



Islamabad POST

Thursday, July 21, 2022

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 20

US' armed forces in Syria, region a destabilizing factor

Detailed News On Page-06

Italy's PM Draghi calls for a new pact

Detailed News On Page-07

India's HR abuses must be exposed: Kaira

Detailed News On Page-03

Briefs

UK's Boris bows out in parliament

DNA

LONDON: To one last round of cheers from his recently mutinous MPs, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson bowed out of his final set-piece event in parliament Wednesday, signing off by saying: "Hasta la vista, baby!" In a vintage blast of verbiage against his critics, Johnson defended his three tumultuous years in office — from Brexit and COVID vaccines to Ukraine — and praised the candidates battling to succeed him, as he fended off opposition attacks at his last session of Prime Minister's Questions. "I'm not following this thing particularly closely," the prime minister said of the Tory race, to laughter.

Peace talks 'make no sense' now

AGENCIES

MOSCOW: Russia said Wednesday that holding peace talks with Ukraine made no sense "in the current situation" as Moscow presses ahead with its offensive in the pro-Western country. "It doesn't make any sense in the current situation," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told state media in an interview, referring to peace talks with Kyiv. Lavrov said that the first rounds of talks with Ukraine proved that Kyiv had no "desire to discuss anything in earnest."

Political crisis hurting economy

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Former finance minister Shaukat Tarin has said that political instability causing economic turmoil in the country. Tarin while commenting on free fall of rupee against dollar, said that the State Bank of Pakistan has refused to give dollars, currently the currency has been trading at Rs 227 in interbank market. "Despite Miftah Ismail's claims the market not showing trust on him," Shaukat Tarin said.

Economic crisis worsens Govt worried over rupee devaluation

Pakistani rupee continues to be on slippery ground, hits new historic low of 224.92

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif convened an emergency meeting regarding the economic situation of the country, media reported Wednesday. The meeting was attended by the economic team and other high-ranking government officials. It discussed the reasons behind the recent appreciation of the dollar against the rupee and considered ways to curb the trend. The economic team also provided a briefing regarding the country's economic situation. After shattering all previous records, the Pakistani rupee on Wednesday further depreciated to Rs226 after losing 4.1 against the US dollar in the interbank market. The Pakistani rupee had hit an all-time low of 224 against the dollar on Tuesday in the afternoon interbank trade, before closing at 221.99. It was the highest day-on-day depreciation after June 26, 2019, when the currency fell by Rs6.80. Meanwhile, the Pakistan Stock Exchange witnessed a negative trend as the KSE-100 index fell 248 points to 40,140 points. The ruling PML-N's thumping in the Punjab by-elections has triggered political uncertainty along with import pressure taking the Pakistani rupee on a downward trajectory. Analysts believe, however, that the domestic political and economic situation are not the only factors at play.

Miftah blames 'political turmoil'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The rupee continued its fall in the interbank market on Wednesday, with the local currency closing at a historic low of Rs225 against the dollar as Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said political turmoil was to blame for the downturn. "The panic in the market is primarily due to political turmoil, which will subside in a few days," Ismail told Reuters, adding that he expected pressure on the rupee to fall in the next few days. Analysts attributed the decline to the lack of

Continued on Page 06

COAS inaugurates Tunneling Institute

Army chief also directed to provide additional manpower for polio teams

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa inaugurated the Tunneling Institute of Pakistan which aimed at promoting professional tunneling expertise including research and development and synergizing tunneling resources. Report of the state broadcaster said the FWO institute will provide a distinctive platform to encompass tunneling education through both tunneling academia and industry experts. Tunneling Institute is reportedly the sixth

such facility in the World which has been completed and operationalized within the

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi exchanging views with Indonesian Ambassador Adam M. Tugio. — DNA

Six-time PM elected Sri Lanka president

AGENCIES



COLOMBO: Six-time prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was elected as crisis-wracked Sri Lanka's new president by the country's parliament Wednesday, with the backing of the party of the ex-leader — who fled abroad after his palace was stormed by protesters. Official results showed Wickremesinghe polled 134 votes in a three-cornered parliamentary vote, with his main opponent Dulas Alahapperuma getting 82 and leftist Anura Dissanayake just three, giving him an absolute majority on first preferences. "Our divisions are now over," Wickremesinghe said in a brief acceptance speech in parliament, inviting Alahapperuma "to join me and work together to bring the country out of the crisis we are facing". He said he hoped to be sworn in later Wednesday at a simple ceremony within the tightly guarded parliament building. The 73-year-old takes charge of a bankrupt nation that is in bailout talks with the IMF, with its 22 million people enduring severe shortages of food, fuel and

Continued on Page 06

Imran says MPAs being offered huge money in Punjab

Says that Asif Ali Zardari is the 'main architect' behind this

PTI forms counter political victimization

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Under a well-conceived move to take legal actions against police officials involved in taking illegal and criminals actions against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) members in Punjab on May 25, the PTI constituted a five-member powerful

Continued on Page 06

ISLAMABAD: As the race for Punjab's chief minister's election heats up, PTI Chairman Imran Khan claimed on Wednesday that horse-trading was happening in Lahore with MPAs being offered Rs500 million to switch their loyalty. "Today, Lahore is seeing

Continued on Page 06

Heatwave takes toll on Europe

Spain was gripped by a heatwave affecting much of Western Europe

NEWS DESK/DNA

ATHENS: Emergency services battled wildfires across swathes of southern Europe amid mass evacuations on Wednesday, as warnings sounded in London after Britain's hottest day that the fight against climate change needed to be stepped up.

Continued on Page 06

Indonesian cultural exhibition opened at Lok Virsa

Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio praises great artistic work done by the Indonesian students studying in Pakistan

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio along with member of the diplomatic community and the management of the Lok Virsa, inaugurated the grand cultural exhibition featuring unique and historical pictures depicting difference stages of the Indonesian history. The exhibition will

continue for five days and will open for the general public from July 21 to 24. Ambassador Adam Tugio in his opening remarks highlighted significance of the event. He especially made mention of the Indonesian students studying in Pakistani Universities who contributed greatly towards the success of the landmark exhibition. The ambassador said, 'A Night at

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Wives of the Indonesian and Palestine ambassadors taking interest in Batik. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio, his spouse, Ambassadors of Jordan, Palestine, Nepal, Australia, Thailand, Korea cutting ribbon to open the exhibition. — DNA

Inside...

- Pakistan, Bulgaria agree to enhance co-op in education — Page 02
- India's human rights abuses should be exposed: Kaira — Page 03
- HEC to conduct special exam to appear in LAW-GAT — Page 04
- Diplomacy in the Middle East — Page 05
- Shafique stars as Pakistan complete record chase to win — Page 06
- Scandinavia breeding center for terrorism, says Erdogan — Page 07
- Aziz Boolani fetes outgoing Austrian, Belgian envoys — Page 08

Briefs

ECP must announce verdict in PTI's funding case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Central Information Secretary of PPPP Shazia Atta Marri has urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for announcing its "long delayed" verdict in the prohibited foreign funding case against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. She said that Election Commission of Pakistan should not delay in the announcement of judgment on PTI's foreign funding case. Ms Marri questioned that why is Imran Khan running away to face the foreign funding case?. "The issue of funding from prohibited accounts is causing chaos and unrest in the country", she added. This she expressed in an important statement issued hereon today. She said PTI chief Imran Khan is exerting pressure on Election Commission of Pakistan to influence the foreign funding case. While asking question from PTI, she said that if Imran Khan is not a thief then why do they take injunctions from the courts? BRT, Malam Jabba, Billion Tree project were mega corruption scams of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's regime and Imran Khan is playing the character of noisy thief, she claimed. Shazia Marri uttered that they will not allow Imran Khan to make the country's a plank of exercise and said that Imran Khan and his company's more than four years incompetent rule have brought the country to this current position and now, the country's economy can not longer afford more experiments.

Over 8.6m people vaccinated in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD: Over 8.6 million (8,613,307) people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun'im said on Wednesday that 4,673,388 citizens were injected first dose while 3,855,560 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He further said that 39,865 health workers were also given first dose while 44,494 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of coronavirus vaccine was available in the district. As of now 435,178 first doses and 290,119 second doses were in the stock in Faisalabad. He said that 37 vaccination centers and 20 mobile vaccination camps were operational in Faisalabad where registered people were being vaccinated. In order to facilitate the people these centers had been established in various areas of the city including Allied Hospital, District Headquarters Hospital, Government General Hospital, Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology, Government General Hospital Samanabad, Children Hospital, Sports Complex Samanabad, Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Jaranwala, Samundri, Tandlianwala, Chak Jhumra, Sports Complex Chak Jhumrah, Sports Complex Jaranwala, Rural Health Centers Mureed Wala, Chak 174JB, Chak 134JB, Chak 229/RB, Chak 65-GB, RHC Lundianwala Jaranwala, RHC Khurrianwala Jaranwala, Pindi Sheikh Musa, Kanjwani, Mamukanjan, RHC Chak 400GB, RHC Chak 153/RB, RHC Chak 374-GB and Chak 469GB, he added. - APP

Teachers' presence remains below 90% in KP

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Monitoring Authority (KPEMA) in a report published here on Wednesday acknowledged that except in two districts of the province the presence of school teachers in rest of the districts remained from 55 to 89 percent. The official reported made public here said that DI Khan and Nowshera were the two districts where presence of school teachers was recorded 100 percent while Mohmand was the only unfortunate district where the attendance of school teachers was zero followed by South Waziristan with 55 percent and North Waziristan with 58 percent. - APP



RAWALPINDI: 92-year-old Indian citizen Reena Varma visits her childhood home in Pakistan for the first time since 1947. - DNA

Pakistan, Bulgaria agree to enhance co-op in education

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Bulgaria and Pakistan on Wednesday agreed to enhance cooperation in the field of education, professional training and culture. It was agreed during a meeting held here between Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan Ms. Irena Gancheva and Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain. Senior officials of the ministry including representative from HEC also attended the meeting. Rana Tanveer

welcomed the Bulgarian delegation and said that the two countries have always had friendly and cordial relations since 1965. He said that Bulgaria has strong ties within Europe and Pakistan and should enhance its ties with Bulgaria for further cooperation between the two countries. Rana Tanveer discussed and exchange of expertise regarding Vocational and Technical Training. He said that the two countries can benefit from the experience of each other. Rana Tanveer welcomed exchange of teachers and students to further mutual cooperation

especially for Skilled Vocational Training. He said that there is significant potential in cooperation between the two countries. He said that Pakistan can learn from the expertise as Bulgaria has achieved 98 percent literacy. Minister said that Pakistan is willing to offer scholarships to Bulgarian students in order to enhance mutual collaboration. Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan Ms. Irena Gancheva presented a draft of a MoU to be signed by both Governments for future collaboration in the field of Education. She said that University to University

cooperation and Technical Institution to Technical Institution collaboration is the way forward. She said that MoUs should be expedited between Pakistani and Bulgarian Universities to enhance exchanges. Rana Tanveer Hussain said that the future is in Vocational Training of the population of Pakistan. He said that it provides the best opportunity to the people to find jobs. He said that Pakistan and Bulgaria through NAVTTC should exchange teachers and students to learn from the expertise of each other. Rana Tanveer praised the current governments ef-

orts in modernising the education system of Pakistan. Federal Minister thanked the Ambassador and highlighted the cordial and friendly relations between the two countries since 1975. He said that there is a bonhomie between the two people. He stated that the two countries should enhance and fine tune their mutual relation. Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan Ms. Irena Gancheva, stressed to further enhance the need for cooperation between the two states in the field of education and culture. Federal Minister said that

our relations have always been marked by trust, mutual understanding and close cooperation and Pakistan attaches high importance to its relations with Bulgaria and is desirous of further enhancing these relations in all fields of mutual interests. During the meeting, Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan Ms. Irena Gancheva said that there is a lot of scope of mutual cooperation in various fields including education and culture. She also expressed keen interest in enhancing and promoting people to people contact and cultural exchanges between the two countries. - APP

Pak-Iran discuss regional peace

QUETTA: A Pak-Iran delegation on Wednesday discussed the issues pertaining to border security and regional peace and stability. Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Captain retired Jameel Ahmed chaired the meeting attended by 12-member Iranian delegation and Pakistani officials. They exchanged proposals regarding the plans for border trade through pilot projects of joint border markets at Gabad 250 border. Security issues and promotion of common border markets was discussed at length and it was agreed that more trade centers will be opened in the border areas. Besides reviewing relations in all sectors including economy, trade, communications, security, energy, education and people-to-people exchanges, regional issues were also discussed in the meeting held between Pakistan and Iran high ups. They also stressed the need for promotion of economic cooperation besides, the events of last year were also discussed. They were also in consent that relevant officials will remain in constant contact and through consultation, cooperation and joint assistance, obstacles in the way of bilateral relations will be removed. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Jameel Ahmed said that Pakistan-Iran bilateral trade cooperation will increase trade and business activities in Gwadar. "Trade with neighboring Iran will increase economic activities in the border areas as well as create employment opportunities for local people," Earlier a 12-member high-level government delegation of the Iran reached Gwadar. - APP

CDA to plant trees in fire-affected areas

ISLAMABAD: On the direction of the Capital Development Authority, the Environment Wing has planted trees in the fire-affected areas of Margalla Hills in the months of May and June this year. This tree plantation is being carried out jointly by CDA, IWMB and district administration. The saplings planted in this regard are now rooting while more plantations are also being done. It should be noted that in these areas, plants compatible with the local climate are being planted. Moreover, safety and monitoring of plantations is also being ensured. These measures aim to increase the greenery of Margalla Hills. - DNA



LAHORE: Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman LSE Financial Services Limited (LSE FSL, the successor company of Lahore Stock Exchange), is being presented the recognition plaque on the eve of approval of the restructuring scheme of the Company. - DNA

Algerian Envoy meets Sadiq Sanjrani

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Algeria H.E. Brahim Romani Wednesday called on Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani here at Parliament House and discussed the existing bilateral and cordial relations between two countries. During interaction, Sanjrani said that Pakistan and Algeria enjoy the lengths of friendly relations due to sharing of common religion, cultural values and

friendly foreign policies. Moreover, the meeting discussed underscoring the need for collaboration in present times. He mentioned that Pakistan values its relations with Algeria and urged to expand the bilateral ties in the field of Information Technology. The Chairman, while talking to the Ambassador, said that Pakistan believes in the expansion of friendly bilateral ties based on mutual interests

to promote savvy diplomacy and to develop a multidimensional approach towards the outer world. He highlighted that Pakistan desires to further collaborate with the Republic of Algeria based on a broad canvas in various fields such as economy, politics, and developing cultural and public connections. Sanjrani underlined that in an age of increasing dependence of states on each other and global connectivity, there is a need to take necessary steps to transform the trends of trade between two states. It is important to address the existing bottlenecks to boost the economies of both countries. The Chairman Senate asked the Ambassador to urge the Algerian investors to collaborate with Pakistan in different sectors to build joint ventures to shape up advanced economies in the 21st century. Chairman Senate exhorted to manipulate parliamentary diplomacy as a tool to promote regional peace, and harmony and make collective efforts to resolve issues hampering development. Chairman Senate underscored that parliamentary cooperation and institutionalized collaboration can help promote people-to-people contacts. The visiting dignitary remarked that Pakistan is an important country for us and in the region. Algerian Ambassador Brahim Romani stressed the need for more institutional cooperation and proposed an early plan for exchanges of delegations in business sectors. - APP



KP CM announces Rs 1.2 billion rehabilitation package

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan on Wednesday announced a special rehabilitation package of Rs 1.2 billion for the flood-hit areas of Swabi district.

The package announced by the chief minister during his visit to flood affected areas, included Rs 1 billion for the rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure and Rs 200 million for electricity repair work. The chief minister also announced financial assistance of Rs 500,000 each for the relatives of those persons who died in flood related incidents, besides Rs 400,000 as compensation amount for a fully damaged house and Rs 160,000 for a partially damaged one. Mahmood Khan also announced to enhance amount of compensation for the damaged crops. He directed the irrigation department to estimate the damages and prepare a report in that regard. Accompanied by former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser, Shahram Khan Tarakai, Abdul Karim and district administration officials, he visited Baamkhel and other affected areas of the district to have first hand account of the damages caused by the recent flash floods. He was also given a briefing in that regard. He said, "The KP government stands with the flood affected victims in this difficult time." He assured all possible support to them. The chief minister directed the department concerned to remove encroachments from the banks of rivers and canals, besides launching a cleanliness drive in the area. The scale of damages would have been far lesser if there were no encroachment on natural water channels, he observed. - APP

PhD degrees awarded to scholars of different departments

BUREAU REPORT

GUJRAT: Doctor of Philosophy degrees have been assigned to the student scholars participating in the PhD program organized by the departments of Islamic Studies, Education and Political Science and International Relations of Gujarat University. According to the announcements issued by the Controller of Examinations, University of Gujarat, Scholar Muhammad Irfan Ahmed of Islamic Studies Department, Muhammad Younis Mughal of Education Department and Ghulam Mustafa of Political Science and International Relations Department were awarded Doctor of Philosophy degrees for completing research in their respective fields. are Muhammad Irfan Ahmed's research thesis was supervised by Dr. Muhammad Riaz Mahmood, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies Department. Muhammad Yunus Mughal completed his thesis under the supervision of Dr. Syed Shafiqat Ali Shah, Assistant Professor/Chairperson of Education Department and Ghulam Mustafa's thesis was supervised. The duty of supervision was performed by Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Relations Dr. Mohammad Ramzan Shahid. All the candidates are entitled to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy keeping in view the criteria and rules set by HEC Pakistan. Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Shabar Ateeq congratulated the scholars who completed their Ph.D.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

- JULY**
- July 01 / Japan Self Defence Day
 - July 01 / Singapore Armed Forces Day
 - July 01 / Canada National Day
 - July 01 / Somalia Independence Day
 - July 04 / USA Independence Day
 - July 05 / Algeria Independence Day
 - July 09 / Argentine Independence Day
 - July 09 / Mongolia Revolution Day
 - July 14 / France National Day
 - July 15 / Brunei Sultan's Birthday
 - July 21 / Belgium National Day
 - July 20 / TRNC Independence Day
 - July 23 / Egypt National Day
 - July 26 / Cuba National Day
 - July 26 / Liberia National Day
 - July 30 / Morocco National 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: Iranian Ambassador, Seyyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini calls on Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamer. – DNA

India's human rights abuses should be exposed: Kaira

Secretary Kashmir Affairs issued instructions to make the planned measures more effective regarding 'Exploitation Day' and said that no effort should be spared to expose Indian human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir and Indian illegal actions on this day

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan has directed to all stakeholders to highlight and expose the dirty face of Modi-led regime as violating all human rights limitation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu Kashmir. He was chairing a review meeting regarding preparations for upcoming 'Exploitation Day' on August 5, against Indian illegal and unilateral actions. The entire nation will celebrate 'Exploitation Day' in full force against India's illegal actions in Occupied Kashmir on August 5, 2019. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, the four provinces and the senior officers of other relevant institutions. In the meeting, a detailed review of the preparations for celebrating Exploitation Day on August 05 was reviewed in detail.

In the meeting, the Secretary for Kashmir Affairs said that on August 5, 2019, India took unilateral and illegal measures and tried to strengthen its illegal occupation by ending the special status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir, against which the whole of Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir protested. He said that three years of these Indian illegal actions in Occupied Kashmir will be completed on August 5 and India was trying

to change the demography of Occupied Kashmir under the guise of these illegal actions. He said that Indian illegal actions in Occupied Kashmir in order to expose the actions and violations of human rights to the world, it is incumbent upon us all to hold a special national protest on August 5. Let us on August 5 exclusively expose the dimensions of the country and India's brutality and illegal actions abroad. In the

meeting, the representatives of the four provinces, Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, besides the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Information and other relevant institutions, informed the participants of the measures taken to celebrate this day in a grand manner. Secretary Kashmir Affairs issued instructions to make the planned measures more effective regarding 'Exploitation Day' and said that no effort should be spared to expose Indian human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir and Indian illegal actions on this day. He issued instructions that the report of the planned measures regarding 'Exploitation Day' should be presented in the next meeting and in this regard all the provinces and institutions should take full measures to fulfill it as a national duty. – APP

Food group exports grew 32.37% in FY 2021-22

ISLAMABAD: Food group exports from the country during fiscal year ended on June 30, 2022 increased by 32.37 percent, where as imports registered 8 percent growth as compared to the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-June 2021-22, different food commodities valuing \$5.418 billion exported as compared to the exports of 4.392 billion of same period last year, according to the data released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. In last fiscal year, rice exports grew by 23 percent and reached to \$2.511 billion, fish and fish preparations increased by 3.87 percent as it was recorded at \$430.654 million, where as country also earned \$0.068 million by exporting different pulses. Meanwhile, exports of tobacco from the country in 12 months of last fiscal year witnessed

about 51.24 percent growth as it reached to \$54.384 million, spices increased by 14.73 percent and recorded at 106.680 million. The exports of oil seeds, nuts and kernalns increased by 104.88 percent and earned \$192.861 million, where as exports of meat, meat products recorded 3.36 percent growth and stood at \$342.788 million in period under review. On other hand food group imports into the country grew by 8 percent as food commodities valuing \$9.015 billion imported during 12 months of last fiscal year as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-June, 2021-22, the imports of wheat reduced by 19.12 percent as it came down from \$983.326 million to

9 more tested positive with Covid in RWP

RAWALPINDI: Nine more people were diagnosed with deadly coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the district's tally of confirmed cases to 47,080. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Wednesday, the total infected cases included 43,522 from Rawalpindi and 3,558 from other districts. Among the new cases, four arrived from Potohar Town, two from Rawal Town and Taxila and one from the Rawalpindi Cantonment area. "Presently, 77 confirmed patients are quarantined at homes, and no one at the health facilities," the report added. The report further said that 6,977,315 people including 44,797 health workers had jabbed themselves against the lethal coronavirus across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10, 2021. District Health Authority updated that during the last 24 hours. – APP

Digital skills training lab inaugurated at PMAS-AAUR

RAWALPINDI: In continuation to strengthen the university institutes by providing latest systems for UIIT labs last year, Vice Chancellor PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi Dr. Qamar-uz-Zaman inaugurated Digital Skills Training Lab at UIMS. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony Dr. Qamar said that access to authentic and reliable information was essential for quality research which was very difficult without establishing modern computer labs. Students would be benefited from the lab, which would not only allow them to work with the other world but also provide access to modern materials, he added. Highlighting the university's online management system, he said the system was in the final phase of completion and it would empower faculty and students to manage their regular tasks and reduce their workload by enhancing productivity with smooth communication and data security. He also inaugurated the cafeteria facility for the students and congratulated Director UIIT/UIMS Dr. Yaser Hafee and faculty of both institutes on arranging these facilities for students. Earlier, digitalization of the university, making it paperless and online access to quality books for students to research through e-library along with setting up of digital video recording studio was also implemented. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail addressing to the press conference at Press Information Department. – APP

PFA sealed spices unit

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Food Authority closed a spices unit Wednesday and confiscated around 1,340 kg of unhealthy food during a raid in the Rawalpindi area. According to the PFA spokesman, in its ongoing drive to check food outlets, the PFA teams raided the spices manufacturing unit in the Industrial area of Rawalpindi and sealed it temporarily to produce loose adulterated herbs. The team seized 980 kg loose red chilli and 360 kg turmeric powder at the spot. He said that samples collected had been sent to Lahore for laboratory testing. The spokesman added that strict action was being taken against violators to ensure hygienic food to the residents, and no compromise would be made with those who were playing with the citizens' health. – APP

PAC examines audit report of M/O Water Resources

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Wednesday examined audit report of Ministry of Water Resources for the year 2019-20. The meeting was held at the Parliament House which was chaired by MNA Noor Alam Khan, chairman of the committee. Members of the committee including MNAs Dr Nisar Ahmed Cheema, Barjees Tahir, Afzal Dhandla, Shahida Akhtar Ali, Dr Ramesh Kumar, Nuzhat Pathan, Rohale Asghar, Wajaha Akram, Senators Shibli Faraz and Mushahid Hussain Syed attended the meeting. Secretary Ministry of Water Resources, Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Director General NAB Lahore and other senior officers were also present. The committee examined 20 highlighted audit paras involving hefty amount. Different paras were recommended for settlement by the Departmental Accounts Committee (DAC). Addressing the committee, Chairman PAC said that the committee had sought the details about the NAB rules and employees' assets as per the Constitution. Chairman NAB said that all the officers' assets and tax returns have been submitted to Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) and committee can ask for details from the bureau. Chairman committee said that misuse of authority or harassment will not be tolerated at any cost as nobody is above the law. – APP

101 teams to administer typhoid vaccine

ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Tariq Salam Marwat on Wednesday chaired a meeting regarding typhoid vaccination campaign to be conducted in seven urban union councils of the district. The officials of health department briefed the meeting that the campaign will be conducted in seven urban union councils where a total of 101 teams would vaccinate some 320,238 people. The DC issued instructions to the district administration officers to provide support to the health department to make the campaign a success. – APP

APBF demands stable exchange rate

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has urged the government to control instability of rupee against the US dollar, as the local currency hit record low against the US dollar in the inter-bank market while the unrest has been creating unstable economic conditions. APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood, in a statement issued here today said that a steep fall in the value of Pakistani rupee against foreign currencies have been causing an addition of trillions of rupees to the public debt, besides high inflation, as the local currency was being quoted at 223 presently, a massive depreciation of Rs8 or nearly 4% against the greenback. APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi feared that political climate of the country has become unpredictable due to political uncertainty, reducing the level of investment and affecting the economic growth of the country, suggesting the government as well as the opposition parties to settle issues through talks, which is the right way to resolve the issues. Ibrahim Qureshi observed that the economic growth and industrialization are not possible without stability of rupee, as the dollar has been appreciating against the rupee for the last several months because of the higher current account deficit and burgeoning import bills. APBF Chairman observed that the market-based flexible exchange rate system, resilience in remittances and other factors can help contain the current account deficit in a sustainable range of 2-3 percent of GDP in FY23. Syed Maaz Mahmood added that it seemed that authorities have let the rupee depreciating to discourage rising imports and encourage exports in an attempt to narrow down the widening trade deficit which poses a serious threat for the domestic economy. He expressed the fear that the rupee might be moving down in search for its value fit for resuming the IMF \$6 billion loan program which is on hold for the last more than six months, but it would impact negatively on the country's overall economy. – DNA

Briefs

Pakistan earns \$2,380 million from IT services' export in 11 months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$2,380.852 million by providing different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the eleven months of fiscal year 2021-22. This shows growth of 25.45 percent as compared to US \$1,897.820 million earned through provision of services during the corresponding period of fiscal year 2020-21, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During July-May (2021-22), the export of computer services grew by 27.76 percent as it surged from US \$1,495.670 million last fiscal year to US \$1,910.922 million this year. Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 43.42 percent, from US \$498.917 million to US \$715.539 million while the exports of hardware consultancy services also rose by 363.64 percent, from US \$0.528 million to US \$2.448 million. The export and import of computer software related services also rose by 37.72 percent, from US \$369.826 million to US \$509.320 million whereas the exports of repair and maintenance services surge to \$1.435 million from \$0.502 million. In addition, the exports of other computer services increased by 8.99 percent going up from US\$ 625.897 million to US \$625.897 million. Meanwhile, the export of information technology services during the period under review increased by 42.36 percent by going up from US \$3.470 million to US \$4.940 million. - APP

Health Levy on Tobacco can generate additional revenue

ISLAMABAD: Health experts have urged the government to impose health levy on tobacco products to save precious lives, which are at imminent fatal risk. In a joint press release shared by Society for Protection of Rights of the Child (SPARC), the experts recommended the government to take this step, which has been pending since June 2019, said in press release issued here on Wednesday. Malik Imran Ahmed, Country head, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, shared that in June 2019, the federal cabinet decided to implement a healthy levy on tobacco products to protect the health of low-income groups and children by taking tobacco products out of their spending reach. Unfortunately, some members from government, hailing from tobacco growing areas, repeatedly blocked this move. Malik Imran added that tobacco industry claims to be an essential entity however tobacco use is the leading cause of death due to non-communicable diseases such as cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and cardiovascular disease. - APP

Railways advertises 37 posts since 2018

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has made recruitment in the department in a transparent manner against 37 posts of different categories advertised since 2018, upholding the principle of set criteria and merit. "The Ministry of Railways has strictly followed the criteria of educational qualification and experience of all MP scales posts in accordance with the set policy," an official told APP. He said Pakistan Railways had strictly followed the prescribed criteria of MP scales posts in accordance with the policy, with the approval of appointing authority of Prime Minister. To a question, the official said that in terms of clause 3 of Federal Governments travel allowance manual all the officers of BS-17 and were entitled to travel by air on official tour. Giving details of air visits, the official said the over last three years. - APP



Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Algerian Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Brahim Romani at Parliament House Islamabad. - DNA

Pakistan condoles with Egypt

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday extended heartfelt condolences to the government and brotherly people of Egypt on the loss of precious lives and injuries to many in a tragic road accident, near Minya city of Egypt. "We express deepest sympathies to the families of the deceased and pray for the speedy recovery of those injured," a Foreign Office statement issued here said. "Pakistan stands in solidarity with the fraternal people and Government of Egypt in this moment of grief," it added. - APP

VC Gomal university for transferring all universities to solarization

ISLAMABAD: Gomal University Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad has suggested the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to convert all universities' electricity system to solarization to save around 20 billion cost of electricity bills. In a letter No. 1473/VC/GU dated July 19, 2022 written to the Chairperson Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad Dr. Shaista Sohail, the Vice Chancellor said that Gomal University pays one crore rupees per month in form of electricity bills. In order to save the cost of electricity bills in Gomal University, he said last year we solved the problem of electricity by installing 120KW solar system in various departments including the Vice Chancellor Secretariat and benefited the university by generating electricity worth Rs. 41 lakh from more than 175000 units. The VC wrote in his post that a solar system project of 700KW/h is in the final stages of implementation on which work will start soon. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad told the Chairperson HEC that if all the universities of Pakistan are transferred to the solar system, on one hand the government will be able to meet the shortage of electricity by using electricity received by the universities in other places, while on the other side they can save Rs 20 billion annually. - APP

HEC to conduct special exam to appear in LAW-GAT

Online applications are invited from desirous law graduates who have obtained their law degrees from HEC/PBC recognised foreign universities/institutions

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan is conducting a Special Equivalence Examination for Law graduates of foreign universities (SEE-Law) as per direction of the Supreme Court and as required under the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC). According to an official of HEC, Special Equivalence Examination is a pre-requisite test to appear in Bar Entrance Test (Law-GAT). The Law graduates of foreign universities/institutions, recognised by HEC/PBC, are required to pass the Special Equivalence Examination before appearing in Law Graduate Assessment Test (Law-GAT) which is mandatory for applying to the Bar Council for enrollment as an advocate. Online applications are invited from desirous law graduates who have obtained their law degrees from HEC/PBC recognised foreign universities/institutions. As per eligibility criteria, the persons who have passed Bachelor's degrees or equivalent in the field of Law from a foreign university/institution recognised by HEC/PBC are eligible to apply. Sharing the details of curriculum of Special Equivalence Examination (SEE-Law), HEC said the Special Equivalence Examination (SEE-Law) will be held as per approved syllabus available at: <https://hec.gov.pk/>

english/HECAnnouncements/Pages/CW-SEE-LAW.aspx Test Type. The test will be based on Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) only. The test will be held on August 7, 2022 tentatively. Any change in the test date will be communicated through www.hec.gov.pk and <http://etc.hec.gov.pk>. Applicants who register through HEC (ETC) online registration process will be able to download their Roll Number Slips from <http://etc.hec.gov.pk> and same shall also be sent on their registered email address a week before the test date. Email/SMS will be sent to the registered applicants for examination date, time and venue. Candidates are required to provide valid email/mobile number while filling their online application forms. A print of Roll Number Slip, original CNIC and original paid Fee

Challan will be required to enter Examination Centre on the test day. The test will be conducted in the federal and provincial capitals. Applicants may select examination centre from the list available in the application form. It is worth mentioning here that the centre once selected will not be changed. The students are asked to visit the following link: <http://etc.hec.gov.pk> for online registration. In case of difficulty during online registration, visit onlinehelp.hec.gov.pk or download the user manual available at <http://etc.hec.gov.pk>. Only submitted applications will be considered for SEE-Law Test and applications in save or incomplete mode will not be entertained. Test fee of Rs. 5000/- is to be deposited

in the Account No. 17427900133401, Account Title: Higher Education Commission, Habib Bank Limited, Branch Code: 1742. Download bank Fee Challan while registering for the test at <http://etc.hec.gov.pk> (Fee Challan is only available on the ETC online registration portal). All candidates are required to upload the paid and scanned Fee challan, duly stamped by an HBL branch, while completing the application form of ETC online registration portal to submit the application. The test fee is non-refundable and non-transferable. It is mandatory to bring original applicant copy of the paid fee challan on a test day along with your original CNIC/original passport, else the candidate will not be allowed to sit in the examination. HEC announced that the last date for online registration is July 22, 2022. However, as per other Requirements/Conditions, 50 percent score is required to qualify the Special Equivalence Examination (SEE-Law) as specified by PBC. Applicants will have to meet other criteria, if any, as per Rules & Regulations of the Pakistan Bar Council. Applicants will have maximum five chances to clear the examination. HEC will conduct the examination twice or on quarterly basis as needed. - APP



PRCS to send more relief package to rain-affected families

Abrar ul Haq says PRCS teams are on ground for risk reduction, mitigation, relief and rehabilitation of rain-affected families; will send more relief package to support the affected families soon after the assessment

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: "Pakistan Red Crescent Society is devotedly active in helping the people who were adversely affected by heavy rainfall; we will make all efforts to mitigate the suffering of the victims and will continue supporting them with relief in terms of shelter, household, health and others on need basis." PRCS Chairman Abrar ul Haq said this on Wednesday while chairing a meeting to review the monsoon relief and rehabilitation operation here at National Headquarters. Abrar ul Haq lauded the efforts of Disaster Management, Emergency Response, Health, First Aid and volunteer teams who took part in the relief operations in various districts of Balochistan, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan, KP, AJK and Merged districts. He directed officials to spare no effort in providing relief to the victims and stressed upon the need to provide maximum assistance and medi-



cal care to the affected families. He said PRCS in collaboration with Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners would send more relief package to support the affected families soon after the assessment.

PRCS teams are on ground for risk reduction, mitigation, relief and rehabilitation of rain-affected families. It is pertinent to mention that immediately after the alert was issued by the Meteorological Department,

Pakistan Red Crescent issued instructions to its provincial chapters and district level offices. Emergency response teams were mobilized in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, erstwhile FATA districts, Azad Kashmir's Neelum Valley and especially, areas adjacent to the Chaman border and Karachi. The control room established at the Red Crescent National Headquarters remained under constant monitoring and communication. With the help of assessment teams in Chitral, Quetta, Ghizer, the requirements were determined and the damages were also estimated. The first aid team in Chitral provided medical aid to the injured on the spot, tents, household items, hygiene kits, kitchen utensils, buckets etc. were distributed to the affected families. In the situation created due to rains in Karachi, volunteer teams performed services together with aid organizations to provide immediate relief and help to the affected people.

Asad Mahmood examines civic amenities at Hakla

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Communications Mr. Asad Mahmood paid detailed visit to Hakla Dera Ismail Khan Motorway and reviewed civic amenities being provided to passengers at rest areas. Mr. Asad Mahmood said that it is our responsibility to provide the best possible facilities to the passengers at Service Areas/Rest Areas of Hakla-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway at all times. To this effect necessary steps are also being taken on top priority basis. Federal Minister of Communications Mr. Asad Mahmood also urged the NHA authorities to make the journey on the motorways and national highways safer and easier and also ensure the provision of necessary facilities to the travellers. He said, the rest areas lacking basic facilities will be completed within the next three months.

NUST, PepsiCo partner to enable a circular economy

Additionally, both organizations will also collaborate on important topics of sustainability, climate change and sustainable agriculture

ISLAMABAD: National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and PepsiCo Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) at NUST to collaborate on enabling a circular economy for plastics. The MoA was signed by Dr. Rizwan Riaz, Pro-Rector NUST and Mr. Mohammad Khosa, Senior Director Commercial and Corporate Affairs PepsiCo Pakistan. Under the MoA, NUST and PepsiCo will launch joint collaboration programs that will help tackle the growing challenge of plastic waste in Pakistan. Collaboration programs will include R&D projects, specialized training programs, research events and student competitions on finding practical solutions to the challenges of plastic waste. Additionally, both organizations will also collaborate on important topics of sustainability, climate change and sustainable agriculture. PepsiCo envisions a world where packag-

ing never becomes waste. As a company, it recognizes the important role it plays in driving toward a circular economy and reducing plastic waste. As a global food and beverage company, PepsiCo aims to use its reach and influence to help change the way society makes, uses and disposes off plastics. In Pakistan, PepsiCo has launched several meaningful programs to drive a circular economy for plastics. In 2021, the company launched one of the largest waste collection and recycling program in Pakistan by collecting 16000 tons of plastic. PepsiCo has doubled down on its plastic waste collection and recycling program for 2022. PepsiCo is also incentivizing plastic waste collection for the citizens of Islamabad and Rawalpindi by giving Aquafina refills in exchange for used bottles. The company also unveiled a first of its kind Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) in Islamabad to

raise consumer awareness. These initiatives are part of the company's PepsiCo Positive agenda, a strategic end-to-end business transformation with sustainability and human capital at the center of how the company will create growth and value. Senior Director Commercial and Corporate Affairs, PepsiCo Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Khosa, commented, "PepsiCo is committed to resolving the issue of plastic waste in Pakistan. We believe that engaging the faculty and students of a world-renowned institution like NUST will create long lasting dividends for Pakistan. I thank NUST for their partnership and look forward to all the great work ahead." NUST is one of the leading Pakistani Universities that is home to the only Sustainability Office in any university in Pakistan and has embedded the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across its research, operations,

governance, as well as internal and external collaborations. The institution has recently been ranked at No.334 in the world according to Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings, retaining 1st position in Pakistan. The university is known for several of its initiatives such as holding the first national dialogues on SDGs, seminars on various topics ranging from plastic waste and collection to advocating for women rights and youth dialogues on climate action. Dr. Rizwan Riaz, Pro-Rector NUST commented, "NUST is thrilled to have joined hands with PepsiCo to further its sustainability agenda in Pakistan. Creating a sustainable environment is a top agenda for NUST and we take pride in our students and our research initiatives that are one of the leading assets of the country. We look forward to a partnership that can create initiatives for a cleaner and greener Pakistan". - APP

Court Notice

In the Court of Umar Rizzwan Civil Judge Gujrat Title: Tanzeela Kashif Versus Rehman Ansar etc.

Notice to:

1. Rehman Ansar S/O Ansar Mehmood, 2. Abid Mehmood S/O Muhammad Rafique Residents of Ghazi Chak Post Office Khas, Tehsil & District Gujrat Suit For Specific Performance along with Consequential Relief and Permanent Injunction Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 27-07-2022, otherwise case will be decided ex party.

Court Notice

In the Court of Umar Rizzwan Civil Judge Gujrat Title: Muhammad Aslam Versus Muhammad Bashir etc.

Notice to:

1. Muhammad Bashir S/O Nawab Khan Caste Jatt Resident of Behind Gulzare-Madina Masjid, Gulzare-Madina Road, Mohalla Bakshu Pura City Gujrat, 2. Zahid Ali S/O Ch. Nazir Ahmed Resident of House No.B-14/874, Gulzare-Madina, Mohalla Bakshu Pura City Gujrat Application for Contempt of Court Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 29-07-2022, otherwise case will be decided ex party.

Diplomacy in the Middle East

The impact of Russia's war in Ukraine continues to ripple across the globe. The primary driver of the flurry of diplomatic activity in the Middle East is the military conflict raging thousands of miles away. Vladimir Putin's visit to Tehran on Tuesday came hot on the heels of Joe Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories last week. The Russian president met his Iranian and Turkish counterparts bilaterally and for tripartite Astana process talks on Syria, where Turkey is threatening a new military offensive to drive Kurdish-led fighters away from the border. But Ukraine topped the agenda. Turkey wants to nail down an agreement for Moscow to lift its Black Sea blockade, allowing 22m tonnes of grain to be exported. Russia wants to develop its relationships and highlight the US's failure to isolate it. The Russian ambassador to Tehran recently declared that the two countries are now in a "single fortress". The US has alleged that Iran plans to send Russia hundreds of drones to use in Ukraine, and Gazprom has just signed a development deal with the Iranian state oil company. Moscow and Tehran have often been wary of each other despite shared interests, but neither now feels that it has much to lose by getting closer. Mr Biden's volte-face on Saudi Arabia is also prompted by Ukraine's war. He vowed to make the country a pariah following the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi and declassified the intelligence assessment which concluded that Prince Mohammed bin Salman approved the killing. But his moral stance was last week downgraded to an ill-judged fist bump with the crown prince – intended to avoid a respectful handshake – and the obligatory mention of human rights. Overshadowed by these visits is the failure to make any progress in talks in Doha on the Iran nuclear deal, leaving it on the brink of collapse. Tehran has made dramatic advances in its programme since Donald Trump withdrew the US from the agreement and doubled down on sanctions. One of the keenest watchers of the nuclear diplomacy warned that attempts to revive it had hit a dead end as Iran, burned by Mr Trump, seeks commitments that the US cannot make on a deal that the next administration might well break. That is part of the US thinking behind efforts to bolster ties between Israel and Arab states. But it risks not only pushing Tehran closer to Moscow, but also heightening conflict in the region following a shift towards dialogue, including between Riyadh and Tehran. That would only produce further turbulence in global energy markets. More critically still, it increases the risk of an arms race and long-term instability.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 363

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ICC should investigate massacre crimes

In less than a month after the UK's "appalling" practice of deporting refugees as criminals was stopped by the European Court of Human Rights, another more "appalling" crime was exposed by Britain's own media. According to recent reports by media outlets like the BBC, Britain's elite Special Air Service (SAS) operatives in Afghanistan repeatedly killed detainees and unarmed men in suspicious circumstances, and SAS squadrons were even competing with each other to get the most kills. And one unit may have unlawfully killed 54 people in one six-month tour. In addition, the reports said SAS operatives might have been falsifying evidence. However, the attention drawn by this revelation is not in line with the seriousness of its content. American and Western public opinion, which tends to make a fuss, has generally shown an indifferent attitude of "treating major issues lightly" this time. Relevant stories rapidly subside before forming a certain momentum, and the ripple in British politics was covered by other topics. In the face of accusations against British military's brutal actions, the attitude of the UK Ministry of Defence was almost perfunctory. Overseas slaughter cannot be tolerated by any civilized country, and it is also a brutal trampling of international morality and laws. No British party or politician dares to endorse the "stain" that the British military is accused of, but they have even less enthusiasm or motivation to truly push for investigation or hold the perpetrators accountable. What they have done is just posturing. Therefore, there is reason to worry that this matter will end up with nothing definite. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Monday that there should be a thorough international investigation into UK's and US' war crimes and human rights violations, noting that justice should be done for innocent victims and that people from all over the world must be protected from bullying and cruelty. The International Criminal Court should immediately open a case against British, American and Australian forces for indiscriminate killings in Afghanistan. The ICC has launched an investigation in the country, but so far it has been directed at the Taliban. Investigations into the US were not pursued after former US president Donald Trump's public threats. It is precisely the three Five Eyes countries, which wield human rights as a stick against other countries most vigorously, that are the most vicious in human rights abuses overseas. This is certainly not a coincidence, but has an inherent dark logic. Worse still, these three countries have established a system of exemption from responsibility. The British Parliament introduced the Overseas Operations Bill last year to shield British service personnel and veterans who commit serious crimes overseas, including torture. Meanwhile, Washington has sanctioned a number of ICC officials who have tried to investigate US war crimes, using this simple and brutal approach to block investigations. As long as the perpetrators are not duly punished, the next crime is inevitable. It's long past time to put an end to this chilling situation in the UK and the US.

The privatization of Haifa Port: India 1 China 0

James M. Dorsey

The coiner of the phrase, Indo-Abrahamic, Mr. Soliman, argues that it is better labeling than I2-U2 because "regional peace and stability in West Asia are not guaranteed through the unilateral military presence of the United States but through a balance of power that will eventually moderate the ambitions of rising states in the region. Furthermore, the original Indo-Abrahamic term allows the forum to expand to potentially include other states," such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan

I2-U2, the Indo-West Asian quad, has boasted its first success with the acquisition by Indian billionaire Gautam Adani of Haifa Port. The acquisition was announced days after an I2-U2 virtual summit during US President Joe Biden's visit last week to the Middle East. The acquisition by a close associate of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a joint bid with Israeli company Gadot, constitutes success in US-backed efforts to counter China's first starter

lied to have a second-strike nuclear missile capability. The acquisition also suggests that the United Arab Emirates, one of China's closest partners in the middle and a member of I2-U2 alongside the United States, Israel, and India, is playing both ends against the Middle East. However, the UAE is the partner that appears to be hedging its bets most. The hedging stems from Gulf uncertainty and Mr. Biden's failure to convince the United States' allies that Wash-

ington would be a reliable security partner in the future. The Gulf states want to see binding defense arrangements rather than Mr. Biden's verbal reiteration during his visit that the United States remains committed to Gulf security. Confidence in US reliability has been undermined in recent years by the identification of China as the United States' main strategic challenger prompting Washington to seemingly attribute less importance to the Middle East. In Gulf minds, that translated into a US failure to respond robustly to attacks on critical Saudi and Emirati infrastructure by Iran and/or its allies. For its part, the UAE distanced itself from the security-focused anti-Iran tenor in Mr. Biden's talks with regional leaders. Instead, the Emirates said it wished to cooperate rather than target the Islamic republic and was seeking to return its ambassador to Tehran. In Haifa, the port competition with China is most immediate. Shanghai International Port Group, which operates the Chinese metropol's deep-water port, the world's largest container cargo harbour, has a 25-year management contract for a privately owned port in Haifa Bay. The port is close to Haifa Port, that the government is privatising with the sale to Mr. Adani and Gadot. I2-U2 aims to increase entrepreneurial cooperation between the four countries through joint investments in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security. In a statement, the four countries also said that they intended to "modernise infrastruc-

ture." The acquisition of Haifa Port fits the mold of the quad and an Indian Middle East policy that, in the words of analyst C. Raja Mohan, "is imbued with greater realism...discard(s) inherited ideological inertia, avoid(s) the temptation of seeing the Middle East through a religious lens, and strive(s) hard to realise the full possibilities awaiting India in the region." Mr. Adani was quick to acknowledge the geopolitical significance of his acquisition allegorically. "Delighted to win the tender for privatization of the Port of Haifa in Israel with our partner Gadot. Immense strategic and historical significance for both nations! Proud to be in Haifa, where Indians led, in 1918, one of the greatest cavalry charges in military history!" Mr. Adani said on Twitter. The billionaire was referring to the capture of Haifa by the 15th Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade made up of troops supplied by Indian princely states in the waning days of World War One as Allied forces pushed back the Ottomans in Palestine and the Sinai. Mr. Adani's US\$1.18 billion bid for the port was 55 percent higher than the second highest bid and far more than the Israeli government had expected. "It's as if Adani is saying: 'Step aside, this is a strategic purchase – and for us the price is less important,'" said journalist Avi-Bar Eli. The acquisition follows the conclusion in February of a free trade agreement between India and the UAE. A similar agreement between Israel and India is in the works. Haifa is Mr.

Adani's first port venture outside of India, where he operates 13 sea terminals and controls the flow of 24 per cent of maritime commerce. The acquisition also follows initiatives to co-produce Israeli arms in India, in which Mr. Adani was a partner in the initial manufacturing of small arms. Cooperation has since expanded into the production of missiles and drones. The port acquisition bolsters what analysts Gokul Sahni and Mohammad Soliman describe in a co-authored article as the rise of an Indo-Abrahamic bloc that is gradually solidifying the creation of a West Asian system. The analysts argue that the bloc "establish(es) a balance of power against the region's dynamic independent powers, Iran and Turkey, and stabilis(es) the region in an era of great power competition." The coiner of the phrase, Indo-Abrahamic, Mr. Soliman, argues that it is better labeling than I2-U2 because "regional peace and stability in West Asia are not guaranteed through the unilateral military presence of the United States but through a balance of power that will eventually moderate the ambitions of rising states in the region. Furthermore, the original Indo-Abrahamic term allows the forum to expand to potentially include other states," such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan. I2-U2 may contribute to a rejiggered West Asian system. However, winning the balance of power game could be a long shot. So far, it has failed to reign in Iran and China or stop Russia from invading Ukraine.

China is not Soviet Union

Nadir Ali



The Soviet Union was fraught with fault-lines whose exploitation proved to be a plain sailing for the US. In the wake of the new cold war, the competition is thrilling between the global powers

The new cold war has reached the climax. China has been challenging the uni-polarity of the US on the every front. Countering China has become the supreme interest of the US in the twenty first century. Many scholars are of the view that the new cold war cannot end up in the similar fashion: downfall of erstwhile USSR. Against the backdrop of dissolution of the USSR, many authors came up with sweeping

has turned up against it. China is the potential competitor which makes this game challenging for the US. As a matter of fact, there many factors that distinguish China from then USSR. First of all, there is difference of nature of power. The former USSR was obsessed with defence and major chunk of economy was diverted to make it global military hegemon. The excessive focus on defence hampered its economic growth significantly. On

statement that communism has thrown up the sponge. In this relation, Francis Fukuyama was on the forefront who compiled his exposition in his notable work—"The End of History and the Last Man". He concluded, "The end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." In fact, the war against communism has never ended as China

the contrary, China is kept on expanding her economic influence globally vis-à-vis Belt Road Initiative (BRI). According to available statistics, the average defence spending of former USSR was relatively above 15pc of the GDP. However, Chinese defence spending is merely below 6pc. Owing to high defence spending and low human development, the erstwhile USSR lost the confidence of its own people. Quite the opposite Chinese economic focus has improved her soft power even beyond the boundaries. In the similar vein, the nation of around 1400 million lifted roughly half of the population from poverty unprecedentedly. In the second place, Professor Amitai Etzioni, renowned American Sociologist, said, "China has always emphasized regional dominance peacefully, but the USSR flagrantly ran after global dominance by hook or by crook." Historically, China has never tried to invade any nation except a few border incursions in the recent past. Deng Xiaoping—"Architect of Modern China"—formulated peace and development as the tenet of Chinese foreign policy. Time and again, he used to quote Chinese proverb 'Hide your strength, bide your time.' Resultantly, Chinese global standing and credibility have ameliorated and turned it robust state. The Soviet followed the ideology of Vladimir Lenin: Comintern Policy. It was based on expanding communism globally with diverse nations. Conse-

quently, it expanded to Baltic region in the west and took over Central Asian nations in the south. Another difference is of national identity and nationalism. The former USSR was comprised of diverse nations. Therefore, there was dire need to evoke a sense of unity among them, but multinational Soviet failed to create a clear national identity. Alongside, China is consisted of single nation. According to statistics, around 92pc of population of China is ethnically Hans. This ethnic cohesion is the enormous tool for creating a sense of national integration. Moreover, people of China are bound by the mixture of ideologies including communism and Confucianism. This makes striking difference between them as far as national identity and nationalism are concerned. Apart from it, the nature of communism is another factor that distinguishes China from then USSR. Soviet model of communism was top-down in nature, but it is down-to-top in case of Beijing. In order to make any ideology to thrive, it is imperative to go through sustained process by every section of society. Peasants brought about the communist revolution in China. The lower and lower middle class population had understanding about the ideology at first hand. Nevertheless, communism in Russia was imposed by educated middle-class and political elite. Consequently, it went beyond the comprehension of lower strata of society. All in all, its effectiveness ebbed away with each pass-

ing day. Last but not least, in the face of domestic and external crisis, the Soviet Union often used a repression as a tool to suppress the voices, but China has constantly reformed whenever there arises any problem. There were periods of reform, both mild and radical, during the Soviet Union era, but the chronic institutional inflexibility persisted and inexorably shook the foundations of the Soviet regime both economically and ideologically. By contrast, the Chinese believe that "reform and opening up" includes many social, economic, and political aspects, and it is an ongoing process, rather than a mission that has been accomplished. In short, the new cold war for the US can never be as simple as former one was. The Soviet Union was fraught with fault-lines whose exploitation proved to be a plain sailing for the US. In the wake of the new cold war, the competition is thrilling between the global powers. As both competitors have relatively strong economies. China has been enhancing her clout by dint of economic partnership literally with rest of the world. To an extent, the US all time partners (European allies) keep China in good books. The US leaves no stone unturned to bring down China forever be it Indo-pacific competition, human rights violation in Xinjiang province among others. Correspondingly, China treads the path sensibly which makes the equation complicated for Washington.

Briefs

Miftah...

FROM PAGE 01

economic guidance amid the political uncertainty prevailing in the country and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) not intervening. According to the SBP, the rupee closed at Rs224.92 against the dollar, down Rs2.93 or 1.3 per cent, from yesterday's close of Rs221.99. Mettis Global Director Saad bin Naseer said the freefall in the rupee's value was continuing because the markets were without economic guidance amid the evolving political situation. "For the market to stabilise, it will require some form of guidance on the political front from the PTI or the ruling coalition with respect to elections."

COAS...

FROM PAGE 01

planned time frame of 10 months by Frontier Works Organization. The reports also mentioned that the top general visited the National Emergency Operation Centre where he was apprised of the latest polio campaigns and challenges being faced. Army chief directed to provide additional manpower and resources in sensitive locations to ensure a safe and secure environment for polio teams for proper reach and effectiveness of polio campaigns to achieve the objective of a polio-free Pakistan, the report added. Earlier, Engineer in Chief Lieutenant General Moazzam Ejaz and Director General Frontier Works Organization Major General Kamal Azfar received General Bajwa.

Six-time...

FROM PAGE 01

medicine. But he is despised by the protesters who forced his predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa from his palace after months of demonstrations over an unprecedented economic crisis as an ally of the former leader. The Rajapaksa Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party, the largest in parliament, backed Wickremesinghe for the presidency. Wickremesinghe has pledged to crack down hard if protesters take to the streets and hundreds of heavily armed troops and police stood guard outside the parliament, but there were no signs of demonstrators.

Indonesian...

FROM PAGE 01

Lok Virsa Museum intends to feature the fusion of Indonesia-Pakistan's cultural history and artworks through a selected collection of photographs and videos, shedding light on the inter-regional connectivity and cross-cultural influence during the course of history of respective countries. The Exhibition aims to offer fresh perspectives into historical connections, religious backgrounds, and the confluence of civilization of both countries from past to present, he added. Ambassador Tugio further said, the Exhibition will highlight the religious-cultural influence and similarities between the two countries during their journey of civilization through the display of art works.

He said, similar to Pakistan, Indonesia has also a huge impact on the study of palaeontology. The island of Java has produced some of the most diverse vertebrates and fossils in numerous discoveries. And in Flores archaeological evidence of prehistoric life has been discovered. Experts like Prof. Verhoeven and Prof. Dubuis predicted that the artefacts were created around 750,000 years ago based on a number of stone tools connected to a stegodon fossil (now-extinct elephant). Ambassador Tugio hoped that the exhibition will help Pakistanis and even foreigners living in Pakistan to better understand the cultural potential that exists between the two countries besides having firsthand information about hitherto unexplored facets of the Indonesian cultural heritage. The Ambassador hoped that more and more people would flock to the exhibition. It may be mentioned here that a Batik display corner was also established on the sidelines of the exhibition. Visitors evinced interest in traditional Indonesia dresses.

Shafique stars as Pakistan complete record chase to win

SPORTS DESK

GALLE: Abdullah Shafique hit an unbeaten 160 as Pakistan chased down a record target of 342 at Galle to win a tense opening Test by four wickets against Sri Lanka on Wednesday. Shafique hit the winning runs in the final session of play on day five to take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series. Left-arm spinner Prabhath Jayasuriya took a match haul of nine wickets but his efforts were in vain as Pakistan battled past the previous best chase in Galle of 268 by Sri Lanka against New Zealand in 2019. The 22-year-old Shafique excelled with his second Test ton. He built crucial partnerships including a 101-run third-wicket stand with skipper Babar Azam, who made 55 after his 119 in the first innings on a tricky pitch to bat on. Shafique finally combined with Mohammad Nawaz, 19 not out, to take the visitors home after a brief rain interruption halted their charge. The teams had taken early tea before returning for the third session of play. Shafique survived three dropped catches, on 70, 135 and 151, but played the anchor's



role to perfection as he surpassed his previous Test best of 136 not out. Pakistan had a few anxious moments after Jayasuriya, who sent back talisman Azam before the close

on day four, struck at the stroke of lunch to get debutant Salman Ali Agha out for 12. Hasan Ali fell for five in the second over of the second session after being promoted

up the order to hit out the remaining runs. Jayasuriya, who took 12 wickets on debut in a series-leveling Test win over Australia last week at the same venue, six in each innings, kept up the pressure but Shafique stood firm. Pakistan resumed the day on 222-3 and Sri Lanka soon used up their remaining two umpire reviews, with Jayasuriya involved in both calls. Mohammad Rizwan opened his day's account with a boundary off Ramesh Mendis and kept up his positive intent by taking singles and twos before he fell lbw to Jayasuriya for 40. A review did not save Rizwan, a wicketkeeper-batsman who has come into the two-match series after a successful stint with English county Sussex. Dinesh Chandimal kept up his blazing form in an unbeaten 94 - his second successive half-century - when he ran out of partners in Sri Lanka's second-innings total of 337. In a match of tail-end fightbacks, Azam hit a defiant century in Pakistan's first innings and batted patiently with the lower order after the visitors slipped to 85-7 on day two. The second Test starts Sunday, also in Galle, after it was moved from Colombo due to the political unrest in Sri Lanka.

Normalization with Israel is a 'great evil': Mishaal

NEWS DESK

ISTANBUL: Head of Hamas's foreign political bureau Khaled Mishaal has described the normalization of Arab relations with the Israeli occupation state as an "extreme evil that must be confronted with all possible means." Mishaal made his remarks in a speech he delivered in a youth evening held recently in Istanbul in the presence of distinguished young people from 40 Islamic countries. Mishaal urged the Muslim nation's youths to work for the growth of their countries, share their people's concerns and contribute to the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation. The Hamas official also called on the ruling and active political parties in the Arab and Islamic worlds to build partnerships within their countries to serve their common interests and prevent any foreign interference in their internal affairs. He criticized what he called the Western world's blatant double standards that were exposed further by the Ukrainian crisis, especially with regard to the treatment of refugees



and the peoples' right to resistance. "They described the Ukrainians as resistance fighters, but they put us on their terrorist lists," he said. "The Movement makes great efforts, during its work and its resistance of the Zionist occupation, to develop its capabilities and means in order to achieve the liberation project, create a balance

between the principles and interests, and uphold its identity and values," he underlined. "Hamas is not infallible and makes mistakes, but it learns from its mistakes, corrects itself and improves its work," he added. Mishaal expressed his Movement's pride in the Muslim nation and keenness on its security, stability and unity.

Syria formally breaks diplomatic ties with Ukraine

AGENCIES

DAMASCUS: Syria on Wednesday formally severed diplomatic ties with Ukraine in response to a similar move by Kyiv last month. Syria is a strong ally of Russia, which joined Syria's conflict in September 2015 helping tip the balance of power in favor of the Syrian regime leader Bashar Assad. In late June, Damascus said it would recognize the "independence and sovereignty" of Ukraine's Russia-backed eastern Luhansk and Donetsk regions, becoming the first country to recognize the two breakaway states' independence. That led Ukraine to sever ties with Syria.

"The Syrian Arab Republic has decided to break diplomatic relations with Ukraine in conformity with the principle of reciprocity," a Syrian Foreign Ministry statement said. It said that Ukraine had in reality ruptured relations with Syria in 2018, when it refused to revalidate residencies of Syrian diplomatic staff in Kyiv, making it impossible for them to carry out their duties. It said that the Syrian Embassy at that time suspended its duties "as a result of the hostile attitudes of the Ukrainian government."

Wednesday's announcement came as Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad was in Tehran to meet with Iranian officials, a day after a summit meeting between the leaders of Russia, Iran and Turkey was held in Tehran. In only his second trip abroad since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, Putin conferred with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the conflict in Syria.

Jokowi instructs officials to rev up sugar production

JAKARTA: President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) ordered relevant officials, especially Agriculture Minister Syahrul Yasin Limpo and State-owned Enterprises Minister Erick Thohir, to increase national sugar production to fulfil the country's requirements. "I have received the instruction with other ministers, particularly the SOEs minister, to properly ready sugarcane ratoon maintenance and clean-up, which means that intensification and expansion of lands must be performed concurrently," Limpo stated at the Presidential Palace here, Wednesday. The minister remarked that while the national demand for consumption sugar reached 3.2 million tons and industrial sugar at 4.1 million tons, the national sugar production was only recorded at 2.35 million tons. The disproportionate national sugar production and demand caused a discrepancy of around 850 thousand tons, he pointed out. "Mr President has instructed us to take necessary measures to rev up consumption sugar (procurement), which means that we need to ready some 850 tons of sugar," Limpo remarked.

While the government will enhance efforts to gradually supply more industrial sugar, the minister is committed to taking measures to maintain the sugar stocks to fulfil industrial needs. He remarked that global economic disruption that causes other countries to restrict their export quota is causal to fluctuations in the national sugar supply. "Hence, Mr President expected that joint steps between the agriculture, SOEs, trade, and industry ministries can be conceived promptly to ready ourselves with various events and, at least, to prepare our national sugar needs," Limpo remarked. The president will strictly monitor issues on food stocks and availability, particularly sugar, which the president stresses, as the commodity influences the national inflation level, he stated. As of June 2022, Indonesia's inflation level had reached 4.35 per cent on a year-on-year basis. - ANTARA

Central Asian leaders meet in Kyrgyzstan

FOREIGN DESK

BISHKEK: The leaders of five Central Asian nations have begun a two-day meeting in the Kyrgyz resort town of Cholpon-Ata to discuss economic and political cooperation after recent unrest in the region and moves by Moscow to increase Russia's influence in the former Soviet republics. The summit, which began on July 20, is the first meeting of heads of state in the region since Russia - which is not a participant in the meeting - launched its invasion of Ukraine five months ago. While previous summits have produced general agreements on cooperation but little else, analysts say this year's edition is "very important" for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, all of which have seen social unrest in the past two years, as well as Turkmenistan. Meanwhile, the cost of living is on the rise in the region, with the situation exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, severe droughts, supply issues, and the war in Ukraine.

"I think Central Asian countries are now realizing that they would be stronger if they worked together, especially in their relations with Russia, China, and the United States...I think the war in Ukraine has demonstrated...how difficult it is to cooperate with Russia...The



countries in the [Central Asian] region feel themselves very vulnerable," Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili, president of the Central Eurasian Studies Society, told RFE/RL. Many experts who talked to RFE/RL said they believe the five presidents will also touch on such issues as the

Taliban's takeover in neighboring Afghanistan, January antigovernment protests that left 232 people dead in Kazakhstan, as well as recent deadly unrest in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region and Uzbekistan's Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan.

US forces in Syria, region a 'destabilizing factor'

Raisi accused US of 'looting (Syria's) natural resources,' including the country's oil

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iran, Türkiye and Russia reiterated their commitment to work toward a political and diplomatic solution to the Syrian crisis at the seventh summit of the guarantor states of the Astana Process on Syria in Tehran on Tuesday. In his remarks at the trilateral meeting and at the joint presser, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi said the only solution to the Syrian crisis is "a political solution without foreign interference." He hailed the Astana Process as a "successful framework for the peaceful settlement of the Syrian crisis" which he affirmed has made "good achievements." He went on to emphasize the "need to maintain territorial integrity and cohesion (and) respect for the national sovereignty and independence of Syria, determining the fate of the country through Syrian-Syrian dialogues and without foreign interference."

Raisi said 11 years have gone by since the war in Syria started, adding that his country still believes that the only solution is "political" and "not military." The guarantor states of the Astana Process, he noted, have always backed the "political solution" to the crisis within the framework of the agreements reached, including holding the Syrian constitutional negotiations, while reaffirm-

ing their commitment to fighting terrorism in the entire region, including Syria. Raisi called for "ending the presence of terrorist groups" in Syria while condemning Israeli attacks in the war-ravaged country, especially on civilian infrastructure like airports and ports. He said US sanctions have put "additional pressure" on the Syrian people, "depriving them of avenues to lead a normal life" while calling for an end to "foreign interference" in the country. A united, independent Syria without a foreign presence will restore peace to Syria and contribute to the stability and security of its neighbors, Raisi stressed, while terming the presence of US forces in Syria and the region "a destabilizing factor." The Iranian president went on to reaffirm Tehran's support to the "people and the government of Syria with full force." The issue of Syrian refugees and domestically displaced people is an "important issue," he asserted, urging regional countries and the international community to "help the refugees return to their homes." Iran is one of the strongest allies of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Damascus and has backed it fully during the years of war. The host of Tuesday's meeting described Syria's territorial integrity and sovereignty as a "red line," attributing instability in the country to the American

presence. Raisi accused the US of "looting (Syria's) natural resources," including the country's oil. He said the international community bears responsibility for solving Syria's refugee crisis and expressed Iran's readiness in supporting any such initiatives. In their joint statement, the three leaders said they discussed the current situation in Syria, reviewed its developments following the July 1 summit, and reiterated their determination to enhance the trilateral coordination in light of their agreements as well as the conclusions of foreign ministers' and representatives' meetings. The statement added that they also examined the latest international and regional developments and emphasized the key role of the Astana Process in the peaceful and sustainable settlement of the Syrian crisis. It further said that they emphasized their unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Syria, expressed their determination to continue working together to fight terrorism, discussed the situation in northern Syria, reviewed the situation in the Idlib de-escalation area, expressed concern over the humanitarian situation in Syria and sanctions, expressed opposition to a military solution to the conflict, reaffirmed their determination to continue operations on the mutual

release of detainees, and condemned Israeli military attacks in Syria.

The Astana Process was launched in 2017 in a bid to restore peace and stability in the Arab country, which has been ravaged by war since 2011, when the Assad regime cracked down on pro-democracy protesters. Last month, the representatives of the three countries stressed that Syria's national sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected. Notably, it is Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's first visit to Tehran since the formation of the new government in Tehran last year. Russian President Vladimir Putin is also on his first international trip beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union since the start of the Ukraine war. Following the talks Tuesday, Nour News, affiliated with Iran's top security body, said the meeting is centered on the "adoption of practical solutions to reduce tensions (and) relying on the principle of dialogue and interaction to resolve misunderstandings and reduce conflicts together with security concerns." Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad is also expected to arrive in Tehran later Tuesday. He will be holding talks with his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, on Wednesday. The next summit of the Astana Format will be held in Russia.

Imran says...

FROM PAGE 01

a repetition of the Sindh House horse-trading episode that happened in Islamabad, with up to Rs500 million being offered to buy MPs," tweeted the PTI chairman. He alleged that PPP Co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari was the "main architect" behind this, adding that the former president has secured an "NRO for his corruption and purchases people with looted wealth". The former prime minister also demanded the PPP leader be jailed. "This is not only an attack on our democracy but also on the moral fabric of our society. Had Supreme Court taken action and barred these turncoats for life, it would have acted as a deterrent," claimed the PTI chairman. He also asked the "handlers" of the incumbent government whether they realised the "severe damage being done to the nation". The PTI chairman further claimed that after his government was "toppled with stolen money from Sindh and NRO 2 achieved, certified criminal Asif Zardari in cahoots with Sharif mafia now seeking to steal Punjab people's mandate by trying to purchase MPs". "Want to ask Honourable Supreme Court are they not cognisant of the damage being wreaked? Isn't destruction of our democracy, Constitution and nation's morality a fit case for Sua Moto action? Are the "Neutrals" not realising how our beloved country is literally being destroyed on all fronts by the Import-export government brought in through US regime change conspiracy?" asked the former prime minister.

PTI forms...

FROM PAGE 01

committee to counter political victimization of their leadership and workers in the province. According to details, the five-member would be headed by Shafiq Mehmood while Aamir Mehmood Kiani, Yasmin Rashid, Own Abbas Buppi and Raja Basharat are also included in the counter-victimization committee. PTI's Central General Secretary Asad Umer on Wednesday issued a notification of the formation of the anti-Victimization and Accountability Committee. The committee was formed in accordance with the decision of the PTI Core Committee, which was tasked to investigate fake cases registered against PTI leaders in Punjab and would work towards countering them. The committee would also identify officers who committed criminal offences against the PTI leaders and workers in order to initiate legal proceedings against them. Asad Umer made it clear that they have not forgotten what happened on May 25, 2022. "We have not forgotten, and will not let anyone else forget," he added. He said that those responsible for the torturing and harassing PTI workers and leaders would be dealt as per the law. He said that they filed contempt petition against Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah and Punjab government in Supreme Court.

Heatwave...

FROM PAGE 01

southern Europe last week, part of a global pattern of rising temperatures, widely attributed by scientists and climatologists to human activity. It is forecast to dump searing heat on much of China into late August. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Wednesday that "more than 500 people" died during a 10-day heatwave in Spain, one of the most intense ever recorded in the country. Sanchez cited figures released Monday from the Carlos III Health Institute which estimates the number of heat-related deaths based on the number of excess deaths when compared to the average in previous years. The institute has stressed that these figures are a statistical estimate and not a record of official deaths. "During this heatwave, more than 500 people died because of such high temperatures, according to the statistics," Sanchez said. "I ask citizens to exercise extreme caution," he said, noting that the "climate emergency is a reality". Spain was gripped by a heatwave affecting much of Western Europe which pushed temperatures as high as 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) in some regions last week, sparking dozens of wildfires.

Briefs

Over 180 settlers defile Aqsa Mosque

DNA

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Hordes of extremist Jewish settlers desecrated the Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem on Tuesday morning and later in the afternoon. According to al-Qastal news website, at least 182 settlers entered the Mosque in groups through its Maghariba Gate and toured its courtyards under police escort. During their tours at the Islamic holy site, the settlers received lectures from rabbis about the alleged temple mount and a number of them provocatively performed Talmudic prayers. The Aqsa Mosque is exposed to daily desecration by Jewish settlers and police forces in the morning and the afternoon except on Fridays and Saturdays.

Six Iraq police killed in attack blamed on ISIS

DNA

BAGHDAD: Six Iraqi police were killed and seven wounded early Wednesday in an attack by militants on their position in a remote area north of Baghdad, a military source said. "Between 10 and 15 ISIS group militants attacked this federal police forward position around 12:30 am (2130 GMT Tuesday). The attack lasted around an hour," the source said, asking not to be identified. The attackers struck near the village of Al-Jillam in an area 140 kilometers north of Baghdad where extremists remain active, AFP reported. ISIS established a so-called "caliphate" across swathes of Syria and Iraq from 2014. It was defeated in Iraq in 2017 after offensives by Iraqi forces with the support of the US-led coalition that has included more than 80 countries, among them Britain, France and several Arab nations.

EU lifts sanctions on cham wings

DNA

BRUSSELS: The European Union has lifted sanctions on Syrian airline Cham Wings, representatives for the EU and the airline said on Wednesday, after the privately owned company was blacklisted over accusations it was helping smuggle migrants into the bloc. The EU imposed the sanctions in December, accusing it of flying people to Belarus so they could then illegally cross the EU's external borders in what flared up into a migration and humanitarian crisis. The airline had already been blacklisted by the United States, who said the Syrian government had used the airline to transport militants, weapons, and other equipment during the conflict raging in the country since 2011.

Scandinavia breeding center for terrorism, says Erdogan

At a NATO summit in Madrid at the end of June, Erdogan called on Finland and Sweden to "do their part" in the fight against terrorism and accused them of providing a haven for outlawed PKK/YPG terrorists

DNA

ANKARA: Scandinavian countries have unfortunately turned into breeding centers for terrorism, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said. Speaking to journalists on his return flight from Iran, the president spoke about the latest situation regarding a deal with Finland and Sweden on the Nordic countries' bid to enter NATO and the fight against terrorism. "We have openly and clearly stated our conditions to Finland and Sweden at the table during which the NATO secretary-general was also present," Erdogan said, reiterating that Turkey's conditions include that these countries

end the activities of the terrorist organizations on their soil while returning terrorist suspects to Turkey. "As you know we facilitated the listing of the PKK/PYD/YPG and FETÖ in official records as terrorist organizations and said that they have to return them," he added. "They feed the terrorist organization even in their parliaments. Similar to a breeding center. If they do not uphold their promises, it is not possible for us to look positively at the issue (Nordic countries entering NATO)." He continued by saying that almost all Scandinavian countries are currently quasi breeding centers for terrorism, including coun-



tries like Norway, Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Italy. "The West currently has no right to speak on the issue (of terrorism)." At a NATO summit in Madrid at the end of June, Erdogan called on Finland and Sweden to "do their part" in

the fight against terrorism and accused them of providing a haven for outlawed PKK/YPG terrorists. Earlier this month NATO kicked off the accession procedures for Sweden and Finland after a deal was struck with Turkey, which had blocked the Nordic na-

tions from joining. Spurred by Russia's war on Ukraine, the two countries applied to join NATO in May, shedding their traditional neutrality. Turkey is one of the most active countries working to ensure a permanent cease-fire between Ukraine and Russia. Its delicately balanced act of assuming a role as a mediator by keeping communication channels with both warring sides open provides a glimmer of hope in diplomatic efforts to find a solution and achieve peace in the Ukraine crisis. With its unique position of having friendly relations with both Russia and Ukraine, Turkey has won widespread praise for its push to end the war. In a breakthrough, Russian

and Ukrainian delegations met for peace talks in Istanbul on March 29 as the war entered its second month with casualties piling up on both sides. Turkey also hosted the foreign ministers of Russia and Ukraine in Antalya in March as well as a recent meeting in Istanbul to discuss the export of Ukrainian grain while Ankara also hopes to bring together Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "Mr. Putin's view on our efforts is currently positive. He thanks us for our efforts. He had various proposals for us," Erdogan said on the issue of continuing coordination.

Lithuania approves NATO Nordic bid

DNA

LONDON: Lithuanian lawmakers on Wednesday ratified Sweden and Finland's accession into NATO. "Lithuanian parliament just ratified Sweden's and Finland's NATO membership!" the Baltic nation's Defense Minister Arvydas Anusauskas said on Twitter. Sweden and Finland formally applied to join the transatlantic alliance in June, a decision spurred by Russia's war on Ukraine. But one longstanding member of the alliance, Türkiye, voiced objections to the membership bids, criticizing the countries for tolerating and even supporting terror groups. A trilateral agreement signed between the countries in June stipulates that Finland and Sweden will not provide support to the YPG/PYD, the PKK's Syrian offshoot, nor the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO), the group behind the 2016 defeated coup in Türkiye, and said Ankara extends full support to Finland and Sweden against threats to their national security. All 30 standing NATO allies need to approve any expansion. The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization by Türkiye, the European Union, and the US, and is responsible for the deaths of 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants. The YPG is the terrorist PKK's Syrian branch.

Japan to contribute in assistance for Palestine refugees

DNA

RAMALLAH: Japan will contribute \$5 million in emergency support for Palestine refugees, the Representative Office of Japan to Palestine said in a press statement. It said the Government of Japan will contribute \$5 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for critical food assistance to Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip at a time of global food insecurity. "I am very happy to announce that the Government of Japan is contributing \$5 million to UNRWA to support Palestine refugee families in midst of growing concerns over the global food price surge which is impacting the most vulnerable population of the Gaza Strip," Ambassador Masayuki Magoshi, Representative of Japan to Palestine, said. "This contribution represents our determined commitment and solidarity to Palestine refugees at a time when the world is faced with multiple serious humanitarian crises," he added. UNRWA Director of Partnerships Karim Amer said: "This timely and generous contribution from the Government of Japan is a very welcome message of support to Palestine refugee households in Gaza." "On behalf of UNRWA, I would like to thank the Government of Japan, one of our reliable and consistent partners. This is a partnership that the Agency is proud of and hopes to maintain and grow," he added.

Baku, Hanoi discuss cooperation

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan's Deputy Foreign Minister Elnur Mammadov and Vietnam's Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son have discussed mutual partnership in international organizations, as well as regional and international security issues, Azernews reports, citing the ministry. The meeting took place within the framework of Mammadov's official visit to Vietnam, on July 19. The sides discussed the historical roots of Azerbaijan-Vietnam ties, the existing situation, and the strengthening of future relations. The visit of the founder of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Ho Chi Minh to Azerbaijan and the National Leader Heydar Aliyev's visit to Vietnam were recalled. The necessity of sustaining high-level political engagement between Azerbaijan and Vietnam, as well as mutual visits and increasing inter-parliamentary contacts and relations between the two countries' ruling parties, was stressed.

Iqbal Academy Lahore donates books to Al-Azhar University, Jakarta



JAKARTA: Ambassador of Pakistan to Indonesia Muhammad Hassan called on Rector, University Al-Azhar Jakarta. – DNA

DNA

JAKARTA: Ambassador of Pakistan to Indonesia, Timor Leste & ASEAN H.E. Mr. Muhammad Hassan called on Rector of University Al-Azhar Jakarta on 18th July 2022 and handed him over 62 books donated by Iqbal Academy Lahore to the Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal Room in the said university. The Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal Room and Pakistan Corner in the university of the Al-Azhar, Jakarta were established in September 2021 with the collaboration of Embassy

of Pakistan, Jakarta. The two learning centers in University Al-Azhar were inaugurated by the former Chief Justice of Pakistan, Hon. Justice Gulzar Ahmad and Senior Judge of the Supreme Court, Hon. Justice Ejaz-ul-Hassan, who at that time were in Indonesia to participate in the 2nd Judicial Conference of Constitutional and Supreme Courts of OIC member states. Ambassador Muhammad Hassan was received by the Rector of Al-Azhar University Prof. Dr. Ir. Asep Saefuddin, along with Vice Rectors and members of his team, in his office for a meeting. During the

meeting, the Rector thanked the Ambassador for the donation of the books and expressed his keen desire to enhance the scope of mutual collaboration to include students' and faculty exchanges, scholarships, and MOUs with Pakistani universities. The Rector also mentioned about the scholarships offered by Al-Azhar University to Pakistani students. Ambassador Muhammad Hassan agreed on the need of further collaboration in the field of education between Pakistani and Indonesian universities. He mentioned that Pakistan embassy was ready to play its role to facilitate contacts between In-

donesian and Pakistani universities. The ambassador also briefed the Rector about the scholarship programs of the government of Pakistan and other universities for Indonesian students. He further stated that out of the 87 books, 62 books donated to Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal Room were provided by Iqbal Academy, Lahore. Subsequently, the Ambassador visited Pakistan Corner at the library and Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal Room. He also visited the Harvest Halal Nutrition Festival, organized by the students of the university and appreciated the efforts of students.



BAKU: Pakistan ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee holds a meeting with Teymur Musayev, minister of health of Azerbaijan. Opportunities for cooperation in health sector and medical education were discussed. – DNA

Italy's Draghi calls for 'new pact' if coalition to survive

ROME: Italy's Prime Minister Mario Draghi said Wednesday the only way out of a political crisis threatening the country's stability was a new government pact based on "courage, selflessness, credibility." The premier threw the onus on parties across the political spectrum to put aside differences and join together as it had in February 2021 when Draghi took the helm of a newly formed unity government to address Italy's myriad challenges from coronavirus to the economy. "The only way forward if we

want to stay together is to rebuild afresh this (government) pact with courage, selflessness, credibility," Draghi told the Senate. "Are you ready? ... You don't owe this answer to me, but to all Italians". The stern speech by a usually soft-spoken Draghi suggested that the former leader of the European Central Bank was prepared to stay - but on one condition: if the wildly disparate parties pledge anew to a common agenda. The crisis was sparked by the refusal by the Five Star Movement, a coalition member, to opt out of

a confidence vote. Parliamentarians will now debate for over five hours, setting out their positions. Draghi will then respond, before a vote later Wednesday. There is much at stake: a government collapse could worsen social ills in a period of rampant inflation, delay the budget, threaten EU post-pandemic recovery funds and send jittery markets into a tailspin. Polls suggest most Italians want Draghi, 74, to stay at the helm of the eurozone's third-largest economy until the scheduled general election in May next year. – APP

Chinese enterprises invited to explore Pakistan

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moinul Haque has invited the Chinese technology enterprises to come and visit Pakistan and explore the country for their future businesses and investment and asked them to take advantage of incentives being offered by the government, Gwadar Pro reported. "We are promoting establishment of Chinese industries, manufacturing units in special economic and technology zones and facilitating their exports also beyond Pakistan to the neighbouring regions," he made these remarks while addressing the participants of China Pakistan Technology Investment Conference. Special Technology Zone Authority (STZA) hosted the conference in collaboration here with Pakistan Embassy. Ambassador Haque said that Pakistan's young population presents a great potential and opportunities for the Chinese companies to establish

their businesses in Pakistan and use huge skilled human resource in the field of IT and software development. Pakistan can also serve as a very important regional hub for the Chinese companies to do business with the Central Asia, Middle East and onwards to Africa, he added. He said that the Chinese enterprises were being offered special incentives and tax rebates as well as other facilities to set up their businesses. Ambassador Haque mentioned the presence of a number of Chinese technology companies particularly Huawei which have a very old association and important business with Pakistan. He pointed out that other Chinese companies like Alibaba, Tencent, Xiaomi, ZTE, Oppo and Haier as well as automobile and electric vehicle manufacturing companies were now looking Pakistan as their future investment destination. While highlighting the special and unique nature of the China-Pakistan friendship, he said that it was an all-weather strategic partner-

ship and iron brotherhood, which has been nurtured over the years by successive generations of our leaders and people, adding, this relationship is deeply rooted in the hearts of our people. He remarked that cooperation between the two countries in the areas of trade, investment and technology has become a very important part of bilateral agenda and one of the manifestation of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is the flagship project of President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative. He said the two countries have already constituted a joint working group on science and technology. Last year, both countries also established a new working group in the field of information technology, which would give a strong boost to our cooperation in the areas of, for example, artificial intelligence, robotics, cloud computing, bio medical engineering, smart industries, and semiconductor industry as well. – APP

JULY 2022

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Briefs

President praises cricket team for win

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday congratulated the Pakistan cricket team for winning against Sri Lanka in the first of two test match series, by achieving a high target in the fourth innings. "Congratulations Pakistan. Good confident cricket to achieve a high target in 4th innings. Despite some hiccups and rain scare you made it," the president remarked on Twitter. He praised Abdullah Shafique for "outstanding batting" who hit an unbeaten 160 as Pakistan chased down a record target of 342 at Galle leading to a victory by four wickets. He also appreciated the performance of Babar Azam and Muhammad Rizwan as well as "good bowling" by Nawaz. "Mashallah you have become a formidable pack" the president commented. - APP

Indian SC grants bail to journalist

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court has granted interim bail to Mohammed Zubair, a leading fact-checker and journalist who spotlighted the ruling party spokesperson Nupur Sharma's controversial comments against the Prophet Muhammad. The top court ordered on Wednesday that Mr Zubair be released from jail immediately, saying there was no justification in keeping him in custody. Since his arrest in late June over a tweet, Mr Zubair had spent most of his time shuttling between prisons and courts. He was moved around by the police in and out of a courtroom in Delhi and then, as newer charges were piled on him, he was taken to a remote town on the India-Nepal border for investigations. Delhi police arrested him on 27 June over a 2018 tweet for "insulting Hindu religious beliefs". Later, they invoked other charges against him that included criminal conspiracy, destroying evidence and receiving foreign funds.

SC seeks transcript of Rana's July 8 press talk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought the transcript of the July 18 press conference where it was allegedly warned that PTI Punjab assembly members could "disappear" before the upcoming chief minister's election. A two-member SC bench comprising Justice Mumib Akhtar and Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan heard the petition filed by Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q) leader Chaudhry Pervez Elahi. The PML-Q leader prayed the apex court to initiate contempt of court proceedings against PML-N leaders Hamza Shehbaz, Rana Sanaullah, Marriyum Aurangzeb and Attaullah Tarar. - APP

Aziz Boolani fetes outgoing Austrian, Belgian envoys

Aziz Boolani said that both the ambassadors had contributed greatly towards strengthening of bilateral relations. He said Pakistan enjoyed excellent relations with Belgium and Austria



Austrian Ambassador and his wife with the hosts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz has recognized serv-

ices of the outgoing Ambassadors of Belgium and Austria during a dinner he and his wife Viqar hosted for the departing envoys, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. Aziz Boolani said that both the ambassadors



Belgian ambassador and his wife with the hosts

had contributed greatly towards strengthening of bilateral relations. He said Pakistan enjoyed excellent relations with Belgium and Austria. He added, it was quite painful to say goodbye to them adding they pres-

ence will always be felt here. Ambassador of Austria while thanking the host said he indeed had a great time in Pakistan. Similarly Ambassador of Belgium too thanked Aziz Boolani for hosting him and his family.

Miftah apprised of issues faced by marble industry

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail on Wednesday presided over a meeting with a delegation of Marble Association, which apprised him of the industry's issues regarding taxation and sought relief from the government. The delegation shared with the minister that the marble industry was transforming its manufacturing methods from traditional to modern for better output, a Finance Ministry news release said. The minister acknowledged the contribution of marble industry in the country's economic development and assured the delegation to resolve their issues. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) chairman and other senior officers also attended the meeting. - APP

Rain-wind-thunder shower expected: PMD

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast rain-wind/thundershower in Kashmir, Punjab, Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and northeastern Balochistan on Thursday. Scattered heavy falls are likely in Kashmir, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, upper Punjab and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The met office has warned that heavy rains may generate urban flooding in Rawalpindi/Islamabad, Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan, Faisalabad, Lahore and Gujranwala from July 20-23. The rainfall may trigger landslides in Kashmir, Galiyat, Murree, Chillas, Diamir, Gilgit, Hunza, Astore and Skardu during the forecast period. In Islamabad, cloudy weather with rain-wind/thundershower (with scattered heavy falls) is expected in Islamabad. In Punjab, rain-wind/thundershower is expected in most districts of the province. While, heavy falls are likely in Rawalpindi, Galiyat, Murree, Jhelum, Attock, Chakwat, Gujarat, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Narowal, Sialkot, Sargodha, Mianwali, Faisalabad, Jhang, Okara, Kasur, Sheikhupura and Lahore. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, rain-wind/thundershower is expected in most districts of the province. However, heavy falls are likely in Dir, Swat, Balakot, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Mardan, Peshawar, Kurram, Kohat, Bannu and Lakki Marwat. - APP

Ukraine seeks debt payment freeze

AGENCIES

KYIV: Ukraine will ask international bondholders to agree to a 2-year delay on its debt payments so it can focus its dwindling financial resources on repelling Russia, a government resolution published on Wednesday showed. Facing an estimated 35-45% crash in GDP this year following Moscow's invasion in February, lawmakers have instructed the country's finance ministry to negotiate the deferral on its roughly \$20 billion of debt by August 15. The delay, which many creditors say is likely to be accepted and was quickly backed by major western powers, would come just in time to put off around \$1.2 billion of debt payments due at the start of September. The government's resolution posted on its website said, "all interest payment dates for the bonds" would be deferred under the plan. In a bid to avoid what would be classed as a hard default, Kyiv plans to offer lenders, which include governments and many of the world's largest investment funds, additional interest payments once the freeze ends.

Ukraine has estimated a fiscal shortfall of \$5 billion - or 2.5% of pre-war GDP - a month, which economists calculate pushes its fiscal deficit to 25% of GDP, compared with just 3.5% before the conflict.

On top of that researchers from the Kyiv School of Economics estimate that it will already take over \$100 billion to rebuild Ukraine's bombed infrastructure, while the head of the EU's powerful financing arm, the European Investment Bank, has warned it could run into trillions. "We, as official bilateral creditors of Ukraine, intend to provide a coordinated suspension of debt service," a group of governments including the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and Britain said shortly after Ukraine made its proposal. "We also strongly encourage all other official bilateral creditors to swiftly reach agreement" the group added. Wednesday's move had marked something of a U-turn from Kyiv, which had repeatedly said in recent months that it planned to keep up debt payments despite the war. Speculation that a debt freeze request could be imminent however was fanned last week after the country's state-run energy firm Naftogaz also requested one.

Pakistan-Afghanistan authorities agree on steps for smooth trade

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed on multiple measures to ensure early clearance and free movement of bilateral trade traffic, improve efficiency in goods clearance and launch luxury bus services between the two countries by end of next month. The bilateral trade relations were discussed between the authorities of the two countries during the visit of a Pakistani delegation led by Secretary Commerce Muhammad Sualah Ahmed Faruqi to Kabul from July 18-20. The visit was meant to discuss mutual actions for enhancing bilateral, trade, transit and connectivity and take necessary trade facilitation measures with a view to addressing the practical problems and impediments being faced by importers, exporters, traders and businessmen from both sides. The Pakistan delegation included representatives from all relevant ministries and departments relating to economic interaction, trade, transit, commercial exchanges and enhancing facilitation at all border crossing points. The delegation held meetings with ministers and senior officials of relevant Afghan ministries including Acting Minister of Commerce Nooruddin Azizi, and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi. During the discussions, the two sides agreed that during the current financial year, bilateral trade and transit had registered a growth. They underscored that the momentum needed to be sustained and further strengthened on a mutually beneficial basis. It was agreed to make border crossing points more efficient to ensure early clearance of trade and transit traffic and address the bottlenecks and impediments on a priority basis. The two sides agreed to implement Temporary Admission Document (TAD) allowing free movement of bilateral trade vehicles and prevent loading and unloading of goods at the border crossing points with view to further increase trade between the two countries. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif presenting a souvenir to Ambassador of Turkiye Mehmet Pacaci during the meeting. - DNA

Joe Biden to announce climate action

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden will announce Wednesday a series of executive measures to combat climate change, in an effort to push forward an environmental agenda stalled by an un-supportive Congress and a conservative Supreme Court. Biden - who will deliver his address from a former coal power plant in Massachusetts - will make clear that time is running out to tackle global warming, highlighted by a devastating heatwave in Europe that has sparked fires, melted glaciers and spelled misery for millions. But he will stop short of declaring a formal emergency, which would grant him additional policy powers. "The president... is going to make it clear that just because Congress couldn't get it done, he is going to move forward with every power available to him to make the change and the shift to clean energy," White House climate advisor Gina McCarthy told CNN. "The president will make very clear again that this is an emergency and we are going to act. But the president is going to outline that at his pace." - DNA

EU tells members to cut gas usage by 15% amid new Putin warning

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: The European Union told member states on Wednesday to cut gas usage by 15% until March as an emergency step after President Vladimir Putin warned that Russian supplies sent via the biggest pipeline to Europe could be reduced further and might even stop. Deliveries via Nord Stream 1, which accounts for more than a third of Russian gas exports to the EU, are due to resume on Thursday after a 10-day halt for annual maintenance. The head of Germany's network regulator, Klaus Mueller, said that initial nominations for gas flows via Nord Stream into Germany stood at 800 gigawatt hours (GWh) for July 21, adding this could still change by tomorrow. On July 10, the last full day before maintenance on the pipeline started, flows stood at around 698 GWh. Supplies via the route had been reduced even before the maintenance outage in a dispute over sanctions,

Vladimir Putin wants curbs removed on grain exports

TEHRAN: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday said that the West must remove restrictions on exports of Russian grain. "We will facilitate the export of Ukrainian grain, but we are proceeding from the fact that all restrictions related to possible deliveries for the export of Russian grain will be lifted," Putin told reporters in Tehran after talks with the presidents of Iran and Turkey. Russia's military intervention in Ukraine has hampered shipments from one of the world's biggest exporters of wheat and other grain, sparking fears of global food shortages. "As you know, Americans have lifted - essentially lifted - restrictions on the supply of Russian fertilizers to the world markets," Putin said. "If they sincerely want to improve the situation on the international food markets, I hope the same will happen with the supply of Russian grain for export." Cereal prices in Africa, the world's poorest continent, have surged because of the slump in exports from Ukraine, sharpening the impact of conflict and climate change and sparking fears of social unrest. The United Nations has said Africa faces an "unprecedented" crisis caused by the conflict. - APP and may now be cut further, while flows via other routes, such as Ukraine, have also fallen since Russia invaded its neighbour in February. The disruptions have hampered Europe's efforts to refill gas storage before winter, raising the risk of rationing and another hit to fragile economic growth if Moscow further restricts flows in retaliation for Western sanctions over the war in Ukraine. The European Commission pro-

posed a voluntary target for all EU states to cut gas use by 15% from August to March, compared with their average consumption in the same period in 2016-2021. "Russia is blackmailing us. Russia is using energy as a weapon. And therefore, in any event, whether it's a partial, major cut-off of Russian gas or a total cut-off of Russian gas, Europe needs to be ready," EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. The Commission proposal would enable Brussels to make the target mandatory in a supply emergency, if the EU declared a substantial risk of severe gas shortages. The move, which needs the backing of EU states, will be discussed on Friday so ministers can approve it on July 26. "We believe that a full disruption is likely," one EU official said. "If we wait, it will be more expensive and it will mean us dancing to Russia's tune." European politicians say Russia is using technical issues as a pretext to cut deliveries. The Kremlin says Russia is a reliable energy supplier and blames sanctions for reduced flows.

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