



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, April 05, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Trump arrested, turns himself in, facing historic day in court

Detailed News On Page-08

Jacinda takes on new role to fight terrorism

Detailed News On Page-07



Boxer Amir Khan handed 2-year ban

Detailed News On Page-06



Election in Punjab on May 14

SC declares ECP decision null and void

Govt asked to provide funds to Election Commission by April 10; Chief Secretaries asked to provide security plan; Non-cooperation from any quarter will have consequences, says Supreme Court

'Ruling over Punjab polls to worsen political crisis'



ECP summons 'consultative' meeting

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned a 'consultative meeting' tomorrow following the Supreme Court of Pakistan's (SC) verdict on Punjab elections, declaring the watchdog's order 'unconstitutional.' According to details, the electoral watchdog summoned the meeting tomorrow at 11am to consult over the SC verdict on Punjab elections, declaring the watchdog's order to postpone polls of the Punjab Assembly till Oct 8 "unconstitutional". The meeting would be chaired by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Raja Sultan. Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court of Pakistan Tuesday declared the

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday said that the recent judgment of the three-member bench of the top court regarding elections in Punjab could further deepened the constitutional and political crisis in the country. Addressing a press conference here, he said he was feeling sad and sorry on today's judgment as it came at the time when the country was already facing financial and security challenges. He said that it was also unfortunate that full court bench was not constituted to hear this very important case despite the demands from

KHAYAM ABBASI

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday declared Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision on Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) election null and void. The decision was announced by a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar. The Supreme Court, in its verdict, declared the electoral body's decision to hold polls on October 8 as "unconstitutional" and ordered the elections to be held in Punjab on May 14. "Constitution and law do not give [ECP] the authority to postpone the election date," said the apex court, adding that

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Nawaz for reference against SC bench

DNA

LONDON: Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif has rejected the Supreme Court of Pakistan's verdict nullifying ECP decision to postpone Punjab elections, calling for submitting a reference against the three-member Supreme Court bench. Addressing a press conference via video link, the former premier said that the verdict - nullifying ECP decision to postpone Punjab elections.

Fahd Husain resigns as SAPM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: After a year in office, former journalist Fahd Husain announced on Tuesday that he has resigned as special assistant to the prime minister on public policy and strategic communication. "Grateful to PM Shehbaz for giving me an opportunity to serve in public office."

Sehr, Iftar Timing

Ramazan 14, 1444
Sehr: 04:24 am
Iftar: 06:35 pm
Fiqa-e-Jafria
Sehr: 04:14 am
Iftar: 06:45 pm

PTI to move SC on KP polls

PTI lauds 'historic' apex court verdict

Imran Khan directs leaders to prepare for provincial polls

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: In connection with the Supreme Court's (SC) declaration that the elections in Punjab will now be held on May 14, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran welcomed on Tuesday the verdict. Sources privy to the development said PTI stalwart Fawad Chaudhry had contacted the deposed premier after the apex court announced the verdict. Mr Chaudhry briefed Mr Khan over the matter. Commending the SC's decision, Mr Khan said, "The apex court had protected the constitution." Asking the nation to gear up for the Punjab Assembly elections, Mr Khan made it

Continued on Page 06

Lahore ATC grants relief to Imran in 3 cases

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Tuesday extended Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's bail till April 13 in three terrorism cases registered against him. Khan - who was ousted in April last year via a no-confidence motion - arrived at the ATC amid tight security as the judges conditioned Khan's bail to his in-person appearance.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addresses a session of National Assembly. - DNA

Suo motu Justice Isa's ruling overturned

A six-judge SC bench disposed of the matter in minutes

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: A six-judge larger bench of Supreme Court has overturned Justice Qazi Faez Isa's ruling about powers of the chief justice of Pakistan regarding suo motu notices and formation of benches. The six-member bench was formed only hours before it conducted its first hearing and shot down Justice Isa's verdict without wasting any time, saying the detailed judgement will be released later. The larger bench was led by Justice Ijazul Ahsan, and comprised of Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Mazahir Naqvi, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Ayesha Malik.

Continued on Page 06

Maryam takes aim at SC judges

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president Maryam Nawaz said on Tuesday parliament should play its role in a bid to hold accountable those who were providing facilities to

Continued on Page 06

'Dark day for constitution'

Verdict murder of justice: PM Shehbaz Denounces SC verdict; links it to Zulfikar Bhutto case

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday likened the Supreme Court's (SC) verdict on Punjab elections to the 'judicial murder' of late prime minister Zulfikar Ali (ZA) Bhutto, media reported. Addressing the National Assembly floor, PM Shehbaz referred to the 'judicial murder' of late prime minister Zulfikar Ali (ZA) Bhutto and said his 'murder' took place on April 4, 1979, and on the same date, the unfortunate episode was repeated with a decision of the Supreme Court (SC) in the polls delay case. The prime minister equating the two decisions said today, a murder of justice took place which was highly regrettable. He said in the cabinet's meeting, they had demanded that a reference over the judicial murder of the late prime minister, which had been pending for the last 12 years, should be taken up and decided by the full court. He said the world knew that ZAB's case was a 'judicial murder'. One of the former judges,

Continued on Page 06

Cabinet rejects SC verdict

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet Tuesday rejected the Supreme Court's "unanimous verdict" on the case pertaining to the postponement of election in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), sources said. The development came during the cabinet's meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, held after a three-member bench - headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar as members - announced the apex court's verdict on the matter which it had reserved a day earlier. Announcing the verdict on a plea filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the country's top court declared the

Continued on Page 06

SBP increases interest rate by 100 bps to 21%

The decision will help achieve the medium-term inflation target over the next 8 quarters

COMMERCE DESK

ISLAMABAD: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Tuesday increased the interest rate by 100 basis points (bps) to 21 per cent, an all-time high in the country in order to arrest ballooning inflation. According to a private news channel, the SBP in its Monetary Policy Statement issued here on Tuesday, at its meeting held on 4th April 2023, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to increase the policy rate by 100 basis points to 21 per cent. The MPC noted that inflation in March 2023 rose further to 35.4 per cent, and is expected to remain high in the near term. However, there are early indications of inflation expectations plateauing, albeit at an elevated level. The MPC views today's decision as an important step towards anchoring inflation expectations around the medium-term target, which is critical for achieving the objective of price stability. The Committee further observed that Pakistan's financial sector remains broadly resilient, while economic activity continues to moderate. Since the last meeting, the Committee noted

three important developments having implications for the macroeconomic outlook. First, the current account deficit has narrowed considerably, more than previously anticipated, mainly on the back of sizable import containment. Nonetheless, the overall balance of payments position continues to remain under stress, with foreign exchange reserves still at low levels. Second, significant progress has been made towards the completion of the 9th review under the IMF's EFF program. Third, recent strains in the global banking system have led to further tightening of global liquidity and financial conditions. These have added to the difficulties of emerging market economies like Pakistan to access international capital markets. In this context, the MPC considers the current monetary policy stance appropriate and es that today's decision, along with previous accumulated monetary tightening, will help achieve the medium-term inflation target over the next 8 quarters. However, the Committee noted that uncertainties attached with the global financial conditions as well as

Continued on Page 06

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Australia to provide emergency nutrition support to Pakistan

Australia's first tranche supported food security of flood-affected communities through cash transfers and minor rehabilitation works in partnership with the World Food Programme

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australia will provide life-saving nutrition support to the Pakistan flood response through an additional AUD \$5 million in immediate humanitarian assistance. The 2022 flooding left an estimated 1.6 million severely malnourished children needing lifesaving nutrition services across the 84 flood-affected districts. Over 60 per cent of these affected children are without essential nutrition services. Australia's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins said, "This additional assistance reflects Australia's commitment to the people

of Pakistan. As Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong has said, we are concerned by the growing scale of food insecurity and human suffering in many parts of the world." Australia will provide AUD \$3.5 million to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to scale-up services for the prevention of malnutrition among children, adolescent girls and pregnant women. This support will also help mothers screen their children at home for malnutrition and strengthen Pakistan's capacity to respond to nutrition emergencies. In addition, Australia will provide A\$1.5 million through CARE Paki-

stan to provide nutrition and livelihood support for flood-affected communities, particularly women and children, in the Matiari District of Sindh. The support will improve the nutritional status of vulnerable children and women through cash grants, kitchen garden kits and training on agriculture and livestock practices. Australia's total assistance to the 2022 Pakistan floods now stands at AUD \$10.2 million. Australia's first tranche supported food security of flood-affected communities through cash transfers and minor rehabilitation works in partnership with the World Food Programme.



PHC issues notices to VC UoP, PUTA

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday issued notices to the Vice Chancellor (VC) University of Peshawar (UoP) and the Peshawar University Teachers' Association (PUTA) over closure of the university for a month. The two-member bench, comprising Justice Ishaq Ibrahim and Justice S.M. Atiq Shah, while conducting a hearing on the request of Islamic Jamiat Students against teachers' protest at UoP expressed shock to learn about the closure of the university for a month due to teachers' protest. The petitioners' lawyer, Advocate Farooq Malik, informed the court that more than a month had passed since the teachers of the biggest university in the province were on a protest and had boycotted the classes. He said studies of the students were being affected and their future was at stake as no party was showing flexibility to resolve the issue. Justice Ishaq Ibrahim questioned the reason for teachers' protest and boycott of classes. Advocate Farooq informed that the teachers were demanding the resignation of the VC in the wake of the killing of a security supervisor by a security guard on the institute's premises. Justice Ishaq Ibrahim questioned the linkage between the killing of the security supervisor and the resignation of the VC and said how could VC be removed due to the murder of the watchman. The court issued notices to all the parties to submit their replies at the next hearing on April 13.—APP

ADB sees Pak economic recovery with robust reforms

ISLAMABAD: Asia Development Bank (ADB) on Tuesday said Pakistan's economy continued to face strong headwinds but it had the potential to 'bounce back' with robust macroeconomic and structural reforms. "Pakistan's economy continues to face strong headwinds while last year's catastrophic floods have exacerbated the economic and financial challenges" said Country Director ADB Yong Ye in a news release while issuing an Asian Development Outlook (ADO) April 2023, flagship economic report. "Yet, with a history of resilience in the face of adversity and depending on a fast return to stability twinned with robust macroeconomic and structural reforms, Pakistan can bounce back. ADB is committed to continuing to support Pakistan's economic recovery and development plans," he added. The

country economic growth is expected to slow in FY2023 (ends June 30, 2023) in the wake of last year's devastating floods, ballooning inflation, a current account deficit, and an ongoing foreign exchange crisis, ADB report said. Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected to slow to 0.6% in FY2023 from 6% last fiscal year as the economy struggles to recover. Growth is forecast to rise to 2% in FY2024, assuming the resumption of macroeconomic stability, implementation of reforms, post-flood recovery, and improving external conditions. ADO April 2023 noted that climate change poses a grave challenge to Pakistan's economic, social, and environmental development. According to the Global Climate Risk Index, the country has ranked among the 10 most vulnerable nations worldwide in the

past 2 decades. Climate-induced extreme weather has led to thousands of fatalities and colossal losses in agriculture, infrastructure, and the economy. In FY2023, industrial growth is forecast to continue decelerating, which reflects fiscal and monetary tightening, a significant depreciation of the local currency, and higher domestic oil and electricity prices. The fiscal deficit is projected to narrow slightly to the equivalent of 6.9% of GDP in FY2023. If the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program remains on track, the deficit will likely continue to shrink in the medium term as measures to mobilize more revenues—such as harmonizing general sales taxes—gain momentum. Average inflation is projected to more than double from 12.2% in FY2022 to 27.5% this fiscal year.—APP

Parliamentarians eulogize ZAB on his death anniversary

ISLAMABAD: The members of the opposition and treasury benches of the National Assembly on Tuesday equally eulogised former prime minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on his 44th death anniversary. Speaker National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf while presiding the 51st Session of the lower house said that April 4 was the 44th death anniversary of the founding father of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and creator of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. He while showering praise for Bhutto said, "Today is the death anniversary

of the great leader who laid the foundation of this building of the Parliament, gave rights to the common man, sacrificed his life for democracy and on this day he was executed." Taking the discussion further, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member National Assembly (MNA), Noor Alam Khan said, "Today is the day of injustice done to the people and the nation was deprived of the people's leader. I request you, Speaker to defer the business and only take up this agenda as its an important event." He said Bhutto

united the Muslim Ummah and gave them awareness about their real power of oil being exploited by western nations. He was executed on Section 109 and its unprecedented in the world, he added. Khan said Bhutto established the people's rule and ended the presidential system in the country. Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) MNA Syed Agha Rafiullah said it was dark in the history of the country when injustice was done to the farmers, serfs, poor by the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Bin Saeed Ahmed Al-Malkiy calls on Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf at Parliament House. DNA

Trade deficit narrows by 35.51% in 9 months of FY23

ISLAMABAD: The trade deficit witnessed a decline of 35.51 percent during the first nine months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The trade deficit during July-March (2022-23) was recorded at \$22.900 billion against the deficit of \$35.509 billion in July-March (2021-22), a decline of 35.51 percent. The exports during the period were recorded at \$21.046 billion against \$23.350 billion last year, showing a decline of 9.87 percent. On the other hand, the imports witnessed a sharp decline of 25.34 percent falling from \$58.859 billion last year to \$43.946 billion during the current fiscal year. On a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country witnessed a decline of 14.76 percent and were recorded at \$2.367 billion in March 2023 against the exports of \$2.777 billion in March 2022. The imports also decreased to \$3.828 billion from \$6.407 billion in March 2022, showing negative growth of 40.25 percent. On a month-on-month basis, the exports during March 2023 however increased by 8.03 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.191 billion in February 2023.—APP

KP police committed to wipe out terrorism

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Akhtar Hayat Khan on Tuesday paid tribute to the courage and bravery of the policemen who embraced martyrdom in a terrorist attack in Tapi area, district Kohat the other night. He said the sacrifices of police officials would not go in vain and soon the perpetrators would be brought to justice, adding that such a cowardly attack could not shake the resolve of KP police to eliminate terrorism and extremism from the province. "The sacrifice of every martyr gives a new resolve to the police force to fight the menace of terrorism more vigorously," the IGP remarked. He said being a Muslim, attaining the status of martyrdom in the holy month of Ramadan was a great achievement.—APP

IGP instructs police force to perform their duties with sincerity

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK (APRIL-04) Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar while appreciating the performance of police officials has instructed the police force to perform their duties with full determination, sincerity and spirit of jihad for protection and service of lives and property of citizens. A public relations officer of Punjab Police told media here on Tuesday, IG Punjab said that a wall against those oppressors who attack the life, property and honour of aggrieved, orphans, widows and the weak and ensure strict legal action against such heartless anti-social elements. IG Punjab emphasised upon that no effort should be spared for taking such callous criminals to their end. Dr. Usman Anwar said to listen to the problem of every person who comes to the police station with good manners and attention and to make a contact of sympathetic lawyer with

victims of civil matters so that their problems can be resolved. IG Punjab said to provide help, support and guidance to the citizens suffering from difficulties and crimes because by solving the problems of the citizens with our power and authority we can make this world beautiful and the world hereafter. Dr. Usman Anwar said that prizes of eight crores are being distributed to the best performing officers and personnel in all the districts of the province into phases and whoever will perform well will be encouraged at all levels. IG Punjab expressed these views while addressing the best performing officers and officials of Lahore Police in a ceremony organized at the Central Police Office today. According to the details, Dr. Usman Anwar distributed awards and appreciation certificates worth about 11 lakhs to 56 officers and officials of Lahore Police in the ceremony held at the Central Police Office. In these teams, officers serving in CIA, Investigation and oth-

er fields were included. Inspectors were given 30 thousand, Sub-Inspectors were given 25 thousand, ASIs were given 20 thousand, Head Constables were given 15 thousand while Constables were given 10,000 per person along with ceremonial certificates. IG Punjab awarded CIA team with cash reward and certificates of appreciation for arresting the murderer of retired SP Farhat Abbas. Similarly, other officers and officials were also awarded for tracing and arresting the suspects of robbery, dacoity, murder, kidnapping and other serious incidents. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar directed the awarded officers and officials to perform their duties more diligently, honesty and hard work. DIG IT Ahsan Younis, DIG Headquarters Humayun Bashir Tarar, DIG Establishment Dr. Inam Waheed, AIG Admin Amara Athar and AIG Discipline Ahsan Saifullah and other officers were also present on this occasion, DPR Punjab Police added.

CDA gives deadline to remove illegal showrooms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dated April 4, 2023: The Capital Development Authority has given a final deadline of April 20, 2023, for the removal of illegal showrooms in Islamabad. In case of non-compliance, the lease of the property will be cancelled. If the

illegal showrooms are not removed within the given deadline, the property will be sealed. Apart from this, heavy fines will also be imposed on those who are operating showrooms illegally in the city. It is pertinent to mention here that during a recent survey carried out by Capital Development Authority, it was revealed that ille-

gal showrooms are being operated in many properties in Islamabad. These showrooms not only affect other business activities but also disturb the pedestrian movement and traffic flow. Similarly, due to these showrooms, people coming to business centres also face parking problems.

Civil society demands vendor licensing for tobacco control

Adopting tobacco retailer licensing laws can be contributing way to ensure compliance with tobacco laws and to combat public health problems

PESHAWAR: Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control (KP) in collaboration with Blue Veins on Tuesday demanded legislative actions around tobacco retail licensing for effective compliance with other tobacco control measures in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Addressing a press conference in Peshawar Press Club, the speakers called for the adoption of provincial legislation to regulate the sale of tobacco products in the province. Earlier, the West Pakistan Tobacco Vending Act, 1958

was repealed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the influence of the Tobacco Industry in 2010. The re-enactment and well enforcement of tobacco vendor licensing policies can encourage vendors to comply with existing tobacco control regulations. The speakers said that tobacco use is a leading cause of preventable deaths worldwide, with more than 8 million people dying each year due to tobacco-related illnesses. In Pakistan, tobacco use is responsible for a significant

number of deaths, with an estimated 160,000 deaths per year attributed to tobacco-related illnesses. According to civil society organizations, tobacco retailer licensing has been recommended as an effective tobacco control strategy worldwide. Adopting tobacco retailer licensing laws can be contributing way to ensure compliance with tobacco laws and to combat public health problems. Qamar Naseem, Program Manager Blue Veins said, "The regulation and en-

forcement of vending licenses will help regulate the sale of tobacco products in KP and ensure that only licensed vendors are allowed to sell tobacco products. This will not only help reduce the availability of tobacco products but also ensure that the products are sold in compliance with the law." Zahoor Ahmad, member Alliance for Tobacco Control, said, "Tobacco Vendor Licensing policies will help to facilitate authorities in strengthening sustainable measures to tobacco con-

trol. Licenses would also increase the likelihood that vendors will comply fully with tax policies, and the revenue generated from the license fees will also help fund tobacco control initiatives." Usman Afridi, a rights activist and member Alliance for Tobacco Control said, "Requiring tobacco vendors to obtain a license and registration is a critical step towards reducing the availability of tobacco products, especially to minors, and promoting tobacco control."

Tender notice No. DW&CE/6000-Adv-Ck/109/E-6 dated 03 Apr. 2023								
MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES								
NOTICE OF TENDER								
01. The office of DW&CE (PAF) Chaklala invites sealed tenders for the following Works in light of PPR Rule 13 (1) of 2004:-								
02.	(i)	Const work at PAF Base	(E)	Rs. 57.106	Million			
03. Firms will furnish details including work orders, location and pictures of completed projects along with satisfactory completion certificate from user. Firms having experience in Construction, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing works / services registered with PEC irrelevant filed are eligible to apply.								
NOTE:- Contractors shall provide certificate that they are not involved in any type of litigation with Government Department in the Court of Law and that no special report of Directorate of Inspection and Evaluation (E-in-C's Branch GHQ) is outstanding against them.								
04. Firms will furnish list of personnel, Bank statement, NTN certificate, Income tax return for the last three years.								
05. Only those firms / contractors can apply who fulfill the under mentioned criteria:-								
a. Enlisted with PEC in Cat C-2 & above in the relevant filed with validity at least up to Jun, 2023.								
b. Preferably Enlisted with MES in Cat A. In case of non-enlisted firms, 2% bid security will be provided (Refundable).								
c. No Special report of D&E & no outstanding D&E recoveries.								
06. Tender will be issued to Pre-qualified firms / contractors and are required to be received in HQ DW & CE (PAF) Chaklala at 1130 hours on 20 Apr, 2023 and will be opened on the same date at 1200 hours.								
07. Bidding Documents:-								
(i). Procuring agencies shall formulate precise and unambiguous bidding documents that shall be made available to the bidders immediately after the publication of the invitation to bid.								
(ii). The procuring agency shall provide a set of bidding documents to any supplier or contractor, on request and subject to payment of price, if any.								
Explanation:- For the purpose of this Sub-Rule price means the cost of printing and providing the documents only.								
08. Incomplete application shall not be entertained.								
09. The Accepting Officer reserves the right to accept or reject the tender. Rejected tenders will be dealt with as per Para 33(1) of PPR Rules.								
10. The interested parties can contact CMES (PAF) Chaklala authorized representative for further details from 0715 to 1335 hours on all working days.								
Sl No	Name of Work Executed during the Last 2 Years and in Hand	Agency	Amount of Work	Time Allowed (Months)	Date of commencement	Date of Completion	Percentage Progress of work in Hand	Departmental Performance Report on each Work by the Engineer in Charge
PID (I) No. 6110/22								

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
Birth Day of His Majesty
 April 30/Netherlands
Birth Day of Queen



Hotels & Restaurants

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

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ICCI calls for resolving pharma industry issues

Khalid Iqbal Malik and Zafar Bakhtawari, former Presidents ICCI also highlighted the important role of the pharma industry in the economy and hoped that the government would resolve its issues on urgent basis

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation called on Mahesh Kumar Malani, Minister of State for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHS-RC) in his office to seek his help in resolving the key issues of the pharmaceutical industry. Addressing the delegation, Mahesh Kumar Malani, Minister of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination said that the pharmaceutical industry is playing an important role in meeting the domestic demand of medicines and promoting exports of pharma products and assured that he would cooperate in facilitating this industry. He also exchanged views on the importance of promoting interfaith harmony in the country and said



that he would keep playing his positive role in this regard. Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the Minister of State about the major issues of the pharmaceutical industry.

He said that the survival of many pharma companies is in danger due to unaffordable production costs caused by the restrictions on imports, rupee's devaluation, and rising inflation. He said that the manufacturing of medicines has declined

by over 20 percent due to the issue of LCs for the import of raw materials and stressed that the government should address this issue on priority basis to save this industry from further problems. He said that Mahesh Kumar Malani should also play

an active role in promoting interfaith harmony as our country is in dire need of national unity to cope with the economic and other challenges.

Faaz Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that though the banks have resumed issuing LCs for imports, but due to the shortage of foreign exchange reserves, banks are approving only around half of requests for LCs and this situation is affecting the growth of the pharma industry. Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan has great potential to enhance the exports of pharma products and urged that the government should provide maximum facilitation to this industry. Khalid Iqbal Malik and Zafar Bakhtawari, former Presidents ICCI also highlighted the important role of the pharma industry in the economy and hoped that the government would resolve its issues on urgent basis.

Pakistan, Italy sign Rs500 mln accord for healthcare of children

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Italy on Tuesday reached an agreement under which funds amounting to Rs 500 million would be spent to ensure better healthcare facilities for children and women under the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). The agreement was signed by Co-Director PIDSA Pakistan Islam Zaib, Co-Director PIDSA (Pakistan Italy Debt Swap Agreement) Italy Pietro Del Sette and BISP Director General Naveed Akhtar, a news release said. Among others, the signing ceremony here at the Ministry of Economic Affairs was witnessed by Secretary of Economic Affairs Division Dr Kazim Niaz and Italian Embassy's Charge d'Affaires Roberto Neccia, besides

Italian Agency for Development Cooperation's newly appointed Director Francesco Zatta. Under the agreement, children, pregnant and lactating women in the targeted districts of Balochistan including Jhal Magsi, Khuzdar and Lasbella would be provided with improved health facilities. The programme would facilitate around 16,000 children below two years of age, by providing specialized nutritious food and taking care of immunization and regular health checks of mother and child in the above flood-affected districts of Balochistan. The Nahsonuma Programme's objective is to prevent stunting in children under 2 years of age, improved weight gain of

pregnant women during pregnancy, reduced anaemia and micronutrient deficiencies, improved awareness of maternal and early child health and nutrition, reduced disease burden through improved uptake of available health and nutrition services and prevention of low birth weight. The whole programme covers 156 districts of Pakistan through World Food Programme and Benazir Income Support Programme. In addition, a loan of 50 million Euros from the ECO Trade and Development Bank (TDB) has been signed and disbursed already, besides an amount of 20 million Euros from German state-owned investment and development bank - KfW grant has been

secured for the same purpose. The instrument of financing is planned to be signed during G2G in Berlin in May this year. In addition to that, the French Development Agency (AFD) is also providing a grant of 45 million Euros for addressing the nutrition-related issues of the residents of the Newly Merged District (NMD) and four Southern districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Ministry of Economic Affairs is also in negotiations with other donor agencies to secure more funds to address the issues of nutrition and improve the overall health conditions of the children, and pregnant and lactating women in the disaster-hit areas of Pakistan.—APP

Bhutto family awaiting justice in ZAB's case

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday in her message on the death anniversary of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) said the Bhutto family, the Pakistan Peoples Party, and the nation were waiting for justice in the judicial murder case of their leader for the past 44 years. The Minister said, "On the occasion of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's 44th Martyrdom Day, I pay tribute to his courage, sacrifices and services for the country and the nation." She said the leader of the nation, the creator of the 1973 consensus constitution, nuclear power and democracy could never be forgotten. Senator Rehman said he made the people and Parliament the center of power and decision-making. The people's leader was taken away from us through judicial murder, she added. She said that the darkest judgment was a blot on the face of the judiciary, adding, "Through an organized plan, a decision was made against the leader of the people. The role played by our justice system in the killing of the leader of the people makes one bow in shame." Former President, Asif Ali Zardari filed a reference in 2011 for justice in the judicial killing of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. "For the last 12 years that reference is buried under files in the High Court," Sherry Rehman regretted.—APP

AIOU offers academic programmes for international students

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has offered admissions in various academic programmes in the second phase of the spring semester 2023 for overseas Pakistani and other international students. According to an AIOU spokesman, programmes offered in this phase include 2.5-year and 4-year BS Programs, Associate degree (BA, B.Com), B.Ed (1.5 Years, 2.5 Years and 4 Years) and one-year Postgraduate Diplomas. Students can apply using the online mode only and the last date for admission is April 18. Apart

from overseas Pakistanis, residents of other countries could also enroll in these programs to increase their educational qualifications, he said. AIOU is the only university in the country providing educational opportunities for Pakistanis living across the world. The university is offering more than 40 educational programmes for international students from the autumn 2021 semester by using the latest online technologies. "More than 460 students from 36 countries have enrolled including students from the USA, Africa, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan, China, New Zealand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, etc," the

spokesman said, adding Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood had set a target of 10,000 international students for next five years. It is worth mentioning here that these programmes for international students are offered under the online management system. All teaching activities from admissions to examinations will be online. Overseas Pakistanis can download the prospectus and form from <http://online.aiou.edu.pk>. For more details about these programmes, students can contact International Collaboration and Exchange Office at +92519057165, +92519250175 or email at overseas@aiou.edu.pk.

PM lauds services of Fahd Husain

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday thanked his special assistant Fahd Husain, who stepped from the post. "Thank you for your service to the country, Fahd sb. As my Special Assistant on public policy and strategic communication, I greatly benefited from your wise counsel," he said in a tweet. Sharif said he found Fahd Husain a wonderful team player and a great human being. "My best wishes to you for your future endeavours," he said. Fahd Husain announced on Twitter that he had stepped down as Special Assistant to PM after productive stint of a year. "Grateful to PM Shehbaz for giving me opportunity to serve in public office," he said. He said, "I witnessed first-hand how PM navigated multiple fault lines in tough times. None other could have done it better."—DNA

Health Expert advises to avoid fried & spicy food items during Ramazan

ISLAMABAD: Health Expert Dr Munaza Hassan Tuesday urged people to pay close attention to their diet, as the disruption of their regular diet and eating patterns during the month could cause some discomfort and heighten food sensitivities, specifically when eating certain types of foods high in sugar or fat. Talking to a Private news channel, it is generally advisable to avoid, or at least limit, some types of foods during Ramadan including fried and fatty foods, such as fried potato and samosa these foods contain a high percentage of the daily recommended fat and sodium intake, so eating them frequently may increase the impact of fatigue and exhaustion caused by fasting in Ramadan. She said foods that contain high amounts of salt, such as pickles. Sodium can dehydrate the body and impact its ability to absorb fluids. Dr Munaza further informed that foods that contain large amounts of sugar are often high in calories but poor in nutritional value. While these foods provide the body with instant energy, the energy is generally short-lived. Foods that contain chocolate or any other source of caffeine. Caffeine is a diuretic and can cause the body to lose fluids, salts and other important minerals needed during the day, she added.

PM directs for track, trace system in cigarette manufacturing units

He observed that with these measures, the economic documentation process would be further improved, enhancing country's revenues

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for installation of track and trace system in all the cigarette manufacturing units of the country within next two weeks to control tax evasion. The prime minister also directed for installation of automatic track and trace system in all the big sectors of the country, besides, formulation of a comprehensive strategy for supplementing of revenue generation. He chaired a meeting to review installation of track and trace system in cig-

arette manufacturing industry, points of sales and broadening of overall tax volume, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During the meeting, the prime minister also directed the law enforcement agencies to provide all possible cooperation to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to control smuggling and illegal sale of cigarettes. He also directed for fixing of responsibility against the relevant authorities for their failure to install auto track and trace system on sugar mills and sought an inquiry report in this regard. The meeting was

attended by Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah, Minister for Industries and Production Makhdoom Murtaza Mehmood, Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar, PM's advisor Ahmad Khan Cheema, PM's Special Assistants Jahanzaib Khan, Tariq Pasha and other senior officials. The meeting was appraised in detail of the track and

trace system. The system was installed in majority of the cigarette manufacturing units while the installation work was in progress on the remaining ones. The negotiations for installation of the system in the cigarette manufacturing units in Azad Jammu Kashmir were in the final stages. The meeting was further informed about the steps taken by FBR to control

smuggling and illegal sale of cigarette. The prime minister opined that tenure posting of officers with good repute should be made on border crossings. The prime minister was appraised that FBR had brought 0.7 million new tax payers under the tax net and taking further steps to meet its targets in the current year. The prime minister stressed that tax evaders and their agents should be brought to book because those elements who embezzled wealth of the country and nation did not deserve any leniency. He also desired that the le-

gal and judicial proceedings over the tax collection matters should be expedited. To a pace of progress on the installation of track and trace system in sugar mills, the prime minister expressed his displeasure and directed that services of the internationally reputed entities should be hired for the installation of latest technology-based track and trace system in all big sectors of the economy. He observed that with these measures, the economic documentation process would be further improved, enhancing country's revenues.—APP

Rs 16.239 bln proposed for widening N-35

ISLAMABAD: Minister of Law and Justice Shahadat Awan on Tuesday informed the Senate that an amount of Rs 16.239 billion had been proposed for widening and rehabilitation of existing N-35 (Karakoram Highway), passing through Abbottabad in the forthcoming Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for year 2023-24.

Replying to a calling attention notice raised by Kamran Murtaza about severe traffic jams in Abbottabad city due to non-construction of flyovers and underpasses, the minister said the project had been included in the PSDP for 2023-24 in order to address longstanding issue of traffic jams in Abbottabad City. The project has been divided into three packages with an estimated cost of Rs 16.239 billion, he added. He said Package one included road from Muslim Abad to Bus Stand, Package-2 from Allah-Hu Chowk to Allah-hu Chowk and Package-3 from Allah-hu Chowk to APS School. A total 269 land would also be acquired to address the traffic jam issue. He said it was a longstanding issue and was already under government consideration.

Earlier, Kamran Murtaza said that the people particularly tourists faced immense problems due to traffic jams in Abbottabad city.—APP

IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday due to necessary maintenance and routine development work for various areas of its region. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Chirah, Kirpa, Ali Pur, CM Pak Zong, Rehara, Tamari, Chatta Bakhtar, Lathar Road, ISI Feeder, Rawalpindi City Circle, Nogazi, Banjialy Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Drabi, Talagang City, Main Bazar, Mogla, Dullar, Bilalabad, Daultala Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, From 08:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Kahuta City-2, Haneef Shaheed Feeders From 07:00 AM To 11:00 AM, Cahan, Chontra, Rajjar, Chakri, SPD, SFF Feeders and surrounding areas.—APP

Mirza Adeeb remembered

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Urdu playwright and short story writer, Mirza Adeeb was remembered on the occasion of his birth anniversary on Tuesday. Adeeb's birth name was Dilawer Hussain Ali, but he came to be known in the literary world as Mirza Adeeb. He was born on April 4, 1914, in Lahore to Mirza Basheer Ali. He attended Government Islamia High School, Bhati Gate, Lahore and got his Bachelor of Arts degree from Islamia College, Lahore. In the beginning, he made poetry his device but later pursued his interest in playwriting as his metier. At first, Adeeb wrote romantic prose. Later, he switched to writing plays about everyday events and incidents taking place in the society; focusing more on social problems. His later works were pragmatist and he used simple and everyday language in his plays, which enabled them to get a greater audience. Moreover, he had begun writing one-act dramas, which made them easier to broadcast over radio and television. When he affiliated himself with Radio Pakistan, many of his plays were broadcast and they gained popularity among the masses.—APP

Briefs

Govt to improve relations with neighbouring countries

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly PML (N) Romina Khurshid Alam on Tuesday said that Pakistan highly values its ties with all friendly countries where foreign minister and prime minister were taking concrete steps to improve relations with its neighbours. Talking to Radio Pakistan's current Affair program, she said, "Imran Khan government during its tenure spoiled the diplomatic relations with friendly countries including China, United States and isolated Pakistan in the world". MNA said that the prime minister while addressing the meeting of PML-N's Parliamentary Party and in the parliament expressed determination to bring the country out of the economic crises soon. The PTI Chief was responsible for the country's current situation as he dissolved two provincial assemblies, she added. Replying to a question, she said it was the need of the hour that all the political parties should develop a mutual consensus for safeguarding national interests.—APP

Trade deficit narrows by 35.51% in 9 months of FY23

ISLAMABAD: The trade deficit witnessed a decline of 35.51 percent during the first nine months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The trade deficit during July-March (2022-23) was recorded at \$22.900 billion against the deficit of \$35.509 billion in July-March (2021-22), a decline of 35.51 percent. The exports during the period were recorded at \$21.046 billion against \$23.350 billion last year, showing a decline of 9.87 percent. On the other hand, the imports witnessed a sharp decline of 25.34 percent falling from \$58.859 billion last year to \$43.946 billion during the current fiscal year. On a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country witnessed a decline of 14.76 percent and were recorded at \$2.367 billion in March 2023 against the exports of \$2.777 billion in March 2022. The imports also decreased to \$3.828 billion from \$6.407 billion in March 2022, showing negative growth of 40.25 percent. On a month-on-month basis, the exports during March 2023 however increased by 8.03 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.191 billion in February 2023. The imports into the country declined by 5.11 percent in March 2023 as compared to the imports of \$4.034 billion in February 2023, according to the data.—APP

IRSA releases 86,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 86,800 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 62,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1429.91 feet and was 31.91 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 21,400 cusecs while outflow as 7,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1104.15 feet, 54.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 19,900 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 27,300, 35,600, 41,300 and 13,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 27,800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 10,300 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

President for speedy relief to all citizens

Mr Nazar Muhammad Baloch also presented the Balochistan Ombudsman's Annual Report for the year 2021 to the President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has underscored the need for expeditiously addressing the complaints of the people so as to provide them timely relief against the maladministration of government organizations. Highlighting the importance of the institutions of Federal and Provincial Ombudsmen, he said that ombudsmen played a significant role in providing justice to the people, adding that ombudsmen needed to be strengthened so that the maximum number of people could benefit from their services. The President expressed these views while talking to the Provincial Ombudsman of Balochistan, Mr Nazar Muhammad Baloch, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Mr Nazar Muhammad Baloch also presented the Balochistan Ombudsman's Annual Report for the year 2021 to the President. Talking to the Ombudsman, the President em-



ISLAMABAD: Provincial Ombudsman of Balochistan, Mr Nazar Muhammad Baloch, presenting the Annual Report 2021 of his institution to President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.—DNA

phasised the need for expanding the outreach of ombudsmen to far-flung

areas to provide justice to the people at their doorsteps. He further stressed

that the Provincial Ombudsman should continue to ensure the timely

implementation of his findings by the concerned agencies to maintain pub-

lic trust in his office.

He said that an effective awareness campaign should be started to sensitize the people of Balochistan about the workings and role of the Provincial Ombudsman. The Provincial Ombudsman briefed the President about the role and performance of his institution in 2021. He highlighted that the number of registered complaints had doubled since he had assumed the charge.

He added that the Provincial Ombudsman received 1321 complaints in 2021 whereas 999 complaints were carried forward from the previous year. He said that 1043 complaints were resolved in 2021 out of the total 2320 complaints, adding that most of the complaints were related to education and health departments.

He further stated that Khuli Katcheries (Open Courts) were held for the facilitation of the general public in seven different districts of Balochistan to provide relief to the people against administrative injustices at their doorsteps.

Poor education system contributes to economic meltdown

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Tuesday said the poor education system has played an important role in the economic collapse. Science and technology are emphasized in developed countries whereas here outdated and faulty ideas are considered to

be the most important, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement that teaching strange and old-fashioned ideology is like wasting the country's human resources which should be stopped. He said that Pakistan and other countries need skilled and competent people and not ideologues. The business leader said that students in developed countries are equipped with knowledge and skills

while our system gives them nothing worth mentioning.

The majority of the students are not equipped with knowledge that can benefit them or the country therefore they are not in demand anywhere. He said that Norway spends 6.6% of its GDP on education, New Zealand spends 6.2% of its GDP on education and America spends 6 percent of its GDP on education, while Pakistan spends only 1.77

percent on this most important sector.

Low spending on education is a big obstacle to national development and it is resulting in an army of unskilled and unemployed people who could not play any role in the development of the country. How can a country prosper where forty percent of children suffer from malnutrition and two and a half million children do not go to school, he questioned?

China emerges as most prominent figure in Int'l diplomacy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: From mediating peace talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia to the use of power of discourse and diplomacy to play a vital role in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, China has risen to be the recent most prominent figure in international diplomacy. According to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday, diplomatic efforts have been critical in promoting global peace, stability, and cooperation. Chinese diplomacy has not only aided in forming partnerships and alliances but also in promoting its own interests in a cost-effective manner. One of China's distinct diplomatic advantages is its emphasis on discourse power; the ability

to shape and influence the narrative on global issues. China has shaped the narrative on issues such as climate change, global governance, and international trade by leveraging its soft power and economic influence. One of the most essential ways China has used discourse power is to promote a new type of international relations. This new form of international relations places a premium on mutual respect, win-win cooperation, and shared development. It represents a break from the traditional great power politics that has dominated the international system for centuries. China has been able to promote this new type of international relations and gain support from other countries through its diplomacy. Diplomacy is crucial in promoting international

cooperation. China's diplomacy has also helped promote regional stability. The country has emerged as a major player in the global economy, with increasing clout in international trade, investment, and development. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to connect China to various parts of the world through infrastructure and trade, has been lauded as an important contribution to global economic development. It is a platform for international cooperation and an engine for global economic growth. With rising protectionism and anti-globalization sentiment, China has advocated for a more open, inclusive, and interconnected global economy. China's diplomacy has also aided in the advancement of global

governance and multilateralism. China has been collaborating with other countries to reform the global governance system to better reflect the world's changing realities. Consequently, China's diplomatic efforts have made significant contributions to global politics and the rise of global economic development. The country's diplomatic cost-benefit analysis has been praised for its effectiveness and strategic nature. China's role as a mediator in current international tensions has been remarkable, with the country playing a vital role in ensuring peaceful conflict resolution. As tensions rise in various parts of the world, China's diplomatic efforts to promote global stability and shape the international order are critical, the report added.

Railways to float tender for advertising trains

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is set to float tender shortly, allowing national and multinational firms to utilize several passenger trains and railway platforms for generating maximum revenue for the department. "All preparations regarding the branding of trains and platforms, railway station, certain crossings and trains have been completed and hopefully the tender will be floated this week," sources in the Ministry told APP on Tuesday. The sources said the branding of the trains and platforms would not only address the increasing deficit of Pakistan Railways but will also allow private firms to advertise their products for this purpose. They said that initially, Pakistan Railways would offer five trains for branding their seat covers, internal walls of the passenger coaches, and even toilets as a pilot project. "The deficit of the department will decrease after starting this project and the minister has already directed the concerned to complete all the formalities in this regard as soon as possible," they added. They said that advertisers would have access to the parking area, platforms, staircases, bridges and other infrastructure at Lahore Railway Station. The sources said this was not the first time Pakistan Railways has attempted to monetize its assets for advertising purposes. In 2014 also, the organization launched a pilot project to offer branding opportunities to companies across the seat covers, internal walls of passenger coaches, and toilets on the Tezgam, Khyber Mail, and Awaam Express. However, the initiative was unsuccessful. The initiative, the sources said, however, based on the information, looks to mitigate the problems faced by its predecessor by adopting a more grand approach to the issue.—APP

Safe City Islamabad playing important role, says IGP

ISLAMABAD Inspector General of Police Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan visited Safe City Islamabad early morning where he met the officials posted in various branches and inquired about their duties, a police public relations officer said. He said that the IGP Islamabad also reviewed the security situation in different areas of the city through Safe City cameras and issued orders to the staff to perform their duties with full attention and immediately inform the concerned authorities about security or any suspicious activity in any area. He ordered the staff posted on Pucar-15 to respond to the calls of citizens in a timely manner and inform the relevant authorities for immediate assistance adding that the work of Pucar-15 is the most important to provide timely assistance to citizens in emergency situations 24/7. IG Islamabad also asked the public not to make irrelevant, wrong/bogus calls on Pucar-15, which wastes the time of the police and deprives the citizens of timely help in an emergency situation. Islamabad Capital Police is always engaged in protecting the life and property of the citizens, IGP maintained adding that the Safe City Project is playing an important role in tackling crime in the city and tracing the criminal elements. Citizens are also requested to keep an eye on their surroundings and report any suspicious activity to Pucar-15 immediately.

Capital Police organizes 278 road safety workshops

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police is striving to ensure traffic discipline and minimize the violation of rules through educating road users. He said that, in this regard the Islamabad capital police organized 278 road safety workshops through which 57455 citizens were educated during the ongoing Year. These road safety workshops were arranged for driving license applicants, volunteers, students of educational institutions and staff of government and non-government organizations, a police public relations officer said. He said that the Islamabad capital police is arranging such workshops and creating awareness amongst people about consequences of traffic rules violations, including over speeding, one-wheeling, non-pattern and fancy number plates, juvenile driving, lane-line discipline and zebra crossing etc. This effort is meant to infuse traffic discipline, which will help to protect the lives and property of citizens and to sensitize road users about various traffic rules.—DNA

Parliamentary exchanges effective tool for development

Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki said that Saudi Arabia also attaches great importance to its deep-rooted ties with Pakistan and considers it a sincere friend

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Honorable Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf met with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki at the Parliament House on Tuesday. During the meeting, they renewed their commitment to further enhance cordial relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The Speaker said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have always enjoyed strong fraternal ties deeply rooted in our shared religion, culture, traditions and mutual goodwill. "Both nations have stood by each other in the testing times," he added. Speaker Raja Pervez

Ashraf remarked that the people and Government of Pakistan have deep respect for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Saudi Leadership. He added that Pakistan remains fully committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia as the country attaches immense importance to its relations with Saudi Arabia. The Speaker said that Saudi Arabia has always generously contributed to the social and economic development of Pakistan. Emphasizing enhancing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, Speaker mentioned that cooperation in different spheres for mutual interest would be mutually beneficial. Speaker said that Pakistan's Parliament has

always been proactive to improve brotherly relations. He added that Parliamentary exchanges would further boost bilateral relations between the countries. Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki said that Saudi Arabia also attaches great importance to its deep-rooted ties with Pakistan and considers it a sincere friend. He assured the Speaker that Saudi Arabia would continue to cooperate in the social sector in Pakistan. He commended the role of Pakistani expatriates in the economic development of Saudi Arabia. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the current level of cooperation in diverse areas and stressed the need to further strengthen mutual ties.

Bike lifter gang held; nine stolen motorbikes recovered

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital Shalimar police team apprehended two wanted members of a Lorlai bike lifter gang involved in bike lifting incidents and recovered nine stolen motorbikes 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 had started a crackdown against criminal elements involved in car and bike lifting incidents in order to save the precious lives and property of citizens. Following these directives, the police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of an interprovincial bike lifter gang involved in bike lifting incidents.

SC larger bench only way forward

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday said that the formation of a larger bench of the Supreme Court was the only way to a stable country.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that despite reservations, the PPP government has always respected the Supreme Court's decisions.

He said the formation of a larger bench will lead the country out of constitutional crises and ensure the continuity of the democratic set-up. "PPP has always believed in a truly independent and impartial judiciary which was a fundamental component of a democratic Pakistan", he added. Replying to a question, he said that the country will always remember the great sacrifices of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto for democracy.

He also paid tribute to the founder of the People's Party Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto on the occasion of his 44th death anniversary. He praised Bhutto's contributions to the country and said that former President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari are following Shaheed Bhutto's vision and policies to make the country prosperous and solve the problems of the people.

'Food delivery apps an emerging trend

ISLAMABAD: With the holy month of Ramadan, the trend of buying food items online has been witnessing a tremendous increase during the sehri and iftar time where food chains are offering discount deals to attract the customers specially youngsters.

Food delivery apps saw a significant boost this Ramadan as compared to last year, said a report aired by a private news channel. The food delivery apps have made it easier for us to order food from any restaurant by paying minimum delivery charges, said a youngster, adding, these services offer an option to the customers for availing countless discount rate delivery items.

A housewife, who recently convenient with these E-commerce apps commented that it was too difficult for me to wake up in sehri so now after downloading the food app i can easily order online sehri deals at my door step.

Another young girl said that after fasting from dusk till dawn, customers are mostly preferring to have access to restaurants nearby serving their preferred type of cuisine and that is where the more cravings app steps in. These platform are promoting fresh and healthy foods and groceries during Ramadan to encourage customers to make healthier choices, as well as remind them to take advantage of the ease and convenience that e-commerce offers, said a delivery boy.

An online fast food dealer said, like every year, many eateries are once again offering one of the most pocket friendly iftar and sehri deals for customers.

There is a significant rise in the number of orders as part of Ramadan food delivery as many people find it more convenient to order food at home instead of going out for dining

in or a take away, said a worker in online fast food platform. The best way to attract more customers and get orders during Ramadan is to offer customers deals and special menu just for delivery. This will enhance customer experience and will attract more customers for your restaurant, said another online retailer. No doubt consumers' demand to receive groceries and iftar deals at the doorstep has increased, and when they buy food in bulk, they find the online delivery options the most convenient ones, said a female regular online customer. Mobile wallets allow many young customers to shop online from their favorite brands, and digital wallet apps always have discounts and promo codes for online shoppers, said another young boy.

McCarthy's provocative meeting

US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and House Republicans hold a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, March 30, 2023.

Whatever excuse they use, US House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy's planned meeting with Taiwan regional leader Tsai Ing-wen on Wednesday will deal irreparable damage to their national credit as well as a heavy blow 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", which has been recognized by every US president and repeated every time the two nations' leaders met since. Now, by allowing Tsai's "stopover" in US territory and arranging for a political leader to meet her, the US government is ruining its own national credibility.

The notice that McCarthy will host a bipartisan meeting with Tsai further shows a consensus is being formed in the US political sector. An "anti-China" cloud is forming over Washington, made up of the dust of the Cold War, which will surely plummet the Sino-US relationship to a new low. But Tsai needs to know rather than an honored guest, she is a just a geopolitical chess piece.

When then-Taiwan leader Lee Teng-hui "stopped over" in Hawaii in 1994, he was reportedly given a small room to rest without being allowed to step on US soil. What the US is doing this time is anything but a routine practice as they claimed, which only serves as further provocation.

The demonstrations staged by some US citizens in front of the hotel in New York where Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen is staying during her ongoing "stopover" in the US, and the protesters urging that the US government realize China is not the US' enemy and Tsai is using the US for her "pro-independence" cause, should be a wake-up call to those strategists such as Milley who are urging the Biden administration to supply the island with more weapons that doing so does not align with US interests.

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Finland's election

For observers of a progressive persuasion, Sunday's Finnish election turned out to be an unwelcome repeat episode of Nordic noir. Last autumn, Sweden ejected a Social Democrat prime minister and installed a moderate Conservative successor, while at the same time empowering the radical right Sweden Democrats party. The same playbook may now be followed in Helsinki, after a cliffhanger vote delivered a similar electoral outcome.

The high-profile casualty of this rightwards shift was Finland's millennial prime minister, Sanna Marin, who has been ousted four years after becoming the world's youngest political leader. Though Ms Marin's Social Democratic party actually improved its vote share, it narrowly came in third behind moderate conservatives and the radical right in what was a photo-finish. Her coalition government's fate was sealed by a collapse in support for allied leftwing parties, as the centre-right successfully mobilised fears over state borrowing levels.

On security matters such as Finland's accession to Nato and fierce support for Ukraine – both policies influenced by a 805-mile eastern border with Russia – little will now change, whatever the makeup of the new government. But the result means that the leader of the poll-topping National Coalition party (NCP), Petteri Orpo, has the option of pursuing a deficit-cutting coalition with the nationalist Finns party, the local iteration of Europe's increasingly assertive radical right.

That is a cause for concern well beyond Finland's borders. In the wake of the pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine, there are signs that economic anxiety and a cost of living crisis is shifting the compass of European politics on to a more insular and less environmentally ambitious trajectory. Following the election of Giorgia Meloni as Italy's prime minister, and events in Sweden, a "blue-black" coalition in Finland would further normalise far-right positions on issues such as climate targets and migration policy. Whatever the eventual outcome, Ms Marin will be missed on the world stage. Despite suffering intrusive and often sexist scrutiny of her private life and behaviour, she remained a hugely popular figure both domestically and abroad, while pursuing an authentically social democratic and egalitarian agenda. Having assumed leadership of a coalition in which all five parties were led by women, she was accomplished in her handling of the Covid pandemic and the crisis that followed Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. And like her onetime political ally, the former New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern, she became a role model for aspirant and actual female politicians. Her departure from office in itself feels like a harbinger of less optimistic and expansive times.



Current political landscape of Pakistan

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The political stalemate and confusion between the authorities' efforts to keep Pakistan's economy afloat and curb growing domestic terrorism naturally raises the possibility that the military, along with the judiciary, might decide to intervene at some point. They can and do apply the infamous doctrine of necessity. Therefore, the confused and alarming political landscape of Pakistan has had far-reaching consequences for the country and its

Pakistan's political scene has been known for its complexities, with numerous political parties and factions competing for power and influence. Due to grapple with issues such as corruption, economic challenges, and the rise of extremist groups, Pakistan is experiencing significant political turmoil and instability over the years, including military coups, civil unrest, and a complex relationship with neighboring countries.

The political landscape in Pakistan is also influenced by regional and international factors, including relations with the United States, China, and India. To better understand the political landscape in Pakistan, it's important to stay informed about current events and to seek out diverse perspectives. This may involve following news outlets from different regions of Pakistan, engaging with individuals from different political parties, and seeking out experts who can provide insights into the country's history and political system.

The country has been under military rule for much of its history, and democracy has struggled to take root. In recent years, Pakistan's politics have been marked by a series of controversies and scandals, including corruption allegations against top politicians, protests against electoral fraud, and tensions between the military and civilian government. In the recent period, the country has faced a number of challenges, including political polarization, corruption, and security threats. Today it is also unclear whether provincial elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will take place on time, but opposition PTI party leader Imran Khan sees the victories there as an important step in regaining national power. A further delay in the elections is likely to trigger massive PTI protests, which would require the deployment

of more security forces and further increase the chances of military intervention.

Pakistan's political landscape is generally ambiguous and chaotic.

Its politicians often engage in rampant behavior in their competing for power, and their politics can take very erratic turns. But recently, the country's political landscape has become particularly strange and worrying. Attention is currently focused on whether the April 30 elections will be held on time thanks to presidential and judicial intervention in the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces which has delayed.

The leader of the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, Imran Khan, sees the victories in the two provincial assemblies as an important step in his campaign to regain national power from him a year ago. With strong exposure, Khan hopes to capitalize on his current popularity. A recent opinion poll found that he had nearly twice the popular support of current Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. The ruling alliance led by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) wants to hang on to power as long as possible by postponing the elections. Pakistan's Election Commission has been quick to say it lacks the financial resources to hold the upcoming provincial elections, and the country's civilian and military intelligence services have warned that the current security situation could make elections difficult in the coming months. Hoping to weaken and divide the opposition, Sharif's government has also used the legal system, with opposition leader Khan evading arrest in several cases brought against him for alleged criminal activity.

Starring in Pakistan's sometimes-byzantine political drama, Khan and the leaders of the ruling coalition, notably Maryam Nawaz of the Muslim League-N, are trying to control the narrative and expose each other's mor-

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

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

The political stalemate and confusion between the authorities' efforts to keep Pakistan's economy afloat and curb growing domestic terrorism naturally raises the possibility that the military, along with the judiciary, might decide to intervene at some point. They can and do apply the infamous doctrine of necessity. Therefore, the confused and alarming political landscape of Pakistan has had far-reaching consequences for the country and its people. However, there are also signs of hope and progress, as citizens and leaders work to address these challenges and build a more stable and inclusive society.

Can wars be abolished?

Afnan Wasif



Wars erupt among two or more parties due to their respective territorial disputes. According to Carl Von Clausewitz, war is an act to compel our opponent to fulfill our will by use of force. States undergo war to annex a certain territory that may be disputed. The annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation in 2014 involves the use of force and endorses the above-said argument. Three wars have been fought between Pakistan and India

War is an organized violence that entails two or more belligerents to achieve certain objectives that may be of political nature. War history can be traced from the very beginning of the world during the era of Adam and Eve. As per the realist's view, wars can never be abolished. Because states operate in an international arena that is characterized by anarchy. There exists a struggle for survival that may be termed competition among states. And this competition eventually leads to war. Uncertainty and unpredictability are one of the features of war. No one knows the exact, precise, and only cause of war as it is an uncertain and dynamic phenomenon. There are some factors that contribute towards the happening of the war which are given below:

1) Territorial Disputes: Wars erupt among two or more parties due to their respective territorial disputes. According to Carl Von Clausewitz, war is an act to compel our opponent to fulfill our will by use of force. States undergo war to annex a certain territory that may be disputed. The annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation in 2014 involves the use of force and endorses the above-said argument. Three wars have been fought between Pakistan and India over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Another possible cause of war is the lust for land. In ancient times, large territories were considered a power symbol. The Anglo-Indian wars were fought between the British East India Company and different states of India including the Mughal Empire, Nawabs of Bengal, and the Kingdom of Mysore, etc. The Napoleonic wars may fall under this category. Acquisition of large territories to enjoy prestige and exert influence on other nations serves as a cause of war. However, in contemporary times the latter cause is obsolete because it becomes

difficult to govern large territories.

2) Internal Politics:

The internal politics of a state plays an important role to wage war against other states. In order to gain leverage in general elections ruling parties indulge the state in the war. In the 2014 elections of Lok Sabha in India, Modi led BJP won 282 seats. But after Balakot's adventure in February 2019, BJP won 303 seats an increase of 21 seats in the Lok Sabha election held in May 2019. Modi's regime utilized public sentiments through an act of war to gather support in upcoming general elections. Civil wars may fall under this category. For example, Nigerian, Syrian, American, and English civil wars were fought due to internal politics.

3) Hegemonic Ambitions:

The application of extraordinary political, military, ideological, economic, etc. influence by one nation over other nations is called the hegemonic design of the nation. To exercise such influence, states opt for wars. It could be evident throughout the cold war period starting from the late 1940s to 1991. Korean, Vietnam, and Afghanistan episodes during the Cold War were solely aimed to become a world hegemon the United States of America. India is also motivated by this factor to wage war against its neighbors. The Gulf War (1990-1991) was fought to contain the hegemonic ambitions of Iraq in the Gulf region. The Peloponnesian War (431 to 404 BCE) was fought between Athens and Sparta to dominate the Greek world. 4) Leadership Aspect:

Personal aspirations may serve as a cause of war. The Napoleonic Wars were a series of conflicts fought by France and various European powers from 1803 to 1815. The wars were largely driven by Napoleon Bonaparte's ambition to expand the French Empire and establish himself as the dominant leader in Europe. Racist ideology driven by Adolf Hitler was a major cause of the outbreak of

World War 2. He opined that Germans belonged to a superior race Master Race (Aryan Race) and they are bound to rule. The Nazis attempted to eliminate all of Europe's Jews, ultimately killing six million in the Holocaust. Because Jews were considered that they belonged to an inferior race. Trojan Wars were fought in Bronze Age just because of Trojan Prince; Paris fell in love with Helen, the wife of the Greek king Menelaus. Such wars involve no rationality or overarching national objective rather these are leader king, military commander centric wars. 5) Lust for Resources: In this world, natural resources are scarce. States contend with other states to acquire more and more natural resources. This factor overlaps with the first factor as territory is also a natural resource. One of the major causes of the First and Second Congo Wars was the desire to control resources. The Congo is rich in natural resources, including diamonds, copper, cobalt, and gold. Neighboring countries, such as Rwanda and Uganda, wanted to control these resources, which contributed to their support for various rebel groups in the conflict.

The Gulf War (1990-1991) was probably caused by lust for its oil resources. Future wars may be waged because of the scarcity of resources. Human by nature is nasty and greedy according to Realism. He/she has a lust for power that mainly contributes to the occurrence of war. The accurate reason for war is unknown or dynamic. If not, maybe someone would come up with a solid reason and get a Nobel Prize and eventually every state would end it and operate peacefully, but it hasn't happened to date. So, wars can never be abolished and even known reasons for wars cannot be eradicated completely.

—The author is a student of Strategic Studies at National Defence University, Islamabad. He tweets at @afnanwasif

Briefs

SC declares ECP decision null and void

FROM PAGE 01
the electoral process was at its fifth stage when the ECP announced its decision. The court remarked that the ECP's order wasted 13 days, saying that the electoral body made an unconstitutional decision by shifting the date for the polls to October 8. The verdict says the last date for submitting appeals against the returning officer's decision is April 10 and the election tribunal will announce the decision on the appeals on April 17. "Elections in Punjab and KP should be transparent, impartial and as per the law," said the verdict. It added that the federal government should provide Rs21 billion in funds by April 10 to the ECP and directed the body to present a report on the issue by April 11. The verdict also said that the Supreme Court will issue instructions to the authorities concerned in case the funds are not provided. "Punjab government should give a security plan to the Election Commission," said the top court's verdict. It added that Punjab's interim cabinet and chief secretary should report to the ECP regarding the electoral staff by April 10. The apex court also directed the federal government to provide resources – including Rangers, FC personnel, and armed forces – and extend support in order to hold polls in the provinces. According to the verdict, the federal government has been directed to share the security plan with the electoral body by April 17. It further urged the ECP to approach the apex court in case the caretaker government of Punjab and the federal government refrain from complying with the judgment. The judgment addressed the concerns raised regarding the March 1 decision which was based on 3:2, stating that the decision announced by Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan has "no legal standing."

Meanwhile, regarding the elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the three-member bench said during the course of the hearing nobody represented the provincial governor therefore the issue, only till this extent, will remain under debate. The ECP had earlier set the date for elections in Punjab on April 30, but later it was postponed to October 8 – in Punjab and KP as well – prompting the opposition party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), to file a plea in the top court. The apex court – which initiated proceedings on PTI's petition on March 27 – reserved the verdict a day earlier, saying it would announce it the next day, April 4. Ahead of the expected verdict, the Ministry of Defence had submitted its report explaining the reasoning behind the army's refusal to provide security for the polls.

'Ruling over Punjab...

FROM PAGE 01
coalition political parties, civil society and bar associations of the country. It would have been appropriate if the decision was based on a collective wisdom of the court, he said, adding that a resolution was also passed in the Parliament regarding it. The minister said that he still expected from the Chief Justice of Pakistan that he would form a full court bench to remove ambiguity in the verdict and for curtailing the impression of division in the judiciary. The attorney general of Pakistan, he said, had also requested the court in last day hearing to form a six-member bench but the same was rejected.

Maryam takes aim...

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan. Expressing her reservations over the Supreme Court's decision, Ms Nawaz said, "It is not enough from the federal cabinet to denounce the verdict delivered by a three-member bench." Going back to 2018, she said, "The responsibility that was taken by Khosa and Saqib Nisar back in 2018, has now been taken by the current bench."

District Conference Golf fellowship held in Peshawar

The District Governor, Barrister Adnan Saboor Rohaila, highly appreciated the arrangements and commended the efforts of Rtn Imran Ghaznavi, President RC Islamabad Metropolitan, for making it happen

DNA

PESHAWAR: District Conference Golf fellowship (DISCON Golf Championship 2023) was recently held in Peshawar, Pakistan, and it was a major success. The event was organized by RC Islamabad Metropolitan and featured over 70 golfers competing in both amateur and senior categories. In addition, over 120 corporate professionals, members of civil and military bureaucracy, legal fraternity, doctors, businesspersons, and financial sector professionals attended the closing ceremony. The event received high praise from the Chief Guest, Rtn Admiral (Retd) Muhammad Asif Sandiala, Former Naval Chief of Staff, who commended the organizers for arranging such an amazing golf



championship at the Peshawar Golf Course. The District Governor, Barrister Adnan Saboor Rohaila, highly appreciated the arrangements and commended the efforts of Rtn Imran Ghaznavi, President RC Islamabad Metropolitan, for making it happen. The event was highly appreciated by attendees and commended for its efforts in promoting the "Public Image" of Rotary in Pakistan among a cross section of society. The DISCON Golf Championship 2023 was a memorable event that brought together Rotarian and non-Rotarian golfers from different cities in Pakistan to compete in a professional championship. The event was a major step forward in promoting the public image of Rotary in Pakistan and was a resounding success thanks to the efforts of the organizers.

Iraq, Kurdish region sign accord to resume oil exports

BAGHDAD: Iraq's federal government and the Kurdistan autonomous region signed an accord Tuesday to allow Kurdish oil exports to resume through Turkey after they were halted 10 days earlier. The agreement, signed in Baghdad in the presence of Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani and Kurdish premier Masrour Barzani, was to be implemented "today", a Kurdish regional government official told AFP. The deal was described as temporary but signals the end of independent oil exports by northern Iraq's Kurdish regional government and marks a clear limit to its autonomy. The agreement comes two days after Iraq, Saudi Arabia and several other major oil exporters announced a sharp reduction in their production from May that sent up global energy prices. Barzani said on Twitter that the deal is "temporary" until Iraq's parliament agrees a new oil and gas law, but he called it "a crucial step towards ending the long-standing dispute" between Arbil and Baghdad. Ankara has stopped handling Iraqi Kurdish oil last month after an international tribunal ruled in

a nine-year-old dispute that Baghdad was right to insist on overseeing all Iraqi oil exports. Oil exports are the key revenue source for both the federal and regional governments and their management has long been a sensitive topic in relations. The government of war-scarred Iraq is betting on earning around \$70 per barrel in its budget calculations for the next three years and has been irritated to see the autonomous region go it alone by exporting its oil via Turkey. The Kurdistan government sees Baghdad as trying to profit from the region's resources while dragging its feet on paying the salaries of Kurdish civil servants and other funds for its regional public sector. Gulf Analyst Yesar Al-Maleki, of the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES), said the deal aimed "first and foremost" at quickly re-starting exports to Turkey. "But it also presents an opportunity for Baghdad to finally be involved in Iraqi Kurdistan's oil sector" and should also allow Kurdistan "to accrue higher revenues" in future. Maleki hailed the deal as a

"breakthrough for the two PMs" that could help both sides draft the new energy law and "resolve the existing historic disputes once and for all". Sales of Kurdistan crude will be managed from now by the State Oil Marketing Organization, a federal government official and a Kurdish official told AFP. A joint committee formed by the federal and regional governments will supervise the export process, they added. Revenues will be paid into an account under the control of the Kurdistan government which will be overseen by Baghdad, they said. The halt to exports through a pipeline to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan had left foreign oil firms with nowhere to pump Kurdish oil. Norway's DNO, one of the main firms operating in Iraqi Kurdistan, announced it was halting production at its wells. Prior to Ankara's action on March 25, the autonomous region was exporting roughly 450,000 barrels per day of crude. Iraq, the second largest producer within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, exports an average of 3.3 million bpd. – Agencies

Amir Khan handed two-year ban for doping

The ban is deemed to have commenced on 6 April 2022, when his provisional suspension was imposed, and will expire on 5 April 2024

LONDON: Former light-welterweight world champion Amir Khan has been handed a two-year ban from all sport after testing positive for a prohibited substance, UK Anti-Doping said on Tuesday. Khan, 36, returned a positive result for the anabolic agent ostarine following his loss to Kell Brook in Manchester in February 2022. Ostarine is a drug designed to have similar effects to testosterone. Khan, who announced his retirement in May last year, accepted a violation of anti-doping rules but said he had not intentionally ingested the substance, an argument accepted by an independent panel following a hearing in January. The ban is deemed to have commenced on 6 April 2022, when his provisional suspension was imposed, and will expire on 5 April 2024. Khan became a household name in Britain after claiming a silver medal at the 2004 Athens Olympics, aged just 17. He made his professional debut in July 2005 and four years later won the WBA light-welterweight title with victory over Andreas Kotelnik in Manchester. Khan unified the WBA and IBF titles with a win over Zab Judah in 2011 but controversially lost his next fight to Lamont Peterson, who would subsequently test positive for synthetic testosterone. He retired with a record of 34 wins and six defeats from 40 bouts. UKAD chief executive Jane Rumble said: "This case serves as a reminder that UKAD will diligently pursue anti-doping rule violations in order to protect clean sport." – APP

Xavi expecting Madrid to wage war in cup Clasico

Barcelona will be without four injured key players in Pedri, Ousmane Dembele, Frenkie de Jong and Andreas Christensen. "Madrid come tomorrow and they can beat you perfectly well – they can against any team," said Xavi

BARCELONA: Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez warned his team on Tuesday that their Copa del Rey semi-final opponents Real Madrid would be coming to wage a "footballing war" at Camp Nou. The Catalans hold a 1-0 lead from the first leg and have beaten their rivals in each of the last three Clasicos. "It doesn't mean anything that we have won the last three Clasicos, tomorrow is another footballing war," Xavi told reporters. "They will be out for revenge, they will come here hurt, they have lost the last three. They will come here wounded, I am sure."

Barcelona will be without four injured key players in Pedri, Ousmane Dembele, Frenkie de Jong and Andreas Christensen. "Madrid come tomorrow and they can beat you perfectly well – they can against any team," said Xavi. "They have a lot of experience, they are used to mounting comebacks. They are still favourites for me. "We were better in the league game and in the Super Cup, but we weren't in the first leg." Despite Eder Militao's own goal handing Barcelona a narrow victory at the Santiago Bernabeu, Ancelotti's side dominated the Catalans. Xavi said he expected Los Blancos to try and stop his team controlling the match and playing their usual possession football. "(I predict) an aggressive Madrid, who want to take the ball off us, pressing us," added Xavi. "We need to have a lot of personality tomorrow to keep the ball." – APP

Rafael Nadal, Alcaraz pull out of Monte Carlo Masters



MADRID: Rafael Nadal and Carlos Alcaraz have pulled out of the Monte Carlo Masters, which begins on April 8. Tennis great Nadal is suffering from a hip injury, meanwhile world number two Alcaraz has post-traumatic arthritis in his left hand along with muscular discomfort in the spine. "Hi everyone, I'm still not ready to compete at the highest level," Nadal tweeted. "I will not be able to play in one of the most important tournaments of my career, Monte Carlo." The Monte Carlo

tournament, which Nadal has won 11 times, was a chance for him to prepare for the French Open, which starts May 28. Nadal said he was hoping to return from the hip flexor injury he sustained in the Australian Open in January, suffering a second round exit against Mackenzie McDonald. The 22-time Grand Slam champion pulled out of hard-court tournaments at Indian Wells and Miami, with his sights set on a return at the start of the clay court season. Record Monte Carlo Masters cham-

pin Nadal won the tournament eight consecutive times between 2005 and 2012. After the tournament's director said Nadal was registered for this year's edition, the Spaniard last week denied he was set to participate. "I don't know who gets this information, but obviously if it were true, I would confirm it, but unfortunately, I cannot confirm it," said Nadal at an event. "Things are moving day by day, and I don't say things that I can't fulfil." Meanwhile, Alcaraz also shared the news about pulling out of the tournament on his official Twitter account. "After two months abroad, I am happy to return home but sad because I finished my last match in Miami with physical discomfort. After visiting my doctor in Murcia today and being evaluated, I will not be able to go to Monte Carlo to start the clay court tour," Alcaraz tweeted soon after Nadal's withdrawal. "I have post-traumatic arthritis in my left hand and muscular discomfort in the spine that needs rest to prepare for everything that is to come," he added. World number seven Felix Auger-Aliassime has also withdrawn from the event due to a left knee injury. "I have been struggling with my left knee for the past few weeks and decided it was the smartest decision to take some time off so I'm able to fully heal and recover before my next tournament Madrid Open," Felix said on his official Instagram account. – Agencies

Pakistan names squads against New Zealand Series

Shaheen had missed five Tests and three ODIs against England and New Zealand post the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 as he was completing his rehabilitation following a knee injury he had sustained during the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle in July

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Shaheen Shah Afridi is all set to return to international cricket after four months when he was named in the Pakistan T20I and ODI squads for the series against New Zealand, which will be played in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi from 14 April to 7 May. Shaheen had missed five Tests and three ODIs against England and New Zealand post the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 as he was completing his rehabilitation following a knee injury he had sustained during the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle in July. He had subsequently missed the second Test against Sri Lanka, ODI series against the Netherlands, ACC Asia Cup in the UAE and seven-match T20I series in Pakistan.

The 22-year-old, who has taken 99 Test, 62 ODI and 58 T20I wickets, staged a remarkable comeback in the HBL Pakistan Super League 8 when he inspired Lahore Qalandars to become the first side to successfully defend the title. Not only that, Shaheen's own performance was outstanding both with the bat and the ball – he scored 133 runs at a strike-rate of 168.35 and grabbed 19 wickets at an economy-rate of 9.13. He was rightly named captain of Team of HBL PSL 8.

Apart from Shaheen, also retained in the T20I squad following stellar performances in Sharjah, while Ihsanullah has also been added to the ODI squad for the first time in his career. The squad will assemble in Lahore on Tomorrow (Thursday) where the training camp will commence on 7 April. SQUADS: T20I: Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Ifthikhar Ahmed, Ihsanullah, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad

Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood and Zaman Khan. ODI: Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Haris Sohail, Ihsanullah, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Naseem Shah, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood and Usama Mir. Reserves: Abbas Afridi, Abrar Ahmed and Tayyab Tahir

Schedule: 14 Apr - 1st T20I, Lahore 15 Apr - 2nd T20I, Lahore 17 Apr - 3rd T20I, Lahore 20 Apr - 4th T20I, Rawalpindi 24 Apr - 5th T20I, Rawalpindi 27 Apr - 1st ODI, Rawalpindi 29 Apr - 2nd ODI, Rawalpindi 3 May - 3rd ODI, Karachi 5 May - 4th ODI, Karachi 7 May - 5th ODI, Karachi

ECP summons 'consultative' meeting

FROM PAGE 01
Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) March 22 order on Punjab elections null and void. A three-member bench – comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar – announced the reserved verdict on the PTI's petition challenging the Election Commission of Pakistan's order postponing the elections in Punjab and KP.

SBP increases...

FROM PAGE 01
the domestic political situation, pose risks to this assessment. The MPC noted that the incoming data on economic activity continues to reflect a broad-based slowdown. In particular, there has been a significant decline in sales volumes of automobiles and POL in recent months. Similarly, the contraction in large-scale manufacturing (LSM) accelerated in January to 7.9 per cent y/y. Cumulatively, LSM output is down by 4.4 per cent during Jul-Jan FY23 when compared with the corresponding period of last year. Reflecting these trends, electricity generation declined for the ninth consecutive month in February. In agriculture, the information on cotton arrivals remains as per expectation; however, the wheat production target is likely to be missed.

Verdict murder...

FROM PAGE 01
who had decided the case, had accepted it in his memories, he added. The prime minister also lauded late ZAB and said he was among the founders of the 1973 Constitution and his historic contribution would always be remembered.

Cabinet rejects SC...

FROM PAGE 01
Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to postpone polls in Punjab and KP from April 30 to October 8 as 'null and void'. The Supreme Court, in its verdict, states that the ECP's order dated March 22, 2023, is declared to be unconstitutional, without lawful authority or jurisdiction, void ab-initio, of no legal effect, and is hereby quashed. "The Supreme Court's decision is a minority verdict, which is why the cabinet rejects it," the sources in the federal cabinet said. The top court's decision, as per the sources, is not enforceable.

PTI lauds 'historic'...

FROM PAGE 01
clear that his party was standing by the court's decision. "I want to congratulate the entire nation that the Supreme Court today buried the doctrine of necessity," PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi said while speaking to media outside the apex court. The Supreme Court, in its verdict released in the election delay case, declared the electoral body's decision to conduct polls on October 8 as "unconstitutional", and directed to conduct polls in Punjab on May 14.

Lahore ATC grants...

FROM PAGE 01
The former prime minister appeared before the court to secure bail in three cases including the Zille Shah murder case, arson, and interference in state affairs. These cases were registered against the PTI chief at the Race Course Police Station of Lahore under anti-terror, aiding and abetting provisions.

Justice Isa's...

FROM PAGE 01
On March 29, a three-member bench comprising Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Shahid Waheed had issued a majority verdict of 2-1, ordering the postponement of cases being heard under Article 184(3) of the Constitution till the amendments made to Supreme Court Rules 1980 regarding the discretionary powers enjoyed by the Chief Justice of Pakistan to form benches.

Briefs

Senior IS commander killed in Syria

BEIRUT: A drone strike carried out by the American-led coalition in north-western Syria has killed a senior member of the Islamic State group who was in charge of planning attacks in Europe, the United States military said Tuesday.

The man killed Monday in the strike was identified by a U.S. military statement as Khalid Aydd Ahmad al-Jabouri. The military statement added that his death "will temporarily disrupt the organization's ability to plot external attacks." Monday's strike was the latest by the U.S. military to kill a top official with the extremist group that once controlled large parts of Iraq and Syria, where it declared a "caliphate." From the areas they once controlled, the extremists planned deadly attacks in Europe that killed scores of people. In recent years, such attacks have decreased because the Islamic State group lost the last sliver of land it controlled in March 2019. The extremist sleeper cells are still launching deadly attacks in Syria and Iraq.

Opposition activists in northwestern Syria said the man killed showed up in the area about 10 days ago claiming to be a displaced person from the eastern province of Deir el-Zour, bordering Iraq. Al-Jabouri is one of Iraq's biggest tribes that also has presence in east and north Syria and the man might have said that he is from Deir el-Zour to hide his Iraqi identity as residents of east Syria speak Arabic dialect similar to the one spoken in Iraq. —APP

EU slams China for support of Russia

BRUSSELS: The European Union's foreign policy chief on Tuesday lashed out at China for its support of Russia amid the invasion of Ukraine and called it "a blatant violation" of Beijing's United Nations commitments.

"There cannot be siding with the aggressor," Josep Borrell said. "There is a clear expectation from a permanent member of the (U.N.) Security Council to stand up in defense of international rules-based order and China as a moral duty to contribute to a fair peace."

Standing alongside visiting U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Borrell was forceful in his condemnation of a nation that has increasingly moved from being a partner to being a rival on the global stage. The comments come just ahead of a visit of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen together with French President Emmanuel Macron to China, where both will press the point that EU-China relations will pivot on Beijing's friendship with Russia. Macron and von der Leyen are set to warn China against sending weapons to Russia during talks with President Xi Jinping on Thursday. —APP

Credit Suisse chairman admits failure

ZURICH: The chairman of Credit Suisse apologized Tuesday to shareholders for failures of the once-venerable bank and acknowledged the shock and anger felt as the troubled Swiss lender is set to be swallowed up by rival UBS in a government-arranged takeover.

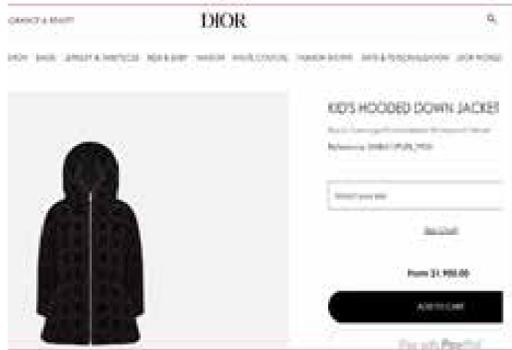
Axel Lehmann, who took the top board job only last year after joining Credit Suisse from UBS in 2021, decried "massive outflows" of customer funds in October and a "downward spiral" that culminated last month as a U.S. banking crisis unleashed global turmoil. "The bank could not be saved," he said, and only two options awaited — a deal or bankruptcy.

"The bitterness, anger and shock of those who are disappointed, overwhelmed and affected by the developments of the past few weeks is palpable," Lehmann told what is likely the last Credit Suisse shareholder meeting in its 167-year history. —Agencies

Shooting missiles, starving people, seeking luxuries: North Korea dear leader !!

North Korean Central News Agency reported on 17th March of Kim Jong-Un and his daughter Kim Ju-Ae observing the test launch of the Hwasong-17 ICBM

NORTH Korea had spent about \$200 million on 70 times missile provocations in 2020. This expenditure can purchase 500,000 tons of rice which are afford to support the whole NK population for 45 Days. Despite the chronic food shortage, with Kim Jong-Un having emphasized this year's grain production as a matter of 'serious national dignity' at the 7th enlarged plenary meeting of worker's party, the Kims luxurious life continues. North Korean Central News Agency reported on 17th March of Kim Jong-Un and his daughter Kim Ju-Ae observing the test launch of the Hwasong-17



ICBM. The coat worn by Kim Ju-Ae at that time was identified as Kid's Hooded Down Jacket by Christian Dior, a luxurious brand that costs more than \$1,900. Meanwhile, according to the North Korean trade officer in South-west Asia, Kim Jong-un, in violation of UN sanctions against NK, is known to enjoy leisure sports by purchasing Jet-Skis (SeaDoo) worth

more than \$40,000 per unit. United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) recently re-designated North Korea as a food-deficit country in need of external aid. A report to the UNHCR on 9th March, by Elizabeth Salmon, Special Rapporteur on the human rights in the DPRK, shows that 42% of the North Korea population is suffering from malnutrition.



US providing Ukraine \$2.6 billion in military aid

WASHINGTON: The U.S. will send Ukraine about \$500 million in ammunition and equipment and will spend more than \$2 billion to buy an array of munitions, radar and other weapons in the future, U.S. officials said, as the Ukrainian troops prepare for a spring offensive against Russian forces.

The ammunition rounds, along with grenade launchers and vehicles, will be taken from military stockpiles so they can be in the war zone quickly, the officials said. The \$2.1 billion in longer-term aid, which is being provided under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, will buy missiles for the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System, or NASAMS, as well as radar and other weapons, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the aid had not yet been announced. An announcement is expected as soon as

Tuesday. The new weapons and funding come as Russia has continued to bombard Ukraine with long-range missiles and the hotly contested battle for the eastern city of Bakhmut drags on. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview that unless his country wins that fight, Russia could begin building international support for a deal that could require Ukraine to make unacceptable compromises. Zelenskyy said if Moscow's forces take Bakhmut, then Russian President Vladimir Putin would "sell this victory to the West, to his society, to China, to Iran."

The latest U.S. package, with its mix of short-term and long-term aid, includes a wide variety of ammunition from Pentagon stocks, 23 million rounds of small arms ammunition and 200,000 grenades, as well as fund-

ing for more high-tech weapons, including counter drone rocket systems, air surveillance radar and satellite communications terminals and services. It brings the total amount of U.S. security assistance to Ukraine to more than \$35 billion since Russia invaded in February 2022. Defense leaders testifying on Capitol Hill last week said the U.S. is prepared to support Ukraine for as long as needed.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg echoed that sentiment on Monday, as the alliance's foreign ministers were preparing to meet in Brussels. The ministers on Tuesday "will discuss how we can step up our support, including by continuing to strengthen Ukraine's armed forces," Stoltenberg said. "Our support is for the long haul." The White House said last week that it has new evidence that Russia is looking again to North Korea for weapons

as it also prepares for a spring offensive. Russia would provide Pyongyang with needed food and other commodities in return. U.S. officials also are concerned that the president of Belarus has warned that Russian strategic nuclear weapons might be deployed in his country, along with part of Moscow's tactical nuclear arsenal. Putin has said he planned to place tactical nuclear weapons in neighboring Belarus. Those weapons are comparatively short-range and low-yield. Strategic nuclear weapons, such as missile-borne warheads, would be a greater threat. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, while talking up the possibility of nuclear weapons, has also called for a cease-fire in Ukraine. He said a truce must have no preconditions and all movement of troops and weapons must be halted. —Agencies

Ahsan Iqbal meets with Sun Weidong

BEIJING: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary had a bilateral meeting with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, Sun Weidong here on Tuesday. He was accompanied by SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Ambassador Moin ul Haque and Embassy officials. The meeting was marked by traditional sentiments of warmth and mutual trust, that form the hallmark of China-Pakistan ties. Acknowledging the timeless and time-tested nature of the bilateral friendship, the two sides reaffirmed the centrality of the 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' between the two countries. The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including cooperation under China-Pakistan Economic Cooperation (CPEC), trade, economic and financial cooperation, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people ties, and reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen cooperation on multilateral fora. The minister thanked the Chinese side for its critical support to Pakistan to ease the country's economic difficulties and amidst Covid-19 pandemic. He also conveyed gratitude for China's for its generous support for the recent unprecedented floods in Pakistan. Noting the completion of one decade of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and CPEC in July this year, the minister expressed government's resolve to mark this milestone in a befitting manner. He lauded the transformational impact of CPEC on Pakistan's socioeconomic landscape and for improving livelihood of the people. progress on various CPEC projects was reviewed, many of which would be completed this year. The two sides agreed to make CPEC the best example of high-quality development under BRI and exchanged views on expansion of CPEC to third countries. Both sides agreed that high-level exchanges had always been a hallmark of the bilateral ties and agreed to further build upon the momentum. The two sides also agreed to enhance people-to-people exchanges in the ongoing year of China-Pakistan Tourism Exchanges. —DNA

Jacinda takes on new role to fight terrorism

AUCKLAND: Former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was appointed special envoy for the Christchurch Call, or in the fight against extremism and terrorist content online on Tuesday. While announcing his government's decision, Prime Minister Chris Hipkins said in a statement that the newly created position will represent New Zealand's continued commitment to pushing for greater online protection from terrorist and violent extremist content. "The Christchurch Call is a foreign policy priority for the Government and Jacinda Ardern is uniquely placed to keep pushing forward with the goal of eliminating violent extremist content online," Hipkins said. The special envoy will begin her duties on April 17 and will report directly to the prime minister. "Terrorist and violent extremist content online is a global issue, but for many in New Zealand, it is also very personal. The March 15 terror attacks on Christchurch masjidain were a defining moment for our country and Jacinda Ardern's leadership and the Christchurch Call is part of our response to those attacks," said the prime minister. Hipkins was referring the March 15, 2019 terrorist attack, where Brenton Tarrant, an Australian white supremacist, killed 51 people and injured 40 more at the Al Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre in the city of Christchurch. "Jacinda Ardern's commitment to stopping violent extremist content like we saw that day is key to why she should carry on this work. Her relationships with leaders and technology companies and her drive for change will help increase the pace and ambition of the work we are doing through the Christchurch Call," he said. —Agencies



WASHINGTON: Furqat Sidiqov Ambassador designate of Uzbekistan to USA presented his documents Ambassador Rufus Gifford the Chief of Protocol. They had a fruitful discussion on ways to further deepen the long-standing robust bilateral ties between our two nations. —DNA

Türkiye, Greece aim to grow new cooperation areas

ANKARA: Ankara and Athens have the potential to expand the "positive agenda" after relations gained momentum recently, Deputy Foreign Minister Kostas Fragogiannis said Monday. Athens is keen to "find solutions to the matters covered by the positive agenda. Because we believe that in this way, we strengthen the good atmosphere and help fight any problems that may arise," Fragogiannis told Anadolu Agency (AA) in an interview in Athens. Pointing to a recent trip across the Aegean Sea to meet with his counterpart Burak Akcapar in Türkiye's capital Ankara, Fragogiannis underlined that progress had been made in many fields, including the economy,

commerce, energy, tourism, transportation, culture and sports. "I and the accompanying Greek delegation were welcomed very sincerely in Ankara by our Turkish colleagues," said Fragogiannis, adding that the discussions mainly focused on economic matters. Relations between Athens and Ankara have warmed significantly in recent weeks after Greece's rapid assistance in the wake of twin earthquakes that shook southern Türkiye in early February. Likewise, Türkiye was the first country to offer condolences and aid following a deadly Feb. 28 train accident in northern Greece that left dozens dead. The Greek government has sent 80 tons of medical and

first aid equipment. Thousands of Greeks had responded to calls for aid to quake-hit Türkiye, reviving memories of how a spontaneous outpouring of help after a similar disaster in 1999 brought the neighbors together when they seemed to be on the brink of war. Underlining that the two neighboring countries respected and listened to each other's perspectives on various matters, Fragogiannis said they were planning a series of joint events in such fields as environmental protection, natural disasters, and civil protection. "Greeks and Turks will see the agreements we have in basic matters will positively affect their daily lives," he added. "This can manifest in issues like

the ability of the businesses to invest in the other country or a third country, the development of economy and trade, touristic visits, or sea transportation." Fragogiannis also underscored that the positive agenda was a dynamic process. "When some matters are fully agreed upon, new topics will be incorporated into the positive agenda to be dealt with," he said. Referring to a ferry line between the port city of Izmir on Türkiye's western coast and Thessaloniki in northern Greece, which stopped after operating for a limited time last year, Fragogiannis said this could be revived by the summer. He maintained that the line could be a good alternative for connecting people and as means of trans-

portation. Fragogiannis also said that Greece wanted to host more Turkish tourists on its islands and that talks had taken place with Ankara on loosening visa measures. He pointed to similar efforts in past years: "We talked to our colleagues in Ankara, with whom we work within the framework of the positive agenda, on methods that will facilitate entry (to the islands) and speed up passport control and customs procedures." Meanwhile, Defense Minister Hulusi Akar is planning to welcome his Greek counterpart Nikolaos Panagiotopoulos in southern Hatay province on Tuesday, who will come to visit the earthquake-hit regions. Greece Migration Minister Notis Mitarakis is also expected to visit the area. —Agencies

UK fines TikTok \$15.9 million

LONDON: Chinese social media giant TikTok has been fined £12.7 million (\$15.9 million) by the UK's Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a number of breaches of the data protection law, including misusing children's data.

The office said on Tuesday that around 1.4 million children in the UK under the minimum age of 13 joined TikTok in 2020, despite the country's rules not allowing children that age to create an account.

"UK data protection law says that organisations that use personal data when offering information society services to children under 13 must have consent from their parents or carers," the ICO noted.

The office added that TikTok failed to obtain permission and to carry out enough controls to identify or remove underage children from its platform.

The large fine comes as TikTok is under fire in a number of countries, including the US and European Union countries, over fears that data from the privately owned platform may be accessed and exploited by the Chinese government. —Agencies

Netherlands: One dead in train derailment

HAGUE: One person has died and some 30 passengers have been injured, many of them seriously, after a train partially derailed in the early hours of Tuesday. The accident happened around 3:25 am in the town of Voorschoten, near The Hague, sending one carriage into a field next to the tracks. Rail network company Pro Rail said the accident was linked to the presence of a construction crane seen in the vicinity. A detailed investigation is underway.

John Voppen, CEO of Pro Rail, called the accident "a black day for Dutch railways". Television images showed one of the people using makeshift bridges to cross a canal running alongside the rails to reach the stricken train in the darkness. Many windows in the train carriages were broken. It was not clear if that happened during the accident or as passengers attempted to escape.

Injured passengers were treated in homes near the rails and transported in a fleet of ambulances to hospitals, including a "calamity hospital" opened in the central city of Utrecht.

"This is an incredibly tragic accident. I sympathize with the victims. Unfortunately, there is also a fatality to mourn. My thoughts go out to all the family and friends of those involved," Voorschoten Mayor Nadine Stemerink said in a statement. Ingrid de Roos, a spokeswoman for local fire services, told news show WNL that a small fire broke out at the rear of the train but was quickly extinguished. —Agencies

Australia to ban TikTok on official devices

CANBERRA: The Australian government on Tuesday decided to ban its officials from using the Chinese video-sharing application TikTok on their devices.

In a statement, Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus said that he has authorized the issuance of a mandatory direction to prohibit the Chinese app on devices by Commonwealth departments and agencies.

"After receiving advice from intelligence and security agencies, today I authorized the secretary of the Attorney-General's Department to issue a mandatory direction under the Protective Security Policy Framework to prohibit the TikTok app on devices issued by Commonwealth departments and agencies," said Dreyfus. "The direction will come into effect as soon as practicable," Dreyfus added. The attorney-general said that exemptions will only be granted on a case-by-case basis and with appropriate security mitigations in place. Australia was the last country in the "Five Eyes", an intelligence alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and US, to ban their officials from using Chinese app on their professional devices. —APP

Briefs

Taliban carries out deadly raid on ISIL hideout

NEWS DESK

KABUL: Taliban forces have killed six members of the ISIL armed group (ISIS) in Afghanistan's northern Balkh province during an overnight raid, a Taliban spokesman said on Tuesday. The raid comes as the Taliban rulers crack down on the regional affiliate of the ISIL group - known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP), which has carried out several deadly attacks in recent months killing dozens, including Balkh governor Mohammad Dawood Muzammil last month. According to Mohammad Asif Waziri, a spokesman for the police chief in Balkh, the operation late on Monday night targeted an ISIL hideout in Nahri Shahi district. Six members of the armed group were killed, he added. Muzammil was known for his resistance to ISIL in the area. The group has emerged as the biggest security threat to the Taliban, which took over Afghanistan in August 2021 after US-led foreign forces withdrew after 20 years of war. A blast in January killed at least five people and injured dozens at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as employees streamed out of the building at the end of their work day. The ISIL group has also claimed other recent attacks in Kabul, including a bombing near a checkpoint at the city's military airport that killed and wounded several people and also an assault on a Kabul hotel in mid-December.

Russia cafe bomb suspect charged with terrorism

DNA

MOSCOW: A suspect in the killing of pro-war Russian blogger Vladen Tatarsky has been charged with terrorism, Russian officials say. Darya Trepova was taken to a Moscow court on Tuesday after her arrest the previous day in St Petersburg. Prosecutors are expected to ask the court for her to remain in detention. Tatarsky was killed on Sunday in a blast in a cafe in St Petersburg where he was due to give a talk. More than 30 people were injured. In a video released by the authorities on Monday - most likely recorded under duress - Ms Trepova was heard admitting she brought a statuette to the cafe that later blew up. But the 26-year-old did not say she knew there would be an explosion, nor did she admit any further role. Russia's Investigative Committee, which looks into major crime, said she had been charged under the criminal code with "a terrorist act carried out by an organised group causing intentional death" and the "illegal possession of explosive devices by an organised group". - APP

Finland joins NATO in a major blow to Russia

Russia warned that it would be forced to take "retaliatory measures" to address what it called security threats created by Finland's membership

DNA

BRUSSELS: Finland joined the NATO military alliance Tuesday, dealing a major blow to Russia with a historic realignment of the continent triggered by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. The Nordic country's membership doubles Russia's border with the world's biggest security alliance and represents a major change in Europe's security landscape: The nation adopted neutrality after its defeat by the Soviets in World War II. But its leaders signaled they wanted to join the alliance just months after Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine sent a shiver of fear through Moscow's neighbors. The move is a strategic and political blow to Putin, who has long complained about NATO's expansion toward Russia and partly used that as a justification for the invasion. Russia warned that it would be forced to take "retaliatory measures" to address what it called security threats created by Finland's membership. It had also warned it would bolster forces near Finland if

NATO sends any additional troops or equipment to what is its 31st member country. The alliance says it poses no threat to Moscow. Neighboring Sweden, which has avoided military alliances for more than 200 years, has also applied. But objections from NATO members Turkey and Hungary have delayed the process. Alarmed by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine last year, Finland, which shares a 1,340 kilometer (832 mile) border with Russia, applied to join in May, setting aside years of military non-alignment to seek protection under the organization's security umbrella. "I'm tempted to say this is maybe the one thing that we can thank Mr. Putin for because he once again here precipitated something he claims to want to prevent by Russia's aggression, causing many countries to believe that they have to do more to look out for their own defense and to make sure that they can deter possible Russian aggression going forward," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said just before accepting the documents that made Finland's membership official.

The US State Department is the repository of NATO texts concerning membership. Earlier, Russia's Foreign Ministry said the country "will be forced to take military-technical and other retaliatory measures to counter the threats to our national security arising from Finland's accession to NATO." It said Finland's move marks "a fundamental change in the situation in Northern Europe, which had previously been one of the most stable regions in the world." Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, meanwhile, Tuesday said Finland's membership reflects the alliance's anti-Russian course and warned that Moscow will respond depending on what weapons NATO allies place there. But Peskov also sought to play down the impact, noting that Russia has no territorial disputes with Finland. It's not clear what additional military resources Russia could send to the Finnish border. Moscow has deployed the bulk of its most capable military units to Ukraine. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg earlier said that no more troops would be sent to Finland unless it asked for help.

"There will be no NATO troops in Finland without the consent of Finland," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels a few hours before the country joins. The country is now protected by what Stoltenberg called NATO's "iron-clad security guarantee," under which all member countries vow to come to the defense of any ally that comes under attack. But Stoltenberg refused to rule out the possibility of holding more military exercises there and said that NATO would not allow Russia's demands to dictate the organization's decisions. "We are constantly assessing our posture, our presence. We have more exercises, we have more presence, also in the Nordic area," he said. Meanwhile, Finland's Parliament said that its website was hit with a so-called denial-of-service attack, which made site hard to use, with many pages not loading and some functions not available. A pro-Russian hacker group known as NoName057 (16) claimed responsibility, saying the attack was retaliation for Finland joining NATO.

Biden to discuss risks of AI with science advisers

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden will discuss the "risks and opportunities" that artificial intelligence poses for people, society and national security during a meeting with science and technology advisers at the White House on Tuesday, an official said. Biden, a Democrat, is scheduled to meet with the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST) on the same day that his predecessor, former President Donald Trump, surrenders in New York over charges stemming from a probe into hush money paid to a porn star. Biden has declined to comment on Trump's legal woes, and Democratic strategists say his focus on governing will create a politically advantageous split screen of sorts as his former rival, a Republican, deals with his legal challenges. "The president will discuss the importance of protecting rights and safety to ensure responsible innovation and appropriate safeguards". - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review implementation of policy measures to increase tax collection. - DNA

India rejects China's renaming of places along disputed border

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India rejected on Tuesday the renaming by China of places in what India regards as its eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims as part of its territory. China and India fought a war along parts of their poorly demarcated 3,800-km (2,360-mile) frontier in 1962 and clashes in mountainous regions in recent years have seriously strained relations between the nuclear-armed neighbours. The latest angry exchange of words was triggered on Sunday when China's Ministry of Civil Affairs issued a statement in which it said it had "standardised" the names of 11 places, including five mountains, in what China calls its southern Tibet region. The statement included a map that showed the 11 places renamed by China as being within "Zangnan", or southern Tibet in Chinese, with Arunachal Pradesh included in southern Tibet and China's border with India demarcated as just north of the Brahmaputra river. India rejected that. "Arunachal Pradesh is, has been and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India," Indian foreign ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Twitter. But a spokesperson at the Chinese foreign ministry said the name changes were "completely within the scope of China's sovereignty". "The southern Tibet region is Chinese territory," the spokesperson, Mao Ning, told a regular media briefing in Beijing on Tuesday.

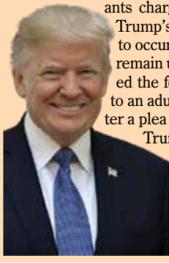
US says its forces killed Daesh leader in Syria

WASHINGTON: The United States carried out a military operation that killed a senior Daesh leader in Syria on Monday, US Central Command (CENTCOM) said on Tuesday, the latest blow to a group that once struck fear across the Middle East. Khalid 'Aydd Ahmad Al-Jabouri was responsible for planning Daesh attacks in Europe and developed the leadership structure for the group, the statement said. Daesh controlled swathes of Iraq and Syria at the peak of its power in 2014 before being beaten back in both countries. The group is estimated to have 5,000 to 7,000 members and supporters spread between Syria and Iraq, roughly half of them fighters, a UN report said in February. No civilians were killed or injured in this strike, CENTCOM said, adding that the group "continues to represent a threat to the region and beyond." "Though degraded, the group remains able to conduct operations within the region with a desire to strike beyond the Middle East," the statement said. It added that Al-Jabouri's death would "temporarily disrupt the group's ability to plot external attacks." The UN report said the threat posed by Daesh and its affiliates to international peace and security was high in the second half of 2022 and had increased in and around conflict zones where it has a presence. - DNA

Donald Trump first US president to get arrested

Becomes first US President to face criminal charges; calls it "a tragic day for our Republic"

NEW YORK: Donald Trump was set to appear in a Manhattan courtroom Tuesday in an extraordinary scene that marks the first time in American history that a former US president has faced criminal charges. The 45th president of the United States and the leading contender for the 2024 Republican nomination will enter the lower Manhattan courthouse on Tuesday as a defendant, surrounded by Secret Service agents. Upon his arrival, Trump will be arraigned, fingerprinted and possibly photographed. Though defendants charged with felonies are typically handcuffed, one of Trump's lawyers has indicated that he does not expect that to occur. The specific crimes Trump has been charged with remain under seal, days after a Manhattan grand jury indicted the former president for his role in paying hush money to an adult film star. The former president is expected to enter a plea of not guilty. After the unprecedented proceedings, Trump plans to return to Mar-A-Lago, his Florida estate where the campaign has scheduled a primetime news conference. In social media posts, Trump has cast himself as a "completely innocent person" and denounced the indictment as part of a broader conspiracy designed by Democrats to damage his political prospects. - DNA



2 civilians killed in Israeli strike on Damascus

DAMASCUS: Two Syrian civilians were killed in an Israeli air strike Tuesday, state media reported, the fourth such attack on government-held areas of the war-torn country in less than a week. "At 00:15 (2115 GMT Monday) the Israeli enemy carried out an air strike... and the attack resulted in the death of two civilians," state news agency SANA said, quoting a military source. The strike came from the direction of "the occupied Syrian Golan, targeting some points in the vicinity of Damascus and the southern region", it said, adding that air defence intercepted "most of" the missiles. During more than a decade of civil war in Syria, Israel has launched hundreds of air strikes on Syrian territory, primarily targeting Iranian-backed forces and Lebanese Hezbollah fighters as well as Syrian army positions. SANA had earlier reported "an explosion heard in the vicinity of Damascus". The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor gave the same civilian death toll, with its director Rami Abdel Rahman adding that "an unknown number of Iran-backed fighters were also killed" in the strike. Israel fired "barrages of missiles targeting military areas controlled by Iran-backed groups and regime air defence," said the Britain-based monitor with a wide range of sources inside Syria. An Israeli missile targeted a radar in the countryside of Sweida, while another hit a glass factory in the Al-Kiswah area of the Damascus countryside, killing the two civilians, it said.

UK minister under fire for singling out Pakistani men

Ms Braverman came under fire when, during an interview about plans to tackle child sexual abuse, she spoke about "the predominance of British-Pakistani males who hold cultural values totally at odds with British values"

MONITORING DESK

LONDON: British Home Secretary Suella Braverman's remarks that British-Pakistani men "hold cultural values at odds with British values" have been criticised by political commentators and children's charities as "inflammatory" and akin to initiating "race wars". Ms Braverman came under fire when, during an interview about plans to tackle child sexual abuse, she spoke about "the predominance of British-Pakistani males who hold cultural values totally at odds with British values". "[British-Pakistani men] see women in a demeaned, illegitimate way, and pursue an outdated and frankly heinous approach to the way we behave," Ms Braverman commented after she was informed that a

Home Office report in 2020 concluded that most child sexual abuse gangs are made up of white men under the age of 30, and that there was not enough evidence to suggest members of grooming gangs were disproportionately more likely to be Asian or black. Ms Braverman instead pointed to reports from Rotherham, which was rocked by a child sexual exploitation scandal in which five British-Pakistani men were convicted of grooming, raping and exploiting young girls. The home secretary also cited a 2015 report penned by Dame Louise Casey CB, which ironically noted how British-Pakistani community had been "harmed by association" in the scandal. Speaking on a TV show after Ms Braverman, West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin said, "It feels very dog whistle, if I may say, and it doesn't deal with what is happening on the ground." British actor and presenter Adil Ray was one of many who pointed out that, as per the Home Office report in 2020, most perpetrators are white. Braverman was attorney general at the time [it was published]. British-American political commentator Mehdi Hasan tweeted, "Despite heavy competition, and despite her own ethnicity, Suella Braverman may be the most bigoted, cynical, and dangerous politician to emerge from the modern UK Conservative Party in many decades. This is vile and dishonest stuff."

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