

Samana

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US' Antony Blinken on rare Niger trip

Detailed News On Page-08



Infantino re-elected as FIFA chief

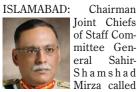
Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

CJCSC calls on **PM Shehbaz**

DNA



Mirza called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at PM House in Islamabad on Thursday. During the meeting, they discussed the professional matters pertaining to the armed forces of Pakistan, a PM Office statement said. PM Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the provision of higher education of international standard to the country's youth was among govt's priorities. The prime minister, in a meeting with Pro Vice Chancellor of International Learning and Teaching at University of London Professor Mary Satiasny in Islamabad.

Ahsan for action against hoarders

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for



underlined the need for ensuring strict monitoring of edible items and taking action against the elements involved in their hoarding during the holy month of Ramazan-ul-Mubarak. Chairing a meeting of the National Price Monitoring Committee, the minister directed the provincial authorities to ensure a smooth supply of essential commodities, especially gram flour and dates in the open market, keeping in view their demand in the fasting month.

Police try to arrest Yasmin



Dr Yasmin Rashid in Lahore from outside her clinic in Lahore, media reported on Thursday. A police team stopped Dr Yasmin Rashid's vehicle by installing a barrier near Shadman's underpass. Dr Rashid argued with the police officials who were in**Senate celebrations**

PM calls for unity in the face of crises

Says had to take tough decisions, assures masses of good times ahead

Info Minister castigates

Imran over 'blatant lies'

Marriyum says PTI workers were

continuously attacking police personnel

his arrest has anything to do with the delay in LAHORE: Punjab Inspector Gener-

elections as Imran is projecting in the foreign al of Police (IGP) Dr Usman Anwar

and domestic media", she said while talking on Thursday alleged that Pakistan

to Sky News. The minister said Imran Khan Tehreek (PTI) workers were well-pre-

was continuously breaking the law instead of pared to attack law enforcement

cooperating with the police which was only agencies outside Zaman Park. He was

implementing court orders. She said corrup- addressing a press conference in La-

tion cases were registered against Khan and hore on Thursday along with Punjab

he had to be arrested and brought to court interim Information Minister Aamir

to face the charges. The minister said that Mir. The top cop of Punjab said FIRs

PTI workers were continuously attacking were registered against people who

police personnel with petrol bombs. Rub- damaged public property. "Shooting is

bishing allegations of police high-handed, very easy, but shooting in not bravery,"

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has admitted that the "tough decisions" taken by his government are leading to "inflation and hard conditions" for the common man but is hopeful that there is "light at the end of the tunnel". The premier assured the masses of good times ahead in his address during the special Senate session being held in Islamabad on Thursday to celebrate the golden jubilee of the upper house of parliament. He told the Senate that when the Pakistan Democratic Movement-led government took over the economy was facing very difficult challenges. The last government, he said, had signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) but did not adhere to its conditions. "We took over through a constitutional instrument and this coalition government faced a very difficult challenge and we had two choices," PM Shehbaz said, adding that the first option was that the current government could follow the path taken by the Imran Khan-led PTI government. "The other path was to show the highest level of responsibility, the highest level of maturity and the highest level of statesmanship, the premier said. The current government, he added, through a consultative process adopted a path which would protect Pakistan. "We had to take some bold decisions.

Continued on Page 06

DNA

ter for Information and

Broadcasting Marriyum

Aurangzeb has said

that Chairman Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran

Minis-

Khan was "uttering blatant lies". "Govern-

ment has nothing to do with his arrest, nor

Continued on Page 06

ISLAMABAD:

And the process certainly led to inflation

Dar slams 'uncustomary' IMF attitude

A sister publication of CENTRELINE & DNA News Agency

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday snubbed the demand for abandoning long-range nuclear missiles and said that nobody has any right to tell Pakistan what range of missiles it can have, also pointing out the "uncustomary" attitude of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The minister's highly unusual statement came amid Pakistan's renewed efforts to mend ties with China, which has lately saved Islamabad from the default by refinancing two commercial loans. But Islamabad is still waiting for the rollover of a \$2 billion Chinese deposit that is maturing on March 23 (Pakistan Day). "Nobody has any right to tell Pakistan what range of missiles it can have and what nuclear weapons it can have. We have to have our own deterrence," said Dar while speaking during a special Senate session in front bassadors of many nations

Continued on Page 06

PTI workers

were well-

prepared: IG

DNA

Continued on Page 06

Council Admiral Ali Shamkhani met UAE president Mohammed bin Zayed, and national security adviser **Palestine** envoy indebted



DNA

of Palestine Ahmed Ameen Rabei has extended great thanks and gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, its brotherly people, and its mighty Army for their permanent stance in support of right, justice, against injustice and occupation and also in support for the legitimate historical, and legal rights of the Palestinian people to end the occupation, and establish their Independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. The ambassador made these remarks while speaking on the occasion of celebrations of Pakistan Senate. The Prime Minister of Pakistan and other dignitaries also addressed the special session. The ambassador further said, it was a great pleasure and honor to join you on the occasion of the celebration of the golden jubilee of the Senate of Pakistan. 'I also have the honor to convey to you the greetings, and heartfelt congratulations of President Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, and Speaker of the Palestinian National Council (the Parliament). 'On behalf of all the Palestinian people, I also extend sincere congratulations

to Pakistan for support



Continued on Page 06

Khan grateful to supporters

ABU DHABI: A week after the historic agreement between Tehran and Riyadh to restore diplomatic

relations, Iran's top security official went to Abu Dhabi. Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security

Tahnoon bin Zayed today in Abu Dhabi.-DNA

Willing to talk to anyone for country's sake

Says his party would not let elections get delayed

BUREAU REPORT Pakistan

LAHORE: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan reiterated on Inurs day that he will hold

talks with anybody else for the sake of the country. Taking to Twitter, Mr Khan went on to say that he had no issue for taking any initiative in terms of the prosperity and interests of the country. Expressing his gratitude for his supporters, Mr Khan said, "I want to express my gratitude to all of the workers who came from different parts of the country, including Lahore, to stand by my side in a bid to struggle for actual freedom.' On the other hand, Mr Khan, while saying that he believed in supremacy of law, vowed to appear before the court on March 18. Speaking to a delegation of journalists,

Continued on Page 06

Plea to suspend arrest warrant rejected

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad court Thursday rejected Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's plea seeking the suspension of non-bailable arrest warrants issued in the Toshakhana case. Additional District and Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal announced the verdict reserved earlier redirecting the authorities concerned to arrest the former prime minister and present him before the court on March 18. He mentioned that the decision has been taken after reviewing each and every

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BUREAU REPORT



sisting she goes with them.

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A Sigh of relief for the distressed - Page 05

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'Ambassador for a Day' initiative by Canadian envoy - Page 08

Eight terrorists killed, two kids martyred in gun battle

Last week, security forces killed at least nine terrorists in two separate operations

STAFF REPORT/DNA RAWALPINDI: As many as eight ter-

rorists were killed and two children were martyred in a gunbattle between security forces and anti-state elements in South Waziristan District, According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the security forces launched an operation in Zinghara area of South Waziristan after receiving intelligence about the presence of terrorists there. In the ensuing gunfight which also involved use of mortar fire, eight terrorists were killed, whereas two Army soldiers sustained injuries, the ISPR

statement said. The ISPR further said

unfortunately two children who caught

up in the shootout also embraced mar-

Separately, on 15 Mar 23, an Intelligence Based Operation was carried

tyrdom during the exchange of fire.

out in general area Boghra Rd, Chaman to search a suspected hideout of Terrorists, linked with recent firing incidents on law enforcement agencies and civilians in Chaman area besides planting of improvised explosive devices in surrounding areas. As a result



of continuous technical Surveillance and Reconnaissance of the area, a location of the Terrorists was identified and Security Forces along with CTD were inducted. Resultantly, while terrorists had already escaped, a huge cache of arms and ammunition including rockets, Improvised Explosive Devices and other accessories has been recovered. The recovery has helped avert an obvious terrorist activity at some urban areas like Quetta.

Pakistan Army in step with Nation, remains determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan. Last week, security forces killed at least nine terrorists in two separate operations - six militants were killed during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Datta Khel area adjacent to North Waziristan district, and three more

Continued on Page 06





SDPI, PCP sign MoU to **boost social** delivery service

ISLAMABAD: Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Pakistan Center for Philanthropy (PCP) on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to conduct research and evidence-based interventions for strengthening of social protection services, particularly in testing times. The Executive Director of SDPI, Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that the informal charity and philanthropy were critical in protecting people from economic shocks and can provide relief to the vulnerable communities when the state resources are constrained or can not reach in time.

Both the institutions were eager to find research and evidence-based philanthropic and social delivery interventions, he said and added that there was a need to prevent thinning out of resources and increase the efficacy of such efforts. He stressed the need for finding solutions to increase the engagement of private sector in social delivery and channelizing their CSR and ESG agendas. Dr Suleri further said that with the arrival of Ramadan, stocking and profiteering would rise which can undermine the philanthropic efforts and turn it into a zero-sum He maintained game. that such challenges call for strengthening collaboration between organizations like SDPI and PCP which are pivotal to find out pragmatic solutions

The Executive Director of PCP, Shazia Maqsood said that Pakistanis were an extremely generous nation, but there was no data available to verify and support this claim. She stressed the need for evidence-based research and data to support such claims and drawing comparisons with developed countries in terms of GDP to philanthropy ratio.

for the policy makers and

private sector.

She added that the private sector and informal charities mobilize and reach affected communities swiftly and well before public social protection in the advent of climate disasters. She urged the authorities to simplify the regulatory environment and ensure ease of doing good just like ease of doing business to create a conducive environment for social delivery organizations.—APP

Mushaira in Attock

ATTOCK: A Mushaira was held in the District Council Hall regarding the celebration of Spring and Punjab Culture Day, presided over by the well-known jurist and literary figure Sheikh Ahsan-Ud-Din.

The well-known poet Maheen Malik, Afifah Khan Saduzai, Javed Jadoon, Anjam were present in the ceremony. Salimi, Mushtaq Azim, Rifat Waheed, Nusrat Bukhari, Nazakat Ali Nazak and other local poets also participated. The poets, especially Maheen Malik, received great applause by reciting the best words.-APP

RCCI organizes session for Women entrepreneurs

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has organized an Orientation Session on Pakistan Single Window (PSW) for Women Entrepreneurs at chamber house. President RCCI Saqib Rafiq welcomed the audience and briefed the session.

He informed that the major aim of RCCI was to provide a platform for achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment through greater participation of women in cross-border trade by providing effective and sustained mechanisms of trading to women entrepreneurs and traders. The session provided an opportunity to women entrepreneurs to get information related to the single electronic platform to efficiently meet requirements for regula-



and transit trade and and compliance. processes to improve ease of doing business Shahzad.

Vice President Faisal

Chairperson

Women Committee Ms Shadab Khan, Executive members.

distinguished other members and women entrepreneurs and stu-

dents from different institutes attended the

Pak direly needs women's financial inclusion: President

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said Pakistan direly needed financial inclusion of women to turn fifty percent of its population into a productive workforce. He said helping women promote their business startups through information technology was the fastest route toward their empowerment. Addressing an event BizNet 2023 themed 'Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion and Pakistan Startups', he said financial empowerment of women and other under-represented groups such as differently-abled persons was crucial for the progress of the country. President Alvi emphasized gender parity at the level of organizations

them to ensure their representation in mainstream and leadership roles. In the digital age, he said, technology could increase the productivity and efficiency of a business. Inclusion of women in IT-related startups could also help them earn a livelihood from their homes, he added. He stressed that women needed to be encouraged to become bank account holders in order to keep authority over their finances. He pointed out that despite the rights enunciated by Islam for women, the culture and harassment were the two main impediments to their He highlighted that it was

adopt a positive approach toward women by creating opportunities and ensuring a harassment-free culture for them. The president expressed concern that fifty percent of the women graduates of medical colleges quit pursuing their careers after wedlock, which was a big loss of a talented workforce. He proposed counseling parents, husbands, and women doctors to help them encourage in utilizing their professional capabilities. He mentioned that both religion and the country's law supported women's right to inheritance, however, ills in the society hindered this in a majority of cases. The president regretted that the busi-

ness loans for women offered by the State Bank of Pakistan were not even utilized by five percent of them.

In this regard, he said, the responsibility lied on women parliamentarians and other prominent women to effectively communicate the message to ensure gender equity. He mentioned that the Special technology Zones Authority could also play a role in advancing the role of women in diverse fields of economy. Birgit Lamm, Country head of Germany's Friedrich Naumann Foundation said her organization was committed to promoting entrepreneurship among the masses including women to help them engage in business activity in a dig-

Parliamentary contacts vital for boosting Pak-Kosovo ties

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf on Thursday stressed in enhancing Parliament-to-Parliament contacts, which he termed vital for deepening the economic, political and cultural ties between Kosovo and Pakistan.

The speaker expressed these views during a meeting with Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to Pakistan Agon Vrenezi who called on the former.

He also believed that establishing parliamentary friendship groups between the parliaments of both countries would take bilateral ties to new heights.

"Pakistan attaches great importance to its ties with Kosovo. Despite the long distance between the two countries and the absence of Resident Missions, Pakistan and Kosovo people are



very close to each other," he added. The Speaker also highlighted the devastating impacts of climate change on Pakistan, particularly the devastating floods of 2022. Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo

expressed his gratitude to the Speaker for the warm reception.

He shared that it was his first visit to Pakistan and that he found the capital to be a calm and beautiful place. He also apprised that Kosovo had a young and

resilient population, and its current leadership was eager to establish linkages with other countries around the world. The ambassador expressed his appreciation for Pakistan being one of the first countries to recognize Kosovo's independence.

Diplomats join Senate Golden Jubilee celebration

to Pakistan Agon Vrenezi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: European Union Ambassador, Dr Riina Kionka extended her sincere congratulations to the Senate on its golden jubilee. She said people used to delegate their power to the elected representatives and they held them accountable. "Democracy is the core value of EU States. The EU is supporting Pakistan in strengthening its parliament and democracy for the past 60 years of strategic relations," she added.

Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan, Adam M. Tugio said that relations between Indonesia and Pakistan parliament were getting stronger and stronger. He said that parliamentarians of both the counties were exploring ways to strengthen these relations. Ambassador of Turkiye, Dr.Mehmet Paçaci congratulated the Upper House on its 50th anniversary and expressed that he was honoured to address at this occasion. He said, "We considered the joy of Pakistan as our joy and its success our success." The Senate which promotes peace and harmony of the nation through equal representation of the provinces has been a true success, he said, adding, "Through the history, we have witnessed that on several occasions Pakistan and Turkiye never left each other alone in tough times."Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan Andrei Metelitsa congratulated the Chairman Senate and people of Pakistan for celebrating 50 year of the Senate of Pakistan. He said that Belarus and Pakistan had established cordial bilateral and parliamentarian relationships. He said that high level delegations of Pakistan had also visited Belarus many times. He also invited the Chairman Senate to visit Belarus along with the parliamentarians' delegation. Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin congratulated the Senate over its golden jubilee and invited the Senators to visit his country with an aim to enhance parliamentary relations.

Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic Ramez Alraee thanked the Pakistani government for extending help to Syrian people in difficult times especially during the recent earthquake. He also wished prosperity and progress for Pakistan.

Ambassador of the Royal Thailand to Pakistan Chakkrid Krachaiwong also congratulated the Senate over its golden jubilee celebrations and said that ties between Pakistan and Thailand would increase in the coming days. Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Hosseini said that Pakistan and Iran had strong parliamentary relations which would be further strengthened in the coming days. Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Danila Ganich said the Senate served as a solid and reliable pillar of democracy. He added that it had helped the norms of the multiethnic societies existing in Pakistan. He vowed that the Russian Federation would continue to strive to promote mutually beneficial ties. Deputy Head of Mission of China, Pang Chunxue extended her heartfelt congratulations to the Senate and People of Pakistan. She said Pakistan was a good country with an honoured history, culture and talented and hardworking nation. She added that the Senate played an important role in strengthening democracy, national cohesion and unity in various ways. Chunxue said this was the fourth year to implement the spirit of the 20th National Congress of Communist Party of China and the 10th anniversary of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). High Commissioner of South

Africa, Mthuthuzeli Madikiza extended felicitations to the Upper House on the occasion. He also underlined the support of the parliament, particularly the Senate, in endorsing the UN Resolutions for the independence of African countries and racial discrimination in African countries. Madikiza said Pakistan should move forward to promote ties with African countries and partake in its development agenda

Jordanian Ambassador to Pakistan Maj. Gen. (R) Ibrahim Yala Al Madani, while speaking in the Senate extended congratulations to the leadership and people of Pakistan for celebrating 50 years of the Senate of Pakistan. He said that Pakistan and Jordan were enjoying brotherly relations based on a solid foundation of mutual respect and joint cooperation on political and military aspects. Yemen Ambassador to Pakistan Mohammed Motahar Ali-Shabi congratulated the people of Pakistan on the completion of 50 years of Senate of Pakistan. He said that Pakistan was an important country in the Islamic world and internationally. He said that Yemen and Pakistan were enjoying excellent bilateral ties. He also appreciated Pakistan's support for peace in the region.

Mauritius High Commissioner to Pakistan Rashidally Soobadar congratulated the Chairman Senate and his team for arranging an event to celebrate 50 years of the Senate of Pakistan. He said that strong institutions were very important for the country to make progress.

Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, Atadjan Movlamov said, "I am very pleased to convey heartfelt congratulations and best wishes on the auspicious occasion of the 50th anniversary of the upper house of the Parliament".

Governor attends ceremony at GCF

Governor said that the promotion of quality education is the top priority of the government and added that steps have been taken to facilitate students and improve facilities in educational institutions

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali here Thursday highlighted the importance of young generation for the development of the country and said that youngsters should venture into new fields of technology and prepare themselves to meet the challenges of current world. He expressed these views as a Chief Guest in a ceremony held at Government College Faqirabad (GCF). The ceremony was also attended by Mayor Peshawar, Haji Zubair Ali, Chairman Peshawar Board, Nasrullah, Principal Government College Faqirabad, Dr. Taj-ud-Din and faculty members. Addressing the ceremony, KP Governor urged students to work with dedication and added that their hard work and honesty would open new vistas of progress and growth for themselves. He also urged students to abide by the golden principles of discipline, unity, mutual respect, honesty, and tolerance in their lives to achieve success. He said that students should use the contemporary digital platform to acquire knowledge of their respective fields. Governor said that the promotion of quality education is the top priority of the government and added that steps have been taken to facilitate students and improve facilities in educational institutions. He also laid the foundation stone of a new academic bloc in the college and announced the renovation of the college hall. He said that steps would be taken to make arrangements for parking in the college. Haji Ghulam Ali also distributed certificates among students for their performance in intermediate examinations. On the occasion, City Mayor, Haji Zubair Ali announced 50,000 rupees for the student of the college Tougeer Zia who topped the Peshawar board in 2021-22. APP

Commissioner Rwp visits Attock district

RAWALPINDI:Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta on Thursday visited Attock district and inspected different projects. According to a Commissioner's office spokesperson, the Commissioner during the visit informed that the Punjab government was utilizing all available resources to provide relief to the public. The Commissioner, at the beginning of his tour, visited Tehsil Hasanabdal and inaugurated the newly constructed office of Assistant Commissioner Hasanabdal. He also visited Gurdawara Panja Sahib and reviewed arrangements made by the administration to facilitate Sikh yatrees. He also inaugurated the construction work of 'Bab-e-Attock' being constructed at Hattian.

The Commissioner was briefed that the total cost of 'Bab-e-Attock' and repair work of its adjacent road would be Rs 251.547 million. The project would be completed in 2024. Liaquat Ali Chatta also inspected the site of District Public School Attock.

The Commissioner was briefed that the school would be built at a cost of Rs 350 million on an area of 20 kanals near 'Teen Mela Chowk'. The Commissioner also inaugurated the newly constructed Medical Social Service Unit at Government Asfandyar Bukhari Hospital. -APP

2 killed, 3 injured in dumper-car collusion

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

ATTOCK: A couple lost their lives while three others including their two daughters seriously injured by car-dumper collusion here on Fatehjang-Rawalpindi road near Hattar check post in the early hours of Thursday. Police and rescue 1122 sources said that Ghulam Fareed along with his wife, two daughters and mother in law was coming towards his native town when a speedy dumper recklessly driven by unknown driver rammed over them Fatehjang- Rawalpindi road near Hattar check post resultantly Ghulam Fareed and his wife Imtiaz Bibi was killed on the spot while the couple's daughters identified as 16 years old Areeba Fareed and 9 years old Areesha Fareed besides Fareed's mother in law identified as 65 years old Anwar Bibi were injured.



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman Mobile: 0300 8553342

National Days and Armed Forces Days

MARCH

March 01 / Bosnia National Day March 03 / Bulgaria National Day

March 06 / Ghana Independence Day March 12 / Mauritius

National Day

March 17 / Ireland St. Patricks Day March 20 / Tunisia Independence Day

March 21 / Namibia National Day March 25 / Greece

National Day

March 26 / Bangladesh
National Day

March 27 / Myanmar Armed Forces Day



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo9	280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange927	70831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5	555489
CAA92	281092

Hospitals

CMH	5611111
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital.	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa Internation	onal 4603666



Departments

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



Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation920	9224
PotoharTown920	9224
Rawal Town577	3343



Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Award ceremony for Afghan short documentary contest

Muhammad Suhaib Salarzai, an Afghan student at NUST won the first position in the contest. Adnan Hamidi from COMSATS University Islamabad and Naqibullah Mashwani from The University of Lahore remained second and third, respectively

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan hosted an award ceremony for the Afghan Short Documentary Contest under the project "Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarships for Afghan Students". The contest was aimed to highlighting the cultural and historical significance of Pak-Afghan relations and developing goodwill between the people of two countries by showcasing "Higher Education Experiences of Afghan students studying in Pakistan".

Muhammad Suhaib Salarzai, an Afghan student at NUST won the first position in the contest. Adnan Hamidi from COM-SATS University Islamabad and Naqibullah Mashwani from The University of Lahore remained second and third, respectively. Runners-up of the contest were Rohullah Qari Zadah and Mohibullah Niazai from IMSciences, Peshawar (4th position) and Sadeeq Ur Rehman and Noor Zia from Islamia College University Peshawar (5th position). The award ceremony was followed by screening of the top three documentaries. The contest was launched in January 2023 and received a total of 70 entries from Afghan videographers residing in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The videos covered a range of topics, including the current state of the country's education, and challenges faced by

Edible oil, ghee

output increased

ISLAMABAD: Domestic production of cooking oil and

vegetable ghee during the seven months of current fi-

nancial year increased by 11.73 percent and 4.26 per-

cent respectively as compared to the output of the

corresponding period of last year. During the period

from July-January, 2022-23 about 301,185 metric tons of

cooking oil manufactured in the country as compared to

the manufacturing of 296,567 metric tons of the same

period of last year, according to the quantum index num-

ber of large-scale manufacturing industries released by

the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. On year on year basis,

the local output of edible oil also grew by 11.22 percent

in January, 2023 as about domestic production of the

above-mentioned commodity was recorded at 48,160

metric tons as against the production of 43,300 metric

tons of the same month of last year. - APP



Afghan people as well as higher education experiences of Afghan students studying in Pakistan. The entries were evaluated by a panel of three jury members, who selected top three documentaries based on their content, cinematography, and overall impact. Jury members included Dr. Muhammad Arif, Mr. Nasir Butt and Mr. Hasan Naqvi. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said, "We are pleased to have received such a positive response to this contest, and we are honoured to have had the opportunity to showcase the work

of these talented Afghan students. Through their videos, they have helped to shed light on the rich cultural heritage and complex realities of Afghanistan, and we hope that their work will continue to inspire others to learn more about this important country." He reiterated that without education and capacity building, no nation can progress and we deserve to be prosperous. He also apprised the audience that in third phase of the Allama Iqbal Scholarships, HEC will increase the number of scholarships to 4,500 and some other additions in the

programme to invite bureaucrats, faculty members, and technicians so that they can develop better system on repatriation.

Mr. Ali Mansoor Khaliq Yar, Afghanistan Embassy's Head of Political, Cultural and Education Sections thanked HEC for organizing this contest and providing Afghan students an opportunity to showcase their talent. Mr. Awais Ahmad, Adviser, Quality Assurance & Global Engagement HEC said that the purpose of this competition was to promote creative activities of the Afghan students and encourage them to excel in co-curricular activities.

SC seeks details from NAB regarding recoveries

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday sought detailed from National Accountability Bureau (NAB) including returned money to public, banks and government institutions which was recovered in various cases. The top court directed the bureau to tell the details of its recovery, where this money was spent and how much was given to the certain provinces and federation.

The chief justice asked the anti-graft

body to submit the above details till next date after which the court would view the matter. The CJP remarked that it had been stated that the NAB

had made record recoveries in previous years. He observed that as per the amendments it was the responsibility of the NAB to prove the assets beyond known sources of income and benami transactions.

Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan remarked that a case was used to be prepared to prove record of payments' transactions against benami property.

As per the NAB, relatives, husband,

As per the NAB, relatives, husband, wife or a servant of someone could be benami owner of the property.

Justice Ahsan remarked that the amendments had reduced the powers of NAB, adding that now the prosecu-

Justice Ahsan remarked that the amendments had reduced the powers of NAB, adding that now the prosecution could not prove the benami property until affectees shared the proofs

tion could not prove the benami property until affectees shared the proofs. The NAB prosecutor said that the recovered money used to be returned to the concern institutions and government. A three-member bench of the court headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial heard the case filed by PTI's chairman Imran Khan against the amendments in NAB laws.

FCDO, UNDP join hands to improve governance



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the United Nations Development Programme(UNDP) signed a new Contribution Arrangement on Thursday to extend their partnership for the period 2023-2026. The FCDO has extended its engagement due to succes-

sive governments' continued ownership of the project's reform efforts, said a UNDP

press release.
The Contribution Arrangement will not only expand the scope and geographic coverage of UNDP's Reforms and Innovation project from the federal to the provincial government levels for enhancing governance effectiveness and improved public service delivery, but will also in-

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (PSMBS) and International Bariatric Club have jointly organized the Third International Conference on Bariatric Sur-

gery, which commenced on Thursday in a private hotel. The conference is being attended by 200 delegates, including 27

foreigners from countries such as the United States, Canada, Turkey, Mexico, and Taiwan. During conference, various topics

related to bariatric surgery were discussed, including the establishment of bariatric surgery in Faisalabad, doctors' perceptions

regarding bariatric surgery, apprehensions of morbidly obese people regarding bariatric surgery, level of satisfaction, bariatric tourism, transit bipartition in patients with mild to severe obe-

sity, robotic surgery, modified roux-en-y gastric bypass, and parallel surgery high tech. Moreover, a panel discussion was also

held on bariatric surgery and transplant surgery, covering various issues such as renal failure, liver failure, and preexisting or-

gan failure in connection to bariatric surgery. The conference's closing session, scheduled for Friday, will focus on magnetic bariatric surgery, controversies, a parallel course on Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass and Mini Gastric Bypass. Speaking to media, General Secretary PSMBR Islamabad Chapter Dr. Tanseer-Asghar stated that the conference has attracted health professionals from around world and will provide an excellent opportunity to medical professionals to increase their exposure and skills

through interaction with international experts. He informed that session also included a basic and advanced laparoscopic skills

workshop, during which Professor C-k Huang performed lap gas-

tric bipartition surgery at Rawalpindi International Hospital in a revisional case of stomach twist with a structure, which proved to

be a great learning experience for practitioners. - APP

troduce new programming streams in the form of risk governance interventions. Chief Economist, Planning and Development Department Sindh Asghar Memon expressed his gratitude to FCDO and UNDP for acceding to the provincial government's request for technical support, "We are grateful for the opportunity to work with UNDP and FCDO to enhance governance in our province by institutionaliz-

ing risk governance frameworks and practices for improved disaster management and recovery." Speaking on the occasion, Jo Moir, the Development

Jo Moir, the Development Director for the British High Commission, said, "We are delighted to extend our collaboration with UNDP in Pakistan. The previous three years

The previous three years have been extremely productive, and we are committed to continuing our joint efforts in pursuit of institutionalizing performance-driven management of public sector organizations and evidence-based policy making.

We are confident that this partnership will continue to have a positive impact on the people of Pakistan as a result of the expansion of our support to the provincial level and the introduction of risk governance interventions."

Digital census process continues smoothly: PBS

ISLAMABAD: The process of the 7th Population and Housing Census, being conducting digitally for the first time in the country's history, has been going on smoothly all across the country, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported here on Thursday. "The overall progress and speed of the census process is very encouraging and satisfactory," PBS said in a press statement issued here. The process

and satisfactory," PBS said in a press statement issued here. The process includes an option for self-enumeration, which was made available from February 20, 2023, till March 10, 2023, and field operations of house listing and enumeration commenced from March 01, 2023, that will continue till April 4, 2023.

Conducting a census digitally ensures transparency, data-driven procedures, real-time monitoring of progress through geo-tagging using GIS systems, and wider acceptability of census results, said PBS press statement. It said structures were listed from March 1st to March 10, 2023, during which all the residential and economic units were geotagged along with the classification of economic activities as per international standards.

It said, the self-enumeration portal was very well received by people who have enumerated themselves using the portal launched and this method was optional. Currently, the final phase of the census i.e. enumeration is ongoing starting from March 12, 2023, and would continue till April 4, 2023. In this phase, the data about household members and their demographic characteristics, various Socio-Economic Indicators, as well as Housing characteristics, are being collected. - APP

Marriyum grieved over demise of senior iournalist

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday expressed grief and sorrow over the demise of senior journalist Masoodullah Khan. In her condolence message, the minister prayed to the Almighty Allah to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage and fortitude to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity.

Marriyum Aurangzed said Masoodullah Khan was not only the hero of freedom of expression but was also part of a struggle for democracy and endured hardships for its preservation. – APP

Non-duty paid cigarettes worth Rs 24.4m seized

RAWALPINDI: The Regional Tax Office (RTO) Rawalpindi on Thursday confiscated non-duty paid cartons of cigarettes worth Rs 24.4 million after intercepting two trucks during patrolling. Upon receipt of credible information, the Inland Revenue Squad of Enforcement Network (IREN) seized 350 cartons (3,500,000 sticks) of a local brand of unpaid duty/taxes counterfeit cigarettes, said a news release issued here. The illegal stock of cigarettes involving tax evasion of approximately Rs.18.2 million/- was confiscated. The stock has been shifted to the FBR office for further investigation. The IREN Squad Rawalpindi Hub has enhanced its patrolling of all major routes and started 24-hour vigilance. - APP

Pakistan, Australia agree to promote co-op

Pakistan

ISLAMABAD:

and Australia have agreed to continue mutual cooperation in the promotion of trade, Information Technology, and intellectual property rights, especially regarding Pakistan's rice exports and import procedures in the agriculture sector. According to a joint statement issued after the 9th Session of the Pakistan-Australia JTC held here on Thursday, both sides agreed to further expand bilateral relations between the two countries. On the occasion, Secretary Commerce, Muhammad Sualeh Ahmad Faruqui mentioned that Pakistan values its trade relations with Australia and highlighted that Australia has emerged among the major development partners of Pakistan. The leader of the Australian delegation, Gary Cowan, First Assistant Secretary, North and South Asia Division, thanked Pakistan for hosting the 9th session of JTC and mentioned that Australia was looking forward to discussing matters of bilateral trade and mutual importance. - APP

Experts discuss advances in bariatric surgery MARCH 2023 Pakistan's Premier News

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Briefs

Lawmakers call for supremacy of parliament

ISLAMABAD: Parliament is the supreme institution of the country and all institutions should stay in their domain and not interfere with work of other institutions. These views were expressed by the incumbent and former Senators while taking part in a debate in the Senate session summoned in connection with the Golden Jubilee of the Upper House. On the second day of the special session, the incumbent and former senators, parliamentary leadership, foreign diplomats and prominent figures from various walks of life participated and congratulated the Senate of Pakistan over completing 50 years. The Senate special session summoned to celebrate Golden Jubilee started with the recitation of the last two verses of Surah Al-Baqarah that highlighted the importance of believing in the messengers of the Almighty Allah and His angels, books and obeying the messengers. It also added that Allah does not burden anyone more than his or her capacity and it's the reward of what a person does and what he receives in the form of its outcome. -DNA

PM grieved over death of renowned journalist

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed grief over death of renowned journalist Masood Ullah Khan. He prayed for elevation of ranks of the deceased journalist in paradise and offered condolence to the bereaved family.

The prime minister said the services of late Masood Ullah Khan for journalism and freedom of expression would always be remembered.—APP

RCB recovers 1200 kgsubstandard meat

RAWALPINDI: Food Control Cell of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) on the special directives of Deputy Cantonment Executive Officer, Muhammad Tanveer here on Thursday conducted raids in different cantt areas against illegal slaughterhouses and recovered 1200 kg substandard meat. According to an RCB spokesman, the Food Control Cell team under the supervision of Food Incharge Haroon Zafar conducted a grand operation and recovered nearly 1200 kg of substandard meat which was later destroyed. He informed that the team visited various areas including Saddar, Allahabad, Westridge, Naseerabad, Chor Chowk, Masrial Road, Allama Iqbal Colony, Buraf Khana Chowk and other areas and took action in accordance with the law against the rules vi-

Daraz donation for flood relief efforts

ISLAMABAD: In response to the devastating floods that hit Pakistan last year, Daraz has announced that it will facilitate a donation of around US \$320,000 from its China-based parent company Alibaba Group to support efforts to rehabilitate communities affected by the disaster. The donation will be made to The Citizens Foundation a globally recognized and respected non-profit organization working since 1995 to provide quality education to the underserved population of the country. The funds will be utilized to build a school in the Badin District of Sindh for 180 children to resume their education at the earliest possible, and its upkeep for the next five years. Daraz Pakistan will be managing the overall partnership with The Citizens Foundation to govern the construction of the school and monitor the project's progress on a monthly basis.Ehsan Saya, Managing Director, Daraz Pakistan, stated, "The country has been through the worst natural disasters in its history, affecting a significant number of our population and infrastructure. - DNA

ICCI urges political leaders to sign charter of economy

He congratulated the Senate of Pakistan for celebrating its Golden Jubilee and said that the Senate is playing an important role in strengthening democracy in Pakistan which is commendable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The economy of Pakistan is currently going through a serious crisis, so it is necessary that the leaders of all political parties should develop consensus on a charter of economy in order to get Pakistan out of the current economic crisis and put it on the path of sustainable development. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) while addressing the Golden Jubilee Ceremony of the Senate of Pakistan. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the Chairman Senate should play the role of bringing leaders of all the political parties on one platform in order to develop and sign a charter of economy. He said that such crises can be avoided in the future only by creating long-term economic policies. He said that today countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam have overtaken Pa-

kistan in economic development,

which should be a wake-up call for kistan takes one step forward policies should continue and the



ladesh have increased to 52 billion dollars in 2021-22, while the exports of Vietnam have crossed 336 billion dollars. He regretted that after every few years, Pa-

development. He termed it very important that all political parties should sign a charter of economy so that whichever political party comes to power, the economic

STER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

EL SIMULATION EXERCISE

sustainably. He further said that if the IMF agreement is indispensable for the economy, it should not be delayed as delay in its finalization is creating a situation of uncertainty in the country. President ICCI emphasized for reservation of seats for the business community in the parliament on the pattern of reserve seats for minorities and women that would help in protecting the interests of the business sector during the legislative process and promoting business & investment activities

in the country. He said that chambers of commerce including ICCI should also be invited as observers to the meetings of business-related standing committees of the Senate so that they can listen to proceedings of meetings and provide their input when needed. He said that Islamabad should be given the status of a province for the better development of the city and solve the problems of the people effectively. He congratulated the Senate of Pakistan for celebrating its Golden Jubilee and said that the Senate is playing an important role in strengthening democracy in Pakistan which is

CDA organizes 3-day literary festival

ISLAMABAD: A three day literary festival is being organized in Islamabad under the umbrella of Capital Development Authority. The literary festival will remain continue from March 17 to March 19 in Islamabad. The objective of the Literary Festival is to provide a platform to citizens for the promotion of literature, culture, art and especially books reading. The three-day literary festival organized by the Capital Development Authority has been divided into 2 different parts for the first time. Various programs have been arranged on all three days at 4 PM including Mushaira, Heer Goai, Manzil-Ba-Manzil Islamabad, theater including panel discussion, cultural dance and musical nights.Panel discussion on Pakistani languages have also been made a part of the festival. Renowned poets including Iftikhar Arif, Anwar Sahoor, Khurshid Rizvi, Fawad Hasan Fawad, Akbar Ehsan will participate in the Mushaira. Similarly, Hafeez Khan, Dr. Saghara Sadaf, Abbasian Yousafzai along with Dr. Muhammad Yusuf will participate in the panel discussion. The musical nights will start at 8 PM at Liagat Gymnasium. Famous artists of the country, including Shafqat Amanat Ali, Hadiqa Kayani, Sahir Ali, Sanam Marvi will perform, Chairman Capital Development Authority Captain Noor Ul Amin Mengal has said that the purpose of holding the Islamabad Literary Festival is to promote literature, culture, art and books reading.He said that it will be ensured that festival will become regular feature and event of the country. He further said that in the era of technology where today's youth is moving away from their literature. At the same time, the interest of reading books to understand their literature and culture is also fading. Such activities will prove helpful in attracting the young towards their culture and literature. He further said that all expenses of the Literary Festival have been sponsored by various companies. Chairman CDA further said that Jashan Baharan will also be organized in Islamabad.-DNA

Vulnerable communities must be center of planning

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday said vulnerable communities must be the centre of planning for disaster preparedness and response. She acknowledged the value of simulation exercises to coordinate disaster responses, and underlined the significance of local involvement and the most vulnerable in real-time response efforts. The minister was speaking at the closing ceremony of the First Simulation Exercise on Flood and Rain, conducted by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change. Sherry Rehman said: "The identification of fragility and vulnerability, and the inclusion of those who are the most vulnerable must be at the front and center as we move forward. Rather than being relegated to the periphery, we must consider the entire spectrum of vulnerability. "In particular, we must rec-

during the rehabilitation hen the loss of live lihoods and health crises impact them first." Despite limited resources, she said, "we must innovate and develop a deep understanding of the shocks faced by these communities, both during and after immediate relief efforts. This exercise pivots

ognize that those who are

the most vulnerable, often

face significant challenges

has got to work as a welloiled machine." The minister stressed the need to reassess rehabilitation in response to the changing nature and complexity of disasters. 'Uncertainty has become

on local assistance, and it

the new normal in the 21st Century, where we have lost all sense of what is to be expected from a monsoon or a riverine flood. To respond

effectively to this dynamic change, our own response and learning must also be dynamic. We must create issilos that enable quick and accessible outreach of relief goods to populations under threat. "Given that provinces and districts are the primary hubs of relief response, they must be integrated into the coordination chain with transparency and speed.'

1,315,000 registered Afghan Refugees reside in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Around 1,315,000 registered Afghan Refugees are residing in Pakistan presently, said an official source here on Thursday. These Afghan Refugees are validated and verified under the Document Renewal and Information Verification Exercise (DRIVE). The DRIVE exercise has been extended up to March, 31, 2023 for residual caseload of Afghan Refugees, It added. Additionally, 141,676 Undocumented Members of Registered families (UMRF) have also been documented under DRIVE initiative whose confirmation is in process and if they are eligible under prescribed criteria, the figure of 1,315,000 would further increase. The Ministry of SAFRON deals only with management of registered Afghan Refugees during their temporary stay in Pakistan and their voluntary repatriation of Afghanistan. The Afghan Refugees are managed under national Policy approved by the Federal Cabinet from time to time which provides directions to facilitate voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan. Currently, the validity of Proof of Registration card issued to Afghan Refugees living in Pakistan and Tripartite Agreement (governs voluntary repatriation of Afghan Refugees signed among Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR) is up till June, 30 2023. Additionally, Pakistan strongly adheres to the three pillars under Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) under a Quadripartite Agreement (Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and UNHCR). The three pillars under SSAR include Creating conducive conditions for voluntary repatriation. Sustainable reintegration in home country, that is Afghanistan and Assistance to the host communities.-APP

Pakistani elite consider trade with India as their death knell

It is neither considered an enemy nor a friend. America and Europe do not want to offend India, but despite being bankrupt, we are always ready to confront the fifth largest economic power in the world, he added

DNA

Pakistani ISLAMABAD: elites consider trade with India as a death knell for their interests. The import of cheap food items from India will reduce inflation in Pakistan and provide relief to the people, but this is not acceptable to the powerful elite. People can be forced to eat onions and tomatoes at Rs250 per kg, but the import of these items from India at Rs40 per kg cannot be allowed because it will hit the interests of our hoarders and profiteers.

The views were expressed by Dr. Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek Shadbad while talking to the President of Pakistan Economy Watch, Dr. Murtaza Mughal. Other officials of both organizations were also present on the occasion. He said that Pakistan is suffering from confusion about India. It is neither considered an enemy nor a friend. America and Europe do not want to offend India, but despite being bankrupt, we are always ready to confront the fifth largest economic power in the world, he added. He said that one will support a failing

state against India whose annual exports stand at more than \$670 billion. India will become the world's third-largest economy in a few years while we will continue to beg for survival, he observed. If we improve relations and open trade with India, our import bill will decrease by billions of dollars, food items and other goods will become cheaper, the back of the profiteering mafia will be broken and the country will develop in many areas including technology. Trade with India is in the interest of the people but unacceptable to the elite plundering national

cording to the requirements

resources for decades. India has imported 758 billion dollars in 2021. And if relations improve and Pakistan gets even a two percent share in it, we will get a foreign exchange of more than fifteen billion dollars, which will solve many of our problems, participants said. India does not want a conflict with Pakistan as she is fully focused on development while Indians know that the instability and disorder in Pakistan will also affect their economy. Instead of blood-warming hymns, we should act realistically and set our priorities ac-

Pak keeping up with global trend of new energy

moral and economic responsibil-

ities, seize the current new round

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Mar. 16 (): Pakistan is keeping up with the global trend of new energy, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday quoting experts. "Electric mobility has become indispensable for Pakistan. Entities striving to introduce electric mobility in Pakistan, including Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and local enterprises, are actively involved in diverse engagements related to the development of the Electric Vehicle (EV) value chain in the country," said Prof. Nauman Ahmad Zaffar, Director of Energy and Power Systems Cluster and the National Incubation Centre. Developing EVs in Pakistan is a potential solution for the country both in terms of improving the quality of the environment and making full use of electricity. In a recent interview with Gwadar Pro. Prof. Zaffar noted that the trans-

to the total airborne emissions in the country. Meanwhile, Pakistan has surplus electricity generation capacity, resulting in accumulation of a large sum of capacity payments. Under such situation, there is a need to introduce non-seasonal and flexible loads, and EVs have emerged as an effective solution. Many favorable factors, such as the Pakistani government's supportive attitude towards EV, have contributed to the development of the National EV policy. Pakistan's EV market is widely favored by international companies. Chinese companies, including Chery, MG, Changan, BAIC and Haval have also been making a push in recent years. Yin Tongyue, a member of the Chinese National People's Congress, chairman and Party secretary of Chery Holding Group, said that the automobile industry, as a pillar industry of the national economy, must shoulder historical, social,

port sector contributes almost 43%

of technological revolution and globalization, and advance China as an "auto power". Chery has started its journey of R&D of fuel-efficient and new energy vehicles in 1999, making it the first ever Chinese auto manufacturer to enter the field of new energy technology. Through years of development, Chery has established a well-established R&D system for new energy technologies, covering vehicle integration. core technologies and core component development capabilities. To

date, it has applied for more than

tor and has obtained more than 600 patents, leading the auto industry. While in the PHEV hybrid segment, Chery has made an early breakthrough. DHT, the full-featured hybrid transmission independently developed by Chery, has four key advantages by virtue of the key technologies of "3 engines, 3 gears, 9 working modes and 11 speed ratios". In addition, Chery's "super hybrid" brings the hybrid vehicle industry with a significant solution to the problem of weak power output. Backed by hybrid technology, the TIGGO 8 PRO e+, Chery's first PHEV model to go into mass production, gained global attention once it was launched. "In the future, Chery's subsequent PHEV models will also cover the global market including Pakistan, bringing a greener travel experience for Pakistani consumers, setting a new standard for Pakistan's automobile industry, and helping Pakistan's market tran-

900 natents in the new energy sec-

sition from traditional fuel vehicles to new energy vehicles," said Felix Hu, country director of Chery Automobile in Pakistan. PHEVs are very complex machines due to the presence of two complete distinct drivetrains, i.e., electric, and gasoline-based, in a single vehicle. Due to this, PHEVs tend to cost more than their all-electric counterparts. Furthermore, the presence of two drivetrains adds substantially to the complexity of indigenous manufacturing, and this, combined with the cost of maintenance and after-sales services, makes the barriers to adoption even higher. In Pakistan, EV manufacturing will need to rely strongly on imports in the short term due to the limited capacity of local manufacturers to develop various modules/components of EVs, especially batteries and battery cells. Prof. Nauman Zaffar told the reporter that the price of the battery in a BEV constitutes almost half of the price of the vehicle. "

BISP reaches over 247,000 children

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) has so far reached over 247,000 children and 231,000 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) under the Benazir Nashonuma initiative. According to an official source, these beneficiaries had been served through the network of over 400 Nashonuma Centers across the country. The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) intervention of Benazir Nashonuma was designed in August 2020 to increase the uptake of Health and Nutrition services of its beneficiaries. The primary objectives of the program were to prevent stunting in children under two years of age, improve weight gain of pregnant women during pregnancy, reduce anaemia and micronutrient deficiencies, and prevent low birth weight. World Food Programme (WFP) is the lead implementing partner for EhsaasNashonuma. programme aims to address stunting among pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and their children less than two years of age through the provision of additional cash of Rs. 2,000 per quarter per PLW and boy child and PKR 2,500/- per quarter per girl child of BISP beneficiary families. -APP

Gang busted; five thieves arrested

RAWALPINDI: In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police have busted a gang and arrested five thieves including ringleader besides recovering bundles of stolen cable, a tractor and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, New Town Police arrested five accused namely Amir Nawab, Bilal, Rashid, Rizwan, Rehman and Anwarullah, who were wanted in different cases. He informed that the police team constituted under the supervision of SHO New Town Police Station on the directives of SP Rawal Faisal Saleem conducted a raid and managed to net the gang members including the ringleader.—APP

Railways all set for branding trains, platforms

ISLAMABAD: Railways is all set for branding several passenger trains and railway platforms across the country to transform itself into a profitable organization and make it a profitable department.

"Minister for Railways Khawaja SaadRafique has already directed the concerned authorities to present a new revenue model regarding the branding of trains and platforms," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He said the branding of the trains and platforms would not only address the increasing deficit of Pakistan Railways but also allow private firms to advertise their products to improve the financial health of the railways.

The official said that initially Pakistan Railways would be offered five trains for branding their seat covers, internal walls of the passenger coaches, and even toilets as a pilot project.

"The deficit of the department to decrease after starting this project and the minister has already directed the concerned to complete all the formalities in this regard as soon as possible," he added.

About the concentration on core activities, he said that Pakistan Railways has prepared a business plan in January 2023 to increase its revenue and reduce expenditure through improved governance. The plan is being implemented in letter and spirit. The recent initiatives towards digitization in form of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Railway Automated Booking and Travel Assistance (RABTA) also aim to increase efficiency and reduced the revenue expenditure gap, he added.

He said the department has restarted its premium train service Green Line from January 2023 and the train consists of new Chinese coaches imported recently equipped with infotainment services like LEDs, Wi-Fi and public address systems. Pakistan Railways is also importing 230 passenger coaches from China.-APP

Honduras' move the right call

resident Xiomara Castro of Honduras tweeted that she instructed Chancellor Eduardo Reina to manage the opening of official relations with the People's Republic of China on March 15. By announcing her country will establish diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China, President Xiomara Castro of Honduras has made the right choice. Castro was honoring her pledge made during her campaign, and will open the way for further cooperation with the world's second-largest economy. Her government's announced negotiation with China on building a hydroelectric dam is but one example. In a statement, Taiwan's "foreign ministry" asked Honduras not to "fall into China's trap", but their definition of "trap" is rather vague and contrary to the Honduran people's interests. With Honduras gone, the number of countries in this world recognizing Taiwan has dropped to 13, and the day will come when it falls to zero. Geographically, South America is a long way from China. But near or far, everyone knows there is only one China and Taiwan is part of it. Analysts said Honduras move was not unexpected given Xiomara's campaign comments and recent discussions with China about financial assistance - in February Reina announced Beijing would provide the funding for another dam along the Patuka River. "I think we are somewhat prepared, so I don't think it's going to be a big issue," Yao-yuan Yeh, the director of the Taiwan and East Asia Studies Programme at the University of St Thomas in Texas told Al Jazeera. "But it could cause the public in Taiwan to have a little panic since we've been abandoned by another country again.' China has been trying to deepen links with Taipei's remaining allies since Tsai Ing-wen was first elected president of Taiwan

In Central America, a region that the United States has long seen as within its sphere of influence, Nicaragua broke off diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 2021. If Honduras does switch, only Belize and Guatemala will formally recognise Taiwan, which will be left with just 13 formal diplomatic allies around the world, compared with 22 when Tsai took office.

in 2016. Several countries, including the Solomon Islands, have

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AUKUS deal a bad thing

t a National Press Club event on Wednesday, former Australian prime minister Paul Keating derided the AUKUS submarine deal as being "irrational in every dimension". Saying that the deal meant Australia was suborning its sovereignty "to the whim and caprice" of US administrations, Keating was scathing in his criticism. He has struck the nail on the head as the deal damages Australian interests any which way you look at it. The latest data from Australian consulting firm Adroit estimates the cost of the AUKUS program will be 368 billion Australian dollars (\$244.32 billion) — and you can bet your bottom dollar, it will run over budget — which will be paid by Australian citizens who will effectively be subsidizing the design of the next UK attack class Astute submarine "simply to be able to grab half a dozen for ourselves on the way through" even though "they will be of little military benefit to anybody, even to the Americans". But it is a sizeable windfall that will be welcomed by the defense companies of the two transatlantic powers. The cost to Australia however is "off the scale". Directed by the US, AUKUS takes China as an imaginary enemy. The deal will inevitably worsen relations between Australia and its largest trading partner. On Feb 8, the first Australian coal-carrying ship in two years arrived at Zhanjiang port, Guangdong province, after the two sides made concerted efforts to repair their relations following the damage done to them by the previous Australian administration. But with Australia taking further steps on a "dangerous and unnecessary journey" those efforts to mend ties are in jeopardy. As Keating warned, no "softer or polite language" can disguise Australia's commitment to rattling a sword in the neighborhood on behalf of the US to impress upon the region "the US' esteemed view of its untrammeled destiny". In doing so it is arraigning itself with an Atlantic power "which upon any defeat or setback will see that power likely repair ten thousand kilometers across the moat of the Pacific, as it retreated from Iraq and Afghanistan", leaving the scarred locals to pick up the pieces. Australia is also damaging its own credibility by exploiting a loophole in the nuclear non-proliferation mechanism, which grants nuclear fission materials exemption from the International Atomic Energy Agency monitoring if they are used for non-explosive military use. The AUKUS deal will set a bad precedent by transferring nuclear technologies to a non-nuclear nation. So the AUKUS submarine deal is damaging as well as costly for Australia whichever way you look at it, and as such, the Anthony Albanese government should take

A Sigh of relief for the distressed

Abdul Rashid Shakir



Starting from 15th of March, District Administration across the province will distribute free flour bags to the registered beneficiaries through 20,000 Points of Sale (POS), including 6000 Utility Stores, 2000 Karyana Stores registered with BISP and some 12,000 trucking points to cover all the potential recipients across the Province. Quality and quantity of flour in the bags would be strictly monitored through active liaison of the relevant district

olitical instability, financial mismanagement and broken promises with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are hitting the masses hard in current crises of high inflation, depreciation of rupee against dollar and higher commodity prices in the International market. "To buy or not to buy, that is the question" for a common man in the wake of massive hike in the prices of basic necessities of life like food items, clothes and shelter. Unchecked spike in the circular debt of energy sector, higher electricity and gas tariff, untargeted and unaccounted-for subsidies in the different sectors of economy are adding woos to the precarious economic conditions of the people. Surge in the fuel cost not only raises travel fares for the commuters but also causes the prices of every item to shoot up because of enhanced shipping charges incurred on transporting goods from farms and factories to the markets.

And above all, depleting income resources because of closure of industrial units and high rate of unemployment further aggravates the whole mix. Similarly, for the Governments too, things are not that much easy to manage. Sustaining the bleeding State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) like Steel Mills, PIA, GENCOs DISCOs and others; making exorbitant amount of funds available for ensuring national defense and maintaining law and order in the country; and arranging for the high debt repayment costs besides recurring expenditures of the civil administration like salaries, pensions, POL and others are undoubtedly akin to achieving an uphill task for the country's financial managers, given the limited economic pie available. However, it is not a hard nut to crack that in such a testing time, any pro-poor intervention of the authorities in power is not only a sigh of relief for the poverty-stricken segments of society but also a quick relief pill for the ailing economy.

Cognizant of their responsibility to provide as much relief to people as possible within their limited financial resources, the Government of Punjab has come up with an innovative and out-of-thebox plan to provide a bit of relief to the depressed and down-trodden sections of the community. With the help of Federal Government, it has finalized a hefty Ramazan Relief Package, worth Rs. 53 Billion, to supply free flour to 100 Million people of its 120 Million population, which accounts for more than 80% of its total population. As per the approved package, around 15.83 Million households in Punjab that earn up to Rs. 60,000 per month will receive 03 bags of 10 Kg flour each (30 Kg) free of cost during the holy month of Ramazan. To make the distribution process hassle-free, an intended recipient would write ATA space his CNIC number (ATA CNIC) and send it to 8070 for getting himself/herself registered in the Package.

Starting from 15th of March, District Administration across the province will distribute free flour bags to the registered beneficiaries through 20,000 Points of Sale (POS), including 6000 Utility Stores, 2000 Karyana Stores registered with BISP and some 12,000 trucking points to cover all the potential recipients across the Province. Quality and quantity of flour in the bags would be strictly monitored through active liaison of the relevant district administration and the flour mill owner, in order to provide good standard flour to the people.

The entire distribution process would be made smooth, transparent and effective with the use of technology. Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) has developed a user-friendly Mobile App for the purpose. The intended recipient would scan his/her CNIC via this App at the dedicated Point of Sale (POS) to confirm his/ her registration with the Programme and to get a confirmation coupon. On producing the said coupon, he/she will receive a 10 Kg flour bag from the delivery counter. This joint venture of the Federal and Provincial Government of the Punjab is a right step in the right direction to ameliorate the sufferings of common people hit hard by the inflation and high cost of living.

The Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi has directed all his cabinet colleagues and the provincial machinery to ensure their physical presence in the field during the holy month of Ramazan to keep an effective check on the smooth supply of free and quality flour to the residents of Punjab during Ramazan under this historic relief package.

Though a good start, more such humanitarian interventions are eagerly needed to shield the low and middle income segments of society being terribly tormented by the tragic onslaught of rising commodity prices and ever-escalating cost of almost everything that matters to all and sundry. It is hoped that the Government of Punjab would come up with more such people-centric and humanitarian initiatives for the welfare and socio-economic uplift of the people of Punjab.

The Saudi-Iran détente and its regional implications

Marwan Bishara

The fact that the agreement was signed after two years of difficult negotiations holds promise. But do not expect the long archrivals to turn archangels after normalising their diplomatic relations. There remains a great deal of distrust and too many points of friction to tackle and resolve. With no love lost, the renewed Saudi-Iranian relationship may turn into a marriage of convenience driven by national interest and shaped by political and economic calculus. Or, it may become a marriage of inconvenience – one that is eroded by divergent ideological and regional agendas.

n March 10, Saudi Arabia and Iran announced an agreement to restore bilateral relations. That's good news.

The deal was conceived out of need and out of desire: The Saudi-Iranian need to end a conflict that has proven costly and toxic to both nations and disastrous to the Middle East, and the Chinese desire to play matchmaker, to fill the strategic void left by the United States and Russia, and to demonstrate its credentials as a trustworthy global partner.

The fact that the agreement was signed after two years of difficult negotiations holds promise. But do not expect the long archrivals to turn archangels after normalising their diplomatic relations. There remains a great deal of distrust and too many points of friction to tackle and resolve.

With no love lost, the renewed Saudi-Iranian relationship may turn into a marriage of convenience driven by national interest and shaped by political and economic calculus. Or, it may become a marriage of inconvenience - one that is eroded by divergent ideological and regional agendas.

Riyadh and Tehran have agreed to reactivate the cooperation and security agreements signed in 1998 and 2001, respectively, but a return to the status quo ante of the 1990s is challenging if not improbable after a dozen years of hostility.

Indeed, their proxy conflicts have been utterly devastating with their sectarian overtones, undermining the two countries' security, crippling their economies and tearing their societies apart. The more they interfered the more Yemenis, Syrians, Iraqis, Lebanese and Bahrainis suffered. That's why the way forward is not the way back for the two regional powers. In light of the new and complicated regional order - or rather disorder - they helped create, the two nations must chart a new and sustainable path forward that serves their and their neighbours' national interests. This begins with refraining from intervening in each other's affairs, wasting fortunes on undermining other Middle Eastern societies, and in the process, engaging in a costly

arms race to the bottom. Like other peoples, Iranians and Saudis would want their leaders to focus their attention on domestic affairs, not foreign bravados, pursuing democratic harmony at home instead of spreading anarchy abroad. A new way forward is an opportunity to lower tensions, mitigate the damages, and compensate neighbours for the harm done to them. It is indeed morally incumbent upon the two oil-rich nations to help Syrians, Yemenis and other victims of proxy conflicts rebuild their shattered lives. China and the West should also help. Beyond that, I believe it is in everybody's best interest if the protagonists try a hands-off approach to regional affairs, especially as their regional overreach allowed foreign powers to exploit and aggravate their conflict.

Indeed, Riyadh and Tehran must now take a common, firm stand on foreign interference, especially Western support for Israel's colonialism and apartheid - predictably the only country to openly oppose the new Gulf détente, which it is, no doubt, determined to sabotage.

They must also reject all attempts by global powers to intervene directly or through proxies in the Middle East. That includes China.

Beijing, which mediated between Rivadh and Tehran and hosted the final celebratory handshake, has emerged as the biggest winner of the new deal. It will gain greater credibility and prestige as a responsible global player, having helped resolve a complicated conflict in a tough region considered part of the US area of influence. Moreover, as the sponsor, China will probably want to stay involved in order to see through the reconciliation and normalisation process, which gives it greater access to the oilrich region it needs to fuel its economy and mili-

tary in the long run. In other words, unlike other regional mediations that came at a cost to their sponsors, this could prove profitable to China, and at the expense of its global rival, the US.

The Biden administration has welcomed the de-escalation in the Gulf, which it says could also help put an end to the war in Yemen, but it is unable to hide its anger and disappointment. This is especially so since Beijing succeeded in championing a diplomatic breakthrough in the Middle East after Washington tried to block its mediation between Russia and Ukraine.

The US's grinning mouth fails to hide its teeth-grinding, as China undermines US plans to expand the so-called Abraham Accords to include Saudi Arabia, or to impose a new nuclear deal on Iran through sanctions and regional pressure. Although it is too early to tell, the Chinese-sponsored agreement may well scuttle the American-Israeli scheme of polarising the region in favour of a pro-Israel and anti-Iran bloc.

But then again, Saudi Arabia is not about to turn its back on the US or switch alliances. It is far too dependent on Washington in military and economic affairs. But like other regional actors, large and small, Riyadh is also going hybrid, merely adding one more relationship to its diplomatic mix, aimed at securing its own interests first and foremost.

So will Iran, which has already developed relations with Russia and China. It may well add the US to the mix, if or when the latter agrees to lift the sanctions and strike a fair nuclear deal.

In other words, the Saudi-Iran deal is an indication of a changing region and shifting geopolitics. Welcome to the new Middle East, where states are acting more independently of global powers, shaping and balancing relationships and alliances, instead of being shaped by them.

-Courtesy: Al Jazeera

WORLD / SPORTS



Briefs

PM calls for unity in the face of crises

From Page 01 Pakistan but we did not shy away from taking those decisions." He added that the coalition government "saved the state and sacri ficed their politics". "I have to say that we are going through a difficult period but there is light at the end of the tunnel, provided you are sincere to the cause," the premier said, adding that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar "is working tirelessly to turn around the economy". Everyone is human and makes mistakes but it is important that lessons are learnt from those mistakes, he added. In the past, the premier said, political leadership had sat together many times to find solutions. He cited the example of 2014 when the political leadership united against terrorism. "Nations tackle such challenges with a political vision.

Dar slams 'uncustomary IMF attitude

From Page 01 It is for the first time that the finance minister has brought the issue of the range of nuclear missiles into the public sphere. In private conversations, some Pakistani authorities had said that there was a longstanding demand by a Western country to abandon the long-range nuclear missile programme.

Shaheen-III is Pakistan's long-range nuclear missile having the capability to take nuclear warheads to 2,750 kilometer distance, covering the whole of India and parts of the Middle East. Dar assured that "nobody is going to compromise anything on the nuclear or missile programme of Pakistan - no way". His categorical statement may end the debate whether Pakistan will eventually compromise on its nuclear arsenals in return for the IMF programme.

Eight terrorists killed...

From Page 01 terrorists were shot dead in a follow-up sanitisation operation of the area. Locals of the area appreciated the security forces' response and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the area, the ISPR had said in a statement following the operation. Pakistan's security forces have conducted numerous opera tions against terrorism across the country, not only arresting them and their facilitators but also thwarting several attacks during the last three months. Security forces have killed more than 150 terrorists during the last three months as operations to eliminate terrorism from the country continue. At least 1,007 terrorists were arrested during 6,921 operations by security forces across the country in the last three months. At least 1,960 operations were conducted in total in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, out of which 1,516 were area-domination operations, 301 were intelligence-based operations, and 143 were area-sanitisation operations.

Palestine envoy indebted...

From Page 01 expressed from the heart of Al Quds Al Shareef, from the first of the two Qiblas, from the second of the two mosques and the third of the Two Holy Mosques, the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, the place of Ascension "Mi'raj" of our Prophet Muhammad. He said, on this great day, we recall the commandments of the founder of Pakistan, the leader, Mr. Muhammad Ali Iinnah. where the blessed Al-Agsa Mosque lives in the hearts of the Pakistani people, and also recall the visit of Allama Muhammad Iqbal to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is the property of the entire Islamic Ummah. 'We take pride of being sure that we are not alone standing against injustice and terrorism and occupation.I renew our heartfelt congratulations on the golden jubilee of the Senate and extend congratulations on the upcoming anniversary of the glorious Pakistan Day'.

Infantino re-elected FIFA president until 2027

Infantino has also announced projected income of \$11 billion in the four years up to 2026, compared to \$7.5 billion in the last four-year cycle ending in 2022

WEB DESK

KIGALI: Gianni Infantino

has been re-elected as president of FIFA until 2027 after standing unopposed at the congress of world football's governing body on Thursday. The 52-year-old Swiss lawyer, who succeeded the disgraced Sepp Blatter in 2016, was waved in for a third term by acclamation, just as he was four years ago, by delegates from the 211 member federations. "To all those who love me, and I know there are so many, and also those who hate me. I know there are a few: I love you all," Infantino told delegates in the Rwandan capital, where the voting system did not register the number of dissident

voices. While FIFA statutes

currently limit a president

to a maximum of three four-

year terms, Infantino has al-

to stay until 2031, declaring in December that his first three years at the helm did not count as a full term. Infantino, who staunchly

defended Qatar's hosting of last year's World Cup as the Gulf state's treatment of migrant workers, women and the LGBTQ community came under the spotlight, has overseen the expansion of the men's and women's World Cup and huge increases in FIFA revenues. Norwegian Football Feder-

ation president Lise Klaveness had said she would not support Infantino and tabled a proposal to discuss at the congress "FIFA's responsibilities to remedy human rights abuses" in relation to the Qatar World Cup and future tournaments. However, Infantino's mainly

European-based opponents were not able to put forward

four teams. The upcomready prepared the ground the man who was once Michel Platini's number two ing women's World Cup in at UEFA. "There is a lot to Australia and New Zealand be looking forward to," Inlater this year will be the fantino said as he turned first to feature 32 teams, thoughts to the next four up from 24 teams at the last years and declared the 2026 edition in 2019. Infantino is World Cup, the first edition also planning to introduce a new, expanded Club World to be enlarged to 48 teams,

will be "the most inclusive World Cup ever". FIFA announced on Tuesday that the tournament in America 🕌 North will feature 104 matches, a huge increase from the 64 at the most recent World Cup, as it will start with

up to 2026, compared to \$7.5 billion in the last fouryear cycle ending in 2022. But he said that figure did not include revenues generated by the Club World Cup, suggesting the final amount of money generat-Cup to be played every

ed will be even greater. Those improved financial four years starting in 2025 and featurresults allow FIFA to keep ing 32 teams. "We on increasing the amount of money it provides in need more, not fewer, competisubsidies to federations, in turn helping ensure many tions worldwide," of them will continue to he told delegates back Infantino. In order to at the 73rd FIFA make football "truly glob-Congress. Infantino has also anal", as Infantino says, at a time when leading Europenounced projected an clubs are able to hoard talent and wealth, FIFA distributes money evenly. And so the likes of Trinidad and Tobago and Papua New Guinea receive the same

amount as Brazil, and each

has one vote at the con-

gress. As long as the FIFA

\$11 billion in the four years president keeps on his side the 35 Central American nations, including numerous Caribbean islands, or the 54 African federations, he need not worry about upsetting the powerful European nations. That is why failed plans for

a biennial World Cup, or

the decision to ban rain-

bow-themed "One Love"

armbands promoting LG-BTQ rights at the World Cup in Qatar, did not stop Infantino eyeing a new term. Yet the fractures in football show no sign of healing as long as Infantino's expansion plans continue.

For example the World Leagues Forum, bringing together 44 leagues worldwide, has complained that FIFA did not consult with them before announcing plans for the new Club World Cup, which will be shoehorned into an "already overloaded" calendar.

Willing to talk to anyone... From Page 01

PSL 8th Edition

Eliminator: 2 TBC vs TBC **FRIDAY 07:00 PM**

MARCH 17, 2023

Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

Mr Khan said his party

would not let the elections get delayed for more than 90 days, otherwise, the PTI will launch a movement as per the constitution in this regard. Talking about his potential arrest, Mr Khan said, "The police, Rangers have come again near my residence to arrest me. There is no doubt about it that after getting arrested, I will be subjected to torture." When asked about the presence of former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi, Mr Khan said, "Chaudhry ParvezEla-

Plea to suspend arrest...

hi has been tested positive

for coronavirus".

From Page 01 aspect of the law, hoping that the petitioners will enjoy reading the detailed verdict. Imran Khan's indictment in the reference, which was scheduled for February 28, was differed multiple times before, due to his continuous absence from the hearing. Later, the court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant

for the PTI chairman. The party approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday requesting it to suspend Khan's non-bailable arrest warrants in the Toshakhana case, but the high court directed the deposed prime minister's counsel to move the trial court as the order for his arrest was "in line

with the law". The additional district and sessions judge presided over today's hearing where Khan's counsel provided the court with two options - either suspend the issued warrants or issue bailable arrest warrants.

Info Minister castigates...

From Page 01 Aurangzeb Marriyum

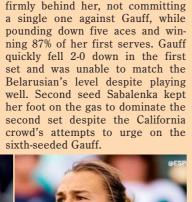
said that police deployed outside Zaman Park did not carry any weapons. On the contrary, she said so far 65 police personnel including DIG Operations Lahore have been injured as a result of PTI workers' attacks. She said that Imran's arrest warrants were issued by the court and unarmed police were present in Zaman Park to arrest Khan. She said that Imran Khan should act responsibly.

She said when the court summoned Imran Khan, he makes an excuse for security threats but at the same time, he was ready to hold political rallies which was a clear manifestation of his duplicity. "Imran Khan wants a civil war, chaos, and anarchy in Pakistan as he is inciting people to violence," Marriyum Aurangzeb maintained. The minister said Khan had no right to use his popularity to fuel civil war, violence and anarchy in the country. "When the police come to arrest Imran Khan, he makes women and children a shield to protect him", she said.

Indian Wells Aryna Sabalenka sets up semis against Sakkari

SPORTS DESK

INDIAN WELLS: : Aryna Sabalenka put on a serving masterclass to crush American Coco Gauff 6-4 6-0 on Wednesday and reach the semi-finals at Indian Wells, where she will face seventh seed Maria Sakkari. The Australian Open champion never faced a break point and used her hard and accurate serve to dispatch Gauff. Sabalenka appears to have put her





past struggles with double faults "I knew you guys wanted to send me home," a smiling Sabalenka told the crowd in an on-court interview. "Thank you everyone for coming and supporting us, mostly her, but us. The atmosphere was unbelievable. I don't want to leave. I want to stay here as long as I can." Later on Wednesday, Greek Sakkari fought back from a set down to beat 15th-seeded Czech Petra Kvitova 4-6 7-5 6-1. Kvitova got off to a flying start, breaking twice to take a 5-2 lead. Sakkari then won back-to-back games, but Kvitova managed to hold serve under pressure to take the first set.

The two-time Wimbledon champion broke in the first game of the second set, but a string of double faults let her opponent back into the match. Sakkari squared the set at 3-3 before once again taking advantage of Kvitova's shaky serve to force a decider. Sakkari, last year's runner-up, broke twice in the third set before serving out to win match in two hours and 15 minutes. "It is (one of the best comebacks in my career), not only because I was down a set and a break but because she made me play like an amateur in the first set," she said. "I tried to play as physically as possible, and all I can say is that I need a pedicure now, because my feet are bleeding so badly."

PCB reschedules final match due to rain forecast

Taking to Twitter, PCB management committee chairman Najam Sethi announced that PSL 8 final will now take place on Saturday (March 18)

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has rescheduled the final of Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 8 due to the rain forecast on Sunday (March 19). Taking to Twitter, PCB management committee chairman Najam Sethi announced that PSL 8 final will now take place on Saturday (March 18).

"PCB and Franchises are anxious that the final should not be disrupted. Therefore, we have decided to reschedule the PSL Final from 19 Mar '23 to Saturday, 18 Mar '23. Tickets already purchased for the Final will remain valid," he wrote.

In a statement released by PCB later on, Sethi reiterated that the decision was taken in the best interest of all stakeholders.

"As such, and on the basis of available information about bad weather forecast, it is a sensible and proactive approach that we use the off-day and play the final on Saturday, and utilise Sunday along with Monday as reserve days. This will give us two reserve days in case the match cannot be completed or played on Saturday instead of the traditional one day,

"We have spoken with the teams involved in the Playoffs, and they are not only aligned to our decision but have backed and supported our decision,

"There will be no inconvenience to the cricket fans as tickets purchased for Sunday's match will remain valid for Saturday's rescheduled final," he stated. Mohammad Rizwan-led Multan Sultans have qualified

for the final after they defeated Lahore Qalandars in Qualifier on Wednesday. Qalandars will now play either Peshawar Zalmi or Islamabad United in second Eliminator on March 17. The winner of that match will play against Multan on Saturday. - DNA

Nadal signs up to play in Monte Carlo Masters

LONDON: Rafa Nadal has signed up to compete at the Monte Carlo Masters next month, organisers of the claycourt tournament said, as the Spaniard prepares to return to the Tour after recovering from a hip flexor injury. The 22-times Grand Slam champion has not played since his Australian Open title defence ended in a second-round defeat by Mackenzie McDonald, during which he sustained his injury. Nadal withdrew from hardcourt events in Indian Wells and Miami this month but is set to return to the ATP Tour on his favourite surface having stepped up training in the last week. "Rafa was the first player to sign up," Monte Carlo tournament director David Massey said in a statement. "He wants to play in Monaco and is giving himself every chance to be able to participate in this tournament he loves so much, and which he has won 11 times in singles, including a record eight consecutive titles between 2005 and 2012." Nadal, 36, has previously used the April 9-16 Monte Carlo Masters as a key tournament to prepare for the French Open, which he has won 14 times. - Agencies

Medvedev 'feels sorry' for Ukrainian tour players

INDIAN WELLS: Russia's Daniil Medvedev says he "feels sorry" for Ukrainian players competing on tour amid the ongoing war. Ukraine's Lesia Tsurenko withdrew from her match against Aryna Sabalenka - who is from Belarus, a Russian ally - at Indian Wells earlier in the week.

Women's world number one Iga Swiatek has also called for more support for competitors from Ukraine, which was invaded by Russia in February 2022. "I'm for peace all over the world, I've always said the same," Medvedev said. Russian and Belarusian players have been allowed to compete on both men's and women's tours as individual athletes without national affiliation while the conflict continues.

"I definitely do feel sorry for all the Ukrainian players and what they go

through," world number six Medvedev said. "Of course we have a responsibility (to talk about the issue) and it depends how every person, individual, will do it." The 27-year-old reached the men's semi-finals in California on Wednesday night with his 18th consecutive tour win, beating Spain's Ale-

jandro Davidovich Fokina 6-3 7-5. But the 2021 US Open champion declined to comment at length on the specific issue between Tsurenko and Sabalenka, saying the subject was a matter for the players involved to speak about. Medvedev, who has won ATP titles in Rotterdam, Doha and Dubai in the past month, will face Frances Tiafoe in the semi-finals after the American beat British number one Cameron Norrie in straight sets. Sabalenka, who won her maiden

tralian Open, moved into the women's semi-finals with a dominant 6-4 6-0 victory over American Coco Gauff.

The world number two had received a bye in the previous round when scheduled opponent Tsurenko pulled out of their match. The Ukrainian said she had suffered a panic attack after a chat with Women's Tennis Association (WTA) chief executive Steve Simon about tennis's response to Russia's invasion. The WTA had issued a formal warning to Russia's Anastasia Potapova, 21, for wearing a Spartak Moscow football shirt before her match against Jessica Pegula earlier in the week. Three-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek, who could face Sabalenka in the final at Indian Wells, supports Tsurenko's decision. - Agencies

Osimhen fires 'dreaming' Napoli into last eight

DNA

NAPLES: Victor Osimhen says Napoli are dreaming of Champions League glory after his brace shot the Serie A leaders to a 3-0 win over Eintracht Frankfurt and into the quarter-finals for the first time in their history on Wednesday. Nigeria striker Osimhen struck either side of half-time to ensure no slip-ups in Naples and help his team secure a straightforward, and deserved, 5-0 aggregate win.

Piotr Zielinski added Napoli's third from the penalty spot on a perfect night for southern Italy's biggest club, who Osimhen believes can go all the way. "It's amazing to make history with this win," said Osimhen to Amazon Prime. "We will keep on dreaming, we have the squad to do so (win the Champions League). I think we are on the right path. We have a great coach. We will see what the future holds for us, I think we have a good chance."

Luciano Spalletti's side are close to securing their first Serie A title in over three decades and an already remarkable season got even better with a place in Friday's draw for the last eight of Europe's top club competition. They have been powered to an almost certain domestic triumph and a deep run in Europe by the red-hot Osimhen, who

for possibly the continent's most exciting team. However Spalletti was less bullish about Napoli's chances than Osimhen, replying with a curt "no" when asked if he was flattered by Pep Guardiola saying his side were the best in Europe.

"It's a game that people play to put pressure on other teams, it's a game that everyone knows by now," said an irritated Spalletti. Eintracht were without suspended France forward Randal Kolo Muani following his sending off in the first leg and the Bundesliga outfit did very little to trouble Napoli.

petition on a night in which their fans were involved in serious disorder after travelling to Naples despite no tickets for away fans being put on sale.

Eintracht had decided to not take up their ticket allocation for the match after Italian authorities produced two separate bans in a matter of days, fearing a repeat of the trouble in Frankfurt before the first leg. That didn't stop the German club's hardcore fans however, who clashed with local police on a tense evening in Naples. Footage in Italian media from Tuesday also



carrying Eintracht fans. Around the stadium the atmosphere was less fraught as Napoli got through without any trouble. Khvicha Kvaratskhelia almost scored his second wonder goal in less than a week in the 19th minute after a brilliant tackle from Zielinski sent him charging towards goal. But he was forced wide just as he looked for a shooting chance and ended up being denied smartly by Kevin Trapp, who did well again two minutes before the break to denied the Georgian.

However Trapp could do nothing to stop Osimhen putting Napoli ahead moments later, the Nigeria international showing why he is one of the most highly-rated strikers in the world with a perfectly timed leap and header from Matteo Politano's hanging cross. And Osimhen struck again seven minutes after the break with a simpler finish, this time tapping in Giovanni Di Lorenzo's low cross after more good play from Politano and Kvaratskhelia. Napoli were cruising and, after two half-chances for Eintracht's Daichi Kamada and Rafael Borre and another good save from Trapp on Kvaratskhelia, they were three ahead on the night. The excellent Zielinski was brought down by Djibril Sow, allowing the Poland midfielder to dust himself down and calmly slot home a spot-kick in the 64th minute.

PTI workers were well...

From Page 01 the IGP stated, adding the PTI workers damaged public property in the riots. The IGP said police were attacked with petrol bombs, while PTI workers had assaulted the police and Rangers vehicles. He said police were barred from carrying weapons to avoid casualties, and highlighted that the force carried weapons in all pre-

'Police personnel were injured in stone pelting by PTI workers," he remarked, adding the Islamabad DIG was injured from stone pelting.

vious operations.

Dr Anwar said there was no objective behind conducting the operation in Zaman Park. The only purpose of PTI workers was to turn Zaman Park into a no-go area, so police could not get there, he added.



US and Russia

resume contact after

drone incident

WASHINGTON: US and Russian officials have resumed contact, following

the downing of a US drone

over the Black Sea after

an encounter with Russian

Defense Secretary Lloyd

Austin spoke to his Russian

counterpart on Wednesday,

after the incident which

brought the two countries

the closest to conflict

since Moscow's invasion of

"We take any potential for

said Austin at a Pentagon

press briefing. "That's why

I believe it's important to

keep the lines of communi-

"I think it's really key that

we're able to pick up the

phone and engage each

other. And I think that that

will help to prevent miscal-

culation going forward," he

The call between Austin

and Russian Defence Min-

ister Sergei Shoigu was the

The US Air Force MQ-9

Reaper was ditched into the

waters south of Ukraine,

after a Russian fighter jet

sprayed it with fuel and

first since October.

escalation very seriously,

Ukraine last year.

cation open."

added.

fighter jets.

Briefs

New wave of rail strikes begins in UK

LONDON: Railway workers on Thursday began a 24hour strike action, the first of four planned walkouts which is expected to cause massive delays and disrupt transportation once again across the country.

People across Britain has once again hit by a wide range of railway strike as tens of thousands of the Maritime and Transport Union (RMT) members have started a series of walkout.

Last month, the union members rejected the pay offer from train operators and decided to take a fourday strike action on March 16, 18, 30 and April 1.

Following the walkout decision, the union said they are seeking "an unconditional offer" from 14 rail operators and Network Rail. which runs the rail network. Early Thursday, the RMT criticized the rail operator bosses for "awarding themselves" while "lecturing" rail workers for pay restraint. "... Bosses at seven rail companies have awarded themselves annual pay rises of between 15- 275% whilst most rail workers have been subject to a pay freeze," it said in the statement. The train companies where staff are striking are Avanti West Coast, C2C, Chiltern, CrossCountry, Midlands Railway, East GTR (Thameslink, Great Northern and Southern) Great Western Railway, Greater Anglia, West Midlands, (including London Northwestern Railway), Northern, South Western Railway, Southeastern, and TransPennine Express.-APP

UK latest country to ban TikTok

LONDON: Chinese-owned social media app TikTok has been banned from government devices in the United Kingdom, it was announced on Thursday. The ban is effective immediately and includes phones used by government ministers and civil servants, according to a statement given to the UK's House of Commons by Oliver Dowden, the Secretary of State in the Cabinet Office. "This is a precautionary move. We know that there is already limited use of TikTok across government, but it is also good cyber hygiene, the minister said in his address to MPs. ByteDance, the company which owns TikTok, has been accused of handing users' data to the Chinese government. The company has strongly denied this. According to the UK's National Cyber Security Centre review, "there could be a risk around how sensitive government data is accessed and used by certain platforms". Beyond the TikTok ban, devices across the government will now only be able to access third-party apps that are on a pre-approved list, accord-

Clashes in Greece as thousands protest train tragedy

ing to Dowden.-APP

ATHENS: Greek police fired tear gas and protesters hurled firebombs on Thursday as more than 40,000 people took to the streets to slam the government and voice outrage at last month's train disaster that killed 57 people.

Television footage showed clashes breaking out at Syntagma Square near parliament in central Athens.

Police fired tear gas and stun grenades as demonstrators tried to surround them, hurling firebombs and rocks. As protesters retreated, they smashed traffic lights and shop windows and set rubbish bins on fire, AFP reporters said. The February 28 tragedy exposed decades of safety failings in Greek railways and has put major pressure on the conservative government ahead of national elections. Police said 25,000 people protested in Athens on Thursday, as well as around 8,500 in each of the country's next largest cities. Thessaloniki and Patras. Brief clashes also broke out in Patras, police said.-APP

Türkiye hails solidarity of Turkic world after disaster

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Hungary helped Türkiye right after the earthquakes, stressing the historic ties between the countries. "We are proud to support you (Türkiye) in the rebuilding process in the upcoming period," Orban added

News Desk

ANKARA: Türkiye will

never forget the solidarity

shown by the Turkic world after the Feb. 6 earthquakes that ravaged the southeast provinces; President Recep Tayyip Erdo an said Thursday as he addressed the opening of the extraordinary summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) in the capital Ankara. "We called for international help, and OTS members were among the first to respond. You did not leave us alone in our most difficult moment. Our beloved nation will never forget your support," Erdo an told the heads of the member states."We will once again show at the highest level that the Turkic world is of one heart and band together," he noted.

Erdo an once again ex-Türkiye's compressed mitment to rebuilding the devastated region, assuring that authorities were working to remove the rubble, move the displaced into



ing permanent residences. "We plan to deliver to the right owners a total of 650,000 residences, 319,000 of which to be completed within the year," he said, adding, "With the support of our friendly and brotherly nations, we will revive our disaster zone as soon as possible."

Referring to the United Nations pledge for \$1 billion (TL 19 billion) for Türkiye and the international donors conference the European Union's term president Sweden will be hosting on March 20, Erdo an notcooperation in the fight against natural disasters and their effects.

He also opined that once

the OTS establishes a civil protection mechanism, it would have the capability to "more effectively manage and execute natural disaster responses. "The Organization of Turkic

States was a dream for us all, and it became real," he said. Erdo an, too praised the admission of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) into the organization, saying, "Our family council has grown stronger.' Pointing out the significance of sustainable energy supplication and keeping energy prices at reasonable levels for the welfare of the region's economies, Erdo an listed the largescale projects implemented by Turkic states so far in the Caspian basin, namely the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP). The Turkic states on Thursday voiced the need to develop a response mechanism against natural disasters. During

his opening remarks, Uz-

zivoyev said that many people were affected and killed by the earthquakes that jolted southeastern Türkiye last month. "Our fraternal peoples have come together through various calamities over the millennia," Mirziyoyev said. He also proposed, at the initiative of the OTS, to mark Feb. 6 as a day of "remembrance and unity" for those who died due to the Kahramanmaraş-centered quakes.

The People's Council of Turkmenistan Chairperson Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov noted that he hoped the OTS would accept Turkmenistan as a member state. "We need

to support each other as friends and brothers. ... We all need to be one," Berdimuhamedov said. Meanwhile, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said a total of 940 search, rescue and medical personnel went to Türkiye to assist in operations in the quake-hit regions of the country, resulting in the recovery of 53 people. In addition, Aliyev said medical support was provided to 300 people, and 520 tons of humanitarian aid was delivered. He also noted that Azerbaijan and Türkiye have always stood by each other in good and bad times, emphasizing that this will continue to be the case. During his remarks, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said, "thousands of our brothers" lost their lives during the quakes in Türkiye. However, the Kazakh people did not remain indifferent to these sufferings through the aid they provided. Tokayev also underlined the need to mobilize the efforts of the OTS against natural disasters, proposing to create an

emergency management group under the organiza-

struck its propeller. Russia has denied that it downed the surveillance drone, which was flying into international air space. Washington says it is work-

ing to declassify surveillance footage from the drone showing Tuesday's crash. Austin, who stood with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley at the briefing, said the incident would not stop the US from flying wherever international law allows. -DNA

Top UAE, Iran security officials meet

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates' national security adviser held talks Thursday in Abu Dhabi with his Iranian counterpart, whose visit to the UAE comes days after a surprise rapprochement between Tehran and Riyadh. Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a brother of the UAE's president, received Ali Shamkhani, the National Security Council, the official WAM news agency said. The two officials discussed "bilateral relations and opportunities to advance them in a way that serves the mutual interests of the two countries," WAM said, without elaborating. Sheikh Tahnoun previously met Shamkhani on a visit to Iran in 2021, the first trip of its kind since relations between the two countries were downgraded in 2016. Shamkhani called his UAE visit "a meaningful beginning for the two countries to enter a new stage of political, economic and security relations," Iran's state news agency IRNA said. -APP

'Tonnes of uranium missing from Libyan site'

NEW YORK: The United

Nations's

International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has said approximately 2.3 tonnes of natural uranium had gone missing from a site in Libya not under government control, news agencies have reported. IAEA chief Rafael Grossi told the organisation's member states this week that inspectors reported that 10 drums containing uranium ore concentrate had gone missing and "were not present as previously declared" at the location in Libya. The IAEA will conduct further activities "to clarify the circumstances of the removal of the nuclear material and its current location", the organisation said in a statement on Wednesday without providing further details on the site, according to news agencies Reuters and Agence France-Presse. "The loss of knowledge about the present location of nuclear material may present a radiological risk as well as nuclear security concerns," the IAEA said, adding that reaching the site required "complex logistics". Libya in 2003, under leader Muammar Gaddafi, renounced its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programme after secret discussions with the United States and United Kingdom. Gaddafi's regime had obtained centrifuges that could enrich uranium.-APP

China-Pak joint exhibition kicks off in Beijing

Its location makes it a veritable gateway between East and West and enhances its geopolitical pre-eminence

DNA

BEIJING: A China-Pakistan joint exhibition on Gandhara culture & art kicked off here at the Palace Museum, which will showcase the cultural heritage of Gandhara, an ancient region. Hu Heping, Minister of China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT), inaugurated the exhibition titled "Gandhara Heritage along the The exhi-Silk Road". bition will remain open up to June 15, according to China Economic Net (CEN). At the occasion, Fareena Mazhar, Federal

Secretary, Ministry of National Heritage & Culture Division, Pakistan, said that Pakistan is a unique country whose strategic location has given it importance not only in the past, but also in the present era, and it will continue to enjoy the same status for all the time to

veritable gateway between the East and the lations and joint endeav-West and enhances its geopolitical pre-eminence. "Over 170 masterpieces were brought from seven museums of Pakistan," she told China Economic and establish contacts at

of the Palace Museum a very fruitful event and it will be beneficial not only to the general visitors but also to Chinese scholars and professionals to understand the cultural heritage of Pakistan. The exhibition will be a landmark in cooperation between China and Pakistan and will open new Its location makes it a vistas of cooperation for further cementing our reors," she added.

She further said that the exhibition will help promote the shared heritage at the international level Net."I wish this endeavor the grassroots level, adding that cultural relations between Pakistan and China are the need of the hour to broaden the basis of the two countries' friendship and enhance the people-to-people relationship. Pakistani Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque said that this exhibition will provide a unique opportunity for the people of China to understand and admire Gandhara heritage. He further said that both countries with very rich traditions in cultural heritage and history have vast potential to widen the foundations of their

successfully train 10,000 youth ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecommunications provider, is proud to announce that it has successfully reached anothermajor milestone in its longterm partnership withPunjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF). This partnership has enabled Zong 4G to provide e-learning opportunities to 10,000 students through

PSDF & Zong 4G

a customised course called "How to e-lance." 10,000 promising and underprivileged students in Pakistan have been given access to e-education opportunities thanks to this game-changing collaboration between Zong 4G and PSDF. PSDF is a non-profit organisation that helps people and organisations improve their employability by offering skills training and support. The "How to e-lance" course gave students and recent graduates the tools they needed to launch successful freelance careerson reputable websites like Fiverr and Upwork. The official spokesperson of Zong 4G said, "We are proud to have achieved this milestone with our partnerPSDF. Digital learning is a vital part of our mission to use technology to empower people and communities. 10,000 deserving students in Pakistan now have access to critical knowledge that can support them in launching their freelance careers. This, in our opinion, will contribute to the development of a

Australian PM defends nuclear submarine deal

CANBERRA: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Thursday rejected criticism of the AUKUS deal with the US and UK made by his country's former Premier Paul Keating, saying the world has changed since the 1990s. Albanese said in an interview with a local Radio 3AW Melbourne that he does not want to get into an argument with Paul Keating.

"I fundamentally disagree with his view. And I disagree with his attitude towards the state of the world in 2023," he said, according to a transcript posted on his official website. Keating, who was prime minister from 1991 to 1996, slammed Albanese's government on Wednesday for a tripartite deal with the US and UK to build a nuclear submarine, calling it the Labor party's worst international decision. -Agencies

more sustainable and inclusive digital economy."-DNA lasting friendship. Amb. Sajjad Haider visits Minsk State Linguistic University

MINSK: Ambassador of Pakistan to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan visited the Minsk State Linguistic University and had a fruitful discussion with the Rector, Mrs. Natalya Lapteva and Vice Rector on Educational Affairs Mrs. Betenia Elena. The two sides discussed the collaboration between the University of Modern Languages Islamabad and the Minsk State Linguistic University (MSLU). They discussed possibilities of establishment of Pakistan culture center in MSLU, commencement of an Urdu language courses and holding Pakistani culture days at the university. The two sides also exchanged views on exchange of visits by the two Rectors of the universities. The Ambassador also offered to host two to three interns from the university for a period of three



Japan, South Korea move past differences

TOKYO: In an apparent warming up of bilateral ties, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Thursday flew to Japan for a two-day official trip, the first by the country's head of state since 2011. Yoon met with Fumio Kishida, the prime minister of Japan, in Tokyo, and the two will hold their first bilateral summit in four years. The top-level exchange between the two Asian nations comes after years of bilateral conflicts rooted in wartime disputes that have impacted diplomatic, trade, and people-to-people ties. The two leaders are expected to discuss North Korea, China, and supply chains, besides bilateral issues. As Tokyo and Seoul appear to move past their differences, Pyongyang Thursday launched intercontinental ballistic

missile eastward, triggering

condemnation from Seoul, Tokyo, and the US. Ahead of his trip to Tokyo, Seoul decided to drop its demand for settlement with Japanese firms to solve the decades-long issue of war-time forced labor and sexual exploitation. Instead, a public foundation in Seoul will pay compensation to the victims. Yoon has pledged to "faithfully implement the solution," according to Tokyo-based Kyodo News. As the two Asian nations move to mend ties, businesses from the two nations announced Thursday that they will "establish a foundation to promote exchanges between the youth of their respective countries." Tokyo has also agreed to end export controls on trade items with Seoul as South Korea will withdraw its complaint against Japan at World Trade Organization. Tokyo and Seoul are also expected to resume a bilateral security dialogue, halted for the past five years. "It is aimed at boosting cooperation at a time of repeated ballistic missile launches by North Korea," Japanese public broadcaster NHK reported.

It was in 2019 that then-South Korean President Moon Jae-in visited Japan to attend a G-20 summit in Osaka. However, no bilateral meeting was held by the two sides. Meanwhile, as the US ramps up its efforts to widen its alliance at the military and trade levels against China's expanding influence in the wider Asia-Pacific, Tokyo, Seoul and Washington have reportedly held over 40 trilateral meetings at different levels over the past

History issues have long "haunted South Korea-Japan relations

and from the US perspective, undermined the trilateral alliance against the region's challenges facing them all," Jingdong Yuan, an international affairs scholar at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), told Anadolu via email. On an optimistic note, Yuan, however, said Yoon's trip is a signal that the two countries are "willing to move forward and not allow the history to derail their cooperation in responding to more imminent threats to their security." "It is made possible, obviously by President Yoon's decision to move beyond the past, with his March 1 speech clearly setting out South Korea's approach to managing its relationship with Japan, characterizing the latter as a country no longer a colonizer but one sharing many democratic values

with South Korea and one upholding the rules-based order in the region," he explained. He said the South Korean court's decision on "how the forced labor should be compensated also

helps to disentangle this specific issue from the overall bilateral relationship." In response to a question about the potential focus of the bilateral summit, Yuan said the South Korean president "will place more emphasis on how Seoul and Tokyo can cooperate in responding to the many challenges but will refrain from singling out China as the reason why the two countries are coming together." "They will be more explicit on the North Korea threats to their and the region's security even though Seoul will not rule out completely approaches to diplomatic management of—and possible solutions to

the nuclear issue."-Agencies



Briefs

Peshawar Zalmi defeats Islamabad United



LAHORE: Peshawar Zalmi defeated Islamabad United by 12 runs at the Gadd afi Stadium in Lahore or Thursday during the Eliminator of ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight. Chasing a target of 184 runs, Islamabad were restricted to 171-6 in 20 overs. Peshawar Zalmi had set Islamabad United a target of 184 runs after being asked to bat first at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Thursday during the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight Eliminator. During the runchase, Azmatullah Omarzai provided an early wicket to Peshawar as Rahmanullah Gurbaz was sent back to the hut after scoring 10 runs. However, Alex Hales and Sohaib Magsood took the attack to the opposition with some clean hitting. The duo added 115 runs for the second wicket partnership and put their team in the driving seat. The century stand was finally broken by Aamer Jamal, who clean bowled Sohaib Maqsood but not before the right-hander had scored 60 runs in 48 balls. –DND

UAE President orders \$3m to rebuild West Bank village

DNA

DUBAI: United Arab Emirates President Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan ordered provision of \$3 million to support rebuilding efforts in the West Bank village of Huwara after the recent events, WAM reported on Thursday A meeting was held in the Department of Municipalities and Transport in Abu Dhabi to discuss the mechanism for implementing the initiative and providing support to the Palestinian delegation, which was headed by Mayor of Hawara.

Huwara is a Palestinian town located in the Nablus Governorate of West Bank, was set ablaze by radical Jewish settlers this month, after two settlers were shot dead by a Palestinian gunman. Dozens of cars and homes were on fire and one Palestinian was killed by Israeli fire during the incident.

India okays purchase of military equipment worth \$8.5bn

NEW DELHI: India on Thursday approved purchases of missiles, helicopters, artillery guns and electronic warfare systems worth \$8.5 billion as it sought to add more teeth to its military. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the top government body for capital acquisition approvals for the Indian military, approved the orders worth 705 billion rupees (\$8.52bn) for all its services, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

All orders would be placed with Indian companies, it said, keeping with a push by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to boost domestic defence manufacturing. Flanked by fellow nuclear-armed powers China and Pakistan and running tensions with Chinese troops along its disputed Himalayan frontier. Agencies

Blinken on rare Niger trip

NIAMEY: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Niger on Thursday for a rare visit to a country seen as a bastion of support for Western military operations in a region where Russia is making inroads. Blinken is the first US official at this level to visit the former French colony, where both France and the United States maintain forces to battle insurgencies in the troubled Sahel region. -APP

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ISLAMABAD: Group photo of the Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani along with members of the Senate and diplomats on the eve of Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Senate of Pakistan. - DNA

International Day of Women

'Ambassador for a Day' initiative by Canadian envoy



DNA

ISLAMABAD: To celebrate International Women's Day 2023 the High Commission of Canada in Pakistan hosted its first ever Ambassador for the Day on March 15th. This initiative aimed to provide the opportunity for a voung Pakistani woman to step into the shoes of a Canadian diplomat and experience the day-to-day responsibilities of this important role.

The Ambassador for the Day had the chance to meet with Canadian diplomats, engage with international donor agencies, foreign and Pakistani officials and participate in a range of activities that gave her unique insights into the workings of a diplomatic mission. She also joined in various meetings with the High Comissioner where she had the opportunity to ask in-depth questions and meet the changemakers who are working to create positive change in Pakistan.

"We are thrilled to launch the Ambassador for a Day event and to provide a unique opportunity for a young woman to experience the world of diplomacy first-hand," said the High Commissioner of Canada to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Her Excellency Leslie Scanlon. "Canada has a long and proud tradition of supporting gender equality and women's empowerment. Guided by Canada's feminist foreign policy, we are advancing and investing in a suite of feminist policies, programs and initiatives that promote women's socio-economic empowerment, encourage gender equity in climate change mitigation, and empower communities to address gender

norms. Through this initiative, we hope to encourage and inspire young girls and women in Pakistan to pursue their dreams and show them that they can make a difference."

"This year's Ambassador for a Day is Nida Khan, a young and ambitious student from Chitral, who will be joining us at the High Commission. Nida aspires to become a diplomat one day, and represent Pakistan. As a passionate advocate for women's rights and inclusion, especially in sports, Nida hopes to learn more about the role of diplomacy in addressing these crucial issues. We are confident that Nida will bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the table and we look forward to a fruitful and engaging day with her,' noted Her Excellency, Leslie Scanlon. Nida was also given the opportunity to manage Canadian High Commissioner's' Twitter account for the day, sharing her unique experiences with the public, in line with the Government of Canada's theme for this year's International Women's Day "Every Woman Counts". The theme is a reminder that all women, from all ages and walks of life have a place in every aspect of a society, including the economic, social and democratic spheres. Gender equality, inclusion, and the promotion and protection of human rights are key Canadian values, which the Government of Canada is committed to promoting through its bilateral international development initiatives. The Ambassador for a Day event is a part of the High Commission's ongoing efforts to engage with local partners and communities to achieve the overarching goal of nurturing inclusion, equitable access, and equal opportunity.

'Iran agrees to stop arming Houthis as part of Saudi deal' on Saudi Arabia, the WSJ report noted.

News Desk

DUBAI: Iran has agreed to stop sending from reaching the Houthis, the report quotweapons to its Houthi allies in Yemen as part of a deal to re-establish diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia that was brokered by China, the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) has reported, quoting US and Saudi officials. Tehran's move would hasten new efforts to achieve peace in Yemen, as it could put pressure on the militant group to reach a deal to end the conflict. A UN-sponsored truce in the country last year lasted only six months after the Houthis rejected calls for de-escalation and an extension to the ceasefire. Tehran publicly denies that it supplies the Houthis with weapons, but UN inspectors have repeatedly traced seized weapons shipments back to Iran. After last week's rapprochement gestures by Saudi Arabia and Iran, officials from both countries said Iran would press the Houthis to end attacks

Saudi Arabia expects Iran to respect a UN arms embargo meant to prevent weapons ed a Saudi official as saying, and diminish the group's ability to launch against the Kingdom and gain more ground in Yemen. The agreement to resume Saudi-Iran relations "gives a boost to the prospect of a [Yemen] deal in the near future," while Iran's approach to the conflict will be "kind of a litmus test" for the success of last week's diplomatic deal, according to a US official quoted by WSJ. Hans Grundberg, the special UN envoy for Yemen, flew to Tehran this week to discuss with officials on how end the Yemen war and then on to Riyadh. Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian assured the UN diplomat that Tehran was ready to do more to help end the conflict in Yemen. Tim Lenderking, US special envoy to Yemen, also met with Saudi officials in an attempt to jumpstart peace talks.

FM for OIC body to ensure finance & trade equality



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Thursday proposed to establish a special task force of experts at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) forum to develop a strategy to secure equal treatment in the rules and structure of international finance, trade and taxation. "We must also demand a speedy debt restructuring for 60 financially vulnerable countries, the redistribution of unutilized SDRs (Special Drawing Rights) to developing countries, large lending by multilateral development banks, massive public-private partnership investments, sustainable infrastructure and the mobilization of promised climate financing of US\$100 billion," he said while delivering his opening statement as Chairman of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) at the two-day 49th Session of the CFM in Nouakchott, Mauritania.

He said Pakistan had been hit hard by the devastating floods last summer after facing the negative impacts of COVID, inflation, economic collapse in Afghanistan, and consequences of the Ukraine war. He thanked the brotherly Islamic countries for their generous support for Pakistan in the hour of need. As regards the Palestine issue, the foreign minister said the OIC member states must continue to condemn Israel's repeated aggression against the Al Aqsa Mosque and in the occupied Palestinian territory. The people of Palestine must have their own state within the 1967 borders with Al Quds Alsharif as its capital. "This may seem a daunting task today, yet I am convinced that the arc of history in the hand of Almighty tends towards justice." Regarding the Kashmir issue, FM Bilawal said the United Nations Security Council had adopted a resolution that the people of Jammu and Kashmir must be able to exercise the right of self-determination through a UN-sponsored plebiscite. However, India moved away from its commitment to implement the decision, and resorted to fraud and force. - APP

