



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, March 30, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

**Pak origin Humza Yousaf sworn in as Scotland's leader**

Detailed News On Page-08

**British King Charles begins Germany visit**

Detailed News On Page-07


**AI training a threat to humanity**

Detailed News On Page-08



## Briefs

**PM vows to curb gas load-shedding**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has assured to address the complaint of gas load-shedding during Sehara and Iftar time. Responding to the point of Agha Rafiullah in the National Assembly today, the Prime Minister said he has already taken notice of this complaint and a meeting to address the issues will be held today. Meanwhile, the National Assembly was informed on Wednesday that agreements are being signed with different countries including those in Europe for the export of Pakistani manpower. Parliamentary Secretary for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Agha Rafiullah told the house during question hour that an MoU in this regard had been signed with Germany.

**ECP can postpone elections**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has said the general elections in the country must be held simultaneously. Speaking to media here on Wednesday, he expressed apprehension if elections were held in phases, no one would accept results. Referring to the PTI plea in the Supreme Court on postponement of elections by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Mr. Sanaullah said "according to our understanding, the ECP has the authority to do so." In a possible reference to the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023, tabled in the National Assembly on Tuesday night, the minister said parliament had done its duty at the right time.

**Sehra, Iftar Timing**

**Ramazan 08, 1444**

Sehra: 04:33 am

Iftar: 06:31 pm

Fique-e-Jafria

Sehra: 04:23 am

Iftar: 06:41 pm

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**Nawaz Sharif to get benefit**

## NA passes bill to curtail CJP's powers

NA Standing Committee also adopts the bill; Law Minister says the bill aims to have transparent proceedings

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Wednesday passed Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023 with amendments as reported by the Standing Committee and proposed by an independent lawmaker which aims at giving the power of taking suo motu notice to a three-member committee comprising senior judges including Chief Justice. Chairman Standing Committee on Law and Justice Ch. Mahmood Bashir Virk presented a report on the bill which was referred to it in the last sitting of the National Assembly a day earlier. The Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar moved the bill which was unanimously passed with amendments. After the presentation of the report, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar said that this bill is people-friendly and thanked the members of the National Standing Committee on Law and Justice for giving their input on the bill after a detailed discussion in the committee. The minister said it was the demand of the bar associations and councils to introduce the bill and they have supported the bill. "This bill is an old demand of the Bar Council which said that indiscriminate use of 184(3) should be stopped," he added. He said the bill aims to have transparent proceedings in the apex court and it also includes the right to appeal.

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## Maryam warns CJP dont 'follow' Imran

Alleges that Imran being "facilitated" by a few judges

STAFF REPORT

KASUR: PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday advised Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial to not "follow" PTI Chairman Imran Khan, claiming that the latter had later turned his back on those "facilitating" him. Addressing a party rally in Kasur, she said: "The courts are taking suo motu notice today on the words of this madman (Imran). So I want to tell you, with great respect, Umar Ata Bandial sahab do not follow after this man. He has used every facilitator of his and later turned on them." Maryam said the country's situation would not have deteriorated to this extent if the CJP had "punished" Imran for violating the Constitution at the time of the no-confidence vote. "The nation is asking why someone who committed such a serious crime was let go scot free," she said. Maryam also questioned why the CJP only took notice of matters concerning the Constitution when Imran talked about them.

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## Imran Khan responsible for crises: Bilawal

ALI FURQAN

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday slammed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan for his policies and said he was responsible for current economic crises and wave of terrorism in the country. Speaking in the National Assembly he said, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan and his team were responsible for the prevailing economic crisis. He said it was unfortunate that the terrorism eliminated due to sacrifices of the Pakistan army, police and common masses had been revived by Imran Khan. He said Imran Khan had brought back thousands of terrorists and extremists

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Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in a meeting with Ambassador of UAE Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi. — DNA

## UAE Envoy to Pakistan calls on Dar

Pakistan expecting Saudi, UAE support this week

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salim Al-Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates called on the Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday. Finance Minister Mr. Ishaq Dar and H.E. Mr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salim Al-Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates shared the deep rooted brotherly relations between the two countries and discussed avenues of furthering and strengthening economic and financial ties between the UAE and Pakistan. Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar stated that Pakistan and the UAE are engaged in various areas including energy, refinery, petroleum and trade, however, still a lot of potential is unexplored. In this regard, the Finance Minister highlighted various avenues in which both countries can enhance their existing trade and investment relations.

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**PTI Chairman says**

## People to resist attack on SC

Claims 'Unknowns' breaking into PTI workers, SM teams homes

KHAYAM ABBASI

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan lashed out at the cabal of crooks, who, he said, were attempting to attack the Supreme Court (SC) by undermining its powers and taking the country towards a state of fascism by breaking into the houses of the PTI workers and Social Media teams. PTI Chairman, in a statement on Wednesday, said that the cabal of crooks attempted to attack the Supreme Court of Pakistan as well as undermined its powers. However, Imran Khan vowed that people of Pakistan would continue to resist the move. About the rising fascism, PTI Chairman stated: "We seem to be heading towards similar state of fascism the way things are happening in Pakistan since last 10 months. He said: "Abductions, custodial torture, multiple fake cases and total clampdown on media plus harassment of journalists - this is the State of Pakistan today with no Rule of Law and complete

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## Khan's non-bailable arrest warrant issued

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Judicial Magistrate Malik Aman on Wednesday issued non-bailable arrest warrant for Imran Khan for threatening female judge Zeba Chaudhry. The judge announced his decision after a short break during proceedings. The judge dismissed Imran's plea for exemption from personal appearance and ordered him to appear before the court on April 18. When proceedings resumed after a break, Prosecutor Raja Rizwan Abbasi opposed Imran's plea and pleaded with the court to change bailable warrant to non-bailable. Abbasi said Imran had

**Punjab, KP elections**

## Polls held even during peak of terrorism: CJP

Urges judges to keep internal matters to their chambers

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday resumed hearing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) petition against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) delaying polls for the Punjab Assembly as the government moved to reduce the powers of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP). A five-member larger bench, headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan,

Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail is seized with the matter. However, the proceedings witnessed ambiguity regarding the earlier apex court judgement of March 1 as one of the judges on the five-member bench, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, made it clear that the case was dismissed by a majority 4-3 as the chief justice did not issue an "order of the court". Earlier, Chief Justice Bandial overruled the objection raised by Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Usman Awan about the bench hearing the PTI's petition as a "technical point" to be raised in a separate application.

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## EU removes Pakistan from High-Risk countries

The exports from Pakistan will not be any more liable to additional conditions set by legal and economic operators

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: After exiting the grey list of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Pakistan has achieved another major milestone under Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's leadership as European Union (EU) has removed Pakistan from the list of High Risk Third Countries. The European Commission has removed Pakistan from the List of High Risk Third Countries, which have strategic deficiencies in their Anti Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/ CFT) regime. The exports from Pakistan will not be any more liable to additional conditions set by legal and economic operators. Federal Minister for Trade Syed Naveed Qamar said that the exemption is a breeze of ease for Pakistani exporters. The minister confirmed that EU has exempted Pakistan from high-risk third countries list. Pakistan was included in this list back in 2018, the restriction has been wreaking havoc on our industry, the minister added. Naveed Qamar said that all credit goes to Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for his tireless efforts to

ISLAMABAD: European Union has removed Pakistan from the List of High Risk Third Countries which have strategic deficiencies in their Anti Money Laundering and Counter Finance Terrorism regime. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif says de-listing of Pakistan from EU's updated list of high-risk third-countries is a major development which will facilitate our businesses, individuals and entities. In a tweet today, he said it is a reflection of our unwavering resolve to further strengthen anti-money laundering and anti-terror financing regime.

get Pakistan off this list. Naveed Qamar also confirmed the development on Wednesday stating "Pakistani businesses and individuals would no longer be subjected to 'Enhanced Customer Due Diligence' by European legal and economic operators." It is worth mentioning here that UK removed Pakistan from the list of High Risk Third Countries back in November 2022. Foreign

"De-listing of Pakistan from EU's updated list of high-risk third-countries is a major development which would facilitate our businesses, individuals and entities," he said in a tweet. The prime minister said it was a reflection of the government's unwavering resolve to further strengthen anti-money laundering and anti-terror financing regime. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, in a tweet today, said Pakistani businessmen and individuals would no longer be subjected to Enhanced Customer Due Diligence by European legal and economic operators. — DNA

Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had announced the development on Twitter. The United Kingdom (UK) had already officially removed Pakistan from its list of "High-Risk Third Countries" in recognition of the effective measures taken by the country against money laundering and terror financing. "Some good news. The United Kingdom has official-

ly removed Pakistan from its list of 'High-Risk Third Countries' following our early completion of FATF action plans," Bilawal wrote, sharing a letter from the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office. "His Majesty's Treasury issued an amendment to the UK's High-Risk Third Countries' list ON November 14, 2022, through a Statutory Instrument. The amendment removes Pakistan from the list in accordance with the decision taken by the FATF on October 21, 2022," the official document read. "The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office recognizes the progress Pakistan has made to improve money laundering and terrorist financing controls," it further added. Pakistan was added to the list of undesirable 21 high-risk countries with unsatisfactory money laundering and terrorist financing controls in April last year. This list of 21 countries — released by the UK Government — included countries named by the FATF as high-risk or under increased monitoring. Pakistan shared the list at number 15 with conflict-ridden countries such as Syria, Uganda, Yemen, and Zimbabwe. However, last month (October) the FATF, a global money-laundering and terrorism-financing watchdog, finally removed Pakistan from its grey list after four years.



## NA body takes notice of illegal housing societies

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change on Wednesday took serious notice and expressed its concerns over illegal housing societies causing serious damage to the environment of the federal capital. The 33rd meeting of the Standing Committee on Climate Change was chaired by MNA Nuzhat Pathan. The Committee directed that in order to protect the environment, the Ministry of Climate Change should adopt more crystal clear criteria for giving approval to these housing societies. The Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) briefed the Committee about the illegal societies, water sewerage and outsourcing of waste management. The Committee appreciated the efforts of Chairman CDA for taking measures on this very sensitive issue and demand for expediting the efforts in a more disciplined manner. The Committee also recommended installing water consumption meters to save water resources. —APP

## PBC stresses criteria for SC's suo motu jurisdiction

ISLAMABAD: Showing serious concern over the controversy involving the Chief Justice of Pakistan's right to take suo motu on any issue, the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) has called for a clear criteria for suo motu jurisdiction. The council also stressed the formation of a committee responsible for the constitution of benches to maintain harmony within the institution. PBC Vice Chairman Haroon-ur-Rashid and Executive Committee Chairman Hassan Raza Pasha, in a news statement, emphasized that the PBC had always stressed the importance of maintaining the impartiality of the judiciary in order to uphold the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law in Pakistan. However, they expressed their disappointment that the recent suo motu was taken on political matters that were already sub judice before two different high courts, which was unnecessary. The news statement further says the legal fraternity attempted to eliminate the perception of polarisation and division. —DNA

## Court Notice

IN THE COURT OF  
SANA AFZAL WAHLA  
CIVIL JUDGE RAWAL-  
PINDI  
Suit For Recovery of  
Maintenance Allow-  
ance etc. Mst. Shabana  
Tabssam etc Versus  
Ghulam Shabir Notice  
To, Ghulam Shabir son  
of Muhammad Akhtar  
Resident of Mohallah  
Ridaar Road Choa Saidan  
Shah District Chakwal.  
Where as in the above  
mentioned case is it  
has been proved to the  
satisfaction of the court  
that the above mentioned  
defendant cannot be  
served in the ordinary  
way it is therefore,  
proclaimed under Order  
5 Rule 20 CPC that if the  
said defendant will/shell  
not appear personally or  
through a duly authorized  
agent or pleader in the  
court at 8am on 30-03-  
2022 the proceedings will  
be taken ex-parte. No argu-  
ments of any nature shall  
be entertained thereafter.  
Given under my hand and  
seal of this Court.

# Japan funded project for solar panels inaugurated

Government of Japan will continue to provide flexible and timely support to improve the social well-being of the people of Pakistan at the grassroots level in cooperation with local organizations

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: A grassroots grant assistance project for installation of solar panels at school in Village Shewa, District Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, funded by the Government of Japan, was inaugurated on March 29, 2023. The Government of Japan had provided a USD 58,928 grant (equivalent to around PKR 16.7 million) to Shewa Educated Social Workers Association (SESWA), a local NGO working in the field of education, infrastructure, and environment, for implementing this project. This is the third time for SESWA to receive financial assistance from the Government of Japan. This time, SESWA utilized the grant to install solar panels at the school that was constructed and expanded by the past two financial supports from the Government of Japan in order to overcome the problem of frequent power outages across the whole of Pakistan in a sustainable and environmentally-friend-



ly way. Thanks to this project, children can now learn in classrooms with a proper illumination level as well as running fans during the hot season. At the inauguration

ceremony, Mr. ITO Takeshi, Chargé d'Affaires of Japan to Pakistan congratulated the representatives of the NGO and the community members for the successful

completion of this project. He also showed the expectation that children would get the chance to carve out their bright future and also this project would strength-

en the existing friendly relationships between the people of Japan and Pakistan. The Government of Japan will continue to provide flexible and time-

ly support to improve the social well-being of the people of Pakistan at the grassroots level in cooperation with local organizations.

## Saudi-Iran relations to usher in new era of peace, prosperity in region

“Both the brotherly countries were in dire need of ceasing the hostilities and healing the wounds,” he said expressing the hope that the recent diplomatic development in Saudi-Iran relations would have positive impact on Pakistan as well and Pakistani break-up of the society along with ethnic lines would definitely become better

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr. Qibla Ayaz on Wednesday said that the recent diplomatic development in Saudi Arabia and Iran relations would usher in a new era of peace and prosperity in the region. In an exclusive talk with APP, he said it was a good omen that both the brotherly countries had resumed their diplomatic relations and agreed to reopen their embassies after a seven-year of estrangement. Dr. Qibla appreciated the unwavering efforts of Chinese President Xi Jin-

ping's in bridging the gap and building an enabling environment for brokering a rapprochement deal between Riyadh and Tehran. He said that this positive move was warmly welcomed by the entire Muslim Ummah at every nook and cranny of the world including Pakistan as it would help unite and strengthen Muslim countries and, resolve issues of common interests with mutual understanding in near future. He said that the fraternal ties between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran would also help normal-

ize the circumstances in Yemen and at the later stage in Syria. “Both the brotherly countries were in dire need of ceasing the hostilities and healing the wounds,” he said expressing the hope that the recent diplomatic development in Saudi-Iran relations would have positive impact on Pakistan as well and Pakistani break-up of the society along with ethnic lines would definitely become better. Dr. Qibla said it would also help Iran to improve its economic situation and decrease the negative impact of sanctions with the

passage of time. Lauding the visionary leadership of Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman in the regional and global politics, he said His Highness had special doctrine for the future because the world was no longer to be dependent on oil that was why; the Kingdom was opting for new alternative resources for generating the revenue. He further hoped that the betterment in Saudi-Iran relationship would create a new space particularly, for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the world politics. —APP

## Justice Musarrat Hilali to become first female CJ of PHC on Apr 1

PESHAWAR: Justice Musarrat Hilali would become the first female Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) on April 1 after the retirement of current Chief Justice Qaiser Rasheed. She would be the second female who would become CJ of a high court after Justice Tahira Safdar, the CJ of Balochistan High Court. Justice Musarrat Hilali was among the senior-most judges of PHC and would serve as CJ till her retirement. Born in Peshawar on August 08, 1961, she received Law Degree from Khyber Law College Peshawar University and enrolled as an Advocate of District Courts in 1983, as an Advocate of the High Court in 1988 and as an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 2006. Being a female she had several achievements in her career including being the first female elected officer bear on the post of Secretary at the bar from 1988-1989, vice president at the bar (twice) from 1992 to 1994, General Secretary 1997-1998, first female twice elected as an executive member of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) from 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. She was also the first female Additional Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from November 2001 to March 2004 and was later appointed as the first female Chairperson Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Environmental Protection Tribunal. She also served as the first female Ombudsman for the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace. She was elevated to the Bench as Additional Judge on March 26, 2013, and confirmed as a permanent judge of the Peshawar High Court on March 13, 2014. —APP



PESHAWAR: Special assistant to CM KP Pir Haroon Shah met Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali in Governor House and discussed various ongoing issues. — DNA

## Plastic waste generated in Pak equal to two K-2 mountains

He said that the SDPI would launch a “National Report on the Status of Circular Economy in Pakistan, adding that the SDPI would also work to launch a report on “Efficiency of Circular Economy in Pakistan”

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said the total mass of plastic waste generated in Pakistan was equal to the size of two K-2 mountains. The federal minister was addressing Policy Dialogue organized by SDPI and UNEP titled “Exploring the Potential of Circular Economy in Pakistan”. Senator Rehman said that Pakistan was one of the top 10 countries affected by environmental degradation. “33 million people in the country were affected by

the floods. We have never seen such a huge destruction caused by climate change,” she added. The Minister said that Pakistan's major stakeholders would have to be involved in controlling waste management. Another challenge, she said the country is facing is its dwindling water reserves. “We have a system of rivers which is the lifeline of Pakistan. Natural calamity floods have badly affected the economy of Pakistan with a loss of its 9 percent GDP.” Unmanaged waste, she said is a major problem in

Pakistan, whereas the Ministry has worked to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Ministry of Climate Change had launched the Living Indus Initiative, Sherry Rehman said. “Recycling of plastic and various things is being done all over the world. Pakistan also needs recycling centers. However, the provinces are now exporting equipment that is used in recycling,” she added. The Minister said that she was in office for the past 11 months but still she had not gotten the data related to plastic. The ocean is

full of more waste material than fish. Everyone has to do their own responsibility. We need a policy to control plastic waste that is in practice,” she added. In his opening remarks, Executive Director Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said Circular Economy Emphasis should be placed on reducing waste, recycling materials to reduce environmental impact. The importance of reusing products should be emphasized, he said. The Executive Director

said that there was need to establish an announcement of public and private sector engagement of research, policy to establish own network on circular economy. He said for connecting with SMEs, public and private sectors and industries to promote a just transition to a circular economy will be supported by the SDPI. He said that the SDPI would launch a “National Report on the Status of Circular Economy in Pakistan, adding that the SDPI would also work to launch a report on “Efficiency of Circular Economy in Pakistan”.

## Petrol, diesel prices likely to slash by Rs4 to Rs20 per litre

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: A proposal has been prepared on Wednesday to make a little cut on petroleum products. According to the sources, a proposal of Rs4.30 reduction in petrol price and Rs20 in high-speed diesel has been prepared for the next fortnightly. The sources said a proposal to reduce the price of kerosene by Rs13 per litre and light-speed diesel by Rs10 per litre is also prepared. A proposal to reduce the price of jet fuel by Rs 13 per litre has also been prepared, the sources said adding that a petroleum levy of Rs50 per litre of petrol and Rs45 on diesel is being charged. The sources said the reduction in the rates of petroleum products is being expected after a decrease in prices of petroleum products in the world market as London Brent oil became cheaper by 6.57% in one month.

## NA body takes notice of illegal housing societies

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change on Wednesday took serious notice and expressed its concerns over illegal housing societies causing serious damage to the environment of the federal capital. The 33rd meeting of the Standing Committee on Climate Change was chaired by MNA Nuzhat Pathan. The Committee directed that in order to protect the environment, the Ministry of Climate Change should adopt more crystal clear criteria for giving approval to these housing societies. The Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) briefed the Committee about the illegal societies, water sewerage and outsourcing of waste management. The Committee appreciated the efforts of Chairman CDA for taking measures on this very sensitive issue and demand for expediting the efforts in a more disciplined manner. The Committee also recommended installing water consumption meters to save water resources. The Directors of National Institute of Health (NIH) and Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) apprised the Committee about the efforts they are making for the allergy patients suffering due to mulberry trees. —APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MARCH

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

Hotels & Restaurants

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

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

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

Enquiry

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

Hospitals

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

Departments

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

# Annual corporate Iftar hosted by CEO Serena Hotels

by the CEO Serena Hotels The guests enjoyed the iftar dinner in a tranquil setting with soulful music, while the evening highlighted the true spirit of Ramadan



**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels, South and Central Asiaand Mrs. Wiqar Boolani, hosted the Serena Hotels Annual Corporate Iftar Dinner to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan. The dinner was attended by large number of Government officials, members of the Armed Forces, Diplomats, Heads of International Agencies, Corporate executives, and Media

personnel. The festive look of Sheesh Mahal with an impressive array of regional cuisine from across Pakistan, coupled with Continental and Asian cuisine added to the ambiance. An exquisite assortment of desserts with individual servings including

## Expert stresses for public-private partnership

ISLAMABAD: Public-private partnership was the need of the hour to strengthen primary healthcare in the country which will improve indicators and provide basic health needs to urban slum populations, a health expert said. CEO and Primary Healthcare Specialist SINA Clinics, Ambareen Kazim Thompson talking to PTV news said that the necessary measures were needed to promote family medicine through faculty development, medicine development, policy reform and targeted research. She called for streamlining service delivery by implementing policies and engaging the private sector in delivery and monitoring. She said that Pakistan's core focus should be on primary healthcare to diagnose ailments at early stages and reduce complications of chronic diseases, adding, investing more and better in primary healthcare was the key solution to "provide equitable, comprehensive, integrated and high-quality" care. Replying to a question, she said limited access to health services along with inadequate knowledge of slum residents about healthcare facilities was the main barrier to the utilization of health care in the slums. SINA is the only healthcare provider working in the slums of Karachi that has a fully digitized patient management system and an electronic medical record system that not only holds records of each patient but ensures traceability and zero loss of patients.—APP

## 4 nabbed, drugs recovered

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in seven different operations against drug peddlers, arrested three drug peddlers and recovered over 646 kg of drugs from their possession, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that ANF recovered three hashish-filled capsules from the possession of a Dubai-bound passenger, a resident of Bannu, netted at Bacha Khan International Airport Peshawar. In three different operations in Haripur, ANF recovered 2.15 kg hashish from the possession of three arrested accused residents of Haripur. The accused were allegedly involved in supplying drugs to the students of different educational institutions. He informed that in an operation near Zero Line at Torkham Border, 26.6 kg hashish concealed in plastic bags was recovered. In the sixth operation, ANF and FC conducted a joint operation in Khyber and seized 22 kg of hashish. ANF and FC in another operation in the Noshki Balochistan area, recovered 596 kg of hashish.—APP

# Gwadar student participated in UN 2023 Water Conference

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: Director General Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Qambarani hailed Miss Bahar Tahira Khalil, a young leader from Gwadar for representing Balochistan at "The UN 2023 Water Conference", which was held on 22-24 March in New York. Miss Bahar Khalil, who is a medical student in China, represented Gwadar

and Balochistan province as a young leader. GDA provided financial assistance to the young leader to participate in the conference. "GDA is proud to encourage young lady Ambassador Miss Bahar Tahira Khalil from Gwadar to represent Balochistan and Gwadar in International United Nations Conference on Water," Mr. Qambarani wrote on his official Twitter account, according to Gwadar Pro. The UN 2023 Water Con-

ference concluded with a breakthrough response to the global water crises and to advance the water agenda, a deal maker for accelerating sustainable development overall. Miss Bahar Tahira Khalil was one of some 10,000 participants who gathered at UN Headquarters and online to urgently scale up action to address the water crisis and ensure equitable access to water for all. The shortage of drinking water has always remained a problem in

Gwadar and other adjoining areas of the province. However, since the inception of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), special attention has been given to addressing the drinking water issue in Gwadar. Various projects under CPEC are being executed to resolve the water issue. A 1.2 MGD seawater desalination plant is near its completion. The plant is a grant from the Government of China for the people of Gwadar.

## China's BRI experience shared by all countries: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: The real beauty in BRI is the spirit of sharing. China shares its success with developing countries," emphasized Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, minister for planning, development and special initiatives, during the ongoing Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2023. The Belt and Road Initiative welcomes everyone to jointly explore opportunities for shared growth, providing developing countries with the most critical investment to fill in gaps in the economy, said the Minister, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. "For example, when Pakistan was only able to provide electricity for 16-18 hours a day, China-under the BRI-allowed its companies to invest in the energy sector when no other foreign investors were coming". "Over the years, China has actively shared its own successful development concepts, models, roads and plans, providing a broad cooperation platform for developing countries and helping promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind," Ahsan Iqbal noted.—DNA

## Imran answerable in 'Toshakhana' cases'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif said on Wednesday that Chairman Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf Imran Khan would be answerable in all the cases including 'Toshakhana' and 'Foreign Funding' as he was bound to abide by rule of law of the country. Talking to a private TV channel, he said PML-N's methods of political expression in state matters were always within the course of law and the constitution. The entire PML-N, including Nawaz Sharif, Marayam Nawaz, and ex-Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, had faced false charges and remained in jails but did not stand against the state institutions. "Imran Khan is inciting workers to violence and wants to lead the country to civil war", he claimed. Bashing PTI chief's politics, the minister said that in order to avoid indictment, Imran Khan adopted criminal and undemocratic behaviour.—DNA

# College hosts golden jubilee celebrations

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: FG home economics and management Sciences College F 11 hosted an event to commemorate the golden jubilee of the 1973 constitution of Pakistan.Mr Makhdoom Syed Sami UL Hassan Gillani graced the occasion as the worthy chief guest while Deputy Director General FDE Ali Ahmad Kharal was guest of honor. Principal Prof Rozina Faheem presided over the auspicious ceremony. The program started with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Amna Hamid and the naat recited by Anila. Program consisted of English and Urdu declamation competitions. The worthy judges of today's competitions were Shagufta Naz Samar Zakki and Prof Muhammad Nazir. The venerable chief guest Makhdoom Syed Sami UL Hassan Gillani shared his

insights and experience with the audience. In his address he highlighted the significance of the 1973 constitution. He also accentuated the role of females in the progress of the country. The Deputy Director General FDE Dr Ali Ahmed Kharal

also shared his views with the audience. He appreciated the worthy principal Prof Rozina Faheem for arranging such an outstanding ceremonial event at such a short notice. He also emphasized the significance of co-curricular activities for the better grooming of the students.

He stressed the youth to demonstrate the teachings of Islam in their actions. The first prize in English declamation was grabbed by Ms Abeer Rizwan of host college second prize was bagged by Ayesha Syed IMCG F-6/2 Maheen khan of F7/2 won third prize and consolation

prize was awarded to Mr Ali Raza of IMCG H-9. In Urdu declamation Areeba Sadiq Komal Kabir Rakeeza Shehzadi Laiba Bibi won 1st 2nd third and consolation prizes. In the end principal presented college crest to chief guest and judges



## TV actor 'Latif Kapadia' remembered



ISLAMABAD:The nation remembers the legend Latif Kapadia on his 21st death anniversary on Wednesday to pay tributes for his unforgettable contribution to this entertainment industry. He was a Pakistani stage and television actor. The great artist was born on March 27, 1934, in Nasik, Maharashtra, in British India. Latif Kapadia migrated to Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan at the age of 13, electronic channels reported. Latif began his career as a stage actor. He was initiated into acting in 1953 by a theatre-loving couple, Meherji and Pervaiz Dastur. They presented many plays in the 1950s. In 1957, Latif Kapadia joined the Avant-Grade Arts Theater formed by Ali Ahmed and Latif's elder brother, Ghulam Ali Kapadia. Ali Ahmed's play, Sheeshay Kay Aadmi, was a great hit. Latif Kapadia had played a pivotal role in it. His other noted plays that earned him fame were Qissa Jagtay Sotay Ka, Ek Din Ka Sultan and Phir Bhi Hum Jeetay Rahay. He is considered one of the most famous actors of Pakistan television. In 1967, When Pakistan Television came to Karachi, Latif Kapadia did his first television play, Sheeshay Kay Aadmi, recreating the same role. His other television plays include Baarish, Barzakh, Fifty Fifty, Gurez, Nadan Nadia, and Shikastay Arzoo. Kapadia also played a role in a film Very Good Dunya, Very Bad Log, the film was released in 1998. He was fond of singing also and used to sing the songs of his friend, Ahmed Rushdi, who was a well-known singer in the Pakistan film industry. On March 23, 2001, Latif Kapadia received the Pride of Performance award from the President of Pakistan.—APP

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## Briefs

**Govt failed to incorporate agreed measures in Fin Bill 2023**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Zohaib Khan, Chairman Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), has categorically apprised that the federal government has failed to incorporate the measures to encourage & incentivize IT exports & exports of IT-enabled Services (ITeS) in the Finance Bill 2023.

Muhammad Zohaib Khan highlighted the fact that P@SHA and Ministry of IT & Telecom (MoITT) reached an agreement with FBR to implement amendments for the IT & ITeS industry in the Income Tax Ordinance (ITO) 2001; Sales Tax Ordinance (STO) 2001 and Sales Tax Act (STA) 1990 through the upcoming legislative opportunity; i.e. Finance Bill 2023.

The understanding was reached with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to insert the aforementioned amendments at the earliest possible opportunity in January 2023 in P@SHA's detailed presentation & consultative session with him, P@SHA Chief added. Chairman P@SHA Muhammad Zohaib Khan mentioned that "it is deeply disappointing to see that despite the seriousness shown by the PM and Finance Minister, the amendments are not reflected in the bill". While the industry is making the effort to achieve the export target given by the PM, the same commitment is not reciprocated from the government institutions."

He added that we are not being able to grow YoY IT exports performance. This is all because of lack of continuity in economic policies; lack of coherence among government institutions and not-incentivizing the IT industry. Last month FBR started issuing notices to the IT companies on super tax that too with very short deadlines. Similarly, SBP announced facility for the IT industry with a timeline till of March 31, 2023. P@SHA has reiterated time and again that the timeline is counterproductive to the spirit and purpose of the facility – and, increasing IT exports of Pakistan through building a conducive digital ecosystem.

**PTA, UNICEF Pakistan collaborate for child protection**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) Pakistan have collaborated to promote a safe, secure and productive online environment for the children. The collaboration aims to prevent and report incidents of online child abuse and encourage responsible internet usage among the children, caregivers and educators through awareness and capacity-building efforts. Under this collaboration, PTA has already declared '1121' as free emergency helpline for child protection whereas other areas of focus will be implemented by both sides.

Mr. Muhammad Naveed, Chairman PTA and Mr. Abdullah Fadil, Representative, UNICEF Pakistan along with senior officers from both PTA and UNICEF attended the ceremony. Speaking at the occasion, the Chairman PTA said that PTA is determined to provide a secure and risk free digital environment for children in Pakistan. UNICEF Pakistan's strong network with child protection stakeholders will pave way for better reporting of child online abuse cases to PTA and subsequent removal of objectionable content from the internet. The Representative of UNICEF Pakistan also emphasized on the importance of this collaboration and assured of their full cooperation to implement the agreed activities.

# Pakistan and Turkiye two souls and one heart: Envoy

## Both countries always helped each other in testing times

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Mehmet Pacaci on Wednesday lauded the humanitarian assistance of the government of Pakistan and Pakistani organizations in the wake of the deadly earthquake in Turkiye.

He commended the relief and rescue operation by several Turkish NGOs which helped tens of thousands of victims across the country. Mehmet Pacaci said this while talking to a delegation comprising Dr. Sohail Majid Sheikh, Country Head of Nisar Fatima Amin Foundation (NFA), Malik Sohail Hussain, Secretary General US-Pakistan International Chamber of Commerce and Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association, and Dr. Syed Yawar Abbas Qazi.

The ambassador said that Pakistan has sent truckloads of supplies to their Turkish brethren in their time of need for which we are thankful. He also thanked the Pakistani business community for their continued support and Nisar Fatima Amin Foundation which is working in Turkiye for the last five years to serve the needy humanity. Mehmet Pacaci was informed that 11000 pieces



of garments, 1000 units of blankets and 500 tents are ready at Karachi which should be shipped to Turkiye for earthquake victims. The ambassador was very glad to know about the relief items are ready to be dispatched to Turkiye and promised its fastest embarkation to the affectees. He also praised the efforts

of Mr. Sheesh Ahmed Hashmi, Chief Operating Officer, Nisar Fatima Amin Foundation, the key source person working on ground in Turkiye.

At the occasion, Dr. Sohail Majid and Malik Sohail said that Turkiye is a brotherly Muslim Country that has always helped Pakistan on international forums and

fought for our cause.

Pakistan and Turkiye were like two souls and one heart and the people of both countries will always walk the extra mile to help each other with huge generosity, they added. Be it the earthquake of 2005, the super floods of 2010, and recent floods, Turkiye has always come forward to help Pa-

kistanis, they said, adding that the friendly country is not only involved in rescue and relief operations in Pakistan but also helping the rehabilitation of the flood victims across the country. Turkiye has sent 15 planes and 13 trains loaded with thousands of tons of relief goods, including tents, boats, food packages, med-

icines, vaccines, kitchen items, and other supplies to flood-ravaged Pakistan. They said that they were deeply grieved by the devastation which was beyond imagination and hoped that Turkish people soon would overcome the post-quake challenges as the resolve of the Turkish nation is very strong.

# Minimum Sadqa-e-Fitr fixed at Rs 320 per head

ISLAMABAD: Former Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Mufti Muneedur Rehman has declared the minimum amount for Sadqa-e-Fitr at Rs 320 per person, which is an obligatory charitable donation that Muslims are required to pay during the holy month of Ramadan.

The rate is based on the prices of staple food such as flour, dates, raisins, cheese or barley, as per the Islamic Shariah. The importance of Sadqa-e-Fitr lies in helping the poor and needy people in society, especially during the festive occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. This act helps the poor and needy during the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr and is a way for Muslims to give

back to their community and earn blessings from Allah Almighty. According to Mufti Muneeb, the market price of 2.25 kilograms of flour, the amount for Fitra is calculated as Rs 320 per head. The faithful who want to pay Fitra equal to the price of barley, and dates should pay minimum Rs 480 and Rs 2,800 per head respectively. Similarly, the faithful wanted to pay Fitra at the rate of raisin should pay Rs 6,400 per head for first class dates and Rs 4,800 per person for second class raisin. A Muslim, who possesses food in excess of his needs, must pay Sadqa-e-Fitr before the Eid prayers. If the person is a bread-

winner, he should also pay Sadqa-e-Fitr for his dependents, such as wife, children, dependent relatives or servants. Mufti Muneeb also advised the people to pay the amount to the poor before Eid-ul-Fitr so that they could also celebrate the festival. The most deserving people for Sadqa-e-Fitr are close relatives followed by neighbours and the poor.

Mufti Munibur Rehman said real spirit of Fitr and Fidy is two-time meal of a destitute person, so it is better to pay the meal cost of a hotel. However, those who are wealthier, they should try to pay more to extend assistance to the poor in this time of skyrocketing inflation. If any one

had been unable to keep fast for the whole month of Ramazan, he or she should pay the whole month Fidy as compensation worth Rs 9,600 in proportionate to flour price, Rs 14,400 for barley, Rs 28,800, for date, Rs 192,000 for raisin first class and Rs 144,000 for second class raisin. Similarly, Kufara (compensation) for leaving 30 fasts in wheat would be Rs 19,200, for wheat Rs 28,800, for barley, Rs 168,000 dates, Rs 384,000 raisin first class and Rs 2,88,000 for second class raisin. Kufara in wheat would be Rs 3,200, barley Rs 4,800, dates Rs 28,000, raisin Rs 64,000 first class and Rs 48,000 for second class raisin.—APP

## OGDCL launches programme to distribute 100 ambulances

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Wednesday launched a programme to distribute fully equipped 100 ambulances worth Rs 200 million among district and tehsil headquarters hospitals and basic health units (BHUs) across the country. These ambulances will be distributed in collaboration with the local administration to BHUs, THQ and DHQ hospitals surrounding OGDCL operational fields. The launching ceremony took place here at OGDCL Head Office and was attended by distinguished guests.

Federal Secretary of Petroleum Division Captain (Retd) Muhammad Mahmood was the chief guest. Speaking at the occasion, OGDCL MD/CEO Ahmed Hayat Lak highlighted the importance of the programme in the country's health sector and emphasized that the initiative would help improve people's access to health services.

He further added that as a responsible corporate citizen, OGDCL had not only launched several initiatives in health sector but also in education, water supply, sports, and infrastructure development. OGDCL Executive Director (Services) Zia Salahuddin provided

a comprehensive introduction to the programme, outlining the salient features of the ambulances and the modalities for their distribution. Speaking on the occasion, Captain (Retd) Muhammad Mahmood emphasized the importance of the CSR programme. He commended OGDCL for taking such an initiative to ensure health facilities for masses across the country. The secretary petroleum gave valuable suggestions for augmenting the CSR initiatives and improving the outreach. He stressed the need for focusing on capacity building of the youth. OGDCL – which is the largest exploration and production company working across Pakistan – took the initiative under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme, informed OGDCL Manager External Communications Babar Ifikhar Warraich. He said the company had an impressive track record for carrying out social work in areas where it operated for welfare of local communities. OGDCL has always exceeded its CSR obligations and spent more on welfare projects for the communities nearby it's operational areas, he added.—APP

## Govt gagging judiciary: Khosa

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Peoples Party (PPP) leader and senior lawyer Latif Khosa has said that the legislation regarding the Supreme Court is like gagging the judiciary. Speaking to the media outside the Supreme Court here on Wednesday, the former governor found the timing of the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023, not right. Mr Khosa said that Article 184-3 had to be amended to give the right to appeal against decision under suo motu notice. Referring to the PTI petition against postponement of election, he said how could the opinion of the members who were not part of the bench be included in the decision.

## AIOU to focus on student facilitation

DNA

**Dr. Nasir Mahmood also directed the Director of Student Affairs to set up Alumni and Student Counseling Counters**

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will give special attention to increase the facilities of the students. Students are the real asset and family members of the university, said Vice Chancellor, AIOU Prof. Dr. Nasir Mshood while visiting the infrastructure and facilities established for students in the Directorate of Student Advisory and Counseling Services (DSA&CS). He further said that all the necessary information and guidance should be provided under one roof to students for their convenience. Vice-Chancellor directed the Additional Director, DSA&CS, Syed Ghulam Kazim Ali that a brief record of the e-mails, phone calls and letters sent by the students should be compiled with the stats that how many applications received, how many were solved, and what is the number of pending applications, these stats will help in the formulation of strategies to further improve student services. Registrar, Director General Regional Services, Director Admissions, Controller of Examinations, In-charge Student Facilitation Center, Planning Officer and others were also present on this occasion. The vice chancellor instructed the Principal Officers to ensure that the date of admissions extension, declaration of results and other student related important information should be provided to DSA immediately so that correct information was provided to the students. Dr. Nasir Mahmood also directed the Director of Student Affairs to set up Alumni and Student Counseling Counters. He also expressed the need to actively participate in social activities and student support programs.



## IESCO issues 2-day power suspension notice

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued 2-day power suspension programme for Thursday and Friday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Thursday from 07:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Chakwal Circle, Kallar Kahar, C.S.Shah, Tharpal, Basharat Feeders. On Friday from 07:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, CM Pak Zong, Rehara, Tarmari, Chatta Bakhtwar, Lehrar Road, ISI, Kuri (Old Bahera) Feeders and surrounding areas—APP

## Every citizen equal before law: Khurram

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Engineer Khurram Dastgir on Wednesday said every citizen of Pakistan was equal before the law and entitled to equal protection of law as per article 25 of the constitution.

Supporting the amendments proposed by Mo-hsin Dawar in the Supreme Court Practices and Procedure Bill, 2023, the minister said the House was going to mark history regarding sovereignty of the parliament.

It was mentioned at the start of the constitution that the elected representatives of the people held the highest authority after Almighty Allah, he said. He said that every elected representative in the House was here for protection of rights and securing of future to their voters. He said that the bill would only bring transparency in judicial system but it was also longstanding desire of the masses.

It would also bring collective wisdom in judicial authority. He congratulated the members for this landmark legislation.

## UN, Int'l Criminal Court urged to prosecute India

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, has urged the United Nations and International Criminal Court to prosecute India for war crimes, in illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Shabbir Ahmad Shah in a message from New Delhi's infamous Tihar Jail drew the attention of the international community to ruthless killings, arbitrary arrests, fake encounters and eviction of local people from their houses and demolition of their properties in the territory.

IOJK's Grand Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam in a statement issued after a meeting of the religious scholars in Srinagar, on Wednesday, called for the release of senior APMC leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Maulana Abdur Rashid Dawoodi, and other religious scholars.

Meanwhile, Indian paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force and police provided special weapon training to more than 300 terrorists raised in the name of Village Defence Guards by the Modi regime across Jammu region in the last few weeks.

In Geneva, Zaffar Qureshi, Chairman of Kashmir Campaign Global, addressing the 52nd session of UN Human Rights Council said people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir urgently need the attention of the World Body to attain their basic right to self-determination.

# UAE company keen to promote SMEs in Pakistan

InvoiceMate for SMEs in Pakistan. He lauded the efforts of InvoiceMate for revolutionizing invoice financing by enabling financial inclusion of SMEs and informal businesses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of UAE-based company InvoiceMate visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry to introduce their invoice management system on blockchain for promoting financial inclusion of SMEs in Pakistan. Muhammad Salman Anjum Founder & CEO, Saeed Alhebsi Co-Founder of InvoiceMate and Advisor on Artificial Intelligence to the Ministry of Human Resource & Emiratization of UAE, Rafael Shulz Founder BlockchainPunk Labs of Germany, Muhammad Zeeshan Abid Co-Founder & Product Design Lead at InvoiceMate were in the delegation. Ms. Rashida Bajwa, Assistant Director (ME-I), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan accompanied the delegation. Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) welcomed the UAE delegation and assured them of full support in rolling out the blockchain powered financial inclusion enabler InvoiceMate for SMEs in Pakistan. He lauded

the efforts of InvoiceMate for revolutionizing invoice financing by enabling financial inclusion of SMEs and informal businesses. He said that the financial inclusion of SME is very important to accelerate the economic growth in Pakistan. He said that SMEs get only around 6% credit of the total private sector credit in Pakistan, which is less

than 1% of GDP and is a major hurdle in their growth and stressed that the government should increase credit to SMEs to at least 20 percent that would boost business activities and put Pakistan on the path of sustainable growth.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Salman Anjum Founder & CEO, Saeed Alhebsi



Co-Founder of InvoiceMate said that they are keen to create sustainable financial inclusion opportunities in the Pakistan market. They gave a detailed briefing to the business community about all the aspects of the world's first blockchain-powered invoice management and financing solution that enables invoice automation. It comes with function specific features that provide efficient results, while saving money & resources. They said that InvoiceMate uses emerging technologies like blockchain & AI that provides multiple benefits to the businesses including 70-80% reduction in payable workload, 60-70% reduction in payment errors, 40-50% reduction in cost per invoice, 95-100% achievement in data accuracy and 70-75% reduction in reconciliation efforts. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that SMEs are the backbone of the economy and said that ICCI would cooperate with Team InvoiceMate in introducing its latest invoice management system in its member companies to increase their efficiency and productivity.



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## Israel's political crisis: not over yet

There is no room for relief. Benjamin Netanyahu's assault on Israel's democratic institutions is not over; it is merely on pause. After nearly three months of political crisis, popular outrage and mounting protests, the prime minister was forced to suspend his attack on the judiciary. He has already caused serious damage to the economy and the state through a headlong charge at the supreme court's independence, which was opposed by most Israelis. Though he said that he was "not willing to tear the nation in half", his primary motivation is not saving the country, but himself.

Mr Netanyahu, who has corruption charges hanging over him, has no love for the judiciary. And though the court has repeatedly undercut Palestinian rights in the West Bank and helped to entrench the occupation, the prime minister's far-right coalition partners are angered by even its modest rulings outlawing Israeli settlements. They are unlikely to back down. The determination of his opponents was aided by Mr Netanyahu's unusual political ineptness. He failed to set out an appealing case for the reforms. Weeks away from the country's 75th anniversary, its president, Isaac Herzog, warned that Israel could be approaching civil war after his compromise plan failed. Then came an unforced error: firing the defence minister, Yoav Gallant, who had urged pausing the legislation, given the turmoil it had caused in the military, with reservists saying they would refuse to serve. Tens of thousands more protesters took to the streets. The far right's price for Monday night's climbdown was an agreement that the minister of security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, could set up a new "national guard" under his control. Whether or not it materialises, sceptics note that Mr Ben-Gvir is bigger on rhetoric than delivery, and that Mr Netanyahu will not want him to have his own armed power base – the pledge to hand a man convicted of inciting racism a militia of his own is inherently horrifying. The danger now is that the prime minister may up his political game rather than lowering his ambitions, moving more slowly and thus, perhaps, more effectively. He could back off – for now – on allowing the Knesset to override the supreme court with a simple majority, while pushing ahead on increasing political control of judicial selection and preventing the court from having oversight of basic laws – elements that have already passed a first reading.

His staunchest opponents, as well as former allies, know to their cost that he is a formidable political survivor and dealmaker. Yet he is undeniably weakened by the last few weeks. The extremity of his coalition reflects the fact that he has run out of people to work with, and polls show a dramatic reversal in its fortunes. Only sustained pressure will see off this threat to Israel's already limited checks and balances. Mr Netanyahu will persist. Will those standing against him?

## Limiting powers of the Chief Justice

Qamar Bashir



Maryam's strategy, which she outlined after returning from London, is becoming clear. Her rhetoric and narrative to balance both sides of the justice balance has started maturing. She and her party have already put enough pressure on the courts by accusing them of siding with Imran Khan while doing injustice to Nawaz Sharif, which they believe needs to be undone by granting Mr. Nawaz the right to appeal and reverse all cases against him, paving the way for his honorable return and subsequent assumption of the party's leadership during the October elections. It appears to be a case of you scratch my back while I will scratch yours. The government is dead set on

The law Minister introduced a bill in parliament today (28.03.20223) to limit the chief justice of Pakistan's ability to take suo motu notice regardless of the nature, substance, or significance of the matter by subjecting it to the approval of a three-member Supreme Court bench. In addition, the bill proposes to grant the right to appeal the supreme court's decision in a suo motu case, which includes a case against the former three-time Prime Minister.

The bill appears to have two overarching objectives. The first is to allow Nawaz Sharif to appeal the Supreme Court's decision to bar him from holding public office, and the second is to clip the wings of upcoming Supreme Court Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Essa, who will take over as Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) on September 17, 2023. The Supreme Court convicted Mr. Nawaz Sharif in the Panama Papers case on allegations of corruption and money laundering in a landmark but highly contentious suo motu decision which removed Sharif from office and imposed a lifetime ban from holding any public office. Sharif could not even file an appeal, as the Supreme Court's decision was final under the principle of res judicata, which states that a matter that has been finally adjudicated by a competent court cannot be reopened or challenged again.

Maryam's strategy, which she outlined after returning from London, is becoming clear. Her rhetoric and narrative to balance both sides of the justice balance has started maturing. She and her party have already put enough pressure on the courts by accusing them of siding with Imran Khan while doing injustice to Nawaz Sharif, which they believe needs to be undone by granting Mr. Nawaz the right to appeal and reverse all cases against him, paving the way for his honorable return and subsequent assumption of the party's leadership during the October elections. It appears to be a case of you scratch my back while I will scratch yours. The government is dead set on bringing Nawaz Sharif back to power at any cost, and the Establishment did not want an independent and powerful Supreme Court judge in the form of Qazi Faiz Essa. As a result of this bill, the PML(L) will have its leader back who will be able to challenge Imran Khan, while the establishment will have weakened and truncated the Chief Justice, making him subservient to the other senior most judges allegedly cultivated by the establishment.

However, there are a number of complications. The court was given the power of *suo motu* by the Constitution, not by subordinate legislation. The Supreme Court is authorized by Article 184(3) of the Constitution to "make any order for the enforcement of any of the fundamental rights conferred by Chapter I of Part II," as well as "for any other purpose" that the court deems necessary. This broad language has been interpreted by the Supreme Court to include the power of *suo motu*, which allows the court to take notice of issues of public importance or relating to the enforcement of fundamental rights even in the absence of a formal petition or complaint. whereas, according to Article 189 of the Pakistani Constitution, "all authorities, civil and judicial, in the territory of Pakistan shall act in aid of the Supreme Court," and "decisions of the Supreme Court shall be binding on all other courts in Pakistan." This means that once the Supreme Court rules on a case, the decision is final and binding on all lower courts and authorities in Pakistan. There is generally no right of appeal against a Supreme Court decision, except in certain limited circumstances where a review petition or a constitutional petition may be filed before the same court. To clip the wings of the Chief Justice, the relevant provisions of the constitution must be amended, which would require a two-thirds majority, which the government currently lacks.

Another issue is that Supreme Court jealousy protects its independence, which was bestowed upon it by Article 175A, which was added to the Constitution by the 18th Amendment in 2010, and establishes the procedure for appointing judges to Pakistan's superior courts, including the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the High Courts. According to Article 175A, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan has the authority to appoint judges to the superior courts, guarantees the tenure of judges, and prohibits their removal from office except in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Constitution. Article 50 establishes a system of separation of powers among the three branches of government: the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary declaring Parliament to be the country's supreme legislative authority. Article 90 delegated executive authority over the Federation of Pakistan to the Prime Minister and the federal cabinet. Article 175 declares the judiciary to be a separate

## Sino-Australian ties reviving

In another sign of improved Sino-Australian relations, Daniel Andrews, premier of Victoria state, is on a six-day visit to China that started on Monday, becoming the first of Australia's state leaders to visit the country since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Prior to his departure, Andrews said on Sunday that it was important to strengthen the state's relationship with China because it is Victoria's largest and most significant trading partner. The visit, his seventh to China since becoming premier in 2014, is about "sending the clearest message that we value this partnership". During the visit, Andrews is expected to discuss trade and cultural ties with Chinese officials, as well as the return of Chinese students to Victoria after the lifting of pandemic-induced border closures. Currently, 42,000 Chinese students are enrolled in schools across Victoria. Victoria, under his leadership, has always been on good terms with China. The state signed on to China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2019 to ensure increased participation of Chinese enterprises in Victoria's infrastructure program and wider market access for Victorian businesses in China, before the Scott Morrison government canceled the deal in 2021 on the grounds that it was inconsistent with Australia's foreign policy.

That Andrews said Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was supportive of his current China trip may serve to guarantee fruitful outcomes will be yielded this time, which augurs well for the future of China-Australia relations. The sense of optimism is being fueled by a diplomatic thaw that has emerged since Albanese took office in May last year, after years of tensions in bilateral ties as a result of former prime minister Morrison closely toeing Washington's anti-China line and taking a confrontational stance toward the country. Thanks to his government's anti-China strategy, Australia became the first country to ban Chinese telecommunication giant Huawei from the construction of 5G networks, and clashed with China on a wide range of issues such as trade, the South China Sea, human rights, and COVID-19. All this, in addition to the AUKUS alliance that it forged with the United States and the United Kingdom to counter China in the "Indo-Pacific" region, nearly pushed bilateral ties to the brink of collapse.

A stable and constructive Australia-China relationship is in the interests of both countries and the region as well, as observed by Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong during her "ice-breaking" visit to Beijing last December – also the first by an Australian top envoy since November 2018. Hopefully Canberra will strive to maintain the momentum of improved relations with China by working with Beijing to push the two countries' highly complementary trade relations, as well as people-to-people and cultural exchanges forward to deliver more significant benefits to both sides.

and independent branch of government with the authority to interpret the Constitution and the law. In his famous decision in *Sindh High Court Bar Association v. Federation of Pakistan* (2010), Justice Chaudhry stated that "the independence of the judiciary is a fundamental principle enshrined in the Constitution and is essential to the rule of law and democracy." Our memories are still fresh of the Supreme Court's ruling wherein it declared the deputy speaker's ruling "contrary to the Constitution and the law, and of no legal effect, and sat it aside."

This bill apparently has all the ingredients to make it an instrument of the government and the parliament to intervene in the internal affairs of the courts which is likely to receive equal and proportion rebuke by the court.

Another issue is the appointment of Qazi Faiz Essa whose independent and free spirited nature prompted the then-government to file a reference against him which was later quashed by a Supreme Court bench. Once appointed as a chief justice, which appears obvious nevertheless, there are many slips between the cup and the lips, the establishment will have far less say in judicial matters than it did previously. We haven't heard much from Qazi Essa lately. He is being barred from many high-profile benches, despite the fact that he is the senior most judge, and he is not responding either through his decisions or public statements. It is only a matter of time before he strikes back.

Above all, with no opposition in the national assembly, the bill, even if passed, will lack credibility, legitimacy, and integrity, making it an easy target for the courts to strike it down as soon as it is challenged, which will be sooner rather than later. The prime minister's lengthy speech in the parliament today did nothing to establish the need and urgency of presenting this far-reaching bill in parliament, but rather created more doubts and confusions. The government, already weary of dealing with Imran Khan, has opened up a new war front, this time with the judiciary. The public will soon learn whether the judiciary, like Imran Khan, will give the government a hard time or will, unlike him, succumb to its pressure.

—The writer is the Former Press Secretary to the President of Pakistan Former Press Minister in the Embassy of Pakistan to France

## Confused and alarming political landscape of Pakistan

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



In the recent period, the country has faced a number of challenges, including political polarization, corruption, and security threats. Today it is also unclear whether provincial elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will take place on time, but opposition PTI party leader Imran Khan sees

Pakistan's political scene has been known for its complexities, with numerous political parties and factions competing for power and influence. Due to grapple with issues such as corruption, economic challenges, and the rise of extremist groups, Pakistan is experiencing significant political turmoil and instability over the years, including military coups, civil unrest, and a complex relationship with neighboring countries. The political landscape in Pakistan is also influenced by regional and international factors, including relations with the United States, China, and India. To better understand the political landscape in Pakistan, it's important to stay informed about current events and to seek out diverse perspectives. This may involve following news outlets from different regions of Pakistan, engaging with individuals from different political parties, and seeking out experts who can provide insights into the country's history and political system.

The country has been under military rule for much of its history, and democracy has struggled to take root. In recent years, Pakistan's politics have been marked by a series of controversies and scandals, including corruption allegations against top politicians, protests against electoral fraud, and tensions between the military and civilian government.

In the recent period, the country has faced a number of challenges, including political polarization, corruption, and security threats. Today it is also unclear whether provincial elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will take place on time, but opposition PTI party leader Imran Khan sees the victories there as an important step in regaining national power. A further delay in the elections is likely to trigger massive PTI protests, which would require the deployment of more security forces and further increase the chances of military intervention.

Pakistan's political landscape is generally ambiguous and chaotic. Its politicians often engage in rampant behavior in their competing for power, and their politics can take very erratic turns. But recently, the country's political landscape has become particularly strange and worrying. Attention is currently focused on whether the April 30 elections will be held on time thanks to presidential and judicial intervention in the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces which has delayed. The leader of the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, Imran Khan, sees the victories in the two provincial assemblies as an important step in his campaign to regain national power from him a year ago. With strong exposure, Khan hopes to capitalize on his current popularity. A recent opinion poll found that he had nearly twice the popular support of current Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. The ruling alliance led by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) wants to hang on to power as long as possible by postponing the elections. Pakistan's Election Commission has been quick to say it lacks the financial resources to hold the upcoming provincial elections, and the country's civilian and military intelligence services have warned that the current security situation could make elections difficult in the coming months. Hoping to weaken and divide the opposition, Sharif's government has also used the legal system, with opposition leader Khan evading arrest in several cases brought against him for alleged criminal activity.

Starring in Pakistan's sometimes-byzantine political drama, Khan and the leaders of the ruling coalition, notably Maryam Nawaz of the Muslim League-N, are trying to control the narrative and expose each other's moral blind spots. Pakistan's political fate is tied to the bit-

ter ongoing rivalry between a vengeful Khan and a badly wounded political establishment, where neither wants to be seen as the villain and both tell tales of injustice to prove their innocence. This was made clear last two weeks when a PTI worker was mysteriously killed following a clash between party protesters and Punjab police. His death has sparked a new round of accusations, with PTI leaders blaming the government-backed Punjab interim administration for the murder. In turn, the interim government blames Khan for spreading false propaganda and spreading hatred against state institutions.

Pakistani politics may become more destructive in the coming months. Any further delay in the elections is likely to lead to massive PTI protests, which will require the deployment of more security forces. The potential for serious violence to break out is particularly high if Khan is arrested and prevented from running for public office. Meanwhile, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif convicted of corruption and awaiting trial in London, could negotiate his return and mobilize government supporters to take on the opposition.

The political stalemate and confusion between the authorities' efforts to keep Pakistan's economy afloat and curb growing domestic terrorism naturally raises the possibility that the military, along with the judiciary, might decide to intervene at some point.

They can and do apply the infamous doctrine of necessity. Therefore, the confused and alarming political landscape of Pakistan has had far-reaching consequences for the country and its people. However, there are also signs of hope and progress, as citizens and leaders work to address these challenges and build a more stable and inclusive society.



## Briefs

## NA passes bill to curtail CJP's powers

FROM PAGE 01  
He said that all institutions have to follow the laws passed by the Parliament. The minister quoted the Article 191 of the Constitution which says that subject to the constitution and law, the Supreme Court may make rules regulating the practice and procedure of the Court. Tarar said that the bill includes the right to appeal, adding that it was time for the Parliament to legislate on it now.

Leader of the opposition leader in the National Assembly Raja Riaz Ahmad appreciated the government's efforts in bringing the bill and said it will ensure the freedom of the judiciary and rule of law.

He was of the view that the bill would ensure speedy justice for common people. Raja Riaz Ahmad said that the bill had the input of the opposition and the government for the sake of providing justice to the poor and ending any discrimination. PTI MNA Ahmed Hussain Dehaar, who is also a member of the National Standing Committee on Justice, congratulated the government for introducing the bill for the welfare of the people. He was of the view that the bill would serve the interest of the poor and said it was the long-standing demand of the lawyers' community.

## Lawyers Pass resolution...

FROM PAGE 01  
Mr Zubairi added nobody could stop the polls as it was clearly enshrined in the constitution mentioning judicial power a redline and it could not be ended. In short, it was demanded from the ECP to hold polls as per the decision of the ECP saying the SCBA did not belong to any political party.

## Maryam warns CJP dont...

FROM PAGE 01  
The PML-N chief organiser alleged that Imran was being currently "facilitated" by a few judges. Lashing out at former CJPs Saqib Nisar and Asif Khosa, she alleged their children were present in the visitor's gallery on the day of the verdict against PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif in the Panama Papers case and "were celebrating that Nawaz Sharif was about to be disqualified".

Referring to comments made by CJP Bandial earlier this week regarding queues for subsidised wheat and the cost of elections during the SC hearing on postponement of polls in Punjab, she said: "There are long lines for wheat in the country but look closely [...] there are longer lines of those seeking justice."

## Polls held even during peak of...

FROM PAGE 01  
Prior to that Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail on Monday had cast doubt on the judgement handed down in the March 1 suo motu regarding elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, saying that the proceedings stood dismissed by a majority of 4-3, and contended that the chief justice of Pakistan did not have the power to restructure benches without the consent of the respective judges. The apex court is expected to pass a judgement on the case.

## UAE Envoy to Pakistan..

FROM PAGE 01  
The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates appreciated development-oriented economic policies of Pakistan initiated by the present government and expressed the interest of the UAE in augmenting and furthering investment in various sectors of the economy of Pakistan. Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar welcomed the investment proposals of the UAE in Pakistan and extended full support and cooperation by the government.



ISLAMABAD: Thailand Football team posing for a picture during Diplomatic Football league match played at the UAE embassy. – DNA

## UN chief calls for new int'l body to find 'disappeared' Syrians

"The whereabouts and fate of an estimated 100,000 Syrians remains unknown," he said. "People in every part of the country and across all divides have loved ones who are missing, including family members who were forcibly disappeared, abducted, tortured, and arbitrarily detained."

NEW YORK: Top UN officials called for creating a new institution to help locate tens of thousands of missing Syrians and bring peace to their families, as the General Assembly debated on Tuesday the human rights situation in the country.

Entering its 13th year of brutal civil war and scrambling to recover from devastating earthquakes in February, Syria and its people "deserve peace" and to know the truth about the fate of their loved ones, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

"The whereabouts and fate of an estimated 100,000 Syrians re-

mains unknown," he said. "People in every part of the country and across all divides have loved ones who are missing, including family members who were forcibly disappeared, abducted, tortured, and arbitrarily detained."

Commending the courageous work of Syrian family, victim, and survivor associations and other civil society groups to chart a path forward, the UN chief called on the General Assembly to establish a new international institution.

"We must work to resolve this deeply painful situation with determination and urgency," Guterres said, urging all Member States to act and calling on the Government

of Syria and on all parties to the conflict to cooperate.

"It is essential to help Syrians heal and remove an obstacle to securing sustainable peace," he said. "The international community has a moral obligation to help ease their plight."

Echoing that call and elaborating on the parameters of such a new mechanism, Volker Turk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, shared findings of consultations with major stakeholders, from the International Committee of the Red Cross to Syrian associations. Those consulted, along with a number of Member States, had agreed that a new, dedicat-

ed entity should be tasked with streamlining existing efforts.

The mechanism would be centred on victims and survivors, emphasize gender sensitivity, ensure inclusivity, operate without discrimination, and would be guided, in all search activities, by the working presumption that the missing person is alive and in urgent need of help, Turk said, drawing on stakeholder consultations.

"The crisis of missing persons in Syria is crushing in its enormity," he said. "The continuing absence of many tens of thousands of people, from small children to elderly men and women, cries out for strong action. This shared pain

in neighbourhoods and villages across the country must be addressed. Reconciliation will remain distant without such work."

Proposing several additional parameters, he said the mechanism must be located where survivors and families feel safe, be fully grounded in human rights, and ensure transparency and adaptability. "There will be no enduring peace in Syria without progress on these issues that are fundamental to families, communities, and society as a whole," he said. "Steps in this direction can begin to restore trust between divided communities. We owe the people of Syria no less."

## Rybakina glides into semis, Pegula battles back



ELENA Rybakina moved into the semi-finals of the Miami Open with a confident 6-3, 6-0 win over Italy's Martina Trevisan at Hard Rock Stadium on Tuesday to extend her winning streak to 12 matches.

American world number three Jessica Pegula had to dig deep to come back from a set down to beat Russian Anastasia Potapova 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/2), saving two match points, in a match which finished at 1:30 am.

Wimbledon champion Rybakina, who competes for Kazakhstan, remains in strong contention for the "Sunshine Double" of Indian Wells and Miami WTA titles after she beat Aryna Sabalenka in California earlier this month. Sabalenka is the biggest obstacle to Rybakina triumphing again with the Belarusian in impressive form in South Florida. Sabalenka powered past Barbora Krejčíková in straight sets in her fourth-round

match on Monday and faces Romanian Sorana Cirstea in the last eight on Wednesday. Rybakina took charge of her match with Trevisan when the Italian double-faulted to hand her opponent a break and a 3-1 advantage in the first set.

Although Trevisan broke back to get back on serve at 4-3, Rybakina took full control and won the remaining eight games to wrap up the win in 69 minutes. The world number seven said she was feeling the pace of her tough schedule.

"It would be better to feel better on the courts physically, but this is something I have to play with, and for now I am getting through, which I'm happy with," she said. "I didn't serve that well, the percentage of the first serve, but in the important moments like 30-40, 30-40 and so on, I was serving aces," added the Moscow-born player.

"I think it's just important to find these moments and to push, and for now I'm

doing well even not being super fresh."

Pegula has got off to flying starts in her matches in Miami and she broke early again to go 2-0 up in the first set, but Potapova struck back winning the next five games with some aggressive winners and then holding to take the set.

Pegula was in control in the second but Potapova was determined in the third and put herself in position to win the contest but she couldn't convert on her two match points and was forced into a tie-break. The American looked exhausted, but she found the energy for a strong finale, winning the breaker 7-2. "I don't know how I turned it around," said Pegula after the victory. "I just kept going. It's a huge win. I haven't been that physically tired in a really long time. Just the humidity was taking so much out of me. It was just really tough, so really it was just pure will," she added.

## Tottenham Paratici banned worldwide by Fifa

London: Tottenham Hotspur managing director Fabio Paratici may have to step away from his role after Fifa extended his ban in Italy worldwide. Paratici was given a 30-month ban in January after his former club Juventus were found guilty of false accounting. The 50-year-old was sporting director and managing director at Juventus before joining Tottenham in June 2021. Paratici and Juventus have both appealed against the decision. Paratici's initial ban only applied to Italian football, meaning he was able to continue working at Tottenham. The extension of the ban coincides with Tottenham's search for a new manager following the departure of Antonio Conte. Conte left Spurs on Sunday with the club fourth in the Premier League but having been knocked out of the Champions League and FA Cup in recent weeks. Paratici told the club website on Tuesday he and the club were "focused" on moving forward and finding a replacement. "Fifa can confirm that following a request by Italian FA (FIGC), chairperson of Fifa disciplinary committee has decided to extend the sanctions imposed by FIGC on several football officials to have worldwide effect," a statement from the world's governing body read. – Agencies

## IOC backs return of Russian athletes as individuals

LAUSANNE: Olympic chiefs on Tuesday recommended the return to competition of Russian and Belarusian athletes as individual neutrals, but refused to give a timeline on their potential participation at next year's Paris Olympics. IOC president Thomas Bach said the body's Executive Board had recommended to international federations and international sports event organisers that "athletes with a Russian or a Belarusian passport must compete only as Individual Neutral Athletes". The move to "postpone" the decision about Russian and Belarusian athletes competing at the Games in France was welcomed by Ukraine. "The decision on the admission of Russians and Belarusians to the Olympics in 2024 has been postponed," Ukraine's Sports Minister Vadym Gutzeit said on Facebook. "We will also make joint efforts so that not a single Z-patriot gets into international sports arenas," he added in an apparent reference to pro-war Russians. – DNA

## President eyes 'crises resolution role' in current situation

The president observed that use of force could give rise to issues and in democratic countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday stressed that he had always played a role for the resolution of national issues and was now ready to make such efforts with 'crises resolution role' in the current situation.

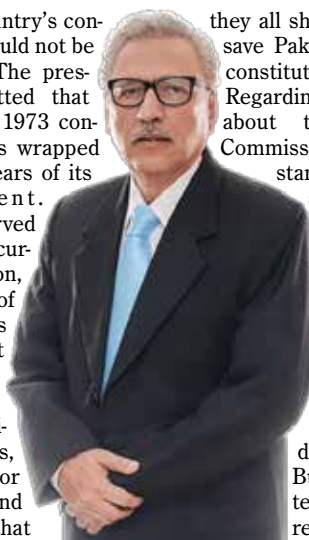
In an interview with a private TV channel (Geo News), the president to a query regarding approval of a bill regarding judicial reforms, replied that it could have been tabled at an appropriate time, considering the ongoing situation.

He said that he had heard different analysis, opinions and discussions related to the judicial reforms and opined that it might be addressed after taking the judiciary into confidence as well. Responding to another question, he said that he would take a right decision over the said bill after receiving the final document.

The president observed that use of force could give rise to issues and in democratic countries, issues were being addressed through development of consensus. He said that pressures on institutions led to cracks and stressed

that the 'country's constitution should not be disfigured'. The president regretted that in the past, 1973 constitution was wrapped after four years of its enforcement.

He observed that in the current situation, division of thinking was apparent whether it was within the political parties, parliament or judiciary and underlined that



they all should strive to save Pakistan and the constitution.

Regarding a question about the Election Commission of Pakistan's decision to set new date for polls in Punjab, the president said that the Supreme Court was seized of the issue and it would decide it. But after listening and reading to me-

dia reports, he wondered if the holding of election was depended upon these issues. The nation wanted a responsible outcome, he added.

The president to a query, replied that if polls were not held within 90 days, the concerned institutions should accept the responsibility for the delay. The president said in the tussle between the democratic forces, there might be opportunities for the undemocratic forces.

About prime minister's letter in response to his earlier letter, the president maintained that due to the responsibility of his office,

he could not remain 'deaf and dumb' regarding the recent human rights incidents as highlighted by media.

He said during the tenure of previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government, he had talked to then minister for human rights over such issues as he could not ignore them. He agreed that rights' issue during 2021 was not good and it grew in the succeeding year.

The president to another question, said that difference of opinion in judiciary was possible as witnessed in the US and the UK, but he stressed, personality-based differences were not good.

## Imran Khan responsible for crises: Bilawal

FROM PAGE 01

living in Afghanistan and settled them in the merged tribal areas. The foreign minister said that the people of the merged areas of erstwhile FATA had given unmatched sacrifices for eliminating terrorism and restoration of peace across the country. He said that non-political actors were responsible for bringing Imran Khan into power.

He said that democracy in the country had been restored by the sacrifices of the political workers and their leadership.

Bilawal Bhutto said that keeping in view the interest of the country and for the strengthening of democracy, two main political parties had signed the Charter of Democracy (CoD). After this, he said, the country was moving to progress, prosperity and development. He said that the constitution of 1973 was restored to its original shape and the 18th amendment approved with consensus to bring harmony in the provinces. He said that after signing of the 18th amendment, National Finance Commission (NFC) had been given to provinces and gave the identification to people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## People to resist attack on SC

FROM PAGE 01

violation of Constitution." "Namaloom Afraad" - the 'Unknowns' are breaking into PTI workers and Social Media teams homes, terrorizing and even abducting their family members if person being sought not present," Imran Khan added.

## Khan's non-bailable arrest...

FROM PAGE 01

appeared before high court two days ago. During the previous date of hearing, the judge said that immunity had been granted many times. He said Imran has not yet submitted his medical report or given any concrete reasons for exemption from appearance. Moreover, his application was signed by his lawyer and not by himself, he added.

The prosecutor requested the court to dismiss Imran's application and issue a non-bailable arrest warrant for him. On it, the court reserved its verdict.

Earlier, the lawyers of former Imran requested the court to restore the bailable warrant. He argued that Imran has security concerns, his life is in danger. He has survived a bid on his life. The Islamabad High Court has also taken notice of withdrawal of his security. It merits mentioning that the PTI chairman on Aug 20 condemned police as well as the judiciary over the alleged custodial torture on Shahbaz Gill and announced that his party would file cases against Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the DIG and AD&S J Zeba Chaudhry. He was booked under various sections of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). Besides, Islamabad High Court (IHC) also initiated contempt of court proceedings against him.

## IMF rejects fuel subsidy

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan has been in virtual contact with the IMF and the institution has insisted for preparation of revised plan of subsidy on petroleum, sources said.

"The government had proposed subsidy on fuel for motorcycles and small 800 CC vehicle owners," according to sources.

The International Monetary Fund is demanding of the government for an effective and targeted subsidy to the poor segment of the society, sources added.

Earlier, the IMF wanted friendly countries to honor their commitments to fund cash-strapped Pakistan before the multilateral lender signs off on a \$6.5 billion bailout program. Pakistan was trying to get written assurances from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) about external financing to strike a staff-level agreement with the IMF.



## Briefs

## Astronomers discover one of biggest black holes

PARIS: One of the largest black holes ever recorded has been discovered using a new technique that could spot thousands more of the insatiable celestial monsters in the coming years, according to astronomers. The ultramassive black hole, one of just four ever observed, is more than 30 billion times the mass of the Sun, a new study said. It is the first black hole ever observed using a phenomenon called gravitational lensing, in which light travelling towards us from a distant galaxy appears to magnify and bend inwards, giving away the presence of a dark giant.

James Nightingale, an astronomer at the UK's Durham University and the study's lead author, told AFP the process was "similar to shining light through the base of a wine glass". He said it was "very fortuitous" that the light of a galaxy in the distant universe travelled extremely close to this black hole, which is roughly two billion light years from Earth.

It could even be the biggest black hole ever recorded, but it was difficult to say for sure given the varying techniques and uncertainties involved, he added. Supermassive black holes sit at the centre of galaxies using their vast gravitational pull to gobble up stars like specks of dust, not even allowing light to escape. Previous black holes of this size have been observed when their voracious devouring gives off huge amounts of light at the margins – or by measuring the orbit of stars that speed up as they pass by.—APP

## Russia starts drills with Yars ballistic missile

MOSCOW: Russia has started military exercises involving the Yars intercontinental ballistic missile, the Defense Ministry said on Wednesday. The inspection and drills, taking place in three Siberian regions, including Omsk and Novosibirsk, engage over 3,000 servicemen and 300 units of military equipment, the ministry said. A special commission of the Strategic Rocket Forces is examining coordination of actions of the military while performing the appointed tasks, it added.

The military exercises are held in accordance with the ministry's training plan for 2023, and are aimed at training maneuvering, it said. "Also, strategic rocketeers will carry out a set of measures to disguise and counteract modern means of aerial reconnaissance in cooperation with formations and units of the Central Military District and the Aerospace Forces," the ministry said.—Agencies

## NZ labor productivity records largest growth

ISLAMABAD: New Zealand's labor productivity rose 2.2 percent in the year ended March 2022, the largest growth in the measure since 2010, according to figures released by the statistics department Stats NZ on Wednesday.

The 2.2 percent rise in labor productivity follows flat labor productivity in the year ended March 2021. These movements should be considered in the context of the different COVID-19 prevention measures that affected both years ended March 2021 and March 2022 respectively. "The rise in labor productivity reflects output increasing at a greater rate than labor inputs over the March 2022 year," national accounts industry and production senior manager Ruvani Ratnayake said. Labor productivity measures the number of goods and services (output) produced per hour of labor. A rise was also seen in multifactor productivity, which rose by 1.2 percent. Multifactor productivity captures the effects of unobserved inputs such as technological progress, efficiency gains, and economies of scale, Ratnayake said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A large number of deserving people stand in long queue outside Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Center to take monthly support Income at Sector G-7 in Federal Capital.—Online

## China vows to 'fight back' if Tsai meets with McCarthy

Beijing's foreign ministry said Washington "blindly connives with and supports Taiwan independence and secessionist forces"

BEIJING: China vowed on Wednesday to "fight back" should Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen meet the US House Speaker during a trip to the United States. Tsai left on Wednesday for the United States, from where she will head to Guatemala and Belize to shore up ties with diplomatic allies. On her way back to Taiwan she will stop in California, where US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy had said he would meet her. China claims the democratic island as part of its territory to be retaken one day and, under its "One China" principle, no country may maintain official ties with both Beijing and Taipei.

Beijing warned Wednesday that it was "resolutely opposed" to any meeting between Tsai and McCarthy and vowed to take "resolute measures to fight back" if it goes ahead. "If (Tsai) engages with US House Speaker McCarthy, it will be another provocation that seriously violates the One China principle, undermines China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and undermines peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," Taiwan Affairs Office spokesperson Zhu Fenglian said. Tsai's trip follows Honduras's decision this month to open diplomatic relations with Beijing, leaving Belize and

Guatemala among just 13 countries that have official ties with Taipei. "External pressure will not hinder our determination to go global," Tsai told reporters at the airport before leaving. "We are calm and confident. We will not succumb and we will not provoke (others)." After first visiting New York, Tsai will meet her Guatemalan counterpart Alejandro Giammattei and Belize Prime Minister John Briceno in their respective countries, her office said. She will then stop in Los Angeles on her way home. McCarthy has said he will meet Tsai in California, although the talks are yet to be con-

firmed by Taiwanese authorities. A visit by McCarthy's predecessor to Taiwan last year sparked an angry response from Beijing, with the Chinese military conducting drills at an unprecedented scale around the island. "There's absolutely no reason for China to use that as a pretext to overreact or to engage in further coercion directed at Taiwan," a senior US administration official told reporters on condition of anonymity, adding that the stopover did not represent a change in US policy. Beijing's foreign ministry said Washington "blindly connives with and supports Taiwan independence and

secessionist forces". Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning urged the United States at a briefing on Wednesday to stop any form of official exchanges with Taiwan and to "stop the dangerous act of undermining the political foundation of China-US relations". Analysts say the US stopover comes at a key time, with Beijing having ramped up military, economic and diplomatic pressure on Taiwan since Tsai came to power in 2016, poaching nine of its diplomatic allies. "Beijing's attempts to poach Taiwan's diplomatic partners will lead to Taiwan developing closer ties with the United States," said

James Lee, a researcher on US-Taiwan relations at Academia Sinica. The United States remains Taiwan's most important ally – and its biggest arms supplier – despite switching its diplomatic recognition to Beijing in 1979. "The loss of official relations with third countries will be offset by a deepening of Taiwan's unofficial relations," Lee said. Recent visits by a Czech delegation and a German minister met rebukes from Beijing. One of Tsai's most prominent domestic opponents, ex-president Ma Ying-jeou, was in China on Wednesday, the first such trip by a former Taiwanese leader.—DNA

## British King Charles begins visit in Germany

BERLIN: British King Charles III and Queen Consort Camilla arrived in Berlin on Wednesday on their first overseas state visit.

The royal couple was welcomed by state officials at the military area of Berlin-Brandenburg Airport, and greeted by a 21-gun salute.

In the afternoon, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and his wife, Elke Budenbender, will host a welcome ceremony for the royal guests at the capital's landmark Brandenburg Gate. Hundreds of people were lined up at the historic center of Berlin to watch the official ceremony. In the evening, President Steinmeier will host a state banquet at Bellevue Palace in honor of the King and the Queen Consort.

During the three-day visit, King Charles will also meet Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and is scheduled to address the German parliament on Thursday. Charles and Camilla will also visit a refugee center in the former Tegel airport and talk to Ukrainian refugees. The royal visit comes at a time when the UK and the EU are seeking closer ties, three years after Britain's exit from the bloc. "The state visit of King Charles and his wife Camilla is seen by many as a rapprochement with Europe and Germany - after the alienation caused by Brexit," German public broadcaster ARD reported. German President Steinmeier said the visit prior to the coronation ceremony on May 6 testifies to the close friendship between the UK and Germany. "This state visit is all the more special because the King decided to come to us in Germany even before his coronation. This timely visit underscores the close. — Agencies

## Palestine people remember Land Day

DNA

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian people remember the Annual Commemoration of Land Day. It is the day in which the Israeli occupation laid hand over and confiscated 21 thousand dunums of land in Al-Jalil, Al-Muthalath and Al-Naqab on the 30th of March 1976. On this day, the Israeli occupation confiscated the land and responded violently to the protestations, killing six young Palestinian demonstrators. Accordingly, this day has become a commemoration to embody the belonging of the Palestinian people to their homeland, and to commemorate those young martyrs. The Israeli occupation controls more than 85% of the

land of historical Palestine. The estimated number of the Palestinians by the end of 2022 was about 14.3 million; about 5.4 million live in the State of Palestine and about 1.7 million Palestinians live in the 1948 territories. In addition, about 6.4 million Palestinians live in the Arab countries, whereas almost 761 thousand Palestinians live in foreign countries. While the number of Jews in historical Palestine is 7.1 million, and thus the number of Palestinians and Jews in historical Palestine equals by the end of the year 2022, at 7.1 million for each. The Israeli occupation is exploiting more than 85% of the total area of the lands of the historical Palestine. It is also worth mentioning that Jews in the era of the

British Mandate exploited only 1,682 Km2, a percentage of 6.2% of the lands of the historical Palestine. In addition the Israeli occupation used the land classification according to the Oslo Accords (A, B and C) to tighten their control over the Palestinian land, especially in areas classified as (C) which are under the full control of the Israeli occupation; settlements in terms of security, planning and construction, where 76% of the total area classified as (C) is directly exploited by the Israeli occupation; settlements in regional councils are controlling 63% of it. While the area of authority regions in the Israeli settlements in the West Bank (Including closed regions allocated for expanding those settlements) is about 537 km2 as

it is by the end of 2022; representing about 10% of the total area of the West Bank. Whereas the confiscated areas for the purposes of military bases and military training locations represent about 18% of the West Bank area, in addition to the Annexation and Expansion Wall that has isolated more than 10% of the area of the West Bank. Consequently, more than 219 Palestinian localities were badly affected by the establishment of the Annexation and Expansion Wall. In addition, and since 1967, the Israeli occupation authorities have confiscated about 353 thousand dunums of Palestinian lands and classified them as natural reserves in preparation for their seizure.

## Mass mobilization continues in France

PARIS: Mass mobilization in France continued against the government's pension reform. The 10th round of planned mobilization since January was held on Tuesday, with thousands of workers protesting and walking out in various sectors, including transportation, energy, and education. Protests were held in other cities as well, including Lyon, Rennes, and Nantes. The social movement intensified when President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne decided to use special constitutional powers to adopt the reform without parliamentary consent on March 16. More than 1,000 people were arrested during the protests since that date. A total of 13,000 police officers ensured security during the nationwide protests on Tuesday. Trade unions fixed a new mobilization day for April 6. Thousands of tons of garbage piled up in Paris streets due to the garbage collectors' walkout since March 6. Transportation workers' strike severely disrupted the traffic in the city of Rennes, and half of the trains were suspended in the Parisian region. 16.3% of the gas stations in the country, 29.2% of those in Paris are suffering from supply issues. The French Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGAC) asked the airline companies to cancel up to 25% of their flights in Paris due to airport staff strikes on Thursday and Friday.—DNA

## Nowruz and the theories of international relations

DR. MANDANA TISHEHYAR

"In international relations, there are no permanent friends and permanent enemies; there are only permanent interests!"

Professors and students of international relations are familiar with this quote. This is a statement by Hans J. Morgenthau, American Professor of International Relations, in his 1948 volume entitled Politics Among Nations. In the beginning years of the bipolar world and only a few years after the end of the WWII, which left behind innumerable ruins in the world, Morgenthau's speech was so appealing and became the basis for the establishment of the Realist school of thought in international relations. However, the world witnessed several ups and downs, the relations between nations developed in various aspects, and new patterns of friendship and enmity emerged. The Realist approach, which was considered as one of the most influential scientific

theories during the Cold War, could no longer explain the new events and trends in the relations between governments and nations. Accordingly, the bases for the formation of international relations were redefined. The establishment of EU and other regional institutions was indicative of the role of new elements in the relations between nations. Even the term "interest" assumed a new sense, and identity and cultural connections, as defined by Alexander Wendt in his Theory of Constructivism in the late 1990s, were considered as the bases for the formation of interests.

Therefore, rather than leading to the formation of a unipolar world and the globalisation of economy, politics, culture, and society, the Cold War era's end resulted in connections between political units with similar identities in different regions. To secure their national interests, governments tried to establish transnational units so they could play a more stable, powerful role in the international arena. The relations between countries at the regional level formed new patterns of international partnerships. In the meantime, the identity links, which tended to define shared

interests, were in turn formed by cultural ties. In fact, identity was considered as a construct of individuals' and societies' cultural features.

In this way, the world today is a "regionalised" world where the links between societies with similar cultures are considered the basis for partnerships between nations and governments. New technologies have also provided an appropriate ground for the development of such a new model. This is why we can see how a key element like "border" has started to be undervalued in the relations between nations. Even the traditional sense of "sovereignty" has been redefined in this Brave New World, and the concept of "region" has undergone considerable changes. Region is no longer considered as something to be delineated on geographical maps. In the world today, a region consists of a group of communities which have come together according to shared cultural and identity elements and within the framework of economic, political, scientific, and other relations, and which cooperate to bring about shared interests. Therefore, evidently, the region can also be a new construct resulting from a redefinition of the

shared cultural elements, which connect societies.

During recent years, Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have tried to register Nowruz as a human intangible cultural heritage in UNESCO, and since 2010, according to the United Nations General Assembly's resolution no. A/RES/64/253, 21 March has been named as the "International Nowruz Day". Meanwhile, the list of countries where Nowruz is celebrated is longer than the ones enlisted and encompasses territories from Albania in Eastern Europe to China and Mongolia in East Asia. It can be clearly seen that the countries in the Nowruz Cultural Region enjoy a considerable diversity. From a geographical viewpoint, the countries include the regions of Western Asia, Caucasus, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and South Asia. From a religious viewpoint, followers of various religions, from Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Judaism to various Muslim religions are all celebrating Nowruz. From an ethnic point of view also, the Now-

ruz Cultural Region includes a multitude of ancient tribes who have lived in this civilizational sphere for a long time and shaped the Culture of Nowruz together. Linguistic diversity is another major aspect in the Nowruz Cultural Region. On the one hand, the inhabitants of this civilizational region have created deep linguistic links between communities, which have led to a more empathetic understanding of the shared cultural and identity concepts, values, and norms. On the other hand, by preserving and continued use of the different dialects and languages of the region, they have formed a beautiful cultural rainbow. In this way, thanks for its reliance on tolerance and forbearance, and through spreading values such as friendship, kindness, reconciliation, and mutual assistance, the Culture of Nowruz has succeeded in connecting several civil societies in the world today. The universality of Nowruz's cultural values has also enabled it to play an identity-making role at transnational level, contribute to the formation of a cultural region, and draw on ancient traditions and rituals to strengthen the

humanitarian attitudes in the contemporary world.

As a shared heritage for the nations of the Nowruz civilizational sphere, the Culture of Nowruz needs to be formulated within the framework of modern theories of International Relations, especially the theories of Regionalism. Moreover, according to the existing common strategies, it needs to form a new broad community, which secures the economic, political, and security interests of governments and nations. Shaping a "Discourse of the Nowruz Cultural Region" is a task which, rather than alliances between political leaders, requires an intellectual and practical co-operation between thinkers and academics in the countries of the region to provide new definitions for national interests, national security, governance, border, friendship, and enmity within their shared cultural values' framework. It can open wonderful new vistas and usher Nowruz Cultural Region into a whole new era of closeness. The author is Faculty member, Department of Regional Studies in ECO College, Allameh Tabataba'i University & Head of the board, Iranian Peace Studies Scientific Association.



## Briefs

## SAPM Irfan Qadir tenders resignation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday accepted the resignation of Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Irfan Qadir.

Irfan tendered his resignation in the morning which was accepted by the prime minister and a notification was issued. The prime minister appointed Irfan as special assistant in September last year and his status was equal to a federal minister. It is reported that Irfan tendered his resignation after embarrassment in the Supreme Court and the prime minister accepted it with immediate effect.

He appeared before the Supreme Court as Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) representative on PTI petition against postponement of elections. The chief justice refused to accept him as ECP counsel and he left the court.

## Video of deadly fire at Mexico migrant centre causes outrage

WEB DESK

MEXICO CITY: Outrage is growing in Mexico following a fire at a migrant centre in Ciudad Juárez that killed 38 migrants. Unverified footage has emerged, which appears to show the moment the fire started at the centre run by Mexico's National Migration Institute (INE). Uniformed officials seem to walk away as the blaze erupts in a corner, leaving a group of men behind in what appears to be a locked cell.

The men unsuccessfully try to open the barred door as smoke quickly spreads. The 32-second clip appears to come from a security camera inside the facility, which is located just south of the border crossing at the Stanton-Lerdo bridge, which links Ciudad Juárez with the city of El Paso in Texas. Mexico's interior minister did not deny the video's provenance when asked about the footage by a Mexican journalist. The minister, Adán Augusto López, said the government had had access to the video shortly after the fire but he did not comment about it any further.

The footage has been widely shared on Twitter and published by a number of Mexican newspapers with many people expressing their shock at what they said was a failure by the uniformed staff to act. They point to the moment at which one of the men in uniform seems to ignore a man behind the barred door, who appears to try to open it and fails as the flames spread.

## Russian spies more effective than army, say experts

MONITORING DESK

LONDON: Russia's security and intelligence services have achieved greater success in Ukraine than its army, says a leading UK defence think tank.

Russian spy agencies began preparing for the invasion of Ukraine as far back as June 2021, says a report by the Royal United Services Institute (Rusi).

The Federal Security Service (FSB) has quickly dominated populations in occupied areas of Ukraine, Rusi adds.

The report was compiled using sources including captured documents, it says. Ukrainian intelligence officials, intercepted communications and on-the-ground research also contributed.

Researchers say the FSB has been able to download government computer hard drives to identify pro-Kyiv individuals that its agents want to arrest and interrogate.

Electronic warfare units have been deployed to cut off occupied parts of Ukraine from the outside world to help them enforce control, Rusi says.

## Zelenskyy: Any Russian victory could be perilous

Trump's likely Republican rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, also suggested that defending Ukraine in a "territorial dispute" with Russia was not a significant US national security priority

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned Tuesday that unless his nation wins a drawn-out battle in a key eastern city, Russia could begin building international support for a deal that could require Ukraine to make unacceptable compromises. He also invited the leader of China, long aligned with Russia, to visit.

If Bakhmut fell to Russian forces, their president, Vladimir Putin, would "sell this victory to the West, to his society, to China, to Iran," Zelenskyy said in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press.

"If he will feel some blood — smell that we are weak — he will push, push, push," Zelenskyy said in English, which he used for virtually all of the interview.

Since then, Ukraine — backed by much of the West — has surprised the world with the strength of its resistance against the larger, better-equipped Russian military. Ukrainian forces have held their capital, Kyiv, and pushed Russia back from other strategically important areas. But as the war enters its second year, Zelenskyy finds himself focused on keeping motivation high in both

his military and the general Ukrainian population — particularly the millions who have fled abroad and those living in relative comfort and security far from the front lines.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speaks during an interview with Julie Pace, senior vice president and executive editor of The Associated Press, on a train traveling from the Sumy region to Kyiv, Ukraine, Tuesday March 28, 2023. In the interview, Zelenskyy warned that unless his nation wins a drawn-out battle in the key eastern city of Bakhmut, Russia could begin building international support for a deal that could require Ukraine to make unacceptable compromises. (AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky) Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speaks during an interview with AP Executive Editor Julie Pace. (AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky) Zelenskyy is also well aware that his country's success has been in great part due to waves of international military support, particularly from the United States and Western Europe. But some in the United States — including Republican Donald Trump, the former American president

and current 2024 candidate — have questioned whether Washington should continue to supply Ukraine with billions of dollars in military aid.

Trump's likely Republican rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, also suggested that defending Ukraine in a "territorial dispute" with Russia was not a significant U.S. national security priority. He later walked that statement back after facing criticism from other corners of the GOP.

Zelenskyy didn't mention the names of Trump or any other Republican politicians — figures he might have to deal with if they prevailed in 2024 elections. But he did say that he worries the war could be impacted by shifting political forces in Washington.

"The United States really understands that if they stop helping us, we will not win," he said in the interview. He sipped tea as he sat on a narrow bed in the cramped, unadorned sleeper cabin on a state railway train. The president's carefully calibrated railroad trip was a remarkable journey across land through a country at war. Zelenskyy, who has become a recogniza-

ble face across the world as he doggedly tells his side of the story to nation after nation, used the morale-building journey to carry his considerable clout to regions close to the front lines.

He traveled with a small cadre of advisers and a large group of heavily armed security officials dressed in battlefield fatigues. His destinations included ceremonies marking the one-year anniversary of the liberation of towns in the Sumy region and visits with troops stationed at front-line positions near Zaporizhzhia. Each visit was kept under wraps until after he departed.

Zelenskyy recently made a similar visit near Bakhmut, where Ukrainian and Russian forces have been locked for months in a grinding and bloody battle. While some Western military analysts have suggested that the city is not of significant strategic importance, Zelenskyy warned that a loss anywhere at this stage in the war could put Ukraine's hard-fought momentum at risk. "We can't lose the steps because the war is a pie — pieces of victories. Small victories, small steps," he said. — Agencies

## Paragon City reference against Khawaja brothers sent back to NAB

LAHORE: An accountability court in the Punjab capital on Wednesday scrapped the reference against Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique and his brother Khawaja Salman Rafique owing to a lack of jurisdiction and sent it back to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

The judge announced the verdict reserved earlier in the day after hearing arguments on acquittal pleas filed by the leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the Paragon Housing Society case.

The court observed that the amendment to the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) barred it from proceeding on such references. During the hearing, the lawyer of Khawaja brothers, Amjad Parvez, argued that his clients were neither shareholder nor hold any position in the housing society. He said the NAB had failed to present any concrete evidence against them in the case and pleaded the court to acquit them. — DNA

## Ambassador designate call on FM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Ukraine Major retired Nadir Khan and Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Kazakhstan Nauman Bashir Bhatti on Wednesday called on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. In separate meetings, the foreign minister expressed his good wishes to both the ambassadors designate on their new duties. Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Talking to ambassador-designate to Ukraine, the foreign minister said that Pakistan attached high importance to its bilateral ties with Ukraine and Russia. Pakistan supported peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the issue, he reiterated. In a meeting with ambassador-designate to Kazakhstan, the foreign minister said that Pakistan valued its bilateral ties with the Central Asian Countries.

He expressed the hope that the ambassador-designate would further strengthen the bilateral cooperation between the two countries in diverse fields. Meanwhile, Pakistan's Ambassador designate to Tajikistan Muhammad Saeed Sarwar also called on the foreign minister. Expressing his good wishes on the ambassador's new assignment, the foreign minister stressed upon further expansion of bilateral trade and economic ties between the two countries. He observed that both countries enjoyed deeply rooted historic and cultural relations and underlined that there existed vast opportunities for bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan in different sectors.

## Pakistan, Malaysia agree to revitalize bilateral mechanisms

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Malaysia have agreed to enhance engagement and dialogue at all levels, revitalize existing bilateral mechanisms and establish new areas of engagement.

This was agreed in the second round of Pakistan-Malaysia Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC), which was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Tuesday, the Foreign Office said in a statement. The talks were co-chaired by Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia & Pacific), Mumtaz Zahra Baloch and Dato' Norman Bin Muhammad, Deputy Secretary General (Bilateral Affairs), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

The two sides reviewed the entire spectrum of Pakistan-Malaysia relations and renewed their commitment to further strengthen bilateral strategic partnerships.

"The two countries will increase cooperation across multiple domains including bilateral trade and investment, defence and

security, agriculture and food security, energy, health, education, and science and technology," the statement said.

It was decided that parliamentary exchanges and people-to-people contacts would be encouraged, including the hiring of additional Pakistani manpower to Malaysia.

There was a convergence of views on a range of regional and global issues of mutual interest, including regional peace and security, islamophobia and

climate change.

The two sides reiterated their interest in close cooperation at multilateral platforms including in OIC and the UN.

Pakistan also expressed a desire for enhanced engagement with ASEAN, leading to a full-dialogue partnership.

The Additional Foreign Secretary conveyed gratitude to Malaysia for its generous support and humanitarian assistance for flood-affected people in Pakistan. — APP

## AI advancement threat to humanity: Experts

Mr Musk, owner of Twitter and chief executive of car company Tesla, is listed as an external adviser to the organisation

WEB DESK

CALIFORNIA: Key figures in artificial intelligence want training of powerful AI systems to be suspended amid fears of a threat to humanity.

They have signed an open letter warning of potential risks, and say the race to develop AI systems is out of control.

Twitter chief Elon Musk is

among those who want training of AIs above a certain capacity to be halted for at least six months. Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak and some researchers at DeepMind also signed.

OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, recently released GPT-4 - a state-of-the-art technology, which has impressed observers with its ability to do tasks such as answering questions about objects in images.

Mr Musk, owner of Twitter and

chief executive of car company Tesla, is listed as an external adviser to the organisation.

Advanced AIs need to be developed with care, the letter says, but instead, "recent months have seen AI labs locked in an out-of-control race to develop

and deploy ever more powerful digital minds that no-one - not even their creators - can understand, predict, or reliably control".

The letter warns that AIs could flood information channels with misinformation, and replace jobs with automation.

The letter follows a recent report from investment bank Goldman Sachs which said that while AI was likely to increase productivity, millions of jobs could become automated.

However, other experts told the BBC the effect of AI on the labour market was very hard to predict.

## LHC allows Shahbaz Gill to go to US once

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday heard the petitions filed for removing the name of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shahbaz Gill from Exit Control List (ECL) and allowed him to go to the United States (US) once for four weeks. A three-member LHC bench, headed by Chief Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti, heard the petition of Shahbaz Gill. Justice Jawad Hassan and Justice Abid Hussain Chattha were part of the three-member bench.

Shahbaz Gill appeared before the court along with his lawyer Hafeezur Rehman Advocate. Additional Attorney General Nasr Ahmed appeared on behalf of the federal government.

Dr Shahbaz Gill had moved the LHC on February 11, 2023 to withdraw his name from the ECL. Meanwhile, a case registered in Karachi against Shahbaz Gill was cancelled. The police submitted the report of the case registered at Memon Goth police station to the Sindh High Court (SHC). "There was no reason to register the case against Shahbaz Gill and others. So, the FIR has been cancelled," police said. The court disposed of the petition after the police report.

## Asad gets interim bail in terrorism case

DNA

LAHORE: A local court in Lahore has granted interim bail to PTI General Secretary Asad Umar in a terrorism case till April 7.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf general secretary again submitted his bail application to the anti-terrorism court as the court rejected his bail on Tuesday following his non-appearance.

Umar submitted his petition through barrister Salman Safdar. ATC Judge Abhar Gul Khan heard the petition. While accepting his interim bail, the judge directed Umar to submit surety bonds worth Rs100,000. He also stopped police from arresting the PTI leader.

It is pertinent to mention here that a terrorism case has been registered in Lahore's Shadman police station against Asad Umar and other PTI activists for their involvement in incidents of arson and attack on police on Canal Road.

## Russia stops sharing missile test info with US

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia will no longer give the U.S. advance notice about its missile tests, a senior Moscow diplomat said Wednesday, as its military deployed mobile launchers in Siberia in a show of the country's massive nuclear capability amid fighting in Ukraine. Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies that Moscow has halted all information exchanges with Washington after previously suspending its participation in the last remaining nuclear arms pact with the U.S.

Along with the data about the current state of the countries' nuclear forces routinely released every six months in compliance with the treaty, the parties also have exchanged advance warnings about test launches. Such notices have been an essential element of strategic stability for decades, allowing Russia and the United States to correctly interpret each other's moves and make sure that neither country mistakes a test launch for a missile attack. The termination of missile test warnings marks yet another attempt by Moscow to discourage the West from ramping up its support for Ukraine by pointing to Russia's massive nuclear arsenal. In recent days, President Vladimir Putin announced the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to the territory of Moscow's ally Belarus.

## Humza Yousaf sworn in as Scotland's leader

Yousaf, the first Muslim to lead a democratic western European nation, was dressed in a black shalwar kameez at Scotland's highest court, the Court of Session in Edinburgh, as his family watched on

DNA

EDINBURGH: Humza Yousaf was sworn in as Scotland's new leader on Wednesday in a ceremony that blended formal tradition with his Pakistani heritage before he announces appointments to his cabinet that risk worsening the deep divisions in his governing party. Yousaf, the first Muslim to lead a democratic western European nation, was dressed in a black shalwar kameez at Scotland's highest court, the Court of Session in Edinburgh, as his family watched on.

The 37-year-old pledged an oath of allegiance to King Charles. He has previously said he wants to replace the monarchy with an elected head of state if he achieves his dream of ending Scotland's three-centuries-long political union with England. Yousaf narrowly won a leadership race on Monday after a bruising contest that followed the surprise resignation last month of Nicola Sturgeon, who had dominated Scottish politics for almost a decade. The internal disagreements over the future of the pro-independence Scottish National Party and the country



re-emerged after Yousaf's main rival, Kate Forbes, quit the government.

Forbes turned down an offer to become the minister for rural affairs and islands, a step down from her previous role as finance minister, according to the BBC and Scottish newspapers.

Former health secretary Alex Neil, who backed Forbes, said the proposed post was "an insult and not a real effort to unite" the party. Yousaf had been expected to offer his leadership rival, whom he only defeated by only about 2,000 votes, a more senior role.

During his leadership campaign, Yousaf had said he would depart from Sturgeon's "inner circle" style of leadership in favour of a "big tent" approach. Forbes, who had questioned Yousaf's record in government during the leadership campaign, posted on Twitter a reminder of the closeness of the contest, while saying Yousaf had her "full support".

Yousaf said on Tuesday that Shona Robison — a close friend of Sturgeon — will serve as his deputy first minister. More appointments to cabinet roles are expected on Wednesday afternoon. — Agencies