

Islamabad POST

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Noam Chomsky warns South Asians about their future

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Turkiye-US talks on F-16 deal going well

Detailed News On Page-06



Tony Blinken meets Abu Akleh's family

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Briefs

Hina Khar for co-op among D-8 nations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar has called for creating a Private Sector Coordination Facility to boost economic cooperation among the Developing-Eight countries. Virtually addressing the 20th Session of D-8 Council of FMs, the Minister of State emphasized the need for creating a conducive environment for trade through facilitative legal frameworks and equal opportunities for investment and business.

Govt withdraws petition against J. Isa

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet Wednesday approved the withdrawal of the curative review petition against a top court order in the Justice Qazi Faez Isa case. After the cabinet meeting, which was held under the chair of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said there was no precedent for the curative review filed against Justice Isa, adding that "it was only filed to keep" the judge "under pressure".

Sibtain to be Punjab speaker

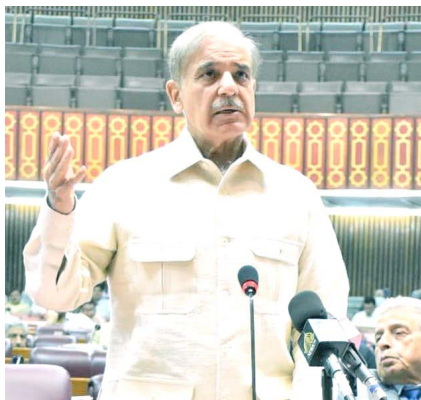
DNA

ISLAMABAD: The PTI has finalised the name of the former provincial minister for forestry, wildlife and fisheries Sibtain Khan for the post of speaker of the Punjab Assembly. The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday declared the ruling of Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari in the Punjab chief minister's election "illegal", and ruled that PTI's candidate Pervez Elahi will be the new CM of the province. Following the verdict, PML-N's Hamza Shahbaz was removed from office with immediate effect and the Punjab cabinet was dissolved.

'Dual standards' Shehbaz criticises judiciary

The prime minister says that the country cannot progress if there is no justice

MAHNOOR ANSAR/DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif speaking in the National Assembly. - DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday addressed a session of the National Assembly during which he took a swipe at the judiciary, calling it out for its "dual standards" towards the coalition government. His comments came in response to the Supreme Court of Pakistan's decision of declaring

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PTI 'not interested' in early elections?

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan addressed the public to thank them for coming out spontaneously last night after the Supreme Court declared Pervez Elahi the new chief minister of Punjab removing PML-N's Hamza Shahbaz from office. Interestingly the PTI Chairman did not make a mention of early elections neither he made any demand for the resignation of the federal government. Analysts believe the PTI Chairman wants to strengthen his foothold in Punjab and try to deliver in KP. He now wants the government of Shehbaz Sharif to stay in power simply because the government would not be able to perform in the prevailing circumstances and thus is likely to lose masses support.

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Governor's rule in Punjab possible

Rana says if his entry banned in Punjab then Govt may go for Governor Rule

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD, Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah, while terming the Frontier Constabulary (FC) a national asset, on Wednesday said anti-riot training would be imparted to 2,000 FC personnel during the current financial year and 5,000 next year. He said the Federal Government may impose Governor Rule if his entry was banned in the Punjab province. Addressing the passing-out of First Batch of FC Anti-Riot Training Course here, he said all-out facilities would be provided to the FC for making it the best professional force. After anti-riot training, he said, the FC would now provide additional

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Farrukh slams Rana over threat

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Secretary Information Farrukh Habib warned that those who talked about imposition of governor's rule in Punjab should bear in mind that they must be ready to face

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan Aybek Usmanov called on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, at MOFA, on Wednesday. - DNA

Imran, Elahi take up Punjab cabinet formation

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi accompanied by former federal minister Moonis Elahi called on PTI Chairman Imran Khan at his Bani Gala residence in Islamabad on Wednesday. On the occasion, Imran Khan congratulated Pervaiz Elahi on assuming the charges of Punjab chief minister. Pervaiz Elahi thanked Imran Khan for his confidence in him and PML-Q. A detailed discussion on the current political situation in the country

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Russia further cuts EU gas flows

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russia delivered less gas to Europe on Wednesday in a further escalation of an energy stand-off between Moscow and the European Union that will make it harder, and costlier, for the bloc to fill up storage ahead of the winter heating season. The cut in supplies, flagged by Gazprom (GAZP.MM) earlier this week, has reduced the capacity of Nord Stream 1 pipeline - the major delivery route to Europe for Russian gas - to a mere fifth of its total capacity.

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FM Bilawal to lead delegation in SCO FM's moot

Foreign Minister will also hold meetings with his counterparts from SCO member states

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be leading the Pakistan delegation to the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (SCO-CFM) meeting in Tashkent on 28-29 July 2022. The invitation to attend the SCO-CFM was extended by the Acting Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, H.E. Vladimir Norov. In the CFM meeting, the SCO Foreign Ministers would deliberate upon important regional and international issues as well as approve the decisions and documents to be presented to the Heads of State at the SCO Summit in Samarkand in September 2022. The Foreign Minister will also hold bilateral meetings with a number of his counterparts from SCO member states on the sidelines. SCO's major objectives include promoting mutual confidence and good-neighbourly relations among member states; strengthening regional peace,

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Uzbek envoy calls on FM Bilawal

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Aybek Usmanov called on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both sides discussed matters related to bilateral and regional cooperation. The Foreign Minister appreciated the positive trajectory of relations in all areas particularly trade & investment and connectivity such as Trans-Afghan Railway Project. The Uzbek Ambassador Aybek Usmanov thanked Pakistan for its support on

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US pledges 16 Million vaccines for Pakistan

An additional \$20 million in USAID funding is also planned

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: U.S. COVID-19 vaccine donations to Pakistan will surpass 77 million doses following an agreement to ship 16 million pediatric doses from the United States to Pakistan in partnership with COVAX. The new donation was announced at the conclusion of the first U.S.-Pakistan Health Dialogue in Washington, D.C. An additional \$20 million in USAID funding is also

planned to support vaccination efforts in Pakistan. Since the start of the pandemic, the U.S. government has provided nearly \$70.4 million in direct support and \$13.8 million in in-kind support to assist the Pakistani people in the fight against COVID-19. The United States is the single largest donor of COVID-19 vaccines to Pakistan. In addition to Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, the United States recently donated four mobile testing

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Kazakhstan, Pakistan direct flights soon: Ambassador

Says the CPEC represents a strategic opportunity for Kazakhstan to further transport export goods, to regional and global markets

Exclusive

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin has said peace in Afghanistan is a prerequisite for peace in the region. While talking to Daily Islamabad POST the ambassador said it is necessary to involve Afghanistan in regional integration, especially in transport and logistics projects. In this context, the project of construction of the Mazar-I-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway, where Afghanistan is of primary importance, is of particular relevance. The successful implementation of the project will open mutual access to the markets of South and Central Asia. The ambassador said, at the same time, the President of Kazakhstan calls for considering new opportunities to

strengthen transport and logistics ties in areas of common interest between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. The Head of our state emphasizes the need to expand trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation between the countries. These issues were discussed in detail at the meeting of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev with Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Dushanbe on September 16, 2021. The Head of our state noted the high level of bilateral relations based on trust and mutual respect. The Pakistani side he added also stated the importance of developing logistics capabilities that will contribute to the expansion of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. To address these issues, as well as to expand the level of bilateral relations between our countries, the visit of the President of Kazakhstan to Pakistan is



planned in the near future. While talking about possibility of direct flights the ambassador said, Yes, now we are actively working on the resumption of direct flights between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. As you know, in the 90s there were direct flights between our countries, however, for some reasons they were canceled and now we have a good opportunity to launch them again. 'I would like to emphasize that the opening of direct flights will strengthen our brotherly relations and will allow us to develop trade and economic ties and achieve high performance. While this program aims to link South and Central Asia, and it is also a promising potential for further regional development'. Ambassador Kistafin said, as far as we know, the government of Pakistan is positive and promotes the Central Asia vision program and the opening of direct flights is the first and main step for further diversify infrastructure and logistics

projects. 'Moreover, the CPEC represents a strategic opportunity for Kazakhstan to further transport export goods, to regional and global markets, while strengthening trade and economic ties. Increasing the export products from Kazakhstan also provides an opportunity to enter the markets of Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East through the Pakistan seaports in Karachi and Gwadar'. To a question about the transit agreement the ambassador said, As you know, Kazakhstan is the biggest landlocked country. Afghanistan is the main transit route between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. Currently, trade of Pakistan with our country is very limited yet. Entering into Kazakh market will open door for Pakistan to capture Central Asian Republics and Eurasian Economic union markets and both Kazakhstani and Pakistani products can have edge in

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SCCI holds BEA, Pak-Thai trade conference 2022

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR, July-27: Continuing of an endeavor to woo foreign investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and building up soft image of the country in rest of the world, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry successfully organised a ceremony of "SCCI Business Excellence Award (BEA) and Pak-Thai Bilateral Trade and Investment Opportunity Conference 2022" in Bangkok. Song Sang, President Thai-Pakistan Business Council was chief guest while Pakistan's Ambassador in Thailand, Sahibzad A Khan participated as guest of honor during the inaugural session of the multi-segments conference. A total 21 major business organisations were awarded gold medals in industrial, commercial, services and retail sectors while 12 business organizations were honored with trophies during these two mega events of four days, which was held in Bangkok, Thailand, according to a press release issued here on Wednesday. Besides, Hasnain Khurshid Ahmad, president Sarhad Chamber of

Commerce and Industry, Ghazanfar Bilour, former president FPCCI, Engineer Saad Khan Zahid, Chairman, SCCI Business Excellence Awards (BEA) for Year 2020-21 and Pak-Thai Bilateral Trade and Investment Opportunity Conference 2022. Abdul Ghaffar Warsi, President Pak-Thai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Rana Shahbaz Ali, Director Thai-Pakistan Business House, Muhammad Farrukh Sharif, Counsellor Trade and Investment, high officials, the SCCI's former presidents Zahidullah Shinwari, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, executive members, SCCI's Secretary General Sajjad Aziz, KPBOIT high officials, along with members, industrialists and traders were participated in the mega international events in a large number. For the Year 2020-21, the chief guest gave away gold medals to 21 business institutions for best performance in industrial, commercial, services, construction, and retail sectors that's include UNISA Pharmaceutical Industries Limited, Gadoon Textile Mills Limited, Associated Industries Limited, Deans Industries, International

Marketing Company, Zamoung Textile Company, Al Hayat Groups of Companies, NSB Bearing (Pvt) Limited, City University of Science and IT, Malik Group of Travels and Tours, Makka Agency, Shakir and Associates, Malik and Associates, R-Sheen Fashion Paradise and AYS International. Similarly, for the year 2020-21, as many as 12 business organizations were awarded trophies for best performance in industrial and commercial sectors that's include Gadoon Textile Mills Limited, Cherat Cement Co Limited, Top Stars Industries (Pvt) Limited, Khalid Nawaz Enterprises, Daudsons Armoury (Pvt) Limited, Aziz Oil Solvent Extraction (Pvt) Limited, Sohail Associates, Sher Ali & Sons Seed Company, Jan and Sons, 091 Mall, MKB Pharmaceutical (Pvt) Ltd, and Jolly Collection. On the sideline of the conferences, the SCCI's and different chambers of commerce and industry signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs), aiming at promoting mutual trade, launching joint ventures, collaboration in various sectors, establishing close liaison between the business community and attracting foreign investment in KP.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong exchanging views during a meeting. – DNA

Speakers urge for Pak-East Asia economic integration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Institute of Strategic Studies (ISS), in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, organized a policy dialogue on "Comprehensive Economic Partnership: East Asia and Pakistan." The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) and Centre for Strategic Perspective (CSP) were organizers of the policy dialogue. The distinguished speakers of the dialogue were: Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG ISSI; H.E. Suh SangPyo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea; Ambassador Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan; Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director CSP; Mr. Muhammad Naseer, DG Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP); Mr. Kim Sung Jae, DG (Korea Trade and Investment Promotion Agency) KOTRA; Mr. Chang Yong Il, Managing director of Samsung Pakistan; Mr. Zhonglei Mou, Chief Operating Officer of Hyundai Nishat; Mr. Jamil Ahmad Qureshi, DG, Board of Investment, Pakistan; Ms. Huma Fakhar, CEO and Founder of MAP Services Group; Mr. Muhammad Zubair, Joint Secretary (Emigration), Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development; Mr. Aftab ur Rehman Tarrar, Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation; and Dr. Nadeem Omar Tarar, Gandhara Chair in Cultural

Studies, Wah University. Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director of CPSC, moderated the event. He introduced the theme of the dialogue and highlighted the prospects of Pakistan-East Asia comprehensive economic partnership. He remarked that today's dialogue analyses Pakistan's interest in East Asia and ASEAN through the prism of geo-economics and economic security in line with the policy direction of the National Security Policy (NSP) of Pakistan. Earlier in his opening remarks, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry gave a brief overview of Pakistan's relations with the East Asian countries and commended the economic growth of the Asian tigers. Ambassador Chaudhry further said that Pakistan has strong ties with the East Asian countries and, especially, with the Republic of Korea, the cultural ties are strong and overall complement the bilateral ties. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Suh SangPyo explained the idea of the comprehensive economic partnership between Pakistan and East Asia. He said that Pakistan and East Asia share promising economic ties. He elucidated that East Asia accounts for one-fourth of Pakistan trade and there will be many opportunities for growing together once the partnership is reached an official agreement. He spoke at length about the economic opportunities and challenges East Asian countries, particularly South Korea, face while interacting with

Pakistan. In the end, he extended his gratitude to ISSI for putting its efforts into organizing the event. The keynote speaker, Ms. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch discussed the challenges that the world is facing in the post-covid era. She expresses her apprehensions on the prevailing competition between US and China which, in her view, was affecting international relations in many ways. She was also sceptical of economic growth while the world was going through a huge economic crisis in the wake of the popular protectionist trends and de-globalization narratives. In this milieu, the present policy dialogue is highly encouraging, she commented. She expressed her optimism about the outcomes that the policy dialogue would have in the short- and long-term. She assured the support of the government and put her faith in the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and the Embassy of the Republic of Pakistan for enhancing the bilateral ties. In the first session on Trade, Dr. Neelum Nigar explained how Pakistan's "East Asia Vision" fits well into the comprehensive economic framework that was being discussed. She highlighted major exports and imports of Pakistan from East Asian countries. She provided an in-depth analysis of the economic interactions of Pakistan with South Korea. On the prospects of FTA between both the countries, Dr. Nigar highlighted some key policy options for Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador, Donald Blome meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar. – DNA

US-Pak pledge to strengthen bilateral economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) and Pakistan on Wednesday pledged to strengthen bilateral economic and trade relations and work together for the peace and stability of the region. The US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome called on Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Commerce here. Syed Naveed Qamar congratulated the ambassador on assuming his charge in Pakistan and underscored the importance of the decades-long relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. The role played by Pakistan in averting a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the efforts undertaken by it to ensure stability of the region were also highlighted. The ambassador appreciated the significant growth seen in exports from Pakistan to the U.S. and expressed the hope for a deeper and wider bilateral relationship in the fields of trade and investment, digital services, science and technology, education, energy and climate. The recently held Pakistan-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Intersessional Meeting was hailed by both sides as an important development in paving the way for future engagements. Federal Secretary for Commerce, Muhammad Saleh Ahmad Faruqi informed that subsequent to the TIFA Intersessional, technical-level discussions have been held by the Ministry of Commerce on various market access issues between both countries. – APP

CDA to address issues of real estate sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The real estate sector is playing an important role in the local economy and CDA would take all possible measures to address its key issues in order to facilitate better growth of its business activities. This was said by Naveed Elahi, Member (Estate), CDA while addressing a meeting of ICCI Real Estate & Developers Committee at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Riaz Ahmed Randhawa, Director General (Admin) CDA also accompanied him at the occasion. Naveed Elahi said that the CDA has streamlined the property transfer procedures by abolishing unnecessary requirements in order to dispose of property related matters swiftly. He said that the condition of obtaining NOC from the Building Control Section of CDA for the transfer of properties to legal heirs under inheritance has also been replaced with an

undertaking. He said that the Revenue NOC has been abolished and the time limit for issuance of No Demand Certificate (NDC) has also been reduced to four days. He said that the automation of Estate Management records was in process to facilitate the stakeholders. He said that the CDA has set up a monitoring portal through Ufone and 1819 complaint service to provide efficient service to the people. He said that the CDA was moving towards a system-based one window facility to deliver quick service and added that the business community should provide its input to further streamline the procedures and processes in CDA for their facilitation. Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry in his welcome address said that close liaison between CDA and ICCI was very important to facilitate the business community in business promotion. He said that Chairman CDA along with Pres-



ident ICCI should re-start visits of markets to address their key issues and focus on their better development. He hoped that Member (Estate) CDA would play a role to address the issues highlighted by the members of ICCI Real Estate & Developers Committee. Ch. Muhammad Masud, Convener, ICCI Real Es-

tate & Developers Committee highlighted the key issues being faced by the business community of property and real estate sector including property transfer, issuance of NDC within time, NOC requirement for property transfer to family members and urged that property transfer letter should be issued on the same

day. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President ICCI, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Ashfaq Chatha and other members of Committee also highlighted various issues of real estate sector including lease renewal issue of commercial and industrial properties and offered useful suggestions for their resolution.

Family of John Snorri calls on Alvi

ISLAMABAD: Family members of late Icelandic mountaineer John Snorri Sigurjonsson called on President Dr Arif Alvi here on Wednesday. During a meeting here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president expressed his condolence on the death of late mountaineer, who died while attempting a K2 summit push during February 2021 along with Pakistani and Chilean mountain climbers, Ali Sadpara and Juan Pablo Mohr. The family members included widow Lina Moey, daughter and sisters of late Snorri, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. On the occasion, Canadian filmmaker and adventurer Elia Saikaly was also present. The president observed that late John Snorri was a renowned mountaineer and passionate about the sports. The Icelandic also played a very active role in the promotion of mountaineering, he added. – APP

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LARGEST CIRCULATED DIPLOMATIC MAGAZINE

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA) REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA) FOR REPAIR & MAINTENANCE SERVICES OF CIVIL WORKS / FACILITIES AT ALLAMA IQBAL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (AIAP)

1. Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority is seeking sealed proposals from reputed national/international Firms/JV consortium and having valid license/certification of PEC in C-5 or above with specialization code i.e. CE-01, CE-09, CE-10, along with minimum 05 years of experience in similar nature Services in the relevant field. The firms/contractors/JVs must have valid registration of EOBI, PESSI, FBR & SECP departments. The contract period shall be one (01) year, extendable to further one (01) year.

Tender Fee	Bid Security	Last date / time for Sale of Tender	Last date / time for Tender submission	Tender Opening date / time
2,000/- (non-refundable)	1,000,000/-	15-08-2022 Till 1700 hrs	16-08-2022 Till 1100 hrs	16-08-2022 At 1130 hrs in under-mentioned office

- Detailed qualification & technical criteria is available in RFP document.
- Tender documents along with instructions, Terms & Conditions can be obtained from Allama Iqbal International Airport on any working day between 0900 to 1700 Hrs upon submission of formal application on Company's letter head along with payment of Tender fee (Non-refundable). This advertisement is also available on PCAA website at www.ppra.org.pk and CAA website www.caapakistan.com.pk.
- The proposal shall be based on Single Stage – Two Envelopes procedure as per **PPRA Rule 36 (b)**.
- Proposal (Technical & Financial) along with bid security, completed in line with instructions contained in the RFP documents must be submitted in the office of Divisional Engineer ES (Civil), RD Block, Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore by Tuesday 16th August, 2022 at 1100 Hrs.
- Technical Proposal Envelop shall be opened on the same day (at 1130 hrs) in the office of Divisional Engineer ES (Civil), RD Block, Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, who wish to attend.
- The Envelops of "Financial Proposal" of only Technically Responsive and Qualified Firms will be opened in the presence of their respective representatives at the date and time to be determined and communicated later.
- The Authority reserves all rights to reject any or all proposals/bids for sufficient/cogent reasons which may be communicated to the bidder without being liable to any claim/compensation of any nature as per applicable Government procurement rules.

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Briefs

EU foreign policy chief urges revival of Iran nuclear deal

DNA

BRUSSELS: The EU foreign policy chief on Wednesday urged parties to the Iran nuclear deal to accept his latest proposal to revive the agreement. In a guest opinion piece in Britain's Financial Times, Josep Borrell argued that it is high time to restore the Iran nuclear deal in today's current "turbulent times." Over the past 15 months of negotiations, "space for additional significant compromises has been exhausted," he argued. Borrell said his latest proposal offers "the best possible deal" since it addresses the question of "sanctions lifting as well as the nuclear steps needed to restore" the treaty. Concluding an agreement now would bring significant economic and financial dividends for Iran once the US sanctions are lifted, he said. It would also "strengthen regional and global security" by contributing to non-proliferation if Iran returns to compliance with the deal, he added. The Iran nuclear deal – officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – was signed in 2015 by Iran, the US, China, Russia, France, the UK, Germany, and the EU. Under the agreement, Tehran committed to limit its nuclear activity to civilian purposes and in return, world powers agreed to drop their economic sanctions on Iran.

Bomb blasts in southern Somalia kill at least 20

DNA

MOGADISHU: At least 20 people including a senior official were killed and several wounded in double explosions in Somalia on Wednesday, a police officer said. The officer in the town of Merca, Lower Shabelle told Anadolu Agency by phone that the Merca suicide bombing killed more than 13 people, including the town's mayor, Abdullahi Ali Wafow, plus security guards and civilians. Several others who were wounded were taken to hospitals for treatment. Merca, 90 kilometers (55 miles) from the Somali capital Mogadishu, is a major town that houses several African Union peacekeeping mission contingents. The attack took place near the Merca administration headquarters. Abdiasis Mahamed Laftagareen, president of the Southwest State, condemned the suicide bombing and the killing of the mayor, calling him "one of the best civil servants" in the Horn of Africa country. Terrorist group Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility, saying one of its bombers had carried out the attack.

Bulgaria set for early elections

DNA

SOFIA: Bulgaria is on course for early elections this autumn after the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) failed to form a government in what was the third and final attempt to resolve an ongoing political crisis. Georgi Svelenski, parliamentary group leader for the BSP, said the party will inform President Rumen Radev on Thursday, who is expected to dissolve parliament and set a date for the polls, most likely in October.

The elections will be the fourth in two years for Bulgaria, which has been marred by political instability since Prime Minister Kiril Petkov's government was toppled in a no-confidence vote last month. Svelenski's announcement came after a parliament vote on a governance plan drawn up by the BSP, Petkov's We Continue the Change (WCC) and Democratic Bulgaria was shelved. The vote was opposed by the coalition of the former ruling party GERB and the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), along with the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, There Is Such a People (ITN) and Vuzrazhdane.



ISLAMABAD: Members of RCCI had a meeting with Former PM Imran Khan in line with campaign for Charter of Economy. Imran Khan agreed to sign a Charter of Economy to be prepared by RCCI. – DNA

Turkish-US negotiations on F-16 deal 'going well': FM

"The F-16 negotiations are going well. The (US) administration's approach on negotiations is very positive," FM Mevlut Cavusoglu said in a televised interview

DNA

ANKARA: Despite challenges in ties, Türkiye's top diplomat on Wednesday said that negotiations are "going well" with the US on an F-16 fighter jet deal. "The F-16 negotiations are going well. The (US) administration's approach on negotiations is very positive," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in a televised interview. After its unfair suspension from the F-35 program, Türkiye has sought to broker a deal with the US for the sale of F-16s and upgrade kits for earlier models of the fighter jet. To help address existing issues between the two countries such as US support for the terrorist group YPG/PKK, sanctions, and the extradition of the ring-leader of the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO), the group behind a 2016 defeated coup, Cavusoglu said that a "strategic mechanism"

has been established and that the first meeting at the ministerial level was already held in New York. Cavusoglu also stressed that the "negative atmosphere" seen at the US Congress in recent years has dissipated. An approximately \$6-billion deal would include the sale of 40 newly built F-16V fighter jets and modernization kits for 80 F-16 C/D models that the Turkish Air Forces has in its inventory. In early May, reports appeared on some US news outlets claiming that several lawmakers favor the deal. Türkiye paid \$1.4 billion for the fighter jets, but Washington took Ankara out of the program in 2019 because Türkiye purchased the Russian S-400 defense system after its efforts to acquire US Patriot missiles were rebuffed. The US claimed the Russian system was a security risk, but Türkiye maintained that the S-400 would pose no threat to NATO or



its armaments because it would not be integrated into the alliance's systems. Ankara also repeatedly proposed setting up a commission to resolve the matter. "This (bilateral) cooperation also has strategic importance for NATO," he said, as both countries have been alliance members for many decades. "They are also

are continuing and that "a sudden move would come," echoing President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's warning that such an operation will come unexpectedly. Reminding that the US and Russia the US and Russia failed to keep their promises against terrorist organizations in Syria, Cavusoglu said they are not sincere in their fight against terrorism. In 2019, Russia expressed its commitment to remove the PKK/YPG terrorist organization from the Tal Rifaat and Manbij areas in northwestern Syria after reaching an agreement with Türkiye during Ankara's Operation Peace Spring. Moscow had also promised that the terrorists would be removed from areas up to 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) from the Turkish border until the M4 road and in the area adjacent to the Operation Peace Spring zone. Likewise, the US' then-Vice President Mike Pence had

also pledged to Türkiye that the PKK/YPG terror group would withdraw from the Operation Peace Spring zone. But neither Moscow nor Washington kept their promises. Responding to a question on the US Central Command openly voicing sympathy for PKK/YPG terrorists, Cavusoglu said it is unacceptable and added that "It is an indication of the insincerity of the US in the fight against terrorism. Terrorist is terrorist." The US Central Command (CENTCOM) on Sunday praised three PKK/YPG terrorists that were killed in northern Syria on Friday. CENTCOM also extended condolences to the terrorists' families. Türkiye has long criticized US support for the terrorist YPG/PKK. While the US claims it fights Daesh/ISIS terrorists with the help of its YPG/PKK allies, Türkiye says using one terror group to fight another makes no sense.

SL parliament approves state of emergency

The government is negotiating with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout package, but no deal has been struck yet

COLOMBO: The Sri Lankan parliament approved on Wednesday a state of emergency imposed by then acting President Ranil Wickremesinghe last week. "The Proclamation on the state of Emergency announced by the Acting President under the Public Security Ordinance was passed by a majority of 57 votes. . . 120 votes were cast in favor of it and 63 votes were cast against it!" the parliament's official Twitter page said. Wickremesinghe announced the measure on July 17 "in the interests of public security, the protection of public order and the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community." The South Asian island nation has been under a state of emergency several times since April, when mass protests started against the government's handling of the economy. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned earlier this month after fleeing to Myanmar and then Singapore when anti-government protesters took to the streets of Colombo and occupied his official residence and offices. His brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa, stepped down as prime minister amid mass protests in May. Wickremesinghe succeeded Gotabaya as the new president while senior lawmaker Dinesh Gunawardena has been picked as the new prime minister. Crippled by a shortage of foreign exchange reserves after the collapse of its tourism-dependent economy, the country of 22 million people has defaulted on all its foreign debt. It has been unable to pay for food, fuel, and other essentials, with a fuel shortage leading to prolonged daily power cuts. Schools have been closed and state employees asked to work from home. The government is negotiating with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout package, but no deal has been struck yet. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister-Elect, Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi called on President Dr Arif Alvi before oath taking ceremony, at his chamber at Aiwan-e-Sadr. – APP

Azerbaijan, Lithuania discuss health co-op

BAKU: Azerbaijan and Lithuania have discussed cooperation in the health and medical science sectors, Azernews reports. The discussion took place during a meeting between Azerbaijan's Health Minister Teymur Musayev and Lithuanian Ambassador Egidius Navikas. During the meeting, the minister emphasized the dynamic development of friendly relations between the two countries. Pointing to the successful cooperation in many areas, including health and medical science, Musayev noted that there is great potential for sharing experiences between national public health institutions and expanding cooperation in the pharmaceuticals sector. "In addition, in order to improve the efficiency of healthcare in our countries there are all the

necessary tools for interaction in the field of medical education, including the exchange of modern methodological and scientific-practical information in the field of continuous professional education of medical specialists," he said. In turn, the ambassador noted the importance of high-level reciprocal visits in expanding bilateral relations. Recalling that in May 2022, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and the Azerbaijan Medical University, he emphasized that this document will contribute to the expansion of medical cooperation between the two countries. Moreover, expressing support for the reforms underway in Azerbaijan's healthcare system, Navikas said that Lithuania is willing to contribute to modernizing the system of medical education in Azerbaijan in accordance with internationally recognized methodologies and standards. The sides discussed the current state of cooperation and the potential for its development in the field of health and medical sciences. – DNA

PCJCCI plans dairy products export to China

The PCJCCI president mentioned that China was willing to explore more opportunities in Pakistan's dairy industry. From 2011 to 2022, China's dairy imports rose at a compound annual growth of 12.3 per cent, and the demand was still expanding

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan-China Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) has planned dairy products export to China, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. The cooperation between China and Pakistan in the dairy industry and China's demand for high-quality dairy products will provide a contemporary path of development for Pakistan's dairy industry, said Wang Zihai President PCJCCI at a think-tank session held here at the PCJCCI Secretariat.

He maintained: "We have learned that Pakistan is the most important exporter and producer of dairy products in South Asia. If we adopt the techniques and technology used by China, Pakistan could advance in this industry." The PCJCCI president mentioned that China was willing to explore more opportunities in Pakistan's dairy industry. From 2011 to 2022, China's dairy imports rose at a compound annual growth of 12.3 per cent, and the demand was still expanding. Milk powder, liquid milk, high value-added dairy products such as whey, cheese, butter and cream

are also in high demand in the Chinese market. On the occasion, PCJCCI Senior Vice President Ehsan Choudhry said that currently, China's dairy imports mainly come from New Zealand (40.44 per cent), the Netherlands (17.15 per cent) and Australia (7.38 per cent). He suggested Pakistani government support this industry to boost export and domestic production, especially to control the adulteration of loose milk. He asserted that the local farmers are facing many problems, such as lack of education and facilities for storage, transport,

and cold storage. He said the government should come forward to train and educate them with the modern technology. In this way, Chinese consumers' demands for high-quality dairy products will be satisfied. Meanwhile, Pakistan's economic development, industrial upgrading and industrial chain extension can be expected in the process. PCJCCI Vice President Sarfaraz Butt said that animal husbandry is one of the pillar industries in Pakistan. Specifically, Balochistan, where Gwadar Port under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC) is located in, is with unique advantages of breeding beef cattle and dairy cows. He added that the construction of epidemic-free area in Gwadar Port is progressing in an orderly way. If the industrial chain of China can be extended to Pakistan, it is expected to achieve win-win outcomes for both countries. Joint Chambers Secretary General Salahuddin Hanif said that Pakistan is among world's top five milk producers, with over 60 million tons of milk production each year. Such ventures and exports could definitely add value to Pakistan's economy.

Blinken meets with family of slain Palestinian journalist

DNA

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Tuesday with the family of Shireen Abu Akleh, a veteran journalist who was shot dead in May while covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the Al Jazeera news outlet. "Today I met with the family of slain Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, whose fearless journalism earned her the respect of audiences around the world. I expressed my deepest condolences and commitment to pursue accountability for her tragic killing," Blinken said on Twitter. He also shared pictures of the meeting. Abu Akleh, a 51-year-old Palestinian-American, was shot dead on May 11 while covering an Israeli military raid near the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. While Palestinian officials and Al Jazeera accused Israel of killing the reporter, Tel Aviv denied any responsibility. Earlier in July, the family had harshly criticized the results of an investigation where the US avoided remarks that held Israel responsible for her killing. "We, the family of Shireen Abu Akleh, write to express our grief, outrage and sense of betrayal concerning your administration's abject response to the extrajudicial killing of our sister and aunt by Israeli forces on May 11, 2022, while on assignment in the occupied Palestinian city of Jenin in the West Bank," family members said in a long letter to US President Joe Biden. It underlined that the journalist, who was also a US citizen, was killed by an Israeli-fired bullet to the head, despite wearing a protective helmet and a blue bulletproof vest that was marked "press."

North Macedonia approves NATO Nordic bid

DNA

SKOPJE: North Macedonia's parliament on Wednesday ratified Sweden and Finland's accession protocols to join NATO. Both bills ratifying the protocols got the consent of 103 deputies in the 120-seat parliament. Speaking after the vote, Parliament Speaker Talat Xhafri told of the difficulties North Macedonia faced during the NATO membership process. "I wish the two friendly countries, Finland and Sweden, the fastest possible journey, success, and coordination in this great family, NATO," he said. North Macedonia, the youngest member of NATO, became part of the alliance in March 2020, after Greece blocked it for years due to its former name, Macedonia. Sweden and Finland were invited to join NATO after Türkiye lifted its veto on their membership following the signing of a trilateral memorandum on June 28. But Turkish officials have said that if the countries fail to abide by the agreement, Türkiye could still block their membership bids. All members of NATO have to approve of any newcomers.

Croatia opens controversial Peljesac Bridge

DNA

BELGRADE: Croatia on Tuesday officially inaugurated the Peljesac Bridge, which was built to connect its northern and southern portions separated by a narrow strip of land belonging to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croatian President Zoran Milanovic, Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic and many high-ranking officials attended the ceremony. The 2.4-kilometer (1.5-mile) long, 55-meter (180-foot) high bridge is part of a wider project called "Road Connectivity of South Dalmatia" which was prepared within Croatia's 2014-2020 transport development strategy. The entire project, including access roads, cost 525 million (\$531 million), of which 357 million was secured as a grant from the European Union.

Briefs

Mohsin Butt appointed as new FIA director general

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet issued Wednesday a notification for replacing the director general of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). According to the notification, the federal cabinet approved the appointment of Mohsin Butt as the FIA director general. Mohsin Butt is a grade-22 officer of the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP). Moreover, the federal cabinet also approved the appointment of Muhammad Tahir Rai as the National Coordinator of National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA). Tahir Rai was serving as the FIA director general. Furthermore, the agenda for the appointment of the governor of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) was delayed. The prime minister had constituted a six-member committee for the appointment of the SBP governor.

Ukraine says work at grain ports resumes after deal

DNA

KYIV: Ukraine says work has started at three ports aimed at forming "green corridors" to allow grain exports. A spokesperson for the Odesa military administration said naval teams will build routes out of southern ports in Odesa, Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi. Once the routes are established, "caravans" of ships led by Ukrainian naval vessels will sail through the Black Sea, Serhiy Bratichuk said. Kyiv and Moscow struck a deal to allow the grain exports last week. Under the deal, which was brokered by Turkey and the UN, Russia agreed not to target ports while grain was in transit, while Ukraine pledged to guide cargo ships through waters that have been mined. However, the agreement was thrown into chaos less than 24 hours after the deal was signed, when two Russian missiles targeted a port in the city of Odesa. Russia said the attack targeted a Ukrainian naval ship docked in the harbour. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the strike showed that Moscow cannot be trusted to stick to the deal and accused the country of "barbarism". And on Wednesday morning, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko warned that the deal could collapse if obstacles to Russian agricultural exports are not removed, the Interfax news agency reported.

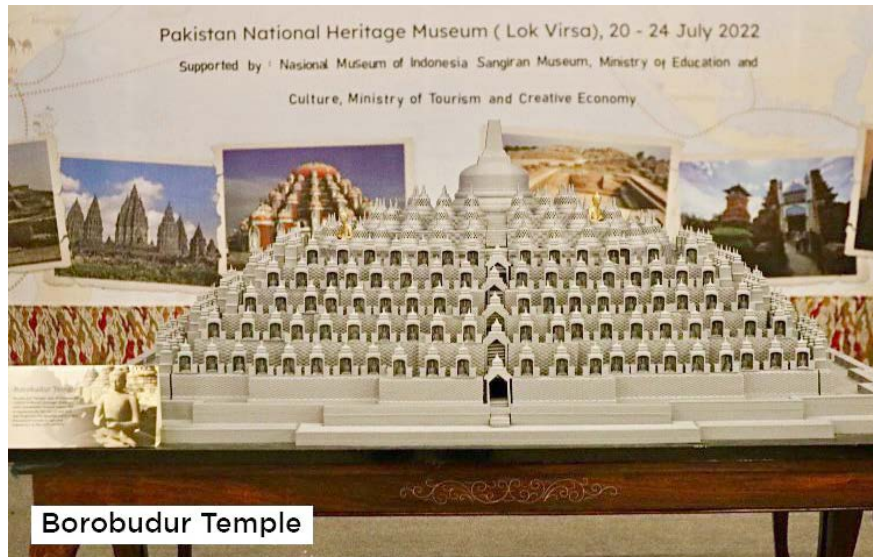
Iran grants activist Morad Tahbaz bail

DNA

TEHRAN: Environmental activist Morad Tahbaz, 66, has been released from prison on furlough, his lawyer said, and has returned to his home in Tehran. Mr Tahbaz was told he would be released as part of a deal that saw Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe finally return home. But when Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe was freed in March, Mr Tahbaz was released from prison for just 48 hours. His daughter Roxanne, who lives in the UK, said she was glad he has been granted furlough "to allow him to receive the medical attention he urgently needs". Ms Tahbaz has urged the UK government to continue to fight for his "unconditional release," and accused ministers of failing to keep a dialogue open with her on what action was being taken. She said: "My father is a UK-born national and he should have been on the flight with Nazanin four months ago. Home is not in Iran, home is with his children." Mr Tahbaz was arrested in 2018 and accused of working as a spy by the Iranian government.

Indonesian exhibition attracts visitors from across Pakistan

According to Lok Virsa management, around 7,286 people visited the Museum from 21 – 24 July 2022 to enjoy the cultural exhibition with their families and children



Borobudur Temple



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with Lok Virsa organized a four-day successful photo-exhibition titled "A Night at Lok Virsa Museum: The Confluence of Civilizations between Indonesia and Pakistan," which drew a large number of crowd from all walks of life. According to

Lok Virsa management, around 7,286 people visited the Museum from 21 – 24 July 2022 to enjoy the cultural exhibition with their families and children. The photo exhibition emphasized on historical connections, religious backgrounds, and aimed at strengthening cultural ties between the two Muslim brotherly countries Indonesia and Pakistan. Visitors were entertained by the live demonstrations at the Batik and Ajrak stalls. Women

and children participated in drawing Batik designs on a white piece of cloth with a batik tool called "Canting" and hot wax. Ajrak stall also received a lot of appreciation from visitors for live stamping and making creative designs of Pakistani traditional art. The exhibition also featured a 3D model of the Borobudur temple. People were eager to learn more about the history of the Borobudur temple, and its reconstructing process that took 75 years to complete. Such displays inspired visitors who expressed their optimism that Pakistan has potential to attract many tourists around the world to visit remnants of the Gandhara Civilization. The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia intends to take this exhibition to various cities in Pakistan in the near future to promote cultural ties and strengthen brotherhood between the two countries.

Macron says Russia 'one of last imperial colonial powers'

COTONOU: French President Emmanuel Macron, on a visit to Benin Wednesday, branded Russia "one of the last imperial colonial powers" for its invasion of Ukraine. "Russia launched an offensive against Ukraine. It's a territorial war, the likes of which we thought had disappeared from European soil," Macron said on the second leg of a trip to Africa to reset France's relations with the continent, where many nations are former French colonies. "I speak on a continent that has suffered colonial imperialism," he said at a press conference with Benin President Patrice Talon. "Russia is one of the last imperial colonial powers" as it decided to "invade a neighbouring country to defend its interests," he said. Russia sent troops into Ukraine on February 24, sparking a war that has killed thousands and displaced millions. The French leader is on a tour of three African countries – Cameroon, Benin and Guinea-Bissau. In Cameroon on Tuesday, he said the archives on French colonial rule in Cameroon would be opened "in full" and asked historians to shed light on the period's "painful moments". French colonial authorities brutally repressed armed Cameroonian nationalists before the country's independence in 1960. Tens of thousands of supporters of the Union of the Peoples of Cameroon (UPC) party died at the hands of French colonial troops and of the first post-independence president, Ahmadou Ahidjo. – APP

WHO says more than 18,000 cases of monkeypox globally

LONDON: There have been more than 18,000 cases of monkeypox reported globally from 78 countries, with the majority in Europe, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday. The WHO declared the outbreak a global health emergency on Saturday. So far, 98% of cases outside the countries in Africa where the virus is endemic have been reported in men who have sex with men, the WHO said. WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus urged that group to consider reducing the numbers of new sexual partners and swapping contact details with any new partners. "This is an outbreak that can be stopped... The best way to do that is to reduce the risk of exposure," Tedros told a news conference from Geneva. "That means making safe choices for yourself and others." Monkeypox is in the process of being renamed, to avoid the name being "weaponised" or used in a racist way, WHO emergencies director Mike Ryan said. The U.N. agency is recommending vaccination for high-risk groups, including healthcare workers, and men who have sex with men with multiple sexual partners. It cautioned that it takes several weeks after getting the second dose of vaccine to be fully protected, so people should take other precautions until that point. Around 10% of patients have been hospitalized in the current outbreak and five have died, all of them in Africa, the WHO said. Monkeypox has been a globally neglected public health problem in parts of Africa for decades, but cases began to be reported outside countries where it is endemic in May. It generally causes mild to moderate symptoms, including fever, fatigue and painful skin lesions that resolve within a few weeks. – DNA

China for peace conference to address Palestine issue

The security of Israel and Palestine is interdependent and indivisible. The two sides should uphold the common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept, and find a way to live side by side in peace, he said

DNA

BEIJING: China has called for a more influential international peace conference to address the Palestinian issue. "China calls for a larger, more authoritative, and more influential international peace conference, in which permanent members of the Security Council and all

stakeholders in the Middle East process are invited to participate in exploring effective ways and means to politically resolve the Palestinian issue," Geng Shuang, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations (UN), told the UN Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, CGTN reported on Wednesday. Geng underscored that the Middle East peace process is "still at a standstill" and relevant UN resolutions have not been implemented for a long time, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people have been continuously violated. "The question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East issue that bears on regional peace and security. It should not be marginalized, much less forgotten," he said. Geng called for reversing the situation on the ground, noting that Israel continues to expand its settlement activities in the occupied territories, thus continuing to squeeze the living space of Palestinian people and undermining the continuity of the occupied Pales-

tinian territory and the prospect of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state. "We urge Israel to abide by international law, implement Security Council Resolution 2334, and immediately stop all settlement activities," he said. Geng highlighted the importance of achieving common security as well. Since the beginning of this year, violent incidents have occurred one after another in occupied territories and it is disturbing that clashes happened in Gaza, he said. "The security of Israel and Palestine is interdependent and indivisible. The two sides should uphold the common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept, and find a way to live side by side in peace," he said. "Seeking absolute security by using one's advantageous position can only lead to greater security dilemma." "Advancing the two-state solution brooks no delay," said Geng. "The question of Palestine has dragged on for more than 70 years. Piecemeal crisis management is no substitute for a comprehensive and impartial solution.



ISLAMABAD: Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail at the Finance Division. – DNA

Iranian, Pakistani civil aviations lock horns

Iranian DG CA says PIA spokesperson statement of incident not true

DNA

TEHRAN: The Director General of the Civil Aviation Organization's Accident and Incident Investigation Bureau denied the claim of the spokesperson of the Pakistan Airlines Company about the incident of two flights being adjacent to each other in the sky of Iran. Hassan Rezaeifar said in an interview with IRIB: The events in the country's space are usually reported to the Civil Aviation Organization and are investigated in a specialized working group. He added: The reports are announced either through the airlines or the air traffic control center of the country, and the news that was published about the incident of the Pakistani plane is not true, and this news was informed by the spokesperson of Pakistan Airlines in an unusual and not-professional manner. Rezaifar said the responsibility of investigating this incident lies with the Civil Aviation Organization of Iran, which should be reported to the Civil Aviation Organization of Pakistan. The Director General of the

Civil Aviation Organization's Accident and Incident Investigation Office added: After receiving this news, appropriate measures were taken to receive the documents of the country's air traffic control center, and the issue will be investigated in the Air Traffic Accidents Working Group of the Civil Aviation Organization's Accident and Incident Investigation Office, and any conclusions will be drawn. Before the report of this committee, any information is not valid. Rezaifar added the preliminary examination of the airspace documents of the country shows that the claim of the spokesperson of the Pakistani airline company is not correct, and for this reason, the report of the pilot of the Pakistani flight number 211 should be checked to find out the reason for the incorrect withdrawal of the permission of the Iranian flight control unit and what was his mistake. According to Rezaeifar, based on the international regulations of responsibility for investigating events; Iran's accident and incident investigation agency has to announce the conclusion with documentation, and other theories are not valid without proofs.

Reza Far emphasized: There is a good coordination and relationship between the two civil aviation organizations of Iran and Pakistan, and the only claim of the spokesperson of an airline company will not be the criterion of any issue between the two authorities. Minister of State Participates in Developing-Eight (D-8) Council of Ministers Meeting Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar, called for creating a Private Sector Coordination Facility to boost economic cooperation amongst the Developing-Eight (D-8) countries. The Minister of State spoke virtually to the 20th Session of the D-8 Council of Foreign Ministers, hosted by Bangladesh today in a hybrid format. The Minister of State called for creating a conducive environment for trade through facilitative legal frameworks, and equal opportunities for investment and business. She underscored that Pakistan's vision of geo-economics had socio-economic growth, connectivity, and development at its core. Through cooperation and partnerships, the D-8 countries can realize their true economic potential. The Minister of State highlight-

ed that Pakistan's location afforded critical overland and maritime connectivity to key regions of Asia – Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and China – that made Pakistan geo-politically among the most pivotal states in the world. We were confident that through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), this geo-political asset will rapidly turn into a geo-economic dividend, she underlined. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, in his capacity as the Chair of the Council of Ministers, presided over the meeting. Foreign Ministers of Türkiye and Iran, and Minister of State of Nigeria, alongside senior officials from Egypt, Indonesia and Malaysia, also participated in the meeting. The Council meeting was preceded by the 45th Session of the D-8 Commission which adopted a series of major decisions building on the progress achieved. One of the key decisions taken by the Council was to fully operationalize the Preferential Trade Agreement by 31 October 2022 with a view to achieving the intra-D-8 trade target of US \$500 billion agreed under the Decennial Road Map 2020-30.

Biden tests negative for Covid, ends isolation

DNA

WASHINGTON: U.S. President Joe Biden has tested negative for COVID-19 after coming down with the coronavirus last week and is ending his isolation period at the White House, his physician said on Wednesday. Biden remains fever-free and is no longer taking acetaminophen (Tylenol), Dr. Kevin O'Connor said in a memo released by the White House. He tested negative on Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning. Biden will speak to reporters in the White House Rose Garden at 11:30 a.m. ET (1500 GMT). The president has had mild symptoms including cough, sore throat and body aches since his initial positive test last Thursday. "His symptoms have been steadily improving, and are almost completely resolved," O'Connor said. Biden, who is 79, will wear a mask for 10 full days when he is around others, the physician said, mindful of potential exposure to Secret Service personnel and White House staff who are in close proximity to him.

Turkey says Sweden, Finland not fulfilling NATO deal

DNA

ANKARA: Sweden has not yet extradited suspects Turkey seeks over terrorism-related charges, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Wednesday. "They must fulfill their responsibilities, or we'll block their NATO bids," Cavusoglu said, according to state broadcaster TRT World. Cavusoglu also claimed, "terror propaganda in Sweden and Finland continues." Sweden and Finland applied for NATO membership in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine but were faced with opposition from Turkey over claims that the Scandinavian countries were supporting "terrorism." Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan has accused them of being a haven for Kurdish militants. Ankara dropped its objections in June after the Nordic states to "address Turkey's pending deportation or extradition requests of terror suspects expeditiously." On Wednesday, Cavusoglu said the deal is currently being processed by his ministry. "If obligations are fulfilled, it will be sent to the president and he will send it to Parliament. Of course, Parliament will decide, but it cannot be sent right now," he was quoted as saying by pro-government Daily Sabbah.

Bar councils demand regulating CJP's powers over benches

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a joint declaration, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) Wednesday demanded that the constitutional provisions related to the discretion of the chief justice of the Supreme Court be amended. This joint declaration of theirs came after a meeting in which the representatives of the SCBA and the PBC discussed matters related to the rules regarding selection of judges for benches to hear cases. The representatives of the bar councils showed reservations over the hastily convened judicial commission meeting, and they also expressed concern over the yesterday's decision of not forwarding a full court. "The power of the Chief Justice to fix cases and constitute benches should be regulated. The bench formation should be the prerogative of the five senior-most judges," the bar councils said in the joint declaration. "The Supreme Court's rules should be amended for the formation of a different bench to hear the review petition. The bar councils do not have any personal interest, nor are they affiliated with any party," they stated.