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Palestine calls upon world to rise against Israeli aggression

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Egyptian FM visits Turkiye after a decade

Detailed News On Page-07



Djokovic clams historic all-time ranking record

Detailed News On Page-06



PUNJAB, KP ELECTIONS

President can give election date, says CJP

Five-member bench hears the case after Justice Ijaz, Justice Mazahar recues and Justice Athar, Justice Yahya Afridi leave the bench



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial said that the parliament has clearly written in the Elections Act, 2017, that the president can announce the date for polls. After deciding that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa KP and Punjab governors – Haji Ghulam Ali and Baligh Ur Rehman – and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) were not fulfilling their constitutional duties to announce the date for polls in both provinces, President Arif Alvi announced earlier this month that elections would take place in April – a move that drew strong criticism from the government. Earlier, in an unexpected development, five judges of the Supreme Court – instead of a nine-member bench – on Monday resumed hearing the suo motu proceedings regarding the delay in the announcement of a date for elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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Justice Afridi questions invoking suo motu right

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Justice Yahya Afridi of the Supreme Court has objected to invoking suo motu jurisdiction by the chief justice in the election date case. In his additional note, made public on Monday along with the court order on the February 23 hearing, the apex court judge questioned the logic behind taking the suo motu notice despite the fact that the matter was pending before the high court in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Justice Afridi also recused himself from the nine-member bench hearing the case after which a new five-judge bench was constituted headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial. "For detailed reasons to be recorded later, it appears that prima facie these petitions fall within the purview of Article 184(3) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973. However, it would not be judicially appropriate to exercise the power to make an order under the aforementioned provision of the constitution given that the matters raised in the petitions are presently pending adjudication before the Lahore High Court (LHC) in Intra-Court Appeal No. 11096 of 2023, Contempt of Court Petition No. 10468/W/2023, and

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review relief activities by Pakistan in earthquake hit areas of Turkiye and Syria. – DNA

PTI chief concerned Lt Gen (R) Amjad Shoaib sent on physical remand



DNA

ISLAMABAD: A local court in the federal capital on Monday rejected the police's plea and approved a three-day physical remand of Lieutenant General (ret'd) Amjad Shoaib. The former military officer was presented in the court of Judicial Magistrate Abbas Shah today after he was arrested by the Islamabad Police early this morning on charges of inciting the public against national institutions. During the hearing, the prosecution informed the court about the case registered against the former three-star general and requested a seven-day physical remand. Prosecutor Adnan contended that the ex-general, through his statement on TV, tried to spread hate between

Continued on Page 06

TOSHA KHANA, ATTEMPTED MURDER CASE

Khan plea for relocating the court rejected

The court has been requested to make security arrangements on the eve of his appearance in the court: Babar Awan

ONLINE / DNA

ISLAMABAD: District and Sessions Court has rejected Imran Khan plea for relocating the court hearing Toshakhana case and an attempted murder case against him. The court while accepting Imran Khan exemption plea for one day has extended his bail for one day. The case of "attempted murder" was registered at the Secretariat police station in Islamabad against him on the complaint of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Mohsin Shahnawaz Ranjha. The PML-N leader claimed that he was attacked when the PTI supporters were protesting disqualification of Mr Khan in the Toshakhana case. Babar Awan counsel for Imran Khan and Ali Bokhari appeared in the court Monday. Dr Babar Awan told the court Imran Khan will come to

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'Khwaja Asif should accept security policy failure'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Dr. Shireen Mazari came down hard on the federal defence minister Khwaja Asif for making hue and cry and blaming PTI for imported government's failure to rein in the alarming resurgence of terrorism in the country and said that being the defence minister, he was responsible for the failure of security policy. Dr. Shireen Mazari, in a statement on Monday, said that the imported government plunged

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Briefs

PM wants facts about boat tragedy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday took notice of the drowning of over two dozen Pakistanis in a boat tragedy in Italy and directed the Foreign Office to "ascertain facts" at the earliest. "The reports of the drowning of over two dozen Pakistanis in a boat tragedy in Italy are deeply concerning and worrisome," tweeted PM Shehbaz. He added that he had asked the Foreign Office to ascertain facts at the earliest so the nation could be taken into confidence.

Rulers dragged country into darkness

DNA

ATTOCK: Ameer Jamaat e Islami Mr. Sirajul Haq while expressing his considered views on the political and financial imbroglio of Pakistan has said that the corrupt rulers dragged the economy of the country into a darkness of default like situation with alarming rate of corruption of more than Rs: 12 billion daily embracing shackles of IMF loan on the hands of our innocent children. He was addressing the gathering of Jamaat e Islami here in Attock. He said that the prevailing crisis was arisen due to the hidden snakes of our own country instead of our external opponents.

PM LAUDS HEROICS OF FORCES Two soldiers embrace martyrdom in Waziristan Security forces kill two terrorists



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: On 26 February 23, a fire exchange took place between terrorists and own troops in general area Spinwam, North Waziristan District. Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location. Resultantly, two terrorists got killed, while two terrorists were apprehended. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the terrorists who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and killing of innocent citizens. However, during intense exchange of fire, Se-

poy Imran Ullah (age 25 years, resident of District Bajaur) and Sepoy Afzal Khan (age 21 years, resident of District Upper Dir) having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Pakistan Army is determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the armed forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan acted as a bulwark against the nefarious designs of terrorists. The prime minister, in a statement, paid tribute to sepoy Imranullah and Afzal Khan who were martyred in firing by terrorists in Spinwam area of North Waziristan. He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant high ranks to the martyred in paradise and sympathised with the bereaved family. The prime minister also appreciated the security forces for a successful operation against terrorists. He said the whole nation saluted the martyrs and stood side by side with their security forces.

Parliament joint sitting on March 15

ISLAMABAD: The joint sitting of the Parliament has been rescheduled as the special session will be held at Parliament House on March 15 at 4:00 p.m. instead of February 28. The Speaker NA has made changes in the schedule of joint sittings in the exercise of powers delegated under Rule 4 of the Joint Sittings of Parliament Rules, 1973, a news release said on Monday. The NA secretariat has issued the notification of change in the schedule of the joint session of the Parliament. – DNA

Maryam wants redressal of 'injustice' against Nawaz



STAFF REPORT

SAHIWAL: In a fiery speech Monday, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz demanded redressal of "injustice" against the party's supremo, Nawaz Sharif, ahead of the next elections. Addressing a workers' convention in Sahiwal, Maryam, who also holds the position

of PML-N's chief organiser, said: "Elections will be held after the conviction of innocent Nawaz Sharif is overturned." Nawaz – who is residing in London since 2019 – stepped down as the prime minister on July 28, 2017, after being disqualified from holding public office by the Supreme Court in a landmark decision on the case. The five-member SC bench had unanimously disqualified Nawaz for failing to disclose his un-withdrawn receivables constituting assets from UAE-based Capital FZE in his nominations papers for the 2013 General Election, stating that this meant he was not "honest" and "truthful", as per the Constitution. Speaking to the PML-N workers, Maryam said: "Justice first, then elections will be held." She maintained that polls would be conducted in the country when the vote is given respect.

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'Armed Forces ever ready to defend motherland'

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, (CJSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Services Chiefs and armed forces of Pakistan paid tribute to resilience of the nation and resolve of armed forces displayed during Operation Swift Retort. Director General Inter Services Public Relations (DG ISPR), Major General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry in a tweet on his official handle on Monday shared the commemorative message on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of Operation Swift Retort. The ISPR DG wrote under the pretext of the false flag Pulwama attack, India stage managed a cowardly attack on a fictitious target. The daring, resolute and measured response from Pakistan thwarted Indian nefarious designs. "Let this day be a reminder that while being a peace-loving nation, Pak AFs (armed forces) are ever ready, not only to defend every inch of the motherland, but to take the fight back to the enemy, if ever, aggression is imposed on us," he said. While stating the resolve and strong determination of the armed forces, he said.

27 Feb witness to India's jingoism

ISLAMABAD: The incidents of 26-27 February 2019 bore witness to India's belligerence and jingoism and the tremendous restraint and responsibility demonstrated by Pakistan. The captured Indian pilot was returned as a gesture of peace, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release on Monday in connection with fourth anniversary of Pakistan's befitting response to the airstrikes conducted by India on that day in violation of the international law and the UN Charter. "India must remain mindful of the consequences of its reckless conduct and realize that Pakistani nation remains ready to fully safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity," it was added. At the same time, the spokesperson said, Pakistan was committed to peaceful co-existence and resolution of long-standing disputes. "We also underscore that durable peace in South Asia remains contingent upon peaceful resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute. – APP

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Pak higher education team leaves for Istanbul

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH: A 34 member Pakistani higher education delegation departs for Istanbul to establish the first ever Pakistani Pavilion at the Eurasia Summit in Istanbul, visit leading Turkish universities, and sign MoUs with international universities.

Under the auspices of Association of Private Sector Universities Pakistan (APSUP) and COMSTECH, a 34-member delegation from Pakistan representing 20 universities and organizations will participate in Eurasian Higher Education Summit (EURI) in Istanbul. First ever Pakistan Pavilion will be established where in six leading universities will set up booths and representatives of other Pakistani universities will brief about the various academic programs and explore opportunities of collaboration, student & faculty exchange and joint academic projects. The delegation is headed by Prof. Dr. Ch. Abdul Rehman, Chairman APSUP, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhry, Coordinator General COMSTECH and Mr. Awais Raof, President APSUP Punjab.

In addition to leadership of APSUP, Chairmen of the Boards of Governors, Rectors, Vice Chancellors and representatives of Iqra University, Indus University, University of South Asia, Brains Institute, SBB Dewan University, Institute of Southern Punjab, ISAT, Gift University are also the part of the delegation.—APP

WHO donates mobile hospital, ambulances, vaccines vans to Health Department

PESHAWAR: World Health Organization (WHO) representative in Pakistan, Dr. Palitha Mahipala visited the Directorate General of Health Services, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and handed over one mobile hospital, two mini ambulances, two mobile vaccination vans, one 2x2 ambulance for Bambarate, Kalash valley of Chitral area in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Dr. Palitha personally visited the Bambarate valley of Chitral to assess the needs on the ground, after which a specific ambulance was designed for the hard-to-reach area (Bambarate-Chitral). A formal handing-taking ceremony was organized at the Directorate General of Health Services office.

Dr. Palitha Mahipala, world health organization representative in Pakistan, Advisor to CM on Health Dr. Abid Jamil, Dr. Shoukat Ali DG of Health Services KP, Additional Director generals, directors, and others participated in the ceremony. DG Health welcomed WHO Representative in Pakistan and extended his gratitude for all the support it provided. While addressing the ceremony Advisor to CM KP on Health Dr. Abid Jameel added that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has been suffering the most from natural disasters. While thanking the WHO's support, the advisor said that the government of KP acknowledges the full-out support of WHO in covid and in recent flash floods.—APP

Pakistan's first-ever digital census launched with great success

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics started the 7th Housing and Population census process on February 20, 2023, with an option to self-enumerate through the specially designed <https://self.pbs.gov.pk> portal. The response from the public has been great with over 4 million people visiting the portal in just a few days. The self-enumeration option will continue till March 3, 2023, while the field enumeration will start on March 1, 2023.

While speaking at a press conference held today in Islamabad, Official Spokesperson of PBS and Member (Support Services/Resource Management), Mr. Muhammad SarwarGondal shared that "Pakistan is making history with the first-ever digital census and Pakistan Bureau of Statistics shares with great pride that the people

are participating actively and stakeholders are appreciating and supporting the exercise." He said that as with any first-time technology initiative, there are some minor issues that are being reported, which have been communicated to NADRA, who is taking care of the technology solutions behind the census. Mr Gondal was grateful for the positive feedback as it is helping NADRA improve their systems. Responding to a question regarding concerns being raised on

the process from Sindh, in particular Karachi, Balochistan and a few other quarters, Mr SarwarGondal, Member SSRM, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics shared that prior to the census extensive and intensive consultations were held at levels, especially with provincial stakeholders to explain the complete digital process. The apprehensions being raised are due to a lack of understanding of what the census process entails. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics is once again engaging with the stakehold-

ers to explain the facts and clear all misunderstandings to ensure that the census is being held in a transparent manner, counting each and everyone living in Pakistan, at the location they are living in. It is for this reason that a digitized methodology was chosen for this census. Further explaining the census objective, Mr Gondal shared that "as per the General Statistics Reorganization Act 2011 and UN Conventions, census is a national duty to inform policymaking, future planning and development for the progress of the country. Participation in the census is mandatory and providing reliable information is a civic duty for everyone living in Pakistan." Member SSRM, Mr Muhammad SarwarGondal, emphasized that spreading fake news or misinformation for any purpose is a criminal offence, or politicising it or using it for agenda setting is dishonesty to country and to the people.



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to PM Engr Amir Muqam, Ambassador of USA to Pakistan Donald Blome are looks poster of famous Pakistani writers during a book launching ceremony of Naheed Virk, at Pakistan Academy of Letters in Federal Capital. ONLINE

Cyber strength' best tool to put Pak on fastest track: Alvi

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said besides conventional security, acquiring 'cyber strength' could put the country on the fastest track of stability and development. Addressing here at the 10th convocation ceremony of Air University, the president highlighted the need for the world's fifth populous nation to gain knowledge in contemporary fields particularly artificial intelligence, cyberspace, and data-driven technology. President Alvi said Pakistan had achieved professional prowess in traditional and conventional defence such as nuclear deterrence, however, stressed that gaining a strong foothold in cyberspace was also

vital for survival. He pointed out that in the last year's global cyber ranking, Pakistan was placed nowhere on the list. The situation, he said, demanded an overhaul in choices of career pathways besides a major shift in the retrogressive mindset. He said cyber knowledge was one of the best tools to equip the country's big youth bulge with contemporary skills. He mentioned that a huge quantum of data based on pattern recognition was available in the world that needed the skill of artificial intelligence to quantify and analyze it.

The president called for decision-making on imparting the youth requisite knowledge about

quantum computing and artificial intelligence as the world witnessed an unprecedented transformation in these fields. He emphasized the importance of carrying out thorough research on job markets by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and said that it would produce a skilled human resource to match the demands of national and international organizations, thus aptly addressing unemployment in the country. About the maiden batch of Cyber Security discipline, Dr Alvi expressed confidence that the graduates would play a vital role in safeguarding Pakistan's cyberspace. The president commended the Chairman Board of

Governors of Air University for his continuous support and patronage towards the noble cause of education which has been provided with the support of the Pakistan Air Force. He awarded degrees to the graduating students and appreciated their efforts in various disciplines. Thirteen hundred bright graduates from the undergraduate, as well as MS and Ph.D. programmes received their medals and degrees in various disciplines including Mechanical, Mechatronics, Electrical, Aerospace and Aeronautical Engineering in addition to the disciplines of Business Administration, Accounting & Finance, Aviation Management, Literature & Lin-

guistics, Mathematics, Physics, Strategic Studies, Computer Science and Cyber Security. Earlier, Air Marshal (Retd) Javid Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of Air University, in his welcome address thanked President Alvi and Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed for gracing the occasion. He lauded the vision of the Air Chief for modernising and reinstating the tech arena through projects under the National Aerospace and Technology Park (NASTP). He said the Air University would continue to impart quality education, research, innovation, and technology to the students and would make meaningful contributions to the national cause.—APP

MD TDCP visits Patriata Chairlift

RAWALPINDI: Managing Director (MD) Tourism Development Corporation Punjab (TDCP), Humira Ikram visited Patriata Chairlift Murree and inspected the operational system. According to a district administration spokesman, during the visit the MD reviewed the facilities being provided to the tourists. She also issued instructions to the authorities concerned to improve the facilities and digitalization of ticketing at the chairlift for promotion of the tourism in the area. Humira Imran also inspected the glamping pod area on the Patriata chairlift top and directed the authorities to provide all possible facilities to the tourists. She planted a sapling in connection with the current spring tree plantation campaign. During the visit, Manager/Incharge TDCP Patriata Resort, Ejaz Ahmed Butt gave a briefing to the MD regarding the chairlift and facilities available for the tourists.

AIU offers 2nd phase of Spring admissions

ISLAMABAD :Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) Monday announced schedule of admissions of the second phase of Spring semester, 2023 in different academic programs, starting from March 01 across the country. The educational programs offered in the second phase include Associate Degree (B.A, B.Com, BBA), BS (ODL Mode), B.Ed, Post-graduate diplomas and certificate courses. Admission forms and prospectuses will be available on the university's website www.aiou.edu.pk. As per the instructions of the Vice-Chancellor, AIU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Student's Facilitation desks are being established in all regional campuses to provide information, guidance and support to the students regarding admissions.—DNA

'Espionage of the Century' Story of a diplomat who played a key role in transfer of sensitive material

STAFF REPORTER

A truthful account of the events that led to Pakistan's nuclear journey, from scratch to the final accomplishment, 'Espionage of the Century' by Ambassador (R) Zahid Said (1938-2020) is now available at bookstalls. The book published by Sang-e-Meel Publications consists of 281 pages and 17 chapters and keeps the readers hooked as its content fully grasps their attention, moreover, the frank style of the writer has a certain appeal for them. Without mincing words, Ambassador Zahid Said successfully brings home the message that those at the helm of affairs through their decisions can make or break the living spirit of a nation. The book in fact is a detailed narration by a Pakhtun nationalist who hails from a noble family of Charsadda and received his education from the prestigious educational institutions such as Islamia College Peshawar and Cambridge University. 'Espionage of the Century' covers many important turns and twists in the history of Pakistan yet the most riveting chapter is "The Hague, The Netherlands" in which Ambassador Zahid Said gives a vivid account of his meetings with the architect of Pakistan's Nuclear Programme, Dr AQ Khan and the events that led to his becoming a part of his plan. Those were the early days of 1974 when both of them happened to be posted in The Netherlands. In the writer's own words "On 18th May, 1974, Pakistan was suddenly faced with a new challenge: The Smiling Buddha as it was officially called by the Indian government. To dispel international reaction and to avoid sanctions they declared that they had carried out a peaceful nuclear explosion and would not convert their capability to making nuclear bombs."

Soon after the Indian nuclear test, Chairman of the Pakistan Energy Commission (PAEC) Dr Munir Ahmed addressed Pakistan's ambassadors, diplomats posted abroad and senior officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the ministry's headquarters in Islamabad. He referred to the emerging nuclear threat from India and told Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was determined to acquire nuclear technology/weapons to meet India's challenge. After the meeting, Ambassador Zahid Said returned to the country of his posting (The Netherlands) where he was serving as Counselor. As luck would have it, a young Pakistani scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan was also in the country working on a research project related to the ultra-centrifuge enrichment plant set up by a consortium of three governments—The United Kingdom, Germany and The Netherlands. Dr AQ Khan

approached the writer in mid-December 1974 at The Hague and broached the subject of enriched Uranium technology for Pakistan. This could be risky but the writer decided to give it a chance, and the outcome of their conversation was: India's claim of peaceful nuclear technology was just a ploy and the Pakistani government under the changing circumstances had the right to develop nuclear capability. Dr Khan requested Ambassador Zahid to send some documents and other material through diplomatic bag to Islamabad as PAEC Chairman Dr Munir had requested for them. After some reluctance, Zahid Said agreed to receive the huge cache of papers and metal parts of the centrifuge to be shifted to Pakistan unchecked and unnoticed by the local authorities through a diplomatic channel. In the hair-raising details of the events and challenges that followed the writer brings the material from Dr Khan's residence to his official building where they lay in the garage for a few days. It was a grave risk and even a minute leakage was sufficient to sabotage the diplomatic ties with The Netherlands.

According to the writer, when he informed his boss Agha Shahi, the then Secretary Foreign Affairs about his decision to help Dr Khan [which was in fact a help to his nation and country] he was livid to know how a junior officer of the Pakistani mission could dare act on his own without taking the Foreign Office into confidence. Zahid Said was thus directed to dump the material on some coast of the sea. However, he decided to do the opposite and handed the material to another Pakistani diplomat safely. Thus the centrifuge's parts and the huge piles of scientific documents were shifted to Islamabad through many channels. Why did he do so and what made him go against the instructions of the Foreign Secretary? Ambassador Zahid Said himself gives the answer: "While initially I was preparing to follow the orders, my wife reminded me of my promise to Qadeer Khan to send the material to the concerned authorities in Pakistan. She said I had given my word. It was her words that aroused my conscience enough to disobey Mr Shahi's instructions and persist in persuading the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to receive the material by sending a high-level courier to take it in several diplomatic bags to Pakistan. It was indeed providential that her earnest remarks had set the ball rolling and had saved the material received from Qadeer Khan from being 'dumped' as required by Mr Shahi." Though published posthumously, the biography was completed by the writer during his lifetime.

Imran fighting for restoration of justice

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK Central leader of Pakistan Tehreek Insaf Mr. Zain Qureshi elder son of detained Vice Chairman PTI Shah Mahmood Qureshi while visiting District Jail Attock on Monday has reaffirmed the commitment of PTI Leader Imran Khan to fight against the anti-democratic powers of the country till the rule of law, justice and restoration of real democracy through conduct of impartial and free elections in the country. These views he expressed while addressing the media at the Al-Murtaza House Attock. Among others, he was also extended warm welcome by the former provincial minister Punjab Syed Yawar Bokhari, PTI District President Attock expected candidate MPA Attock Qazi Ahmed

Akbar, General Secretary, PTI Attock Mr. Ahmed Nawaz along with PTI workers came across the district. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Zain Qureshi also expressed his thanks giving remarks to all the PTI activists with the hope that the jail filling movement of PTI workers launched by Imran Khan will be continued till getting its goals.

He also appreciated the offer of court arrest by PTI leader candidate MNA-50 Attock Syed Zulfikar Abbas Bokhari (Zulfi Bokhari) hailing from Attock. Mr. Zain Qureshi further said that his father was arrested from Lahore and they were being refused to see him under one pretext or the other despite their repeated attempts but they would never leg behind from the ongoing movement till its conclusion. He said that the political detainees were being targeted who were even scattered at different jails away from their home towns depriving their families from inquiring their health. Mr. Zain Qureshi said that the jail filling movement of Imran Khan were turning into a historic revolution in the country but the rulers were afraid of their defeat due to their own misdeeds and political engineering as they know that the political future of the country would be in hands of PTI, he added.



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

National Days and Armed Forces Days

FEBRUARY

- Feb 04 / Sri Lanka National Day
- Feb 06 / New Zealand National Day
- Feb 06 / Uganda Defec 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 / Dominican Republic Independence Day



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Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
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Motorway Police.9270601-20
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MH.....5611116
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RGH.....9290301-7
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Shifa International 4603666



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Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of clouds in a pleasant sunny day at Zero Point. —APP

PBM undertakes life-changing initiatives

The institution revolutionized lives of millions of people by improving their social order through different initiatives in various areas from health to education and other various forms of assistance

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) is making all possible efforts to address issues pertaining to a socio-economic imbalance with its life-changing humanitarian and social protection initiatives at national, provincial, divisional, and district levels. The PBM has been significantly contributing towards poverty alleviation through its various pro-poor services by helping the destitute, widows, orphans, invalid, infirm and other needy persons since its establishment in 1991 through the Act of Parliament. The institution revolutionized lives of millions of people by improving their social order through different initiatives in various areas from health to education and other various forms of assistance. Hafeez Ahmad, a beneficiary of PBM hailed from Attock while describing his ailment, told APP that at the age of

21 he was diagnosed with kidney failure. Due to poor financial circumstances and lack of medical insurance, he was getting delayed in medical treatment. However, the PBM took responsibility by providing financial assistance that enabled him to get the dialysis done. "Thanks to the PBM and the government who had established such institutions that serve the ailing humanity during their testing times when people were being faced with inflation," he added. Madeeha, another beneficiary said, "Being a child, it was not easy for me to continue my studies as my father passed away in 2020 and my mother had to face tremendous challenges to make us successful in our lives. Without the help of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal scholarships, I was unable to complete my education in any way. Now I am doing my PhD and

PBM awarded me scholarships in Masters (MSC) and MS also," she added. A Thalassaemia patient on condition of anonymity told APP that the PBM had so far spent Rs one million on his treatment. "I wish the PBM more success to serve the destitute people," he added. Rukhsana Baigam, wife of a taxi driver while expressing her gratitude to PBM, said that she was suffering from breast cancer and had received over Rs 100,000 for her treatment from the institution. Ameer Sultan a biomedical engineer in a private lab said he had completed primary education at PBM School for Rehabilitation of Child Labour (SRCL) Multan. "I am proud of my teachers who have been helpful and supportive in my education and enable me to get this employment," he maintained. Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Amir Fida

Paracha highlighting the objectives of the organization said that social protection for vulnerable people was playing a vital role in inclusive and balanced growth in developing countries. He said, "The PBM's primary aim is to contribute towards poverty reduction in the country involving the strategic use of tools such as access to healthcare, education, socio-economic rights, self-reliance, women empowerment and rehabilitation." He said that he was determined to implement e-governance and digital infrastructure within the organization to reduce response time and increase transparency, better workflow and efficient information management through shared databases, effective targeting management, and accountability through transaction tracking. To a query, Paracha said awareness of

these services was equally important for community engagement and public-private partnerships in social services. Reaffirming the Federal Government's resolution for the well-being of deprived persons, he said he was committed to supporting the poor, widows, orphans, disabled persons and other vulnerable segments of the country. Commenting on future projects, he said his organization was fully focused on accelerating the execution of the expansion strategy while continuing to strengthen the organization. The spokesperson of the PBM said that all information regarding the assistance programs and the procedure to apply for assistance was available on the official website of PBM. "Needy people may call on tollfree number 0800-666 66 or write an email at info@pbm.gov.pk for any query or information," he added.—Agencies

Rs 48.560 bln disbursed for various projects

ISLAMABAD: The government has released a sum of Rs 48.560 billion for various projects of the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) and Pakistan Electric Supply Company (PEPCO) under the Annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) during the first six months of the current fiscal year 2022-23.

According to the data of the Planning Commission, the government had allocated Rs 42,983.26 million for various NTDC/PEPCO projects with Rs 20,773.43 million foreign aid component. A sum of Rs 42,566.29 million has been spent so far on various

projects. A sum of Rs 35,120.25 million has been disbursed under foreign aid component till December 2022. The government had specified a sum of Rs 7500 million for the Interconnection of Makran Network, Rs 2,000 million for 220 kV Swabi Substation (NTDC), Rs 1,500 million for 220/132kV GIS Substation Dhabiji (NTDC), Rs 1,200 million for 500 kV Allama Iqbal Industrial City, Rs 1000 million for 220kV Haripur Substation, Rs 750 million for ABC Cable for Peshawar, Bannu Circle (PESCO), Rs 600 million for construction of 132 kV Grid Station (Khan Mehterzai),

Rs 395 million for electrification works at different villages of Chitral. For the new scheme, an amount of Rs 2,500 million has been allocated for the electricity distribution efficiency improvement project, Rs 2,000 million for secondary Transmission Lines and Grid stations (HESCO), Rs 1500 million for 220 kV Quaid-e-Azam Apparel and Business Park, and Rs 500 million for construction of 2nd Circuit Stringing of 132 kV Transmission Line (Jiwani to Gwadar). Similarly, a sum of Rs 14,085 million has been earmarked for the installation of 2,600 MW Coal Fired Power Project Jam-

shoro, Rs 7,600 million for evacuation of power from Sukki Kinari, Rs 7,260 million for provision of 50KVA T/F & HT 'Line for De' Rs 3,360 million for evacuation of power from 2,160 MW Dasu HPP Stage-1, Rs 3,400 million for evacuation of power from Tarbela 5th extension, Rs 2,500 million for power distribution enhancement investment programme-II, Rs 2,000 million for up-gradation/extension of NTDC's Telecommunication and SCADA System at NPCC, Rs 1,650 million for 500 KV Islamabad West and Rs 3,000 million for evacuation of power from 1,224 MW wind power plants at Jhimpir.—APP

Railways to complete rehabilitation work soon

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways was putting maximum efforts to complete rehabilitation work of 33.50-kilometer track 'through sleeper renewal' between Quetta-Bostan and Quetta-Chaman section shortly. "The track will not only facilitate the passengers, small businessmen, but also connect three major cities of the province," an official source in the Ministry of Railways told meida. He said railway network in Baluchistan province mainly consisted of Quetta Division having Dera Allah Yar Sibi-Quetta, Quetta-Chaman, Sibi-Khost, Spezend-Dalbandin-Taftan and Bostan-Zhob which were closed for the last 15 years. The source said there were two passenger trains namely Jaffer Express (40Up, 39 Down) and Chaman Passenger (349Up, 350 Down) operating in Balochistan while no stations had been closed during the last 15 years in Quetta division. He said the overall length of the railway track in Balochistan was 1470.36 kilometer including the closed Bostan-Zhob section. "The most of the track was more than one hundred year old and on certain stretches, engineering speed restrictions have been imposed due to deferred maintenance and owing to resource constraints," he said adding that the routine maintenance of track was being carried out with available resources. To improve railway services in Balochistan, he said the department was taking several steps like approval of PC-I for the track's rehabilitation.—DNA

FGEHA to launch residential projects in eight cities

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) will shortly start new residential projects in eight major cities of the country to provide housing to government employees and general public.

"The authority has already received several applications from land owners, companies and firms interested in the mega projects," sources in the FGEHA told APP. They said the applications were invited from land owners, developers, firms and eligible individuals for the supply of land for housing schemes (plots, houses and apartments) projects in major cities of the country.

The procedure for applications and selection was being followed as per Joint Venture Regulations 2020, they added. They said the authority was planning to launch new residential projects in eight major cities of the country, including the twin cities Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Other cities are Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Multan, Faisalabad and Karachi. "The new housing projects will be started for federal government employees and the general public on the basis of a joint venture," they added. To a question, they said the pace of different development projects, being executed under the FGEHA, had been accelerated significantly to provide modern residential facilities to employees in the shortest possible time.—APP

8,647 graduates get training in freelancing centers

Ignite is collaborating with international partners like Plug & Play, orbit, DMZ, 500 global and hub 71 so that the local startup ecosystem can be exposed to international investors

ISLAMABAD: About 20 training centers were established across the country under the National Freelance Training Program, initiated and funded by the Ministry of Information Technology. As many as 8,647 graduates were trained through International standard IT courses and these students contributed to the country's economy by earning \$23 million through

freelancing after training, said an official of the Ministry of IT. He said, during the year 2022, around 1,638 new IT companies got registered with Pakistan Software Export Board, while 761 call centers and 1,463 freelancers were also registered with the PSEB. He said the ministry was also establishing specialized incubation centers in agriculture and textile, aerospace

technologies, gaming and animation to create more businesses in these areas and boost exports. For the provision of early-stage investment, he said Ignite was starting an accelerator program so that early-age startups can sustain their businesses. Ignite is collaborating with international partners like Plug & Play, orbit, DMZ, 500 global and hub 71 so that the local startup ecosystem can

be exposed to international investors. He said that about 33 million people have got themselves registered for freelancing courses under the DG Skills Programs of Ignite, which is 75% more than the target. By June 2022, the freelancers trained with DG Skills have earned a whopping \$290 million, adding to the country's foreign exchange reserves.—APP

Zero Discrimination Day to be marked on March 1

ISLAMABAD: International Zero Discrimination Day will be marked on March 1 (Wednesday) across the globe including Pakistan that promotes diversity and recognizes that everyone counts.

Organizations like the United Nations (UN) actively promote the day with various activities to celebrate everyone's right to live a full life with dignity regardless of age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, skin color, height, weight, profession, education, and beliefs. Many countries have laws against discrimination but it's still a problem in all layers of society in every country in the world. Many countries have and still use discrimination as a way of governing.

The symbol for Zero Discrimination Day is the butterfly, widely used by people to share their stories and photos as a way to end discrimination and work towards positive transformation. The UN first celebrated Zero Discrimination Day on March 1, 2014, after UNAIDS, a UN program on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), launched its Zero Discrimination Campaign on World AIDS Day in December 2013.—APP

Minister express sorrow over boat sinking incident

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi on Monday expressed his deep sorrow and grief over the boat sinking incident in Italy wherein 40 Pakistanis lost their lives.

The minister said that such types of incidents were increasing and precious lives of illegal immigrants were being lost in these painful incidents. He said that human traffickers were misleading the youth with false dreams, adding, so far, thousands of Pakistani youth had lost their lives while going to European countries in search of a better life. The minister revealed that through a joint venture, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis both will prepare a comprehensive policy for strict legal action against human traffickers.

Turi urged that passports and Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) of human traffickers should be cancelled and their bank accounts should be frozen.—APP

'Khan should surrender first for 'Jail Bhara' tehreek'

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly and senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Tahira Aurangzeb Monday asked Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan should surrender first in 'Jail Bhara' Tehreek then support his party workers, especially the youth who are disappointed. She expressed these words while talking to PTV news channel on Monday.

She said IK does not want to get arrested and had named the Jail Bhara movement after the party's workers, adding, PTI's senior leadership is seeking bail from the courts and asking their supporters to get arrested. Imran Khan's only aim is to use the innocent youth workers for his conspiracy, she added. The 'Jail Bhara Tehreek' was a flopped circus show where PTI's leaders and MPAs were seen taking pictures and videos inside the prison vans and when they saw the police were coming to arrest them, they ran away. MNA further warned that government will not allow those who attempt to hold the nation hostage for their personal gains. Replying to a question, she said the PML-N workers' convention has already started by Maryum Nawaz, adding.—APP

Briefs

One more infected with coronavirus in RWP

RAWALPINDI: One more person was diagnosed with coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the district's tally of confirmed cases to 47,764. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here on Monday, the infected cases included 44,121 from Rawalpindi and 3,643 from other districts. The report added that the new case had arrived from the federal capital while one confirmed patient was quarantined at home. The report updated that 7,006,011 people, including 44,790 health workers, had received jobs against the lethal Coronavirus (COVID-19) across the district since the vaccination drive was launched on March 10, 2021. District Health Authority added that during the last 24 hours, 104 samples were collected, out of which 103 were declared negative, while the positivity rate was recorded at 0.96 per cent.—DNA

Chinese researchers to reach Gwadar for green initiative

ISLAMABAD: A group of seven Chinese researchers and botanists led by Professor Wang Sen will arrive at Gwadar Port in March for Green Gwadar Initiative. According to Gwadar, their visit aims to make further progress on plant growth and sustainability by ensuring plants' resilience against unsuitable and harsh climates through the modern technology of tissue culture and genetic engineering. They will work at the Tissue Culture Lab and Green Center in Gwadar Free Zone which has been jointly established by China Overseas Ports Holding Company and Central South University of Forestry and Technology, China. The prime focus of the laboratory is to conduct research and subsequently produce plants that are conducive to the arid environment of Gwadar. In collaboration with China, the tissue club has significantly contributed to the preservation of Gwadar's natural environment by planting 150,000 plants and converting the previously reclaimed area of Gwadar port and free zone into green land. The previous team of researchers has conducted significant research using non-conventional methods such as tissue culture and genetic engineering to yield new varieties of bananas and jubbe plants. A systematic experimentation has been conducted on the arid non-wood forest.—DNA

MMBL extends unlimited OPD consultation

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited (MMBL), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sehat Kahani, a leading telemedicine platform, to provide affordable and accessible Outpatient Department (OPD) consultation services to its existing and potential customers. Through this partnership, MMBL customers will have access to a dedicated telehealth helpline round-the-clock from the comfort of their homes. MMBL is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and online services across seven countries. As part of its digital operator strategy, VEON is transforming people's lives by creating opportunities for increased digital inclusion and by driving economic growth across countries that are home to more than 8% of the world's population. Under this partnership, MMBL's customers will be able to access Sehat Kahani's services, including virtual consultations with qualified doctors.

Gender equity must for sustainable development

Pakistan has been ranked 145 out of 156 countries for economic participation and opportunity by the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2022

ISLAMABAD: Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is integral to each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The implementation of SDGs ensures that women and girls will receive justice and inclusion in economies that work for all. Pakistan with a population of 107 million women, has been reported as the second-worst country in terms of gender parity. Focusing on the issue of gender equality is not only a necessity but also should be taken as a priority. Pakistan has been ranked 145 out of 156 countries for economic participation and opportunity by the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2022. The missing elements in the country profile of gender statistics and the recognition of the need



to fill critical gaps in data coverage have increased exponentially for Pakistan. Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Cyntax Health

Projects have collaborated to focus on developing solutions for providing women with equal access to education, entrepreneurial opportunities, health

care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes for social cohesion and prosperity. To turn this mission into

action, IWCCI Gender Equity Hub has been launched which will address gender inequities and develop transformative gender and diversity policies for the fe-

male workforce in Pakistan. It will form a national focus for gender-balanced workforce transformation. It will also act as a direct national link with the global equity programs. The hub will create clear evidence-based strategies for addressing gender and diversity inequalities in female workforce development in Pakistan for better SDGs achievement and reporting from a gender lens. The chief guest on the soft launch of the IWCCI Gender Equity Hub was Federal Ombudsman FOSPAH, Madam Kashmala Khan. She appreciated the efforts of both organizations and highlighted the need of creating awareness of gender rights and opportunities for women available in the country through the use of digital media. The event was attended by members of the embassies of Italy and Egypt, representatives of the State Bank of Pakistan, and women entrepreneurs.

Dasu HPP creates over 2,600 jobs for the local

ISLAMABAD: The under-construction Dasu Hydropower Project (DHPP) in the Upper Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has created at least 2,664 jobs for the local community, the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) stated, Gwadar Port reported. According to WAPDA, DHPP will accommodate

more people in the coming days from the local area, which is one of the backward regions of the country. Currently, over 3,700 people (including 2,664 locals) have been given jobs during the peak construction period, the number of jobs will be increased to 8,000 with the majority from the local areas. Meanwhile, the work on the project sites is underway to meet the 2026 deadline for power

generation. The under-construction sites include diversion tunnels (Indus River water has been recently diverted to one of the tunnels while one is under construction) underground powerhouse, a flushing and traffic tunnel, right bank access roads, 132 KV transmission line, WAPDA colony, and offices. China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) has been working on DHPP

as the Main Works Contractor since 2017, which is one of the top green and low-cost energy projects in the country. It is apt to mention that upon completion, Dasu will become the project with the highest annual energy generation in Pakistan. WAPDA is spending funds on schemes relating to re-settlement, environmental management, and social development in the project area.

Pakistan a peace-loving country: Senate chairman

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani Monday said Pakistan was a peace-loving country and wanted to resolve all disputes through peaceful means. In a message to the nation and international community on the occasion of the anniversary of operation Swift Retort, he informed that it was launched by the Pakistan Air Force on February 27, 2019, in response to Indian intrusion into Pakistan's airspace. The chairman said Pakistan was fully capable of defending itself and would not hesitate to respond to any aggression against its sovereignty. He reiterated that Pakistan would continue to strive for peace and stability in the region. "We hope that all nations will work together to promote peace and security in the world," he said adding, "We appreciate the bravery and courage displayed by the Pakistan Armed Forces during operation Swift Retort and their continued dedication towards safeguarding our nation's sovereignty. We salute the sacrifices of our soldiers and their families who have stood firm against all odds in defending our country. The Pakistan Armed Forces remain the pride of our nation and a symbol of our strength and resilience."—APP

'Public role crucial in fighting blindness'

RAWALPINDI: President Al-Shifa Trust Maj. Gen. (R) Rehmat Khan on Monday said vision impairment and eye disease are major problems and proper public health interventions can reduce the prevalence of blindness in Pakistan. The current annual cost of vision impairment and eye disease in the world runs in hundreds of billions of dollars which include the impact of lost productivity, diminished quality of life, increased depression, etc., he said. Addressing the first international conference on Public Health, Maj. Gen. (R) Rehmat Khan said that Public Health great tool for fighting blindness which must be utilized optimally. He said that professionals in Public Health can educate the



masses on the importance of eye care and ways to maintain good eye health. This education can include information on proper nutrition, the importance of regular eye checkups, and ways to protect the eyes from injury. Research by Public Health professionals about the prevalence of eye diseases and conditions in the population can help eye hospitals and NGOs in developing prevention and treatment strategies, he said. Dean of PIO, Prof. Dr. Wajid Ali Khan, Advisor to the HEC Chairman

Awais Ahmed, Dr. Zahid A. Butt from the University of Waterloo, Canada, Prof. Tokie Anne from Tsukuba University Japan, Babar Taseem Sheikh, Director of John Snow International, Mrs. Tahira Ahammad, Chairperson of Special Pakistan. Dr. Ayesha Babar Kawish, HOD of Al-Shifa School of Public Health, (ASOPH), Dr. Ahmed Abdullah, Associate Professor at ASOPH, Dr. Quratulain Waheed, Senior Lecturer at ASOPH Dr. Ammara Ajmal, Assistant Professor at ASOPH contributing their expertise to the discussions. The conference provided a unique opportunity for participants to engage with experts from diverse fields within public health. Attendees included faculty and students from the Al-Shifa School of Public Health, higher management of Al-Shifa Trust.

SMEDA to organize webinar tomorrow

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) is going to organize a webinar on "How to sell on Daraz" for profitable business growth on February 28 (Tuesday). The session is being offered by SMEDA under National Business Development Programme (NBDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium businesses, according to a source in the authority. The programme will provide opportunities to SMEs in high trending and most demanding e-commerce tools and platforms. The training provides information about introduction to e-commerce, introduction to daraz, signing up for daraz seller account, daraz ad creation guide and introduction to daraz live. The SMEDA specifically encouraged Women to apply for webinars.—APP

Pakistan's first Artificial Intelligence Summit concludes

ISLAMABAD: 10Pearls, a leading end-to-end digital services company, hosted AI Summit 2023, Pakistan's pioneering conference on Artificial Intelligence, at the Pak-China Friendship Center, Islamabad. The event was a massive success, with more than 1500 registrations, comprising professionals, students, enthusiasts and entrepreneurs. The AI Summit, first launched in 2019, aims to 'explore the transformative world of AI' - share the latest developments in AI, recognize innovations by emerging AI entrepreneurs, power conversations with leading international and local AI experts, and provide hands-on knowledge about various AI tools, technologies, and techniques. The 2023 edition of AI Summit, held at the ITCN Asia, featured 30-plus eminent speakers who conducted enlightening tech talks, stimulating panel discussions, and engaging fireside chats. The Summit also hosted hands-on workshops and showcased demos of new innovations by emerging AI startups. According to Syeda Sana Hussain, Senior Director, People & Programs, 10Pearls, "The AI Summit 2023 was a huge success! It garnered massive footfall; both the conference track and workshops were fully packed with super-charged and enthusiastic audience. All the emerging AI startups who showcased their products received phenomenal response, attracting the interest of potential investors and the public alike. This incredible success of AI Summit 2023 shows the transformative role AI can play in addressing the complex challenges of today's world.—APP

Old Bannu road project to improve connectivity

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway Authority (NHA) is making steady progress on the Old Bannu road project which is a crucial transportation road linking Bannu to Dera Ismail Khan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Talking to APP on Monday, an official of NHA said that progress has been made on the Old Bannu road which spans a distance of 84 kilometres and is divided into three packages, adding that the first package, which covers the area near Sarai Naurang, has already been completed and the remaining area, from Krapa to Bannu, has been divided into two additional packages. The official said that the Frontier Works Organization (FWO) has been contracted to carry out the work on this project, and progress is being made at an impressive pace.—APP

IRSA releases 97,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 97,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 54,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1460.96 feet and was 62.96 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 15,000 cusecs while outflow as 50,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1112.60 feet, which was 62.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 17,400 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 58,900, 41,400, 30,400 and 7,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 13,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Hira Mani celebrates birthday in style

ISLAMABAD: Wishes poured in as the A-list Pakistani actress, singer and presenter Hira Mani celebrated her 34th birthday with friends and family. Turning to her official Instagram handle, the 'Do Bol' sensation shared her captivating photos donning simple yet classy white attire teamed up with elegant jewelry along with the caption "Happy birthday to me". Syed Shafaat Ali, a famous Pakistani TV host and stand-up comedian along with his wife Rebecca Faryal made the diva's day unforgettable by surprising her with cake and adorable gifts. Sharing the fun-filled celebration reels on his Insta handle, the former video jockey's husband Mani also wished the queen on her big day.—APP

ANCHORCryp to currency governance and Pakistan Economy

MUHAMMAD SHAHZAD AKRAM

Cryptocurrency governance refers to the process by which decisions are made regarding the rules, policies, and direction of a particular cryptocurrency network. Since cryptocurrencies are decentralized and do not have a central authority, the governance process typically involves a community of users, developers, and other stakeholders who come together to propose, discuss, and implement changes to the network. Several states have implemented cryptocurrency governance including the United States. The Japanese government has implemented a licensing system for cryptocurrency exchanges and other service providers and has established a framework for the taxation of cryptocurrency transactions. The Swiss government has established a legal framework for cryptocurrency and blockchain businesses and has implemented a licensing regime for cryptocurrency exchanges and other service providers. Malta has established itself as a hub for cryptocurrency businesses, with the government implementing a pro-cryptocurrency regulatory regime. The Maltese government has established a licensing system for cryptocurrency exchanges and other

service providers and has also implemented a framework for initial coin offerings (ICOs). The Singaporean government has established a licensing system for cryptocurrency exchanges and other service providers and has also implemented a framework for ICOs. Overall, the approach to cryptocurrency governance varies widely from country to country. Some countries have adopted more permissive regulatory regimes, while others have taken a more cautious approach. The specific approach to cryptocurrency governance will depend on a variety of factors, including the size and sophistication of the local cryptocurrency market, the level of support for cryptocurrencies among regulators and policymakers, and the specific goals and values of the local population. There are different approaches to cryptocurrency governance, but some of the most common include. Core Development Teams: Some cryptocurrencies have a small group of core developers who make decisions about the network's direction and implementation. These developers are typically chosen based on their technical expertise and are responsible for maintaining the codebase, implementing updates, and addressing bugs and security issues. Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs): A DAO is a decentralized entity

that operates through code and smart contracts on a blockchain. In the context of cryptocurrency governance, a DAO can be used to allow token holders to vote on network changes and proposals. Token Holder Governance: Some cryptocurrency networks allow token holders to vote on proposals through a process known as "token holder governance." This approach gives users a direct say in the network's development, but it can also be prone to manipulation by large token holders. Hybrid Governance: Some cryptocurrencies use a combination of the above approaches to achieve a balance between decentralization and efficiency. Overall, cryptocurrency governance is a complex and evolving field, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution that works for every network. The success of a particular governance model depends on a variety of factors, including the size and diversity of the community, the complexity of the network, and the specific goals and values of the stakeholders involved. Pakistan, like any other country, can approach cryptocurrency governance in several ways. Here are some potential steps that Pakistan could take to develop a framework for cryptocurrency governance: Legal and Regulatory Framework: The first step for Pakistan would be to establish a legal and regulatory framework

for cryptocurrencies. This could involve defining cryptocurrencies as a specific asset class, creating a licensing regime for cryptocurrency exchanges and other service providers, and developing rules for the issuance of new cryptocurrencies. Education and awareness campaigns can be important tools for promoting responsible cryptocurrency use and reducing the risk of fraud and other illegal activities. Consumer Protection: Pakistan could establish consumer protection measures to ensure that users of cryptocurrency platforms are protected against fraud and other forms of exploitation. This could include measures such as requiring exchanges to maintain sufficient reserves to cover user deposits and implementing dispute resolution mechanisms to resolve disputes between users and service providers. Pakistan could implement anti-money laundering (AML) and know-your-customer (KYC) requirements for cryptocurrency exchanges and other service providers. This could help to prevent illicit activities such as money laundering and terrorist financing. Pakistan can collaborate with other countries and international organizations to develop best practices for cryptocurrency governance. This could involve sharing information and expertise with other

countries, participating in international forums, and working with industry associations to promote responsible cryptocurrency use. The approach to cryptocurrency governance in Pakistan will depend on a variety of factors, including the size and sophistication of the local cryptocurrency market, the level of support for cryptocurrencies among regulators and policymakers, and the specific goals and values of the Pakistani people. Cryptocurrency governance has the potential to improve the Pakistani economy in several ways. Here are some potential benefits: Increased Access to Capital: Cryptocurrencies can provide individuals and businesses with a new way to access capital. By allowing users to make borderless transactions with low fees, cryptocurrencies can provide an alternative to traditional financing channels. This could be particularly beneficial for Pakistani entrepreneurs who face challenges in accessing capital due to limited access to credit and other traditional financial services. Improved Financial Inclusion: Cryptocurrencies can also improve financial inclusion in Pakistan. Cryptocurrencies are accessible to anyone with an internet connection, which means that people who are excluded from the traditional banking system can still participate in the economy. This could help to

reduce poverty and increase economic growth. Reduced Transaction Costs: Cryptocurrencies can also reduce transaction costs for individuals and businesses. Traditional financial systems often involve high transaction fees, especially for cross-border transactions. Cryptocurrencies, on the other hand, can facilitate low-cost and fast transactions, which can reduce the cost of doing business and increase economic activity. Improved Transparency: Cryptocurrencies are built on blockchain technology, which provides a transparent and immutable ledger of all transactions. This can help to reduce corruption and improve accountability in the Pakistani economy. Job Creation: The development and adoption of cryptocurrencies can also create new jobs in the Pakistani economy. This could include jobs in software development, financial services, and other related fields. Overall, the potential benefits of cryptocurrency governance for the Pakistani economy are significant. However, there are also risks and challenges associated with cryptocurrencies, such as volatility, security risks, and regulatory challenges. Therefore, Pakistan needs to approach cryptocurrency governance in a responsible and balanced way, taking into account both the potential benefits and the potential risks.

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Rising Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians

Israeli settlers have carried out at least 300 attacks, including shootings and arson, in a rampage through Palestinian villages in the Nablus area of the occupied West Bank, Palestinian officials say, in what has been described as a "pogrom". A 37-year-old Palestinian man identified as Samih al-Aqtash was shot in the stomach on Sunday night by settlers protected by the Israeli army in the village of Zaatarah south of Nablus. He died of his injuries. The father of five returned home five days ago after volunteering to help earthquake survivors in Turkey. At least 390 Palestinians were injured in the settler rampage across the villages of Huwara, Zaatarah, Burin and Asira al-Qibliya – all south of Nablus, the Palestinian Red Crescent said, adding that the majority were wounded from tear gas fired by the Israeli army as well as smoke inhalation from widespread fires set by the settlers. Palestinian media reported stabbings and attacks with metal rods and rocks. The Palestinian Ministry of Health said one person was in hospital after being beaten in the head with a rock, causing fractures to the skull. Another person suffered a beating with a metal rod to the face. Israeli settler attacks have consistently been rising for the past six years. Attacks on villages in the Nablus area, where there is a heavy settler concentration, have been increasing and becoming more organised over the past year.

Many of these incidents have been recorded on video that shows the attacks taking place under the protection or in coordination with the Israeli army, sometimes with soldiers and settlers shooting side by side. In a statement on December 15, the United Nations said, "2022 is the sixth year of consecutive annual increase in the number of Israeli settler attacks in the occupied West Bank." "Disturbing evidence of Israeli forces frequently facilitating, supporting and participating in settler attacks, makes it difficult to discern between Israeli settler and state violence. Armed and masked Israeli settlers are attacking Palestinians in their homes, attacking children on their way to school, destroying property and burning olive groves, and terrorising entire communities with complete impunity," the statement said. In recent weeks, matters on the ground have become particularly tense after Israel carried out several large-scale raids in Palestinian cities, killing dozens of Palestinians.

On Wednesday, Israeli forces killed 11 Palestinians and wounded more than 100, the majority with live ammunition, during a raid on Nablus. It was the largest Palestinian death toll in a single Israeli military operation since 2005. Less than a month prior, the Israeli army killed 10 Palestinians during an attack on the Jenin refugee camp, including two children and a 61-year-old woman. The Israeli army and settlers have killed 67 Palestinians since the start of 2023, including 13 children. The Palestinian Ministry of Health said the death toll is the highest in the past 22 years. The developments on Sunday in Nablus happened during talks between Palestinian Authority and Israeli officials at the Red Sea port of Aqaba. Representatives from the US and Egypt also attended the meeting, which was condemned and rejected by many Palestinians.



The stars are aligned for cinema in Saudi Arabia

A Saudi film festival concluded a few days ago in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom. In what was a magnificent display of local creativity and an appreciation of the beautiful art of movie-making, local producers, directors, actors and film fans all got together and enjoyed the wonders of the big screen together. More importantly, the festival served as a reminder that Saudis – like anyone else in the world – can enjoy the magic of motion pictures and experience the thrills and chills of public screenings without any issues. Of course, this was not the first festival of its kind in the Kingdom; such events have been organized more frequently over the past few years. However, there is no escaping the obvious question: If Saudis and foreigners can enjoy films at these local festivals, then why can't the Kingdom simply open up public movie theaters, where both locally produced films as well as selected Hollywood blockbusters can be shown? The ban on cinema in Saudi Arabia is a complicated matter. Technically, there is no law or religious edict (fatwa) that prohibits it and the disappearance of movie theaters (which used to exist up to the 1970s in some Saudi cities) is known to be a recent matter which crept its way into society. This was possibly based on the "ijtihad" of some overzealous elements and the negligence of officials who may have not seen the matter as a priority... after all, to many people cinema is merely a pastime. Could there have been an element of media control at that time as well? Possibly... although that argument, if it ever existed, was shredded to bits with the introduction of satellite television in the early 1990s and the Internet a decade later. Yet today's Saudi Arabia is incomparable with that of 1980s or 1990s. In fact, the pace of change occurring in the Kingdom is so fast that it is even incomparable to the Saudi Arabia of two years ago! Yes, there are still plenty of social issues to fix. However, one cannot ignore that in the past six months alone, we have seen live concerts, mixed audiences, visit of Hollywood stars, the Kingdom's first ever Comic-Con and more art galleries and film activities than perhaps ever before. Naturally, credit needs to be given where credit is due, and the newly-formed and government-backed General Authority for Entertainment certainly deserves a round of applause for all its efforts to bring joy, laughter and magical moments to the Kingdom and paint a bright future which awaits us within Vision 2030. Will there be those who are unhappy with a decision to re-open movie theaters? Of course there will be. However, nobody will be forcing them to change their mind or watch a film if they don't choose to. We must remember that there were also those who opposed schools for girls and if it wasn't for the late King Faisal and his stern and decisive approach to the matter in the 1960s, women's education might have been delayed for decades. Will there be a security risk of having people together in a public arena? Of course there will be. But would that be any more dangerous than attending a football match or flying on a plane? –Arab News

Russia's concerns related to Afghanistan

Gul.i.AyeshaBhatti



Moscow increased its outreach efforts as the United States and NATO withdrew their presence and the Taliban slowly gained momentum across the nation. As a result, Russia established a number of diplomatic initiatives, which were frequently organised as rival conversation platforms to efforts conducted by the West. Russia developed the Moscow format of regional peace negotiations on Afghanistan with Taliban involvement in 2017 and an informal inter-Afghan

Russia views Afghanistan primarily through the lens of security risks to itself and its Central Asian neighbors, over which Moscow seeks soft supremacy. After Ukraine, Afghanistan is another significant factor in Russia's complex and tense ties with the United States and NATO. Beginning in the early 2010s, Russia explored diplomatic avenues to influence Afghanistan's political climate.

Moscow increased its outreach efforts as the United States and NATO withdrew their presence and the Taliban slowly gained momentum across the nation. As a result, Russia established a number of diplomatic initiatives, which were frequently organised as rival conversation platforms to efforts conducted by the West. Russia developed the Moscow format of regional peace negotiations on Afghanistan with Taliban involvement in 2017 and an informal inter-Afghan forum under the auspices of Afghan diaspora organisations in Russia in 2019. The meeting brought together the leaders of numerous key movements and factions of the old Afghan Northern Alliance, mujahideen groups, and the Taliban to examine the chances for peace.

Even though the Taliban remained on the official Russian list of terrorist organisations, these measures were implemented. The Chinese-Russian-US discussion, a cooperative project that developed out of the US-Russian dialogue on Afghanistan, was a comparable attempt.

Midway through 2019, this format was expanded to include Pakistan.

In 2019, US and Russian special envoys for Afghanistan began meeting regularly. Moscow supported US-Taliban talks late in 2018 but opposing any peace plan without Russia. In February 2019, the Taliban-US Doha talks restarted, changing Russia-Taliban ties. Russia abandoned limited collaboration for full engagement. As Afghan MPs and Taliban members met in Moscow to celebrate 100 years

of Russia-Afghanistan diplomatic relations in May 2019. In addition Russia was the first to negotiate with the Taliban after the US left Afghanistan to protect its regional interests.

There are important factors that prevent Russia from downplaying Afghanistan's importance in terms of its foreign policy goals. One is the risk of turmoil in Central Asia due to the Taliban's ascent and U.S. and NATO military withdrawal. Russia worries about the Taliban administration in Afghanistan inspiring terrorism and insurgent activity in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. It distrusts Central Asian states and its capacity to protect the region from a Taliban inspiration. It believes the present surge in terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan might spread and affect the CARs.

Afghan drug trafficking is another threat. Russia has recently changed from being a large drug transit country to becoming an important consumer of opiates and heroin from Afghanistan. Russia uses somewhat less heroin than Europe combined, according to the UN (70 tonnes versus 88 tons). 30,000-40,000 of the 100,000 drug users that die each year are Russian. As the Taliban fell and coalition soldiers entered Afghanistan, drug manufacturing expanded significantly.

Due to Islamic State-rising Khorasan's attacks in Afghanistan, Russia is concerned about its nationals' safety. Last September, the terrorist group exploded a suicide bomb outside the Russian Embassy in Kabul, killing two employees and several Afghan visa applicants.

At the beginning of this month, Russia invited regional powers to Moscow for multilateral discussions on Afghanistan. These powers included China, India, Iran, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. According to his office, Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke at the beginning of the fifth international dialogue on how to build peace and stability in Afghanistan. He stated that there are conflicts "not far from Russia,

including on the Ukrainian track," but that these do "not reduce the significance" of the situation in Afghanistan, and that Russia does not want "more points of tension" on its southern borders. Mr. Putin also noted that "international terrorist organizations" like al-Qaida are "stepping up their activity" in Afghanistan.

Pakistan skipped Russia's international Afghanistan conference this year whereas on the other hand, India made sure that its anti-Pakistan stance on Afghanistan was heard well. Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesman Mumtaz Zahra Baloch explained Islamabad's absence from the Moscow meeting during the weekly press briefing. She said Pakistan didn't go because it thinks it can contribute more to Afghanistan peace efforts elsewhere. Pakistan is working on a quadrilateral (US, China, Russia, Pakistan) platform to address Afghanistan's peace and stability and the danger of terrorism, according to a senior Pakistani official. It was an obvious choice by Pakistan not to participate as it is in dire need of Washington for a successful IMF deal.

Nevertheless, it is not wise to be absent from a diplomatic forum and miss the opportunity to express the state's stance. Pakistan is one of Afghanistan's most unstable neighbors. So, its voice matters if it speaks out at all important regional and global venues. Mr. Putin discussed Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis and terrorism at the Moscow conference. These are Pakistan-related concerns. In the future, Pakistan must actively engage in any such conversations that might assist in stabilize Afghanistan and ensure that its voice is heard and its interests safeguarded at such regional gatherings so that others do not take advantage of our absence to further isolate us.

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Conversion of Green Lands into Housing Schemes

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sulemaahir



Hunger and malnutrition are major global issues that affect millions of people, particularly those living in poverty. According to the United Nations, approximately 690 million people suffer from hunger, and an additional 2 billion people experience food insecurity. Achieving Zero Hunger is critical for several reasons. First, it is a basic human right to have access to sufficient and nutritious food

SDGs stand for Sustainable Development Goals. They are a set of seventeen global goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs aim to address a wide range of social, economic, and environmental issues. The SDGs are designed to be universal, meaning that they apply to all countries and are intended to be implemented in both developed and developing countries. They are also interrelated, recognizing that progress in one goal can contribute to progress in other goals. The SDGs provide a framework for action by governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals to work together to achieve a sustainable future for all. Zero Hunger, is one of the most important goals of the SDGs. Hunger and malnutrition are major global issues that affect millions of people, particularly those living in poverty. According to the United Nations, approximately 690 million people suffer from hunger, and an additional 2 billion people experience food insecurity. Achieving Zero Hunger is critical for several reasons. First, it is a basic human right to have access to sufficient and nutritious food. Hunger and malnutrition can lead to stunted growth, weakened immune systems, and even death, particularly among children. Second, ending hunger can help to reduce poverty, improve health outcomes, and promote economic growth. When people have access to nutritious food, they are better able to work, learn, and contribute to their communities. Third, achieving Zero Hunger is essential for environmental sustainability. Sustainable agriculture practices, including reducing food waste and improving soil health, can help to protect natural resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve Zero Hunger, a range of actions are needed,

including increasing agricultural productivity, improving food systems, reducing food waste, and increasing access to nutritious food for vulnerable populations. This requires collaboration between governments, civil society, the private sector, and individuals. To fulfill the needs of modern societies, the conversion of green lands into housing schemes can have a negative impact on achieving Zero Hunger. Green lands are important for agricultural production, as they provide space for crops to grow and for livestock to graze. When these lands are converted into housing schemes, it can lead to a loss of agricultural productivity and a reduction in the availability of nutritious food. The conversion of green lands into housing schemes can also contribute to food insecurity, particularly for vulnerable populations. When land is used for housing, it may no longer be available for farming, which can lead to a reduction in food production and an increase in food prices. This can make it difficult for low-income households to access sufficient and nutritious food, leading to malnutrition and hunger. To achieve Zero Hunger, it is important to prioritize the preservation of green lands for agricultural production. This can be done through the implementation of policies and regulations that limit the conversion of agricultural land into housing schemes. Additionally, efforts can be made to promote sustainable land use practices, such as agroforestry and conservation agriculture. Overall, it is essential to balance the need for housing with the need for agricultural land and to prioritize the achievement of Zero Hunger in all development efforts.

Pakistan is a country that faces significant challenges related to food security and zero hunger. The country has a large population, and a significant proportion of the population lives in

poverty. In addition, climate change and environmental degradation pose significant challenges to agricultural productivity in Pakistan.

To address these challenges, it is important to prioritize the preservation of green lands for agricultural production in Pakistan. This can be done through the implementation of policies and regulations that limit the conversion of agricultural land into housing schemes. The government can work with local communities and stakeholders to identify areas of land that are suitable for development and those that should be protected for agricultural purposes. In addition to preserving green lands, efforts can be made to promote sustainable agricultural practices in Pakistan. This includes investing in irrigation systems and improving soil health, which can help to increase agricultural productivity and reduce the impact of climate change on crop yields. The government can also promote the use of modern agricultural technologies and techniques, such as precision agriculture and conservation agriculture, which can help to reduce inputs and increase yields. Finally, efforts can be made to ensure that vulnerable populations have access to sufficient and nutritious food in Pakistan. This can be done through the implementation of food assistance programs, nutrition education initiatives, and other policies and programs that promote food security. By prioritizing the preservation of green lands for agricultural production and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, Pakistan can take important steps toward achieving food security, zero hunger and improving the health and well-being of its population.

—The writer is Vice Chancellor KhwajaFareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan

Briefs

President can give election...

FROM PAGE 01

The original bench included: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyid Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Athar Minallah. The bench has been reconstituted to a five-member bench after four judges – Justice Mandokhail, Justice Shah, Justice Afridi and Justice Minallah – wrote dissenting notes in the Feb 23 order and called for the reconstitution of the bench.

CJP Bandial, Justice Shah, Justice Mandokhail, Justice Akhtar and Justice Mazhar are currently hearing the case. Justice Ahsan and Justice Naqvi, whose inclusion to the original bench was opposed by the coalition government and the Pakistan Bar Council, as well as Justice Minallah and Justice Afridi have distanced themselves from the bench. "These four judges have shown grace and stepped away from the bench," said the chief justice at the outset of the hearing.

Division in the bench had also emerged in the very first hearing after Justice Mandokhail, who is part of the current bench, objected to the suo motu notice itself as "unjustified". The reconstituted bench began hearing the case around 1:30pm after two delays in its scheduled timings of 11:30am and 12:30pm.

As the proceedings commenced Monday, CJP Bandial said that four members of the bench have disassociated themselves from the bench. "The remaining bench, however, will continue hearing the case. We will continue the hearing for the interpretation of the Constitution because what the Constitution says depends on its interpretation," he stated.

The apex judge went on to say that the court will again hear the suo motu case at 9:30am tomorrow (Tuesday) and try to wrap it up. CJP Bandial also pointed out that the note of one of Justice Mandokhail had emerged on social media even before the verdict was released. "We will take precautions so that such an incident does not recur in the future."

As the hearing proceeded, Barrister Ali Zafar informed the court that the Punjab governor had sought names from both parties regarding the caretaker chief minister. "But because there was a disagreement between the parties involved, the ECP decided on the name of the CM." The ECP, he continued, wrote a letter to the governor but the latter declined to propose a date for the election on the grounds that he had not dissolved the assembly. "According to the Constitution, it is compulsory to hold elections within 90 days [of the dissolution of the assemblies] and no constitutional representative can delay the polls further than this," the lawyer stressed. Here, Justice Mazhar remarked that the governor had "thrown the matter" into the ECP court. "Who appoints the governor?" he asked. Barrister Zafar responded that a governor was appointed with the consent of the president.

"There is a difference between a governor dissolving an assembly and an automatic dissolution of the assembly after the completion of its term," Justice Mazhar said. At that, Barrister Zafar said the court could either order the governor or the ECP to announce the date for elections, highlighting that the meeting between the governor and the ECP team that was held on the directions of the court had ended inconclusively. The president unilaterally announced the election date while analysing the whole situation, the lawyer told the court. For his part, former Punjab Assembly speaker's counsel said that holding elections was the responsibility of the electoral body. Referring to the Lahore High Court's Feb 10 order of holding elections in Punjab, Barrister Zafar said that the ECP also did not comply with the court's orders. "Was the option for the contempt used?" Justice Mansoor Ali Shah asked here. The lawyer replied that a contempt plea was filed on Feb 14. "The ECP was subsequently asked to furnish a reply on the petition," he added.

Women footballers accuse PFF NC of mistreatment

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: "Should we all stop playing football, because obviously, despite spending our lives on it we are now obsolete?" asked a football player who endured abusive environment at the national women's football camp back in August. The story of women's football in Pakistan is that of perseverance, passion, overcoming social isolation, fighting gender bias, and finding their own identity. Despite all this, their many years of hard work and strife still end in heartbreak. The kind that leaves one numb, dejected, and angry, and should the women speak out against it, they are gotten rid of, as had been witnessed in the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalisation Committee's (NC's) dealing with the players who had held the head coach accountable for mistreatment. The players' words played increasingly loud in my head as I saw the press release and pictures of the national women's football team probables along with the coach Adeel Rizki, PFF NC chairman Haroon Malik and President of Pakistan Arif Alvi last week. Those pictures were deeply disconcerting to look at. I learnt



about it over the last two weeks after several women footballers spoke to me about their experience at the national football camp which was set up for the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship in Nepal last year. The way players' concerns and wellbeing had been neglected to keep the positions at the PFF and the national team was nothing short of a reprobate behaviour.

The pictures only brought about the horrifying realisation yet again that women's football, much like every other department in Pakistan, is dictated by a bunch of men fighting for their place in the power corridors. It is an open secret that the women footballers had submitted their letters to the PFF NC complaining about the head coach's discriminatory behaviour and abuse, only to find

out that the NC head was not only complicit but also showed all the letters to the same coach. The SAFF Championship was historic for Pakistan women because it was finally a comeback for them in international arena after eight long years. In these eight years, the women who chose football, who stuck to their passion despite living in a patriarchal and traditional society that discour-

ages girls to play sports, finally saw their chance of proving their mettle. It was also the first tournament that any Pakistani team had played since FIFA lifted its 15-month-long suspension on PFF which came after a faction of former PFF officials overtook the federation's headquarters in Lahore. The faction claimed to be the rightful office holders, which FIFA did not recognise; hence it suspended the membership of the country after several warnings.

That too happened in the middle of the Women's National Championship. The takeover resulted in the cancellation of the event which left the women traumatised, angry and heartbroken. It is always the case that women are not the ones who have a say in their own game. Pakistan also does not have an active women's league and the federation only holds the annual National Championship that too lasted for a month. "Of course, every player wanted to play, we all had been hungry for an opportunity, but what we saw in the camp was so discouraging. The coach would not even look at the game of all the players, he had already picked his favourites, but it was interesting to know that we have not had any national championships before, there were only closed trials.

PSG beat rivals Marseille 3-0 to win Le Classique



PARIS: The World Cup foes Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé inspired Paris Saint-Germain to secure a 3-0 win at bitter rivals Marseille to extend their Ligue 1 lead to eight points on Sunday. Mbappé, who scored twice, was set up by Messi for both his goals and repaid the favour by laying on another for the Argentina forward as PSG, who were without the injured Neymar, moved to 60 points from 25

games with the second-placed Marseille on 52. Mbappé, the France forward who was on the losing side against Messi's Argentina in the World Cup final, became PSG's joint record scorer with 200 goals – level with Edinson Cavani. The three points came at some cost, however, with the PSG head coach Christophe Galtier confirming that Presnel Kimpembe had ruptured his achilles tendon and

the France international will now miss the rest of this season.

Kimpembe, who missed the World Cup with an achilles problem, left the pitch on a stretcher, two weeks after making his comeback from a three-month layoff. Mbappé wrote on Instagram: "Stay strong, my brother," while PSG said on Twitter: "All our support and strength. We are with you!" PSG next face Nantes at home before travelling to Bayern Munich for their Champions League last-16 return leg after losing the first leg 1-0 at Parc des Princes. The third-placed Monaco slumped to a 3-0 home defeat against Nice, who prevailed thanks to a Terem Moffi double and a superb half-volley by Khéphren Thuram. The result left Monaco on 50 points, ahead of the fourth-placed RC Lens on goals scored after the team from north France drew 1-1 at Montpellier on Saturday. Rennes won 1-0 at Nantes with an early strike from Jeremy Doku to keep themselves in the hunt for European qualification. Auxerre boosted their own survival hopes with a 1-0 win at Lorient courtesy of Rayan Avelosson's free-kick. – Agencies

Tokyo Olympics scandal net widens

TOKYO: The scandal-hit Tokyo Olympics has seen more development as another businessman has "confessed" to rigging before the global event was held in Japan in 2021. Hiroshi Igarashi, who is president and CEO of Dentsu Group Inc., "has admitted to prosecutors the Japanese ad giant's involvement in rigging bids over the Tokyo Olympics," unnamed sources told Kyodo News on Monday. During questioning last Friday, Igarashi has "voluntarily" admitted to "rigging bids over contracts to plan and run pre-games test events and operate competitions during the Summer Games in 2021." The public prosecutors are now mulling to indict Dentsu and "five other companies on charges of violating the anti-monopoly law as early as Tuesday after receiving complaints by the Japan Fair Trade Commission." Several others, including Koji Hemmi, a former Dentsu executive, have been arrested so far. Haruyuki Takahashi, 78, who was a senior official of the now-defunct Tokyo Olympics organizing committee, has also been arrested over suspicion of receiving bribes of around 51 million yen (\$380,000) from major business suit retailer Aoki Holdings, one of the sponsors of last year's summer games. He is believed to have taken bribes "on more than 50 occasions between October 2017 and March this year." Takahashi, has, however, denied any wrongdoing. He is accused of helping Hironori Aoki, a former chairman of Aoki Holdings, in getting "preferential treatment in the process of selecting sponsors." Aoki has also been arrested, along with two other people. – DNA

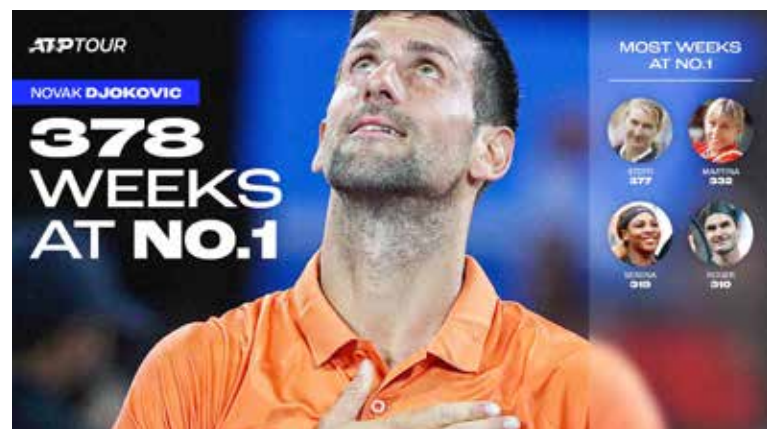
James Vince bids farewell to PSL 8

LAHORE: English batter James Vince has left Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 8 due to his national commitment. Vince was scheduled to play only Karachi leg of the PSL 8. He featured in the last game that was played in Karachi this season between Karachi Kings and Multan Sultans. The right-handed opener scored 174 runs in five matches he played in the tournament. His handsome strike rate of 175.75 made him the center of attraction during Kings' matches. He was named in England's ODI squad against Bangladesh. The two countries will play three ODIs on March 1, 3, and 6 in Bangladesh. Vince will be replaced by another English cricketer Adam Rossington. Adam, who represents Northamptonshire County Cricket Club, will join Kings' squad in Rawalpindi tomorrow. Taking to Twitter, Kings wished Vince all the best for his national duty. "Wishing good luck to Vince as he heads off to join the England team for their international assignment. You'll be missed on the pitch but we know you'll do us proud. All the best Vincey," the franchise wrote. After finishing Karachi leg on a winning note by defeating table-toppers Multan Sultans last Sunday, Kings will now head to Rawalpindi to resume their Punjab leg of the tournament. They will take on Peshawar Zalmi in their seventh match at Pindi Cricket Stadium. After their latest victory, Kings held fourth position on the points table with four points in six matches. – DNA

Novak Djokovic breaks all-time record for most weeks at No. 1

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Novak Djokovic achieved yet another milestone in his glittering career by overtaking Steffi Graf's record of most weeks as the world's top-ranked tennis player. "The Serbian already held the record for the most weeks as No. 1 in the history of the Pepperstone ATP Rankings (since 1973) when he surpassed Roger Federer's mark of 310 weeks in March 2021," read an ATP statement on Monday. "Now he has moved past Graf by beginning his 378th week on top of tennis' mountain." Djokovic is currently on 6,980 points in the ATP Rankings, returning to the summit last month for the first time since last June by claiming his 10th Australian Open title. He defeated Stefanos Tsitsipas in straight sets to clinch the record-extending championship win.



After Djokovic and Graf, the players with most weeks as No. 1 are Martina Navratilova (332 weeks), Serena Williams (319 weeks), and Roger Federer (310 weeks). Graf, a tennis great, had 377 weeks as the top-ranked women's player by the time she retired in 1999. The German bagged

22 Grand Slam titles in her 16-year professional tennis career. She is still the only player to win a Golden Slam, achieving the feat in 1988 as she won all four majors – Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, and US Open – and the Olympic gold in Seoul.

Man Utd win League Cup to end 6-year drought

United remain challengers on three other fronts, sitting third in the Premier League and with an FA Cup fifth round tie against West Ham on Wednesday followed by a Europa League last 16 tie against Betis

WEB DESK

MANCHESTER: Manchester United clinched their first major trophy for six years with a ruthless 2-0 win against Newcastle in the League Cup final at Wembley on Sunday. Erik ten Hag's side took control by half-time thanks to Casemiro's header and a Sven Botman own goal and held firm despite Newcastle's second-half pressure. United's first silverware since 2017, when they won the League Cup and the Europa League in the Jose Mourinho era, was just reward for a mature display that underlined the impressive work done by Dutchman Ten Hag since he arrived from Ajax last year. The celebrations that accompanied United's sixth League Cup triumph could be the first of many trophy parades on the evidence of Ten Hag's transformative first season. "You have to win the first one and that is what we did today," Ten Hag said. "We can get a lot of inspiration from this and more confidence that we can do it. We are still at the start of restoring Manchester United to where we belong – winning trophies." United remain challengers on three other fronts, sitting third in the Premier League and with an FA Cup fifth round tie against West Ham on Wednesday followed by a Europa League last 16 tie against Real Bet-

is in March. After 10 years in the wilderness since Alex Ferguson retired having led them to their last Premier League title in 2013, United are finally emerging from one of the darkest periods in the club's illustrious history. United finished a dismal sixth in the Premier League last season, but Ten Hag has swiftly masterminded their return to relevance. It was fitting that Ten Hag's maiden trophy success with United came after he met Ferguson for dinner recently and with the Scot watching from the Wembley stands. Ending United's longest trophy drought for 40 years

is no guarantee of future success, but the steely Ten Hag appears capable of thriving in the unrelenting Old Trafford spotlight. United co-chairman Avram Glazer, attending his first game since the November announcement that his family are considering offers for the club, might reconsider selling up after viewing what could be the start of a golden era. Despite failing to win their first major trophy since the 1969 Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, Newcastle can also expect to feature in more showpiece occasions soon. Newcastle have been revitalised since their

takeover by a Saudi-funded consortium in 2021 and they competed gamely in their first cup final for 24 years

"We played really well between both boxes. I can't fault the players' efforts, but we didn't defend the free-kick well enough for the first goal. That's what we will regret," Howe said. Newcastle's fanatical "Toon Army" turned one half of Wembley into a roiling sea of black and white as they belted out songs of praise for their heroes well over an hour before kick-off. But that show of Geordie passion proved the highpoint of the day for Newcastle as United spoiled the party in composed style. Newcastle had feared stand-in keeper Karius might be exposed in his first major occasion since his howlers led to Liverpool's 2018 Champions League final defeat against Real Madrid. Playing instead of the suspended Nick Pope, Karius might feel he could have done better with United's second goal, but he was not to blame for Newcastle's defeat. United went ahead in the 33rd minute when Luke Shaw's free-kick arrowed towards the Newcastle six-yard box and Casemiro timed his run perfectly to glance a clinical header past Karius.



PSL 8th Edition

WEDNESDAY 07:00 PM
MARCH 01, 2023Pindi Club Ground,
Rawalpindi

Justice Afridi questions...

FROM PAGE 01

the Peshawar High Court in Writ Petition No. 407-P/2023." While noting that the jurisdiction under Article 184(3) is "not affected by the pendency" of any matter before any other court or forum, the LHC verdict and "peculiarly charged and unflinching contested political stances" taken by the parties, warrant this court to show "judicial restraint" to bolster the principle of propriety. The judge further added that this is to avoid any adverse reflection on the Supreme Court's judicial pre-emptive eagerness to decide.

Lt Gen (R) Amjad Shoaib...

FROM PAGE 01

the government, the opposition and the government employees. The lawyer also told the court that they require a photogrammetric test of the former military officer and have to take him to Lahore for the purpose. The prosecutor then requested the court to approve seven-day physical remand of Lt Gen (ret'd) Shoaib. Meanwhile, Lt Gen (ret'd) Shoaib's lawyer Mudassar Khalid Abbasi opposed the physical remand request and instead urged the court to discharge the case. "The sections inserted in the FIR do not apply to Amjad Shoaib," said the lawyer. He added that his client only gave an example of a certain situation.

Khan plea for relocating the court...

FROM PAGE 01

Islamabad today (Tuesday). The exemption plea of Imran Khan for one day was also filed in the court. Through it the court was requested too to make security arrangements on the eve of his appearance in the court. Babar Awan said interior ministry has given statement there is threat of attack on Imran Khan. Suicide attack can be made on him during his appearance in the court. During the hearing request was made on behalf of Imran Khan that the cases which have to be heard on Tuesday should be heard in judicial complex. Counsel Babar Awan said in the court Prime Minister, Interior minister, IG and Chief Commissioner should take responsibility.

'Khwaja Asif should...

FROM PAGE 01

the country into the worst crisis but instead of taking responsibility to fix their own wrongs, they blamed PTI government. She said that all the three armed forces came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence, Khawaja Asif; therefore, he was mainly responsible for the failure of the security policy. Dr. Mazari stated that Khawaja Asif was crying daily on the floor of the house and leveled allegations against PTI, who even did not know about the policies of the imported government.

Maryam wants...

FROM PAGE 01

The PML-N leader said that her party was not afraid of elections, adding that they were preparing for the upcoming polls. "The elections will be held after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan will be measured on the same standards of justice set for Nawaz Sharif," she added.

Briefs

Italy's left picks Schlein to lead party

ROME: Italy's centre-left Democratic Party (PD) has selected Elly Schlein as its new leader.

The 37-year-old MP has emerged as a breakout star in Italian politics, and will hope her elevation to party leader will bring a ray of hope for the beleaguered centre-left, which suffered a devastating defeat in the September general elections, which saw Brothers of Italy's Giorgia Meloni and her right-wing alliance sweep into power with a landslide victory.

Italian-American Schlein was born in Switzerland and holds triple nationality. She is young and openly bisexual, a feminist and impassioned pro-European who posits herself as a "real" leftist - one who appeals to society's most disenfranchised, rather than the "elites" the modern-day left is often accused of courting.

Media outlets have described Schlein as the "anti-Giorgia Meloni", and compared her to US Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who is also renowned for her socially progressive platform. So who is Elly Schlein? Will she be able to revive Italy's moribund centre-left? And how do Italians perceive her?—DNA

Protests in Mexico against electoral reforms

MEXICO CITY: A huge crowd of protesters descended on Mexico City's main plaza on Sunday amid controversial electoral law reforms that critics say will threaten democracy. Sporting the white and pink of Mexico's National Electoral Institute, the country's elections agency, demonstrators at Zocalo square urged the government not to "touch their vote", after controversial electoral reform proposals by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador were passed last week. Organisers say 500,000 people marched on the city's main plaza, whereas the local government put the number at 90,000. If signed into law, the proposals would cut salaries, funding for local election offices, and training for those who operate and oversee polling stations.

The head of the National Electoral Institute, Lorenzo Cordova, has said the reforms "seek to cut thousands of people who work every day to guarantee trustworthy elections, something that will, of course, pose a risk for future elections."

But López Obrador has rejected the criticism as elitist and says the institute spends too much money and that more funds should be spent on the poor. Mexico's president added that he expects court challenges, but that his proposals would be upheld because none of it was "outside the law."—Agencies

Pope to visit Hungary, meet Orban in April

VATICAN City: Pope Francis will visit Hungary in April and meet far-right Prime Minister Viktor Orban, the Vatican said Monday, with the Ukraine war and migrants expected to dominate talks. Francis, who regularly champions the rights of refugees, will sit down in Budapest with Orban, who portrays himself as the defender of a Christian Europe against migrants. During his April 28 to 30 trip, the pope will also meet with poor people as well as youths and refugees, according to a programme released by the Vatican.

It will be the 86-year-old pope's second visit to the predominantly Catholic country in two years. Francis made a one-day visit to the country in September 2021, spending just seven hours in the country to preside over a mass and meet privately with Orban. The pope then received Orban for the first time at the Vatican a few months later.—APP

Mayor assures to play role to increase Pak-UK Trade

Speaking at the occasion Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the UK is an important trading partner of Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Yasser Iqbal, Mayor of Pendle of Lancashire County said that he would play a role to further increase bilateral trade ties between Pakistan and UK as both countries have good potential to do trade in many items for mutual benefit. He said this while exchanging views with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry during his visit to the Chamber. Ch. Ifikhar, Khalid and Raja Azhar also accompanied him at the occasion. Yasser Iqbal said that the Pakistani diaspora in the UK is keen to invest in Pakistan as they want to see Pakistan as a strong economy. He said that a



further conducive business environment would attract more investment from overseas Pakistanis settled in the UK and other countries. He invited the ICCI delegation to visit the UK to explore business collabo-

ration with Britain counterparts and assured that he would cooperate in making their visit successful. Speaking at the occasion Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce &

Industry said that the UK is an important trading partner of Pakistan and we want to further enhance trade and exports with the UK. He said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and the UK is still less than US\$

3 billion and stressed the need of developing strong business linkages between the private sectors of both countries to take bilateral trade to higher levels. He said that the Chinese and Indian diaspora has played

an important role in making the economies of their home countries better and stressed that the Pakistani diaspora should also come forward to steer Pakistan out of the current economic turmoil. He said that the UK has already invested in Pakistan in many sectors including financial services, oil & gas exploration, petroleum refining, electricity generation, pharmaceutical, publishing, industrial chemicals & cement and stressed that Pakistani diaspora in UK should transfer technology and explore JVs and investment in Pakistan. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and UK

Without fulfilling pledges

Türkiye can't approve Sweden's NATO bid

NEWS DESK



ANKARA: Türkiye on Monday reminded the pledges of Sweden and Finland for their NATO accession bids, saying it is impossible to approve Sweden's bid "without seeing steps taken."

"With regards to the membership of Finland and Sweden, the position of Türkiye is clear and transparent," said Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in a joint news conference with Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto, who arrived in Ankara for solidarity visit following the earthquakes that occurred on Feb. 6. Reminding that terrorism is one of the two main threats for NATO, Cavusoglu said Türkiye expects two Nordic countries to meet Ankara's concerns regarding fight against terrorism. Since the signing of the trilateral memorandum in NATO Madrid Summit in June

2022, Cavusoglu said "there has not been any satisfying steps taken by Sweden." Noting the "determined" stance of the new Swedish government, the Turkish minister also said Sweden has made "amendments to its constitution and some laws, especially the anti-terrorism laws." "The purpose of this amendment, as clearly stated in the memorandum of understanding, is to stop illegal acts such as financing terrorism, recruiting people for a terrorist organization and terrorist propaganda," he said, adding that such terrorist activities still continue in Sweden.

He emphasized that it is not only regarding the incident of burning of copies of the holy Quran and noted that such incident was not only unacceptable but also "an act against humanity." Cavusoglu urged the international community to fight against such acts. "There are pledges (by Sweden and Finland) to NATO membership. It is not possible for us to say 'yes' to Sweden's NATO membership without seeing these steps," he said. He also said the NATO bids of the two Nordic countries can be assessed separate-

ly, as Türkiye is more positive towards Finland's process. Cavusoglu reminded of the mechanism established among Türkiye, Sweden, and Finland, and said it is beneficial for 3rd meeting of mechanism to be held in Brussels. The 3rd round of the mechanism's meeting is to be held "on March 9," according to the Turkish minister. "Everyone should see clearly that Sweden, particularly, is not fulfilling its obligations. That's the reason why we said 'yes' for the meeting to be held in Brussels," he added. Pointing out that this mechanism is not for negotiations, Cavusoglu reminded that it was established to see and understand whether the trilateral memorandum is being implemented. The first meeting of the Permanent Joint Mechanism established under the memorandum was held on Aug. 26, 2022 in Vantaa, Finland, while the second meeting on Nov. 26, 2022 in Stockholm. Sweden and Finland formally applied to join NATO last May, abandoning decades of military non-alignment, a decision spurred by Russia's war on Ukraine, which started on Feb. 24, 2022.

Egypt FM visits Türkiye for first time in decade

ANKARA: Hailing the support and solidarity Egypt displayed immediately after deadly earthquakes shook southern Türkiye earlier this month, the Turkish foreign minister said Monday that the two countries were "opening a new chapter in relations." "Friendship and fraternity are evident during difficult times," Mevlut Cavusoglu told a joint press conference with Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry, who is visiting southern Adana and Mersin regions. After the two powerful back-to-back earthquakes that occurred on Feb. 6, Egypt showed Türkiye its fraternity and friendship, Cavusoglu said. He underlined that the two nations were "opening a new chapter in relations," noting the "fruitful" meeting between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in Doha last November. "Developing relations between Türkiye and Egypt is in the interest of both countries, but not only for both countries, but also important for the peace, stability and development of our region," the top Turkish diplomat added. For his part, Shoukry said he conveys a message of "support and consolation for the friendly Turkish people." He said Egypt has been making efforts to help Türkiye during the disaster, adding that priority was given to ships carrying aid supplies to cross the Suez Canal. Egypt's efforts during the earthquake disaster "affirm the special relation which connects the Egyptian people with the Turkish people," Shoukry added. He said Egypt believed in Türkiye's ability to overcome the disaster, it will remain by Türkiye's side and that bilateral relations will rise to the "best level." Regarding the prospects of normalization and possibility of a meeting between Erdogan and Sisi, he said "certainly, there will be contacts at the appropriate time according to the vision of the two presidents."—Agencies

Dmitry Medvedev warns of global nuclear catastrophe

MOSCOW: Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has warned that the continued influx of Western weaponry to Ukraine amid the raging war risks a global nuclear catastrophe. In his remarks published on Monday, Medvedev, a key aide to President Vladimir Putin and deputy chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, urged an immediate halt to the Western supply of heavy weaponry to the embattled government in Kiev. The Russian official reiterated his threat of nuclear war over Ukraine if Western countries continue to arm Ukraine despite repeated warnings from Moscow. "Of course, the pumping in of weapons can continue ... and prevent any possibility of reviving negotiations," Medvedev said in remarks published in the daily Izvestia. "Our enemies are doing just that, not wanting to understand that their goals will certainly lead to a total fiasco. Loss for everyone. A collapse. Apocalypse. Where you forget for centuries about your former life, until the rubble ceases to emit radiation." The latest comments by Medvedev follow Putin's nuclear warning last week and his Sunday remarks casting Moscow's confrontation with the West as an existential battle for the survival of Russia and the Russian people. Since Russia launched its military operation in Russia a year ago, the US and its European allies have provided billions of dollars in military aid to Ukraine, despite repeated warnings from the Kremlin.—APP



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi being briefed about training facilities for students with disabilities, at the National Training Center for Special Persons.—DNA

TBTP: Balochistan Forest Dept performing well

Better performance in spite of shortage of funds, rocky soil, without irrigated water is a suitable answer for those who think that work in Balochistan is in files not on ground

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



After the launch of Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Program (TBTP), there was a strong thought that the performance of Balochistan Forest Department will not be good because the soil behavior in Balochistan is not suitable for plantation; there is no canal water facility. And a wrong perception had developed about Balochistan that the work in Balochistan is only in the files and there is no work on the ground. Funds from the federal government were neither available on time nor as required. In such circumstances, it was right to think that the performance of Balochistan Forest Department would not be appreciable. I was thinking that in this modern age it is not possible to complete the work in the files but not on the ground.

The Forest Department of Balochistan answered all the false perceptions and negative propaganda with its best performance. In Quetta I met Niaz Kakar, Project Director Wildlife Balochistan and Conservator of Forest Quetta Circle. He informed me about the details of Pakistan's first advanced lab estab-

lished in Quetta and I also visited it. Niaz Kakar has given scholarships to the students of the universities for research related to the forest and is also monitoring it regularly. This research work will greatly benefit the forest departments in future. Appreciable work is being done in Balochistan in the field of wildlife. DFO of Gwadar, Yar Muhammad Dashti, under the supervision of Niaz Kakar, is doing international level work in less resources to protect the species of green turtle. Breeding of green turtles in Jiwani beach area is being supervised by trained staff expertly. More than 60,000 baby turtles have been released into the sea. 83500 mangrove plants have been planted in Shadi area of Gwadar, the survival rate of which is more than ninety five percent and all the plants are healthy. The special thing about Gwadar's roadside plantation is that not a single Eucalyptus plant has been planted here and palm trees have also been planted. The survival rate of roadside



plantation is also appreciable. Tribal chiefs are powerful in Balochistan, so it is very difficult to stop the hunting of wildlife in Balochistan. But the satisfactory thing is that DFO Yar Muhammad Dashti has controlled illegal hunting with better strategy and full support of PD Wildlife Niaz Kakar. Due to the control of illegal hunting, Chinkara deer is now seen roaming freely in Basol area. Successful breeding of chinkara deer is also going on and now a cage has been completed on five acres of land for breeding. I visited BRC college, new Bus Truck Stand & khawa zai sawara plantation along with Deputy Conservator Sultan Mehmood and Muhammad Ayub SDFO in Zhob where all plantations of different local species were looking lush and healthy. Pits size and plant to plant distance were accurate. Visited the nursery near zob circuit house, in this nursery there were local species of plants along with fruit plants. The

nursery was clean and plants were kept in order by making a proper shed. During the visit, I saw that Field Staff was not only present but was busy with his work. DFO Afrasiab Khan organized a field visit at Loralai and visited the plantations around Loralai. The beautiful plantation spread over hundreds of acres of local varieties of plants was a testimony to the hard work and professionalism of DFO Afrasiab Khan and his team. The plantations planted by Quetta Forest Division around Quetta city was so beautiful that it attracts visitors from far away. Plantation in Balochistan is the most difficult task in the whole of Pakistan. Plantation requires heavy machinery to level rocky land. Watering has to be done with water bowsers. The Forest Department of Balochistan is completing this difficult task in an efficient manner. The forest officers of Balochistan have been working on the Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Program in a better way, improving the reputation of the forest department, and giving an answer to the negative propagandists with unprecedented progress. Niaz Kakar PD Wildlife, Syed Ali Imran Shah PD Forest and Umar Farooq Khan Kakar Conservator of Forest M&E for their hard work and struggle to make TBTP successful is appreciated at all levels. There is plenty of land in Balochistan where plantation can be done. With the attention of the federal and provincial government, greenery can be seen everywhere in Balochistan.

China hails 'all-weather' Belarus ties

BEIJING: China hailed its "all-weather and comprehensive" strategic partnership with Belarus on Monday, the day before a state visit by President Alexander Lukashenko to Beijing. Lukashenko, who is visiting at the invitation of Chinese leader Xi Jinping, is a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin and has backed Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Lukashenko's three-day visit comes after China last week released a position paper on the conflict, reiterating its insistence it is a neutral party and calling for dialogue between the two sides. "Since the establishment of diplomatic relations 31 years ago, the political mutual trust between (China and Belarus) has been continuously strengthened," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said Monday at a regular press briefing. "China looks forward to working with Belarus to take this visit as an opportunity to promote all-round cooperation between the two countries for further development."

Xi has spoken to Putin several times since the war began, but has not done so with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Asked about Zelenskyy's recent comment that he planned to meet Xi, Mao did not comment directly on a potential meeting. "We have been in constant communication with relevant parties including Ukraine," she said.

Belarus shares a border with both Ukraine and Russia, but is financially and politically dependent on the Putin administration. It allowed Moscow to use its territory to launch its attack on Ukraine last year. Kyiv has expressed concerns that Belarus could again support Moscow in its war effort.

In September last year, Xi and Lukashenko met in the Uzbek city of Samarkand, where they again hailed their "all-weather" partnership.—Agencies

Strike grounds hundreds of flights in Germany

BERLIN: Hundreds of flights were cancelled at Germany's Dusseldorf and Cologne/Bonn airports on Monday due to a fresh strike by security personnel. The one-day "warning strike" will continue until midnight at both airports, the ver.di trade union said in a statement. "We have not received any acceptable offer so far in the negotiations, and now with the strike, the employees are jointly putting pressure on the respective employers," the ver.di representative Andrea Becker said in a statement. In Dusseldorf, over 200 flights were canceled, and the operator advised passengers to check the current status of their flight online before traveling to the airport. The strike forced Cologne/Bonn airport to halt almost all operations, and 134 flights scheduled for the day were canceled.—APP

Croatia to send 14 helicopters to Ukraine

BELGRADE: Croatia plans to send 14 helicopters to Ukraine, a local newspaper reported. The Jutarnji List daily said that preparations have begun for the donation of the helicopters from the Croatian Armed Forces.

The country will send 12 MI-8 MTV-1 and 2 MI-8T helicopters. The helicopters underwent the necessary maintenance in the hangars and will be ready within 10 days. They are expected to be delivered first to Poland and then to Ukraine. The Croatian government has kept all military support to Ukraine secret. Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic did announce in November that 14 helicopters would be sent to Ukraine but declined to provide further details. President Zoran Milanovic, known for his opposing view on sending military aid to Ukraine, reacted by saying: "I don't care."—APP

Briefs

France to unveil new economic in Africa

DNA

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron will unveil on Monday his country's changing economic and military strategy in Africa for the coming years, as France's influence substantially declines on the continent. Macron is expected to call for a more balanced partnership with African nations, in a speech at the Elysee presidential palace before he begins an ambitious Africa trip on Wednesday to Gabon, Angola, the Republic of Congo and Congo. Monday's speech comes at a time when France's influence on the continent is facing more challenges than it has in decades. In less than a year, French troops had to withdraw from Mali, which turned instead to Russian military contractors, and most recently from Burkina Faso, which also appears to increasingly look towards Moscow. A growing anti-France sentiment has led to street protests in several West and North African countries against the former colonial power. In addition, historical economic ties that France had with the region are being challenged by the growing commercial presence of Russia, China and Turkey. "It's not a trip that aims at getting into the race to regain a regretted influence," a top official with the French presidency said.

Feb 26 incident witness to India's jingoism: FO

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The incidents of 26-27 February 2019 bore witness to India's belligerence and jingoism and the tremendous restraint and responsibility demonstrated by Pakistan. The captured Indian pilot was returned as a gesture of peace, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release on Monday in connection with fourth anniversary of Pakistan's befitting response to the airstrikes conducted by India on that day in violation of the international law and the UN Charter. "India must remain mindful of the consequences of its reckless conduct and realize that the Pakistani nation remains ready to fully safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity," it was added. At the same time, the spokesperson said, Pakistan was committed to peaceful co-existence and resolution of long-standing disputes. "We also underscore that durable peace in South Asia remains contingent upon peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people," it was further added.

1 killed in new Turkey quake, 69 injured

ISTANBUL: An earthquake shook southeast Turkey on Monday, killing one person, injuring 69 and causing some buildings to collapse, Turkish authorities said. It hit three weeks after a massive quake that killed more than 50,000 people in Turkey and Syria. Yunus Sezer, head of Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) told a news conference that search and rescue teams had been deployed to five buildings. The quake, which struck the southeastern province of Malatya, was measured by the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre at a magnitude of 5.2. AFAD put it at 5.6. It struck at a depth of 5 km (3 miles), said EMSC. Media reports said two people were believed to be trapped in the rubble of one building. - Agencies

UN seeks \$4.3 billion for Yemen humanitarian needs

"This terrible humanitarian disaster is one the world repeatedly and much too often has almost closed its eyes to," she told reporters in Geneva

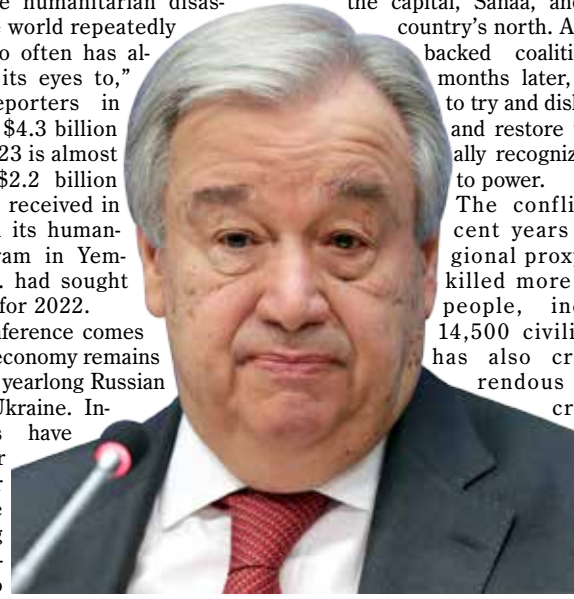
NEWS DESK

CAIRO: The United Nations is seeking \$4.3 billion at a pledging conference Monday to alleviate the suffering of millions of people in Yemen, where an eight-year civil war has created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. More than 21 million people in Yemen, or two-thirds of the country's population, need help and protection, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, which says the humanitarian needs in Yemen are "shocking." Among those in need, more than 17 million are considered particularly vulnerable. "The people of Yemen deserve our support. But more than that, they deserve a credible path out of perpetual conflict and a chance to rebuild their communities and country," said U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, addressing the donors. Monday's high-level gathering is co-hosted by Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.N. in the organization's Palais des Nations in Geneva. In Monday's first

pledge, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said her country will provide 120 million euros (\$127 million). "This terrible humanitarian disaster is one the world repeatedly and much too often has almost closed its eyes to," she told reporters in Geneva. The \$4.3 billion appeal for 2023 is almost double the \$2.2 billion that the U.N. received in 2022 to fund its humanitarian program in Yemen. The U.N. had sought \$4.27 billion for 2022. Monday's conference comes as the global economy remains rattled by the yearlong Russian invasion of Ukraine. Inflation rates have surged over the past year across the world, forcing many governments to

focus on elevating the needs of their own people. Yemen's conflict started in 2014, when the Iran-backed rebel Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of the country's north. A Saudi-led, U.S.-backed coalition intervened months later, in early 2015, to try and dislodge the rebels and restore the internationally recognized government to power. The conflict has in recent years become a regional proxy war that has killed more than 150,000 people, including over 14,500 civilians. The war has also created a horrendous humanitarian crisis, leaving millions suffering from food and medical care shortages and pushing the country

to the brink of famine. The conference is taking place as the warring sides continue to observe an informal and fragile cease-fire. Efforts are underway to declare a new truce after the parties failed to renew a U.N.-brokered truce in October. "We have a real opportunity this year to change Yemen's trajectory and move towards peace, by renewing and expanding the truce," Guterres, the U.N. chief, said. The truce, which took effect in April, brought some relief for Yemenis, especially in Houthi-held areas. It enabled commercial traffic to resume at Sanaa's airport and the sea port of Hodeida. However, partly because of the territorial division - with roughly half of Yemen under Houthi control and the other half under government control - the country is haunted by an economic crisis. There is dual system of currency, dual exchange rates, restrictions on imports and double taxation on goods, according to the U.N. Panel of Experts investigating Yemen's conflict. Annual inflation reached 45%, and food prices surged 58%, according to the panel's report.



Serbia, Kosovo leaders weigh EU proposals

DNA

BRUSSELS: The leaders of Serbia and Kosovo are holding talks on Monday on European Union proposals aimed at ending a long series of political crises and setting the two on the path to better relations and ultimate mutual recognition. Tensions have simmered between Serbia and its former territory since Kosovo unilaterally broke away in 2008; a move recognized by many Western countries but opposed by Serbia, with the backing of Russia and China. Recently, those tensions flared over seemingly trivial matters like vehicle license plate formats, or the arrest of an ethnic Serb police officer, triggering renewed concern among Western leaders that a new Balkan conflict might break out just as Russia's war in Ukraine enters its second year. At meetings in Brussels, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti are expected to discuss ways to put the European proposals into action. Both leaders have already discussed the plan, which hasn't been made public, and EU officials are confident of progress. A senior EU official said before the talks that "we need to break the vicious circle of crisis." He said the proposals are "not the end of the road" when it comes to normalizing ties between Belgrade and Pristina, but that given recent tensions, the EU plan is the "maximum achievable at this point." The official briefed reporters on the condition that he not be named because of the highly sensitive nature of the meetings.



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner Vice Admiral Mohan Wijewickrama made a courtesy call on Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, the Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. - DNA

PTI MNAs resignations accepted as per Constitution: Speaker

ISLAMABAD: Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Monday clarified that he had accepted the resignations of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members of the National Assembly (MNAs) as per the Constitution and on their own request. Talking to a delegation of PTI leaders, which met him under the leadership of Malik Amir Dogar, the speaker made it clear he would discuss the matter with his legal team and they would be informed accordingly. The PTI leaders requested the speaker to withdraw his decision regarding the acceptance of their MNAs' resignations, a news release said. Raja Pervez Ashraf said he had repeatedly sent letters but no PTI member appeared before him. He started the process of accepting resignations when a delegation led by former speaker Asad Qaiser and Aamir Dogar requested him to do so. The speaker observed that he was bound by the Constitution, the law, and the rules and regulations of the National Assembly. He asked the delegation whether the PTI MNAs did not resign according to their will. The resignations were accepted when the PTI delegation headed by Asad Qaiser stressed to do so, he added. - APP

IS land mines in Syria kill 10

NEWS DESK

DAMASCUS: Land mines left behind by the Islamic State group in central Syria went off in two different locations on Monday, killing 10 workers as they were collecting truffles in the countryside and wounding 12, state media reported. According to Syria's state news agency SANA, the two mines exploded east of the central town of Salamiyeh. All the casualties were taken to a hospital in the town, the report added. It wasn't immediately clear what had triggered the explosions.

It is not uncommon for mines left behind years ago, when IS controlled large parts of Syria, to go off inadvertently, usually when stepped on, inflicting casualties. IS was driven out of all the territory it once held in Syria and neighboring Iraq in 2019, but the extremists left behind countless bombs and booby traps, and large areas have yet to be cleared. The militant group's sleeper cells still carry deadly attacks both in Syria and Iraq. SANA said the first explosion on Monday killed nine people and wounded two while the second killed one person and wounded 10. Earlier this month, IS sleeper cells attacked workers collecting truffles near the central town of Sukhna, killing at least 53 people, mostly workers but also some Syrian government security forces.

Palestine calls upon world to rise against Israeli aggression

Israeli Jewish terrorist groups chanted "death to Arabs" and danced on the rubble of burned homes and the bodies of dead and injured Palestinians, all while protected by Israeli occupying forces

RAMALLAH: The State of Palestine has called on the international community to provide international protection for the undefended Palestinian people from unrelenting Israeli sponsored terrorism and incitement; The bloodletting scenes of Israeli Jewish terrorist militias in Huwara destroying the life of every discoverable Palestinian and burning homes, cars, trees, and animals to ash and rubble, are sickening and unprecedented in scale and ferocity; Israeli Jewish terrorist groups chanted "death to Arabs" and danced on the rubble of burned homes and the bodies of dead and injured Palestinians, all while protected by Israeli occupying forces. This Jewish settler terrorism is State-sponsored; it is financially diplomatically, and politically facilitated and supported by every branch of Israel's government and celebrated by Israeli officials. Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh held the Israeli government fully responsible for the crimes of the settlers in the northern West Bank town of Huwara in Nablus and surrounding villages. Speaking at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting held in Ramallah, the Prime Minister said that last night settlers practiced the most heinous forms

of crimes, including killings, setting fire to properties, and terrorizing women and children, which he stressed, will be added to the file of crimes committed by the Israeli occupation to be submitted to international courts. He noted that the government will form a ministerial committee, which will include the ministries of local government and finance and the governor of Nablus, to assess the damage inflicted upon Palestinians and to assist in compensating them. Shtayyeh praised the Palestinian people in Huwara and other neighborhoods for their steadfastness and for standing firm in the face of settlers. He further called for re-activating the protection committees throughout the West Bank in light of the heinous crimes committed by fascist colonialists with the guidance of ministers in the Israeli government. With regard to the Israeli parliament's preliminary approval of a death penalty law for Palestinian prisoners, Shtayyeh stressed that "this decision did not shock us because this government and others are already practicing extrajudicial killings against our youth and children, otherwise how else will the world explain the killings of more than 60 Palestinians in less than two months." - DNA

UK's Sunak on verge of EU deal

NEWS DESK

LONDON: The U.K. and the European Union were poised Monday to end years of wrangling and seal a deal to resolve their thorny post-Brexit trade dispute over Northern Ireland. Striking an agreement at a meeting with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen would be a big victory for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak - but not the end of his troubles. Selling the deal to his own Conservative Party and its Northern Ireland allies may be a tougher struggle. Sign of a potential U.K.-EU breakthrough came Sunday, when the two sides announced that von der Leyen would travel to England for a meeting with Sunak in Windsor, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) west of London. A joint news conference is penciled in, followed by a statement by Sunak to the House of Commons. A meeting between von der Leyen and King Charles III at Windsor Castle is also planned. The meeting is likely to touch on a variety of issues including climate change and the war in Ukraine. Buckingham Palace said the meeting was taking place on the government's advice, leading critics to accuse Sunak of dragging the monarch, who is supposed to remain neutral, into a political row. "I cannot quite believe that No. 10 would ask HM the King to become involved in the finalising of a deal as controversial as this one. It's crass and will go down very badly in NI," former Northern Ireland First Minister Arlene Foster said on Twitter. Sunak's spokesman, Max Blain, said the government "would never"

embroider the king in politics. "His Majesty has met with a number of foreign leaders recently," he said, including Polish President Andrzej Duda and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "This is no different." If all goes to plan, the deal could end a dispute that has soured U.K.-EU relations, sparked the collapse of the Belfast-based regional government and shaken Northern Ireland's decades-old peace process. Northern Ireland is the only part of the U.K. that shares a border with an EU member, the Republic of Ireland. When the U.K. left the bloc in 2020, the two sides agreed to keep the Irish border free of customs posts and other checks because an open border is a key pillar of Northern Ireland's peace process. Instead there are checks on some goods entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the U.K. That angered British unionist politicians in Belfast, who say the new trade border in the Irish Sea undermines Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom. The Democratic Unionist Party collapsed Northern Ireland's Protestant-Catholic power-sharing government a year ago in protest and has refused to return until the rules are scrapped or substantially rewritten. The DUP has stayed largely silent in recent days, saying it needs to see the details of a deal before deciding whether it meets the party's self-imposed tests. Hints of compromise towards the EU also have sparked opposition from hard-line euroskeptics who form a powerful bloc in Sunak's governing Conservative Party. Critics include former PM Boris Johnson, who as leader at the time of Brexit signed off on the trade rules that he now derides.



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