional campuses across Pakistan. He said NUML was keen to collaborate with its Azerbaijanian counterparts to develop research culture in Pakistan, and to start student/faculty exchange program with Azerbaijan universities.



ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan University of Languages with support of Azerbaijan Embassy opened Azerbaijan Language & Culture center at NUML. Azerbaijan Ambassador is inaugurating the center with other officials. - DNA

**CM reviews UADAs affairs**

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: A meeting to review administrative affairs, financial matters and performance of Urban Area Development Authorities (UADAs) was held here on Monday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair. Secretary local government Zaheer ul Islam, Focal Person to CM Muhammad Khaliq, Project Directors of UADAs and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The meeting was given a detail briefing about composition of UADA board, its functions and powers, and decisions

so far taken by the board. The meeting was told that under the UADA Act 2020 different committees had been constituted including auction committee, general rules committee, audit, finance and budget committee and human resource committee. It was further told that auction regulations had been framed for Urban Areas Development Authorities while service regulations were in process. The chief minister, on the occasion, directed the quarters concerned to take concrete steps so as to achieve the purpose for which these authorities were formed and to ensure provision of civic facilities to housing societies

established under the Urban Development Authorities. He further directed them to initiate a project for provision of sports facilities in the housing societies where needed. The chief minister while stressing the need of financial independence of Urban Area Development Authorities directed the relevant authorities to work out a business model for these authorities and reflect a project for centralize consultancy in this regard. The participants were informed that since the establishment of Urban Development Authorities various matters including approval of building plans had been streamlined.

**JUNE 2022**

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