

PTI welcomes verdict LHC orders ECP to ensure polls in Punjab in 90 days

Lahore High Court says after dissolution of assembly the Election Commission is bound to hold elections in 90 days

BUREAU REPORT / DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday ordered the Election Commission of Pakistan to immediately announce the date for elections in Punjab. Pronouncing its much-anticipated verdict reserving it earlier in the day, the LHC ruled that the ECP was bound to carry out elections within 90 days of the assembly's dissolution and that it should issue the election schedule. The PTI had on Jan 27 approached the LHC seeking orders for the Punjab gov-

ernor to immediately announce a date for an election in the province since the assembly had been dissolved on Jan 12. The ECP had recommended the elections be held between April 9 and 17. The petition, filed through PTI General Secretary Asad Umar, stated at the time that more than 10 days had passed since the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly but Governor Rehman had failed to fulfil his constitutional duty of announcing an election date. In the hearing today, Justice Jawad Hassan asked about the

ECP dismisses PTI's request for by-polls on March 19

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) dismissed on Friday a request of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of hold by-elections on March 19. As per the ECP sources, the by-elections will be held on March 16 and in this regard there will be a local holiday in the concerned constituencies. The electoral watchdog will pen a letter to the concerned provinces to declare the local holiday on March 16. According to sources privy to the development, the ECP had to hold elections within 60 days, and by holding elections on March 19,

summoned. The two officials arrived at the courtroom as the proceedings were under way. The IG told the court that he was not aware of the case background. "We will implement whatever decision the ECP takes in this regard," the senior cop told the judge. The court said it was looking forward to such an assurance from the police chief. The chief secretary also reiterated the stance adopted by the IG, saying he was also bound to

implement the ECP and court orders. The commission's counsel raised objections to the admissibility of the petition, saying the plea pertained to an announcement of the election date, which he said was not the domain of the ECP.He argued that the commission could not be made a respondent in the plea. The counsel said the LHC had itself stated that it would not issue an order whose implementation was complex. He contended that neither the president nor the federal government had been made respondents in the petition. "The police, judiciary, and other institutions have refused to sanction staff for poll duties.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhannad Shehbaz Sharif talking to media on the occasion of seeing off a plane carrying relief goods for the earthquake victims of Turkiye; Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq , Chief Minister of the Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi and Turkish Consul General Emir Ozbay are also present at the occasion. - DNA

Gen Bajwa concedes he was behind 'regime change': Imran Khan



ISLAMABAD: Former prime

minister and Pakistan Tehreek-

e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran

Khan Friday said that former

army chief General (retd) Qa-

mar Javed Bajwa had accepted

quake-hit Turkiye Shehbaz Sharif says Pakistan to extend every possible support to Turkiye

Brotherly gesture

Pakistan allocates

Rs 10 bn for the

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif said on Friday that Pakistan would provide all possible assistance to Turkiye in the wake of the devastating earthquake

that left thousands killed and injured and

Rescues efforts ongoing as toll

chief secretary and inspector general of the Punjab police, saying they were also

Briefs **Fawad for** 'reducing **bitterness**' in politics

BUREAU REPORT



the need to "reduce bitterness" in the country's politics amid the crumbling economy and security situation. Talking to media persons in Lahore the PTI stalwart commented on renowned anchorperson Javed Chaudhry's column in the newspaper on meeting with former army chief Gen (retd) QamarJavedBajwa said that ex-COAS confessed in the column that he played a key role in "regime-change operation" against the PTI government, adding that Imran Khan ousted to appease foreign powers.

Not seeing Maryam as PM: Safdar

DNA



seeing Maryam Nawaz as prime minister in near future, media reported. "Not seeing Maryam Nawaz as PM in near future," Captain (retired) Safdar Awan said in his exclusive interview with a news channel

Holiday Notice

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

– Editor

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COLOMBO: Pakistan's Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee (CJCSC)

General Sahir Shamshad Mirza arrives in Sri Lanka for an official visiton

the invitation of his counterpart General Shavindra Silva. - DNA

Poet Amjad Islam

Amjad passes away

that he was behind the "regime change" move that led to his government's removal.

Khan had earlier blamed the United States for overthrowing his PTI administration, later he turned the guns towards the ex-army chief, and then he also claimed that Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi was also involved in the "regime change" operation. In an interview with Voice of America (Urdu), the ex-premier said: "General Bajwa told the journalist with much pride how he had our government ousted due to economic policies and other matters." He added, "People were already aware of who was behind overthrowing the PTI regime. However, General Bajwa has accepted and

Continued on Page 06

urged people to donate to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. Talking to the media here at Lahore airport, the prime minister handed over 100 tonnes of relief goods including food, medicines, and winterized tents for the people of Turkiye. Shehbaz Sharif said the people of Pakistan stand in solidarity with their brethren in distress and would do everything to help them rebuild their lives. He recalled how Turkiye had estab-

lished an air bridge with Pakistan after the horrific 2005 earthquake that killed around 80,000 people in Azad Kashmir. The prime minister was earlier briefed about the collection and dispatch of the relief goods from Pakistan to Turkiye and Syria. He was informed that the NDMA was coordinating and rushing relief goods from various cities of Pakistan to the quake-affected areas. "We would leave no stone unturned to help the Turkish brethren ... we have never seen tops 21,000

News Desk

ANKARA: The rescue of several survivors from the rubble in Turkev lifted the spirits of weary search crews on Friday, four days after a major earthquake struck the country and neighbouring Syria, killing more than 21,000 people. Cold, hunger and despair gripped hundreds of thousands of people left homeless in the middle of winter by the region's deadliest earthquake in decades. Several people were pulled from the rubble of buildings during the night, including a 10-year-old boy saved with his mother after 90 hours in the Samandag district of Hatay province in Turkey's south. Also in Hatay, a seven-year-old girl named AsyaDonmez was rescued after 95 hours and taken to hospital, the state-owned Anadolu news agency reported. In Diyarbakir to the east,

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Local Court summons Major, Captain Khan on March 29 embrace martyrdom ISLAMABAD: A lower court on Friday summoned Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s chief Imran Khan in personal capacity on March 29 in a case re-RAWALPINDI: Based on credible intelligarding vandalizing the public gence, a sanitisation Operation was iniproperty during long march. tiated on 10 Feb 23 in Kohlu area of Ba-Civil Judge Hassan Chishti lochistan to deny Terrorists any Liberty heard the case with regardof action. During the ensuing sanitisation ing to first information report of the area, an IED exploded close to the (FIR) registered by the Sehaleading party. Resultantly, 2 x officers la Police Station. Prosecutor (Major Jawad and Captain Sagheer) em-Ayesha Akbar and case investibraced Shahadat and laid their lives in gation officer appeared before defence of the motherland against an exthe court. The police submitternally perpetrated threat. ted the case record against Imran Khan, after which the

The sanitization Operation continues in the area to apprehend perpetrators and enemies of peace. Such cowardly acts

DNA



Captain Sagheer Major Jawad

by inimical elements cannot sabotage the hard earned peace and prosperity in Balochistan. Security Forces are determined to neutralise their nefarious designs even at the cost of blood and lives.

Palestinian envoy grieved August 4, 1944 in Lahore. He did his Maters ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei has expressed In 1968, he was appointed as an Urdu pro- sorrow and grief over the sad demise

fessor in the MAO College Lahore. He con- of great Pakistani writer Amjad Istinued to be a professor there until 1975. lam Amjad, a great friend of Pales-Same year in August, he became the depu- tine and defender of humanity and ty director in Punjab's Arts Council. He has justice, who wrote and translated been a vital part of the literary world. some Palestinian poems and wrote about of his famous dramas include; Varis, Din, injustice and occupation of Palestine. Fishar and many more. In 1975, his famous We extend our heartfelt condolences to

Continued on Page 06

LAHORE: Renowned poet/drama writer Am-

jad Islam Amjad passes away in Lahore. The

news of his death was confirmed by his fam-

ily. According to them, the 78-year old poet

died to a heart attack. Amjad was born on

in Urdu from University of Punjab in 1967.

Continued on Page 06

IMF staff-level talks conclude positively, says Ishaq Dar

to PTI's chief. – APP

Virtual discussion from Monday; Rs170bn in taxes to be imposed through mini-budget prior to IMF deal

court issued summon notice

Shujaat Hamza

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Ishaq Dar said on Friday that after positive conclusion of staff-level talks on the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would start virtual discussion on the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) from Monday. "Good news is [that] as per their commitment, the team has gone according to their plan. As per their commitment, we have received MEFP. The draft is with us, we will study it and from Monday we will engage in virtual discussion with the fund," Dar said while addressing a press conference on

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar addressing a press conference. - Online

Considerable progress made on EFF agreement, says IMF

ISLAMABAD: Under the ninth review of Extended Fund Facility (EFF) agreement, Pakistan and the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** have made considerable progress on policy measures to address domestic and external imbalances. "Considerable progress was made during the mission on policy measures to address domestic and external imbalances," the fund said in a statement at the conclusion of its staff level negotiations with Pakistan that concluded on Thursday. It said, virtual discussions would

continue in the coming days to finalize the implementation details of these policies. The statement said, IMF mission led by Nathan Porter visited Islamabad during January 31 – February 9 to hold discussions under the ninth review of the authorities' program supported by the IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement. "The IMF team welcomes the Prime Minister's commitment to implement policies needed to safeguard macroeconomic

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02

NATIONAL

Islamahad **POST** Saturday, February 11, 202

Envoy assures to identify new venues for Pakistan in Ukraine

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Maj. Gen. (Retd) Nadir Khan, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Ukraine assured that he would work to identify new business opportunities for Pakistan in Ukraine and facilitate the business community in promoting trade with Ukrainian counterparts. He said that lots of business and investment opportunities would be available in Ukraine during its reconstruction phase and stressed that the entrepreneurs and investors of them. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). Maj. Gen. (Retd) Nadir Khan said that Pakistan-Ukraine bilateral trade is less than US\$ 1 bilvor of Ukraine as Pakistan's imports improve its foreign exchange reserves, increase trade and economic relations are over US\$ 700 million and exports

are around US\$ 70-80 million. He US\$ 3 billion and stressed that Comexports with Ukraine Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad ticals, surgical & medical equipment, textiles, cutlery, construction materi-Pakistan should be ready to capture al, IT products, sports goods, leather ness linkages between the private sectors of both countries to explore new

stressed that the business communi- mercial Sections of Pakistan in foreign ty of Pakistan should make efforts to countries should identify the demand export more products to Ukraine to of Pakistani products in foreign marimprove trade balance. He assured that kets to improve exports. He said that he would take all possible measures to direct airlinks between Pakistan and facilitate them in promoting trade and Ukraine are important to promote B2B and P2P relations between the two countries. Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI said Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistani commercial counselors that Pakistan can export many prod-should be given annual export taructs to Ukraine including pharmaceu- gets and their performance should be analyzed on the basis of achievement of given targets. He said that some commercial counselors should be take products, fruits and emphasized that en from private sector, who can help the embassy of Pakistan in Ukraine in improving exports. Zafar Bakhtashould cooperate in promoting busi- wari, Ameer Hamza, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Magsood Tabish, Ashfaq Chatha, Jam shaid Akhtar Sheikh, Khalid Chaudhry avenues of trade promotion. He said Nasira Ali and others also spoke at the lion and trade balance is highly in fa- that Pakistan needs to boost exports to occasion and gave useful proposals to between Pakistan and Ukraine.



which have tumbled down to below

138 arrested for timber smuggling

PESHAWAR :On the orders of Regional Police Officer Malakand Sajjad Khan, the police arrested 138 accused of trict Police Chiefs of Malakand imber smuggling from across division, 49 were arrested

under 3-MPO, during the last three months Under the supervision of Disdistrict police chiefs across the district and sent 16 to jail from Swat, 13 from Buner, 12 the division, said that timber them. -APP

from Shangla, 29 from Lower Dir and 35 from Upper Dir. Similarly, two each from Swat and Lower Dir district, 11 from Upper Dir and one from at all costs. Lower Chitral were booked under 3-MPO and sent to jail. The police took three trucks, 20 pick-up vans, one ambulance and other vehicles loaded with timber and logs into custody and handed over the same to the Forest network of timber mafias Department, which imposed should be thwarted by put-

mafia should be dealt with iron hands, adding that the natural beauty of Malakand Division would be protected

"Malakand is a tourists' destination due to its beautiful landscape, forests area and natural tourists' resorts. Nobody will be allowed to spoil its beauty", he said. The RPO directed that the Rs 10 million fine on the ac- ting up strict blockades on cused arrested. Sajjad Khan the entry and exit routes while issuing orders to the in the division and by taking strict measures against projects. – DNA



RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) delegation headed by President Saqib Rafiq in a group photo with Station Commander Brig Salman Nazar.-DNA

RCCI delegation meets Station Commander Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) delegation headed by President Saqib Rafig along with Group Leader Sohail Altaf. Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad and Former President Syed Asad Mashadi, Former Vice President Shahraiz Malik attended a meeting with Station Commander Brig Salman Nazar at Station Headquarters Rawalpindi. Imran Gulzar, CEO Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) and Zaki Haider Nagvi CEO, Chaklala Cantonment Board (CCB), among others were also present on

the occasion Matters related to the property tax, encroachment issues, traffic congestion, parking, beautification and | Dr Muqbool Khan, Mumtaz uplifting of cantt areas, harassment by CB staff, rain water recharge, plantation & face-lifting of different projects came under discussion. A joint working group will also get formulated representing RCCI, RCB and CCB to work together on these activities. The working group/committee will look after and share their input, suggestion and regular follow up on different

Traders demand examination of vehicles-laden with export cargo PESHAWAR :Traders and others. Regional Director alists due to multiple check

exports, have urged the wa, Incharge Bacha Khan export cargo and suggested authorities concerned to International Airport Pecarry out one-time check- shawar, Aza Khel Dry Port, ing and examination of vehicles-laden with export cargo Karachi port, and Incharge instead of multiple inspec- Investigation Cell were also ANF for keenly listening tions to avoid huge financial present during the meeting. to issues of the traders losses and bring swiftness During the meeting, Muin the clearing process. The issue was taken up by a the Commander Brig Abdul usinessmen delegation led Manan, senior officials of by Sarhad Chamber of Com- ANF and the participants merce and Industry (SCCI) of the meeting regarding President, Muhammad Ishaq during a meeting with Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Regional Directorate Com- scrutiny and examination of mander, Brig Abdul Manan export-laden cargo consignhere at the regional office ments causing wastage of of the ANF, said a press re- time besides slowing down Brig Abdul Manan said the lease issued on Friday. The of the clearance process. delegation was comprising of President Frontier Cus- huge financial losses were toms Clearing Agents As- being inflicted to the tradsociation (FCCA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ziaul Haq

Sarhadi, former senior vice president of the SCCI Engineer Saad Zahid, senior member Khalid Shehzad. Peshawar Dry Port. Khan, Asif Khan, Mazharul Haq, Syed Ejaz Ali Shah, Khalid Sultan Khawaja and lems faced by the industri- cines.-APP

manufactures, dealing with ANF Khyber Pakhtunkh- ing and examination of the IT Branch, DDR Branch hammad Ishaq informed grievances and reservations of business community regarding multiple checking, Ziaul Hag Sarhadi said that

to facilitating businesses trade and exports at every level. He said that the ers owing to multiple times were available to the busi checking and scrutiny of ness community wheneve export cargo. He demandthey could approach them ed an end to the practice He assured for prompt rere-examination after solving of all those issues clearing of export cargo at of the traders which had fallen in their respective Saad Khan Zahid told the ECC approves domain. meeting about the prob- hike in prices of 20 medi-

a number of proposals for

SCCI President thanked

the senior officials of the

community and giving as

surance for all those issues

which had fallen into juris

dictions and ambit of the

Ishaq appreciated the ANI

for always playing a pivotal

role in facilitating traders

and resolving their issues

on priority grounds and

providing maximum relief

ANF is fully committed

anti-narcotics force.

to the community

their amicable resolution

ECC approves hike in prices of 20 medicines

ISLAMABAD: The Eco- Tariq Mehmood Pasha, sidered another summ nomic Coordination Com- SAPM on Government Ef- of the Ministry of National mittee (ECC) approved the fectiveness Dr. Muhammad Health Services, Regularecommendation of Drug Jehanzeb Khan, Chairman tions and Coordination Pricing Committee (DPC) SECP, Federal Secretaries on Maximum Retail Price for reduction in Maximum and other senior officers (MRP) of Paracetamol Retail Prices (MRPs) of attended the meeting. 20 drugs.Federal Minister The ECC considered a sumfor Finance and Revenue mary of the Ministry of Na- Pricing Committee (DPC) Senator Mohammad Ish- tional Health Services, Reg- for the increase in Maximum aq Dar presided over the ulations and Coordination Retail Price (MRP) of Par

products and approved the recommendation of Drug fixed price of Paracetamol Tablet 500 mg at Rs. 3.32



Stakeholders to jointly promote tobacco control

ment and non-government tional and provincial level stakeholders in an event, cooperation and support signed the first-ever con- to address the global tosensual statement at pro- bacco epidemic effectively, vincial level to promote and holds the commitment to prioritize tobacco control strengthen stronger collabas public health priority orations and coordinated through policy and re- efforts across Government source reforms in Khyber and non-government in-Pakhtunkhwa. According stitutions to lead policy to a press statement issued development, reforms and here on Friday, the event implementation on tobacco

a local NGO Blue Veins in

and Taxation, Narcotics Control Cell said that the Control, Additional Com- Health Department was & Relief and Additional accelerate its implementafrom Peshawar and Hari- area require multi-sectoral pur, National Human Rights response. The commit-Department, Child Welfare stakeholders would be of & Protection Commission, great contribution to provarious private and govern- mote effective laws, policy ment hospitals, academia, actions, and monitoring lawyers and civil society mechanisms for smoking organizations. The signed restrictions and smoke-free statement recognizing the public places."-APP

PESHAWAR: The govern- need for international, na-

was jointly organized by control and support. Further, the stakeholders collaboration with Tobacco pledged to allocate human Control Cell on 2nd Febru- and financial resources for ary 2023. The event was awareness and educationwell attended by the govern- al programs on prevenment officials from Health tion of tobacco use among Department, Directorate young people, cessation General of Health Services, support initiatives, and ev-Elementary and Secondary idence-based researches Education, Higher Educa- on the tobacco. Aimal Shah tion Department, Excise Coordinator of the Tobacco missioner Human Rights making all out efforts to Assistant Commissioners tion to WHO FCTC but the Institutions, Social Welfare ment and engagement of

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Masoom Qamar, Vice President of Gujrat Chamber of Commerce meets Ambassador of Nigeria to Pakistan, Muhammad Bello Abio, at the Nigerian embassy. –DNA

FPCCI for promoting trade ties with Bulgaria

of Federation of Pakistan and have common views from the Bulgaria to take agri-value added products. cement bilateral trade Chamber of Commerce on many international benefit from these op- He said that current bilat- and diplomatic relations and Industry Irfan Iqbal issues. He said that huge portunities, which would eral trade between both of both the countries and Shaikh on Thursday opportunities of coopera- further cement the exist- the countries was needed said that such interaction stressed the need for en- tion and collaboration in ing trade and diplomatic to further enhance by initi- would enhance people hancing bilateral trade a host of economic sec- relations. and investment relations tors were existing, which The FPCCI head urged the riculture sector develop- told that a Joint Econombetween Pakistan and could mutually benefit Bulgaria as the existing the people of both coun- cooperation in the field and establishing business trade volume between the tries. He said that both of agriculture as the large to business contacts. two countries was lower countries had vast scope livestock potential was ex- Besides, he said that than the existing poten- for economic coopera- isting in the country and it multi-billion dollars' Chi- ing trade and investment tial. Talking to the Am- tion, trade and invest- was ranked among the top na-Pakistan Economic between both the counbassador of Bulgaria to ment development. He milk-producing countries, Corridor Project was tries. The ambassador Pakistan Irena Gancheva, said that many sectors adding that Bulgaria has also offering investment also stressed the need who visited FPCCI here, of national economy in- the world's best expertise opportunities and called to diversify the trade and Irfan Iqbal said that both cluding minerals, mining, in yogurt production and the Bulgarian investors to investment cooperation the countries were enjoy- oil and gas exploration, collaboration in the field take the benefit from it. in areas of agriculture ing cordial trade and dip- tourism, agriculture and of agriculture and dairy Speaking on the occasion, cooperation dairy devel-

ISLAMABAD: President were based over 57 years called upon the investors ther promote the output of ed her resolve to further

lomatic relations, which energy generations and development would fur- the ambassador reiterat- opment.-APP

ating joint ventures in ag- to people contact. She need to enhance bilateral ment, education, tourism ic Commission of both countries was also established in 2015 to explore opportunities for enhanc-



National Days and Armed **Forces Days**

FEBRUARY Feb 04 / Sri Lanka National Day

Feb 06 / New Zealand National Day Feb 06 / Uganda

Defece Forces Day Feb 11 / DPR Korea National Day Feb 16 / Lithuania National Day

Feb 18 / Gambia National Day Feb 19 / Nepal National **Democracy Day** Feb 23 / Brunei

National Day Feb 23 / Guyana National Day

Feb 23 / Russian Federation National Army Day Feb 23 / Tajikistan Armed Forces Day

Feb 25 / Kuwait National Day

Feb 27 / Dominicar Republic Independence Day



Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel....111 133 133 Marriott......051- 28261210334-5421812





Emergency

Rescue (Police) Bomb Disposal... Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16 Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122 Motorway Police...9266044 Motorway Police.9270601-20 Women Police Stations9222596 Islamabad...

Rawalpindi......9270601-20 Enavir

Edhi Ambulance.

PIA Flight Info... ...114 PIA Cargo... ...9280979 Railway Inquiry.....117 Railway Exchange9270831-5 WASA Rawalpindi..5555489 .9281092



Hospitals

ин	
ИН	561116
Cantt Hospital.	9270907-11
)HQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Ioly Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
olyclinic	9218300-09
hifa International 4603666	

Sho Ti

Departments

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
ТМА	5770886
Cantonment B	oard 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480



Commemorative shields were also presented to the guests at the end of the ceremony

BEMA

RF

DNA

SLAMABAD : Inter national Development and Relief Foundation (IDRF) will distribute relief cheque to 97 people affected by the flood The event was held at Te hsil Matta Chinar Marki of Swat The deserving people were helped with the support of "The BC Muslim Association" PresidentThe BC Muslim Association Mu hammad Assad Gondal Development ,Human expert Sajid Hussain Tanoli, Ex MPA Sved Jahfer Shah, bacha said ,SP Khankhail,and other political and social per sonalities participated in the event. The honored guests along with Coun-Khan distributed relief

Head(IDRF) Yasir

sion. International Devel- activities future palan- Iafar Shah explained said that financial assisopment and Relief Foun- ning. Bacha Syed praised the needs and problems tance to the flood victims dation Country Head the actions of the IDRF of the area. In the cere- was done as a duty, IFRD Commemorative shields Yasir Khan also gave a and paid tribute to the mony, 97 flood victims, cheque to the deserving multimedia briefing on financial support of the including women, were

People Helping Peop

people . On this occa- the foundation's, relief flood victims. while Syed benefited. Yasir Khan

09 Feb 2023

With financial help, the

BS C

priority is given to helping severely affected families. is engaged in its welfare were also presented to the works across Pakistan. guests at the end of the

Govt to train over 2,800 olive farmers

victims will be able to

fulfill their needs of their

Association Presi-

own accord. The BC Mus-

dent Muhammad Assad

Gondalalso addressed on

this occasion and praised

the efforts of Yagoob-

Shah,HeHighlighted the

work of the association

to bring religious change

n people's lives and ful-

ill their economic needs.

SPkhankhail praised the

remarkable work of IDRF

and The BC Muslim Asso-

ciation. SaiidTanoli hosted

the program in an excel-

lent manner It should be

noted that the Internation-

al Development and Relief

Foundation is continuing

its relief activities in the

lood-affected areas and

ISLAMABAD: The government has set a target to impart training to over 2,800 olive farmers and stakeholders during the tree plantation campaign for the current season for encouraging and developing olive farming in potential areas across the country. "The aim of the initiative is to ensure the production of nutrient-filled hygienic edible oil by enhancing domestic output as well as reduce the reliance on the imported commodity, which is putting pressure on foreign exchange reserves," aid Dr Hassan Tariq, National Project Director Olive Cultivation Program in National Agriculture Research Center. Talking to APP here on Friday, he said that during the current spring tree plantation drive about 47 training programmes would be organised in different areas to familiarise farmers with international best practices for olive cultivation. Besides, the farmers would be trained on orchard management, and value addition of the olive to en-

hance their farm income, whereas they would also be introduced to the latest marketing techniques, labelling and branding, he added. Meanwhile, a national olive reference lab was also established for quality testing to ensure the safety and quality of the locally produced products including olive oil and other value-added products that would help to ensure a proper rate of return to growers.-APP

Senator Mushtaq grills new cabinet members

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan from Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) on Friday grilled the new cabinet members for remaining absent from the Senate proceedings and demanded the Chairman Senate to write to the Prime Minister to take notice of their negligence.

While taking to the House, the JIP Senator in supplementary query during the question hour told the Upper House members and the Chairman that some five new ministers were included in the federal cabinet swelling it upto 88 members. Senator Mushtaq said, "It will take till March for the cabinet to score a century. The Prime Minister would appoint a special minister to keep count of his cabinet ministers. It's the biggest cabinet in the world." The Senator regretted that the newly appointed ministers were unfamiliar to him and other members of the House. "We don't even know them. None of the minister added to the cabinet recently have appeared in the Senate Sessions," he added. Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani directed the Secretary of the Senate Secretariat to write a note to the Prime Minister to inform that his ministers did not attend the Senate meeting. Referring to his question, he said the Guns and Country Club (GCC) audit comprised of 88 paras which should be briefed in detail since its inception in 2018 till 2022. On the question of Senator Bahramand Khan Tung on educational institutions, Senator Mushtaq said the reply to his questions were incomplete. "The universities' fees are high and they are facing financial crisis. The Minister of State for Law should inform that what plan does government has to provide quality education to poor masses on merit and why universities are in financial crisis?" he added.-APP

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Germany Alfred Grannas enjoying Dal Channa and Channay at a roadside dhaba. His picture has been released in connection with the Wrold Pulses Day observed on Friday. -DNA

MEFP from IMF termed significant development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said after ten days of difficult negotiations with the IMF, obtaining the Memorandum of Economic and Fiscal Policies (MEFP) is an important development. After the return of the IMF delegation, further negotiations will continue online

eliminate circular debt, after tution has appreciated Prime achieve 100 percent recovery which a staff-level agreement Minister Shehbaz Sharif's de- of dues in the energy sector, would be possible. Mian Zahid termination to take tough deci- and to increase the energy Hussain said that the staff-lev- sions to improve the economy. el agreement will be subject to Mian Zahid Hussain said that the approval of the IMF board the IMF asked Pakistan to in- implementation of these reafter which Pakistan will qual crease its revenue, strengthen forms are necessary to ensure ify for the loan installment of its financial position, increase 1.2 billion dollars paving way electricity and gas prices, hike for loans from other sources. interest rates, reduce untar-Talking to the business com- geted subsidies, and help vul- in their implementation is not munity, the veteran business nerable and flood-affected peo- in Pakistan's interest. Pakileader said that progress has ple. IMF has also demanded stan's real interest is not only been seen in the negotiations an increase in social security, in obtaining credit but in movbetween Pakistan and the phasing out the shortage of ing the economy in the right IMF but the international or- foreign exchange reserves and direction. The implementation ganization has described the allowing the exchange rate to of these reforms will lead to a while Pakistan will have to im- government's steps so far as be determined by the market, sharp rise in inflation, which pose new taxes worth Rs170 insufficient for the staff-level and lifting the ban on imports. will allow targeted subsidies

the electricity and gas sectors of subsequent steps have not to stop the increase in the and come up with a plan to been accepted but the insti- circular debt and eliminate it, billion, introduce reforms in agreement. The assurances The organization also wants for low-income groups.

supply. Mian Zahid Hussain said that timely and decisive sustainable development. IMF's demands are tough bu the need of the hour and delay





NAB had arrested the accused Tanvir Ahmad and Bilal Tanvir for committing fraud with the citizens in FIzaya Housing Scheme Karachi. The accused had obtained bail on the assurance of returning the amount they had grabbed from the citizens through fraud. NAB has challenged in the SC the bail granted to the accused.

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court (SC) has directed NAB to bring to open the real name of the people who are in olved in Fizaya Housing Scheme Fraud. The court gave this order during the hearing of NAB appeals against e acquittal of the accused who are involved in Fizaya Housing Scheme Karachi fraud. A 3-mmeber bench of presided over by the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial took up the case for hearing Friday. ring the hearing of the case Justice Athar Minallah inquired did NAB take action against Pakistan Air Force (PAF) on the fraud in Fizaya Housing Scheme. How can PAF become involved in real state business. PAF cannot take part in real state business as per constitution

The prime accused was some one else. How the NAB arrested those who had made payments. The CJP remarked this is correct that the element of legal capability of PAF is included in this case. If PAF is prime accused in this case then this ved in the husiness NAB should bring a and the facts of the case. NAB prosecutor took the plea Sindh High Court (SHC) has acquitted the accused persons in Fizaya Housing Scheme fraud without security. The court adjourned the hearing of the case for indefinite period. NAB had arrested the accused Tanvir Ahmad and Bilal Tanvir for committing fraud with the citizens in FIzaya Housing Scheme Karachi. The accused had obtained bail on the assurance of returning the amount they had grabbed from the citizens through fraud. NAB has challenged in the SC the bail granted to the accused. - Online



Motorway police hit target 'zero crashes

LAMABAD: The Nationa ghways and Motorway Po e (NHMP) have achieved remarkable achievement by successfully implement ng their zero-accident poli cy during the foggy weather of 2022-23.

The use of modern techno ogy and timely response to control accidents were ke factors in ensuring the safe travel of passengers, said a statement issued by an NHMP spokesperson here on Friday

Over the past 12 years, 23 pileup accidents have of curred on the motorways during heavy fog. In the last two years, there were 9 accidents resulting in the loss of 29 lives and 146 peo ple being injured.

The financial loss these accidents exceede one crore rupees and 176 vehicles were damaged. The NHMP under the

guidance of IG Khalio Mahmood, conducted a de tailed observation of the various factors contributing t accidents during foggy con ditions. The use of advanced thermal cameras allowed the safe extraction of vehicles stuck in the fog.-APP

Bahaar Rung Women Gala starts today

ISLAMABAD: Lets' Grow Together – a communit f entrepreneurs will hold grand event of Bahaar Rung - Islamabad Womer Gala 2023 here on Febru ary 11 to promote home based women workers and artisans at f-9 Park

The two-day gala is being or ganized for the fourth time featuring over 150 stalls of made in Pakistan home made products by wome entrepreneurs including variety of lifestyle exhibits like fashion products, inte rior decor products furni ture, resin art, painting garments and jewelry etc while some stalls are als given to children to incu cate the spirit of entrepre neurship among the young minds and engage them in healthy activities.-APP

Police to improve data sharing mechanism to curb crime

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad po lice have decided to improve data sharing mechanism among all divisions in order to effectively curb crime and activities of anti-social elements.

The decision to this effect was made in a meeting presided over by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and attended among others by the CPO Operations, SSP Operations, AIGs, all zonal DPOs, SDPOs and SHOs. The meeting decided to use modern technical resource es to further improve the investigation, coordination and data sharing strategy at the division level. The IGH directed all police officials to maintain high vigilance in the city to eradicate crime and ensure an effective security and crackdown against drug traffickers and land grabbers. The IGP reviewed the perfor mance of the police stations and questioned every officer separately.-APP

04

TWIN CITIES

IslamabadPOST Saturday, February 11, 2023

Briefs Court extends **Imran Khan's** bail till Feb 27 ISLAMABAD: A local cour

on Friday extended the pre-arrest bail of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) head Imran Khan till February 27 and sought a written state ment in an FIR regarding the protest after the decision of ECP in toshakhana case and attack on PML-N's leader Mohsin Shahnawaz Raniha.

Additional District and Session Judge Zafar Iqbal heard the case against Imran Khan. Dr. Baber Awan submitted the medical report of Imran Khan and requested the judge to grant him a one-time exemption from attendance.

The court noted that the applicant had stated that still he would take 20 to 25 days to recover from in juries. He said that Imran Khan was not allowed by the doctors to travel. Mohsin Shahnawaz Ran-

jha said that PTI's leader used to talk about justice but on the other hand, he was not willing to appear before the police. If this was the situation then the court should form a medical board of PIMS as h was not sure if the plaster would be opened in the next six months, he said. He said that this plaster was only for the court as the other jobs were being done openly. He said that the doctors of PIMS hospital could examine the health of the PTI chief at

witnessed heated remarks between Dr. Baber Awan and Mr. Ranjha. Mohsin Ranjha said that Imran Khan should have presented himself for arrest in line with his announced drive to court ar rest but he was requesting an extension in bail. -APP

his home. The court also

Marriyum expresses grief over demise of Amjad Islam Amjad

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of famous poet, writer and dramatist Amjad Islam Amjad. "A great person who represented the rights and sentiments of the people has left the world today," she said in a condolence message, praying to Allah Almighty for eternal peace of the departed soul and grant of courage to members of the bereaved family to bear this loss with equanimity. She said the deceased gave his life's 50 years to Urdu literature and left the "precious asset" (contribution to Urdu literature) for the nation, recalling a famous stanza from his poetry "Woh Terav Naseeb Ki Barashein Kissi Aur Chatt Par Baras Gaein," remembered by a generation. Marriyum Aurangzeb also recalled one of his famous dramas 'Waris' terming it a 'masterpiece.' The minister said the men itorious services rendered by Amjad Islam Amjad in the 'literary world' would long be remembered.-APP

No shortage of petrol in

ICT: DC ISLAMABAD:Deputy oner Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration Nawaz Memon on Fri-APP here on Friday, Irfan Nawaz Memon said, "The adequate reserves of petrol and diesel are available in all petrol pumps under the jurisdiction o ICT administration." "The administration has received no complaint of

petrol shortage in any area." he added. He highlighted that some pumps have less stock

col (Lethrar road), ZIC Svedan.

He informed that ICT adthree fuel stations and arrested three violators. station on corrupt practices, he said.-APP



ISLAMABAD : People offer absentia funeral prayer for Turkey and Syria earthquake victims at Faisal Mosque in Federal Capital. The 7.8-magnitude quake struck early February 6 near the Turkish-Syrian border, and by Friday morning the death toll in both countries topped 21,000. -Online

Ahsan for release of funds under Knowledge Corridor

The meeting was attended by officials of HEC, Finance Division and other stakeholders

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister scholars will enroll in American for Planning, Development and universities over the next ten Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal years as the government of Pahas directed the Finance Division kistan seeks to train its teaching to immediately release funds un- resources in identified subject der the US-Pakistan Knowledge areas. Corridor project to solve the prob- The key objectives of this initialems of Pakistani students living tive were to increase the number in the United States so that they and standard of faculty in Higher can complete their education at the earliest.

The US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor Scholarship Program was higher education institutions by launched in 2015 by Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Igbal to promote cooperation in the field The federal minister while reviewof education between the two ing the progress of the project countries under Vision 2025. Under the plan, 10,000 Pakistani vision to immediately ensure the

Education Institutions (HEI's), enhance the research and academic capacity of Pakistan's providing trained manpower to nprove the quality of teaching. yesterday directed the finance di-



release of the funds given under the scholarship to these students so that there is no disruption in the studies of these students. The meeting was attended by officials of HEC, Finance Division and oth-

On this occasion, the Federal Minister said that these students are

asset of the country and despite the financial difficulties, the government will continue to patronountry is going through an ecoomic crisis He said that this US-Pakistan

Knowledge Corridor was organlents can get access to the best education at the top universities of America and they can apply this knowledge in their country. During the meeting, while giving a detailed briefing about the pro-

awarded scholarships in various categories including Arts and Humanities, Design and Media, Social Sciences, Engineering, Basic Sciences, Medical and Allied ize them fully even though the Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary Sciences, Computer Sciences, Emerging Technologies, Water Resources and Energy. ED HEC further informed ized in 2015 so that Pakistani stu- the meeting that about 2,800 applications have been received for GRE-General training in 2023 and 35 GRE-General training sessions have been conducted including 10 virtual sessions and a total of

that so far 410 students have been

1,536 participants have benefited ject. Executive Director HEC told from the training.

CPEC created 192,000 jobs, 809km of highway

the modernization of Paki-

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As a megaproject with a cumulative investment of \$ 65 billion in 2022, the CPEC has created 192,000 jobs, 6,000MW power supply, 809km of highway, and 886km of nission line, which laid a solid foundation for Pakistan's socio-economic development

This was stated by Rana Ihsan Afzal khan, Coordinator to Prime Minster of Pakistan on Commerce and Industry, in an interview with China Economic Net (CEN). Citing an example road project under



nomic Corridor, Rana said, "it used to take almost 24 hours to travel from Islamanomic activities in the cities bad to Gilgit Baltistan. along the road. As soon as the CPEC came Meanwhile, the Orange was improved with trave-

ling time shortened by half, we saw that all of a sudden there was a boom of tour-stan's transport system. ism and economic growth Motorways are an impor-

tant part of Pakistan's According to the official "National Trade Corridor website of the CPEC Au- Project" and CPEC, which aims to link its three Arabithority, five transport projects under the CPEC have an Sea ports (Karachi Port, been completed, and among Port Bin Qasim and Gwathem, three are motorway dar Port) to the rest of the projects, including KKH country through its nationhase II, Multan-Sukkur al highways and motorways Motorway(M5), and Hakla network and further north D.I Khan Motorway, adding with Afghanistan, Central 809 km to the road network Asia and China. of Pakistan and driving eco-"The network of roads and

Gwadar Port have been established. Now we are moving towards the Gwadar in and the road network Line Metro train and the new international airport Cross Border Optical Fiber and the ML-1 railway pro-Cable lay the foundation for ject, which will further improve logistics, the speed of trading, and people-to-people contact, " Rana stated.

Senate passes CDA (Amendment) Bill

hadat Awan presented the bill on behalf of the Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah Khan on the floor of upper house of parliament. According to the statement of objects and reasons, the brief facts leading to amendment in CDA Ordinance, 1960 are that the Islamabad High Court (IHC) in its udgment dated December 29, 2017 in writ petition number 348/2016 set aside the notification for appointment of Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad Mayor Sheikh Anser Aziz, as Member of CDA Board with additional functions of CDA chairman. The IHC further directed the federal government to initiate the process for selection of an eligible person to

be appointed as Member of the Board of the civic authority for the fixed term which has been specified under Section 6(3) of the Ordinance of 1960 and appoint a chairman for a fixed period of five years from amongst the members within 45 days from the date of announcement of the judgment. In order to elaborate the procedure for appointment of CDA chairman/members, it was decided to amend the relevant sections of the CDA Ordinance, 1960 accordingly. The president promulgated CDA (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018 on

January 10, 2018 for a period of 120 days which was further extended for another period of 120 days with effect from May 10, 2018 till September 06, 2018.-APP

PNCA remembers Sadequain on 36th death anniversary

ISLAMABAD: In remembrance of legendary Sadeqauin, the Visual Arts Division of Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) held an exhibition of Sadequain's work followed by a documentary screening here on Friday. The documentary, 'Raaz-e-fun', was screened in collaboration with Sadequain Foundation USA to commemorate the 36th death anniversary of the legendary artist. The show, organised to pay tribute to the life and artworks of Sadequain, contained paintings on display that are from National Art Gallery's permanent collection. The artist during his lifetime had gifted more than 100 artworks to the PNCA. The renowned artist has also been the subject of numerous documentaries in the past by institutions such as Irfan PTV's 13-episode serial titled 'Mojiza-eFun', PNCA, GEO TV, and others, but Raaz-e-Fun surpasses all its predecessors in its day said that there was tone and tenor. The 30-minute Film was written, narrated, and no shortage of fuel, and directed by acclaimed award-winning writer and director Waseem people should avoid cre- Amrohavi. He takes the viewer on a blissful odyssey traversing ating panic. Talking to Sadequain's initial forays into calligraphy and poetry at a young age, then later in life focusing on painting.-



Turkiye embassy to condole deaths of earthquake victims. -DNA

Translating threat into opportunity world decided to boycottIran and and progressive scientific and in- ities and the lack of aids such as

FAIZA HUSSAINI

tion at the different intervals and and financing the imposing regime of petrol including Has- in the various areas by the impe- of the dictator Sadam Hossain. them being the epic of translating in Iran. During the Iran-Iraq war, war, most of the countries of the supported, ended up in a pioneer unavailability of the medical facil- Iranian vaccine called CovIran Joyously One Day.

to avoid providing any help and assistance to the newly independ-Due to the limitations and sanc- ent nation of Iran raided by Iraq, tions inflicted on the Iranian na- while at the same time supporting rialists, the nation has learnt how This epic, along with the concept (Tramri chowk), Shell to make its way through the cri- of self-sufficiency, self-esteem and clear energy, but also to hold back pumps at F-7, Embas- sis by experience and endeavor. the economy of resilience, has the whole train of the prosperity sy Road, I-8 and Jhangi The role of the concepts has here contributed to lots ofscientific, been of significant benefit, one of industrial and sport achievements ministration also sealed the threats into opportunity. This the defense industries initiated mindset has contributed to amaz- in Iran, engaged to manufacture ing achievements and progresses whatever needed at the front and two years agowhen the world was medical facility for the country, tory of the Islamic Revolution The teams also sealed during the past decades in Iran. in the back, varying from logistics struggling with COVID-19, tens of Iran managed not only to produce, of Iran. Now, Iran regards any seven illegal LPG filling The necessity to develop and to weaponry and maintenance.

engine of the country in the numore progress was made and the

true about the inalienable right of to the inhumane sanctions.On Iran to cherish the peaceful atom- that time. Iran was even deprived While sanctions were meant not aids from all over the world under only to halt the scientific progress the pretext of the sanctions and pressures imposed by the USA. However, enjoying remarkable of the nation. However, the more ing to adequate scientific efficacy the God Almighty, the Iranian sciless dependent the country was entists and industrialists managed

Barekat, was invented by the Iradustrial dynamism. The same is vaccine. The main reason was due nian scientists and researchers in order to reverse the effects of the sanctions and to translate the polic energy science and industry. of receiving the simplest medical icy of self-sufficiency and the epic of benefiting from the threats into practice. This makes it the first locally and regionally developed COVID-19 vaccine to be approved determination in the youth, own- in the Middle East and being the | F- 8/3 Feeders, Rawalpindi single first one Islamic vaccine in sanctions were imposed, the and having faith in the mercy of the world. The examples of the epic of "Translating the Threats into Opportunity"are galore in becoming. Moreover, Just about to produce whatever needed as a the last four decades of the histhousands of valuable lives were but also to export and donate the restriction and sanction as a stick to such mindset emerged The threat of the imposed war dolorously claimed in Iran, just equipments to the other coun- way out from the dependency. Kaliam, Karnab Kaswal, Nis initially when during the Iran-Iraq and the concern of being left un- because of the inaccessibility and tries. Meanwhile, the indigenous Resilience Costs, But It Pays han Haider,-APP

earthquake victims SLAMABAD: The Asso iation of Private Sector niversities of Pakistan (APSUP) and the Pakistan Association of Private Med ical & Dental Institutions (PAMI) have urged all the private sector universities

help out the victims of

levastating earthquakes in south-eastern Türkiye and north-western Svria. The devastating earth uakes in Türkiye and Syr have resulted in endless uffering and angst with the death toll at 8,764 people at the time of writing. With over 41,600 people suffer ing from non-fatal injuries, over 5,700 structures reduced to rubble, and over 13 million people affected in total so far; this is the worst natural tragedy to hit the region in recent history. The APSUP and PAMI had a humble tradition of stand ing with our brothers and sisters in need, be it here in Pakistan or in our brotherly Muslim countries anywhere in the world with PKR 477.6 llion contributed to such noble causes thus far. Talking to APP, APSUP Ex-ecutive Director Murtaza Noor said that both the or ganisations have collective ly launched the Mission Essar Earthquake Relief Fund for Türkiye and Syria to help

less individuals and families who have lost their loved ones, their homes, and their livelihoods. "Millions remain in dire need of food, shelter medical care, and, above all an arm around their should ders.-APP

ease the suffering of count

ECP bans postings, transfers

ISLAMABAD: The Election

sion of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday banned postings, transfers of all government officials, and announcement of development schemes in 33 con stituencies where bye-elec tions were scheduled to be held on March 16. The ECP notification directed the government and authorities not to post or transfer any officer in the districts, where the schedule for sued on January 27, 2023 till the publication of names of returned candidates. The election watchdog also banned announcing development schemes by government functionaries or elected representatives including a local government functionary for the constituency where the schedule of elections has been announced. The afore mentioned 33 constituen cies where ban is imposed include: NA-04 Swat, NA-17 Haripur, NA-18 Swabi, NA-25 and NA-26 Nowshera NA-32 Kohat, NA-38 Dera Ismail Khan, NA-43 Khyber, NA-52, 53, and NA-54 Is lamabad, NA-57, 59, 60, 62 and NA-63 Rawalpindi, NA-

67 Jhelum, NA-97 Bhakkar, NA-126 and NA-130 Lahore NA-155 and NA-156 Multan, NA-191 Dera Ghazi Khan NA-241, 242, 243, 244, 247, 250, 252, 254, and NA-256 Karachi and NA-265 Quetta.**–APP**

ESCO notifies 2-day power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued nower suspension pro ramme for Saturday and inday for various areas f its region due to necesary maintenance and rou ine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Saturday from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM Islamabad Circle, Islamabad Club-1, Filtration Plant, G-6, G-8/2, Zia Mas jid, Khanna Dack, Farash Town, Scheme-2, Madina Market, PTN, Fazal Ghimal, SES, Warid Telecom Independent 2&3. I-10/3. Dargah, Mera Jaffar, T&T, Pindi Point, Bahrain, Kot Sattian, Balawara, Terit Cantt Circle Mall Road Tipu Road, Chaklala, River Garden, Mehboob Shaheed Gulistan Colony, Lalkarti, Chontra, Hayal, UC Lakhan, Chongi No. 22. Rawat

Sagari, Lahtrar-1, Doberan

Nara Matoor, Hamid Jhangi,

05

US needs to explain Nord Stream blowup

hat would happen if someone attacks a major civilian infra-structure? That depends. If one attacks a US pipeline, he will be hunted to every corner of the Earth. If anyone else destroys Stream supplying natural gas to the US' allies he will be called a terrorist. But now that the Seymour Hersh report points to the US as the suspect of Nord Stream pipeline blow, they simply deny it. While it takes only a piece of A4 paper for the White House to deny the Hersh report, the whole world must remember how the same White House had denied intelligence failure in Vietnam, Guantanamo Bay torture, and even taken a box of white powder as "evidence" for its invasion of Iraq. Their former secretary of state Mike Pompeo even had a famous quote "We lied, we cheated, we stole", which adds to the world's lack of trust to the power center of the world's only superpower. It wouldn't surprise anybody if Hersh's report is true. In order to drag its European allies deeper into the Russia-Ukrainian military conflict, the US had already emptied its taxpayers' pockets, sending M1 Abrams to Ukraine and taking all measures possible in its toolbox. US mainstream media outlets have always been fond of digging secrets with much more resources than Hersh, but have remained silent on the issue this time. Which fact makes one further doubt that Washington has mobilized all its power to keep some secret. If the White House wants the global audiences to believe in its denial of the detailed Hersh report, better show some sincerity by explaining the whole thing at least in equal details. Don't forget that to attack a major civilian infrastructure as a natural gas pipeline amounts to suspicion of state terrorism. The Pentagon has also issued a statement saying that "the United States was not involved in the Nord Stream explosion". But Biden declared on Feb 7 last year that there would no longer be a Nord Stream 2 if Russian troops or tanks crossed the border into Ukraine - "We will bring an end to it." And, as was noted at the time, it was only the US that had anything to really gain from blowing up the pipelines, despite some Western officials trying to point the finger of blame at Russia. Not surprisingly, Russia, which has "repeatedly expressed" its belief that the US and NATO were responsible for the explosions, has called for an international investigation. While cautioning about treating the article as the primary source, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said it was "unfair" to ignore an article that was "remarkable for the depth of analysis" and the world must find out the truth about the act of sabotage as it set a "very dangerous precedent: if someone did it once they can do it again anywhere in the world". If the US wants the world to believe its denial that it was the culprit, it should offer full assistance to a transparent and independent international probe into the incident.



Saturday, February 11, 2023

Arms for Ukraine: a battlefield race against time

R ussia is preparing for a long war in Ukraine. Recent reports put the number of Russian troops in Ukraine at about 320,000. They are not there to look at cathedrals. They are there to kill Ukrain ians and take territory. Vladimir Putin wants to win the war. He is demanding "sweeping advances". At the very least he wants to control the Donbas. There is absolutely no evidence that Russia is interested in any form of settlement to the conflict that will carry what the military expert Prof Lawrence Freedman calls "a whiff of defeat". Volody myr Zelenskiy's visit to western Europe this week should be understood in that light. The Ukrainian president - who visited London, Paris and Brussels in quick succession - knows that the Russians are not interest ed in peace negotiations. What is more, he knows that western European and US leaders now know it too. The logic of this recognition is that the western states have no alternative but to arm Ukraine to win some battles. Mr Zelenskiy's trip to the west, like his trip to Washington at the end of last year, is designed to secure the weaponry which can make that possible. It can be tempting to suppose the trip is exclusively focused on securing fighter planes. That was the message in Mr Zelenskiy's call in London to "give us wings", and in Boris Johnson's intervention in similar terms, which was simply designed to embarrass Rishi Sunak. The Ukrainian president repeated the call in his speech to the European parliament on Thursday. Mr Zelenskiy would certainly welcome more jet fighters. But he knows that the western military powers remain cautious about committing their jets, partly because they do not want to offer an excuse for Russia to trigger nuclear escalation and also because they do not want to become involved in strikes into Russian territory. There are also logistical and support reasons why fighter planes are not going to be sent to the frontline any time soon. Nevertheless, as Mr Sunak said on Wednesday, the issue is now on the table. Although the EU summit on Thursday was not specifically about weapons pledges to Ukraine, the weeks since Ramstein have seen even more commitments and serious momentum. On Tuesday, the German, Danish and Dutch defence minis ters announced they would provide Ukraine with at least 100 refurbished Leopard battle tanks. More seem likely to follow, perhaps including Challengers from the UK. Ukrainian soldiers are being trained to use them. In January, Mr Zelenskiy asked for 300 tanks. He is getting closer to securing them. The worry – and it is a real one – is that Russia will be ready to advance, albeit also ready to take heavy losses, at the month's end, before Ukraine is ready to launch its enhanced battle formations. It is a race against time, which is why Mr Zelenskiy has been at his most persuasive and urgent this week in pressing for the support he demands

World must quickly find a way to end the Ukraine war

Mohamed Chebaro

Moscow looks unable to achieve its maximalist aim of annexing Ukraine or influencing a regime change at its doorstep in the face of alleged eastward NATO expansion. The Ukrainians, despite the substantial support they have received, will not be able to liberate all the territories occupied since Feb. 24, 2022, or those seized in 2014. All evidence, therefore, continues to point to the fact that attrition is likely to remain the name of the

game in Ukraine for the foreseeable future, with no one likely to emerge victorious in 2023 – short of course of an accident

world finds itself in.

imalist aim of annexing Ukraine or influ- refraining from actively pushing for peace, world order that was fought for and conencing a regime change at its doorstep even though a protracted war would likely ceived during and after the Second World in the face of alleged eastward NATO ex- negatively impact their economic growth. War. Its conclusion cannot be allowed to pansion. The Ukrainians, despite the sub- Russia's invasion has descended into a see the demise of that order at this juncstantial support they have received, will zero-sum game and a guessing game to tion of history, when humanity is facing not be able to liberate all the territories counter the fluid strategy of the oppo- threats of a chaotic transition induced occupied since Feb. 24, 2022, or those nent. It is clear that the West has crossed by the new digital age, overseen by a seized in 2014. All evidence, therefore, a new threshold in its assessment of the short-termist global leadership that is still continues to point to the fact that attrition war, scaling up its weapons deliveries to grappling with climate change, shrinking is likely to remain the name of the game Kyiv in terms of numbers and strategic resources and wider gaps between the in Ukraine for the foreseeable future, quality, which modern theaters of war haves and have-nots. All of this comes at a with no one likely to emerge victorious in have not seen used before. This demon- time of unparalleled geopolitical divisions 2023 - short of course of an accident or a strates the stakes at play in the game of and a world that is, more than ever, lackmiracle that could spur all parties back to denying Russia a victory that could fur- ing in trust and solidarity to uphold the the negotiation table.

invasion of Ukraine has been met by a A year on, it is obvious that Russia has deliver advanced battle tanks, air defense series of unexpected obstacles that have lost out and, in comparison, Ukraine has shields and other hardware to Ukraine. exposed Russia's limited power and high-lighted once again how a small force with the right tactical weapons, intelligence also outperformed all expectations and that their support to Ukraine and a determined human asset can blunt remained united in the pursuit of its goal would falter in the face of energy security the efforts of one of the largest armies in of supporting Ukraine with enough "de- disruptions, the increased cost of living the world. As political and diplomatic ef- fensive" weapons to frustrate Moscow's and economic volatility. forts continue to be elusive, the Russian advances. At the same time, the West is All the indications coming from the Krempreparations for a late winter offensive denying the Ukrainians the assault capa- lin point to the intention of achieving that would metamorphose into an all-out bilities to turn the table on the Russians all prewar goals, unless something drasspring push to punch through Ukrainian in the hope of keeping a ramp open for the defenses are likely to yield only limited re-Kremlin to walk down in the future. Mean-the tic happens. The Ukrainian leadership, meanwhile, is intent on winning back at sults, according to most military experts, while, global players like China and India least what it has lost since February 2022 further highlighting the conundrum the have reaped some short-term benefits as the only way to prevent any future Rusthrough their access to cheaper Russian sian adventures. Another aspect of this Moscow looks unable to achieve its max- energy, but they have stayed on the fence, war is that it has constantly tested the ther encroach on democracy, liberty and common good. The Global North, like the Losses in military terms have been co- Western freedoms and way of life. Rus- Global South, has a common interest in lossal for the Russians, as well as for the sia's illegal annexation of four partially quickly bringing this conflict to an end. Ukrainians, who have also suffered sub- occupied regions of Ukraine last October, stantial civilian losses and infrastructure along with the constant posturing and

kraine and prevent the country from allegedly seeking further ties with the EU and NATO. However, the damage, which, given Kyiv's defensive posture, is likely to continue as the con-flict risks becoming frozen. nuclear threats, have served to persuade hesitant nations in the West, such as Ger-many, to open their storage facilities and Courtesy: Arab News

US foreign policy reduced to an afterthought

Marwan Bishara

But that has proven easier said than done, as Washington has channelled billions of dollars to Ukraine to fight a war that may last years amid warnings from populist Republicans about high inflation, the high cost of living, and high national debt. Hence the president, who seems keen on pursuing a second term, dialled down the costly global bravado in his speech and instead focused on "made in America" growth and prosperity. His call on Congress to tax billionaires and big

upbeat. It was long on domestic affairs and short on foreign policy. It skimmed through the challenges posed by Russia and China and skipped the rest of the world altogether. It is a first for a US president to reduce the United States' global role to an afterthought, no less a president who considers himself an authority on foreign policy, or for a commander-in-chief, who has spent so much time, effort and political capital confronting Russia in Ukraine and containing China in Asia. This, therefore, begs the question: Why has Biden chosen to ignore entire continents and countless hot spots where America is directly involved? According to one theory, Americans are not terribly interested in the rest of the world and foreign policy is an unaffordable luxury at a time of economic hardships and culture wars. Even the elites with greater overseas interests realise that costly investment in foreign policy is becoming a hard sell for the public in the absence of direct national security threats. Biden understands that. which is why when he first took office, he vowed to end the "forever wars" and promised a "foreign policy for the middle class" - one that serves Americans at large.

But that has proven easier said than done, as Washington has channelled billions of dollars to Ukraine to fight a war that may last years amid warnings from populist Republicans about high inflation, the high cost of living, and high national debt. Hence the president, who en. But that's hardly a good thing; in fact, it's to shape it, police it, and lead it. It is not. seems keen on pursuing a second term, dialled down the costly global bravado in his speech

🔁 S President Joe Biden's State of the Un- and instead focused on "made in America" the centre of his foreign policy, has ignored US er the costs of drugs – aligning him with the fist, while the region teeters under violent sec-"progressive left" led by Senator Bernie Sand- tarian and authoritarian regimes. ers – may prove more popular among working Washington cannot in good conscience claim and middle-class families than, say, restoring to confront Russia and China in the name of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

> is not much to celebrate in US foreign policy, alism and dictatorship in the Middle East or which is why the president decided to skip the elsewhere. subject altogether. The two theories are not mutually exclusive.Biden may have embraced Senator Sanders' prescriptions on the eco- first visited the Middle East in 1973, the oldnomic malaise, but do not expect him to take er President Biden seems to view the region his approach on foreign policy, no less in the through the same prisms he did back then: Middle East, where the US has failed misera- Israel, oil, and the Cold War with Moscow. bly. And disgracefully.

> The president rejects Sanders's stance on the Israeli occupation and the racism of its prime as tragedy, the second time as farce. It is minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Worse, he em- indeed laughable that despite 50 years of braces the populist right-wing premier as his costly strategic, diplomatic and military inbest friend, and continues to support his gov- terventions, the US is back to square one, ernment of fascists and fanatics. But Israel is only one of several failures.

There has not been a single foreign policy ac- getting rejected and humiliated in the procomplishment anywhere in the greater Middle cess. Biden began and ended his State of the East, unless one considers the humiliating and Union speech with the lofty idea that Ameridisastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan in fa- ca is the land of possibilities. It is a nice and vour of the Taliban a success, after 20 years of catchy slogan, one that allowed the country horrific war. Truth be told, the Biden admin- to dream big and to reach the moon, literalistration has helped reach ceasefires or main- ly. America is indeed a mighty nation, but it tain stalemates and status guos from Sudan to is not almighty. It must stop its evangelical Syria, through Iraq, Libya, Palestine and Yem- approach to world affairs as if it is ordained a terrible normalisation of a dreadful situation. Biden, who promised to put human rights at

democracy, human rights and the preserva-According to another theory, however, there tion of sovereignty, while appeasing coloni-

It is hypocritical and it is counterproductive. Half a century after young Senator Biden But as one exhausted 19th-century saying goes: history repeats itself, the first time appeasing misbehaving regional clients in the name of a global democracy crusade and

06

Briefs

LHC orders ECP to...

FROM PAGE 01

How can we hold elections

in such circumstances?" the

counsel asked. He said th

en either by the governor o

the president. "We require

Rs14 billion for the whole

electoral exercise in the

province," the ECP lawye

told the court. He pointed

out that the elections of

provincial assemblies and

the lower house could not

be transparent if they were

"It is not written anywhere in

the Constitution that the ECP

will give the date of general

elections," he argued. When

he spoke, Punjab governor's

lawyer Shehzad Shaukat said

he had submitted a written

reply to the court on behalf

of his client. In his reply

vesterday, the governor said

that he was not obligated to

announce a date for the gen-

eral election in the province

provincial assembly on the

as he had not dissolved the

The governor had said he

never dissolved the provin-

cial assembly in terms of

Article 112 of the Consti-

tution: therefore, the provi-

sions of Articles 105(3) and

224, which deal with the

announcement of a date for

election by the governor,

would not apply in the case

at hand. Shaukat had sub

mitted the governor's reply

in a petition filed by Muni

ECP

dismisses...

FROM PAGE 01

there will be a violation

of the constitution. Or

Wednesday, the PTI asked

the ECP to hold by-elec-

tions for 31 National Assem-

bly (NA) seats on March

19. PTI Secretary General

Asad Umar penned a letter

to the electoral watchdog,

saving the ECP had issued a

schedule for the NA by-polls

on a working day, during

which the majority of the

masses usually remain busy

in their job routines, in pub-

Mr Umar was concerned

that the holding of elections

on Thursday would deprive

Rescues

efforts...

FROM PAGE 01

Sebahat Varli, 32, and he

son Serhat were rescued

and taken to hospital on

Friday morning, 100 hours

But hopes were fading

that many more would be

found alive in the ruins

of thousands of collapsed

buildings in towns and cit-

ies across the region. The

death toll from the 7.8 mag-

nitude earthquake and sev-

eral powerful aftershocks

across both countries has

surpassed the more than

17,000 killed in 1999 when

a similarly powerful earth-

quake hit northwest Turkey.

after the first quake.

lic and private sectors.

the majority of

their right to vote.

Ahmad, a lawyer.

chief minister's advice.

held on separate days.

election date had to be give

WORLD / SPORTS

Islamabad **POST** Saturday, February 11, 2023

IMF stafflevel talks..

FROM PAGE 01 the completion of IMF staff-level visit to Pakistan.

Once completed and approved by the IMF Executive Board, Pakistan would receive the next tranche of SDR 894 million (\$1.2 billion), the finance minister said. The minister said, the ten-day dialogue with IMF concluded positively and there was no ambiguity on anything. The final round was held on Thursday dur ing which "we mutually agreed and finalized all the things". He said there was mutual understanding to complete the programme for the second time in the country's history, adding the government was com mitted to fulfill its sover

promote women's sports in the

untry, adding that under the

nitiative Youth program we will

s expanding the scope of talent

nunting in sports around the coun-

ederation (PVF) Chaudhry Mu-

nammad Yaqub thanked all the

in international competitions in

ualifying for the Olympics will be

Madam Malika Junaid thanked al

the sponsoring teams and guests

and said that they will organize

women volleyball events in the

future as well, which will improve

the game of women volleyball

ulfilled soon

players of Pakistan.

Raphinha finding

Barca footing ahead

of Villarreal trip

BARCELONA: Barcelona winger Raphinha is finally hit

ting his best form and helping the Catalans cope without

the injured Ousmane Dembele, ahead of the La Liga lead-

ers' trip to face Villarreal on Sunday. The French forward

went off hurt against Girona at the end of January bu

Raphinha has stepped up to fill the gap despite an erratic

start to his career at the club. Signed from Leeds United

for around 55 million euros (\$59 million) last summer, the

Brazilian was often shunned for the improving Dembele

However, with the former Borussia Dortmund forward

out for up to five weeks, Raphinha has ensured the club

have not stumbled in his absence. The 26-year-old scored

against Real Betis in a 2-1 win on February 1 and then

again in the 3-0 win over Sevilla on Sunday, helping Barce-

ona open an eight point chasm above second place Real

Madrid. AnsuFati and Ferran Torres have been reduced

to lesser roles as Raphinha claimed Dembele's place and

nidfielder Gavi is being deployed on the left of the attack.

Although there is outside criticism, we value his work,

said Xavi after the win over Sevilla. As well as scoring

Raphinha set up a goal for Gavi with a razor-sharp pas

and played a significant part in Jordi Alba's opener. "He's

ntense, he attacks space, he gives us a lot in attack and is

being decisive," continued Xavi. "Now it might seem like

inha had only been handed eight starts in the league

he's standing out more, but he's an extraordinary player.

before Barcelona faced Girona and that inconsistency led

to mixed performances. Xavi must decide whether or not

to start with Raphinha on the right flank against Villarre-

al, with the first leg of the Europa League play-off round

eign commitments. The minister said the tean had also a courtesy zoom meeting with Prime Minister wherein the PM said that the things agreed by the finance team would be implemented Talking about the outcomes of the negotiations.

Considerable progress...

FROM PAGE 01 stability and thanks the authorities for the construct tive discussions," Porter said in a statement. He said, key priorities include strengthening the fiscal position with permanent evenue measures and reduction in untargeted subsidies, while scaling up social protection to help the most vulnerable and those affect ed by the floods; allowing the exchange rate to be market determined to gradually eliminate the foreign exchange shortage; and enhancing energy provision by preventing further accumulation of circular debt and ensuring the viability of the energy sector. "The timely and decisive implementa tion of these policies along with resolute financial sup port from official partners are critical for Pakistan to successfully regain macro economic stability and ad-

vance its sustainable devel opment," he added. Pakistan allocates...

FROM PAGE 01 such catastrophe in a centu ry and can feel the pain and loss of the people of Turkive," the prime minister said and likened the people of Turkive and Pakistan as "two hearts and one soul." He recalled that the wife of President Erdogan even donated her precious neck lace to help the people of Pakistan who lost thei homes and livelihood after the 2005 earthquake.

He said his government had decided to turn the ongoing rescue and relief efforts for Turkive into a nationwide support campaign. n this regard, he said, the support of the business community, religious schol ars, and educational institutions would also be sought

The prime minister said an air bridge has already been set up to transport relief good to Turkiye and the trucks of the National Logistic Cell will carry 100 tonnes of relief goods to Turkey via Iran. A PIA 777 aircraft earlier in the day carried relief goods to Turkiye from Lahore, while

30 tonnes would be airlift ed from Islamabad today Another batch of 40 tonnes of relief goods will be sent from Lahore on Saturday, The prime minister made an impassioned appeal to the people, the business community, and philanthropic organisations to gear up their efforts and send winterized tents, blankets, food, and cloth ing for those who lost everything in the 7.8 mag nitude earthquake. He asked the people to send their donations to the

in Turkiye. Poet Amjad Islam...

Prime Minister's Relief

Fund for the earthquake

FROM PAGE 01 / drama KhuwabJaagtay Hain won an award. He also translated the poetries of the African poets in Urdu called Kale Logon

ki Roshan Nazmein. Amjad Islam Amjad also wrote dramas based on criticism. He has been hon oured with many national and international awards He received the Pride of Performance in 1987 and Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 1998 Later on, he also received prestigious Tamgh-e-Imtiz in 1998. - APF

Wapda retains Women's Volleyball C'ship title

Higher Education Commission (HEC) outclassed Sindh by 25-18, 25-10 and 25-15 to take the third slot in the championship

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan WAPDA defeated Army by 3-1 to retain the title of the national women's vollevball championship here at Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad on

Assistant to the Prime Special Minister on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja was the chief guest of the closing ceremony while Senator Khushbakht Shujaat, Chairman of Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob, President PVF Chaudhry Iftikhar Ahmed, Chairperson Women's Development Committee of PVF Malika Junaid and other dignities were also present in the concluding ceremony. The final match was vi- Wadapa players fought back in the ciously contested between Wapda and Army as the first set was won to take advantage at any stage by Army with their strong defence during the final by winning three by 26-24 points in the decisive en- consecutive sets with 25-18, 25-



ishin title

Higher Education Commission

game and never allowed Army

(HEC) outclassed Sindh by 25-18, 25-10 and 25-15 to take the third slot in the championship. counter. Losing after the first set, 14 and 25-20 which retained the Farooq from Wapda declared most Speaking on the occasion PM

valuable player of the champion ship while Tayyaba Ali from Wapda declared best libero and Aleesha Junaid from Army declared best setter of the championship.

Ronaldo scores four to pass 500 league goals

The 38-year-old Portuguese star now has 503 goals scored for five different teams stretched across five leagues. He hit 3 for Lisbon, 103 for United over two spells, 311 for Real and 81 at Juventus



RIYADH: Cristiano Ronaldo scored all

interval before his hat-trick arrived from the penalty spot eight minutes into the second half It was his 61st career hat-trick. He

added a fourth just after the hour mark when he was first to a rebound. Ronaldo had opened his account for his new employers last Friday with a stoppage-time penalty in a 2-2 away draw against Al Fateh. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who holds the alltime records for Champions League and international goals, is banking more than 400 million euros for his surprise move to Saudi, according to sources close to Al Nassr. The giant sum includes 200 million euros for romoting Saudi Arabia's expected t bid to host the 2030 V the sources told AFP. Ronaldo has become a figurehead for the conservative kingdom's push to improve its reputation through sports - a process that has drawn accusations of "sportswashing", or trying to sanitise its hu-





Bryant - who died three years ago in a tragic helicopter accident - sold at auction for \$5.8 million on Thursday. The sale by Sotheby's in New York set a new record for any Bryant item at the auction but came in under the upper pre-sale estimate of \$7 million. The price was comfortaly more than the previous high of \$3.7 million paid for a jersey worn by the Los Angeles Lakers titan, who won ive NBA titles and two Olympic gold medals. Game-worn ports memorabilia is big business. Michael Jordan's 1998 NBA Finals jersey, which sold for \$10.1 million in Septemer 2022, is currently the most valuable such item.

Diego Maradona's "Hand of God" jersey sold for \$9.3 nillion at Sotheby's in London last year. Bryant's iconic yellow-and-purple number 24 jersey, put up for sale by an nonymous owner, was worn by the legendary Laker in 25 games during the 2007-2008 season, Bryant's only as the NBA's Most Valuable Player. In one of those appearances - a post-season game against the Denver Nuggets on April 23, 2008 - photographers famously captured Bryant celebrating after a successful three-point shot, gripping his iersev and letting out a primal scream. The image has since been plastered on walls around the world by street artists, especially in Los Angeles, where Bryant played

PESHAWAR: Cake cutting ceremony held on the occasion of China's Spring Festival & Lantern Festival 2023 celebrations at Rashakhai Special Economic Zone (RSEZ). China Friendship Association's SG, Sved Ali Nawaz Gilani, Project Manager, He Bing, China Road & Bridge Corporation's Zheng Fang Sophia, KPEZDMC's COO, Adil Salauddin, Pro Vice Chancellor (UOP) & Director-General China Study Centre Prof. Dr. Zahid Anwar and KPEDZMC's Chief Executive Officer, Javed Khattak were present at the occasion. - DNA

mn at auction

NEW YORK: A jersey worn by US basketball legend Kobe

his entire professional career. - Agencies

Diplomats briefed about Kashmir situation Acting FS highlighted the

egregious human rights violations in IIOJK and India's illegal attempts to change the demographic structure

ISLAMABAD: Acting Foreign Secretary, Muhammad Syrus Qazi, today briefed the representatives of the Diplomatic Missions in Islamabad on the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The Acting Foreign Secretary highlighted the egregious human rights violations in IIOJK and India's illegal attempts to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory. He emphasized that durable peace in South Asia remained contingent upon peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The Acting Foreign Secretary called upon the international community to urge India to stop human rights violations in Pakistani people, and the IIOJK; reverse its illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019: and implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions so that the Kashmiris could realize their inalienable right to self-determination. The Acting Foreign Secjad, and may he rest in retary's briefing was part of Pakistan's regular diplomatic peace. We pray for peace outreach to keep the international community apprised of

the developments relating to IIOJK and the region. - DNA



ling career, 103 for Manchester Unit of Al Nassr's goals in a 4-0 rout of Al ed over two spells, 311 for Real Ma-Wehda in the Saudi league on Thurs- drid and 81 at Juventus. Ronaldo now day as he passed the 500 league goal has five for Al Nassr who he joined afmark in his club career. The 38-year- ter the World Cup following his bitter old Portuguese star now has 503 divorce from United. On Thursday, he goals scored for five different teams hit the 500 mark in the 21st minute man rights record. – Agencies stretched across five leagues. He hit with a left-footed strike. He made it three for Sporting Lisbon in his fledg- 2-0 with his right foot just before the

Gen Bajwa concedes...

FROM PAGE 01

clarified that he was behind our government's ouster." Imran Khan - who became the first prime minister to be ousted through a no-con fidence vote in April last year - said that at present the establishment and the Pakistan Democratic Move ment-led coalition government are on "one page". Khan was referring to a re cent column published in local newspaper, in which a journalist wrote about his meeting with the ex-arm chief, where Gen (retd) H jwa spoke about his time i the office and interaction with the PTI chief.

In the column, the journal ist wrote that Khan want ed the former COAS to save his government, how ever, Gen (retd) Bajwa did not do so as he feared tha the PTI "was dangerous for the country and if it remains in power, the coun-

Palestinian

try would not survive".

envoy...

the writer, and poet Am-

of his great soul. - DNA

FROM PAGE 01 Pakistan, the brotherly family of the deceased. May God have mercy on

07

BUSINESS / WORLD

Islamahad **POST** Saturday, February 11, 2023

Briefs Ethiopia's

social media blocked

NAIROBI: Widespread tensions caused by a rift within Ethiopia's Orthodox Christian church have resulted in the suspension of access to social media platforms including TikTok, Facebook and Telegram. The church, which recently denounced a splinter group in the country's largest region as "illegal," has accused Ethiopia's government of interfering in its affairs. It has threatened to

go forward with a rally on Sunday despite a government warning. The division within the church, followed by the majority of Ethiopia's more than 110 million people, came after church members in Oromia declared a new synod on Jan. 22, claiming a need to exercise their faith in local languages. The church ex-communicated several church officials who participated in the split Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has urged church members

to solve their differences and said the government will not get involved. But many followers of the church are accusing the prime minister, an ethnic Oromo and a Protestant, of undermining the church and siding with the breakaway synod.-DNA

Macron weighs kicking Putin out of French Legion of Honor

BRUSSELS: Ukraine's wartime leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy has now been bestowed with France's highest medal of honor. But there's a problem: Russian President Vladimir Putin has the same medal.

French President Emmanuel Macron pinned the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor medal on Zelenskyy's chest after the two met in the French presidential palace Thursday, a move Macron said was meant to show France's "immense recognition for Ukraine's valor since Russia invaded it a year ago.

Some French legislators and activists have called on Macron to rescind Putin's award because of the war. Macron didn't rule out stripping Putin of the honor bestowed by then-President Jacques Chirac in 2006. Macron told reporters Friday that such a decision "has serious meaning, and it should be taken at the right moment." He noted that he has rescinded the honor in the past.–Agencies

Increasing support to Ukraine is vital: PM

BRUSSELS: Prime Minister Sanna Marin underscored the need for increasing posupport as well as humani-"It is vital that we continue between the EU leaders and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Brussels. According to Prime Minister Sanna Marin, it is important that the Ukrainian President had the opportunity to appeal to EU leaders in person, according to a government press release issued on Fri-"Russia is increasing the in-

tensity of its invasion, and Ukraine must be able to defend itself. To do so, they will need significantly more heavy armaments. The need for additional sanctions will also remain for as long as Russia continues its illegal invasion," said Marin. The special meeting of the European Council held on Thursday discussed support for Ukraine, migration and measures to support the European economy and competitiveness. At the summit. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky appealed to EU leaders to increase support for Ukraine and to intensify sanctions against Russia.

Following a general ex-

change of views between

President Zelensky and the

EU leaders, the President

met with the leaders of the

discussions.-Agencies

Member States in separate



PARIS: 14th round of Pakistan-France Political Consultations held in Paris led by Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and SG Anne-Marie Descôtes. DNA

Steps taken to expand Pak diplomatic footprint in Africa

ISSI organizes in-house session with heads of mission of African countries and highlighted the main

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized an organised an in-house ses sion with heads of mission of African countries in Islama bad. The session, which held under the chair of ISSI Director General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, was attended by Dean of the African Corps and Ambassador of Morocco Mohammed Karmoune, High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa Mthuthuzeli Madikiza, Ambassador of Sudan Salih Mo hammed Ahmed Mohamed

STAFF REPORT

Siddig, High Commissioner of Kenva M. Nvambura Kamau, High Commissioner of Mauritius Rashid Ally Soobadar, High Commissioner



es of Somalia Shirwa Abdullahi Ibrahim On the occasion, views

were exchanged on the of mutual cooperation and myriad dimensions of Pakistan-Africa relations. The African envoys shared

underscored the desire for deeper collaboration in diverse fields including

their thoughts on the level political, economic and

footprint in Africa and deepen its economic engagement with the continent. He added that Pakistan's policy was further driven by the pivot to geo-economics. Areas of mutual cooperation were identified, including prospects for increased trade and investment as well as opportunities in the wake of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). was agreed to maintain regular mutual dialogue, facilitate interface with the private sector, and strength

contours of Pakistan's 'En-

gage Africa' policy. He said

practical steps taken to ex-

pand Pakistan's diplomatic

en linkages with academic people-to-people exchanginstitutions and think-tanks es. ISSI DG Ambassador Chairman BoG ISSI Ambas-Sohail Mahmood shared a sador Khalid Mahmood, and historical perspective on Director Amina Khan also Pakistan-Africa relations spoke on the occasion.

'US House resolution political manipulation'

BEIJING: China on Friday dismissed dent," ministry spokesperson Tan have tumbled to their lowest leva U.S. House of Representatives res- Kefei said in a statement issued late el in decades over trade, human olution condemning Beijing over a Thursday. "Given that this irresponsuspected Chinese spy balloon shot down above U.S. waters as "purely by the U.S. did not create the proppolitical manipulation and hyping up er atmosphere for dialogue and ex-""China is strongly dissatisfied with changes between the two militaries, this and firmly opposes it," Foreign China did not accept the U.S. pro- na's version of events. saving that Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told posal for a phone call between the reporters at a daily briefing. "The two defense ministers," Tan said. resolution by the U.S. Congress was China, Tan added, "reserves the the country showed that it was "capapurely political manipulation and right to use necessary means to deal hyping up," Mao said. The resolution, which passed unanimously on Thurs- After initially expressing "regret" day, condemned China for a "brazen over the incident, China's rhetviolation" of U.S. sovereignty and oric has hardened in recent days efforts to "deceive the international as the FBI gathers debris from the community through false claims about site of the downing in U.S. territoits intelligence collection campaigns."

Biden administration for not acting lab in Quantico, Virginia, for insooner to shoot down the balloon, but both parties' lawmakers came together on the vote, 419-0. Chi- The Foreign Ministry has labeled litical, economic and military na insists the object was a civilian the action "irresponsible" and tarian assistance to Ukraine. off course, but has not said whom it "part of the U.S. side's informabelonged to or offered other details. Ukraine. Ukraine needs our try said it refused a call from U.S. the balloon issue with his Chinese

sible and seriously wrong approach with similar situations.'

vestigation. Beijing said the U.S. have sailed over five continents, ac-"overreacted" by shooting it down. tion warfare against China." Austin an approved vendor" of the army. The political, economic and mil- Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin fol- counterpart, Wei Fenghe, but was Publicly available records show sev itary support as well as hu- lowing the downing of the balloon refused, the Pentagon said. In the eral Chinese companies have been manitarian assistance," said because the U.S. had "not created wake of the incident, Secretary of developing balloons for military use the Premier at the meeting the proper atmosphere" for dia- State Antony Blinken canceled a with some openly touting their conlogue and exchange. The U.S. action planned trip to Beijing this week nections with the PLA, advertising "seriously violated international that some had hoped would help airships bristling with surveillance

rights. China's threats against Taiwan and the Chinese military's increasing assertiveness in the

South China Sea. The U.S. has flatly contradicted Chiimagery of the balloon collected by American U-2 spy planes as it crossed ble of conducting signals intelligence collection" with multiple antennas and other equipment designed to upload sensitive information and solar panels to power them.

The U.S. says the balloon was part of a huge aerial surveillance program rial waters off the coast of South that targeted more than 40 countries Republicans have criticized the Carolina and sends it to the FBI's under the direction of the People's Liberation Army. Similar balloons

cording to the administration. A State Department official said the U.S. has confidence that the manufacweather balloon that had been blown calls U.S. claims that it was spying turer of the balloon has "a direct relationship with China's military and is and increase our support to Meanwhile, China's Defense Minis- had sought on Saturday to discuss official cited an official PLA procurement portal as evidence.

norms and set a pernicious prece-stabilize bilateral relations, which and communications gear.-APP

MEP Marc Tarabella arrested by Belgian police BRUSSELS: The investigation into the corruption scan-

dal engulfing the European Parliament has resulted in a new arrest: Marc Tarabella, the Belgian MEP formerly associated with the socialist group, was taken into police custody on Friday morning. Tarabella is now waiting for a hearing before a judge, who could decide to release him or charge him as part of the widening probe, the Belgian Federal Prosecutor's Office confirmed to Euronews, without specifying the possible charges he might face. The MEP will have to be heard in a maximum period of 48 hours. Since his name became embroiled in the scandal, Tarabella has consistently defended his innocence. The police operation to take Tarabella into custody took place on Friday morning, between 6:00 and 8:00 AM CET, the prosecutor said. European legislators enjoy immunity

from detention and legal proceedings, but Tarabella lost this privilege last week after his colleagues voted to strip him of this special protection. Tarabella himself voted for the lifting of his own immunity. Italian MEP Andrea Cozzolino was also deprived of protection during that same vote. Since the scandal exploded in mid-December, four people have been officially charged: Greek MEP Eva Kaii, her domestic partner Francesco Giorgi, former MEP Pier Antonio Panzeri and NGO director Niccol Fig-Ta-

amanca. The four were charged with participation in a criminal organisation, corruption and money laundering Kaili, Giorgi and Panzeri remain in prison, while Fig -Talamanca was released earlier this month without conditions. The investigation is looking into illicit lobbying allegedly carried out by Qatar and Morocco in a bid to influence EU decision-making. Both Qatar and Morocco vigorously deny the claims. The lobbying entailed "large sums" of money and "substantial" gifts, prosecutors said. Over 1.5 million in cash has been seized across dozens

of police raids. Panzeri, the presumed intermediary between the Arab countries and the hemicycle, has signed a deal with prosecutors in which he admitted his criminal participation in bribery and committed to sharing "revealing" details about the cash-for-favour scheme.-APP

Israeli police: 2 killed, 5 wounded in Jerusalem car-ramming

JERUSALEM : A driver plowed a car into a crowded bus stop in east Jerusalem on Friday, killing two people, including a six-year-old, and injuring five others before being shot and killed, Israeli police and medics said, the latest escalation as violence grips the contested capital.

The car-ramming took place in Ramot, a Jewish settlement in east Jerusalem. Tensions have soared in the Israeli-annexed eastern half of the city, following a Palestinian shooting attack outside a synagogue on Jan. 27 that killed seven people in the deadliest attack in Jerusalem in over a decade. The Israeli rescue service identified the two killed as a six-year-old boy and a man in his 20s. It said medics were treating five injured, including a five-year-old in critical condition undergoing CPR. Others were unconscious and in serious condition. Police said that an off-duty detective shot and killed the suspected attacker at the scene. There was no immediate word on his identity. The Islamic militant groups Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, praised the attack but did not immediately claim responsibility. Footage from the scene showed police and paramedics swarming a mangled blue Mazda that had slammed into the bus stop. Bloodied bodies lav strewn along the way. Israel claims all of Jerusalem as its undivided capital, while the Palestinians seek east Jerusalem, captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, as a capital of their future state. Hostilities have escalated in east Jerusalem and the West Bank since Israel stepped up raids in the occupied territory last spring, following a series of deadly Palestinian attacks within Israel.-APP



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf receiving Ambassador of the Syrian Arab, Ramez Alraee at Parliament House.- APP



cabs

MOSCOW Russia at nounced Friday that will cut oil production by 500,000 barrels per day next month after Western countries capped the price of its crude over its action i Ukraine.

"As of today, we fully sell all our crude output, but as we stated before, we will no sell oil to those who direct ly or indirectly adhere to the 'price ceiling,'" Deput Prime Minister Alexande Novak said in remarks carried by Russian news agei cies.

"In connection with that, Russia will voluntarily cut production by 500.00 barrels a day. It will help restore market-style rela tions." he said.

Analysts have said one pos sible Russian response the cap would be to slash production to try to raise oil prices, which could eventu ally flow through to higher soline prices at the pump less oil makes it to th bal market ernational benchmar

Brent crude rose 2.2% Fr day, to \$86,42 per barrel The Group of Seven majo nocracies have impose 1 \$60-per-barrel price cap on Russian oil shipped to non-Western countries. The goal is to keep oil flowing to the world to prevent pric spikes that were seen last year, while limiting Russia's inancial gains that can be used to pay for its campaign against Ukraine

The cap is enforced by ba Western companie largely control ship ping and insurance servic es from moving oil priced above the limit.-Agencies

ring

Nicaragua frees 222 opponents of Ortega

MEXICO: In the middl of the night, political leaders, priests, students and activists languishing inside Nicaragua's most notori ous prisons were awoken given the clothes they had been arrested in and told to dress. Hours later, 222 of them, widely considered political prisoners, landed at Washington-area airport deported from their own

The United States gov ernment said the massive release was both a "uni lateral decision" by the government of Presiden Daniel Ortega and the result of concerted diplomatic efforts. President Joe Biden said Thursday that the U.S believes all political prison ers should be released.

"And whether this is a to ken of their demonstration that they're ready to begin to change the human rights policies or not remains to be seen," Biden said in an interview with Telemundo Noticias. –APP

Palestinian prisoner dies in Israeli jail

OCCUPIED: An independen and non-governmental rights organization says a Palestinian prisoner has died from medi cal complications he sustained during his time in Israeli de tention centers. The Palestinian Prisoners' Society (PPS) announced in a statement that Ahmed Badr Abdullah Abu Ali a resident of Yatta city in the south of the occupied Wes Bank city of al-Khalil, died at Soroka Medical Center on Fridav morning. The 48-year old Abu Ali, whose family says was suffering from chronic heart health failure, diabetes and obesity, was admitted to hospital after his health condition sharply deteriorated He was detained in 2012, and sentenced to 12 years in pris on. The PPS held Israe authorities fully responsible for Abu Ali's death, and for the fate of all ill Palestinia prisoners being incarcerat ed at the regime's detention centers, stating that his death represents yet another crime that the occupying Tel Aviv regime is system atically perpetrating agains Palestinians. It went on to vehemently denounce the Israel Prison Service over its policy of deliberate medical negligence, emphasizing that the practice has been behind the death of many Palestinian prisoners over the past few years. The Palestinian Hamas resistance movement also mourned Abu Ali's death, lamenting it as a blatant violation of all nternational principles and humanitarian rules.-APP







Briefs S. Korea lifts visa curbs on Chinese travelers

SEOUL: South Korea plans to resume issuing shortterm visas for travellers from China on Saturday after China improved its COVID-19 situation, Seoul officials said on Friday. South Korea suspended issuing short-term visas to

Chinese visitors last month after China abruptly ended its "zero-COVID" policy, leading to a wave of infections. Beijing retaliated by halting short-term visas for South Korean travellers.

Kim Sung-ho, South Korea's vice interior minister in charge of disaster and safety management, said the government had decided to restart the visa issuance after the number of infections among Chinese arrivals dropped significantly, and new strains of the

virus have not emerged. South Korea's prime minister, Han Duck-soo, last week hinted at lifting restrictions before the end of February if China's COVID situation became "manageable".

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said the lifting of visa restrictions was "a step in the right direction". "China will actively consider the resumption of short-term visas for South Korean citizens on a reciprocal basis. We hope that the Republic of Korea will work with China to create more convenience for the normal flow of people between the two sides," she said at a regular briefing. - Agencies

Belarus calls closing of crossing point 'catastrophic'

MINSK: Belarus on Friday condemned as "catastrophic" a decision by Poland to close a border checkpoint between the two countries, saying it could lead to a

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE Japan provides \$ 0.37 mn for **Taxila Museum improvement**

Japanese ambassador says the ancient Gandhara civilization is very close to the heart of Japanese people and this project would lead to attract more tourists to Pakistan

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has agreed to provide new grant assistance worth 48.8 million Japanese Yen (equivalent to around 0.37 million USD/ around 101.6 million PKR) for enhancement of the antiquities conservation and exhibition capacity of Taxila Museum. On February 10, 2023, a signing ceremony for the assistance was held at the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Islamabad. H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan, Mr. KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, and other officials from both countries attended this ceremony. The Taxila Museum is located in the middle of ancient Gandharan Buddhist ruins in Taxila, a UNESCO World Heritage site with Gandharan arts of great historical and cultural value. The museum preserves and exhibits the precious artifacts excavated in this area. As of now, only approximately 30% of the ruins at this site has been excavated, and the excavation is still under progress. However, there are insufficient facilities and equipment to display the increasing number of excavated works in the museum, as well as to prevent these artifacts from deteriorating. This project aims to promote understanding of the histo-

ry and cultural heritage of Gandharan Buddhism among domestic and overseas visitors and will do so by providing the Taxila Museum with the necessary equipment for improving its capacity for the conservation and exhibition of historical artifacts excavated from the Gandharan ruins. This project also aims to enrich cultural education for youths, and to facilitate cultural conservation, thereby contributing to SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities).

In the signing ceremony, H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro



stated, "The Government of Japan recognizes the importance of cultural heritage and attaches great value to its preservation and supports Pakistan in this area as well. The ancient Gandhara civilization is very close to the heart of Japanese people and this project would lead to attract more tourists to Pakistan in the future." Mr. KINOSHITA while speaking at the

event said " Taxila Museum has its own cultural identity and monumental historical significance. We hope that the upgraded Taxila museum will contribute in keeping the cultural heritage of Pakistan intact and making those accessible to researchers, scholars and students who would like to reconnect with the past and appreciate its monumental significance"

Moldovan PM resigns, government collapses

CHISINAU: Moldova's pro-Western government resigned on Friday after a turbulent 18 months in power marked by economic turmoil and the spillover effects of Russia's war in neighbouring Ukraine. In the latest tensions with Moscow over the war, the government said shortly before Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita announced her resignation that a Russian missile had violated Moldovan airspace, and summoned Russia's ambassador to protest. President Maia Sandu accepted Gavrilita's decision and said she would consult with parliamentary groups on nominating a new prime minister. She gave no sign of abandoning her pro-Western policies that include seeking European Union accession. "Thank you so much for your enormous sacrifice and efforts to lead the country in a time of so many crises." Sandu wrote on Facebook. "In spite of unprecedented challenges, the country was governed responsibly, with a lot of attention and dedicated work. We have stability, peace

Xinjiang resumes passenger flights to Pakistan

BEIJING: Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has resumed direct regular passenger flights to Pakistan for the first time since the COV-

ID-19 pandemic started. China Southern Airlines resumed its regular passenger flights between Urumgi, the capital of Xinjiang, and Islamabad in Pakistan on Wednesday after three years of suspension due to COVID-19, CEN reported. More than 160 passengers, mostly overseas students and business people, took the flights to and from Islamabad on Wednesday, according to the Xinjiang subsidiary of China Southern Airlines. One passenger surnamed Xiang, who engages in trade and regularly travels between China and Pakistan, said that the resumption of the direct service could greatly shorten travel time and help him grasp market opportunities more quickly. The airline is scheduled to operate one-round trip per week. - APP

Chinese spy balloon not a major security breach: Biden

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden, under fire from some lawmakers, said on Thursday he did not view a Chinese spy balloon that transited the United States before it was shot down in the Atlantic Ocean to have been a major security breach. Biden, who has sought to maintain communications with China and not allow tensions with Beijing to get out of control, said in a Noticias Telemundo interview that he did not regret shooting down the balloon sooner.

"It's not a major breach,



collapse on both sides of the border. Poland said on Thursday, citing security concerns, it would close a key border crossing into Belarus at Bobrowniki, starting at 12 p.m. (1100 GMT) on Friday, driving already hostile relations between the two countries to a new low. Poland has been a key refuge for opponents of Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko and Warsaw has become one of Kyiv's staunchest since Belarus' main ally Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. The Belarus government criticised the border decision on Thursday, but went further in a statement on Friday, calling the move irrational and dangerous.

"The actions of the Polish authorities could lead to a collapse on both sides of the border," the country's border committee said in a statement shared on social media. After the closure comes into force, only two of six major land crossing points along the two countries' 400-km (250- mile) border will be open, the border force said. - Agencies

supporters

KARACHI: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari along with Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Senator Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, CM Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, inaugurates Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference PIMEC -2023at Expo Centre. - APP

where others wanted war and bankruptcy."

The former Soviet republic of 2.5 million has suffered from soaring inflation and was strained last year by an influx of Ukrainian refugees. It has also suffered power cuts following Russian air attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure, and has struggled to break its dependence on Russian gas. The steep price increases, particularly for Russian gas, led to street protests last year in which demonstrators called for the government and Sandu to resign. The protests, organised by the party of exiled opposition politician Ilan Shor, marked the most serious political challenge to Sandu since her landslide election win in 2020 on a pro-European and anti-corruption platform. - Agencies

Biden said. "I mean, look, it's totally ... it's a violation of international law. It's our airspace. And once it comes into our space, we can do what we want with it." He said U.S. military officials were worried that by shooting it down over land, the balloon and its parts could drop into a populated area.

"This thing was gigantic. What happened if it came down and hit a school in a rural area? What happened if it came down? So I told them as soon as they could shoot it down, shoot it down. They made a wise decision. They shot it down over water, they're recovering most of the parts, and they're good," he said.

Biden on Feb. 2 ordered the balloon shot down once it crossed into the northwestern United States, but acquiesced to the U.S. military's request to not act until it was over water.

The 200-foot-tall (61-meter) balloon, along with its undercarriage of electronic gadgetry, was shot down by a U.S. fighter jet off the coast of South Carolina on Feb. 4. The U.S. military has been recovering as many parts as possible.

Indian SC rejects plea to ban BBC coverage

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court of India has dismissed a petition filed by the Hindu Sena president requesting a ban on British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) coverage in the country and an investigation into the broadcaster's "anti-India" rhetoric in reporting and films, Indian media outlets reported on Friday. The BBC documentary revolves around Modi who was the chief minister of the western state of Gujarat when it was gripped by riots that left more than 1,000 people dead – most of them Muslims. The violence erupted after a train carrying Hindu pilgrims caught fire, killing 59. Accused of failing to stop the rioting, Modi had denied the accusations and was exonerated in 2012 following an inquiry by India's top court. Another petition questioning his exoneration was dismissed last year. According to The Hindu, a two-judge bench comprising Justice Sanjiv Khanna and MM Sundresh rejected today the petition filed by Vishnu Gupta, terming it as "absolutely misconceived" and bearing "no merit".

NAB law tweaks: SC raises questions on Imran's conduct

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday raised important questions on the conduct of Imran Khan and his party during the hearing of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman's petition against the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) amendments. During the hearing in the apex court, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah inquired whether the former premier and his party avoided voting on the NAB Amendment Bill, asking "Does a abstainer have a claim in court?"

Further expressing displeasure, Justice Shah stated that "can a member of the assembly leave the parliament empty?" Justice Shah added that when the resignations of PTI's members of the National Assembly (NA) were not accepted, it meant that membership of the lawmakers was intact.

He further noted that the "member of the assembly is the representative of the people of the constituency and the trustee of their trust", and then asked if it "right for the trustee of public trust to boycott the parliament?"

The apex court justice further asked "how will it be determined that the NAB amendments are a case of public interest and importance?"

Justice Shah also noted that it has not been identified which fundamental rights the NAB amendments conflict with. Makhdoom Ali Khan, the lawyer of the federal government, then

made his remarks during the hearing and said that the PTI chief could have defeated the NAB amendments in the assembly if he wanted. Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar

Ata Bandial then remarked that the court will get an answer from the former prime minister on this point. The CJP also asked if the court should not hear a public interest case only on the basis that the petitioner's conduct was not correct. He also noted that "every leader takes recourse to the Constitution to justify his actions", adding that "boycotting the Parliament was a political strategy of PTI and that there is no legal justification for the political strategy". – DNA

Missiles target Ukraine's cities as Russian forces advance

Russia's latest aerial attack saw missiles cross Moldovan airspace. Kyiv's top general said missiles also flew above Romania - a claim denied by Romania

KYIV: Russia launched a wave of attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure in the cities of Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia on Friday morning as Ukrainian officials said a long-awaited Russian offensive was under way in the east. At least 17 missiles hit the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia in an hour, acting mayor Anatolii Kurtiev said, and the state grid operator said high-voltage facilities across the country had been hit and electricity supplies shut down.

Russia has repeatedly struck civilian infrastructure far from the front lines over the last four months, leaving millions of Ukrainians in major cities without power, heat or water for days at a time in the middle of winter. Air raid sirens blared across the country during the morning rush hour and local officials urged weary civilians to heed them and take shelter. Kyiv's city administration said air defences were working as explosions were heard in the capital. Kharkiv regional governor Oleh Synehubov reported about 10 explosions and said power had been cut in some areas. Critical infrastructure was also hit in Khmelnitskyi in the west and the Dnipropetrovsk region in central Ukraine, regional officials said. Air force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat told

Ukrainian television that Ukrainian air defences had shot down five of seven drones and five out of six Kaliber missiles. However, the air force also said Russia had launched 35 S-300 missiles, which Ukraine's air defences are unable to shoot down, at the Kharkiv and Zaporizhizhia regions. Ukraine has been bracing itself for a new Russian offensive in the belief that, after months of reverses, President Vladimir Putin wants to be able to tout a battlefield success before the anniversary of the invasion he launched on Feb. 24.

Russia's main focus has been the town of Bakhmut in the eastern Donetsk province, a region whose capture has been one of Moscow's declared priorities since the start of the war. After months of static artillery battles that have become known to both sides as the "meat grinder", Russian forces, including the Wagner private army which has recruited tens of thousands of convicts with a promise of pardons, have finally begun to encircle the town. Britain's Defence Ministry said Wagner forces appeared to have advanced two to three km around the north of Bakhmut since Tuesday - a remarkbaly rapid push in a battle where front lines have barely moved for months. - Agencies

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