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China warns Aukus allies on 'path of error and danger'

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Iran supports UN peace efforts in Yemen

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EU ambassador assures Police of cooperation

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Imran Khan's arrest

PTI workers, police clash at Zaman Park

Chaotic scenes as Police shells Imran's residence; PTI workers resist the attempt; dozens arrested; IHC to hear Imran Khan's petition today



BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Law enforcers and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers clashed Tuesday as a heavy contingent of police reached Zaman Park to arrest former prime minister Imran Khan in the Toshakana case – the only case in which his arrest warrants are not suspended. A team of Islamabad police has been in Lahore since Sunday to comply with the court orders to arrest the PTI chairman – who faces a number of cases in different cities. An Islamabad police team reached Lahore to arrest Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan after a district and sessions court issued his non-bailable arrest warrants for failing to attend the hearing in Toshakana reference. The court of ADSJ Zafar Iqbal restored non-bail-

able arrest warrants for Imran in the Toshakana reference. It instructed the police to arrest the PTI chief and present him in court by March 18. In a statement, the Islamabad police spokesperson said that they have reached Lahore to arrest PTI chief on court orders. The Islamabad police used water cannon and tear gas to disperse PTI workers gathered outside party chief Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence in Lahore. Last week, the IHC suspended the non-bailable arrest warrant for Khan issued by the local court issued due to the PTI chief's continuous absence and directed him to appear before the lower court on March 13 – and he failed to comply with the orders yet again. This is the second time in less than 10 days that the police have arrived at

Protests erupt in major cities

DNA

LAHORE: Amid fears of possible arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters poured onto streets in major cities to stage protests on Tuesday night. In Karachi, the PTI workers staged protests in several areas including Orangi Town, Hussain Square, Sohrab Goth and Shaheen Complex. Due to the protests, the main roads of the Sindh's capital were closed for traffic. In the Tarnol area of the federal capital, the PTI workers closed GT Road due to which the police officers were being summoned. The police made it clear that the PTI would not be allowed to stage protests in any of the areas in Islamabad. The PTI supporters also headed to Committee Chowk to stage their protest and chanted slogans against the government. The PTI workers also poured onto streets in Multan, Khanpur, Wazirabad, Karak and other places to protest the potential arrest of Mr Khan. Early, PTI leader Shibli Faraz said his party knew who would lead the party if PTI chief Imran Khan was arrested. Speaking to the media outside

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with Commander of Bahrain National Guard General Shaikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa. – DNA

Governor fixes May 28 for KP polls

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Tuesday announced the fixing of May 28 for holding General Election in the province. In a press statement issued here the Governor said that following the judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and fulfilling constitutional responsibility to give the election date to the Election Commission of Pakistan. The Governor had held important meetings at the Office of Election Commission of Pakistan Islamabad where he consulted with the election officials for the second time regarding the general elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Governor Haji Ghulam Ali informed the Election Commission about his concerns regarding the overall security situation in the province in the two consultative meetings and said that the law and order situation in the province is not favorable to holding the election.

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PM stresses for Pak-Bahrain cooperation in diverse fields

During a meeting with Bahraini Commander, PM hails the historic ties

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday, while expressing satisfaction on positive trajectory of the relations between Pakistan and Bahrain, stressed the importance of enhancing mutual cooperation in multiple fields. The prime minister, in a meeting with Commander of Bahrain National Guard General Shaikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa who called on him here, emphasised the bilateral cooperation in the fields of information technology, medicine, construction, food security, and export of Pakistani skilled and semi-skilled human resource. Both sides discussed avenues of cooperation between the two brotherly countries. The prime minister hailed the historic fraternal ties between the two countries, characterized by common aspirations, respect, and values. General Al Khalifa acknowledged the deep-seated bilateral relations between the two countries and shared aspirations for further

Continued on Page 06

PM sees 'more burden' on masses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sees "more burden" coming on the already inflation-hit masses moving forward as Pakistan scrambles and meets the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) conditions for reviving the stalled \$1.1 billion loan tranche. During an interview, the prime minister said that when he came into power, he and his partners were aware that the situation was very bad and that Pakistan was on the brink of default. But what he did not know was "that Imran Khan had completely gone back on the promises he made with the IMF, and I was also not aware that [IMF's]

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Zalmay urges national elections in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former US Representative on Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad has expressed concern on latest developments in Pakistan. In his Tweet he said Pakistan faces a triple crisis: political, economic, and security. Despite great potential, it is underperforming and falling far behind its archrival, India. It is time for serious soul-searching, bold thinking, and strategizing. Here are my thoughts:

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Army 'not available' for election duty, ECP told

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was informed on Tuesday that the Pakistan Army will not be available for poll-related duties due to the prevalent security situation within the country and on the borders. Provincial elections for the Punjab Assembly are scheduled for April 30 while KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali said earlier that he has suggested May 28 as the election date in the province. A press release issued from the electoral body said that three important meetings were held under the chairmanship of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja. The press release said that in the third meeting, Defence Secretary Lt Gen (retd) Hamooduz Zaman Khan

and Additional Secretary Maj Gen Khuram Sarfraz Khan briefed the CEC and ECP officials on the country's prevalent situation and the military's deployment within Pakistan and on its borders. "They said that the army attaches importance to its basic duties, in which the security of the borders and the country is its first priority. They said that the army is not available for election duty at this time due to the present situation in the country," the press release reads. The defence ministry officials said that the current economic situation of the country was also affecting the army. Meanwhile, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Tuesday announced the fixing of May 28 for holding General Election in the province. In a press statement issued here the Governor said that following the judgment of Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Briefs

US supports democracy in Pakistan

DNA

WASHINGTON: US State Department spokesperson Ned Price on Tuesday said Washington supports the democratic and constitutional system in Pakistan, media reported. Addressing his last press conference as US State Department spokesperson, Ned Price said US does not take any position between political parties. "We do not support any political leader." Ned Price stepped down after more than two years and will now take up a new position reporting to Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Today was my final in-person press briefing.

ECP bound to follow SC orders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja said on Tuesday that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is bound to follow Supreme Court's (SC) orders to hold Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) elections, media reported. In an informal talk to journalists, CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja said that the Punjab chief secretary and the inspector general (IG) expressed concerns regarding the prevailing law and order situation.

Complete peace will return, vows COAS

The Army Chief reiterated the resolve of the Army to fight against terrorism till elimination of menace

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Tuesday visited forward posts at Pak-Afghan border in South Waziristan and interacted with the troops. The COAS laid floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada (the martyrs' monument) in Wana and visited Formation Headquarters where he was briefed about the operational, training and security matters of the formation as well as progress on development works being undertaken in the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs), an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The COAS appreciated the counter terrorism efforts of the formation and provision of enabling environment for the completion of socio-economic development projects, vital for enduring stability and sustainable progress of NMDs. The Army Chief reiterated the resolve of the Army to fight against



terrorism till elimination of the menace. He vowed that sacrifices of Shuhada of Pakistan would not go in vain and complete peace would inshallah (by the will of Almighty Allah) return to Pakistan. He highlighted the importance of the synergy between various state institutions and in particular the importance of the people of Pakistan towards the collective fight against terrorism.

Continue struggle even if I am killed: Imran Khan

PTI Chairman constitutes a six-member 'emergency committee' to overlook party matters in case of arrest

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has urged the party workers and supporters to continue struggle for 'real freedom', as either they put me in jail or kill me, you (the nation) have to prove the imported government wrong that you can struggle without Imran Khan. In a video message on Tuesday, the PTI Chairman urged the nation to stand resolute and fight for 'Haqeeqat Azadi' and rule of law, as the police reached outside Zaman Park to arrest him. Meanwhile, Imran Khan has constituted a six-member 'emergency committee' to overlook party matters in case of arrest. The six-member committee – constituted to overlook party matters – included PTI vice chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Senator Saifullah Niazi, Senator Azam Swati, Ijaz Chaudhry, Murad Saeed and Ali Amin Gandapur. Imran Khan stated that the government believed the nation would not react if he got arrested, urging the party workers and supporters to



Maryam Nawaz calls for justice before polls

SHEIKHUPURA: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz said on Tuesday that elections would not be acceptable until and unless party supreme Nawaz Sharif was provided justice. Addressing the PML-N organisational convention, she said the scale of justice should be balanced first and then elections should be held in the country. She said, after providing justice to Nawaz Sharif, the PML-N would be ready for polls even if those were held tomorrow. She said the PML-N would not only contest elections but also win it with a thumping majority. She said that PTI held a rally in Lahore on Monday which was rejected by people, because they did not want to sacrifice their children for a person who hid himself under a charpoy when the police arrived at his residence to

arrest him. Maryam regretted that the PTI chairman was using the party workers and women as a human shield. The PML-N leader said she respected Zille Shah, a PTI worker, who was killed in a road accident some days ago. She said that she heard Zille Shah's father telling a TV channel that when the body of his son was lying in a hospital, Imran Khan called him to Zaman Park residence to offer condolences. Maryam said that old man was made to wait for over two hours before he could meet the 'king', (Imran Khan). She said Imran Khan insulted not only the father of his martyred party worker but also all political workers. Referring to former chief justice Saqib Nisar's remarks about her, she said: "I want to tell 'Dam wala baba' that

Continued on Page 06

prove the imported government 'wrong'. "They think that after I am arrested, the nation will fall asleep. You have to prove them wrong," he said. "The nation will have to prove that we are a living nation", he added, asking the nation to continue its struggle for real freedom and come out of their houses. "They put me in jail or kill me, but you have to prove the government wrong that you can struggle without Imran Khan," he said, adding that the nation would never accept the "worst slavery of thieves". "This nation is the Ummah of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) and it was formed on the principles and slogan of La illahallallah. You must step out and fight for your rights and true freedom," he said. He called on Pakistanis to stand up for their rights and true freedom, stating that he has been fighting this battle all his life and would continue to do so. He made it clear that if something were to happen to him, his supporters must carry on the fight and never accept the tyranny of the "thieves" who are making decisions for the country, particularly the one man who holds the reins of power. "God has given me everything, and I am fighting this battle for you. I have been fighting this battle all my life, and I will continue to do so," he said. "But if something happens to me, if I am jailed or if they kill me, then you must show that this nation will carry on fighting. You must never accept the tyranny of these thieves, especially the one man who is making decisions for the country."

Senate body seeks illegal construction details

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works Tuesday sought details of illegal construction on government allotted accommodation and directed strict action against the encroachers. The committee met here with Senator Haji Hidayatullah in the chair. Reviewing the matter regarding progress on tendering process to restart construction work related to Kashmir Avenue Apartments Sector G-13, permission to transfer Kashmir Avenue Apartments, the committee was informed that the transfer of Kashmir Avenue (G-13) apartment project had been opened subject to clearance of all outstanding installments payable at the time of transfer of apartments as per payment schedule which is not less than 23 percent of the total cost of the apartment. The committee stressed the need for timely possession of the apartments. While discussing the retendering process, the committee was of the view that transparency must be ensured and that all out efforts must be made to ensure that there was no usurpation of rights of the contractor due to the termination of the previous contract. —APP



ISLAMABAD-Mar14: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) demolishing illegal constructed houses during anti encouragement operation at Bari Imam area, in Federal capital. —ONLINE

UNDP delegation meets CS of KP

PESHAWAR: The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) delegation on Tuesday called on the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Imdadullah Bosal, and discussed the ongoing activities and interventions of Merged Areas Governance Programme. The meeting was attended by officials from the UNDP, including Programme Manager Raluca Eddon, Chief Strategic Advisor Javed Iqbal Khan, and Lead Economic Advisor Musharrif Rasool Cyan. The Additional Chief Secretary, Secretary Home, and Secretary Local Government also participated in the discussion. Both sides reiterated their commitment to improving public welfare in the merged districts of KP through the Programme's initiatives. The UNDP's Merged Areas Governance Programme aims to strengthen the capacity of the provincial government to deliver public services effectively and efficiently. The Programme also supports efforts to promote peace, stability, and development in the region. The meeting provided an opportunity for the UNDP delegation to review the progress of the programme's various projects and initiatives. —APP

EU Ambassador assured all possible cooperation to KP police

Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR: The European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Riina Kionka called on the Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan at CPO Peshawar today. Matters of mutual interest especially KP police professional affairs and projects of enhancing police capacity with the help of European Union came under discussion. The European Union Ambassador extended congratulation to Akhtar Hayat Khan on assuming the office of IGP and expressed best wishes for KP police under his dynamic leadership. The European Union Ambassador expressed her sorrow over the Peshawar police lines attack that claimed precious human lives. On the occasion a detailed briefing was given to the European Union Ambassador regarding the confronting challenges in maintenance of law and order and the police steps taken for its redressal. The IGP informed that KP police was playing front role against the terrorists and so far more than 2 thousands officers and jawans of every rank have sacrificed their lives in the war against terror. The IGP further briefed that attacks on the police force with modern gadgetries have increased after the withdrawal of allied forces from the



neighboring country, especially the police are being targeted in southern districts. However, the IGP said that despite manifold challenges and difficulties the KP police was fighting and giving tough time to the terrorists. The IGP also informed that Thermal Imaging Cameras and sophisticated weapons

are being provided to the police force to combat the terrorists armed with modern weapons. The IGP further went on to say that anti-terror financing unit has been established in CTD added that an automatic monitoring system would be installed to ensure supervision of money being used in terrorism. The

IGP informed that police are more exposed to attacks due to peculiar nature of its duty. However, he said, that police despite being targeted neither abandoned any post nor showed retreat in the field. The IGP said that excellent working relationship exist amongst different Law Enforcing Agencies and the public was fully cooperating with the police force in the war against terror. The IGP said that the KP police valued the cooperation of the EU and hoped this cooperation will continue in future too. The EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka appreciated the role and sacrifices rendered by the KP police in the war against terror and the steps taken by the IGP for improving police performance. The members of the delegation also asked several questions in the light of the briefing. The IGP gave detailed answers to these questions. The EU Ambassador assured all possible cooperation to KP police in its support programme. Later on, the IGP presented commemorative police shields to the participants. The First Secretary Political of the EU Ms. Dilarde Tealin also included in the delegation. Additional IGP Headquarters, Additional IGP CTD, DIG Special Branch and DIG Finance were also present in the meeting.

Commissioner inaugurates 'Clean, Green Peshawar' campaign

PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair and Deputy Commissioner, Shah Fahad on Tuesday inaugurated the 'Clean and Green Peshawar' campaign by planting a sapling. The inauguration ceremony was also attended by CM aide, Malik Mehar Elahi, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Saneel Safi, traders and officials of Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP). Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner said workers of WSSP would clean the streets of the city and dispose of garbage on daily basis. —APP

COURT NOTICE

In The Court Of Saadat Hussain Malik Additional District Judge Gujar Khan Appeal Civil etc. Rashida Bano Versus Muhammad Aslam etc Notice To No 01. Muhammad Aslam son of Hukamdaad 2. Jahangir Aslam 3. Jameel Aslam sons of Muhammad Aslam Resident of Nagail Pehlwan Tehsil Gujar Khan District Rawalpindi. 7. Muhammad Ali Khan Resident of House No 23/5 Mohallah Hayyat Sir Road Ward No 7 Gujar Khan District Rawalpindi. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the court personally, through counsel or attorney on 16/03/2023 at 9 am avoid ex parte proceeding.

SCCI urges traders to provide relief during Ramadan

PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Muhammad Ishaq Tuesday urged traders' community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to provide food items on subsidized rates to inflation-stricken masses during the holy month of Ramadan, calling it as a virtuous deed

and also a great source for gaining great reward in this blessing month. In a statement issued here, SCCI chief said that spiraling 'price-hike' had broken the backbone of the poverty-hit people of the society. He added the purchasing power of the common man was rapidly dying owing to unprecedented surge in

food commodities prices. Keeping in view the prevailing circumstances, Ishaq said traders' community across K-P province should provide maximum relief in food prices to inflation-battered poor masses so that all essentials would be available to 'underprivileged' and 'downtrodden' segments of the society and they would perform the sacred religious obligation in Ramadan. The SCCI chief mentioned that traders' communities belonging to other religions sell essential food items

during Ramadan at subsidized rates in Pakistan and different countries around the world. "Our religion Islam teach us to provide every possible assistance to poor Muslim brothers, especially keeping in view the holy month and following the teaching of Islam, we should give maximum relief to poor people in prices", he added. Ishaq said inflation had touched a new peak, which was miserably hit by the poor segment of the society. —APP

Maximum coverage of transgenders in Population Census to be ensured

PESHAWAR: Special measures have been taken to ensure coverage of transgenders community in the ongoing Seventh Population Census in the country, making the highly marginalized segment of society eligible for benefiting from welfare oriented policies launched by the government. "In the ongoing first ever digital census in the country, three categories have been mentioned in gender section including male, female and transgender," informs Shaikat Ali Khan, Deputy Director General Population Census Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Talking to APP here on Tuesday, Shaikat informed that the enumeration teams are visiting every nook and corner of the country for registration of people and were also directed to go to 'Deras' (collective staying facility of transgenders) for their coverage. The government, Shaikat continued, has also relaxed the condition of identity cards and transgenders would be registered on the assurance of 'Gurus', mentors in transgender community. —APP

Hindko translation of book "ambassador of light" arrived in market

PESHAWAR: Hindko translation of a book titled as 'Ambassador of Light' and penned by prominent businessman and Executive Member of Ghandhara Hindko Board Peshawar, Ziaul Haq Sarhadi has been arrived in market. According to a press re-

lease issued here on Monday, the book has been published by Gandhara Hindko Board, an organization striving for promotion of regional languages especially Hindko. General Secretary Ghandhara Hindko Board, Ziaul Haq Sarhadi has thrown light on religious saints of sub-continent, spiritual personalities famous for their pious life and services for Islam. —

his visit to the office. Speaking on the occasion, Ziaul Din termed Ambassador of Light has a good addition in Hindko literature. The book, he continued, will not only prove beneficial for researchers on regional languages but would be also an interesting read for people associated with spirituality. In the book, Ziaul Haq Sarhadi has thrown light on religious saints of sub-continent, spiritual personalities famous for their pious life and services for Islam. —



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Professor Ahsan Iqbal addressing the International Conference on Health Security organized by UVAS Lahore. —APP

Imran Khan destabilizing country: Muqam

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs and National Heritage, Engr Amir Muqam here Tuesday said that PTI Chief Imran Khan was destabilizing the country after realizing that his politics became irrelevant. Addressing a big public gathering after the inauguration of 132KV Karnal Sher Khan grid station completed with an estimated cost of Rs 800 million here, Engr Amir Muqam said Imran Khan has destroyed the country's economy that created price-hike and inflation in the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where PTI ruled over four and 10 years. He said Imran Khan has dragged state institutions

into politics after his ouster due to a successful no-confidence motion by the national assembly and was still levelling baseless allegations against political opponents and senior officials of government organizations. Amir Muqam said Imran Khan was known for his lies-based politics, which is evident from the fact that he stepped back from his uncalculated foreign conspiracy narrative. Muqam said Imran even did not like neutrals and his time to play and win political matches under his own umpires was over now. The prime minister's adviser said that PTI dissolved KP and Punjab assemblies in a bid to politically destabilize Pakistan. He said on one side PTI prematurely dissolved KP

and Punjab assemblies as well as the governments and was now demanding early elections, which showed the immature politics of Imran Khan. He claimed that Imran Khan was exerting pressure on state institutions including the judiciary after he was charged in different cases including Tosh Khan, adding the PTI leader has tarnished the country's image after stealing an expensive watch of Khan Kaba's model from Tosh Khan. Amir Muqam said work on Kanal Sher grid station was stopped by former PTI rulers after its inauguration in 2017 by the Nawaz Sharif government in Swabi, adding the present government has immediately resumed work on it and completed it in record nine

months benefiting thousands of consumers of Swabi. He said work on the other development projects in the Swabi district was also expedited and would be soon completed. The prime minister's adviser asked the PTI workers whether they would continue support to a person (Imran), who deceived them in the name of so-called change for the last 10 years or extend support to Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, who completed records development projects including the construction of a network of motorways, highways and made Pakistan an atomic power besides enhancing the country's image globally. Amir Muqam said that there was no price hike and inflation during the government

of Nawaz Sharif and held the Imran Khan government responsible for the current high price hike and inflation. "Nawaz Sharif has faced all difficult situations including imprisonment with steadfastness and bravery and has never compromised on peoples' rights." "We have joined the coalition government, not for the sake of politics but to take the country out of existing difficult inherited challenges," he said, adding "our agenda is the development of Pakistan and prosperity of its people." He claimed that Imran Khan would be held accountable for his corrupt practices including Tosh Khan and PTI foreign funding cases and the law would take its own course. —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. Patrick's 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



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WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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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
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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: Bushra Rehman President Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association presenting a souvenir to the Canadian High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon during a dinner hosted by the President PWCTA and Malik Suhail Hussain Secretary General at the Islamabad Serena Hotel.—DNA

Pak, Canada discuss ways to promote coop

Ms. Leslie Scanlon meets Finance Minister Ishaq Dar; shares sentiments of deep rooted friendly relations between Pakistan and Canada

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Mar 14 (DNA): The High Commissioner of Canada, Ms. Leslie Scanlon and Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday exchanged views on enhancing bilateral relations in various avenues and cooperation in a number of fields including trade, investment and climate resilience. During a call on meeting of the High Commissioner with the Fi-

nance Minister, both the sides discussed overall global economic situation as well as economic policies and programmes of the government in Pakistan. According to press statement issued by finance ministry, Ishaq Dar said both the countries were having friendly relations and commended the support of Canadian government for flood affected people. He briefed the envoy about the economic outlook and the challenges being faced by the country, coupled with huge losses

due to the devastating floods last year. He further shared that the government with its pragmatic policy decisions had not only arrested the economic decline but was also steering the economy towards stability and growth. He also shared that the government had taken difficult decisions in key sectors, including energy in order to reduce budgetary and current account deficits and increased the revenue generation. The minister also informed about the talks held with

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission and reiterated the commitment of the government to complete the existing program with the fund and fulfill all the international obligations. The minister appreciated the Canadian investments in Pakistan and extended full support and cooperation of the government to enhance the economic relations between both the countries. On the occasion, Ms. Leslie Scanlon also shared sentiments of deep rooted friendly relations between Pakistan and

Canada and said, both the countries enjoyed excellent relations and these needed to be further promoted especially on trade, investment and Climate resilience. She informed about the newly developed strategy for the region through which Pakistan would be able to access facilities for climate resilience and re-building. She supported the policies and programs of the government for socio-economic development and economic growth.

Pakistan has great potential to enhance exports to Africa—ICCI

Dr. Teshome Adunga, Mayor of Shagar briefed the ICCI delegation about the business and investment opportunity in his city

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is exporting many quality products at competitive prices around the world including textiles products, surgical instruments, pharmaceuticals, cutlery items, leather products, sports goods, chemicals, marble & granite, carpets, & rugs, rice, sugar, cotton and Pakistan can export many of these products to Ethiopia and other African countries. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry while addressing a dinner reception hosted by Dr. Teshome Adunga, Mayor of Shagar, the 2nd largest city of Ethiopia, in honor

of ICCI delegation during their visit to Ethiopia. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that Pakistan is well-known in the international market for its surgical and pharmaceutical products while Ethiopia is importing most of these products to meet its needs. He said that Ethiopia should facilitate Pakistani pharmaceutical companies for registration in its market by lowering registration costs that would enable Ethiopia to import quality surgical and pharmaceutical products from Pakistan. He said that Ethiopia should also help Pakistani investors to set up their manufacturing units here and export their products to many African countries. He thanked the Mayor of Shagar for hosting

a dinner reception for ICCI delegation and hoped that the visit of ICCI delegation to Ethiopia would start a new chapter of growing trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia. Speaking at the occasion, H.E. Jemal Bekir Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan said that Pakistan should increase its footprint in Africa through Ethiopia which is a gateway to the continent of 1.4 billion people. He said that Ethiopia is a fast-growing economy and is offering lucrative business, trade and investment opportunities with cheap cost of production and skilled labour. He said that Ethiopia is supportive of the foreign investors as it has opened up its economy and is en-

couraging the private sector to take lead for the development of the country. He stressed that Pakistani investors should take advantage of Ethiopia's good business environment by investing in various sectors of its economy. Dr. Teshome Adunga, Mayor of Shagar briefed the ICCI delegation about the business and investment opportunity in his city. He said that Ethiopia is fully committed to facilitate the foreign investors and looked forward to investment from Pakistan in Ethiopia. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President and others were in the delegation. A cultural show of Ethiopia was also presented to the delegation.

Coordination among institutions necessary: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday said coordination among institutions involved in disaster management was necessary for protection against natural calamities.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) simulation exercise to ensure the preparedness of the departments concerned to cope with impending disaster risks in the coming Summer season, the Minister said the NDMA, PDMA along with other organisations worked together in the rescue and rehabilitation of the disaster affected. Senator Rehman said there was a need to increase cooperation between various institutions to deal with disasters in the future. She added the first task after a natural disaster was to restore basic infrastructure whereas no country could bear the loss of natural calamities on its own. During the natural calamities, she said the friendly countries were the first to reach out for help. "Pakistan suffered massive losses due to floods. However, affected by glacier melt and heatwave, the spring season is almost over," Sherry Rehman added. The Minister underlined that climate change was a big threat to human lives, adding, "Problems can be solved easily with mutual cooperation of institutions."—APP



FGEHA allocates 1,188 category-I plots

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Housing Authority (FGEHA) has allocated around 1,188 category-I plots in Park Road Housing Scheme, Islamabad for allotment to federal government employees as per the approved layout plan. "As per the decision of the 142nd meeting of the executive committee of the authority, a 3.5 per cent quota was further segregated into constitutional serving (2.5 per cent), constitutional retired (0.5 per cent) and constitutional widows (0.5 per cent) categories with the criteria "age-wise seniority" and "length of service" respectively," said a document available with APP. It said a number of plots to be allotted as per the above-approved quota reserved in the Park Road Housing Scheme for the registered members of constitutional bodies/quota. The bodies included in the said quota were the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad High Court, Federal Shariat Court, Election Commission of Pakistan, Senate Secretariat, National Assembly Secretariat, Islamic Ideological Council, Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat and Federal Tax Ombudsman Office, the document said. The allotment in Park Road Housing Scheme would be made under age-wise seniority to above mentioned constitutional bodies registered in membership Drive-II. —APP

ANF seizes over 1652 kg drugs in 39 operations; arrests 45

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan has seized 1652.968 kg drugs and 1846 liters prohibited chemical, worth US\$ 33.302 million internationally, arrested 45 persons including two women and three absconders, impounded 13 vehicles while conducting 39 counter narcotics operations throughout the country during last week. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 23.032 kg Heroin, 1531.140 kg Hashish, 67.9 kg Opium, 28.011 kg Methamphetamine (Ice), eight grams cocaine, 0.312 kg Ecstasy Tabs (530 tablets), 1.865 kg Xanax tabs (8320 tablets), 0.300 kg Valium Tabs (1065 tablets), eight grams caffeine and 1846 liters HCL. ANF Balochistan recovered 1092.200 kg drugs and 1846 liters prohibited chemical in eight operations while arrested eight persons involved in drugs smuggling and impounded two vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 21 kg heroin, 1048.200 kg hashish, 23 kg Methamphetamine (Ice) and 1846 liters HCL. ANF Punjab recovered 64.205 kg drugs in nine operations while arrested 11 persons including a woman involved in drugs smuggling and impounded five vehicles. —APP

'Sunwalk Group intends to invest USD 2 bln in Telecom Sector'

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque on Tuesday said that Sunwalk Group intends to invest USD 2 billion in Telecom Sector for the deployment of an Optical Fiber Network, encompassing an area of 100,000 km. The willingness to make investments was showed by a high-level delegation of Sunwalk Group led by Chairman Mr HOU who called on Federal Minister for IT & Telecom Syed Amin Ul Haque, said a news release issued here. The meeting also discussed Investment in Telecom Infrastructure, Optical Fiber Cable (OFC) and Right of Way (RoW). Sunwalk (Pvt) Ltd, is a Telecom and Technology based multinational private Chinese enterprise that has developed multiple telecoms, and communication infrastructure projects in China and has acquired a TIP License in Pakistan. The company already started deployment and invested about USD 5 million. Sunwalk (Pvt) has the plan to deploy 5000 km OFC as the next step. Syed Amin Ul Haque briefed the delegation that consultation with the Ministry of Railways and Highways Authority is ongoing regarding the Right of Way to laying OFC. He assured the delegation that all obstacles in this regard will be removed soon. Chairman Sunwalk expressed his gratitude to Federal Minister and his team for their full support and cooperation. The meeting was attended by Member Telecom Muhammad Omar Malik, DG Wireless Jahanzeb Rahim while the Sunwalk delegation comprises: Mr LOU Vice President of Sunwalk Group, Mr Tony Li (Assistant to Chairman), Mr Chen Dianbo (COO of Sunwalk Pakistan) and Miss Afshaan Malik (CBO of Sunwalk Pakistan).—APP

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Briefs

4,498 MW capacity added to CPPA-G system in FY 2021-22

ISLAMABAD: As many as 4,498 megawatts (MW) of electricity was added to the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) system during the financial year 2021-22. The said capacity was added to the system through the commissioning of 1,263 MW Trimmu RLNG Power Project, 1,145 MW KANUPP-III Nuclear Power Project, 720 MW Karot Hydropower Project, 660 MW Coal-Based Lucky Electric Power Project, 100 MW Zhenfa Solar Power Project and 12 wind projects with an accumulated capacity of 600 MW, official sources told APP here on Tuesday. The total electric power generation in CP-PA-G and KE systems remained at 143,108.69 GWh and 10,765.51 GWh during the said period, they said. Out of the total electricity generation in the country including KE System remained 153,874.20 GWh. This generation translated into 43% utilization factor of dependable capacity meaning thereby 57% of the "Take or Pay" based power generation capacity remained unutilized. —APP

PR plans to lay fibre optics cable along railway tracks

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has been planning to lay fibre optics cables along the railway tracks across the country in a joint venture with private sector investors to generate revenue for the department. "Pakistan Railways has around 7,791 kilometres railway network across the country which will not only help the department to improve its financial condition but also attract investors to invest," the official sources in the Ministry told APP. They said the matter also came under discussion during a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) last month in which the Ministry of Railways pointed out that the department was offering an excellent opportunity for laying fibre optics cables along its track for digital connectivity across the country. Pakistan Railways told the meeting that it has a network of 7,791 km, which passed through high-density population areas and connects major cities in the four provinces, they added. They said with the average assets and hefty pension bills, Pakistan Railways contended, but its financial health was deteriorating and unless new revenue sources were identified, the reliance on government subsidy would keep on growing. —APP

CDA plans new development schemes for rural, urban areas

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has planned new development schemes worth billions of rupees aimed at uplifting the living standards of urban and rural residents in the federal capital.

An official told APP, that the Development Working Party (DWP) meeting approved the PC-I of a scheme worth Rs 10.5 billion for development work in the rural areas, extending the scope of uplift projects to rural areas. The project would focus on repairing the dilapidated roads, water supply system, street pavement, and sanitation system in the rural areas, and was expected to be completed in two years. The CDA has recently approved the Chhatta Bakhtawar Housing Scheme worth Rs 2,120 million, and another project worth Rs 1,424 million for the construction of a two-lane flyover at Rawat T-Chowk from N-5 Gujjar Khan side to the Islamabad Highway. The construction of a 2-Lane Flyover at Rawat T-Chowk from N-5 to Islamabad Highway along with approaches was expected to be completed within nine months of current year. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and parliamentarians witnessing the photo exhibition in connection of the golden jubilee celebrations of the Senate of Pakistan at Parliament House.—DNA

NDMA issues guidelines for DRM steps during summer

It also advised the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MoNHSR&C) to issue necessary instructions to all concerned for enhancing departmental and hospital capacities to manage heatwave conditions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued detailed guidelines for the departments concerned to ensure timely measures for disaster risk management (DRM) during the upcoming summer season.

The Authority in its guidelines mentioned that with the onset of the summer season; heatwaves, forest fires and glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) events could be expected across the country in respective hazard-prone areas.

It noted that based on the vulnerability of different regions, the impacts could vary, hence requiring requisite preparations by respective disaster management authorities, rescue agencies, line departments and local administrations. The NDMA guidelines underscored the need for proactive measures from all provincial disaster management authorities (PDMAs), state disaster management authority (SDMA-AJK), Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration, health departments, line departments, rescue agencies, responders, urban search and rescue (USAR) teams, Armed Forces and federal departments and ministries to undertake dynamic measures to ensure timely prepa-

rations and response against likely hazards. For Heatwave, the guidelines stated that PDMAs in collaboration with district disaster management authorities (DDMAs) and local administration would carry out extensive awareness campaigns for sensitizing the public to likely dangers associated with heatwave-like conditions and associated preventive measures. Moreover, the ministries, departments and local administration should undertake the required measures for protecting children from exposure to heatwave conditions in education institutes. Identification of high-risk areas and establishment of heatstroke treatment centres with required doctors and paramedic staff and water. It also advised the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MoNHSR&C) to issue necessary instructions to all concerned for enhancing departmental and hospital capacities to manage heatwave conditions. For individual measures, the NDMA guidelines advised the masses to remain hydrated; drink sufficient quantity of water, keep a drinking water bottle for regular intake, stay cool; avoid exposure to direct sunlight and crowded spaces, remain informed; keep track of local weather conditions to avoid exposure to extreme conditions and in case of any signs of illness consult a qualified physician to seek expert medical advice. It also exhorted to plan work, ex-

ercise and outdoor activities; manage work timeline according to weather conditions and avoid unnecessary exposure to heatwave-like conditions, special attention and care to the elderly and people with underlying health conditions must be ensured. The guidelines also underscored the need for vehicular fitness as vehicles and humans both can be adversely affected due to heatwave-like conditions, ensure that moves and travels were planned to avoid unnecessary exposure to heat and sun. For Forest and Urban Fires, it is advised to carry out immediate risk and vulnerability assessment of respective regions to identify fire-prone sites and areas. The NDMA guidelines also demanded expediting the work of preparation and mitigation measures in forests namely the creation of fire lines and lanes, ditches, clearance of dry foliage, and dry grass, planning and executing controlled fires. All measures in line with standard operating procedures (SOPs) of the forest department must be ensured. It also underscored the need for fire drills, the fitness of equipment, readiness of water supply and replenishment points, checking and refilling of fire extinguishers, and local communities' engagement at fire-prone sites to enable round-the-clock monitoring and feedback mechanism for early warnings and alerts for at-risk population and assets, (areas in the vicinity of forests

and high-rise buildings/ storage facilities/ warehouses etc). The NDMA in its guidelines also advised holding forest and urban fire mock exercises for both departmental preparedness and combined exercises with all stakeholders for the readiness of men and machinery and equipment. For the GLOF events, it mentioned carrying out immediate risk and vulnerability assessment of respective regions to identify possible GLOF sites and areas in addition to already identified locations. It also noted to ensure a clock monitoring mechanism, and arrangements through all possible means and resources, especially involving the local communities for immediate dissemination of early warnings. Moreover, a mass awareness campaign for the general public on GLOFs in at-risk areas covering key steps like avoiding unnecessary movement in such areas, especially across nullahs, streams and rivers, high risk associated with the exponential rise of flow or discharge, which can result in washing away of houses, infrastructure, vehicles, humans and livestock, alerting general masses living in low-lying areas to exercise extra caution including community-based alert system, evacuation plan of at-risk community and conduct of evacuation drills.

The law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and Traffic Police should advise travellers regarding likely situations, dangers and safety measures, it added.

16 acres of mangrove forest successfully Restored

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sixteen acres of mangrove forest have been successfully restored in the Sonmiani Marsh Dam area of Balochistan, as the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (SCSIO) has made smooth progress in the construction of the mangrove biodiversity and mangrove restoration demonstration zones in Pakistan. According to China Economic Net (CEN), SCSIO is leading a project titled "Database Construction of Mangrove Biodiversity in South Asia and Southeast Asia, and Construction of Anti-pollu-

tion Ecological Restoration Demonstration Zones," which is being conducted in collaboration with the Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water & Marine Sciences (LUAWMS) in Pakistan. As part of this project, the research team utilized the R&D technology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences to apply the mangrove anti-pollution ecological restoration afforestation technology to restore damaged coastal wetlands in Pakistan. The Pakistani side successfully completed over 16 acres of mangrove anti-pollution ecological restoration demonstration zones in the Sonmiani Marsh Dam area, which effectively promoted the protection and development of local mangroves.

Mangroves, as one of the most productive and diverse ecosystems on Earth, play a crucial role in preventing floods that could affect 39% more people annually if they were absent. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), mangroves are exceptional carbon sinks, with three to five times greater carbon storage capacity than tropical forests. They also sustain the livelihoods of over 120 million people globally and provide habitat for more than 3,000 fish species. Pakistan's two coastal states, Sindh and Balochistan, are endowed with unique coastal ecosystems that possess a significant capacity for capturing and retaining substantial

quantities of carbon dioxide (CO₂). With the technologies provided by SCSIO, the Marine Science School of LUAWMS organized a mangrove planting project and a fisherman community engagement event in the Sonmiani Marsh Dam area of Balochistan. Professor Mohammad Baloch, Executive Vice President of Lasbela University, and members of the Marine Science School also interacted with the community fishermen to discuss their livelihoods during the inter-activity event. Professor Mohammad Baloch said that mangroves provide fishing-based livelihoods, fuelwood, herd animal forage, and act as a natural barrier against natural disasters.

Experts laud PM's free flour package

ISLAMABAD: Political and economic experts besides the general public on Tuesday lauded the Prime Minister's free wheat flour package that would greatly help provide significant relief to millions of households during the holy month of Ramadan. Ikhtair Wali Khan, PML-N spokesman while appreciating the Prime Minister's package aimed to provide free of charge flour to over 15.8 million households of Punjab province during Ramadan was highly commendable and praised-worthy. He said free flour bags would be distributed through 8,500 utility stores while another 20,000 flour distribution points to be set up in Punjab province to facilitate the masses. Ikhtair said the federal government would also assist the other provinces including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the provision of flour and other facilities to people during Ramadan. Meanwhile, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker government prepared about Rs 4 billion food relief programme including provision of free of charge flour bags to facilitate poor people during Ramadan. The package would benefit around one million households in the province. The provincial government under the package would either give Rs 4,000 to each family or three flour bags of 10KG each for Ramadan. The package would be distributed through Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to ensure its quick and transparent distribution. Hamza Khan, PML-N Nowshera President while welcoming the PM's assistance package said it would provide —APP

Siddiqui calls for economic analysis to fix responsibility

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Education and Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture Chairman Irfan Ul Haq Siddiqui has called for a thorough analysis of the country's economic history to determine who was responsible for its current economic woes. Talking to a TV channel Senator Irfan-Ul-Haq Siddiqui pointed out that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program was completed during the era of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2017. In 2017, the country's economy was thriving. Inflation was less than three percent which was touching 35 percent. People were satisfied. As Pakistan continues to grapple with economic challenges, experts are hoping to pinpoint the root causes of the country's economic deterioration. He also questioned the transparency of former Prime Minister Imran Khan regarding his Toshakhana gifts, stating that legal experts agree that selling the received gifts is illegal and unethical. Responding to a question, he said former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is set to return to the country soon, although no date has been decided yet. He said the country was destroyed to get rid of one person (Nawaz). Right now India has foreign reserves of \$500 billion and Pakistan's foreign reserves were grappling on mere \$ one billion. One has to answer why country's economy took a persistent downward slide after ousting of Nawaz Sharif from power.—APP

Pakistani farmers trained for hybrid canola cultivation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A serial field training for Pakistani canola farmers was inaugurated in Gujranwala, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday. On Nasir Cheema's dairy farm, farmers, seed distributors, and agricultural technicians gathered to learn about the cultivation and harvesting technology of hybrid canola. The Field Day in Gujranwala is the first field training to Pakistani farmers that the company organizes. In the following weeks, about 50 such training sessions would be held for about five to ten thousand households in Pakistan. The hybrid canola, with seeds provided by China's Wuhan Qingfa Hesheng Seed

Company, is being planted on 80,000 hectares of land in Pakistan this year, particularly in Punjab and Sindh. At the beginning of next month, a bumper harvest is expected

that will translate into tens of thousand of tons of edible oil, and a demonstration mechanized harvest will be staged with harvesters from China. "We enjoy higher yield from

this hybrid variety HC-021C. It has much more branches as compared to other mustard or canola plants. I hope it will provide an average of 35 mounds per acre", canola

farmer Nasir Cheema told CEN.

"Its fertility period is 8-10 days shorter than others, and its lower heights make it more unlikely to be beaten down by strong wind", he added. Director Zhou Xusheng of the Chinese seed company told CEN, "this event is part of our efforts to help local farmers increase production and reduce costs. In the next step, we'll develop the canola industrial chain through make-to-order (MTO) partnership with local refineries and farmers and by introducing China's advanced harvesting and pressing technologies". From 2021 to 2022, Pakistan imported around \$3.6 billion edible oil, accounting for 89% of nation's total supply.

**Chairman Senate inaugurates photo exhibition**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani inaugurated a photo exhibition commemorating the Golden Jubilee of the Senate which beautifully showcases the rich history of the Upper House of the Parliament.

In addition to the exhibition, Chairman Senate Sanjrani also unveiled the Senate Golden Jubilee Theme Song, which is a testament to the Senate's contribution to the democratic process in Pakistan.

To further mark this special occasion, Chairman Senate Sanjrani announced the issuance of a commemorative coin and postal stamp. These will serve as lasting reminders of the Senate's 50-year journey and its important role in the country's political landscape.

Lastly, Chairman Senate Sanjrani planted a sapling in the yard of the Parliament House Building. This act represents the Senate's commitment to nurturing and growing democracy in Pakistan.

Chairman Senate while talking to media personnel remarked that today marks a significant milestone in the history of our nation. The Upper House of the Parliament has successfully completed 50 years of its remarkable journey. During this span of five decades, the Senate of Pakistan has emerged as a compelling forum, representing not only all the provinces of the country but also the underdeveloped regions.

The Upper House has been instrumental in promoting the country's progress and prosperity, as well as serving as a channel for the ordinary citizens' voices, he added. Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani was accompanied by Former Deputy Chairman Senate, Jan Jamali, Minister of State for Law Senator Shahadat Awan, Senator Sana Jamali, Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi, Senator Haji Hidayatullah and Secretary Senate, Mohammad Qasim Samad Khan.—DNA

5th Pakistan International culinary championship begins

ISLAMABAD: The 5th Pakistan International Culinary Championship (PICC-2023) kicked off on March 14, with the objective to provide a platform for young professional chefs to showcase their culinary talent to the world. Pakistan Tourism Development Cooperation (PTDC) as a strategic partner of the Chefs' Association of Pakistan (CAP) and the College of Tourism and Hotel Management (COTHM) is organising the three-day PICC-2023 at Royal Palm Golf and Country Club, Lahore. According to PTDC officials, the event was the harbinger of a new era of culinary education and food trends in Pakistan which also will provide a great opportunity to promote gastronomy tourism in Pakistan.

Through the participation of university, college and school students, Pakistani professional chefs and international culinary teams and delegates, the championship would connect Pakistan with the global world, they highlighted.

"The PICC-2023 will also foster an image of Pakistan that would depict us as a peaceful, friendly, creative.—APP

US caught in the grip of gun tyranny

Even though gun deaths are so common in the United States that people are becoming numb to them, the latest news of a 3-year-old girl in Texas who found a loaded gun in her home and unintentionally shot and killed her 4-year-old sister is still heartbreaking. It is all the sadder that this is only the latest in a long litany of fatal shootings involving youngsters as either the perpetrators or the victims. Research published on March 8 on JAMA Network, a consortium of general medical and specialty publications, indicates that guns are already a main cause of youngsters' deaths in the US. While Gun Violence Archive, an online archive of gun violence incidents, recorded the deaths of 227 youngsters in the first two months of 2023. That's almost four a day. The number of people shot on school property increased 46 percent in the US in 2022, with the number of incidents up 21 percent, according to the K-12 School Shooting Database. When the founding fathers of the US passed the Second Amendment to the Constitution, they meant to protect US people's ability to resist any tyrant that might emerge. Two centuries later it is that Amendment itself that has become the tyrant. Its deliberate misreading by gun advocates has allowed firearms to proliferate in the US to such an extent that there are now more guns than people in the country. Those promoting gun ownership disingenuously argue that guns make people safer. If that was the case then the US should be the world's safest country. That is palpably not the case. It is a damning indictment of the US that shootings are so frequent in the country that they are classified as mass incidents with four or more casualties or ordinary ones. The US is a nation built on the myth of the gun. Guns are enshrined in the national psyche as the securers of the country's independence, the tamers of savages and the upholders of American values. It is a myth that demands regular sacrifices to the bullet. Sacrificial bloodlust that the arms producers and dealers deny they have any responsibility for. Whether or not to support gun control is not about politics. It is about humanity and conscience. If there is a hell, Satan must be waving a JR-15 in one hand and an "On sale" tag in the other.



AUKUS submarine a dangerous road

In a move that makes it crystal clear that the United States is now so obsessed with its China phobia that it is speeding along a dangerous road that will put regional peace at jeopardy, Washington has accelerated the timeline for the sharing of a nuclear-propulsion technology for the first time since the 1950s, announcing that it will sell three Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, with an option for it to buy two more. Australia's acquisition of the nuclear-powered attack submarines, to be built by General Dynamics, is part of a multi-stage project under the AUKUS framework that is to culminate with the United Kingdom and Australia producing and operating a new trilaterally developed submarine based on the UK's next-generation design. The vessels are to be built in the UK and Australia and will include "cutting edge" US technologies. The UK is due to take delivery of its first submarine in the late 2030s, while Australia would receive its first vessel in the early 2040s. Addressing a ceremony at the US naval base in San Diego on Monday, accompanied by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, US President Joe Biden called the agreement a demonstration of the three partners' shared commitment to "a free-and-open Indo-Pacific region", which is Washington-speak for containing China. As Sunak noted, it means that for the first time ever, three fleets of (nuclear-powered) submarines will be working together with common cause. But rather than "ensuring peace and stability" in the Asia-Pacific, the plan, which will cost up to \$245 billion by 2055, "constitutes serious nuclear proliferation risks, undermines the international non-proliferation system, fuels an arms race, and hurts peace and stability", as China's permanent mission to the United Nations said in a tweet after the announcement. The US and its allies should know exporting nuclear technology to a nuclear-free country is a blatant violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. With over 190 signatories worldwide, the NPT embodies the international community's commitment to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and promote cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Both Washington and London are signatories to the NPT, and Australia has joined both the NPT and the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. So, how can they go back on their non-proliferation commitments while urging others in the world, such as Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to give up their nuclear ambitions? AUKUS countries should drop their double standard and respond to the international community's concerns. They should fulfill their non-proliferation obligations and maintain candid and transparent communication with other countries on the basis of equality and mutual respect under the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Pakistan's sad regression and India's phenomenal progression

Imitiaz Gul

Both the HRCP and the Amnesty International finally woke up after the mentioned TV news channel was put off-air. "Criticism of state institutions cannot be considered hate speech as has been suggested by PEMRA. Any limitations on the right to freedom of expression must be on a case-to-case basis and deemed to be necessary and proportionate conforming to international human rights laws and standards," reminded a statement by Amnesty International on March 6. Probably, political expedience

The recent ordeal of Amjad Shoaib, an 80-year-old decorated veteran of Pakistan's armed forces, marked another low in Pakistan's chequered politics. It symbolises an administrative tactic that apparently knows no compassion, tramples citizens' fundamental rights and is bereft of any moral scruples whatsoever. Dozens of cases against former prime minister Imran Khan and his colleagues reflect the parochial, petty political and bureaucratic mindset ruling Pakistan. Everybody wonders how a former PM all of a sudden turned into a criminal, terrorist and a rebel. Will brazen March 5 ban on Khan's speeches orders by PEMRA followed by the shutdown of a TV news channel neutralise Khan? All bans against Imran Khan, in the words of advocate Faisal Zaman, have only worked in his favour and against his opponents. The reality is, he says, that Khan is news or else there's no news. All speeches of opposition mention only Khan. Courts won't allow blanket prohibition as it violates fundamental rights. Contrast this with the next-door India. A country we have been told since childhood needs to be "crushed" has galloped its way up in a phenomenal way. It is reaping dividends of a resolute foreign policy - recalibrated around year 2000 - like never before. Two cases illustrate this proliferation of influence - the recent G-20 summit in India, and a meeting between the National Security Advisors of the United States and India at the inaugural meeting of the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) in Washington DC (Jan 31). A statement after the huddle said: "The United States and India affirm that the ways in which technology is designed, developed, governed, and used should be shaped by our shared democratic values and respect for universal human rights. We are committed

to fostering an open, accessible, and secure technology ecosystem, based on mutual trust and confidence, that will reinforce our democratic values and democratic institutions." The inaugural meeting was the literal first step towards translating the announcement that Biden and Modi made during their meeting in May 2022. Objective: to elevate and expand strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation between the governments, businesses and academic institutions of the two countries. See who participated from both sides - the US Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Executive Secretary of the National Space Council, senior officials from the Department of State, Commerce, Defense and the National Security Council. From the Indian side, the Ambassador to the United States, the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization and senior officials from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the National Security Council Secretariat participated. Former US President Bill Clinton laid the foundations of the present US-India relationship in March 2000. It rose to new levels in 2006 when both nations signed the civil nuclear technology cooperation deal. India has since assumed an unmatched place in the Indo-Pacific policy of the United States through multiple bilateral and multilateral partnerships such as Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), BRICS and OIC (observer status). Where is Pakistan? Is it relevant to the rest of the world anymore? The slew of sedition cases and arrests of opposition leaders and journalists critical of the present system prompts one to wonder if

Pakistan is in the reverse gear to the brutal 1970s/1980s of pro-US military dictatorships marked by arrests, illegal detentions, torture and muzzling of media and opposition. Sedition and terrorism cases against Imran Khan, Sheikh Rasheed, Fawad Chaudhry, Azam Swati, journalists Arshad Sharif and Imran Riaz inter alia are some of the cases in point. Shandana Gulzar, one of the most articulate leaders of PTI, is meanwhile also part of the "hall of fame" that includes all those accused of sedition, hate-speech and anarchy. Shandana had made some critical remarks to the context of the Peshawar Police Lines Mosque tragedy during a TV show. Amjad Shoaib faced similar charges, went through public humiliation before being "honourably" acquitted. Almost all - Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Human Rights Watch, Reporters Sans Frontieres, Amnesty International, Federal Union of Journalists, US State/Justice Departments - hardly took any public position on the post March 2022 events in Pakistan. Both the HRCP and the Amnesty International finally woke up after the mentioned TV news channel was put off-air. "Criticism of state institutions cannot be considered hate speech as has been suggested by PEMRA. Any limitations on the right to freedom of expression must be on a case-to-case basis and deemed to be necessary and proportionate conforming to international human rights laws and standards," reminded a statement by Amnesty International on March 6. Probably, political expedience, geopolitical compulsions and commercial considerations have muzzled most defenders of human rights and freedom of speech - both inside Pakistan and abroad. Are we dealing with a theatre that is deafened, dumbed and blinded by aforementioned factors?

Majid Hussain Dogar a Young PTI Candidate

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



He will be a younger member of parliament at this time, and his victory will be seen as a sign of the growing importance of young people in Pakistani politics. Majid Hussain Dogar's success as a young candidate from the PTI has inspired many other young people in Pakistan to become involved in politics and work towards creating a better future for themselves and their country. His focus on youth empowerment

Pakistan is a country with a significant youth population, where young people make up about 64 percent of the total population. Youth engagement in politics and democracy is crucial for the development and stability of the country. Unfortunately, many young people in Pakistan face several barriers to participate in democratic processes, such as poverty, lack of education, and limited access to information. One of the significant challenges facing youth engagement in politics and democracy in Pakistan is the lack of political awareness and education. Many young people do not understand their rights as citizens and do not have the knowledge to engage effectively in the political process. Therefore, there is a need for civic education programs that educate young people on democratic values, human rights, and the importance of civic participation. Another significant barrier is the lack of political opportunities for young people in Pakistan. The political system in Pakistan is dominated by older politicians, and many political parties are not receptive to youth participation. Therefore, it is crucial to create more opportunities for young people to participate in the political process, such as creating youth wings within political parties, establishing youth councils, and providing training and mentorship programs. Furthermore, many young people in Pakistan face economic challenges that limit their ability to participate in politics. Poverty

and unemployment among young people are widespread, and this can discourage them from engaging in the democratic process. Therefore, it is crucial to create economic opportunities for young people, such as job creation programs, entrepreneurship training, and microfinance initiatives. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is a political party in Pakistan that has attracted significant support from young people, particularly during the 2018 general elections. The PTI has positioned itself as a party that is committed to youth empowerment and has made several promises to address the issues faced by young people in Pakistan. Majid Hussain Dogar is a young candidate from PP195 from the PTI who is going to contest the 2023 general elections in Pakistan. He is about 30 years old at this time, and his campaign is focused on youth empowerment, education, and job creation. Majid Hussain Dogar was born in Arifwala District Pakpattan, Pakistan, and completed his education Arifwala and then from Lahore. He remained brilliant student through his academic career. He always respected his teachers and elders. After completing his studies and became involved in youth activism, working to promote education and employment opportunities for young people. Since the last decade, Majid Hussain Dogar highlighted the issues faced by young people in his constituency, including the lack of job opportunities and poor education standards. As a young PTI candidate,

Majid Hussain Dogar is running an active and energetic election campaign that focused on engaging with young voters in his constituency. He is promising to work towards creating employment opportunities by attracting foreign investment and promoting entrepreneurship. He also is pledging to improve the quality of education in the area by increasing funding for schools and providing better training for teachers. Majid Hussain Dogar's campaign is going successfully, and he willelecta member of the Punjab Assembly from his constituency PP195. Majid Hussain Dogar's campaign was characterized by a strong focus on engaging with voters directly, building personal connections, and demonstrating his commitment to serving the community. These strategies helped him to build a broad base of support and win the election in his constituency. He will be a younger member of parliament at this time, and his victory will be seen as a sign of the growing importance of young people in Pakistani politics. Majid Hussain Dogar's success as a young candidate from the PTI has inspired many other young people in Pakistan to become involved in politics and work towards creating a better future for themselves and their country. His focus on youth empowerment, education, and job creation has resonated with many young people in Pakistan, and his election has demonstrated the potential for young people to make a significant contribution to Pakistani politics and society.

Briefs

PTI workers,
Police clash
at Zaman Park

FROM PAGE 01
Zaman Park to apprehend the deposed prime minister. As the party's workers resorted to stone-pelting, 14 policemen – including DIG Operations Islamabad Shahzad Bukhari – sustained injuries. Meanwhile, the law enforcers have also arrested the PTI workers.

Protests
erupt in
major cities

FROM PAGE 01
The Islamabad High Court (IHC), he said it was a breach of the law when the capital police reached Lahore [to arrest Mr Khan], adding that the party would continue fighting the court battle. "Police tortured PTI activists and lobbed teargas shells", he added. The barbarism which started on May 25, he said, was not settling.

PM stresses
for Pak-
Bahrain...

FROM PAGE 01
strengthening them in all areas of common interest. Bahrain currently hosts over 120,000 Pakistani diaspora which contributes significantly towards the progress and development of both nations.

PM sees
'more
burden'
on masses

FROM PAGE 01
trust in Pakistan was also damaged to a great deal". The premier also said that due to Khan's repeated backtracking, the Washington-based lender is forcing Pakistan to implement the pre-conditions for unlocking the loan tranche. "Definitely, these conditions resulted in burdening the masses and they will be burdened further. I absolutely acknowledge this," the prime minister said, mentioning that "hardworking Pakistanis will be burdened by this." The IMF deal would unlock other bilateral and multilateral financing avenues for Pakistan to shore up its foreign exchange reserves, which have fallen to just four weeks' worth of import cover.

Islamabad has met most of the global lender's demands to clear the review. The last one yet to be fulfilled on the list is an assurance on external financing to fund its balance of payment gap for the current fiscal year, which ends on June 30. The prime minister also said that it was not only the IMF's conditions that were leading to historic-high inflation but Pakistan was also being impacted due to "imported inflation". Since his government came into power last year in April after removing Khan from power, PM Shehbaz said the Russia-Ukraine war broke out and resulted in the increase in prices of fertiliser, oil, and other commodities that the nation imports.

"The IMF's toughest conditions have been met and we will sign the staff-level agreement within a few days," he said – a similar statement that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has already made repeatedly.

Zalmay
urges
national...

FROM PAGE 01
He added the sequential cannibalizing of its leaders through jailing, execution, assassination, etc. is the wrong path. Arresting Imran Khan will only deepen the crisis. I urge 2 steps: 1. Set a date for national elections in early June to avert a meltdown. 2. Use this time for the main political parties to confront what has gone wrong and propose a specific plan to rescue and put the country on a path to stability, security, and prosperity. Whichever party wins the election will have a mandate from the people on what must be done.



ISLAMABAD: Winners of body building competition pose for group photo with chief guest Naem Bhukari Advocate and Chief Organizer Sheikh Siddique held at Gun Club. – DNA

US, UK and Australia agree
on nuclear submarine project

Biden, appearing sensitive to tensions with China and its criticism of the deal, stressing that "They're nuclear-powered - not nuclear-armed"

DNA

SAN DIEGO: The United States, Australia and Britain unveiled details of a plan to provide Australia with nuclear-powered attack submarines from the early 2030s to counter China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific. Addressing a ceremony at the U.S. naval base on Monday in San Diego, accompanied by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, U.S. President Joe Biden called the agreement under the 2021 AUKUS partnership part of a shared commitment to a free-and-open Indo-Pacific region with two of America's "most stalwart and capable allies."

Sunak called it "a powerful partnership," adding: "For the first time ever it will mean three fleets of submarines working together across the Atlantic and

Pacific keeping our oceans free ... for decades to come." Under the deal, which was welcomed by its Asian allies on Tuesday but has angered Beijing, the United States intends to sell Australia three U.S. Virginia class nuclear-powered submarines, which are built by General Dynamics, in the early 2030s, with an option for Australia to buy two more if needed, a joint statement said. It said the multi-stage project would culminate with British and Australian production and operation of a new submarine class - SSN-AUKUS - a "trilaterally developed" vessel based on Britain's next-generation design that would be built in Britain and Australia and include "cutting edge" U.S. technologies. Britain would take delivery of its first SSN-AUKUS submarine in the late 2030s, and Australia would receive its first in the early 2040s. The vessels will be built by BAE Systems

and Rolls-Royce. "The AUKUS agreement we confirm here in San Diego represents the biggest single investment in Australia's defence capability in our history, strengthening Australia's national security and stability in our region," Albanese said at the ceremony. AUKUS will be the first time Washington has shared nuclear-propulsion technology since it did so with Britain in the 1950s. Biden stressed that the submarines would be nuclear-powered, not nuclear armed: "These boats will not have nuclear weapons of any kind on them," he said. But the deal comes with an eye-watering bill for Australia with cost estimated to go up to \$368 billion (\$245 billion) by 2055. Albanese defended the spending, saying it was "an economic plan, not just a defence and security plan". He said he expected AUKUS

would result in \$6 billion invested in Australia's industrial capability over the next four years and create about 20,000 direct jobs over the next 30. He said it would require funding amounting to about 0.15% of GDP per year. Australia's defence minister, Richard Marles, said it was an investment in the nation's security. "It is an investment that we cannot afford not to make," Marles told a news conference in Canberra. China has condemned AUKUS as an illegal act of nuclear proliferation. The plan "constitutes serious nuclear proliferation risks, undermines international non-proliferation system, fuels arms races, and hurts peace and stability," China's permanent mission to the United Nations said in a tweet after the announcement. Asked if he was worried China would see the AUKUS submarine deal as aggression, Biden replied

"no." He said he expected to speak to Chinese leader Xi Jinping soon, but would not say when. U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan pointed on Friday to Beijing's own military buildup, including nuclear-powered submarines, saying: "We have communicated with them about AUKUS and sought more information from them about their intentions." Australia offered China a briefing on the submarine deal, Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said. In launching the partnership, Australia also upset France by abruptly cancelling a deal to buy French conventional submarines. The agreement will see US and British submarines deployed in Western Australia as soon as 2027 to help train Australian crews and bolster deterrence. U.S. officials said this would involve four U.S. submarines and one British in a few years.

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World No.1 Iga Swiatek
sets up Raducanu clash

SPORTS DESK

INDIAN WELLS: Iga Swiatek overcame former U.S. Open champion Bianca Andreescu 6-3 7-6(1) to reach the fourth round at Indian Wells on Monday and set up a meeting with Emma Raducanu, who scored her biggest win since her own run to the Flushing Meadows title. Top seed Swiatek has been in superb form on hardcourts since the Australian Open, capturing the Doha title and reaching the final in Dubai, and the Polish player looked set for another comfortable win after cruising through the opening set. The reigning U.S. Open champion found herself in trouble at 2-4 in the next set but battled back to close out

the match in the tiebreak. "She (Andreescu) changed the rhythm pretty well and with this surface it can get tough," Swiatek said. "But I'm pretty happy I was solid most of the times, at least. "And that I could be recomposed in the tiebreak because I really knew that I could get my focus up. I'm even glad that I got a chance to kind of play under pressure some more and see how I'm going to cope with it." Unseeded Raducanu, who has been sidelined by injuries and illnesses that have kept her out of action since the Australian Open, earlier beat 13th seed Beatriz Haddad Maia 6-1 2-6 6-4. The victory was the Briton's best by ranking since her surprise Flushing Meadows title in 2021 and just the second time since that U.S. Open run she has strung together three consecutive match wins. It was a disappointing day for Leylah Fernandez, who Raducanu beat in the final two years ago, as the Canadian fell 6-4 6-7 (5) 6-1 to fifth seed Caroline Garcia. Even though the match required three sets and nearly two-and-a-half hours to determine a winner the fifth seeded Garcia was rarely under pressure from her opponent, who managed just two break chances and could not convert either. Australian Open winner Aryna Sabalenka will take on Dubai champion Barbora Krejickova on Tuesday after



advancing to the fourth round when her Ukrainian opponent Lesia Tsurenko withdrew due to a panic attack. Tsurenko said her panic attack was triggered following a conversation with WTA chief executive Steve Simon about tennis's response to Russia's invasion of her country. On the men's side of the draw, defending champion and fourth seed Taylor Fritz steamrolled into the fourth round with a 6-1 6-2 demolition of Sebastian Baez. Fritz kept the 35th ranked Argentine under constant pressure throughout breaking him six times to set up a round of 16 meeting with Hungary's Marton Fucsovics. It was the end of the road for Andy Murray, who lost 7-6(6) 6-2 to fellow Briton Jack Draper.

Madrid relying on
Benzema for more
European glory

MADRID: Karim Benzema has formed an essential part of Real Madrid's Champions League success, but there are doubts over whether his team can rely on him to extend their European domination this season. The French striker's season has been regularly disrupted by injuries, and although Vinicius Junior is a deadly threat on the left, without Benzema, defences can focus on shutting down the Brazilian winger. His future at Madrid is also unknown – his contract expires in June and no public decision has been made over a renewal by player or club. "Legends of this club have to stay at Madrid," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, hoping the forward remains at his disposal next year. Benzema missed Madrid's La Liga win over Espanyol on Saturday with an ankle issue but is expected to return to face Liverpool at the Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday in a last 16 second leg clash. The 35-year-old has been sidelined frequently, including with a thigh problem that saw him miss the World Cup with France. "Something is wrong with Benzema, never in his entire career has he spent so much time in the injury room," complained Madrid newspaper AS last week, with Benzema out for the eighth time.

The forward has missed 34 percent of Madrid's games across all competitions this season, 14 matches in total, but has scored 18 in the 27 games he has played. "These have been months of disappointment and enormous mystery regarding Karim," continued AS. Benzema has aged like a fine wine, playing his best football in his later years, freed up from playing on the fringes when Cristiano Ronaldo left Madrid in 2018, and becoming a top-class goalscorer. Last season Benzema captained Madrid to Champions League glory, with the 1-0 win over Liverpool in the final securing a record 14th triumph. Benzema was crucial in Madrid's wild run to Paris, scoring a remarkable 17-minute hat-trick in the last 16 to knock out Paris Saint-Germain. – Agencies

Morata strikes late as Atletico beat Girona

The pair combined early on, with Depay teeing up Griezmann, whose effort was saved by Paulo Gazzaniga. Then Griezmann turned creator and crossed for Depay, who volleyed narrowly over from close range

DNA

GIRONA: Alvaro Morata snatched a 94th minute winner to earn Atletico Madrid a 1-0 victory at Girona on Monday and tighten their hold on third place in La Liga. After La Real, fourth, drew at Mallorca on Sunday, Atletico moved three points clear of the Basque side with their last-gasp victory at Montilivi. Morata turned home from close range after a corner was flicked on to him by Angel Correa, with Atletico surviving a long VAR check to see if the striker had strayed offside. "For me it was very clear (that it was valid), but if it wasn't I'd have gone home by bicycle," Morata told DAZN. "My teammates were annoyed because I touched it, but VAR gave it, so I am happy. "It's hard to see it there and not touch it, maybe they would have been more annoyed if I didn't touch it and it didn't go in." Girona, 12th, started brightly and thought they had won a penalty when Stefan Savic handled in the box, but striker Taty Castellanos was offside. After Atletico's 6-1 thrashing

of Sevilla last weekend, Simeone kept faith in the Memphis Depay and Antoine Griezmann strike partnership. The pair combined early on, with Depay teeing up Griezmann, whose



effort was saved by Paulo Gazzaniga. Then Griezmann turned creator and crossed for Depay, who volleyed narrowly over from close range. Yannick Carrasco also tested Gazzaniga



in the first half, playing well on the left flank and getting forward at every opportunity. Depay fired another effort over as Atletico took control of the game.

Early in the second half Griezmann, one of the league's most in-form players, set up Marcos Llorente but he too was denied by Gazzaniga. Atletico appealed for a penalty when Oriol Romeu handled but the referee spotted Rojiblanco defender Mario Hermoso pushing the Girona midfielder into the ball when watching the VAR replay. Jan Oblak was called into action for the first time to deny Viktor Tsygankov, and then again to deny David Lopez, who tried to lob him from range. Atletico's Slovenian goalkeeper made another fine save to deny Rodrigo Riquelme late on, with the on-loan midfielder almost scoring against his parent club. With the game petering out, substitute Morata intervened late on to snatch Atletico three points from an even clash, their fourth win from their last five La Liga games. "It's a pity, we made a huge effort, (a result) escaped us by a fine margin, and it's a shame because it was an important point," Girona defender Santi Bueno told DAZN.

PSL 8th Edition
Qualifier: TBC vs TBC
WEDNESDAY 09:30 PM
MARCH 15, 2023
Gaddafi Stadium,
Lahore

Maryam
Nawaz calls
for justice
before polls

FROM PAGE 01
Maryam Nawaz has been brought up by Nawaz Sharif and Kalsoom Nawaz, both gentle persons, and their daughter is also a cultured woman," Maryam said that she did not misbehave but showed people like Saqib-Nisar their real face. She said she would continue raising her voice against the oppression and injustice. She said nations and leaders face difficulties in their life, adding that real leaders face all hard times with bravery but those lacking courage always hide themselves in their houses. She said Nawaz Sharif was a real leader who returned to the country along with his daughter and presented himself for arrest when he was incriminated in false cases. She said, Nawaz Sharif faced all fake cases against him and never avoided courts, and at the end, all and sundry became convinced that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was innocent. On the other hand, Imran Khan, who was not a leader but a "Geedar" (jackal), always shunned courts on the pretext of age and his leg injury, she added. The PML-N Chief Organizer said that Nawaz Sharif presented himself for arrest as he had not committed anything wrong. But Imran Khan was not ready to court arrest, as he and his wife were thieves. – DNA

Governor
fixes May
28 for
KP polls

FROM PAGE 01
Terrorist attacks are happening in KP, in such conditions it will not be possible for the candidates to conduct the campaign. The Governor said that we have to provide security to the election candidates, election duty staff and voters due to which there will be difficulties in the election. The Governor said that according to the decision of the Supreme Court, he completed two consultations with the Election Commission, the sole purpose of which was to present the overall situation of the province before the Election Commission. The Governor said that he has fulfilled his constitutional responsibility by giving the date of General Elections by completing the consultation process and laid the further responsibilities on election commission. – APP

Golf's
governing
bodies propose
rule change

LONDON: Golf's governing bodies have proposed a new rule to give tournament organisers the option to require the use of a distance-reducing ball over fears that elite players are taming courses too easily. Advances in fitness and technology have enabled golfers to hit the ball further – at last week's Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass, world number three Rory McIlroy hit a tee shot 362 yards. The R&A, which organises the British Open, and fellow rule-makers US Golf Association (USGA), said in 2020 they intended to "break the ever-increasing cycle of hitting distance". Since then they have been consulting with equipment manufacturers and on Tuesday they announced the proposal of a Model Local Rule (MLR) that would give organisers the option to use specially adapted balls. Speaking in 2021, Masters chairman Fred Ridley said a specific "Masters ball" would be a last resort in the battle to limit hitting distances. The par-five 13th hole at Augusta National has been extended by 35 yards for next month's Masters. The MLR is intended for use only in elite competitions and, if adopted, would have no impact on recreational golf. – APP

Briefs

Suicide car bomb kills 2 in Somalia

MOGADISHU: At least two security personnel were killed and several others wounded when a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden car in southern Somalia on Tuesday, a security official said.

Mohamed Ali Adan, a police officer, told Anadolu over the phone that the explosion targeted a guest house in the town of Bardhere that housed regional administration officials and senior military officials. Garane Abdi, a local resident, told Anadolu that there were mortar attacks before the explosion. "The explosion was huge. I never witnessed such an explosion in my life", he said. The al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist group al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack. Since military operations against al-Shabaab have intensified, the terrorist group has increased its attacks. In October of last year, two car bombs targeted the Education Ministry, killing at least 121 people and injuring more than 300 others in the deadliest bombing in Somalia in years. The Somali National Army has been fighting al-Shabaab terrorists since President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud declared an "all-out war" on them after his reelection for a second term last May. Somalia has been plagued by insecurity for years, with al-Shabaab and Daesh/ISIS terror groups being the main threats.—DNA

Oil extends losses after collapse of US banks

WASHINGTON: Oil prices continued their losses on Tuesday amid concerns about the US banking sector after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and Signature Bank.

International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$79.96 per barrel at 9.57 a.m. local time (0657GMT), down 1% from the closing price of \$80.77 a barrel in the previous trading session. At the same time, American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at \$73.99 per barrel, a 1.08% decrease after the previous session closed at \$74.80 a barrel. Both benchmarks fell sharply in a highly volatile trading session, with Brent dipping to \$78.34 a barrel and WTI \$72.33 a barrel in the previous session after the sudden collapse of the two banks in less than a week. Hopes that the US Federal Reserve (Fed) might slow the pace of its monetary tightening were overshadowed by fears of an economic recession and lower oil demand. Concerns that emerged following the collapse of the banks were not eased although President Joe Biden on Monday assured Americans that the US banking system and depositors are "safe". In an e-mailed note, Daniel Hynes, commodity strategist at Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, pointed to the supply side issues.—APP

Macron pushes European 'unity'

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron received far-right Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban at the Elysee Palace on Monday for a working dinner where he underscored the need for European "unity" on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the president's office said. Unlike most European leaders, Orban has been openly critical of the bloc's stance on the conflict, slamming what he has described as an "indirect war" being waged against Russia while calling for a ceasefire.

At Monday's dinner, Macron "reaffirmed the need for the unity of European countries in their support for Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression, particularly via the strict application of sanctions", according to the president's team.

The pair also touched on the accession of Finland and Sweden into NATO. Hungary and Türkiye are the only two members of the 30-nation alliance not to have ratified both countries' bids.—Agencies

US partners with Pakistan to improve fertilizer use

The United States remains firmly committed to partnering with the people of Pakistan to strengthen Pakistan's economy and agricultural sector through collaborative research and technical assistance

DNA

ISLAMABAD : United States Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome today joined Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali of the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) at the National Agriculture Research Center (NARC) to announce the \$4.5 million "Fertilizer Right" project. To be implemented over the next four years, the project will emphasize practices to help Pakistani farmers enhance fertilizer use efficiency. "Simply put, farmers need fertilizers to grow crops. The adoption of innovative and efficient fertilizer practices can alleviate pressure on fertilizer supplies, lower nitrous oxide emissions, and improve crop output. The U.S. Government looks forward to partnering with PARC and NARC to make this fertilizer project a success," Ambassador Blome said.



The "Fertilizer Right" project is part of the U.S.-Pakistan "Green Alliance" framework, which helps our countries jointly face the climate, environmental, and economic challenges of the future.

A top priority of the "Green Alliance" is to cooperate on overcoming the challenges that agriculture faces because of climate change and collaborate to reduce the carbon emissions that contribute to climate change. The Ambassador also explained that the project is designed to help farmers produce more with less fertilizer applied, and therefore should help boost farmers' incomes, while also protecting soil resources.

The United States remains firmly committed to partnering with the people of Pakistan to strengthen Pakistan's economy and agricultural sector through collaborative research and technical assistance.

NATO ratification of Sweden, Finland can be at different stages

COPENHAGEN: Sweden and Finland can be ratified as NATO member states at different stages, the Swedish prime minister said on Tuesday.

"It is not out of the question that Sweden and Finland will be ratified in different stages," Ulf Kristersson said at a news conference on NATO membership application of his country, the Swedish media reported. Kristersson said what he and Oscar Stenstrom, Sweden's chief negotiator for NATO accession talks, "have encountered in recent weeks is that the probability that this will happen at different rates has increased." He said Sweden is "prepared for what we will do if that were to happen." 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.

The Swedish premier's remarks came after an anti-terror legislation - that was scheduled to pass last Thursday - was postponed to May 3. The new counter-terrorism bill is aimed



to target the financing, aiding and propagation of terrorist groups, a key demand by Ankara. To approve their NATO membership bids, Ankara demands the two Nordic countries to take concrete actions to combat terrorist groups PKK and Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO), the group behind the 2016 defeated coup in Türkiye. However, Sweden is seen as not doing enough to gain Türkiye's approval.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu recently said that since the signing

of a trilateral memorandum in NATO Madrid summit in June 2022, "there has not been any satisfying steps taken by Sweden."

"There are pledges (by Sweden and Finland) for NATO membership. It is not possible for us to say 'yes' to Sweden's NATO membership bid without seeing these steps," he said.

Cavusoglu also said the NATO bids of the two Nordic countries can be assessed separately, as Türkiye is more positive towards Finland's process. While Türkiye was un-

satisfied with the vague approach of Sweden, Ankara postponed a trilateral meeting after Swedish authorities allowed a Danish far-right politician to burn a copy of Islam's holy book, the Quran, outside the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm on Jan. 21.

The talks then restarted with a foreign ministerial-level meeting in Brussels last Thursday. Stockholm reiterated its determination to take the steps required under the trilateral memorandum. In the face of criticism, Stenstrom recently told Anadolu that Sweden's stance on terrorism is no longer the same.

"Yes, we have changed. And we have realized better the security concerns of Türkiye. This will also improve the security of Sweden. Sweden should and will never be a safe haven for any terrorist, and that's why we're also increasing our cooperation between our security services. We're dedicating more funds to these services and defense. We will be happy to cooperate together in NATO," Stenstrom said.—Agencies

Iran supports UN efforts to bring peace to Yemen

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says the Islamic Republic supports intra-Yemeni talks to find a political solution to the crisis in the war-ravaged Arab country.

In a meeting with United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in Tehran on Monday, Amir-Abdollahian reaffirmed Tehran's support for the continuation of the ceasefire and the end of the Saudi-led blockade on Yemen.

He emphasized that Iran supports any dialogue which would help promote peace and stability in Yemen. The top Iranian diplomat also commended efforts by the UN secretary general and his appointment of a special envoy in order to follow up on the situation in Yemen. The UN special envoy, for his part, called for Iran's support for the world body's efforts to promote peace in Yemen.

Grundberg expressed the UN's firm determination to find a political solution to the ongoing crisis in Yemen. Saudi Arabia and its allies launched the devastating war on Yemen in March 2015 with armed and logistical support from their Western partners, leaving hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead. The war also displaced millions of people, rendering them homeless, while destroying the country's infrastructure and spawning the contemporary age's worst humanitarian catastrophe.

The most recent truce, which began in April 2022, had rekindled hopes of peace, but the Saudi-led coalition breached the terms of the ceasefire agreement, prompting Yemenis to continue resistance.

In the wake of a rapidly worsening humanitarian situation in Yemen, the United Nations said late last month that it needed \$4.3 billion this year to help millions of people in the war-ravaged country, warning that failure to deliver the aid will put them at risk.—Agencies

EU raises budget for military support

BRUSSELS: EU member states authorized on Tuesday raising the budget of the European Peace Facility (EPF) up to 8 billion (\$8.5 billion) until 2027 to provide military supply for Ukraine and replenish the bloc's own stocks.

"The Council (of the EU) adopted a decision increasing the financial ceiling of the European Peace Facility to 7.979 billion (in current prices) until 2027, ensuring that additional financial needs can be covered," the EU institution representing member states announced in a statement.

The decision confirms the political agreement reached by EU foreign affairs ministers in December about increasing the EPF budget by 2 billion in 2023 and allowing a further raise up to 5.5 billion by 2027. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell called the European Peace Facility "an integral part of the EU's support to promote peace and security globally." Hestressed that the raise ensures "the financial sustainability of this instrument" which "is crucial for our support not only to Ukraine, but also for our partners in other parts of Europe, Africa and the Middle East, as needs continue to arise." With the budget amendment, the EU will be able to implement Borrell's latest proposal on supplying immediately ammunition to Ukraine and replenish the stocks of EU member states by common procurements. According to the plan, EU member states sending ammunition from their own supplies to Ukraine could be reimbursed by the EPF up to 1 billion in total.—APP



ISLAMABAD: H.E Ms. Leslie Scanlon, High Commissioner of Canada called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division.—DNA

Rally in London against migration bill

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Hundreds of people have rallied in London to protest against the British government's controversial new asylum and migration law as MPs debated the measures in the House of Commons. The crowd gathered in Parliament Square on Monday evening, holding signs and chanting slogans: "What do we want? Safe passage. When do we want it? Now," and "Who built the NHS? Migrants built the NHS." "Migrants and refugees welcome here: blame austerity, not migrants," a placard read. The protests erupted after the government announced its new 'Illegal Migration Bill', upon which, people entering the UK on small boats will be detained im-

mediately and hindered from claiming asylum in the UK. The new plan also bans immigrants from returning once removed. Prior to this, asylum seekers had the right to remain in the country to have their cases heard. "This bill will not stop people ... people will find even more dangerous routes to cross. When people are fleeing, there's nothing in this world that can stop them," Kolbassia Haoussou MBE, co-founder of Survivors Speak Out told protesters in Parliament Square, urging them to contact their MPs. "We have people, we have the power." The bill passed to its second reading on Monday night following a vote by MPs of 312 in support to 250 against. Labour MP, Nadia Whittome, told the crowd: "We've got to tell

those Tory MPs sitting in the chamber of the House of Commons right now to stop the dehumanizing, denigrating, disgusting rhetoric that they use to talk about refugees. "People arriving on our shores, they're not an invasion, they're not queue jumpers, they're not criminals, they're not illegal. They're people just like you and me," Whittome added. In the Commons session on Monday, Home Secretary Suella Braverman defended the government's plan and said her political opponents were "naive do-gooders" and there has been "too much" immigration in recent years. Braverman, whose parents migrated to Britain in the 1960s from Kenya and Mauritius, told parliament that she "will not be hectored by out-of-touch

lefties."The government's new plan comes as most of these asylum seekers qualify to have their claims considered in the UK under international law and the government cannot declare them inadmissible forcefully. Home Office figures show that around 3,000 migrants have crossed the Channel already this year, compared with a record of 45,000 channel crossings during the whole period of 2022, surpassing the previous year's record by more than 60 percent. Aside from its casualties, the flow of illegal migrants has also soured Britain's relations with neighboring France, prompting a blame game between the two. Meanwhile, as a solution to stop the crossings and manage hundreds of refugees who pass the Channel every day.

'Children to be exempt from detention, removal from UK'

LONDON: British Home Secretary Suella Braverman said Monday that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will be exempt from detention and removal under the UK's controversial illegal migrant bill. "Given the mischaracterization of the bill from members opposite, I would like to make a few things clear.

The home secretary's duty to remove will not be applied to detain and remove unaccompanied asylum-seeking children," Braverman told members of parliament in London. She added that children instead will be provided with necessary support until they reach the age of 18. "Only in limited circumstances, such as family reunions, would unaccompanied asylum-seeking children be removed from the UK," she said. Braverman stressed that the focus of removals would be on adult men under the age of 40, who represent the overwhelming majority of illegal arrivals. "Removing them will be our primary focus. But we must not create incentives for the smugglers to focus on people with particular characteristics by signposting exemptions for removal. "It is right that we retain powers to adapt our policy so that we can respond to any change in tactics by the smuggling gangs," she added.—Agencies

Talks continue for grain deal extension

ANKARA: As the Black Sea grain deal is set to expire within days, Türkiye said on Tuesday that talks on its extension are still underway. Turkish National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and the relevant authorities continue to negotiate and coordinate to carry on with the activities of the grain deal and to extend it in accordance with the agreement, with demands of the parties taken into account, the National Defense Ministry said in a statement.

"In these talks, the parties are reminded of the importance of continuing this initiative, which has a positive impact on humanity around the world and proves that all crises can be resolved with goodwill and dialogue," it read.

The Black Sea grain deal has allowed the export of 24 million tons of grain, the statement noted, adding that Türkiye will continue to do its part in ensuring peace in the region and humanitarian aid. It also said, "the steps taken by the parties to extend the initiative are appreciated." Last July, Türkiye, the UN, Russia, and Ukraine signed a deal in Istanbul to resume grain exports from three Ukrainian Black Sea ports which were paused after the Russia-Ukraine war began in February 2022.

The deal, extended for 120 days in November 2022, will expire on Saturday.

Türkiye's statement came a day after Russia said it backs a 60-day extension to the landmark deal.—Agencies

Indonesians seeking climate justice

PARI ISLAND: Sitting near a wall of stacked rocks, fisherman Mastagfirin looks out to sea from the tiny Indonesian island of Pari, wondering whether his home will exist for much longer. His battered wooden boat is anchored just offshore, where trees and statues that were once on the beach now sit partially submerged about 40 kilometres (25 miles) north of the capital Jakarta.

"I am very saddened and terrified knowing in the next 10 or 20 years Pari island might disappear," the 52-year-old told AFP.

Environmentalist have said most of the 42-hectare (103-acre) island could sink by 2050 because of rising sea levels. The island's residents are seeking justice, and last month sued Swiss cement giant Holcim over its emissions.

They allege the world's largest cement firm is responsible for climate-related loss and damages in a case that could be a landmark for plaintiffs from developing countries who take on industrial giants.—DNA

21 migrants die in boat sinking off Madagascar

ANTANANARIVO: At least 21 migrants died when their boat sank off the coast of Madagascar over the weekend, the island nation's maritime authorities said on Monday, revising downwards its earlier toll.

"To date, 21 people have died, two are missing and 24 have survived. We assume that there were 47 people on board, according to information from fishermen who were the first to try rescue the shipwrecked," director general of the Madagascar Maritime Authority (APMF) Jean Edmond Randrianantainaina told AFP. The APMF had in an earlier statement listed 22 dead of those who had "clandestinely taken a boat headed to (the French territory of) Mayotte, but that sank".

The accident occurred on Saturday. According to regional gendarmerie commander Jules Tovoson Andriatsiriniana, "all the survivors fled once they reached the shore, for fear of being arrested by authorities". "Only one pregnant woman, too distressed by the accident, was unable to flee and was found where the fishermen had left her," said APMF's director general, who visited the scene of the tragedy on Monday. She would be "a key witness" in the investigations, he said.

The investigators want to track down the smugglers, who are suspected to be among the survivors on the run, and establish how they operated.—

Briefs

Government unveils new Toshakhana Policy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the midst of the ongoing Toshakhana gifts saga, the government has announced the Toshakhana Policy 2023, which will take effect immediately. The government has announced a ban on gifts such as vehicles, watches, and jewelry worth millions of rupees for high-ranking officials including the president, prime minister, cabinet members, judges, civil and military officers. Under the new policy, they will only be allowed to receive gifts worth up to \$300 and cash gifts will be prohibited. Judges and civil and military officers will also be banned from receiving cash gifts from domestic and foreign dignitaries, and any forced cash gifts must be immediately deposited in the national treasury. The gifted vehicles and valuable antiques will be catalogued and displayed in the central pool of cars of the Cabinet Division and official places owned by the government, respectively. Apart from the president and PM, other officials will be banned from receiving gifts for their families and gold and silver coins will be handed over to the State Bank of Pakistan.

Ahsan pays actual price of Toshakhana gifts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ahsan Iqbal has paid the price of three Toshakhana gifts at market rates. In a letter to the secretary Cabinet Division, the minister has said he has voluntarily deposited over Rs1.9 million in the Toshakhana, which are the cost of these gifts. He has further said that the price of these three gifts was estimated at over Rs2.4 million. Earlier, he went on to say, he had paid over Rs0.1 million for the gifts according to law. "And now I have paid the remaining amount," he informed.

PM greets Punjabis on their cultural day

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday felicitated the people of Punjab on their cultural day. "Happy Punjabi Culture Day to the people of the land of lush green fields of Punjab", he said in his tweet, as the province marked the cultural day. He mentioned various cultural colours of Punjab such as Cholistan deserts, Multan - the land of saints, wrestlers of Gujranwala, talented people of Faisalabad, the active youth of Potohar and the lively people of Lahore. "The beauty of the federation of Pakistan is incomplete without this rainbow," he added. - APP

Assistant Secretary Pyatt's Travel to Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Department of State's Bureau of Energy Resources Assistant Secretary Geoffrey R. Pyatt will travel to Lahore and Islamabad March 14-15. As Pakistan recovers from devastating floods and the global energy crisis, the Assistant Secretary will stress the US commitment to ensuring Pakistan's sustainable energy future by promoting cooperation on regional energy security and the clean energy transition through the US-Pakistan Green Alliance. In Lahore, he will visit the Lahore University of Management Sciences Electric Vehicle Labs to highlight technological advances made through US-Pakistan cooperation.

UN 2023 Water Conference

Clear commitments, pledges needed for successful moot

Tajikistan, the Netherlands embassies co-host briefing on the upcoming water conference

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Embassy of Tajikistan in collaboration with Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands co-hosted a briefing on the UN 2023 Water Conference, at the premises of the Tajik embassy in Islamabad. The UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, 'Water for Sustainable Development,' will take place from 22-24 March 2023, in New York, US, to coincide with World Water Day. The Federal Secretary Water, diplomats and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the briefing. The Federal Secretary Water briefed the audiences about government initiatives and shared details about govt plans to for the upcoming Water Conference. Ambassador of Tajikistan Ismatullo Nasreidin said this is a greater focus on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives, the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects, as well as on the furtherance of cooperation and partnerships at all levels, in order to help to achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He said water is essential for human life. The growing water crisis, coupled with rising demand and unsustainable use of water threaten human rights, food security, livelihoods security and environmental sustainability worldwide. The UN 2023 Water Conference provides a unique opportunity for the world to come together and collectively accelerate our work to making the world a more water secure place. Ambassador Nasreidin further said this Conference should be historical for the world community. And it is not because it will be the first UN Conference on Water after almost 50 years, but because of needs for urgent actions. Actions are needed because today's water resources are under high pressure of impacts of climate change, population growth, economic development and other challenges. And without urgent actions it will be very complicated to achieve SDG6 and other water related goals and targets. 'It is hoped that the UN 2023 Water Conference will make more people understand that we need to radically change how water is used, managed and valued'. Ms. Lianne Houben, Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of the Netherlands in her remarks said it was no coincidence that the Netherlands was committed to this subject. The name of our country literally means low lands. She added, The Netherlands has been battling with water for centuries. And we continue to do so till this day. "We have no other option with almost half of the country under sea level. Living with water is a matter of life and death for us". While talking about floods in Pakistan she said, the unprecedented floods that hit Pakistan last summer were heartbreaking and once again showed us that the power



of water is immense. 'I am glad the Netherlands was able to support the humanitarian efforts. I am also very proud to have Dutch water experts working on solutions for flood management in Pakistan under the umbrella of the Dutch Risk Reduction program'. Ms. Lianne Houben said this year The Netherlands and Pakistan are celebrating 75 years bilateral relations - we planted tulips in park F-9 and a photo exhibition named 'after us the deluge' by famous Dutch photographer Kadir van Lohuizen showed pictures of people worldwide struggling with rising sea levels and other types of flooding. 'We also included pictures of the excellent work that Dutch companies that are experts in flood mitigation have carried out worldwide', she added.

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Two TTP-Gandapur Group terrorists killed

D.I.KHAN: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and the security forces in a joint intelligence-based operation have killed two terrorists in the limits of Dera Town Police Station. Regional Police Officer Dera Abdul Ghafoor Afridi told the media on Tuesday that the two terrorists - Akhtar Munir alias Qari Waleed son of Razi Khan, resident of Bannu, and Abdul Aziz alias Talha son of Bahadar, resident of Afghanistan (presently residing in Kohat) - belonged to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)-Gandapur Group. He said on a tip-off about the presence of the terrorists, the CTD personnel in coordination with the security forces besieged the area. During the search operation, an exchange of fire took place, which resulted in the killing of the terrorists. Arms and ammunition were also recovered from them, he added. RPO Afridi said Akhtar Munir was wanted to police in 11 cases of terrorism registered against him in Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. Similarly, Abdul Aziz was wanted to the Dera Police in three heinous cases and to the Kohat Police in four cases. It may be mentioned that another terrorist Abdur Rashid alias Rashidi, also of the TTP-Gandapur Group, was killed in Rohi village in the precincts of Kulachi Police Station. - APP

Commander Bahrain National Guard calls on Air Chief

ISLAMABAD: Commander Bahrain National Guard, General Shaikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force during his visit to Air Headquarters, Islamabad today. During the meeting, several key areas of mutual interest along with regional developments were discussed. On his arrival, a smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented General Shaikh Mohammed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa the guard of honour. Later the visiting dignitary was introduced to the Principal Staff Officers. He also laid floral wreath on the martyrs' monument. Chief of the Air Staff shared broad contours of PAF's modernization plan of smart acquisitions from allied countries, upgradation of infrastructure and revamping of training. The Air Chief highlighted that both the countries enjoy long lasting religious and historic relationships which are manifested through unprecedented strategic partnership. He also reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral ties in military to military cooperation, strategic alliance and the training domain. CAS further said, "Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic and defence relationship with Bahrain which is based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability". The visiting dignitary praised the professionalism of PAF personnel and the exceptional progress made by Pakistan Air Force over the years, especially through indigenization. He also appreciated Pakistan's continuous efforts for regional stability and pledged to play his role for further improvement in bilateral military cooperation at all levels. Both the dignitaries vowed to further consolidate cooperation in various fields including training, emerging technologies and mutual cooperation in aviation industry. - DNA

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Bills moved in Senate against extension of services chiefs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Three separate bills seeking to take away prime minister's powers to retain retiring services chiefs and chairmen of the joint chiefs of staff committee have been submitted to the Senate Secretariat. The bills are the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, the Pakistan Air Force (Amendment) Bill, and the Pakistan Navy (Amendment) Bill. Jamaat-Islami's Senator Mushtaq Ahmad separately submitted notices in the office of the Senate secretary, seeking to move amendments to the existing laws. In January 2020, following unprecedented hitches to the proposed extension in the term of the then army chief, Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, parliament had approved three bills that set a higher retirement age for the chiefs of the armed forces, allowing the prime minister to extend their terms at his discretion. The Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill seeks to amend the Pakistan Army Act, 1952 by omitting Sections 8B and 8E in the law.

Similarly, the Pakistan Air Force (Amendment) Bill and the Pakistan Navy (Amendment) Bill seek to amend the Pakistan Air Force Act, 1953 and Pakistan Navy Ordinance 1961 respectively by omitting different sections in these laws. The statement of objects and reasons of the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill says that in the year 2020, the Pakistan Army Act was amended and provisions were inserted for extension in services of army chief and chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. "Keeping in view the meritorious appointment and promotion of young bold within the Pakistan Army leadership, the provisions related to the extension of these two offices are proposed for omission," it added. The statement of objects also underlines the role of Pakistan Army for giving services and sacrifices for the sake of safety and security of the country since its inception. Two days prior to the retirement date of Gen Bajwa on Nov 28, a legal crisis over his extension was focus of attention following suspension of his extension orders by the Supreme Court.

US envoy expects Pakistan-IMF deal 'in a few days'

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome has said that Washington fully supports Pakistan in its efforts to resume a stalled \$6.5 billion bailout programme from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Speaking to reporters at a ceremony in Islamabad on Tuesday, the ambassador said that the United States wishes for a deal between Pakistan and the IMF and that it is ready to cooperate with Pakistan to help on the issue. The US ambassador further said that he expects that matters between Pakistan and the global lender would be "settled in a few days". Ambassador Blome expressed Washington's willingness to help Pakistan with the ongoing challenge of terrorism. He further highlighted that there has been significant progress in diplomatic relations between the two countries. The IMF and Pakistan have been in talks over a stalled bailout package since late last year, with Pakistan seeking a \$1.1bn tranche to address its worsening balance of payments crisis. The two parties have been engaged in negotiations to reach a mutually agreeable package that would help Pakistan come out of the ongoing economic turmoil. - DNA

Maldives hails Saudi-Iran normalization

"The agreement includes their affirmation of the respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-interference in internal affairs"

MALE: The Government of the Republic of Maldives welcomes the Joint Trilateral Statement by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China announcing that an agreement has been reached between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran that includes an agreement to resume diplomatic relations between the two countries and reopen their embassies and missions and the affirmation of the respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-interference in internal affairs of states. In light of these positive and welcoming developments the Government of Maldives has decided to resume diplomatic ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran. On Friday, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to re-establish relations after years of hostility that had threatened stability and security in the Gulf and helped fuel conflicts in the Middle East from Yemen to Syria. The deal, brokered by China, was announced after four days of previously undisclosed talks in Beijing between top security officials from the two rival Middle East powers. Tehran and Riyadh agreed to resume diplomatic relations and re-open embassies within two months, according to a statement issued by Iran, Saudi Arabia and China. "The agreement includes their affirmation of the respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-interference in internal affairs," it said. - Agencies

Aukus allies on 'path of error and danger'

China accused the three Western allies of inciting an arms race, saying the security deal was "a typical case of Cold War mentality"

WEB DESK

BEIJING: China warned on Tuesday, March 14, that Australia, Britain and the United States were treading a "path of error and danger" after they unveiled a nuclear-powered submarines deal. Australia announced on Monday it would buy up to five US nuclear-powered submarines, then build a new model with US and British technology under an ambitious plan to bulk up Western muscle across the Asia-Pacific in the face of a rising China. US President Joe Biden has stressed that Australia, which joined the alliance with Washington and London known as Aukus 18 months ago, will not be getting nuclear weapons. However, acquiring submarines powered by nuclear reactors

puts Australia in an elite club and at the forefront of US-led efforts to push back against Chinese military expansion. Wang Wenbin, China's foreign ministry spokesman, said: "The latest joint statement from the US, UK and Australia demonstrates that the three countries, for the sake of their own geopolitical interests, completely disregard the concerns of the international communities and are walking further and further down the path of error and danger." Wang accused the three Western allies of inciting an arms race, saying the security deal was "a typical case of Cold War mentality." The sale of submarines "constitutes a severe nuclear proliferation risk, and violates the aims and objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty," Wang said at a regular news conference in Beijing.

The UN nuclear watchdog said it had to ensure there were no proliferation risks from the deal. "Ultimately, the Agency must ensure that no proliferation risks will emanate from this project," International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said. Moscow, which has sought to shore up its ties with China, also accused the West of fomenting "years of confrontation" in the Asia-Pacific region. "The Anglo-Saxon world, with the creation of structures like Aukus and with the advancement of NATO military infrastructures into Asia, is making a serious bet on many years of confrontation," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in televised comments. Monday's announcement came at an event at a naval base in San Diego, California, where Biden hosted Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. With a US Virginia-class nuclear submarine moored behind the trio's podium, Biden said the United States had "safeguarded stability in the Indo-Pacific for decades" and that the submarine alliance would bolster "the prospect of peace for decades to come." Albanese said the deal represents the biggest single investment in Australia's defense capability "in all of our history." The submarines are expected to be equipped with long-range cruise missiles, offering a potent deterrent. The Australian government estimates the multi-decade project will cost almost \$40 billion in the first 10 years, and create an estimated 20,000 jobs. Albanese underlined that Australia was now only the second country, after Britain, to be granted access to US naval nuclear secrets.

ISLAMABAD: The Department of State's Bureau of Energy Resources Assistant Secretary Geoffrey R. Pyatt will travel to Lahore and Islamabad March 14-15. As Pakistan recovers from devastating floods and the global energy crisis, the Assistant Secretary will stress the US commitment to ensuring Pakistan's sustainable energy future by promoting cooperation on regional energy security and the clean energy transition through the US-Pakistan Green Alliance. In Lahore, he will visit the Lahore University of Management Sciences Electric Vehicle Labs to highlight technological advances made through US-Pakistan cooperation.

N. Korea fires two ballistic missiles

SEOUL: North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea off its east coast on Tuesday, South Korea's military said, the latest of several weapons tests as the South and the United States conduct their largest joint military drills in years. The missiles were fired about 7:40 a.m. (2240 GMT on Monday) from South Hwanghae province, near the country's west coast, and flew about 620 kilometres, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said. The South Korean military was on high alert and maintaining full readiness posture in close coordination with the United States, the JCS said in a statement. - Agencies