



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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### Pakistan to be cleared from FATF grey list: German Ambassador

Detailed News On Page-01

### Philippine's Independence Day celebrated

Detailed News On Page-08



### Max Verstappen wins Azerbaijan F1 Grand Prix

Detailed News On Page-07



## Briefs

### FIA to launch probe against Moonis Elahi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has decided to launch a money-laundering probe against former federal minister and PML-Q leader Moonis Elahi, sources told Geo News Sunday. Moonis is the son of Pervez Elahi, a senior leader of the PML-Q. FIA sources said that "sufficient evidence" has been collected against Moonis after which the agency decided to formally start an investigation against him. Responding to the development, Moonis took to his official Twitter account and wrote "Bismillah" while sharing a screenshot of the news.

### Sonia Gandhi hospitalized

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI, June 12 (Reuters) - The leader of India's main opposition party, Sonia Gandhi, has been admitted to hospital in New Delhi with health issues related to COVID-19, her Congress party said. The party tweeted the announcement but gave no other details. Italian-born Gandhi, widow of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, is the longest-serving president of the Congress party, which ruled India for decades after its founders led the country to independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

### Fawad taunts Marriyum

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Senior PTI leader and former federal minister for information Fawad Chaudhry on Sunday called out Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb for making "stupid remarks" regarding the loans taken by the PTI-led government. "You will do have [such] stupid conversations if you keep playing Candy Crush [popular mobile phone game]," Fawad wrote on Twitter, addressing the information minister. The statement came in response to Aurangzeb's remarks about former finance minister.

## COAS in China

# Pak, China strategic partnership to continue

### Both the sides discussed their perspectives on international and regional security situation

NEWS DESK

BEIJING, A senior level tri-service military delegation of Pakistan visited China from June 9 to 12 where the delegation held wide ranging discussions with senior officials of Chinese military and other government departments. The apex meeting was held on June 12 wherein the Pakistani side was headed by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa while the Chinese side was led by Vice Chairman Central Military Commission of China General Zhang

Youxia, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. Both the sides discussed their perspectives on international and regional security situation, and expressed satisfaction on defence cooperation between the two countries, it added. Pakistan and China reaffirmed their strategic partnership in challenging times and agreed to continue regular exchange of perspectives on issues of mutual interest. Both the sides also vowed to enhance their training, technology and counter-terrorism cooperation at the tri-service level.



BEIJING: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Vice Chairman Central Military Commission of China General Zhang Youxia posing for a picture. - DNA

# China not to allow Taiwan independence

### 'Those who pursue Taiwanese independence in an attempt to split China will definitely come to no good end'

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China will "fight to the very end" to stop Taiwan from declaring independence, the country's defence minister has vowed as tensions soar with the United States over the island. "We will fight at all cost and we will fight to the very end. This is the only choice for China," Defence Minister Wei Fenghe told the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit in Singapore on Sunday. "Those who pursue Taiwanese independence in an attempt to split China will definitely come to no good end," he said. "No one should ever underestimate the resolve and ability of the Chinese armed forces to safeguard its territorial integrity." His speech came a day after US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin accused China of "provocative, destabilising" military activity close to the island. Wei said it was up to the United States to improve the bilateral relationship, saying that the ties were at a critical juncture. "We request the US side to stop smearing and containing China. Stop interfering in China's internal affairs. The bilateral relationship cannot improve unless the US side can do that," Wei said. Beijing views democratic, self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory awaiting reunification, by force if necessary. US-China tensions over the island have

## US to 'stand by our friends'

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US will stand by its friends as China adopts a more "coercive and aggressive approach to its territorial claims," the country's defense chief said. Addressing the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Lloyd Austin said China's expanding fishing fleet in the East China Sea is sparking tensions. In the South China Sea, China "is using outposts on man-made islands bristling with advanced weaponry to advance its illegal maritime claims," he said, adding that Beijing continues to "harden its position along the border that it shares with India." "Indo-Pacific countries shouldn't face political intimidation, economic coercion, or harassment by maritime militias," Austin went on to say. He said the US "will maintain our active presence across the Indo-Pacific" alongside its partners. Commenting on Beijing's tensions with Taiwan, the defense chief said the US remains "firmly" committed to the long-standing one-China policy. China considers Taiwan a "breakaway province"

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# Afghan govt needs to revisit its internal, external policies

### This time Taliban are faced with latest internet technology, spreading 'happenings or Taliban aggression' reports within seconds throughout the world

SHAMIM SHAHID

Whatever might be strategy of Emirate Islami Afghanistan regarding fate of its government but they are facing unfriendly atmosphere throughout the world on the issue of women education, human rights and social media. In the light of such unfriendly atmosphere it could be hard for its top broses to have its own "Taliban doctrine" regime in war devastated country. Besides unfriendly atmosphere at global level, the "helpless opposition" both in and outside of the country are also engaged in hobnobbing not only for survival but also to help the countrymen to get rid of Taliban clutches. Unlike of late 90's, this time Taliban are faced with latest internet technology, spreading "happenings or Taliban

aggression" reports within seconds throughout the world. Despite extending aids and grants, almost members of the global community are reluctant to recognize the Taliban regime-called Emirate Islami Afghanistan on the grounds of its "policies towards human and women rights." Since mid of previous August, almost members of global community, forums and individuals are crying for "allowing girls to schools," ending of political victimization of rivals and respecting rights of vulnerable communities like trans, women, singers and others. The return of former Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah confirms that no Afghan wants to stay abroad but they are demanding nothing else "peace, security and respect" in Afghanistan. It is the time for Taliban to leave all sorts of ban and restrictions against the genuine Afghan leaders

and representatives whether they are living like hostages in the country or forced for "self exiled" shelter abroad. With giving a chance to all these scattered leaders, Taliban could easily materialize its dreams of getting recognition of global community. Some of self-sufficient or developed countries are extending financial aid and grants to Afghanistan but internally almost these countries are unhappy with the Taliban policies. Some of the regional countries like India, Iran and some neighbouring Central Asian Republics are making best to have or establish their influence in Afghanistan-just for countering Pakistan but internally they also consider "talibanisation" a serious threat to its future interests in the region. But all these neighbours

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## 'Pak to be cleared from FATF grey list'

ALI FURQAN

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan is expected to be clear from the FATF grey list this year and the GSP plus status is likely to be renewed, ambassador of Germany to Pakistan, Bernhard Schlagheck said on Sunday. He said that his country was concerned about the state of Human rights in India too. "The European and Germany as well were indiscriminate to human rights violations, Germany is telling it to India too," Mr Schlagheck said adding that the former German Chancellor Angela Merkel had told the Indian PM Modi that the situation in Kashmir was not sustainable and human rights have to be respected without any discrimination." The German envoy was talking to the media at the inauguration of the third public street library of Islamabad. The library to distribute free books for the public has been established by EarthLinks a real estate developer as part of their CSR in coordination with the CDA who have allocated land for the purpose. The German ambassador lauded the progress made by Pakistan to meet the FATF conditions and expressed the confidence that the country will be out of the grey list this year. The next review

# Bilawal, OIC chief discuss Islamophobia

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Sunday announced that he has recently had a discussion with the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Hissein Brahim Taha regarding the persecution of Muslims in India. Taking to Twitter, Bilawal wrote: "Spoke to OIC SG HE Hissein Brahim Taha on the totally unacceptable and condemnable remarks by Indian BJP officials towards the Holy Prophet PBUH. Shared concerns on rising Islamophobia and persecution of Muslims in India and the need to address that through collective efforts." Earlier today, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif requested the National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf to hold a debate, and subsequently adopt a resolution to condemn BJP leaders' blasphemous remarks against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the upcoming session of the assembly on Monday. In a statement issued on Twitter, the premier denounced the violation of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) honour and said that the sacrilegious remarks have hurt the sentiments of 1.25 billion Muslims across the world. "We want to send out a clear message



to the entire world by passing a resolution that we are ready to render any sacrifice for the honour of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH)," Shehbaz wrote. Last week, two senior

Continued on Page 06

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US Embassy starts academy for women entrepreneurs - Page 04

Arrangements done for Pakistanis stranded in Syria - Page 05

Swiss Business Council hosts farewell in honour of envoy - Page 06

Protesters demand action on US gun violence - Page 07

Philippine Independence Day celebrations - Page 08

# UNDP Pakistan appoints Fawad Khan as National Goodwill Ambassador

DNA

ISLAMABAD: UNDP Pakistan has appointed acclaimed actor Fawad Khan as its National Goodwill Ambassador. UNDP's Goodwill Ambassadors are inspirational individuals who serve as spokespersons to uphold the United Nations Charter and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The launching ceremony took place, where UNDP Pakistan's Resident Representative Knut Ostby, Deputy Resident Representative Aliona Niculita, Head of Communications Unit Ayesha Babar, and UNDP's young beneficiaries working as green social entrepreneurs were part of the event. The ceremony started with the con-

tract signing between Knut Ostby and Fawad Khan, followed by the screening of a climate action advocacy film 'Don't Choose Extinction'. It launched by the UNDP Headquarters during COP26 and voicing for phasing out fossil fuels for a more sustainable and equitable future. To reach wider population and raise awareness on the issue of climate change in Pakistan, Fawad Khan has done the voice-over of the film in Urdu. "We are incredibly proud to have Fawad Khan as our Goodwill Ambassador. As you all know, climate change is one of the most serious and immediate risks we're facing. I appreciate that as a spokesperson for Agenda 2030, Fawad Khan's first advocacy support highlights climate action," remarked

UNDP Pakistan's Resident Representative, Mr Knut Ostby. "I am honoured to be signed as the National Goodwill Ambassador for UNDP Pakistan," commented Mr Fawad Khan while speaking to the audience of green ambassadors and social entrepreneurs "I truly believe that the Sustainable Development Goals provide us with a roadmap towards peace and prosperity, for the people and the planet as well. This is an exciting opportunity for me to raise awareness and advocate the Agenda 2030." The event concluded with a conversation with the green ambassadors and start-ups on UNDP's role in climate action in Pakistan, and how UNDP is amplifying young people's voices in decisions on climate action.



# AJK President seeks diaspora community's role for Kashmir issue

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mehmooh Chaudhry said that Kashmiris settled in UK can play an important role in resolving the Kashmir issue and bringing an end to the spate of violence and bloodshed in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu Kashmir. Barrister Chaudhry made these remarks while addressing a reception hosted in his honor by the Kashmiri community here in Birmingham on Sunday, AJK President office said on Sunday. The reception was attended and addressed by Chaudhry Khadim Hussain, Karamat Hussain, Chaudhry Hukam Dad, Chaudhry Dilpazir, Chaudhry Malik, Chaudhry Shaaban, Chaudhry Amjad, Chaudhry Abdul Ghafoor, Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain, Sardar Sarfraz Qayyum and Ansar Ali, Allah Datta, Irfan Lehri, Gulfray and others. In his address, the AJK president while referring to his efforts to highlight the Kashmir cause, said, "From

2014 to 2018, I organized million marches in London, Dublin, New York, Brussels and Berlin under the auspices of Kashmir Peace Forum International (KPFPI)". He urged the diaspora community to unite together under the platform of the KPFPI to highlight the plight of Kashmiris effectively at global level. He was of the view that Kashmiris living in other countries should also unite and redouble their efforts to galvanize international support for early and amicable solution of the Kashmir dispute. Regarding the recently formed committee, he said, a defense committee was formed that will take legal action for the release of Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik. "Kashmiris in the UK and other countries should unite and intensify their efforts to seek world attention towards the dire situation in Occupied Kashmir and to expose the India's ugly face before the world", he said.

# UBG satisfied with federal budget

DNA

LAHORE: The leaders of the UBG SM Munir, Zubair Tufail, Shahzad Ali Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari and Khalid Tawab in a Joint press statement issued Sunday have termed the Federal Budget 2022-23 as satisfactory. "The federal budget announced by the Federal Finance Minister Miftah Ismail is a growth oriented and balanced which is prepared after a deep and well thought-out analysis, taking stocks of all ground realities and challenges being confronted by the country with the aim to boost its economic growth," the UBG leaders said in a press statement Sunday. They added, "The main focus of the maiden Budget - initiated by the newly formed coalition government - is on huge development in agricultural sector and providing relief to unprivileged masses." They appreciated the coalition government for taking difficult measures and decisions for an economic turn around, sustainable de-

velopment and industrial boom to steer out the country from multi-faceted economic crises including stagflation like situation. Moreover, they added that a hefty income tax relief is proposed to be allowed to hard pressed salary class by enhancing basic threshold of taxable salary from current Rs 0.6 million to Rs 1.6 million and as such a huge amount of rupee benefit would be passed-on to the salaried individuals, which consequently, would generate a positive economic cycle thus increasing their disposal income, thriving of business, creating additional job opportunities, decline in current unemployment rate and generation of future tax revenue. Summarily elaborating the main strategy of the Finance Bill 2022, the UBG Leadership hoped that its fiscal measures would go a long way in stabilizing economic growth, slashing current inflation rate, generation of additional revenue, documentation of economy, boosting exports to its real potential, protecting/ relief to unprivileged class and low income groups.

# 'Imran Khan used institutions to run govt'

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Azma Bokhari on Sunday while taking a dig at PTI chairman Imran Khan said he created drama in the name of accountability for four years and used institutions to run his government. During the media talk, PML-N spokesperson said that the former PM wanted to file cases against the opposition leaders under Article 6, adding that PML-N does not interfere in anyone's private life but Imran Khan used the woman's video against NAB Chairman for personal interest. The PML-N leader said Imran Khan used a woman to crackdown on political opponents and getting clean chit in corruption cases against him and the KP government. She said the compromised video of former NAB chairman Javed Iqbal was publicized by Imran Khan and that too through the television channel of his close friend, who she said was also a special assistant. She said the video was uploaded by Tayyaba Gul on May 10 on Pakistan Citizen Portal to get justice. However, she added that the NAB chairman appeared before the media exactly after nine days to reveal that he had been pressurized to put PML-N leaders behind the bars and closing corruption cases against the ruling party (PTI).



PALLANDRI: Advisor to the PM on Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Qamar Zaman Kaira attends annual Urs in Nariyan Sharif. He said that there is an urgent need for Muslims to wage jihad against ignorance and promote knowledge. - DNA

# 'Improve the provision of medical facilities'

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHHRAN: Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak paid a surprise visit to Lodhran District. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Azuba Azeem, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Ahmed Faraz Awan, Assistant Commissioner Lodhran Farhan Mujtaba and other district officials. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak directed to further improve the provision of medical facilities during the inspection of DHQ Hospital. Commissioner Multan Division inspected various wards including Emergency Department, OPD, Cardiology Ward, Dialysis Unit, Indoor Pharmacy. He directed every deputy commissioner to inquire into the non-supply of medicines by a citizen. During the visit, Commissioner Multan visited the patients and inquired from their families about the provision of facilities, attitude of doctors and staff. Commissioner Multan Division inquired from the patients present in the hospital about the medical treatment on which the patients expressed satisfaction over the provision of facilities in the hospital. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak said that service to the suffering humanity is no less than worship. He said that availability of medicines and attendance of doctors

and staff should be ensured in the hospital. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak directed the doctors, nursing staff and staff to treat the patients with good manners. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak checked the ECG machine on public and media complaints. Commissioner Multan Division on public complaint issued orders to transfer ECG machine to generator in case of power outage. He directed to provide dialysis medicine exclusively for the patients of Duniyapur. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak also directed to post a list of medicines available at prominent places outside the pharmacy. Commissioner Multan Division ordered to improve the facilities in the hospital. He took a detailed look at the hygiene including availability of medicines and provision of medical treatment facilities at the District Headquarters Hospital. Later, the Commissioner Multan Division reviewed the supply of urea fertilizer at fixed rate to the farmers at various fertilizer cell points and directed to provide cold drinking water and shade for the fertilizer recipients. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi visited Fertilizer Cell Points in the city. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak ordered to give fertilizer on farmer's card. The Commissioner checked the record of arrival and sale of urea

fertilizer at the sale point and directed the dealers to give the receipt of cash memo to the farmers at the time of distribution of fertilizer. He said that as per government orders, no dealer is allowed to sell fertilizer after 8 pm in the division. He further said that dealers must issue receipts for sale of fertilizers to farmers. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak said that all records of sale of fertilizer at cell points should be available on the spot. Commissioner Multan said that fertilizer dealers should sell urea fertilizer at the rate of Rs. 1850 per sack as per the directive of Punjab government. He said that the name, identity card number and phone number of every farmer who buys fertilizer must be written on the cash memo. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak said that all records of purchase and sale of fertilizer should be compiled on daily basis. He said that price list of fertilizers should be displayed in prominent places. He said that dealers are not allowed to impose any tie-up condition while selling fertilizers. Meanwhile, Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak along with Deputy Commissioner Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi reviewed the supply in the government subsidized flour market and the quota on flour mills as per quota. Commissioner Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak said that supply of flour should be ensured as per government wheat quota.



# Parliamentary committees urged to push authorities for rapid climate response

Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said the objective of the NCCR Brief is to urgently highlight the fast rising human security challenges and inaction of government authorities. Through this brief, the parliamentary committees are urged to push climate action forward more vigorously

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Climate Rapid Response (NCCR) Brief have urged the senate, national assembly and joint parliamentary committees on climate change, water, national food security to rapidly expedite the federal, four provincial, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to take urgent steps to reduce climate impact without any failure. Damage to climate barriers have gone beyond the red alert. Strangely, it seems the cartels and mafias have surged up over and above the government authority. Urgent steps shall be taken for local corrective measures to stop the local deforestation, water degeneration, over-harvesting of underground water, and change in the land-use of green and agricultural land. The NCCR executive brief has highlighted the human insecurity indicators have gone up the red point but the authorities are playing slow. They shall come up with a rapid response agenda under their jurisdiction areas and take strict action against the cartels and mafia. Only parliamentary committees can push the agenda forward if they are sincere to their core of hearts and duty-bound. Development Communications Network

(Devcom-Pakistan) launched the National Climate Rapid Response Executive Brief on Saturday. Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said the objective of the executive brief is to urgently highlight the fast rising human security challenges and inaction of government authorities. Through this brief, the parliamentary committees are urged to push climate action forward more vigorously. Talking about the environmental degradation and climate change governance in Pakistan, WWF-Pakistan Director General Hammad Naq Khan said: Pakistan is in the midst of a climate crisis. Currently, we are facing an intense heatwave across the country that threatens livelihoods, food security and collective well-being. We are seeing regular occurrences of glacial lake outburst floods. Episodes of riverine flooding, part and parcel of our landscape, are being exacerbated by global warming. Moreover, biodiversity is also at risk as can be seen with the recent fires that devastated parcels of the precious chilgoza forests in Balochistan. In recent years, we have witnessed intense storms affecting our urban areas and a return of locusts to Sindh and Southern Punjab; events that researchers link to the climate crisis. Meanwhile, environmental degradation continues to affect

our natural environment and our communities. The quality of the air we breathe is degraded, our waterways are polluted, and the land is degraded by improper disposal of solid and hazardous waste. Hammad Naqi has suggested concerted efforts based on already available policies and plans. The Environmental Protection Act of 1997, later adopted by the provinces post the 18th Amendment, needs to be followed in letter and spirit. The Climate Change Policy 2012 (revised 2022), and its associated implementation framework (2014-30), is similarly well placed in terms of addressing the challenges discussed above. For us, climate change is water change and in this regard, the National Water Policy of 2018 offers key avenues for effective policy up-take. In the same vein, effective implementation of the National Flood Protection Plan (IV) will be key to ensure that we are well prepared to address the challenges posed by flood episodes. Karakoram International University (KIU), Gilgit, Assistant Professor and IUCN Pakistan Biodiversity Expert Dr. Saad Abbas has mentioned that over the last one decade the frequency as well the intensity of floods, GLOFs (glacial lake outburst flood), rock sliding, avalanches, land slips, earthquakes

have been reported to be increased 4 times as compared to last 30 years. The main reasons for this effect are the presence of emerging industrial activities in neighbouring China and increasing vehicular pollution in Pakistan, India and China resulting in penetration of monsoon residues into high Himalayas. Mitigation measures though in smaller scale, under different government and private sector projects and programs are being implemented but what GB calls for to cope with these environmental issues is to develop and implement a robust and multi-hazard preparedness and disaster risk reduction program and enhance the adaptive capacity of all stakeholders including the communities. Environment and Community expert Naseer Memon believed that Sindh is particularly affected with various manifestations of Climate Change such as increased variability of river flows and floods, heat waves and drought. Sea level along the Karachi coast has risen approximately 10 centimeters in the last century and is expected to further rise by 60 centimeters by the end of the century to threaten the low-lying coastal areas south of Karachi toward Keti Bander and the Indus River delta affecting the infrastructure and livelihoods in these areas.

# Weather turns pleasant as Pakistan welcomes pre-monsoon rains

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Different areas of Balochistan and Punjab received their first pre-monsoon showers late on Saturday, turning the weather pleasant in these areas. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (Met Office), dusty storm winds have entered the country from Iran. The winds caused some pre-monsoon rains in various parts of the country. Lahore, Faisalabad, Jhang, and Toba Tek Singh received showers along with thunderstorms. Meanwhile, Pishin, Qila Abdullah, Noshki and Dalbandin were hit by dust storms, which caused rains in districts of East Balochistan. Kohlu, Barkhan, Harnai, Dera Bugti and Sibbi areas of Balochistan also received some pre-monsoon rains. The long-awaited showers provided citizens with some respite from the sizzling heat of recent weeks. The Met Office has predicted that higher altitude locations in the north of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the provincial capital Peshawar, along with the mountainous Malakand, Hazara, Kohat, Bannu and northern tribal regions will experience rain with some thunder in the next 24 hours. A seasonal low lies over north Balochistan and adjoining areas with its trough extending eastwards. Light to moderate moist currents are expected to penetrate the upper and central parts of the country and is likely to continue during the next 24 hours. The clouds are still hovering over Peshawar and the met office predicts the city could receive some showers in the next 24 hours.

**National Days and Armed Forces Days**

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



**Hotels & Restaurants**

- Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
- Marriott.....051- 2826121
- Monal.....0334-5421812



**Airlines**

- Turkish Airlines.....8494949



**Emergency**

- Rescue (Police).....15
- Bomb Disposal.....15
- Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
- Emergency Ambulance..1122
- & Rescue Services.4451122
- Motorway Police....9266044
- Motorway Police..9270601-20
- Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
- Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



**Enquiry**

- Edhi Ambulance.....115
- PIA Flight Info.....114
- PIA Cargo.....9280979
- Railway Inquiry.....117
- Railway Exchange 9270831-5
- WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
- CAA.....9281092



**Hospitals**

- CMH.....5611111
- MH.....5611116
- Cantt Hospital..9270907-11
- DHQ.....5556311-4
- RGH.....9290301-7
- Holy Family.....9290322-7
- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
- Shifa International.4603666



**Departments**

- CDA.....9221334-43
- CDA.....9208301-04
- Met Office.....9250360-6
- RDA.....5555864
- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3

**Islamabad Metropolitan**

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

**Water Tank**

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Members of the Philippine community living in Pakistan posing for a picture on the occasion of cultural performance to mark the 124 Anniversary of the Philippine Independence Day. – DNA

**ANF recovers over 453 kg narcotics, arrests 14**

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting raids in different areas of the country managed to recover over 453 kg narcotics besides arresting 14 accused including five women during last seven days. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the ANF Rawalpindi and ANF Intelligence on Sunday conducted a raid near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad and recovered over 104 kg narcotics including 87,600 kg charras and 16,800 kg opium from secret cavities of a Toyota Corolla car besides netting four accused including three women namely Muhammad Ishaq, Fiza Niaz, Mariya and Zarish Fatima. The ANF Rawalpindi and ANF Intelligence conducted a raid at a house near Khan Chowk in Attock and unearthed a drug factory besides recovering 17,760 kg Ice. The factory was working in basement of the house. ANF team also arrested an Afghan national namely Pervaiz Khan. In another raid conducted near Ghauri Garden Islamabad, the ANF recovered 530 grams heroin from possession of an accused namely Adil Fareed, resident of Rawalpindi. – APP

**‘Malaysia sets RM56 billion target for halal food exports’**

**AGENCIES**

ISLAMABAD, Acting High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Deddy Faisal Ahmad Salleh on Sunday said that Malaysia has set a target of RM 56 Billion for export revenue in the halal food industry by 2025 to get benefit the global halal food market. Malaysia's current exports in the halal food industry are 35.8 billion RM, which is a huge growth potential according to the size of the global halal market, Malaysian envoy, Deddy Faisal Ahmad Salleh told APP here. The Malaysian envoy said that the current size of the global halal market in terms of revenue is \$2 trillion was expected to increase to \$3 trillion by the year 2027. He said that there were huge opportunities



for cooperation in 'Halal Food Market' between Pakistan and Malaysia and this sector

in Malaysia had an extensive network of value added industry and multinational companies that could help Pakistan to connect with the global supply chain. Deddy Faisal said that traditionally, halal food includes meat, poultry, seafood, fruits and vegetables, dairy products, grains, oil, fats, waxes and confectioneries but it could be sold at competitive price in the global market by bringing value added products. Replying to a question, he said the Malaysian halal standard is now being widely used by several renowned global multinational companies (MNCs) including Nestlé and Unilever. Malaysia's halal portfolio has also expanded beyond food and beverage, venturing into various other sectors such as cosmetics, logistics, pharmaceutical and most recently, tourism, he said. He said that the country provided the

world's first halal in-flight catering on board its national carrier, Malaysia Airlines. Replying to another question, he said that there was a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and Malaysia, which had to bring the business communities of both the countries closer to make it more effective. He said that currently, Malaysia had seven bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the following countries: Australia, Chile, India, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan and Turkey. The Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) members have established the ASEAN Free Trade (FTA) area also. "I call upon the business community of Pakistan to be the partner and catalyst for reform, to drive sustainability and to contribute to our collective goal of shared prosperity," he said.

**Admin sets up 2,528 flour sales points**

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Noor ul Amin Mengal has said that the administration had set up 2,528 flour sales points in Rawalpindi division to supply subsidized flour to the citizens on the rates fixed by the Punjab government. He said that the price magistrates were regularly conducting raids to check prices of daily use items and all-out efforts were being made to provide relief to the citizens. The Commissioner informed that strict action in accordance with the law was being taken against profiteers and hoarders on daily basis. – APP



KALLAR KAHAR: ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov visits The Kallar Kahar Museum of along with his wife. – DNA

**Korea enhances employment quota for Pakistani workers**

ISLAMABAD: Mr Suh Sangpyo, Ambassador of Korea to Pakistan, on Sunday disclosed that Korea has decided to increase the employment quota for Pakistani workers from 1000 to 1500 per year under Employment Permit System (EPS). In an exclusive interview with APP, the Korean Ambassador said that the program was suspended during the pandemic period, but since last January, it had become operational again and more Pakistani workers would go to Korea on employment visas. Presently, the envoy said that around 10,000 Pakistan workers in South Korea were performing their duties in different fields with full dedication and commitment. The cooperation could be extended further, but for this, the Ambassador said both countries are also required to enter into a particular arrangement like and Free Trade Agreement (FTA), on which negotiations are underway but unfortunately, the process is slow and should be expedited. Moreover, FTA is very important to boost economic rela-



tions between the two countries, he added. In reply to a question on a recently signed agreement with Pakistan under Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) worth USD 1 billion for five years from 2022 to 2026, he said that this would be a soft loan that would be returned in 30 to 40 years. This soft loan will help Pakistan to establish IT Parks in Karachi by spending almost \$120 million and around \$80 million in Islamabad, he expressed.

The Ambassador further added that Pakistan's Information Technology industry was booming and export to other countries were increasing day by day, but we found that the export from Pakistan was mainly in IT services. It accomplished that the establishment of IT parks buildings in Islamabad and Karachi would enhance the scope of IT exports, he added. Commenting on the electronics of Samsung, he said that the company had made an investment in Pakistan and established a mobile production unit in Karachi last year. But, the envoy said, taxes are too high in Pakistan on the import of electronic gadgets such as mobile phones. Therefore, the production of mobiles had witnessed a decrease due to the difficulty of importing mobile parts in the current situation now, he said adding, the original plan to produce more than 3,000,000 units here in Karachi is complicated. Kia and Hyundai also just started their business here and created their space in the vehicle industry of Pakistan, he told. – APP

**RCCI demands withdrawal of proposed property tax**

**DNA**

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has demanded of the government to withdraw the property tax imposed in the federal budget 2022-23. The proposed tax measures will affect the real estate sector as more than forty allied industries are connected to this sector.



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## Briefs

## Israeli bombing in Syria halts PIA flights

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Saturday suspended its flight operation to Syrian capital Damascus in view of bombing of the city airport's runways by the Israeli forces yesterday. "Both runways are inactive due to bombing at the Damascus airport that led to complete suspension of (flight) operations there," Spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khand said in a news release here. PIA flight PK-135, which was to leave Karachi for the Syrian capital today early in the morning with 170 passengers on board, had to be cancelled.

Similarly, national flag carrier's flight PK-136, which had to bring 169 passengers from Damascus back to Karachi, was also cancelled. The spokesman regretted the inconvenience faced by the passengers, explaining that the flight's cancellation was unavoidable due to the confronted operational issues. He said the flights would be rescheduled as soon as the runways were restored; otherwise, the passengers would be transported through alternative means. Accordingly, he said, all passengers were being informed through PIA's call centre.

## NA to hold debate on blasphemous remarks

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf, on the request of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, decided to discuss the issue of blasphemous remarks by fascist BJP leaders during the budget session of the National Assembly on Monday. The Speaker has allotted a specific one hour in the session of the Assembly for condemning these unworthy remarks by BJP leaders. The discussion on the issue will be followed by a debate on the Budget. The National Assembly will also pass a resolution condemning the BJP leaders. The Prime Minister requested the National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf to hold a debate over the Namoos-e-Risalat (PBUH) in the session of the Upper House of the parliament on June 13 (Monday). Raja Pervez Ashraf also invited the opposition to attend the session. He said that this is not a matter of political, party, or individual nature but a matter of faith for 1.25 billion Muslims across the world. - APP

## GLOF-II to focus flood risk reduction activities in 24 NA valleys

ISLAMABAD: The second phase of Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF-II) project will focus on ensuring flood risk reduction activities in 24 valleys of northern areas particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan. The rising temperatures all over the world has casted serious impacts on Pakistan and South Asia region which has increased the risk of GLOF events in the country, an official of Climate Change Ministry told APP while elaborating details of the important GLOF-II project. He said the areas targeted for the project included eight valleys of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and 16 valleys of Gilgit Baltistan (GB). The GLOF-II project activities included establishment of Early Warning System, installation of 51 Automatic Weather Stations, 153 Rain Gauges (tipping bucket), 63 Water Discharge Gauges, 77 River Water Level Gauges, 63 Lake Water Level Gauges and 48 Warning Posts. He informed that the Ministry of Climate Change was implementing GLOF related Projects (GLOF-I & II) where the GLOF-I was related to reduction on the risks of Glacial Lake Outburst Flood in Northern Areas of Pakistan. "In this context vulnerability risk assessment with respect to communities in one district each in GB and KP had been done", he mentioned while claiming the first phase of the project being executed. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Director General Ministry of Foreign Affairs Amir Ahmed Atozai, Charge d'affaires Maria Agnes M. Cervantes' Chairman Pakistan ASEAN Friendship Association Zafar Bakhtawati' Hon. Counsel General Dr Imran Yousaf (Karachi) , Fahdel Sheikh(Lahore) and Khalid Ch are cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the 124th anniversary of Independence day of the Philippines in Islamabad. - DNA

## US Embassy starts academy for women entrepreneurs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: US Embassy Islamabad's Counselor for Commercial Affairs John Coronado congratulated more than 115 Pakistani women entrepreneurs on their selection to the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) 2022 in a virtual launch event on June 11. This U.S. training program supports women worldwide in building their own businesses. Its launch in Pakistan is part of the 75th anniversary celebrations of U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relations and an ongoing effort to empower Pakistani women

to realize their economic potential and increase prosperity for all Pakistanis.

During his remarks, Mr. Coronado spoke about the need to support women entrepreneurs: "When women are economically empowered, they reinvest in their families and communities, strengthening the social fabric and improving education and skill levels of the workforce. This multiplier effect spurs economic growth and enhances stability."

With mentoring and guidance from established Pakistani entrepreneurs, the AWE participants will undertake a three month, rigorous online

training program developed by Arizona State University's Thunderbir School of Global Management and American natural resource company Freeport McMoran. Through AWE, participants learn core business skills and will meet weekly to discuss the material with experienced local mentors and U.S. experts. AWE is designed to cultivate entrepreneurial know-how, help women entrepreneurs connect with funding opportunities, enhance opportunities for business expansion, and increase the likelihood of entrepreneurial success.

Four of the U.S. Mission to Pakistan's Lincoln Corners in Multan, Muzaffarabad,

Khairpur, and Peshawar will lead AWE Pakistan 2022, with support from the Pakistan American Cultural Center and the DOVE Foundation. Lincoln Corners in Peshawar, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Larkana took part in AWE Pakistan 2021.

Toward the end of their AWE journey, participants will have the opportunity to compete for seed funding from the U.S. Mission to Pakistan to further grow or establish their enterprises. Upon completion, the participants will join the global AWE network, which offers further growth opportunities, as well as the community of U.S. exchange program alumni.

## Hajj pilgrims warned against drugs trafficking

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani pilgrims performing Hajj 2022 have been warned to desist from carrying prohibited drugs to the Holy Land as a severe penalty awaits any pilgrim found with drugs, official of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony said on Sunday.

"The Saudi law on drugs was very strict and officials were being encouraged to educate pilgrims," he said urging the intending pilgrims to be law-abiding while in the Holy Land. "We advise pilgrims not to be involved in drug smuggling because we all know that this leads to the death sentence," he said. "You should be law-abiding and exhibit good conduct while in the holy land so as not to dent the image of the country," he said. He also warned pilgrims against carrying bags or envelopes on behalf of people.

He appealed to the pilgrims' trainers to enlighten the pilgrims on the dangers inherent to carrying drugs, trafficking contraband drugs to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He said many pilgrims were ignorant and need to be informed about Hajj rituals and the code of conduct in the holy land. The Ministry had made adequate arrangement to ensure that they performed the pilgrimage without difficulty. He urged the intending pilgrims to exhibit the highest sense of responsibility and perform the pilgrimage in accordance with Islamic teaching. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Germany Bernhard Schlagheck, interacting with the Pakistani media people. - DNA

## AIU's MA/M. Sc exams begin today

DNA

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

## EST teachers demand PM to upgrade in Grade-16

DNA

RAWALPINDI: EST teachers posted in educational institutions across the country, administered by the Federal Government Educational Institutions Cantonments Garrisons Directorate, demand from Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to upgrade in Grade 16. According to the details, Elementary School Teachers (EST) of 355 educational institutions under the FGEI Cantt Garrison Directorate across the country have demanded to upgrade the Elementary School Teachers from Grade 14 to Grade 16. It has been demanded that teachers who have not been promoted for years

should be promoted. According to the teachers, along with the upgrade in Grade 16, three to five additional annual increments should be given to EST teachers and the same facility should be given to all TGT and SST teachers as well as honorary teachers who have also been asked to increase the honorarium. Teachers said that the formula developed by the Federal Government Educational Institutions Cantt Garrison Directorate for the promotion and induction of EST teachers is 25% teacher development and 75% recruitment of new teachers based on gross abuse and injustice. Due to which thousands of teachers have been waiting for promotion for the last 16 years while recruitment

of new teachers is going on every year. According to the teachers, FGEIs Directorate has not promoted EST teachers since 2007. By the year 2022, hundreds of new teachers have been recruited, thus depriving thousands of teachers of their basic rights. Teachers Farhat Abbas, Malik Gulzar Ahmad, Arif Abbasi, Osama Mumtaz Qureshi and others said that inflation in the country has risen to such an extent that they have not been able to meet their current salaries. They said that EST teachers have also been completely ignored in the four-tier formula which is a gross abuse and cruelty. They told teachers were working on the lowest salaries in the country. They said

that the development of teachers and builders of the nation was not taken into consideration in the priorities of any government. Teachers whose salaries should be higher than all other sectors have always been completely ignored, forcing them to live on extremely low salaries and live a life of white supremacy.

The teachers have appealed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif, Defence Minister and Secretary Defence to provide special package for the salaries of the teachers and especially the EST teachers by giving them upgradation and departmental promotion and redressal of their grievances so that they can lead dignified lives in the society.

## PIAF suggests Dollar amnesty scheme

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) on Sunday while appreciating the budget 2022-23 asked the government to also take measures to reduce energy prices besides controlling rupee depreciation by announcing dollar amnesty scheme to strengthen local currency. PIAF senior vice chairman Nasir Saeed and vice chairman Javed Siddiqi, in a joint statement, asked the government that instead of opting for borrowing to handle the budget deficit it should announce dollar amnesty scheme to bridge this huge gap. He said that no measures have been announced to curtail the current account deficit or the imports as the finance minister sets the current account deficit target at only 2.2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The coalition government caved in to the

demand to exhibit primary budget surplus, pitching it at Rs152 billion by planning fiscal consolidation of nearly Rs1.8 trillion or 2.2% of the GDP in the next fiscal year. A major chunk of the new budget - the Rs5.45 trillion or nearly 58% of the budget - will be spent only on two heads - debt servicing and defence. There is an alarming increase of over Rs806 billion or 26% increase in debt servicing cost in just a year. In the outgoing fiscal year, the share of these two components was half of the total budget. The defence services share remained constant but the debt servicing has gone out of control. The domestic debt servicing will eat up nearly Rs3.5 trillion while another Rs511 billion will be given for foreign debt servicing. The average interest rate in the next fiscal year is estimated at 14%, which would take away what the government will earn in additional revenues. Nasir Hameed said that other ways to re-

duce the budget deficit are promoting industrial growth by announcing relief in cost of production. He said that high economic growth is the best way to reduce the budget deficit because it would also enhance the government revenues. Javed Siddiqi said that Pakistan needed millions of jobs annually but the government had not taken any concrete step in federal budget for job creations for the unemployed youth. Although details are still to come out, the budget vibes seem positive, he said. He commended the government for removing duty from solar panels import by agreeing to the demand of industry. He praised the government for introducing an alternate dispute resolution mechanism which, he said, was a longstanding demand of the industry. He said corporate tax had been increased and feasibility of the sector was already out, as its raw material had doubled in prices. Fuel, diesel,

and gas prices have increased. Besides, they need to increase prices of their staff and cater them. Direct tax collection seems impossible. Tax on 130 items has been dropped, while increased on 670 items whose details are not available yet. He said that the government failed to introduce a well-thought out strategy for enhancing production of key crops including cotton, wheat and oilseeds in addition to reducing cost of production of farmers in federal budget 2022-23. He expressed dismay that on one hand the government was rightly distressed over rising inflation, but on the other hand it fell short of addressing the root cause of this alarming trend, which was continuous downward trend in farm productivity. He also called for reducing the input cost of farmers that was increasing particularly due to upsurge in power tariff and increase in rates of fuel.

## 'Climate governance major issue of Pakistan'

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Department of Environmental Sciences, Islamic International University Islamabad Dr Muhammad Irfan Khan has said that Pakistan is persistently among the top ten countries most vulnerable due to climate change and climate governance was a major issues of the country to tackle rising environmental degradation. The Chairman Department of Environmental Sciences in an exclusive chat with APP in connection to World Environment Day 2022 said the country's major issue was of governance as their were policies but no instruments of implementation and if they existed in any case then the departments concerned lacked human, technical and financial capacity to implement those functions. The theme for this year's world environment day was #OnlyOneEarth.

The geographical location of the country was naturally a disaster prone terrain as it possessed the world's largest ice reserves after the North and South Poles in its Northern areas that were the origin of our rivers, he said. He said the global warming due to increasing emissions across the world were causing temperature rise driving glacial melting leading to floods. The country could not develop any proper reservoir in the past 50 years to conserve that floodwater which could help mitigate the flood disasters, he added. He said the shift in rain pattern was also disturbing the hydrological cycle incurring impacts on the crop cultivation practices damaging the country's agriculture economy. On the rising heatwaves impacts, he said it was mainly due to global warming which was also affecting the waves cycle at the sea level disturbing the temperature inversion. - APP

## PM approves new transit visa policy for Afghan citizens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Head of PM's Strategic Reforms Initiatives Salman Sufi Saturday said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has approved a new transit visa policy for the Afghan migrant citizens. Taking a notice of the issues faced by the Afghan citizens and the illegal immigration, the prime minister had accorded his nod to the new policy, he added. Sufi further informed that under the new policy, the government of Pakistan would issue 30-day transit visas to the Afghan citizens within 24 hours, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Those countries that had granted immigration to the Afghan citizens, could apply for transit visas from Pakistan, he added.

## IGP announces fuel quota reduction

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan had announced a reduction in petrol quota for the department, following the government's decision to implement measures for preservation of fuel and energy. Whereas Islamabad Safe City Smart Cars, Police Stations, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and Eagle Squad vehicles were directed to use minimum fuel to carry out operations. The Capital police chief also ordered all officers, including the Central Police Office and others to ensure the least amount of electricity usage. Air conditioning should be turned off in the absence of officers. Petrol for operational duties and government purposes will be provided only after the approval of DIG Headquarters. Not more than 65 liters of petrol will be provided on motorcycles for carrying out official duties.

## Arrangements done for Pakistanis stranded in Syria

According to the spokesperson of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), at the request of Pakistan's ambassador to Syria, PIA made arrangements to send the plane. The Pakistani Ambassador wrote a letter to the CEO of National Airlines and the Government of Pakistan. In his letter to the government, the ambassador asked the government to send flights to Aleppo to repatriate Pakistanis stranded in Syria. On the special instructions of Aviation Minister Saad Rafique, PIA today completed the arrangements for sending the flight. In the first phase, Pakistanis will be transferred from Damascus to Aleppo by bus, from where a PIA plane will bring them back home. The Ministry of Aviation said in a statement that due to PIA flights, all visitors will start arriving home within 24 hours. The Ministry of Aviation further said that PIA is a national body and always offers its services to the country on such occasions. It may be recalled that the runway of Damascus International Airport was partially destroyed due to Israeli bombardment two days ago. The Syrian government has since canceled all flights from Damascus, and Aleppo's airport is being used for national and international flights. For Pakistanis stranded in Syria, the Pakistani government's move is commendable, but all countries in the world, including Pakistan, which believe in the protection of human rights, must stop Israel from carrying out any kind of terrorist act that could harm civilians. Lives are at stake.



## Vision 2047

MOHAMMAD UMAR IFTIKHAR

Pakistan's government must pursue a long-term vision with short-term strategies to implement the vision. The sectors of education, health, justice, economy, and infrastructure must be focused upon to address all shortcomings. We are already under debt with external pressures from IMF increasing with each passing day. Corruption must be curbed at all costs and the government officials need to be well-educated and experienced so they can implement the rules. Pakistan will be 100 years old in the next 25 years. The last 75 years were lost to wars, internal conflicts, cross-border terrorism, external pressures, and geopolitical tussles. Inflation and insecurity caused damage to the national vision to perform while development could not be achieved in its true sense because of how the various political fabric remained in friction with each other. This caused regime changes that hampered the flow of growth in all sectors. Brain drain was another issue that we have been facing. Pakistani talent is not being recognized because those sitting at the helms of affairs are not wise enough to admire such talent. This resulted in skilled graduates leaving Pakistan for greener pastures abroad. A holistic change is required if Pakistan must achieve its economic and social objectives. The country can uplift its standards of living if honesty reigns supreme in the public sector. The literacy rate needs to increase so that the unskilled population can be taught skills so they can add value to the economy. Women empowerment across all strata of the population among the provinces should be encouraged. These areas are years behind and will require continuous efforts to bring them to par with the contemporary lifestyle. Hospitals and medical facilities must follow suit. Otherwise, we will still be yearning for development in 2047.

## Recognising Israel: Any Asian volunteers?

James Dorsey

Mujtahid, an anonymous tweeter who has repeatedly provided insights into the secretive workings of the House of Saud in recent years, reported that Saudi Arabia and Israel had created a "situation room" on the 14th floor of an Istanbul office building to advance the establishment of diplomatic relations. He said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's close aide, Saud al-Qahtani, headed the Saudi side

The question for Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is not whether either country will recognise Israel but when and who will go first. For the past two years, Saudi Arabia was believed to want a Muslim state in Asia, home to the world's three most populous Muslim majority countries, to recognise Israel first. Asian recognition would give the kingdom, home to Islam's two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, a welcome fig leaf. Numbers, as expressed by population size, were one reason. Compared to Saudi Arabia's 35 million people, Pakistan has a population of 221 million, Indonesia 274 million, and Bangladesh 165 million. That was one reason Saudi Arabia preferred an Asian state to take the lead in

like to formalize its expanding informal relations with Israel but needs a cover to do so. The kingdom has emphasized this in recent weeks as it sought Israeli acquiescence in the transfer by Egypt to Saudi Arabia of sovereignty over two islands at the top of the Red Sea and prepared for a possible visit by US President Joe Biden. The visit is designed to improve relations strained since Mr. Biden came to office over Saudi doubts about US security commitments, US demands that the kingdom increase oil production in a bid to reduce prices and limit Russian energy exports, Saudi acquisition of Chinese missiles, and the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. In advance of a visit, Saudi Arabia has not

rejected a US proposal for a regional Middle Eastern air defence system that would include the kingdom and Israel. Mujtahid, an anonymous tweeter who has repeatedly provided insights into the secretive workings of the House of Saud in recent years, reported that Saudi Arabia and Israel had created a "situation room" on the 14th floor of an Istanbul office building to advance the establishment of diplomatic relations. He said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's close aide, Saud al-Qahtani, headed the Saudi side. Despite rampant speculation, Mr. Bin Salman is unlikely to see Mr. Biden's visit as a capstone for recognition of Israel. More likely, he will continue to insist on a fig leaf in the form of progress in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or a major Asian Muslim-majority state going next. Much of the attention focused in the almost two years since the UAE-led quartet forged relations with Israel focused on Indonesia. Not only because Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim majority state and its foremost Muslim democracy but also because it is home to the world's most moderate mass Muslim civil society movement, Nahdlatul Ulama. Heads of Nahdlatul Ulama have visited Israel and met Israeli leaders multiple times in the past two decades, even though Indonesia and Israel have no diplomatic relations. The movement also has close ties to various American Jewish groups. Similarly, the absence of formal relations between Israel and Indonesia has not prevented Israeli diplomats, scholars, and journalists from maintaining contact with Indonesian counterparts and travelling to the archipelago nation or Indonesian pilgrims from touring the Jewish state. Nevertheless, Indonesia has rebuffed both

the Trump and the Biden administration's requests to move towards recognition. Indonesia's refusal may not come as a surprise. However, suggestions that Pakistan, despite its close ties to Saudi Arabia, may strike a deal with Israel come out of left field. Religious ultra-conservatism is woven into the fabric of society and at least some state institutions. Moreover, anti-Semitism is rampant in Pakistan. Nonetheless, a recent visit to Israel by a delegation of Pakistani activists seeking to promote people-to-people contacts has sparked anger and debate in Pakistan. The group, which met with Israeli President Isaac Herzog, included American and British Pakistanis, prominent Pakistani journalist Ahmed Qureshi, and Fischel BenKhalid, a Pakistani Jew. "Without at least an overt nudge from powerful quarters, no Pakistani journalist could make this public trip to Israel and return safely, reflecting how attitudes pertaining to Israel have evolved in the world's only Muslim nuclear power," said London-based Pakistani journalist Hamza Azhar Salam. That did not stop Pakistani state television from firing Mr. Qureshi. "The good news is, we today have the first, robust and rich nationwide debate in Pakistan on establishing diplomatic ties with Israel. This is huge," Mr. Qureshi said. Many Pakistanis, led by ousted prime minister Imran Khan, saw the visit to Israel as part of an effort by Pakistan's powerful military to forge closer ties to the Jewish state – a move Mr. Khan appears to have considered when he was in office. His aide, Zulfi Bukhari, reportedly visited Israel for a meeting with then head of the Mossad, Yossi Cohen. Mr. Bukhari has denied travelling to Israel. The visit by the Pakistani activists came two years after two Pakistani ac-

ademics called in an op-ed in Israel's Haaretz newspaper for Pakistani-Israeli cooperation in resolving the South Asian state's water stress and upgrading its agriculture sector. Similarly, Pakistani political analyst Saad Hafiz recently argued that Pakistan's recognition of Israel would earn it the support of the Biden administration and the Israeli lobby in Washington for continued International Monetary Fund (IMF) aid for his country's battered economy. Mr. Hafiz also reiterated that Pakistan could benefit from Israeli water conservation technology. "The US leadership, Congress, and the powerful pro-Israel lobby could support the resumption of financial assistance to Pakistan as an incentive if it agrees to normalize ties with Israel," Mr. Saad said. Pakistanis and Israeli have links in other ways. For example, many Pakistanis offer their services on Fiverr, an Israeli marketplace for freelance professionals. Degrees of Saudi cooperation with Israel and Pakistani feelers contrasted starkly with legislation passed in the last two weeks by the Iraqi parliament criminalizing contact with Israel and by the Houthi government in Yemen that outlawed contact not only with Israel but also with Jews. Pakistan is unlikely to follow Iraq or the Houthis. Even so, "it is unlikely that Pakistan's fragile coalition government has the credibility and time to take the politically risky decision to open dialogue with Israel, especially with (Imran) Khan snipping at its heels," Mr. Saad said. "Yet, bold decisions are needed for Pakistan to compete in a changing world." Dr. James M. Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and scholar, a Senior Fellow at the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute.

## Libya – a tale of two governments, again

Hafed Al-Ghwel



Given recent developments, there is an argument to be made that the Bashagha-led parallel authority does possess a few internal advantages over an increasingly isolated Government of National Unity led by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah who, for now, retains authority over the country's finances via the Libyan Central Bank

A troubling sense of déjà vu has settled over Libya in recent months, following the escalations that capped the failure last year to hold general elections and finally end a senseless struggle between rival governments with self-proclaimed mandates over post-Muammar Qaddafi life in the country. Since March, the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity, which was established in 2021 as part of a UN-led political process, has faced a serious challenge from a rival government based in Sirte, the Government of National Stability, that was appointed through a controversial vote in Libya's parliament, the House of Representatives.

Tensions flared three weeks ago when attempts by the head of that parallel government, Fathi Bashagha, a former interior minister, to enter Tripoli and depose the Government of National Unity sparked clashes between militias. His gamble was ultimately unsuccessful but the episode was reminiscent of the attempt by Bashagha's current ally, Khalifa Haftar, a military commander based in the east of the country, to wrest control of Tripoli in 2019 in an effort to derail the transitional processes in the country. It triggered a war that drew a variety of external actors and escalated a competition of interests on both sides, with Bashagha himself emerging as a key figure in the effort to thwart Haftar's offensive. Bashagha's current affiliation with Haftar's forces and the Tobruk-based House of Representatives is not a strange or surprising occurrence, however. It is a stark reminder of how alliances, affiliations and loyalties governed by shared interests are constantly shifting in Libya. Nonetheless, the situation inside the North African country has devolved, yet again, into a familiar and untenable state – and that is by design. Since the unceremonious fall of the Qaddafi regime in 2011, intransigence, massive corruption and a political impasse have stifled attempts to accelerate what should have been Libya's seamless embrace of democracy. Partisanship and self-interest quickly overtook rec-

onciliatory efforts that drove the country's now decade-long, turbulent transitional processes in a deeply fragmented land, replete with tribalism, hyper-localized tensions, and extremely fluid security and sociopolitical dynamics. Throughout the ensuing political crises, limited skirmishes and even an all-out civil war, Libya appears to have settled on a strange governance equilibrium. Attempts at unity and reconciliation have always crumbled, leaving two competing, parallel authorities safeguarding the interests of elite cabals and their pursuit of internal ambitions, backed by external actors – all at the expense of the war-weary and frustrated Libyan people. In hindsight, it should have been fairly easy to anticipate Libya's struggles with transitioning to a nascent democracy, given the unprecedented political, social and economic changes in the post-Qaddafi era. Forty years of centralized authoritarian rule was quickly replaced by a variety of competing actors, factions and rival institutions, armed and unarmed. While that might have brought many of the country's disparate voices to the fore to enhance its democratization processes, it produced few unifying figures with high profiles that did not derive their legitimacy from localized, tribal or other partisan dynamics. The end result was further fragmentation at a very inopportune time, the post-Arab Spring phase, which not only fueled the constant shifting of allegiances and loyalties, it also sparked violent conflicts, undermined national reconciliation, fueled massive corruption, and hardened divisive attitudes in both the east and west of the country. Given recent developments, there is an argument to be made that the Bashagha-led parallel authority does possess a few internal advantages over an increasingly isolated Government of National Unity led by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah who, for now, retains authority over the country's finances via the Libyan Central Bank. Bashagha's meteoric rise from member of parliament to interior minister in former Prime Minister Fayez Al-Sarraj's interim Government of National Accord is mostly due to his mastery of an art of compromise that is severely lacking in Libya's sociopolitical landscape. Over the course of a

decade, Bashagha's willingness to seek trade-offs and negotiate with even the most diametrically opposed factions through discreet channels naturally earned him substantial connections, name-recognition and some influence in western, eastern and central parts of Libya. This penchant for compromise, combined with a favorable stature abroad, also nurtured Bashagha's national profile, which now rivals other well-known figures in the country and could have turned a three-way race for the presidency between Seif Al-Islam Qaddafi, Haftar and Dbeibah into a four-way affair. However, it is likely that even Bashagha's solid credentials, his substantial external backing, a bevy of connections crisscrossing a war-torn land and his ability to work with "the other side" will fail to re-energize the nation's stalled democratic aspirations. Ironically, the willingness to compromise – a cornerstone of his political maneuvering – will actually do more to preserve the status quo than push Libya toward a much-needed turnaround. In a tragic twist, as prime minister-designate of the Government of National Stability, he is simultaneously, the best, arguably, and the worst option for a transition process belabored by intense rivalries and endless grievances. The more the Government of National Stability works the middle ground in the name of unity and addressing the plight of millions of Libyans, the more opportunities will be afforded to detractors seeking to derail the country's emergence from its lost decade, and the more Bashagha's appeal will diminish in the west of the country, where compromise with Haftar is viewed almost universally as an absolute red line that no one should cross. Overall, the current situation in Libya is almost the worst possible scenario in terms of hopes for conflict resolution and de-escalation. Neither side, east nor west, is capable of overpowering the other to unilaterally drive Libya's transition process and extend its authority over the rest of the country. Yet both sides are equally convinced of their legitimacy, longevity and imperviousness to any externally engineered solutions, particularly those that do not materially benefit their leadership. Of course, democratization and political tran-

sitions will never be feasible, let alone sustainable, if they simply become one-sided affairs. However, when neither side shares any interest in working with the other to settle long-standing issues or commit to a singular road map, every new development simply becomes an opportunity to undermine a rival and apply a "poison pill" to the transition process. In other words, there will only be the emergence of even more "Governments of National Somethings," each confident in its own mandate to oversee Libya's transition, only to crumble years later having achieved little other than entrenching an all-too-familiar status quo. If it happened before, it will happen again. And, while Bashagha's march on Tripoli should have served as a demonstration of intent that things would be different this time around, all it amounted to was a poorly conceived "test" to determine whether the prospect of violence – previously defused by a still partially intact October 2020 ceasefire – remains an effective disincentive to escalation. Much like in the Charles Dickens novel "A Tale of Two Cities," this might be the best of times and the worst of times for Libyans. It could be the best of times for them to seek a way forward, having been abandoned to their own devices by a weak and ineffectual UN flustered by no-win scenarios and loss of credibility in the country; an international community that is now distracted by the conflict in eastern Europe; a divided Brussels not keen on sticking to a coherent, unified approach to the Libya quagmire; and a US that is not really interested in doing anything serious in Libya. Unfortunately, it is simultaneously the worst of times for change in Libya given that those in charge of the transition have no interest or incentive whatsoever in seeing it through. The lack of any real possibility of success means, sadly, that the only road that remains open for Libya is a downward spiral into further fragmentation and hopelessness.

Hafed Al-Ghwel is a non-resident senior fellow with the Foreign Policy Institute at the John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. Courtesy: Arab News

## Briefs

## China not to allow Taiwan independence

FROM PAGE 01

risen due in particular to a growing number of Chinese aerial incursions into Taiwan's air defence zone. But he also struck a more conciliatory tone at points, calling for a "stable" China-US relationship, which he said was "vital for global peace". During his address, Austin also said he wants "lines of communication" with Chinese officials to remain open. The pair held their first face-to-face talks on the sidelines of the summit in Singapore on Friday, during which they clashed over Taiwan. Tensions over Taiwan have escalated in particular due to increasing Chinese military aircraft incursions into the island's air defence identification zone (ADIZ). President Joe Biden, during a visit to Japan last month, appeared to break decades of US policy when, in response to a question, he said Washington would defend Taiwan militarily if it was attacked by China. The White House has since insisted its policy of "strategic ambiguity" over whether or not it would intervene had not changed. The dispute is just the latest between Washington and Beijing. Another major flashpoint has been the South China Sea. China claims almost all of the resource-rich sea, through which trillions of dollars in shipping trade passes annually, with competing claims from Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. The United States and China have also been at loggerheads over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with Washington accusing Beijing of providing tacit support for Moscow.

## US to 'stand by our friends'

FROM PAGE 01

but Taipei has been insisting on its independence since 1949. "We categorically oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo from either side. We do not support Taiwan independence," he said. "And we stand firmly behind the principle that cross-strait differences must be resolved by peaceful means." He added: "Our policy hasn't changed. But unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be true for China." The US official argued that maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is not just a US but a matter of international concern. "So let me be clear. We do not seek confrontation or conflict," he said. "And we do not seek a new Cold War, an Asian NATO, or a region split into hostile blocs." Washington in recent years is focusing more on the Asia-Pacific region, shoring up bilateral and multilateral support as it seeks to contain Beijing's growing influence.

Besides its Five Eyes intelligence alliance (comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and US), Washington also leads a loose regional security group that includes Japan, Australia, and India. Known as the Quad, the alliance is one of the many ways in which the US has been working to counter China's expanding military and economic power. Washington also signed the AUKUS pact last year with the UK and Australia that paved the way for Canberra to acquire nuclear-armed submarines. It has bilateral military pacts with many countries in Asia-Pacific, including Japan and South Korea, where it has deployed thousands of soldiers and the latest weaponry. On his first trip to Japan last month, President Joe Biden went as far as to threaten Beijing with military force if it attempts to take over Taiwan by force.

## Bilawal, OIC chief discuss Islamophobia

FROM PAGE 01

officials of India's ruling party BJP issued derogatory remarks against the Holy Prophet (PBUH), inviting severe condemnation and backlash from Muslims in India and abroad.

## Swiss Business Council hosts farewell in honour of envoy

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Swiss Business Council (SBC) hosted a farewell in honour of the Swiss Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Bénédicte de Cerjat together with the Executive Committee (EC) of the SBC at a Local Hotel in Karachi. The Ambassador addressed the EC during the meeting and shared his beautiful memories in Pakistan. H.E. Bénédicte de Cerjat arrived in Pakistan to start his assignment as the Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan in July 2020. And now after completion of his tenure of about two years, he is heading towards his next assignment. The Council extended its best wishes to H.E. Bénédicte de Cerjat for his future endeavors. During the meeting, we had the presence of H.E. Bénédicte de Cerjat, Swiss Ambassador to Pakistan, CEOs of Nestlé, HABIBMETRO Bank, #Archroma along with the Managing Directors of #AlAmeenTradingCo., #SICPA Inks, Chairman of #PolygalNV, Advisor on Commercial Affairs - Swiss Embassy, Business Development Manager Fletcher P. Albert - SBC & the Office Manager - SBC



## Viktor Axelsen wins Indonesia Masters title

NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: Danish badminton ace Viktor Axelsen clinched the men's singles title at the Indonesia Masters on Sunday, beating Taiwan's Chou Tien-chen in straight sets. The world number one beat Chou 21-10, 21-12 in a 41-minute match held at the Istora sporting arena in Jakarta. "I love playing here in Istora and I always dreamt of winning a tournament at Istora. It's a legendary venue, so to have done that is something that is really special to me," 28-year-old Axelsen told reporters. Axelsen's victory came after he downed home favourite Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in the semi-finals. In the women's singles, China's Chen Yufei overcame Thailand's Ratchanon Intanon to win her first title since her gold medal at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. She defeated Ratchanon, who won the Indonesia Masters women's title in 2020, in a 74-minute three-set match 21-16, 18-21, 21-15. "I am very pleased to get the gold medal today. I faced some difficulties during the game but I'm very pleased to overcome them and secure the win," world number four Chen said. Chen secured a place in the final after defeating compatriot He Bingjiao 21-17, 21-14 in the semis. After the Indonesia Masters, the Indonesia Open is set to begin on June 14 and will last until June 19. The back-to-back tournaments were highly anticipated by badminton fans after almost three years without live audiences in the Indonesian capital due to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Max Verstappen wins Azerbaijan Grand Prix

AGENCIES

BAKU: Max Verstappen has extended his Formula One championship lead by winning the Azerbaijan Grand Prix after Charles Leclerc retired from the lead with an engine failure. Leclerc started from pole on Sunday but immediately lost the lead to Sergio Perez, Verstappen's Red Bull teammate, in the first corner. The Ferrari driver regained the lead with a smart strategy call to pit under "virtual safety car" speed restrictions while the two Red Bull cars stayed out. Leclerc seemed poised to challenge for the win, but the Monaco driver's car started spewing smoke on lap 20 of 51 and he had to pull into the pits. It was his second retirement in three races. "It hurts. We really need to look into that for it to not happen again. I don't really find the right words to describe, obviously it is very disappointing," Leclerc said. Verstappen had passed Perez shortly before Leclerc's failure and the reigning F1 champion



cruised to his fifth win of the season. There were more late reliability concerns Sunday when Verstappen told his team the car felt odd under braking, but he was able to make it to the finish. "I think today we had incredible pace in the car, we could really look after the tires and chip

away at it and pass for the lead," Verstappen said. "But then of course, also, maybe a tiny bit lucky with (Leclerc's) retirement. I think nevertheless our car was really quick today and could have closed that gap." Red Bull went 1-2 in the race with Perez finishing second, while Mercedes was third and fourth with George Russell and Lewis Hamilton. Ferrari had a terrible day as both Leclerc and teammate Carlos Sainz Jr failed to finish, as did the Ferrari-powered cars of Zhou Guanyu and Kevin Magnussen. It was the first time since the Italian Grand Prix in 2020 that the Ferrari team had to retire both cars. Verstappen leads the standings by 21 points over Perez, while Leclerc dropped to third and is 34 points behind Verstappen. Pierre Gasly was fifth for AlphaTauri and Sebastian Vettel sixth for Alfa Romeo. Fernando Alonso of Alpine held off the two McLarens of Daniel Ricciardo and Lando Norris to finish seventh, and Alonso's teammate Esteban Ocon was 10th.



ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Interior Abdur Rehman Kanju addressing during launching ceremony of De-concepts T-10 Celebrity Cricket League (DCL). - DNA

## Roger Federer plans comeback with Laver Cup

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: The former world number one, who will be 41 in August, has not played since July last year, when he was knocked out of Wimbledon in the quarter-finals against Hubert Hurkacz. Roger Federer has said he is "definitely" intending to return to top-level tennis in 2023, but added that he had not

made any concrete plans beyond his scheduled appearances at the Laver Cup and his home tournament in Basel later this year. The former world number one, who will be 41 in August, has not played since July last year, when he was knocked out of Wimbledon in the quarter-finals against Hubert Hurkacz. Earlier this year, Federer confirmed his plans to team up with Spaniard Rafa Nadal at the Laver Cup in London, before

competing at the Swiss Indoors tournament. "Yes, definitely," Federer told the Swiss based newspaper Tages-Anzeiger when asked if he wanted to return to the ATP tour in 2023. "How and where, I don't know yet. But that would be the idea. I haven't planned more than the Laver Cup and Basel yet. After Basel, the season is over anyway. It's important for me to get fit again so that I can train fully."

## Largest Palestinian displacement in decades looming

AGENCIES

RAMALLAH: Some 1,200 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank region of Masafer Yatta face the risk of forced removal to make way for an army firing zone after a decades-long legal battle that ended last month in Israel's highest court. The ruling opened the way for one of the largest displacements since Israel captured the territory in the 1967 Middle East war. But residents are refusing to leave, hoping their resilience and international pressure will keep Israel from carrying out the evictions. "They want to take this land from us to build settlements," said Wadha Ayoub Abu Sabha, a resident of al-Fakheit, one of a group of hamlets where Palestinian shepherds and farmers claim a historic connection to the land. "We're not leaving," she said. In the 1980s, Israel declared the area a closed military zone known as "Firing Zone 918". It argued in court that these 3,000 hectares (7,400 acres) along the Israel-West Bank boundary were "highly crucial" for training purposes and that the Palestinians living there were only seasonal dwellers. "It has been a year of immense grief," said Abu Sabha, her voice breaking as she sat in one of the few tents left standing, lit by a single light bulb. The communities in this part of the South Hebron Hills traditionally lived in underground caves. Over the past two decades, they have also started building tin shacks and small rooms above ground. Israeli forces have been demolishing these new constructions for years, Abu Sabha said, but now that they have the court's backing, the evictions are likely to pick up. Steps away, her family's belongings were reduced to a pile of rubble after soldiers arrived with bulldozers to raze some of the structures. She lamented the significant losses — the dwindling livestock even more than the destroyed furniture. Much of the argument during the protracted case centred on whether the Palestinians who live across the area are permanent residents or seasonal occupants. The Supreme Court concluded that the residents "failed to prove their claim of permanent habitation" before the area was declared a firing zone. It relied on aerial photos and excerpts from a 1985 book that both sides cited as evidence. The book, titled "Life in the Caves of Mount Hebron", was authored by Israeli anthropologist Yaacov Havakook, who spent three years studying the lives of Palestinian farmers and shepherds in Masafer Yatta.

## 'Pak to be cleared from FATF grey list'

FROM PAGE 01

meeting is scheduled to be held in Berlin from June 14 to 17, and Mr Schlagheck suggested that the FATF teams should visit Pakistan to see that efforts have been made by Pakistan to meet the conditions and curb money laundering and other issues. The envoy brushed aside the concerns that certain lobbies were active in the FATF against Pakistan, he said that FATF was a collective forum and one country alone cannot influence decisions. "It is a technical process and positive results regarding Pakistan are expected," he added. He stopped short of criticising India over the missile incident and said that such matters have to be taken into consideration seriously, but he lauded that there was a relative calm at the LOC but the overall situation has to improve. Regarding the GSP+ status granted to Pakistan that is set to expire in the last quarter of 2023, Mr Schlagheck said that a EU delegation is set to arrive in Pakistan next week, there were some reviews. "This is a new mission from Brussels, the outcome will be positive but there are certain practical steps that Pakistan has to take," he said, adding that while the relevant has signed all the country conventions, the implementation process needs to be visible." He expressed the confidence that Pakistan will grant the GSP+ status from 2024 too. However he added that some tasks have to be done — "the governments are aware of this." Among these issues includes misuse of blasphemy laws and undue laws related to death penalty. "We understand that it is not practically possible to finish the blasphemy law but its misuse has to be contained, besides there were certain provisions that award death penalties should be amended," he added. Mr Schlagheck said that the European Parliament too had a role in this matter and suggested that the Pakistani foreign minister as well as the parliamentarians should meet the members of the European Parliaments too.

## Afghan govt needs to...

FROM PAGE 01

didn't trust one another, thus making beneficial no other than Emirate Islami Afghanistan to go for further enhancing its influence in that country- considered hub of extremism and terrorism. Internally, Taliban despite tall claims had utterly failed to satisfy the common men, thus giving opportunities to the resistance elements to mobilise the public in favour of their main purpose, getting rid of Taliban regime. No doubt to mention that at the moment the non-Pushtoon community Tajiks are on the forefront of resistance against Taliban. Ex Vice President Amar Ullah Saleh and Ahmad Masoud are considered the two main leaders who are leading and sponsoring the armed resistance against Taliban whereas several others like Dr. Abdullah, Younas Qanooni, Salah Ud Din Rabbani and several others are silent. Likewise others like Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostam, Tajik warlord from Hirat Ismael Khan, Shia Hazara leaders Ustad Karim Khalili and Ustad Mohaqiq and former top Jihadi leader Prof. Abdul Rab Rasool Sayaf have recently held first ever meeting in Turkey. Minutes of the meeting are still unclear but definitely it was focused on "strategy how to topple Taliban regime." The Pushtoons who are in majority and historically known for playing major role in politico-strategic changes in Afghanistan through one or the other ways made disintegrated. The three top amongst the Pushtoons ex-President Hamid Karzai, deposed President Dr. Ashraf Ghani and once-loyal or considered favorite of Pakistan spy agencies Engineer Gulbadin Hekmatyar are not only lacking communication with each other's but they have conflicting ideas regarding Taliban regime and future set up of Afghanistan.

## Azerbaijan win European minifootball c'ship

SPORTS DESK

BAKU: The Azerbaijani mini-football team has won the European Championship for the first time in its history. The Azerbaijani team won the European championship with a 1:0 victory over the Romanian team in the final match at Kosice, Slovakia on June 11. In the 25th minute, Seymur Mammadov scored the game's lone goal. Earlier, Azerbaijan defeated Kazakhstan 3: 2 in the semifinal of the European Championship. The bronze medals were won by the Bulgarian team, which defeated the Kazakh team with a score of 4: 1. Then, the champion Azerbaijani national team, members of other medal-winning teams, and notable players were awarded. Davud Karimi, the Azerbaijani team's goalie, was awarded the best goalkeeper in Europe in mini-football, while Bakhtiyar Sultanov was named the continental championship's top player. It should be noted that Anar Mammadov,

Tanriverdi Maharramli, Tural Narimanov, Vitaly Borisov, Seymur Mammadov, Asif Zeynalov, Elvin Alizade, Samir Hamzayev, Vusal Isayev, Taleh Babayev, Mirmehdi Rzayev, Ramil Hasanzade, Orkhan Aliyev, Ilkin Hajiyev, Tamraz Amirjanov, Ravan Karimov, Bakhtiyar Soltanov, Mehdi Rasulov, Davud Karimi and Elmar Gasimov were among the members of the Azerbaijani team that won the title of European champion. The Azerbaijani national team started the competition in Group B at the European Championship, where 24 teams competed. Despite losing to Romania (0: 2) in the group round, the Azerbaijani team advanced to the quarterfinals, beating Spain (5: 1) and Albania (1: 0). The Azerbaijani national team advanced to the semifinals, defeating Israel 3-0 in the quarterfinals and host Slovakia in the quarterfinals with a minimum score. The Azerbaijani footballers, who won a decisive victory over the national team of Kazakhstan (3: 2) in the semifinals, got the right to play in the final.



## Briefs

**Turkey bets on modern cruise hub to boost tourism**

## AGENCIES

ISTANBUL: A state-of-the-art port in Istanbul with an underground terminal, a celebrity chef's restaurant and a shopping centre, welcomes yet another 5,000-passenger cruise ship, bringing more cash to Turkey's struggling tourism industry. Hit hard by Covid, Turkey's tourism sector could get a shot in the arm from the revenue generated at Galataport, which opened in 2021 – a year later than planned due to the pandemic.

**Georgian PM 'optimistic' about EU membership**

## FOREIGN DESK

TBILISI: Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili on Saturday said he remained "optimistic" that a "sensible decision" would be made by the European Commission on the country's European Union membership bid, which he said would be in the "best interest of both sides". Trend reports citing Agenda.ge. Garibashvili noted he had publicly stated Georgia was "only asking for a merit-based decision" and "nothing 'undeserved' during his visits to Brussels, Davos and Bratislava. The head of the Government also decried the "insulting" and "irrational" European Parliament resolution, adopted on Thursday, which urged the Georgian authorities to "refrain from interfering in media freedom or pursuing politically motivated judicial cases against media owners or representatives".

**ILO warns of rising tide of child labor across globe**

## WEB DESK

GENEVA: Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the globe has seen a rise in the use of child workers, the International Labor Organization (ILO) warned on the eve of Sunday, June 12, World Day Against Child Labor. ILO figures from numerous countries indicate a rising trend in child labor in the post-pandemic period due to worsening economic conditions, Benjamin Smith, the organization's senior officer on child labor, told Anadolu Agency on Saturday. Before the pandemic, there were some 160 million child laborers globally, Smith said, but 9 million more children might join the ranks of laborers by the end of this year.

# Protesters demand action on US gun violence

## AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: Thousands of people took to the streets in the United States on Saturday to push for action on the devastating gun violence plaguing the country, where Republican politicians have repeatedly blocked efforts to enact stricter firearms laws. Protesters of all ages streamed onto the National Mall in Washington, where activists placed more than 45,000 white vases holding flowers – one for each person killed by a firearm in the United States in 2020. "Protect People Not Guns," said one sign held by a protester near the Washington Monument. "Fear Has No Place In Schools," read another. Two horrific shootings last month – one at a Texas elementary school that killed 19 children and two teachers, and another at a New York supermarket that left 10 Black people dead – helped spur the rallies, organized by March For Our Lives. The student-led organization, founded by survivors of a shooting at a high school in Parkland, Florida, held a rally that drew hundreds of thousands of people to the nation's capital in March 2018. Four years later, the demonstration was marked by frustration at the lack of progress.

"Enough is enough" rang out repeatedly from the podium, with speakers including Parkland survivor X Gonzalez and Martin Luther King Jr's granddaughter Yolanda King. "We are here to demand justice," said Garnell Whitfield, whose 86-year-old mother was killed in the racially motivated supermarket shooting in Buffalo, New York on May 14. "We are here to stand with those who are bold enough to demand sensible gun legislation." The problem of gun violence in the United States – which has killed more than 19,300 people so far this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive – goes far beyond high-profile mass killings, with more than half of those deaths due to suicide. Outside of Washington, hundreds of other demonstrations were planned around the country Saturday, including in Parkland, where protesters carried signs with messages such as "Am I Next?" Thousands also turned out in New York City. In Brooklyn, white crosses were erected for the children killed in Uvalde and portraits of those killed in Buffalo fastened to shopping carts. Ease of access to firearms, and mental health problems that can lead to them being used in attacks, have both been in the spotlight in the wake of the May 24 shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. The massacre

was carried out by a gunman who bought two assault rifles shortly after turning 18. Gun control advocates are calling for tighter restrictions or an outright ban on such rifles. But opponents have sought to cast mass shootings as primarily a mental health issue, not a weapons problem. Geraldo Mendes, a physical education teacher in Texas who joined the rally in New York said he supports the US constitutional right to bear arms, but that "as far as AR-15s and weapons of war, we regular citizens don't need those." The majority of Americans support tighter gun laws, but opposition from many Republican lawmakers has long been a hurdle to major changes. "The will of the American people is being subverted by a minority," said Cynthia Martins, a 63-year-old resident of the US capital, referring to the Republican Party. "There's a reason that we're still in this situation," she said. Some lawmakers are trying to pass gun regulations. The Democrat-controlled House of Representatives passed a broad package of proposals this week that included raising the purchasing age for most semi-automatic rifles from 18 to 21 – but the party does not have the requisite 60 votes to advance it in the Senate. A cross-party group of senators has also been working on a narrow col-

lection of controls that could develop into the first serious attempt at gun regulation reform in decades. But it does not include an assault weapons ban or universal background checks, meaning it will fall short of the expectations of President Joe Biden. Faith Barrett, a teacher who traveled to the rally with her daughter, also a teacher, voiced the frustration shared by many on the Mall. "We're still back in the same place," the 47-year-old said, voicing only "tentative" hope change would come. Both she and her daughter have plans in place in case of a shooting at their school. "Most teachers look at every single classroom they go into and think, where am I going to put my kids if something happens," Barrett said. The spectre of gun violence also hung over the rally, where police and security forces had a heavy presence. A moment of silence for the Uvalde victims was shaken by a brief panic when a disturbance near the stage sent people sprinting away in terror. While the crowd quickly calmed and the man creating the disturbance was detained, with Park Police telling local media no weapons were found, some were left in shock and tears. Fred Guttenberg, the father of a Parkland victim, took to the podium to ease the crowd. "Unfortunately somebody decided to show up and put the fear that we live with everyday to life."

## 5 dead in Italy helicopter crash

## AGENCIES

ROME: Five bodies have been found at the crash site of a helicopter that disappeared in Italy two days ago, while two people are still missing, local media reported on Saturday. The helicopter crashed on Mt. Cusna in the northern part of Italy, according to news agency ANSA. Seven people were aboard the helicopter, including four Turkish and two Lebanese nationals. It was heading from Lucca in Tuscany to the northern city of Treviso when it vanished from radars on Thursday. While a search is underway for the missing passengers, diplomatic sources said there were no survivors in the crash.

## PKK supporters attack Azerbaijani man

## MONITORING DESK

LONDON: A group of supporters of the PKK terrorist group attacked a member of the public during a demonstration in London on Saturday. The attack targeted an Azerbaijani man who was walking down the street near the tourist hub Piccadilly Circus. The assailants, a group of men and women, punched the man on the chin and continued to physically assault him before the police took him into a shop for protection. The man told Anadolu Agency (AA) that he is originally from Azerbaijan but works in London. He said he "saw the anti-Turkish meeting and I could not take it," explaining that the group members "were making the Victory sign." He said he made the gray wolf sign – a sign symbolizing patriotism commonly used in Turkey and Azerbaijan. "Men and women, they attacked me. They punched my chin. Then police protected me in a shop," he said.

## Attack in Mali kills at least five people

## AGENCIES

MALI: An attack at a checkpoint in southeast Mali has killed at least five people, including customs officers and civilians, local and military sources said. While a military source told AFP news agency a "terrorist attack" had killed seven civilians and customs officers at the Koutiala checkpoint, a local councillor put the death toll at five. Neither source provided the breakdown of the civilian and customs officers involved. "The enemies also suffered losses," the military source said, adding the situation was currently under control. At the time of the attack, the Malian army was conducting an operation in the Koutiala area, near the border with Burkina Faso.

## Pakistani Buffalo Embryos to be exported to China soon

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Buffalo Embryos will be exported to China soon, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. Earlier this month, China and Pakistan have agreed on the protocol on quarantine and health requirements for buffalo embryos' export. It was agreed that both countries will join hands to enhance cooperation and upgrade the technology of the buffalo industry in Pakistan. According to the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, China and Pakistan have reached consensus on the text of the Protocol on Quarantine and Health Requirements for Buffalo Embryos to be exported from Pakistan to China. The donor cows and sperm bulls used to create buffalo embryos are quarantined and raised at the farm under regional management of foot-and-mouth disease. After signing the protocol, buffalo embryos produced in the embryo processing sites registered by both parties that meet the requirements of the protocol can be exported to China. The signing of the Protocol is conducive to the introduction of Chinese buffalo embryo in vitro production and embryo transfer technology into Pakistan and the improvement of the embryo technology level of Pakistan's domestic buffalo industry. In addition, according to the requirements of Pakistan's Ministry of National Food Security and Research, half of the buffalo embryos developed by Chinese enterprises in Pakistan will be used in Pakistan and half can be exported to China, which will also help improve the superiority of buffalo in Pakistan. The entry of Pakistani buffalo embryos into China is of great significance to China's buffalo milk industry. The donor cows and sperm bulls used for the production of buffalo embryos are the selected high-quality buffalo provenances with strong growth, high disease resistance and high milk yield. Buffalo embryos will be used to improve the provenance of Chinese buffalo and provide continuous support for the development of the Chinese buffalo milk industry. According to Dr. Gu Wenliang, Agricultural Commissioner, Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, Chinese enterprises have set up buffalo embryo processing laboratories in Lahore and are planning to build foot-and-mouth disease free farm in surrounding areas. Buffalo embryos have been successfully trial-produced in Pakistan. Guangxi University, Buffalo Institute of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) and other institutions have also carried out relevant cooperation with Pakistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) and University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF).



JAKARTA: Ambassador of Pakistan to Jakarta Mohammad Hassan hosted Mr and Mrs Adam Tugio, Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan and friends at Pakistan House Jakarta. – DNA

## Pak-China form traditional medicine alliance

Alliance is jointly established by the China-Pakistan Medical Association and the China Academy of Chinese Medicine

## DNA

BEIJING: "We hope the Health Corridor could link China with Pakistan, ensure people's health and wellness, and promote the development of TCM," said Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz, President of China Pakistan Medical Association, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Friday. Dr. Shahbaz made the remarks at the launching ceremony of the China-Pakistan Traditional Medicine and Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control Alliance (the Alliance) held in Shandong, China, aiming to help the building of the Pak-China Health Corridor. The Alliance will promote the research on Herbal and Traditional Medicine in

both countries, and jointly carry out research and development of new TCM, especially new anti-viral drugs for treatment of COVID-19 patients and others, according to Dr. Shahbaz. "We want to build institutes and college of pharmacy with TCM characteristics in Pakistan, by the strength of the Alliance. We also plan to provide training for Pakistani medical staff on traditional medicine and therapies," said Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz. The traditional Chinese medicine plays an important role in helping the world combat the pandemic. TCM has proved to have a positive effect in coronavirus prevention and treatment. Amid the global fight against COVID-19, the Alliance will further promote TCM experience on anti-pandemic to countries and regions along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

"Since the establishment of the Alliance, we hope the Chinese and the Pakistani sides would carry out pragmatic cooperation on the research of traditional medicine's role in epidemic diseases' prevention and controlling, to benefit the two nations," said Yu head of Shandong Academy of Chinese Medicine. The Alliance is jointly established by the China-Pakistan Medical Association and the China Academy of Chinese Medicine. Several Pakistani universities, including University of Punjab, Bahaudin Zakaria University and Gomal University, will join in the Alliance. Haripur University & Apex College of Pharmacy have already joined the Alliance, besides, seven Chinese universities and institutes.

## SRICEC vows to deepen co-op with Pakistan

## DNA

BEIJING: Pakistani ambassador to China Moin ul Haque and General Manager Hu of Silk Road International Cultural Exchange Center, China agreed to deepen cooperation in art & culture, movie, and other areas. According to China Economics Net (CEN) Moin ul Haque along with officers of the Pakistani Embassy in Beijing visited Silk Road International Cultural Exchange Center in Langfang, Hebei, where they toured various sections of the center and reviewed its state-of-the-art facilities. General Manager Hu and Ms. Claudia Yang, Director of International Arts briefed the Ambassador and his team on the role of the Center in popularizing performing arts of China and dif-

ferent countries. They also expressed a keen desire to showcase Pakistani cuisine, music and films in China to deepen cultural exchanges between the two countries. Appreciating the role of Silk Road International Cultural Exchange Center, Ambassador Moin ul Haque highlighted the affinity between the culture and artistic styles of Pakistan and China and their role in solidifying bilateral relations between the two countries. He hoped that the Center would continue its endeavors for acting as a bridge between diverse cultures and civilizations of the world and for fostering a spirit of friendly sentiments among them. Both sides also discussed plans for organizing events this year to promote Pakistani culture and history in China.



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**Briefs**

**Britannia still rules part of Cyprus**

DHEKELIA: Next to a palm tree, the Union Jack hangs limply on a pole outside a simple courthouse built decades ago on this eastern Mediterranean island. "Morning your honour," the clerk said in English to the British judge, beginning another day at Her Majesty's Court in Waterloo Road, Dhekelia. In this part of Cyprus, a former British colony, Britain is still in charge and Cypriots appear before the court. Some on the island liken the arrangement to continued colonisation. Scholars called it "undeniably anachronistic" and "highly unusual". "It is different," said Major General Rob Thomson, the top official in the sovereign areas, "but it's different because it serves a different purpose." Cyprus became independent from Britain in 1960 after a bloody guerrilla campaign. Under that treaty, which Greece and Turkey also signed, Britain retained control over two military zones in the east and south of the island, Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) where thousands of Cypriots live - outnumbering British troops. - Agencies

**Sri Lanka open to buy Russian oil**

**MONITORING DESK**

MOSCOW: Sri Lanka may be compelled to buy more oil from Russia as the island nation hunts desperately for fuel amid an unprecedented economic crisis, the newly appointed prime minister has said. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said that he would first look to other sources, but would be open to buying more crude from Moscow. "If we can get from any other sources, we will get from there. Otherwise (we) may have to go to Russia again," he said. Since Russia's attack against Ukraine in late February, global oil prices have skyrocketed. While Washington and its allies are trying to cut financial flows supporting Moscow's military effort, Russia is offering its crude at a steep discount, making it extremely enticing to a number of countries. Wickremesinghe also indicated he would be willing to accept more financial help from China, despite his country's mounting debt. "We need to identify what are the projects that we need for economic recovery and take loans for those projects, whether it be from China or from others," Wickremesinghe said. "It's a question of where do we deploy the resources?" Sri Lanka is also seeking financial assistance from the World Food Programme, which may send a team to the country soon, and Wickremesinghe is banking on a bailout package from the International Monetary Fund.

**South Korea vows to boost defence capabilities**

**WEB DESK**

SEOUL: South Korean Defence Minister Lee Jong-suk has said that his country would enhance its defence capabilities and work closely with the United States and Japan to counter North Korea's nuclear and missile threat. Lee, speaking at an Asian security meeting in Singapore on Sunday, said the situation on the Korean peninsula posed a global threat and he urged North Korea to immediately end its nuclear weapon and missile programmes. "Moreover, we would like to strengthen security cooperation between South Korea, the US and Japan to respond to North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes," he added. North Korea promoted its key nuclear negotiator to foreign minister, state media said on Saturday, as leader Kim Jong-un vowed to his ruling party that he would use "power for power" to fight threats to the country's sovereignty.

**Philippine Independence Day celebrations**



ISLAMABAD: Members of the Philippine community living in Pakistan presented cultural performances on the eve of 124 Anniversary of the Philippine Independence Day. The flag hoisting ceremony was also performed ahead of the cultural performances. The Charge d Affaires of the Philippine embassy and military officials of Philippine and audiences witnessed the ceremony. Maria Agnes M. Cervantes' the Charge d Affaires of the Embassy spoke to the audience and highlighted the significance of the event. She told daily Islamabad POST that around 4,000 Philippine Diaspora were living in Pakistan. Some of them were married to Pakistanis. The day also celebrated the way Philippine came out of Covid pandemic. The Charge D Affaires praised resilient Philippine nation in this regard. Detailed coverage of the event shall be published in the coming issue of Centreline magazine. Related pictures also appear on page 3 and 4. - DNA

**Pak denounces treatment of Muslim protestors in India**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has strongly condemned the heavy-handed treatment by the Indian authorities of Muslim who were registering a peaceful protest after Friday prayers over the derogatory remarks of the two members of the ruling political party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) against Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). The indiscriminate and widespread use of brute force by the Indian authorities across various states in India resulted in killing of two innocent Muslim protesters and critically injured thirteen others in Ranchi city. The Foreign Office Spokesperson, in a press release on Sunday, said that the footage of Indian forces unabashedly opening fire on unarmed protesters in Ranchi city was horrific beyond belief. In Uttar Pradesh alone a total of 227

people had been arrested so far. "This is a new low in the Indian government's repressive 'Hindutva' inspired majoritarian policy aimed at demonizing and persecuting minorities, especially Muslims. Pakistan denounces this shameful treatment of Indian Muslim citizens by the Indian government and expresses its solidarity with the Muslims of India in these testing times," the spokesperson added. Pakistan once again strongly urged India to ensure that demonstrable action was taken against those responsible for making derogatory remarks and attacking the dignity of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The international community must also take immediate cognizance of the grievously aggravating situation of Islamophobia in India, the spokes-

person said, adding India must be held accountable for stifling the rights of the minorities, especially Muslims, and ensure that Muslims living in India were not victimized for practicing their faith and religious beliefs. It was alarming that despite the global condemnation of the BJP officials' sacrilegious remarks, the Indian government's reaction has been muted, while on the other hand the BJP-RSS regime has persisted in its Islamophobic actions and shamefully chosen to handle public protest with brutal and indiscriminate use of force. "The Indian government's apathy to the grievous situation and the vicious cycle of communal violence may lead to further marginalization of the Indian Muslims," the spokesperson maintained. - APP

**"Turkey has legitimate security concerns"**

**FOREIGN DESK**

BRUSSELS: Security concerns raised by Turkey in its opposition to Finnish and Swedish NATO membership applications are legitimate, the Western military alliance's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said in Finland on Sunday. Stoltenberg, visiting Finland, said it was important to note that no other NATO ally had suffered more terrorist attacks than Turkey, and that therefore its concerns needed to be taken seriously. Sweden and Finland applied to join the Western defense alliance last month in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but their bids have faced resistance from Turkey, which has accused them of supporting terrorist groups.



**Train crash kills 21 in eastern Iran**

**NEWS DESK**

TEHRAN: At least 21 people were killed and several others injured after a passenger train derailed in eastern Iran early on Wednesday, local officials said. The train was heading from Mashhad in northeastern Iran to the central city of Yazd when it derailed from the track near Tabas, a city in eastern Iran, 550 kilometers (341 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran. Iranian railway's public relations division issued a statement, saying the train collided with an excavator on the railroad at around 5.30 a.m. local time (0100GMT).



BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi are all planning to travel to Ukraine's capital before the G7 meets at the end of June. But none of the leaders has yet confirmed that the visit will go ahead, Bild am Sonntag reported on Sunday. If it does happen, it will be the first time the

**Scholz, Macron and Draghi plan Ukraine visit**

three have visited Kyiv since Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February, now holding about 20% of the country under its control. In Ukraine, visiting European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was given a short tour of Kyiv's historic centre earlier on Saturday. In a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the two discussed Ukraine's aspirations for EU membership.

**Anne Frank diary, a landmark of world literature**

**WEB DESK**

PARIS: Thirteen-year-old Anne Frank began keeping her now-famous diary on June 12, 1942. She would spend a little more than two years confiding in its pages, sharing stories from daily life, observations, and hopes for the future from the cramped annex in Amsterdam she occupied with her family and several other Jews in hiding. The last entry in her diary is dated August 1, 1944, after which she was arrested and deported. "I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support." Anne Frank's diary begins with these now-famous words. Her book, published by her father in 1947, has become a landmark of world literature in its singular account of innocence in the face of barbarism. Born in Frankfurt in 1929, Anne Frank emigrated with her family to the Netherlands in 1933, when Adolf Hitler became chancellor of a crisis-ridden Germany. In 1942, as the authorities tracked down Jews in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands, the Frank family moved into the 'annex', a flat hidden behind a false bookcase, to escape the Gestapo. In August 1944, the family was betrayed by an unknown individual, and the inhabitants of the annex were deported to Auschwitz. Afterwards, Anne and her sister were transferred to Bergen-Belsen. Anne died of typhus in February or March 1945, shortly after the death of her older sister Margot.

**Two airport employees killed in Afghanistan**

**AGENCIES**

KABUL: Unidentified gunmen fired at a bus ferrying airport employees in northern Afghanistan on Sunday, killing at least two people and wounding six others, a senior police official said. The bus was ambushed by two gunmen on its way to the Mazar-i-Sharif airport, Balkh provincial police spokesman Mohammad Asif Waziri told AFP. "The vehicle came under attack when the technical team was on its way to the airport," Waziri said. The ambush was the latest in a series of deadly attacks that have hit Afghanistan in recent months. Foreign airlines have still not resumed flights to Kabul and other Afghan cities since the Taliban seized power in August, citing security concerns for their crew and passengers. Since the Taliban's return to power, the country has faced an acute shortage of professionals in a wide array of fields, including technical staff for the country's airports. While levels of violence in Afghanistan have fallen since the extremist group returned to power, bombings and gun attacks have ticked up recently.

**Norway to label products from Israeli settlements**

OSLO: Norway has decided that products made in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, Eastern part of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights must be labeled with their place of origin. In a statement announcing the move on Saturday, the Norwegian foreign ministry noted a 2019 ruling by the European Union's top court requiring products from these areas to be labeled as originating from an "Israeli settlement." "Norway considers the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories to be contrary to international law," it stated. The European Union's top court ruled in 2019 that EU countries must identify products made in Israeli settlements on their labels. Norway is not an EU member, but is part of the European Single Market. - Agencies

**Russia says it destroyed Western weapons' depot**

**AGENCIES**

KYIV: Russian forces fired cruise missiles to destroy a large depot containing U.S. and European weapons in western Ukraine's Ternopil region, Interfax reported on Sunday, as street fighting raged in the eastern city of Sievierodonetsk. The governor of the Ternopil region said a rocket attack on the city of Chortkiv fired from the Black Sea had partly destroyed a military facility, injuring 22 people. A local official said there were no weapons stored there. Moscow has repeatedly slammed the United States and other nations for supplying Ukraine

with weapons. President Vladimir Putin said earlier this month that Russia would strike new targets if the West supplied longer-range missiles to Ukraine for use in high-precision mobile rocket systems. Ukrainian leaders have renewed pleas to Western countries in recent days to speed up deliveries of heavy weapons as Russian forces pound the east of the country with artillery. Sievierodonetsk has become epicentre of the battle for control over the industrialised Donbas region in the east, made up of Luhansk and Donetsk provinces. Parts of the city have been pulverised in some of the bloodiest fighting since Moscow began its invasion on Feb. 24. Luhansk Governor Serhiy Gaidai said on

Sunday that Ukrainian and Russian forces were still fighting street by street in Sievierodonetsk. He said that while Russian forces have taken most of the city, Ukrainian troops remain in control of an industrial area and chemical plant where hundreds of civilians are sheltering. After being forced to scale back its initial campaign goals Moscow has turned to expanding control in the Donbas, where pro-Russian separatists have held a swath of territory since 2014. Ukraine has said some 800 people were hiding in bomb shelters under the Azot plant, including employees and city residents. "No one can say whether and how many victims there have been in the last 24 hours

in Sievierodonetsk, where intense fighting continues," Gaidai said on the Telegram messaging app on Sunday. "Everyone wants to evacuate now, probably, but so far there is no such possibility." In Lysychansk - Sievierodonetsk's twin city across the Donets River - a woman was killed in Russian shelling while four houses and a shopping centre were destroyed, Gaidai said. To the south and southwest of Sievierodonetsk, Russian forces were firing mortars and artillery around a number of settlements, according to a daily update from Ukraine's general staff. But it said Ukrainian forces had repulsed Russian attempts to advance towards some communities.