



Islamabad POST

Monday, April 17, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

NA Speaker says Supreme Court cant interrupt legislation

Detailed News On Page-08

Imran Khan to change personal security personnel

Detailed News On Page-08



Bayern's Thomas Tuchel laments 'big setback'

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Jordan envoy condoles death of minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Jordan Ibrahim Almadani has expressed heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of Religions Minister in a road accident. In his Twitter message he said, "deeply saddened to learn about the death of Pakistan's religious affairs minister Mufti Abdul Shakoor in an accident. May Allah grant him a place in Jannat al-Firdous. My sincere condolences to the Government, people of Pakistan, family and friends of the deceased".

Zalmay hits back at Zardari

DNA

WASHINGTON: Former US envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad on Saturday slammed former president and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, calling him "Pakistan's Mr 10 Percent". The former US envoy said that the PPP co-chairman should "put the country first and honour the legacy of BB [Benazir Bhutto]." In response to this, the former US envoy took to Twitter and wrote: "Responding to Pakistan's 'Mr. 10 Percent': I do not lobby for anyone or any country and am no one's agent. I have shared my sincere concern about Pakistan's triple crisis, which unfortunately is intensifying, and have suggested what should be done. 'Mr. Ten Percent' should put country first and honor BB's legacy, to preclude a meltdown that will hurt the 220 million people who — unlike him and others like him, do not own posh homes in several countries that they can run away to."

Elections on same day

All parties moot likely after Eid

Maulana Fazl ur Rehman, a key PDM ally has outright rejected any negotiations with Imran Khan

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Efforts have been intensified to convene the All Parties Conference (APC) to evolve a consensus on the general elections. Sources say the PTI Chairman Imran Khan shall also be invited to the APC, which among others, shall also be attended by the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif. There is a strong view among all stakeholders that elections for the provincial and national assemblies shall take place on the same day. Previously the PTI was not ready to talk to the government but now after constant canvassing it has agreed to sit with the PDM parties provided there is only one point agenda i.e holding of general elections. Interestingly now the PDM parties do not seem willing to engage with the PTI simply because at the time of the regime change they were told that they would continue to

Continued on Page 06

PTI forms three member committee for dialogue

DNA

LAHORE: A day after Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) emir Sirajul Haq launched a fresh bid to initiate talks between the government and the opposition, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Sunday constituted a three-member committee to hold a dialogue "on the ongoing political crisis in the country." According to a statement issued today, the three-member committee includes Pervaiz Khattak, Ejaz Chaudhary and Mian Mahmoodur Rasheed. The development comes

Continued on Page 06

Imran vows PTI will defeat mafia groups

Says "Zardari group has made people of Sindh hostage"

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan on Sunday said his party will defeat the 'Zardari mafia' in Sindh. "Zardari group has made people of Sindh hostage," Imran Khan while expressing his views with PTI Sindh leader Khurram Sher Zaman who called on him in Lahore to discuss the political situation including the arrest of party leaders and

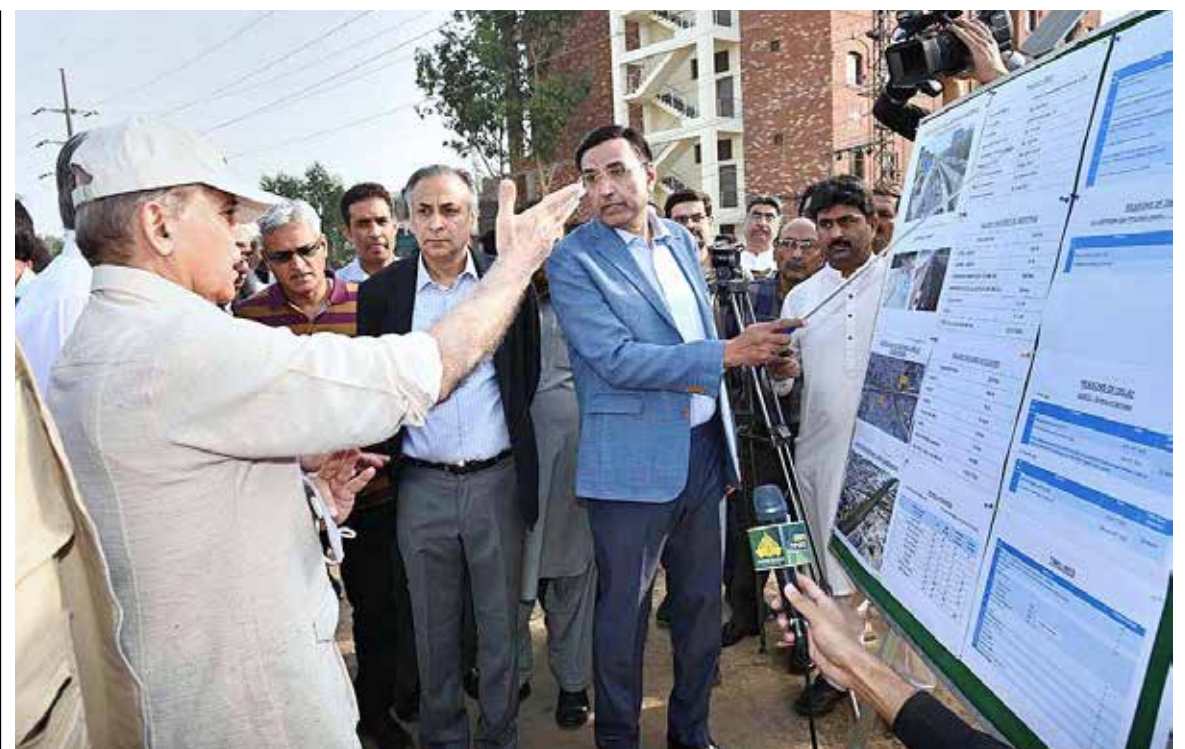
Continued on Page 06

'Can't foresee talks in current situation'

DNA

LAHORE: The political climate in Pakistan has become increasingly tense, with negotiations between political parties seeming less and less likely. Recently, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

Continued on Page 06



LAHORE: PM Shehbaz Sharif receives briefing regarding under construction Lahore Bridge. — DNA

Pulwama attack revelations vindicate Pakistan

India must answer the questions raised: FO

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The latest revelations made by Satya Pal Malik, the so-called former Governor of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), have once again vindicated Pakistan's stance on the Pulwama Attack of February 2019. "His disclosures demonstrate how the Indian leadership has habitually used the bogey of terrorism from Pakistan to advance its sham victimhood narrative and the Hindutva agenda, clearly for domestic political gains," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday. The spokesperson further said that Pakistan hoped that

Continued on Page 06

'Election won't be held on May 14'

STAFF REPORT

FAISALABAD: As the date for polls in the country is well in the debate, Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah asserted on Sunday that elections to the Punjab Assembly would not be held on May 14 despite "all-out efforts" of the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Elections across the country would be held at the appointed time this year, he said while talking to the media in Faisalabad.

Continued on Page 06

PTI's govt delayed development pace in Punjab: PM

Directs the early completion of all ongoing projects

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf had deliberately interrupted the development pace in the Punjab which was initiated by their government. Instead initiating new uplift projects, the earlier ones initiated by the PML-N government were put to halt. The people of the province were avenged for their support to Pakistan Muslim League-N, the prime minister expressed these views during a high-level meeting to review the ongoing public welfare and other proposed projects. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi, PM's advisor Ahad Khan Cheema and federal and provincial authorities, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The meeting was given a detailed

Continued on Page 06

PM orders crackdown against hoarders

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has ordered a major crackdown against sugar smuggling, hoarding and profiteering. Chairing a high-level meeting in Lahore on Sunday, the Prime Minister expressed strong resentment over the reports of profiteering and smuggling of essential commodities like sugar. He convened a high-level meeting in Islamabad on Monday to devise a comprehensive country-wide strategy to end the smuggling of sugar and other essential commodities.

Continued on Page 06

Sehr, Iftar Timing

Ramazan 26, 1444

Sehr: 04:06 am
Iftar: 06:44 pm
Fique-Jafria
Sehr: 03:56 am
Iftar: 06:54 pm



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Adviser on Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira in a meeting with Ambassador of Morocco Muhammad Karmoune, at the Moroccan embassy. — DNA

Forces against paramilitary group

Death toll mounts in Sudan as battle rages

The clashes capped months of heightened tensions between the military and its partner-turned-rival, Rapid Support Forces group

NEWS DESK

KHARTOUM: A Sudan doctors' group said Sunday the death toll in fierce fighting between the armed forces and a powerful paramilitary group has risen to 56. The Sudan Doctors' Syndicate said at least 595 people were wounded across Sudan. Sudan's military and a powerful paramilitary force battled fiercely in the capital and other areas, dealing a new blow to hopes for a transition to democracy and raising fears of a wider conflict. The clashes capped months of heightened tensions between the military and its partner-turned-rival, the Rapid Support Forces group. Those tensions had delayed a deal with political

parties to get the country back to its short-lived transition to democracy, which was derailed by an October 2021 military coup. Chaotic scenes unfolded in the capital of Khartoum, where fighters firing from truck-mounted machine guns battled in densely populated neighborhoods. "Fire and explosions are everywhere," said Amal Mohamed, a doctor in a public hospital in Omdurman. "We haven't seen such battles in Khartoum before," said resident Abdel-Hamid Mustafa. By the end of the day, the military issued a statement ruling out negotiations with the RSF, instead calling for the dismantling of what it called a "rebellious militia." The head of the paramilitary group, in turn, branded

the armed forces chief a "criminal." The tough language signaled that the conflict between the former allies, who jointly orchestrated the 2021 coup, was likely to continue. Meanwhile, diplomatic pressure appeared to be mounting. Top diplomats, including the US Secretary of State, the UN secretary-general, the EU foreign policy chief, the head of the Arab League and the head of the African Union Commission urged the sides to stop fighting. Arab states with stakes in Sudan — Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — also called for a cease-fire and for both parties to return to negotiations. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

Continued on Page 06

MURREE SPARKLETT'S
Bottled Drinking Water

WATER TASTES BEST IN GLASS!!

CARBONATED WATER ALSO AVAILABLE IN GLASS BOTTLE

330ml
750ml

For Sales & Supply Contact:

Rizi Abbas 03325599169
Kaiser Waheed 03325808422
Riaz Muhammad 0335 5111043

Inside...

OIC, UN urged to resolve Kashmir, Palestine issues — Page 02

CDA teams to visit markets to address issues of traders — Page 03

President asks FBR to provide hearing to company in refund case — Page 04

Indonesia to Russia via CPEC — Page 05

Ex Olympians want stern measures, proper planning — Page 06

Pak auto dealers to explore new avenues with China — Page 07

Speaker says SC has no right to interfere — Page 08

Jl Karachi demands formation of committee on census

KARACHI: The Jamaat e Islami (JI) has announced to establish a protest camp from April 17 in Karachi outside the Statistics Department office and demand from the federal government to constitute a committee comprising all the stakeholders over census. JI Karachi Amir Hafiz Naemur Rehman said they would hold a big protest march on Shahr-e Faisal on April 30. He said census result in Karachi was not correct. The staff visited one block and filled forms of rest of the blocks themselves, he said adding that Karachi's population was lowered from the census of 2018. He said they did not love the interior Sindh, they only wanted to increase their numbers.—DNA

Elderly woman loses life

DNA

MUZAFFARGARH: Another elderly woman died on Sunday as she was trying to get flour from the Punjab government's free flour point in Muzaffargarh, ARY News reported.

According to police, the incident took place at Khanqar police station in Muzaffargarh, wherein the woman had come to collect free wheat flour. After standing in the queue, she got exhausted and became unconscious due to low blood pressure.

The elderly woman was shifted to nearby hospital for medical treatment where she breathed her last. The doctors claimed she died of heart attack.

In a statement, the police said that the woman's body was handed over to her family. It is pertinent to mention here that the government has established flour distribution centres in several districts to provide the commodity free of cost to people during Ramadan. However, these distribution centres have witnessed mismanagement as long queues line up with people eager to get the essential commodity for free.

Noor Jahan elephant on path to recovery

KARACHI: The Karachi administrator has said the 17-year-old ailing elephant Noor Jahan lying is recovering, ARY News reported on Sunday. A 17-year-old African elephant fell into a pond inside her enclosure, earlier this week. Administrator Karachi Dr Saifur-Rehman said that the staff is adhering to the instructions of the foreign NGO's medical specialists and expressed the hope that Noor Jahan will soon make a full recovery.

Experience veterinary doctors are examining Noor Jahan, who are also in contact with Four Paws. The ailing elephant was lying on the ground, and although she has not yet been able to stand on her feet, she is still moving her limbs, which is a sign of some improvement. It may be noted that a seven-member team of international experts of Four Paws on last Wednesday started the treatment of Noor Jahan at the Karachi Zoo. Their visit follows an order by the Sindh High Court (SHC) in Karachi last year for Four Paws to assess the health of the animals after local animal rights activists.—DNA

OIC, UN urged to resolve Kashmir, Palestine issues

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The leadership of various political and religious parties of Pakistan have expressed their solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian and Kashmiri people and demanded practical measures from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations to resolve the issue of Palestine and Occupied Kashmir immediately.

While addressing "Tazeem-e-Harmain Al-Sharifain Conference" here on Saturday in Lahore, representatives of various political and religious organisations said that the series of Indian and Israeli atrocities in Kashmir and Palestine have increased alarmingly and the Islamic and the world Leadership have to take immediate practical steps to end these atrocities. "Tazeem-e-Harmain Al-Sharifain Conference" held here in Lahore in the chair of Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council, Secretary General International Tazeem-e-Harmain Al-Sharifain Council. Speaking with the conference, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Nauman Hashmi, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Patafi, Maulana As-



adullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid, Allama Tahir Al-Hasan, Maulana Abu Bakar Hamid Sabri, Mufti Umar Farooq, Maulana Mufti Falak Sher, Maulana Anwarul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui, Qari Abdul Hakeem Athar, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Qadri, Qari Shamsul Haq Nawaz, Qari Mubasher Rahimi, Qari Faisal, Maulana Abdul Ghaffar Farooqi, Maulana Muhammad Ibrahim Hanafi and others said that the solution to the problems of the Muslim Ummah and Pa-

kistan lies in unity and stability of the Islamic world. In the holy moments of Ramadan, the leadership of the Islamic world will have to pay attention with practical measures to solve the problem of Kashmir and Palestine.

After the restoration of Saudi Arabia-Iran relations, the Muslim Ummah hopes that all the attention of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation should be shifted towards the solution of the Kashmir and Palestine problems, said clerics speaking with Ta-

zeem-e-Harmain Al-Sharifain Conference.

Appreciating the role and services on part of Saudi leadership in the patronage of Shah Salman bin Abdul Aziz and in the leadership of Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman for pilgrims of Hajj and Umrah, the services of Saudi leadership are laudable.

The clerics said that the way the leadership of Saudi Arabia has facilitated Umrah and pilgrimage for the pilgrims of Harmain Al-Sharifain is commendable and entire Islamic world is quite

satisfied with the services of Saudi Arabia leadership. Likewise, the restoration of Iran-Saudi Arabia relations, the efforts of Saudi Arabia to restore relations between Syria and the Arab countries, and the restoration of Qatar-Bahrain relations and the exchange of prisoners between the government of Yemen and the Houthis are good news for the Muslim Ummah and Tazeem-e-Harmain Al-Sharifain Conference welcomes all these efforts.

Pakistan Ulema Council also congratulated and announced to support Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman for the title of Quaid-e-Salam (Leader of Peace) for the year 2022-2023. Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi speaking with the conference said that the political and religious parties of Pakistan believe that Saudi Arabia and other Arab Islamic countries should take immediate steps to solve the problem of Palestine and Kashmir.

In the context of the current situation in Pakistan, in a resolution adopted in the conference, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, President Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif, Asif Ali Zardari, Imran Khan and other leaders were appealed to start the process of negotiations for the sake of the country and the nation.

The way the Supreme Court and the Parliament have come face to face is not in the interest of the country in any case. The current political, economic and social situation of the country requires that the problems and sufferings should be resolved through negotiations in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan, said speakers of Tazeem-e-Harmain Al-Sharifain Conference.

Through another resolution adopted in the conference, the conference strongly condemned the baseless propaganda campaign against the armed forces.

IGP for best service delivery to citizens

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

Attock: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said urged upon the police officers and officials to achieve the best career growth as well as the success of this world by fulfilling their official commitments. This was told by the Director Public Relations of Punjab Police in his press released here on Sunday. IG Punjab said that the young police officers have to play a commanding role during the field duty in the future, so the young officers who are part of the police force should make the best service delivery to the citizens with their competence, professionalism and passion for service as their primary goal. Dr.

Usman Anwar said to prioritize difficult postings at the beginning of career so that you can better cope with future challenges. Dr. Usman Anwar instructed to maintain close contact with the subordinate staff and get the best performance from them as a successful commander. He said that the future is IT-based policing and you should also align yourself with modern policing skills and information technology. IG Punjab said that policing is a challenging career in which the responsibility of serving and protecting citizens will fall on you, so do not spare any effort for justice to widows, elderly and poor and helpless citizens. He expressed these views while meeting 14 ASPs in the 50th Common

at the Central Police Office today. According to details, 14 ASPs belonging to 50th Common have joined Punjab Police and will complete training at National Police Academy. IG Punjab directed the young officers who are part of the police force to complete their training with full attention. The young officers reiterated their commitment to public service delivery and eradication of crime as per the vision of IG Punjab. DIG Headquarters Humayun Bashir Tarar and other officers were also present on this occasion. Moreover, on the instructions of IG Punjab, a training workshop was organized in Police Training College Chung Lahore to increase the efficiency of investigation officers of Punjab Police

in which 50 focal persons and investigation officers from all districts of the province participated. Senior officers of Investigation Branch Punjab trained the participants in completing the documentation of red notices of absconding proclaimed offenders abroad. During the workshop, the instructors gave full awareness about the procedures for preparing and issuing Passport Control List, Exit Control List and Red Notice. Investigating officers and focal persons received practical training on arrest and extradition of criminals on international level. Senior officers gave lectures on issuance of red notices, blue notices, green notices and other notices of criminal cases and file preparation for deportation.

Political wrangling over election of new AJK pm

MUZAFFARABAD: After disqualification of Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Tanvir Ilyas, election of the new prime minister has caused headache for the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The Forward Block in the party has claimed to have reached to a deal with the opposition for election of the new prime minister. Barrister Sultan Mahmood Group has named Chaudhry Akhlag and Chaudhry Rasheed as its candidates for the coveted office of the AJK PM. In case of an alliance between the opposition and Sultan Mahmood group, their count in the legislative assembly will reach to 26, while 27 votes required for election of the prime minister in the legislature, which have 52 members strength. Thus, the solitary vote of Muslim Conference's Sardar Ateeq Ahmed, a former prime minister of the region, has got strategic importance. Barrister Sultan's group, which is comprised of six legislators, could play the kingmaker's role. Their support could guide a candidate to the office of the prime minister. Meanwhile, Chaudhry Yaseen, Chaudhry Latif and Faisal Mumtaz from the opposition benches have also entered in the race for the PM office. Under Article 17 of the Assembly rules clause 16, the prime minister should be elected immediately in the session of the legislature. The leader of the house could not be elected owing to adjournment of the legislative session for two days continuously. The house likely to elect its leader in a session of the Azad Kashmir Assembly, summoned today.

It is to be mentioned here that the Azad Kashmir High Court, had disqualified Tanvir Ilyas as the AJK PM in a contempt of court hearing on April 11.



CHITRAL: EU ambassador to Pakistan, Riina Kionka visit Trout Fish Farm in Garamchashma, Chitral during her recent visit to GB and Northern areas. With EU's support farm is contributing to the rainbow trout harvesting industry in the region.—DNA

Plantation beautifies surroundings and environment

He invited to participants, let us all work together to make our schools villages and the country greener, more sustainable a better place for all living beings

STAFF REPORT

ARIFWALA: Today, a spring tree planting ceremony was held in Government Elementary School 71 EB Arifwala under the chairmanship of Headmaster Mr. Umar Hayat Chaudhary, in which parents and other local dignitaries participated. Addressing to the ceremony, Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer said Today marks an important milestone in our journey towards a greener and cleaner country. As we gather here today to plant trees, we must remind ourselves of the significance of this act and its impact on our environment.

Trees are the lungs of our planet, and we need them now more than ever. They absorb carbon dioxide, release

oxygen, and help regulate the temperature and climate. They also prevent soil erosion, provide habitat for wildlife, and contribute to the overall beauty of our surroundings. By planting trees, we are not only benefiting ourselves but

also ensuring a better future for generations to come. He emphasized that it is our responsibility to take care of our country village and school and do our part to protect and beautify them. We must recognize the importance of trees

and make it a habit to plant them whenever and wherever we can. It is not only a way to give back to the environment, but also a way to connect with nature and appreciate its beauty. Today, we are not just planting trees, but we are also sowing the seeds of hope, inspiration, and change. We are making a commitment to the environment and to ourselves to be more mindful of our actions and their impact on our planet. Let us take this opportunity to pledge our support to this cause and promise to make it a priority in our lives.

He furthermore stated that planting trees in our schools can also be an opportunity for community engagement. Students, teachers, parents, and community members can come together to plant trees, fostering a sense of shared responsibility

and commitment to our environment. This can also serve as a way to teach our students the value of teamwork and community involvement. Planting trees in our schools is a vital step towards creating a sustainable environment and promoting the wellbeing of our students. It provides an opportunity to teach our students about the importance of being environmentally responsible, as well as creating a peaceful and healthy environment for them to learn in. He invited to participants, let us all work together to make our schools villages and the country greener, more sustainable a better place for all living beings. In the last, Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer also appreciated to school administration and staff that they organized a wonderful and meaningful activity.



The Smooth Moving Connection

freeline MOVERS

PACKING, SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING







Our Services

- Packing
- Shipping
- Freight Forwarding
- Land, Sea & Air Freight
- Custom Clearance
- Relocations
- Office Removals
- Fine Art Handling
- Project Management
- Pet Relocation
- Warehousing
- Storage

Head Office
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel: (+92-51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822711, 2874289 - Fax: (+92-51) 2825152, 2274227.
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Branch Offices:

<p>Karachi Floor No. 14 & 15, 3rd Floor, Nazimabad, Main Nazimabad, 75th Block-2, P.E.C.H.S. Karachi. Tel: (+92-21) 3430333, 3431079. Fax: (+92-21) 3431147. E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com</p>	<p>Lahore F-4, Gulberg Green, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92-42) 3578988, 3579100. Fax: (+92-42) 3571422. E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com</p>	<p>Peshawar Office No. C-2, 2nd Floor, Zia Park, East Ameer, Ring Road, Peshawar. Tel: (+92-91) 2502779. Fax: (+92-91) 2502798. E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com</p>	<p>Kabul House # 4, Street # 4, Charikot Area Road, Shiva Park, Kabul, Afghanistan. Tel: +93 798611173, 83 797985 838, 83 797986 838. E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com</p>
--	---	--	---

National Days and Armed Forces Days

APRIL

- April 04/Senegal
National Day
- April 07/W. H. O.
World Health Day
- April 12/Somalia
Armed Forces Day
- April 15/DPR Korea
The Day of the Sun
- April 16/Denmark
National Day
- April 17/Iran
Army Day
- April 17/Syria
Independence Day
- April 18/Zimbabwe
Independence Day
- April 24/Holy See
Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate
- April 25/DPR Korea
Armed Forces Day
- April 26/Tanzania
National Day
- April 27/Sierra Leone
Independence Day
- April 27/South Africa
Freedom Day
- April 30/Sweden
Birthday of His Majesty
- April 30/Netherlands
Birthday of Queen



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

- Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

- Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations
Islamabad.....9225596
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

CDA teams to visit markets to address issues of traders

Zafar Bakhtawari & Mohammad Ijaz Abbasi former Presidents ICCI and Khalid Chaudhry former SVP also highlighted the various issues of the markets and emphasized the need for their early solution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation, met with CDA Member Finance Syed Mazhar Hussain Shah and briefed him in detail about the need for development works in the markets. Member Engineering Syed Munawar Shah and Treasury Head Mian Tariq Latif were also present on the occasion.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the sewage system in the markets is very old, which no longer has enough capacity to work according to the needs of the current population. Resultantly, the sewage lines are leaking from many places and the gutters are overflowing in markets that spread bad smells in the area. He stressed that in the first phase, CDA should lay new sewerage lines in Blue Area, G-9 Markaz and F-7 Markaz and then gradually replace the old sewerage system with new ones in other markets and the city. He said that many development works



are required in markets including carpeting of roads, repair of footpaths, construction of parking and restoration of street lights. He urged that CDA should form teams comprising directors of all CDA departments to visit the markets every week along with the representatives of ICCI and concerned Market Association to see issues and start development works. He said that the car showrooms also

need to be shifted to a separate place to reduce the rush from the markets. He suggested that until a permanent place is arranged for the car showrooms, the CDA should shift the car showrooms to non-auctioned plots on lease for at least three years, which will reduce parking issues in markets. Addressing the delegation, CDA Member Finance Syed Mazhar Hussain Shah assured that after

Eid, the directors of all departments of CDA in collaboration with ICCI and concerned Market Association will conduct weekly visits to markets to identify issues and address them. He said that markets in Islamabad need upgradation which includes painting the buildings and other developmental works, so the CDA in coordination with ICCI and the Market Associations

will make efforts to solve the problem of sewage system start required development works. He said that the business community is playing an important role in the development of the economy and CDA will take all possible steps to address their problems. He said that the proposal to shift the car showrooms to a separate place would be given due consideration. He expressed his resolve that CDA will play its role in developing Islamabad as a modern city. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, said that Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan, so it needs to be developed as a role model city. He said that ICCI and Market Associations can support CDA for the better development of Islamabad, so CDA should take them on board regarding development works in markets. Zafar Bakhtawari & Mohammad Ijaz Abbasi former Presidents ICCI and Khalid Chaudhry former SVP also highlighted the various issues of the markets and emphasized the need for their early solution.

Pakistan Railways to run five special trains

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has announced the operation of five special trains to facilitate the travel needs of the public during the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr holidays. These trains will operate from Karachi to Lahore and Karachi and Peshawar to various locations across the country, providing a comfortable and convenient mode of transportation for passengers. The schedule for these trains was recently released by the railway department. The first of these special trains will leave Karachi for Peshawar Cantt on April 18, while the second will depart from Quetta to Rawalpindi on the same day. On April 19, the third special train will run from Karachi to Lahore, providing a convenient and affordable option for those travelling between the two cities. The fourth train will be from Rawalpindi to Quetta on April 26, offering a comfortable journey for those who need to travel between these two cities during the Eid holidays. Finally, the fifth and last special train will run from Lahore to Karachi on April 27, enabling passengers to travel from Lahore to Karachi with ease and comfort.

CDA set to develop several new parks

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is all set to develop several new modern parks in Islamabad to provide better recreational facilities to the residents. The civic authority has already developed around 37 public parks in the federal capital during the last ten years and is working on a policy to increase their number in the coming years. "We need three to four months to develop a new park after completion of the codal formalities," official sources in the CDA told APP. At present, they said the federal capital had six amusement parks, which were considered sufficient to cater to the recreational needs of Islamabad residents. "But the policy has been made that whenever a new sector will be developed, an amusement park will be constructed along," they added. The sources said that the CDA was developing several new sectors, including I-11, I-12, I-14, I-15, I-16, D-12, and Park Enclave, adding that Model Villages and parks were also being developed in those areas. "As and when these areas are developed and completed, the new parks will be there to meet the demand and requirement of the general public as per CDA approved layout plan," they added.—APP

Mushaal depllores world's silence over IIOJK issue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick Chairperson Peace and Culture Organization depllored the world powers and UN bodies' silence over the unabated and continued fascism and brutalities unleashed by the notorious Narendra Modi-led Indian government Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Mushaal, the wife of jailed Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, in a statement on Saturday said that the world showed unity and joined hands against Russia for its

invasion against Ukraine but observed criminal silence over Indian fascist government inhuman policies in the occupied valley. She said that notorious regime usurped all basic rights including right to life of the people in the scenic valley but ironically the international community and so-called human right organisations were watching the situation as a silent spectator. The chairperson condemned the lethargic and unconcerned attitude towards Kashmir region which was turned into a largest open prison in the world and biggest tortured

cell in the world. She recalled the senior Hurriyat leaders including her husband incarcerated in fake and fabricated and politically motivated cases to defuse intensity of the freedom movement; however, all such brutal tactics proved otherwise. The Chairperson stated that India was violating and trampling international laws and agreements by depriving the Kashmiris of their fundamental rights, as the occupied forces turned the valley into a living hell for its inhabitants. She went on to say that the Indian troops were committing the killings, arrests,

torture, destruction of properties, molestation of women and other heinous crimes in the garb of so-called cordon and search operations with impunity. She said that Modi regime's August 5, 2019 illegal and unilateral actions can't change the internationally recognized status of Kashmir and the Kashmiri people would not rest until liberate the occupied valley from the illegal and unlawful occupation of the Indian forces. Mushaal urged world to wake up of the sweep slumber and resolve the issue of Kashmir as per with wishes and aspirations of the people of the valley.

Scholarships for non-Muslim regular students by May 12

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab government has asked the deservng non-Muslim regular students, studying in government institutes within the province, to submit their merit based scholarship applications by May 12, 2023. An official told APP on Sunday that, only minority students with exceptional educational records, whose monthly family income does not exceed Rs. 38,375, will be eligible for the scholarship program for the financial year 2022-23. Interested applicants from matric to PhD levels who hold a Punjab domicile are eligible for the scholarship. Applications must be submitted to the Department of Human Rights and Minority Affairs at 24-C-II, Gilberg-III, Lahore. The eligibility criteria for the scholarship program includes regular students of Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, and other minority communities, who have achieved a minimum of 40 percent marks in their most recent annual examination. Minority students enrolled in professional-level programs such as MBBS, DVM, BDS, BSc (English), BSc (Nursing), Pharm-D, PhD, or equivalent are eligible for an annual scholarship of Rs 50,000. Postgraduate students pursuing MA, MSc, M.Com, MCS/ MBA, M Phil, LLM, or equivalent programs will receive Rs 35,000 per annum, while undergraduate students pursuing BA, BSc, BBA, B com or equivalent programs will receive Rs 30,000 per annum. Additionally, students pursuing intermediate-level programs such as FA, FSc, I.Com, A Level, DAE, or equivalent programs will receive Rs 20,000 per annum, while matric-level students will receive Rs 15,000 per annum. The initiative aims to empower regular students studying in government institutes within Punjab, including those run by the federal government in Punjab, to achieve their academic goals and contribute positively to society. Students studying in federal government institutes located outside Punjab are not eligible to apply for the scholarship program. Additionally, students receiving distance or virtual education are also not eligible to apply. It is important to note that applications received through post or any other means after the due date will be rejected. Similarly, incomplete applications will also be rejected. The Department of Human Rights and Minority Affairs reserves the right to cancel a student's scholarship if it is found that they submitted fake or concocted documents, or provided false information about their qualifications or income. The applicants must provide attested copies of their domicile, passport-size photos, Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC) of themselves and their father/guardian, educational certificates, and result cards/equivalent attested by a Grade 17 or above officer. In the case of the semester system, the candidates should submit an attested certificate from the Controller of Examination and the head of the institute.—APP

BISP reaches over 287,180 children and 266060 PLW

ISLAMABAD: The benefits of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) have so far reached to over 287,180 children and 266060 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) under the Benazir Noshonuma initiative. According to an official source, these beneficiaries had been served through the network of over 470 Noshonuma Centers across the country. The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) intervention of Benazir Noshonuma was designed in August 2020 to increase the uptake of Health and Nutrition services of its

beneficiaries. The primary objectives of the program were to prevent stunting in children under two years of age, improve weight gain of pregnant women during pregnancy, reduce anemia and micronutrient deficiencies and prevent low birth weight. World Food Programme (WFP) is the lead implementing partner for Ehsaas Noshonuma. The programme aims to address stunting among pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and their children less than two years of age through the provision of additional

cash of Rs. 2,000 per quarter per PLW and boy child and PKR 2,500/- per quarter per girl child of BISP beneficiary families. In return, mothers must commit to attending regular antenatal health checks and awareness sessions during pregnancy, consuming specialized nutritious food (SNF), and taking their children for immunization and regular health checks. According to the statistics, Pakistan's high rates of malnutrition (40.2 percent stunting, 28.9 percent underweight, and 17.7 percent wasting) are indica-

tive of an ongoing child nutrition crisis. Levels of malnutrition rank Pakistan as the second-highest burden country in the region. The first 1,000 days of a child's life are a window of opportunity to lay a strong foundation for later achievements. This timeframe is a period of enormous change characterized by a high degree of plasticity in the child's neurological development. Investments in the early years of life are the foundation of human capital, and human capital is a key driver of economic development in the modern economy.—APP

Trade and industry cannot afford long Eid holidays

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) on Sunday, while rejecting the government's notification of almost week-long holidays for Eid, appealed the authorities to withdraw the decision, as the nation cannot afford this luxury amidst poor economic growth and serious financial crisis in the country. He observed that the national economy is already in distress and can ill afford such a luxury. The PIAF Chairman Faheem ur Rehman Saigol, expressing grave concern over the long period of holidays on Eid, said that the government has made it a precedent to declare long holidays to please the government employees, who already do not have tendency to work seriously. He said that in the view of the present economic condition of the country, the decision should be reviewed, adopting a pragmatic approach which suits the national interest. He urged upon the policymakers to refrain from allowing such a long spell of holidays, which the nation cannot afford both economically and socially. Due to long holidays' spell during Eidul Fitr together with weekly holidays, the country will remain cut off from the rest of the world for almost one week having halted all kinds of trade and exports with foreign countries. He regretted that due to these long and unnecessary holidays the country has had to bear an irreparable monetary loss. Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said that the country would remain disconnected with the world for almost a week, and it will cost the economy of billions. He said that long closure of banks would lead to delays in the opening of LCs and making payments. The impact of banking sector shutdown would also create problems for not only the trade and industry but also for the common man. The ATM system is not efficient and it might aggravate the liquidity problem, he said.—DNA

APRIL 2023

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pk
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



Briefs

Increase in petrol price is condemnable.
Ajmal Baloch

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ajmal Baloch President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran and Traders Action Committee Islamabad, Secretary General Yasin Mengal, Secretary and Convener Traders Committee ICCI Khalid Chaudhry - General Secretary of Abpara Market Akhtar Abbasi, President of Sitara Market Syed Altaf Hussain Shah, President of Melody Azhar Iqbal - President of G-11 Markaz Chaudhry Aftab Gujjar - President Jinnah Super Market Asad Aziz - President G-10/4 Chaudhry Zafar Gujjar. Waleed Khalid, General Secretary I-9 Markaz. And President of Steel Market Irfan Chaudhry rejected the cruel increase in the price of petroleum products on the occasion of Eid last night, condemning the act and demanded that the government withdraw this increase immediately. Because if the government cannot provide any facility, then it also has no authority to kill the happiness of the people. Fares for transport for other cities have already increased on the occasion of Eid and now it will increase further intolerable. They further said that the price of oil is decreasing in the world market and the value of the dollar is also decreasing, at least the government would think about the happiness of the people on Eid. They said that Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar came as Tarzan and now he is doing drone attacks. And the efficiency is zero while they have completely failed. He demanded that the cruel increase in the price of petrol should be withdrawn immediately.

Float of police with SMD screen educates road users

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic) has introduced special measures to ensure discipline on roads and made traffic float more attractive by installing SMD screen on it for creating awareness about traffic rules among road users. The special education campaign has been launched following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and staff of traffic police is disseminating information about traffic laws. Traffic Police float having SMD screen is delivering messages to the road users and special announcements about road safety tips are being made at important boulevards, chowks, commercial centres and main avenues of the city. During last 24 hours, the citizens at sectors G-7, G-9, G-10, F-7 and F-10 were educated about traffic rules. Chief Traffic Officer Syed Mustafa Tanveer said that national songs are played on SMD screens of float while trained and experienced staff of ITP disseminates messages related to road safety on it. It is to mention that citizens were provided awareness about traffic rules related to bike riding, pedestrians' rights, driving on roundabout, use of seat belts and risks of amateur driving as well as using fancy and non-pattern number plates and use of mobile phones during drive. Chief Traffic Officer said the purpose of this campaign was to ensure better traffic discipline through cooperation of citizens and create traffic sense among them. Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic) is striving hard for safety of citizens and to overcome the traffic accidents by ensuring safe road environment in the city. Special campaign is being run to educate citizens who are appealed to cooperate with traffic police in its efforts for disciplinary traffic system, Chief Traffic Officer maintained. This initiative of the Islamabad Capital Police is being appreciated by the citizens and it has been appealed to cooperate with traffic police by obeying rules to protect themselves and others from accidents.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Farmers use a threshing machine to refine wheat during harvesting in a field at Golra area in Federal Capital.— Online

President asks FBR to provide hearing to company in refund case

The President in his decision pointed out that as per a Supreme Court's judgment (PLD 1998 SC 64), a genuine refund could not be refused

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the decision of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) directing FBR to dispose of the refund application of a private food company after providing it with the opportunity of hearing as per law on a matter where the company had filed refund claims after a delay of 5 to 8 years. The President gave this decision while rejecting FBR's representation against the decision of FTO in a case where a private food company had requested the Large Taxpayers Office (LTO), Karachi in 2020 for condonation in delay under the Sales Tax Act, 1990 for filing refund claims relating to

the period of 2012 to 2016 as the Sales Tax amount of Rs.88.5 million was not claimed/adjusted in their previous Sales Tax Returns due to some technical issues at the company. FTO had directed FBR to provide a hearing opportunity to the company on the matter. The President in his decision pointed out that as per a Supreme Court's judgment (PLD 1998 SC 64), a genuine refund could not be refused, even if refund applications were filed late. He added that the fundamental rights as enshrined in Article 24 (1) of the Constitution postulate that no person shall be compulsorily deprived of his property save in accordance with Law. He stated that the principle evolved and

approved by Judicial pronouncements was that it was the duty of the State to return what had been taken erroneously or wrongly; and that a democratic Government could not take a plea of limitation to deny what was due to a citizen. The President referred to the Supreme Court's decision (PLD 1998 SC 64) in M/s Pfizer Laboratories Ltd. Vs Federation of Pakistan case that held that if one party under a mistake, whether of fact or law, paid some money to another party (which included a Government department) which was not due by law or contract or otherwise, that must be repaid in view of Section 72 of the Contract Act, 1872. It added that where some money was received by the Government not lawfully

due, the plea of limitation by its departments was one which the Court always looked upon with disfavour as it was violative of the principles of morality and justice. It further stated that there may not be a legal liability on the part of a Government functionary to refund any amount received by it as a tax or other levy by virtue of certain special provisions under the special law but keeping in view that we lived in a democratic society governed by the rule of law and every Government, which claimed to have ethical and moral values, must do what was fair and just to the citizens regardless of legal technicalities. The President reiterated that as per Indo-Pak laws the fact

that the amount of tax of which the refund was claimed was voluntarily paid, did not preclude the right to claim the refund if it was not lawfully payable. He also pointed out that the Commissioners of two different Zones in the company's matters of identical nature [M/s Zakariya Traders (M/s Unilever Distributors) and M/s Unilever Pakistan Foods Ltd (UPFL)] had passed orders contrary to each other i.e., in the former case, the delay was condoned whereas in the latter it was rejected. "Such contrary approach in identical matters raises suspicions which as far as possible must be avoided", he stated and rejected FBR's representation.

Anti-encroachment drive to be intensified

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Li-aquat Ali Chatta has said that the Anti-Encroachment drive continued in the Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi areas would be intensified in eight more markets of the city after Eid. Talking to media persons, the Commissioner said that immediate steps were being taken to boost business activities in the prevailing economic situation in the country. He said that NOCs of stalled petrol pumps, plazas, and housing societies would be issued in two weeks while regular desks for issuance of NOCs had been established in Deputy Commissioner and MCR office. Chatta said that during the ongoing anti-encroachment drive around eight city markets had been cleared from the encroachers while the remaining bazaars would be made free of encroachments in collaboration with the business community after Eid. Meanwhile, the trade bodies of the city have demanded the district administration to increase security around all market areas. President Markazi Anjuman-e-Tajiran Sharjil Mir talking to APP, said that as Eid shopping had reached its peak the security arrangements made in shopping areas needed to be improved compared to the rush of visitors. He said the presence of the large number of beggars who sought alms but were involved in criminal activities like pick-pocketing and snatching different items from the people visiting markets. President Commercial Market Raja Tauheed also asked the concerned to beef up the security of city markets, especially during the evening hours.

Pakistan inching close to IMF agreement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Sunday said the agreement with the IMF is likely to be restored in a few days, which will reduce the country's problems and help restore the confidence of the business community. A twenty-fourth agreement with the IMF is needed immediately after the restoration of the current agreement because it is impossible to repay old debts without new debts, he said. Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as President ICCI and Chairman PVMA said in a statement issued

here today said that the current IMF program will end in June, but Pakistan will need at least \$36 billion in 2023-24 to pay loans. Managing 36 billion dollars without the IMF umbrella will be impossible to obtain, he said, adding that Pakistan's current account deficit will be at least ten billion dollars, which will also be a challenge. The business leader said that the ninth review of the IMF was to be held in September 2022, but the conditions of this institution were not followed, and the reforms were not implemented. The ninth review has been stalled for more than six months due to neglect, and the

country is getting closer to default every day. He said Pakistan needs at least \$73 billion in the next three years to clear the debt and if the current account deficit remains at twenty billion dollars in three years, it will reach 93 billion dollars. It will be very difficult for Pakistan to repay loans unless debt restructuring and re-profiling is ensured, he observed. Atif Ikram Sheikh said that currently the level of Pakistan's debt is considered unsustainable by almost all the stakeholders given that the size of the economy which has contracted and growth is likely to be minimal.

ANF recovers over 195 kg drugs; arrests five

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in five operations managed to recover over 195 kg drugs, 1840 intoxicated tablets and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that in two operations at Rawalpindi International Mail Office, ANF recovered 1840 intoxicated tablets from two parcels being sent to London. In an operation at Bacha Khan International Airport, 83 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Dubai-bound passenger resident of Khyber. In another operation conducted in Khyber area, ANF and FC recovered 27 kg charras concealed in plastic bags. In fifth operation, ANF conducted a raid near Hub Winder RCD Highway and foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Quetta to Karachi. 168 kg charras was recovered during the operation from secret cavities of a bus while four accused residents of Quetta were also sent behind the bars. He said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

Jump in oil rates unfair ahead of Eid

ISLAMABAD: The Businessmen Panel (BMP) of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on Sunday said that the sharp rise in oil prices before Eidul Fitr is unjustified, calling it totally destructive and dangerous for the trade and industry, which was already stuck in the quagmire of hyperinflation and facing exceptionally high cost of production. FPCCI's Businessmen Panel (BMP) chairman Mian Anjum Nisar, who is also the former president of the FPCCI, observed that the businessmen totally reject further jump in petroleum products' rates for the second fortnight in-a-row ahead of Eid, which is likely to be celebrated at the end of this week, stating the move would further hinder economic activities, as the massive hike in prices of petroleum products and electricity tariff has already jolted the trade and industry amidst record high inflation. It is unfortunate that the government has again jacked up the prices of petrol and kerosene oil by Rs10 per litre and Rs5.78 per litre with effect from April 16, 2023, in a fortnightly review of petroleum prices.—DNA

Chinese seed company starts trial of gene

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Chinese seed company has started trial of single and triple gene Chinese Bt cotton varieties at the farms of Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) Multan,

according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Saturday. It aimed at assessing how these high yielding, long staple and disease resistant varieties respond to the Pakistani soil and climatic conditions. Cooperation between Pakistani and Chinese agriculture scientists

would benefit Pakistani cotton economy in a big way, said CCRI Multan Director Dr Zhid Mahmood in a statement. Earlier, Dr Zahid Mahmood, accompanied by other scientists witnessed the seed trial of Chinese seed company Jinhua along with company representative Mr. Li.

Pak-China collaboration helps Pakistan combat water woes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pak-China collaboration could help Pakistan combat water woes. "Pakistan is among the top ten most vulnerable countries to climate change. One of the consequences of climate change is water scarcity. China-Pakistan water cooperation can help Pakistan cope with climate change and its derived disasters by managing water sources through the application of technical means", said Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Chairman of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCR-



WR) according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) said last month that more than 10 million people, including children, still lack access to safe drinking water after the

catastrophic flood in 2022. Flooding, the worst in 30 years, is threatening even the soil and vast groundwater reserves. Pakistan has a chronic water shortage problem, which has been exacerbated by the floods.

Since the floods began, the China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community has been providing food, temporary shelters, and drinking water stations in the worst-affected areas. In the flood-ravaged Dadu district, where many families have been displaced, the community has constructed 260 tent villages and is constructing a purified water station, which will provide clean water to nearly 10,000 people across eight villages. Ma Bin, head of the community, said improving water management and infrastructure requires a lot of money.

DINO VALLEY

10 minutes Drive from The Monal Islamabad

Pakistan's First Ever Dinosaur Themed Park

17 KM, Pir Sohawa Road, Haripur, KP. ☎ 03005221018 / 03455357094 ☎ 03001769377

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 218

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

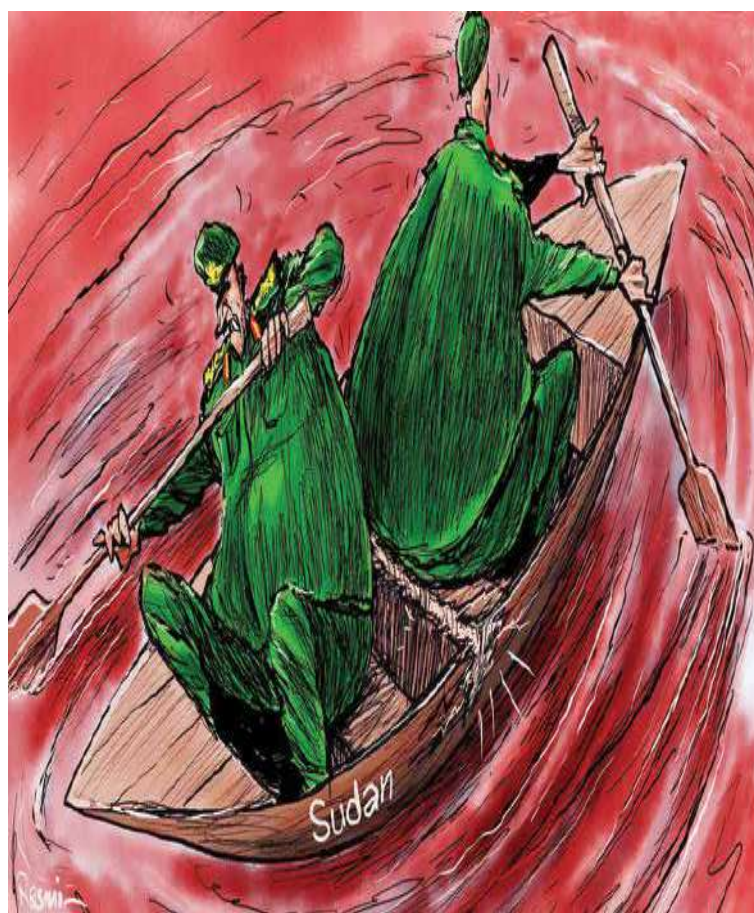
Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

North Korea's latest round missile tests

North Korea's scary test launch of a newly developed, solid-fuel, nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile caused a brief panic on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido last week. It also added a note of urgency to today's meeting of G7 foreign ministers in Japan's hot-spring resort of Karuizawa, where the Pyongyang regime's escalating threats will be high on the agenda. Even so, the key to the North Korea conundrum may lie hundreds of miles away, in Beijing.

Two questions will dominate G7 deliberations. Why is Kim Jong-un, North Korea's dictator, deliberately ratcheting up tensions with South Korea, Japan and the US, their ultimate protector? And what can the allies do in response? Hailing the launch, the latest in more than 100 tests since last year, Kim gave an insight into his paranoid thinking. North Korea repeatedly condemns joint US and South Korean military exercises, which it depicts as preparation for invasion. Inter-Korean dialogue has broken down since the election last year of South Korea's conservative president, Yoon Suk-yeol. A bungled attempt at rapprochement by former US president Donald Trump came to nothing. Whether Kim feels genuinely threatened – North and South Korea are still technically in a state of war – or is exploiting fear of attack to better control North Korea's people is a moot point. Yet he has many other reasons to feel insecure. His brutal regime, founded in 1948 by his grandfather, Kim Il-sung, lacks legitimacy at home and is isolated abroad. Punitive UN sanctions have stunted development. Desperation to have them lifted may be driving Kim's aggressive actions. Recent reports that North Korea is again facing famine conditions point to hidden weakness. In January, the US-based monitoring project, 38 North, said food insecurity was at its worst since the Arduous March famines in the 1990s, which killed an estimated one million people. It is also unclear how badly the country has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, though the toll is probably far worse than officially admitted. While such matters are shrouded in secrecy, it is also suggested that Kim, whose health is often questioned, is grappling with an in-house succession crisis. Speculation surrounds the recent public appearances of his previously unseen daughter, Kim Ju-ae, who is thought to be about 10. How her suddenly elevated status sits with her auntie, Kim's high-flying, tough-talking younger sister, Kim Yo-jong, is anyone's guess. To his other problems, it seems, beleaguered Kim must add trouble at home.

President Xi Jinping wants to place China at the helm of a new world order. He recently brokered a "peace deal" between long-time foes, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Yet here is another entrenched problem, much closer to home. If Xi is serious about global leadership, he should demonstrate it by ending the standoff on the Korean peninsula.



US hijacks world with Ukraine dragnet

It seems that it has become a compulsive habit for the Joe Biden administration to say one thing while doing another.

A group of senior officials from the US Department of Commerce visited Beijing and Shanghai last week as part of an effort to lay the groundwork for a potential trip to China by Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo later this year. But even as they were doing so, the Department of Commerce imposed export controls on 12 Chinese companies on Wednesday, along with a dozen of entities from some other countries, for their alleged support of Russia's military and defense industries. In February, when US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was preparing for his scheduled trip to China, which was unilaterally canceled by Washington on the pretext of the so-called Chinese spy balloon that it allowed to be hyped up to an insane level by the China hawks, the US also sanctioned five Chinese companies citing the same reason, without providing any substantial evidence. The US' moves, as the Chinese side responded on both occasions, are "outright bullying". Its sanctions on Russia "have no basis in international law and are not authorized by the United Nations Security Council". They are a form of "long-arm jurisdiction" that "seriously damages the legitimate rights and interests of enterprises and affects the security and stability of the global supply chain". The US has blacklisted more than 400 entities from other countries for their alleged connections with Russia over the past year, a convenient justification for it to hobble the competitors of US companies in key sectors.

The Biden administration's double standard is self-evident in the harsh sanctions it imposes on those it thinks support Moscow, and its own intense efforts to provide Kyiv with support.

It has always been part of the US geopolitical strategy to snare China in its Ukraine dragnet. In upholding so-called US values and interests the Biden administration is trying to force a square peg into a round hole. Rather than its stated endeavor of "advancing a world that is peaceful, secure, stable, and with more opportunity", the administration has given free rein to warmongers, China hawks and selfish politicians to hijack its agenda at home and abroad to such a degree that its diplomacy is nothing more than a pacifier for the domestic dogfight. What the US is trying to do is to sever the connections between major countries that have been formed in economic globalization. However, Washington will only find itself cornered at last by its own weaponizing of trade and technology, as well as its own attempts to divide the world according to its own values, as it is acting against the trend of the times and counter to aspirations of people around the world for peace and stability.

Indonesia to Russia via CPEC

Dr M Ali Hamza



It is important to know that out of 7.888 billion human beings, 5.74 billion people live in the eastern world. This makes 72.85% of the world population. To clarify: In geography, the Eastern hemisphere is usually considered to be formed by all of Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and the islands of the Pacific that are west of the International Date

Changes in population size impacts the consumer market potential. Population forecast assist us to stay in tune with the expected patterns of change, which is the key to strategize, adapt and succeed in the longer term. Therefore, monitoring demographic trends is an essential part of global business strategy for any country offering any sort of goods or services. To put it simply, rise in population triggers the increase in demand, that leads to a bulge in scale of production and pushes toward diversification of production patterns to meet the demand.

On one hand the swelling in amount of global population appears challenging, but on the other it has all attributes of a positive contributor toward economy. More hands more production, more consumption, and ultimately more economic turnover. The western industrialization took all its advantages due to huge eastern population. Yes, channeling the use of population for national development is a must. So did China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Russia, and India do. Therefore, the economies of these countries showed up well, even being among the top ten populous countries in the world.

It is important to know that out of 7.888 billion human beings, 5.74 billion people live in the eastern world. This makes 72.85% of the world population. To clarify: In geography, the Eastern hemisphere is usually considered to be formed by all of Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and the islands of the Pacific that are west of the International Date Line. However, in history, politics and economics, Europe, Australia and New Zealand is often grouped with America because of their cultural similarities, and collectively they are referred to as the Western World. Anyways, out of 5.74 billion, 4.24 billion: (73%) of eastern population lives in only few countries that exist between Indonesia and Russia like Malaysia, Philippine, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.

Besides population, the geographical landscape between Indonesia and Russia is hyper rich in natural resources, crops and livestock. For instance, more than 45% of world's total wheat production happens only in four countries of the Asia; China, Russia, Pakistan & India. Indonesia is one of the world's main suppliers of rubber, coffee, cocoa, and palm oil. China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Iran are among

top countries with the most natural resources. Afghanistan & Pakistan are rich in minerals. China, India, Russia, and Indonesia are the countries with most productive mining economies. Moreover, the central, south and south east Asian countries are almost self-sufficient in technology. China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, and India are top technology exporters.

This all says that we are more than sufficient for each other, thus require a sense of harmony and structure of connectivity to easily transport our goods and services to each other. CPEC is a well long-sighted connecting route between all the countries from Indonesia to Russia. And that makes it a game changer. Does CPEC really offers higher financial gains and involvement of lesser intermediaries in transportation of goods? To understand we need to re-visit some statistics.

According to a 2021 data, Russia imports Palm & Coconut Oil and Rubber from Indonesia (worth \$1.79 B), and Indonesia imports Potassic Fertilizers, Coal Briquettes and Semi-Finished Iron (worth \$1 B). Besides lots of goods, Russia mainly imports rubber, electronic equipment, medical apparatus and boilers from Malaysia that worth around \$1.8 billion, and in return exported plenty of goods to Malaysia like mineral fuels, oil, distillation products, and fertilizers worth \$1.19 billion. Data of the same year reveals that South Korea exported \$10.4B to Russia. The main products were Cars, Motor vehicles; parts and accessories and Iron Structures. South Korea imported crude oil, mineral fuels, distillation products, steel and lot more that worth \$13.22 billion from Russia. Moreover, other countries of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) like Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, and Singapore total import from Russia is approximately \$5.6 billion and Russian import from these countries is around \$2.5 billion in 2021. The trading route of these all transactions is primarily Indian ocean to Red sea, and via Suez canal to Mediterranean sea, turns to Black sea and then the railways or road path. This route is long, expensive and full of many intermediaries. So, what is better option than CPEC that cuts down tremendously the cost of logistics, and taking permission from many countries, thus saves time.

For the sake of an argument; in 2021, China exported \$5.48B to Sri Lanka. The main products that China export-

ed to Sri Lanka are Broadcasting Equipment, Light Rubberized Knitted Fabric, and Vaccines, blood, antisera, toxins and cultures. Indonesia exported goods of around \$54.5 B worth to China and in return Indonesia imported Broadcasting Equipment, Vaccines and Computers worth \$60.4 B from China in the same year. Malaysia's import from China was \$55.27 billion and exported products of \$47.9 billion worth, in 2021. As China is shifting its major industry to western end: Xinjiang. Xinjiang province is emerging as industry, logistics and economic zone with Kashgar as its capital. Southern & central routes of silk road merge in Kashgar, therefore it is an important transfer hub of the Silk Road and that makes Kashgar the significant and global future trading center. Who does not want to connect with the promising trading hub of the near future? and if south and specially south east Asian countries will use old routes that go all the way from Pacific Ocean to eastern Chinese ports and then all the way to Kashgar to connect with silk road, the transportation cost will go sky rocketing. Furthermore, the total trade between CARs and ASEANs is more than half of billion US\$. This trade and its profit margins can be extended through using CPEC. Central Asian Republics (CARs) are an important market. A study indicates that for CARs, regional approach to the development of infrastructure is important, and policy toward infrastructure development should be associated with a further regional economic integration process. CPEC is a flagship program of greater plan of BRI that is designed to assure regional economic integration. Above data is a speck of a larger reality. Countries that are between Indonesia and Russia need to re-visit their bi and multilateral economic policies to get the best of CPEC. This makes all responsible. It is not only China and Pakistan who needs to re-adjust but the countries of eastern world have to decide whether to stay dependent on west or enjoy economic freedom through accepting the differences and realizing each other's strengths. Is it sensible to fuel the economies of people who do not and they never belonged to our side of the world? They were the infiltrators, and they will not stop doing it. It is us who need to be together for the greater good of our side of the world as well as the other.

PDM between devil and deep sea

Qamar Bashir



The subsequent plan was to bring Nawaz Sharif back to the country honorably and exonerated based on the narrative of balancing both sides of the justice panel by enacting the Nawaz Sharif specific Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Bill, 2023 to allow him to appeal against

courts, civil society, or the most dangerously vocal and popular opposition we have ever witnessed in our lifetimes? Why are they acting like a pigeon with its head buried in the sand, assuming the storm has passed? What are their pieces of chess that give them the strength and courage to defy the supreme court's express orders and the constitution with flimsy and irrelevant justifications?

Their sole strategy was crystal clear: file as many charges as possible against Imran Khan, entice him to make grave errors, imprison him, and disqualify him from holding public office. They got off to a good start in achieving this objective, publicizing the Toosha Khana case, drumbeating foreign funding case, and filing over 140 FIRs on charges ranging from violating section 144 to terrorism. All of these weapons were rendered ineffective because their own skeletons in the closet overshadowed those of Imran Khan and deflated the balloon. Maryam's most recent interview with Mansoor Ali Khan exposed not only Maryam and her family, but also Asif Ali Zardari and his retinue with proven cases of ruthlessly looting the Toosha khana and making allegations against Khan dwarfed and peanuts. They deprived the exchequer of millions of valuable revenues that could have been realized if the then-prime minister, Yousaf Raza Gilani, had not relaxed the rules and allowed them to illegally appropriate several luxurious and expensive vehicles. The foreign funding case lost steam due to a lack of admissible evidence in court, making it another empty cartridge like the numerous FIRs that are being quashed for lacking any basis, evidence, or legality. So far, so good, their hopes of putting Imran Khan behind bars have been dashed due to the lack of support from the deep state, which may have realised quite correctly that putting Imran Khan behind bars would be suicidal due to the public support he has garnered.

The subsequent plan was to bring Nawaz Sharif back to the country honorably and exonerated based on the narrative of balancing both sides of the justice panel by enacting the Nawaz Sharif specific Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Bill, 2023 to allow him to appeal against his conviction and receive a clean bill so that he could lead his party and become Prime Minister for the fourth time. The move was accompanied by increasing political pressure on the supreme court, dividing the court to the point where it would have had no choice but to clear Nawaz Sharif of all charges. As a result of the parliament's haste, it may have intentionally closed its eyes to the fact that entering the domain of the judiciary can only be done through a constitutional amendment, and any law with inherent intrusion into the affairs of the judiciary without constitutional backing will be deemed unconstitutional and struck down in no time. As predicted by numerous analysts and in my own previous articles, the Supreme Court has aborted the challenged act before its birth. This plan, despite being quite sound, appears to have fallen short of its intended objective.

Their contingency plan to defy the supreme court's order to provide Rs. 20 billion for holding punjab assembly elections by using parliament has also been thwarted, as the

supreme court in its wisdom very rightly kept the scope of hearing very tight and only summoned the state functionaries to implement its orders, leaving both the government and the parliament in the state of nothingness and with no say in the provision of funds and security for holding the elections. The supreme court conveniently ignored all resolutions passed by the parliament against the superior judiciary and the hurling of threats by the government, their pledges to defy the supreme court's order no matter what, as if they had never occurred, a remarkable and unprecedented display of restraint reflecting court intent to remain focused on implementation of constitutional provisions as opposed to becoming entangled in allegations and counter allegations. The Supreme Court has already ordered the State Bank of Pakistan, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance, to provide the necessary funds by passing approval of the government, which consists of the Prime Minister and the cabinet and in total disregard of resolution passed by the parliament and its passing and further treatment of money bill. The illogical and suicidal denial and defiance of Supreme Court orders by the PDM validates the opposition's narrative that, while launching a regime change operation, the PDM was promised a smooth ride up until the next general elections, but it is becoming increasingly difficult even for the deep state to keep its word. Their demonstrated ability to divide, coax, and arm-twist the judiciary in order to obtain favourable decisions succeeded in dividing the judiciary, but fell short of achieving the desired objective, which was to arrest and disqualify Imran Khan, exonerate Nawaz Sharif of all charges, and postpone the elections until October or later.

Maryam Nawaz's suspicions that remnants of the former DG, ISI continue to assist Imran Khan in achieving his political goals may be partially justified. It is also documented that the Bajwa doctrine assigned the Punjab and KP governments to the PTI in order to keep the new regime in check and make the PTI a partner in the economic collapse. But PTI, either out of high ambition or naivete, chose not to pursue Bajwa's plan and instead dissolved both the assemblies, which at the time appeared to be an unthoughtful and unwise decision. However, that decision now appears to be the correct one, as the new regime is in excruciating pain to go for elections, which, if held, are likely to result in the sudden death of all the PDM's constituent political parties. The failure of the plans and waning support of the deep state, the current act of PDM to defy the constitution and non-compliance of express orders of the supreme court appears to be an act of deep desperation and hopelessness, as if they have no other options or ways to survive than to create an atmosphere of perceived injustice and to employ coercive, undemocratic, indoctrinated, and manipulative acts to remain in power as long as possible to avoid sudden and imminent political suicide. PDM, which has access to a large number of legal minds, is well aware that willfully refusing to comply with the Supreme Court's order can lead to a constitutional crisis and the collapse of the rule of law. In such cases, the Supreme Court may issue a writ

of mandamus, which is a court order compelling a public official or entity to perform a specific duty.

PDM appeared to have chosen to invite the Supreme Court to take aggressive action to disqualify either the prime minister or the government as a whole and become political martyrs, despite knowing that trampling the constitution and disobeying the supreme court's orders threatens the very foundations of democracy. This can have grave implications for the functioning of the state and the rule of law in the country, as well as for the rights and liberties of its citizens, prompting civil society to take to the streets and, through public pressure, restore the honour and dignity of the supreme court and reestablish the rule of law and the constitution. We have already witnessed the most vocal and influential members of the legal community has publicly started demanding the restoration of constitutional order as we have witnessed against Pervez Musharraf, which ultimately resulted in his removal from power and ignoble exile from the country until his ignominious death, such movements quickly gained momentum, leaving the government with no choice but to concede to their demands.

Had the government's performance on the economic and financial front been exceptional, it could have gained public and media attention; however, the government has demonstrated deterioration in every aspect of governance. Mansoor Ali Khan's current interrogation of Maryam has provided ample evidence of the moral bankruptcy of the entire PDM leadership. The most recent economic forecast released by the IMF predicted one of the worst economic performances in decades. Inflation is at an all-time high, and unemployment is rising sharply, resulting in widespread poverty and social unrest. The perception of political repression, censorship, and human rights violations is alienating large segments of the population and provoking a backlash. Foreign policy without bite is causing diplomatic isolation and loss of national prestige. Moreover, the government is perceived to have disregarded the constitution and the law of the land, which has the potential to spark a crisis that will translate into a further steep decline in popularity and effectiveness, which would ultimately result in political suicide. Although it is too late for the PDM to save itself from political extinction and the disqualification of a few of its members from holding public office, they still have a small window of opportunity to abandon their self-serving interpretation of the constitution. It should cease passing person-specific laws, awaken and take the correct pulse of the people and masses, and view the judiciary's role in the democratic system as essential to upholding the rule of law and the Constitution. It should cease interfering with the role of the judiciary and attempting to influence its decisions, and instead collaborate to ensure that both the judicial system and the judiciary operate efficiently.

—The writer is the Former Press Secretary to the President and former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France. The views expressed in the article are writer's own.

Briefs

All parties moot likely after Eid

FROM PAGE 01
hold office till 2024 without elections. But it seems as if the guarantors are finding it difficult to live up to the PDM expectations because of public pressure channelized by Imran Khan and his party. The Jamaat-e-Islami, for the past few days, has been very active in helping the politicians reach a consensus on elections. In fact, the idea of the APC was put forth by the Jamaat leadership during its meetings with the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the PTI Chairman Imran Khan. The JI plans to convene this APC after Eid if all parties agree to these proposals. Maulana Fazl ur Rehman, a key PDM ally, has outright rejected any negotiations with Imran Khan, however PPP, another important partner in the alliance, has already shown flexibility when it comes to political engagement. Ultimately it is the PPP and PML N that would decide about any negotiations or taking part in the APC.

PTI forms 3 member..

FROM PAGE 01
after the JI chief held meetings with PTI Chairman Imran Khan and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at their residences in Lahore with an agenda to bring the government and opposition closer and end the ongoing political crisis. Sirajul Haq along with a three-member delegation held separate meetings with PM Shehbaz Sharif and Imran Khan and urged both parties to sit on the negotiation table. During the meeting with the prime minister, the current political situation in the country and the judicial crisis were discussed. The leaders agreed that issues should be resolved with collective wisdom. On the occasion, Sirajul Haq said that the political situation could only be resolved by sitting together and resolving issues politically. "The country cannot afford any uncertainty at this time and holding elections at the same time is better for the country," he said. Meanwhile, Imran Khan agreed to continue future contacts after Eidul Fitr.

Pulwama attack..

FROM PAGE 01
the international community would take cognizance of the latest revelations and see through India's propaganda campaign against Pakistan driven by selfish political considerations and based on lies and deceit. "India must answer the questions raised in the latest revelations. It is time India be held accountable for the actions that imperiled regional peace in the aftermath of Pulwama attack," it was stressed. Pakistan, the spokesperson said, for its part, would continue to counter India's false narrative, and act firmly and responsibly in the face of different provocations. In an interview with Karan Thapar for 'The Wire', Satya Pal Malik, the Modi government's former so-called governor of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), painted a damning picture of the PM and his closest advisors.

'Election won't be..

FROM PAGE 01
Despite the Supreme Court's order to hold elections in Punjab on May 14, as well as pressure from the Imran Khan-led former ruling party, the security czar said elections would be "held together" under the caretaker setup. "If elections are not held in May, then October is not too far away either." Calling former prime minister Imran Khan a "fitna" (chaos), Sanaulah said that he had been brought to power through a "conspiracy". "Their [PTI's] policies over four years created a crisis situation for the country," Sanaulah said Khan used to claim that he would prefer to die by suicide instead of approaching the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Bring hockey back

Ex Olympians want stern measures, proper planning

"Then there were different departments, offering jobs to players. But, rapid changes in the hockey setup affected the game badly. At present, the Pakistan national hockey team holds the 16th spot in International Hockey Federation (FIH) rankings which is painful," he said

ISLAMABAD: Former Olympians have asked for stern measures to be taken in bringing the national game back on track through proper planning from the grassroots to the top level, as to regain hockey's lost glory. There were times when Pakistan was the most successful team in World Cups, Olympics and Champions Trophy winning four World Cups in 1971, 1978, 1982 and 1994. Pakistan also has three gold medals in Olympic Games field hockey tournaments in Rome in 1960, Mexico City in 1968 and Los Angeles in 1984. Then its downfall began and an always-winning team that played all World Cup editions, could not qualify for the 2014 and 2023 mega-events. Speaking on the revival

of the national game, Olympian Shahbaz Ahmed Sr emphasised proper education of players as he deems that an illiterate cannot carry on in international sports without education. "There is also a need to build four to five hockey centres in the country directly operated under the federation," he added. "Youth must be spotted from grassroots, educated and fed properly and trained at these centres according to international standards." Shahbaz further pleaded that the PHF must have a proper annual budget and the federation should itself manage its affairs. "Every time we have to request the government for grants to participate in national and international

championships or preparation of training camps abroad." He said, "Young players must also be offered regular jobs as was happening during our times when all players had jobs in different departments." Shahbaz advocated organizing Pakistan Hockey League (PHL) as he believes it would prove a key step towards reviving the national game. "Besides providing financial support to PHF, the league will help explore new talent for regaining our lost glory." Once an unbeaten center-forward and a star Olympian Shahnaz Shaikh pleads to blend young players with experienced hands for forming a squad that owns the potential to beat any team in the world.

"Players need to improve their movements and points marking in the D area. They should avoid counterattacks and improve the conversion of penalty corners. If we get three to four penalty corners at least two must be utilized," Shahnaz said. "We need to strongly work on all these things if we want to improve our game. Our players must play with unity and avoid individual point scoring in any game," he commented. Further suggesting measures for improvement, he said, there were around 28 Education Boards in the country with hundreds of schools affiliated with each Board. "Therefore, if each government school is allowed to participate in tournaments,

the total number of participating teams would be in the hundreds. This practice would be a sort of talent hunt bringing new players to the national squad." He also suggested designated hockey fields to promote the game as he recalled, "in our times plentiful of national and district tournaments were held annually for improvement of players mental and physical strength." "Then there were different departments, offering jobs to players. But, rapid changes in the hockey setup affected the game badly. At present, the Pakistan national hockey team holds the 16th spot in International Hockey Federation (FIH) rankings which is painful," he said. - Agencies

Sheffield boost promotion hopes

LONDON: Sheffield United came from behind to hammer Championship strugglers Cardiff 4-1 on Saturday, boosting their hopes of automatic promotion to the Premier League. Sory Kaba's penalty had put Cardiff in front, but James McAtee levelled before the break. The Blades pulled clear in the second half through goals from Jack Robinson, Ilman Ndoye and Ciaran Clark to leave Cardiff mired in the relegation fight. Paul Heckingbottom's Sheffield United are five points clear of third-placed Luton, who were 2-0 winners at Rotherham, extending their unbeaten run to 10 games. "The fact we won 4-1 after going behind shows a lot about the group," said Heckingbottom. "It's not the first time in recent weeks. "It says a lot about what we are trying to do. Our message has been the same regardless of what the outside narrative is." Carlton Morris broke the deadlock for Luton on the stroke of half-time before Cauley Woodrow turned home the rebound after his penalty was saved shortly after the restart. - Agencies

Digital Journalists hosts Palestine Issue seminar

ISLAMABAD: Digital Media Journalists Association (DJMA) hosts a seminar titled "Palestine Issue: An Human Tragedy" in Islamabad. The speakers expressed their determination that until Palestinian lands are free, until an independent Palestinian state is established with Al Quds as its capital, we will continue to support Palestinians. The seminar, which was held at a local hotel, was addressed by Dr Sabir Abu Maryam Secretary General Palestine Movement, Senior Analyst Ameer Abbas, Bureau Chief BOL News Siddique Jan, Anchor Makh-

doom Shahab ud Din, Sikh Representative Harmeet Singh, Senior Journalist Nadir Baloch, Human Rights Activists Razi Tahir, President DMJA Faisal Tarar and others. Speakers said Israel was an illegitimate state created and supported by the United States and Western countries to maintain their colonialism in the modern era. The father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had said that Pakistan would never recognise Israel. Following the footprints of the founder of Pakistan no one will be allowed to change Pakistan foreign policy about Israel.

Speakers called for the rulers of the Muslim world to help uproot Israel. They also condemned attacks of the Zionist forces on the Al-Aqsa Mosque and vowed not to remain silent on such atrocities. "Palestine is not a Jewish problem. It is a problem created by Zionists which is a question for all humanity," they added. More than 85 digital journalists along with Qamar Mekan, Jahangir Khan, Mughes Ali, Gohar Abbas, Ziyad Ali, Malaika Noor, Nimla Jutt, Javeria Jamal, Ehtisham Ch, Mansoor Qureshi, Rana Uzair and others participated. - DNA

Real Madrid look to finish the job against Chelsea



BARCELONA: Real Madrid were made to wait, but eventually conjured a stylish 2-0 victory at Cadiz on Saturday in La Liga, ahead of their Champions League trip to face Chelsea. Nacho Fernandez and Marco Asensio struck to help champions Madrid cut Barcelona's lead at the top of the table to 10 points. Both sides hit the woodwork in the first half but Madrid overran their opponents,

with only Cadiz goalkeeper David Gil keeping them at bay. Eventually, when it seemed they had tried everything, Nacho broke the deadlock in the 72nd minute with a drive from distance, with Asensio adding another four minutes later. "Good attitude, good commitment, good combinations, the team played very well," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti. "It was a game that could have been a trap

- the players were concentrating well, and we played well." Ancelotti rang the changes at the Nuevo Mirandilla to rest players for the visit to Stamford Bridge for the quarter-final second leg, including veteran midfielders Toni Kroos and Luka Modric and winger Vinicius Junior. Madrid suffered a 3-2 home defeat by Villarreal last weekend before the 2-0 first leg win over Chelsea, and Ancelotti admitted his team were not motivated enough. On this occasion they arrived with the right mindset and on another day would have ended the first half several goals in front. Gil made stunning saves to deny Karim Benzema, Rodrygo and Asensio. Madrid were racking up the shots and, finally, their 26th effort of the night went in. It came from an unlikely source, in veteran defender Nacho, who drove home from the edge of the box into the bottom corner. With Cadiz's resistance broken, Madrid quickly added another. Fede Valverde carried the ball forward and fed Asensio, who finished clinically. - APP

Man City ready for 'final' against Arsenal

MANCHESTER: Erling Haaland equalled the Premier League record for goals in a 38-game season on Saturday as Manchester City closed the gap on leaders Arsenal to just three points after a day of drama in the top-four race. The Norway forward netted twice in the first half of City's 3-1 win over relegation-threatened Leicester to reach 32 goals - the same as Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah's tally in 2017/18. John Stones opened the scoring at the Etihad Stadium before a goal from the penalty spot and a clever dinked finish from Haaland. Pep Guardiola substituted the 22-year-old at half-time, denying him the chance to hunt down the overall single-season record of 34 goals in the Premier League era - set in the days of 42 games per side. Leicester, with Dean Smith in charge for the first time, pulled a goal back in the second half through Kelechi Iheanacho but they slumped to a fourth straight defeat and remain second from bottom of the table. City, chasing a fifth Premier League title in six years, are on 70 points, three behind Arsenal with eight games to go. The two teams meet at the Etihad on April 26 in a potential title-decider - City's next league fixture. "Like I said lately, it is win, win and win," said Guardiola, whose side have now won 10 consecutive games in all competitions. "They have had an incredible run this season and I don't think they are going to drop many points, so what we have to do is be there. - Agencies

Bayern's Tuchel laments 'big setback'

MUNICH: Bayern Munich coach Thomas Tuchel said he was surprised with his team's lack of "anger in the belly" after a tame home draw with Hoffenheim on Saturday ahead of their Champions League return leg against Manchester City. Bayern were thrashed 3-0 in Manchester in the first leg of their quarter-final tie on Tuesday and face a mountain to climb in Wednesday's second game. They missed a chance to move four points clear at the top of the Bundesliga with a 1-1 draw against Hoffenheim as second-placed Borussia Dortmund also drew 3-3 with 10-man Stuttgart. "We only had very, very rare moments of good play," Tuchel said. "We played with little energy, little spirit, little change of pace, little conviction and little confidence." It was a disappointing end to a tumultuous week in which Sadio Mane was suspended by the club after a physical altercation with Leroy Sane following the City game which left his teammate with a cut lip. "It's definitely a big setback for us, in performance, in conviction and in self-confidence," added Tuchel. Fortunately for Bayern, a late capitulation from Dortmund on Saturday - who led 2-0 and 3-2 - keeps them clear with six games remaining in their bid for an 11th straight Bundesliga title. Tuchel has just two wins in five games since taking over as coach from the sacked Julian Nagelsmann last month, with Bayern also knocked out of the German Cup by Freiburg. - Agencies

Israeli forces arrest Palestinians, including children

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Israeli regime forces have arrested at least twenty Palestinians, including children, during raids in the West Bank and al-Quds, as the Tel Aviv regime continues its wide-scale arrest campaign in several areas across the occupied territories. Palestine's official Wafa news agency, citing local sources, reported that Israeli troops arrested three children-identified as Musa, Fo'ad and Omar Jibril- after raiding their family home

in the Silwan neighborhood of al-Quds on Sunday. Israeli forces detained at least three other Palestinians in the occupied East al-Quds neighborhood of al-Tur, while another six were arrested after the regime's troops stormed their houses in the occupied Old City of al-Quds. Six other Palestinians were also arrested after occupying regime forces attacked their house in the West Bank village of Husan, west of Bethlehem. Israeli troops also arrested a Palestinian from the

village of Tuqu, south-east of Bethlehem, during regime's latest violence against Palestinian worshippers at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in al-Quds. In the West Bank city of Qalqilya, Israeli forces also arrested at least one Palestinian during a raid on the town of Azzun. Over the past months, Israel has ramped up attacks on Palestinian towns and cities throughout the occupied territories. As a result of these attacks, dozens of Palestinians have lost their lives and many others have been arrested. Most of the raids have focused on Nablus and Jenin, where Israeli forces have been trying to stifle a growing Palestinian resistance against occupation. - DNA

Zhang sets sights on Usyk fight

LONDON: China's Zhilei 'Big Bang' Zhang set his sights on Ukraine's heavyweight world champion Oleksandr Usyk after dealing Britain's Joe Joyce a first professional defeat on Saturday. Referee Howard Foster stopped the fight in the sixth of 12 scheduled rounds at London's Copper Box Arena after the ringside doctor had twice inspected Joyce's puffed up right eye, which was almost closed. "Today belongs to me...I'm 39 years old, but I'm disciplined, I train hard. - APP

Federal Cup 3x3 Basketball Tournament begins

Islamabad Hawks with a brilliant game defeated AKA Club by 17-14 points while Bahria Town CH faced defeat against DHA Lakes by 16-10 points

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Under patronage of the Federal Basketball Association (FBBA), the Federal Cup 3x3 Basketball Tournament is underway amongst the 37 teams of twin cities here at the F-6 Multipurpose court, Islamabad. According to Federal Basketball Association Secretary Ouj E Zahoor, a large number of basketball clubs are participating in the four-day event as 37 teams have been divided into eight pools in the tournament to be played under floodlights. Ouj said that to promote the 3x3 basketball standard and to increase the interest of this game amongst the youth is the main objective to organize the tournament, adding that 3X3 is an excellent way to introduce inactive children and youth to the sport of



basketball. He said that since inactive youth have little to no basic basketball skills, they have the opportunity to develop themselves fairly quickly within the sport. Islamabad Hawks with a brilliant game defeated AKA Club by 17-14 points while Bahria Town CH faced defeat against DHA Lakes by 16-10 points. In the third match, Spurs won the pool match against Hawks Greens by 20-14 points. In the fourth match, Thunders defeated Titan by 12-05 points. City Reapers beat Ball Magician A by 17-10 points. In other pool matches, City Reapers beat Raptors White 16-11, Bulls B beat Ball Magician B by 19-12, Hawks Blues beat Hawks Greens by 17-09, Thunders beat G-5 by 19-10, Raptors Red beat Bulls B by 18-15, Net Reapers beat TW C by 13-10 and Bahria A defeated Miracles by 17-14 points respectively.

Death toll mounts...

FROM PAGE 01
said he consulted with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. "We agreed it was essential for the parties to immediately end hostilities without pre-condition," he said in a statement early Sunday. The fighting comes after months of escalating tensions between the commander of Sudan's military, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the head of the RSF, Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. It also followed years of political unrest since the 2021 coup. The recent tensions stem from disagreement over how the RSF, headed by Dagalo, should be integrated into the armed forces and what authority should oversee the process. The merger is a key condition of Sudan's unsigned transition agreement with political groups.

Imran vows PTI will...

FROM PAGE 01
workers in Sindh. Khurrum Sher Zaman presented the progress report of the party's MPAs in Sindh to Imran Khan. The meeting also discussed the expected Sindh visit of Imran Khan. Speaking on the occasion, the former prime minister said the people of Sindh should prepare themselves for elections and vowed to get the people of Sindh freed from the 'Zardari mafia'. "We will defeat the 'Zardari mafia' with the strength of the vote," he added. mThe former prime minister noted that the majority of rights violations have been reported in Sindh. Earlier, Imran Khan asserted that he would form the next government in Sindh, reiterating his demand for 'immediate and transparent' elections.

'Can't foresee...

FROM PAGE 01
leader Fawad Chaudhry criticized the current situation, stating that there is no atmosphere for negotiations with 'unserious people'. Chaudhry expressed his frustration, stating that while talks of negotiations continue, the leadership of his party is being imprisoned. Zeroing in on Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), he said that the party part of the ruling coalition gives a statement advocating for negotiations one day and the next day, its government in Sindh arrested PTI leader Ali Zaidi.

PTI's govt delayed...

FROM PAGE 01
briefing over the construction work on Imamia colony flyover project. The prime minister directed for early completion of the project for the public use. Addressing the participants, the prime minister said that during the last four years of the previous government, the affairs of the province were handed over to an incompetent and puppet chief minister. Instead focusing on the progress of province, the office of the chief minister was misused for political maneuvering at the federal level, he opined. The prime minister further observed that these public welfare-oriented projects which should have been completed and alleviated public woes, continued to hit snags for years during the previous government's tenure.

PM orders crackdown..

FROM PAGE 01
The Prime Minister directed the authorities concerned to take stern action against those involved in smuggling, profiteering and hoarding. He directed the Chief Minister of Punjab to ensure strict monitoring of sugar prices in the province and formulate action plan for onward supply of sugar, seized from smugglers and hoarders, to the people at prescribed rates. Shehbaz Sharif also asked the Chief Minister Punjab to hold consultations with sugar mills owners to stop the increase in sugar prices. It merits mention here that due to Prime Minister's timely action, the price of sugar was brought down to 92 rupees per kilogrammes. Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi and other high officials attended the meeting.

Briefs

Govt releases Rs129bn for development projects under PSDP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government has released 129 billion rupees for development projects under Public Sector Development Programme, including 27 billion rupees for Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and the erstwhile tribal areas. According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, this amount has been released for the fourth quarter of the current fiscal year. Thirty billion rupees have been released to speed up the projects like Diamer-Bhasha Dam, Mohmand Dam, Kachi Canal, Nai Gaj Dam. Besides, twenty two billion rupees have been earmarked to expedite the projects like Khuzdar-Kuchlak Road, Dualization and Improvement of Old Bannu Road, eight billion rupees to complete the Higher Education Commission projects. Similarly, an amount of 4 billion rupees has been released for the Ministry of Housing and Works, eight billion rupees for the Ministry of Railways, and five billion rupees for the Power Division. It is worth noting that in the last quarter of the previous fiscal year, there was a zero release for PSDP that resulted in the shrinking of the PSDP from 700 billion rupees to 550 billion rupees.

Govt orders to shut down Karachi Zoo

KARACH: The Karachi Zoo may be permanently shut down due to the terrible living conditions faced by the animals kept there. The issue came to light when a 17-year-old elephant named Noor Jehan was found to be in a severely deteriorating condition. Despite undergoing successful surgery, the elephant's condition has worsened due to months of inadequate care and treatment. Following public outcry and involvement of international organizations, Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman has urged the provincial government to close down the zoo due to its lack of capacity to care for wild animals. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has also supported the proposal to shift the animals to safer places. The Sindh government is likely to accept the proposal after receiving support from these ministers. Moreover, proposals have been presented to turn existing zoos into botanical gardens and rescue and rehab centers for wild species. —DNA

Foolproof security during free flour distribution

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police has taken all necessary measures to ensure the safety of citizens during the free flour distribution campaign being carried out by the district administration in the federal capital. In accordance with the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has made strict security arrangements to safeguard the lives and property of the citizens during the distribution of flour. To ensure the convenience of citizens, the district administration has set up multiple distribution points across the city, including Saffron Marquee on Park Road, Rawat Utility Store, Majestic Marquee on Expressway, Galaxy Marquee on GT Road, Dhok Paracha on GT Road, Sitara Market, Bari Imam, Gola Utility Store, Jafar Chowk, Jawa Chowk in Sector I9, Thanda Pani Utility Store, Chatha Bakhtawar, Syedpur, Motial Marquee, Dubai Marriage Hall, and Modern Marriage Hall. While following the special directions of IGP Islamabad, senior officers are also visiting the free flour distribution points on a daily basis and briefing the staff engaged in the duties, so that no untoward incident takes place and citizens can easily get benefit from this facility.—DNA

Pak auto dealers to explore new avenues with China

“Chery’s products have been incredibly successful in the global market, and we have been very impressed with its performance in Pakistan as well”

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistani auto dealers are moving ahead to explore new avenues of collaboration with China. In recent years, made-in-China products and Chinese brands have begun to become real players and drivers in the global auto industry. With the help of China’s leading automotive industry communication platform, we can learn about the latest exciting trends in the automotive industry, said Bilal Chaudhary, a Pakistani auto dealer in Gujarat, while expressing his excitement to participate in the Automobile show in Shanghai and Chery’s Annual Global Dealer Conference, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday. Chery will present its latest products, create live experiences, and host user-salon co-creation sessions at the Shanghai International Automotive and Manufacturing Technology Exhibition, one of China’s most authoritative and influential auto



shows, on April 18. It will coincide with its 2023 Global Dealer Conference, which is also the first face-to-face meeting between Chery and its global partners in three years. The conference aims to strengthen Chery’s internationalization strategy, listen to the needs of the global market, and negotiate future development plans

with its global partners. It also means that Chery will once again accelerate its global marketing strategy. The year 2022 was full of both risks and opportunities. Despite numerous uncertainties, such as chip shortages and logistics constraints, the global automotive market experienced a 1% year-on-year sales decline.

While Chery sold 450,000 units in overseas markets, matching its best-ever performance, it defied the trend by increasing by 68 percent year on year. “Chery’s products have been incredibly successful in the global market, and we have been very impressed with its performance in Pakistan as well.” Bilal’s collaboration with

Chery resulted in the successful introduction of two vehicle models, the Tiggo 4 and Tiggo 8. The quality of the vehicles has consistently impressed Pakistani customers. “We propose launching more Tiggo models and variants in our region so that customers have more options to choose from.” “The internationally successful Ar-

rizo could be a good project to launch in the Sedan category,” Bilal added. Bilal believes that the convention will provide a great opportunity for Pakistani dealers and Chery to reconnect, share insights and explore new ways of working together. “We will work with nearly 1,000 Chery dealers from Europe, South America, the Middle East and other regions to closely appreciate Chery new energy products, hybrid platforms and other scientific and technological exhibits, exchange on industry trends, cooperative products and models, and bring the advanced concepts back to Pakistan.” Another driving force of Bilal’s visit to China is the upcoming on-the-spot exchanges with Chinese partners. “The Chery team has always been highly professional, responsive and easy to work with. Chery may consider investing in training programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of our local sales force.” Bilal added.

Diplomats gather in Japan at ‘historic turning point’

KARUIZAWA: Top diplomats from Europe and North America were arriving Sunday in this hot spring resort town to discuss the world’s most intractable crises, including ways to end Russia’s war in Ukraine, confront China’s aggression toward Taiwan and lure North Korea back to nuclear disarmament talks. They will dive right in, with a private working dinner Sunday spotlighting China and North Korea. But even before the Group of Seven foreign ministers’ talks began, outside events threatened to overshadow the diplomacy, including questions about U.S. intelligence leaks that cast doubt over crucial alliances, and security worries after someone threw an explosive device at the Japanese leader during a campaign event. Japan is eager to use a smoothly run G-7, which includes a host of gatherings on climate,

finance and other issues ahead of a leaders’ summit next month in Hiroshima, to pursue a stronger unified front against what Tokyo and other democracies see as Russian, Chinese and North Korean aggression. Amid widespread skepticism that the United Nations, which is often paralyzed by the oversized power on the Security Council of Russia and China, can do anything about these issues, many will be watching to see what, if anything, G-7 ministers from Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Italy and the European Union might do. Security is tight in Karuizawa, but Japan has been forced to address safety concerns after a young man threw an explosive device toward Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on the eve of the diplomats’ arrivals. Kishida was uninjured

Saturday and continued campaigning, but the attack is an unwanted development for Tokyo amid a lingering security debate over the assassination nine months ago of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. “Starting with the summit, we have to make every effort to ensure security and safety ... (as) dignitaries from all over the world gather,” Kishida told reporters Sunday. The three-day talks will also see the first real test of the Biden administration’s assertion that there has been minimal damage from the disclosure of highly classified documents related to the war in Ukraine and U.S. views of its allies and partners. Before traveling to Japan, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Saturday from Hanoi that he had heard no concerns from allies, but the revelations will loom over the G-7 meeting, the first ma-

major international diplomatic conference since the documents were discovered online and made public. On the diplomatic front, the talks, which end Tuesday, will be dominated by worries over the Russian leader’s threats to use tactical nuclear weapons as his forces struggle in Ukraine, China’s increasing belligerence toward Taiwan, the self-governing island Beijing claims as its own, and North Korea’s record-setting run of illicit weapons tests. Some observers expect that Japan and other nations might use the G-7 to announce an increase in aid to Ukraine. “As Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has been shaking the foundation of the international order, the international community is now at a historic turning point,” Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi said ahead of the meeting.—DNA

Militants kill 26 people in Syrian countryside

BEIRUT: Islamic State militants have killed 26 people who were foraging for wild truffles in Syria’s Hama region, opposition and state media reported Sunday. Amid the economic devastation of Syria’s yearslong war, foraging for truffles can help people earn money, as the seasonal delicacy fetches a high price. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition media group based in Britain, said civilians and military personnel were among the victims of the armed attack in the eastern outskirts of the city of Hama, 115 miles (186 kilometers) north of the capital Damascus. State news agency SANA said that the attack was carried out by members of the Islamic State group. Despite their defeat in Syria in March 2019, the militant group’s sleeper cells still carry out deadly attacks both in Syria and Iraq where they once held territories and declared a “caliphate.” Since the truffle hunters work in large groups in remote areas, IS militants have repeatedly preyed on them, emerging from the desert to abduct them, kill some and ransom others for money. In February, IS sleeper cells attacked workers collecting truffles near the central town of Sukhna, killing at least 53 people, mostly workers but also some Syrian government security forces. Earlier this month, six people were killed by a land mine planted by the Islamic State group in the southern Deir Ez-Zor province also while foraging for truffles, according to state-run news agency SANA.

Poland and Hungary ban Ukraine grain imports

WARSAW: Poland and Hungary have agreed to temporarily ban imports of grain and dozens of other food products from Ukraine, in a move they say will protect struggling local farmers amid a glut of Ukrainian grain on the market. Logistical problems in central Europe have caused grain stores to pile up and prices to plummet, sparking protests from agricultural workers and even the resignation of Poland’s agricultural minister. Poland’s ruling Law and Justice Party (PiS) party leader, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, said that the Polish countryside is facing a “moment of crisis,” and that while Poland supports Ukraine, it was forced to act to protect its farmers. Kyiv’s ministry of agrarian policy has deplored the decision as “drastic and unilateral,” arguing that Ukrainian farmers were “facing the most difficult situation” given Russia’s invasion. A spokesperson for the Polish government said it’s ready to start talks with Ukraine to resolve the grain issue. The Hungarian government, meanwhile, said it expects changes in European regulations, including a review of last year’s decision to lift all import tariffs on Ukraine’s agricultural products.—Agencies

Dozens killed as army, rivals battle for control of Sudan

KHARTOUM: The Sudanese military and a powerful paramilitary group battled for control of the chaos-stricken nation for a second day Sunday, signaling they were unwilling to end hostilities despite mounting diplomatic pressure to cease fire. Heavy fighting involving armored vehicles, truck-mounted machine guns and war planes raged Sunday in the capital of Khartoum, the adjoining city of Omdurman and in flashpoints across the country. The rival forces are believed to have tens of thousands of fighters each in the capital alone. At least five civilians were killed and 78 wounded Sunday, bringing the two-day toll to 61 dead and more than 670 wounded, said the Sudan Doctors’ Syndicate. The group said it believes there were dozens of additional deaths among the rival forces. The clashes are part of a power struggle between Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, the commander of the armed forces, and Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, the head of the Rapid Support Forces group. The two generals are former allies who jointly orchestrated an October 2021 military coup that derailed Sudan’s short-lived transition to democracy. In recent months, internationally backed negotiations revived hopes for such a transition, but growing tensions between Burhan and Dagalo eventually delayed a deal with political parties.—Agencies

Turkiye neutralizes wanted PKK terrorists

ANKARA: The two terrorists were confirmed dead after clashes with security forces in the province of Van. Security forces in eastern Turkiye have neutralized two PKK terrorists, the country’s interior minister has said. The two terrorists were confirmed dead after clashes with security forces in the province of Van, Interior Minister Sulayman Soylu tweeted on Sunday, adding that one of them had been sought after by Turkish authorities in the second-most wanted category. Turkiye’s wanted list is divided into five color-coded categories, with red as the most wanted, followed by blue, green, orange, and grey, with the most wanted terrorist on the blue list. Soylu had stated yesterday that there were 88 armed terrorists left in Turkiye, adding that, “On October 29, 2023, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Republic, we will not leave any terrorists in the mountains of Turkiye.” —DNA

Thousands turn out for anti-govt protest in Prague

PRAGUE: Thousands of people rallied again in the Czech capital on Sunday to protest high inflation and demand the government’s resignation. It was the second such rally at Prague’s Wenceslas Square after one on March 11 that was organized by a new political party known as PRO under an “against the poverty” banner. The demonstrators, speakers at the protest and the head of the populist group, Jindrich Rajchl, blamed the European Union and the Czech government for soaring inflation and all repeatedly called on the current five-party coalition to resign. “We want the government’s resignation,” Rajchl told the crowd. Rajchl, a lawyer by profession, is the former deputy head of the Czech soccer association. “Resign, resign,” the protesters chanted. “We’re here to stand by our country,” Rajchl said. His group, whose name in English stands for Law, Respect, Expertise has no seats in parliament. Rajchl claimed his group was ready to further escalate the protests. Inflation has been high but on the decline in recent months, dropping to 15% in March, down from 16.7% in February and 17.5% the month before. The protesters also want the Czech government to stop taking actions that are intended to reduce misinformation and fake news. Although Rajchl rejected his group is pro-Russia, the protesters condemned the government’s stance in Russia’s war against Ukraine. The Czech Republic has staunchly supported the government in Kyiv since Russian troops invaded Ukraine.—Agencies

G7 vows to step up moves to renewable energy

SAPPORO: Energy and environment ministers of the Group of Seven wealthy nations vowed Sunday to work to hasten the shift toward cleaner, renewable energy, but set no timetable for phasing out coal-fired power plants as they wrapped up two days of talks in the northern Japanese city of Sapporo. The officials issued a 36-page communique laying out their commitments ahead of a G-7 summit in Hiroshima in May. Japan won endorsements from fellow G-7 countries for its own national strategy emphasizing so-called clean coal, hydrogen and nuclear energy to help ensure its energy security. “Recognizing the current global energy crisis and economic disruptions, we

reaffirm our commitment to accelerating the clean energy transition to net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 at the latest,” the communique says. “We call on and will work with other countries to end new unabated coal-fired power generation projects globally as soon as possible to accelerate the clean energy transition in a just manner,” the document says. The leaders reiterated the need to urgently reduce carbon emissions and achieve a “predominantly decarbonized power sector” by 2035. They also stressed the importance of ensuring supplies of critical minerals, used in many high-tech products, are stable and conform to high social and environmental standards. “I believe that we were able

to demonstrate to the international community that our commitment to climate change and environmental issues is unwavering, even in the context of the situation in Ukraine,” Akihiro Nishimura, Japan’s environment minister, said after the talks ended. The stipulation that countries rely on “predominantly” clean energy by 2035 leaves room for continuation of fossil-fuel fired power. But the ministers agreed to prioritize steps toward phasing out “unabated” coal power generation — plants that do not employ mechanisms to capture emissions and prevent them from escaping into the atmosphere. U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry said the meetings

were “really constructive.” “I think the unity for the goal that was expressed of phasing out unabated fossil fuels is a very important statement,” Kerry said in an interview with The Associated Press. The call to action comes as China and other developing countries step up demands for more help in phasing out fossil fuels and stabilizing energy prices and supplies amid disruptions from Russia’s war on Ukraine. The issue of setting a timeline for phasing out coal-fired power plants is a longstanding sticking point. Japan relies on coal for nearly one-third of its power generation and is also promoting the use of so-called clean coal, using technology to capture carbon emissions.—Agencies

WB projects Pakistan’s inflation to further surge

The country’s real GDP growth is expected to “slow sharply to 0.4 per cent” in FY23 reflecting corrective tighter fiscal policy, flood impacts, high inflation, high energy prices and import controls

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan’s inflation is projected to further swell to 29.5 per cent in the current fiscal year 2023 owing to higher energy and food prices and the weaker rupee, projected the World Bank (WB) in its latest report. However, the report on the macro poverty outlook for Pakistan indicated that inflation is expected to moderate over the forecast horizon as global inflationary pressures dispersed. The country’s real GDP growth is expected to “slow sharply to 0.4 per cent” in FY23 reflecting corrective tighter fiscal policy, flood impacts, high inflation,

high energy prices and import controls. With reduced imports, the current account deficit is projected to narrow to 2pc of GDP in the fiscal year 2023 but widen to 2.2pc of GDP in the fiscal year 2025 as import controls ease. The fiscal deficit is projected to narrow to 6.7pc of GDP in the fiscal year 2023 and further over the medium term as fiscal consolidation takes hold. The macroeconomic outlook is predicated on the completion of the IMF-EFF programme, sound macroeconomic policy, continued structural reforms and adequate external financing. The report further says the agricultural output is too expected to contract for the

“first time in more than 20 years” owing to last year’s catastrophic floods. Similarly the industry output is also expected to contract with supply chain disruptions, weakened confidence and higher borrow-

ing costs and fuel prices. Output growth is expected to gradually recover in the fiscal year 2024 and 2025 but “remain below potential” as low foreign reserves and import controls continue to curtail growth, a

privatetelevision channel reported Sunday. According to the WB, poverty in Pakistan will inevitably increase with pressures from weak labour markets and high inflation. Further delays in external financing, policy slippages, and political uncertainty possess significant risks to the macro poverty outlook for the country, the global lender warns. In the absence of higher social spending, the lower middle-income poverty rate is expected to increase to 37.2pc in the fiscal year 2023. “Given poor households’ dependency on agriculture and small-scale manufacturing and construction activity, they remain vulnerable to economic and climate shocks,” the report

added. The lower activity is expected to spill over to the wholesale and transportation services sectors, weighing on services output growth. The report says Pakistan’s economy is under stress with low foreign reserves and high inflation. Activity has fallen with policy tightening, flood impacts, import controls, high borrowing and fuel costs, low confidence, and protracted policy and political uncertainty. Despite some projected recovery, growth is expected to remain below potential in the medium term. Key risks to the World Bank’s outlook are the non-completion of the IMF programme due to policy slippages and the non-materialisation of expected financing.



Briefs

Mufti Abdul Shakoor laid to rest

DNA

PESHAWAR: Religious Affairs Minister Mufti Abdul Shakoor, who had died last night in a road accident in Islamabad, was laid to rest on Sunday in Tajbi Khel area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's LakkiMarwat district. The federal minister and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Fazl (JUIF) leader had died in a road accident in the capital's Red Zone area on Saturday evening. According to the police, the minister, 55, was heading towards Secretariat Chowk on Constitution Avenue when his car was hit by a Hilux vehicle with five passengers on board. The minister was immediately shifted to the Polyclinic Hospital in a critical condition, but he couldn't be resuscitated. At the time, police said all the five occupants of the other vehicle had been arrested and shifted to a nearby police station for investigation.

Ex-Indian politician, brother shot dead live on TV

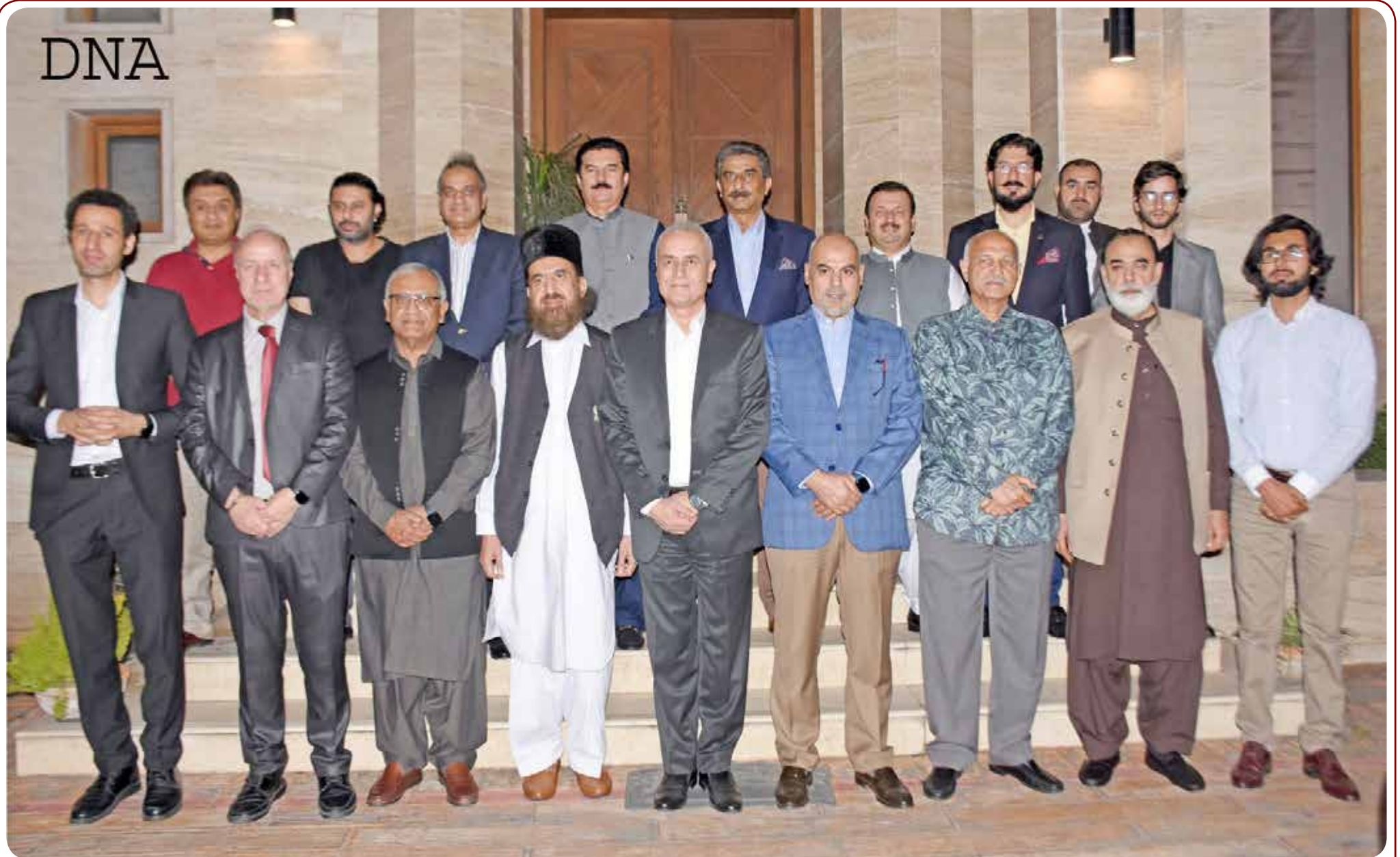
WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: Gunmen seemingly posing as journalists shot dead a former Indian member of parliament and his brother live on TV as they were being taken in handcuffs to hospital by police, authorities said. Atiq Ahmed, 61, who had been jailed since 2019 and was convicted of kidnapping, was answering reporters' questions on Saturday when he and his brother Ashraf were shot at close range, the television images showed. "According to preliminary information, three persons posing as journalists approached them and opened fire... The attackers have been held and are being questioned," police official Prashant Kumar said. The TV clip in the northern city of Prayagraj shows the assailants shouting Hindu slogans after the brazen attack. The two victims were from India's Muslim minority but police did not say whether they were investigating a possible sectarian motive in the killings. The brothers were deeply involved in India's criminal underworld - the ex-MP was reportedly facing more than 100 different cases - and press reports said the attackers were petty criminals. The pair were being taken to hospital for medical examinations and were surrounded by police officers at the time.

Noor murder: Zahir Jaffer moves SC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Zahir Jaffer, the main convict sentenced in the Noor Mukadam murder case, Sunday approached the Supreme Court of Pakistan against the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) verdict which upheld the trial court's decision awarding him with a death penalty for the crime. The convict filed a plea against the IHC asking the country's top court to declare the death sentence null and void. He has also asked the top court to order his acquittal in the case. The IHC, on March 13, upheld the death sentence awarded to Jaffer issued by the trial court turning his life imprisonment into capital punishment. The verdict was reserved on December 21 following appeals filed against the punishment awarded to the convicts and the acquittal of co-accused for the brutal murder of the 27-year-old woman. The court's decision for the double death sentence came following Jaffer's crime for Noor's rape and murder. He earlier received a 25-year imprisonment sentence with rigorous labour and a fine of Rs0.2 million after rape was proven.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei hosted Iftar dinner at his residence. Seen in the picture are Pir Naqeeb ur Rehman, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Senator Talah Mahmood, CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani, Ambassador of Jordan Ibrahim Al Madani, Dr. Luay Shabaneh UNFPA Representatives, Abedalrazaq Khalil Sector Leader World Bank, SAPM Faisal Karim Kundi, Editor Daily Islamabad Post Ansar M Bhatti, Ghalib Iqbal, Malik Ahammad, Sultan Ali and others. - DNA

Speaker says SC has no right to interfere

Chief Justice should reduce the atmosphere of conflict in institutions: Raja Pervaiz Ashraf

ALI FURQAN

ISLAMABAD: The Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, says that if the legislative authority of the Parliament is not to be acceptable, then the mockery of the election should also be ended. He maintained that if the Supreme Court interferes in the matters of Parliament, then its authority will also be challenged. He was sharing these views in a special interview with Voice of America correspondent Ali Furqan in Islamabad. He opined that legislation is the authority of the parliament and if Supreme

Court interferes in these matters constitutional supremacy of the parliament would be ended. He added, if Supreme Courts continues interference, then the mockery of elections should be stopped and the legislation should be done by them (Supreme Court). The Speaker said that the same Supreme Court, which is preventing the elected representatives of the people from making laws, had given military dictator Pervez Musharraf the right to amend the law. "The constitu-



tional institutions of the state should work within their limits", he added. Pervaiz Ashraf said that the Parliament is the mother of all institutions from where the Constitution of Pakistan was formulated and according to it, epicenter of power is parliament, "no other institution has this authority", he emphasized. He said that he is unable to understand that when political parties and lawyers' fraternities were demanding that a full court be constituted to address the issue of provincial assembly

elections, what was wrong with it that instead of three or seven judges, full court listened to it. If ambiguity can be removed from forming full court, then why is not anarchy avoided, he asked. According to him, this conflict is not in anyone's interest because it gives rise to mistrust and mismanagement between institutions and the country cannot run without mutual respect between state institutions. Referring to the decision of the Supreme Court regarding the Punjab Assembly elections, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said that the nation is still confused about the decision, "the Chief Justice would resolve this crisis", he hoped.

Yemen's Houthis, govt forces complete prisoner exchange

Three other flights during the day were to complete the deal reached in Switzerland last month to exchange 181 government forces for 706 rebels, just before major Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr

SANAA: Yemen's Houthis and government forces freed scores of prisoners Sunday on the last of a three-day exchange of nearly 900 detainees, boosting hopes of ending their protracted war. Planes carrying detainees took off at the same time from the Houthi rebel-held capital of Sanaa and the government-controlled northern city of Marib, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said. Some were taken to the Red Cross planes in wheelchairs. All released prisoners were given plastic bags with food to eat when the daily Ramadan fast was over. At the airport in Sanaa, Houthi fighters staged a ceremonial dance with swords to greet their comrades. "Forty-eight former detainees were on board the Marib-Sanaa flight, and 42 on the Sanaa-Marib flight," ICRC media adviser Jessica Moussan told AFP. Three other flights during the day were to complete the deal reached in Switzerland last month to exchange 181 government forces for 706 rebels, just before the major Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr. Four journalists sentenced to death by the Iranian-backed Houthis are part of the exchange, said government negotiator Majed Padail. The last talks ended hours before 318 prisoners were transported on four flights on Friday between Sanaa and government-controlled Aden, reuniting detainees with their families. On Saturday, 357 detainees took flights between the Saudi city of Abha and Sanaa. - APP

Imran Khan to change security personnel

PTI chairman expressed his concerns about the increasing risk of potential murderous attacks against him, prompting the need for a new security detail

LAHORE: The Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan, on Sunday announced that he would be making changes to his security personnel due to heightened security risks. The decision was made in light of recent events that have raised concerns about Mr. Khan's safety. New guards would be added to his security squad. Interviews for the new security team were conducted on (Sunday) at Zaman Park, with the security head of former Prime Minister Imran Khan overseeing the process. The PTI chairman expressed his concerns about the increasing risk of potential murderous attacks against him, prompting the need for a new security detail. - DNA

Fire in Dubai building kills 16 people

DUBAI: A fire has swept through an apartment building in an older neighbourhood of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, killing at least 16 people and injuring nine, local media report. The fire broke out on Saturday on the fourth floor of the building in the Al-Ras neighbourhood. The Dubai Civil Defence Force said preliminary investigations showed the fire was caused by "a lack of compliance with building safety and security requirements", according to a statement quoted by The National, a UAE-based newspaper. "Relevant authorities are conducting a comprehensive investigation to provide a detailed report on the causes of the accident," the statement said. Dubai, one of the seven emirates of the United Arab Emirates, has a population of about 3.3 million, of whom nearly 90 percent are foreigners. The nationality of the victims has not been released. Fires have broken out in skyscrapers in Dubai and other fast-growing cities in the UAE in recent years. In 2017, a large fire broke out at a high-rise under construction near the city's largest shopping mall. - APP

Ukraine: 'unprecedented bloody battles' in Bakhmut

KYIV: Ukraine's military has reported "bloody battles unprecedented in recent decades" in the eastern city of Bakhmut as the death toll from a Russian attack on residential buildings in nearby Sloviansk climbed to 11. The reported battles on Saturday came as the Russian defence ministry said fighters from its Wagner mercenary group had captured two more areas of Bakhmut. Wagner has spearheaded Russia's attempt to take the city - the main target of Russia's offensive in eastern Ukraine - since last summer. The fight has been the longest and deadliest battle of the war for both sides. "Bloody battles unprecedented in recent decades are taking place in the middle of the city's urban area," said Serhiy Cherevatyi, spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern military command. "Our soldiers are doing everything

in bloody and fierce battles to grind down (the enemy's) combat capability and break its morale," he told the 1+1 television channel. "Every day, in every corner of this city, they are successfully doing so." Russia meanwhile claimed advances in Bakhmut. "Wagner assault units have successfully advanced, capturing two districts on the northern and southern outskirts of the city," Russia's defence ministry said in a briefing. It added that Russian army paratrooper units were supporting the claimed advance by holding back Ukrainian forces on the flanks. The United Kingdom said in an intelligence update on Friday that Ukrainian troops had been forced to cede some territory in Bakhmut as Russia mounted a renewed assault there, with intense artillery fire over the previous two days.

In nearby Sloviansk, which lies about 45km (27 miles) to the northwest, Ukrainian officials said rescue teams had recovered the bodies of two more people from under the rubble of a house hit in a Russian missile attack, raising the toll there to 11. According to Ukrainian officials, seven Russian missiles hit five buildings, five homes and an administrative building in the attack on Friday. A previous toll reported nine dead, including a two-year-old boy who was rescued from the rubble but died on his way to the hospital, and 21 wounded. Ukraine's First Lady Olena Zelenska sent her condolences to the child's family during this "indescribable grief". President Volodymyr Zelenskyy denounced Russia for "brutally shelling" residential buildings and "killing people in broad daylight". - Agencies

ISLAMABAD SERENA HOTEL
THE LEADING HOTELS OF THE WORLD

رمضان كريم
RAMADAN KAREEM

Celebrate the holy month
with our decadent Sehr & Iftar Buffet

Sehr Buffet
PKR 3,000 + tax

Iftar Dinner Buffet
PKR 5,200 + tax

For reservations, please call: 051 111 133 133

*15% discount applicable on Prestige Club membership
Upto 20% discount applicable on HBL cards
*Terms and Conditions apply