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NA Speaker hails Pakistan-Hungary ties as excellent

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'Parties want desired judgements' 'Independent judiciary a must'

CJP Bandial seeks record of parliamentary proceedings on SC bill, rejects PBC's request to exclude Justice Naqvi



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial remarked on Tuesday that the political parties wanted to "pick and choose" the bench for "desired judgments". Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial observed that an independent judiciary was a main component of the Constitution. The CJP passed the remarks as the Supreme Court resumed hearing on the petitions challenging the law clipping his office's powers. An eight-member larger bench of the apex court headed by CJP Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A Malik, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Shahid Waheed heard the case. At the outset of the hearing, CJP Bandial remarked that the bench will hear everyone after Attorney General for

Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan shared that some parties in the case would like to address the bench via video link. The top judge observed that important points, including the independence of judiciary, have been pointed out in the case and is "one of a kind". "Our stay order of the last hearing is in place. Law related to the Supreme Court rules are very clear," said CJP Bandial. CJP Bandial further stated that the judiciary has "reservations" over the law. "Democracy is an important part of the Constitution and so is an independent judiciary and the federation," the chief justice said and wondered whether the component of the judiciary can be changed. The chief justice stressed that independence of the judiciary is a "fundamental right". Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawyer Khawaja Tariq Rahim said that the judicial reform bill has become part of the law. On this point, the court sought record of the debate held in the Parliament and standing committee on judicial reforms. While the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) requested the inclusion of senior judges in the bench. The PBC stated that more than six references have been filed against Justice Mazhar Ali Naqvi who is part of the bench. However, the PBC's request for the formation of a full court and exclusion of Justice Naqvi was rejected by the court. The Supreme Court also rejected the AGP's request to withdraw its stay order till April 13. "There is no legal importance of a reference filed against any judge. Until the reference is fixed for hearing, it does not hold any importance," Justice Bandial said, highlighting that a bench - headed by

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WASHINGTON: Uzbek Ambassador of USA Furqat Sidikov meeting with the US President Joe Biden after presenting his credentials. Ambassador Furqat has also served as Uzbek ambassador to Pakistan. Before his appointment as Ambassador to USA he was serving in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. - DNA

Shehbaz heads to Britain

To attend Coronation; meet with Nawaz Sharif

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will leave for the United Kingdom to witness King Charles III and Queen Consort Camilla's coronation. PM Shehbaz will also take part in a gathering of Commonwealth leaders on May 5 in London. He is anticipated to meet separately with the world leaders taking part in the celebrations. According to the FO, the relations between Pakistan and the UK date back many years and are firmly rooted in the vibrant Pakistani-British community. "We see the British monarch and the royal family as friends of Pakistan and its people and look forward to further strengthening ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom," the statement said.

Inflation surges to record high
'Pakistan has the fastest rising prices in Asia'

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Amid the unceasing political and economic turmoil in the country that continues to make the lives of citizens miserable, monthly inflation has soared to an all-time high, data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed Tuesday. Inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), clocked in at 36.4% year-on-year in April. It was recorded at 35.4% last month and 13.4% in April 2022. This is the highest inflation ever, according to data available since 1965, Arif Habib Limited said. Meanwhile, inflation rose by 2.4% month-on-month. Pakistan has the fastest rising prices in Asia, which have left behind even Sri Lanka where inflation was measured at 35.3% in the previous month. Pakistan's inflation has been elevated for months as the economic crisis worsened, the rupee

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Briefs Parliament's power can't be undone

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that a transparent and fair system has been introduced by the recent legislation by the Parliament amending Article 184 (3). "The Parliament will go to any extent to protect its constitutional powers", the minister said in a statement. The Parliament has the right to fully protect and defend its constitutional rights, she said adding no one could take away the constitutional power of Parliament for legislation. She said that the judiciary's authority was to interpret the Constitution and laws but it had no power to rewrite the Constitution or impose restrictions on legislative power of the Parliament. The Parliament passed a law on the long-standing demand of the lawyers' fraternity, bar councils and bar associations, she maintained.

Poor nations suffer from climate issue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto expressed concerns over the climate change in Pakistan stated that the poor nations are suffering from the consequences of the climate crisis created by developed countries. According to details, the FM talked about the situation of rains in various regions of the country and stated that the poor nations are suffering from the consequences of the climate crisis created by developed countries. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed sorrow and grief over the loss of valuable lives during the accidents that occurred during the rainfall. The foreign minister said that due to climate change, rains already started in Pakistan causing floods.

PTI to move SJC for CEC's removal: Fawad Says Bushra Bibi to 'file criminal case' against Maryam Aurangzeb

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry said that PTI would file a reference against the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja in the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) seeking his removal for acting as a "crony" of the ruling alliance and for being biggest obstacle in the execution of the decisions of the Supreme Court to hold elections in the country. Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, Fawad said that they requested the Chief Justice of Pakistan to remove the CEC from his position who became a spokesperson of a political party. He said that unbiased and impartial election commission should be appointed so as to ensure holding free, fair and transparent elections in the country, as the way CEC was conducting himself was extremely shameful. "On the one hand, they say there is no

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Asad sends legal notice to JI Amir

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: PTI Central Secretary General Asad Umar has sent a legal notice to Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Sirajul Haq for accusing him of stashing wealth in a foreign country. Through the legal notice dispatched on Tuesday, Asad Umar sought immediate apology from Sirajul Haq, saying his lawyers have initiated the action against the JI leader for levelling baseless allegations. He maintained that either Sirajul Haq will tender an open apology or face legal action. The PTI leader also demanded of the JI chief to also disclose from where he got the "wrong information".

Chinese top diplomat to lead strategic talks with Pakistan

A United Nations Security Council committee has accepted a Pakistani request to allow the acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, to travel to Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang will visit Pakistan from May 5, his maiden visit to Islamabad after taking the post. According to diplomatic sources, Qin Gang will land in Islamabad after attending Goa meeting on May 5 and will lead China delegation in strategic dialogue with Pakistan on May 6. The foreign ministers of Pakistan, China and Afghanistan will also hold a trilateral meeting Islamabad on May 6. The last trilateral meeting of foreign ministers under current mechanism was held in September 2019. A United Nations Security Council committee has accepted a Pakistani request to allow the acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, to travel to Pakistan next week to meet with the foreign Ministers of Pakistan and China, according to Ambassador Munir Akram. "The Security Council's Taliban sanction committee approved our request this (Monday) afternoon," the Pakistani envoy to the UN told a state run news agency in New York. Muttaqi is subjected to a travel ban, asset freeze and arms embargo under Security Council sanctions. In a letter to the committee, Pakistan's Mission to the UN requested an exemption for FM Muttaqi who is to travel between May 6-9 "for a meeting with the foreign ministers of Pakistan and China." Last month, the Security Council committee allowed Muttaqi to travel to Uzbekistan for a meeting of the foreign ministers of neighbouring countries of

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Hina stresses on support for Afghan people

MAHNOOR ANSAR

DOHA: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar has underlined the importance for international community to take credible steps in support of the people of Afghanistan. She expressed these views during a meeting with Foreign Minister of Indonesia Retno Marsudi on the sidelines of the meeting of Special Representatives on Afghanistan, in Doha. During the meeting, matters of bilateral and regional interest were discussed. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar is attending the Meeting of Special Envoys on Afghanistan being held from May 1-2, 2023 in Doha, Qatar, being held under the auspices of the United Nations. Besides attending the Meeting of Special Envoys on Afghanistan, the minister of state will also hold bilateral meetings with leaders of other

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Balochistan flour dealers announce strike

QUETTA: Flour dealers in Balochistan have announced a strike against the ban on inter-provincial supply of flour.

According to flour dealers, there was a ban on bringing flour from Punjab and trucks loaded with flour had been stopped at check posts on the Punjab border with Balochistan. The flour crisis has further worsened in Quetta, Loralai and other areas of Balochistan as the supply has been interrupted from last weeks. The price of a 20-kilogramme flour bag jumped from Rs 2800 to Rs 3300 in the open market on Tuesday. They sought assistance from the government to resolve the issue on an emergency basis and make sure flour was affordable for the people of Balochistan. "We will shut down our shops in protest until our halted trucks leave and the strike will continue until lifted the ban on flour supply to other provinces," Haji Ghani Nasar said. Ghani said that in the event of a shutdown situation, the unavailability of flour will only aggravate the problem for the masses. —APP

Sanjrani emphasizes importance of press freedom

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has conveyed his warm greetings to all journalists and media workers on the upcoming occasion of World Press Freedom Day, which is scheduled to be observed on May 03, 2023. Underscoring the significance of an autonomous and unrestrained press in any democratic setup, the Senate chairman emphasized that it was not just a fundamental right but also an indispensable tool for promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability. He has appealed to all individuals to recognize and applaud the invaluable contributions made by the press, and to unite in safeguarding and preserving press freedom not just on World Press Freedom Day, but every day. —APP

Rescue operation in progress across KP

PESHAWAR: At least two people were killed, and two others sustained injuries in separate roof-collapsed incidents due to heavy rain that lashed the province the other day. Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rescue 1122, Dr Khateer Ahmed here on Tuesday reported ongoing rescue operations in various areas of the province following heavy rainfall. He said that floodwater entered different residential areas of district Lakki Marwat, Malakand, Lower and Upper Dir, Chitral, Swat, and Kohistan. Additionally, a 12-year-old child and a woman were washed away in the flood relay in Lakki Marwat with the child's body later being recovered while the divers of Rescue 1122 striving to recover the missing body of the woman. —APP

Ethiopia's peace process offers lessons for Sudan: Envoy

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a body of eight member states including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Jamal Beker Abdula on Tuesday said Sudan could learn from the successful peace process of his country for ending the conflict which had entered into its third week. Addressing to Pakistan-based ambassadors from the member states of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) here, he said dialogue was the only way forward for resolving disputes to bring lasting peace in the region. The meeting of the ambassadors of IGAD member states was called by Sudan's Envoy in Pakistan to brief his counterparts about the latest situation in his country. Referring to the speech delivered by Prime Minister of



ISLAMABAD: May 02- Contract Base Female Teachers holds placards and shouting slogans during protest outside Federal Directorate of Education, for issuing of their salaries, which are pending from more than 11 months, in Federal Capital. — Online.

Czech embassy launches web page to highlight women's role

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The embassy of Czech Republic in Pakistan here on Tuesday launched a web page jointly developed by Czech arts school and the National College of Arts (NCA) Lahore with objective to highlight the role of women in the society, providing role models, and supporting women empowerment. Deputy Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic Jiri Kozak and Tomáš Smetánka, Czech Ambassador to Pakistan inaugurated along with Nilofar Bakhtiar. Ambassador said with this initiative contact among people of the two countries would be further strengthened. He said women of Pakistan achieved great success in every field including science, technology and education. A hundred of artistic portraits of women, who shaped the past and present of Pakistan and Czechia, together with their short biog-

phies, can be accessed at the domain heroines.pk.

In 2020, students of Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art in the Czech city of Plzen created a set of 50 posters of outstanding women of all times. The collection inspired NCA to produce a

similar series, celebrating prominent Pakistani women. The Czech and Pakistani Heroines posters exhibition was then held in Lahore on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Pakistan last August. Afterwards, pictures of 50 + 50 great women from both

countries have been edited into a book, published in December 2022. In order to make the Czech and Pakistani Heroines widely accessible, the Czech Embassy prepared the online form of the book, which will also include an Urdu version. "I wish the Heroines

serve in education, to widen boys' and particularly girls' view about the roles women have been playing and can play as professionals, artists, entrepreneurs, lawyers, politicians, social activists," says Ambassador Tomáš Smetánka. "I do hope portraits of personalities like Samina Baig, Asma Jahangir, Perween Rahman or Arfa Kareem will inspire young ladies to the best use of their talents and abilities." "The women of Czech & Pakistan are resilient and fearless, their stories have a special place in our hearts and now they'll live forever through the very special initiative: web page Heroines.pk," Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar says. The Czech Embassy, NCA, and Bata Pakistan Ltd. as sponsor of the project decided to establish "The Heroine Award to be conferred every year to a woman that distinguishes herself in her profession or area of activity. The laureate's portrait will then be added to the collection. Public can submit nominations for the award through www.heroines.pk

Over 3.429 mln MT wheat procured so far

ISLAMABAD: The government has so far procured over 3.429 million metric tons (MT) of wheat under its wheat procurement campaign-2023 to fulfil the domestic requirements of staple food and build strategic reserves of the commodity for maintaining demand and supply at a smooth level in the country. The wheat procurement targets for the current crop season were fixed at 6.8 million metric tons at an official support price of Rs3,900 per 40 kg to ensure a proper rate of return to local farmers across the crop-producing areas in the country, Food Security Commissioner in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Intiaz Ali Gopang told APP. He said wheat output during the Rabi season 2022-23 had increased by 1.6 per cent as compared to the production of last year, adding that the total output was estimated at 26.81 million tons. He said the wheat crop was sown over 9 million hectares to fulfill the local staple food requirements as well as for keeping the strategic reserves. Owing to the incentives introduced by the incumbent government to mitigate the adverse impact of catastrophic floods and torrential rains during the last moon soon season and to revive the local agriculture sector, the output of Rabi crops witnessed significant growth, Gopang added. So far, over 50.43 per cent of wheat procurement targets had been achieved as the campaign was in full swing all across the crop-producing areas in the country and the provincial governments have also set up procurement centers to facilitate the growers to sell their produces at official fixed rates on their nearest sales point, he added.

Meanwhile, he said the Punjab government has completed 62.86 per cent of its assigned procurement targets as it procured over 2.200 million metric tons of wheat against the targets of 3.500 million metric tons. —APP



Sherry urges int'l community to restructure int'l financial system

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday urged the international community to restructure the international financial system to address climate change adaptation and mitigation. "International financial infrastructure must be restructured to make climate finance accessible to developing countries," she said. The Federal Minister for Climate Change made these remarks during her participation in the Petersburg Climate Dialogue in Germany. Senator Sherry Rehman said amid the rising climate crisis and vulnerabilities of impacted communities it was imperative for making the Climate Fund more accessible to developing countries bearing the maximum burden of environmental degradation. Developing countries like Pakistan faced the challenge of securing the necessary climate funds to meet their environmental goals, she added. "According to the Standing Committee on Finance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 78 developing countries need \$6 trillion by 2030 to meet their financial needs under the Paris Agreement. Developed countries will receive 52% of climate finance in 2022 while developing countries will receive only 48%," Sherry Rehman said. Although 80% of the world's population belonged to these developing countries, she said, adding, "Worryingly, developing countries, including Pakistan, have limited access to global environmental finance." Sherry Rehman said Pakistan needed \$348 billion by 2030 to address the challenges of climate change, which was 10.7 per cent of its total GDP. "For us, international climate finance is critical to adaptation and mitigation. Developing countries need access to funds to meet their environmental goals," she added. The Minister added that transparency and accountability were also essential in the distribution and use of climate finance. Climate justice and equitable adaptation and mitigation efforts were central to this conversation, whereas the UN commits developed countries to provide sustainable financial resources to developing countries, Sherry Rehman said. "We must address important questions regarding the recently created Loss and Damages Fund before COP-28 and close the funding gap in the global financial system. A clear outline for COP 28 should be presented with climate finance and adaptation as the main agenda," Sherry Rehman said. She added that it was the collective responsibility of the global community to take necessary steps to ensure a sustainable future and tackle climate change. —DNA

Raising Hindu militias reflects Modi's criminal intent

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, Mushaal Hussein Mullick Tuesday lambasted the supremacist Narendra Modi-led hindutva regime for raising 5,000 well-equipped and well-trained hindu militia in line with notorious RSS militants in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to trigger a communal strife to divert world's attention from Kashmir freedom movement that entered into a decisive phase. Mushaal, who is wife of incarcerated senior Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, said in a statement that the notorious Indian authorities raised hindu militia to terrorise Muslims and suppress the Kashmiris' ongoing freedom struggle. The chairperson said that the BJP was playing with fire by creating a pretext for religious conflict in IIOJK, as they wanted to forward their divisive and blood-soaked agenda. —APP

Govt devising strategy to curtail illegal narcotics' trade

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shazain Bugti on Tuesday, said that government was devising a comprehensive strategy to curtail movement of narcotics while legislation for ensuring effective control on selling and use of drugs was under consideration as well. He talking to media persons during visit of Benazir Shaheed ANF Model Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre (MATRC) Karachi, said that government was determined to root out the menace of drugs from the society. Besides stringent measures to control the drug peddling across the country, the government was also focused on effective measures for rehabilitation of drug addicts, he said adding that federal and provincial governments were working jointly to achieve the set goals. Shazain Bugti said that Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) and other federal and provincial agencies and departments were actively engaged in controlling the menace of drugs that was evident from the fact that out of total recovery of drugs and narcotic substances across the world as much as 17 per cent. —APP

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Head Office
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel: (+92 51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822711, 2874289 - Fax: (+92 51) 2825132, 2274227.
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Karachi
Room No. 14 & 15, 3rd Floor, Markazi Mall,
Main Tariq Road, T-11 Block-2, P.E.C.S.
Karachi. Tel: (+92 21) 34531747
Fax: (+92 21) 34531747
E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com

Lahore
F-4, Gulberg Centre,
Main Boulevard, Lahore.
Tel: (+92 42) 3579888, 3579705
Fax: (+92 42) 35711423
E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com

Peshawar
Office No. C-6, 3rd Floor, Zameer Plaza,
Laf Azeem Ring Road, Peshawar.
Tel: (+92 91) 2522778
Fax: (+92 91) 2522658
E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com

Kabul
House # 4, Street # 4,
Chahar Awar Road, Shahr-e-Naw,
Kabul - Afghanistan.
Tel: +93 799621 773, 93 797996 808, 93 779488 288
E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com

National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

May 03/Poland	National Day
May 06/Bulgaria	Armed Forces Day
May 06/UAE	Armed Forces Day
May 07/Kazakhstan	Armed Forces Day
May 08/Czech Republic	National Day
May 09/European Union	National Day
May 17/Norway	Constitution Day
May 21/Hungary	Armed Forces Day
May 22/Yemen Republic	Re-unification Day (National Day)
May 24/Eritrea	National Day
May 25/Argentina	National Day
May 25/Lebanon	Liberation and Resistance Day
May 28/Azerbaijan	Republic Day
May 28/Ethiopia	National Day
May 31/Brunei	Armed Forces Day



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Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



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Edhi Ambulance.....115
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Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
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Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
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DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
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Shifa International 4603666



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CDA.....9221334-43
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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



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research of Pakistan Tariq Bashir Cheema visiting the stalls along with Chairman PARC Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali and others during "Modern Agriculture Technologies" exhibition "at National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) in Federal Capital.—Online

G-20 Summit in Srinagar

President asks MOFA to intensify efforts to expose Indian designs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to intensify its efforts to expose India's nefarious designs and the ulterior motives behind its planned move to hold the G-20 Summit in the UN-recognized disputed territory of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The President expressed these views while conveying the letter of the Convener of the All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference (APHC), Mehmood Ahmed Saghar, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(MOFA), for appropriate action on the issue raised by him, today. In his letter to the President, Mr Mehmood Ahmed Saghar had sought the urgent attention of Pakistan towards the Indian government's highly controversial move to convene a meeting of the members of the G-20 countries in Srinagar and its far-reaching consequences on the Kashmiris' ongoing struggle for the right to self-determination. Expressing serious concern over the India's plan to hold the G-20 Summit events in the UN-recognized disputed territory, the Convener termed the move as a part of a "multi-faceted and multi-front campaign"

that New Delhi had been waging to create confusion about the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute. He added that India wanted to dilute Kashmir's international and legal status; strengthen the notion that Kashmir was nothing but its internal matter; deflect the world's attention away from the real issue; hide ground realities, and promote its so-called normalcy narrative. He had highlighted that India was yet again trying to use this crucial meeting to project its baseless normalcy narrative. Mr Mehmood Ahmed Saghar had emphasized the need for mega diplomatic offensive by Pakistan in the United Nations, and other regional

and international fora, to expose India's nefarious designs and its ulterior motives behind holding such a meeting in IIOJK. The Convener of APHC had stated that India, in brazen violation of the UNSC resolution, changed the special status of Kashmir unilaterally in 2019, and had been remorselessly peddling lies to create a smoke-screen to hoodwink the world, particularly the G20 nations into believing that all was well in the occupied territory. He said that the Modi government had organized visits of foreign envoys stationed at New Delhi to the disputed territory. He added that dozens of diplomats, mostly from European and African countries, were invited for a curat-

ed visit to help the government to project its "all is well in Kashmir" image and to ward off international pressure. He said that these guided trips were arranged to keep the charade of normalcy alive and convince the world that all was well in Kashmir.

He appreciated the efforts of Pakistan that had expressed strong indignation over India's decision to hold the G-20 Tourism Working Group meeting in Srinagar on 22-24 May 2023. Mr Saghar said that Pakistan was an important party to the dispute, and expressed the hope that it would continue to play its role and use its political and diplomatic clout effectively to thwart the Indian conspiracies.

NUST students display mural art on a huge canvas

ISLAMABAD: In a stirring display of artistic prowess, creativity and teamwork, NUST Marketing & Communications joined by a spirited team of students has successfully unveiled the first-ever wall mural at NUST on as large a canvas as the rear of Power Zone, one of the vast sports and fitness complexes at the university's Islamabad campus. It has taken months of unparalleled commitment and perseverance for the team to realise the mural that features a mesmerising blend of colours, shapes, and designs. From bold and vibrant brushstrokes to delicate and intricate patterns, the mural is a true testament to the power of collaboration and imagination, and a reminder of the incredible things that can happen when people work together to achieve a common goal, said a press release. To celebrate the culmination of this unprecedented initiative at the university and recognise the magnificent work of the project team, an event was organised at the mural site, which was graced by the presence of Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST, members of faculty and staff and students from different NUST institutions. Rector NUST extolled the artistry and dedication of the student team and NUST Marketing & Communications in executing this joint enterprise. Rector NUST also presented shields and certificates as a token of appreciation to students and staff.—DNA

Dar rejects news about OGRA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday rejected some reports circulating in both press and electronic media that the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) had recommended a decrease in the price of Motor Spirit Oil (MSO - Petrol) for first fortnight of the current month, terming them 'baseless and untrue.' "Some reports have been circulating in the press and electronic media stating that OGRA made recommendation to the government for a reduction in the price of Motor Spirit/ Petrol with effect from 1st May, 2023, which are baseless and untrue," the minister clarified on his Twitter handle. Meanwhile, OGRA spokesman Imran Ghaznavi in a brief press statement said the authority did not recommend any decrease in the prices of MS/Petrol. "The recent decrease in international price was offset against the outstanding exchange rate adjustment, and as such, there was no room for a decrease in the local prices of MS/Petrol.—APP

Member of thief gang held; valuables recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police Khanna police team have arrested a wanted member of a thief gang and recovered laptop, Jewelry, LCD, Digital camera and valuables from his possession, a Police Public Relation Officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police had categorically started a crackdown against criminal elements in order to save the precious lives and property of citizens. According to the details, a Khanna police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a thief gang. The accused was identified as Ata Ur Rehman. Police team also recovered stolen laptops, Jewelry, LCD, digital camera and valuables from his possession. Case has been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway. During the preliminary interrogation, the accused confessed to being involved in numerous theft incidents in various areas of the city.—DNA

Strategy devised to ensure complete coverage of census in Islamabad

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Noor-ul-Amin Mengal assured his full cooperation in filing the gaps identified by PBS and completing the important National task of Census as per timelines. DC and ACs will play their role by ensuring field visits for effective vigilance and monitoring and will share progress report on daily basis with Chief Census Commissioner Dr. Ali Ahmed Kharral, Deputy DG, Federal Directorate of Education assured to take action against non-cooperative field staff. PBS presented in detail the reasons of low coverage mined through Digital System and gave recommendations to achieve the target of full coverage and Chief Census Commissioner, Dr. Naem uz Zafar, assured full support of PBS in identifying further gaps and provision of desired information

In pursuance of directions of Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Minister PD & SI, to complete census exercise on 15th May, 2023 for timely handing over data to Election Commission of Pakistan. PBS higher management has decided to hold series of meetings starting with Chief Commissioner Islamabad on 1st May, 2023. Such meetings will also be conducted with Provincial Government of Punjab on 2nd May, 2023, KP on 3rd May, 2023, Sindh on 4th May, 2023 and Balochistan on 5th May, 2023. A meeting between Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) higher management and ICT administration, under the chair of Chief Census Commissioner, Dr. Naem uz Zafar, to determine the reasons (gaps) of low coverage in Islamabad and devise a targeted strategy to ensure complete coverage till 15th May, 2023 was held in National Census Coordination Centre (N3C). PBS head office on 1st May, 2023.

The reasons of low coverage determined through data analysis and ground realities were discussed in detail with ICT administration. As ICT Administration is fully responsible for completion of Census Field Work in Islamabad. The problems of negative growth rate specially in Islamabad Urban are lack of security of Enumerators, Non response, non-coverage of collective residences like hostels, madrassas etc. low coverage in high rise buildings, high percentage of one person and two persons' households, over reporting of non-living households. It was mutually agreed that all efforts will be made to reduce the gaps identified by PBS. Mr Sarwar Gondal, Member SSRM, PBS stressed on regular field visits of DC and ACs for effective monitoring. He also emphasized on daily progress sharing as strict action is needed to conclude the exercise on 15th May, 2023. Islamabad

Administration was fully agreed with the concept of targeted approach. Deputy Commissioner apprised that he has already directed all ACs to undertake field visit to ensure complete coverage and plug in the gaps identified by PBS. Results will be visible in coming days. Further, daily progress sharing, vigilance visits of DC and ACs in field in their respective areas of responsibility, complete security of field staff and strict action for the enumerators who have neglected their duties were also assured. Commissioner ICT directed DC to provide fool proof security to field staff coverage by engaging Rangers. He also advise to make utmost efforts to ensure complete coverage. Chief Census Commissioner, Dr Naem uz Zafar, anticipated that with cooperation of ICT Administration and PBS by taking remedial measures, the exercise will be completed successfully on 15th May, 2023.

Talha urges Moavineen-e-Hujjaj to fulfil responsibilities

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood on Tuesday urged the Moavineen-e-Hujjaj to fulfil their responsibilities in letter and spirit by taking care of the complete needs of the pilgrims during the entire Hajj operation. Addressing a training session of Moavineen-e-Hujjaj (assistants for pilgrims) here at the Pakistan Sports Complex, he said they should perform their duties under 'Jazba-e-Imani' (spirit of faith), adding that no negligence would be tolerated. Minister Talha said their performance would be monitored keenly as he himself would be among them in Saudi Arabia. He said he was in constant contact with the airlines and Saudi authorities assuring that the Hajj arrangements would be completed soon and the intending pilgrims would be dispatched on time to the holy land. He urged the media to avoid baseless news as it could degrade the morale of the people burning the midnight oil to make the Hajj operation a success story. In the end, he prayed to Allah Almighty to help the Hajj mission manage this official and religious duty in the best possible manner. Later talking to APP, spokesperson of the Ministry Muhammad Umar Butt informed that the training of Moavineen-e-Hujjaj started on May 01, and would continue till May 14 without any interruption. He said this training programme would equip them with all necessary religious and administrative information which would help them to perform their assigned duties in a diligent manner. Umar Butt said the training session was comprised of 500 people including the civil secretariat, armed forces police, traffic police, Rangers, Rescue 1122, and scouts etc. In addition, there were 200 staffers of the ministry taking part in the training, he added. He said after completing their codal formalities, they would be divided into groups and assigned various duties during the Hajj operation.—DNA

Mega corruption scandal unearthed in EOBI

ISLAMABAD: A corruption scandal involving billions of rupees has been unearthed in Employees Old-Age Benefit Institution (EOBI), a subsidiary of the Ministry of Human Rights and Overseas Pakistanis, which caused a loss of millions to the exchequer. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) launched an inquiry after seven audit paras came to light. According to the audit report, the contract for the Old Age Multiplex Hall in I-8 was awarded for more than estimated cost. PEC and engineers had estimated a cost of Rs2 billion, but EOBI awarded the same project at Rs3 billion with a 45 percent cost overrun. Moreover, scams were also reported in the project to link the EOBI building to the central AC system. The report further states that a company offered Rs71 million for the AC system and it had to furnish the complete building with AC in four months. However, EOBI installed the same system in Rs80 million which could not be operational for three years. Similarly, EOBI's Sialkot residential project for pensioners in Sialkot was also rife with irregularities. The project was started in 2014, and only 45 percent of the work has been completed so far, despite paying any additional cost overruns to the contractor for the project. The report also added that the total cost of the project was Rs67 million, which has now been treble. The project also reported the incompetence and collusion of both the consultant and the construction company. Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has also tasked the FIA separately to investigate the matter. FIA directed all concerned zones to submit reports on EOBI cases, adding that the investigation should be finished and submitted in accordance with the Public Accounts Committee's directions.—Agencies



Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini in parliament house Islamabad.—DNA

Briefs

Bid to
smuggle 265
flour bags
foiled

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police here on Tuesday foiled a bid to smuggle 265 flour bags. According to the district administration spokesman, Food Department Rawalpindi and Rawalpindi district police in a joint operation recovered 265 flour bags from the possession of an accused namely Abid. He informed that the authorities of the food department along with Rawalpindi District police were strictly monitoring all the exit points of the district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids. No one would be allowed to smuggle wheat and flour out of Rawalpindi District, he said.—APP

Police arrest
10 gamblers;
recover Rs
98,950 stake
money

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district Police arrested 10 gamblers and recovered Rs 98,950 stake money, five mobile phones and valuables from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that Waris Khan police conducted a raid and arrested five gamblers namely Toqeer, Tanveer, Ahmed, Talha and Bilal, who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. Police also recovered Rs 60,000 cash stake money, five mobile phones and other items from the possession of the arrested accused. In another raid, Westridge police conducted a raid and rounded up Sadaqat, Fakhar, Khurram, Ghulam Shabbir and Abdul Ghaffar, five gamblers and recovered Rs 38,950 cash stake money and other items from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process. Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Capt. Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi appreciated the police parties and said that gambling is the root cause of other evils and those involved in such crimes do not deserve any concession.

ANF recovers
over 224 kg
drugs; arrests six

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in three operations managed to recover over 224 kg of drugs, and 180 intoxicated tablets and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He said in an operation near Rawalpindi Bahria Town Phase-4, ANF arrested two accused and recovered three grams of cocaine, two grams of Ice drug and 180 intoxicated tablets. ANF in an operation conducted a raid on Quetta-Karachi Road and recovered 84 kg charras from a Karachi-bound mini bus coming from Quetta. Charras was concealed in secret cavities of the bus while two accused residents of Mastung were also rounded up during the operation. In the third operation on RCD Highway, 120 kg charras was also recovered from secret cavities of a truck and ANF arrested two accused residents of Quetta.—APP

Police arrest
nine for
possessing
illegal weapons

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi Amir Khan Niazi conducted raids in different areas and netted nine accused for possessing illegal weapons. According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad, Civil Lines, Taxila, Saddar Wah, Gujjar Khan, Jati and Rawat police rounded up nine accused namely Asim, Farhan Naeem, Munawar, Irfan Ullah, Imran, Afzal, Qamar ul Salam, Tariq and Waqas and recovered eight pistols 30 bores, a 30 bore rifle, and ammunition from their possession. The spokesman informed that Rawalpindi district police in their ongoing operation against professional beggars also arrested 37.—DNA

LoU signed for promoting
senior citizens' rights

The LOU was signed by Mr. Abdul Sattar, Director General, Ministry of Human Rights and Syed Moez Kakakhel, Country Director, HelpAge International

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Human Rights, Pakistan and HelpAge International on Tuesday signed a letter of understanding (LoU) to promote and protect the rights of senior citizens. The ceremony was held in Islamabad. The LOU was signed by Mr. Abdul Sattar, Director General, Ministry of Human Rights and Syed Moez Kakakhel, Country Director, HelpAge International. The event was attended by government officials from MoHR, representatives of Civil Society, media and senior citizens. In his welcome remarks, Rana Tariq Ali, Deputy Director MoHR informed the participants that the National Assembly had passed "The Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens Bill, 2021". He highlighted the steps taken so far to roll out the act. Ministry has constituted the senior citizens' council at the Ministry headed by the Federal Minister for Human Rights. The Ministry of Human Rights, he said is bound to create a senior citizens fund whereas the matter has been taken up with the finance ministry and will be approved this year. "We will need guidance in creating old age homes and regulations keeping in view the global best practices as it has become a

need of the hour," he said. He underlined that the grievance committee constitution and its rules are also needed under the legislation. Punjab government has established old age homes in seven divisions but has not framed any law on it, he said, "We not only intend to bring legislation but rather an attitudinal change in the society pertaining to senior citizens." "A senior citizen card will also be issued and they will be entitled to not stand in queues and also get 20% discount on medicines," the Deputy Director said. In addition, he said the Ministry has to do a lot of work and will need cooperation from civil society in this regard. Syed Moez Kakakhel, Country Director HelpAge International said the population of senior citizens globally was rising with population growth. He added that around one billion population in the world is above 60 years of age, and it will cross 1.4 billion by 2030. "Pakistan is the fifth most populous country and its old age population will reach 43 million by 2030. The youth population to shrink and senior citizens number will rise with time," he added. The Country

Director noted that women's life expectancy is more as compared to men in Pakistan whereas both equally faced the issues of secure income and health problems. He also highlighted that climate change resulting in various natural disasters like floods, heatwaves etc. in which older people are the most affected. Mr Moez emphasized on the involvement of the younger generation in educating the senior citizens on technology usage, Mr. Shahzad Khaskheli, Head of Programs, HelpAge International - Pakistan said the world population on November 15, 2022, reached eight billion and the planet Earth could only accommodate the same number of people. "Aging population is growing very fast. As per 2017 there were 962 million old-age people which is 13% of the global average. By 2050 100+ population to constitute 3.4 million international frameworks related to population ageing," he added. Syed Sajjad Hussain, project coordinator HelpAge International - Pakistan provided a detailed account of HelpAge role in advocacy and needs assessments done across the country to ensure legislation for ageing population.

He also briefed the participants on the project titled "Strengthening the Legal Framework and Civil Society for Age Inclusive Pakistan" Or the Ageing Pakistan project. The project will be till 2025 for an inclusive society also focusing on digital resources for age-inclusive measures, he added. Mr. Salman Khan, Development Cooperation Specialist from German Embassy in his remarks said Pakistan is facing serious threats due to climate change, food security, inequalities, inflation etc. However, Pakistan and Germany last year celebrated their 70th anniversary of bilateral ties. The project being briefed today has been built on the knowledge of different programme of BMZ (German Development Organization) on the same in various provinces. Germany remains committed to support Pakistan and its people for development," he added. Mr Javed Alam, Ex Director General, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education, shared different components of old age issues that need redressal in policy making. Mr. Muzaffar Mahmood, Former Federal Secretary, MoHR said it was

a moment of great pleasure that after a long time, the department achieved the goal and started developing different initiatives that were much needed related to Ageing population. He shared a comparative analysis of the Senior Citizens Acts of the three provinces and ICT. The Sindh Senior Citizens Welfare Act, 2014 is elaborate, and we need to learn from it, he added. Bilquis Tahira from Shirakat Organization, pointed out that the proposed "The Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens Bill, 2021" aims to provide advantages to the elderly. However, the elderly community is not seeking special treatment as they are not a group of dependent individuals. Instead, they aspire to actively participate in society and make valuable contributions, showcasing their capabilities and strengths. The changing of mindsets is extremely important whereas the use of language in policy is important and needs to be focused on by the stakeholders, she added. DG MoHR Mr Abdul Sattar in his concluding remarks said the Ministry will make all-out efforts to ensure the Senior Citizens Act implementation and achievement of all of its objectives in the shortest possible time.

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COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Medum Afshan Younas Civil Judge Gujrat
Title: Tajamal Hussain. Versus Muhammad Walayat etc. Notice to: Muhammad Walayat S/o. Allah Dita Late through, Walayat Begum widow, Muhammad Ishfaq, Shahzad Ahmad Sons, Asim BiBi, Fatima BiBi Daughters Walayat Khan R/o. Mohallah Feroz Abad Near Narowali Tehsil & District Gujrat.

Suit for Declaration with Permanent Injunction Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 10-05-2023, otherwise case will be decided ex party.

COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Medum Afshan Younas Civil Judge Gujrat Title: Azra BiBi etc. Versus Province of Punjab etc. Notice to: 1- Province of Punjab through Collector Gujrat, 2- Revenue Officer Halqa Kotli Kohala, 3- Patwari Halqa Kotli Kohala, 4- Zafar Iqbal S/o. Atta Ullah cast Jutt Warraich R/o. Kotli Kohala Tehsil & District Gujrat. Suit for Declaration with Consequential Relief Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 5-05-2023, otherwise case will be decided ex party.



ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins hosted dinner for the outgoing Deputy High Commissioner at his residence.—DNA

Self-serving elites stealing
from people to fill their coffers

Saifuddin Sheikh, Executive Director of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Tuesday said inflation is decreasing in dozens of countries, but it is increasing continuously in Pakistan and there is no possibility of a reduction. The main causes of inflation in Pakistan which has made life difficult for the majority include poor governance and endless elitism, he said. Saifuddin Sheikh said that all the resources are being spent on the welfare of the elite therefore poverty is increasing and the middle class is disappearing in the country. In a statement issued here today, he said that the burden of wrong priorities and benefitting the elite falls on the poor who are reeling under inflation. The price of flour, meat, rice, chicken and sugar along with other items is continuously increasing in the country and their export and smuggling are also growing rapidly. He noted that the statements

regarding action against the profiteer mafia by the top authorities are meant to feed the public a lollipop of satisfaction, which has nothing to do with reality. All the important policies are designed to benefit the elite which increases the suffering of the people instead of reducing it. Due to the selfishness of the elites and the avoidance of necessary reforms, the economy has not been able to develop and instead of reducing poverty, it is increasing it, he added. Politicians and other influential consider it their right to plunder national resources while paying tax is considered as an insult. Businessmen also prefer to get subsidies and packages through various pretexts instead of competing in the international market and when they have a lot of black money, they get the government to announce an amnesty scheme, he observed.—DNA

Tariq
demands
full bench of
court

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Tuesday demanded holding elections at the same time in the entire country and a full bench of court decisions to ensure transparency in the system. "The solution to the prevailing constitutional, political and legal complications is to hold elections once and at the same time in the entire country to ensure transparency and fairness", he said while talking to a private news channel. Replying to a question, he said dialogue was one of the decent choices at the moment to resolve the issues. He further said the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) were holding their "final" round of negotiations and hopefully meaningful results would be obtained. In response to another question, Tariq said that the ruling coalition government was not violating the Constitution but rather expressing its reservations.—APP

Bid to
smuggle 265
flour bags
foiled

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police here on Tuesday foiled a bid to smuggle 265 flour bags. According to the district administration spokesman, Food Department Rawalpindi and Rawalpindi district police in a joint operation recovered 265 flour bags from the possession of an accused namely Abid. He informed that the authorities of the food department along with Rawalpindi District police were strictly monitoring all the exit points of the district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids.—APP

Railways' Eid train
operation gets
brilliant response

"The SPs of Railways Police directed to conduct complete check and search of empty racks for departure towards their destinations," the official added

ISLAMABAD: The special trains on Eid ul Fitr introduced by Pakistan Railways had received an overwhelming response from thousands of travellers who visited their loved ones in their native towns. The passengers have expressed their gratitude to Pakistan Railways for facilitating them on Eid through special trains which saved their precious time and money. A large number of passengers with families were seen at the railway stations according to whom the staff at the stations was quite helpful in informing them about timing of trains, platforms' numbers, ticketing and booking issues. Talking to APP Muhammad Ali who arrived at Rawalpindi Railway Station from Karachi after celebrating Eid with his relatives said that Pakistan Railways had won the passengers' hearts through completing Eid trains operation with a lot of improvement. Another passenger, Shahraiz Arshid said that the services being provided by the management were very much improved while all the railway stations were neat and clean. He said that despite the tracks were not in good condition after the heavy rains and floods of 2022 across the country, the timing of the trains was also improved as compared to the previous years. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Railways had announced the operation of five special trains to facilitate the travel needs of the public during the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays. He said the trains had been operated from Karachi to Lahore and Karachi and Peshawar to various locations across the country, providing a comfortable and convenient mode of transportation for passengers. On the other hand, Pakistan Railways Police had also tightened security arrangements in trains as well as at stations to avoid any untoward incident during Eid-ul-Fitr vacations. Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique had directed all superintendents (SPs) of Railways Police to depute sufficient force at exit and entry points of all railway stations and strictly watch to be carried out of suspicious persons, he added. Pakistan Railways Police Commando Force had been deputed at vulnerable installations and in trains, while bomb disposal staff was also kept on alert for the search of luggage and passengers at railway stations.

Pak battered currency
is slowly recovering


Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Tuesday said the country's rupee is recovering slowly which is encouraging. If the IMF loan is received, the recovery of the rupee will be accelerated, while if the loan is not received, the recovery process will come to a halt and its value may fall further, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that one dollar was being traded at 288.43 rupees on April 11, but now it is available for 283.84 rupees. He said that foreign exchange reserves have also increased to more than four and a half billion dollars, which is good for the economy. The business leader said that Saudi Arabia and Iran will reopen embassies in each other's countries after seven years, which is a great achievement for China. This development has reduced American influence in the region, it will balance the situation in the region, increase trade, and cut the military budget. It is expected that due to the improvement of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Syria and Yemen will see some stability and the political situation in many other countries will improve, he said. China is also pushing for a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, and Beijing should also consider mediation between Pakistan and India so that the two countries can become friends instead of enemies. This will end hostilities and improve the living standards of more than one and a half billion people. It will be a difficult task for China, but not impossible. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that Pakistan has always been in need of political and economic support from America while India is also very close to the US while both countries are on the same page to counter China's influence. He said that it is in China's interest to help establish better relations between Pakistan and India for development, elimination of terrorism and smooth sailing of CPEC.—DNA

Prices of tea leaves
skyrocketed again

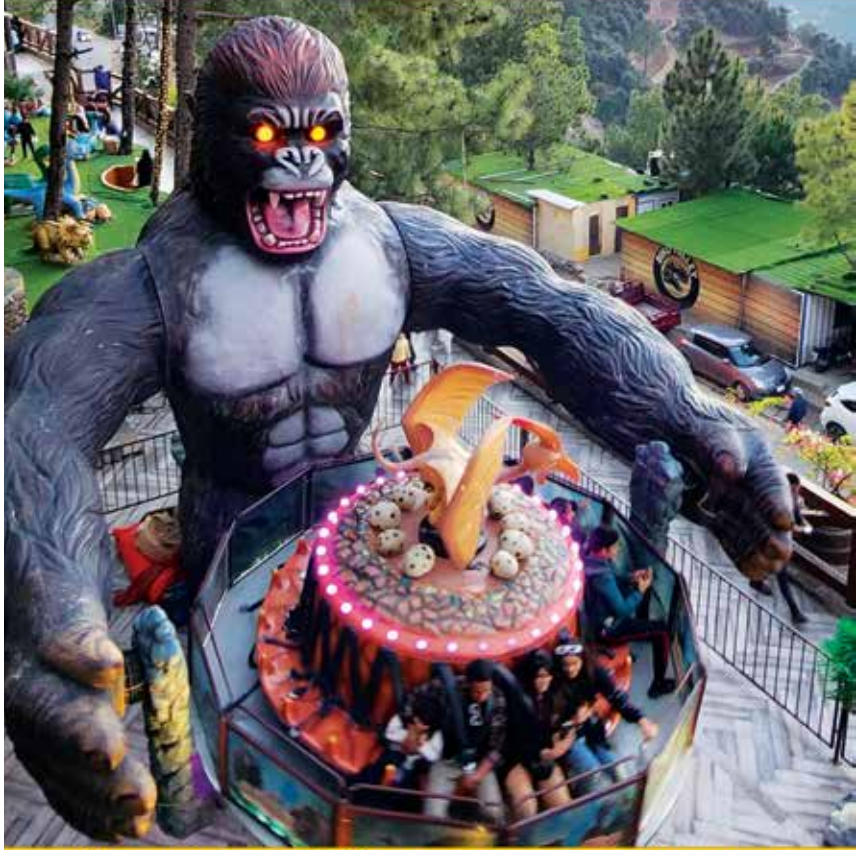
ISLAMABAD: The prices of tea leaves, the only luxury enjoyed by the poor, have been hiked once again. Rates of loose and branded tea leaves soared, making them

unaffordable for those who are struggling with inflation. According to details, the price of a kg of loose leaves has been increased from Rs1,400 to Rs1,600. The price of 900

grams of Tapal tea has gone up from Rs1,400 to Rs1,700. Likewise, 900 grams of Lipton tea, which was previously priced at Rs1,600, would now be sold at Rs1,850.—DNA



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India under Modi dictatorship

Becoming the world's most populous nation allows India to burnish its credentials as a global economic and political heavyweight. With a population that is much younger than those of China, the US and the EU, there will be renewed interest in India's potential to be a beacon of liberal values. The west is eager to draw a democratic giant into its orbit. China and India will together account for about half of all global growth this year. But India risks emulating its bigger northern neighbour's economic ascent under tight political control by a dominant authoritarian party. Hindu nationalism in India is writing an epitaph for the country's experiment with multi-ethnic secular democracy. Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) has weakened institutions meant to keep the state both transparent and accountable. Information is censored, civil society hounded and protests suppressed. It is absurd that opposition leaders have been targeted to the extent that Mr Modi's main rival – Rahul Gandhi – is currently disqualified from parliament. Such is the polarisation in politics that India's last parliamentary session was the least productive since 1952. Mr Modi's party has bent state institutions to service its ideology. This has effectively rendered minorities second-class citizens. The suppression of the civil rights of the world's largest minority group, about 200 million Muslims, is unlikely to be viable over a long period without giving up on democracy. This would be a terrible outcome for India and the world. The latest Lamborghini sports car models, which cost £400,000, are already sold out in India. But 350m Indians went hungry in 2022, up from 190m in 2018. Rather than taxing the rich and corporates to fund health and education, the BJP has taxed the poor to pay for public services. India added zero net new jobs over the past decade, even as the number of people in the labour force rose by more than 100 million. The country's democratic rise is far from assured. But for it to be sustained, there must be a political consensus that the prosperity of all its people, not just those at the top, should be increased.

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Japan's semantics endanger the sea

When Tokyo Electric Power Company finished digging a one-kilometer underground tunnel last week, providing an outlet to discharge contaminated nuclear wastewater into the sea, they had spent all that time and money on what amounted to a technicality. In 1972, the year the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea came into force, several countries agreed to adopt the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, or the London Dumping Convention, which sets strict rules on dumping waste into the ocean. Yet at a meeting of the Protocol of the Convention in October 2022, when the South Korean delegate pointed out Japan had violated the convention, the Japanese delegate argued they were not technically "dumping" the nuclear contaminated waste water due to the construction of the pipeline, and said the issue "should not be discussed" at such meetings. Whether discharged from a ship, a tunnel above sea level or a pipe under it, nuclear-contaminated wastewater is radioactive and will pose a grave threat to marine life. Japan's move won't help it escape the necessary consequences. Instead, it only exposes the dishonesty of the Japanese government and TEPCO, who spend all their energy playing with semantics rather than doing the right thing.

Pak-Rus Relations: Diamond Jubilee

Dr M Ali Hamza



It was 1st may 1948 when Pakistan and Russia (former Soviet Union) established diplomatic relations. From the initiation of the relations till 1954 both countries had ups and downs. As a result of elections in 1954, the newly elected PM Hussain Suhrawardy; a man of left-wing ideology, deliberated on improving relations

When the former prime minister Imran Khan was ousted from the parliament, one of the main rumors circulated was his two days visit to Russia. The pro-American forces within the country did not approve of this visit. It was not a simple trip, rather was the first visit by a Pakistani prime minister in 23 years. PM Imran is the first Pakistani premier to visit Russia on a bilateral trip since Nawaz Sharif visited the country in March 1999; and you know what happened afterwards. It was a declaration of revival of relations. Moreover, Imran Khan was first foreign leader to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin after Russian troops entered the separatist regions of eastern Ukraine that escalated crisis between Russia and the West. It was also a clear demonstration that Pakistan and Russia now matter for each other strategically more than ever before. Let us have a quick overview of 75 years of this zigzag relation and the future prospects. It was 1st may 1948 when Pakistan and Russia (former Soviet Union) established diplomatic relations. From the initiation of the relations till 1954 both countries had ups and downs. As a result of elections in 1954, the newly elected PM Hussain Suhrawardy; a man of left-wing ideology, deliberated on improving relations. A delegation of the Soviet cultural troupe toured Pakistan and a first ever festival of the Soviet films was held in Karachi. As a reciprocal gesture the Govt. of Pakistan sent a delegation to study the Soviet industrial and agricultural development. It was 1956 when Soviet Union offered technical and scientific support to Pakistan for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This all happened after PM Suhrawardy submitted the plan to establish the nuclear power against India: so, it was Mr. Suhrawardy not Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who has to be credited for the conception of nuclear energy program. Later, the Soviet Union agreed to offer technical assistance to Pakistan in agriculture, economic, science, control of pest, flood control, desalination, soil erosion etc. This was the result of dialogues and consistent relation that in 1958, Pakistan and Soviet Union finally established an oil consortium; Pakistan Oilfields, and expressed interests in establishing the Pakistan's first steel mills. Then a sudden and decisive exercise of armed force in politics was triggered; a US-backed 1958 military coup took place. The relations between Pakistan and USSR turned dormant.

In 1959 a location called Badaber; in south of Peshawar, was leased to CIA for 10 years to establish a camp under the project Sand Bag. CIA was interested to intercept radio transmission from the Soviet Union. So, they did. On May 1, 1960, a United States U-2 spy plane was shot down by the Soviet Air Defence Forces while conducting photographic aerial reconnaissance deep inside Soviet territory. It is said that Soviet Union paid back its revenge on Indo-Pakistani war of 1965; emerged as the biggest supplier of military hardware to India. Soviet Union also used the diplomacy, convincing the US and Western powers to keep a ban on Pakistan's military hardware. However, in 1968, Soviet Union and Pakistan made an arms deal. The Anti-American sentiment was greater in East-Pakistan (currently Bangladesh). Even 162 newly elected members of East-Pakistan Parliament in 1970, denounced Pakistan's government defense treaty with United States signed in 1954 and caused the establishment of MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group). Later the value of friendship with Soviet Union was also realized in Pakistan, so Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto made efforts to improve relations. Mr. Bhutto revived the foreign policy; relieved Pakistan from SEATO and CENTO, put a halt to the relations with United States, and in 1974 paid a state visit to Soviet Union; becoming the first PM of Pakistan since the independence in 1947. Soviet Union met the delegation with great jubilation, displayed warm-hearted celebration, given an honorary guard of honour by the Soviet Armed Forces and reached to agreements with Soviet Union on mutual trust, cooperation, technical assistance, and friendship. Resultantly Mr. Bhutto convinced Soviet Union to provide funds for the billion-dollar integrated steel mills project. The foundation stone for this gigantic project was laid in 1973, and Pakistan being inexperienced for the erection work of steel mill, Soviet Union sent its dozens of advisors and experts who supervised the construction of Steel Mills project. In this period Soviet Union and Pakistan enjoyed healthy and strong relationship for mutually agreed benefits. Again history repeated itself and CIA-sponsored operation codenamed Fair Play was launched to remove Mr. Bhutto from power in 1977. The Soviet relations with Pakistan started deteriorating in 1979, when Bhutto was executed by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The post 1979 era was the apex of cold war, and Pakistan sided the American

and fought a covert war in Afghanistan through Mujahidin against Soviet Union. US portrayed a picture that Soviet Union is moving forward with extension policy and going to grab Pakistan after Afghanistan. This reason was good enough to engage Pakistan against Soviet Union; indeed MAAG must have played a key role in painting this picture. We know what happened afterwards, USSR collapsed and reborn as Russia, US hegemony expanded, Dollar dominance deepened, and New World Order got in place. From 1979 till 2002, Russia struggled out from its clawed economy, handled its oligarchs, restructured the political system, and got back to the path of development. In Pakistan, these years were full of political uncertainty, and economic suffering. And then 9/11 took place. Pakistan was threatened by US "Our way or the highway", this pushed Pakistan to review its foreign policy and at last the landmark visit of President Musharraf in Feb 2003 to Kremlin; aimed at strengthening ties between the two countries, and assuring Pakistan's new approach toward global and regional politics, paved a new way toward healthier relations. After the visit of 2003 onward the relations between Pakistan and Russia improved markedly as illustrated by high-level visits, arms sales, and increased cooperation. To mention few of the developments: four-nation summit in Moscow on Afghanistan that involved Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, high-level security meetings, visit of top political and military officials including visit of three army chiefs; Gen. Kayani, Gen. Raheel Sharif and Gen. Bajwa to Kremlin, lifting arms embargo on Pakistan, joint counter-narcotics and military exercises, Aman naval exercise: which included the participation of 35 countries and for the first time, Russia's largest antisubmarine warfare Severomorsk participated. As relations between Pakistan and Russia were brewing, US president Donald Trump terminated Pakistan's participation in America's International Military Education Program. In response Pakistan and Russia signed the "Security Training Agreement" to train Pakistani military officers in Russian military institutions for the first time. These examples show the trajectory of relations. After 75 years the fresh and new dawn of bilateral relations is on exponential growth. We foresee that the new political power; expectedly Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf will add-on to strengthen these ties for the national, regional and global interest.

Ursula Von der Leyen should apologize for whitewashing Israel's apartheid regime

Osama Al-Sharif

The fact that such an unabashed message failed to refer to the occupation or the Palestinian right to self-determination can only be a sign of either ignorance, which cannot be forgiven, or acquiescence, which is criminal. The colonial-era trope uttered by her in reference to making "the desert bloom" resurrects falsehoods spread by the Zionist hasbara propaganda machine many decades ago about a promised land that had no native inhabitants and no civilization that goes back thousands of years. It is no wonder that her message, celebrating Israel's "vibrant democracy in the heart of the Middle

The congratulatory video message recorded by the head of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to mark Israel's 75th Independence Day last week was a blatant insult to millions of Palestinians living under occupation and in the diaspora. Moreover, it was an affront to anyone who is disgusted by Israel's immoral and illegal 56-year occupation of Palestinian territories, the 16-year siege of Gaza, the building of illegal settlements, the demolition of Palestinian homes, the incarceration and killing of children and the repugnant violation of UN resolutions and international conventions and laws, in addition to numerous human rights violations. The fact that such an unabashed message failed to refer to the occupation or the Palestinian right to self-determination can only be a sign of either ignorance, which cannot be forgiven, or acquiescence, which is criminal. The colonial-era trope uttered by her in reference to making "the desert bloom" resurrects falsehoods spread by the Zionist hasbara propaganda machine many decades ago about a promised land that had no native inhabitants and no civilization that goes back thousands of years. It is no wonder that her message, celebrating Israel's "vibrant democracy in the heart of the Middle East," was condemned by the Palestinian Authority and thousands of social media activists. For starters, one cannot mention Israel's so-called independence without referring to the Palestinian Nakba, or catastrophe, of 1947-48 and beyond. These two events are intertwined and always will be; one people's liberation came at the expense of another. And if Von der Leyen rejects the Palestinian narrative, she should check the historical accounts of respected Israeli historians such as Ilan Pappé, Tamar Novick and Benny Morris about massacres and ethnic cleansing crimes committed by the Irgun, Lehi – also known as the Stern Gang – and Haganah during Israel's war of independence against the Palestinians. More than 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their ancestral homes and tens of villages were destroyed forever. But one does not have

to go that far back in history. The claim that Israel is a democracy is also false. How can a state that occupies an entire people for more than five decades be described as a democracy? Again, the European Commission president should check the indictment of one of Israel's most-respected human rights organizations, B'Tselem, which in January 2021 reported that "in the entire area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, the Israeli regime implements laws, practices and state violence designed to cement the supremacy of one group – Jews – over another – Palestinians." B'Tselem added that "a regime that uses laws, practices and organized violence to cement the supremacy of one group over another is an apartheid regime." And it concluded: "These accumulated measures ... form the basis for our conclusion that the bar for labeling the Israeli regime as apartheid has been met." Its case also rested on Israel passing the Nation-State of the Jewish People law in 2018. The same label was soon adopted by Amnesty International, which declared that its "investigation shows that Israel imposes a system of oppression and domination against Palestinians across all areas under its control: in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and against Palestinian refugees, in order to benefit Jewish Israelis. This amounts to apartheid as prohibited in international law." The same conclusion was reached by Human Rights Watch, also in 2021. As for Von der Leyen's provocative statement that Europe and Israel share common values, she should check some figures related to Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank and its siege of the Gaza Strip. In the first quarter of 2023, the Israeli military killed 95 Palestinians in the West Bank, including 17 children, according to the UN. At least 4,765 Palestinian prisoners, of whom 971 were administrative detainees, were held in Israeli jails at the start of March this year, according to Haaretz. Administrative detainees can be held for an open-ended period of time without charges and without trial. Furthermore, since the start of this year, Israeli forces have demolished at least 47 Palestinian-built structures in occupied East

Jerusalem, including inhabited and uninhabited homes, stores and other structures. This is a war crime under international law. Moreover, Israel continues to approve new illegal settlement building in the West Bank, in violation of international laws. Are these the shared values that Von der Leyen is referring to? Finally, Israel blocked a visit by the EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, earlier this year because he dared to criticize Israel's policies in the West Bank. It has also barred UN envoys from visiting the Occupied Territories on numerous occasions. And with reference to Brussels' partnership with Israel, Von der Leyen should check how many EU-funded schools Israel has demolished in recent years. By 2017, Israel had destroyed at least \$74 million-worth of EU-funded projects in the Occupied Territories, including schools, playgrounds and agricultural initiatives, according to the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor. In response, eight EU countries demanded that Israel compensate them for the demolition of new school facilities for Bedouin communities in the West Bank. No compensation was ever received. Last year, an EU delegation visiting the West Bank said it was "appalled" after Israeli forces destroyed a primary school in Masafer Yatta. And, in 2021, a group of 160 academics from 21 countries urged the European Commission to "use its leverage" and ban Israeli universities from receiving funds from an EU program worth over \$100 billion. In a letter, they said that "the complicity of Israeli academic institutions in Israel's structural violence perpetrated against Palestinians across historic Palestine has been broadly and systematically documented." Echoing Israeli propaganda about making the desert bloom and shared democratic values is an attempt to whitewash an apartheid regime. Von der Leyen's rhetoric reeks of obscene Orientalist bigotry and she must apologize to the Palestinians, who continue to suffer under the oldest colonial occupation in modern times.

—Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

'Independent judiciary a must'

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former chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry — had addressed the issue in a verdict. "Politics has tainted the judicial process," the country's top judge remarked. He maintained that there are also some limitations and restrictions of the federal list with respect to legislative powers. "See section 55 of the Federal Legislative List," the CJP said. He added that an independent judiciary is a fundamental component of the Constitution and it cannot be changed. "It is alleged that the fundamental part of the Constitution was violated through legislation for the first time in the country's history," he remarked. He added that the chief justice has the authority to appoint seven senior judges and form a full court. Only the president, CJP Bandial said, can file a reference as declared by the court in the Iftikhar Chaudhry case. "A reference against a judge cannot prevent them from working until the opinion of the Supreme Judicial Council," he said. The CJP said that the court gave the same decision even in the Justice Qazi Faez Isa case and highlighted that he has received complaints against judges regularly. "Complaints keep coming against most of the Supreme Court judges including myself," he added. Criticising political parties for seeking verdicts based on their wishes, the chief justice said: "Political people want decisions of their choice, not justice."

The demand for a full court and removal of judges was also made during the elections delay case. "The decision of the Supreme Court judges is the decision of the court. Every institution is bound to implement the Supreme Court's orders," the CJP said. The hearing of the pleas was adjourned by the court till May 8. "We will resume the case on Monday and then review all the issues," CJP Bandial said. He also directed all parties in the case to submit written arguments in the case. After having the PBC's request rejected during the hearing, its lawyer Hassan Raza Pasha apologised to the judiciary in case of any hurt caused. "We are not angry. We will leave [eventually]. PBC will stay here, we won't," CJP Bandial said. "A request for formation of a full court was made earlier, but not for the exclusion of judges," Pasha elaborated. CJP Bandial asked the PBC counsel to find out what a full court is according to lawyers. Pasha said he has informed the court about lawyers' concerns.

"The Supreme Court bar has to protect the institution," the chief justice remarked. He said that it should first be understood what the law is and why it is made. "The court should consider expanding the bench," AGP Awan said. The CJP responded saying that the members of the bench can also be reduced. "If the judges of the Supreme Court are not respected, then there will be no demand for justice," the top judge said. He lamented that it was shameful that a request for full court was made in the previous case.

Chinese top diplomat to lead strategic talks with Pakistan
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Afghanistan to discuss urgent peace, security, and stability matters. On Monday, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres began a two-day meeting in Doha with special envoys from Afghanistan from various countries that aims "to achieve a common understanding within the international community on how to engage with the Taliban," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar has underlined the importance for international community to take credible steps in support of the people of Afghanistan.



RAWALPINDI: Winner team of 119th M.P. Bhandara Polo Cup 2023 posing for a picture with envoys of Japan, Nepal, France, CEO Murrree Brewery Ishphanyar Bhandara and others after the final match played at the Rawalpindi Polo Ground. — DNA

Zeeshan Zeb bags Torsam Khan Squash C'ship Crown

Zeeshan Zeb outclassed Mohammad Ammad in the men's final of the championship, The contest lasted for 28 minutes with Zeeshan overcoming Ammad 11-8, 11-3 and 11-6 in three straight sets

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Young talented Zeeshan Zeb, showing brilliant form to beat his opponent Muhammad Ammad in the final to win the title of 2nd Torsam Khan Men's PSA Satellite Series sponsored by Image Private Limited & Xtrime Labs at Pakistan Navy Roshan Khan Jahangir Khan Sports Complex, Karachi on Monday. Zeeshan Zeb outclassed Mohammad Ammad in the men's final of the championship, The contest lasted for 28 minutes with Zeeshan overcoming Ammad 11-8, 11-3 and 11-6 in three straight sets. It should be noted that the tournament is named after Torsam Khan, who was the son of a former British Open champion Roshan Khan and elder brother of squash legend Jahangir Khan and died of a heart attack on November 28, 1979, dur-

ing the Australian Open match in Adelaide, Australia. In the final of the women's event, Mehwish Ali defeated Roshan-

aMahboob by 3-2 after an interesting and thrilling contest. The score was 11-6, 11-9, 4-11, 9-11 and 12-10. In the under-15 final of

the championship, Nauman Khan defeated Malik Haris by 3-0. The final score was 11-4, 11-3 and 11-2. Later, the former World No.

1 legendary squash champion Jahangir Khan along with the CEO of Combaxx Sports Omar Saeed and CEO of Image Pvt Ltd., Mr Asad Ahmed distributed trophies to the players and souvenirs to the members of the organizing committee. POA media advisor, Asif Azeem, Tania Karim and tournament referee Naveed Alam were also present. Meanwhile speaking on the occasion, Jahangir Khan said that Torsam Khan was his mentor and he was considered one of the best squash players of his time. Almost 44 years have passed since his death but the memories are still alive in our hearts, he added. Appreciating the enthusiasm of the young players during the event, Jahangir Khan advised them to pay full attention to their sport and talent so that they become world-class players for the country. This is the only way to regain the lost glory in squash.



Klopp says referee row down to 'emotion and anger'

LIVERPOOL: Jurgen Klopp said his aggressive confrontation with match officials after Liverpool's dramatic late winner against Tottenham was down to "emotion" and "anger in that moment". The Football Association is investigating comments by the Reds boss that appeared to call into question the integrity of referee Paul Tierney after Sunday's 4-3 victory at Anfield. Following Diogo Jota's late winner, Klopp ran down the touchline to celebrate in front of fourth official John Brooks and received a yellow card from Tierney. "The whole situation shouldn't have happened at all," Klopp said at a press conference on Tuesday. "It was out of emotion, out of anger in that moment. That's why I celebrated the way I celebrated. "I didn't say anything wrong. I couldn't get close to the fourth official and I didn't want to get close to him." Klopp, whose team are fifth in the Premier League table after four straight wins, added: "Paul Tierney came over and I didn't expect a red card, I expected a yellow. He said to me: 'For me it's a red card,' but he gave me a yellow. 'After the game I tried to calm down and didn't properly. I said (in TV interviews): 'What he said to me was not OK. I opened the box which I didn't want to open. "The rest was things I said about how I felt in that moment and Paul Tierney doing our games. I'm not a resentful person but these things which happen in the past happens, not intentionally but they are there. "Obviously the refs are really angry about what I said. I did a lot of things that day but I didn't lie." Klopp said after the game that he did not know what the official "has against us". Speaking ahead of Wednesday's home match against Fulham, Klopp said he expected to face punishment. "Refs think I questioned their integrity, which if I am sitting here now calm, I don't do," said the German. — AP

Serena announces pregnancy on Met Gala

NEW YORK: Serena Williams confirmed she is expecting baby number two on Monday, telling reporters at the star-studded Met Gala in New York that there were "three of us" on the red carpet, where she arrived with husband Alexis Ohanian. The 23-times major winner announced last year that she was "evolving away from tennis," writing in a Vogue magazine article that she wanted to grow her family after welcoming daughter Olympia in 2017. "Was so excited when Anna Wintour invited the 3 of us to the Met Gala," Williams said in a TikTok post on Monday evening. Williams, a long-time friend of Wintour, the Vogue editor-in-chief and Met Gala co-chair, is a frequent attendee of the annual event to benefit the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute and on Monday donned a form-fitting black gown with a white skirt. — Agencies

Pak Shaheens eye winning start in Zimbabwe

DNA

HARARE: Pakistan Shaheens, under the leadership of Imran Butt, set to start their Zimbabwe tour with first four-day against their A team, starting on May 3 in Kwekwe. The Shaheens squad, comprised of seven international cricketers, is looking forward to start the tour on a winning note. The competitive squad contains young energetic players alongside captain Imran, who is a Test cricketer, Hussain Talat (one ODI, 18 T20Is), Kamran Ghulam (one ODI), Mir Hamza (three Tests), Mohammad Ali (two Tests), Shah Nawaz Dahani (two ODIs, 11 T20Is) and Saim Ayub (eight T20Is). Pakistan will play two four-dayers and six one-dayers against Zimbabwe A team from May 3-27 Kwekwe, Harare and Mutare. It will be Pakistan Shaheens' first tour after 2021. Before departing for Zimbabwe, Pakistan Shaheens had a 11-day training camp

in Karachi followed by two-day camp in Lahore. Under the supervision of coaching staff led by former Test cricketer Aizaz Cheema, Pakistan Shaheens did extensive training session. Imran Butt said: "Our preparations have been going well, we have been working on adapting to the conditions here. The players are determined to play their best cricket and make the most of this opportunity. "Our players understand the importance of this series and what it could mean for their future prospects. They are all motivated to perform well and make a strong case for themselves."

Squad: Imran Butt (captain) (Lahore), Hussain Talat (vice-captain) (Lahore), Amir Jamal (Islamabad), Abdul Wahid Bangalzai (Quetta), Haseebullah (Quetta), Kamran Ghulam (Peshawar), Mehran Mumtaz (Rawalpindi), Mir Hamza (Karachi), Mohammad Ali (Sialkot), Mohammad Hura (Sialkot), Mubasir Khan (Islamabad),

Omar Bin Yousuf (Karachi), Qasim Akram (Lahore), Rohail Nazir (wicketkeeper) (Islamabad) and Shah Nawaz Dahani (Larkana). Saim Ayub (Karachi, 50-over matches only).

Reserves: Asif Mehmood (Hyderabad), Athar Mehmood (Gujranwala), Saad Khan (Hyderabad) and Waqar Ahmad (Peshawar) Player Support Personnel — Aizaz Cheema (coach), Imran Abbas (manager), Saboor Ahmed (trainer), Muhammad Asad (physiotherapist) and Faisal Rai (team analyst). Abdul Rehman (Team Consultant, for 50-over matches only)

Tour schedule: 3-6 May — 1st Four-day match; KSC, Kwekwe, 10-13 May — 2nd Four-day match; MSC, Mutare, 17 May — 1st 50-over match; TSC, Harare, 19 May — 2nd 50-over match; HSC, Harare, 21 May — 3rd 50-over match; HSC, Harare, 23 May — 4th 50-over match; OH, Harare, 25 May — 5th 50-over match; HSC, Harare, 27 May — 6th 50-over match; HSC, Harare.

Uzbek-German: Co-op pursues long-term perspective

BAKU: Germany, one of the world's leading powers and a confident leader in various sectors and spheres of the global economy, is Uzbekistan's reliable and time-tested partner in Europe. The first official visit of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Germany on January 20-22, 2019, as well as the return visit of the Federal President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier to Uzbekistan on May 27-29 the same year have given a powerful impetus to the further development of bilateral partnership. On March 12, 2021, the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Angela Merkel held an online summit during which they exchanged views on implementation of the agreements reached at

the highest level, as well as on the current international agenda and interaction within global and regional structures. Today, the partnership between the two countries is multifaceted, covering trade, economic, investment and technological areas. The two nations have worked out fruitful cooperation in security, human rights protection, environment protection, science and education, expansion of cultural ties and tourism exchange. Uzbekistan's constructive cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany on issues of global and regional agenda has also been realized in multilateral formats - within the United Nations, OSCE and other agencies. Tashkent and Berlin hold similar or coinciding positions on many issues, including the fight against terrorism, organized crime,

drug trafficking, and the situation in Afghanistan. The Uzbekistan-Germany group for cooperation with the German Bundestag was set up in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis in 2016. A parliamentary group "Germany - Central Asia" has been active in the



German parliament since 1994. The regular political consultations between the foreign ministries of Uzbekistan and Germany are an effective mechanism for discussing the current agenda of bilateral relations. For many years, the Konrad

Adenauer and Friedrich Ebert foundations, the Foundation for International Legal Cooperation at the Ministry of Justice of Germany and the German Society for International Cooperation have been successfully cooperating with partner organizations in Uz-

bekistan and implementing relevant social and economic projects. The contacts are developing dynamically in the development of civil society, jurisprudence, judicial and legal issues, and information and communication technologies.

Germany actively supports our country's policy of strengthening relations of friendship, good-neighbourliness, trust and partnership in Central Asia and promoting regional infrastructure projects in transport and energy to this end. The indicators in the areas of trade and investment, where Germany has traditionally been our key partner, best illustrate the high level of cooperation between our countries. Over the past five years, bilateral trade has increased by 24%. In 2022, growth in mutual trade exceeded 51%, while Uzbek exports to Germany rose by 21%. Uzbekistan has 219 enterprises with German investments, including 97 individual enterprises. Among German companies represented in the Uzbek market are leading manufacturers "Deutsche Kabel", "Knauf",

"Claas", "Papenburg" and "Falk Porsche". Cooperation with leading companies in their fields, such as "Siemens", "BASF", "Thissen Group", "Roland Berger", "Adidas Group" and others is carried out. The financial cooperation is established with leading German banks "Deutsche Bank", "Commerzbank" and "Landesbank".

The Intergovernmental Working Group on Trade and Investment and the German-Uzbek Business Council, established in 2015, are fully promoting trade, economic and investment cooperation. For example, more than 100 representatives of leading German companies took part in the meeting of the German-Uzbek Business Council in Tashkent last July. According to its outcomes, the Roadmap for the implementation of investment projects totaling about 400 million euros was adopted. — Agencies

Hina stresses on support for Afghan people

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participating countries. Chaired by United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, the meeting brings together major international and regional countries to discuss the ongoing situation in Afghanistan with a view towards constructive engagement. The minister of state for foreign affairs will present Pakistan's perspective vis-à-vis Afghanistan and work on building a consensus regarding the way forward with international and regional partners. Pakistan will continue to support all efforts to advance the shared objectives of a peaceful, stable, sovereign, prosperous and connected Afghanistan.

PTI to move SJC for CEC's...

FROM PAGE 01
money for elections, but on the other, they have purchased four kanals of land for the election commission office in Sargodha for Rs. 320 million," he added. PTI Senior Vice President stated that the CEC had appointed blue-eyed persons on important positions and did posting without advertising the posts. Fawad said Senator Ejaz Chaudhary had filed a reference against the CEC but no action was taken. PTI is sending a new reference against Sikander Raja, who, he said, is part of the conspiracy to deprive people of their right to vote and demanded his dismissal. Fawad said that apex court should not only give decisions but it should also ensure their execution in true sense. He made it clear that the entire nation, bar associations and top jurists were standing with the SC and the Chief Justice of Pakistan. Hence, he said that the top court's judges should give decisions without being blackmailed and according to the constitution and the law, adding that the people of the country would implement the courts' verdicts. Fawad stated that if the people could not even protect their constitution, then we have no right to be called a nation, then our situation would be like the people of Sudan and Afghanistan. He went on to say that the country's judiciary was currently competing with a mafia, adding that lawyers on the payroll of the government neither have any place nor should the SC should listen to them. Lashing out at Maryam Nawaz, Fawad said that she systematically targeted the Chief Justice, Justice Mazahir Naqvi and Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan not because of the polls but because she wanted to build pressure to break the bench hearing the case of the NAB law amendment bill to save the skins of shariif and Zardari families. He stated that Maryam was nervous because her NAB corruption cases would be restored automatically if NAB laws were reserved. Fawad revealed that Bushra Bibi, wife of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, has decided to lodge a criminal case against Maryam for defamation, adding that she accused Bushra Bibi of taking bribes for getting official documents signed by the authorities during the PTI government. However, Fawad stated: "She has never participated in any political activities she was only seen visiting panahgahs." Despite the fact that the former first lady is an apolitical person, Fawad said, Maryam continued to hurl allegations against her.

Inflation surges to record high
FROM PAGE 01
depreciated sharply and devastating floods during last year's monsoon season destroyed crops. The situation was exacerbated by the huge drop in the country's foreign exchange reserves that left it with less than a month's import cover. The Pakistani rupee has been one of the world's worst-performing currencies this year, depreciating 20% against the US dollar. This has made imports, including food and fuel, much more expensive while the country desperately looks for ways to finance its balance-of-payments deficit.

Briefs

Bid to smuggle 265 flour bags foiled

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police here on Tuesday foiled a bid to smuggle 265 flour bags. According to the district administration spokesman, Food Department Rawalpindi and Rawalpindi district police in a joint operation recovered 265 flour bags from the possession of an accused namely Abid. He informed that the authorities of the food department along with Rawalpindi District police were strictly monitoring all the exit points of the district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids. No one would be allowed to smuggle wheat and flour out of Rawalpindi District, he said.—APP

Wani terms COAS Gen. Asim Munir's statement

ISLAMABAD: Senior leader All Parties Hurriyat Conference Altaf Hussain Wani has welcomed the Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir's recent statement on Kashmir and termed it as a great morale booster for the freedom-loving people of Kashmir. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, Wani said that the Army Chief's categorical stance on the issue of Kashmir and reaffirmation of Pakistan's all-out support to Kashmiris' legitimate struggle had solidified the Kashmiris' resolve besides rejuvenating their spirit and passion for freedom. The army chief's bold remarks, he said, had left the Indian disinformation networks completely exposed that keep on churning out lies to create cobwebs of confusion around Kashmir. Terming Kashmir as the bloody legacy of the partition of the subcontinent, Wani said that as an important stakeholder in the dispute, Pakistan has always expressed its willingness to resolve the dispute peacefully in accordance with the UNSC resolutions. He said, "India's traditional intransigence has always been a stumbling block in the way of peace in the region." Wani said that the Indian leadership needs to acknowledge the harsh reality that peace and stability in the region were linked to a just and equitable settlement of the Kashmir issue.

He said that it was equally important that the international actors should use their political and diplomatic clout to help resolve the lingering Kashmir conflict that has been the main cause and consequence of bloodshed and violence in the region.—DNA

Police arrest 10 gamblers; recover Rs 98,950 stake money

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district Police arrested 10 gamblers and recovered Rs 98,950 stake money, five mobile phones and valuables from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that Waris Khan police conducted a raid and arrested five gamblers namely Toqeer, Tanveer, Ahmed, Talha and Bilal, who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards.

Police also recovered Rs 60,000 cash stake money, five mobile phones and other items from the possession of the arrested accused. In another raid, Westridge police conducted a raid and rounded up Sadaqat, Fakhar, Khurram, Ghulam Shabbir and Abdul Ghaffar, five gamblers and recovered Rs 38,950 cash stake money and other items from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process. Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Capt. @ Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi appreciated the police parties and said that gambling is the root cause of other evils and those involved in such crimes do not deserve any concession.—APP

MoFA to facilitate business community in promoting Pak exports

Zafar Bakhtawari, Former President ICCI & Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan can double its exports in a few years by focusing on Afghanistan, Iran, China and African continent

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan needs a great boost in exports to improve its economy and said that MOFA should cooperate with the business community in this regard. He said this while talking to Director General OIC & Economic Diplomacy Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Asma Rabbani during a meeting with her along with a delegation. Director ED Bilal Akram Shah and Assistant Director ED Hira Fatima were also present on the occasion. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the close cooperation of Pakistani foreign missions with the private sector is the key to promote exports. He said that the Ethiopian Ambassador in Pakistan is very active in promoting business interests of his country and stressed that our ambassadors should also work hard to explore new markets for exports. He said that ICCI is



planning to promote tourism and intends to celebrate Africa Day to highlight exports potential for Pakistan in the African market, so MOFA should cooperate with ICCI in this regard. He also highlighted the importance of close links between the Chambers of Commerce and the Foreign Missions of Pakistan to improve the economy.

Addressing the delegation, Asma Rabbani, DG OIC & ED, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, lauded the role of the business community in the development of the economy. She said that a better understanding of the international market is important for exports promotion and assured that MOFA will cooperate with the business community for better access to the global

market. She said that MOFA will act as a bridge between Pakistani missions and chambers of commerce for closer ties to promote business and economic interests of Pakistan in the international market. She stressed the need for strong linkages between MOFA, Ministry of Commerce, BOI and ICCI to improve Pakistan's economy. She said that ICCI should

prepare comprehensive proposals to promote Pakistan's exports in Africa, Central Asia and other markets, which would be considered for implementation. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, said that Pakistan can improve its exports by focusing on product development, so MOFA should cooperate with the private sector in this regard. He shared useful proposals to improve olive oil export and meet the palm oil needs of Pakistan. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan foreign missions through MOFA should share the list of top imports of their respective countries with the Chambers of Commerce in so that the private sector can know which products of Pakistan have good export potential in foreign countries. Zafar Bakhtawari, Former President ICCI & Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan can double its exports in a few years by focusing on Afghanistan, Iran, China and African continent.

Pakistani entrepreneurs excel at Canton Fair exhibition

DNA

GUANGZHOU: Pakistani entrepreneurs excelled at Canton Fair exhibition, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. The Canton Fair is a prestigious event for businessmen from all over the world, and Pakistani enterprises have shined in the exhibition for years. This year was no exception, as Pakistani businessmen demonstrated their innovative products and services to an international audience, said Sardar Muhammad Pakistani Counselor General at Guangzhou. The Pakistani Counselor General who was present at the fair, said he was proud to witness the success of these Pakistani businesses. He said that the Canton Fair is an admirable platform for Pakistani businessmen to showcase their products and increase business and upsurge prosperity for all

the people. He added that the Chinese market is open to Pakistani products and Chinese consumers show interests to buy Pakistani products besides Pakistani businessmen are well received in the Canton Fair. "There are nine Pakistani companies participating in the third phase of Canton

Fair and the main products that they are offering are related to the textile sector. There are stationery items, bags, and leather products. I'm sure that they will have a very good response here and will find good partners in this fair," he added. He further said that the

Pakistani textile sector is very good in terms of quality and Chinese people like to buy Pakistani linen bed sheets and related items. Sardar said that e-commerce sector is flourishing in Pakistan and there is a huge scope for collaboration with those in China who have gone much more advanced in e-commerce. It is to be noted that, the 133rd Canton Fair is scheduled from April 15 to May 5 in Guangzhou, China. The export-oriented fair will showcase 16 product categories with 54 exhibition sections and nearly 70,000 exhibition booths and 73 percent of exhibitors are from countries and regions along the Belt and Road Initiatives. In the third phase of the Canton Fair which started on 1 May, seven Pakistani textile companies, and two office supplies and leather products enterprises are participating.



Türkiye launches Europe's largest solar power plant

ANKARA: Türkiye is on Tuesday officially opening what is said to be Europe's biggest solar power plant built on a single site and one of the five largest in the world. Developed by Kalyon Energy, an affiliate of one of Türkiye's top conglomerates, Kalyon Holding, the plant in the central province of Konya boasts an installed capacity of 1,350 megawatts (MW). Set to be launched with a ceremony attended by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Kalyon Karapınar Solar Power Plant promises to help Türkiye curb its vast energy imports and back its drive to boost renewable energy production that has already been propelled by large-scale solar and wind power tenders. More than 3.2 million solar panels at the facility are to generate 3 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, enough to provide power to 2 million people and prevent the use of \$450 million of fossil fuel equivalent resources. The \$1 billion plant already produces electricity and will prevent 1.5 million tons of carbon emissions annually and increase the share of solar energy in Türkiye's total energy production by 20%. Kalyon Holding, in August last year, agreed to sell a 50% stake in Kalyon Energy to the Abu Dhabi conglomerate International Holding Co (IHC) for about \$490 million. The transaction included the solar power project in Karapınar, in addition to another one in Gaziantep region and a wind power project in Ankara. Kalyon Energy developed the plant as part of the country's Renewable Energy Resource Zone (YEKA), a government initiative to establish renewable facilities in areas with a high concentration of at least one renewable energy source, such as wind or solar power. YEKA projects use investments from local investors and/or consortiums to manufacture equipment and construct large-scale electricity generation facilities.—DNA

Muslim mayor bared from Eid celebrations

WASHINGTON: Mohamed Khairullah, the Muslim Democrat Mayor of Prospect Park, New Jersey, was barred by the U.S. Secret Service from attending an Eid celebration at the White House with President Joe Biden. Shortly before he was set to arrive at the White House for the Eid-al-Fitr celebration, he received a call from the White House stating that he had not been cleared for entry by the Secret Service and could not attend the celebration where Biden delivered remarks to hundreds of guests, according to the New Jersey chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. U.S. Secret Service spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi confirmed that Khairullah was not allowed into the White House complex, but declined to detail why. Khairullah was elected to a fifth term as the borough's mayor in January. "While we regret any inconvenience this may have caused, the mayor was not allowed to enter the White House complex this evening," Guglielmi said in a statement. "Unfortunately we are not able to comment further on the specific protective means and methods used to conduct our security operations at the White House." Selaedin Maktut, CAIR-NJ executive director, called the move "wholly unacceptable and insulting." "If these such incidents are happening to high-profile and well-respected American-Muslim figures like Mayor Khairullah, this then begs the question: What is happening to Muslims who do not have the access and visibility that the mayor has?" Maktut said. Khairullah, who has previously done humanitarian work in Syria and Bangladesh, was previously stopped by authorities and interrogated at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York for three hours and questioned about whether he knew any terrorists, according to Dina Sayedahmed, a spokesman for CAIR-NJ. The group said Khairullah helped the New Jersey Democratic Party compile names of local Muslim leaders to invite to the White House Eid celebration.—DNA

Climate talks see pushes for renewable energy target

BERLIN: Germany called Tuesday for governments around the world to work on setting an ambitious target for renewable energy that would "ring in the end of the fossil fuel age" and help prevent dangerous global warming. Speaking at the start of a two-day meeting in Berlin attended by dozens of top climate envoys, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock noted that the world needs to sharply cut greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). "But we also know that not all countries are prepared to do so," she said. "That is why I want to open the debate (...) on whether we should and can reach a target on renewables at the next climate conference."

Baerbock's proposal flips the script on a previous push to set a deadline for phasing out all fossil fuels, which faced stiff resistance from major oil and gas exporting nations. They instead backed the idea of capturing planet-warming emissions as a way to reducing greenhouse

gas in the atmosphere. Experts say such technologies, known as carbon capture and storage, are aren't proven at scale and could require huge investments at the expense of cheaper alternatives such as solar and wind power. Addressing officials from about 40 countries attending the annual Petersberg Climate Dialogue in the German capital, Baerbock said that renewables such as solar and wind power are already the most cost-effective form of generating energy in most places around the world. "Our goal for the (climate conference) in Dubai must be to ring in the end of the fossil fuel age," she said. The idea received a cool re-

sponse from the United Arab Emirates, which will host this year's U.N. climate summit. "In a pragmatic, just and well-managed energy transition, we must be laser-focused on phasing out fossil fuel emissions, while phasing up and scaling up viable, affordable zero-carbon alternatives," said Sultan al-Jaber, a former oil company executive who will preside over the COP28 climate summit from Nov. 30 to Dec. 12. He placed particular emphasis on the word "emissions" as he spoke. "We know that the energies used today will continue to be part of the global energy mix for the foreseeable future," he added. "As such, we will work with the

world to decarbonize the current energy system while we build a new one, capable of transitioning even the most heavy-emitting industries." U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for an end to all fossil fuel use, which is blamed for the majority of global warming that has occurred since the start of the industrial era, warning that otherwise the goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) may be missed. But so far only coal has been put on notice, with a commitment by nations two years ago to "phase down" its use. Environmental campaigners say solutions also need to be found for millions of workers in the coal, oil and gas industry if it is to be wound down successfully, as well as alternative sources of energy for billions of people around the world who still rely on cheap fossil fuels. "What we need to see coming out of COP28 is not just about fossil fuel phase-out, but equitable phaseout of fossil fuels," said Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at Climate Action Network International.—DNA



Int'l condolences after Palestinian prisoner's death

Israel is currently holding more than 1,000 Palestinian detainees without charge or trial, the highest number since 2003, according to the Israeli human rights group HaMoked

NEWS DESK

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: International reactions have poured in following the death of Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan, who had been on an almost three-month hunger strike. The prominent Palestinian, affiliated with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group, was found unconscious in his cell early on Tuesday morning. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Israel and the occupied territories expressed their condolences to Adnan's family, calling for Israel to release his body. "We call on the Israeli authorities to release Mr Adnan's body, so his family can mourn and arrange a dignified

burial according to their customs and beliefs," the ICRC said in a statement Tuesday. The organisation had visited the detainee several times since his arrest in February to monitor his condition. Iran's foreign ministry spokesman reacted to the "martyrdom" of Adnan in a statement, saying that it depicted the righteousness of Palestinian resistance. "The way this Palestinian citizen was arrested and the inhumane treatment he received from the Zionist regime [Israel] is a clear example of the inhumane and violent behaviour that the regime has used against the Palestinian nation and fighters for over seven decades in an organised and widespread manner, and constitutes a crime against humanity," said Nasser Kanani.

"The silence of the global community and human rights organisations will lead to the increasing audacity of the apartheid Zionist regime," the spokesman added. The Iran-backed Lebanese Shia group, Hezbollah, also released a statement offering condolences on Adnan's passing, and calling for the freedom of all Palestinian prisoners. The group lauded Adnan's "long march full of steadfastness" and "resistance" against Israel's "arbitrary practices", decrying the years he spent in prison undergoing "abuse and terrorism", according to a statement published by Al-Manar, the party's press agency. United Kingdom MP Francie Molloy, an Irish politician with the Sinn

Féin party, tweeted in reaction to Adnan's death. "They have nothing in their whole imperial arsenal that can break the spirit of one Palestinian who doesn't want to be broken," Molloy said. Reaction among Palestinians was also rife. His death is considered an "assassination" by Palestinians, Al Jazeera's Nida Ibrahim said, because he was a political activist whose hunger strikes were a protest against Israeli imprisonment without charge. Islamic Jihad warned Israel that it will "pay the price for this crime". Other Palestinian groups including Hamas, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and a leader from the Fatah party all condemned Israel's role in his death. Meanwhile,

the Palestine Ministry of Foreign Affairs called for an international investigation into Adnan's death, while the Palestine Authority's Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs suspended work on Tuesday to protest his death. Adnan began his hunger strike shortly after his February arrest. The father of nine had been arrested 12 times during his life and had undertaken hunger strike actions several times while in Israeli prisons, including a 55-day strike in 2015 to protest his detention without charge. Israel is currently holding more than 1,000 Palestinian detainees without charge or trial, the highest number since 2003, according to the Israeli human rights group HaMoked.

ANF recovers over 224 kg drugs; arrests six

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in three operations managed to recover over 224 kg of drugs, and 180 intoxicated tablets and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He said in an operation near Rawalpindi Bahria Town Phase-4, ANF arrested two accused and recovered three grams of cocaine, two grams of Ice drug and 180 intoxicated tablets. ANF in an operation conducted a raid on Quetta-Karachi Road and recovered 84 kg charras from a Karachi-bound mini bus coming from Quetta. Charras was concealed in secret cavities of the bus while two accused residents of Mastung were also rounded up during the operation. In the third operation on RCD Highway, 120 kg charras was also recovered from secret cavities of a truck and ANF arrested two accused residents of Quetta. He said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

Police reunites missing boy with parents

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police Phulgran police station team reunited a missing boy with his parents, a Police Public Relation Officer said. According to the details, a citizen namely Saleem Khan submitted an application at Phulgran police station and stated that his son namely Saad had been missing and could not be traced despite hectic efforts by family members. Upon receiving the application, the Phulgran police team immediately started the investigation. The police team used technical and human resources and succeeded to trace the missing boy and reunited him safely with his family. The parents appreciated the police team's efforts and thanked the Islamabad capital police for immediate action.—DNA

Police to organize youth internship program

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police will organize a 2nd batch of 'Youth Internship Program' to enhance the professional capabilities of young students and provide them opportunities for better understanding of policing affairs. Following the directions of Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah Khan, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has decided to initiate the 2nd batch of 'Youth Internship Program' and women and minorities will be provided equal opportunities in this program. Students including graduates of data scientist, data analyst and critical thinker can participate in this program. The duration of the internship program will be 03 months further while compensation will be given to the participants for this internship. For participation in this youth internship program, students can apply online before May 06, 2023 at the Islamabad capital police websites. The purpose of this youth internship is to develop skills and professional training among students.—DNA

700 e-challan issued during April month

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad capital police with the help of briefcam software have issued 700 e-challan and successfully recovered 11 vehicles involved in various criminal activities and e-challan defaults, which were then transferred to different police stations for legal proceedings, a police public relations officer said. He further said that, the Islamabad capital police under the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan is continuously engaged in ensuring effective surveillance and monitoring through safe city cameras, while keeping a close eye on criminal elements in the federal capital.—DNA

Briefs

Israeli attack puts Syrian airport out of service

DNA

CAIRO: An Israeli attack late on Monday killed one soldier, wounded 7 others including two civilians and put Aleppo International Airport out of service, Syrian state media reported early on Tuesday citing a military source.

Syrian air defenses intercepted the Israeli missiles on the vicinity of Aleppo and shot down a number of them, Syrian state media said earlier on Monday.

Israel carried out the missile attack at 23:35 p.m. south-east of Aleppo, targeting the airport and some sites in the vicinity of the Syrian city and causing some material damage, the source was quoted as saying. Israel has for years been carrying out attacks against what it has described as Iran-linked targets in Syria, where Tehran's influence has grown since it began supporting President Bashar al-Assad in the civil war that started in 2011.

Interpol arrest 288 in dark web bust

THE HAGUE: A global crackdown has halted a major "dark web" marketplace, with international police arresting 288 suspects and recovering more than 50 million euros (\$54.8 million) in cash and virtual currency, Europol said on Tuesday.

The joint operation called Spector by US, British, Brazilian and European law enforcement also netted almost a tonne of drugs and 117 firearms, Europe's policing agency said.

"In an operation coordinated by Europol and involving nine countries, law enforcement have seized the illegal dark web marketplace 'Monopoly Market' and arrested 288 suspects involved in buying or selling drugs on the dark web," the Hague-based Europol said in a statement. "A number of these suspects were considered high-value targets," Europol said. The sting followed in the wake of a successful 2021 operation by German police in which it seized the Monopoly Market's criminal infrastructure. - APP

IMF asks Pak to 'do more' on external financing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has not given the Pakistan government a green signal as to when the money lender will be making a staff-level agreement with Islamabad. Sources said that despite Pakistan's best efforts, no major progress had been made on a staff-level agreement between Pakistan and the IMF. They added that the IMF was still awaiting confirmation of external financing.

Sources said the IMF had received confirmation of Saudi Arabia and the UAE but now it was waiting for confirmation of more external financing, including the provision of \$2 billion from the WB and \$900 million from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. On the other hand, the Pakistani authorities said despite implementation of all previous measures, the delay in a staff-level agreement was beyond comprehension.

It should be noted that due to delay in the agreement, Pakistan is facing an economic crisis, while the State Bank foreign exchange reserves are still at a low level of \$4.4 billion. Amid the unceasing political and economic turmoil in the country that continues to make the lives of citizens miserable, monthly inflation has soared to an all-time high, data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed Tuesday. Inflation, measured by CPI, clocked in at 36.4% year-on-year in April.

Golden Jubilee of Constitution of Pakistan

Exhibition 'Islamic Architectural Heritage in Hungary' inaugurated

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Mehnaz Aziz, Hungarian ambassador and others opened the exhibition



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf inaugurated the exhibition titled Islamic Architectural Heritage in Hungary, at the Parliament House on Tuesday. The exhibition is first of its kind jointly organized by the Hungarian embassy in Islamabad and the National Assembly to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution of Pakistan. Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif,

Mehnaz Akbar Aziz, Head of Pakistan-Hungary Parliamentarians group, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, former ministers and senators also attended the event. A large number of members of the civil society thronged to the event in order to enrich their knowledge of the Islamic Architectural Heritage of Hungary. The Speaker National Assembly in his speech said Hungary became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1526 after Suleiman the Magnificent defeated the Hungarian Royal Army. It is just coincidence that it happened in the same year when Mugal emperor

Babur invaded the northern part of the Subcontinent as a result of the first battle of Panipat. He added Hungary was different from other parts of the Ottoman Empire not only for economic and social but for cultural reasons as well. In fact the Ottomans never succeeded in strengthening their power in Hungary during the 150 years of the occupation of the country. Raja Pervez Ashraf declared relations between Pakistan and Hungary as excellent and hoped these relations would grow further even in the days to come. He thanked the Hungarian ambas-

sador and the Embassy for arranging the exhibition. He hoped that both countries would be able to further expand cooperation in the field of culture and art as well.

Ambassador of Hungary Bela Fazekas in his speech said he was happy to co-host the important event along with the National Assembly secretariat. He hoped through the exhibition people would get information about the Islamic Architectural Heritage of Hungary.

The ambassador said although most buildings which were redesigned as mosques lost their Ottoman character after transforming them back into Christian churches, newly built mosques were conserved better. For example the Malkoc Beg Mosque at Sklos was renovated in the 1990s and subsequently won the Europa Nostra prize in 1993. 'After the Yugoslav wars, when a small group of Muslims moved into the area the mosque once again began functioning. At Szigetvar where Suleiman the Magnificent died and the place where his organs were buried, was a popular Islamic pilgrimage site whose exact location was lost to time,' he added.

Mehnaz Akbar Aziz, Head of Pakistan-Hungary Parliamentarians group in her speech thanked the Hungarian embassy for arranging the exhibition and thus providing the people to know about the Islamic architectural heritage of Hungary.

She added, Pakistan and Hungary enjoy excellent relations adding these relations were on the move. She thanked the Hungarian government for increasing the number of scholarships for Pakistani students from 200 to 400.

Mehnaz further said it was quite a unique experience for her to know about this aspect of Hungary. She said through this exhibition many Pakistanis would also get firsthand information. She also encouraged the Pakistanis to visit these sites as well when they go to Hungary to explore its natural grandeur.

Ambassador of Turkiye Mehmet Pacaci also spoke on the occasion and informed the audience about the analogies between Turkiye and Hungary Islamic heritage.

He said Ottoman architecture of Hungary or Maljistan, contained a mix of eastern and western elements as the Ottoman architects adapted to local buildings and materials. The Ottomans built many mosques in Hungary and incorporated many decorative elements in the surrounding areas. They also built castles and bridges in Hungary using their advanced architectural knowledge.

Türkiye hopes to serve friendly countries for aircraft retrofit

TURKIYE: Türkiye wishes to carry out retrofit activities of friendly countries' aircraft in its factory in the near future, the country's defense chief said on Tuesday. "We believe that in the coming period, the retrofit operations of friendly and allied countries' aircraft will also be carried out in our factory, thus providing much more added value to the national economy," National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said at the delivery ceremony of the fourth of A400M transport aircraft retrofitted in the central Kayseri province. The 2nd Air Maintenance Factory Directorate in Kayseri is one of the four centers in the world performing retrofit activities for A400M aircraft, which Akar described as a "source of pride." "Our factory, which is the pride of our country and Kayseri, successfully continues its activities in the field of defense and aviation with its experience from its history, and makes great contributions to our defense industry and the country's economy with its qualified personnel, opportunities, and capabilities," he added. The A400M retrofit contract was signed between Airbus, a major player in the aviation industry, and Türkiye's state-run defense firm ASFAT at the 2nd Air Transport Main Base Command in Kayseri in 2019. - APP

PTI declines ANP's invite for All Parties Conference

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf has declined to participate in the All Parties Conference called by the Awami National Party. PTI senior leader and former speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser said that the PDM-led government is playing with the constitution. "If elections are not held on May 14, it means the government violates the constitution," he added. Qaiser said that the PTI does not agree with the agenda given by the ANP. "We believe that the current government is responsible for all the problems being faced by the country. The government is responsible for the poor state of economy and law and order," the PTI leader maintained. He said that his party could not accept the ANP invite for the All Parties Conference. In order to forge a national consensus on holding simultaneous elections in the country amid the current political crisis, the Awami National Party has decided to call an All Parties Conference on May 3. The APC will be held at Marriot Hotel in Islamabad. The ANP is making contact with other political parties inviting them to attend the moot.

Sudan faces catastrophe as 100,000 flee war: UN

NEWS DESK

GENEVA: More than 100,000 people have fled Sudan since heavy fighting broke out between rival forces on 15 April, the UN has said. Officials warned of a "full-blown catastrophe" if fighting does not end. A further 334,000 people have been displaced within Sudan. Fighting is continuing in the capital, Khartoum, between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), despite a ceasefire due to be in force. On Monday, the UN special envoy to Sudan, Volker Perthes, told the AP news agency that the two sides had agreed to enter into talks to negotiate a "stable and reliable" ceasefire. Saudi Arabia was a potential venue for the talks, he added. If talks take place, it would be the first meeting between the two sides since the conflict started. More than 500 people have been killed and more than 4,000 have been wounded in the fighting, according to Sudan's health ministry. A series of temporary ceasefires have failed to hold, with the military continuing to pound Khartoum with air strikes in a bid to weaken the RSF. Heaving fighting has also taken place in Darfur in western Sudan. UN refugee agency spokeswoman Olga Sarrado told reporters in Geneva that the 100,000 total included people from Sudan, South Sudanese citizens returning home,

and people who were already refugees within Sudan fleeing the fighting. Refugees have also been fleeing over Sudan's border with Egypt in the north and Chad in the west. Most European states have completed the evacuation of their nationals, but Russia said on Tuesday that it was sending four military planes to fly out more than 200 people - including its nationals and those from "friendly countries" - from Sudan. In Khartoum, food, water and electricity are running out, but desperately needed aid supplies - shipped by the UN into Port Sudan - are being warehoused because of the violence. Meanwhile, widespread looting means there is no safe way to deliver them. WHO regional director Ahmed al-Mandhari said that health facilities have come under attack in Khartoum, and some are being used as military bases. "Up to now there were around 26 reported attacks on health-care facilities. Some of these attacks resulted in the death of healthcare workers and civilians in these hospitals," he told the media. "Also you know some of these hospitals are used as military bases and they have thrown the staff, they have thrown patients out of these healthcare facilities," he added. On Monday, the UN's Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Abdou Dieng, said that more than two weeks of devastating fighting risked turning the country's humanitarian crisis into a "full blown catastrophe".

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

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