

Friday, April 07, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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China's Xi Jinping willing to call Ukraine's Zelenskiy

Detailed News On Page-07

Kremlin sees no prospect of China mediation

Detailed News On Page-08



Hafeez gets MCC honorary life membership

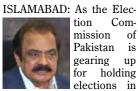




Briefs

Elections will ensue chaos

STAFF REPORT



Punjab on May 14, Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah reiterated on Thursday that controversial elections would ensue chaos in the country. Addressing a ceremony at the Lawyers Complex, the PML-N Punjab president said the PML-N believed in serving people adding that the lawyers' fraternity was an essential part of our community. "The Lawyers Complex will incur Rs2billion in cost for construction and it will be completed in a year," he added. He went on to say that an attempt was being made to hold controversial elections adding that the PML-N was not afraid of elections.

Imran Khan weakening democracy

DNA



former PM Imran Khan of weakening democracy during a National Assembly session on Thursday. Mr Kaira's statement came in response to the ongoing debate surrounding the implementation of court decisions regarding the Punjab elections. According to the PPP leader, the court created a crisis and was involved in dividing the nation. He further criticized the judiciary, saying that they should not only give orders but also suggest ways to run the country. Mr Kaira also highlighted the demand for a full court bench to hear the Punjab and KP election case, which was not paid heed to by the court.

Sehr, Iftar Timing



Sehr: 04:21 am

Iftar: 06:37 pm Fiqa-e-Jafria Sehr: 04:11 am Iftar: 06:47 pm

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AJK President seeks OIC's proactive role to resolve Kashmir issue - Page 02

Chairman Senate, UAE envoy discuss bilateral relations - Page 03

ME Geopolitics Present Iranian Nuclear Program..

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Empower Sports will support Pakistani girls to excel in sports - Page 06

North Korea ready to hold nuclear test at any time - Page 07

Bakhmut: Wagner advances as Ukraine readies offensive - Page 08

Resolution passed

NA rejects SC's Punjab polls verdict

Calls it a 'minority decision', urges PM to not obey it

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Thursday passed a resolution rejecting the decision of a three-member bench of the Supreme Court in the Punjab elections delay case. The resolution was moved by BalochistanAwami Party legislator Khalid Magsi, who read it out on the floor of the house. "This house rejects the minority decision of the three-member bench and binds the prime minister and the cabinet not to implement the unconstitutional and unlawful decision," Magsi said as he read out the resolution.

The resolution referred to an earlier one passed in the NA on March 28. It stated stated that the previous resolution had demanded the implementation of the "majority decision taken by four SC judges" and that the top court should refrain from meddling in the country's political and administrative affairs. "But it was not accepted," the resolution said, lamenting that the "stance of no political party barring one was heard". "Instead, parliament's clear resolution and the majority decision of the four judges were completely ignored and the minority opinion of the three-member bench was imposed.'

The resolution said this was in violation of the apex court's traditions, precedents and procedures. "Parliament rejects the minority decision of the three-member bench and in accordance with the Constitution and law, declares that the decision of the majority bench is in force". The resolution said the house also endorsed the verdict issued by the Justice QaziFaez Isa-led bench regarding the postponement of cases filed under Article 184 (3) of the Constitution until amendments were made to Supreme Court

Continued on Page 06

PM calls NSC

A sister publication of CENTRELINE & DNA News Agency

Khayam Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Shehbaz Sharif has convened National Security Committee (NSC) meeting on Friday amid ongoing political, economic and terrorism challenges. The meeting will be attended by cabinet members of the prime ministers, services chiefs and others. Sources said the heads of the intelligence agencies would brief the participants on overall security situation in the country. They would also give briefing on security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab where the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has announced elections on May 14 in line with the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Sources added that the ongoing economic turmoil would also come under discussion as the South Asian country is reeling under record inflation amid delay in revival of the loan programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Pakistan's loan programme is yet to materialize months after it imposed additional taxes and increased energy prices and allowed free floating of currency to meet conditions laid forth by the IMF. The nation has missed mul-

meeting today

tiple deadlines to revive the deal.

Continued on Page 06

Army committed to defend sovereignty

COAS visits forward areas along Line of control (LOC)

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir said on Thursday that the army was resolved to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan against "all kinds of threats". According to a press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the army chief made the remarks while visiting forward areas along the Line of Control (LOC) today. The army chief was received by the Rawalpindi Corps Commander and briefed on the situation along the LoC and operational preparedness of the deployed formations. The ISPR statement said Gen Munir met officers and troops on the forward positions and emphasised upon the troops to extend all-out support to the local population, remain steadfast and discharge their duties with utmost sincerity and devotion.



"The COAS appreciated officers and men for maintaining continued vigil, remarkable operational preparedness and high state of morale," it stated. "Pakistan Army is resolved to defend sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan against all kinds of threat," the ISPR quoted the army chief as saying. He also said that the army was determined to support the "just cause of Kashmiris and seeks resolution of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with UN resolutions".

US envoy assures Dar of support to overcome crises

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador Donald Blome Thursday called on Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. The minister, during the meeting, spoke about the deep-rooted historic and durable bilateral relations with the United States on economic and trade fronts, said a news release. Finance Minister Dar briefed the envoy about the country's economic out- ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Filook and the challenges being faced by it.

Picture on Back Page

tional Monetary Fund (IMF) and reiterated last week, Prime Minister Shehbaz

Continued on Page 06

IMF receives Saudi Arabia's assurance

STAFF REPORT

nance and Revenue Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha said on Thursday that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has received a commitment from Saudi He shared the pragmatic policy decisions Arabia regarding funding for Pakistan. being taken by the government in order to Last month, Finance Minister Ishaq arrest the economic decline and to steer the Dar had said that financing commiteconomy towards a positive trajectory lead- ments from friendly countries were ing to economic stability and growth. The the last hurdle in securing the IMF finance minister also informed the envoy on deal, which Pakistan needs to stave the progress in talks held with the Interna- off default. In a parliamentary address

Continued on Page 06



Apex Court verdict

PM urges stakeholders to respect law

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said the government would accept the decision of the full bench of the Supreme Court in the case for elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Islamabad Lawyers Complex here, he said however, those judges who recused themselves should not be made part of that bench. He recalled that Justice Munir was the creator of the principle of necessity which took Pakistan in a certain direction. He said, "We respect Supreme Court and justices and their decisions should apply to everyone." Talking about proceedings of the Supreme Court in the case for elections,

Continued on Page 06

IHC extends Khan's bail in eight cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has extended PTI Chairman Imran Khan's interim bail in eight cases including the Judicial Complex attack until April 18. The IHC on Thursday also accepted former prime minister's applications seeking exemption from appearance in all the eight cases. The court, however, ordered Imran Khan to appear before the trial court on April 18. While hearing a plea for providing security to Imran Khan, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) earlier sought the rules about security to former prime ministers. "If a prisoner is in jail, he also has rights.

Continued on Page 06

Govt disobeying SC orders

PTI says ready to hold nationwide protest movement

Fawad hopes the institutions will back the Constitution

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice President Fawad Chaudhry has said that they are ready to launch a nationwide movement if the incumbent government rejects the Supreme Court's (SC) verdict, media reported on Thursday. Fawad Chaudhry said that national institutions will protect the Constitution. He added that it is inevitable to end political instability to bring economic stability to the country.

The PTI vice president expressed hopes that the national institutions will back the Constitution instead of a government. He admitted that the government has the right to file a review petition against the SC verdict in the election delay case. He announced that PTI will launch a massive movement if all constitutional paths are closed. "There is only one way to delay election if the government commits a constitutional violation and martial

PTI moves SC for KP election date STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Thursday filed a petition in the Supreme Court, pleading with the court to order the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) governor to announce the date of the elections. The development comes a day after a three-member bench of the top court set aside an order of the Election Commission of Pakistan to put off the polls in Punjab, ordering elections on May 14. The apex court had ruled that it would look into the matter related to polls in KP if

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Iran, Saudi top diplomats meet

Both the countries agree to resume flights

BEIJING: The foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia met in Beijing on Thursday, paving the way for normalised ties under a surprise China-brokered deal. Tehran and Riyadh announced an agreement last month to restore relations that had been severed seven years ago.

The shock rapprochement between Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, and Iran, has the potential to reshape relations across a region characterised by turbulence for decades. Iranian Foreign

Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan "negotiated and exchanged opinions with the emphasis on the official resumption of bilateral relations and the executive steps towards the reopening of the embassies and consulates of the two countries", Iran's foreign ministry said in a statement. Saudi state TV channel Al Ekhbariya reported that the two ministers held a meeting in Beijing to "discuss implementing the agreement", airing footage of the pair shaking hands in front of Saudi and

Iranian flags and then talking and smiling. Continued on Page 06

APRIL 2023

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Friday, April 07, 2023

AJK President seeks OIC's proactive role to resolve Kashmir issue

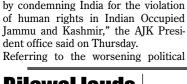
Urging the OIC member countries to revisit their policy vis a vis the establishment of ties with India, Barrister Chaudhry said that the OIC must take a bold initiative and mount pressure on India to resolve the Kashmir issue and stop the ongoing atrocities in the held valley

and human rights situation in the occu-

DNA

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has urged the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to redouble its efforts to help resolve the lingering Kashmir dispute in line with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. While talking to the ambassadors of Islamic countries during an Iftar dinner hosted by him in Islamabad the other day, the president thanked the friendly countries for their all-out support for the Kashmir cause. "The OIC has always supported the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people and adopted a principled stand on the issue by condemning India for the violation of human rights in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir," the AJK President office said on Thursday.

Bilawal lauds Sindh for



pied territory, the president said that at this crucial point in time, there was a dire need for the Muslim body to raise the issue and play its much-needed role in ending rights violations in the region. Terming Kashmir as an issue of the

entire Muslim Ummah, Barrister Chaudhry said that the OIC countries should take a united stand to stop the bloodbath of innocent civilians in the region. He said that Muslims in occupied Kashmir were being barred from offering Friday prayers in mosques.

"Kashmiri youths are being killed day in and day out in fake encounters, women are being harassed and humiliated and children orphaned," he said, adding that along with Hurriyat leadership, human rights defenders and members of civil society had been booked under sedition charges and thrown behind the bars. "It is therefore imperative that the Muslim Ummah should discharge its moral and legal responsibilities and play its due role in granting the Kashmiri people their right to self-determination guaranteed to them by the international community," he stressed.

Urging the OIC member countries to revisit their policy vis a vis the establishment of ties with India, Barrister Chaudhry said that the OIC must take a bold initiative and mount pressure on India to resolve the Kashmir issue and stop the ongoing atrocities in the held valley.

On this occasion, the ambassadors of Muslim countries, including Turkiye, Palestine, Cyprus, Bahrain, Lebanon, Sudan, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Malaysia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Syria, Somalia, Libya, Afghanistan, Jordan and others were present.

PTI leader lauds SC's role in current situation

DNA



Court orders.

PDM

boycotts by-

election in

NA-118

NANKANA SAHIB: The

Pakistan Democratic Move-

ment (PDM) on Thursday,

announced that it would boy-

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Overseas Wing leader and NA-66 candidate

Chaudhry Kherat Hussain has said that the Supreme Court of Pakistan deserves appreciation for the historical verdict regarding polls in Punjab. He said that despite ever mounting pressure and blackmailing from the ruling PDM government, the apex court has taken a firm stand to preserve law and constitution. The PTI leader further said that the 'imported' government is trying hard to evade elections because they cannot face the people. He lauded the role of PTI Chairman Imran Khan in awakening the whole country against the mafia and cabal of crooks. The whole nation will stand guard and protect the Supreme Court in observance

of the constitution, he added. Chaudhry further said that the nation is well aware of delaying tactics of PDM SHAWAK: parties and this time they will not be allowed to run from their constitutional duties in light of Supreme

AJK PM inaugurates

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan on Thursday inaugurated a special web portal to improve the governance system in Azad Jammu Kash-

of time.

sible time. "In this era of information technology where the world has turned into a global village, we are still running with an outdated system that needs to be innovated", the PM said. He said that IT parks would be established at the district level to promote technological education in Azad Kashmir. The PM said that the people sitting in the Prime Minister's Grievance Cell should be well-trained so that they can be able to tackle the issues in a proficient manner and guide

On this occasion, Director General for IT Dr Muhammad Rafiq while briefing the Prime Minister said that through the Prime Minister's Portal, the complaints of users can be directly conveyed to the Prime Minister's Office. He said that a user-friendly portal would enable the public to directly access the Prime Minis-

partments through the complaint portals", he said, adding that people from remote areas can register their grievances at home.-APP

DPO for foolproof security of Sikh devotees

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Haji Ghulam Ali, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa called on Federal

Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. - DNA

ATTOCK: District Police Officer Attock Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan on Thursday while reviewing the over all security measures has said that more than 1000 policemen along with officers deployed at various places to provide fool proof security to Sikh devotees coming across the country and abroad to celebrate their religious obligations at Gurdwara Panja Sahib Hassanabdal during Baisakhi Mela. A spokesman of Attock Police told media that DPO said"It is a part of our duty to provide security to Sikh devotees coming to our land to perform religious festival, he said." while, district administration Attock has also finalized security arrangements for the upcoming Baisakhi festival at Gurdwara Punja Sahib, Hassanabdal. A special session of all stakeholders was held at Gurdwara Punja Sa-

hib Hassanabdal which was presided over by deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza along with District Police Officer (DPO) Ghiyas Gul Khan. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Adnan Anjum Raja, Assistant Commissioner Dr Sana Ramchand, officials of ETPB, augaf department and other administrative officers were also present on this occasion. The main ceremony of Vaisakhi, a New Year's celebration as well as a critical day in the formation of the Sikh religion, will be held at the Gurdawara Panja Sahib on April 14. Talking to newsmen, deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza said, "We have finalized plans for security, food and accommodation at the Gurdwara for the devotees," He said that the Sikh devotees from around the world especially neighboring India will visit Gurdwara Panja Sahib to

participate in the Baisakhi

festival. He said that the pro-

any miscreant to spread un-Earlier, District Police Officer (DPO) Ghiyas Gul Khan while talking to the media has said a foolproof security plan has put in place for Sikh devotees. He said that District Police Attock has also finalized the security

tection of all religious places

and followers is the top prior-

ity and they would not allow

plan for the Sikh devotees at various places. Around 1,000 police officers and personnel, including six SD-POs, 17 Inspectors, 103 upper superintendent, 94 head constables, 667 constables and 36 lady's constables will be deployed to monitor the security. Baisakhi Mela celebrations will start from April 12 at Gurdwara Panja Sahib Hassanabdal. More than 10.000 Sikh devotees from all over the world, including India will participate in the four-day Baisakhi Mela and perform various religious rituals.

Salaries of 1109 PTI SMIs stopped in KP

rne knybei Pakhtunkhwa Finance Department has been asked to immediately stop the salaries of 1,109 Social Media Influencers (SMIs) recruited by the

ty at the expense of the public

immediately stop the salaries of 1,109 SMIs recruited by the PTI government, says a notification of the KP Information Department here. The notification stated that after the dissolution of the KP assembly and setup of interim government in the province, whose constitutional responsibility is to hold free, fair and impartial election, the subject project titled 'Establishment of Social Media Participatory Platforms for Public Awareness. -APP

exchequer. The KP Information and Public Relations Department has asked the Secretary Finance Department to

special portal

Pertinently, the portal will provide people easy and direct access to the government besides lending them an opportunity to lodge complaints online and get their grievances addressed in due course

Speaking on this occasion, Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan emphasized developing a mechanism for the timely redressal of grievances of overseas Kashmiris and locals in the minimum pos-

the masses properly.

"Complaints can also be made to the concerned de-

اسلام آباداليكٹرك سپلائي تميني (آئيسكو) **INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)** (TENDER No. IESCO/PMU/CIVIL/NCB-125/2023)

.IESCO invites sealed bids from the contractors Registered with Pakistan Engineering Council and renewed for the year 2022-23 on National Competitive Bidding (NCB) basis, under Single Stage - Single Envelope (SSSE) Bidding Procedure in accordance with Provisions of CONSTRUCTION OF RCC PILE FOUNDATIONS OF TUBULAR

POLES, ERECTION, STRINGING & ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND MITIGATION PLAN (EMMP) FOR SHIFTING / RELOCATION OF 132KV TRANSMISSION LINE FEED FOR DESTO ON NEWLY PROPOSED ROUTE DUE TO CONSTRUCTION OF BARA KAHU FLYOVER UNDER COST DEPOSIT BASIS. (ESTIMATED COST: PKR ELIGIBILITY

2. This Invitation for Bids is open to all Bidders meeting the following

a. Pakistan Engineering Council Registration renewed for the year 2022. 3 with at least C-6 Category having Specialization Code of CE-02, CE-10 EE-05. In case of JV, all partners of JV must have to comply with the equirement of PEC as stated thereto.

b. The bidder/JV must have to demonstrate at least five years' experience the field of construction as per registration categories of PEC.

c. A Bidder/JV may be a natural person, private entity or government wned enterprise or any combination who is an active tax payer.

f. The bidder/JV shall have to furnish income tax returns for last three ears duly verified by FBR.

 Bidder/JV must demonstrate at least two (02) No. of contracts that have een successfully completed within last five (05) years similar to the roposed work. The aggregate value of both Contract Agreements / Work orders will be equal to Rs. 19.19 Million. However, none of the work order hould be less than 30% of Rs. 19.19 Million. For the purpose, the idder/JV shall provide relevant Work Order/Contract agreement & Completion certificates etc. Bidder/JV must also demonstrate satisfactory

rformance of the previous completed works. The bidder/JV shall demonstrate at least the following financial criteria or last three (03) years duly verified from audited financial statements from eputable chartered accountancy firms

47 Million

Average Annual Turn Over (PKR)

Financial Resources/Cash Flow (PKR) 08 Million Terms & Conditions:

3. National Competitive Bidding (NCB) will be conducted in accordance with Single-Stage, Single-Envelope method.

4. A complete set of bidding document may be purchased by interested

pidder on submission of a written application to the office of General Manager (Development) IESCO, on any working day during office hours upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand only).

Bidding document will be issued to the bidders on a written request on their Company's letter head.

6. All the bids must accompany Rs. 600,000/- as Bid Security in the shape of Bank Guarantee/CDR/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank for this tender in favor of General Manager (Development) IESCO, Islamabad. Bid security shall be valid for 28 days beyond bid validity and bid shall be valid for 90 days.

7. Bids must be delivered to General Manager (Development) IESCO Street No 40, Sector G-7/4, Islamabad on or before 1100 Hour, on 26.04.2023 and same will be opened at 1130 Hours in the office of General Manager (Development), Street No. 40, G-7/4, IESCO Headquarters Islamabad on the same date in the presence of participants or their authorized representatives who choose to attend bearing Authority letters).

No conditional bid(s) received through email shall be accepted. This advertisement is also available on Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) website: www.ppra.org.pk & IESCO vebsite: www.iesco.com.pk.

10. IESCO reserves the right to accept or reject all the bids as per PPRA Rule-33 (1). PID (I) No. 6141/22 General Manager (Development) IESCO Head Quarter, Street No.40, Sector G-7/4, Islamabad Phone No. +92-51-2378045, Fax No.+92-51-9252345

Email: iescopmu@iesco.com.pk ی چوری دینی ، اخلاقی اور قومی جُرم ھے جـلـی چوری کـی اطلاع هیلپ لائن 118پـر کریر

pursuing



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that bringing health facilities to the doorsteps of the people is the manifesto of his party, and theSindh people's government has developed worldclass health institutionsas a bright example for other governments. In his message issued from Media Cell Bilawal House on World Health Day being observed tomorrow, the PPP Chairman said that public health has always been one of the top priorities of his Party. After the creation of Pakistan, most hospitals and health centers were established in the country for the first time during the reign of Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

The initiative of Lady Health Volunteers by Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was a revolutionary development, which is the backbone of our public health system across the country. The initiative of anti-polio campaign to save the nation's children from becoming crippled is also an unforgettable gift of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto to our present and future generations. President Asif Ali Zardari launched 'Waseela-e-Sehat' program under the umbrella of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) for free treatment of poor women. The PPP Chairman said that National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) and its satellite network, Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT), Pir Abdul Qadir Shah Jilani Institute of Medical Sciences Gambat, and the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center (JPMC) and its cyberknife technology unit for cancer treatment are the gifts of the PPP government to the people of the country including the province.

PBM MD opens social program for orphans girls

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Baitul Mall (PBM) Managing Director, Aamir Farid Paracha here Thursday evening inaugurated the first-ever social protection program for orphans girls students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Addressing the inaugura-

tion function here at Pakistan Baitul Mall KP headquarters, he said that Rs 800 per month to be provided to the widowed mother of one school-going orphan girl in the province. He said that Rs12,000 per

month to be given to an orphan family whose two or more girls are reading in the schools

The project was started

under the Orphans and Widows support program of Pakistan Baitul Mall.

He said the program was in line of the vision of the Prime Minister and Shaheed Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto for educational and socioeconomic empowerment of poor and underprivileged segments of society. He said sweet home projects were continued in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to support orphans and vulnerable children.

The MD said that a donor has provided clothes for 100 sweet home children at

The poor women and widows were being provided their economic empowerment. He said street children were being facilitated in schools

enrolments campaigns. Lal Badshah, Director PBM KP said that the project was started on a pilot basis from Peshawar and later would be extended to other dis-

tricts of the province. Later, the MD Pakistan Baitul Mall handed over cheques to the widows for the education of their girls. They thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and MD Pakistan Baitul Mall for their support and assistance.—APP

SCBAP condemns Israeli attack on Al-Aqsa

the Israeli forces on the sacred land of Masjid

Abid S. Zuberi President, Mugtedir Akhtar Shabbir, Secretary and the members of the 25th Executive Committee of SCBAP strongly condemn the terrorist activities being carried out by the Zionist regime which are in blatant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various resolutions passed by the United Nations reaffirming the rights of the Palestinian people. Such use of indiscriminate and excessive force including stun grenades and tear gas has now become the norm amongst the Israeli aggressors who continue to act in blatant disregard of all charters and resolution protecting human

Such brutal use of force against innocent and unarmed worshippers in the sacred land of Masjid Al-Aqsa during the Holy

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court Bar As- and has violated the sanctity of one of the sociation (SCBAP) on Thursday strongly holiest sites for Muslims across the world. The Association hereby calls upon the en tire international community, especially

their independent home land.-APP Month of Ramadan is in no way acceptable

ECNEC approves mega

issued here. Minister for Commerce

the Muslim community to wake up to the apartheid being carried out by the Zionist regime of Israel and to take immediate steps to alleviate the plight and misery of our Palestinian brothers and sisters. The international community and the United Nations must recognize Palestine as an independent state, with Al-Quds/ Jerusalem as its capital; and further all efforts including but not limited to arms embargo and economic sanctions against the Zionist state of Israel until all aggression against the Palestinian people is put to an end. The SCBAP further call upon the United Nations Organization (UNO) to take all possible steps to ensure that its resolutions, protecting the rights of the Palestinian people, are upheld in letter and spirit. On behalf of the entire legal fraternity of Pakistan, the Supreme Court Bar Association reiterates and reaffirms its support of Palestinians' struggle for

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on Thursday approved several developto Prime Minister on Revenue Tariq Mahmood Pasha, Federal Secretaries, and other senior officers from federal Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance Himmayat ullah Khan, attended

cott the upcoming by-election in constituency NA-118. As per the party policy of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), candidate Dr. Shazra Mansab Ali Kharl submitted an application to the election commission to withdraw from the election. The district election commissioner approved her request and the PML-N candidate would not be contesting in the upcoming by-election. It should be noted that PML-N candidate Mian Tahir Jameel had withdrawn his nomination papers on the orders of

projects for social sector SIAMABAD: The Executive Committee of Syed Naveed Qamar, Special Assistant

hammad Ishaq Dar, said a news release

the meeting through zoom.-APP

mental projects of social sector uplift ministries and provincial departments including communications, energy, and also attended the meeting. While Senior railways for economic uplift and social Minister P &D Balochistan Noor Muhamprosperity of the country. The ECNEC mad Dummar, Punjab Industries Minismet under the chairmanship of Minister ter SM Ahsen Tanveer, Adviser to the for Finance and Revenue Senator Mo-

Naval Chief heads command & staff conference The Command & Staff Conference serves as apex decision-making body of Pakistan Navy wherein, Chief of the Naval Staff, Principal Staff Officers and Field Commanders review Pakistan Navy policies and plans

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Command & Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy concluded at Naval Islamabad. The Conference was chaired by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi.

During the conference, participants assessed evolving maritime situation in the region and discussed a range of topics related to national security, geostrategic affairs, combat readiness and training of troops. Besides, progress on Pakistan Navy's ongoing projects including future plans was

reviewd. The Naval Chief underlined the importance of maintaining perpetual combat readiness to effectively counter any potential aggression Pakistan.

praised the efforts made towards capability enhancement through acquisition of emerging technologies. The Admiral expressed full confidence in high state of operational preparedness of

Pakistan Navy in safeguarding maritime frontiers of the motherland. Pakistan Navy's commitment in line with Government of Pakistan policies to extend all-out efforts to support earthquake-hit countries

Turkiye and Syria through recently conducted International Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief mission by PN ships was reaffirmed. The Command & Staff Conference serves as apex

decision-making body of Pakistan Navy wherein, Chief of the Naval Staff, Principal Staff Officers and Field Commanders review Pakistan Navy pol-

icies and plans

the PDM leadership in the

by-election of NA-108 con-

stituency of Faisalabad a day

prior.-DNA



National Days and Armed **Forces Days**

APRIL

April 04/Senegal **National Day** April 07/W. H. O. World Health Day April 12/Somalia **Armed Forces Day** April 15/DPR Korea The Day of the Sun April 16/Denmark

National Day April 17/Iran **Army Day** April 17/Syria

Independence Day April 18/Zimbabwe **Independence Day**

April 24/Holy See Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate April 25/DPR Korea

Armed Forces Day April 26/Tanzania **National Day**

April 27/Sierra Leone **Independence Day** April 27/South Africa Freedom Day

April 30/Sweden Birthday of His Majesty April 30/Netherlands Birthday of Queen



Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel....111 133 133 Marriott......051-2826121



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Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Chairman Senate, UAE envoy discuss bilateral relations

United Arab Emirates is Pakistan's largest trading partner and major source of investment in the Middle East

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al Zabi, met with Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at the Parliament House today. The meeting discussed matter of mutual interest, including bilateral relations. During the meeting, the two discussed the deep fraternal relations between Pakistan and the UAE, which have been bound by common values and culture for the past five decades.

In the meeting, it was agreed to intensify efforts to deal with the challenge of Islamophobia and raise a strong voice against the ongoing brutality of Palestinians and Kashmiris.

The Chairman Senate expressed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen its relations with the UAE in all areas of com-



The Ambassador of UAE appreciated Pakistan's develop-

ment-oriented economic policies

initiated by the government. Both the dignitaries emphasized the need to explore new avenues in economic diplomacy and

investment to further promote and strengthen economic and financial relations between the

"United Arab Emirates is Pakistan's largest trading partner and major source of investment in the Middle East ,and there is still a lot of scope for economic cooperation between the two countries. There are vast possibilities of cooperation in the fields of renewable energy. trade, industry, and infrastructure development", Sanjrani underlined.

The Chairman Senate expressed good wishes for the development and prosperity of the brotherly people of the United Arab Emirates and thanked the UAE for its assistance to the flood victims in Pakistan.

The Pakistanis living in the UAE are an asset who are playing an important role in the development of both countries. The meeting concluded with a mutual understanding to explore more opportunities to further enhance the bilateral relations between the two countries.

MPs irked over poor maintenance of Parliament Lodges

ISLAMABAD:The members of the National Assembly (MNAs) on Thursday expressed their regret over the poor maintenance of Parliament Lodges by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) despite the allocation of resources. During the question hour

session of the National Assembly's 51st session, MNA Shagufta Jumani put a query on decaying partially constructed infrastructures of public departments devolved under the 18th Constitutional Amendment. On a supplementary question, MNA, Sheikh Rohale Asghar of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) pointed out that the decaying buildings were under the notice of the authorities but the prevailing situation of the Parliament Lodges revealed the performance of the civic agency.

MNA, Rana Tanveer Hussain of PML-N in his supplementary query said the media should ask what

Tarar fears political,

constitutional crisis if

full court is not made

ISLAMABAD: Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Taran

has called for holding simultaneous elections in the coun-

try, saying according to the Constitution the Election Com-

mission of Pakistan (ECP) has the power to conduct polls.

The law minister once again demanded formation of a full

court to resolve the matters pertaining to holding elections

Briefing the foreign journalists on the Supreme Court's

verdict and the government's stance on it in Islamabad on Thursday, Azam Nazeer Tarar said the solution to the prevailing constitutional, political and legal complications is to

hold elections once and same time in the entire country to

ensure transparency and fairness. The law minister said if the elections are held in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

in compliance with the court's orders and again in October

after completion of constitutional term of the National As-

sembly and provincial assemblies of Sindh and Balochistan it will create another constitutional and political crisis. "The ECP is an empowered and autonomous institution

and has complete authority over elections. It is election commission which is vested with the duty of elections and

to ensure the polls are conducted fairly," Azam Tarar said.

He said the controversy began when the assembly was dis-

solved on advice of the Punjab chief minister. The Punjab

governor didn't sign on the CM's advice and the assembly

itself dissolved after the specified time and it was where

"As per the constitution, there's a procedure for elections.

Elections should be held at the same time all over the coun-

try," he said. The law minister said petitions regarding elec-

tions were sub judice in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

He said the matter was brought to the court and the appeal

filed by the governor was pending in the LHC. He warned

that the political and constitutional crisis would deepen if

full court bench was not formed. The government believed

that it would be better if the decision was announced by the

the Pandora box was opened, he added.

full court, he added.-DNA

in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

were the expenses and salaries of the parliamentarians while living in the Lodges which were in a dilapidated condition. He said there were rats roaming in the Lodges and sanitary con-

ditions were poor, adding, "Parliamentarians won't be able to perform their duties well with this mental state." Rana said the parliamentarians were doing huge national service but they were decrying poor facilities in the Lodges. MNA Muhammad Abubakar

of MQM-P said the House should outsource the maintenance services of the lodges which were important and could help address this issue. "It is regrettable to see that this parliament is unable to take CDA to task," he added.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Javed Abbasi on behalf of Interior Minister, Rana Sanaullah Khan briefed the House that a sizeable amount of funds were allocated for the

repair and maintenance of the lodges which was under the CDA. The House and Library Committee used to oversight this issue and ensure arrangements in this regard, he added.

Abbasi said in 2012-13 the then government initiated the construction of a new block of the Parliament Lodges which was to be completed in 2013-14 but it was still under construction. "There is a question mark on the performance of the CDA and also the House and Library Committee that holds the authority to take note of the

matters," he regretted. The Minister demanded the Speaker issue a ruling that a committee should be constituted on the new block construction delay that should present its report within 10 days.

The Speaker directed to send the matter to the NA Standing on the Committee of Rules of Procedures and Privileges to probe the

matter and give its recommendations on the matter whereas he would also visit the Parliament Lodges himself to take stock of the

The Leader of the Opposition, Raja Riaz requested the Speaker to chair the committee to ensure speedy action on the matter. The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs informed the House that over 200 employees of the CDA were drawing pay and allowances from the funds earmarked for the repair and maintenance of the Lodges.

He added that an informal agreement was made with the Islamabad Club for outsourcing the repair and maintenance of the Lodges but could not get materialized whereas it would not incur additional expenses but rather would help manage the task within the same allocated funds.

CDA, he said was the white elephant not performing its duties properly.—APP

Mehfil e Milad at PNCA held

ISLAMABAD: A Mehfil-e-Milad of women was held here by the Pakistan National Council of the Arts Islamabad on Thursday in conjunction with the holy month of Ramazan. Speakers enlightened the audience on the life and practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which present great lessons for his followers to live their life according to the teachings of Islam.

Speakers also discussed the significance of the holy month of Ramazan, to purify the souls and bodies of the Muslims and to understand the importance of sharing their blessings with others.

Ms. Hajra Mudassir opened the Mehfil with a Qirat, and Professor Salma Khan referred the incidents in hadiths highlighting the need to follow the life of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) for a successful life in the world and hereafter. She also recited a maqabat to commemorate the birthday of Hazrat Hassan (A.S.) Renowned Naat Khawans namely Tasneem Akhtar, Night Zahoor, Shazia Zaheer, Nausheen Ehsaan, Rifat Anjum, Rizwana Khan, Attira Mohsin, Shamma Adil, Anila noor, Professor Salma Khan of twin cities presented naats in the Salma Khan, the host of the event. The event's chief guest and well-known poet, Ms. Mehmooda Ghazia, also recited a naat written by herself.

At the closing of the Mehfil, prayers were offered for the well-being of everyone, peace, and prosperity of the country. The event was appreciated by the audience, they urged PNCA to organize similar events in the future.-APP

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director Pakistan Bait ul Maal Amir Fida Paracha offering dua along with orphan children before Iftar time at Pakistan Sweet Home. -APP

Bank Alfalah and NOWPDP team up

Under the partnership, Bank Alfalah will fund the running costs of the Centre of Excellence for Financial Inclusion (CEFI) against an amount of PKR 4 million.

ISLAMABAD: Bank Alfalah, one of Pakistan's leading commercial banks, has announced a strategic partnership with Network of Organizations Working For People With Disabilities Pakistan (NOWPDP), a non-profit organization to empower persons with disabilities by creating employment opportunities for them and promote financial inclusion in the banking sector. Under the partnership, Bank Alfalah will fund the running costs of the Centre of Excellence for Financial Inclusion (CEFI)

against an amount of PKR 4 million. The goal of the center is to improve financial inclusion and literacy among persons with disabilities by providing them with access to financial products and creating income opportunities for them. Through this partnership, the Bank will collaborate closely with NOWPDP to create specialized modules and provide training on financial management, budgeting, and saving at the center.

"This partnership is a significant step towards promoting financial inclusion and literacy among persons with disabilities in Pakistan. We are excited to work with Bank Alfalah, a leading financial institution, to provide access to financial services and products to persons with disabilities," said Amin Hashwani, President of NOWPDP. "We are proud to partner

with NOWPDP in this important initiative that aligns with our commitment to create job opportunities to promote financial inclusion in Pakistan for the differently abled persons. By supporting the CEFI, we aim to empower

and enable them to become financially self-sufficient," said Faisal Farooq Khan, Chief Human Resource Officer, Bank Alfalah. Furthermore, to gain a broader understanding of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, the team at Bank Alfalah proactively engaged in disability sensitization activities. Through this experience, the team members were able to gain valuable insight into the daily experiences and functioning of PWDs, allowing them to develop a deeper sense of empathy.-DNA

persons with disabilities

strict action against route violators

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police (ICTP) has decided to take stern action against public service vehicles involved in non-completion of routes, misbehavior with passengers and overloading. "Strict action will be taken against those transporters violating traf-fic routes. The purpose is to provide better traffic facilities to the citizens,' said Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr. Sved Mustafa Tanweer on Thursday while reviewing a special report submitted by the Special Squads constituted for checking of route completion. According to details ICTP is utilizing all resources to facilitate the general public and not only issuing traffic violation tickets to the PSVs for overcharging, misbehavior of driver/conductor and incompletion of route but also canceling the driving license of the PSVs drivers who found repeatedly involved in same violation. He said that action against such violators would be made more effective and progress of squads would be reviewed on a regular basis.

Five wanted members of criminal gang held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Shams Colony police team arrested five wanted members of a criminal gang involved in snatching activities and recovered cash, mobile phone, motorbike and arm ammunition from their possession, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, a Shams Colony police station team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending five wanted members of a criminal gang involved in different street crime activities. The accused were identified as Shahbaz, Bilal, Muhammad Zubair, Akber Hussain and Zakar Ullah. Police team also recovered snatched cash, mobile phone, motorbike and arm ammunition and dagger from their possession. Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is

Certificates awarded to Eagle Squad officials'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: DPO City Zone Farooq Farooq Ahmed Butter has awarded certificates of appreciation and cash prizes among the eagle squad officials, who have taken effective action against criminals, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, a ceremony was held at SSP Operations office to award certificates of appreciation among the officials of eagle squad for capturing criminals and recovering arms and ammunition from their possession. On the occasion, DPO City said that our first duty is to ensure the safety of Islamabad and its citizens and we will not hesitate to lay down our lives in this regard. He said that the officials who perform well should be rewarded. We are the public servants, so every official should perform his duties with good intentions and passion. He further said that the of-

ficials who will show good performance in future will be encouraged as well. The safety of lives and property of citizens is our prime responsibility and no laxity will be tolerated in this regard.

IRSA releases 90,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 90,600 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 63,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1432.31 feet and was 34.31 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 21,100 cusecs while outflow as 5,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1107.45 feet, 57.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 21,500 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 31,100, 32,900, 38,700 and 11,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 30,800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 9,800 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.-APP

Friday, April 07, 2023

President

condoles with families

of martyred

ISLAMABAD: President

Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday

expressed condolence with

the family members of the

troops who were martyred

in a terrorist attack from

across the border in Kech.

The president had tele-

phonic interaction with the

family members of martyrs

Naek Sher Muhammad, Se-

poy Irfanullah and Lance

Naek Asghar Ali and offered

President Alvi also ex-

pressed sorrow with family

members of Sepoy Irshadul-

lah who embraced martyr-

dom in Mir Ali on March 31.

The whole Pakistani nation

was proud of its martyrs, he

said. He also paid tributes

to the martyrs who sacri-

ficed their lives for the sake

President Alvi offered sym-

pathies with the families

of the martyrs and prayed

to Allah Almighty for cour-

age to bear this irreparable

Gang busted;

five dacoits

arrested

RAWALPINDI: In an oper-

ation against criminal ele-

ments, Rawalpindi Police

have busted a gang and ar-

rested five dacoits including

ringleader besides recover-

ing Rs 36,500 cash, stolen

goods, weapons, two motor-

cycles and other items from

spokesman, Saddar Baroni

Police arrested five accused

namely Qismat Khan alias

Mithu, ringleader, Mur-

saleen, Kamran, Fareed and

Zabiullah, who were wanted

in a dacoity case registered

in Saddar Baroni police

station. He informed that

the police team constituted

under the supervision of

SHO Saddar Baroni Police

Station on the directives

of SP Saddar Muhammad

Nabeel Khokhar conducted

a raid and managed to net

the gang members includ-

ing the ringleader. The ac-

cused have been sent to jail

for an identification parade,

their possession.

According to a

of their country.

loss.-APP

condolence to them.

Jalgai sector on April 1.

Briefs

India will never succeed to **suppress Kashmiris**

ISLAMABAD: Secretary In formation All Parties Hur riyat Conference AJK and Pakistan Chapter, Imtiaz Wani has said that India will never succeed to suppress the Kashmiris' freedom sentiment through the use of brute force. Imtiaz Wani in a statement issued in Islamabad said that India was increasing the number of its troops to strengthen its illegal hold on Jammu and Kashmir. He deplored that India is converting the Kashmiris' land into military garrisons in the Israeli style. Imtiaz Wani deplored that in fact, India was turn ing the Muslim majority status of IIOJK into a minority by granting domiciles to a large number of non-Kashmiris to accommodate them in the occupied territory.

Interior Ministry working out to equip Capital Police

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Thursday said the Ministry of Interior keeping in view the rising challenges of security and law and order was working out to equip the Islamabad Capital Territory Police (ICTP) on modern lines.

Responding to a query on behalf of Minister for Interior, Rana Sanaullah Khan during the question hour session of the 51st session of the National Assembly, the Minister informed that the ICTP was facing challenges to maintain law and order due to rapid expansion of population and housing in the metropolis that demanded capacity buildup of the law enforcement

MNA, Moulana Abdul Ak bar Chitrali of MMAP in his supplementary question queried the nature of the crime rate of 2021 and 2022 in comparison.

Abbasi said the crime rate index of 2021 and 2022 in comparison showed improvement but the federa capital demanded a good and well-maintained law and order situation.

The Minister termed the ICTP performance satisfactory and said that after an increase in housing societies; people from all over the country had settled in the federal capital. The Police was facing challenges of terrorism resurgence, criminal activities and political terrorists, he added.

Moulana Chitrali underlined that the salaries of the police officers and constables was very low whereas unless it was made independent and provided proper facilities improvement in services was difficult.-APP

Ride-hailing company joins Akhuwat Foundation

ISLAMABAD: A private ride-hailing company has donated Rs.10 million to the Akhuwat Foundation for the reconstruction of flood-hit schools in Sindh.

The donated amount will aid the Thatta and Thar region in the rebuilding of schools that were affected by the devastating floods and heavy monsoon rains in 2022. From June to October 2022, floods in Pakistan killed 1,739 people and caused 3.2 trillion in damage and 3.3 trillion in economic losses. The catastrophic floods in Pakistan have destroyed nearly 27,000 schools, preventing more than 2 million children from attending school and resuming their educa-

The donated amount of Rs. 10 million by the company will help reconstruct the schools and build new units. Aleksandra Kirillina, Team Lead of the CSR project at the ride-hailing company, said, "One of the primary pillars of our mission is serving and empowering communities, and education is our top priority, as a good education is the greatest gift you can give anyone.' "To support and rebuild the education system in the cities of Thar and Thatta is to reopen those schools where children can resume their studies," she added.-APP

ME Geopolitics present Iranian Nuclear Program in a New Light

The net impact of the US sanctions upon Iran had been reduced by recent geopolitical developments particularly Tehran's defense cooperation with Russia, economic and energy trade with China and recent peace agreement with Saudi Arabia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Iran adhered with the Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments regarding its nuclear program, however, the West has its suspicion due to lack of trust", said Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi, former Pakistan's permanent representative at IAEA. He was speaking at an international webinar on IAEA's chief visit to Iran, arranged by Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad. He further added that the role of IAEA in terms of nuclear technology had transformed from being a facilita-

cy. While pointing towards the historic development, he said that in the course of various rounds of negotiations during 2002-2018, Iran promised to adhere to several norms. However, the US withdrawal from JCPOA in 2018 resulted in the most intense form of sanctions upon Iran that caused in a \$100 billion-dollar economic damage. The main issue as of now is the presence of a strong Israeli lobby in the US congress that was hampering the revival of JCPOA, he argued.

Mr. Pooya Mirzaei, an Iranian academic, argued the European states party to JCPOA were not fulfilling their economic commitments towards the Iran Nuclear Deal. While agreeing with Amb. Naqvi, he argued that the Israeli lobby was the primary obstacle in reviving JCPOA. He claimed that Iran lacked any destructive weapons but the trust deficit prevailed in the western countries. Mr. Mirzaei took a principled stance by advocating for the complete dismantlement of the global stockpiles of nuclear weapons. He highlighted the discriminatory attitude of international community towards the nuclear programs of Iran and Israel. While Israel's

non-compliance was often ignored, pressure was put on Iran's nuclear program despite the fact that Iran was party to the NPT, he said. Syed Muhammad Ali, a renowned nuclear and strategic affairs expert, deliberated upon the geopolitical significance of Iran's nuclear program. He explained five dimensions of the issue including the technical, security, legal, economic, and political aspects. He argued that the net impact of the US sanctions upon Iran had been reduced by recent geopolitical developments particularly Tehran's defense cooperation with Russia, economic

and energy trade with China and recent peace agreement with Saudi Arabia. He further stated that Iranian technical capacity had enhanced both qualitatively and quantitatively despite sanctions. He also stated that any threat to Iranian nuclear sites could provide Tehran the perfect rationale to leave NPT.

Mr. Fraz Naqvi, the moderator and the researcher of Iran Program at Institute of Regional Studies, concluded by stating that the diplomatic engagement is the best way forward to peacefully deal with the Iranian nuclear program.

Ramazan can help reduce smoking frequency

month of Ramazan can improve the quality of their life by reducing the frequency of smoking in their effort to ultimately quit it, Nutrition and Dietetics expert of National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) Dr Abdul Momin said here on Thursday. Dr Momin, who is heading the NUMS Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, debunked the myth that electronic smoking and vaping were less dangerous, adding, the use of tobacco in any form was "absolutely detrimental to one's health and causes cancer". He advised smokers to taper off smoking gradually as it would be long-lasting because quitting it, in one go, has its own complications. During the holy month of Ramazan, fasting smokers get a big gap from dawn to dusk which can make it for them easier to give up smoking, he added. Quoting the figures from International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease regarding tobacco control in Pakistan, he said 20 % of the adult population smoke in Pakistan; 32% of men while 6% of women smoke in Pakistan. 16% of male and 4.9% of female deaths were linked to the use of tobacco which kills around 163,000 in Pakistan annually, he added. The economic cost of smoking in Pakistan is estimated to be around USD 3.85 billion which is a whooping amount for a developing country like Pakistan. Dr Momin urged parents for sensitizing their children on the ill-effects of tobacco in their teenage and advise them not to accept peer pressure to start smoking.

tire family as smoke is equally damaging to those who do not smoke themselves but are exposed to smoke because of active smokers, he informed. Smokers expose their families and office colleagues because if someone has smoked in a room, smoke particles penetrate the body through the skin, and can harm those present in the room, a phenomenon known as thirdhand smoke,

ANF seizes over 541 kg narcotics; arrests six

The spokesman informed that in an operation near the Dina Mangla bypass, 75 grams of Ice drug and 64 grams of heroin were recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Narowal

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in six operations managed to recover over 541 kg of narcotics and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman

He informed that in an operation at Islamabad International Airport, ANF recovered 49 heroin-filled capsules from the possession of a Sharjah-bound passenger, resident of Sargodha, going on flight no ER-703.

In another raid near Islamabad Sangjani Toll Plaza, 36 kg charras was recovered from secret cavities of a car. Two accused were sent behind the bars during the operation. In the third operation near Jhelum Terraki Toll Plaza, ANF rounded up an accused resident of Charsada with two kg charras. The spokesman informed that in an operation near the Dina Mangla bypass, 75 grams of Ice drug and 64 grams of heroin were recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Narowal. In an operation near the Quetta-Kuchlak bypass, 498 kg charras was recovered from the possession of a drug smuggler resident of Qilla Abdullah. In the sixth operation near Hub Western bypass, ANF seized 4.8 kg of Ice drug. He said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investi-

gations are under process.—APP

RAWALPINDI: Over 22 million smokers in the holy

Secondhand smoking (passive smoking) affects the en-Dr Momin added.-DNA

Federal Board achieves int'l certificate

he added.-APP

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) Islamabad has achieved ISO27001:2013 from the international grading organization for the best secrecy of its information and excellent management system. According to official sources, the award was issued by Partner Certificate Assurance (PCA) to the FBISE on April 4. The Federal Education Board has been placed in Group C at the international level for three years due to its excellent management system and best secrecy of information. Clear Partner Certificate Insurance is a global grading organization that issues certificates to its partner organizations for a period of three years after assessing their management and secrecy system. Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Islamahad has previously received other honours including ISO9001.-APP

Police arrest five POs wanted in different cases

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police arrested five Proclaimed Offenders (POs) wanted in different cases, said a police spokesman here on Thursday.

He said Kalar Syedan and Naseerabad police managed to arrest three accused namely Tahir Murtaza, Tahseen and Nusrat, wanted in different cases.

Police rounded up Masood ur Rehman and Mohsin, two POs wanted in cases registered in Taxila and Morgah police stations.

He said that Rawalpindi district police were taking stern action in accordance with the law against the lawbreakers, adding, the operations would continue and all the POs would be sent behind the bars. SSP Operations, Rawalpindi Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against POs and most wanted criminals.—APP

China, Pakistan agree to boost cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Hafiz Sherali President His Highness Prince Aga Khan Shia Imami Ismaili

Council of Pakistan hosted iftar dinner for senior journalists. Seen in the picture are CEO

Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz Boolani and others.-DNA

Khan said that the Lab will jointly organize International Conferences to promote Belt and Road Joint laboratories and relevant scientific research institutions in China and Pakistan on the international stage.

DNA

BEIJING: China and Pakistan agreed to boost cooperation through the "China- Pakistan Joint Laboratory on Smart Disaster Management/ Major Prevention of Infrastructures" established in Tianjin, China Economic Net (CEN) reported quoting Khan Muhammad Wazir, Science Counsellor, Embassy of Pakistan in China.

The Joint Laboratory will act as a platform to train Researchers and Scientists from Pakistan at Master and Doctoral levels as well as other high-level talents in fields such as civil engineering, smart disaster prevention, and big data related to major infrastructure including high rises, dams, ports, bridges, railway platforms,

Khan stated that the platform will strengthen exchanges and communication between scientific communities of the two

people of both countries.
The Joint Laboratory is administered by the Ministry of Science and Technology, China. China's Southeast University, Shenzhen University, Tianjin Fire Research Institute of the Ministry of Emergency Management, and Hefei Institute of Public Safety of Tsinghua University are partner Organizations/Universities from Chinese side while the University of Science and Technology Bannu is the Partner University from the Paki-

stani side. The partner universities and research institutions from both China and Pakistan will use the Laboratory as a platform to apply for Chinese Scientific Research Projects and avail of Scientific Re-

search funding. "The Chinese Partners Universities will invite government personnel and University Researchers from Pakistan to visit China for short-term exchanges and learning, and to enhance the

friendship between China and Pakistan", he told

achieve the objectives of the Joint Laboratory, proposal", he added.

institutions in China and Pakistan on the international stage. He mentioned that the

"To make the cooperation more active and to

we need to include more Universities from the Pakistani side in this cooperation. The Chinese side has agreed to my Khan said that the Lab will jointly organize International Conferences to promote Belt and Road Joint laboratories and relevant scientific research

construction of this laboratory not only focuses on academic research but also pivots on the promotion of Chinese intelligent disaster prevention technology in Pakistan and other Belt and Road countries. It is worth mentioning that the China-Pakistan Joint Lab is one of the total seven joint laboratories China has set up with BRI Countries.

POWERCHINA creates more jobs for local communities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As Chinese ate jobs for local communities, POWERCHINA, the main contractor of Diamer Basha Dam Project (DBDP) announced 190 jobs from the project area in Gilgit-Balti-

According to Gwadar Pro, it has invited applications for the contractor POWER-CHINA and the interested candidates from the project area can apply to the Joint Employment Committee WAPDA Chilas through the Collector DBDP office.

The jobs are divided into ten categories. The company required 53 professional construction personnel, 41 steel fixers, 25 masons, 24 welders, and 29 laborers on long term basis.

The others include seven technicians, five scaffolders, three electricians, two drillers and one driver. Interested candidates from the local area can apply till April 11, 2023. POWERCHINA regularly trains and provides jobs for the people from the site area on a regular basis.

In December 2022, the company had provided jobs to 208 skilled and technical professionals at the project sites. The company also conducted skill completions in its local employees to enhance their skills.-Agencies

ICCI to cooperate with Police to control crimes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar

Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry lauded the role of Islamabad Police for maintaining maintain law & order situation and providing a secure environment to the private sector and assured that the business community would extend all possible cooperation to the police in controlling the crimes in the city. He said this while addressing an Iftar party organized by the Islamabad D.Watson Lions Club in honor of the police officers and jawans at G-11 Check Post, Islamabad. District Police Officer Saddar Nausherwan Ali Sub-Divisional Police Officers, Police Officers of Saddar Zone and members of the business community were present at the oc-

said that police officers and jawans perform duties at check posts and in mosques during prayer times and their presence

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari at the occasion gives a sense of better safety and security to the citizens, which is laudable. He assured that the business community would always

be standing with police various gifts to the police in maintaining a safe and jawans at the occasion. secure environment in the Sai fur Rehman Khan, city that would also help in President, promoting business activi-

D.Watson Lions Club said ties. He also distributed that the purpose of organ-

personnel is to express solidarity with them as they are rendering great Islamabad service to the community. He said that police is a key part of the society and close liaison between the police and the civil society would be very helpful in controlling crimes and promoting peace.

District Police Officer Saddar Nausherwan Ali thanked Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Sai fur Rehman Khan, President, Islamabad D.Watson Lions Club for joining police officers and jawans in iftari and expressing solidarity with them. He said that their cooperation and support would further boost the morale of police and enable them to perform their duties with more commitment and dedication.

McCarthy's meeting with Tsai

hatever excuse they use to try and cover it, US House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy's meeting with Taiwan regional leader Tsai Ing-wen will do irreparable damage to the Sino-US relationship.

It was solemnly written in the three Sino-US joint communiques that "there is only one China and Taiwan is part of China". This has been recognized and affirmed by every US president every time the two nations' leaders have met since that truth was acknowledged by the US.

By allowing the independence-pursuing Tsai to "stop over" in US territory and arranging a political leader to meet her, the US government is ruining its own national credibility and the trustworthiness of any legal document signed by a US president and bearing the US seal.

The notice that McCarthy will host a bipartisan meeting with Tsai further shows that a consensus has been formed in Washington that the Taiwan question can be exploited to put pressure on Beijing.

An "anti-China" storm has swept through the Capitol Building bearing the dust of the Cold War mentality, which the members of Congress are unwilling to brush away, despite it getting into their eyes so they can't see clearly. The meeting will only further strain Sino-US relations.

All the signs show that the toxic dust of the Cold War mentality has contaminated the whole of Congress, leaving no one untouched on either side of the political divide. Upon taking office as House speaker, McCarthy immediately formed a select committee on China, comprising 13 Republicans and 11 Democrats; when the House of Representatives passed an act prompting the Secretary of State to alter China's developing country status in international organizations, the voting was 415:0. At a time when the divisions in US society and politics are becoming increasingly virulent, to counter China has become almost the only consensus between the Republicans and the Democrats.

Tsai should recognize that rather than being a honored guest she is simply viewed by her hosts as a useful piece on the US game board. When then Taiwan leader Lee Teng-hui "stopped over" in Hawaii in 1994, he was reportedly given a small room to rest in the military base there, received by a sergeant, without even being allowed to step on US soil. What the US is doing this time is anything but a routine practice as they claim. It serves only as a further provocation to Beijing.

Beijing has said that it will respond accordingly, which prompted Tsai to talk with US security officials via video link on Tuesday, exposing her worries about going too far without the support of the US and thus the weakness of her position.

Islamabad POST

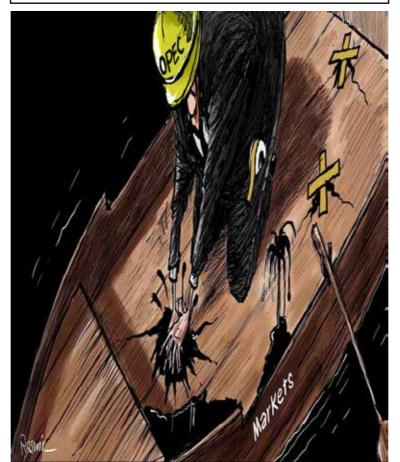
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Covid-19 still requires focus

y the end of 2021, Americans were dying three years sooner, on average, than they were before Covid-19, with life expectancy falling from 79 years to 76 years, according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's most recent statistics. Such astonishing declines have occurred planet-wide – the first global reduction in life expectancy since World War II. Total deaths jumped 13 per cent in the first two years of the pandemic. Estimates indicates that about 15 million more people died than would have been expected. Human development has been pushed into reverse. Most of these deaths have been a direct result of the coronavirus. But the pandemic also killed people by damaging health care more broadly, which will itself have enduring consequences. Years of gains and investment have been wiped away. And we have only started to see the effects.

Decades of evidence show that primary care teams are also capable of remarkable improvements in health when they're appropriately trained, paid and — this is crucial — given the capacity to reach out regularly to every household that they serve. Keeping people connected to the most important services for their health and survival, and working to make sure no one falls through the cracks, adds years of life. The global primary care work force also provides critical capacity to detect future public health threats and deliver a response. When people have a weird rash, a nasty cough or a bad fever, it's a local doctor or nurse whom they most depend on to recognise that it could be mpox (as monkeypox is now called), a new coronavirus variant or a deadly avian flu breaking out. And then it's those same primary care professionals who deliver the needed testing, vaccinations and treatments to the community at large. Yet around the world, they are routinely among the most neglected and underfinanced part of the health care work force. Which brings us back to the conditions that have driven the first global decline in life expectancy in generations.

A doubling of human life span in less than a century, one of the greatest accomplishments in history, was achieved through worldwide cooperation on sustained efforts to address many individual causes of death and sickness — polio, HIV/AIDS, diarrheal illness, malaria and childbirth risks, to name just a few. These efforts have saved millions upon millions of lives, but they depend on primary health workers to achieve their impact. This workforce is the same one we now must count on to incorporate management of future coronavirus variants into routine care. Last week, the president again put forward a budget to back this vital effort. Recovery has received far too little attention and resources, and Congress must do its part to change that. As the World Health Organization has put it, we need countries "to make a radical reorientation of their health systems toward primary care." This is how we will make a real recovery from the pandemic — and be prepared for the next one. And it is the only path we have back to a world of longer and healthier lives.

Politics of ruin: Why Modi wants to demolish India's mosques

Sara Ather

The illegal destruction of a historical Mughal-era mosque, the Babri Masjid, on December 6, 1992, served as the declaration of a mute war cry against history. The mosque was reduced to rubble by religious volunteers who claimed that an ancient Ram temple stood at the same site. Images of the demolished mosque gave graphic representation to the idea of a pre- and post-Babri India, signalling the beginning of a nationalist project that rejects all possibilities of plurality on Indian land. The demolition of Babri Masjid, in many ways the most significant single event in post-independence India, triggered a spiral of violence in several cities, culminating in riots

historic 16th-century mosque, Shahi Masjid, in Prayagraj city in India's Uttar Pradesh state was demolished by bulldozers on January 9 under a road-widening project.

The demolition took place even though, according to the mosque's imam, a local court was supposed to hear a petition seeking a stay on the city administration's plans on January 16, a week later.

This incident should have caused public outrage, but the matter hardly made any headlines. The destruction of structures using bulldozers in India has become a banal occurrence and has already lost its shock value. Shahi Masjid is also not the first ancient mosque to have been sacrificed for a road widening project. Last November, a 300-year-old mosque in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district that stood in the way of a highway was razed. Another mosque, one of the largest and oldest in India, Shamsi Jama Masjid, an 800-year-old national heritage site in Budaun, Uttar Pradesh, became a matter of dispute last year when a court case was filed on behalf of a local Hindu farmer - backed by the right-wing Hindu nationalist group Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha (ABHM) - alleging that the mosque is an "illegal structure" built on a demolished 10th-century temple of Lord Shiva. Their petition states that Hindus have rightful ownership of the land and should be able to pray there.

The claim of illegality rests on a far-right narrative according to which most of the Indian mosques were actually temples at one point in time and were forcefully converted into mosques by Muslim rulers. Even though most historians today deny these claims because there is little material evidence to support them, they have enormous popular support.

The rule of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is increasingly marked by a destructive urgency. The party's attempts to culturally homogenise India began with the renaming of places in an overtly Hindu vocabulary and progressed to new strategies such as bulldozing Muslim monuments and archaeological excavations to find Hindu roots at Muslim religious sites. In the past few years, there have been a number of controversies surrounding Mughal monuments. Even the Taj Mahal, a monument of global importance, has not been spared. Farright Hindu groups claim, again without any evidence, that it was a Hindu temple. The fate of Indian Muslims has reached a watershed moment. Scores of petitions have been filed by right-wing Hindu groups against mosques across the country. The past several years have also seen the activation of an informal apparatus of religious volunteers who use religious processions to establish dominance over Muslim places of worship, including mosques and Muslim shrines. During several Hindu festival celebrations in 2022, including Ram Navami and Hanuman Jayanti, armed Hindu mobs, led at times by BJP members, entered Muslim neighbourhoods and chanted obscene slogans while planting saffron flags on mosques. MS Golwalkar, one of the founders of Hindu nationalist ideology or Hindutva, claimed in his most renowned text, Bunch of Thoughts, that "wherever there is a masjid [mosque] or a Muslim mohalla [colony], Muslims believe that it is their own separate territory". It is important to remember that the belief in exclusive ownership of Indian land did not emerge with the BJP's election to power, but has always been a central tenet of Hindu nationalist thought. Golwalkar throughout his writing maintained a definition of "nation" that kept the "natural" congruence between a Hindu monoculture and territory, excluding from within it all those who the Hindu right views as a political or cultural threat.

It was no coincidence that it was the destruction of a historical mosque that fuelled the rise of the far-right nationalist politics that dominates India today.

The illegal destruction of a historical Mughal-era mosque, the Babri Masjid, on December 6, 1992, served as the declaration of a mute war cry against history. The mosque was reduced to rubble by religious volunteers who claimed that an ancient Ram temple stood at the same site. Images of the demolished mosque gave graphic representation to the idea of a pre- and post-Babri India, signalling the beginning of a nationalist project that rejects all possibilities of plurality on Indian land. The demolition of Babri Masjid, in many ways the most significant single event in post-independence India, triggered a spiral of violence in several cities, culminating in riots. The heterogeneous social fabric of Indian cities was violently transformed, with urban spaces reorganised along religious lines. The memory of those violent encounters continues to inform the logic of spatial segregation in many Indian cities up to this day. But Babri was not destined to be the only mosque to be demolished; rather, it was only the first of many monumental martyrs that were to follow. The slogan, "Babri to bas jhanki hai, Kashi Mathura baki hai" (Babri is only a sneak peek; Kashi and Mathura are yet to happen), attests to the longing that persists even today. A list of such Muslim landmarks and monuments marked for demolition has been in broad public circulation for quite some time. Meanwhile, in 2019, the Supreme Court of India issued a ruling according to which the land of the Babri Masjid was handed over to Hindus as the birthplace of Lord Rama. This emboldened the right wing to shift from illegal mob violence to legal methods. Indeed, Hindu groups have challenged the continuing existence of historic mosques in Mathura and Varanasi (also known as Kashi) through court cases.

And a Mathura court has already ordered a survey based on the claims of the petitioners that the land of the Shahi Idgah Mosque is actually the rightful birthplace of Lord Krishna. Several states in India have gone through their own unique rebranding as Hindu religious sites, including Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh. The Hindutva framework requires the deployment of a spatial imagination where all Indian territory is defined as a sacred landscape in an overtly Hindu religious vocabulary. The necro-economy of Hindu nationalism today invariably relies on making history its most important site, which has to be transformed and moulded to justify its present-day rule. Golwalkar also claimed that Muslims have transformed the Hindu nationalist homeland into "just a hotel, only a land for enjoyment", effectively equating the presence of Muslims and mosques with the symbolic violation of the Hindu homeland.

Any sign of cultural expression in Muslim architecture, under this nationalist vision, is thus seen as a violation of the purity of the holy land or Bharat Mata - Mother India. It is this spirit of vengeance that has lived on, violently unfolding its own inner horizon, both temporally and spatially. The truth about today's unrelenting violence on ancient Indian mosques is best understood through its deep roots. Historically, the cultural cleansing of an entire people has been accompanied by the destruction of monuments and a clear intent to erase their memories. To deny a people their future, the past is razed first. The events of the tragic night of the broken glass "Kristallnacht" especially shed light on this phenomenon. Hundreds of synagogues were burned to the ground, while many others were damaged on a night that arguably signalled the beginning of the Holocaust's last phases. They were not destroyed because they housed Jews, but because they stood as a testament to the Jewish presence on that land.

Monumental architecture, by virtue of its perceived permanence and timelessness, creates a space for communities to gather and serves as a fixed anchor around which traditions are invented. Thus, its destruction promises not just a rebuilding of spatial relations but also of historical traditions.

Spatial violence is therefore not just an aggressive retributive tool for causing terror but a calculated strategy that aims to reinvent cultural meanings associated with territory and redefine them in terms of a nationalist conceptual grammar. The political work of the BJP and its farright Hindu allies resembles a war machine, stuck in frantic, endless attempts to deconstruct the present. The failure to find the ghost of the past is compensated by inventing one in the present. Monuments have thus become portals for this proxy war.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Human rights report on Israel's apartheid policies refuses to go away

Ray Hanania

Denunciations of apartheid will not go away. Israel's apartheid policies, which continue every day in Palestinian cities and villages, will forever define it as an undemocratic nation that embraces racist brutality against Christians and Muslims. One day, the Muslim and the Christian worlds will come together and recognize that Israel today is not a democracy and never has been. They will speak out in defense of their own people who are the victims of Israel's policy crimes

housands of Israelis are protesting against efforts by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government to overhaul the country's judicial system, including making it easier for convicted prime ministers to remain in office.

Nationwide protests were sparked when Netanyahu, who has been fighting three corruption charges filed against him in November 2019, introduced legislation to change Israel's judicial system. It is good to see Israel so concerned about a judicial system that already has been corrupted, applying different standards to justice for Jews versus justice for non-Jews: Palestinians inside Israel and under occupation. Israel's Jewish society has closed its eyes to the injustices of its nation against non-Jews since the country was forcibly founded by conflict in 1948. Although the government has pursued normalization with the Arab world to circumvent its inability to come to a compromise on Palestinian statehood over the years, Israel's integrity in the Middle East remains questionable.

It is not as if there is insufficient evidence to show that Israel has discriminated against Palestinian citizens and all those who have lived under a brutal Israeli military occupation. The most powerful indictment of Israel's pol-

The most powerful indictment of Israel's policies has come from Amnesty International, a global organization that monitors human rights around the world and has become the target of governments it has censored in the past.

Nations that claim to be democracies cannot ignore Amnesty International. A true democracy must abide by the rule of law, which is the basis not only of Amnesty International's mandate, but also the mandate of the International

Criminal Court, which prosecutes war crimes. Israel has always condemned both because

both have criticized Israeli policies Just over a year ago, Amnesty International released a scathing report on Israel's brutality and oppression, which is driven first and foremost by racism against non-Jews, particularly Christian and Muslim Palestinians. The report on Israel's apartheid practices, issued in February 2022, was so comprehensive that it was impossible for anyone in Israel to reject the findings. Yet, that is what Israelis have chosen to do. Their government – the one that a majority of Israeli citizens voted to place in power last December, and in dozens of elections before that - has refused to adjust and implement the rule of law. Instead, Israeli officials and citizens continue to reject Amnesty's report. However, instead of responding to its detailed inventory of apartheid practices, they respond by describing the report as "antisemitic." This week, Amnesty International issued another scathing report, which concluded that the EU, whose members also claim to be democracies, have failed to live up to the fundamental principle of democracy by failing to denounce Israel's apartheid policies.

The latest report repeats the fundamental foundation of apartheid's violations of international law, stating, "The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines apartheid as a crime against humanity, characterized by the commission of 'inhumane acts,' such as unlawful killing, torture and forcible transfer, which are committed to maintain an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over another." In the face of the deflection by Israe-

lis, falsely calling the Amnesty report "antisemitic," 12 Israeli human rights organizations have affirmed Amnesty's conclusions that Israel prostices apartheid

rael practices apartheid. Israelis stood up to protect the principle of justice, opposing Netanyahu's efforts to undermine the rule of law there. But these protests will mean nothing if they fail to stand up against the violations of the rule of law that have already been implemented by Israel's government.

Denunciations of apartheid will not go away. Israel's apartheid policies, which continue every day in Palestinian cities and villages, will forever define it as an undemocratic nation that embraces racist brutality against Christians and Muslims. One day, the Muslim and the Christian worlds will come together and recognize that Israel today is not a democracy and never has been. They will speak out in defense of their own people who are the victims of Israel's policy crimes. The rule of law will not just go away. It will always be there as a measure of Israel's failure as a democratic nation and of its people, who claim to desire justice and law, but who continue to permit one of the worst forms of anti-democratic policies to

If Israelis want to make their protests stand for anything, they need not only to condemn Netanyahu's government for attempting to derail the rule of law in its proposed overhaul of the judicial system, but also strongly and forcefully demand an end to its racist apartheid policies.

Israel will never be fully welcomed in the world until it embraces the rule of law in a manner blind to race, religion and ethnicity.

Courtesy: Arab news

World / Sports



Briefs

NA rejects SC's Punjab..

From Page 01 Rules 1980 regarding the CJP's discretionary powers to form benches. Referring to the SC registrar's circular disregarding the order, the resolution said that it viewed the move "to stop the imple mentation of this decision through an executive circular" with deep concern.

Commenting on the larger SC bench's decision to over ride Justice Isa's order, the resolution said the House had reservations over the fixing of this matter before a "controversial bench" for hearing in haste and "the issuance of an immediate ruling in it within a few minutes".

PM calls NSC...

From Page 01

Washington-based lender has asked the cashstrapped Pakistan to seek commitments for new loans from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) before it releases the funds. However, hopes have rekindled for receiving the much-needed loan tranche stalled since last year as the global lender confirmed that it had received assur ance from Saudi Arabia for providing new loan worth \$2 billion to Pakistan.

US envoy assures...

From Page 01 the commitment of the gov ernment to complete the programme. Donald Blome on the occasion expressed confidence in the policies and programmes of the government being taken for the economic sustainability of the country and the socio-economic uplift of the masses. He extended his support to further promote bilateral economic, investment and trade relations between both countries.

The two sides also exchanged views on matters of commor interest and showed their interest in enhancing the existing bilateral relations between the countries. They also talked about various economic avenues in which both countries can further strengthen their ties.

IMF receives...

From Page 01

Sharif had also said that the IMF wants external financing commitments fulfilled from friendly countries before it releases bailout funds. The international lender has been negotiating with Islamabad since early February to resume \$1.1 billion in funding held since November, which is part of a \$7 billion bailout agreed in 2019.

With central bank reserves falling to critical levels, hardly enough for four weeks of imports, the IMF tranche is critical for the country as it will also unlock other external financing avenues, helping Pakistan avert a default on its obligations. "IMF has indicated to us that they received correspondence from Saudi Arabia on the funding commitment," Pasha said. "Our situation has improved and talks with UAE are also underway," Pasha said, adding that Pakistan would need a similar commitment from the Emirates as well before things with the IMF progress.

PTI says ready to...

From Page 01

law is imposed. The nation will decide its fate if martial law is imposed." He alleged that the government is amending judicial laws just to facilitate PML-N Quaid, Nawaz Sharif.

Fawad Chaudhry said that the crisis is prevailing due to the stubbornness of the government in not implementing the Constitution which states to organise elections in 90 days after the dissolution of the assembly.

The PTI leader said that the rulers want to snatch the voting rights of the nation. He added that all decisions of the caretaker ministers will be unconsti tutional after April 22.

He asked the election commission to send a reference to the Supreme Court and begin the process of constituting a new caretaker government.

UAE Ambassador's Football cup 2023







ISLAMABAD: The Football team of the Embassy of United Arab Emirates won UAE Ambassador Football Cup 2023. In first pictures Ambassador of UAE, Jordan, Kuwait, Iran and Thailand posing for a picture with the wining team; in second picture the captain of the winning team gets trophy from the Ambassador of UAE Hamad Alzaabi and in the third picture players holding Ambassador of UAE to celebrate their win. – DNA

Empower Sports will support Pakistani girls to excel in sports

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) Women's Development Committee Chairperson Malika Junaid said that Pakistani women have potential in volleyball and other sports to shine the county name as well as Empower Sports also aims to empower women in different sports to bring medals at international level. Talking to media Malika Junaid, who is also founder of Empower Sports Academy based in United

ing the national women's volleyball team in the first phase and planning their various training camps to improve their technique and skills, adding that we want to bring women's volleyball team to higher level by providing good coaching from foreign coaches for some good results in the international competitions. "Pakistan women's volleyball team will play international events including South Asian Games", Malika said, adding that we organised the national women's volleyball championship recently held in which we



have prepared a pool of talented players as well.

She said that the aim of Empower Sports Academy is to empower women in sports through providing all possible facilities and environment which they need to excel their fitness, skills and game in different sports as they have the potential to zeal the country's name globally.

"By providing the positive environment in women's sports, a large number of other female players will also be attracted towards sports", Malika said adding that every stakeholder including business community should have to play their positive role for a good cause as our aim is not only to provide opportunities for women to only play sports but also to develop the capacity on them to lead, train and support many more girls.

"Pakistani-origin living in the United States said that her efforts are not only to create a balance in the society but also to highlight the awareness among the people that if the best platform is provided to women athletes, she can bring pride to the country through bringing medals", she concluded.

PTI moves SC for KP...

From Page 01 any petition is filed in this regard. The petition, filed by KP Assembly Speaker Mushtaq Ghani, pleaded with the apex court to order the governor to give the date of the elections nearest to the period of 90 days. "The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should be directed to issue the election schedule as soon as it gets the date," it demanded. "All the federal and provincial institutions should be ordered to support the ECP for the elections," it added.

Iran, Saudi

top...

From Page 01

In a readout from state

broadcaster CCTV, Beijing

hailed "the first official

meeting between the for-

eign ministers of the two

countries in more than

seven years" and Beijing's

"active mediation" in the

diplomacy.During phone

conversations in March,

the ministers had vowed

Benzema hits treble as Madrid smash Barca

a hat-trick as Real Madrid hammered Barcelona 4-0 at Camp Nou to reach the Copa del Rey final on Wednesday, progressing 4-1 on aggregate.

Vinicius Junior opened the scoring just before the break as Carlo Ancelotti's side mounted a spectacular comeback from their one-goal semi-final first leg deficit, with Benzema adding a second-half treble.

After netting three at the weekend against Real Valladolid in La Liga, Benzema repeated the trick to humiliate Barcelona on a painful night for coach Xavi Hernandez in front of almost 95,000 distraught fans.

Los Blancos trail their arch-rivals by 12 points in La Liga and were beaten by Barca in the Spanish Super Cup final in January, but triumphed here to reach the Copa final for the first time since 2014, where they will face Osasuna. "It was a complete game - when you play a complete game, you win 4-0 like that," said Ancelotti.

"This is the most important moment of the season and when we're at the right temperature (like this), we're good." Madrid turfed out the record 31-time cup winners with a muscular performance on a spiky night in Barcelona, where they also ended a demoralising run of three consecutive Clasico defeats. Barcelona's Sergi Roberto said letting in Vinicius' goal on the stroke of half-time was a huge blow. "Their goal at the end of the first half killed us, we didn't deserve to let in that goal. I think we were better in the first half," the midfielder told RTVE.

"We created more chances that we didn't put away, and that goal hurt our morale. In the second half they scored the second and we couldn't play our game." The Catalan said defeat would not damage Barcelona's title bid in the distance, it will not affect us, we have to continue and go for the league,' he added. Xavi was without injured quartet Ousmane Dembele, Pedri, Frenkie de Jong and Andreas Christensen, and eventually it told. The game started at a furious pace and intensity, both teams keen to reach the final, but absolutely desperate not to be knocked out by the other.

Barca coach Xavi was booked for protesting a foul as tempers boiled over, while Gavi and Vinicius were also issued yellow cards as they scrapped. Thousands of Barcelona fans chanted Lionel Messi's name in the 10th minute, amid speculation he could leave Paris Saint-Germain, and they would have dearly loved some of the Argentine's magic. Los Blancos took the lead in stoppage time at the end of the first half, when they showed their

'Tennis missed a chance to ban Russians'

LONDON: Women's world number one Iga Swiatek says tennis authorities missed an opportunity to ban Russian and Belarusian players outright after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, but the moment has passed to do so now, she told the BBC. The 21-year-old Pole has been a staunch supporter of her Ukrainian rivals criticising the WTA for not doing enough to support them. Unlike other sports which imposed an outright ban following the invasion in February 2022, tennis officials permitted those from Russia and Belarus to continue playing, but as neutral athletes. They were allowed to play three of the four Grand Slam tournaments, with Wimbledon the exception. Authorities punished Wimbledon organisers by not awarding the tournament ranking points, but Russian and Belarusian players will be able to compete this year after the ban was lifted. Both countries were also barred from team events like the Davis Cup, in which Russia were the defending champions. "I heard that after World War Two, German players were not allowed as well as Japanese and Italian, and I feel like this kind of thing would show the Russian government that maybe it's not worth it," Swiatek told the BBC. "I know it's a small thing because we are just athletes, a little piece in the world but I feel like sport is pretty important and sport has always been used in propaganda. - Agencies

to meet during the Muslim holy month of Ramazan, which ends later in April. Saudi officials had said the ministerial meeting was the next step in restoring ties, and an Iranian statement

structive path of relations between the two countries. PM urges stakeholders

last week spoke of "the con-

From Page 01 mentioned that a nine-member bench was formed which was later shortened to three members as some judges recused. In the same case, political parties were not made part of the proceedings despite requests, he noted.

IHC extends Khan's...

From Page 01 Today, we are judges, tomorrow we won't be. Everyone has rights. What level of security is provided to former prime ministers?" IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq inquired from the additional attorney general.

Six stadiums to host Asian Cup

DOHA: Six of Qatar's eight World Cup stadiums will be used for the Asian Cup to be staged in the Gulf state next January, the AFC has announced. But the Lusail stadium used for the World Cup final and the iconic 974 stadium made from containers will not be part of the 24-nation tournament to run from January 12 to February 10. The Asian Cup was originally meant to be held this year in China but was switched and delayed because of the country's coronavirus restrictions. Asian Football Confederation president Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa said that based on Qatar's hosting of the World Cup last year the Asian Cup will be "a true spectacle never before experienced in Asian football history." "We have every faith that they will showcase their unrivalled hosting capabilities, state-of-the-art infrastructure and warm hospitality." - Agencies

Hafeez awarded with MCC honorary life membership

prowess on the counter-attack. – APP

DNA

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain Mohammad Hafeez was awarded with Honorary Life Membership by the Marylebone Cricket Club on Wednesday. Hafeez played 55 Tests, 218 ODIs and 119 T20Is over the course of his international career while accumulating over 12,000 runs. The all-rounder was also a handy off-spinner with more than 200 wickets for Pakistan. Hafeez was a member of the Pakistan

team, which clinched the 2017 ICC Champions Trophy and represented his country in three 50-over (2007, 2011 and 2019) and six T20 World Cups (2007, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2021). His last international match was the ICC Men's T20 World Cup semi-final in November 2021.

honoured by MCC

Jenny Gunn - England (2004-2019),

Complete list of players Merissa Aguilleira - West Indies (2008-2019), M.S. Dhoni – India (2004–2019), Jhulan Goswami - India (2002-2022),

- India (1999-2022), Amy Satterthwaite New Zealand (2007-2022), Yuvraj Singh - India (2000-2017), Anya Shrubsole England (2008-2022), Dale Steyn -South Africa (2004–2020), Ross Taylor - New Zealand (2006-2022) "We are thrilled to be able to an-

Muhammad Hafeez - Pakistan (2003-

2021), Rachael Haynes - Australia

(2009-2022), Laura Marsh - England

(2006-2019), Eoin Morgan - Eng-

land (2006-2022), Mashrafe Mortaza

- Bangladesh (2001-2020), Kevin Pie-

tersen - England (2005-2014), Suresh

Raina - India (2005-2018), Mithali Raj

nounce our newest cohort of Honorary Life Members of MCC, as we prepare for the new international summer," Guy Lavender, Chief Executive and Secretary of MCC, said.

Friday, April 07, 2023

Briefs

Russia jails suspect in cafe attack

MOSCOW: The woman suspect allegedly involved in the bombing that killed a Russian military blogger in St. Petersburg was jailed for two months pending an investigation, a Moscow court ruled Tuesday. The blogger, Vladlen Tatar-

sky, 40, was an ardent supporter of the war in Ukraine and filed regular reports on the fighting from the front lines. He was killed Sunday as he led a discussion at a riverside cafe in the historic heart of St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city. Russian authorities described the bombing as an act of terrorism and blamed Ukrainian intelligence agencies for orchestrating it.

Police arrested 26-year-old St. Petersburg resident Darya Trepova, who was seen on video moments before the blast presenting Tatarsky with a statuette that is believed to have contained explosives.

The Interior Ministry released a video in which Trepova told a police officer that she brought the bust to the cafe. When asked who gave it to her, she said she would explain later. The circumstances under which Trepova spoke were unclear, including whether she was under duress.

The National Anti-Terrorist Committee, which coordinates counterterrorism operations, said the bombing was "planned by Ukrainian special services."-APP

Drought adds to Argentina's economic

woes

LIMA: Argentina's already fragile economy is now taking a beating from nature, as the worst drought in almost 100 years decimates critical soy, wheat and corn production. Soy and wheat crops were halved this year. while corn yield was cut by more than a third, according to official projections, slashing Argentina's exports in a sector crucial for

ly 100 percent year-on-year and a burdensome debt of \$44 billion with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the drought could not have come at a worse time for Latin America's third biggest economy.

the public purse.

What's more, "the true situation will only become clear once the harvesters enter the fields," agronomist Jaime Mestre told AFP. With rainfall 50 percent lower than usual, whatever is there to be harvested will likely be of lower quality. While in Washington last week for a meeting with US President Joe Biden, President Alberto Fernandez pleaded for clemency in the face of the worst drought "since 1929" as the IMF executive board met. The United States is the nation with the most voting rights at the IMF, which subsequently announced a \$5.4 billion disbursement to Argentina as part of its loan program.—APP

KSA, Morocco consultation committee hold meeting

RIYADH: Senior officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Morocco held here on Wednesday night the third meeting of the Political Consultation and the Follow-up committees.

The Assistant Minister of State for African Countries Affairs, Ambassador Dr. Sami bin Abdullah Al-Saleh, headed the Saudi delegation, while the Moroccan side was headed by the Director General of Bilateral Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Abroad, Ambassador Fouad Yazough. The meeting was also attended by the Saudi Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco, Abdullah bin Saad Al-Ghurairy, the Moroccan Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Dr. Mustafa Al-Mansouri, and several officials and representatives of the two countries foreign ministries. The two sides discussed ways to enhance historical and strategic bilateral relations in various fields and exchanged views on several regional and international issues of mutual interest.-APP

Claims South Korea

North Korea ready to hold nuclear test at any time

defense chief on Thursday claimed that North Korea has already completed its preparations and could hold a nuclear test any time, local media reported.

Briefing the Defense Committee of the National Assembly, Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup said Seoul is also bolstering its deterrence to Pyongyang's evolving nuclear and missile threats. "(North Korea) has already completed preparations for what would be its seventh nuclear test, and is capable of carrying out a nuclear test at any time." the Yonhap News Agency quoted Lee as saying. Lee also briefed lawmakers on North Korea's recent unveiling of the Hwasan-31 tactical nuclear warhead and the test of an underwa-

ter nuclear attack drone. Last month, North Korea claimed that its military tested a new underwater nuclear weapon capable of creating a super-scale radioactive tsunami and said the drone could be operated from any coast or port. Lee told the lawmakers that South Korea along with the

US will respond to North Korea in case of a nuclear test, but did not explain his government's strategy on the joint response.

Lee said that his military is monitoring the North's Punggye-ri nuclear test site for an expected nuclear test. He also confirmed that trilateral talks between senior defense officials of South Korea, the US, and Iapan will be held later this month. The meeting is expected to discuss measures to counter evolving nuclear and missile threats, according to the agency.

envoys of the US and South Korea met on Thursday in Seoul and discussed the latest security situation on the Korean Peninsula.

During the meeting, South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Kim Gunn, and his US counterpart, Sung Kim, agreed to continue their efforts to dissuade the North from developing nuclear weapons, Yonhap News reported, citing a Foreign Ministry statement.

"The two sides agreed to respond sternly to any provocations from Pyongyang

Meanwhile, chief nuclear under a robust South Korea-US combined defense posture while keeping a close eye on the possibility of the North's further provocations," the ministry said. South Korea on Thursday called on Pyongyang to stop the unauthorized use of a joint industrial complex in the North's border city of Kaesong and warned of actions if it does not respond to its call. The Unification Ministry accused Pyongyang of using the facility despite its 2016 shutdown in response to North Korean nuclear and

long-range missile tests.

factories in the complex without authorization constitutes a clear violation of South Korean businessmen's right to property and a related inter-Korean agreement," the agency quoted an unnamed official as telling reporters on condition of anonymity.

The ministry's reaction came after North Korean media published photos on Wednesday showing buses still running in the industrial park, which Seoul presumed are buses provided by South Korea for workers' transportation.-Agencies

Mexico's president **backs Trump**

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's president sided Wednesday with former US President Donald Trump following his arraignment in a Manhattan courtroom, dismissing the charges against him as political persecution.

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who shared a brief but courteous relationship with Trump during his first two years as Mexico's president, suggesting the charges were politically motivated to hurt Trump's 2024 election prospects.

"I reiterate and maintain my position that legal matters, supposedly legal matters, should not be used for electoral political purposes. That is why I do not agree with what they are doing to him," he said. According to Lopez Obrador, Trump's case mirrors his own experience in early 2000, when the federal government tried to indict him during his time as mayor of Mexico City over a dispute regarding a construction project.-APP

Poland pledges more fighter jets to Ukraine

WARSAW: Poland pledged additional Mig-29 fighter jets to Kyiv during Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's first official visit to its key ally on Wednesday. His Polish counterpart, Andrzej Duda, said Warsaw planned to send Ukraine more of the Soviet-era planes. "We are ready to deliver another six Mig-29s which are undergoing maintenance. We estimate that they can be delivered relatively quickly," he said. In addition to talks with Duda, Zelensky also visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, met with Ukrainian refugees, and took part in an economic forum on his country's future reconstruction. His visit is seen a gesture of thanks to Poland, not only for its assistance to over 1.5 million Ukrainians who have fled across the border to escape the war, but also for its ongoing support. Warsaw has played a key role in galvanising Western military and political support for Kyiv in its defence against Russia. It was also among the first nations to offer Ukraine Western tanks and other artillery and armaments.

The Ukrainian president has made only a few trips outside the country since Russia's invasion over a year ago, all of them to his country's most powerful allies. Unlike previous visits to the United States, Britain, France, and Belgium, this trip was announced in advance and he was accompanied by his wife.

But his visit also comes at a delicate time, with Polish farmers growing increasingly angry at the glut of Ukrainian grain in Poland which has caused prices to fall.-APP

Brazil's Luiz sets out to save Amazon

RIO DE JANEIRO: When it comes to what some call his most important job - saving the Amazon rainforest - President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has been talking the talk, vowing "Brazil is back" in the fight against climate change.

Now, environmentalists say it is time for him to walk the walk - and for the international community to put its money where its mouth is by ramping up funding to protect the Amazon, a vital resource in the race to curb global warming.

Luiz, who marks his 100th day in office Monday, has made a radical break with the environmental policies of far-right predecessor Jair Bolsonaro, vowing to fight for zero deforestation in the Amazon after a surge of destruction the past

four years.

The 77-year-old leftist got down to business on day one, signing a flurry of decrees to undo Bolsonaro's environmental legacv. create an inter-ministerial anti-deforestation task force and revive the suspended Amazon Fund, an internationally financed initiative to protect the rainforest.-APP

Xi willing to call Ukraine's Zelenskiy: EU chief BEIJING: China's Xi Jin-

ping expressed willingness to speak to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, the head of the EU said on Thursday, after French President Emmanuel Macron urged Beijing to talk sense to Russia over the war in Ukraine. In closely watched talks, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen and Macron met with Xi in Beijing. Macron said the West must engage China to help end the crisis and prevent "spiralling" tensions that could split global powers into warring blocs. Xi, who has sought to position China as a potential mediator in the conflict but is seen by the West as favouring Russia, responded by saying he hoped Moscow and Kyiv could hold peace negotiations as soon as possible. "It was interesting to hear that President Xi reiterated his willingness to speak" to Zelenskiy, Von der Leyen said, calling his words "positive". Xi said a conversation could happen when the "conditions and time are



right", she added. Zelenskiy has repeatedly asked Xi to meet him, including after the Chinese leader visited Russia's President Vladimir Putin in Moscow last month. A French diplomatic source told Reuters that Xi was "ready" to call Zelenskiy. "The Russian aggression in Ukraine has dealt a blow to (international) stability," Macron told Xi, standing alongside the Chinese president outside the Great Hall of the People at the start of their bilateral meeting, "I know I can count on you to bring Russia back to its senses and everyone back to the negotiating table." China has proposed a 12-point peace plan for the Ukraine crisis that calls on both sides to agree to a gradual de-escalation leading to a comprehensive ceasefire.

The plan was largely dismissed by the West due to China's refusal to condemn Russia, and the United States and NATO then said China was considering sending arms to Russia, which Beijing has denied. "Arming the aggressor is

a clear violation of interna-

tional law," von der Leyen said. "This would indeed significantly harm the relationship between the EU and China." The French diplomatic source said Macron had urged Xi not to provide weapons to Russia, and that Xi had replied that it was not

his war. In comments after the meeting, Xi called for Ukraine and Russia to resume peace talks and find a political solution to the conflict. More than a year into a conflict that has claimed thousands of lives. there is little sign either side is keen to negotiate.

France said the discussions between the leaders were "frank and constructive." while China described them as "friendly" and "in-depth". Macron also asked Xi to press Russia to comply with international rules on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Putin has said he will station tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine's neighbour Belarus, a move seen as a dangerous escalation in the bloody year-long conflict.-APP

'NATO, concept of security are incompatible things'

MOSCOW: Marking this week's 74th anniversary of NATO on a negative note, Russia early Thursday claimed that the military alliance is "incompatible" with international security. "Everything is being done to make the world even more dangerous, in order to prevent the existence of alternative centers of power that can undermine the hegemony of the West. In general, it can be stated with confidence that security and NATO are incompatible things," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova claimed in a commentary published by the ministry. Zakharova claimed that while the NATO bloc celebrated its 74th anniversary on Tuesday, it had "nothing to brag about" since "behind NATO allies are wars, turning states into ruins, unpunished war crimes, the killing of civilians, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.' Zakharova further claimed that despite the alliance saying it is a defensive one, its history suggests otherwise, with NATO currently expanding towards Russia with the intent to "usurp the entire European security system," thus creating threats to Moscow's security. In this regard, she claimed that by officially joining the alliance this week, Finland became "another victim" of NATO by renouncing its policy of neutrality "in exchange for turning it into a frontline zone - a springboard to contain Russia in the northwestern direction." In a break from its traditional policy of non-alignment, Finland joined NATO in response to Russia last year launching a war against its neighbor Ukraine. Finland also borders Russia, and suffered a Soviet invasion during World War II. "As we can see, NATO does not intend to stop there," Zakharova continued. "Increasingly, NATO Secretary General J. Stoltenberg makes statements about the global role of the alliance, the need for it to go beyond the traditional zone of responsibility - the Euro-Atlantic. -DNA

Protests again grip France

PARIS: Protesters disrupted vehicle traffic at Paris' main airport and police fired clouds of tear gas in other French cities as people marched in their thousands in a new round of strikes and nationwide demonstrations Thursday seeking to get President Emmanuel Macron to scrap pension reforms that have ignited a monthslong firestorm of public anger. In Paris, rat catchers set the tone by hurling rodents' cadavers at City Hall. That protest Wednesday was one of the more shocking illustrations of how Macron's plans to raise the national retirement age from 62 to 64 have stoked workers' fury. Broadcaster BFMTV showed the rodents' emaciated corpses being tossed by workers in white protective suits. Natacha Pommet, a leader of the public services branch of the CGT trade union, said Thursday that Paris' rat catchers wanted "to show the hard reality of their mission" and that opposition to Macron's pension reforms is morphing into a wider movement of worker grievances over salaries and other complaints. "All this anger brings together all types of anger," she said in a phone interview. Ten previous rounds of nationwide strikes and protests since January have failed to get Macron to change course, and there was no sign from his government that Thursday's 11th round of upheaval would make it back down. Talks between trade union leaders and Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne quickly broke up Wednesday with no breakthrough, setting the stage for protesters' return to the streets. Largely peaceful crowds marched behind unions' colored flags and banners in Marseille on the Mediterranean coast, Bordeaux in the southwest, Lyon in the southeast and other cities. In Paris, strikers again closed the Eiffel Tower. In the western city of Nantes, rumbling tractors joined the parade of marchers and thick clouds of police tear gas.-APP



MINSK: Pakistan ambassador to Belarus, Sajjad Haider meets with the Director of the National Agency of Investment and Privatization (NAIP) of Belarus, Dmitry Krasovsky, and the First Deputy Director Dmitry Berezovsky to discuss ways to enhance bilateral economic cooperation. - DNA

China vows 'forceful' measures after US-Taiwan meeting

Speaker Kevin McCarthy hosted Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Wednesday in a show of U.S. support for the self-governed island, which China claims as its own, along with a bipartisan delegation of more than a dozen U.S. lawmakers

TAIPEI: China vowed reprisals against Taiwan after a meeting between the United States House speaker and the island's president, saying Thursday that the U.S. was on a "wrong and danger-

Speaker Kevin McCarthy hosted Taiwanese President Tsai Ingwen on Wednesday in a show of U.S. support for the self-governed island, which China claims as its own, along with a bipartisan delegation of more than a dozen U.S. lawmakers. The Biden administration maintains there is nothing provocative about the visit by Tsai, which is the latest of a half dozen to the U.S. Yet it comes as the U.S.-China relationship has fallen to historic lows. with U.S. support for Taiwan one of the main points of difference between the two powers.But the formal trappings of the meeting, and the senior rank of some of the elected officials in the delegation from Congress, could lead China to view it as an escalation. No speaker is known to have met with a Taiwanese president on

U.S. soil since the U.S. broke off formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979. In response to the meeting, Bei-

jing said in a statement issued early morning by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that it would take "resolute and forceful measures to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

It urged the U.S. "not to walk further down a wrong and dangerous road." In December, China's military sent 71 planes and seven ships toward Taiwan in a 24-hour display of force after expressing anger at Taiwan-related provisions in a U.S. annual defense spending bill. China's military pressure campaign on Taiwan has intensified in recent years, and the Communist Party has sent planes or ships toward the island on a near-daily basis. But as of Thursday afternoon, there was no overt sign of a large-scale military response. "We will take resolute measures to punish the 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces and their actions, and resolutely safeguard our country's sovereignty and territorial integrity," China's Taiwan Affairs Office said in a statement Thursday. referring to Tsai and her political party as separatists. Chinese vessels were engaged in a joint patrol and inspection operation in the Taiwan Strait that will last three days, state media said. The Fujian Maritime Safety Administration said its ship, the Haixun 06, would inspect cargo vessels and others in the waters that run between Taiwan and China as part of the operation. Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said Wednesday evening it had tracked China's Shandong aircraft carrier passing southeast of Taiwan through the Bashi Strait. On Thursday morning, it tracked three People's Liberation Army navy vessels and one warplane in the area around the island. U.S. congressional visits to Taiwan have stepped up in frequency in the past year, and the American Institute in Taipei. the de facto embassy, announced the arrival of another delegation Thursday. House Foreign Affairs Committee head Michael Mc-

Caul of Texas is leading a group of eight other lawmakers on a three-day visit to discuss regional security and trade, AIT said. At their meeting Wednesday, Tsai and McCarthy spoke carefully to avoid unnecessarily escalating tensions with Beijing. Standing side by side at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in California, the two acknowledged China's threats against the island's government. "America's support for the people of Taiwan will remain resolute, unwavering and bipartisan." Mc-Carthy said at a news conference later. He also said U.S.-Taiwan ties are stronger than at any other point in his life. Tsai said the "unwavering support reassures the people of Taiwan that we are not isolated." Tsai said she and McCarthy spoke of the importance of Taiwan's self-defense, of fostering robust trade and economic ties and supporting the island government's ability to participate in the international community.

But she also warned, "It is no secret that today the peace that we have maintained and the democracy

in a world where democracy is under threat and the urgency of keeping the beacon of freedom shining cannot be understated," she said. McCaul was less circumspect upon arriving in Taiwan. "By being here I think sends a signal to the Chinese Communist Party that the United States supports Taiwan and that we're going to harden Taiwan and we want them to think twice about invading Taiwan," he told reporters. The group

which we have worked hard to build

are facing unprecedented challeng-

es." "We once again find ourselves

is to meet with Tsai on Saturday and will talk about weapons delivery to Taiwan, much of which has been delayed, he said. The United States broke off official ties with Taiwan in 1979 and formally established diplomatic relations with the Beijing government. As part of its recognition of China, the U.S. agreed to a "one China" policy under which it acknowledges that Beijing lavs claim to Taiwan. but does not endorse China's claim. and the U.S. remains Taiwan's key provider of military and defense as-

sistance.-Agencies



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Briefs

Funeral of martyred soldier held

DNA

RAWALPINDI:Funeral prayers of Sepoy Hamid Rasool who embraced martyr dom during an Intelligence Based Operation in Shin Warsak, South Waziristan District, was offered at Frontier Corps (FC) Headquarters Wana initially and subsequently in his hometown Jaswal, district Rawalpindi with full military honours.

Senior serving & retired Officers/ Soldiers including the injured comrades of the same operation, relatives and a large number of people from civil society attended the funeral prayers. Armed Forces of Pakistan stand firm against the nefarious designs of enemies to spoil the hard-earned peace. Such sacrifices will not go in vain and further strengthen our resolve to take the fight against terrorism to it's logical conclusion.

China concerned over Palestine situation

BEIJING: China on Thursday expressed deep concerns over Israeli police clashes with Palestinians at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and called on all parties, Israel in particular, to show calm and restraint and immediately stop all words and deeds that might heighten tensions, in order to prevent further escalation of the situation.

China is deeply concerned over the recent escalation of the Palestine-Israel conflict, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Mao Ning said during her regular briefing held here.

She said that the issue of Jerusalem's status is complicated and sensitive and added, parties concerned with relevant UN resolu tions, and earnestly respect and maintain the historical status quo of the holy sites

in Jerusalem.

Mao Ning said that in the meanwhile the international community needs to act with a stronger sense of urgency and take concrete steps in advancing the twostate solution, work for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question at an early date, and realize the peaceful coexistence between Palestine and Israel. According to reports, on April 5, Israeli police clashed with Palestinians at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, leaving many Palestinians injured. - APP

Rupee stages recovery against US dollar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Thursday was the day for the Pakistani rupee to rebound and gave the US dollar a taste of its own medicine in the interbank market. According to the information forwarded by the forex dealers, the local currency hit back at the greenback recovering by Rs1.85 on the heels of some positive news on the economic front, and was currently being traded at Rs286.

On Wednesday, negative economic indicators and uncertainty about IMF programme revival pushed the rupee towards a record low against the US dollar. The rupee closed at 287.29, a loss of Rs2.25 or 0.8%. This is the lowest level for the Pakistani rupee since it hit 285.02 against the greenback in March this year.

However, some positive news developed on Wednesday evening after the markets were closed including a statement from the governor of State Bank of Pakistan, suggesting the International Monetary Fund can make a good news about Pakistan anytime. The SBP governor speaking in Islamabad further said the IMF can make a good announcement for Pakistan anytime as the country has fulfilled all the public finance and monetary requirements as demanded by the global lender.

Bakhmut: Wagner advances as Ukraine readies offensive

Russian mercenaries say they have seized the centre of Bakhmut as Ukraine's troops train for new offensives

News Desk

KYIV: Russian forces spearheaded by mercenaries of the Wagner Group seized the centre of the eastern city of Bakhmut during the 58th week of the war. Yet Ukrainian defenders were still holding the Russian army at bay, and their commanders said the Russian offensive was now clearly waning. At the same time, pro-Russian civilians were evacuating southern occupied regions as thousands of Ukrainian soldiers completed their overseas training for a counteroffensive that could come later this month. Wagner mercenaries made advances into the centre of Bakhmut on March 31. Geolocated footage showed them within 400 metres (1,300 feet) of the town hall. Two days later, after an overnight battle

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

described as "especially hot", geolocated footage showed Wagner founder Yevgeny Prigozhin raising a Russian flag over the city hall. "From a legal point of view, Bakhmut has been taken," Prigozhin said in an audio message.

Wagner was also understood to have gained complete control of the AZOM industrial complex. By April 3, Russian forces had likely advanced in southern Bakhmut closer to the Avangard Stadium, and Russian military bloggers claimed on April 4 that Wagner forces captured the Bakhmut-1 railway station. Zelenskyv appeared to reassure Ukrainians wary of a repeat of the siege of Mariupol, when he said "corresponding decisions" would be made in Bakhmut as the situation developed. Some 2,000 Ukrainian soldiers were taken prisoner last year from the Azovstal plant when they were surrounded by Russian forces and were ordered to surrender.

Yet Russia's attacks were fewer in number, Serhiy Cherevaty, spokesman for Ukraine's eastern forces, said.

"If earlier the occupiers stormed our positions from 35 to more than 50 times a day, in recent days their number has decreased from 17 to 25," Cherevaty said on April 1. "The enemy will not be able to significantly change his so-called 'metre by metre' tactics ... and, as the Kharkiv operation showed, these metres occupied by the en-

emy return to us very quickly." British military intelligence agreed that Russia's winter campaign to seize the Donetsk and Luhansk regions by March 31 was flagging. "Eighty days on, it is increasingly apparent that this project has failed," it said. "Russian forces have made only marginal gains at the cost of tens of thousands of casualties," the ministry wrote. Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Malyar

said Bakhmut had been Russia's most expensive battle of the entire war in men and matériel. Russian casualties certainly seemed to be going up. On April 2, the Ukrainian defence ministry estimated the Russian dead of the previous week at a staggering 4,000. Russian military bloggers said the campaigns for Bakhmut and Avdiivka to the south had to be won in time to prepare defences against a Ukrainian counteroffensive they thought likely to come between Orthodox Easter, on April 16, and Labour Day, May 9. "If our army cannot solve these problems, then larger-scale offensives are not even worth thinking about," said one. "In some areas, the enemy is noticeably nervous, because time is against them, and there are fewer human resources for storming our positions," said Ukraine's commander of ground forces Col-Gen Oleksandr Syrskyi.

Gandapur arrested; **Imran** condemns arrest

-Claims he has been arrested on orders from 'above'

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: PTI leader Ali Amin Gandapur was on Thursday arrested in Dera Ismail (DI) Khan following a five-hour-long standoff. According to details, the police arrested the PTI leader from the premises of Peshawar High Court Dera Bench. The police team - headed by DPO Dera - shifted Ali Amin Gandapur to an unknown location. The former federal minister was present in the premises of High Court for almost 5 hours. Reports said that former federal minister for Kashmir affairs and GB was arrested from outside the high court premises as he had taken refuge in the court to avoid arrest. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, Donald Blome calls on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. - DNA

Israel retaliates after intercepting rockets from Lebanon

Defence Minister Yoav Gallant had been briefed on the details of events on Israel's northern border, a ministry spokesman said

IERUSALEM: The Israeli army said it intercepted rocket fire from Lebanon Thursday after clashes between Israeli police and Palestinians inside Islam's third-holiest site drew warnings of retaliation from around the region. Israel then struck targets in southern Lebanon, state media in Lebanon reported, without giving any details of any casualties. "A rocket was fired

from Lebanon into Israeli territory and was successfully intercepted," an army statement said as Israeli media reported a "salvo" of projectiles had been fired. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, which came amid heightened tensions after Israeli police clashed with Palestinians inside Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque before dawn Wednesday and again in the evening. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "receiving continuous updates about the security situation and will conduct an assessment with the heads of the security establishment," his office said.

Emergency services reported a man had been lightly wounded by shrapnel and a female was injured while running to the shelter. Warning sirens sounded in the town of Shlomi and in Moshav Betzet and the Galilee in northern Israel, the army said. "The minister will soon conduct a situation assessment with senior officials in the defence establishment." - APP

Rashid dares govt to move reference against judges

ISLAMABAD: Awami Muslim League president and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has dared the PDM ruling alliance to bring a reference against three judges as the entire nation is standing behind the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Speaking outside the Islamabad High Court here on Thursday, Rashid said 240 million people were standing like a rock with the apex court judges. He said it was only Maryam Nawaz's wish to move a reference against honourable justices.

in the parliament, he said and added that many such resolutions have been passed in the past. Regarding elections in the Punjab, the former minister taunted the ruling alliance that they were not eligible to go the

They are planning to table a resolution [against judges]



'The nation is for preparing elections, they are trying to evade the vote. Out of 13 parties [in the PDM], candidates only three parties have submitted their nomination papers," Rashid added.

He ridiculed the government saying that they have no opinion of theirs as "vote [masses] is not with them." He claimed that Imran Khan has a day ago said that they would be humiliated. Imran's popularity has increased by their foolishness, he continued.

'They were conspiring [against us] but we will use people's power against them," Rashid quipped. He criticised the government for adding to their miseries and said people were dying in an attempt to get a bag of flour. - DNA

Israeli raid risks igniting violence: Arab League

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the situation had been caused by "extremists" who barricaded themselves inside the mosque with weapons, stones and fireworks

OIC holds an emergency meeting

JEDDAH: The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) will hold an emergency, open-ended meeting of the Executive Committee at the level of Permanent Representatives, on Saturday, 8 April 2023, at the headquarters of the General Secretariat in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The meeting called for by the State of Palestine and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is expected to discuss the incursions and attacks carried out by the Israeli occupation forces against Al-Aqsa Mosque and worshipers therein. It is anticipated that the OIC Secretary-General, Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, will address the meeting to highlight the serious developments that the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Palestinians in general are going through, because of the repeated Israeli attacks. - DNA

News Desk

CAIRO: The Arab League on Wednesday strongly condemned an Israeli police raid on Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, saying it put regional stability at risk.

In a statement issued after an emergency meeting on the incident, the League condemned what it called "crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces against defenceless Muslim worshippers" in the mosque.

The pre-dawn raid risked "igniting a spiral of violence that threatens security and stability in the region and the world", it added. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the situation had been caused by "extremists" who barricaded themselves inside the mosque with weapons, stones and fireworks. Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit had

earlier condemned the raid in a separate statement. "The extremist approaches that control the policy of the Israeli government will lead to widespread confrontations with the Palestinians if they are not put to an end," he said.

Kremlin sees no prospect of Chinese mediation

it saw no "prospect" for China to mediate the Ukraine conflict and that it had "no other way" than to press on with its offensive. The comments came as French President Emmanuel Macron was in Beijing to try to dissuade China from supporting Moscow's campaign. "Undoubtedly, China has a very effective and commanding potential for mediation," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "But the situation with Ukraine is complex, so far there are no prospects for a political settlement," he said. He was asked about China's potential role

of mediator after Macron told Chinese leader Xi Jinping he was counting on him to "bring Russia to its senses".

"At the moment, there are no other ways

for us aside from the continuation of the special military operation," Peskov also said, using the Kremlin term for its offensive. President Putin meanwhile met the leaders of four Ukrainian regions Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson - that he claimed to have annexed despite never fully controlling.

"Our goal is to push (Ukraine's forces) back to a distance where they won't be able to inflict any damage on us," he said. The televised talks otherwise bore a striking resemblance to Putin's usual

meetings with the heads of other Russian regions. The leaders made a point of discussing snowfall, gas distribution and vegetable storage, with almost no mention of the armed conflict. - Agencies

Japan mily helicopter missing with 10 on board

The helicopter belonged to the army's branch in the southern Kumamoto region, according to Public broadcaster NHK

TOKYO: A Japanese military helicopter with 10 people on board disappeared from radar on Thursday near an island in the southern region of Okinawa, army officials said. The aircraft had been on a reconnaissance mission when it went missing in the afternoon, in what the Ground Self-Defence Force (GSDF) described as an "aerial accident". Search and rescue operations are ongoing. GSDF chief of staff Yasunori Morishita told reporters.

"To rescue everyone who was on board as soon as possible, we will continue to do our utmost... using the vessels and aircraft of the maritime and air self-defence forces, as well as coastguard patrol ships," he said.

What appeared to be an aircraft part had been found, but it was not clear whether it belonged to the helicopter in question, Morishita said. Two pilots, two mechanics and six crew members were on board, including a GSDF general from the 8th division, he added.

The helicopter belonged to the army's branch in the southern Kumamoto region, according to public broadcaster NHK. After taking off from Okinawa's Miyako island before 4:00 pm, it was scheduled to have returned after an hour-long flight, NHK said. "Saving lives is our utmost priority," Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said while briefly addressing reporters, as officials scrambled to assess the situation. - APP

