



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

Symposium on Iqbal and Petofi's spiritual kinship organized

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Georgia accuses Ukraine of stirring unrest

Detailed News On Page-07



Shadab named captain for Sharjah tour

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Siraj urges PDM for snap polls

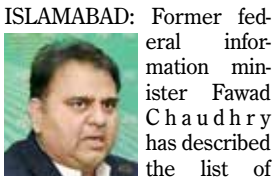
NAZIR SIYAL



KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Siraj Wahaj urged on Monday the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) to announce general elections in the country.

Fawad seeks names of all beneficiaries

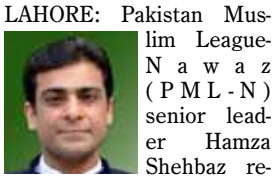
DNA



ISLAMABAD: Former federal information minister Fawad Chaudhry has described the list of Toshakhana beneficiaries "incomplete" as it did not mention the gifts received by generals and judges.

Hamza back ahead of Punjab polls

STAFF REPORT



LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Hamza Shehbaz returned to the country on Monday night in a bid to play an active role in his party's electoral campaign.

Islamabad police reach Lahore

Imran leads rally, calls jalsa on 19

Ex-Premier says after Toshakhana records, PML-N's foreign funding will also be revealed

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced to hold a public gathering at the iconic Minar-e-Pakistan on Sunday, March 19 as part of the election campaign.

Non-bailable arrest warrants issued for Khan

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Two non-bailable arrest warrants were issued for PTI chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan on Monday after he failed to appear in courts in cases linked to the Toshakhana reference and threatening a woman additional district and sessions judge.



ISLAMABAD: PM Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on pro-poor initiative, on Monday. - DNA

Noor Mukadam case Zahir Jaffer death sentence upheld

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday upheld the death sentence awarded to Zahir Jaffer in the Noor Mukadam murder case by the trial court and turned his life imprisonment into capital punishment.

Nawaz Sharif to return soon

Imran Khan made properties by selling gifts, says Maryam PML-N stalwart says we faced difficulties for four years

ABID RAZA



LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz lambasted on Monday Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan, saying the latter had acquired properties for his generations by selling the Toshakhana gifts.

PML-N to field candidates in all constituencies

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) has decided to field its candidate in all constituencies for general elections in Punjab.

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Dar to talk to US over IMF delay

The decision comes as majority of demands have been completed

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Following the delay in the staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Pakistan has decided to seek US help for the revival of the stalled loan programme.

Implementation of austerity measures reviewed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The monitoring committee to oversee the implementation of austerity measures has expressed serious concerns on the use of vehicles above 1800 cc by some officers and directed all the authorities to immediate stop the use of all these cars.

Japan to help Pak transport tents to Turkey

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan decided anew to dispatch a Self-Defense Forces (SDF) aircraft in response to the damages caused by the earthquake in southeastern Turkey.

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Palestine welcomes Iran-Saudi agreement

The Ministry affirmed that this agreement would lead to stability, security and cooperation among the countries of the region

DNA

RAMALLAH: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine has welcomed the Saudi-Iranian agreement to resume diplomatic relations between them, which was sponsored by China.

specter of fighting and wars, and pull the rug from the hands of some countries that were looking for military solutions to their crises. In this context, the Ministry congratulates the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this diplomatic achievement, and we congratulate it on this decision, which reflects the depth of a political vision and historical responsibility towards its people and the peoples of the region and the world.

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Saudi-Iran accord; let's cross our fingers (P-2)

ANALYSIS

ANSAR M BHATTI

IT may be a far-fetched approach yet Iran-Saudi easing of tensions may not augur well for the future investments which the Saudis had planned for Pakistan.

cially Iran given the fact that the CPEC project fate still hangs in a balance and scores of Chinese have been killed so far in Balochistan and elsewhere.

supreme that at least from the point of view of the Pakistani side the entire exercise was just an eye wash.

Iran agreed not to approach any international court if Pakistan would finish the pipeline until 2024.

While we may not draw a parallel between Iran-Saudi relations and Pakistan India ties, however this development appears to have opened a window of hope for both Islamabad and New Delhi to give peace another chance.

CONCLUDED

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US advances women's inclusion in Pak Policing - Page 03

Construction at IJP-Road causing trouble for commuters - Page 04

A hoax normally by G20 Summit - Page 05

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Heavy losses reported as battle for Bakhmut rages - Page 08

Need to ensure suitable environment for working women

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Monday said that it was necessary to provide a proper work environment to women with zero tolerance for discrimination, fear and harassment. He stated this while addressing the inaugural session of the National Women Police Conference organized by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and the Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR) under the theme of "Inspire, Empower, and Transform." The law minister said that policing for women or by women was a need of the hour, adding that nothing including law and religion stops women from playing an active and productive role in a profession of their choice. He said that the legislation could give benefit only when the law was implemented in letter and spirit, adding that collective efforts were required for this purpose. The litigants were suffering due to the complexity of the law and jurisdiction issues, he said.

Azam Nazeer said that society needed to bring changes in its attitudes towards gender issues to empower women. About 80% of women in the country needed cooperation and protection, he said. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah affirmed the commitment of the government to ensure that everyone in Pakistan had access to justice and that women are safe. They emphasized the need for collaborative efforts between government agencies, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to promote gender equality and women empowerment in the country. During his remarks, US Ambassador to Islamabad Donald Blome emphasized the importance of women's inclusion in policing and the need for innovative policies to ensure equal access to justice. Highlighting the role of women in policing and acknowledging the challenges they face in their line of work, Ambassador Blome also discussed the need for collaboration and partnership between various stakeholders to ensure women have equal opportunities and

access to justice. Executive Director of PCHR Shafique Chaudhry briefed the participants on the efforts towards improving gender inclusion and responsiveness in Pakistan police. USIP Country Director Imran Khan shared details about various activities under the U.S. Embassy-USIP Police Awam Sath Sath (PASS) program that USIP is carrying out in partnership with police departments and civil society organizations nationwide. The National Women Police Conference 2023 is part of a broader effort to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan. Speaking at the conference, Minister of Human Rights Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Federal Minister of Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and Federal Minister of Climate Change Sherry Rehman also highlighted the importance of gender-responsive policing in Pakistan. The conference concluded with a summary of recommendations and a way forward, followed by closing remarks from U.S. Embassy's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Director Lori Antolinez.



PESHAWAR: Dr Riina Kionka, ambassador of EU to Pakistan meets Caretaker Chief Minister of KP, Azam Khan. Both sides discussed bilateral interests including gender inclusive growth, community support, and youth employment. - DNA

Hundreds of political workers join PPP in KP

PESHAWAR: Hundreds of the workers of ANP, PML-N and PTI including influential political families announced joining PPP during a grand joining ceremony held here at Takhtabad (Shahalam) on Monday. In this connection, a function was held here with Provincial Deputy General Secretary PPP Malik Tehmash Khan in the chair, who welcomed the new entrants into the party fold. Addressing the occasion, Malik Tehmash Khan said that the people had been cheated in the name of the hollow slogans of change. He said that PPP was capable of guaranteeing the bright future of the people of KP and would never compromise on the struggle for the rights of the people. He said that PPP was gaining popularity in the province as it was the only political party which had always honoured its workers. Malik Tehmash Khan directed the party of office bearers and workers to make diligent and honest preparation for the coming general elections. - APP

EU envoy calls on KP CM, discusses public welfare projects

Dr. Riina Kionka on the occasion said that EU in its upcoming support programs will have special focus on KP and Balochistan

DNA

PESHAWAR: Dr. Riina Kionka, European Union's Ambassador to Pakistan on Monday called on Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mohammed Azam Khan. Both the dignitaries discussed matters of mutual interest with a special focus on public welfare projects being carried out with the cooperation of the European Union in the province. First Secretary Cooperation Mr. Sven Ruesch and Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Imdadullah Bosal were also present on the occasion. Dr. Riina Kionka expressed her condolences and sorrow over the brutal blast in the Peshawar police line that claimed precious human lives. The caretaker Chief Minister, while talking on the occasion, said that the European Union is providing support in various social sectors of the province adding that the government and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa highly valued and appreciated their cooperation. "We are looking forward to the same cooperation in the future as well," the chief minister remarked and said that the provincial government is looking forward to special support from the Union in the newly merged districts of the province. He said that the government is going all out for the development of merged areas; however, cooperation from the international development partners is

of vital importance in this regard. Muhammad Azam Khan remarked that the people of merged areas had been suffering from multiple challenges for the last forty years due to war in bordering Afghanistan, and added that the people of merged districts need and deserve special focus in order to bring them into the mainstream of development and prosperity. The difficulties and problems of merged areas can substantially be reduced by focusing on technical and vocational education, rural development, health and other social sectors. Dr. Riina Kionka on the occasion said that the European Union in its upcoming support programs will have special focus on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

CII calls 2 day special meeting on 'transgender issues'

ISLAMABAD: The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) has called a two-day special meeting to discuss the issues of the transgender community which is scheduled to be held on March 14 to 15 with Dr Qibla Ayaz in the chair. Sharing key points of this special meeting with APP on Monday, CII Research Officer Dr Ashfaq Ahmed informed that apart from the council members, representatives of the transgender community, doctors, legal and social experts, civil organizations, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and Ministry of Human Rights would also participate in the meeting in a bid to review all aspects of the issues pertaining to the transgender community. He said recommendations would be made regarding Transgender Act 2018, Amendment Bills and Transgender Protection Rules 2020, medical issues, administrative difficulties and social issues related to sterility and transgender in the meeting. He said the meeting would be comprised of the CII members - Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Sahibzada Muhammad Hasan Haseebur Rahman, Allama Muhammad Hussain Akbar, Maulana Syed Ziaullah Shah Bukhari, Maulana Hamidul Haqqani, Dr Umair Mahmood Siddiqi, Pir Syed Muhammad Habib Irfani, Allama Muhammad Raghbi. He said Hussain Naïmi, Sahibzada Junaid Amin, Malakullah Bakhsh Kalari, Justice (Rtd) Zafar Iqbal Chaudhry, Justice (Rtd) Altaf Ibrahim Qureshi, Muhammad Jalaluddin Advocate, Pir Khalid Sultanul Qadri, Allama Dr Abdul Ghafur Rashid, Farida Rahim Sahiba, Maulana Mufti Muhammad Zubair, Maulana Naseem Ali Shah, Sahibzada Dr Abul Hasan Muhammad Shah Al-Azhari would also be part of this consultative meeting. - APP

Masterminds of KPO attack killed, two others arrested

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Information and Archives Sharjeel Inam Memon on Monday said the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Sindh Police had arrested two terrorists while two others were killed, who were involved in a terrorist attack on Karachi Police Office (KPO) on February 17th this year. Addressing a news conference, the minister informed that a special team comprising officers from federal intelligence agencies, CTD Sindh and other law enforcement agencies was constituted to investigate and expose the network of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) involved in the attack on KPO. He said the team had some intelligence reports that the network

involved in the recce and planning of the attack was hiding in bordering areas of Karachi and Balochistan. Last night, the CTD received a tip that some of the terrorists belonging to the said network would enter Karachi from the Hub area. Sharjeel Memon said a team of CTD was deployed on the route. About four terrorists riding on two motorcycles entered the city from the Manghopir area, when they were asked to stop they resorted to firing on the police team. During the exchange of firing two terrorists were killed while two others were arrested. The killed terrorists were identified as Aryadullah alias Hassan and Waheedullah alias Khalid alias Huzafa and both were masterminds of the KPO attack, he said. The arrested were identified as Abdul Aziz alias Muhammad

Ali and Mehran alias Meharban. Sharjeel Memon said the killed and arrested terrorists were residents of Karachi. The arrested terrorists during the initial investigation revealed that the car used in the KPO attack was bought by the suicide bomber Kifayatullah, who exploded himself during the attack and the arrested accused Abdul Aziz for Rs. 1 million from a showroom in Hub. The money to buy the vehicle used in the attack was provided by Aryadullah and Abdul Waheed alias Khalid alias Huzafa. The minister further informed that weapons and suicide jackets used in the KPO attack were transported by truck from the Tank area of KPK. The CTD recovered a suicide jacket, three pistols, two motorcycles and 80 rounds from the arrested terrorists.

Kosovo's ambassador holds a meeting with VP of FPCCI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: H.E Agon Vernezi, Non-Resident Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to Pakistan visited FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad held a meeting with Mr. Amin Ullah Baig Vice President of FPCCI & Incharge along with Zahid Anjum Honorary Consul of Kosovo and Mr. Gent Gjokoli, Frist Secretary Embassy of Kosovo. During the meeting, the matters of enhancing cooperation in diverse fields, including tourism, trade, investment, technology, and exchange of business delegations were discussed.



The Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo appreciated Pakistan's support in their struggle for independence. He said that Kosovo wants to strengthen its trade and economic relations with Pakistan as both countries have good potential to trade in many areas. Pakistani investors may use Kosovo as a hub to promote their exports to European markets Agon Vernezi, said that Kosovo was interested in developing sector-specific relations with Pakistan to make some tangible progress and later those ties could be diversified to cover more areas of cooperation. He was of the view that regular interaction between the private sectors of the two sides with follow-up meetings should be the way forward to further strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties between Kosovo and Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Amin Ullah Baig Vice President of FPCCI & Incharge Capital Office, said that Pakistan could export many products to Kosovo including textile goods, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, IT products and services, sports goods, leather products, fruits and vegetables. He said that Kosovo is an unexplored market for the Pakistani business community and emphasized that both countries should facilitate the exchange of trade delegations and organise B2B meetings. Amin Ullah Baig, emphasized evolving institutional mechanisms to promote economic and commercial cooperation as well as to enhance awareness about trade and investment opportunities available in the two countries. He further said that the business community could play an important role in forging stronger relations between the two countries. The need for exploring the possibility of the establishment of a Pakistan-Kosovo Business Council in the respective Federation Chambers was also agreed upon during the meeting. Mr. Rana Muhammad Saadiq EC Member FPCCI, Mr. Arif Malik President Skardu Chamber, Mr. Syed Mansoor Nadeem, Islamabad Chamber, and Farukh Alvi Mining Association were also present on this occasion.

Pakistan vulnerable to climate change: WB

According to the report, the 2022 floods will likely hamper progress toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Pakistan by 2030

KARACHI: "Pakistan is highly vulnerable to worsening climate change; building resilience is key to avoiding poverty increases, otherwise, there is a significant probability of more frequent and intense events such as droughts, floods, and sea level rise." This was disclosed by a World Bank high-power delegation led by its Regional Director for Sustainable Development (SD), South Asia, Mr. John A. Roome who met with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah here at CM House. The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, the chief secretary, the chairman P&D, and others. Through a presentation, the world bank's regional director for South Asia told the meeting about the report that Pakistan's recent poverty reduction was fragile due to macro-fiscal vulnerabilities and low, volatile growth. The report said that the reduced extreme poverty due to off-farm economic and foreign remittances, growth in per

capita GDP has been volatile and low. The structural issues, including circular debt, large and unproductive subsidy regimes, and inadequate tax collection adds to fiscal stress and constrained investment in human capital, basic infrastructure, and services. According to the report Pakistan has been a low GHG emitter, but there are opportunities in Pakistan's own interests to decarbonize the economy. Pakistan contributed less than one per cent of total Green House Gases emissions between 1990-2018. The GHG emissions per capita are low; about one-third of the global average. GHG emissions per GDP are decreasing but at a lower rate than the global average. The GHG emissions are growing fast due to population increases and economic growth, therefore focus may be made to significant decarbonization options in industry, power, and transport that deliver local co-benefits. Cli-

mate change is already having devastating effects on the country. The unprecedented floods brought one-third of the country under water, and caused 1,700 casualties, affecting around 33 million people, therefore Pakistan needs \$16 billion to recover. According to the report, the 2022 floods will likely hamper progress toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Pakistan by 2030. Some 8.4 to 9.1 million people would be pushed into poverty, and 6 to 7 million people would fall further behind. Additional 7.6 million people face food security, 17 million women and children are at greater risk of preventable diseases, 4.3 million people would face job loss or disruption and 640,000 women and girls are at risk of GBV and child marriage. The post-flood presents a significant opportunity for building long-term and systematic resilience. The report suggests that

an inclusive and resilient recovery through a "whole Pakistan approach leads to sustainable development for the people and country. The pillars of the recovery, according to the report, include the restoration of jobs and livelihoods, recovery and reconstruction of critical assets, services, and infrastructure, and strengthening government and stakeholder capacity for reconstruction, especially communities. Building resilience to these compound risks will require a strong pivot of the economy towards a development pathway that can sustain and strengthen equitable growth and limit the impact of climate change-related physical, transitional, and financial risks. The chief minister directed his P&D team to study the WB report and recommendations and then frame its own development plan in light of the report so that the province could be steered out of poverty through sustainable development. - APP

APCOYF felicitates President Xi

ISLAMABAD: President of All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation (APCOYF) Aasma Ismail Butt on Monday congratulated Xi Jinping for the third term as the President of the Republic of China in a statement issued here, the Federation President said it was hoped that under the leadership of Xi Jinping, the relationship between Pakistan and China would further strengthen, leading to the development and prosperity of the people of both countries. Butt said that President Xi Jinping was unanimously elected by 2,952 members of the National People's Congress for the third term, proving that he was the heart of the Chinese people, and his popularity was not only in China but also existed in Pakistan. "Strong Pakistan-China bilateral relations promote the message of prosperity, friendship and love for both countries. Chinese President Xi Jinping's efforts to make Pakistan-China friendship more stable over time are commendable. We are hopeful for the future that China will always support Pakistan as a brother country in all times. China is the only country which has always appreciated the love of Pakistan and its people and has also given ample proof of being a benevolent friend," she added. All Pakistan Chinese Overseas Youth Federation and the people across the country expressed their best wishes for Chinese President Xi Jinping and pray for his success ahead, she further said. - APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MARCH

March 01 / Bosnia National Day
 March 03 / Bulgaria National Day
 March 06 / Ghana Independence Day
 March 12 / Mauritius National Day
 March 17 / Ireland St. Patricks Day
 March 20 / Tunisia Independence Day
 March 21 / Namibia National Day
 March 25 / Greece National Day
 March 26 / Bangladesh National Day
 March 27 / Myanmar Armed Forces Day

Hotels & Restaurants

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

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

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

Enquiry

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

Hospitals

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

Departments

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

US advances women's inclusion in Pak Policing

MAHNOOR ANSAR/DNA

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Embassy in Pakistan hosted the National Women Police Conference today at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. Funded by the U.S. government, the conference united key stakeholders in policing and women's rights under the theme of "Inspire, Empower, and Transform."

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and the Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR) helped organize the conference. During his remarks, U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome emphasized the importance of women's inclusion in policing and the need for innovative policies to ensure equal access to justice. Highlighting the role of women in policing and acknowledging the challenges they face in their line of work, he commended the organizers and attendees for their efforts in promoting women's rights and empowerment, expressing his hope that the conference would lead to positive outcomes and tangible results.



Federal Law Minister Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar also affirmed the Pakistani government's commitment to ensuring that everyone in Pakistan has access to justice and that women are safe. He emphasized the need for collaborative efforts between government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the country. The National Women Police Conference 2023 is part of a broader effort to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan. Through the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the U.S. government has been working closely with the Government of Pakistan and civil society partners to support initiatives that promote women's rights and access to justice. The conference provided an important platform to discuss and share best practices, challenges, and opportunities for women's inclusion in policing, ultimately improving access to justice for all in Pakistan.

ICCI delegation returns after 5-days visit of Ethiopia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President, returned after a very successful and historic 5-days visit of Ethiopia where the delegation met with the country's political leadership, businessmen, government officials and the local community. The delegation was received at Addis Ababa Airport by Mrs. Birtukan Ayano, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia. The delegation attended the Pak-Ethiopia Business Forum, which was inaugurated by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia Demekle Mekonnen. 70 delegates from Pakistan including ICCI delegation members were in attendance in the Business Forum.

The delegation also met with the Ethiopian Minister for Industry, Minister for Mines and Commissioner of Ethiopian Investment Commission besides visiting Ethiopian industrial parks. Giving an overview of the visit, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the visit of Pakistani delegation would start a new chapter of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Ethiopia and boost business and investment relations between the two countries. He said that Africa is a huge market of over 1.4 billion people and Pakistan has huge potential to promote trade and exports with Africa through Ethiopia, which is a gateway for Africa. He said that Pakistan has made a Look Africa Policy, which has not as yet achieved its desired goals. He said that the visit of Pakistan's business delegation to Ethiopia would make positive progress towards the objectives of Look Africa Policy. He said that Pakistan's two close friends Türkiye and China have made good investments in Ethiopia and Africa, which provides Pakistani investors better confidence to explore Ethiopia for business and investment opportunities.

Motorway Police introduce strict enforcement regime

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) have launched a campaign #NoMore to promote road safety and reduce violations on motorways. According to the details shared by NHMP on Monday, the campaign aims to create awareness among motorists and promote responsible driving habits.

Those who violate traffic laws and regulations, such as not wearing seat belts, using mobile phones while driving, or speeding, would be heavily fined. For the enforcement of the said campaign spotters have been planted along the motorways which are equipped with high-definition cameras to capture clear photos of vehicles. In addition to that, cameras will also capture violations such as drivers not wearing seat belts and using mobile phones while driving. The vehicle number will also be recorded which will make it easier for authorities to issue challans. To further enhance the effectiveness, a variable messaging system will be put in place which will display the vehicle number on the back screen reminding the violator about the fine. Meanwhile, NHMP have urged motorists to cooperate with the Motorway Police and follow traffic rules and regulations to avoid fines. —APP

Women Intl Film Festival concludes

ISLAMABAD: Women International Film Festival (WIFF) that was having its seventh year run concluded here late Sunday at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) with amazing line-up of films all made by women from Pakistan and around the world. The event was supported by the Embassy of France in Pakistan and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany Islamabad. The films screened during the two day festival included, The great Melies by Beatrice Campagna (Italy) based on the complex relationship between a father, a world famous illusionist, and a young musician daughter, is resolved after many years in the very place that has most deeply united and divided them. Three wishes. One truth by Cecilia Petrujino, (Argentina) based on Autumn 1984. Valeria is ten years old and lives in distress out of her father's violence. Speaking about it is forbidden. On her birthday celebration she finds a magical object that can help her to ease her sorrow. Now Valeria has a plan. Women of my family by Alissa Sophie Larkamp from Germany is a film as a personal stream of memories - the biographical fragments of a great-grandmother, grandmother and mother are marked by simple circumstances. Silk's balance by Elise Lorthois from France revolves around life of five women in their adolescence, high lining in the middle of the mountains. Betty's burning by Camille Vigny (Belgium) shows how to end a toxic and violent relationship. Awaaz by Halimah Tariq from Pakistan follows the story of Shakila Farooq, the first woman in Mardant to take a stand for educating hearing and speech impaired girls, she fights to change the mindset and norms of a patriarchal society. Baira Gharakh by Mehreen Jabbar from Pakistan highlights that nothing goes as planned when a wife, her husband, and his friend end up in the same house at the same time. Other films include, The most boring granny in the world by Damaris Zielke from Germany, 48 hours by Azadeh Mousavi from Iran, Inadequate by Beyza Yildir from Turkey, Hot rod by Juliette Gilot from France, Nobody by Mingyuan Li from United States, The woman under the tree by Karishma Kohli from United States, Late winter by Jasna Safa from Croatia, My mother's daughter by Ahmen Khawaja, Mariam Khan from Pakistan, Misophonia by Melodi Tozum from Turkey. —APP

COMSTECH and the University of Jordan organize workshop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The chemistry department of the University of Jordan and COMSTECH organized jointly a "Workshop on Modern Spectroscopic Techniques and Their Applications in Research" during March 12-14. This three-day workshop consisted of lectures of eminent scholars and practical sessions involving hands-on experience on interpretation of spectroscopic data. This workshop offered the opportunity of hands on training on modern spectroscopic instruments and software that are used in the field of chemical and biological sciences. Lectures followed by discussion session further strengthened the knowledge and understanding of the modern spectroscopic techniques and promoted research partnership between the scientists of OIC countries. Assistant Secretary General-OIC, H.E. Mr. Askar Mussinov said that it is my delight to welcome you all in this 3 - day event organized by COMSTECH and University of Jordan. He said that spectroscopy offers the necessary tools to investigate the structure and function of small chemical compounds as well as biological macromolecules. He said

we sincerely hope that this event will contribute in the development and strengthening of the capacity in modern spectroscopic techniques at the regional level through the contribution of eminent scholars from various universities and R & D institutions. He conveyed, on behalf of OIC secretariat in Jeddah, well wishes to COMSTECH



and University of Jordan for organizing this illustrious gathering, and offered full support of our secretariat to COMSTECH for achieving its mission and objectives. The inaugural session was addressed by H.E. Prof. Dr. Nathir Obeidat, The President of the University of Jordan, H.E. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General

(FRS), President, Network of Academy of Sciences of Islamic Countries (NASIC), Professor Emeritus/Patron-In-Chief ICCBS, H. E. Prof. Dr. Adnan Badran, Chair of The Board of Trustees of The University of Jordan, H.E. Prof. Dr. Azmi Mahafza, Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research.

resource persons. Among these speakers, we had pioneers of this field whose work is shining light to many chemists and biologists around the world. Researchers from Algeria, Pakistan, Jordan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Turkiye, USA, Kenya, Palestine and Kazakhstan participated in the workshop.

ECP establishes Online Scrutiny Cell

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has established an online Scrutiny Cell to provide legal assistance and support to 297 Returning Officers (ROs) during the rigorous scrutiny of nomination papers of candidates vying for provincial assembly seats of Punjab. According to ECP spokesperson, the special software links several government agencies such as the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), National Accountability Bureau (NAB), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) with the Election Commission Secretariat. The Cell, tasked to work round the clock, was also equipped with fax, telephone, and internet facilities. The necessary proforma and Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) have been devised and provided to all the Returning Officers (ROs) to help them carry out their duties effectively. This move by the ECP is aimed at ensuring free and fair elections in Pakistan and promoting transparency in the electoral process. With the help of advanced technology and the coordination of various government agencies, the ECP hopes to eliminate any possibility of electoral malpractice and uphold the integrity of the democratic process. The returning officers were required to send candidate's particulars to the online Scrutiny Cell daily. —APP

Leader awards entry submission extended

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives has extended the deadline for submission of entries for the Development Leadership Award (DLA) till March 16 to provide more opportunities to the applicants. The decision was taken amid providing maximum opportunities to the candidates. Earlier, the deadline was February 25. However, it has been extended to March 16. The DLA initiative was taken by the Planning Ministry to mark the celebrations of 75 years of independence. The key objective of these awards is to honour Pakistani citizens and overseas Pakistanis who have contributed significantly to the socioeconomic development of Pakistan. The DLA will be given to outstanding individuals in recognition of high achievers, emerging leaders and overseas Pakistanis in specific fields which include teachers, researchers, public policy experts; business owners; investors; startups, social enterprises, philanthropists; social activists; journalists, and others. Under the awards, three main categories were established which include high achiever (over 35 years of age), emerging leader (under 35 years), and recognizing accomplished overseas Pakistanis. A high-powered 'DLA Evaluation Board' - comprised of intellectuals, practitioners, professionals, and policymakers - will evaluate the submissions and forward recommendations to the Prime Minister Office. It may be noted that since the government came into power in April last year several initiatives have been taken for the development of the country, particularly for the youth and DLA is one of the initiatives to recognise the contribution of people in respective fields. —APP

MARCH 2023

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YEAR IN REVIEW
2022

LARGEST CIRCULATED DIPLOMATIC MAGAZINE

Pacific islands should shun tug of war

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi will reportedly visit the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and the Cook Islands in late March. That the senior Japanese official visited Fiji and Palau around 10 months ago reveals the increasing importance Japan is attaching to the Pacific island countries, which the Japanese media have described as a new frontline in the country's competition for influence with China. The visits, expected to take place from March 18 to 22, come after China reached a comprehensive consensus on many issues including security with the Solomon Islands last year. Hayashi thus intends to affirm the three island states' cooperation with a "free and open Indo-Pacific", and is considering suggesting security cooperation as well, according to a Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper report.

The "free and open Indo-Pacific" concept, first raised by Japan in 2016, smacks of the Cold War mentality as it portrays China's rise as a threat to the region that must be countered by a United States-led alliance of like-minded countries. That Japan is now going all out to pursue this confrontational approach against China in the South Pacific does not augur well for peace and stability in the region. For decades China has been committed to close cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual respect with the Pacific island countries in such areas as poverty reduction, climate change and disaster prevention, which has brought tangible benefits to the people in the region, greatly improving their well-being and helping them achieve sustainable development.

The wide range of consensus that China reached with the Solomon Islands on security and climate change during then foreign minister Wang Yi's visit to the Pacific nation last May injected new synergy into their win-win cooperation. Yet China's commitment to building a community with a shared future with the Pacific island countries, especially the cooperation deal with the Solomon Islands, has been vilified by the US and its regional allies such as Japan as an attempt to expand its political and economic reach, and even military buildup, in the region. Such has been the extent of the smear campaign that Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Damukana Sogavare, in an address to the United Nations General Assembly last September, said his country had been "unfairly targeted" by "a barrage of unwarranted and misplaced criticisms, misinformation and intimidation". He also said that the Solomon Islands had adopted "a 'friends to all and enemies to none' foreign policy", suggesting that the country does not want to take sides in any geopolitical competition for sphere of influence.

What the Pacific island countries most urgently need are funds, technology, and expertise to help them build better infrastructure and deal with the climate change crisis, not geopolitical competition between major powers. Hopefully, Hayashi will bear that in mind during his upcoming trip to the three countries.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 189

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Decoupling a wrong path leading nowhere

By highlighting the record high trade volume between China and the United States last year, nearly \$760 billion, Premier Li Qiang gave a to-the-point reply to a question on the Joe Biden administration's attempts to decouple the world's two largest economies at his first news conference in Beijing on Monday, two days after taking up his post. Li's previous long-term work experience in Shanghai granted him many opportunities to have contact with senior executives of US enterprises operating in China. The confidence and interest that the US business community expressed in the Chinese economy and market, he said, consolidated his view that there is much potential to be tapped in China-US cooperation. His remarks should serve to convey a clear message to the US side that China will maintain its policy continuity to weave the Chinese economy deeper into the fabric of the global industry and supply chains. The dramatic rise in foreign direct investment in China over the past three years, when the US intensified its decoupling and containment practices targeting China and when the COVID-19 pandemic and a series of regional geopolitical tensions were seriously taking their toll on the world economy, should also awaken Washington to the fact that what it is acting against is not a "China threat" but the overall trend of economic globalization. The question Li raised at the news conference – How many people are actually benefitting from the US' decoupling practices? – deserves an answer from Washington. What threatens the US' national security and interests is its institutional maladies, not China's development. Yet Washington is so consumed by its partisan struggles that no efforts are made to address these. China is only a convenient scapegoat for the US politicians to divert domestic attention from the country's true challenges and to build cliques to protect its hegemony.

The Biden administration put 28 Chinese entities on its Entity List on March 2 citing violations of its sanctions, which is nothing but typical long-arm jurisdiction, and blacklisted another 24 Chinese enterprises and one individual for the same reason on March 9. The message from the US side is clear, Washington is intent on walking farther down the wrong path in its China policy. As Foreign Minister Qin Gang has warned, no amount of guardrails can prevent derailing, and there will surely be conflict and confrontation if the US does not hit the brakes but continues to speed down the wrong path. In its haste to reach its objective, Washington is taking a reckless gamble which puts at stake the fundamental interests of the two peoples and even the future of humanity.

A hoax normalcy by G20 Summit

Mukhtar Baba

The 2023 summit of G20 which is expected in the United Nations recognized disputed land of Jammu & Kashmir is already under military occupation for more than seven decades. Since 1989, when the movement for Kashmiri Freedom took the form of an armed insurgency, more than half a million Indian troops have been deployed there, making it one of the most highly militarized regions of the world. Some estimates place the number of Indian occupying troops deployed as high as 900,000. With a ratio of one soldier to every ten civilians, Indian counterinsurgency has progressed as a classic dirty

war, which safeguards the land and citizenship rights of erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir state has exposed India and its genocidal crimes perpetrated in IIOJK. The fascist ruling government BJP which has blood of Kashmiris on its hands is adopting an indirect approach to not only pronounce its sovereignty over the internationally recognized disputed territory but by implication would also seek international acquiescence to all its war crimes and crimes against humanity to suppress the right of self-determination movement in IIOJK. In February 2019 the UN genocide watch statement on Kashmir warning that the region is at the brink of genocide and the recent US intelligence report during the US congressional hearing apprehending increased tension between India and Pakistan and India and China with the possibility of a conflict between them is an eye-opener for the G20 Countries that India is playing diplomatic faux which will aggravate an already tense, sensitive and explosive environment. The multiple UNSC Resolutions on this internationally recognised disputed territory remain relevant and applicable therefore, another critical ramification of the G20 will be seen as giving the credence to the Indian criminal aggression claiming Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan as an integral part of India. Last year Pakistan Ministry of Foreign affairs (MOFA) in its statement showed its concern about holding G20 summit in IIOJK and warning international community that India has been seeking to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory in flagrant violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, international law, and the 4th Geneva Convention. But Pakistan must undertake pragmatic measures to prevent India from violating the UN resolutions on IIOJK. It must work to generate a swell against this Indian move with

or without the G-20. A proactive policy needs to be installed that engages all stakeholders importantly China and Turkey and apprises them of the ramifications of such execution. On the other hand, the Kashmiri diaspora must approach the EU parliament and other country heads with the dossiers of the crime against humanity perpetrated by India in IIOJK. Pakistan must exercise its legal right as a 'disputant party' and seek the appropriate remedy before UNGA, UNSC, OIC, & SAARC.

The permanent representative of Pakistan in United Nation must unambiguously put across its position on IIOJK in the ongoing 52nd regular session of the Human rights council in the light of relevant UNSC Resolutions and ask the UN about the malicious design of India holding G20 in war-torn region and also highlight the sensitive strategic environment of IIOJK and the adverse consequences of a G-20 summit in the disputed territory. Most critically, Pakistan and China must coordinate their policies and adopt mutually supporting positions on the issue. China has already expressed its disapproval of such an exercise but has withheld its further response so far. APHC and Kashmiri Diaspora must write to all foreign ministers of G20 about the ongoing situation in IIOJK and appeal to them to speak against the state-sponsored violence and terrorism in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The stakeholders must urge G20 members to use their influence to promote a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir, one that takes into account the wishes and aspirations of the people of the region.

—The writer is Senior journalist from IIOJK and has been associated with liberation movement since decades. He is presently International media In Charge of Masrat Alam Bhat, Incarcerated Chairman of APHC

Israel-Palestine Conflict and the Role of Media

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Over the years, the conflict has been marked by violence and insecurity on both sides. Palestinian militant groups, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, have carried out attacks against Israeli civilians, while Israel has responded with military force, including airstrikes, ground offensives, and the construction of a separation barrier in the West Bank. Efforts to resolve the conflict have been ongoing for decades, but a lasting

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is a long-standing and complex issue that has been ongoing for decades. The conflict stems from the competing claims of Israelis and Palestinians over the same land in the region, which is considered sacred by both Jews and Muslims. The conflict has resulted in a series of wars, violent clashes, and ongoing tension between the two sides. At the heart of the conflict is the issue of land and territory. Israelis believe that the land of Israel is their ancestral homeland and argue that they have a right to establish and maintain a Jewish state in the region. Palestinians, on the other hand, claim that the land is rightfully theirs and that Israel's creation in 1948 displaced and dispossessed them. Over the years, the conflict has been marked by violence and insecurity on both sides. Palestinian militant groups, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, have carried out attacks against Israeli civilians, while Israel has responded with military force, including airstrikes, ground offensives, and the construction of a separation barrier in the West Bank. Efforts to resolve the conflict have been ongoing for decades, but a lasting peace agreement has yet to be achieved. Key issues in the negotiations include the borders between Israel and a future Palestinian state, the status of Jerusalem, the rights of Palestinian refugees, and the security of both Israelis and Palestinians. Media coverage of the conflict is often polarized, with different media outlets presenting differing views and interpretations of events. In general, media coverage tends to reflect the biases and perspectives of the countries and societies in which the media outlets are based. This can lead to a situation where the same event is reported in vastly different ways in different parts of the world. Media coverage of the conflict can also have a

significant impact on public opinion and political decision-making. Coverage of violent incidents and terrorist attacks can fuel public anger and frustration, while coverage of peace talks and diplomatic efforts can generate hope and optimism. In addition, media coverage can influence international responses to the conflict, such as sanctions or diplomatic pressure on one side or the other. There is also the issue of media censorship and control. In some cases, media outlets in Israel and Palestine may be subject to government censorship or influence, limiting their ability to report on certain aspects of the conflict. This can lead to a situation where the public is only exposed to one side of the story, which can further polarize the situation and make it more difficult to find a peaceful resolution. The role of media in the conflict between Israel and Palestine is complex and multifaceted. While the media can play an important role in shaping public opinion and policy, it is important for media outlets to strive for objectivity and balance in their reporting, and for individuals to seek out multiple sources of information in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the situation. Media bias is a major issue in the coverage of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Many media outlets have been accused of having a pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian bias, which can influence the way the conflict is reported and perceived by the public. Media bias can take many forms. For example, news outlets may selectively report certain events or emphasize certain aspects of the conflict while downplaying or ignoring others. They may also use loaded language or rely on sources with a particular bias, which can further distort the coverage of the conflict. In general, the bias in the media coverage of the conflict tends to reflect the political and ideological positions of the news outlets and their audiences. Media outlets in Israel tend

to emphasize Israeli perspectives and concerns, while Palestinian media outlets tend to do the same for Palestinian perspectives and concerns. Similarly, media outlets in the United States and Europe may have their own biases based on their national interests or political agendas. It is important to note that not all media outlets are biased, and that some strive to provide balanced and objective coverage of the conflict. However, it can be difficult for the public to distinguish between biased and unbiased coverage, and media bias can further exacerbate tensions and misunderstandings between Israelis and Palestinians. The role of media in the conflict between Israel and Palestine is a complex issue, and there are differing opinions on whether the media has played a positive or negative role. On one hand, media coverage of the conflict has brought attention to the ongoing violence and human rights abuses in the region, which has helped to raise awareness and mobilize public opinion in support of peace and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians. On the other hand, media coverage can also be biased and one-sided, and can contribute to the polarization of public opinion and the perpetuation of stereotypes and misunderstandings about the conflict. Additionally, some media outlets may sensationalize the violence, which can lead to further escalation and tension. Ultimately, the media can play a positive role in the conflict by providing accurate, fair, and balanced coverage that highlights the perspectives of both Israelis and Palestinians and promotes peaceful dialogue and resolution. However, it is important for media consumers to be critical of the sources and biases of the information they consume and to seek out diverse perspectives to gain a more nuanced understanding of the conflict.

Briefs

Protest in Chisinau against Moldova's pro-Western gov't

CHISINAU: Thousands took to the streets in Chisinau on Sunday demanding that the Moldovan government fully covers the costs of winter energy bills, and urging lawmakers "not to involve the country in war." Opponents of the pro-Western President Maia Sandu have repeatedly called for her to step down, arguing that Russia should be Moldova's number one partner. Local authorities say the demonstrators were coordinated by the pro-Russian oligarchs Vladimir Plahotniuc and Ilan Shor, who are wanted internationally for corruption charges. Sunday's protest was one of several held in recent weeks, organised by a group calling itself 'Movement for the People', which is backed by Moldova's Russia-friendly Shor Party, which holds six seats in the country's 101-seat legislature. The United States has accused Russia of wanting to destabilise the Republic of Moldova in order to overthrow the pro-European government in Chisinau. Moldovan police said on Sunday they have foiled a plot by groups of Russia-backed actors who were promised 9,000 to organise "mass disorder" during the protest. Seven people were detained. The head of Moldova's police, Viorel Cernateanu, said in a news conference that an undercover agent had infiltrated groups of "diversionists," some Russian citizens, who had been promised \$10,000 to organise "mass disorder" to destabilize Moldova during a protest in the capital, Chisinau. Seven people were detained, he said.—APP

Japan's Nobel-winning author dies at 88

ISTANBUL: Japan's Nobel-winning novelist Kenzaburo Oe has died, his publisher Kodansha said on Monday. He was 88. "He died of old age in the early hours of March 3," the publisher said in a statement, adding that a family funeral had already been held. Born on Jan. 31, 1935 in Ehime province, Oe was a major figure in contemporary Japanese literature. In 1994, he became the second Japanese to win the Nobel Prize in Literature after Yasunari Kawabata. The Nobel Committee had described him as someone "who with poetic force creates an imagined world, where life and myth condense to form a disconcerting picture of the human predicament today." —Agencies

Nationwide polio vaccination campaign starts in Afghanistan

KABUL: Afghanistan's Public Health Ministry, in cooperation with international organizations, started a nationwide polio vaccination campaign in the country, Monday. Over 9.4 million children under the age of five are supposed to be vaccinated against polio in this campaign, according to the Ministry. Bamyan, Daikundi and Ghor and some other regions with polar climate are not included in this campaign, said the Ministry. In this campaign, vitamin A is also set to children aged six months to five years to increase their immunity against various diseases. Acting Public Health Minister, Dr. Qalander Ebad said that the Ministry of Public Health is determined to eradicate polio from Afghanistan, adding the recent developments in this regard are promising. Polio is a viral disease that has no cure and can only be prevented and eradicated by vaccination. Any child who gets this disease will remain paralyzed for the rest of his life. Meanwhile, during this year, no positive cases of polio have been recorded in the country, and last year, only two cases of child paralysis were reported in Paktika and Kanar.—DNA



KARACHI: Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan A. Metelitsa took part in the opening of the National Exposition and Business Forum of Belarus within the framework of the international industrial exhibition «International Trade and Industrial Fair-2023» in Karachi.—DNA

Georgian PM accuses Ukraine of stirring unrest

Irakli Garibashvili has lashed out at Vladimir Zelensky for rallying support for the mass protests in Tbilisi

NEWS DESK

TBILISI: Kiev has its hand in the unrest over the controversial foreign agents legislation in Georgia, Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili has claimed, urging Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky to take care of his own country instead of fueling riots in Tbilisi. The PM made the remarks in an extensive interview with Georgia's Imedi TV channel that aired on Sunday. Garibashvili strongly condemned the support expressed by Zelensky towards the protesters, accusing him of yet again trying to open a "second front" against Russia

in Georgia. Earlier this week, Zelensky issued a video address to Georgians, stating that every Ukrainian wishes a "democratic" and "European success" to the country. "An even greater escalation of hostilities is expected in Ukraine, and many external forces are interested in opening a 'second front' on Georgian soil. How else to explain that the President of Ukraine Zelensky, during the conflict in his country, finds time to appeal to several thousand participants of a destructive action in Georgia?" Garibashvili wondered, urging the Ukrainian leader to "[take] care of himself and his country" first. Moreover, Garibashvili accused Kiev of long seeking to destabilize Georgia, with such efforts apparently predating the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In particular, Kiev deliberately sent ex-Geor-



gian president-turned Ukrainian official Mikhail Saakashvili back to his home country in October 2021 to stage a "coup," he asserted. "Saakashvili was sent in deliberately, the main goal was to stage a coup here and drag the country into war at the right time. We don't doubt it today," Garibashvili stated. The PM also claimed that "a few dozen" Georgian fighters returned from Ukraine amid the unrest over the foreign agents law and urged them to have no "illusions" over the situation in the country. "We know significantly more than they could imagine," he warned, adding that no "second front" will materialize while the ruling Georgian Dream

party remains in power. Over the course of the ongoing hostilities with Russia, Ukrainian officials have repeatedly criticized Tbilisi over its neutral stance, urging it to open a "second front" against Moscow instead. One such call was made early in the conflict by Ukraine's secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, Alexey Danilov, who accused Georgia of "behaving not very appropriately" at the time. The official openly admitted that a potential new conflict over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which broke away from Tbilisi in the 1990s and were recognized as independent by Russia in the aftermath of the 2008 war, "would definitely help us."

'Iran-Saudi Arabia deal to strengthen peace in Gulf'

TEHRAN: Iran says its enhanced relations with Saudi Arabia can not only help secure the interests of both nations but boost joint cooperation and convergence with the aim of consolidating regional peace and stability in the region, and the Persian Gulf in particular. Speaking at a weekly press briefing in Tehran on Monday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani said that boosting regional stability benefits all countries in the region. The remarks came three days after Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to restore diplomatic ties and reopen embassies seven years after their relations were severed. China mediated the rapprochement between the two Middle Eastern powers. "The agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to return to their natural political relations can once again

activate the two countries' high capacity in various fields," Kan'ani said. "By expanding their cooperation, Tehran and Riyadh can help secure the interests of their nations. They can also have a positive effect on strengthening joint cooperation and convergence in the region in order to consolidate regional peace and stability, especially in the strategic Persian Gulf region." He also hailed China's important role in brokering the Iran-Saudi deal, noting that Beijing showed that it wants to contribute to the stability and security of the region as well as Asia with goodwill. The spokesman also announced that the Iranian and Saudi foreign ministries are making arrangements for a meeting between the two foreign ministers in the near future. "Given the goodwill that

exists, we hope that this meeting will take place in the near future and that the implementation of the [Iran-Saudi] agreement will be expedited," he added. "There is no obstacle to the meeting of the two top diplomats, and God willing, the arrangements will be made through diplomatic channels." Kan'ani also appreciated the constructive role played by Iraq and Oman regarding the Iran-Saudi pact, saying the two countries hosted almost eight rounds of talks between Tehran and Riyadh. Asked about the recent visit by an Iranian parliamentary delegation to Bahrain, he said that the positive reactions to the Iran-Saudi deal show that the diplomatic breakthrough can have positive effects on regional relations, including those between Iran and other countries, adding that Iran-Bahrain ties are not an

exception. The Islamic Republic's political will revolves around the neighborliness policy and the expansion of relations with neighboring Asian countries, the spokesman added. "Fortunately, with the positive atmosphere that we are witnessing in the region, this positive development (the deal with Saudi Arabia) can happen in connection with other regional countries as well, including Bahrain. We should further trust the path of diplomacy and take steps in this direction," he explained. Kan'ani said that Iran already has a political relationship with Jordan, but stands ready to expand ties with the Middle Eastern state. "The Islamic Republic's principled policy is strengthening relations with neighbors. We are definitely ready to develop ties with Jordan." —Agencies

CPEC brought development in Pakistan

BEIJING: As a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has not only brought infrastructural development in Pakistan, but also paved way for industrialization. Infrastructural scholar exchanges may also pave a better and further way for CPEC. A brighter future of Pak-China cooperation remains to be seen, said Zhang Shuibo, dean of School of International Project Management of Tianjin University, China, who is also a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress (NPC), according to Gwadar Pro. "We should establish a scholars' alliance of Countries of Belt and Road initiative (BRI) on infrastructure construction to deepen and normalize relevant academic exchanges. It will also make international cooperation on infrastructure construction more efficient and sustainable," said Zhang Shuibo. Over the past decade, the Belt and Road Initiative has made remarkable achievements. Constructions of railways, ports, airports and roads in the BRI countries have played a positive role in promoting their economic and social development. However, due to the differences in technical standards, legislation and religious culture between China and the host countries, China sometimes faces challenges in the implementation of the programs. "Conflicts and misunderstandings occur occasionally, which increases the cost and elongates construction." Zhang Shuibo pointed out. —DND

Junior doctors start 3-day strike in England

BIRMINGHAM: Tens of thousands of junior doctors in England have launched a three-day strike on Monday in a dispute over pay and working conditions. The doctors have started forming picket lines outside hospitals across the country. The British Medical Association (BMA), an association and trade union representing and negotiating on behalf of all doctors in the UK, has been campaigning for a pay rise for months in the country that is severely hit by the cost-of-living crisis. However, negotiations between the unions and the government have not yet resulted in an agreement. The talks will continue this week with the hope of a breakthrough in the long-running pay dispute. Prior to the start of the industrial action, BMA launched an advertising campaign saying junior doctors could earn more serving coffee at the cafe chain, Pret a Manger. "Pret a Manger has announced it will pay up to £14.10 (\$17) per hour. A junior doctor makes just £14.09. Thanks to this government you can make more serving coffee than saving patients. This week junior doctors will take strike action so they are paid what they are worth," BMA said. It said junior doctors in England have suffered a 26.1% real-term cut to their pay since 2008/09 and are campaigning for pay restoration. In a joint statement, BMA junior doctors committee co-chairs Robert Laurensen and Vivek Trivedi said: "Is £14.09 an hour really all junior doctors are worth? These are people who can be providing life-saving care, having trained intensively at medical school, and racking up around £100,000 worth of debt in the process.—APP

Pakistan learns poverty alleviation experience from China

BEIJING: For the first time in the past three years, China's Ministry of Commerce welcomed the first batch of informational officials who came in-person for training seminars, according to China Economic Net (CEN) on Monday. Ms. Pizwak Intiaz, Section Officer (F&A), Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS), has just concluded a 14-day Seminar on China's Poverty Alleviation Practices under the Global Development Initiative. The seminar, hosted by the Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO), Ministry of Commerce, China, is one of the 5 seminars that took place from 22nd February to 7th March for a total of nearly 200 officials from 27 countries across the globe. "Another colleague from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Government of Pakistan attended the seminar on International Cooperation and Trade,"

she told China Economic Net (CEN) reporter. "The Seminar included a 4-day trip to the coastal city of Fuzhou, Fujian, during which we visited the Juncao Technology Research Center in Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University," she said, adding, "Juncao Technology uses wild-grass for cultivation of medicinal mushrooms that has transformed the production of high-yield mushrooms since 1989 and helped ecological protection by preventing soil erosion and desertification. The technology is currently under experiment in Gwadar Port in Pakistan." In addition, the visit included a trip to the Fuyao Glass factory which produces world quality automobile glass to key manufacturers across the globe, creating jobs, infrastructure and employment opportunities to locals since 1987. "I was impressed by the village businesses that are modern, digitized and profit-based. Whether agro-based or industry-reliant, there has been a targeted shift towards digital systems empowered by locals who are effectively trained in marketing, media, and enterprise development. Additionally, the online and infrastructural value chains created across struggling regions in the northern and western provinces of China have allowed these regions to be part of the country's growth rather than hurdles," she recalled. "All tiers of government local institutions and businesses are synergized to work towards the common goal. This system of centralized planning but decentralized and coordinated implementation provided an excellent opportunity for locals to have specialized solutions to their problems. This is something that developing nations struggle with, owing to there being different institutions working often with lack of coordination," she observed. She told CEN reporter that the poverty rate in Pakistan has declined from 57.9% in 1998 to 24.3% in 2015, but it remains unacceptably high as of today. A much higher percentage of the population faces non-monetary

India's passenger plane leaves for Doha after 'medical emergency' landing at JIAP

ISLAMABAD: A passenger plane of India made a 'medical emergency' landing at the Jinnah International Airport (JIAP) Karachi at 0012 hours on Monday and left for its destination, Doha (Qatar), after around a four-hour stopover. The pilot of a Doha-bound Air Indigo flight, which took off from Delhi, was 16 nautical miles east of Pangjur (Balochistan) when he made the emergency call requesting a doctor and ambulance, an Aviation Division news release said. "The pilot requested to divert the plane, which carried 163 passengers, to Karachi because of the sickness of a passenger," it added. The pilot asked that the patient, a 60-year-old Nigerian woman, was not breathing and had no pulse. Following the medical inspection, the Air Indigo flight left for its destination at 4:06 am, with the body of the ill-fated Nigerian woman on board.—APP

Int'l arms trade shrinks 5.1% in 2018-2022

LONDON: The volume of the international arms trade in 2018-2022 contracted by 5.1% from the previous five-year period, according to a report released on Monday. The five largest weapons exporters were the US, Russia, France, China, and Germany, with a share of 76% of global exports from 2018 to 2022, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in its report. Accounting for 40% of the global total in that period, US arms exports surged 14% from 2013-2017. A total of 41% of US arms exports went to the Middle East, down from 49% from the previous period. Russia's arms exports, meanwhile, plunged 31% in 2018-2022 compared to the previous half-decade. India, with a 31% share, was the biggest recipient of Russian weapons, followed by China with 23% and Egypt with 9.3%. Russian exports to India fell 37% between the two five-year periods, while they surged 39% to China and 44% to Egypt. "However, Russia made no deliveries to Egypt in 2021-2022 and the volume of deliveries to China in 2020-2022 was at a much lower level than in 2018-2019," it said. The report projected a further decline in Russia's arms exports due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, now in its second year, as the country will likely to prioritize the production of arms for its own military. "The multilateral sanctions, including wide-ranging trade restrictions, imposed on Russia, coupled with pressure from the USA and its allies on states not to acquire Russian arms, will also hamper its efforts to export arms," it added. French arms exports soared by 44% during this period, with nearly a third of this increase going to India. The country also expanded its share in global weapons exports to 11% from the previous five years' 7.1%.—APP

