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Italian trade office is being opened in Pakistan: Envoy

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'Rs70 million corruption case' PTI President Elahi arrested

Minister says Elahi was wanted by the anti-corruption police; Moonis says will stay with PTI 'Call PM if you truly desire talks,' Sana tells Imran



BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Parvez Elahi was arrested by anti-corruption officials from Lahore outside his home, media reported on Thursday. The family sources told media that Parvez Elahi himself courted arrest. The former Punjab chief minister was taken into custody by the anti-corruption personnel after pulling over his car near Zahoor Elahi's residence in Lahore's Gulberg area. Elahi's spokesperson has confirmed the development. The development came after an anti-corruption court last week discarded his interim bail over his failure to appear before the court citing health issues. His arrest was required in the Rs70 million corruption case related to the embezzlement of development funds allocated for the Gujrat district. The anti-corruption court judge also declared Elahi's medical certificate bogus which claimed that

DNA ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Thursday lashed out at former prime minister Imran Khan over his reluctance to engage in negotiations with political leaders, urging him to call Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directly and engage in productive discussion if he truly desires talks instead of focusing on forming committees. "I would like to appeal for talks, because what is currently happening is not a solution," Khan said in a live talk streamed on YouTube, warning that the country was headed towards anarchy. "Imran Khan is still not prepared to talk to politicians and is only creating committees. If he really wants negotiations, he should call the prime minister and

sit down for a conversation," Sanaullah said during an interview. The interior minister said that the government did not take the committee formed by Imran Khan seriously because the matter has progressed far beyond that. He said that during the attack on the Jinnah House, the miscreants took away laptops and other important items containing sensitive information, adding that the military would recover these items and the Army Act has been applied to the cases for this very reason. "Those who entered Jinnah House or its surroundings will face military courts. If Imran Khan has planned all this, then he will also face a trial in the military court. Those who distanced themselves from PTI may avoid cases but those involved in agitation and unrest will not be forgiven."

he had been experiencing chest pain. The anti-corruption spokesperson in a statement said Elahi was taken into custody while trying to flee and added that for those in various corruption cases. The spokesperson also said that Elahi was arrested as his bail was discarded by the court for

submitting a fake medical certificate. Speaking to media, Punjab caretaker Information Minister Amir Mir said Elahi was wanted by the anti-corruption police in a graft case. He said the PTI president was fleeing from his

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov calls on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. - DNA

Law to clip CJP's powers AGP says govt to review legislation

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Thursday adjourned the hearing on a set of petitions against the Supreme Court (Practice & Procedure) Act, 2023 - aimed at limiting the powers of the top judge - till next week after Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan said the federal government had decided to review the legislation. The hearing - which was conducted by an eight-judge bench comprising the CJP, Justice Ijaz Ahmad, Justice Munsif Akhtar, Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Nagri, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar,

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Need to boost ties stressed Uzbek envoy lauds professionalism of PAF personnel

Air Chief emphasizes the longstanding bond between Pakistan and Uzbekistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov called on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu and lauded the professionalism of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) personnel here on Thursday. The meeting was focused on areas of mutual interest and regional developments, a PAF news release said. During the meeting, the Chief of the Air Staff shared his pragmatic policy decisions aimed at modernizing Pakistan Air Force through the smart acquisition of niche technologies, upgradation of infrastructure and revitalization of operational and training domains. The Air Chief emphasized the longstand-

ing religious, cultural and historical bond between Pakistan and Uzbekistan which was exemplified through robust bilateral relations. He also reiterated his unwavering commitment to enhancing the existing ties in realms of military-to-military cooperation and training. Highlighting the bond of brotherhood between the two nations, the Air Chief said, "Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic and defence relationship with Uzbekistan which is based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability." The Ambassador of Uzbekistan expressed his admiration for the exceptional progress made by Pakistan Air Force, particularly in the area of indigenization.

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Briefs PM to attend Erdogan's inauguration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will attend the inauguration ceremony of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara on June 3, the Foreign Office said Thursday. The prime minister is paying the visit at the invitation of President Erdogan, who was re-elected to his office on May 28. "The prime minister's visit will be a reaffirmation of the deep-rooted fraternal ties between Pakistan and Turkey," Foreign Office Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch at a weekly press briefing. The FO spokesperson said the prime minister would convey warm felicitations on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan to President Erdogan.

State is of paramount importance

MUHAMMAD UMER

RAWALPINDI: State was of paramount importance in state and politics, said Sheikh Rashid - the head of his own faction of Muslim League - but alleged that the way the sanctity of home had been trampled and bribes demanded in police stations was very unfortunate. In a series of tweets posted on Thursday, Mr Rashid claimed that everyone from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to Australia and from China to Saudi Arabia was advising the government to act wisely but the greed of being the ruler had reached a dreadful level.

'Liar'; Marriyum slams Imran's statements

Says Imran has the habit of blaming others

DNA



ISLAMABAD, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb Thursday said that Imran Khan's interview with BBC correspondent was "a true reflection and mirror of the real face of a duplicitous and false character." In a tweet while commenting on Imran's contradicto-

ry claims in the interview, she said in one sentence he said if he was jailed, there would be reaction while in the next sentence he blamed the party's workers and leaders for May 9 mayhem. This was a lesson for all those who had fallen victim to the misguidance and deception of the misguided Imran Khan, she remarked.

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Gold prices fall as rupee shows recovery

NAZIR SYIAL

KARACHI: The gold prices in Pakistan took a sharp decline as the local currency - massively appreciated against the dollar in the open market on Thursday. According to the data issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA), the price of gold (24 carats) declined by Rs5,400 per tola and Rs4,629 per 10 grams to reach Rs229,000 and Rs196,531, respectively.

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2 Jawans martyred in terror attack

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Two soldiers were martyred in a shootout by terrorists at a security forces post in Sangwan - the country's bordering region with Iran - in the district Kech of Balochistan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Thursday. In a statement, the military's media wing stated that a group of terrorists targeted the security forces' post, but they were pushed back as the deployed troops were alert. A heavy exchange of fire ensued as the soldiers responded gallantly, using all the available weapons. "During the intense fire exchange, two brave soldiers, Sepoy



Hassan Ishaiq, 34, and Sepoy Iqbal Ullah, 27, embraced Shahaad while fighting bravely with the terrorists," the statement read. Providing details about the martyred soldiers, the ISPR said that Sepoy Ishaiq was a

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Italian trade office being opened in Pakistan: envoy

Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese says Italy is home to the largest Pakistani Diaspora in Europe (post-Brexit). Their contribution to the Italian economy, as well as to that of their native country, is remarkable

Exclusive

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese has said the time-honoured Italy-Pakistan relations are marked by emergent bilateral cooperation and harmony of views at a great range of issues. He added that our cooperation encompasses, but is not limited to, political, economic, cultural and social spheres. Italy values the vital support and continued cooperation that Pakistan extended to the international community. The ambassador expressed these views on the occasion of 77th anniversary of the Republic Day National Day of Italy. This year also marks 75th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between our two countries. Ambassador Andress further said, with a community exceeding 180,000, Italy is home to the largest Pakistani Diaspora in Europe (post-Brexit). Their contribution to the Italian economy, as well as to that of their native country, is remarkable. He said, worker remittances from Italy to Pakistan have been an all-time high in past two years (more than 1 billion Euro a year). Italy was the seventh largest source

of worker remittances to Pakistan globally, and the top one within the EU countries. Both countries appreciate the importance of people-to-people contacts that foster bilateral ties. The Embassy is strongly committed to improve consular services. While talking about the joint commission he said, the fifth Italy-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission (JEC) took place on 29-30 May in Rome, where the two sides agreed to establish a joint framework to deal with climate change and cooperation in water management. Both sides signed an important "Roadmap for Cooperation" which covers climate change, trade & investment, heritage

& culture, agriculture, technical cooperation, higher education and transfer of technology in related sectors. Italy remains among top ten exporting countries for Pakistan in the world, and third major trade partner in the EU. Both our countries are in favor of trade liberalization scheme at World Trade Organization, and contest the idea of unilateralism. With a population of around 240 million, and a constantly growing demand of high-end products, Pakistan continues to be an attractive market for Italian companies and businesses. Some of renowned Italian companies have established their presence in Pakistani

market lately," the ambassador said. He said he was pleased to announce the establishment of Italian Trade Agency (ITA) office in Islamabad and assignment of the first Italian Trade Director to Pakistan. This would be a major step towards enhanced trade cooperation. "We shall continue to explore the avenues with focus on agriculture, renewable energy, textiles, construction and tourism. Collaboration in fields of textiles, agriculture, livestock, marble, pharmaceuticals and mass manufacturing would help enhance Pakistan's industrial scope and increase exports of value added goods". The ambassador said, in addition to eco-

nomic affairs, Italy remains active in community uplift projects and several fruitful programs in various fields have been accomplished. Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) has supported a number of projects in fields of agriculture, health and infrastructure in diverse regions of the country. We are excited to see the initial success of "Olive Culture Project" in Pakistan that would bear tangible fruits for the country in future. On cultural side the Ambassador said there existed huge scope. "Our Archaeological Mission is one of the oldest present missions in Pakistan, and has made great contributions to Pakistan's already rich archaeological scene. Italians' love for Pakistani mountains is no secret and that reflects through their activities of conservation and uplift of Pakistan's mountainous areas. You would be pleased to learn about all these activities through articles published in this supplement," he added. Ambassador Andress said the Embassy of Italy in Islamabad was committed to further strengthen bilateral ties, with an aim to take mutual trade to its natural size. We look forward to a deeper collaboration with Pakistani business community, relevant bodies such as chambers of commerce and industry in both countries, he concluded.



RCCI property BUILD Expo 2023

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The third property expo BUILD 2023 organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be held today at Topi Rakh Complex of Ayub Park. Chairman Expo Sarder Tanveer Sarwar has said that the three-day Expo will be held from June 2 to 4. He said that this is the first time that more than sixty stalls of industries related to the construction sector such as property, engineering, machinery, interior, architecture i.e. architecture and renovation and ceramics are being set up on the occasion of the expo. Chairman Sarder Tanveer Sarwar said there will also be conferences on the sidelines of the expo and added that a food court for families and a musical evening will also be organized in the evening.

Punjab to launch OMIS

RAWALPINDI: The Directorate General of Punjab Probation and Parole Service department had decided to launch the Offender Management Information System (OMIS) to integrate the data of criminals placed on probation and parole across Punjab including Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad to make their monitoring process more effective. District Officer of Probation and Parole Service Dr. Hassan Raza revealed while addressing a two-day seminar held under the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan approved research project titled "Revamping Probation Services: Assessment of Risks and Needs and Strengths of Offenders on Probation in Punjab," a news release said. Dr. Hassan informed that work on the OMIS was being carried out on war footing, adding for the first time rehabilitation centres for offenders on probation/parole were being set up to bring them back into the national mainstream and purge the society of anti-social elements.—APP

Era of progress about to begin in merged districts

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has said that the era of real development and prosperity in the merged districts is about to begin now, powers and funds will be transferred to the merged districts through the elected local government representatives very soon. He was talking to a 30-member delegation of the Ittehad Malikan (Alliance of Malis) which called on him here at the Governor's House on Thursday. The delegation led by Haji Lali Shah was comprising Muhammad Afzal Khan, Malik Ayaz, Malik Sultan, Malik Hafizur Rahman, Haji Syed Ahmad Jan, Mufti Haniffullah, Malik Khanzab Malik Faqir, Malik Faqir, Malik Wali, Malik Habib, Malik Ehsanullah, Malik Fazl Rabi, Malik Shater, Malik Usman, Malik Muhammad Shah, Malik Wazir, Malik Shireen, Malik Mashq, Malik Nawaz Khan, Malik Abdul Nasser, Malik Hazzat Nave, Malik Umar Wahid, Malik Muhammad Ayaz, Malik Khanzada, Abu Bakr Shah.—APP

PCFR holds breakfast meeting with Secy General Islamic Chamber

Ambassador Baluch emphasized that there is a need of collaboration, cooperation, and collective wisdom at the political, economic, and social levels to maximize the benefits for the Muslim Ummah

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations (PCFR) Karachi-based think tank hosted a breakfast meeting with H.E. Sheikh Yousef Hasan Khalwi, Secretary General, Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (ICCIA). The meeting was attended by Mr. Justice Gullzar Ahmed, former Chief Justice of Pakistan and Co-Chief Patron of the Council, Dr. Abdul Badhi El Dada, Director of Economic Management, Karachi-based Consul General of Muslim countries, former ambassadors of Pakistan, prominent businessmen of the city, patrons, and senior members of the Council. Mr. Ahsan Makhtar Zubairi, Secretary General presented

the welcome address and briefed participants on the achievements of the PCFR since its formation. Mr. Zubairi highlighted that PCFR is playing an important role in promoting Pakistan's outward positive image and also serving as a bridge between foreign missions and the Pakistani community. Mr. Zubairi maintained that there is a need for joint ventures between the business community of Pakistan and brother Muslim countries, and ICCIA can play a vital role in this regard. While addressing the meeting H.E. Sheikh Yousef Hasan Khalwi highlighted the role ICCIA has been playing in promoting economic linkages among the Muslim community living in other countries. He maintained that ICCIA



endeavors are aimed to facilitate economic ties through promoting pri-

vate investments by the members of ICCIA. Mr. Khalwi highlighted the

role of trading relations in the spread of Islam across the globe. He fur-

ther said through business diplomacy we can establish relations that will equally benefit the entire Muslim Ummah. H.E. Khalwi also appreciated the role of organizations like PCFR in developing mutually beneficial bonds between trading communities of the Islamic world. While presenting a conclusive remarks Ambassador G. R. Baluch highlighted that there is a great potential for economic cooperation among Muslim countries. Ambassador Baluch emphasized that there is a need of collaboration, cooperation, and collective wisdom at the political, economic, and social levels to maximize the benefits for the Muslim Ummah. Ambassador Syed Hassan Habib presented the vote of thanks and acknowledged the worthy guest and participants.

CM reviews progress on Lahore's development projects

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi chaired a meeting at his office to review the progress on Lahore's major development projects and establish timelines for their timely completion. Addressing the meeting, CM Mohsin Naqvi emphasized that development projects must adhere to the prescribed timelines. He instructed the officials to expedite the initiation of new projects, ensuring prompt decision-making regarding designs and other necessary matters. Any delay or negligence in public welfare development projects will not be tolerated, CM Mohsin Naqvi emphasized. He also stressed the importance of convenience to citizens during the construction phase, the meeting emphasized the need for the best alternative traffic plans and suggested that alternative routes should be suggested for best managing traffic flow. The progress of the elevated expressway, Navesha Sharif interchange under-

pass and cavalry signal-free road was reviewed while reports about Arfa Karim Tower, Ferozepur Road to Pine Avenue, Sankhata nullah, Main Boulevard to Walton, and CBD project were presented. The CM directed the Punjab Horticulture Authority (PHA) to expedite the plantation and landscaping project at the airport. He also ordered improvement of the green belt on Mall Road. Landscaping along the airport's runway and plantation at intersections and roads will also be done in the provincial metropolis. The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister for Housing, Arfa Ali Nisbi, chief secretary, chairman P&D, administrative secretaries, commissioner Lahore, DG LDA, DG PHA and representatives of NESPAK and FWO. CM condemns terrorist attack Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the security

forces checkpoint near the Pakistan-Iran border and expressed deep admiration for the courage displayed by the security forces in thwarting the attack. He paid tribute to the brave soldiers, Hasnain Ishtiaq and Yasminullah, who fearlessly defended against the terrorists at the cost of their own lives. Their heroic sacrifice deserves the utmost respect and reverence, he said and added that the indomitable spirit of the martyred heroes has elevated their status to the highest level. The nation will forever cherish and honor the everlasting sacrifices made by the martyrs, he emphasized. The PHA has extended unwavering solidarity and heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs. Earlier on the day Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday said that the government was striving to provide the best medical facilities to patients in public sector hospitals related to

heart emergencies. He was chairing a meeting at his office to review the progress of primary angiography in hospitals. During the briefing, it was revealed that a total of 5,343 primary angiographies were performed in government hospitals of various districts in the past five months. As many as 313 primary angiographies were performed in the morning shift of nine government hospitals and 1866 in the night shift, ensuring a 67% increase in these hospitals on the interventions of Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi. The meeting also reviewed the proposal to set the target of angiography in every government hospital to facilitate patients. The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister Dr. Javed Akram, President of the Pakistan Society of International Cardiology Dr. Zaher Akram, health secretary, Dr. Farrag Alamgir, DG Rescue 1122, and others.—APP

First Lady for affordable Assistive Tech for PWDs

KARACHI: First Lady Begum Samina Arif Ali has urged the need to make Assistive Technology (AT) affordable for persons with disabilities to make them active and productive citizens of the country. She said that civilized societies have equal importance to differently-abled people by providing necessary skills and training so that they can be assimilated into the mainstream of society. She expressed these views during her visit to the Society for the Rehabilitation of Special Children Centre (SRSC) in Karachi. She visited SRSC as part of her commitment to support and advocate for the well-being and inclusivity of special children across the country. Speaking on the occasion, the First Lady emphasized

the need for increased awareness, resources and public-private support to ensure that every special child in Pakistan received the necessary care, education and opportunities to thrive. She further said that the reserved quota for differently-abled persons in public and private organizations in Pakistan needed to be fully implemented. She added that 10 to 15 per cent of the population in Pakistan suffered from some kind of disability, and they needed to be provided facilitation, support, and Assistive Technology to help them become productive members of the country. Accompanied by a delegation of philanthropists and teachers, the First Lady interacted with differently-abled children and was given an overview of the therapy and recreational services at the centre. She

appreciated the services being provided to special children and commended the team of professionals and caregivers for their efforts in creating an inclusive environment for children with special needs. The treatment and therapy facilities being provided at the centre include medical treatment, dental treatment, intellectual therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, sports training and vocational training. The officials of the Rehabilitation Centre for Special Children expressed gratitude for the First Lady's visit and her unwavering commitment to championing the rights of special children. They highlighted the significance of such visits in raising awareness, fostering empathy and driving positive change in society.

PNS conducts rescue operation in Arabian Sea

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) SAIF while conducting routine patrolling in the Arabian Sea, expeditiously responded to a distress call by a stranded Fishing Vessel, PELZUBAIR and saved the valuable lives of six fishermen. The fishing vessel had suffered engine failure and subsequent flooding due to rough sea conditions, a Pakistan Navy news release said. PNS SAIF swiftly responded to the distress call at night and safely recovered six stranded fishermen. Medical assistance was provided onboard and the fishermen were subsequently shifted to Gwadar. The fishermen's community has lauded the efforts of the Pakistan Navy in saving precious lives at sea. Pakistan Navy, besides ensuring combat readiness at all times.

LWMC plans cleaning operation before Eid

LAHORE: The Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) has launched a special cleanliness drive in view of upcoming Eid-ul-Adha 2023. Special zero waste operation was being conducted in all nine towns of the city in phased manner, said a spokesperson here on Thursday. In the first two days of the drive Dala Ganj, Bakhsh Town and Gulberg Town were being made zero waste. In order to make the zero waste operation successful more than 1,500 workers and 120 additional vehicles were allocated in Dala Ganj Bakhsh Town while 740 workers and 128 vehicles including mini dumpers and compactors were working in Gulberg Town. During the zero waste operation 24 open plots in Gulberg Town and six open plots in Dala Ganj Bakhsh Town would be cleared. To review the ongoing zero waste operation, LWMC Chief Executive Officer Babar Sahib Din along with deputy CEO LWMC Fahad Mahmood and Muhammad Anwarogha visited the Muslim Town Mar, Canal Road, Barkat Market, Gulberg Main Boulevard, Dala Darbar and adjoining areas.—APP

Pakistani handicrafts shine at cultural event in China

ISLAMABAD: A throng of Chinese customers gathered around Humayon stall, asking for information about the Pakistani handicrafts including wooden chairs and desks, bronze kettles, bronze animal figurines and hand-made soaps, at a cultural and tourism exhibition held in China's northeast city of Harbin. Humayon said that he has received widespread hospitality. The Pakistan exhibitor revealed to CEN. Humayon noted, preparing for exhibitions often presents challenges and incurs huge costs as it requires a careful coordination of elements including transportation of products, accommodation, and local travel. For this exhibition, the local government exempted booth fees and accommodation charges for foreign enterprises, Humayon said excitedly, and this creates an outstanding platform for promoting our sales. As Humayon packs a rooster figurine for his customer, he informed CEN reporter of his forthcoming exhibition in China's southern coastal province of Fujian. Without a doubt, he concluded, cultural and tourism exchanges have really put some serious muscle behind the cooperation between China and Pakistan, and I would like to be a significant catalyst for this endeavour.

PTI's CSVP, PVP step down from party positions

LARKANA: Central Senior Vice President, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Sarder Ameer Bakhsh Khan Bhutto and Senior Vice President PTI Singh Allah Bakhsh Umar announced to step down from all party positions. They announced their decision during a press conference at Larkana Press Club on Thursday. Sarder Ameer Bakhsh Khan Bhutto said that the press conference that is being held today should have been held a year and a half ago. He said that the reverse Ganga is flowing, earlier it was flowing here and now it is flowing there. "I talked to Ali Zaidi and wrote a letter to Asad Umar in November 2022 that I cannot do politics under these conditions," he said. He further said that the time has passed but the problems have not been resolved. Ameer Bakhsh Bhutto said that Singh National Front (SNF) was merged into Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), but we did not ask for any seats.—APP

Maid to give free plots to the martyrs

Hundreds of people are employed in their projects. Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Zahid Rafiq, Tahir Abbasi, Ashfaq Chatta, Khalid Chaudhry and others are also present in the delegation

ISLAMABAD: prominent businessman Chaudry Abdul Majeed has announced to give free plots to the martyrs of the Pakistan Army and Police, saying that the martyrs of Pakistan are our pride. The dedication of the memorials of the martyrs in the events of 9th May is commendable but the nation will never forgive those who have been found involved in arson should not be exempted. He expressed these views yesterday while talking to a delegation led by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari.

President Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari congratulated him on the success of his group in the private housing society elections. Chaudhry Abdul Majeed thanked him and said that Islamabad Chamber is our second home. It is a honour for us to have President Ahsan Bakhtawari come to our office along with a delegation. He said that the martyrs' day celebrations across the country are a proof of how much the nation loves our forces and martyrs. He said that I will build a separate housing society for the members of Pakistan Army and Police. In which free plots will be provided to the heirs of martyrs. This initiative of mine is to pay homage to the martyrs and acknowledge their sacrifices. He said that he has a long-standing relationship

with the Bakhtawari family. Zafar Bakhtawari is also my neighbor, he has rendered valuable services for the construction and development of Islamabad city. Speaking on this occasion, President Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that martyrs' day is associated with the construction sector. The recovery of this sector drives the economy. The proposals given to the government in the budget include a special package for housing societies and builders. He said that the amnesty scheme given by government to the construction sector should be extended for another two years, because this sector has come to a standstill due to the huge increase.

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Briefs

Commerce Minister leaves for London

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar Thursday left for London to attend the Commonwealth Trade Ministers Conference. According to press statement issued by the commerce ministry, matters of mutual interest and trade would be discussed during the conference. Investors from Commonwealth countries would be encouraged to invest in the stock market and other sectors of Pakistan economy, the statement added.—APP

World Bicycle Day to be marked on June 3

ISLAMABAD: World Bicycle Day will be observed on June 3 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan, with the aim to develop a culture of cycling for basic transportation, commutation, and strengthening physical and mental health. The day draws attention to recognize the longevity, uniqueness, and versatility of the bicycle, and that it is an affordable, reliable, simple, clean and environmentally fit sustainable means of transport. World Bicycle Day is a special day meant to be enjoyed by all people regardless of any characteristic of the bicycle as a symbol of human progress and advancement. "Promotes tolerance, mutual understanding and respect and facilitates social inclusion and a culture of peace." The bicycle further is a "symbol of sustainable transport and conveys a positive message to foster sustainable consumption and production, and has a positive impact on climate." World Bicycle Day is now being associated with promoting a healthy lifestyle for those with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.—APP

Foundation stone laying ceremony of Sangiani police station

ISLAMABAD: The foundation stone laying ceremony for the construction of a new building of Police Station Sangiani was held here, which would have modern facilities for policemen and to help them in carrying out the operational activities effectively. The ceremony was attended by DIG Operations Syed Shahzad Nadeem Balhara, while DPO Sadoor Zameer and a large number of police officials as well as community members were present on the occasion. With the introduction of the new police station, the demarcation of boundaries has also been adjusted. As per the revised demarcation, the area along both sides of the road from Tarnol Railway Crossing to Sangiani Picket will now fall under the jurisdiction of Police Station Sangiani. DIG (Operations) said the establishment of new police stations will improve investigation procedures and reduce the burden on existing police stations. It would also help to reduce crime and expand presence of the policemen in the newly defined area.—APP

IIA delegation meets Finance Minister

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a

meeting with delegation from Islamabad Industrial Association led by its President Mr. Mohamud Ahmad on Budget 2023-24 proposals at FBR (HQs), today.

SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Mr. Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Chairman RRCM Mr. Ashfaq Yusuf Tola, Chairman FBR, and senior officers from FBR

attended the meeting. The delegation thanked the Finance Minister for inviting the budgetary proposals from business community. They discussed the current economic situation of the country with the Finance Minister and informed him about the issues being faced by them particularly related to taxation. The delegation also presented their proposals to address those issues through the upcoming budget 2023-24. They also guaranteed the Finance Minister of their continuous assistance to the Government for economic development.

Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar appreciated the budgetary proposals of the delegation and expressed the resolve of the government in overcoming the issues being faced by the business community to ensure the economic growth of the country. He also assured the business leaders that Government will provide all possible assistance to the business community for the economic stability and growth by bringing forward a business and people friendly budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24. The delegation thanked the Finance Minister for considering their budget proposals. The delegation included President IIA, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, Mr. Usman Shaikat, Mr. Tariq Siddiq, Malik Sohail Hussain, Mian Akram Farid, Mr. Zakria A Zia, Mr. Aijaz Akram Shaikh, Mr. Waheeduddin, Shaikh Amir Waheed, Mr. Nasir Qureshi, Mian Shaikat Masud and others.



Indonesian embassy initiative

"A Night at Lahore Museum" to be inaugurated on 17 June

Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio has warmly invited the Pakistani friends to the Exhibition and to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the two Muslim brotherly countries

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with Lahore Museum will inaugurate a week-long photo exhibition titled "A Night at Lahore Museum: Tracing the Influence of Civilizations Between Indonesia and Pakistan", on Saturday 17th June 2023 at Lahore Museum. Talking to the officials of Lahore Museum and journalists in Islamabad, the Ambassador of Indonesia Mr. Adam Tugio has warmly invited the Pakistani friends to the Exhibition

and to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the two Muslim brotherly countries. "Let's embrace the spirit of friendship and witness together the exciting display of cross-cultural connectivity and convergence of Indonesia-Pakistan civilization through past and present journeys". Director of the Lahore Museum, Mr. Muhammad Usman appreciated the initiative of this joint collaboration by the Embassy to strengthen the two-way historic religious cultural linkages and assured full cooperation from Lahore Museum to make this event successful



and attractive for all the visitors. The exhibition will highlight the spread of Buddhist and Islamic civilization from ancient Gondars to archipelago, the territories known as Indonesia today, initially in search for spices, the golden green at that time. Through the display of selected photographs and art works, the Exhibition provides an excellent opportunity to the visitors and art lovers to witness the impact of cultural influences across continents. They manifested in the form of interesting similarities in art, traditions and architecture of

the two great countries during the course of history. Moreover, Indonesian Batik and Pakistani Ajrak art will also be displayed in the exhibition, which are not only colorful and attractive but also carry cultural and historical significance. The week-long exhibition will be opened for general public from June 18-24, 2023, featuring a meticulously curated collection of photographs and videos to provide a fresh perspective on the cross-cultural connectivity between the two biggest Muslim populated countries from past to present time.

G7's leaders do not want to miss the Chinese market

ISLAMABAD: G7's common sense issued at the end of the recent summit, show its leaders are confused, self-centered and insist on its hegemony, at any cost. According to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Thursday, on one hand they do not want to miss the Chinese market.

Second, all interests dictate them to keep close economic relationship with China. The report says, it is a classical example of self-interest based policy. But simultaneously they do not want China to become the largest economy of the world. They consider it necessary to contain China, one way or other, to sustain their hegemony. Thus, they are pressurizing small countries to disengage China.

Second, they are confused because they do not know how to malign China in the disguise of international law and values to fulfill their national interests. For example, the Communiqué accused China of economic coercion and asked China to act in accordance with international law.

However, it was unable to find any example of economic coercion. On the contrary, G7 countries have a history to punish countries by economic coercion and apply unhuman economic sanctions. They destroyed many countries and put many regions on ventilator. They never cared about the international laws, human rights and values. G7, especially the USA has been applying the same strategy of economic coercion on China for many years. First it launched a trade war against China. It imposed multiple sanctions to harm Chinese companies. It is openly running a campaign against Chinese tech companies including Huawei. Like, the USA is leaving no stone unturned to hurt Huawei and is asking every one not to engage Huawei. Third, the Communiqué was a blatant interference in the internal affairs of China. One cannot understand why G7 is discussing the internal affairs of China at their summit. In reality, China is doing extremely well to develop itself. China is implementing the most people policies on its land. We have seen a

revolution in the life of Chinese people. In nutshell, China has all the rights to solve its internal matters according to its national interest. Although, it is against international laws and values to interfere in internal affairs of any other countries, but G7 kept discussing about China. The astonishing fact is that they are doing so, while they are delivering lectures on the importance of and the respect for international laws and values. Despite all such malicious campaigns and actions, G7 wants China to play a leading role to tackle global challenges. It is a perfect example of the confused G7, more precisely the double standards of G7. They are asking China to lead the fight against climate change, environment degradation and economic stability. Unfortunately, when China starts to play its role, G7 members start to malign China. For example, China launched Belt and Road Initiative as an economic development program but G7 is opposing it. They are shouting with full throat to stop it. Second, the G7 members are crying for help to solve

the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Although China has nothing to do with it, neither China is initiator nor party, but still they are asking China to take the responsibility to solve it. Despite these facts, China tried to help and came up with proposal to peacefully solve the conflict. Unfortunately, now they are not agreeing to the Chinese proposal. In this backdrop, how China can help. On the basis of above discussion, it can be inferred that G7 is not interested in solving the issues or building mutually beneficial relationship with China. They consider China a rival if not enemy and they are ready to do anything to contain China. Thus, they are turning G7 into an anti-China cult. It is against the international laws and values and will be disastrous for the world. The world needs cooperation, not confrontation, as it is facing multiple challenges including the existential threat of climate change. Initiative as an economic development program that let us cooperate and work for our future generations and build a community with a shared future.

NA defence body condemns May 9 incidents

MNAs Rubina Irfan, Chaudhary Muhammad Barjess Tahir, Muhammad Khan Dahi, Ramesh Kumar Vankani and Salahuddin Ayubi attended the meeting

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence Thursday expressed solidarity with the Armed Forces of Pakistan, who were the pride of the nation and strongly condemned the incidents of terror that happened on 9th May. The committee in its meeting held here under the chairmanship of Member National Assembly (MNA) Chaudhary Farrukh Alif unanimously condemned the incidents of violence of May 9 and said such incidents were deplorable and intolerable, and must be dealt with sternly. "We unanimously condemn the incidents of violence of 9th May which have deeply hurt the sentiments of the nation. We stand with our Armed Forces," the committee in its resolution resolved. The 19th meeting of the Standing Committee on Defence discussed the prevailing law and order situation, and condemned the terror incidents of May 9th. The committee remarked that it was imperative upon every citizen of Pakistan to respect the sanctity of the institutions and the public property of Pakistan. The committee also paid tributes to the martyrs, who sacrificed their lives for Pakistan. MNA, Barjess Tahir moved the resolution stating, "The Committee passed the resolution unanimously, and recommended that the perpetrators of the violent incidents must be dealt with an iron hand." Additional Secretary, Ministry of Defence thanked the committee for recognizing the role and sacrifices of the Armed Forces of Pakistan to ensure prosperity of the country. The committee expressed its desire to visit the General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi as a symbol of solidarity with the armed forces.

The committee deferred "The Institute of Space Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2022," moved by Muhammad Jamal ud Din, MNA till the next meeting. MNAs Rubina Irfan, Chaudhary Muhammad Barjess Tahir, Muhammad Khan Dahi, Ramesh Kumar Vankani and Salahuddin Ayubi attended the meeting.

Iftikhar Ali Malik hails re-election of Turkish President

ISLAMABAD: Founder Chairman Pak-US Business Council and former President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik has felicitated Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for winning the election. In a congratulatory letter, he said that both countries had enjoyed friendly relations since Pakistan's inception in 1947, with Turkey being one of the first countries to recognize Pakistan as an independent state. He said economic ties between Pakistan and Turkey had been growing steadily, said a press release on Thursday. The trade volume between the two countries had increased over the years, with both sides aiming to enhance bilateral trade and investment, Malik highlighted. Efforts were being made to explore new avenues of economic cooperation, particularly in sectors such as textiles, construction, energy, and agriculture, he added. He said the two countries continue to deepen their cooperation in various fields, further cementing their longstanding friendship. Iftikhar Ali Malik said Pakistan and Turkey share strong cultural, people-to-people contacts, diplomatic relations, political and military cooperation, besides historical bonds due to their common Muslim heritage. "The people of both countries have a deep appreciation for each other's culture.—APP

Thar coal can ensure Pakistan's energy security alone

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC) Amir Iqbal has said that Thar coal alone can ensure the energy security of Pakistan besides reducing power tariffs significantly. Talking to APP here, he said that unlocking indigenous Thar coal reserves could generate approximately 100,000 megawatts (MW) electricity for the next 250 years. Coal was considered a cheap energy resource to catch up with future energy requirements of both the domestic and commercial consumers in Pakistan, adding in the last five years coal-based power production had also witnessed a significant increase, he added. The CEO said in order to scale down fuel import costs, the country needed to shift towards local coal resources. Even in India, coal-fired power plants produce over two third of total electricity, he added. He said India imports 200 million tons coal annually besides utilizing 500-600 million tons domestic coal while Pakistan's coal

production stood at a mere 14 to 15 million tons per annum. Amir Iqbal said currently SECMC was extracting 7.5 million tons per annum coal from Block-II and its capacity was being expanded to 11.2 million tons. Thar coal had total 13 blocks but presently coal was being mined from two blocks, he added. Taming coal reserves the future of Pakistan, Amir Iqbal said that coal could not only be used for power generation but also in the cement and steel industries. However, he said Thar coal had not yet been connected through the railway network. Once, Thar coal was connected with the railway network, it would not only open to the entire world but also pave the way for the economic prosperity of the country, he remarked. In power plants, the average coal consumption is approximately 0.62kg/kWh. However, the new efficient power plants utilize 10% less coal as compared to the ordinary plants, he said.—APP

the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Although China has nothing to do with it, neither China is initiator nor party, but still they are asking China to take the responsibility to solve it. Despite these facts, China tried to help and came up with proposal to peacefully solve the conflict. Unfortunately, now they are not agreeing to the Chinese proposal. In this backdrop, how China can help. On the basis of above discussion, it can be inferred that G7 is not interested in solving the issues or building mutually beneficial relationship with China. They consider China a rival if not enemy and they are ready to do anything to contain China. Thus, they are turning G7 into an anti-China cult. It is against the international laws and values and will be disastrous for the world. The world needs cooperation, not confrontation, as it is facing multiple challenges including the existential threat of climate change. Initiative as an economic development program that let us cooperate and work for our future generations and build a community with a shared future.

Ayesha Omar hails legendary Nayyar Ejaz

ISLAMABAD: Sharing the screen with most acclaimed actor of Pakistani drama industry, Nayyar Ejaz, Omar is nothing but all praise about the Texali coactor. Starting top notch cast of the industry including Ayesha Omar, Yasir Husain, Mehreen Khan, Nayyar Ejaz, Ifat Omar, Iftikhar Baloch, Babar Ali, Umar Aalam, and Sheheryar Cheema, "Taxali" is an upcoming crime-thriller set to be released on this Eid-ul-Azha as announced by the director. Since the announcement of the most anticipated film got aired, fans have been witnessing sweet interactions between two of its co-stars. The "Karachi se Lahore" star took to her Instagram account.



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Terror without purpose

V LADIMIR Putin has never been honest with the Russian people about the war in Ukraine. He lied about the scale of the invasion and the reasons for it. The deception is sustained with propaganda and repression. Outlawing the truth has kept the reality of war mostly out of sight, which is a condition of public acquiescence. That doesn't mean that millions would rise up against their government if confronted with the true horror of what is being done in Ukraine in their name. The bellicose cult is well embedded in Russian society. But it is easier to support a war that unfolds on television than one that can be heard flying overhead, which is why drone strikes against targets in Moscow this week have rattled the Kremlin. Ukraine denies involvement in the attack, as it does automatically when military operations cross Russia's borders in deference to Kyiv's western allies who are made uncomfortable by such bold incursions. There were also reports on Wednesday of a fire at an oil refinery in the southern Russian Krasnodar region, started by a drone. The raid on Moscow caused little damage but plenty of alarm, which is the point. Most analysts interpret these attacks as part of a disorientation strategy, forcing the Kremlin to divert resources and attention away from the frontline in advance of a Ukrainian counter-offensive to recapture occupied territory. The same applies to the murkier business of raids across the Ukrainian border into Russia's Belgorod region, carried out by far-right, anti-Putin Russian militias. That makes it all the more important to keep a focus on core facts and moral imperatives: Ukraine is the victim of an unprovoked invasion by forces whose primary tactic is terrorising the civilian population into submission by means of indiscriminate murder and destruction. This campaign of atrocity has not succeeded, because Ukrainians have shown heroic fortitude and ingenuity on an epic scale. Russia did not start its territorial aggression against Ukraine in 2022, but eight years earlier, in Crimea. Mr Putin did not stop there because Russia wanted to have complete dominance over the domestic and foreign policy orientation of the government in Kyiv. He gambled that the west would look away again. Thankfully, the Russian president was mistaken. He thought then that Russia's appetite for carnage, even from a losing position, would outlast western solidarity with Ukraine. That too turns out to be a miscalculation, so far. With out a follow-up strategy, Mr Putin's war is sustained by his monstrous pride, readiness to sacrifice conscript soldiers for no measurable purpose and a political apparatus that allows him to cover up his failures. Those conditions make Russia's position look solid. But they could turn out to be brittle, as long as Ukraine's allies stand firm.

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EU and the US

THE fourth ministerial meeting of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council was held in Lulea, Sweden, on Tuesday and Wednesday. With the presence of their respective trade, commerce and diplomatic officials, the meeting should have focused on resolving the trade and technology disputes between the two sides. But thanks to the United States' obsession with taking every opportunity to bolster its bid to contain China, the meeting was transformed into another anti-China workshop. The TTC remains an empty shell at the trade level, having no ability to prevent or resolve even transatlantic trade issues, but the US clearly doesn't want to waste any chance the talk shop can provide to get the EU fully signed up to its anti-China stance. Reportedly, the two sides haggled over the China-related parts in the draft of their joint communiqué for a long time ahead of the meeting, with some of the EU members, including France and Germany, unwilling to toe the US line. As revealed by some media outlets in Brussels, a version drafted by the EU side apparently only had one veiled reference to Beijing. However, later additions from the US showed that the EU's diplomatic language had been "punched up" to repeatedly refer to Beijing, and the US outlined de facto EU-US united front against China. Yet in the last-minute negotiations between the two sides late last week, the US additions were markedly toned down again, indicating that the EU found it difficult to assume the role assigned to it by Washington. It remains to be seen what the final text of the joint communiqué will be, particularly as the US side refuses to budge on its market-law-bending green subsidies, a core issue the meeting was supposed to deal with. But the flip-flop in the drafting process demonstrates in the divergence between the two sides on China has become wider compared with that in late 2021. At that time, with the retirement of Angela Merkel as the German chancellor, Brussels and Washington vowed to "speak with one voice" on China. There has been close communication between Beijing and Brussels, particularly with the European leaders' visits to China over the past months. Chinese diplomats have also visited various countries in Europe. At the same time, China has been making indispensable contributions to the stability of global supply chains. It has also been making efforts to broker peace in the Ukraine conflict. That served to prompt EU policymakers to think twice when Washington peddles its anti-China stance to them. However, with Washington going to extremes in its efforts to smear, bully and coerce China, that almost all EU officials speak to the media only on the condition of anonymity about the bloc upholding strategic autonomy in its China policy means Washington has already caught Brussels in its net. That should make clear to the EU that having the US as its ally is little different to having it as a "competitor".

G-20 meeting in an Indian prison

Qamar Bashir



The OHCHR is the UN's principal human rights office, mandated to provide technical assistance to governments and monitor human rights situations around the world and the Human Rights Council which can appoint experts to investigate human...

WITH its typical and proven insensitivity to human life, dignity, and honor, India continued to treat the indigenous people of Kashmir as pygmies when it unexpectedly announced the conduct of a G-20 tourism working group conference in Srinagar from 22nd to 24th May, 2023. This move elicited a furious reaction from Pakistan, as well as a much-needed snub from one of the world's most powerful countries, China, which, like Pakistan, has territorial conflicts with India and has given India a valuable lesson on numerous occasions. It was also a reflection of the G-20 countries' insensitivity and pursuit of vested interests in attending the contentious meeting despite India's human rights violations since partition in 1947. By making a highly contentious, insensitive, and arrogant decision, India turned Srinagar into a large human prison for the indigenous people of the land, trampled and humiliated them by millions of heavily armed security forces, and made a mockery of human rights and human dignity. The unprecedented and extensive security arrangements included a three-tier security system on the ground with police, paramilitary forces, and the National Security Guard (NSG), anti-drone technology was installed to prevent drone attacks, and special highway patrolling teams were deployed at major junctions along Srinagar's major roads. The city was also closely guarded by security forces, with checkpoints and barricades built up at important places, and police and paramilitary forces held simulated drills in

the city to ensure that they were ready for anything. The entire population and Kashmiri leaders reacted and objected to the meeting, calling it a violation of the motherland and local traditions, and insulting the local people by imprisoning them in their homes, shutting down their businesses, and making them irrelevant for the meeting while they were the major stakeholder. The entire city was reduced to a ghost town after being invaded by security forces and aliens who claimed the entire city as their birthright while depriving the people of land of all fundamental human rights. These rights include the right to life and not to be killed by the state or another person. The right to be free from torture, or subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. The right to be free from slavery and not to be held in slavery or servitude. The right not to be discriminated against because of one's race, colour, gender, descent, or orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and to hold whatever ideas you want and to express those opinions without fear of reprisals. The right to free speech to express one's beliefs and ideas, as well as to receive and impart information and ideas through any medium and regardless of borders. The right to peaceful assembly and association, which allows you to gather with others for any reason. The right to a fair trial entails the right to be believed innocent until proven guilty, as well as the right to a fair trial if accused of a crime. The right to privacy, which includes the right to privacy in your home, family, and communication, and the right to property, which includes the right to own property and the right not to be deprived of it without due process of law. The holding of this meeting was a total defiance of the United Nations (UN) declared and fundamental human rights and disregard of the number of mechanisms UN had established to address human rights violations in any country. It reflected the helplessness of the UN Human Rights Council, which is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights, instead of examining the allegations of human rights violations and making recommendations to the UN and the Indian government, it sided with India and turned a blind eye to the enslavement of the entire IIOJK during the pre- and post-G-20 events. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is the UN's principal human rights office, mandated to provide technical assistance to governments and monitor human rights situations around the world and the Human Rights Council which can appoint experts to investigate human rights violations in specific countries or thematic areas, but instead chose to remain oblivious to this violation of indigenous peoples' dignity, privacy, and right to earn a living. The International Criminal Court (ICC), the world's first permanent international court with jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community, such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression, decided to sleep over the crime committed by the Indian Security forces. The UN is also empowered to impose sanctions on governments that violate human rights, such as travel bans, asset freezes, and arms embargoes, and to reprimand

noncompliant governments through the use of its bully pulpit, but in reality, the UN has proven itself castrated and too feeble against India while taking prompt actions against other nations such as Iran, Syria, and North Korea. When Kashmiri leadership across the board, including political parties, student organizations, civil society groups, and the entire Kashmiri population, rose up and expressed their anger, indignation, and deep frustration for outright exclusion from the G-20 meeting, the UN in the deeply troubled and disputed city of Srinagar, the United Nations and all international and regional human rights organizations conveniently decided to declare themselves deaf and dumb. The UN expressing their concern, the Kashmiri leadership across the IIOJK described the G-20 meeting as a distraction from the real problems, termed it a failed attempt by India to use the meeting to legitimize its illegal and brutal role and to use of blatant force to strangle the Kashmiri population, the United Nations and International Community thought them as economically non viable entities and ignored their just and rightful doubts and demands. The convening of the G-20 conference in Srinagar was an act of provocation by India, and the protests were a manifestation and sign of the deep political divisions in Kashmir, as well as an opportunity for people to show their anger and displeasure. The protesters emphasized that the Kashmir issue is far from ended and the battle rages on, with no sign of a resolution in sight. India conveniently sparked the disproportionate use of force to suppress Kashmiris' lawful right to assemble and protest and resorted to the brazen overuse of tear gas and baton charges to disperse them, resulting in serious injuries to the protesters. India cannot fool itself and the world community by staging such mock and failed attempts to legitimize its illegal and illegitimate rules on Jammu and Kashmir as this issue holds significant importance for the United Nations, India, Pakistan, the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and the international community. It is important for the UN as it considers it a dispute between India and Pakistan, which remains one of the oldest unresolved issues on its agenda. The UN has passed several resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing the need for a peaceful resolution through dialogue and self-determination for the people of the region. The United Nations has been involved in the Jammu and Kashmir dispute since partition of India in 1947. The UN considers it a conflict between India and Pakistan, and it is one of the organization's longest unresolved disputes. The United Nations has issued multiple resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, underlining the importance of a peaceful resolution through dialogue and self-determination for the region's people. The United Nations is interested in fostering peace, stability, and the right of all states and peoples to self-determination. India incorrectly and illegally considers the territory as an internal matter, based on the extremely contentious, contaminated, and shrouded in mystery accession of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir to India in 1947 by the Sikh ruler, against the wishes and aspirations of the IIOJK people. India, albeit unsuccessfully, continues its sovereignty and regards any external meddling or interference as unwarranted. Pakistan asserts, and rightfully so, that IIOJK is a disputed area, and has been campaigning for the people of the

region's right to self-determination. Pakistan contends that the region's majority-Muslim population should be able to decide their political future through a plebiscite, as guaranteed by UN resolutions. The prolonged conflict has had a direct impact on the people of Jammu and Kashmir as they have been suffering politically, socially and economically. The dispute directly affects their lives, rights, and hopes for a peaceful and successful future. The world community recognizes that resolving the IIOJK dispute is critical for regional and international peace and to assure stability, prevent nuclear conflict, combat cross-border terrorism, uphold human rights, build diplomatic relations, and sustain overall global peace and security. It believes that resolution of the dispute would serve to lessen tensions, minimize the possibility of military conflict, and contribute to South Asian regional stability. It also believes that it is a nuclear flashpoint since any escalation of the Kashmir conflict might have disastrous effects, whereas a peaceful resolution of the issue would lessen the risk of nuclear conflict and contribute to regional nuclear non-proliferation efforts. Although, by all accounts, India's attempt to distract international attention away from the disputed region of IIOJK failed terribly, India is portraying the 3rd G-20 Tourism Working Group Meeting as a huge success. According to Indian official sources, the meeting, which was attended by representatives from 19 G20 member countries and the European Union, ended successfully with the adoption of a G20 tourism declaration highlighting the importance of tourism for economic growth and job creation, and making a number of commitments such as investing in tourism infrastructure and promoting sustainable tourism practices, developing human resources in the tourism sector, and promoting tourism. It further claimed that the summit drew such a big number of delegates not just from G20 countries but also from international organizations. Pakistan's natural and expected reaction was to aggressively and forcefully oppose the conference, citing its firm opposition to "in legitimizing any kind of activities in disputed territory." Many countries either did not attend or sent low-key delegations. Mehbooba Mufti claimed India had turned the region into the equivalent of the Guantanamo Bay prison simply to hold a tourism meeting. Fernando de Vareañas, the UN's special rapporteur on minority issues, described the meeting as "unwittingly providing a veneer of support to a facade of normalcy" at a time when human rights violations, political persecution, and illegal arrests were on the rise. Pakistan's reaction though was natural and forceful, but words alone will not suffice. An appropriate response could be to hold an equally important and high-level conference in Azad Jammu and Kashmir to project Kashmir's point of view and to express the extremely contentious, contaminated, and shrouded in mystery accession of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir to India in 1947 by the Sikh ruler, against the wishes and aspirations of the IIOJK people. India, albeit unsuccessfully, continues its sovereignty and regards any external meddling or interference as unwarranted. Pakistan asserts, and rightfully so, that IIOJK is a disputed area, and has been campaigning for the people of the

Erdogan's re-election is good news for Türkiye – and the world

Fahrettin Altun

Erdogan's vision extends beyond Türkiye's borders and includes resolving international conflicts and alleviating global suffering.

While these goals are undoubtedly ambitious, they are achievable as they are underpinned by a steadfast commitment to diplomacy and negotiation as well as a deep-rooted belief in the importance of mutual respect. Under the leadership of Erdogan, Türkiye will continue to work collaboratively with any willing nation to resolve pressing bilateral, regional and global challenges

AGAINST the backdrop of an increasingly complex global political landscape, last Sunday's presidential run-off in Türkiye marked a pivotal moment both for its people and the wider world. In a triumph for democracy, the election was fair, free, and it boasted an impressively high voter turnout. The results reaffirm the vibrancy of Türkiye's political landscape and the faith Turkish people have in their democracy. That Turkish voters trusted President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to lead the nation for another five years bodes exceptionally well for regional stability and global peace. The campaign season was colorful and dynamic as Türkiye's diverse political culture, reflecting the best qualities of its vibrant, resilient and inclusive democracy. Amid this rich tapestry and despite all the expected tensions that come with an election, Turkish citizens used their ballots to reiterate their trust in and support for President Erdogan's policies and vision for the country. After yet another landmark election victory, the undefeated president humbly and graciously embraced the entire nation. As a leader who recognizes the need to earn political support through delivering tangible results, he promised to continue to serve everyone regardless of their support for him and his party in this election. He reaffirmed that his achievements will be shared not only by his supporters but by all Turkish citizens. In this election, President Erdogan defeated not only the opposition candidate but the xenophobic and anti-refugee elements on the fringes of Turkish society whose support he relied on. By once again choosing President Erdogan, Turkish people clearly stated that they do believe refugees currently residing in Türkiye should return to their home countries only when it is safe to do so. In this context, this victory was a testament to Erdogan's approach to the refugee issue – an approach that marries practicality with compassion. Türkiye will continue to provide refuge to all those in need while working towards establishing peace in their homelands. Building on this ethos, the new Erdogan administration will continue to spread



a message of fairness and justice across the globe while persistently advocating for reform within international organizations. As Erdogan's famous "five bigger than five" motto – where "five" refers to the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – communicates, the new Erdogan administration will continue working towards amplifying marginalized voices and redistributing power within global governing bodies to achieve equity within the international system. Erdogan's vision extends beyond Türkiye's borders and includes resolving international conflicts and alleviating global suffering. While these goals are undoubtedly ambitious, they are achievable as they are underpinned by a steadfast commitment to diplomacy and negotiation as well as a deep-rooted belief in the importance of mutual respect. Under the leadership of Erdogan, Türkiye will continue to work collaboratively with any willing nation to resolve pressing bilateral, regional and global challenges. Erdogan's re-election also demonstrates the Turkish people's support for and appreciation of their country's reso-

lute stance against terrorism. Following this momentous electoral victory, the Erdogan administration will continue its battle against this global menace with full force. It will fight terrorism in all its forms and encourage other nations to adopt a similar approach in international forums. After this election, the Erdogan administration will continue its efforts to address global challenges such as climate change, food shortages, irregular migration and economic crises as well. Under President Erdogan's leadership, Türkiye is ready to step forward, contribute to solutions, and encourage global cooperation. The Turkish people placed its trust in President Erdogan once again, sending a clear message to the world: we are ready to work with you based on principles of mutual respect and common interests. The election has not only reaffirmed the strength of Türkiye's democracy but also demonstrated the Turkish people's unyielding resolve to be led by a leader with a vision for peace, equality, and justice. Erdogan's re-election is not just a victory for Türkiye; it is a beacon of hope for a world that seeks unity in times of division, compassion in the world, and resolution amidst chaos. As we mark the centennial of our republic, Türkiye once again has reaffirmed their readiness to march forward, guided by President Erdogan's vision for the future. Charting that future starts with working on common challenges to turn "Türkiye's Century" into a force for good in the world. President Erdogan's candid attitude and positivity in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties is a crucial asset the international community should utilize in its effort to confront the international challenges of our time. It is stability and conflict continue to test our world, the need for unity and cooperation in fostering and preserving peace for future generations becomes ever more crucial. President Erdogan has dedicated his life to building peace at home and abroad. Now that the Turkish nation has once again voted in support for Erdogan's vision, the world must join him in this quest for sustainable peace and global stability. - Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

China pledges increased economic co-op with Nigeria

KANO: China's president has pledged to increase economic cooperation with Nigeria, saying the country is important to Africa and the world. Xi Jinping spoke on Wednesday through his Special Envoy Peng Qinghua, who is also vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Peng met Nigerian President Bola Tinubu at the State House in the capital Abuja. According to a press statement from the Nigerian president's media team, the two countries enjoy good bilateral relations and economic cooperation and Chinese companies were doing well in Nigeria in railways, roads, hydropower and free trade zones. While commending President Tinubu's plan to lead Nigeria to a new era of economic development and prosperity, the Chinese envoy, however, said there were areas where Nigeria could benefit from China. He called on the two countries to share ideas and align strategies, urging President Tinubu to also create a more conducive environment for investment.

US House passes debt ceiling bill

WASHINGTON: The US House of Representatives passed a bill on Wednesday to avert a catastrophic default on the national debt before a June 5 deadline. The Republican-controlled House voted 314-117, sending the bill to the Senate. In the final vote, 165 Democrats and 149 Republicans backed the bill negotiated by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and President Joe Biden. The bill, which suspends the \$31.4 trillion cap on the federal government's borrowing limit through January 2025, needs to be passed by the Senate before Biden signs it into law. The debt limit was hit in January, but the Treasury Department has taken steps to ensure that the US continues to pay its bills. "Tonight, the House took a critical step forward to prevent a first-ever default and protect our country's hard-earned and historic economic recovery," Biden said in a statement after the vote. "This budget agreement is a bipartisan compromise. Neither side got everything it wanted." He thanked Speaker McCarthy and his team for negotiating in "good faith."

EU-DNA partnership mission in Moldova

LONDON: European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell opened a partnership mission in Moldova on Wednesday, delivering the message that the "EU stands firmly with its partners in countering threats from abroad." "I am proud to inaugurate today in Chisinau the European Partnership Mission in Moldova. With the shared goal to ensure peace, stability and stability of our citizens," he said on Twitter. "The mission will strengthen the security, enhance resilience to counter hybrid threats and foreign information manipulation and with a project, call (and) provide targeted operational support to help Moldova respond in these areas," he said. Borrell inaugurated the mission ahead of a meeting Thursday of the European Political Community (EPC), which will bring together the leaders of European countries on the continent and the heads of EU institutions in the Moldovan capital, Chisinau. —Agencies

Sanirani, Thai envoy call for strengthening bilateral ties

Thai Ambassador Chakkrid Krachaiwong conveyed his admiration for the hospitality and rich culture of Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan, H.E. Chakkrid Krachaiwong called on Chairman Senate Muhammad Saqib Sanjani here on Wednesday, today. The meeting discussed matters of mutual interest, focusing on further enhancing the close and cordial relations between Pakistan and Thailand. Acknowledging the longstanding bond between the two countries, Chairman Senate Muhammad Saqib Sanjani expressed appreciation for the monuments preserved in Pakistan, which have played a pivotal role in fostering a lasting and robust relationship between the nations. Additionally, he highlighted the significant role played by thousands of Pakistanis residing in Thailand, acting as a bridge to connect both nations. During the meeting, both parties emphasized the need to strengthen bilateral relations across various sectors, including investment, education, science, and technology. The Thai Ambassador expressed a warm welcome to the continuous development of



Senate Muhammad Saqib Sanjani (right) and Thai Ambassador Chakkrid Krachaiwong (left) during their meeting. The ambassador conveyed his admiration for the hospitality and rich culture of Pakistanis.

to seize the numerous investment opportunities available in the country. The meeting emphasized the exchange of delegations between the business communities of Pakistan and Thailand. The step would aim to foster closer collaboration, strengthen business ties, and explore new avenues of cooperation. Moreover, Chairman Senate Muhammad Saqib Sanjani highlighted the establishment of Special Economic Zones in Pakistan, which aspire to facilitate foreign investors and create a favourable investment atmosphere. The Thai Ambassador also commended the hospitality and rich culture of Pakistanis. He expressed the willingness of Thai companies to invest in agricultural and food products, showcasing their confidence in the potential of the Pakistani market. Both agreed to actively strengthen mutual relations and explore new areas of cooperation. Chairman Senate Muhammad Saqib Sanjani extended his best wishes to the Ambassador of Thailand, emphasizing the commitment to deepening the friendship between the two countries

Macron wants 'tangible' security guarantees for Kiev

French President Emmanuel Macron has argued that Ukraine is "protecting Europe" and should be provided with security guarantees by NATO. "That is why I'm in favor of offering tangible and credible security guarantees to Ukraine," Macron said on Wednesday at a forum in Bratislava, Slovakia. He added that it would be in the interests of NATO members to provide such assurances while Kiev awaits approval to join the Western military bloc. France and other Western powers have invested billions of dollars worth of military aid to Ukraine since the conflict with Russia began in February 2022. However, they have stopped short of offering the blanket protection afforded to NATO members. Article 5 of the bloc's founding

ing treaty stipulates that an attack on one member is considered an attack on all. We have to build something between the security provided to Israel and full-fledged membership," Macron said. The French president, who once described the Brussels-based alliance as "branded," said the Ukraine crisis had "jolted NATO awake." Macron called on the bloc's members to "intensely" military aid to Kiev so it would have everything it needs for an effective counter-offensive against the Russian forces. While acknowledging that US contributions have been key in enabling Ukraine to defend itself, Macron argued that Europe must build up its own defense industry rather than relying on Washington for protection. —APP

Japan PM unveils plan to tackle birthrate crisis

TOKYO: Japan's prime minister unveiled a \$25 billion plan on Thursday to expand support for young people and families in a bid to help raise the country's plummeting birthrate. Larger direct subsidies for those with children and more financial help for education and prenatal care are on the cards, along with the promotion of flexible work styles and paternity leave. Fumio Kishida said he was proposing "policies to tackle the falling birthrate on an unprecedented scale" as well as steps to "increase income for the young, and the child-rearing generation." "We will move forward with these measures to fight the falling birthrate without asking the public to bear a further burden," he told ministers, experts and business leaders gathered to discuss the issue. While many developed countries are struggling with low birthrates, the problem is particularly acute in Japan. It has the world's second oldest population after Monaco, and its relatively strict immigration rules mean it faces growing labour shortages. The country of 125 million recorded fewer than 800,000 births last year, the lowest since records began, while the cost of child care soared. At Thursday's meeting, Kishida said he wanted to budget roughly 3.5 trillion yen (\$25 billion) over the next three years for the policies. The drive has drawn criticism, however, for its failure to identify funding sources other than spending cuts elsewhere and improving the economy. —APP



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Toyota India Motors led by President Toyota Asia Yoshiaki Konishi and CEO Indus Motors Aji Asghar Jamali calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Japanese Ambassador Takahito Mitsuhiro, Federal Ministers Ishaq Dar, Makhdoom Munir Khan and Tariq Bajwa were also present in the meeting. —DNA

Kosovo clashes NATO 'des not give up' on political solution

OSLO: NATO chief on Thursday said that sending additional troops to Kosovo "does not mean" that the alliance expects the clashes may turn into a bigger conflict in Europe after Russia's war in Ukraine. Stoltenberg said: "This does not mean that we are giving up on a political solution." "Our message to both Belgrade and Pristina is that they have to engage in the good faith in the EU-facilitated dialogue, that's the only path to peace," he urged. He added: "But at the same time, NATO has the responsibility to ensure stability in Kosovo. That's why we have been there for many years and are now increasing our presence in the region." Reiterating that attacks on NATO peacekeepers are "totally unacceptable," the NATO chief said that additional troops will be stationed in Kosovo to ensure a safe and secure environment, and calm down the tensions." He said the first batch of additional 700 troops is on its way. Recent clashes in Kosovo and supporting Ukraine against Russia will remain at the top of the foreign ministers' agenda. Tensions have gripped Kosovo with protesters and security forces clashing in the northern Serb-dominated municipalities over the local elections. Albanians are

the largest ethnic group in Kosovo, followed by Serbs, especially in the north, near the border with Serbia. During the clashes, at least 30 NATO soldiers were injured. Meanwhile, more than 53 civilians were injured by shock bombs and tear gas, according to hospital sources. Sweden's NATO bid Stoltenberg said that he will soon visit Ankara to discuss Sweden's NATO bid with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Noting that he spoke with Erdogan earlier this week and highlighted the importance of making progress on the accession of Sweden, he said: "I will also travel to Ankara in the near future to continue to address how we can ensure the fastest possible accession of Sweden." Finland and Sweden applied for NATO membership soon after the start of the Ukraine war in February 2022. Finland joined the alliance in April, while Sweden is still making reforms to get membership. Sweden is joining the summit as a NATO invitee. Stoltenberg praised the "unprecedented level of support" for Ukraine by the allies and partners over the last months, saying allies also agreed to Kyiv's NATO membership. "But most importantly, all allies agree that the most urgent and important task now is to ensure that Ukraine prevails as a sovereign independent nation. —APP

Perpetrators of violence in have to be accountable

LONDON: The violence in northern Kosovo has to be condemned and the perpetrators of it have to be accountable, the EU foreign policy chief said on Thursday. Josep Borrell's remarks came during his doorstep before the 2nd European Political Community Summit, which is bringing together the leaders of European countries on the continent and the heads of EU institutions in Balboaca, Moldova. "We have to insist that the violence is not the way," he said, recalling that he met Kosovo's Prime Minister Albin Kurti on Wednesday and he expects to meet with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic. "Everybody has to try to avoid any kind of escalation and uncoordinated moves," added Borrell. Tensions have gripped Kosovo with protesters and security forces clashing in the northern Serb-dominated municipalities over the election of ethnic Albanian mayors. Albanians are the largest ethnic group in Kosovo, followed by Serbs, especially in the north, near the border with Serbia. —Agencies

Bosnia marks White Ribbon Day

SARAJEVO: Bosnia and Herzegovina marked White Ribbon Day on Wednesday in honor of more than 3,000 civilians killed in the western town of Prijedor. Thousands in Prijedor and across the country wore white ribbons on their arms to mark the 31st anniversary of the massacre. A crowd gathered in the center of Prijedor and urged authorities to build a monument in memory of 162 children who were killed. Fikret Basic from the Association of Families of Children Murdered in Prijedor said the bodies of 640 people in Prijedor have not yet been found. Relatives of the victims with white ribbons on their arms attended the event. On May 31, 1992, the Serbian administration in Prijedor ordered the non-Serb population to wear white stripes on their arms when they left their homes. It was an order that was followed by extermination, murder and persecution. The Bosnian War began March 1, 1992 and lasted until Dec. 14, 1995. More than 100,000 people were killed in the war, while 2 million were uprooted from their homes. The country suffered greatly during its war of independence, which included the siege of Sarajevo and the genocide of Srebrenica - Europe's worst wartime atrocity since 1945. Among the 3,176 civilians killed in Prijedor, 102 were children and 258 women. About 20,000 others suffered in concentration camps at Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje on the outskirts of Prijedor. —Agencies

Most of the killings took place between May and August 1992

NEW YORK: Elon Musk has reclaimed his position as the world's wealthiest person, the latest data from the Bloomberg Billionaire Index shows. According to the ranking, the Tesla, SpaceX and Twitter owner's wealth has jumped to \$192 billion, against \$187 billion amassed by French luxury goods magnate Bernard Arnault. The two businessmen have been neck-and-neck at the top spot for months now. Musk has seen his wealth jump by \$55.3 billion this year, largely due to the Tesla share price, which surged about 24% in May alone and 65.6% in the past 12 months. In December 2022, Musk led the top spot to Arnault, whose LVMH conglomerate owns luxury brands including Louis Vuitton and Dior. Back then, the French billionaire's wealth spiked due to a surge in luxury goods sales, propelling the company's stock price. Last month however, LVMH's share price plunged amid growing concerns over demand for luxury goods due to signs of slowing economic growth. Shares in the French company have lost about 10% of their value since April, reportedly wiping \$11 billion from Arnault's net worth in a single day amid a rout in mid-May. The company's stock is still up 19.7% for the year. —APP

UN climate agency picks first woman leader

GENEVA: The World Meteorological Organization voted Thursday for Argentina's Celeste Saulo to become its first woman leader and steer the WMO's critical global role in tracking climate change. Saulo, a WMO vice-president who has headed Argentina's weather services since 2019, won a landslide vote at the UN climate and weather agency's congress in Geneva. The WMO's role in climate change has become increasingly prominent and Saulo, 59, will likely become a well-known advocate on this pressing world issue. "In these times when inequality and climate change are the greatest global threats, the WMO must contribute to strengthening meteorological and hydrological services to protect populations and their economies, providing timely. —APP

Briefs

PM invites Japanese companies to invest in Pakistan

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said Pakistan considered Japan as an important partner for its progress and prosperity and Japanese companies should avail the immense opportunities for investment in Pakistan. The PM was speaking to President Toyota Asia Yoshiaki Konishi and Chief Executive Officer of Inland Motors Ali Asghar Janali who called on him here. Japan's ambassador to Pakistan, Mitsuhiko Wada, Vice Chairman Toyota Inland Motors Shuji Yanagi, Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister for Industries and Production Malikdoun Murtza Mehmood, Adviser to PM Ahsan Cheema, Special Assistants to PM Jehanzeb Khan and Tariq Bajwa and high ranking officials attended the meeting. In a briefing, the prime minister was told that Toyota Inland Motors for the first time established a unit for production of hybrid vehicles in Pakistan with an investment of \$100 million. Shehbaz Sharif welcomed the project of Toyota to produce hybrid vehicles in Pakistan.

Direct flights from Lahore to China restored

DNA
LAHORE: It has been decided to restore direct flights to China from Lahore after a gap of three years and China Southern Airline has announced to reactivate its flights operation in this regard. The Chinese airline will launch its Lahore to Orumci flight operation from June 13, under which three weekly flights will be operated. China Southern will use Boeing 737 for this purpose and two-way flights will be operated on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

Pervez Khattak leaves party positions

DNA
PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Pervez Khattak announced stepping down as the party's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter president late Thursday. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, the PTI stalwart said it was difficult for him to continue serving as the party's KP chapter president amid the prevailing political crisis. Khattak said he would announce the future course of action after consulting his friends and party colleagues. The development comes hours after PTI President Pervez Elahi was arrested by anti-corruption officials in Lahore outside his home. The PTI leader further said that he had taken the decision to leave the party post after thorough consideration.

SBP reserves fall to \$ 4.9 bn

DNA
KARACHI: Foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) fell to \$4.99 billion as the liquidity-challenged country considers quitting the stalled International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme without completing it and entering a fresh bailout deal. In a statement, the SBP said its reserves have fallen \$102 million as of the week ended May 29 due to external debt repayments, and currently stand at \$4.99 billion with an import cover of less than a month. The net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stand at \$5.42 billion, declining \$116 million. But were \$133 billion more than the reserves held by the central bank.

Minister lauds longstanding ties between EU, Pakistan

According to press statement, ambassador met the minister to engage in discussions on matters of mutual interest and explore avenues for strengthened cooperation

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Pakistan, Dr. Rina Klontka Thursday called on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and discussed agenda items, preparations and protocol of the upcoming 13th European Union (EU)-Pakistan Joint Commission, scheduled in Brussels later this month. According to press statement issued by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD), the ambassador expressed her appreciation for the commendable execution of the recent meeting of the International Partners Support Group (IPSG). She also emphasized the importance of continued alignment and coordination among the IPSG's members and highlighted the need for future endeavors that foster even greater collaboration and synergy. The Ambassador, on behalf of the Delegation of European Union to Pakistan, expressed condolences on the death of elder brother of the Minister Ayaz Sadiq. According to press statement, the ambassador met the minister to engage in discussions on matters of mutual interest and explore avenues for strengthened cooperation. On the occasion, the minister appreciated the longstanding friendship and cooperation



Minister between the European Union and Pakistan and expressed gratitude for the EU's continuous support to Pakistan's economic development. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved so far and reiterated their commitment to further deepen cooperation between Pakistan and the European Union. They agreed to continue engaging in high-level discussions and work towards concrete actions to strengthen the economic ties, promote investment opportunities, and enhance bilateral trade.

Ishaq Dar takes up fiscal issues with UAE envoy



DNA
ISLAMABAD: Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salim Al-Zabai, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates called on the Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar today. Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and H.E. Mr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salim Al-Zabai, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates con-

versed about the deep rooted brotherly ties between both countries and discussed the various areas of common interest for further strengthening the trade and economic ties between the UAE and Pakistan. Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar acknowledged that UAE has been a great partner of Pakistan in various fields including energy, refinery, petroleum and trade. The Ambassador

Russia says it repels new border incursion attempt

NEWS DESK
MOSCOW: Russia said on Thursday it had repelled an attempted incursion along its border with Ukraine by what it cast as pro-Ukrainian militants, while heavy shelling prompted a partial evacuation of civilians from the area. Ahead of an expected Ukrainian counter-offensive in the 15-month war, Russia has come under repeated attack in recent days, with a major cross-border incursion and, earlier this week, the biggest ever drone attack on Moscow. Settlements in the Russian region of Belgorod, which borders Ukraine, were briefly seized by pro-Ukrainian forces last week during the incursion. Russia's defence ministry said it had repelled three cross-border attacks on Thursday near the town of Shebekino, and it accused Ukraine of using what it cast as "terrorist formations" to carry out attempted attacks on Russian civilians. Ukraine says the incursions into Belgorod have nothing to do with its military and are conducted by Russian volunteer fighters. "The selfless actions of Russian servicemen repelled three attacks by Ukrainian terrorist formations," the Russian ministry said. "No violations of the state border were allowed." The ministry said Russian army units, border guards and units of the Federal Security Service repelled the first attack at around 0100 GMT as two units with vehicles and tanks tried to penetrate the border near Novaya Tavolzhanka and Shebekino. Russia said its forces repelled three attacks from Ukraine. More than 30 Ukrainian fighters had been killed, along with four armoured vehicles destroyed, the ministry said. Reuters was unable to immediately verify battlefield accounts from either side. The Kremlin said President Vladimir Putin was being regularly briefed on the situation and noted that Western powers have refrained from condemning the attacks on Russian territory that it said Ukraine had carried out.

'India rape survivor in fear as attackers jailed

MONITORING DESK
MUZZAFFARNAGAR: It has been three weeks since two men accused of gang-raping a woman in 2013 were jailed for 20 years - a rare sentencing for sexual assault during a communal riot in India. Congratulatory calls to celebrate the courage and requests to interview the rape survivor, 35-year-old Adreen, have ebbed since. Worse, her decade-long fight for justice - that should have brought her a sense of closure - is not over yet. "Someone tell my name slip out while talking about me here in Muzaffarnagar. So people who had no idea this was my case got to know," Adreen told a media organization, adding that she feels more vulnerable than before. "People from the village and other parts of Muzaffarnagar kept calling my husband and asking him why he did not tell them it was his wife's case," she said. Sarf, her 37-year-old husband, has kept his phone on silent mode for a few days now. Adreen was among at least seven women who alleged they were raped during the riots in Muzaffarnagar, a district in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, in 2013. The violence began on August 27, 2013 after a 29-year-old Muslim man was stabbed to death over allegations of harassing a Hindu girl.

'Does law allow surveillance of citizens?' asks IHC

ISLAMABAD: A day after Islamabad High Court (IHC) asked the government to inform it about the elements responsible for recording audios, Justice Babar Sattar issued a notice to the Secretary of the National Assembly raising a number of questions, including whether the law permitted the surveillance and secret recordings of citizens. The seven-page long order sheet was issued by Justice Babar in response to a petition filed by Najam Saqib, son of ex-CJP Nisar, against a special committee formed by National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to probe audio clips allegedly featuring his voice. Najam, in his plea, had submitted that the proceedings of the Aslam Bhoontani NA special committee be stopped. Subsequently, the IHC stayed with the NA committee, demanding, instead, to know the "elements" behind the leaks. Now, in its detailed order, the federal capital's top court has asked the NA to answer five questions pertaining to the matter. These questions range from parliament's authority to inquire into acts of private citizens to which agency is permitted to record calls of private citizens. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi exchanges views with Ambassador of Korea Suh Sangpyo. - DNA

Pakistan, Azerbaijan hold political consultations

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The 3rd Round of Pakistan-Azerbaijan Bilateral Political Consultations was held in Baku, the foreign office said Thursday. The Pakistan side was led by Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and Deputy Foreign Minister Elnur Mammadov headed the Azerbaijani delegation. Ambassador Bilal Hayee also attended the meeting. The two sides held wide ranging discussions to review the state of play of the multifaceted and historic bilateral relations and agreed to further deepen and expand the fraternal relationship. It was agreed to enhance and diversify bilateral trade and expand cooperation in energy, information technology, labour mobility, agriculture, transport connectivity and education. The two sides expressed satisfaction on mutual cooperation at the international fora especially at the United Nations and the OIC. The Foreign Secretary briefed the Azerbaijani counterpart about the grave situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and thanked Azerbaijan for its principled stance on the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir.

PNS conducts rescue operation in Arabian Sea

DNA
KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) SAIF while carrying out routine patrolling in the Arabian Sea, expeditiously responded to a distress call by a stranded Fishing Vessel AL ZUBAIR and saved the valuable lives of six fishermen. The fishing vessel had suffered engine failure and subsequent flooding due to rough sea conditions, a Pakistan Navy news release said. PNS SAIF swiftly responded to the distress call at night and safely recovered six stranded fishermen. Medical assistance was provided onboard and the fishermen were subsequently shifted to Gwadar. The fishermen's community has lauded the efforts of the Pakistan Navy in saving precious lives at sea.

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