



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

India threatened to shut Twitter and raid employees

Detailed News On Page-08

EU to seal trade deal with South America: Ursula

Detailed News On Page-07



Shaheen Afridi likely to miss Sri Lanka Tests

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

PM vows to bring peace to KP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday expressed his determination to bring development and peace to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) leadership belonging to KP, during which he took a swipe at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying, "The previous government never developed the province". During the meeting, the political situation of the country and various issues, including the upcoming KP assembly elections, were highlighted.

Not being permitted to meet family

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi on Tuesday said he was being kept in a small room in the prison for the past 10 days where his health has deteriorated. "I am unwell and for 10 days I have been locked up in a tiny room," he told journalists ahead of his hearing at a local court in Lahore. "The fan in the room malfunctions," he added "and I am not being permitted to meet my family." Upon a journalist's question about his possible plans to leave the PTI, Elahi said.

Chairman Nadra Tariq resigns

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) Chairman Tariq Malik on Tuesday resigned from his post after allegations of corruption. He tendered his resignation to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting held with the latter at the PM House. Sources said the FIA also added his name to the no-fly list, barring him from travelling abroad. "The FIA and the NAB have also initiated some cases against him," sources added.

Biparjoy expected tomorrow 1 lac people to be shifted to safe places

Dust storm hits Karachi, Cyclone currently some 400km south of Karachi



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authorities (NDMA) Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik said Tuesday that — in a bid to ensure the safety of those living in the country's coastal belt ahead of the very severe cyclonic system (VSCS) Biparjoy — around 100,000 people will be shifted to safer places by today evening. The NDMA chairman's remarks came during a presser in the federal capital regarding the arrangement made to protect citizens ahead of June 15 — the day the storm is expected to make its landfall between

Karachi and India's Gujarat. "Measures to control the storm's effects and weather damage are in progress," Malik said. "The Sindh government along with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and relief camp medical missions in Balochistan have been alerted," he added. In the same presser, Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman said: "The storm is now heading towards Balochistan," adding that the government is in constant touch with the NDMA. "The storm will surely hit Ketu Bandar; however, the NDMA is continuously monitoring the situation," she said. However, the climate minister assured people that the government had started taking measures to keep citizens safe. "Ketu Bandar, Thatta and Badin, amongst others, will be affected," Rehman said, adding that all rescue missions and agencies have been put on alert. She lamented: "Victims of the previous floods are still suffering and now this has come." In a tweet earlier today, Rehman warned that even though the storm had downgraded from "extremely severe" to "very severe", urban flooding is likely in Karachi, given the scale and intensity of the winds. She further wrote: "So far, more than 40,000 people have been evacuated, while 43 relief camps have been established." According to the Pakistan Meteorologist Department (PMD)'s latest advisory, the cyclone now lies about 400km south of Karachi, 390km south of Thatta.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif regarding preparations to deal with Cyclone "Biparjoy". — DNA

Khan says beneficiaries behind May 9 events

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Supremo and deposed prime minister Imran Khan on Tuesday reacting to a resolution passed by the National Assembly to try May 9 rioters under the army act blamed those individuals who were benefiting from the acts of arson are the ones responsible for the chaos that unfolded on that day. The PTI chairman took Twitter and opined that the simplest way to find out who was responsible for the arson on May 9 is to ask ourselves the billion rupee question that who gained and benefited the most from the violence. He added that "Clearly it wasn't PTI." Mr Imran also raised questions over the connectivity of events following his arrest and asked "How come within 48 hours there was the most well-planned operation conducted with mind-boggling precision, 10,000 PTI workers, supporters, and pro media persons were either jailed or incapacitated." Meanwhile, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Tuesday extended the interim bails granted to former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan in three cases of attack on Jinnah House, Askari Tower and torching Shadman police station until June 27. Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar of the ATC also exempted Imran from appearance in the court on Tuesday when his counsel Naseeruddin Nayer Advocate said that

Pak, Azerbaijan ink deal for LNG at 'cheaper price'

Minister says Azerbaijan will supply an LNG cargo every month

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has issued two tenders seeking spot liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargoes for the first time in nearly a year on Tuesday, while also announcing a deal that will see Azerbaijan provide the country with one LNG cargo per month. Dependent on gas for power generation and running short of foreign exchange to pay for imports, the country has struggled to procure spot cargoes of LNG after global prices spiked last year following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, leaving it to face widespread power outages. But Asian spot LNG prices this year have eased from record highs of \$70/mmBtu hit in August, and are now trading below \$10. Pakistan LNG, a government subsidiary that procures LNG from the international market,

PM to pay official visit to Azerbaijan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to pay a two-day official visit to Azerbaijan on June 14-15 at the invitation of President Ilham Aliyev. The members of the federal cabinet representing the priority areas of cooperation with Azerbaijan will be part of the prime minister's entourage, according to the Foreign Office. The prime minister will hold wide-ranging talks with President Ilham Aliyev on key areas of cooperation including trade, investment and energy.

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Elections after govt completes its term

Information Minister says Nawaz Sharif to return before elections

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday the government would complete its term in August. She expressed these views while speaking to a reporter. Answering a question, the federal minister said the government had presented growth-inclusive budget, adding that the package also supported development in sectors like IT, agriculture, youth, and women. "It will ensure speedy progress in the country," she added. She went on to say that the government would complete its constitutional term in August, adding that it would follow a caretaker setup and elections. "The PML-N has started election campaign and it is the only party that is [active] in the field right now," she added. Ms Aurangzeb said the party would continue its campaign with



Imran Khan fails to show any 'evidence': Rana

DNA

VEHARI: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Tuesday asserted that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan has failed to provide the 'evidence' of allegations levelled after the assassination attempt on him in Wazirabad. Addressing a press conference, the federal minister claimed that Imran Khan failed to provide 'any evidence' to a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) probing the assassination attempt, for which the former premier blamed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Rana Sanaullah and a senior military officer. During his appearance before the JIT, Rana Sanaullah said,

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11 killed in strike as Kyiv reports gains

NEWS DESK

KYIV: A Russian missile strike killed at least 11 people in an apartment building and a warehouse in President Volodymyr Zelenskii's home town on Tuesday, while Moscow's forces yielded ground in the early stages of a Ukrainian counteroffensive. Residents sobbed outside the burnt-out apartment block and smoke billowed after the early-morning attack in Kryvyi Rih, a half-hour drive from the huge reservoir emptied last week by the destruction of a dam that flooded a swathe of southern Ukraine. Officials said at least four people were killed in the apartment building and another seven in the warehouse. Twen-

ty-eight were injured. Broken glass and bricks were strewn across the street and courtyard outside the apartment block. At least five cars were ruined husks. Survivors described two explosions. Olha Chernousova said she was thrown out of her bed by a violent blast wave. She escaped onto her balcony to wait for rescuers. "I thought I would have to jump into a tree." "Russian killers continue their war against residential buildings, ordinary cities and people," Zelenskii, who was born in the city, said on Telegram. Moscow denies intentionally targeting civilians but has repeatedly struck apartment buildings with long-range missiles, often at

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Lombok island: a jewel in Indonesia's crown

TRAVELOGUE

ANSAR M BHATTI IN LOMBOK

I HAD heard a lot and read articles about the Lombok Island, which is nestled in the West Nusa Tenggara province, but was ostensibly thrilled and amazed to visit this exotic place as part of the FAMTRIP organized by the Indonesia embassy in Islamabad in collaboration with the Indonesian Tourism and Creative Economy Ministry. The island that is located close to iconic tourist destination Bali, Lombok is known for its stunning landscapes, beautiful beaches, and vibrant culture. The island population comprises 85 percent of Muslims yet the place can rightly be termed as a perfect model of Unity in Diversity. The capital city of Lombok is Mataram, which is located in the western part of the island. Other major cities and tourist destinations include Senggigi, Kuta (not to be confused with the more famous Kuta in Bali), and the Gili Islands. The word Mataram, as told by our local guide stands out for respect and dignity. "Mata" is influenced by Hindi, which means Mother. Mataram, a small yet gorgeous town, is located in the Western part of Lombok. It takes almost an hour to reach the main city from the airport. As we were accommodated in the North part of Lombok so it took us almost two hours to reach the Gili Islands, another wonderful tourist attraction in the Wonderful Indonesia. On the way to Gili Islands, we passed by the Capital City of Mataram.

As told by our local guide, Lombok is often referred to as "Bali's sister island" due to its close proximity and similarities in terms of natural beauty. However, Lombok has its own unique charm and attractions that make it a popular destination for travelers seeking a less crowded and peaceful surroundings. The island is renowned for its picturesque beaches, such as Tanjung Aan, Selong Belanak, and Mawun Beach. Lombok is also home to Mount Rinjani,

an active volcano and the second-highest peak in Indonesia, offering opportunities for trekking and breathtaking views from its summit. The local Sasak culture is prevalent on the island, and visitors can explore traditional Sasak villages, witness traditional ceremonies, and learn about the unique customs and traditions of the Sasak people. On our way to the hotel from the airport our first stop was at a village called Sasak Ende. The popula-

tion of this village may not be more than 200 inhabitants yet it presented a true picture of traditional Indonesian countryside lifestyle. People were welcoming and hospitable. As is a tradition and culture even in Pakistani villages as well that hospitality is spontaneous and whole-hearted. The idea of such model villages is quite rare but unique and an instant tool of disseminating information about the cultural heritage of the respective countries. This is an area where Pakistan also needs to collaborate with Indonesia in order to promote its culture and village life. As various reports suggest, in recent years, Lombok has been developing its tourism infrastructure to accommodate increasing visitor numbers. The international airport in Lombok, Lombok International Airport (LOP), serves as the main gateway to the island, with regular flights from major Indonesian cities and some international destinations. Overall, Lombok offers a mix of natural beauty, cultural experiences, and outdoor activities, making it a popular destination for those seeking a tropical getaway in Indonesia. Access to Lombok is very easy. If you are already in Bali, you can take a ferry from Padangbai or Gilimanuk to Lombok. The ferry ride takes around 4-5 hours depending on the route and sea conditions. There are both public and private ferry services available. The public ferry is more economical, while private fast boats offer a quicker journey but happen to be a little bit expensive.



LOMBOK: An enchanting view of the Lombok Island captured from the Kayana resort by the writer. More Pictures on the Back Page. — DNA

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Minister inaugurates burns, plastic surgery unit at Mufti Mehmood Hospital

PESHAWAR: Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Security, Faisal Karim Kundi here on Tuesday inaugurated the burns and plastic surgery unit at Mufti Mehmood Hospital, Dera Ismail Khan. Former Member Provincial Assembly, Ahmad Karim Kundi, Dean's Gomal Medical College, Dr Nasim Saba Mehsud, Director of the hospital Dr Umar Shah Astrana, hospital director medical, Dr Muhammad Wasim, doctors, paramedics and elites of the city attended.

In his address at the symposium at Gomal Medical College DI Khan in connection with the inauguration of the unit, Faisal Kundi said that it was his desire to equip all hospitals of DI Khan with state-of-the-art facilities so that patients could not go for treatment to other cities including Islamabad, Multan or Lahore.

He said the burns and plastic surgery units at Mufti Mehmood Hospital DI Khan were set up by the doctors on a self-help basis and highly praised philanthropist Hidayatullah Khan Kundi for providing Rs 8 million for the purchase of equipment for the said unit that helped its operationalization.

He said federal and provincial governments would ensure every possible assistance to the people of Dera Ismail Khan.

Assistant Professor, Dr Tauseef Al Hassan apprised the participants about the facilities and treatment provided to patients at the burn and plastic surgery unit.

Later, shields were presented to the state minister and other speakers.—APP

Rawal literature festival kicks off at PAC

RAWALPINDI: Rawal Literature Festival 2023 started at the Punjab Council of the Arts (PAC) here on Tuesday. The inaugural session was presided over by renowned poet and writer Dr Ehsan Akbar, while Irfan Ahmed Urfi hosted the session. While addressing the opening ceremony Dr. Ehsan Akbar said that the Rawal literature festival was an excellent effort to promote literature in the region. "For many decades, he said that a large-scale literary festival has not been organized in the Potohar region." Director of Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that a nation whose culture dies cannot survive. "There are many hatreds and quarrels in our society and we have to end these hatreds by developing literature and culture." Waqar said that the message of brotherhood, peace and friendship will connect the youth of Pakistan with literature and culture through the festival. Assistant Director PAC Muhammad Suleman on the occasion said that the literary fair contains the treasures of knowledge. "Intellectual construction is also indispensable, along with the construction of buildings in any country," he added.—APP

Amb. Frederico Silva visits AKDN programmes in Gilgit-Baltistan

DNA

GILGIT: His Excellency Frederico Silva, the Portuguese Ambassador to Pakistan, recently visited various programmes of the Aga Khan Development Network in Gilgit-Baltistan. Accompanied by Mr. Akhtar Iqbal, CEO of the Aga Khan Foundation, the Ambassador saw 15 projects in Skardu, Hunza and Gilgit including water and sanitation, education, early childhood development, community forestry programmes, women entrepreneurship, agriculture and food security, natural resource management, infrastructure development, youth employability, land development, health and hygiene, disaster preparedness and mitigations, climate change action, tourism and cultural preservation.

Ambassador Frederico Silva expressed his deep admiration for the comprehensive approach of



AKDN towards protecting the environment and mitigating climate change, whether through generating clean energy, operating climate-friendly hospitals, and

health centres, working to reduce the risk from climate-induced disasters or promoting environmentally conscious tourism.

Whilst speaking about the unique-

ness of the region, the Ambassador noted that Gilgit-Baltistan is home to highest summits and is at the crossroads of civilisation with a rich cultural heritage. The di-

verse communities reflect strong traditional values of unity and a deep sense of respect.

While appreciating the overall quality, approach and impact of the development programmes, a unique part of the Ambassador's visit was his meeting with a local woman resident of Skardu, Ms. Farzana who owns a solar passive greenhouse supported by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme. The greenhouse produces green vegetables in the winter and seedlings earlier in the season in the greenhouse tunnel, which provides nutritional support for the local population and input for other women farmers. Observing the impact of the initiative, Ambassador Frederico commented, "Women entrepreneur are change makers and indeed with good training and greater perseverance, there can be significant improvement in the quality of lives of the local communities."

Strengthening Pakistan-Belarus bilateral relations

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The first meeting of Pakistan-Belarus Parliamentary Friendship Group was held in National Assembly Secretariat, Islamabad. Ms. Javaria Zafar Aheer, MNA/Convener of Pakistan-Belarus Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) along with the Members, Syed Javed Hasnain, MNA, Makhdoom Syed Sami Ul Hassan Gilani, MNA and Engr. Sabir Hussain Kaim Khani, MNA met with H.E. Mr. Andrei METELITSA, Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan on Tuesday, 13th June, 2023 at 1400 hours at Parliament House, Islamabad. Ms. Javaria Zafar Aheer, MNA/Convener of Pakistan-Belarus PFG expressed satisfaction with the cordial relations based on mutual respect, friendship and trust established between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and highly appreciated the bilateral meetings and interaction at high levels. The Convener proposed to develop a plan of joint events

dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Andrei METELITSA, Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan highlighted that Belarus regarded Pakistan as an important country in the region and appreciated its efforts to promote regional peace and stability. Agreement between the Government of Belarus and the Government of Pakistan on the Abolition of Visas for holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports was

welcomed by the Members of Pak-Belarus PFG. Ms. Javaria Zafar Aheer highlighted Pakistan's potential to export textile and agriculture products and medical and surgical equipment to Belarus while benefiting from Belarusian expertise for joint ventures in heavy machinery and plants. She especially mentioned that the tractors and heavy trucks are the identity of Belarus due to their power and reliability. The Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus invited the Pak-Belarus Parliamen-

ary Friendship Group to visit the Republic of Belarus in July 2023 to attend an International Cultural Festival. Ms. Javaria Zafar Aheer mentioned that Parliamentary Friendship Groups of both countries could play a pivotal role in promoting parliamentary diplomacy, people to people contacts and augment parliamentary relations. She assured that existing bilateral relations between two countries will strengthen further through mutual cooperation, understanding and interactions at all levels.



Nishtar-II to be made fully operative by Sept this year

MULTAN: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi announced on Tuesday that Nishtar-II would be made operative by Sept with 100 per cent staff this year and termed it a dire need of the hour for masses of Multan and its adjoining areas. Talking to the media after inspecting different sections of the project, he stated that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif would be invited to open the health facility as he had performed its groundbreaking ceremony too as CM Punjab. He

informed no staff would be deputed at Nishtar-II from Nishtar Hospital, adding that Punjab government would allocate funds in the budget for ongoing health projects of Multan. The CM maintained that the Extension of Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi Institute of Cardiology would also be made functional by next month and added that a new emergency Children Complex would be constructed with the help of philanthropists soon. Earlier, Naqvi went to different sections of

the under-construction health facility including OPD, Pharmacy, Laboratory and Ultrasound. Project Director IDAP, briefed the CM about the Nishtar-II project.

Provincial ministers Amir Meer, Azfar Nasir, ACS South Punjab, Saqib Zafar, NMU VC, Dr Rana Altaf Ahmad, Commissioner Multan Division, Aamir Khattak, RPO, Sohail Chaudhary and other officials were accompanying the CM. Later, he inspected the CPCEIC extension of the Emergency block beside other

departments of the hospital. The CM ordered to make emergency operative within the stipulated time at all costs. He spoke to patients and knew their well-being and examined the waiting area for the attendants and directed them to improve the facilities. Separately, he inaugurated the newly built Nishtar Inn and checked the facilities being extended for people.

He directed the department concerned to install air conditioners and keep them functional round the clock. It worth mentioning here that the three-story inn has been constructed with over Rs 90 million which can accommodate 60 males and 32 females in its 10 halls. The attendants staying there would be served breakfast and dinner. It has 20 lavatories besides separate dining rooms and a kitchen for men and women.—APP

Air route resumed between Lahore and Urumqi

ISLAMABAD: China Southern Airlines resumed its flight operations from Lahore to Urumqi on Tuesday with flight number CZ6018, which will provide greater convenience for businessmen and tourists traveling to China from Lahore and neighboring provinces. The route will have three return flights per week with a capacity of around 177 passengers per flight, according to China Economic Net (CEN). Urumqi, a city in northwestern China, has extensive business, cultural and tourist exchanges with Lahore. The resumption of flights has attracted the attention and involvement of passengers from both countries. Zhang Bing, a passenger on the flight, said with excitement that before the resumption, passengers needed to travel from Lahore to Islamabad one day in advance. "The opening of flights from Lahore to Urumqi has shortened the entire journey", he added. Afridi, a businessman engaged in the import and export of small commodities between China and Pakistan, said that the resumption of flights has improved the efficiency of transportation and reduced logistics costs. Zhang Xingru, General Manager of China Southern Airlines Company Limited Lahore Office told CEN that this year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative, and the resumption of flights between Urumqi and Lahore will further promote connectivity and boost the high-quality construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Following the resumption of the flights, the airline company has increased the number of routes from Urumqi to Pakistan to both Lahore and Islamabad and realized daily service for the two brotherly countries. "We are considering adding some new services after this resumption to meet the needs of passengers. We also look forward to expanding the air route network and operating more flights between Pakistan and China in the future, so as to contribute to Pak-China collaboration in economy, trade, tourism and people-to-people exchanges", Zhang Xingru added.

Ambassador of Pakistan to Damascus visits SCCI

SIALKOT: Ambassador of Pakistan to Damascus Shahid Akhtar on Tuesday visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). Senior Vice President SCCI Wahub Jahangir and Vice President SCCI Amir Majeed Sheikh welcomed the guest. During the meeting, issues related to the diplomatic, commercial relations and trade promotion with Damascus were discussed. SVP SCCI

Wahub Jahangir stressed for strengthening mutual trade ties between Pakistan and Damascus and said there was a huge scope for business opportunities between Pakistan and Damascus. He said the two countries should facilitate single country trade exhibitions and frequent trade delegation should be exchanged between the both countries to encourage B2B linkages.—APP

Digitalization of PBM to enhance productivity

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), Malik Amir Fida Paracha Tuesday said digitalization of PBM projects would enhance its productivity, cost-effectiveness and ensure transparency in its working. "The process of digitalization of all projects of PBM is underway which would help transform the entire working of the institution as well as attract national and international donors to extend their contributions", the MD said in an exclusive interview with APP. The MD PBM said that the institution was running a number of welfare projects, including Shelter Homes, Sweet Homes, Pakistan Thalassemia Center, Individual Financial Assistance, Women Empowerment Centers, PBM Schools, Persons with Disabilities project, Old Homes and provision of medical assistance for treatment of various diseases. During the FY 2021-22, the PBM has provided medical assistance to 13719 patients, educational scholarships to 5769 students, education stipends for 18375 children, benefited 5068 special persons and 10,075,716 persons through shelter homes. The first priority of Amir Paracha, since joining this authority as MD PBM, was to attract domestic and foreign donors for which the digitalization of all the projects was the pre-requisite. "The work on digitalization of all the projects was started on war footing which is instrumental.—APP

RAWALPINDI CANTONMENT BOARD INVITATION TO BID TENDER NOTICE

The general public is informed that the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board intends to auction miscellaneous goods including Carriages, Signboards, Iron Benches, Wooden Counters, Building Materials, Old Tyres, Tables, Chairs, Woods etc. The goods are available at the Cantonment Board Enforcement Branch (same as on the spot) and will be auctioned on 4 July, 2023 at 1100 hours.

Interested bidders will have to submit a deposit @Rs.100,000 (in the shape of Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) in favour of the Cantonment Executive Officer Rawalpindi Cantonment) which will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders on the spot, after the end of process. After that (1/4 part of total bid), has to be deposited immediately, otherwise the collected money will be confiscated by Cantonment Executive Officer, Rawalpindi.

Upon approval of the bid, the remaining (3/4 of the bid amount) will have to be deposited immediately, along with the payment of Income Tax / General Sales Tax, which is mandatory, as per the government rules.

The authorized officer shall have full right to isapprove or reject any bid for any reason (prior to acceptance), in accordance with the PPRA Rules and the conditions of auction shall be readout on the spot even before the commencement of bidding, on the day of bidding.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. In case of non-bidding for any reason on the scheduled date, then the auction will be held on 5 July, 2023 and 6 July, 2023 at the same time and place.
2. The list of goods can be seen on the official website of RCB and PPRA, which also can be seen in the Enforcement Store of RCB.
3. The successful bidder shall be bound to remove the auctioned goods from the site, within 15 days, after acceptance of the bid.

Cantonment Executive Officer
Rawalpindi Cantt.

FO & SIDA a key stakeholders in agreement with World Bank

SWAT a major economic change and development prosperity in agri sector for Pakistan: Francois

NAZIR H SIYAL

KARACHI/HYDERABAD: World Bank Task Team leader Francois Onimus has expressed that World Bank SWAT pilot project for modernization of canals not a traditional, but to understand it as future prosperity and major economic change and development in agri sector for Pakistan. He was speaking to the irrigation officials of Sindh-Punjab and local communities of the area, particularly the Farmers Organization (FO) here at Jarki distributory in Badin district. Mr. Francois Onimus emphasized direct and indirect stakeholders for mutual consensus on valued Sindh Water and Agriculture Transformation project (SWAT) funded by the World Bank. The authorities along with Farmers Organization (FO) The Hydraulic features and key features were discussed on the occasion and intended

to modernized infrastructure was suggested for the socio economic development in the various parts of the country. On the occasion, Chairman Farmers Organizations (FO) Pir Bux Chang, Vice Chairman Ghulam Qadir Leghari, Secretary Rashid Ahmed, Treasure Allah Bachayo Lashari and the members

Mohammad Urs Allah Yar Awan were motivated by Dr Charles Burt Chairman ITRC-Irrigation Training Research Center US California, along with officials Ahmed Junaid Memon UN FAO program Manager and other representatives of Sindh Irrigation Drainage Authority (SIDA), while during the visit

of Jarki minor/regulator. Earlier, the Village communities and Farmers Organization (FO) raised various issues and objections about water shortages and proper distribution of irrigation water for Agriculture purpose, as well political and officials coordination also briefly discussed with the World Bank team and

ITRC trainers. The Farmers Organizations (FO) delegation told that 80 villages are in the Jarki minor/regulator, which they are suffering heavy negligence of proper distribution of irrigation water and raised few objectives. Later, Dr. Charles Burt and other officials, stake holders satisfied the Farmers Organization (FO) representatives for mutual understanding over the common interest. Dr. Charles Burt further described that the Farmers Organizations (FO) after the agreement and implementation of pilot project, the Water Board will remain aware and involved during up and down stream water and official chart levels before the trainings according to the agreement will be carried out by World Bank SWAT project between Farmers Organizations (FO) and SIDA officials. He informed that SIDA officials are bound to inform the Farmers Organizations (FO) about the water stream chart levels.



National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

- June 02/Italy
National/ Independence Day
- June 04/Finland
Armed Forces Day
- May 06/UAE
National Day
- June 06/Sweden
National Day
- June 10/Portugal
Portugal Day (National Day)
- June 10/Jordan
Arab Revolution & Army Day
- June 11/United Kingdom
Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth
- June 12/Philippines
Independence Day
- June 12/Russian Federation
Day of Sovereignty of the Russian
- June 13/Zambia
Armed Forces day
- June 17/Iceland
National Day
- June 18/Seychells
National Day
- June 25/Croatia
National Day
- June 25/Mozambique
National Day
- June 26/Azerbaijan
Army Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of PMLN leadership from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. — DNA

PARC vows to ensure nutritious food production

A crucial report, "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020," highlights a staggering statistic: approximately three billion people worldwide lack the financial means to access a healthy diet. Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive transformation of existing food systems

DNA

ISLAMABAD: To enhance the Government of Pakistan's initiatives in enhancing nutritious food accessibility and meeting global targets by 2030, the Ministry of National Food Security & Research organized a National Consultation focused on reviewing the progress of the "Pakistan National Food System Transformation Pathway." The consultation, titled "Aligning National Practices and Policies for Transforming Pakistan Food Systems," aimed to strengthen the alignment of national practices and policies with the goal of transforming the country's food systems. The National Consultation was organized in response to the Government of Pakistan's strong political commitment leading up to the "United Nations Food System Summit - Stock Taking Moment-2023." This significant event was inaugurated by the Chairman of Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) and concluded with remarks from Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Bajwa, the focal point and National Convener for Pakistan, who serves as the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of National Food Security & Research. The consultation served as a platform for key stakeholders to come together and contribute to the ongoing dialogue

on transforming Pakistan's food systems. In his opening remarks, Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, extended a heartfelt welcome to all the distinguished guests, participants, provincial stakeholders, and members of the media present at the event. Dr. Ali emphasized PARC's strong commitment for supporting farmers and facilitating the production of sustainable and nutritious food for consumers. He also underscored PARC's efforts in adhering to global guidelines for food security. Furthermore, the Chairman reiterated PARC's vital objective of aligning



its research with international standards in order to contribute effectively to food security not only globally but also with a specific focus on Pakistan. Leading the

technical discussion, Dr. Ghulam Sadiq Afridi, Member, Social Sciences Division, PARC and Secretary of the Technical Working Group (TWG), along with Mr. Faiz Rasool, Senior Policy Advisor at the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), shared the progress made by the Government of Pakistan. The progress review process on Food System Transformation in Pakistan received technical assistance from GAIN in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), and International Fund for Agricultural

Development (IFAD). Notably, provincial leadership highlighted the overall progress achieved, challenges faced (particularly regarding climate change

implications), stakeholder engagement, and strategic investments allocated for the transformation of Pakistan's food systems. The event witnessed the active participation of country representatives from FAO, IFAD, WFP, and GAIN, providing valuable technical insights. It brought together a diverse range of participants, including senior officials such as Secretary Food, Punjab, Mr. Zaman Wattoo, Secretary Agriculture (AJK) Mr. Javed Ayub, and Director Generals from provincial food, agriculture, and livestock departments, as well as representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Consumer Association Network. In today's world, poor diets have emerged as a significant contributor to one in five deaths. Furthermore, food production and consumption have become intertwined with pressing environmental issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, unsustainable water usage, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss. A crucial report, "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020," highlights a staggering statistic: approximately three billion people worldwide lack the financial means to access a healthy diet. Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive transformation of existing food systems.

Senate continues debate on budget 2023-24

ISLAMABAD: Senators from both sides of the aisle on Tuesday participated in the debate on the budget 2023-24 in the Upper House of the Parliament and presented various proposals to make it more people-friendly. Taking part in the discussion, Senator Mohsin Aziz said more resources should be generated to overcome economic issues, particularly vigorous efforts for more revenue collection. Senator Irfan-ul-Haq Siddiqui appreciated the government's decision of allocating an amount of Rs 1 billion in the budget for health insurance of working journalists and expressed the hope that the provinces would also follow suit. He

also hailed sufficient increase in the salaries of government employees upto 35% considering their problems. He questioned, "How investment will come when agitation, sit-ins and protests are held every day?" The opposition had an important role in the government affairs but it was their own decision to leave the Parliament, he added. Senator Siddiqui said various innovative steps were taken to boost the economy during the tenure of Nawaz Sharif when the inflation rate was under 3 percent and the country was on the right track of economic progress. Senator Syed Waqar Mehdi said the budget was presented at a time when the

country was facing economic issues due to weak policies of the past government, which had failed to deliver. He said funds should be released for the flood-affected people of Sindh province who faced loss of lives and property during the 2022 floods. He appreciated the allocation of funds for working journalists to address their health issues and suggested to also consider their family members. Senator Raza Rabbani said the problems of flood-affected people in Sindh and Balochistan should be considered and their due grant amount should be disbursed. He said political stability was need of the hour which was interlinked with the econom-

ic stability of the country. He demanded strict action against those who were involved in May 9 incidents and the state must enforce its writ and arrest all masterminds. Senator Prof Dr Mehar Taj Rohani suggested to allocate more funds in the health budget to address medical problems of the people and starting new health projects. She said more focus should be on prevention aspects of the diseases like diabetes and hypertension which are silent killer diseases. She said more attention on preventive measures means protecting various precious lives and making the country's people healthy and energetic.—APP

Steps afoot to cope with any eventuality

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Marri has said that necessary steps are being taken both in Sindh and Balochistan to cope with any eventuality arising from Cyclone Biparjoo. Speaking in the National Assembly on Tuesday, she said the process of evacuation of the people from different areas of the coastal belt is continuing and so far about eighty thousand to one hundred thousand people have been evacuated. She said billboards are also being removed in Karachi. In his remarks, the chair said the personnel of the Armed Forces are present in the areas likely to be affected by the cyclone. He said the people should observe precaution and give serious consideration to the directions and alerts being issued by the authorities concerned regarding the cyclone. On the occasion, the House also prayed to avert the looming cyclone and save the country from natural disasters. The National Assembly continued discussion on the budget for the year 2023-24 today. Participating in the debate, Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshed Shah said the budget has been presented in a difficult economic situation. He was appreciative of increasing the salary of employees, but stressed for taking more steps for the uplift of agriculture sector. Khurshed Shah said the country is blessed with many resources, but regretted that these have never been exploited to strengthen the economy.—DNA

Barter trade to benefit both Pakistan and Russia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Describing the import of Russian oil by Pakistan as a good omen, Russia's Ambassador in Pakistan Danila Ganich said on Tuesday that barter trade could be of benefit to both the countries. In an interview with a private TV channel, Ganish said that if Pakistanis were happy that finally oil from Russia had arrived in their country, so were the Russians. He expressed his country's desire to expand trade relations with Pakistan. "Today Russia's national day is being celebrated not only in Russia but also in Pakistan," he said, adding, "Today, on this auspicious day, I also felicitate the people of Pakistan. Ganich also showed his country's willingness to make both Pakistan and India sit at the negotiating table for the resolution of Kashmir issue. The first shipment of Russian oil to energy-starved Pakistan was unloaded at Karachi Port on Monday. State Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik previously said shipments will be paid for in currencies of "friendly countries", with Pakistan's US dollar reserves dangerously low and Russia pivoting away from the greenback. "This is the first-ever Russian oil cargo to Pakistan and the beginning of a new relationship between Pakistan and Russian Federation," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Twitter. Local media reported the cargo of 100,000 metric tons of oil left Russia a month ago and was split across two smaller ships in Oman before sailing to Karachi. Islamabad imports 84 percent of its petroleum products and has historically relied on friendly Gulf States for shipments.

Capital Police expedites action against violators

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police expedited action against traffic laws violators in order to ensure smooth traffic flow and make Islamabad accidents free city. Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanweer directed all zonal DSPs and beat inspectors to take stern action against drivers violating rules including seat belt violators, motorcyclists without helmets, lanes discipline violators and especially heavy vehicle drivers who are violating their designated route and time. While Issuing special instructions to the officers and jawans, he said non-discriminatory action should be taken against the violators of traffic rules, maintain polite attitude with citizens, and respect to the citizens will not be tolerated at all. He further said that incharge beat inspector will be responsible for his area, strict departmental action will be taken against those who are negligent and performing their duties not well, while rewards will also be given to the officers.—APP

Senator Raza demands Rs10,000 hike in EOBI pension

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Senator Raza Rabbani has demanded to make Rs10,000 hike in the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) pension. Speaking on the floor of the Senate, Raza Rabbani said that the budget 2023-24 was a unique budget in many aspects. "IMF [International Monetary Fund] is also imposing unique conditions on Pakistan." "Despite fulfilment of all pre-conditions, the IMF agreement is not signed yet. IMF has always forwarded the goal post and the institution is also part of the international imperialism," criticised the senator. Senator Rabbani claimed that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was deliberately put on the back burner and a campaign was commenced against it. "It seems that the IMF agreement would not be signed. Everyone knows about the regional situation. The payment for Russian oil was made in Chinese currency. Pakistan will have to come out of the clutches of the IMF and the global imperialists." He demanded a Rs10,000 hike in the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) pensions.—APP

Gold prices decline by Rs 4,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 4,000 and was sold at Rs 221,500 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 225,500 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs3,430 to Rs189,900 from Rs193,330 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs.174,075 from Rs177,219. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,650 and Rs 2,271.94 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$2 to \$1961 against its sale at \$1963, the association reported.—APP

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Briefs

Lawmakers appreciate balanced budget

ISLAMABAD: The lawmakers in the National Assembly here on Tuesday expressed their appreciation for the government's presentation of a balanced budget despite prevailing economic challenges.

During the general discussion on the Budget for the year 2023-24, Maulana Muhammad Anwar of MMAP acknowledged Pakistan's multifaceted challenges and stressed the importance of unity in accordance with Islamic teachings to effectively overcome them. Noor Ul Hassan Tanvir commended the government for announcing a balanced budget despite the difficult economic circumstances.

He advocated for justice to be served to Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in the fabricated cases initiated by PTI, while also highlighting the achievements of Sharif's previous administrations.

Mahesh Kumar Malani lauded the salary increase for employees and pensioners, recognizing it as a significant step to address the financial struggles faced by individuals affected by inflation. He also lauded the government's allocation of additional funds for development projects and the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP). Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMAP) emphasized the need to establish an interest-free economic system in line with the Constitution of Pakistan and Islamic laws.

Chitrali criticized the federal budget for its inclusion of interest-based financial measures, expressing concern over the substantial expenditure on loan interest payments to international institutions. He argued that the budget lacked measures to control rising inflation, predicting further price surges for essential commodities in the days ahead.—DNA

PIDE conference kicks off

ISLAMABAD: In collaboration with the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE), the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) organized a dynamic and engaging 02-Day Conference at the University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The conference, titled "Unleashing the Economic Potential of KPK," brought together local leaders, experts, and stakeholders to address regional problems and explore indigenous solutions.

The conference commenced with an inauguration session, where participants reflected on the past 37 years of conducting general meetings and conferences, recognizing the pressing need for local solutions to tackle the diverse range of issues impacting our communities. It was emphasized that efficiency, thoughtful consideration of local issues, and regional consensus are crucial elements for building networks and linkages between academia, government, and other key stakeholders. The collaboration with the University of Malakand was unveiled as a significant step toward achieving these goals.—DNA

Pakistan Post advances 7 spots in World Postal Rankings

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Maulana Asad Mehmood was overjoyed as Pakistan Post moved up to seven spots in the 2022 World Postal Rankings, released by Universal Postal Union (UPU). Mehmood who was the chief guest at the inauguration ceremony of "UMS-Overnight" Service by Pakistan Post here on Tuesday, said Pakistan Post has reached 155th position from 162 in the world ranking, and further improvements would be made in order to reach new heights. Pakistan Post has moved up to seven spots under his tenure in the Postal Ranking Index which is based on four pillars namely reliability, delivery, relevance and flexibility. Speaking about the "UMS-Overnight" Service, he said Pakistan Post



ISLAMABAD: Bikers are riding bikes without wearing helmet at Jinnah Avenue, which needs the attention of concern authorities.—Online

COMSATS, POWERCHINA to construct a cultural bridge

DNA

ISLAMABAD: POWERCHINA has actively participated in the "Chinese Culture Hour" exchange and exhibition event organized by COMSATS University at its Islamabad campus. The event served as a platform for students to showcase their knowledge of Chinese culture, encompassing various aspects such as calligraphy, tai chi, kung fu, cuisine, tongue twisters, and music, the POWERCHINA said on Tuesday. POWERCHINA praised and encouraged the students for their splendid performance demonstrations and they generously donated carefully selected Chinese cultural books to the university. Additionally, outstanding students were presented with commendation certificates as recognition of their remarkable contributions. After the event, POWERCHINA and the university held in-depth discussions and reached a consensus on further solidifying their commitment to cross-cultural exchange and collaboration. On the day of the event, the university

campus buzzed with the vibrant atmosphere of Chinese culture as students eagerly displayed their knowledge and appreciation of it. The art of calligraphy came alive as students demonstrated the charm of Chinese characters, skillfully explaining the meaning behind each stroke to the captivated audience. The performances of tai chi and kung fu embodied

the essence of traditional Chinese martial arts, showcasing the students' excellent body control and graceful movements, which garnered the admiration of the audience.

In the food exhibition area, a variety of delicious Chinese cuisine delighted the senses. The students demonstrated their exquisite culinary skills by preparing dishes

such as spicy chicken, dumplings, fried noodles, and fried rice. They ingeniously incorporated elements from local cuisine, adding a unique touch. Tongue twisters and music performances contribute to the joyous and lively atmosphere. The students eloquently spoke Chinese and delivered melodious tunes, showcasing the diverse and enchanting facets of

Chinese culture. Representatives from POWERCHINA showered the students with high praises and encouragement for their exceptional performances, and as honored guests, they awarded certificates to the students as acknowledgement.

Additionally, to further support the university's Chinese cultural education, a carefully curated collection of books encompassing various aspects of Chinese culture was presented. These valuable resources will offer students more learning material and serve as a source of inspiration, facilitating them to develop a deeper understanding of Chinese culture.

This event not only allowed the students to express their admiration for Chinese culture and enrich their knowledge of it but also fostered an important cultural exchange between Pakistan and China. POWERCHINA remains dedicated to advance cultural exchange and understanding with universities, cultivating friendships, and jointly promoting the integration and development of cultural diversity.



Relief for masses on cards as Russian crude oil arrived in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik on Tuesday said the deal struck by Pakistan with Russia for crude oil import would help the government pass on financial relief to the masses who had been bearing brunt of inflation stemmed from the previous government's flawed economic policies. "This is the history since it is the first time that crude oil from Russia has been arrived in Pakistan," the minister said while addressing a news conference here. He refused to divulge details of the commercial terms of the oil deal with Russia due to agreements signed by both sides for confidentiality. "I want to say to my political opponents that Russian oil has reached Pakistan, which will benefit the people, so at least congratulate the nation today," he said while accusing the previous government of misleading the masses on the subject. The PTI government, in fact, did not manage to get any oil deal with Russia which was also confirmed by the Russian government's officials. He said Pakistan had imported 100,000 tons of oil from Russia initially with plans to gradually increase the quan-

ntity over time as the country would meet its quarterly oil requirements through the utilization of Russian oil.

He said the previous regime had made baseless claims, suggesting that the PTI government's attempt to import oil from Russia led to its alleged removal. "If this is true then how we have imported oil from Russia successfully," he questioned. Musadik said the government wanted good relations with all countries including Russia, America, Europe, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and China as Pakistan was not part of any group. He said that the government intended to ink a \$10 billion contract, before the end of its tenure, so a new oil refinery could be established in Pakistan. The minister said that Pakistan had also received a contract from Azerbaijan, which was available to the cabinet. "Under the contract, the Central Asian country would provide Pakistan a distressed LNG cargo monthly. The LNG price would be much lower than in the international market," he said. The minister said that under the terms of the contract, it would be Pakistan's prerogative to accept the cargo or not.—APP

QAU students explore Parliament House

ISLAMABAD: A delegation comprising 54 members from the Quaid-e-Azam University, School of Political and International Relations on Tuesday embarked on

an enriching visit to Parliament House, accompanied by esteemed faculty members. The delegation received a warm reception from senior officials at

Parliament House, setting the tone for an insightful experience. The highlight of their visit was a captivating tour of the Senate Museum, where the dele-

gation delved into the historical significance of the Upper House. They were treated to a thought-provoking documentary that showcased the evolution and milestones of the Senate throughout history. Immersed in the museum, the delegation displayed a profound interest in the sculptures of distinguished politicians.—APP


IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to an IESCO Spokesman, the power supply would remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 2:00 PM in F-17/1&2, Tu-fail Shaheed, Charah, Frash Town and Kirpa feeders in Islamabad Circle; Nogzi, Bagh Sardaran, Social Security, Industrial, Pir Wadhai, Raja abad, Nogazi, Bijnyal, Dhoke Choudhuria and Shams Colony feeders in Rawalpindi City Circle; River Garden I, II, III and Naval I & II feeders in Rawalpindi Cantt Circle; Domeli, Bhagwal,—APP


Nation's future depends on teachers' performance

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday said that the future of this nation depends on the performance of teachers. He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the induction training program 2023 for the newly recruited 1000 teachers here at Federal Education College. He said that we have hired 1000 new elementary, and secondary teachers and lecturers to meet the needs of the educational institutions of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

Rana said that the teachers are the backbone of the education system and stressed them to play their due role in the character building of the nation. "It is important to provide the right training to the teachers in order to deliver their mandate" he underlined. Federal Minister stressed that there is no room for nepotism and corruption in our children's future. With proper training, Education Minister said that teachers can ensure the proper education of the youth. "I hope that the newly recruited teachers will perform their duties with full honesty and integrity, Rana Tanveer Hussain remarked.—APP



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

UNESCO move shows US' arrogance

For years the United States has been the world's sole superpower. This has spoiled politicians in Washington. They take it for granted that it is an unquestionable prerogative of the US that it should have an absolute say in United Nations organizations simply because of that status. Being the world's largest economy, the US is also the biggest funder of the organizations. This is regarded by the politicians in Washington as a leverage to ensure the organizations are pliable to the US' diktats. That is why the US has withdrawn from UNESCO, twice, as well as the UN Human Rights Council and the World Health Organization when it has taken umbrage with them. Similarly, it has also quit the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and the Paris Agreement, although it has now rejoined the latter. With such a mindset the politicians in Washington refuse to accept that the world is becoming increasingly multipolarized, and it is natural and fair for emerging countries to have a greater say in global affairs and demand a fairer world order. It is not fair for the US to have the absolute say over global affairs in UN organizations, where international affairs of concern to all countries should be decided by vote. Countries, small or big, have equal status in the UN and its organizations. But Washington remains stubbornly willful as shown by the announcement of UNESCO that the US plans to rejoin the UN cultural and scientific agency. That decision has reportedly been motivated by concerns that China is filling the gap left by the US in UNESCO. This is the second time the US will rejoin the organization having withdrawn in a fit of pique. In 1984, the US quit, citing mismanagement and an anti-US bias. Having rejoined in 2003, the Donald Trump administration again withdrew the US from the organization in 2017 because Palestine was included by vote as a member. To be frank, the presence of the US in UNESCO and other UN organizations is important for concerted global efforts to address challenges of great concern to the future of humanity. But whether the US will play a positive role in the agency remains a conjecture. If, as its official says, its return is just for regaining its own influence against that of China in the organization, the US will likely just be a troublemaker. China's ambassador to the agency has expressed the hope the move means that Washington is serious about multilateralism. He said that being a member of an international organization is a serious issue, and it is hoped that the return of the US this time means it acknowledges the mission and the goals of the organization. Other members of the agency share that hope.



China-Arab engagement

With reportedly more than 3,500 government and business officials from China and Arab countries participating, and \$10 billion in investment agreements signed on its first day, the 10th Arab-China Business Conference was illustrative of the thriving relationship between the two sides. Hosted by Saudi Arabia, co-organized by the Arab League and China, the event sought to enhance the strategic partnership based around the Belt and Road Initiative, according to Saudi media. Just as the agreements signed in Riyadh indicate, the partnership is reaching far beyond oil as a traditional energy source to such fields as technology, agriculture, renewable energy and tourism. As an interesting particular of this change, the host country signed a \$5.6 billion deal with a Chinese company to manufacture electric vehicles locally. This will certainly add to the concerns of some outside observers about the geopolitical implications of the rapidly widening and deepening engagement between China, Saudi Arabia and the broader Arab world. It will even spur some parties to make greater efforts to suppress the momentum in the cooperation out of their anxieties that China is exploiting the strategic vacuum the West has left behind in the Middle East. But while they see the matter through the prism of "major power strategic competition" and "systemic rivalry", the Saudi government has made it crystal clear that it has no interest in the West-led geopolitical game. As Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman clarified, his country prioritizes business interests. He said the country totally ignores criticism from that perspective. Businesspeople "will go where opportunity comes their way", he noted, and China is where there are opportunities to be seized. "There is nothing political about it, there is nothing strategic about it," he said, stressing Saudi Arabia doesn't have to be engaged in a zero-sum game. Unlike some in the West who are keen on making allies and partners take sides between them and China as an alleged strategic rival, the Saudi official does not believe such relationships should be mutually exclusive. Speaking of the thriving trade ties and expanding realms of cooperation with China, he stated, "This doesn't mean we're not going to collaborate with others". There is nothing unusual about the world's largest crude oil exporting country cooperating with the largest importer. And the two countries are engaging more closely in broader areas because the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative aligns well with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which in itself is a transformative economic and social reform blueprint. Most importantly, their cooperation is driven by the opportunities they see in each other.

What does Turkey expect from Erdogan in his new term?

Adham Kawa Qadr



The country suffers from high inflation rates, unemployment rates, a widening trade deficit, and dwindling foreign exchange reserves. Erdogan's unconventional monetary policy of keeping interest rates low and relying on currency swaps and injections from allies has not succeeded in stabilizing the Turkish lira, which has lost more than 40% of its value against the US dollar since 2020. Many economists fear that Turkey is heading towards a crisis.

Turkey is a country with vast lands, it is on two continents, Europe and Asia, and it has a pivotal role in regional and international affairs, this is its destiny and destiny. However, these destinies bear many challenges, internally and externally, and affect her destiny and identity. In May 2023, Turkey held its presidential elections, which resulted in the re-election of Recep Tayyip Erdogan for a third term. Erdogan is a charismatic leader who has changed the political, economic and social landscape in Turkey since he entered the political arena at the beginning of the second millennium. He also pursued an assertive and ambitious foreign policy, which often put him at odds with his allies and neighbors. One of the most pressing issues for Erdogan now is the economic crisis that Turkey has been experiencing in the past few years. The country suffers from high inflation rates, unemployment rates, a widening trade deficit, and dwindling foreign exchange reserves. Erdogan's unconventional monetary policy of keeping interest rates low and relying on currency swaps and injections from allies has not succeeded in stabilizing the Turkish lira, which has lost more than 40% of its value against the US dollar since 2020. Many economists fear that Turkey is heading towards a crisis. In the balance of payments, unless international confidence is restored and foreign investment is attracted.

Erdogan promised to defeat inflation and build a productive economy in his third term, but he will have to make tough choices and reforms to achieve that goal. He will either have to raise interest rates to rein in inflation and defend the lira, or devalue the currency to boost exports and competitiveness. It will also have to address the structural problems of the economy such as low savings, high debt, low productivity and dependence on imports. Moreover, he will have to deal with the social consequences of economic hardship, such as poverty, inequality, and resentment among

the urban middle class. To solve this dilemma, Erdogan appointed the economist, Mehmet Cismak, as Minister of Treasury and Finance. Another major challenge for Erdogan is the refugee crisis caused by the civil war in Syria and the instability in Iraq and Afghanistan. Turkey hosts more than 4 million refugees, most of them Syrians, who have fled violence and persecution in their countries of origin. While Turkey has been praised for its humanitarian response and generosity towards refugees, it has also faced criticism and resentment from some segments of Turkish society who blame refugees for taking jobs, resources and services from the local population. Erdogan tried to balance maintaining his humanitarian stance with responding to popular pressure to deport or resettle the refugees. He also used the refugee card as a bargaining chip with the European Union, threatening to open the borders and launch a new wave of immigration if Turkey did not receive more financial aid and political support from Brussels. Erdogan will have to find a sustainable solution to the refugee crisis in his third term, one that respects the rights and dignity of refugees, while addressing the concerns and needs of the Turkish people. And he will have to cooperate with the international community, especially the European Union and NATO, to share the burden and responsibility of hosting and integrating refugees. He will also have to work towards ending the conflict in Syria and Iraq and upholding peace and stability in Afghanistan. The third challenge for Erdogan is the upcoming municipal elections in March 2024, which will be a critical test of his popularity and legitimacy. Municipal elections are important because they determine who controls local administrations and services in Turkey's major cities and regions. It also reflects the general mood and public opinion towards Erdogan's policies and performance. And in the last municipal elections in 2019, Erdogan suffered a major setback when the ruling Justice and Development Party lost control of Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir

and several other major cities to opposition parties. This was seen as a sign of Erdogan's declining popularity. Opposition parties capitalized on their victories by providing better services, transparency, and accountability to their constituents.

Erdogan will have to regain his lost ground in the upcoming municipal elections if he is to maintain his grip on power and secure his legacy. He will have to win back the trust and support of urban voters, especially youth, women, Kurds, seculars and minorities. He will have to address their grievances and demand more democracy, freedom, justice and pluralism. He will also have to face a united and confident opposition bloc that will challenge him on all fronts. Erdogan has been a staunch critic and opponent of Assad since the outbreak of the Syrian uprising that turned into a civil war. Erdogan supported various rebel groups fighting against the Assad regime and intervened militarily in northern Syria to create a buffer zone along the Turkish border. Erdogan also accused Assad of committing atrocities against his own people and called for his removal from power. However, Assad managed to survive and regain most of the territory he lost to the rebels, thanks to the support of Russia, Iran and Hezbollah. Al-Assad also regained some international recognition and legitimacy, as some Arab and European countries resumed diplomatic relations with him. Al-Assad also expressed his willingness to engage in political dialogue and negotiations with the opposition and other stakeholders under the auspices of the United Nations. Erdogan will have to decide whether to continue his hostile stance towards Assad or change his policy and seek rapprochement with him. He will have to weigh the costs and benefits of each option in terms of security, stability, and influence in Syria. He will also have to consider the views and interests of his allies and partners such as Russia, Iran, NATO, and the United States, who have different agendas and expectations in Syria.

The writer is Expert International Relation & Diplomacy (Iraq)

Pakistan's Complex Foreign Policy Dynamics

Shumaila Amanat



Pakistan's foreign policy faces a significant challenge related to its nuclear capability, particularly in light of the United States' campaign against countries possessing weapons of mass destruction. As the only Islamic country with nuclear capabilities, Pakistan encounters numerous problems. Interestingly, the United States has consistently opposed

In the field of International Relations, the concept of permanent friendship or enmity among nations does not exist. Instead, the primary consideration is given to national interests, upon which each state bases its foreign policy, focusing on national security and interests. These factors are instrumental in shaping and determining the direction of foreign policy. Pakistan's foreign policy faces a significant challenge related to its nuclear capability, particularly in light of the United States' campaign against countries possessing weapons of mass destruction. As the only Islamic country with nuclear capabilities, Pakistan encounters numerous problems. Interestingly, the United States has consistently opposed Pakistan, an Islamic state, becoming a nuclear power, while showing little concern for India's nuclear program. Following the alleged involvement of individuals like Amil Kanshi and Ramzi Yusuf in terrorist activities, the government of Pakistan decided to hand them over to the USA. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Pakistani government faced tremendous pressure to cooperate with the United States due to its shared border with Afghanistan. However, despite past betrayals, the Pakistani people opposed the military government's cooperation with the US in attacking Afghanistan. In the aftermath of 9/11, India found greater support from the international community, particularly the West, in its calls for action against terrorism in Kashmir, accusing Pakistan of supporting cross-border terrorism in the region.

The people of Pakistan, as well as the political establishment, felt a profound sense of betrayal by the United States. Pakistan was left to deal with the aftermath of the Afghan war against the Soviets, resulting in more than three million refugees and significant economic repercussions. Supporting the US after the events of 9/11 meant further economic challenges for Pakistan, which was already suffering from sanctions imposed after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Additionally, the Indian parliament's actions created further economic problems for Pakistan. However, the events of 9/11 also contributed to an improvement in Pakistan's economy. The country, which had been severely affected by sanctions imposed by the US, Europe, and Japan, received economic and military assistance from these countries. The US and other

donor countries decided to write off \$12.5 billion in debt. Pakistan's geostrategic location once again forced the US to reconsider its policies toward the country. The development of the Gwadar Port in Pakistan presented an opportunity for economic benefits through cooperation with China, facilitating the transportation of hydrocarbons from Central Asia to the rest of the world. Pakistan could also provide port facilities to landlocked countries in Central Asia and Afghanistan. By offering a transit route for a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to India, Pakistan could potentially generate \$600 million to \$800 million. The changing world scenario following the US attack on Iraq has also had an impact on the South Asian region. Pakistan has the opportunity to improve relations with Russia, which, although no longer a superpower, remains an important Eurasian nation seeking regional diversification. Additionally, given China's current high economic growth rate, Pakistan has the opportunity to strengthen its relations with China, as China is projected to become the world's largest economic power by 2025. To strengthen the region, Pakistan should consider normalizing and improving relations with India and making SAARC more effective, similar to other economic alliances like the EU and ASEAN. Another development after 9/11 is the revival of Muslim identity among the people of Islamic states. As an Islamic country, Pakistan can play a crucial role in bringing Muslim countries together, fostering people-to-people contacts, and promoting trade relations. Islamic countries can pool their substantial resources to develop infrastructure, education, healthcare, banking, and media. Pakistan also has an opportunity to engage in barter trade with some Middle Eastern countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs typically prepares the foreign policy in accordance with executive directions and presents it to the parliament for approval. After discussion and debate, the parliament grants approval or suggests changes. Members of parliament, whether from the ruling party or the opposition, can appreciate or criticize the government's foreign policy and question the performance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Statements issued by the President, Prime Minister, or Foreign Ministers regarding external affairs are included in parliamentary debates, allowing honorable members to express their sentiments and the opinions of the people. Given the importance of parliament, particularly in mat-

ters of foreign affairs, President General Muhammad Ayub Khan convened a special session of the National Assembly during the 1962 Sino-Indian border issue, briefing members on its impacts on Pakistan's security. Similarly, the National Assembly was taken into confidence when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then President of Pakistan, traveled to New Delhi in 1972 to hold talks with Indian Premier Mrs. Indira Gandhi after the East Pakistan debacle. The Simla Agreement signed by Pakistan and India on July 3, 1972, was also ratified by the National Assembly, marking the first time that any Pakistani government had sought parliamentary ratification for an agreement. Joint sessions of parliament have been convened multiple times to discuss the Kashmir issue and other security-related matters. Considering the developments that have occurred on the world stage after 9/11, it is crucial for those responsible for formulating Pakistan's foreign policy to review it. The founding fathers of Pakistan envisioned it as an economically stable, tolerant state that could serve as a role model for other Islamic countries, free from legal and political discrimination. This can only be achieved under a democratic regime capable of formulating foreign policy based on national consensus. Pakistan's foreign policy objectives should include improving relations with Russia and achieving peace with India, thereby strengthening the South Asian region and enhancing the effectiveness of SAARC. To have independent policies, Pakistan must focus on improving its economy, relying on self-sufficiency. Given the shared Islamic ideology, Pakistan should work on improving relations with the Muslim world through increased people-to-people contact. Pakistan must develop long-term policies in the national interest, moving away from ad hoc and reactionary approaches. It is essential to establish a definite foreign policy, considering recommendations from advisory boards. At the end, I thank to Respected Sir Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer who has shown in my growth as a writer. His belief in my abilities and their dedication to helping me succeed has been an invaluable source of motivation. His mentorship has empowered me to explore new perspectives, challenge my own assumptions, and develop a stronger and more confident voice.

The writer is Department of Medical Lab and technology University of Okara

Briefs

Pakistan, Azerbaijan ink deal for LNG at 'cheaper price'

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has one tender seeking six cargoes on a delivered-ex-ship (DES) basis to Port Qasim in Karachi in October and December, according to the tenders posted online. The delivery windows are Oct. 5-6, 20-21 and 31, and Dec. 7-8, 13-14 and 24-25. The tender will close on June 20. Pakistan LNG's second tender seeks three cargoes, also on DES basis to Port Qasim, for delivery windows of January 3-4, 28-29 and February 23-24. The second tender closes on July 14. Pakistan LNG last issued a tender seeking 10 spot cargoes in July 2022, but it received no offers. Separately on Tuesday, Pakistan's petroleum minister Musadik Malik told a news conference that Azerbaijan will supply an LNG cargo every month to Pakistan at a "cheaper price."

He did not share details on the supply deal, but said that a contract had already been signed with Azerbaijan and that it will "start soon." Pakistan has two long-term supply deals with Qatar, one signed in 2016 for 3.75 million metric tons of LNG a year, and another signed in 2021 for 3 million metric tons a year. It also has an annual portfolio contract with ENI for 0.75 million metric tons a year. In 2022, Pakistan's imports of LNG slowed to 6.93 million metric tons for the year, down from 8.23 million metric tons in 2021, according to data from data analytics group Kpler.

PM to pay official visit to Azerbaijan

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Regional and global issues of mutual concern and cooperation in multilateral forums will also be discussed. The Pakistan-Azerbaijan relationship is embedded in commonalities of faith, culture and history, and strengthened by mutual trust and convergence of views on regional and global matters. Frequent leadership-level exchanges highlight the bonds of friendship between the two countries and contribute to closer multifaceted cooperation for the mutual benefit of the people of Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Khan says beneficiaries behind May 9 events

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his client was not feeling well since he had returned from Islamabad last night. Ordering the PTI chairman to cooperate with the investigators, the court also ordered the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) head to submit report in these cases on the next hearing. The court also put off hearings of the cases of PTI worker Zille Shah's murder and Zaman Park case against Imran Khan until June 27.

Elections after govt completes...

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complete consistency, adding that elections would be held after the completion of the constitutional term. "The PML-N paved the way for progress whenever people mandated it to the power," she said. Answering another query, she said the PML-N changed the status of the country whenever it came to power. Its biggest success, she said, was saving the country's economy from default. "We have lowered prices of petroleum products despite difficult conditions and given relief to people," she added. As for PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif's return to Pakistan, she said Mr Sharif would return before elections. "The PDM leadership will take a decision if the parties want to stay united for elections but the PML-N will fully contest elections," she said. At one point, she condemned the May 9 attacks. She said the perpetrators would be brought to justice on the basis of proper investigation.

PVF rewards cash prize to National Volleyball team

Chairman PVF said that despite the lack of resources we were making strenuous efforts for the promotion of the volleyball game in the country, adding that volleyball is a very popular game the players need encouragement and patronage

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) on Tuesday honoured the Pakistan national volleyball team and officials with cash rewards for winning the five-nation Engro Central Asian Volleyball Championship which was held in Pakistan last year in November. A simple ceremony was held at a local hotel in Islamabad to honor and acknowledge the performance of the national volleyball team who beat favourite Iran in the final of the championship where Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan also participated in the international event. Chairman of Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) Choudhary Muhammad Yaqoob was the chief guest of the ceremony while Engro Group Senior Vice President Syed Zahoor Mehdi, Army Sports Directorate Lieutenant Colonel Nabeel Ahmed Rana, Brazilian coach Issanay Ramires Ferraz and others dignitaries were also present during the ceremony. Speaking at the ceremony, Chairman PVF Choudhary Muhammad Yaqoob said that the federation doing their best to improve and develop volleyball standard in the



country as well as the federation setting the target to qualify Pakistan team for Olympics 2028, adding that services of the Brazilian coach Issanay Ramires Ferraz is hired for one year to improve the performance of the national team. He said that our commitment for the promotion of the volleyball game which would be encouraged at national and international level as

volleyball is one of the most famous international sports. Chairman PVF said that despite the lack of resources we were making strenuous efforts for the promotion of the volleyball game in the country, adding that volleyball is a very popular game the players need encouragement and patronage. He said that Pakistan senior team will feature in the AVC Men's

Challenger in Chinese Taipei from July 8-15. It will be followed by the Asian Championship which Iran will host in Tehran from August 18-26. And the Green-shirts' next target will be the 19th Asian Games slated to be held in Hangzhou, China, from September 23 to October 8. However, volleyball event during the quadrennial spectacle will be held from Sep-

tember 19-26. He said that Pakistan will also hold a 15-day camp in Tehran ahead of the Asian event, adding that the national under-16 team will also participate in the first U-16 Asian Championship will be played in Uzbekistan from July 22 this year as well as federation has planned to hold the national volleyball league in November this year.

Joshua Kimmich salvages Germany draw with Ukraine

BREMEN: An injury-time penalty from Germany captain Joshua Kimmich salvaged a 3-3 draw with Ukraine in a friendly in Bremen on Monday. Germany trailed 3-1 with less than 10 minutes remaining but a goal from Kai Havertz gave the home side hope, before the Chelsea forward won a penalty in injury time, bringing Kimmich to the spot. Despite the comeback, an impressive Ukraine led for much of the match and will take signifi-

cant momentum into this month's crucial Euro 2024 qualifiers against North Macedonia and Malta. Asked if his side had given away victory, Ukraine manager Serhiy Rebrov, in his first match in charge, said "are you asking me whether it's a success if we draw 3-3 with Germany?" "I think we created enough chances and we could have scored even more." The manager thanked Germany for hosting the friendly, telling the post-match press confer-

ence "this is an important match for Ukraine". "We are grateful to Germany for supporting us in the war". Germany coach Hansi Flick lamented the "individual mistakes" and said his side needed to "keep working and showing that we've improved the things we're training". "We know it's a long process, but it's the process that's important" Flick told Germany's ZDF network. "We started well," Kimmich said after the game, "but then conceded

two stupid goals. That's exactly what we need to stop". Flick stayed true to his pre-match promise to bring the "attacking power" ahead of the game, which was Germany's 1000th top level match. The manager selected a back three, allowing the offence-minded David Raum and Marius Wolf to roam the wings. The script looked to be going according to plan for the hosts early, Antonio Ruediger's pressure forcing a hurried Mykhaylo Mudryk to pass directly to an unmarked Niclas Füllkrug just metres from goal. While the striker blasted centimetres wide, Füllkrug had the ball in the net soon after, deflecting a Wolf shot into the net just six minutes in. Originally awarded to Wolf, the goal was later credited to Füllkrug, making it the Bremen striker's seventh in seven games in Germany colours. Germany pushed for a second but Ukraine struck twice in five minutes to turn the match on its head. - Agencies



Stokes the only captain I'd return for: Moeen

LONDON: Moeen Ali says he would not have come out of Test retirement to play in the Ashes for any other England captain than Ben Stokes. Moeen answered England's call after Jack Leach was ruled out of the series against Australia with a back injury. Stokes' pioneering style of captaincy has led England to 11 wins from their past 13 Tests. "To be part of it is amazing. It's such a big series and the guys have been playing exciting cricket," said Moeen. A stress fracture in Leach's back was revealed after England's comprehensive win against Ireland at Lord's earlier this month. Off-spinner Moeen, who retired from Test cricket in September 2021, was contacted by Stokes before he heard about Leach's injury. "Stokesy messaged me with a question mark - 'Ashes?'," said Moeen. "I just said 'LOL', thinking he was taking the mick. "The news came through and I had a chat with him. That was it." Moeen and Stokes were team-mates with Chennai Super Kings at the Indian Premier League in April and May. Ben Stokes describes Ashes team-mates in one word "I've obviously spent a lot of time with Stokesy during the IPL," said Warwickshire's Moeen. "He didn't mention anything about coming out of retirement, it was just about the Ashes and how he was looking to take the team. He obviously watched me train out there and thinks I can bowl decently." - Agencies

Shaheen Afridi likely to miss Sri Lanka Tests

KARACHI: Pakistan's ace speedster Shaheen Afridi is likely to miss the upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka. According to sources, the lanky pacer could be rested, due to workload management ahead of the World Cup this year, during next month's assignment. Sri Lanka Cricket will announce the schedule of the two-match Test series, which is part of the ICC World Test Championship, soon. Earlier, it was also reported that Pakistan are unlikely to play ODI matches during their Test tour of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Cricket and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had discussed the possibility of playing ODI matches alongside the two-match Test series between the two sides. However, according to sources, the idea is likely to be dropped due to unforeseen circumstances. Shaheen is currently playing in England's T20 Blast for Nottinghamshire, where he has claimed 13 wickets in nine matches. The lanky pacer said the benefit of the experience of playing league cricket is that he can share the knowledge gained with other players too when he will return home. "We play with and against such players who perform at the international level too. So it becomes easier to plan the way I should be bowling to them later on," Shaheen told Geo News last month. "So it's good for the personal experience but also will be helpful to enhance my performance which will indeed be very beneficial later on for the World Cup preparations and to build a good momentum before that," he added. It must be noted that Pakistan will participate in the World Cup in India in October-November this year. - DNN

Pakistan's proposed World Cup schedule:
Pakistan vs Qualifier, Oct 6, Hyderabad
Pakistan vs Qualifier, Oct 12, Hyderabad
Pakistan vs India, Oct 15, Ahmedabad
Pakistan vs Australia, Oct 20, Bengaluru

Pakistan vs Afghanistan, Oct 23, Chennai
Pakistan vs South Africa, Oct 27, Chennai
Pakistan vs Bangladesh, Oct 31, Kolkata
Pakistan vs New Zealand, Nov 5, Bengaluru
Pakistan vs England, Nov 12, Kolkata

Nepal's ambassador honors Pakistani climbers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nepali ambassador to Pakistan, Tapas Adhikari, organized an event to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the first successful expedition to the Mount Everest and to honor Pakistani climbers Naila Kiani and Sajid Ali Sadpara for their recent successful ascent to the world's tallest peak. During the event, Ambassador Adhikari welcomed and congratulated the Pakistani climbers who recently conquered Mount Everest, bringing great recognition in the field of mountaineering. He specifically mentioned Naila Kiani and Nadia Azad Sajid Ali Sadpara as the two climbers who successfully ascended the world's tallest mountain. The ambassador extended his congratulations to all the climbers and offered his prayers and best wishes for their future endeavors. He emphasized the significance of mountaineering for Nepal and assured that the Nepali government is providing all possible support to the mountaineering industry. Nepal is well-known for its mountain, and the government actively supports related businesses. Ambassador Adhikari also took the opportunity to welcome Mingma G Sherpa and Dawa Sherpa, Everest Summiteer from Nepal, who

are planning to climb Nanga Parbat. He expressed his prayers and best wishes for their success in this endeavor. Ambassador Adhikari also highlighted the silent features of Nepal Government policy to promote mountaineering and appreciated the contribution of Sherpa community in expanding mountaineering activities in Nepal and in around the world. He further said that Sherpas are trained, skillful, reliable, trustworthy and helpful and their efforts have helped in expanding

mountaineering in different countries. He also said that Sherpas are soft power of Nepal and Nepali people have high regards to their contribution highlighting the country's name. He invited the Pakistani people for mountaineering and adventure tourism that Nepal can offer best facilities and services to the people. During the event, Naila Kiani and Sajid Ali Sadpara were presented with certifications by the ambassador recognizing their ascent to the Mt. Everest. Naila Kiani

became the first Pakistani woman climber to summit five peaks over 8,000 meters, including Mount Everest. Nadia Azad and Sajid Ali Sadpara also successfully reached the summit of Mount Everest and proudly hoisted the Pakistani flag atop the peak.

In an interview with the media, Naila Kiani announced her next expedition, which will be an attempt to conquer the majestic Nanga Parbat, the world's ninth-highest mountain. Despite its reputation as one of the most challenging mountain in the world, Naila expressed her full preparedness and determination to succeed in climbing the peak. Nanga Parbat, located in Diamer, Gilgit-Baltistan. Naila Kiani appreciated the assistance provided by the Government and People of Nepal during her stay in Nepal, noting the generosity of the Nepali people towards Pakistanis. Sajid Ali Sadpara shared his experiences with the media and stated that the government of Nepal is ahead of Pakistan in terms of providing technical assistance to climbers from around the world. Mountaineer Sirbaz Khan, while reflecting on his journey in the field of mountaineering, mentioned that he started as a kitchen boy with climbers, but it was Mingma G who advised him to join the field of mountaineering. He credited Mingma G for his success and expressed his gratitude towards him.



Imran Khan fails to show any 'evidence': Rana

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the PTI chief admitted that he made hearsay allegations, adding that the JIT has declared him [Imran Khan] "a liar over false accusations". "When asked about the allegations he [Khan] levelled against the military establishment, the PTI chief own his statements and the videos he made after the assassination bid. However, no proof was provided in this regard," the interior minister added. Lambasting the former premier over May 9 events, Sanaullah said that he misled the country's youth by mentioning name of a senior military officer and incited them for violence. "Investigation into the May 9 vandalism was underway," he said, adding that the PTI chief chalked out strategies to provoke the country's youth. "He presented his arrest on May 9 as a red line and asked the party workers to vandalise the state buildings when he gets arrested," he added. The minister further said that the party was trying to prepare the Tiger Force comprising one million people to carry out events such as May 9. "The aid they received during coronavirus pandemic was mostly spent on strengthening the Tiger Force," he added.

11 killed in strike as Kyiv reports gains

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perceived turning points in the war. It killed 25 people in an apartment block in the central city of Uman six weeks ago, heralding the start of an intensified campaign of drone and missile strikes in the run-up to Ukraine's long-awaited counteroffensive. After seven months of a huge Russian offensive that yielded scant gains despite the bloodiest ground combat in Europe since World War Two, Ukraine began its counterassault last week. So far the offensive is still in its early days, with tens of thousands of fresh Ukrainian troops and hundreds of Western armoured vehicles yet to be committed to the fight. Confirmed video footage from villages over the past two days show that Ukraine has already captured more ground than at any time since November. But it has yet to pierce Russia's main defensive lines, which Moscow has had months to prepare.

Sanjrani felicitates Speaker of Turkiye Assembly

ISLAMABAD: In a gesture of goodwill and diplomatic camaraderie, Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, on Tuesday extended his heartfelt congratulations to Numan Kurtumulus on his recent election as the speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkiye. The Chairman's letter of congratulations is a testament to the strong bilateral ties and shared democratic values between Pakistan and Turkiye. In the letter, he expressed his deep admiration for Kurtumulus' remarkable achievement and conveyed his utmost confidence in his leadership abilities. Recognizing the significance of Kurtumulus' appointment, Senate chairman commended him for his exemplary leadership and unwavering dedication, believing that it would undoubtedly contribute to the progress and prosperity of Turkiye. Highlighting the importance of fostering inter-parliamentary linkages, he emphasized the crucial role of collaboration between the Parliaments of Pakistan and Turkiye in promoting democratic values and advancing legislative processes. He stressed the need for mutual cooperation and exchange of ideas at various regional and international forums, including the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA). The Senate chairman expressed his eagerness to further enhance bilateral parliamentary ties and sought Kurtumulus' support and guidance regarding the International Parliamentarians' Congress (IPC).

Briefs

Fight against wildfire in Kazakhstan continues

ASTANA: Firefighters in Kazakhstan's eastern Abai region kept battling the forest fire that poses "no threat to settlements," the country's emergency services said on Tuesday.

A statement by the Kazakh Emergency Situations Ministry said more than 1,800 people and about 350 pieces of equipment from the ministry, as well as other government bodies, are involved in extinguishing the forest fire in the Abai region. It said that measures were taken to prevent the spread of the forest fire to settlements, adding that helicopters were also involved to inspect the situation. "Over the past day, a total of 546 water discharges were carried out with a volume of more than 1,500 tons. Since the beginning of the fire, more than 1,300 water discharges with a volume of about 4,000 tons have been carried out," it added.

On Monday, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev declared a day of national mourning in honor of the 14 firefighters who died attempting to extinguish the fire. The wildfire erupted last week due to hot and dry weather conditions.—Agencies

Annual tax evasion in Greece exceeds \$65B

ATHENS: Tax evasion in Greece exceeds \$65 billion annually, Bank of Greece governor Yannis Stournaras said on Monday in an interview with news website in.gr. Incomes officially declared in the country totaled 80 billion euros, while consumption totaled 140 billion euros, he said, adding that this consumption was not accompanied by a decline in savings, which in fact continued to rise. "We are considered European champions" in tax evasion despite the progress made in raising tax revenue as a percentage of GDP, Stournaras said. Commenting on non-performing loans, he said that a legislative initiative was ready to be sent to the next finance minister to implement a common code of ethics for funds servicing NPLs. On asset auctions, the central banker said vulnerable borrowers should be protected. He also said that to reduce the high interest rate spread between deposits and loans Greece must improve competition in the banking system, helping smaller banks and asking the government to offer equal competition terms. Stournaras expressed his confidence that the country will regain the investment grade this year and reiterated that Greece needs a government with a long-term horizon.—DNA

Man held after three killed in UK's Nottingham

NOTTINGHAM: Police arrested a man Tuesday after three people were found dead and a van tried to mow down three others in the central English city of Nottingham in incidents authorities believe are linked.

Nottingham's centre was cordoned off, with a heavy police presence, including some armed officers following the series of events that left residents shaken.

A 31-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of murder, police said.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak thanked emergency services who had dealt with the "shocking incident".

"My thoughts are with those injured, and the family and loved ones of those who have lost their lives," he added.

Police were called just after 4:00 am (0300 GMT) after two people were found dead in Ilkeston Road, which runs west out of the city centre. The body of a man was also found just over a mile (1.6 kilometres) away on Magdala Road, about two miles away. The three people hit by the van, in Milton Street, in the city centre, were being treated in hospital, a police statement added. Witness Lynn Haggitt said she saw a van hit two people at around 5:30 am (0430 GMT) near the city's Theatre Royal after the vehicle pulled up beside her on her way to work.—APP

New world order taking shape in favor of freedom-seeking states

Iran and Venezuela are determined to increase their trade volume to \$10 billion in the medium term and further increase them to \$20 dollars, he added

CARACAS: Iranian President Ebrahim Raesi says a new world order is being formed in favor of freedom-seeking, independent countries, stressing that resistance against the arrogant powers has led to significant achievements. Raesi, who is on an official visit to Venezuela on the first leg of a three-nation trip to Latin America, made the remarks at a joint meeting of the high-ranking delegations of Iran and Venezuela on Monday afternoon local time.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro was also present at the meeting. The Iranian president said Tehran and Caracas have managed to improve "strategic" relations in recent years, but they should swiftly implement the previously signed agreements to upgrade ties to higher levels given diverse mutual capacities. He added that Iran has capabilities in the field of exporting technical-engineering services and processing agricultural and mineral products. "The Iranian nation has gained valuable experience and achievements in the field of science and technology thanks to its resistance against the arrogant system and [success to] overcome the sanctions," Raesi said, expressing Tehran's readiness to share them with Venezuela.

Iran and Venezuela are determined to increase their trade volume to \$10 billion in the medium term and further increase them to \$20 dollars, he added. Speaking at a joint press confer-



ence earlier in the day, the Iranian and Venezuelan presidents announced their decision to increase the volume of bilateral trade to \$20 billion.

The press conference was preceded by an official ceremony during which the two countries' ministers and other top officials signed a total of 19 cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding. The Iranian president stressed the importance of further activating the shipping lines between the two countries and called for strengthening cooperation in the industrial, mining, energy, monetary and banking sectors. The Venezuelan president, for his part, pointed

to Caracas's strategic relations with Tehran and said Venezuela is firmly determined to start a new round of bids aimed at expanding relations with Iran.

Maduro added that Iran and Venezuela have made efforts to reduce their dependence on oil revenues and increase the resistance of their economies against foreign upheaval and pressure. In the new world that is being formed, imperialism is collapsing and the countries that have resisted the excessive demands of the arrogant powers are on the verge of victory, he emphasized.

The Venezuelan leader stressed the necessity of establishing a direct air line between the two

countries and strengthening shipping lines to increase bilateral trade. He noted that Tehran and Caracas have also appropriate capacities for cooperation in the fields of tourism, agriculture and animal husbandry. Speaking in a joint meeting of Iranian and Venezuelan tradesmen, Raesi said becoming stronger in the economic sector would be the most effective way to counter sanctions. He added that the Iranian youths have succeeded in turning sanctions into opportunities by making use of the capabilities of the knowledge-based companies and maintaining peace and stability in the country against the upheavals. He noted that Tehran and Cara-

cas have enormous capacities to increase economic exchanges which have not been used yet.

The Iranian president emphasized that Tehran and Caracas can reach the 20-billion-dollar target through investment.

The two sides agreed to remove customs, banking and tariff barriers in order to facilitate and accelerate economic exchanges, he noted. Raesi said Iranian ambassadors, commercial offices, the house of science and technology and all active sectors in the fields of industry, mines and banking affairs must work to facilitate mutual trade ties. A high-ranking delegation comprised of ministers of foreign affairs, oil, defense, and health is accompanying Raesi on the five-day tour, which will also take him to Nicaragua and Cuba.

Iran has close ties with many Latin American states in different domains and seeks to further deepen its relations with those nations. Back in February, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made an official visit to two Latin American countries of Nicaragua and Venezuela. Last June, Iran and Venezuela signed a 20-year partnership agreement aimed at bolstering bilateral cooperation in various fields during Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's visit to Tehran. The partnership agreement includes cooperation in the fields of science, technology, agriculture, oil and gas, petrochemicals, tourism and culture.—Agencies

US senator calls for probe into Ukraine aid

US Senator Marco Rubio has demanded a comprehensive review of the aid provided by Washington to Ukraine, amid concerns that the Pentagon is failing to accurately estimate its real value. In a letter released on Monday, Rubio chided the administration of US President Joe Biden for a recent \$3 billion accounting "error" in the Pentagon which meant the value of equipment sent to Ukraine was supposedly overestimated. However, according to the Florida senator, the opposite may actually be true as the Pentagon "appears now to be using the depreciated value of the equipment."

To rectify the issue, Rubio has requested that the Government Accountability Office conduct a full review of all equipment provided to Ukraine since the start of the conflict with Russia more than one year ago. "This will ensure US taxpayers are not footing an even larger bill to replace the equipment needed to defend the US and its interests," the senator stated.—APP

Egypt, Iraq probe ways to boost ties

BAGHDAD: Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi held talks in Cairo on Tuesday with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani to discuss ways of enhancing bilateral ties.

A statement by al-Sudani's office said the talks also covered a host of regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The two leaders emphasized "sustaining mutual cooperation and translating it into concrete actions and further strengthening partnership between the two nations," the statement said.

According to the statement, the Egyptian president expressed "appreciation for Iraq's contribution to fostering regional stability and security." "Egypt is eager to broaden the scope of cooperation with Iraq in various domains, aiming for a long-term partnership that advances the development and prosperity of all friendly nations," he added.

The Iraqi premier arrived in Egypt on Monday on an official visit, leading a high-level delegation. The visit is the second by al-Sudani since he came to power late last year.—Agencies

France to 're-shore' production of 50 key medicines

CHAMPAGNE: France will bring home production of around 50 crucial medications for which it currently depends on imports, President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday, hoping to battle shortages of items like antibiotics and paracetamol. Of the initial slate of drugs with a "clear dependence on imports from outside the EU", 25 "will have their production re-shored or significantly increased... in the coming weeks," Macron said during a visit to a pharmaceuticals factory in southern France. The announcement comes after a March survey by pollsters BVA found 37 percent of people had already run into shortages at the pharmacy. Up to 80 percent of familiar medications like antibiotics and painkillers used in France are produced abroad, especially in China. Some of the drugs are still made in France, but at volumes that fail to match demand. Over the winter, Europe faced shortages of key antibiotic amoxicillin and other medications as surging illnesses particularly among children have increased demand for the drugs.

Under Macron's plan, public money to the tune of 160 million euros (\$173 million) will go to support eight of the new projects, including for amoxicillin - produced by British pharma giant GSK in northwestern France - as well as anaesthetics, painkillers and cancer drugs. Companies would be able to apply for a share of a further 50 million euros in funding, Macron said. The 50 drugs flagged by Macron are among a list of 450 drawn up by the health ministry for which "we must absolutely secure our supply chains, either by completely.—Agencies

UK's pandemic inquiry opens as victims' relatives lash out

LONDON: An inquiry probing the UK government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic kicked off Tuesday with the investigation mired in controversy even before the first witness is called. The inquiry chair, retired senior judge Heather Hallett, has called for ex-prime minister Boris Johnson's unredacted WhatsApp messages and notebooks to be handed over, prompting a legal challenge from the government of his successor Rishi Sunak.

Sunak, who was finance minister during the pandemic, has denied trying to block the material, while Johnson is said to be in favour of it being shared.

Relatives of Covid-19 victims have also taken aim at the investigation saying it will be a "farce" if bereaved families are not able to testify. Members of the Covid-19

Bereaved Families for Justice campaign group lined up outside the inquiry in central London holding pictures of their loved ones.

Launching proceedings, Hallett pledged that those who suffered during the pandemic would "always be at the heart of the inquiry".

She paid tribute to the relatives' "dignified vigil", adding that she hoped they would "understand when they see the results of the work we are doing that I am listening to them". "Their loss will be recognised," added Hallett, who previously oversaw the coroner's inquests into the 52 people killed in the July 7, 2005 London bombings.

The UK suffered one of the worst Covid-19 death tolls in Europe with more than 128,500 fatalities recorded by mid-July 2021. The current toll of deaths with Covid-19 on the death certificate

stands at just over 227,000, according to the latest government figures.

The first phase of the inquiry is due to focus on the UK's resilience and preparedness in the face of the global health emergency. Established by Johnson in 2021, it has been split up into six sections.

The first witnesses to give evidence in person to the inquiry will be leading epidemiologists Jimmy Whitworth and Charlotte Hammer on Wednesday. The relatives' campaign group has condemned the decision not to include any of them in the inquiry's first six-week phase. "Without learning from the experiences of our members, how can the inquiry properly evaluate the decisions made by those in charge?" group member Barbara Herbert, who lost her husband Paul

to Covid, said earlier this week. "We are people that will be able to put reality to the theory that Hallett is testing, that has got to happen, otherwise it's just a farce," added Saleyha Ahsan, a doctor whose father Ahsan-ul-Haq Chaudry also died. A spokeswoman for the inquiry has said Hallett had not ruled out calling testimony from bereaved people in later phases of the probe.

Public inquiries in the UK are government-funded but have an independent chair. They investigate matters of public concern, establishing facts about what happened, why and what lessons can be learned. They do not rule on civil or criminal liability, and any recommendations are not legally binding. Hallett has refused to back down over her request for Johnson's unredacted communications.—Agencies

EU to seal trade deal with South America

BRUSSELS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has vowed that a free trade agreement between the EU and Mercosur, an economic and political bloc comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, will be concluded as soon as this year. The official made the pledge as she appeared at a press conference alongside Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Monday.

According to von der Leyen, the pact will allow investment to flow and will support the reindustrialization of Brazil, as well as the creation of jobs. Brazil is the first stop on the EC president's Latin American tour, and she is next set to travel to Argentina, Chile and Mexico to meet with the heads of each state. The EU-Mercosur free trade talks were launched in 2000 but later stalled on numerous occasions. The two sides completed negotiations in 2019 on a wide-ranging pact, but it has yet to be ratified by any of the individual countries.

READ MORE: New proposals for Russia sanctions revealed - media The process stuttered during the presidency of Lula's predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, due to the EU's concerns over his environmental policies, as well as the bloc's desire to protect EU farmers from cheaper imports from Mercosur. Von der Leyen has also used her trip to call on Brazil to take its partnership with the bloc to the next level, adding that Brussels is planning to invest 10 billion (\$10.8 billion) in Latin America and the Caribbean.—DNA

No hesitation on use of nuclear weapons: Lukashenko

MINSK: Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has said he made a "friendly request" for Russia to store some of its tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus as a deterrent. He stated that he would not hesitate to use them if his country is attacked. "That was my request. Russia didn't impose it on me," the Belarusian leader said on Tuesday, as cited by national media. "Nobody has ever gone to war with a nuclear state, and I don't want anyone to go to war with us. Is there such a threat? Yes. I have to counter this threat." Moscow announced its decision to place nuclear weapons in Belarus in March. It argued that it would be no different from what the US has been doing for decades by keeping parts of its nuclear arsenal in non-nuclear nations, such as Türkiye, Belgium or Italy. The US and its allies have disputed that position and accused Russia of recklessness and resorting to nuclear blackmail. Russian President Vladimir Putin mentioned the arrangement during a meeting with Lukashenko earlier this month, stating that the preparation of infrastructure on Belarusian soil was in its final leg. It could be completed on July 7 or 8, Putin said, indicating a week-long delay compared to the initial projection.—APP

RCCI at Senate Committee recommends tax holiday

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has recommended that the 5 year tax holiday announced in the budget should be extended to all new Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) instead of just publicly listed companies. The recommendations were made by the acting President RCCI Muhammad Hamza Sarosh who was invited at the Senate Committee meeting on recommendations on Finance Bill 2023-24 presided over by Senator Sal-



em Mandviwalla, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue at Parliament House. Former Presidents Kashif Shabbir and Raja Amer Iqbal, representatives from FBR, among others were also present on the occasion. Acting Pres-

ident RCCI Muhammad Hamza Sarosh recommended that the GST for Grandparent chicks should also be removed as it adversely impacts the food chain as chicken is the essential food item and one of the cheapest sources of protein for the masses. RCCI also recommended that the term 'non-filer' also be removed. Moreover, he suggested that custom controls at borders to check smuggling should be tightened rather than harassing traders and retailers.

Zangezur corridor will strengthen Ankara-Baku ties

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Establishing the key Zangezur corridor land route in the southern Caucasus will build stronger ties between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, the Turkish president said on Tuesday. "If we solve the Zangezur issue quickly, this will lead us to progress on two important gains taken by both road and railway," Recep Tayyip Erdogan told a joint news conference with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on a visit to Baku, Azerbaijan's capital. He added that with the corridor, "Türkiye's connections with (the Azerbaijani exclave) Nakhchivan will grow much stronger. The existence of these connections will lead to strengthening relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan." The planned Zangezur corridor - an unimpeded road through Armenian territory connecting Azerbaijan to its Nakhchivan exclave - would also link Azerbaijan directly to eastern Türkiye and so give additional unity to the larger Turkic world.

Erdogan came to Baku after visiting the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as part of his first foreign tour since his reelection on May 28. The Zangezur region was originally part of Azerbaijan,

though the Soviets gave it to Armenia in the 1920s, leaving Azerbaijan deprived of a direct overland route to Nakhchivan. Following its 44-day war with Armenia in fall 2020, Azerbaijan has focused on planned connections including motorways and a 43-kilometer (26.7-mile) railway through the corridor. Erdogan also announced that work has begun to establish a Türkiye-Azer-

baijan university. "We will achieve this. Azerbaijani youth will be able to come to Türkiye easily, and Turkish youth will have the chance to study in Azerbaijan," he added. The president also said they discussed energy cooperation. "In terms of energy, Europe is abuzz about the gas they will buy through Türkiye. They are constantly asking about it. We're doing our part in this re-

gard and will continue to do so," he added. For his part, Aliyev again congratulated Erdogan on his reelection victory late last month, saying it had made the people of Azerbaijan "very happy."

Aliyev said Erdogan and he exchanged a wide range of ideas about bilateral work in the coming years in both narrow and expanded talks, adding that the successes achieved are based on the fraternal relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan.

Aliyev further said that Türkiye and Azerbaijan will continue to take a unified stance on foreign policy, as their joint efforts on this carry great importance for the region. Ankara and Baku officially become allies through the 2021 Shusha Declaration, he said. "I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude once again on behalf of the people of Azerbaijan to brotherly Türkiye for the fraternal, moral and political support you gave us during the (fall 2020) Karabakh war," he said. He added that the union between the two countries is important for both nations as well as the wider region and the Turkic world. The close brotherly ties between Türkiye and Azerbaijan are often summed up in the motto: "One nation, two states."



Briefs

Wagner chief says unsure if his men will continue fighting

LONDON: The head of Russia's powerful mercenary Wagner Group said on Tuesday he was "not sure" if his men would continue to fight in Ukraine amid a bitter standoff with the Defence Ministry after capturing the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut. It was unclear how serious Yevgeny Prigozhin was being as his fighters have proved themselves to be among Russia's most effective in Ukraine despite suffering huge losses, while any attempt by him to disengage from the war could be seen as treasonous by officials in Moscow. "Regarding the further work of the Wagner private military company in Ukraine, I am not sure that we will work specifically in Ukraine," Prigozhin said in reply to a Danish media query.

Wagner fighters have also fought in Africa and the Middle East, where they still have some contracts. After spearheading the months-long battle for the eastern city of Bakhmut in which tens of thousands perished, Prigozhin last month withdrew his men to rest and regroup. Prigozhin has long been at odds with the Defence Ministry over what he says is everything from its poor leadership and tactics to ammunition shortages. - Agencies

Putin says no need for martial law

DNA

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday that Russia needed to fight enemy agents and improve its defences against attacks deep inside its own territory but said there was no need to follow Ukraine's example and declare martial law. "There is no reason to introduce some kind of special regime or martial law in the country," Putin told a televised meeting of Russian war correspondents and military bloggers. "There is no need for such a thing today." Ukraine's large-scale counter-offensive began on June 4 and has not been successful in any area, Putin said, adding that Ukrainian human losses were 10 times greater than Russia's. Ukraine has lost over 160 of its tanks and 25%-30% of the vehicles supplied from abroad, he said, while Russia had lost 54 tanks. Putin also said Ukraine had deliberately hit the Kakhovka dam with HIMARS rockets supplied by the United States, a step he said had also hindered Kyiv's counter-offensive efforts. The goals of what the Kremlin calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine, launched on Feb. 24, 2022, might evolve with the situation, but their fundamental character will not change, Putin said.

Earthquake hits Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar

DNA

LAHORE: A 5.6-magnitude earthquake jolted Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, and other cities on Tuesday afternoon, prompting people to rush out of their offices and homes. No loss of life has been reported. In Punjab, the tremors were felt in Shakar Garh, Chichawatni, Sialkot, Mandi Bahauddin, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Hafizabad, Zafarwal and Murree. The quake also hit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Abbottabad, Swabi, and Swat areas. Meanwhile, in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the tremors were felt in Bagh, DhirKot, and Muzaffarabad areas. Sarah Batool Haider, an Islamabad-based journalist, said the tremors were felt for a short time, resulting in people rushing out of their offices. "It was horrifying as this was the second time a quake hit the capital within a short gap," Haider added. According to Pakistan Meteorological Department, the earthquake originated at 1:04pm, with its depth at 10 kilometres.

CJP points to loopholes in Supreme Court Act 2023

The CJP remarked that the bench could not repeatedly suspend laws. "We suspended a law earlier, we cannot suspend another"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) adjourned on Tuesday the hearing of a plea calling on it to suspend the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 and refer the matter to a larger bench. A three-member bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial was hearing a set of petitions challenging the law which has widened the scope of review. During the hearing, CJP Bandial highlighted certain loopholes in Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023. He observed that 'super appeal' has been created through this law. "Don't you think they should have made this law carefully rather than hastily," the CJP asked Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's counsel Ali Zafar.

He said that the parliament could have given the affect of Article 187 of the Constitution for doing complete justice in review jurisdiction. He also referred to the example of India wherein review jurisdiction was widened on two grounds. The chief justice noted that through this law the legislators created jurisdiction of review equal to an appeal. If the case being made against the law is not strong, then rules and procedures moving forward will be set, said the CJP. The ECP's lawyer argued that under the current law, a three-member bench cannot hear the review petition. Meanwhile, the petitioner's counsel contended that the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 was inconsistent with Article 10 of the Constitution of Pakistan and interfered with the independence of the

judiciary. The counsel moved the court to suspend the law and refer the matter to an eight-member bench for hearing. The CJP remarked that the bench could not repeatedly suspend laws. "We suspended a law earlier, we cannot suspend another." Meanwhile, the court accepted the PTI's plea to be made party to the case. PTI's lawyer Zafar informed the court that the petition has been submitted on behalf of Omer Ayyub. He maintained that the SC has the authority to review decisions. Both the right to appeal and to file for review are separate powers; the Constitution does not say an appeal can be filed against the SC's decisions. The parliament can legislate according to the Constitution but no law can be made in violation of it, he argued. Justice Munib Akhtar observed that Article 188 was an act of parliament. Doesn't the

nature of a review petition change through the Act, he questioned. At this, PTI's counsel said that if laws are made this way then who is to say another law wouldn't be introduced tomorrow regarding a second appeal? The new law is giving the shape of an appeal to a review, he said, arguing that if appeal after appeal can be filed against the SC's decisions then its rulings would not be final. The CJP observed that appeals and reviews are very different. Now this law has conflated the two, he noted. Will there now be an option to file a review against an appeal as well, he asked. The bench adjourned the hearing till tomorrow. This matter is being heard simultaneously with the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) review petition against the apex court's Punjab polls order.

France says uncovers disinformation campaign by Russia

PARIS: France on Tuesday said it had uncovered a major Russian disinformation campaign, with false news items hostile to Ukraine made to look like they were published by prominent French news media. Western states have been acutely concerned about an intensification of Russian-led disinformation campaigns, as Moscow seeks to influence public opinion across the world over its invasion of Ukraine.

"France condemns these actions unworthy of a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council," Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna said.

"The French authorities are working closely with their partners to defeat the hybrid warfare led by Russia," she added. France has for several years sounded the alarm over alleged Russian disinformation campaigns in areas of Francophone Africa, particularly those where the Russian mercenary group Wagner has been active. The campaign was carried out by "Russian actors" with "state entities or entities affiliated to the Russian state" then working to amplify its impact, according to Colonna. "This campaign is based in particular on the creation of fake web pages impersonating national media and government sites as well as the creation of false accounts on social networks," she said. - Agencies

9 injured in Denver mass shooting

WEB DESK

DENVER: Nine people have been injured in a mass shooting in Denver, Colorado. Three of the victims are in a critical condition, police said in a Twitter post, while the others have non life-threatening injuries. They added that a suspect was also shot and was in police custody. The shooting happened on Market Street, close to Ball Arena, where the city's basketball team, the Denver Nuggets, won their first NBA championship on Monday night. Police said they believe that "multiple shots were fired during an altercation involving several individuals" and said a "complex investigation" was taking place. CBS Colorado reported that thousands of celebrating fans poured into the streets around the arena after the game, which saw the Denver Nuggets beat Miami Heat 94-89 on Monday night. The news outlet quoted Denver Police Department spokesperson Doug Schepman as saying that the shooting happened roughly three-and-a-half hours after the game and that crowds had dispersed, leaving only a smaller number of people in the area when gunfire broke out.

Trump to face charges in Florida court

MIAMI: Former US President Donald Trump was due to appear in federal court in Miami on Tuesday to face criminal charges that he unlawfully kept national-security documents when he left office and lied to officials who sought to recover them. It will be the second courtroom visit for Trump since April, when he pleaded not guilty to charges in New York stemming from a hush-money payment to a porn star. Trump is the first current or former president to face criminal charges, but that has not dented his hopes of returning to the White House. According to a Reuters/Ipsos poll, he holds a wide lead over his rivals for the Republican nomination for the 2024 presidential election and 81% of Republican voters view the charges against him as politically motivated. Trump has maintained his innocence and portrayed the case as an effort to undermine his re-election effort. After his court appearance at 3 p.m. EDT (1900 GMT), Trump is due to fly back to his New Jersey golf course, where he is scheduled to speak in the evening. Trump's April court appearance in New York drew a circus-like atmosphere of vocal supporters and protesters, and officials in Miami are bracing for crowds of up to 50,000 people. - APP



ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation led by Ali Fekri, Deputy Minister and Head of OIETAI calls on Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. - DNA

'India threatened to shut Twitter and raid employees'

NEWS DESK

CALIFORNIA: Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey has alleged that the Indian government threatened to shut the platform and raid employees' houses in the country. In an interview with a US-based YouTube channel, Mr Dorsey said India requested removal of several tweets and accounts linked to the farmers' protest in 2020. Twitter was also asked to censor journalists critical of the government, he alleged. India has denied the allegations and accused Twitter of violating laws. "This is an outright lie... Perhaps an attempt to brush out that very dubious period of Twitter's history," federal minister Rajeve Chandrashekar tweeted on Tuesday. "No one went to jail nor was Twitter 'shutdown'. Dorsey's Twitter regime had a problem accepting the sovereignty of Indian law. It behaved as if the laws of India did not apply to it." Mr Dorsey's comments - made to the American news series Breaking Points - are the latest in an already

troubled relationship between Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government and Twitter. It also comes at a time when the platform has been caught up in an intensifying debate on its role in supporting principles of free speech amid demands in several countries to control Twitter's influence. Mr Dorsey quit as the Twitter CEO in 2021 and the social media platform was purchased by billionaire Elon Musk in 2022. In the interview, which was uploaded on YouTube on Monday, Mr Dorsey said "countries like India and Turkey made many requests to us to take down journalists' accounts that give tacit information and remove them from the platform". He added that he was "surprised at the level of engagement and requests" by governments of the world to censor content on the platform during his time. "India, for example, was a country that had many requests around the farmers' protests, around particular journalists that were critical of the government," he said.

China says US eagerness to engage is an 'illusion'

BEIJING: A Chinese state-affiliated social media commentator accused the United States on Tuesday of playing tricks and creating an "illusion" that it is eager to engage, days before an expected visit by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The lead up to the high-stakes visit has been marred by new U.S. accusations of Chinese spying and scathing Chinese questioning of Washington's sincerity in improving badly frayed ties. While the U.S. State Department has not announced Blinken's visit, a U.S. official has said he will be in China for talks on June 18. In February, he cancelled a visit to Beijing after a suspected Chinese spy balloon flew across the United States. "Every time they say they want to meet, the United States plays a role and creates the false illusion that it is eager to communicate while at the same time repeatedly testing and provoking China's fundamental principles," Yuyuan Tiantian, a social media

user affiliated with state broadcaster CCTV, wrote in an article. U.S. officials, including Blinken himself, have in recent days said China had been spying from Cuba for some time and upgraded its intelligence gathering facilities there in 2019. Beijing and Havana have rejected the accusation as false. On Monday, Blinken said China's efforts in Cuba were part of a global effort to expand its presence overseas, and U.S. action to address it since President Joe Biden came to power in 2021 had produced "results", without specifying what those results were. The balloon incident in February was a "farce", and a request by the U.S. defence secretary to meet his Chinese counterpart at a conference in Singapore this month, which China rejected, was nothing by a "carefully crafted" performance, the Chinese social media commentator wrote. - Agencies

Lombok a jewel in Indonesia's crown

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 1

NESTLED off the coast of Lombok, Indonesia, the Gili Islands have emerged as a sought-after tourist destination for those seeking an idyllic tropical getaway. Comprising three pristine islands—Gili Trawangan, Gili Air, and Gili Meno—this archipelago offers a harmonious blend of natural beauty, blue waters, and a serene atmosphere. The island of Gili Trawangan is often described as the Party Island. And it looked so when we reached there. A lot of hustle and bustle; huge influx of tourists, mostly from the Western countries makes it a perfect destination for those who want to see nature at its best. The Gili Islands are renowned for their stunning beaches, characterized by powdery white sands and crystal-clear waters. Each island has its own distinctive charm: Gili Trawangan boasts a lively beachfront with a bustling atmosphere, while Gili Air offers a more relaxed vibe and tranquil stretches of coastline. Gili Meno, the smallest of the three, entices visitors with its secluded beaches, ideal for a romantic escape or peaceful solitude. I will remember the Gili Meno because there I did for the first time in my life the snorkeling exercise. It was indeed a daunting task for persons like me who do not know how to swim, to perform this drill in the deep sea, albeit with the life jacket. Underneath the turquoise waters surrounding the Gili Islands lies a breathtaking underwater world teeming. Scuba diving and snorkeling enthusiasts will find themselves in awe as they explore the underwater treasures, encountering graceful sea turtles, colorful tropical fish, and even the occasional reef shark. With numerous diving schools and centers scattered across the islands, both beginners and experienced divers can partake in unforgettable underwater adventures, our guide informed us.



LOMOBK: The Pakistan media delegation posing for a picture during visit to the Ende village. - DNA



GILI ISLANDS: Members of Pakistan delegation disembark at the picturesque Gili Islands. - DNA

For those seeking adventure beyond the beaches, the Gili Islands offer a variety of thrilling water sports and island-hopping opportunities. Rent a kayak or paddleboard and venture out into the ocean, or embark on a glass-bottom boat tour to witness the mesmerizing marine life without getting wet. We also took the glass boat on our way to the islands, though on our way back a speed boat transported us from the Gili to the The Kayana resort where the delegation was offered dinner by the hotel management. The Gili Islands have managed to retain their charming, laid-back island atmosphere, even as they have gained popularity among tourists. These islands are predominantly car-free, relying on horse-drawn carts known as cidomos or bicycles for transportation, further enhancing the relaxed ambiance. Engage with the friendly locals, immerse yourself in their rich cultural heritage, and savor the delicious local cuisine, featuring freshly caught seafood and traditional Indonesian dishes. The Gili Islands Lombok, with their enchanting tropical beauty, abundant marine life, and laid-back island culture, provide an unforgettable escape from the pressures of everyday life. So, pack your bags, leave your worries behind, and embark on an unforgettable journey to the mesmerizing Gili Islands. Here the Indonesian government and tourism ministry also deserve credit the way they have developed the infrastructure in these areas. It was undoubtedly an uphill task to revive the industry after the covid pandemic but the Indonesian authorities have done it in a miraculous manner. It is therefore expected that by next year the tourism industry would be fully revived to pre-pandemic levels. - Full coverage of the visit to Lombok shall be published in the coming issue of Centreline magazine.