



Islamabad POST

Saturday, June 04, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Rafael Nadal reaches French Open final as Zverev retires

Detailed News On Page-06

'United' path needed for Turkey concerns

Detailed News On Page-06



World must act on post COVID recovery

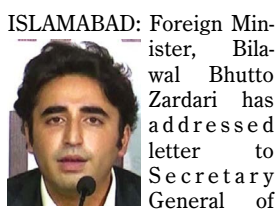
Detailed News On Page-03



Briefs

FM writes to UN Secy Gen

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has addressed letter to Secretary General of United Nations Antonio Guterres on the conviction of Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik. According to Foreign Office Spokesperson, the letter apprises the Secretary General of the circumstances of Yasin Malik's conviction in a manifestly dubious and politically motivated case filed by the Indian National Investigation Agency, his chronic ailments and the ruthless treatment meted out to him in Indian jails. It also highlights that the incarceration of Yasin Malik his sham trial on concocted charges, his malicious conviction and the attempt to portray the legitimate freedom struggle of the Kashmiris as terrorism, illustrate India's blatant disregard of its international legal obligations. The Foreign Minister underscored that the malicious trial and conviction of Yasin Malik was a part of Indian government's ongoing attempts to persecute and repress the Kashmiris and their leadership and to implicate them in fictitious and motivated cases

Pak wants peaceful borders

SAIFULLAH



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Asim Iftikhar Ahmed has said Pakistan will continue taking steps, including engagements with the Afghan interim authorities and others, to have peaceful and stable borders. Replying to a question at his weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Friday, he said it is in the interest of the neighbouring countries to have peaceful and stable borders. He said counterterrorism is also a shared responsibility. Regarding the threat of terrorism and cross border attacks, he said Pakistan has consistently raised such issues with the interim Afghan authorities and it is hoped that they will be taking steps to address these concerns.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

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PM visits CSC Quetta

Pakistan's security to be ensured

PM says Pak armed forces are guarantors of peace, internal and external security; PM directs for provision electricity in Gwadar

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has emphasised that Pakistan's security, sovereignty and integrity will be ensured at all costs, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Friday. PM Shehbaz Sharif visited Command and Staff College, Quetta. On arrival, PM Sharif laid a floral wreath on shuhada monument to pay homage to the martyrs of Pakistan. Later, PM addressed the officers attending Command and Staff Course 2021/2022, according to the military's media wing. Speaking at the occasion, the premier said that Pakistan's armed forces are guarantors of peace, internal and external security, regional stability and also contributing to global peace efforts. Paying rich tribute to the achievements and sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces, PM Sharif said that our successes in the war against terrorism are unparalleled, and duly acknowledged by the world. The prime minister reiterated, "The armed forces have always done a commendable job in service of the nation during natural calamities. Armed Forces of Pakistan are very important state institution

Continued on Page 06

PM decides to slash petrol quota of cabinet

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A day after hiking the prices of petroleum products by Rs30, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday decided to slash the petrol quota of the federal cabinet members and government employees, sources privy to the matter said. The government announced increasing the petrol price to Rs209.86 per litre. The price of petrol, diesel, and light diesel were hiked by Rs30 per litre, while the rate of kerosene oil was increased to Rs26.38 per litre, effective from June 3. The decision was made in line with the conditions set forth by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) regarding the removal of subsidies from

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On 100th day; Zelensky confident of victory

A day earlier, Ukraine President said that Russia controls about one-fifth of his country

WEB DESK

KYIV: As the Russian invasion of Ukraine reached its 100th day, the President of the war-torn nation, Volodymyr Zelensky, said he is "sure of victory". In a video marking 100 days of Moscow's assault on its pro-democracy neighbour, the Ukrainian leader said his country's military would "fend off the Russian invasion". "Victory will be ours," Zelensky said in the video that included Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and presidential advisor Mykhaylo Podolyak, news agency AFP reported. A day earlier, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Russia controls about one-fifth of his country, including ground gained over Moscow's invasion, the annexed Crimean peninsula and territory held by Moscow-backed separatists. "Today, about 20 percent of our territory is under the control of the occupiers," the Ukrainian leader said during an address to lawmakers in Luxembourg. Russian forces are solidifying their hold on the eastern Donbas region and pushing steadily towards Ukraine's de facto administrative centre in that region, Kramatorsk.



Russia has achieved 'certain results'

AGENCIES

MOSCOW: Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov says Russia has made gains and will not give up until it has achieved its objectives. He says one of the main goals of the operation, as Moscow calls it, is to protect people in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's and Luhansk People's Republics. "Measures have been taken to ensure their protection and certain results have been achieved," he says. "Quite a number of localities have been cleared from the pro-Nazi Ukrainian armed forces, and people there can start bringing their lives back to normal now. "These efforts will be continued until all goals have been attained in the special military operation."

However, they pulled back from regions around the capital and in the northeast to focus on their offensive for the eastern

Continued on Page 06



QUETTA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif attends passing out ceremony at Command and Staff College. - DNA

SC gives govt 1 week for ECL rules changes

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday directed the federal government to bring the recent changes in the rules of the Exit Control List (ECL) within the "ambit of the law" within a week, cautioning that it would issue an order if its directive was not followed. On April 22, the government introduced significant changes to the rules controlling citizens' exit from the country in an attempt to end the practice of keeping people on the no-fly list for years and even for over a

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Majority wants immediate elections, Survey

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: A majority of Pakistanis are in favour of immediate elections and have rejected the arguments made by the PML-N-led federal government to justify the increase in fuel price, ARY News reported on Friday. This was the finding of an opinion survey conducted by renowned research institute Ipsos. According to the survey, 6 in 10 Pakistanis have rejected the arguments made by the federal government to justify petrol price's hike. The survey asked whether the Shehbaz Sharif-led federal government should

Continued on Page 06

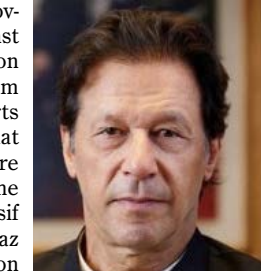
Khan warns the govt against filing treason case

Says he has "neither broken the law", "nor have any of his actions been against the law"

DNA

BUNER: PTI Chairman Imran Khan Friday

warned the government against filing a treason case against him after reports emerged that key officials were mulling over the idea. "Can Asif Zardari and Nawaz Sharif file treason cases against me? All of their properties are in foreign countries," the PTI chairman said, claiming that Zardari had sought the United States' help against the Pakistan Army. "And can Nawaz Sharif - who has bought four properties worth billions in London - decide whether I am a traitor?" Khan said,



Continued on Page 06

Govt mulls filing treason case against Imran

ISLAMABAD: Key federal government officials deliberated over going ahead with filing treason charges against PTI Chairman Imran Khan and the chief ministers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan over PTI's May 25 'Azadi March' during a special committee meeting of the cabinet, media reported Friday. According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Interior, the cabinet's special committee meeting was chaired by Interior

Continued on Page 06

'Price hike decision with heavy heart'

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Marriyum Aurangzeb says government is taking concrete steps to mitigate impact of recent petroleum price hike. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Friday, she said government took the decision of fuel price hike with a heavy heart. She said government will provide two thousand rupees to fourteen million poor families, who have their income below forty thousand rupees, to protect them from impacts of price hike. She said families registered in BISP will also be receiving additional two thousand rupees. She said deserving people can call at 786 to check their el-

igibility status for relief package. Marriyum Aurangzeb said the decision of price hike of petroleum products was taken beyond of politics. She said government will also announce an austerity drive very soon. She said common people are under burden of price hike due to imprudent decisions of previous government. Marriyum Aurangzeb criticized previous PTI government for inking IMF agreement with harsh terms and conditions. Responding to a question, she said government is taking steps to bring Charter of Democracy to draw some red lines for upcoming governments. She said government will hold a conference on Tuesday in this regard and all stake holders will be present there to discuss the matter.



'Indian policies discriminate against Muslims'

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Some officials in India are ignoring or even supporting rising attacks on people and places of worship in the country, a United States official said late on Thursday after the release of a report on religious freedom globally in 2021. The report said attacks on members of religious minority communities, including killings, assaults, and intimidation, had occurred throughout last year in India. These included cow vigilantism - assaults on non-Hindus for allegedly slaughtering cows or trading in beef. Most Hindus, who account for about 80 per cent of India's 1.3 billion people, consider cows sacred. Many states ruled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party have enacted laws or toughened old ones against slaughtering cows. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the report showed religious freedom and the rights of religious minorities were under threat around the world. "For example,

objectives are different", Wani said adding that, in 1990, the government's motive behind the mass migration of pandits was to defame the freedom struggle and put blame on resistance fighters. "This time the racist regime's designs are far more dangerous than what Jaghmohan did in the 90s", he said. Getting Kashmir valley free from Pandits, he said, is part of the BJP's sinister plan to pave a way for genocide of Muslims in Kashmir and turn the Muslim majority region into a minority. Terming it as part of the Indian government's settler colonialism campaign, Wani said that the Modi government had been engaged in hatching conspiracies to alter the

MIRPUR: Senior Hurriyat leader Altaf Hussain Wani has said that Indian government was forcing Kashmiri pandits to migrate from valley to pave a way for Muslim genocide in the region. Talking to APP, the APHC leader while citing the recent incidents of targeted killing of Kashmiri Pandits by unknown assailants, said that the BJP was following the footsteps of former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Jaghmohan Malhotra-the man who orchestrated the drama of so-called Pandit-exodus from valley in early 90s to give a communal colour to Kashmiris' ongoing struggle. The BJP government, he said, was now hell bent on repeating history. "The methodology and tactics being employed are same, however, the

region's demography. He said that settling non-state subjects, creating a separate-colonies for Kashmiri pandits and ex-army personnel in different areas of the valley had been on top of the BJP government's agenda. Referring to Bollywood movie, the Kashmir files, Wani said, "the highly controversial, propaganda laden film, which portrays Kashmiris as terrorists was used by the BJP government as a tool to advance its ultra-nationalist agenda, which paints Islam and Muslims to be a threat to the country's Hindu majority". The film, being screened for free in many Indian cities, he said, fostered Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred across the India. - APP

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in India, the world's largest democracy and home to a great diversity of faiths, we've seen rising attacks on people and places of worship," Blinken said. Rashad Hussain, who leads the US State Department's efforts to monitor religious freedom around the world, said some Indian officials were "ignoring or even supporting rising attacks on people and places of worship". India's foreign ministry said the country values religious freedom and human rights, and that it had noted the "ill-informed comments by senior US officials". "It is unfortunate that vote bank politics is being practiced in international relations," ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in a statement. He also said Indian officials have regularly highlighted "racially and ethnically motivated attacks, hate crimes and gun violence" in the United States. Disputes between religious communities in India over places of worship have flared ever since the country won independence from British rule in 1947, but they have become more common in recent years. Muslims make up around 13pc of India's population.

RCCI AI and IT expo begins in Rawalpindi

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: A two-day Artificial Intelligence and Information Technology Expo organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) began at a local hotel in Rawalpindi here on Friday. The exhibition was inaugurated by Federal Minister of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Senator Talha Mahmood. Ambassador of Turkmenistan and Dean of Diplomatic Corps H.E. Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, Chief Commissioner of Inland Revenue Muhammad Iqbal, Asim Shehryar, CEO IGNITE, representative of Anjuman-e-Tajir Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, former President RCCI, Senior Vice President Asim Malik, Vice President Talat Awan, Chairman Expo Raja Omar Iqbal, Vice Chairman Waqas

Bin Mahmood, Chamber members including executive members and CEOs of IT companies and a large number of young IT entrepreneurs were also present on the occasion. Federal Minister Talha Mahmood in his address said that the top priority of the government is to create a conducive environment for the business community. He said that the Rawalpindi Chamber deserves appreciation for organizing the conference and expo. He said that the private sector should come forward and lend a helping hand to the government. Business and education are closely related. Progress and prosperity can be achieved if both given priority and focus. He assured his services to act as a bridge between the government and the business community. Undoubtedly Pakistan is a country rich in natural resources, however, proper management is required

to get the desired results, he said. Earlier in his address, Chamber President Nadeem Rauf said that IT is an emerging sector. Pakistan's share in IT Services and exports stood at just \$4 billion dollars whereas neighboring country India's share has been manifold, approximately \$133 billion dollars. Group Leader Sohail Altaf said that the business community wants continuity of policies, the budget is coming, and we have great expectations that incentives will be provided on priority basis for the revival of business activities. Chairman Expo Raja Omar Iqbal gave a detailed briefing on the aims and objectives of the conference including scope, priorities and potential of the IT sector in Pakistan. The conference also included panel discussions on topics related to artificial intelligence, automation, robotics and industry academia linkages.



National productivity movement seminar held

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: In order to create awareness about National Productivity Movement Pakistan, a walk/seminar was arranged in collaboration with trade bodies and relevant stakeholders here on Friday. The walk/seminar was jointly organised by the National Productivity Organization (NPO), Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and relevant stakeholders here at Government Technical and Vocational Centre Gulbahar Peshawar. The main purpose of the seminar/walk was to create awareness about the "National Productivity Movement". The NPO has launched a National Productivity Movement, in a bid to create awareness on the use of modern innovative techniques and technology in

various sectors of the country's economy, which is essential for the promotion of sustainable productivity. The awareness activity was attended by office bearers, officials of chambers, traders, principle of Government Technical and Vocational Centre Peshawar Saeed Khan, TEVTA Joint Venture Officer Sohail Ayub, NPO Deputy General Manager Aftab Khan, Secretary General of the SCCI, Sajjad Aziz, Central Tanzeem e Tajaran Peshawar Haji Ihtesham Haleem, NPO Regional Office Peshawar Incharge Wasay Ullah, a large number students of the technical centre. On the occasion, a walk was arranged during which participants were holding placards and banners inscribed with slogans as "1st Productivity Movement of Pakistan/Sustainable National Productivity (SNP)". Speakers

highly praised the NPO for arranging awareness event about its ongoing National Productivity Movement Pakistan, saying that the movement aims at to create awareness on the use of modern innovative techniques and technology in various sectors of the country's economy, which is essential for the promotion of sustainable. Participants of the event stressed the need for awareness on productivity in Pakistan at all levels, including industry, agriculture, academia, and the general public. While realising sustainable productivity as an important factor for achieving competitiveness and target GDP growth, the speakers said a nation-wide comprehensive productivity awareness has been launched as successfully done in the other developed countries such as Singapore, South Korea, Japan, and Malaysia.

Make dengue surveillance more effective: DC Lodhran

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHAN: Deputy Commissioner Agha Zaheer Abbas orders to make surveillance more effective for controlling dengue. The Deputy Commissioner said that negligence in the prevention of dengue would not be tolerated at all. He said that every department has to fulfill its responsibility to keep the people safe from dengue. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting of the District Emergency Response Committee for Dengue Prevention here today. Additional Deputy Commissioner Azuba Azeem, Assistant Commissioners, Chief Executive Officer District Health Authority Dr. Shaikat Ali Ijaz and officers of other concerned departments were present in the meeting. Deputy Commissioner Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi said that special attention should be paid to the treatment of suspected dengue patients. He said that there was no justification for shortage of medicines. He further said that practical steps should be taken to prevent dengue. Deputy Commissioner said that strict measures should be taken by the concerned departments to deal with the dengue epidemic. He said that he would personally supervise the treatment of the patients. Deputy Commissioner said that no effort would be spared to deal with the dengue epidemic and all resources would be utilized for the prevention of dengue.



ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabian ambassador Nawaf Saeed Al-Maliki and Minister for Religious Affairs, Interfaith Harmony Mufti Abdul Shakoor visited Islamabad International Airport to inspect the Mecca Road Initiative Project and its preparation for the reception of Pakistani pilgrims. – DNA

46 companies registered in Gwadar with investment of \$450 million

The expressway starts from China-Pak Friendship Avenue in Gwadar Port and converges with the existing Makran Coastal N10 Highway. The expressway has a total length of 19.49Km, with 6-lane-embankment and 4-lane-pavement in each way and a design speed limit of 100km/h

DNA

GWADAR: Forty-six companies have registered in Gwadar Free Zone with a total investment of \$450 million. This was stated by Ms. Pang Chunxue, Charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan on Friday while addressing the inauguration ceremony of Eastbay Expressway, a \$ 153 million project in Gwadar, says a report carried by Gwadar Pro. Highlighting the social welfare work undertaken here under CPEC, she said China-funded vocational institute has begun operating with Chinese government scholarships awarded to top students from Gwadar. Faqeer Middle School has enabled the students to go to

school without going for miles. The Gwadar hospital will expand the number of bed from 50 to 150. The 3,000 solar panel is being installed for needed households of water to ease power shortage, the seawater dissemination power inaugurated today will supply 5,000 tons of fresh water per day upon completion in 2023. Tree planting has turned the area greener. "We are confident that a smart and modern Gwadar will emerge to benefit the local friends", she said. The Eastbay Expressway project commenced on 12th Oct. 2017 and was completed on 10th April 2022 after 54 months of construction, becoming an important traffic link that connects Gwadar Port and its free zone with the national road networks, and providing Gwadar Port with

much-needed on-land access to international cargo distribution. The expressway starts from China-Pak Friendship Avenue in Gwadar Port and converges with the existing Makran Coastal N10 Highway. The expressway has a total length of 19.49Km, with 6-lane-embankment and 4-lane-pavement in each way and a design speed limit of 100km/h. In an exclusive interview with staff from China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC), which undertakes the project, Gwadar Pro was told that the Eastbay Expressway was constructed in various geographic conditions such as coast, mountain, etc. In addition to the road, cofferdam, bridges, and culverts, pavement, works for reclamation, soft ground treatment, exca-

vation, embankment, revetment, drainage and protection, traffic safety and ancillary are also part of the project. In terms of security, a Leading Group for Emergency Responses and Terrorism Events has been set up for the project. Security augmentation measures include security facilities and enablers, security inspection, training, drills on terrorism, and emergency responding. Apart from infrastructure construction, the undertaking company, is also engaged in social responsibility activities such as donations to Faqeer Primary School, Government Primary School Garzwan Gwadar, and Gwadar Hospital, provision of living necessities to the local people in need and fishing net to fishermen communities, etc.



ISLAMABAD: Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid Bakhtawari and Sharjeel Mir are leading 'Istahkam e Pakistan rally'. – DNA

FESCO releases load management schedule

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: On the directives of the Ministry of Energy Power Division, Faisalabad Electric Supply (FESCO) Engr. Bashir Ahmed. He said that the areas of Abdullah Pur, Civil Line, Madina Town, Mansoorabad, Sargodah road, Millat Town, Guiltan Colony, Hajiabad, Muslim Town, GuttWala, Manawala and Islam Puretc would observe load management from 08:30am to 09:30am, 12:30pm to 1:30pm, 3:30pm to 4:30pm and 6:30pm to 7:30pm while 8:30am to 10:30am & 2:30pm to 4:30pm ID feeders would observe load management. In second circle the areas of GM Abad, Nazimabad, Faizabad, Razabad, Samanabad, Peoples Colony, Garden Colony, Rachna Town, Batala Colony, Samundari road, Kareem Town, Factory Area, Jhang road, Saddar bazaar & Madinabadetc would observe load management from 9:30am to 10:30am, 2:30pm to 3:30pm, 7:30pm to 8:30pm while ID feeder would observe load management from 8:30am to 10:30am and 2:30pm to 4:30pm.

DPCC meeting held to review daily items' prices

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: On the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz, a meeting of District Price and Control Committee was held at DC Office under the chairmanship of Chairman Committee / Member Provincial Assembly Rana Ali Abbas. The Deputy Commissioner Lt. (R) Sohail Ashraf gave a briefing on the supply and sale of Sasta flour and said that the performance of the price control magistrates would also

be monitored. Members Committee/ Parliamentarians Mian Tahir Jameel, Rai Haiderkharal, Rana Shoaibdrees, Leaders of PMLN Mian Abdul Manan, Sheikh Ejaz Ahmad, Muhammad Ajmal Cheema participated. ADCR Abid Hussain, ADCG Qaiser Abbas Rind, ACs Muhammad Umar Maqbool, Sahibzada Muhammad Yousaf, DO IndustriesShahbaz Khan, DFC WaqarYousaf and Oil manufacturers and others traders also attended the meeting. Deputy Commissioner asked the Ghee price otherwise subsidy. He said that the progress of price control magistrates would be reviewed and the meeting of the Price Control Committee would be held on daily basis and would ensure price control along with the members of the Assembly. Parliamentarians said that price control is a matter of service to humanity and they would be innfied to check price control. They said that comprehensive plan of action would be evolved to control the price of essential items.



Petrol stations refuse sale, 10 owners arrested

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: Action of AC Gujrat Umer Draz Gondal against the petrol pumpowners who closed petrol pumps with increase in petrol prices. More than 10 owners and managers were arrested and cases were registered against them. He also imposed millions of rupees fine of them. Supply of petrol and diesel for the citizens was immediately restored. DC heard public

complaints regarding various revenue services Gujrat: Revenue Public Services have been launched in all the three tehsils of Gujrat district to address the grievances of the citizens regarding revenue. DC Capt. (R) Rizwan Qadeer heard petitions / complaints regarding various revenue services including land records, registry, domicile, Intiqal, inspection records in Tehsil Office Kharian. AC Kharian Sajid Munir was also present on the occasion. AC Gujrat and Sarai Alamgir Tehsil Umer Daraz Gondal and Ahsan Mumtaz heard public complaints regarding revenue. The DC issued immediate orders to concerned officers on a total of 36 complaints in Tehsil Headquarters Kharian; all the complaints were disposed of before the end of the office hours. AC Gujrat Umer Draz Gondal disposed of 113 complaints while AC Sarai Alamgir Ahsan Mumtaz disposed of 54 complaints.

Dr. Hassan appointed as VC Swat University

SHAMIM SHAHID

SWAT: Prof. Dr. Hassan Sher, a renowned researcher in the field of plant sciences and biodiversity, has been appointed as Vice Chancellor of University of Swat here on Friday. His appointment was made by the Chancellor/ Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on advice of the CM KPK, Mahmood Khan. Prof. Dr. Hassan Sher, who is a Saarc gold medalist, has assumed the charge as the VC for a period of three years soon after the notification. Earlier, he was Pro-Vice Chancellor of the same university and has also been leading the University of Swat since the completion of his predecessor's tenure in December, 2021.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

May 03 / Poland	National Day
May 06 / Bulgaria	Armed Forces Day
May 06 / UAE	Armed Forces Day
May 07 / Kazakhstan	Armed Forces Day
May 08 / Czech Republic	National Day
May 09 / European Union	National Day
May 17 / Norway	Constitution Day
May 21 / Hungary	Armed Forces Day
May 22 / Yemen Republic	Re-unification Day (National Day)
May 24 / Eritrea	National Day
May 25 / Lebanon	Liberation and Resistance Day
May 25 / Argentina	National Day
May 25 / Jordan	Independence Day
May 28 / Azerbaijan	Republic Day
May 28 / Ethiopia	National Day
May 31 / Brunei	Armed Forces Day



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Water Tank

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Musadik welcomes Baku's \$100m investment proposal

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik on Friday welcomed a proposal given by Azerbaijan to make \$100 million investment in Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) sector of Pakistan. Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov floated the investment proposal by his country's oil company 'SOCAR' in LNG sector, varying from terminal establishment to short term loans and deferred payment facility, during a meeting with Petroleum Minister Dr Musadik Malik, a Petroleum Division news release said. "With increasing energy needs of the country, such investment and partnership is a tremendous opportunity," the minister said. During the meeting, the two sides focused on strengthening brotherly relations between the two countries and expanding the areas of cooperation in diverse fields. "The partnership in oil and gas sector can be enhanced to other sectors like tourism. Azerbaijan wishes to transform brotherly relations into economic ties along the lines of Turkey Azerbaijan relations," the press release said. The minister assured his full support to the Working Groups on energy and said a focal person would be appointed from the petroleum division for all energy sector collaborations. The meeting also discussed Pakistan's huge potential in oil and gas exploration sector and decided to explore ways and means to strengthen collaboration in that regard. The ambassador lauded Pakistan's unconditional support to Azerbaijan and expressed his desire to take the bilateral relations to new heights. He said the direct flights operation from Islamabad to Baku, starting in June, would help boost people-to-people linkages.



Tough decisions taken to avoid bankruptcy

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik on Friday said the incumbent government had taken tough decisions regarding subsidies on petrol and diesel, in compulsion, giving a special focus on reviving the national economy and steering the country out of the confronted financial crunch. Addressing a news conference along with senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Shahid Khakan Abbasi, he said the previous government of PTI gave unjustified subsidies on petroleum products without any budgetary allocations and approval from the quarters concerned like the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and the Federal Cabinet. Terming the subsidies 'landmines' installed by the PTI government before facing the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan, he said it put around Rs700-800 billion extra burden on the national exchequer in three months, if taxes were included. Drawing a comparison, the minister said around Rs 528 billion expenses were incurred annually to run the affairs of the whole federal government. Besides, Dr Musadik said the previous government also violated the commitments made with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) about the subsidies for getting financial assistance. "The PTI government, as a pre-condition, had signed a contract with the IMF that they will increase the prices and impose petroleum levy and sales tax. But, it violated sovereign commitment with the international financial institutions," he said. The minister said the PTI did all this to push the country towards default and bankruptcy for political gains, and recalled Imran Khan's recent statements about the country's strategic assets and disintegration. - APP

PARC releases 15 pulses varieties

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) has so far released 15 seed varieties of different pulses for local cultivation in order to promote and enhance output of all major legumes to achieve self-sufficiency in pulses production. The step had been taken under pulses enhancement initiative, which was aimed at reducing the reliance on imported pulses, consumption of which averages \$1 billion annually, said an official of PARC on Friday. Talking to APP here, he said that the releases of advanced varieties of different pulses would help to enhance the per-acre output of crop, besides helping to conserve foreign exchange being spent on the imports of such pulses. For this purpose, the official said, the council had also acquired and evaluated 3,230 germplasm of various pulses and conducted 10 national uniform yield trials. In order to equip the farming communities with innovative techniques, the council had also conducted 118 production technology trials in different locations countrywide, he said, adding that 12 portable irrigation units were also provided to growers of various areas to reduce the reliance on imported legumes. - APP

FAFEN hails Balochistan Local Government polls

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan has successfully completed the controversy-free first phase of the local government (LG) polls to elect over 6,000 general councilors, with prompt acceptance of the results by all major political parties. "Such an acceptance augurs well for democracy and development in the province where the integrity of electoral exercises has previously been questioned," the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), in its report on LG election in Balochistan released on Friday. Despite sporadic illegalities and irregularities, the elections remained largely peaceful, orderly and better-managed. FAFEN observers reported a large number of voters turning out to vote on election-day. Although majority of polling stations (65 percent) were categorized as sensitive or most-sensitive security-wise, the election-day remained largely peaceful with scattered incidents of local violence reported in some districts. As many as 17,774 candidates, including 17,642 male and 132 female were in the run for general seats fielded by 17 political parties in 6,259 wards (5,345 rural and 914 urban wards) in municipal corporations, municipal committees and union councils. The Election Commission of Pakistan had set up a total of 6,237 polling stations, including 671 male, 652 female and 4,914 combined. These polling stations had a total of 13,533 polling booths, including 6,867 for men and 6,307 for women to facilitate 3,614,724 voters - 2,043,828 male and 1,570,896 female voters. FAFEN said following the May 29 elections of representatives on general seats, the ECP was now due to hold indirect elections for the seats reserved for women, peasants or workers, and religious minorities, and the elections for chairmen and vice chairmen of the local councils. Moreover, the ECP had yet to announce

schedule for general seats elections in two major districts with sizeable urban population in the province i.e. Quetta and Lasbela, which were earlier withheld because of issues with the delimitation of wards, it added. FAFEN noted that after the expiry of LGs in Balochistan on January 27, 2019, it took over three years for the ECP to conduct LG elections, which faced delay on one pretext or the other by the provincial government. Lack of consensus among political parties over amendments to the Balochistan LG Act (BLGA), 2010 and delimitation of constituencies remained the primary hurdles before the conduct of election. The report mentioned that though the ECP had taken extraordinary measures over the last few years to improve inclusivity of elections particularly by focusing on women, persons with disabilities and transgender people, women participation as candidates had remained a cause of serious concern. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Joint Secretary M/O Information & Broadcasting Arshad Munir inaugurating digital media simulation lab and studios at Information Service Academy. - DNA

World must act on post COVID recovery

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday said the world must ensure urgent actions and adequate resources for the developing countries' post-pandemic recovery and protection of the most vulnerable poor masses. The minister expressed these views while addressing to the Leadership Dialogue 2: Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic at Stockholm+50 Day 2 on behalf of G-77 plus China Group. In her opening remarks, she said, "At the outset, allow me to appreciate the coaches of this leadership dialogue Germany and Indonesia as well for their hard work". Sherry presented the seven recommended actions proposed by the G-77 plus China group. "First, we must take urgent actions in key COVID-19 affected sectors such as food, energy and tourism and manufacturing sectors to protect the poor and most vulnerable living in the developing countries", she added.

The Minister continued to state that secondly, it was important to mobilise adequate financial resources to enable recovery and for that an additional \$1 US\$45 trillion were needed to finance recovery in the developing countries. "So far only a fraction of these has been made available. We should utilise all possible channels to mobilise finances this includes official development assistance (ODA), debt relief, rechanneling of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), expanding of the finan-

cial facilities of the MDPs", she mentioned. Thirdly, she said that the global community must rethink our patterns of consumption and production. "We can certainly produce with greater respect for nature. We can stop the pollution of our lakes, rivers and oceans. We can produce more with less water and without dangerous chemicals", she underlined. Sherry further mentioned that transfers of technology and technical assistance were also key to achieving these goals, adding, "And we must also recall the harmful aspects or impacts of agricultural subsidies and protectionist policies among sustainable systems". Fourthly, the recovery efforts should also address the widening technology and digital gaps that existed between the developing and the developed countries, the Minister highlighted.

In the Fifth proposed action, the Minister said the world must work towards promoting the alignment of the business practices with the sustainable development goals (SDGs), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement. In the Sixth recommended action, she said the pandemic has highlighted the need for better foresight capability and resilience planning in national and international governance. "We need to market access as well for the developing countries and promote their inclusion in the global supply chains," she added. At the end, the Minister mentioned the final action that proposed to develop an international hub of global best practices and experience sharing for result oriented actions. "There is a lot that we can learn from each other and need to establish a global repository of successful practices", she said. - APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanvir Hussain have held out assurance to the heads of public sector universities that the Government will not cut the higher education sector's budget for the fiscal year (FY) 2022-23. The Ministers were addressing the Vice Chancellors Committee meeting held at the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Islamabad. Vice Chancellors of all the public sector universities and the Commission (HEC's governing body) members attended the meeting. The Vice Chancellors conveyed their concerns about the Indicative Budget Ceilings (IBC) of only Rs. 30 billion for higher education's recurring grant for the FY 2022-23. However, they welcomed the assurances of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with regard to protection of the higher education sector's budget. They emphasized that HEC had presented a rationalized demand of Rs. 104.983 billion for the next financial year worked out together with the Ministry of Finance which needs to be protected. Ahsan Iqbal affirmed that the Government is cognizant of the importance of higher education and universities in the development of a nation. He underlined that the country needs to bring the universities to the forefront to help tackle its challenges by fully utilizing the potential of youth. "The States unable to provide education to their youth lose their right to survival," he stated. He said Pakistan has rich endowments and it will turn around the tide of economic hardships. Minister said that the universities carry-out mentoring of almost two million youth, who are the future of this country. He termed classrooms and laboratories of the universities as national security frontiers while calling the Vice Chancellors the corps commanders. - APP

Ministers for uplifting higher education sector

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IHC dispose of plea against Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday disposed of a petition challenging the appointment of Hanif Abbasi as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister. Chief Justice Athar Minallah, hearing the case, disposed of the case after the court was told that Hanif Abbasi had already resigned from the post. Hanif Abbasi's lawyer presented the resignation of his client to the court and prayed it to dispose of the petition as it had become ineffective now. The chief justice remarked Mr. Abbasi had done a respectable act by tendering resignation himself. The petition was filed by the former Interior minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed. - APP

ANF recovers 60 kg charras; arrests two

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its operations has managed to recover 60 kg charras and arrested two accused. According to ANF headquarters spokesman, ANF Rawalpindi and ANF Intelligence in a joint operation conducted on Srinagar Highway Islamabad intercepted a Suzuki Bolan vehicle and recovered 9,600 kg charras besides arresting an accused namely Aurangzaib Khan resident of Muzaffarabad. On the pointation of the arrested accused, ANF conducted another raid on Murree road and impounded a Toyota Corolla Executive car besides recovering 50,400 kg charras. An accused namely Asad Nawaz resident of Peshawar was also rounded up. The drug smuggler was trying to smuggle narcotics from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa to Islamabad, Murree, Abbottabad and Kashmir. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is in progress. - APP

Briefs

Mobile App 'IESCO Light' introduced

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has introduced mobile application namely "IESCO Light" for provision of prompt facilities to the consumers as well as redressal of their complaints.

The IESCO spokesperson told through the App, the valuable customers could apply online for new electricity connection, change of name, change of tariff, provision of duplicate bills, registration of complaints, awareness regarding load managements schedule and bill estimators. Call on helpline number 118 or SMS on 8118 were also the features of this application, he said. He said that the consumers could download the mobile app from play store. Keeping in view the advancement in technology, IESCO was also switching towards digital application, he added. He said the company purely believed in serving valuable customers by providing quality services and all available sources were being utilized for provision of best services to valuable customers. - APP

Exports surge by 27.78% in 11 months

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country witnessed an increase of 27.78 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. According to PBS data, the exports from the country were recorded at \$28.848 billion during July-May (2021-22) against the exports of \$22.576 billion recorded during July-May (2020-21), showing growth of 27.78 percent.

The imports during the months under review also went up by 44.28 percent by growing from \$50.028 billion last year to \$72.182 billion in July-May (2021-22). Based on the data, the trade deficit during the period under review was recorded at \$43.334 billion, showing an increase of 57.85 percent over the deficit of \$27.452 billion recorded during last year, the PBS data revealed. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports of the country increased by 55.66 percent during May 2022 as compared to the exports of same month of last year. The exports during the month under review were recorded at \$2.601 billion against the exports of \$1.671 billion during the same month of last year. The imports into the country increased from \$5.297 billion in May 2021 to \$6.644 billion in May 2022, showing growth of 25.43 percent. On month-on-month basis, the exports from the country declined by 10.22 percent during May 2022 as compared to the exports of \$2.897 billion recorded during April 2022. - APP

CDA disconnects 70 illegal water connections

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has disconnected some 70 illegal water connection in the area of Bari Imam to mitigate water shortage in the federal capital. "The illegal connections and installation of motors and water pumps on the main supply lines are depriving the other residents from their basic right as well as creating water shortage in the city," its spokesman told APP on Friday.

The teams of water supply directorate in collaboration with Islamabad Capital Territory Administration was taking strict and stern action against small and large illegal water connections across the city, he added. Apart from the connections, illegally installed suction motors on water supply lines were also being removed during the ongoing drive. To make the operation successful, the CDA had sought the coordination of police and the area's magistrate. The campaign, he said would not only help achieve the desired results but also help highlight the discrepancies and shortcomings in the service delivery. Special teams were formed for effective monitoring of illegal water connections so that this practice could be discouraged in the future, said the spokesman. - APP

China, Pakistan media must speak out for fairness, justice

This year, China donated another 3,000 sets of solar panels to the Gwadar people, which brings the total number of donations to 7,000 sets. The construction of a desalination plant aided by China will start the construction soon in Gwadar"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "CPEC cannot progress well in a world full of cold war mentality. Therefore, media of China and Pakistan have the responsibility of speaking out for fairness and justice," said Pang Chunxue, Charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy here at the 7th CPEC Media Forum. According to Gwadar Pro, Pang Chunxue said at the forum that CPEC cooperation has achieved fruitful results, under which the two sides have initiated or completed 46 of the 70 early harvest projects with a total investment of USD 25.4 billion. Among the projects, "the East Bay Expressway of Gwadar Port has been

completed and will open for traffic soon. This year, China donated another 3,000 sets of solar panels to the Gwadar people, which brings the total number of donations to 7,000 sets. The construction of a desalination plant aided by China will start the construction soon in Gwadar," she stated.

Pang also added that two units of the Karot Hydropower project have started to provide stable clean power to Pakistan's power grid since May. After its full operation, its four units will provide electricity for 5 million people. Despite the fruitful CPEC cooperation, false propaganda and disinformation on CPEC are on the increase. "Hostile forces are trying to undermine the de-



velopment of CPEC, as well as the unity and mutual trust between the two countries." She mentioned the Global Development Initiative and Global Security

Initiative which called for common development and progress of all countries. However, QUAD, AUKUS, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework targeting China are undermining such efforts. In this regard, Pang said that the media of China and Pakistan have the responsibility of speaking out for fairness and justice, and should be a positive force for CPEC, for world peace and stability. She suggested that synergy among media circles should be strengthened. "Chinese media has seven permanent bureaus and one Urdu language studio in Pakistan. Pakistan is believed to have over 100 television channels and 150 radio stations. Both countries' media should form in-depth coop-

eration in terms of exchange of news materials, co-production of programs, personnel training and co-organizing of activities, especially on CPEC," she said. She also suggested the full mobilization of resources of multiple entities, the strengthening of narrative building, and the two sides should join hands in combating fake news, as some western countries continue to slander China on issues related to Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, and spread rumors on CPEC. Therefore, "I hope that the media of China and Pakistan will play a more active role as a bridge, tell true stories of China-Pakistan cooperation, and consolidate the all-weather friendship between the iron brothers," Pang added.



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to PM for Kashmir & GB Qamar Zaman Kaira and Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a press conference at PID media center. - DNA

Efforts on card to start two-way flights between Pak-China

ISLAMABAD: Efforts on card by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training for operating two-way special flight between Pakistan and China in order to facilitate the Pakistani students enrolled in Chinese universities. The relevant Chinese authorities, in that regard, would be requested for two-way operating special flight so that students in China could also be facilitated in coming back to Pakistan, the official sources from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training told APP. In first phase, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in collaboration with the Ministry of Affairs and other relevant institutions was making all-out efforts for the return of Pakistani students to China in order to continue their studies in Chinese universities that were halted due to Covid-19. According to the sources, the initiative has

been taken on the special directions of Federal Education Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain who took special interest in that regard and put the issue on top priority. The authorities concerned ensured speedy execution of these students so that their educational loss can be minimized on emergency basis. In that regard, a special charter flight of PIA will fly on June 7th to take Pakistani students to Xian, China, the sources said adding that, the minister was informed that all formal approvals for a charter flight have been gained from the government of China. The flight will take approximately 150 students back to China, contingent on issue of Chinese visas to Pakistani students. The sources informed that the ticket prices have been highly subsidized so that they are affordable for the students, adding, 112 student visas have been issued to the Pakistani students while 17 visas are still pending. A number of meetings had taken place between Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Higher Education Commission and Aviation Division with the Cultural Counselor in Chinese Embassy in order to start the return of Pakistani students to China, they told. The process of returning Pakistani students has been started in coordination with the Chinese government, they said. - APP

Govt, UNHCR verify 1.3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Government of Pakistan, with the support of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, completed the verification of some 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan. The Documentation Renewal and Information Verification Exercise, known as DRIVE, was aimed at updating and verifying the data of Afghans holding a Proof of Registration (PoR) card, said a press release here on Friday. The exercise was a joint effort conducted by the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), the Chief Commissionerate Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), and UNHCR with the technical assistance of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). "The data of Afghans was not updated in the last 10 years, therefore it was imperative to verify and update records which will enable us to better understand existing needs in the refugee communities," said Saleem Khan, Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees in Pakistan. Close to one million new smart identity cards have been issued to date with a validity until 30 June 2023, with children under the age of five included in parents' cards. DRIVE also provided an opportunity for Afghan refugees to flag specific protection needs or vulnerabilities. More detailed information about refugees' socio-economic circumstances will allow to better assist them for their self-reliance in Pakistan and more tailored support, for those who express their intention to return to Afghanistan, when conditions allow. - APP

Lucchesi's love for Iqbal will bring the two countries closer



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Marco Lucchesi's love for Allama Iqbal and Urdu will bring the two countries closer. These views were expressed by Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Chairman, Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) while giving an introductory speech in a panel discussion on

"Contemporary Brazilian Literature" organized by the PAL. He also mentioned the translation of the book "Selected Stories of Brazil" published under the auspices of PAL and said that this book is a milestone in the development of literature between the two countries. While introducing Mr. Marco Lucchesi, DrYousuf said that Mr. Marco Lucchesi is

a writer, poet and translator. He was also the former president of the Brazilian Academy of Letters. His books have been translated into more than 15 languages. He has also been a professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. He has also won literary awards in Brazil, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Germany and France.

Prominent Brazilian writer, poet, journalist, writer, translator and critic Mr. Marco Lucchesi was specially invited by the PAL Islamabad to discuss contemporary Brazilian literature. Poems by Mr. Marco Lucchesi have been translated into Arabic, Roman, French, German and Swedish, said in a press release issued here on Friday.

VCs urge govt to protect Higher Education budget

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanvir Hussain have held out assurance to the heads of public sector universities that the Government will not cut the higher education sector's budget for the fiscal year (FY) 2022-23. The Ministers were addressing the Vice Chancellors Committee meeting held at the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Islamabad. Vice Chancellors of all the public sector universities and the Commission (HEC's governing body) members attended the meeting. The Vice Chancellors conveyed their concerns about the Indicative Budget Ceilings (IBC) of only Rs. 30 billion for higher education's recurring grant for the FY 2022-23. However, they welcomed the assurances of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif with regard to protection of the higher education sector's budget. They emphasized that HEC had presented a rationalized demand of Rs. 104.983 billion for the next financial year worked out together with the Ministry of Finance which needs to be protected. Mr. Ahsan Iqbal affirmed that the Government is cognizant of the importance of higher education and universities in the development of a nation. He underlined that the country needs to bring the universities to the forefront to help tackle its challenges by fully utilizing the potential of youth. "The States unable to provide education to their youth lose their right to survival," he stated. He said Pakistan has rich endowments and it will turn around the tide of economic hardships. The Minister said that the universities carry-out mentoring of almost two million youth, who are the future of this country. He termed classrooms and laboratories of the universities as national security frontiers while calling the Vice Chancellors the corps commanders. He highlighted that it is up to the Vice Chancellors as to how they prepare the youth for future challenges. "We have to provide a platform to our youth to bring Pakistan to the position it deserves and inculcate the principle of unity in diversity" he stressed. Minister for Federal Education Rana Tanveer stated that he stands by the universities in their valid demand for allocation of Rs. 104.983 billion. He stressed the need for promoting quality of education, innovation, and research activities in the universities to equip the country's youth with education and skills. He said that the Government will take steps to improve the financial management of universities.

K-IV Phase-I (260 MGD) PL1&PL2 awarded to CHEC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) awarded "The Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme K-IV Phase-I (260 MGD)" Contract Package No. KIV-PL1 and KIV-PL2 to China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd. (CHEC). According to a Gwadar Pro's report, CHEC is responsible for a 111.7-kilometer-long large diameter steel pipeline for the water supply in the Greater Karachi Region. The project consists of MS pipe procurement, processing, installation, trench excavation & backfill, pipe pressure test, casting of related wells, chambers and part of road work, etc. Upon completion, the project will effectively alleviate the regional water shortage, improve people's livelihood and promote the economic development of the Greater Karachi Region.

Opp. asked to refrain from 'point scoring'

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in Senate, Azam-Nazir-Tarar on Friday urged the opposition party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to avoid point scoring on increased prices of petroleum products and electricity and suggest way forward as ruined economy was not the issue of any political party. Speaking on an adjournment motion moved in Senate to discuss the increased prices of petroleum and electricity, he said that the country badly needed unity as economy was not the issue of only one political party. The PTI government had left the country on the verge of default, besides ruining the economy, he added. He blamed PTI for high inflation in the country and urged them to show political maturity by avoiding chaos in the country. He said the complex issues could not be tackled in just 55 days of the government. The PTI had left debt traps and the government was bound to honour commitments made by PTI to the IMF. Government has no resources to continue Rs 112 billion per annum subsidy on petroleum products' prices. However the poor were being given target subsidy to save them from impacts of inflation, he expressed. PML-Q's Kamal Ali Agha criticized increase in prices of petroleum products terming it unprecedented in country's history. He appreciated PTI government for allocating Rs 466 billion subsidy in the prices of petroleum products. - APP

PEIRA announces summer vacations

ISLAMABAD: Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) has announced summer vacations in public sector schools of Islamabad Capital Territory from June 10 till July 31, 2022. According to notification issued by PEIRA here Friday, all private educational institutions will open on August 01, 2022. However, PEIRA has also directed the private educational institutions to complete the next academic session till March 31, 2023. While, Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) has already announced summer vacations for all public sector educational institutions of federal capital starting from June 06 till August 3, 2022 (for students only).

In a notification, the FDE directed to All Heads of Institutions (Hols) Islamabad Model School/Colleges (Boys/Girls) Urban and Rural Areas, Islamabad that schools/colleges will reopen on 01-08-2022 for the next academic session 2022-23 that shall be concluded on 31-3-2023. The summer vacations shall be fully utilized to manage the following activities in all educational institutions in amicable manner. The activities included admissions according to already issued schedule. The physical verification of stock /stock checking, repair and maintenance of furniture /building/playgrounds. To complete the said tasks, heads of Institutions (Hols) shall engage necessary number of staff to manage all these activities when and where required, it added. - APP

COMSTECH organizes int'l virtual training on GIS

The Coordinator General COMSTECH said that this event is part of OIC Africa Program. Several programs under different thematic areas going to be held under the OIC Africa program for the capacity building of Africa with the emphasis on least developed countries

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH inaugurated two weeks long comprehensive virtual training on Geographical Information System (GIS) and Satellite Remote Sensing: Application for Natural Hazards, Land Cover and Water Resources on May 30. The training was organized in collaboration with International Islamic University in Uganda, National Centre of Excellence in Geology, University of Peshawar and Department of Forestry, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Dir Upper. The objective was to develop the participants' basic knowledge of space technology and GIS and to be able to acquire free

resources of satellite data and open access software to further enhance the capacity and apply that in their field of interest. Prof. Dr. Mohammad Shafiq from the National Center of Excellence in Geology, University of Peshawar said in his opening remarks that the space sciences and geographical information system are emerging technologies. The application of these technologies include monitoring, management of natural resources, urban and regional planning, governance, and defense. He said the application of space science is expanding tremendously. He said that the capacity of developing countries is not adequate to fully utilize the space technologies to contribute in the socio-economic development. He stressed the need of basic training and

capacity enhancement of young researchers so that they can fully utilize these technologies for the benefits of their countries. Prof. Dr. Ismail, Rector Islamic University, Uganda said in his address that I am delighted to be the part of this event jointly being organized by IUIU and COMSTECH. He encouraged informal communication with open mindedness among the experts of different fields and said such communication lead to the practical projects and initiatives. He said that education is to know the skill and attitude and apply that in your daily life, and this is all about capacity building. The Coordinator General COMSTECH said that this event is part of OIC Africa Program. Several programs under different thematic areas going to be held under the OIC

Africa program for the capacity building of Africa with the emphasis on least developed countries. In the next phase in-person trainings would be conducted in different African member states of OIC. The training comprised upon one-hour lecture and two-hours computer based practical training session on the data and software of space technology and their application, each day. The lectures and practical training was conducted by national and international experts working in the fields of GIS and remote sensing. More than hundred students, researchers and scientists from around the OIC member states particularly from African region attended this training. This two weeks training course will conclude on June 9.

Platinum jubilee: an old order is passing

The platinum jubilee is showing us contrasting things about this country. More than anything else, it is embodying the respect and affection that millions feel for the matriarch monarch herself. At 96, and after a record 70 years on the throne, it could hardly be otherwise. Much of that was on display as the jubilee weekend began on Thursday, thankfully in good weather in most places, with a palace balcony appearance, a flypast, the colour trooped, street parties getting under way and celebratory beacons lit. It would be a churlish country that treated Elizabeth II's great longevity and these anniversary events with anything other than goodwill and generosity. And goodwill is emphatically the national mood this weekend.

Yet Britain's mood should not be misread, as some seem too ready to do. Respect for the Queen extends across Britain, but it is not unconditional or without important nuances. The Queen's popularity can be measured in opinion poll ratings that any politician would envy. Her net positive to negative opinion rating is +69; Boris Johnson's, by contrast, is -42. She is the best regarded of all the royals. But respect is not the same thing as enthusiastic support.

Good feelings about the jubilee itself are beyond dispute. But they should not be exaggerated, however tempting this may be. The Britain that gathered in the Mall on Thursday, waving its flags, was large and significant, but it was not typical. Only a week ago, more people in Britain, 54%, told pollsters that they were not interested in the platinum jubilee than the 43% who said they were.

The features of a jubilee holiday have become familiar during Elizabeth II's long reign. This is the fourth since 1977. Yet there is no mistaking that this one is unusual and different from the others in some ways. The central difference is the relatively low profile of the monarch herself. The Queen is an elderly woman, recently widowed. Understandably, she is slowing down. She knows, as we also know, that the old order is beginning to pass. This jubilee cannot be understood without that truth. A long, stable and feminised period in the monarchy's history is ending.

This country needs to discuss things like a modern monarchy's proper role, its cost, its prerogatives, its accountability and the monarch's anachronistic role as head of state of other countries. Yet Britain is extraordinarily bad at any of this. A few months ago, the Commons Speaker even reprimanded Keir Starmer for mentioning the Queen in a Commons debate. Self-censorship of that sort should end. Today the country is inevitably focused on the Queen. Tomorrow it needs to talk about the future of the monarchy.

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Depp v Heard: an abusive spectacle

The publicity surrounding the defamation suit brought by the actor Johnny Depp against his former wife and fellow actor Amber Heard would have been concerning whatever the verdict. There are precedents in the US for trials involving celebrities that become media circuses. This, though, was particularly ugly. Partly that was due to the intimate nature of the case, involving as it did the breakdown of a brief and disastrous marriage. The invasion of privacy was magnified to grotesque proportions by continuous coverage on social media, and the Virginia court's decision to allow live-streaming. With Mr Depp's grossly insulting messages to other actors about Ms Heard now common knowledge, the phenomenon of trial as entertainment plumbed new depths of offence and misogyny.

Mr Depp's victory brings further worrying implications. The jury decided that his ex-wife defamed him in a 2018 article for the Washington Post, in which she called herself a "public figure representing domestic abuse", even though his name was not mentioned. There is a risk that, in future, other women who wish to speak or write about domestic abuse may be deterred by the fear of being sued by former partners.

Ms Heard, who said she was "heartbroken" by the outcome, may yet appeal. The fact that in 2020 a British high court judge took the opposite view to this American jury could encourage her. In that case, Mr Depp was the loser in a libel case he brought against the Sun newspaper. The judge found the description of Mr Depp as a "wife beater" was "substantially true".

But this earlier ruling, in a jurisdiction usually thought to be favourable to libel claimants, has also added to this week's shock. As in most trials involving abuse allegations where the alleged perpetrator and victim know each other, both cases rested on which witnesses were seen as more credible. Of course, juries must be allowed to reach decisions based on the evidence before them. But the power imbalance between the protagonists and campaigning by Mr Depp's supporters made for a troubling backdrop. At 58, Mr Depp is a world-famous film star.

It is hard to predict the case's precise impact. Part of the reason for the saturation coverage is people's fascination with lives that are so remote from their own. But the level of public sympathy for Mr Depp despite plentiful evidence of appalling behaviour, including violence, is disturbing. As is the hostility towards Ms Heard, particularly on social media with, as usual, no obvious way for her to seek redress. In 2018, she wrote hopefully that the #MeToo movement had created a "transformative political moment". The past few weeks have been closer to a nightmare.

Russia and Iran: Between competitive partnership and rivalry

Kirill Semenov

On the other hand, Russia is interested in maintaining friendly relations with the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf and Jordan, for which the strengthening of Iran's position in Syria also poses a threat. Therefore, Russia might continue its policy of restraining Iranian ambitions but keeping an eye on the Arab states rather than on the US and Israel

Moscow-Tehran relations are shaped and constrained by ideological and geopolitical developments in the Middle East and beyond. Many in the West have long considered the Islamic Republic of Iran to be Russia's ally. The reality, however, is more complex. Ties between Russia and Iran would be better characterised as a "marriage of convenience" – if not even a "competitive partnership". They lack strategic depth and the supposed shared ideological foundations that underpin their relations are situational. Today, the politico-military sphere of cooperation between Moscow and Tehran is limited to the Syrian dossier and mutual trade does not exceed \$4 billion (compared to \$25 billion of trade between Russia and Türkiye). Of course, Moscow-Tehran relations are experiencing a certain renaissance, but

70s, the Soviet Union built factories and gas pipelines in Iran and equipped the Iranian military with modern weapons, making this period the best in Russian-Iranian relations. Soviet-Iranian cooperation came to an abrupt end with the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who came to power afterwards called the USSR a "small Satan" (the "big Satan" was the US) and began to support the mujahideen who were fighting against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. In Lebanon, a leader of the pro-Iran Hezbollah, Imad Mughniyeh, was behind the abduction of Soviet diplomats and the murder of one of them, in 1985. It was not until 1989 that Soviet-Iranian relations began to normalise and continued to improve in Yeltsin's Russia. However, the essence of this cooperation was purely transactional: Iran wanted the latest Soviet/Russian arms, and the

their relations have been marked by ups and downs over the decades.

Until the reign of the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, there had been numerous Russian-Persian wars and Soviet interventions in Iran, which cast a shadow on the modern relations between the two countries.

Even though the shah was considered a close ally of the United States, he had close contact with the USSR.

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USSR and then Russia sought to get billions of dollars from sales.

More recently, many in Iran perceived Russia as a hostile state during the latter's use of the Hamadan Airbase in Iran to strike Daesh positions in 2016. Russia's publicising this information caused a stir among Iranians, who felt Russia's use of the base echoed Soviet intervention between 1941 and 1945. As a result, Tehran cancelled the deal for the use of the facility for Russian military aviation.

Iran would likely have remained Russia's minor partner in the Middle East if not for the Arab uprisings and the Syrian revolution, which led to a gradual politico-military rapprochement between the two.

The ties between Tehran and Damascus were much deeper than those between Moscow and Damascus. Syria was an important element of the "Axis of Resistance," which has an ideological and even a religious and spiritual component, as it is supposed to lay "the international and regional ground" to ensure the return of the 12th Shia Imam from hiding. Naturally, Russia did not share such attitudes and its cooperation with Iran – and the Assad regime – in Syria was purely pragmatic. Even though they both supported the Assad regime, tensions started as soon as Moscow became involved in Syria. The countries had contrasting visions: Moscow was interested in normalising relations between Syria and its neighbours, using the country as a springboard to enter the "big game" in the Middle East, while Iran tried to turn the country into its military springboard for attacks on its neighbours.

At first, these differences appeared more technical, mainly concerning, for instance, the question of how agreements with the Syrian opposition on the cessation of hostilities were to be implemented. At the time, Russia sought a relatively more moderate approach compared to Iran and the Syrian regime. For instance, it brought in Sunni Muslim and Chechen military police into Aleppo after the city had been taken over by the regime – in part to prevent massacres of Sunni residents by pro-Iranian Shia militias.

In other areas, like Wadi Barada, there were incidents between Russian military police and pro-Iranian militias. Tehran's dominance in Syria's economy also began to displease Moscow since too few business spheres were left for Russian oligarchs. Even though it was somewhat more profitable for the Assad regime to enter into contracts with Russian companies, Iran retained its influence both through official channels as the regime's main sponsor, trading partner and supplier of oil products; and unofficial channels; and pro-Iranian militants reinforcing Tehran's policies.

Finally, Russian-Iranian tensions reached a new level in 2018 after Israel and an American military contingent stationed in Syria began striking pro-Iranian formations in the country. With this came the risk of a direct military clash between Iran and the US and Israel, which Moscow wanted to avoid.

In southern Syria, Iranian formations reached Israeli and Jordanian borders after a 2018 military campaign. Based on agreements with Washington and Tel Aviv, Moscow prevented Tehran from establishing lodgings in Daraa and Quneitra.

Russia also tried to limit Iranian expansion in northeastern Syria near the borders with Iraq, between the cities of al Mayadin and al Bukamal, where a pro-Iranian-controlled enclave was effectively formed, bringing the risk of a clash with US troops on the other side of the Euphrates.

However, given Israel's pro-Ukraine stance and the US military assistance to Kiev, Moscow may reconsider this

approach. On the other hand, Russia is interested in maintaining friendly relations with the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf and Jordan, for which the strengthening of Iran's position in Syria also poses a threat. Therefore, Russia might continue its policy of restraining Iranian ambitions but keeping an eye on the Arab states rather than on the US and Israel.

However, the contradictions between Russia and Iran are gradually moving beyond the Syrian dossier and may spread to the post-Soviet space, particularly in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Iran has become more active in its Caucasus policy after the Armenian-Azerbaijani war when Armenian leadership considered Russian assistance in its war with Azerbaijan insufficient. Instead of increasing its military support to Yerevan, Russia concluded an alliance agreement with Azerbaijan.

Iran is now trying to pressure Azerbaijan by conducting military manoeuvres under the pretext of alleged military ties between Baku and Tel Aviv and offering itself as a more reliable partner for Yerevan than Moscow.

In Tajikistan, Iran is trying to compete with Moscow on security issues. Moscow is trying to develop constructive dialogue with the Taliban despite Dushanbe's hesitancy regarding the new government in Kabul. Meanwhile, Tehran has already offered Dushanbe new forms of interaction in the military sphere, including opening a new factory to produce Iranian-made drones.

Against the backdrop of the Russian military operation in Ukraine, where Moscow is rapidly using its resources, Russia's Central Asian and Caucasian allies may be feeling increasingly insecure. Therefore, Iran has an opportunity to fill this security vacuum.

Most pressing though is to find a formula to end the conflict in Ukraine that will not reward Russia for its invasion, while providing its current or future leadership a ladder on which it can climb down and return from the cold, maybe through refraining from calling the current war "a battle between democracy and autocracy," as it has been framed by US President Joe Biden. This might alienate countries like China, which can play a role in persuading Russia to change course, despite the many lines crossed on the leadership level that cannot easily be uncrossed. Even if Russian President Vladimir Putin is persuaded to end the war by Ukraine ceding territory, which could be seen as a form of appeasement, it is going to take decades to return to the relatively stable Russian-NATO relations that existed before February's invasion. And though everything must be done to avoid a new cold war, Russia is unlikely to see the sanctions against it removed soon. So, it could continue as it did in the past decade – testing NATO and Western resolve through countless soft-power disinformation campaigns and direct action like cyberattacks on infrastructure. This is why NATO will remain a cornerstone for Western countries to adapt to and deal with the challenges that could be seen as existential to peace, stability and the freedom of the world generally and to Western countries specifically.

Courtesy: Arab news

Why West will continue to need NATO after Ukraine war

Mohamed Chebaro



To remain relevant, NATO needs to redefine its strategic priorities, which Stoltenberg said should include facing Chinese ambitions, the rise of anti-democratic states, climate change and instability in Africa

Many people claim that the world before the war in Ukraine will never be seen again. It certainly seems that, instead of reducing nations' reliance on NATO, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has actually reinforced the need for the transatlantic alliance, even among traditionally neutral countries.

If the pandemic ushered in second thoughts about the benefits of globalization, the war in Ukraine has put defense policies and the need to rearm and ce-

other structures in a bid to shield themselves from the winds of change blowing from the east. Alarmingly, the tenets of sovereignty, the right to self-determination, nonaggression, respect of international laws, interdependence and the promotion of a quasi-liberal economy have been shaken. Therefore, the next decade is likely to witness a shift toward militarism, power posturing and the shrinking of neutrality as more European states look to join the NATO alliance, a military behemoth we all thought was

ment alliances to ensure nations' security individually or as part of blocs at the forefront of the travails of most Western countries.

Clearly, NATO is not going anywhere anytime soon, as Western countries are scrambling to increase their defense spending and improve their armies' readiness and capabilities for what looks like a new cold war.

So, thanks to Russia, countries are rushing to abandon neutrality and are making bids to join NATO, the EU and other structures in a bid to shield themselves from the winds of change blowing from the east. Alarmingly, the tenets of sovereignty, the right to self-determination, nonaggression, respect of international laws, interdependence and the promotion of a quasi-liberal economy have been shaken. Therefore, the next decade is likely to witness a shift toward militarism, power posturing and the shrinking of neutrality as more European states look to join the NATO alliance, a military behemoth we all thought was

"brain dead," as French President Emmanuel Macron said in 2019. Moscow has long been apprehensive of NATO's enlargement and, though its Ukraine operation was started in an attempt to deter further enlargement, the invasion has actually served to refocus states' efforts to be part of various security umbrellas. Individual states are also increasing their defense spending, while NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg expects the summit in Madrid at the end of June to be a "historic" opportunity to strengthen the alliance in the face of Russian aggression and to "chart the way ahead for the next decade," including welcoming new members like Sweden and Finland.

To remain relevant, NATO needs to redefine its strategic priorities, which Stoltenberg said should include facing Chinese ambitions, the rise of anti-democratic states, climate change and instability in Africa. This is all in addition to the pressing issue of finding the necessary consensus among member states to continue their support for Ukraine in a way that deters further aggression from Russia. NATO's 73-year history demonstrates its resilience and, so far, its adaptability through countless strategic evolutions, which have seen the alliance evolve to meet various challenges. The war in Ukraine could be the catalyst for a renewed alliance, with objectives that are more aligned to the adversities of the 21st century.

It was France's withdrawal from the

alliance's military command structure in 1966 that pushed it to produce a report that guided its philosophy for the next 50 years. The 1967 report produced by then-Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel called for the pursuit of a "two-track approach," combining strong military deterrence with the willingness to embrace détente and dialogue with the Soviet Union. The alliance's drive for a quasi-stable world did not deter NATO from welcoming old Warsaw Pact nations through its Partnership for Peace program, which Moscow itself joined in 1994. The NATO-Russia Council, whose work has been suspended since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, promoted partnership and cooperation to strengthen security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic sphere. Its principles included calling for the respect of democracy, pluralism and the rule of law, refraining from the use of threats or force, the prevention of conflict, and cooperation in peacekeeping under the UN's authority.

It is in this spirit that NATO must conduct a new strategic review in order to realign its priorities so that it can survive and stay relevant in the long term. Challenges such as the changing nature of warfare, asymmetric wars, hybrid conflicts, the taming of cyberspace, terrorism, migration and climate change, while ensuring a technological edge, are the issues in play if the alliance is to remain relevant.

Briefs

Pakistan's security...

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and are the pride of the nation." "Country's defence is sacred and Pakistan's security, sovereignty and integrity will be ensured at all costs, PM emphasised. The nation owes its freedom to monumental sacrifices of our heroes our martyrs," PM concluded. Separately, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday directed authorities to install a desalination plant in Gwadar so that people could get clean drinking water and to put up solar panels so that supply of electricity could be ensured in the coastal town. He issued the direction during a meeting here with a delegation of Chinese companies. He also stressed that Gwadar airport should be completed at the earliest and said that Gwadar port should be made a busy and profitable port. He assured the Chinese investors of all possible cooperation in achieving goals. He asked Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal to hold comprehensive talks with the Chinese investors and prepare a clear roadmap for the resolution of all issues. Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti and special assistants Tariq Fatmi and Fahd Hussain also attended the meeting.

PM decides to slash...

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commodities so that it could lend funds to Pakistan. Earlier, in an interview with TRT, PM Shehbaz said the next general election will be held within 15 months and till then his goal would be to address the challenges of inflation and poverty. "My vision is to rebuild Pakistan and try my best to decrease poverty and cut the budget of the government sector to ensure austerity," the premier added. The prime minister said his government would take "short-term" measures to address the problems faced by the general public ahead of elections. However, he stressed if he comes to power by the votes of the people, a full-fledged development agenda would be launched to deal with issues such as unemployment and poverty.

SC gives govt 1 week for...

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decade, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah had said. A five-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Mohammad Ali Mazhar, had taken suo motu notice on apprehensions that criminal justice might be undermined by people in authority. In a written order issued earlier this week, the SC had observed that it appeared the amendments in the Exit From Pakistan (Control) Rules of 2010 had been enforced with retrospective effect. "This appears to have been done without the authorisation necessary for giving such an effect to amendments in the rules," it had said. When the hearing resumed today, Chief Justice Bandial said the government should take adequate steps to bring the amendments within the ambit of the law. "We do not want to interfere in executive powers right now." At the start of the hearing, the CJP grilled Attorney General Ashtar Ahsan about the process to remove names from the ECL.

Majority wants...

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complete its full term or should announce mid-term elections? To which, 64 percent of Pakistanis opined in favour of immediate elections. Over the justification of hike in petrol prices, 62 percent of Pakistanis rejected the PML-N's argument and opined that there was no such compulsion and it could not be good for the country. Meanwhile, 59 percent of the Pakistanis believe that, raising fuel prices at this point in time will further aggravate the problems of ordinary people.

NATO seeks 'united' path to address Turkish concerns

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: NATO is in touch with Turkey to find a "united way" forward to address Ankara's concerns over Sweden and Finland's bid to join the pact, the bloc's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said. "When an ally, Turkey, rises concerns, then we have to do what we always do in NATO and that is to sit down, address those concerns and then find a united way forward," Stoltenberg told reporters at the White House after meeting President Joe Biden. "That's exactly what we're doing now. We are in close contact with Ankara, with the political leadership there. I've spoken to President (Recep Tayyip) Erdogan and in also very close contact with Sweden and Finland," he said.

Stoltenberg will convene a meeting with senior officials from three nations ahead of a June 28 NATO summit. In addition, he said Turkey should be recognized as "an important ally," which he said: "contributes to security in many different ways." He cited Turkey's "strategic geographic location" bordering Iraq and Syria and its "key role" in the fight against the Daesh terror group. Finland and



Sweden said on Wednesday they would continue a dialogue with Turkey over their bids for NATO membership but did not say whether there had been progress on overcoming Ankara's objections to their joining the military alliance. A bid to join NATO requires unanimous backing from the alliance's current 30 member states. All 30 NATO members are ready to come to the table to address Turkey's security concerns related to the PKK terrorist group, Stoltenberg had also said Wednesday. The comments come as Ankara continues to protest Finnish and Swedish membership bids to join the trans-Atlantic alliance, main-

taining both countries have supported and provided a safe haven for terrorists, including members of the PKK, its Syrian branch YPG and others. "All NATO allies are of course ready to sit down and address those concerns, including the threats posed to Turkey by PKK, and this is terrorist threats, which of course, is something we are taking very seriously," Stoltenberg told reporters at the U.S. State Department where he was being hosted by Secretary of State Antony Blinken. "We know that no other NATO ally has suffered more terrorist attacks than Turkey, and Turkey is an important ally not least because of its strategic geographic location bordering Iraq and Syria," he added.

Stoltenberg said he will convene senior officials from Turkey, Sweden and Finland in Brussels "in the coming days," adding that he is confident "we will find a united way forward." Earlier Wednesday, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sweden and Finland have not yet provided Ankara with concrete responses that meet its expectations. Sweden and Finland formally applied to join NATO on May 18, a decision spurred by Russia's war on Ukraine, which began on Feb. 24. But Turkey, a longstanding member of the alliance, has voiced objec-

tions to their membership bids, criticizing the countries for tolerating and even supporting terrorist groups. Last week, Turkey hosted consultations with Swedish and Finnish delegations on their NATO applications in Ankara. Erdogan said the meetings had not been "at the desired level." Amid Sweden and Finland's NATO bids, Turkey on Tuesday emphasized that these two countries need to make amendments to their counterterrorism laws. Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said there are certain conditions that both countries must fulfill. He added that Turkey maintains a dialogue with Sweden and Finland in line with Erdogan's directives. Ankara has said Sweden and Finland must halt their support for the PKK and other groups, bar them from organizing any events on their territory, extradite those sought by Turkey on terrorism charges, support Ankara's military and counterterrorism operations, and lift all arms exports restrictions. Finland and Sweden have sought to negotiate a solution and other NATO capitals have said they remain confident that the objections raised by Turkey - which has NATO's second-biggest military - can be overcome.

Remembering Ali on 6th anniversary of his death

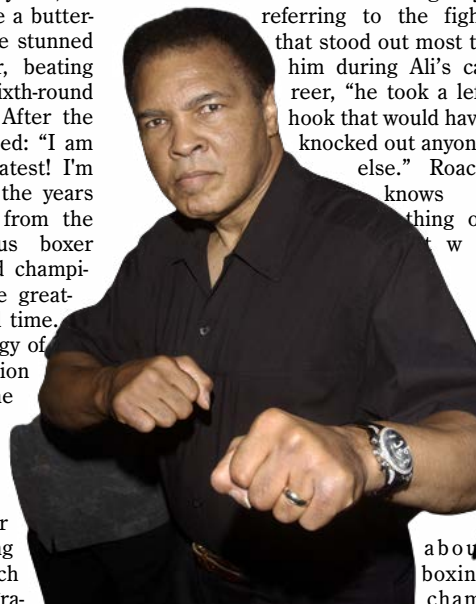
WEB DESK

HOUSTON: The Greatest. That describes Muhammad Ali in his simplest and purest form. Ali died six years ago on June 3, 2016, at the age of 74. But his legacy lives on to this day. "Muhammad Ali made boxing a worldwide sport," said Hall of Fame boxing trainer Freddie Roach. "He drew the fans in and brought more visibility to the sport and to humanitarian causes." Born Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr. on Jan. 17, 1942, in Louisville, Kentucky, Ali started boxing when he was just 12 years old. He racked up Golden Gloves boxing titles along the way, leading up to the 1960 Olympics in Rome, where he took home the gold medal as the light heavyweight champion. Ali turned professional shortly after the Olympics. His knack for talking up his talents and skills in a showboating style earned him the nickname "the Louisville Lip." But Ali would always put his money where his mouth is, backing up his talk with action. That became evident in 1964, when Ali got his opportunity at the title in a highly anticipated fight in Miami, Florida against heavyweight champion

Sonny Liston. Ali broke out with a series of poetic insults and rhymes, including his iconic "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee." And he stunned the champ in short order, beating the favored Liston with a sixth-round technical knockout (TKO). After the fight, Ali famously proclaimed: "I am the greatest! I am the greatest! I'm the king of the world." In the years following, Ali transformed from the tough-talking, braggadocious boxer into a powerful, fleet-footed champion, arguably considered the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time. That culminated with a trilogy of fights with legendary champion Joe Frazier, ending with the third and most talked-about match of the century in 1975, known as the "Thrilla in Manila."

Ali and Frazier exerted their power and might, trading blow-for-blow in an epic match that saw Ali triumph over Frazier with a TKO at the end of the 14th round. Ali admitted after the fight that he was spent, saying it "was the closest thing to dying that I know" and calling Frazier "the greatest fighter of all times next to me." "When he

beat Joe Frazier in their third fight," Roach told Anadolu Agency, referring to the fight that stood out most to him during Ali's career, "he took a left hook that would have knocked out anyone else." Roach knows a thing or two about boxing champions, having trained former world champion boxer Manny Pacquiao, the only eight-division world champion in the history of boxing who won 12 major world titles.



BJL receives France's highest civilian award

PARIS: American former world number one Billie Jean King was awarded the Legion of Honour, France's highest civilian award, on Friday. The multiple major winner and rights activist was presented the award at the Elysee Palace by French President Emmanuel Macron, 50 years after her 1972 singles triumph at Roland Garros. King, 78, was also honoured at the French Open on Thursday, a day before the award ceremony in Paris in recognition of her fight for women's sport, gender equality in sport. "I am prouder of what I have done off-court than as an athlete, even though my tennis career was not so bad, was it?" King said. "I guess being the world's number one and winning Grand Slam tournaments, including Roland Garros, is quite an achievement. But I am prouder to have fought for gender equality. "Tennis would be my platform and, if I could become the world's best player, it would be better to have my voice heard. "I knew that, as a woman, it would be much harder, but it would be even harder for my coloured-skin peers. I had the opportunity to make the world a slightly better place. "It was a revelation - since then, it has guided my life and I have never changed course." Two years before her triumph at Roland Garros, King signed a \$1 contract along with eight other women players and joined the breakaway Virginia Slims Circuit, which led to the creation of the Women's Tennis Association in 1973 with King as its first president. She lobbied for equal prize money for men and women at the U.S. Open, leading to the tournament becoming the first tennis major to offer equal prize money to both sexes in 1973.

Rafael Nadal reaches final, as Zverev retires

PARIS: Rafael Nadal is through to his 14th Roland Garros final from 18 trips to Paris. Nadal battled against Alexander Zverev under a closed roof over Court Philippe-Chatrier, and it could have been one of the most epic encounters in the Roland Garros semi-finals. The rivals needed over three hours to reach the second set tie break, but the German could not play it after injuring his ankle on a slow and muddy court. They pushed each other to the limits, and the opening set lasted for almost 100 minutes! Zverev made a stronger start and led 4-2 before Nadal bounced back to get back on the positive side. The German fended off three set points in the tenth game to introduce a tie break and opened a 6-2 advantage. Giving his best to survive, Rafa fended off four set points and stole the breaker 10-8 for a massive boost after an epic battle. Zverev led 5-3 in the second set and served for it before Nadal made another escape to prolong his chances. The set should have gone into a tie break, but Alexander injured his ankle in the 12th game's last point, leaving the court and returning on crutches just to announce the retirement. - APP



BAKU: Pakistani feature film "Dum Mastam" released in Cinema Plus theaters in Baku. Premiere of the movie was screened at Ganjlik Mall. Ganira Pashayeva, Chair of Pakistan-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Friendship Group was the chief guest on the occasion. Ambassador Bilal Hayee also present at the occasion. - DNA

FF Steel promoting healthy sports activities

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: FF Steel encourages healthy sports activities to engage youth ensuring better productivity and physical fitness which alternatively result into minimizing the brain drain from Peshawar to other areas where these types of activities are at peak. FF Steel in collaboration with Bank of Khyber hosted one such event to promote a healthier, active and happier set of employees and hoping a ripple effect in the society stated by Mr. Zarak K. Khattak (CEO FF Steel) at a Friendly Cricket Match held between FF Gladiators and Bank of Khyber Lions on June 02, 2022 at Islamia University Cricket Ground Peshawar. This friendly event was graced by Mr. Amir Zafar (Chairman BOD PESCO), Mr. Nauman Wazir (Chairman FF Steel) and other sport lovers from FF Steel, BoK, Universities and Corporate sector. The two organizational teams actively participated with zeal and sportsmanship. Spectators were thoroughly entertained and it is anticipated that other companies, organizations and educational institutes will follow the footsteps to promote healthy opportunities for the people of Peshawar. The Friendly Cricket match comprised of 12

overs was won by Bank of Khyber Lions and Man of the Match was awarded to Mr. Muhammad Kamran from BoK. While distribut-

ing prizes, Mr. Muhammad Ali Gulfaraz (MD BoK) appreciated the initiative taken by FF Steel and BoK and also addressed the need to

further strengthen the industry and corporate linkages to stop brain drain and improve the social, cultural and friendly activities.



Khan warns the govt...

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adding: "The only reason the government is against me is that they know once I am out of the way, it makes it easier for them to siphon the country's money to foreign countries." The PTI chairman claimed the coalition government - which he maintains was formed with the help of a US-backed conspiracy - knows that the people were still backing him, therefore, they have now decided to file a sedition case. He added that he has "neither broken the law", "nor have any of his actions been against the law". He stressed that his 126-day sit-in in Islamabad was "peaceful". "I never want to break the law and do not want to spread anarchy [...] we never wanted to get into clashes with the army, rangers, or police," the ousted premier said. Khan also took the government to task for the back-to-back increase in the price of electricity and petroleum products, saying it has "dropped an atom bomb of inflation on the nation". The ousted prime minister said during his 3.5 years in government, the petrol prices were hiked by Rs56, but during the present government's "60 days in power", it has gone by Rs60. The PTI chairman said his government increased electricity per unit by Rs6 and the present government has hiked it by Rs10 in just two months.

Govt mulls filing...

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Minister Rana Sanaullah, Minister for Communications Maulana Asad Mahmood, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira, Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Minister for Law Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, including Interior Secretary Yusuf Naseem Khokhar and Islamabad Police IG Nasir Akbar were in attendance. During the meeting, the interior minister, interior secretary and IG Islamabad briefed the participants on PTT's 'Azadi March' held on May 25. The participants deliberated over filing a case under the charges of sedition against former prime minister Imran Khan and the chief ministers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan, and Gilgit-Baltistan, Khalid Khursheed, the statement read. "However, the committee postponed the meeting to deliberate over the matter further till June 6 to present its final recommendations before the federal cabinet," the statement read. During the meeting, Sanaullah urged the committee to recommend the federal cabinet file a treason case against Imran Khan.

On 100th day...

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industrial region. Zelensky said that in 2014, Kremlin-backed separatists and the Russian military controlled 43,000 square kilometres (16,600 square miles), an area he compared to the size of the Netherlands.

Medicine prices increase by 20pc within week

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The pharmaceutical companies have increased the prices of medicines for diabetes, eye disorders, blood pressure and other diseases by 20 per cent within a week. The medicines' distributors have said that the price of insulin has increased from Rs1049 to Rs1,142 and that of eye drops from Rs875 to Rs955. Similarly, the pill used for psychological disorders has increased from Rs2,800 to Rs3,150, whereas, the price of milk cartons has increased by Rs1,000. The medicines' distributors have also stated that the prices of medicines would further increase by another 50 per cent. People at pharmacy stores have expressed their concerns over the skyrocketing prices of medicines, stating that the prices of medicines were going beyond their reach. They pointed out that they were forced to buy medicines at exorbitant prices, for they could live without petrol and electricity but not without medicines.

Briefs

Azerbaijan, China discuss green energy projects

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan and China have discussed activities realized for the implementation of green energy projects in the country, Azernews reports. The discussion took place during the meeting between Azerbaijan's Export and Investment Promotion Agency Head YusifAbdullayev with the newly-appointed Economic and Trade Adviser at the Chinese embassy in Baku, Ma Chi. During the meeting, the parties discussed the business and investment climate in Azerbaijan and the work done to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries. They also exchanged views on the participation of Azerbaijani companies in the 5th China International Import Expo to be held in Shanghai on November 5-10. Azerbaijan is China's key trade partner in the South Caucasus region. In 2021, China became Azerbaijan's 4th largest trading partner. The trade turnover between the two countries amounted to \$1.7 billion. Azerbaijan has a trade mission in China, trade and wine houses, trade branches in trade networks and measures are continuously taken to develop cooperation. In addition, there are companies with Chinese capital operating in Azerbaijan. The successful investment cooperation is underway. Meanwhile, negotiations are underway with China on a number of industrial projects. Azerbaijan was one of the first countries to support China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative.

Global food prices slightly down in May

DNA

LONDON: Global food prices went down modestly in May for the second consecutive month, although prices of wheat and poultry rose, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said on Friday. The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in the international prices of a basket of commonly-traded food commodities, dropped 0.6% month-on-month to 157.4 in May of 2022, yet still close to a record high of 159.7 points hit in March. Main decreases were observed in the vegetable oil index (3.5%), amid lower prices across palm, sunflower, soy, and rapeseed oils, due to the removal of Indonesia's export ban on palm oil. The dairy price index also went down 3.5%, the first decline in eight months.

"Prices of milk powders declined the most, linked to market uncertainties from the continued COVID-19 lockdowns in China, while robust retail sales and high demand from restaurants in the Northern Hemisphere prevented cheese prices from falling significantly despite weakened global import demand," FAO said.

NGOs file case against French arms firms

DNA

PARIS: A group of NGOs filed a criminal complaint against three major French weapons manufacturers for "possible complicity in alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in Yemen." Independent Yemeni group Mwatana for Human Rights, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECHR) and French organization Sherpa, supported by Amnesty International, have filed a case with the Paris Judiciary Tribunal. They contend that fighter jets, missiles and guidance systems made by Dassault Aviation, Thales Group and MBDA France are used in the conflict in Yemen, where there is "overwhelming evidence of indiscriminate attacks on Yemeni civilians." From 2015 to 2020, France delivered over 8 billion (\$8.6 billion) worth of defense equipment, ammunition and maintenance services to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the two countries heading a military coalition against Yemen's Iranian-aligned Houthi rebels for the past seven years.

SCO Secretary General in Kazakhstan

Kazakh President hails SCO's geopolitical role

President Tokayev also focused on the uniqueness of the SCO agenda, which touches on a wide range of issues. It is noteworthy that the SCO is not confrontational in its essence, it is set up to be constructive, to develop co-op between the participating states

NEWS DESK

NUR-SULTAN: President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev received Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Zhang Ming, who arrived in Kazakhstan on his first official visit, the Akorda press service reports. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Zhang Ming discussed Kazakhstan's cooperation with the SCO in such priority areas as ensuring regional security, and developing trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian ties. They also touched upon key aspects of the Organization's activities in the current geopolitical situation. Welcoming Zhang Ming, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev noted that the SCO Secretary-General took office amid a challenging geopolitical situation, and in these conditions, the Organization should play a special role. Kazakhstan is an active participant in our



Organization. Speaking at the SCO summit in Bishkek, I stated that this Organization is the most successful among the international organizations existing in the international arena," the Head of our State said.

President Tokayev also focused on the uniqueness of the SCO agenda, which touches on a wide range of issues. «It is noteworthy that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is not confrontational in its

essence, it is set up to be constructive, to develop cooperation between the participating states. The SCO is also aimed at making a great contribution to the improvement of the international situation.

'Referendum will change our society'

NUR-SULTAN: Much discussion and explanation of the draft constitutional amendments were underway throughout the country over the month, Kazinform correspondent reports. «In the history of our country, the amendments to the Constitution will be introduced for the first time through a national referendum. Holding it is an important step towards building a developed democratic society in Kazakhstan. Much discussion and explanation of the draft constitutional amendments were underway throughout the country over the month. The Constitutional reform received a wide response within the society," said the President in his video address. According to him, its provisions aim not at increasing the privileges and authority of the President but enhancing the system of checks and balances between the branches of the power, protecting the interests, rights, and freedoms of all citizens. «I'm sure that people's declaration of will on the constitutional amendments will lay a strong foundation of new fair Kazakhstan. Together we'll bring New Kazakhstan into reality in which social justice will be the main value and framework for a new social compact, said Tokayev. The referendum will challenge our society's civil maturity and political awareness. The Central Referendum Commission and other authorized government bodies will ensure full implementation of all norms of the electoral legislation. International observers and reps of public associations of our country are to monitor the voting process," added the Kazakh Head of State. The nationwide referendum to introduce amendments and additions to the Kazakh Constitution is to be held on June 5, 2022. - DNA

EU officially adopts 6th sanctions package against Russia

DNA

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Friday officially adopted the sixth sanctions package against Russia as the war in Ukraine rages on. "With today's package, we are increasing limitations to the Kremlin's ability to finance the war by imposing further economic sanctions," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell commented on the decision of the Council of the European Union. The package includes a ban on Russian oil imports, giving EU member states six months to phase out crude oil and eight months to cut other refined petroleum products. Pipeline oil is temporarily exempted from the oil embargo, as a main concession to Hungary. In addition, Bulgaria and Croatia are also granted further derogations on the imports of seaborne oil and vacuum gas oil. According to the calculations of the European Commission, the sanctions will cut 92% of Russian oil trade into the bloc by the end of this year. The decision extends the list of dual-use goods and technology that are not allowed to be exported to Russia as they could support the military and defense sector. The sanctions package also excludes Russia's biggest bank Sberbank from the SWIFT international payment system, as well as the Credit Bank of Moscow, the Russian Agricultural Bank, and the Belarusian Bank For Development And Reconstruction. The bloc also added three new Russian state-owned broadcasters, Rossiya RTR/RTR Planeta, Rossiya 24/Russia 24, and TV Centre International, to the list of media outlets banned from the EU.



MINSK: Pakistan ambassador to Belarus Sajjad Haider meets Christine Honegger Zolotukhin, ambassador of Switzerland to Belarus. Both sides discussed bilateral ties, regional situation and other matters of mutual interest. - DNA

Closing ceremony of Model OIC-2022 held in Baku

DNA

BAKU: The closing ceremony of the "Model Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) - International Relations Academy" project, which has been suc-

cessfully implemented for over a decade by the Eurasian Regional Center of the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF-ERC), was held in the Park Inn Hotel in Baku, Azerbaijan. The event was attended by the representatives of government agencies,

members of parliament, as well as ambassadors of the OIC member states, the media and NGOs. A short introductory video about the activities of Model OIC was shown. The first speaker, Mr. Vusal Gurbanov, Acting Director General of ICYF-ERC, spoke about the main goals and objectives of the project, which has more than a thousand alumni and noted the growing interest in Model OIC in recent years. Mr. Gurbanov also mentioned how the project - which got around 600 applications - is being successfully implemented in more than 30 OIC member states. In his speech, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Elnur Mammadov spoke about Azerbaijan-OIC relations, in particular, the successes of Azerbaijan's foreign policy at the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC in March this year.



New Zealand opens center for countering violent extremism

AUCKLAND: New Zealand on Friday launched the Center of Research Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. In a statement, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said her government is implementing all recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the 2019 terrorist attack at mosques in Christchurch. "We have ensured that the Centre of Excellence will go even further than the Commission's recommendation to establish a programme to fund independent New Zealand-specific research on the causes of, and measures to prevent, violent extremism and terrorism," Ardern said. The government had formed a royal commission inquiry to find out whether there were any failings by government agencies in the Christchurch mosques attack. The 792-page report, which took about 18 months to compile, had identified deficiencies in the firearms licensing system, as well as "inappropriate concentration of resources" on the part of security agencies. It had made a list of recommendations, including changes to how firearms are managed, establishing a new national intelligence and security agency and a proposal for the police to better identify and respond to hate crimes. Brenton Tarrant, an Australian white supremacist, killed 51 people and injured 40 more at the Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre on March 15, 2019. - DNA

Pak-China increasing co-op on disaster risk reduction

Cui advised to advance the compilation of the disaster prevention and mitigation action plan under CPEC for closer people-to-people bonds and the building of China-Pakistan community with a shared future

DNA

BEIJING: China and Pakistan should strengthen cooperation on natural disasters prevention and mitigation to build a China-Pakistan community with a shared future. This was stated by Xu Peng, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in an exclusive interview to China Economic Net (CEN). "Building a beautiful homeland is a common dream for mankind. In face of climate change, disaster prevention and mitigation and other global issues, no country can manage alone or stand aloof. Only through joint efforts can we address them in a scientific way," said Cui, who is also the Director-General of China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre on Earth Sciences (CJPJRC). According to Cui, the annual fre-

quency of extreme weather and major natural disasters caused by global climate change is about 320 times on average in the past four decades. Similar situation prevails in Pakistan. Unusual heatwave has been striking Pakistan from March to May 2022, it is most likely by human-caused climate change, a rapid analysis finds. The peak temperatures reached 51C in March. Since the start of May, Balochistan province has been engulfed in ever growing forest fire. China and Iran both assisted Pakistan in putting out the blaze. As an expert on disaster risk reduction, Cui shared his opinion with CEN on China-Pak cooperation in this regard. Cui called to establish a China-Pak cooperation mechanism on disaster information sharing and cooperation in disaster prevention and mitigation, to facilitate bilateral collaboration.

With reference to international practices on investments, the two nations should accelerate establishing a disaster risk assessment and prevention mechanism for major projects under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), to guard against and defuse major investment and engineering disaster risks. Cui advised to advance the compilation of the disaster prevention and mitigation action plan under CPEC for closer people-to-people bonds and the building of China-Pakistan community with a shared future. In terms of disaster prevention and mitigation cooperation, Cui advanced the application of the new generation "space-sky-ground" stereoscopic monitoring technology by using satellites, UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) and ground-based real-time monitors in disaster identification

and monitoring. Cui thought it is necessary to strengthen disaster monitoring cooperation and carry forward the building of a monitoring network applicable to multiple disasters including earthquake, sleet and snowstorms, geohazards, flood and tsunami, to improve the monitoring and early warning capacity. China and Pakistan could conduct regular disaster risk assessment of the key areas along CPEC in order to guarantee the people's livelihood and major projects' construction. Cui encouraged various government departments and organizations to launch talents training program on disaster prevention and mitigation, and youth exchanges and cooperation plans under CPEC. Cui hoped to train professionals on disaster prevention and mitigation for Pakistan by special program of international students,

skill training on disaster prevention and mitigation, international cooperation program and talents exchanges program. "As a scientific researcher, it is my responsibility and obligation to make efforts to mitigate and/or reduce the damage to nation and people's safety and property," Cui said. Cui has been doing scientific research for almost 40 years at Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment (IMHE), Chinese Academy of Sciences. He is dedicated to mountain hazards (specializing in debris flow and landslide), disaster risk reduction, water and soil conservation and fluvial geomorphology. Cui insists that scientific researchers on geological disasters should make field trips to get the first-hand data as the direct scientific basis for creating better methods and technologies on disaster prevention and mitigation.

Hate crimes rise in US

DNA

HOUSTON: Hate crimes against the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community continue to rise in the US. According to Stop AAPI Hate, a non-profit organization, a total of 10,905 hate incidents against AAPI residents were reported from March 19, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2021. Of the AAPI hate crimes recorded by the organization, 4,632 of those incidents happened in 2020 after the COVID-19 pandemic began, while 6,273 occurred in 2021, an increase of more than 35%. There is a substantial increase in the volume of hate-related crimes against the AAPI community from 2020 to 2021, especially when compared to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) statistics from the year before the pandemic. According to the FBI, the number of anti-Asian hate crimes rose from 158 in 2019 to 279 in 2020, an increase of more than 76%, but a significantly smaller amount of hate crimes in total. "It is no secret that former President (Donald) Trump often blamed the pandemic on the 'Chinese virus,'" said Rogene Gee Calvert, an AAPI advocate with OCA Greater Houston, a non-profit organization. "By targeting and blaming a particular group, it focuses attention and responsibility on them, whether or not it is warranted," Calvert told Anadolu Agency. "Anti-Asian hate is not new but with this blame by the former president, the pandemic unleashed whatever hatred and animosity that might have been under the surface, to emerge and be normalized to blame 'Chinese.'" One of the first high-profile hate crimes against the AAPI community took place in Midland, Texas on March 14, 2020, just a few days after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus a "global pandemic." Jose Gomez III, 21, attacked a Burmese family with a knife at a Sam's Club while the father and his two children were shopping. Gomez shouted "get out of America" while carrying out the knife attack because he believed they were Chinese and responsible for the pandemic.

Germany's trade surplus down to \$1.4B

DNA

BERLIN: Germany's trade surplus in April fell sharply to 1.3 billion (\$1.4 billion), the lowest since 1992, as the country's imports surged 25.2% year-on-year to 120.9 billion, official figures showed on Friday. Exports increased 9.2% to 122.2 billion in April compared to same month last year, according to the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis). In April 2021, the trade surplus was 15.3 billion. On a nominal basis, Germany exported goods to the value of 0.8 billion to Russia in April 2022. Sales to Russia dropped by 10% in April, after sinking 60% in March due to sanctions imposed on Moscow. Most shipments were sent to the US (7.7%) and the EU (4.2%). Imports from China went up 12.3% and those from the euro area 2.4%. Purchases from the US went down 1.2%.

Death toll in Brazil rises to 126

BUENOS AIRES: At least 126 people have died from landslides and floods caused by heavy rains in northeastern Brazil since May 25, local authorities said Thursday. According to the Pernambuco Social Defense Secretariat, two other people are still missing as a result of the natural disasters in northeastern Pernambuco state. Pernambuco Social Defense Secretary Humberto Freire said search and rescue efforts were approaching the final stage and they were intensifying all efforts to locate those missing. At least 9,302 people have been driven from their homes and they stayed in 111 shelters in 27 cities. In addition, 31 cities have declared a state of emergency as 51 cities across the state were damaged due to the heavy rains. The heavy rains, which have been occurring since last week in Pernambuco, caused landslides and floods in various parts of the state. - DNA

Briefs

Russia summons heads of US media outlets

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Russia's Foreign Ministry said it was summoning the heads of U.S. media outlets in Moscow to a meeting next Monday to notify them of tough measures in response to U.S. restrictions against Russian media. "If the work of the Russian media - operators and journalists - is not normalized in the United States, the most stringent measures will inevitably follow," ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Friday.

"To this end, on Monday, June 6, the heads of the Moscow offices of all American media will be invited to the press centre of the Russian Foreign Ministry to explain to them the consequences of their government's hostile line in the media sphere," she added. "We look forward to it."

Russia has accused Western countries of imposing unfair restrictions on its media abroad, including bans on some state-backed news outlets. Lawmakers passed a bill last month giving prosecutors powers to shut foreign media bureaus in Moscow if a Western country has been "unfriendly" to Russian media. Since invading Ukraine in February, Russia has cracked down on media coverage of the conflict, introducing 15 year prison sentences for journalists spreading intentionally "fake" news about what it calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine.

EU blacklists "butchers" of Bucha and Mariupol

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Friday blacklisted Russian military commanders who it said led troops involved in atrocities in Ukraine, describing them as the "butchers" of Bucha and Mariupol. Its latest sanction list also included Alina Kabaeva, whom it described as "closely associated" with President Vladimir Putin, although he has denied they are romantically linked.

The EU released the names of 65 more people targeted by the latest round of sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which also included a ban on most oil imports and removing Russia's top lender Sberbank (SBER.MM) from the international SWIFT payments system. read more Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the EU blacklist and there was no immediate public comment by those targeted by the bloc. Among the 65 people named was Azatbek Omurbekov, who the EU said led Russian troops as they "killed, raped and tortured civilians in Bucha", earning him the nickname "Butcher of Bucha". Also named was Mikhail Mizintsev, a general the EU said oversaw the siege and bombardment of Mariupol that killed thousands. Russian strikes on the Azov Sea port city hit a maternity hospital and a theatre, killing hundreds of children, the EU said, dubbing him "the Butcher of Mariupol". - DNA

UNODC Pak Office launches Programme for 2022-2025

In launching the new UNODC CP-III 2022-2025, Dr. Jeremy Milsom, Country Representative of UNODC COPAK, unveiled four priority areas in Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Country Office Pakistan (COPAK) hosted Government officials, Diplomatic Corps, Civil Society and Private Sector partners to celebrate achievements of UNODC's Country Programme for Pakistan II (2016-2021) and to launch the Third Phase of the Country Programme (2022-2025). The event was held at the Marquee Hall, Marriott Hotel, Islamabad.

UNODC COPAK's results under the previous Country Programme (CP-II) 2016-2021 include support at the policy level, with the development, enactment, and approval of Bills and Acts, and assistance at the technical and operational level, training more than 40,000 law enforcement personnel through face-to-face as well as eLearning courses, also providing equipment and infrastructure facilities to Government counterparts. In addition, UNODC supported the creation of important digital platforms such as the Prison Management Information System in 65 Prisons of Sindh and Punjab, and Case Management Information System to facilitate communication between investigation and prosecution.

At the launch, Julien Harneis, the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan also reiterated that "the work of UNODC directly support the efforts of Member States related to SDG 16 "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" and SDG 5 "Gender Equality" which is imperative for



promoting rule of law, gender responsiveness to fighting crime, improve overall governance structures, and promote citizen-centric policies for sustainable growth".

Mr. Sabino Sikandar Jalal, Acting Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control, pointed out that "Given the complexity and international linkage of trafficking in illicit drugs, no country can win this war alone. Concerted efforts by the international community can help in addressing this menace more effectively". In a video message, UNODC's Executive Director Ms. Ghada Waly expressed her gratitude to all the partners who have been supporting

UNODC in Pakistan and shared that the Country Programme is "a tailored implementation vehicle of the UNODC Strategy 2021-2025 in Pakistan - proposing integrated, scalable, and sustainable solutions to address the multifaceted responses to all forms of crime, inclusive of gender-responsive programming for achieving rule of law while promoting human rights". In launching the new UNODC CP-III 2022-2025, Dr. Jeremy Milsom, Country Representative of UNODC COPAK, unveiled four priority areas in Pakistan:

Illicit Trafficking and Border Management - assistance to Law Enforcement Agencies

(LEAs) on land/sea border management, counternarcotics and other forms of contraband smuggling, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and cybercrime. Criminal Justice System and Legal Reforms - assistance to all agents of the rule of law chain, such as police and criminal justice institutions, on themes spanning from anti-corruption, gender-based violence, prison management, and money laundering. Drug Demand Reduction and HIV/AIDS - Grass-root advocacy and community outreach, as well as policy-level support on drug addiction, drug treatment, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and opioid substitution.

Turkish inflation soars to 73%, highest since 1998

ISTANBUL: Turkey's annual inflation rate jumped to a 24-year high of 73.5% in May, fuelled by the war in Ukraine, rising energy prices and a tumbling lira - though the figure was slightly lower than economists had feared. Inflation has surged since last autumn, when the lira slumped after the central bank launched a 500 basis-point easing cycle sought by President Tayyip Erdogan. The latest figure surpassed the 73.2% touched in 2002 and is the highest since October 1998, when annual inflation was 76.6% and Turkey was battling to end a decade of chronically high inflation. Nevertheless, the consensus forecast was for annual inflation to rise to 76.55%. Month-on-month consumer prices rose 2.98%, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) said on Friday, compared to a Reuters poll forecast of 4.8%. Transport and food costs have soared by 108% and 92% respectively over the last year, reflecting a deepening economic crisis for Turks struggling to afford basic goods. - Agencies

Rupee reverses trend, sheds 0.17% against US dollar

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee on Friday reversed the momentum as it shed 0.17% to close at Rs197.92 against the US dollar in the inter-bank market owing to concerns regarding widening trade deficit and depleting foreign exchange reserves. According to the data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the local currency closed at Rs197.92 compared to Rs197.59 recorded a day earlier.

The decline comes on the back of a widening trade deficit - which peaked at \$43.33 billion during the 11 months (July-May) of the outgoing fiscal year - and depleting foreign exchange reserves that dropped to levels worth just six weeks of imports - their lowest since December 2019.

Four killed, 30 injured after train derails in Germany

WEB DESK

BERLIN: Four people were killed and 30 injured when a busy regional train derailed near a popular ski resort and hiking destination in southern Germany on Friday, police said. Fifteen of the injured were receiving hospital treatment, a police spokesperson said, adding that 60 people had been on board at the time of the crash, which occurred north of Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Bavaria. Prosecutors and police have launched an investigation into the cause of the accident, the official said. No information was given on the identities of the dead or whether the driver was among the casualties. A spokesperson in the Garmisch-Partenkirchen district office had previously reported that 60 people were hurt in the accident. There were many school students on board the train, the regional Muenchener Merkur newspaper reported, citing local paper the Garmisch-Partenkirchen Tagblatt.

Ukraine and Russia: What you need to know right now

KYIV: Russian forces advanced deep into the ruined eastern factory city of Sievierodonetsk, but Ukrainian troops were still holding out on Friday as Russia's assault on its neighbour entered its 100th day.

FIGHTING

* After 100 days of war, Ukraine is fighting for time, trying to hold out against overwhelming Russian fire on its eastern front long enough for Western weapons to arrive and give it a badly needed edge. read more

* Ukrainian forces have had some success forcing Russians in the city of Sievierodonetsk but the overall military situation in the Donbas region has not changed, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said.

* Russia will continue its military operation in Ukraine until all its goals have been achieved, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday.

* Prosecutors investigating war crimes cases in Ukraine are examining allegations of the forcible deportation of children to Russia since the invasion as they seek to build a genocide indictment, the country's top prosecutor said.

* Ukraine does not plan to use multiple-launch rocket systems it receives from the United States to attack facilities in Russia, a Ukrainian presidential adviser said on Friday.

ECONOMY

* Turkey expects progress on

a plan to unlock grains exports from Ukraine's Black Sea ports when Russia's foreign minister visits next week, a senior Turkish official said.

* United Nations officials warned on Friday that a protracted war in Ukraine threatened a hunger crisis in the country and around the world. Crisis coordinator Amin Awad said at least 15.7 million people in Ukraine were now in urgent need of assistance and protection.

* Russian President Vladimir Putin met African Union leaders on Friday and the Kremlin said he would tell them that Moscow was not responsible for the growing food crisis affecting

their continent.

* Slovakia expects European Union solidarity to mitigate impact of the bloc's sanctions on Russian oil, Slovak Economy Ministry said.

DIPLOMACY

* Russia accused Germany of throwing European security into imbalance by "remilitarizing", as Berlin shores up its military spending in response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

* NATO should consider granting Ukraine "de facto" rather than "de jure" membership of the alliance when its summit discusses its strategy for the next 10 years in June, Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov said on Friday. - Agencies

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee beacon lit in Islamabad



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The UK and Pakistan have come together to light a beacon to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of her reign. The event was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad on Thursday

night at 2115, to coincide with beacon lighting ceremonies in every capital city across the Commonwealth.

The Acting British High Commissioner in Pakistan, Richard Crowder, and Pakistan's Additional Secretary (Europe) Dr Israr Hussain simultaneously started the torch beacon as a symbol of friendship and closeness.

This year marks not only Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee - a reign of 70 years - but also marks separately 75 years of UK-Pakistan relations.

Acting British High Commissioner Richard Crowder said: "Lighting this beacon represents 70 years of the reign of Her Majesty The Queen, and also the enduring importance today of the Commonwealth".

17 Pakistani female students selected for Energy Scholars Program

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Mission Pakistan is excited to announce the start of the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council's (USPWC) inaugural four-week Future of Women in Energy Scholars Program. Starting June 5, 17 bright Pakistani women university students will participate in this certificate program to learn about working in the energy sector. This program will foster women's participation and leadership in Pakistan's energy sector by providing young women the opportunity to study energy issues and energy infrastructure at Texas A&M University's campus in Qatar. Following their two-week program in Qatar, the students will return to Pakistan for a two-week familiarization trip to engage with key Pakistani public and private-sector organizations in Islamabad and Lahore to learn about Pakistan's energy sector. The program is jointly sponsored by the U.S. Mission Pakistan, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Texas A&M University, and a number of public-sector and private-sector energy employers interested in promoting women's advancement in the energy sector. The program is a product of the commitment the U.S. government made to advance women's educational and economic participation in Pakistan's energy sector during the U.S.-Pakistan Energy Dialogue in September 2021.

The Pakistani women students participating in the program are currently pursuing bachelor's degrees in science and engineering at private and public universities throughout Pakistan and were chosen through a rigorous selection process. U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome said, "Coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Pakistan, we are excited to launch the USPWC's Future of Women in Energy Scholars Program. Through this program, the U.S. Mission in Pakistan is helping Pakistani women to pursue career opportunities in the energy sector and help them develop networks for a vibrant future." - DNA

Ulemas-Mashaykh urge pilgrims to follow code of conduct

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Ulemas-Mashaykh have urged on pilgrims visiting Saudi Arabia for Hajj to fully abide by the code of conduct issued by the government of Saudi Arabia, and to stay away from any kind of political and sectarian sloganeering and negative activities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. While speaking at "Hajj Conference" held here on Friday at Grand Jamia Masjid Baharia Town Lahore in the chair of Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council, Secretary General International Tazeem-e-Harmin Al-Sharifain Council, Ulemas-Mashaykh said that this year, one million pilgrims will perform Hajj.

The Ulemas-Mashaykh at Hajj Conference also lauded Hajj arrangements for pilgrims on part of government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by paying tributes to Saudi Arabia gov-

ernment and people of Saudi Arabia. Addressing with Hajj Conference, the Ulemas-Mashaykh said that the government of Pakistan should provide subsidy to the poor and middle class adding that subsidy on 'Nafli Hajj' for affluent sections of the society should end. Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council, Secretary General International Tazeem-e-Harmin Al-Sharifain Council presided over the conference, while notable religious scholars including Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Noman Hashir, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Patafi, Maulana Asad Habib Shah Jamali, Maulana Obaidullah Gormani, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi Maulana Saadullah

Shafiq, Maulana Abdul Ghaffar Farooqi, Maulana Abu Bakar Hameed Sabri and others also addressed with the Hajj Conference held at Grand Jamia Masjid Baharia Town Lahore. The Code of Conduct for Pilgrims of Hajj and Umrah issued at the conference states that Hajj is a mandatory act of worship which is dutified on those who can afford it. During the last two years, Saudi government has not allowed pilgrims from out of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on account of Coronavirus limits. The government of Saudi Arabia has made arrangements for the Hajj for one million pilgrims this year, which is commendable, said Ulemas-Mashaykh addressing with Hajj Conference. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in heading of Khadim-e-Harmin Al-Sharifain Shah Salman bin Abdul Aziz and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman has ensured best available arrangements for pilgrims this year.

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