

PTI calls for ECP's resignation No reserved seats for SIC, rules ECP

In the dissenting note, ECP Punjab chapter member maintained that these seats will remain vacant till the time any such amendment in Articles 51 and 106 is made by the parliament

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Monday ruled that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) is not eligible for the reserved seats allotted to women and minorities, serving a major blow to the already embattled party. The commission's five-member bench - headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja - announced the split decision with a 4-1 majority. ECP Punjab member Hassan Bharwana dissented with the majority verdict, which was reserved on February 28. The remaining 77 reserved seats will now be allotted to other political parties. In the verdict, the ECP said it extended the deadline to submit a priority list for the reserved seats of women, and the SIC, before the February 8 polls, did not submit the required list which was "mandatory".

The electoral body said the SIC cannot claim the share in the reserved seats for the women "due to non-curable procedural and legal defects and violations of mandatory provisions of the Constitution". The ECP verdict cited Article 51(6), saying the article clearly stated the reserved seats would be allocated to the political parties who contested elections and won general seats based on a "proportional representation system". It further stated that the percentum share of

Punjab cabinet: 15 ministers set to take oath

Marriyum Aurangzeb is expected to assume the Ministry of Planning and Development and Forests

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The first phase of the Punjab cabinet expansion is expected to take place within the next one to two days, with 15 ministers taking the oath of office at the Governor's House. This initial phase will see a leaner cabinet, focusing on key portfolios. The swearing-in ceremony is scheduled to be held at the Governor House, a momentous occasion signifying the com-

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ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif as the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Presidential polls: Zardarí, Achakzai set for showdown

ECP prohibits media coverage of scrutiny process of candidates'



Mehtab Pirzada

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan

Amid political chaos Shehbaz sworn in as prime minister

President Dr Arif Alvi administered the oath to the newly-elected premier in a ceremony which was attended by several dignitaries including Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Asim Munir

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Shehbaz Sharif on Monday took an oath as the country's 24th prime minister at the President's House in the federal capital. President Dr Arif Alvi administered the oath to the newly-elected premier in a ceremony which was attended by several dignitaries including Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Asim Munir. Meanwhile, leaders of the country's mainstream political parties such as Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Mutahidda Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), and Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), among others, attended the oath-taking ceremony. Those among the leaders included PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, PPP Co-Chair-



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NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: As the presidential election is all set to take place on March 9, the PPP sought Muttahida Movement-Paki-Qaumi stan's (MQM-P) support for the presidential election scheduled for March 9 as part of its efforts to muster the support of the political parties, a private news channel reported citing sources. The PPP has fielded its Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari for the presidential election against Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkM-AP) chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai, who has support of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) lawmakers.

Punjab's first staterun cancer hospital

Maryam issued directions for inviting the best doctors from around the world

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said on Monday the Punjab government would establish first state-run cancer hospital in Lahore's Valencia Town. The chief minister visited the proposed site of the cancer hospital near Valencia Town where she was briefed on various aspects of the project. Maryam issued directions for inviting the best doctors from around the world for the proposed cancer hospital. She also issued instructions for building of an eatery for people attending the cancer patients.

national reconciliation "We not only endorse it but also urge the Opposition to participate in this process for the broader interests of the country," he stated Transfers,

Bilawal condemns ruckus

PPP fully endorses

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, stated on Monday that the PPP fully supported the in federal govt offer made by newly elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for a 'Charter of National Reconciliation.' Speaking in the National Assembly, Asad-ur-Rahman Gillani appointed he recalled the Prime Minister's offer during his maiden speech in the House to collaborate on a Charter of National Reconciliation. "We not only endorse it but also urge the Opposition to participate in this process for the broader interests of the country," he stated. ISLAMABAD: As soon as Shahbaz Sha-

Bilawal Bhutto congratulated the newly rif became the prime minister, major elected Chief Ministers of all four prov- changes in the federal bureaucracy inces and emphasized the need for them have started taking up. Asad-ur-Rahto play their role in saving Pakistan's man Gillani, a grade-21 officer, got the "democracy and economy." He said that charge of principal secretary to the people did not vote for anyone to create a prime minister. The Establishment ruckus but to save them from this econom- Division also issued a notification for ic crisis. Bilawal Bhutto stressed the need the appointment of Asad-ur-Rehman for discourse among all the lawmakers. Gilani as Principal Secretary to the

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Continued on Page 06

postings start

as principle secretary to PM

ADIL SHAHEEN

(ECP), as per the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, has approved the nomination papers of Asif Ali Zardari and Mahmood Khan Achakzai for the presiden-tial elections. "No objection **Continued on Page 06**

Outrage over Brazilian tourist's gang rape in India The couple had

travelled to several parts of Asia on their motorbikes before arriving in India a few months ago

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: The alleged gang rape of a tourist with Brazilian-Spanish dual nationality in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand has led to outrage. The 28-year-old woman and her husband, who were on a motorbike tour, had stopped for

Continued on Page 06

PTI calls for trial of Imran's military secretary in cipher case

"Bilawal does not know cipher's mechanism," insists Omar Ayub

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan Monday called for the trial of former prime minister Imran Khan's military secretary in the diplomatic cable case. Talking to journalists outside the Parliament House, Ayub, alongside PTI's newly elected chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, said that keeping the cipher documents safe was the responsibility of the then-prime minister's military secretary. "If the case is to proceed, it should be proceeded against these per-sons [military secretary]." In January 2024, PTI founder Imran and party's senior leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi were sentenced to 10 years, each, in the cipher case.

BILAWAL MEETS COAS: PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

Speaking on the occasion, the PTI leader demanded a "judicial inquiry" into the ciphergate case. Commenting on the PPP chairman's address in the lower house of parliament, Ayub said Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari used unparliamentary words today. "Bilawal Bhutto does not know the cipher's mechanism." For his part, Barrister Gohar said that the party wanted to move forward, despite problems. Slamming the eight-party ruling alliance, the PTI leader said that ed towards Pakistan's ambassador in Washington.

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Cipher case Asad demands judicial probe

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Asad Qaiser on Monday demanded a judicial inquiry into the cipher case. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, the former NA speaker stated, "Our position on the cipher case is clear: we demand a judicial commission is formed and the truth will come out." The cipher case revolves around a diplomatic cable that the Federal Investigation Agency alleges was never returned by the PTI founder. The PTI has long maintained that the document contained a threat from the US to oust the PTI founder as the prime minister of Pakistan. Asad Qaiser recalled that an extremely hostile attitude had been adopt-

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Pakistan, under PM Shehbaz, set to achieve greater accomplishment in nation-building: Mao Ning

DNA/APP

ISLAMABAD: Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman has felicitated Shehbaz Sharif on taking oath as Prime Minister of Pakistan. In a cable message, Crown Prince wished Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif success,



man Asif Ali Zardari, and PPP Chairman

Continued on Page 06

NATIONAL

RCCI inks MOU with WELDO

RCCI President Sagib Rafig assured all kinds of support, close cooperation and assistance through the chamber platform

DNA

02

RAWALPINDI : The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) inked an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Women Empowerment Literacy and Development Organization (WELDO). President Mr. Saqib Rafiq, on behalf of RCCI and Manager Finance Mr. Umer Waqas from WELDO inked and exchanged the MOU documents. Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Mr. Faisal Shahzad. Former President Mr. Najam Rehan, EC member Abdul Rauf and Hussain Ali Marwat (Reintegration Manager) witnessed the MOU cer-

emony. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq assured all kinds of support, close cooperation and assistance through the chamber platform. The prime focus and mission of WELDO is to provide impartial returns and reintegration services to returnees coming back to Pakistan through health, social, economic, and psychosocial support measures.



Rescue 1122 receives 12885 disturbing calls in Feb

MUZAFFARGARH : District Emergency Service Rescue 1122 has received 20774 calls on emergency helpline, out of which, some 12885 were noted disturb ing calls while 4567 were observed real emergency calls during the last month of February.

District Emergency Officer (DEO) Dr Hussain Mian disclosed the details of the emergency calls while presiding over a monthly meeting held here on Monday. In the meeting, the DEO reviewed the monthly performance of the department.

LESCO chief holds functional heads meeting

LAHORE : Lahore Electric the social media performance of the Public Rela-Supply Company (LESCO) tions Officer. The CEO di-Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haider rected the safety officials chaired a high-level meetto ensure earthing and ing of all the functional make the electrical hazard areas hazard-free, adding heads of the company here at LESCO Headquarters that the Director (Safety) on Monday. Director (Cusshould provide maximum tomer Services) Rai Musafety awareness to the hammad Asghar, Director officers and employees to (Admin.) Zameer Hussain avoid accidents in future Kolachi, Chief Financial as safety of human lives (CFO) Bushra is the primary duty of LE-Director (HR) SCO. He said that the authorities concerned of the Nauman Ghafoor, Chief Engineer (Material Manmaterial management of agement) Ramzan Butt, LESCO should take steps Chief Engineer (P&D) Imto improve the perforran Mehmood, Chief Engimance of material manageneer (T&G) Zafar Iqbal, ment. Similarly, the main-Engineer (PIU) tenance department must Tahir Mayo and Director also take necessary steps by utilizing all resourc-(Safety) Fawad Khalid

on,LESCO's starts technical staff training Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) Regional Training Centre has started training classes for technical staff of the company. The LESCO spokesman told the media here Monday that on the instructions of Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haider, excellent courses and training programmes were being organized for the technical staff. The training programme also feature practicals to avoid more damage in any unexpected situation. LESCO staffers are also being trained to use modern technical, protective equip-

family planning services and easy access services to women said that family planning services are available to women. and introduced a network of trained women "nor workers" to ensure the delivery of information which was launched as a community-based family planning model which has been successful at the initial level. And seeing better results, its scope has been extended to 10 more districts Sheikhupura, Nankana, Faisalabad, Gujranwa-la, Kasur, Chiniot, TT Singh, Sargodha, and Lahore. He said that PPIF has provided women with family planning. Improving sanitation counseling and health services has made it possible these facilities to the doorsteps of the underprivileged. This model is supported by locally trained women serving ment and safety methods to as community resource persons. A pilot project was launched through the program in this cycle and was referred to as "Noor". Through this dissemination model. of information through group awareness sessions, audio-visual and print materials is ensured to bring family planning services to every individual. By empowering `Noor Workers'' socio-economically, the provision of world-class family planning facilities is ensured for every household. Shops have been set up to provide sanitary and sanitary products, where the local population is provided with household items, and women's health and hygiene products, while family planning information is also provided to local women at these shops. Possible by The Chief Executive Officer PPIF said that these workers have been provided with "Business in Box" bags containing family planning products which the Noor workers will go door to door during their visits to provide family planning information, counseling, short-term contraceptive methods, and services as well as sells its products. It is expected to provide family planning facilities to 823 thousand married women through this inter-



RAWALPINDI: Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi along with Chaudhary Muhammad Akram keenly viewing Science & Arts Exhibition of Punjab College of Commerce.-DNA

Family planning initiative launched

LAHORE : Director General Welfare Punjab and Chief Executive Officer PPIF Saman Roy while addressing a meeting regarding to deliver

NCRC consultation concludes on free education in KP the alarming dropout rates

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : In an effort to address the critical issues plaguing the access to quality education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) organized a pivotal provincial consultation on Free and Compulsory Education, said a press release issued here on Monday. A diverse array of stakeholders, including academia, social welfare advocates, media representatives and political leaders, gathered to confront the challenges ahead. The consultation uncovered a myriad of pressing concerns, including the pervasive influence of economic challenges hindering children's access to education. Moreover,

among girls, primarily driven by socio-cultural norms, demand immediate attention. Urgent infrastructural enhancements are imperative, as evidenced by the dire state of many schools. Despite of constitutional mandate stipulating free and compulsory education for all children aged five to sixteen (Article 25A), a staggering reality persists: a mere fraction of the education budget is allocated to development plans, exacerbating the scarcity of higher secondary schools and perpetuating the challenge of inadequate school facilities, particularly in remote areas and newly merged districts. A glaring gap in inclusive education was also highlighted, particularly concerning children with disabilities, including those affected by landmines in newly merged districts. Their needs have been consistently neglected, highlighting an urgent call for action to ensure their right to quality education. Nadia Bibi, Member KP, NCRC emphasized the constitutional obligation to provide free and compulsory education to all children, underscoring the urgency of addressing the current education crisis.

Islamabad **POST**

Tuesday, March 05, 2024

Article 25A of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan clearly states the state shall provide free and compulsory Education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years. "However, unfortunately, only 52.9 percent of children in Pakistan are in school and out of these, only 4.5 percent of children complete secondary-level education, making it the lowest in Asia.

'Suthra Punjab' campaign begins in Attock

ATTOCK : On the direc- the municipal bodies to ention of the Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the district administration of Attock has launched a massive

sure provision of clean and healthy environment to the public. Which include complete cleaning and improve-

nance of street lights is also a part of the current campaign. It is very gratifying that thanks to the Suthra Punjab campaign, the public will be

Sharing the details with participants of the meeting, he said that disturbing calls not only create problems for the performance of the department but it would also cause loss of the precious time for those people who missed their calls during real emergencies.

He urged the masses to avoid fake and disturbing calls on "emergency helpline" in order to save lives and times of other people. He further said that department has received 20774 calls on the "helpline" during the last month, out of which, 12885 were noted as disturbing calls while 4567 were observed as emergency calls including 754 of road accidents, 3568 medical emergencies. 22 fire emergencies, 22 crime, two building collapse and 199 other emergencies. The Rescue 1122 has rescued 4458 people, out of which, some 1899 persons were given first aid, while 2479 shifted to hospitals and 80 ill-fated persons died on the spot. He said that most of the emergencies were caused violations of traffic by laws. He further said that that violators must be treated strictly as per law of the country to minimize losses on roads. -APP

also attended the meeting. During the meeting, the LESCO Chief appreciated

Officer

Imran,

Chief

protect their precious lives es to save the customers from any trouble related while performing field duto power supply. Earlier ties.-APP

First national immigration, welfare policy in its final stages

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI : The Federal Secretary of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Dr. Arshad Mahmood on Monday said that they were about to finalize their first National Immigration and Welfare Policy. He said that the policy had many promising offers for the youth and about their proper selection, training and welfare benefits. While addressing the Inauguration ceremony of 2nd Korean Computer Based Testing (CBT) Laboratory here, the Secretary Dr. Arshad Mahmood said that approximately 10 million people were living abroad and they send \$31 billion remittances. He said that the Ministry was trying to restructure itself. Vice President of Human Resource Development (HRD) Service of Korea Kim Sung Jae and Consul General of Republic of Korea to Karachi Yi Sungho were also present on the occasion. Mahmood said that Korea pick up right kind of people and the emerging youth and train them. He lauded the pragmatism of South Korean government and their system. The Secretary said that the Korean model put the youth on a decent work profile. He said, "We would love to replicate this model for so many other countries." Mahmood said that the youth were the best ambassadors of Pakistan to South Korea and they would be new entrepreneur in Pakistan upon return. He said that the youth when leave the country they remain under the protected signature and receive facilities under 'Welfare Portal'. He said that around 13000 people had gone to South Korea, which was part of G20 economies and in many ways lead in semi-conductors and knowledge based economy. A EU delegation was coming tomorrow to us and they had shown their interest in hiring Pakistani youth for EU countries, he added. Consul General of Republic of Korea to Karachi Yi Sungho said that the economic relationship between Pakistan and Korea had continued to develop. He said that people-to-people exchange allowed both the countries to achieve mutual benefit in the current conditions. He said that Korea needed manpower for sustainable development. He further said that more young people from Sindh and Balochistan would had the opportunity to work in Korea in the future. Vice President of Human Resource Development (HRD) Service of Korea Kim Sung Jae also spoke on the occasion.

vention.-APP

Naghban Ramadan package distribution begins March 05

Engineer AamirKhattak siad that Ration package will be distributed to 378496 families across the division

DNA

RAWALPINDI : Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Engineer AamirKhattak visited the industrial estate for the preparation of ration bags for the Nighaban Ramadan package. He made a detailed review of the quality and quantity of essential items included in the ration bags. After the visit, he presided over the meeting held with the Deputy Commissioners of all five districts and directed them to verify the data of the beneficiaries across the division and prepare the final list in the next two days. Apart from this, the quality of the essential items kept in the Ramadan ration package given to the beneficiaries should be ensured. During

the packaging of the ration, the Deputy Commissioner should personally monitor and ensure that there is no compromise in the specified quantity and quality of the items in all the packages and that the packaging should be completed by coming Monday. Deputy Commissioners should also finalise their transportation and security plan by tomorrow. He directed that transparency should be ensured during the verification of the list and in the meantime, those in the list who are no longer eligible for this package and thise who are non-verified due to incomplete address or any other reason should be segregated in separate list. Commissioner Rawalpindi directed that a control room should be set up in the Deputy Commissioner's office

to monitor all the processes. Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Dr. Hasan Waqar Cheema, Additional Commissioner Coordination Syed Nazarat Ali, DGRDA Saif Anwar Jappa, DGPHA Ahmed Hasan Ranjha and other concerned officers attended this meeting in person whereas Deputy Commissioner Attock, Jhelum , Chakwal and Murree participated through video link. While giving a briefing on this occasion, Commissioner Rawalpindi was told that there are 378,496 households across the division who are eligible beneficiaries and guardians of NighabanRamzan package. A total of 68% verification has been completed across the division so far. 67,628 households in Rawalpindi district, 45181 in Jhelum district, 5541 in Mur-

ree district, 74624 in Attock district and 64654 in Chakwal district have been verified. Commissioner Rawalpindi directed that the relevant departments should complete all their arrangements on priority basis regarding the distribution of ration bags to ensure timely and best distribution of ration bags. This ration package consists of 10 kg flour while rice and 2 kgs sugar, ghee and Basin. Ration bags should be delivered at the doorsteps of the beneficiaries so that the beneficiaries do not have to face any problem or difficulty in providing the ration bags. Meanwhile ,Commissioner Rawalpindi AamirKhattak's surprise visit to Murree during the recent rains. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division EngineerAamirKhattak paid surprise to Murree on hol-

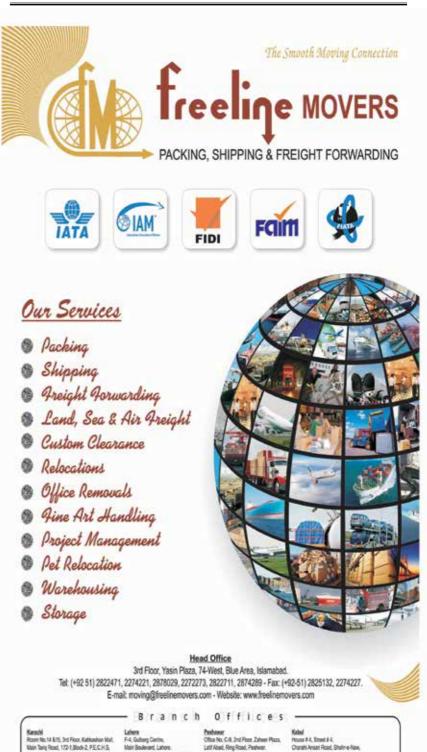
iday to review the arrangements being made during current rains and snowfall. Commissioner Rawalpindi visited various facilitation centresincluding that of Jhikagali. On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Murree Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Captain (retd) QasimIjaz, AC Murree Abdul Wahab, Xen Highway, Rescue 1122 and other concerned officers were also present there.Commissioner Rawalpindi while reviewing the measures taken for the tourists during the snowfall said that the administrative officers should spend more time in the field to assess the situation themselves. He directed that implementation of Murree Contingency Plan should be ensured.

cleanliness campaign which is a major step towards a clean and sustainable environment. Under the vision of Chief Minister, "Sathra Punjab", the activities of cleanliness campaign in the urban and rural areas of Attock district are ongoing under the round-the-clock supervision of the district administration, which will continue till March 31.

According to a report by district reporter Faisal Munir that As per priorities of Clean Punjab campaign, daily targets have been given to ment of sewage and drainage and environmental friendly activities including good cleaning and timely waste management in the streets of urban and rural areas. In this regard, it has been informed by the district administration that the focal officers of the municipal committees and district council are regularly monitoring the sanitation and waste management in the respective scopes to ensure the completion of the sanitation targets on a daily basis. Apart from this, the improvement and mainte-

more aware of the promotion of a clean and disease-free environment. The district administration complaints would be redressed on a daily basis. Citizens to cooperate with the administration to make the clean Punjab campaign a success and throw waste at designated places. He has appealed to the public that instead of throwing the garbage of the houses in the streets, they should put it in the containers designated by the municipal bodies so that there is no problem of sanitation.-APP

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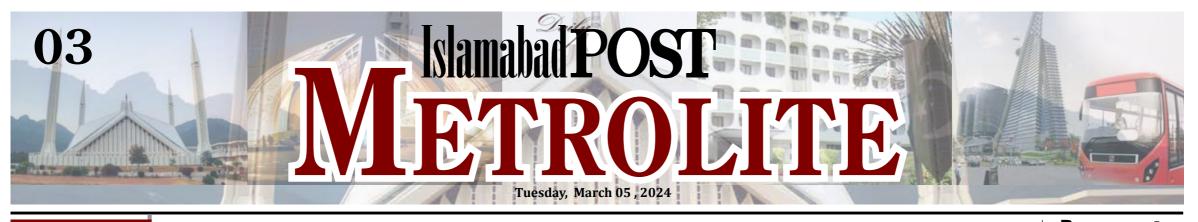
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National Days and Armed **Forces Days**

MARCH

March 01/Bosnia National Day March 03/Bulgaria National Day March 06/ Ghana **Independence** Day March 12 /Mauritius National Day March 17/Ireland St. Patricks Day March 20/Tunisia **Independence** Day March 21/Namibia National Day March 25/Greece **National Day**

March 26/Bangladesh

National Day

March 27/Myanmar **Armed Forces Day**



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



Uganda delegation briefed about the BISP activities

The visit of delegation, scheduled from March 4 to March 8, 2024, aims to explore into Pakistan's experiences in implementing social protection programs and to gain insights into various sides of BISP's operations

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: A 17-member delegation from Uganda, led by Mr. Aggrey David Kibenge, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development of Uganda, embarked on a study visit to the headquarters of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in Pakistan. The Secretary BISP, Mr. Amer Ali Ahmad, who welcomed the delegation at the inaugural session, and provided them an indepth overview of BISP and its multifaceted initiatives. Secretary Amer Ali Ahmad highlighted the pivotal role of BISP in providing a safety net for those identified as beneficiaries in Pakistan over the past 15 years. Under the umbrella of BISP, programs such as the Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) - Kafaalat, have been instrumental in providing financial assistance

SAIFULLAH ANSAR



to 9.3 million deserving families. Moreover, BISP's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs for education, such as Taleemi Wazaif, have enrolled 9.2 million children, while Nashonuma, ben-

efiting 1.7 million expectant and lactating women and infants, has played a pivotal role in addressing issues related nutritional needs. Highlighting the core features of BISP, Secretary Ahmad empha-

sized the importance of the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) database, covering 35 million households and 88% of Pakistan's total population. This robust database not only serves

as a foundation for targeting beneficiaries but also facilitates timely and transparent interventions, particularly during pandemics and natural disasters. In response, Mr. Aggrey David Kibenge the delegation lead commended BISP for its hospitality and expressed keen interest in learning from BISP's experiences, particularly in managing the dynamic NSER registry. He highlighted the potential for collaboration between Uganda and Pakistan to enhance their respective social protection systems. The meeting was attended by Addl. Secretary BISP Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor, along with all Director Generals of BISP and representatives from the World Bank. The visit of delegation, scheduled from March 4 to March 8, 2024, aims to explore into Pakistan's experiences

in implementing social protection programs and to gain insights into various sides of BISP's operations.

Ramazan to commence on March 12: weather expert

ISLAMABAD: A weather expert Jawad Memon on Monday said Ramazan in Pakistan was expected to commence on March 12. Memon, speaking to a

private news channel, disclosed that the moon for Ramazan is slated to appear on March 10, but visibility will only be feasible on March 11. "The first Taraweeh will be observed on the night of March 11," he asserted, indicating the beginning of the spiritual gatherings preceding the first day of fasting. "It is 95 per cent possible that the first fast will be on March 12," he disclosed. As communities eagerly await the arrival of Ramazan, preparations for spiritual reflection, increased prayer, and acts of charity are underway across Pakistan. The holy month serves as a time of heightened devotion and self-discipline for Muslims worldwide.-APP

PPAF honoured with Award

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) has been awarded the International Energy Workforce Award 2024 by the Energy Institute (EI), United Kingdom. The Renewable Energy Pro-gramme of PPAF stood out among entries from 29 countries, highlighting its commitment to building a diverse and skilled workforce for combating climate change in remote areas of Pakistan. According to the PPAF, the Renewable Energy Programme has so far implemented over 3800 projects with a cumulative capacity of 13.8MW, benefiting over 300,000 people. The program has had a positive impact on the lives of beneficiary communities, improving their quality of life, increasing

HEC, WB review progress of higher education development and serving as vital check-

the team's continued sup-ISLAMABAD: The Higher port for faculty training Education Development in throughout the remainder Pakistan (HEDP), a pivotof the project's lifespan, al initiative spearheaded by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), connoting HEC's commitment to conducting thorough evaluations of project producted its 9th World Bank gress. Ms. Inga Afanasie-(WB) Mission at the HEC va, the Task Team Leader Secretariat. Over the and Senior Economist course of a week, exhausat the World Bank, reaffirmed WB's unwavering tive discussions were held concerning each of the six commitment to bolstering Pakistan's Higher Educaproject components, metion Sector through this ticulously evaluating their progress alongside conproject. She emphasised siderations of safeguards the pivotal role of extendand fiduciary aspects. ing support to critical arsuch as

duration. Highlighting the overall 83% project points. He also solicited progress, the HEDP team presented a multitude of achievements, such as the award of 132 research grants including 43 Innovator Seed Fund grants, establishment of quality enhancement cells in 29 affiliated colleges (ACs), capacity-building of 3900 faculty members on the revised Undergraduate Education Policy (UEP), and significant strides in enhancing access to the Pakistan Education Research Network (PERN), among others. A notable aspect of the mission Academy for Higher Eduinvolved engaging project cation (NAHE), Affiliated beneficiaries and academicians in a constructive dialogue at HEC Islamabad, providing valuable insights into the project's contributions towards bolstering research endeavors and elevating the quality of teaching and learning in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Additionally, the mission encompassed visits to prominent institutions such as the Univer-

sity of Education (UoE). Government College University (GCU) Lahore, and associated ACs, along with a tour of the Data Center established at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Lahore. In a wrap-up meeting with Chairman HEC Dr. Mukthar Ahmed, the WB team conveyed their appreciation for the hospitality extended by the HEDP and HEC teams throughout the mission. They lauded the substantial progress achieved since the last mission in July 2023, underscoring **NEPRA** approves key renewable energy projects Alvi extended his gratitude

to NEPRA, and all other stakeholders involved for their support and collaboration throughout the approval process

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has granted approval for two of the three Requests for Proposals (RFPs) submitted by K-Electric (KE) for the addition of renewable energy to its power generation fleet. These approvals are a milestone in KE's strategic plan to integrate renewable energy into its operations; thereby, contributing to a cleaner and more sustainable energy future. Under the approved RFPs, solar projects would be installed within KE's

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enguiry

EdhiAmbulance.....115 PIA Flight Info.....114 PIA Cargo.....9280979 Railway Inquiry.....117 Railway Exchange9270831-5 WASA Rawalpindi..5555489 CAA ..9281092



Hospitals

СМН	5611111
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital.	.9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666	



Departments

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

Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480



Colleges (ACs), Financial Autonomy of universities, and faculty training. The joint review between HEC and WB facilitated a comprehensive assessment of each component's progress, culminating in mutually agreed-upon next steps aimed at maximizing support for the higher education sector throughout menting lessons learned, the project's remaining

collaborative efforts driving positive transformation within Pakistan's Higher Education Sector.

HEDP is the flagship project of HEC aimed to support research excellence in strategic sectors of economy, improve teaching and learning, and strengthen governance in higher education. The HEC website, www.hec. gov.pk may be viewed to learn more about the project.

Account and more recently

Digital Banks and specialized

territory, aligning closely with the power utility's commitment to diversify its generation mix with renewable energy resources. Moonis Alvi, CEO of KE, emphasized the importance of these approvals, saying, "As we strive towards the goal to incorporate at least 30% renewables into our fleet by 2030, the approval of these RFPs by NEPRA serves as a cornerstone of our ambitious plan. The impending commencement of the installation process signifies a tangible step forward in KE's journey towards a greener energy ecosystem." "With the necessary regulatory approvals in place, KE is poised to initiate the implementation phase promptly, aiming at expediting the integration of renewable energy solutions into its system, he said, adding that this initiative underscores KE's unwavering commitment to sustainability.-DNA

economic activity and reducing the environmental impact. Every year, the EI Awards recognise organizations and teams globally that are making significant impacts in workforce development, engagement, and technical innovation. PPAF is dedicated to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion, and fostering future talents for the energy transition through collaborations with partners.-APP



Governor SBP inaugurates Financial Literacy Week

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmad, Monday, said that SBP fully recognizes access to financial services a fundamental right, and SBP's mission is to empower every citizen by providing them with the tools and knowledge needed to participate fully in the economy. He was delivering his key note address via video link to the inaugural event of Pakistan Financial Literacy Week (PFLW) held here at Learning Resource Center,

SBP, Karachi. The theme for

the week is 'Digital Bankari financial services needs in a fair and dignified manner. He - fori aur asaan'. The event was attended by Presidents said that the key initiatives and CEOs of commercial taken for expanding financial banks, senior officials from services to the unbanked the World Bank, Alliance and underbanked segments for Financial Inclusion and of the society includes imother stakeholders. The Govplementation of national level strategies and policies ernor said that an inclusive such as National Financial financial sector is not only important for overall growth Inclusion Strategy, National of the banking industry but Financial Literacy Program also augments monetary and Banking on Equality Polpolicy transmission channels icy. He shared that SBP has and increases its effectivebeen implementing a number ness. Jameel Ahmad stated of initiatives under the nathat SBP has always been tional level policies which are working on increasing the uniquely positioned to benefit all segments of population, availability and utilization of financial services for people i.e. RAAST, ASAAN Digital and businesses to meet their Account, ASAAN Mobile

schemes to enhance access to finance. The specialized schemes include SME Asaan Finance Scheme (SAAF), Refinance and Credit Guarantee Scheme for Women Entrepreneurs, Line of Credit for MSMEs, and Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme (PMYB&ALS). Governor SBP said that these initiatives have made an impact on advancing financial inclusion in Pakistan and as of June 2023, there were around 177 million bank accounts in Pakistan, of these, 83 million were unique accounts, which is 60% of the 137 million adult population. Total number of accounts owned by women were 49 million, of which unique accounts are 29 million.



ISLAMABAD: WHO Representative to Pakistan Dr. Luo Depeng called on Federal Secretary of Health Iftikhar Ali Shallwani.-DNA

TWIN CITIES

Islamabad **POST**

Tuesday, March 05 , 2024

Briefs

World Obesity Prevention Day highlights alarming global issue

ISLAMABAD: Today, the world marks World Obesity Prevention Day, drawing attention to the staggering rise in obesity rates worldwide. The prevalence of obesity has reached unprecedented levels, posing significant health risks to over one billion people, according to research published in the British journal 'The Lancet'. A team of international scientists underscores the urgent need for changes in how obesity is addressed, as it has become a pervasive public health crisis. Obesity not only increases the risk of life-threatening diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer but also contributes to a myriad of other health complications. The data, sourced from 2022, reveals that approximately 88 million adults and 159 million children are affected by obesity globally. The study sheds light on the disparities in obesity rates between countries, with factors such as age playing a significant role. Notably, the United States ranks 10th for men and 36th for women in terms of obesity rates, while India ranks 19th for women and 21st for men, and China ranks 11th for women and 52nd for men. -APP

AIOU offers academic programs for Overseas Pakistani

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has offered admissions in more than 40 academic programs for Overseas Pakistani and international students. According to the AIOU, the programs offered include Associate Degree in Arts (B.A), Associate Degree in Commerce (B.Com) BA open courses, BS Programs in 22 subjects, B.Ed (1.5 Years, 2.5 Years and 4 Years), one-year Postgraduate Diplomas in 10 subjects and certificate courses in 3 subjects. Overseas and International students can apply till March 25, 2024 through online mode only. It is pertinent to mention here that these programs are offered under the online management system. All teaching activities from admissions to examinations will be online. –DNA



RAWALPINDI: A labourer loading foamic sheets on loader rickshaw at Said Pur Road. - APP

PPAF, NCSW celebrate Int'l Women's Day

The conference emphasized the vital importance of investing in women's potential and acknowledging their invaluable contributions to society and sustainable economic growth

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), in collaboration with the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture Division, the Ministry of Human Rights, and the Punjab Government, hosted a National Women's Conference on Economic Empowerment in Islamabad to commemorate International Women's Day. The conference emphasized the vital importance of investing in women's potential and acknowledging their invaluable contributions to society and sustainable economic growth. A prominent highlight of the event was the

community leaders from marginalized areas across the country, celebrating their resilience and inspirational leadership within their communities. Additionally, four special accolades were given to outstanding individuals for their exceptional commitment and innovation, setting the stage for further progress and excellence in their respective fields. The event was attended by representatives from government institutions, the donor and diplomatic community, academia, civil society, and students from educational institutions. During a welcoming address, Nadir Gul Barech, CEO of the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), underscored the essential link between gender equality and sustainable devel

governance, human rights, and environmental sustainability. He highlighted the central role of women and girls in PPAF's initiatives, noting the significant impact that empowering women has on their lives and communities. Barech detailed PPAF's efforts in enhancing women's access to financial resources, providing assets, interest-free loans, and technical and financial training to reduce poverty and promote inclusion. He emphasized the importance of giving women a voice, including them in decision-making processes, and removing barriers to their participation in development, reinforcing the organization's commitment to women's empowerment. Nilo-

Status of Women (NCSW) and the chief guest of the conference, stressed the importance of inspiring a new generation of women to break free from fear and pursue their dreams by equipping them with the skills necessary to become leaders who can significantly contribute to Pakistan's social and economic well-being. Bakhtiar stated, 'We cannot achieve true development without equal opportunities for women in education, health, and employment.' She underscored the need for equal opportunities and skill development for women, citing them as both a moral and practical imperative. She envisioned the event as a beacon of optimism, signaling a shift towards a future where women lead

also shed light on the significance of national narratives 'Paigham-e-Pakistan' and 'Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan,' initiatives that promote unity, peace, social cohesion, and the empowerment of women. The audience also heard from former Inspector General of Police, Helena Iqbal Saeed, Dr Amena Hasan, Dr Saima Afzal, and Dr Bakhtawar Khalid, who shared their journeys to success despite facing adversities. They emphasized that success is a journey requiring continuous effort, perseverance, and dedication. Girl students from various colleges in Islamabad and Rawalpindi impressed the audience with their performances themed around the Economic Empowerment of Women, earning accolades from

Upper House adopts 6 bills to amend ordinances

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Monday adopted six different bills to amend ordinances and sent to the concerned committees for further deliberations. Senator Mohsin Aziz, introduced a bill to further amend the Provincial Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1965 (The Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2023) which was adopted and sent further to the concerned committee. Senator Mohsin Aziz, introduced a bill further to amend the State Bank of Pakistan Act, 1956 (The State Bank of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2023) which also adopted by the upper house and sent further to the concerned committee for deliberations. Senator Mohsin Aziz, introduced another Bill to further amend the Factories Act, 1934 (The Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2023) which was adopted by the upper house and sent to the concerned committee for further deliberations. Senator Mohsin Aziz, introducedt the bill to further amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (The Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2023). -APP

ANF recovers 128 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover more than 128 kg drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 40 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a passenger going to Jeddah at Peshawar Airport. 63 kg hashish was recovered from Zakhakhel Khyber area and 58.8 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects rounded up near National Highway Hyderabad. In fourth operation, 4.8 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested from Noor Shah Road Sahiwal. 1.2 kg hashish was recovered from the accused netted near G.T Road Suhawa Jhelum. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while furinvestigations are under

Another spell of rains predicted

such season.-APP

annual PPAF of the

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani ex-

perts have lauded the signif-

icance of the "Two Sessions"

Amtul Raqeeb Awards to female opment goals, including good National Commission on the opment and prosperity. Bakhtiar tivity and insight.

far Bakhtiar, Chairperson of the

the narrative of Pakistan

process.-APP

MOM Pakistani convener suggests experts praise parliamentary two sessions

sons in 2024. I'm attending

different meetings and brief-

ings during the six-day Two

Sessions. I will focus on joint-

ly building the Belt and Road

Initiative President Xi Iin-

ping launched a decade ago

to build a community with a

shared future. I'm lucky that

I witnessed the previous five

to six Two Sessions during

my assignments which I have

good experience of it", he

stated. He further said that

the Pakistan Economic Cor-

ridor is a flagship project of

jointly building the Belt and

Road Initiative. Several pro-

iects have been completed

in Pakistan under CPEC. "I

am also looking forward to

attending Foreign Minister

Wang Yi media interaction

ISLAMABAD: Convener of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) Pakistan, Dr Maqbool Saddiq on Monday suggested a parliamentary committee to probe rigging allegations in the general elections. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he said, "I would suggest the Prime Minister to constitute a parliamentary committee to probe rigging allegations in the recently held general elections." Khalid Maqool said that his party has always supported Pakistan's interests over personal interests. He congratulated the people for participating in election, members of the National Assembly, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, and the Prime Minister for their election.

and also opening and closing He appreciated the opposiceremonies of Two Sessions tion party for participating in the People's Great Hall", in the democratic process he added. Shahid Afraz despite all reservations. Khan, a Foreign Expert in MQM leader said that at Beijing said that the strategic present, Pakistan is facing discussions and initiatives economic challenges and undertaken during these sesrequires the good intensions serve as a testament tions of political leaders to to the strong partnership bring the country out of the crisis. -APP

Aneeq urges Muslims to champion Quranic knowledge

Former terfaith Harmony, Aneeq ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Ahmed on Monday empha-Religious Affairs and In- sized the responsibility of

every Muslim to spread knowledge of the Holy Quran. Addressing a seminar on 'Purposeful Life' organized by the Asr School System, he expressed optimism about potential of the younger generation and said, "The Holy Quran teaches us about conquer-

کفالتِ یتیم سے جنٹ کا حصول بھی ۔۔۔ رفاقتِ رسول پھی

ing the universe." Aneeq, highlighting the disparity knowledgeable between and ignorant, stressed, "Those who have knowledge and those who are ignorant can never be equal.' He underscored the eternal guidance provided by the Quran, stating.-APP

in fostering global economic stability in the context of ISLAMABAD: The Projointly building the Belt and vincial Disaster Manage-Road Initiative, particularly ment Authority (PDMA) China-Pakistan Economic spokesperson in Khyber Corridor (CPEC) initiatives. Pakhtunkhwa Taimur Ali They believe that the foreign Monday asked the adminpolicies and incentives for foreigners in China during istration in districts to advise tourists and locals these sessions are pivotal in in sensitive highlands to enhancing economic coopbe aware of weather coneration and promoting susditions and take precautainable development in the tionary measures. Talking region. Muhammad Asghar, a Media expert in China told to a private news channel, he said that the authority China Economic Net that the had reissued an alert for strategic discussions held another spell of rains in during the Two Sessions Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and serve as a platform for fosterasked district administraing stronger ties between Pations of the province to adopt kistan and China, paving the measures to prevent fatal way for mutually beneficial incidents. He advised the partnerships that contribute masses to keep themselves to global economic stability. protected from viral diseas-I feel honored to attend the CPPCC Spokesperson briefes which usually breakout in

ing held ahead of Two Seabetween China. Emirates supports local charity in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In its 25th year of operations in Islamabad, Emirates Airline has stepped up to support children in the local community by teaming up with SOS Children's Village Islamabad. The airline collaborated with the charity organisation to provide much-needed blankets to the orphaned students and their caretakers. Emirates' charitable initiative, led by Salem Al Mana, Emirates' Regional Manager - Pakistan and other members of its local sales team, re-

flects the airline's ethos of giving back to the communities in which it operates. In addition to donating the blankets to the orphanage's management at its premises in Islamabad, the team also spent quality time with the children, engaging in exciting activities and sharing inspirational stories. By partnering with organizations like SOS Children's Village Islamabad, Emirates continues to uphold its values of enriching the communities it serves and supporting disadvantaged children. "We believe in not only providing material support but also in fostering personal connections and

uplifting spirits," said Salem Al Mana. "Our said team had the privilege of spending time with the children of SOS Children's Village Islamabad, sharing stories of perseverance, courage, and determination. Emirates is grateful to have been given the opportunity to bring some cheer to the children. It was a humbling experience for all of us." SOS Children's Village is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a loving home and family-like environment to orphaned and abandoned children. The blankets donated by Emirates will undoubtedly provide comfort for ment system ice.

the children under its care, especially during the cold winter months. Emirates has been operating in Pakistan since 1985, with Karachi being its first destination when the airline launched. Emirates currently operates 53 weekly flights between Dubai and five points in Pakistan, conveniently connecting travellers to over 140 cities globally, via Dubai. To meet the diverse needs of passengers, Emirates serves regionally-themed cuisine to cater to their taste on board, as well as movies and other content in Urdu, featured amongst 6,500 channels on the airline's multi award-winning in-flight entertain-



الحدمت هاؤنديشن يا مد جن كان مرى الحدمت هاؤنديشن يا مد جو المعالم مرى

Europe is fearful and desperate

LEADING Establishment newspaper in Europe says that "what is driving European politics at present - is fear". The headlines ring out 公 with apprehension: "Germany's élites run scared, as Putin rains down death on Ukraine". The British Prime Minister calls an emergency press conference to warns of 'democracy at risk' from 'extremism' on the eve of a by-election win by George Galloway, an articulate, if somewhat unruly, 'thorn' in the side of conventional politics (but hardly any 'extremist'). In the US too the liberal sphere is in meltdown over the publication of a just-released book: White Rural Rage: The Threat To American Democracy, in which "rural whites are [described as] the most racist; xenophobic; anti-immigrant; anti-gay; and conspiracy-minded, anti-democratic" demography in America. They "don't believe in an independent press or free speech", and are "most likely to accept or excuse violence". Of course, the fear is being - in the first instance - diverted outwards towards the claim that this is somehow Russia's 'doing' - a looming 'menace' further stoked by claims of President Putin's 'imperial aspirations', way beyond Ukraine. There is however (to invert the usual MSM meme), absolutely no evidence for these claims (from anything Putin has said over the years). What is spooking the West more immediately is the cascading defeats inflicted on Ukrainian forces, after the Avdeevka rout. The new Ukrainian commander, General Syrski, in the wake of the flight, announced a retreat to new defence lines, but as some had predicted, it turned out that the 'more favourable lines' Syrski promoted did not exist.

Ukrainian photographers Konstantin and VladaLiberov who document the war from the ground demanded from Syrski: "So what is the next "fortetsia" -Pokrovsk? Or just Konstantinovka?" "Where is this second line of defence?" Yuri Butusov, editor-in-chief of Censor- following his trip to this area - asks: "There are no words. Gap: here in Kiev - the supreme commander-in-chief says one thing, but at the front something completely different is happening. I want to say that no field lines of fortifications have been built beyond Avdeevka so far. I saw Russian drones attacking our soldiers in their burrows - in the middle of a field". These tripwire forces, Macron claimed, would form strategic deterrents to Moscow's military room for manoeuvre - oases of 'untouchable' NATO, scattered through Ukraine. His colleagues, horrified, demurred; they saw the emplaced tripwires as the conveyor belt leading to WWIII: 'Madness', and 'no thank you'. The 'other leg' to European desperation was given away by PM Sunak's rush to the microphone in the wake of the Rochdale by-election outcome to warn that democracy is in peril from extremism. One commentator opined: 'Rishi Sunak was right': "This is not politics, not even of the radical kind ... It is inchoate, incoherent rage which is ready to make common cause with anyone else, who is enraged even on contradictory grounds". If this reaction sounds a bit over the top – just because George Galloway overwhelmingly won in Rochdale – let us 'join up the dots' for you:

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India's supremacy obsession

CCORDING to Indian media reports, the Indian Navy is stepping up its presence in the Indian Ocean as it is set to open a new base on March 6 公 on "strategically important" islands near the Maldives, from where New Delhi will start withdrawing its troops in the next four days. India has long viewed the Indian Ocean as its backyard. This hegemonic mentality is the basis on which India engages with smaller South Asian neighboring countries. Since last year, India had been told its troops "cannot stay" in the Indian Ocean archipelago of the Maldives, which shows the resentment of South Asian countries toward India's hegemonic mentality and its hypocritical "Neighborhood First" strategy. During these last few days, India was clearly hoping to exert pressure on the Maldives government to change its mind, Xie Chao, an associate professor at the Institute of International Studies, Fudan University, told the Global Times, adding that the new base India is going to set up can be seen as punishment to the Maldives, after it demanded that India withdraw its troops. However, it is also a means to check China's influence in the region. "This move is very typical of India, and expected,"?Xie said. The new base will augment India's "operational surveillance" of the region, according to a statement issued by the Indian Navy on Saturday. An Indian official, cited by Indian media outlet Economic Times, mentioned that the new base would "give India a strong foothold in the area to keep an eye on the military and commercial activities of adversaries in the area." Considering the importance of the Indian Ocean route for trade, particularly for China and other countries, India's actions indicate a confrontational approach aimed at asserting control over the region by leveraging its geographic advantages.

Long Xingchun, a professor at the School of International Relations, Sichuan International Studies University and president of Chengdu Institute of World Affairs, believes that the new base is more of a political gesture rather than having real military significance. "As India loses its foothold in the Maldives, it wants to send a message that it is still the regional hegemon," said Long. While the top Indian diplomat boasted about India's aid to its neighbors, what he tried to conceal was how India used the aid to tighten its control over them. Once these countries try to break free from India's influence, India will play the "aid" card to affect their India policy. Amid the India-Maldives diplomatic row over the withdrawal of Indian troops, the Indian government has proposed a 22-percent reduction in aid to the Maldives for the 2024-25 financial year. Nepal experienced India's carrot-and-stick approach much earlier. In 2015, India provided significant assistance to Nepal after a deadly earthquake in the country. But in the same year, India reportedly imposed a blockade at a crucial crossing on the border with Nepal due to India's dissatisfaction with Nepal's passing of a new constitution and enhanced cooperation with China. This caused an economic and humanitarian crisis that severely affected Nepal and its economy. India's socalled aid to its neighbors does not alleviate, but rather exacerbates their sense of insecurity due to India's bullying and tightened control.

Shahbaz Sharif, a loyal and steadfast leader

Qamar Bashir



Once Shahbaz Sharif assumed office as Prime Minister in April 2022, his primary objective was to secure the return of Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan without facing any risks. In pursuit of this goal, Shahbaz Sharif made significant concessions to the military establishment. compromising civilian powers in the process. Notably, he enacted the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill 2023, which granted full legal status to the military's extensive business interests. criminalized criticism of the armed forces...

HAHBAZ Sharif, who today took oath for the second time as the country's 25th Prime Minister amid looming financial and economic challenges, stands out as a rare example of unwavering loyalty to his elder brother, Mr. Nawaz Sharif. Despite numerous offers of the premiership by various army chiefs, including Musharraf, in exchange for shifting his allegiance, Shahbaz Sharif's loyalty has remained steadfast. His resolve has never wavered, and no amount of wealth, power, or worldly riches has been able to weaken his deep-seated love, respect, and allegiance to his brother, though both are diametrically opposite on ideological considerations and philosophically bent of mind. Shahbaz Sharif demonstrated his unwavering loyalty when he was directed by Nawaz Sharif to assume the role of Prime Minister in a coalition government in April 2022. Despite knowing that accepting the premiership at that tumultuous time, with the ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan enjoying immense popularity and leading widespread public protests against his removal, would be an immense challenge, Shahbaz Sharif did not falter. He held his fort amid long marches, large rallies, numerous sit-ins, drawing unprecedented crowds that exerted immense pressure on the country's administrations. Many, including myself, have pondered whether Nawaz Sharif would have accepted the premiership under such challenging circumstances in April 2022, given the country's financial, economic woes, assertive establishment and high degree of political uncertainty. It's likely that the response from readers and myself would lean towards a resounding "no." This raises a critical question: why did Nawaz Sharif instruct his loyal brother to assume the premiership in such trying times. Once Shahbaz Sharif assumed office as Prime Minister in April 2022, his primary objective was to secure the return of Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan without facing any risks. In pursuit of this goal, Shahbaz Sharif made significant concessions to the military establishment, compromising civilian powers in the process. Notably, he enacted the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill 2023, which granted full legal status to the military's extensive business interests, criminalized criticism of the armed forces, and authorized them to engage in activities related to national development and strategic interests. Additionally, the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill 2023 was passed, granting security agencies broad discretionary powers to arrest individuals deemed threatening. The legislation also prohibited approaches to military installations and offices, with suspects subject to trial in military courts.

sitions, including Chairman NADRA, Chairman NAB, and Chairman PTA. By October 2023, reports indicated that over 1,000 military officers, including 104 serving and retired Lieutenant Generals and Major Generals, had been placed in civilian roles across various ministries, divisions, and Pakistan's diplomatic missions abroad. By capitulating critical and sensitive positions of the country and granting unparalleled powers to the military, Shahbaz Sharif fulfilled his end of the deal. In return, the establishment facilitated Nawaz Sharif's return to Pakistan under VVIP status, despite being a declared absconder and convicted criminal, previously disqualified from holding public office.

Upon Nawaz Sharif's return, the establishment swiftly resolved all legal cases against him, including the disappearance of his prison sentence and disqualification. The stage seemed set for Nawaz Sharif's potential fourth term as Prime Minister. However, it appears that either bringing Nawaz Sharif back to power was not part of the deal, or the establishment reneged on their agreement with the PML(N). In Scenario C of the article titled "Will Nawaz's hopes die down soon?" published on December 10th, 2023, it was concluded that based on past bitter experiences with Nawaz, the Establishment would never bring back Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister. The scenario suggested that to navigate resistance and controversies surrounding Nawaz Sharif's leadership, the Establishment might orchestrate conditions during pre-poll and after poll 2024, where Nawaz will have no choice but to abdicate power in favor of his brother, Shahbaz Sharif. In pursuit of this strategy, the results of the 2024 elections were orchestrated in a manner that significantly undermined Nawaz Sharif's electoral prospects. Nawaz suffered a decisive defeat, losing one seat by a significant margin and barely managing to secure a victory in Lahore, a stronghold contested fiercely by his rival candidate. In contrast, Shahbaz Sharif emerged victorious in all his contested seats, clearly indicating the establishment's preference for him as the chosen candidate. Nawaz Sharif, who had set securing a simple majority in the parliament as the single most important condition to assume the premiership for the fourth time, found himself demoralized and humiliated by the election outcome. His hopes, pinned on assurances from the establishment, were dashed, leaving him feeling betrayed and dejected. As predicted in the article, Nawaz Sharif found himself with no choice but to relinquish the premiership in favor of his younger brother. This raises an important question: why did Nawaz Sharif believe that something unfavorable for himself would be beneficial for

his brother? Upon closer examination, the answer lies in Nawaz's uncompromising nature, which, at times, becomes his biggest liability, and Shahbaz's compromising nature, which, conversely, becomes his biggest asset. Nawaz Sharif is characterized by his unwavering commitment to freedom of thought and action, refusing to succumb to pressures and intimidation until his limit is reached. When pushed beyond this threshold, he responds with a vengeance, disregarding potential consequences. He possesses a strong vision and dedication to a specific ideology, particularly in promoting democratic values. Since the 1990s, Nawaz Sharif has emerged as a formidable challenger to the dominance of the military establishment in Pakistan. He has actively pursued policies aimed at curbing the military's influence, including efforts to assert civilian control over intelligence agencies and challenge the military's dominance in national security decision-making. Despite facing threats, intimidation, and periods of exile, Nawaz Sharif has remained steadfast in his commitment to advancing civilian authority and democratic principles. His resilience in the face of adversity underscores his determination to uphold fundamental values and principles in Pakistani politics. In contrast, Shahbaz Sharif's with his pragmatic approach to governance, often necessitating compromises with various stakeholders, including the military establishment and coalition partners. He willingly engaged with the establishment leading to perceptions of accommodation and compromise with the military, especially during periods of political turbulence or when facing pressure from powerful institutions. He has at times adjusted his positions and policies to accommodate the demands of coalition partners, even if it meant making concessions on certain issues even at the expense of ideological purity and principles and the integrity of governance or undermined democratic norms. Nawaz Sharif, as the elder brother, may have come to the realization more than anyone else that his prolonged periods of exile have disconnected him not only from his voter base but also from any lasting favor within the establishment. He may have recognized that his ideological and visionary approach to politics has been overshadowed by the tactical compromises of his younger brother, Shahbaz Sharif, and the theatrics orchestrated by his daughter, Maryam Nawaz, and her inner circle. In this political landscape, his close associates such as Khaqqan Abbasi, Mufta Ismael, Mohammad Zubair, Asif Kirmani, Danyal Aziz, Khawaja Asif, and Khawaja Saad Rafique find themselves marginalized, with little influence or relevance. - The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President

Furthermore, Shahbaz Sharif's administration appointed numerous military officers to sensitive civilian po-

Strategic shifts: The UAE's evolving role in the Libyan dossier

Fuat Sefkatli

This context positions Libya as an indispensable component of the UAE's aspiration to act as a commercial conduit between China and Western nations. Within this geopolitical framework, the eastern part of Libya, predominantly under Haftar's control, offers the UAE an unparalleled opportunity to assert itself as a regional power.

This is attributed to both its proximity to the Mediterranean, affording valuable port assets, and its strategic significance for interventions in various African crisis zones.

ROM being one of the most fervent external back-ers of warlord Khalifa Haftar's failed Tripoli in 2019 to a recalibrated actor in the complex civil conflict, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has made a 180-degree course correction in Libya. Since the appointment of the Government of National Unity (GNU) led by AbdulhamidDbeibeh in March 2021, questions regarding the UAE's position in Libya have been frequently discussed. To understand the extent to which the UAE has transformed its ideological, interest-based, and geopolitical ambitions since intensifying its engagements in Libya since 2016, it is necessary to briefly look back at the recent past. Shortly after assuming office, Prime Minister Dbeibeh visited Abu Dhabi, where he held bilateral talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, focusing on the role the UAE could play in Libya's reconstruction process. Additionally, in July 2022, the UAE mediated a power-sharing agreement between Dbeibeh and the eastern warlord Haftar, playing a significant role in appointing Farhat Ben Gadara as the head of the Libyan National Oil Company (NOC).

During this period, the UAE also withdrew funding to African-origin mercenaries in eastern Libya, indicating a breakdown in the Haftar-Wagner Private Military Company (PMC) and UAE consensus. Moreover, reports published by the state-linked think tank Emirates Policy Center (EPC) throughout 2022 and 2023, advocating for the unification of the central bank, execution of electoral processes, and cessation of political contestation, further elucidate the UAE's adjusted trajectory in Libya.

Firstly, the transition from the Trump era to Joe Biden's presidency in the United States led to tense relations between the Gulf countries, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The Biden administration's adoption of a 'zero-tolerance' policy towards certain regional behaviours necessitated the UAE to actively pursue new regional alliances and partnerships. A pivotal moment in this strategic redirection was the signing of the Abraham Accords in November 2020, which facilitated normalisation with Israel and symbolised a broader realignment in regional politics.

This was closely followed by the initiation of a rapprochement process with Türkiye, leading to a discernible moderation of the UAE's stance regarding the Libyan dossier. A critical aspect of this recalibration was the termination of financial support to the Wagner PMC and other Sudanese and Chadian mercenaries active in Eastern Libya.

This decision could be interpreted as a manoeuvre to sidestep potential confrontations with Türkiye, a nation possessing substantial political, economic, and societal influence in western Libya. Furthermore, the establishment of robust ties with the GNU underscored the UAE's transition from a stance of conflict to one emphasising cooperation within the Libyan context. Secondly, Libya's strategic position as a nexus connecting sub-Saharan Africa and the Horn of Africa to the Mediterranean renders it an exceedingly advantageous arena for the UAE, facilitating not only the control over commercial routes but also the augmentation of military influence.

This context positions Libya as an indispensable component of the UAE's aspiration to act as a commercial conduit between China and Western nations. Within this geopolitical framework, the eastern part of Libya, predominantly under Haftar's control, offers the UAE an unparalleled opportunity to assert itself as a regional power. This is attributed to both its proximity to the Mediterranean, affording valuable port assets, and its strategic significance for interventions in various African crisis zones. Specifically, the logistical network established therein is of strategic importance for Sudan and Chad, nations where the UAE maintains direct engagements. The UAE has endeavoured to solidify its regional stature by leveraging the military frameworks of Western countries (the US, France, the UK) and international organisations (the UN, NATO) present in Libya. This scenario has ostensibly provided the UAE with a platform to showcase its capabilities and resources to Western counterparts. Nonetheless, the escalating backlash against oil blockades in eastern Libva has necessitated a recalibration of the UAE's engagements in the region. This shift was significantly influenced by the international community, particularly the US and European nations, driven by the imperative to stabilise the global energy crisis.

Furthermore, robust diplomatic engagements cultivated with the Dbeibeh administration by these nations and the UN, coupled with strategic agreements in the energy and construction sectors with the GNU, have precipitated the UAE's migration towards a more pragmatic trajectory.

A third aspect to consider is the apparent shift in the UAE's initial counter-revolutionary stance during the early phases of the Libvan revolution. In the revolution's nascent stages, some suggested that the UAE identified the Muslim Brotherhood's activities in Libya as a potential threat to the survival of its rule. The progression towards democratic processes and the incorporation of a moderated form of Islam were perceived by the UAE as precursors to the activation of different democratic Arab movements.

This perception led to the UAE's support for Haftar, who launched a campaign against so-called religious factions in the west under a 'secular' guise. Nevertheless, evolving regional and international dynamics, coupled with Haftar's policies that antagonised stability, emerged as sources of anxiety for the Abu Dhabi leadership. Consequently, Haftar's progressive estrangement from the control of Egypt and the UAE nudged these nations towards exploring alternative alliances. In the dynamics of Libya's security landscape, the UAE's approach has been notably articulated by its UN envoy, Mohamed Abushabab, during Security Council sessions in April and December 2023.

Abushabab commended the facilitative efforts led by Senegalese diplomat Abdoulaye Bathily under the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in organising meetings of the 5+5 Joint Military Committee, comprising military officials from Tripoli and Benghazi.

Further, Abushabab emphasised the critical need to initiate disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration programmes aimed at unifying the military factions in Libva's eastern and western regions. This perspective evidences a shift from the UAE's prior positions, showcasing a contemporary inclination towards fostering a stabilised military context within Libya. It is, however, plausible to suggest that the UAE might assume a significant role in facilitating disarmament and reintegration, particularly in the east.

Finally, statements in December 2023 proposed the simultaneous and phased withdrawal of all foreign military forces and mercenaries from Libya. This position suggests that the UAE, at least in the short to medium term, is unlikely to revert to employing a proxy strategy.

It is pertinent to recognise the strategic importance of Türkiye's military presence in the region, which is pivotal for ensuring stability and peace and acts as a deterrent against potential spoilers. In the current climate of advancing normalisation between Türkiye and Egypt, there are expectations for the UAE to moderate its narratives and actively pursue avenues for both political and military collaboration with Türkiye, specifically concerning the Libyan context. - Source: Trt World

WORLD / SPORTS

Islamabad **POST** Tuesday, March 05, 2024

Briefs

No reserved seats for SIC, rules ECP

FROM PAGE 01

the total number of general seats in the National Assembly and the provincial assembly. "The same formula is provided for the reserved seats for non-Muslims." While rejecting the plea of SIC, the ECP accepted applications of the opposing parties and de-cided that the seats in the National Assembly would not remain vacant and be allocated by a proportional representation process of political parties on the basis of seats won by political parties. "[The] Office is directed to calculate the quota accordingly," read the verdict. The ECP had reserved the verdict on the petitions filed by the SIC seeking the allocation of women and minority seats after PTIbacked winning candidates joined its ranks following the February 8 elections.

Punjab cabinet...

FROM PAGE 01 Among the anticipated cabinet appointments, Marriyum Aurangzeb is expected to assume the Ministry of Planning and Development and Forests, while Azma Bukhari is poised to become the Provincial Minister for Information. Khawaja Imran Nazir is slated to take charge as the Minister for Primary Health, with Bilal Yasin designated as the Minister for Food and Mujtaba Shuja to oversee the Excise department. In Maryam Nawaz's initial cabinet lineup, Khalid Jaja is earmarked for the Ministry of Agriculture, while Faisal Ayub is anticipated to assume the responsibilities of the Ministry of Housing and Sports.

PTI calls for trial...

FROM PAGE 01 they themselves were "crises" and added that they could not steer the country out of the crises. Earlier today, responding to the remarks made by the PPP chairman regarding the cipher case, wherein the ex-prime minister was discussed, Asad Qaiser called for the constitution of a judicial commission to investigate the controversy. Imran was sentenced on the cases that the Pakistan League-Nawaz Muslim (PML-N) had termed as "lies", Qasier said while taking a jibe at the Shehbaz Sharif-led party



RAWALPINDI: Players of Peshawar Zalmi and Islamabad United in action during the PSL match at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. – Photo Mudassar Raja

Boulter beats Kostyuk in WTA San Diego final

Boulter won the biggest title of her career, beating Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk to claim the WTA San Diego Open title

SPORTS DESK

LOS ANGELES: Britain's Katie Boulter won the biggest title of her career, beating Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk 5-7, 6-2, 6-2 to claim the WTA San Diego Open title. The 27-year-old, whose only previous WTA crown came at Nottingham last June, moves into the world rankings top 30 for the first time in her career. Boulter had upset third seed Emma Navarro of the United States in the semi-finals. Kostyuk, ranked 34th, had beaten top-seeded Jessica Pegula to reach the final but struggled after winning the first set against the big-hitting Briton.

After rain forced a delay in the final, Boulter handed the hard-fought first set to the Ukrainian on her seventh set point after she double faulted. But having forced her way back from 5-2 down to 5-5 in that set, the momentum was with Boulter and she took that into the second set. A fine forehand winner down the line put her 3-1 ahead and she broke again to lead 5-2 on the way to forcing a third set. As Kostyuk tired, Boulter grew in confidence, breaking her opponent twice before firing two emphatic aces in the final game. Boulter converted seven of her 11 break points and saved seven of the 11 that she faced in a win that

will move her to 27th in the world rankings. "I want to say a small special thank you to my boyfriend," she said. "He finished last night at midnight and I really want to embarrass him. He got on a 4.15 taxi this morning and six o'clock flight to be here today, so I do appreciate it." "I really didn't think I would be standing here with a trophy right now, I really didn't," said Boulter, who was cheered on by her Australian boyfriend Alex de Minaur, who had flown in after winning the ATP title in Acapulco on Saturday. She continued: "This week has been very, very special for so many different reasons. This one is pretty amazing, I've worked very hard for it, I played some incredible tennis all week.

"Today was a complete battle, with myself as well, because I was a little bit nervous. But I managed to get over the line, and that I'm very proud of. "A lot of it was about me staying as tough as I possibly could mentally, and I managed to keep my cool and actually kind of went within myself and calmed myself down a lot. I think that really helped me, and then I started to relax and play through shots a little bit more." Both women picked up their first WTA Tour titles last year in breakout 2023 seasons. Boulter claimed her maiden championship on grass in Nottingham last summer, while Kostyuk found victory in Austin.



World leaders...

FROM PAGE 01 and the people of Pakistan steady progress and prosperity. President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon also congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, emphasising that through joint efforts, both the countries would enhance and expand long-term bilateral partnership. In felicitation message, he said that Tajikistan and Pakistan are linked by long traditions of friendship, mutual understanding, respect and trust.He said that the multifaceted cooperation between two countries, based on those good traditions, is constantly developing and enriched with new content. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has telephoned and felicitated his newly elected counterpart Shehbaz Sharif on taking oath of his office.

PPP fully endorses...

FROM PAGE 01 He said the Parliament was the mother of all institutions, and if this institu-tion was strengthened, it would ultimately empower the masses. "The people of Pakistan are tired of poverty, unemployment, and inflation," he said, adding "they did not give their vote for you to come here and abuse each other and create a ruckus." Bilawal Bhutto asked older lawmakers to make decisions that benefit youth and future generations. "Many of whom have been in this House six times,' he remarked. "Past decisions that have been made have completely ruined the country," he added.

Transfers, postings...

FROM PAGE 01 Prime Minister. Earlier. Gilani was serving as Additional Secretary-in-charge. On the other hand, captain retired Khurram Agha was removed from the post of principal secretary to the prime minister. Notification has been issued to appoint Khurram Agha as Secretary Commerce Division. Sec-retary Saleh Farooqui has

Asad demands...

FROM PAGE 01 Pointing to the lawmake ers sitting on the treasury benches, Qaiser asserted that all of them had called the cipher "false", but later on, the same diplomatic cable was used as a tool to punish the PTI founder and the former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi In January, both the PTI founder and Qureshi were sentenced to 10-year rigorous imprisonment in the cipher case by a special court established under the Offi cial Secrets Act.

Shehbaz sworn in...

FROM PAGE 01 Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan chief ministers - Maryam Nawaz, Murad Ali Shah, and Sarfraz Bugti - were also present at the ceremony. Ambassadors and diplomats from different countries were also present at the venue. Following the oath-taking ceremony, the prime minister was presented with a guard of honour. Shehbaz was elected as the prime minister on Sunday, retaining the title after his 16-month-long stint in the top coveted position from April 2022 to August 2023. This is the second time that Shehbaz will serve the nation as the premier after receiving 201 votes against his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) opponent Omar Ayub Khan who got 92 votes in a ruckus-marred session of the Parliament's lower house. Shehbaz's victory was expected as he enjoyed the support of seven other parties apart from the PML-N.



Nadal praises Alcaraz after Netflix Slam defeat

WASHINGTON : Rafael Nadal praised Carlos Alcaraz after suffering a 3-6 6-4 (14-12) at the inaugural Netflix Slam in Las Vegas. Nadal, who spent nearly a year on the sidelines with a hip flexor injury before encountering a muscle injury at the beginning of this season, expressed feeling "much better than expected" during the exhibition match.

The match drew a sell-out crowd of 9.489, including nota



term contract came to an

end, as the Sports Ministry

recommended against sign-

In a TV show Inzamam said

"Can someone explain the

reasoning behind removing

Muhammad Hafeez as team

director but retaining Wa-

hab Riaz as chief selector

after the Australian and

He further asked that

"Weren't both appointed at

same time and given same

responsibilities so why has

only Hafeez been held ac-

countable and not Wahab

Riaz?" The former cricket

player also asked the PCB

to start treating players

with respect. He quit in an

New Zealand tours?"

ing a long-term deal.

ble figures such as Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Charlize Theron, Danai Gurira, Logan Lerman, and Manu Rios. The showdown, part of Netflix's ongoing initiative for live-streaming events, featured two Spanish superstars in an exhibition match that had been postponed from last year due to Nadal's injuries. It came just in time as both players

prepare for the Indian Wells tournament this week. Nadal is making his return to the tour after being sidelined for months due to injury, while the match also served as a physical test for Alcaraz, who recently sustained an injury to his right ankle at the Rio Open. "It's a good thing that as a player I will not face him many times," said Nadal.

"As a fan, I will enjoy watching him for many years hopefully. In Spain, we should be very, very happy about having someone like Carlos coming. "He's an amazing player. He's only 20-years-old and he's already won two Grand Slams and a couple of important tournaments." Nadal expressed his hope of avoiding any further injury setbacks at Indian Wells, aiming to be fully fit for the upcoming clay-court season. This season could potentially be his final year on the ATP Tour, with the 37-year-old contemplating retirement. Having claimed 14 of his 22 Grand Slam titles on the red clay of Roland Garros, Nadal missed this year's Australian Open due to discomfort in his surgically repaired hip.

"Whatever has to be left, leave it in the clay season, which may or may not be the last, I have not decided 100 per cent," Nadal said in Spanish at a press conference ahead of the Netflix Slam event. "At the moment things are going that way. "I'm not saying goodbye because then I'd say I'm not playing anymore. This is an important point and I don't want to say it because I'm not 100 per cent clear about it. In the last two years, I haven't been able to play. Life is showing you the path." - Agencies

Misbah reveals middleorder contenders for Pak

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan head coach Misbah-ul-Haq revealed the possible middle-order candidates for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024. Speaking on a local sports channel, Misbah emphasised players who have been recognised as potential assets to strengthen Pakistan's middle-order batting lineup, which is pivotal for the team's success in the tournament. "Potentially the names I'm seeing are simple. Agha Salman is there, Azam Khan is there, Iftikhar Ahmed is there, and Shadab Khan is there. Regarding Fakhar, you're already thinking about him," Misbah said. More- over, Misbah explored the dynamics of the top order, suggesting

preference for

Mohammad

Saim Avub,

alluding to

tial reshuf-

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zwan, and

you

I think Saim

place Babar at

then

and PCB and it was not

such a big deal and I told

them I would resign and

they can complete their in-

quiry," The former captain

stated that he had not vet

received the results of the

inquiry committee's inves-

tigation into his conflict of

interest matter from PCB.

He declared that "Pakistan

cricket cannot be run in

this manner. It is time the

him, or let Rizwan

a pronounced Babar Azam, Rizwan, and while also potenfle. "You top three: Azam, Rimad Saim Ayub. is at the top, should either three or open with

play at three or open. Saim should be the opener because you need a left-hand, right-hand combination," he further added. It must be noted that the T20 World Cup 2024 is slated to commence on June 1, 2024, with the USA and West Indies serving as co-hosts. The eagerly awaited match between Pakistan and India is scheduled for June 9 at Eisenhower Park in New York. Meanwhile, prior to the World Cup, the Men in Green are in line to play 12 T20Is. They host New Zealand for five T20Is in Pakistan while they travel to Ireland and England for three and four T20Is respectively. - DNA

been instructed to report to the Establishment Division.

Presidential polls...

FROM PAGE 01

was raised on the nomination papers of Zardari," said PPP's Farooq H Naek while speaking to the media in Islamabad. Whereas PTI's Amir Dogar, flanked by Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) chief Achakzai and Ali Muhammad Khan, also announced that the electoral body has approved the nomination papers of the Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) candidate for the office of the head of state.

Outrage over Brazilian...

FROM PAGE 01

the night in Dumki district when the alleged attack took place. Police say that they have arrested four men and are searching for three more. The identities of the men, who are also accused of beating the woman's partner, have not been disclosed yet. The couple had travelled to several parts of Asia on their motorbikes before arriving in India a few months ago. Over the weekend, the woman posted a video on their Instagram page which has 234,000 followers. "Seven men raped me. They have beaten us and robbed us, although not many things [were taken] because what they wanted was to rape me," she said in Spanish, adding that the men beat them and threatened to kill them. In a separate video, the husband, who is Spanish, said: "My mouth is destroyed, but my partner is worse than me.

Court Notice

مدالت جناب چوبدری طائق خلن صاحب سول کارڈ ین ت اولينذى درخواست حصول سرميقكيث كارذين مساة ماريه فيظ ملك ماكن مكان نبر 489، متريث نمبر 18، یکلر A، محسّر کا Caltex ، 14روڈ مراولینڈ ک اشتہار یام حوام الناس ہر کا و مقدمہ عنوان یالا میں حوام الناس ی بذ ربعہ سمن تعمیل ممکن نہ ہے لہٰدا عوام اتنا س کو لوبذ ربع اشتهار بذا مطلع كماجا تاب كدك كوأثر كوكى عذر مر اش ہوتو وہ مورکد 20 24 - 3 0- 05 کو ایقت 9 بج مج امالاً يا وكالاً حاضر عدالت أو العورت ديگر یکطرفہ کاروانی عمل میں لائی جائے گی۔ بعکم عدالت مہر

Inzamam criticizes PCB: Pak cricket being mismanaged

Ex-caption criticizes cricket board for dismissing Hafeez as team director over 'poor performance'

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ISLAMABAD: Due to recent poor performance, the Pakistan cricket board removed Muhammad Hafeez from his position as Team Director. Inzamam-ul-Haq, former captain of the team, has criticized the move, saying it is unfair to "target" former players for administrative positions when the officials refuse to take accountability for the team's performance. Following a 1-4 T20 International series loss to New Zealand and a 0-3 Test series loss in Australia, the PCB had parted ways with Hafeez last month. After the T20 series in New Zealand, Hafeez's first shortunpleasant manner from his position as top selector during the World Cup last year. "The PCB Chairman no doubt is a highly respectable position but don't former captains and stalwarts deserve the same amount of respect from the top board officials," said Inzamam. Inzamam said that previous PCB Chairman Zaka Ashraf treated him disrespectfully when he was at odds with the Board over claims of conflict of interest. "We had a meeting scheduled at the PCB offices after this story about me having a conflict of interest



as chief selector broke out. "I was sitting with (PCB officials) Salman Naseer and Aliya Rasheed waiting for the chairman to come." he recalled. "But he went to the academy and from there called Naseer and Aliya to meet him and I was told to wait as he would not be seeing me. Only Aliva returned after a time and told me about the inquiry committee," he added.

board officials also accept-According to Inzamam the ed responsibility for their actions," Additionally, Inattitude of Zaka Ashraf was hurtful. Inzamam zamam stated that because stated that "I was hurt the previous selection by this behavior from the committee had chosen the Chairman. Every detail of team before to the Asia Cup last year, he had never agents and their companies who work with playwanted to take on the posiers are available with ICC tion of chief selector.

BUSINESS / WORLD

Briefs

Tusk urges EU sanctions on Russian, Belarusian food imports

VILNIUS: Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk on Monday called on the European Union to impose "full" sanctions on food and agricultural imports from Russia and Belarus in response to bloc-wide farmer protests. Farmers across Europe have been protesting for weeks over what they say are excessively restrictive environmental rules, competition from cheap imports from outside the European Union and low incomes. "I would prefer that we, as the entire European Union, decide on sanctions against Russia and Belarus regarding food and agricultural products," Tusk told reporters on a visit to Lithuania. Latvia parliament bans food imports from Russia, Belarus Baltic EU member Latvia already banned food imports from Russia and Belarus, including via intermediary countries, this month. "I am convinced that a joint EU decision will be incomparably more effective than individual decisions by the region's member states," Tusk added. He said he would propose a Polish parliament resolution urging the European Commission to impose "full sanctions" on the imports. Ukraine, once dubbed "Europe's bread basket", has seen its agriculture sector crippled by Russia's invasion, with many of Black Sea export hubs blocked and farmland rendered unusable by war fare.-DNA

EU fines Apple 1.8 billion euros over music streaming restrictions

BRUSSELS : The EU on Monday hit Apple with a 1.8 billion-euro-fine (\$1.9 billion) for violating the bloc's laws by preventing music streaming services from informing users about sub-

Akmal Saidov : Uzbekistan is always willing to engage in practical dialogue

The delegation of Uzbekistan took part at the High-level Segment of the 55th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

News Desk

TASHKENT: The delegation of Uzbekistan led by the First Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, Director of the National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) Akmal Saidov took part at the High-level Segment of the 55th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.According to the NCHR, during the speech of the delegation of Uzbekistan, it was noted that our country is consistently implementing its policy in the field of human rights, an example of which, in particular, is the updated Constitution of the country adopted during a national referendum in 2023.

Uzbekistan has formally prohibited the use of the death penalty in its recently adopted new Constitution. Internationally recognized institutions of jurisprudence as the Miranda Warnings and Habeas Corpus are consolidated at the constitutional level. The Pro bono institute, which provides free legal assistance has been granted constitutional status Notably, for the first time, the Con-

stitution guarantees the right to approach both international and national human rights bodies. Furthermore, it firmly establishes the status of national human rights institutions. The new Constitution for the first time enshrines the institution

of constitutional complaints from citizens. In recent years, Uzbekistan achieved substantial results in the human rights protection. Forced and child labor has been completely abolished in Uzbekistan. Particularly, the complete eradication of forced and child labor has been achieved. The new Constitution of the country now not only ensures the prohibition of child and forced labor but also institutes criminal liability for such offenses. Implementing the National Human Rights Strategy over the past 3 years, the following results have been achieved: First. According to the recommendations of the HRC and UN treaty bodies, the position of the Children's Ombudsman was established. Now our parliament is adopting Law on the Children's Ombudsman. Second. In order to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons



with Disabilities, legal and administrative measures have been taken to improve the system of state support for persons with disabilities. Third. The Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality until 2030 was approved. Fourth. Uzbekistan openly condemns the use of torture, amendments have been made to the Civil Code to provide for the procedure for compensation for harm caused to victims of torture. Fifth. According to the recommendations of the UN

treaty bodies, the National Preventive Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture was created according to the "Ombudsman Plus" model. Additionally, Children's Ombudsman, the National Centre for Human Rights, and the Business Ombudsman have been empowered to oversee penitentiary institutions. Sixth. Uzbekistan actively participates in the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education. The country is implementing the National Programme for Human

Rights Education. Training and special courses "Human Rights", 'Women's Rights", "Child's Rights" are being introduced in the system of professional education and universities. Training courses are being opened on the rights of persons with disabilities, women, children and migrants. An Electronic Platform for Human Rights Education has been launched. Furthermore, permanent training courses on combating the use of torture

have been launched for law enforcement officers and penitentiary institutions. Seventh. Collaboration with business structures on human rights issues is essential as well. Particularly, human rights training courses for entrepreneurs are organized. The National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights is currently being developed. Eight. The country is implementing consistent reforms in the political, judicial and legal spheres, increasing the role of civil society institutions, including on religious freedom. Uzbekistan places utmost emphasis on ensuring religious freedom within its borders, recognizing its historical experience of harmonious coexistence among diverse faiths and ethnic communities over the centuries. Throughout its long history, Uzbekistan's territory has been a home to a multitude of religions and belief. Traditional faiths in our nation have always coexisted peacefully. This harmony is not just a legacy, but a fundamental element of our traditions. Ninth.

Islamabad **POST**

Tuesday, March 05, 2024

BD Nobel winner fears for future as woes mount

DHAKA:Bangladesh Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus says it is a "million-dollar question" why the prime minister hates him, but says many believe she sees him as a political threat. Yunus, 83, is credited with lifting millions out of poverty with his pioneering microfinance bank but has earned the enmity of long-time Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Last month, several of his firms were "forcefully" taken over, weeks after his conviction in a criminal case his supporters say was politically motivated. "She calls me bloodsucker, calls me all the dirty things she can come up with," he said. "Why (does) she hate me? Some say it's political... (that) she sees me as a political opponent," he added, carefully avoiding directly accusing Hasina himself.

In January, Yunus and three colleagues from Grameen Telecom, one of the firms he founded, were sentenced to jail for six months after they were found guilty of violating labour laws. All four deny the charges, and have been bailed pending appeal. Yunus, who is facing more than 100 other charges over labour law violations and alleged graft, said the forcible takeover of his companies was re-

NASA, SpaceX launch 8th crew rotation mission

LOS ANGELES : NASA and SpaceX launched a new crew rotation mission to the International Space Station on Sunday. The mission, codenamed "Crew-8," is NASA's eighth commercial crew rotation mission with the company to the space station. A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launched the crew aboard a Dragon spacecraft from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida at 10:53 p.m. Eastern Time (1553 GMT) on Sunday, according to NASA. Shortly after the liftoff. SpaceX confirmed the main engine cutoff and stage separation. The Dragon spacecraft has separated from the second stage, and is heading to the space station. The spacecraft is scheduled to dock autonomously to the space station at about 3:00 a.m. Eastern Time (0800 GMT) Tuesday. The Crew-8 mission carries NASA astronauts Matthew Dominick, Michael Barratt and Jeanette Epps, as well as Alexander Grebenkin of Roscosmos, Russia's state space corporation.-APP

UN rights chief calls for global peace mindset

'Rarely has humanity faced so many rapidly spiraling crises,' says Volker Turk, stressing 55 ongoing conflicts around world

WEB DESK

GENEVA: The world needs to "regain a mindset of peace," the UN human rights chief urged Monday amid 55 conflicts flaring up around the globe. "Rarely has humanity faced so many rapidly spi-raling crises," Turk said during his global update at the 55th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. "A wave of conflict is battering people's

hopes for multilateral solutions," he said. Noting that there are 55 ongoing conflicts around the world, he lamented that widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law are generating a "devastating impact" on millions of civilians. They caused displacement and humanitarian crises to already reach an "unprec-edented scale," he said, adding that all of those conflicts have regional and lives, destroying econoglobal impact. "Overlapmies, profoundly damagping emergencies make the specter of spillover conflict ing human rights, dividing

very real. The war in Gaza the world, and upending has explosive impact across the Middle East. Conflicts in other regions – including in the Horn of Africa, Sudan, and the Sahel - could also escalate sharply. Increasing militarization on the Korean Peninsula raises threat levels,' the human rights chief said. "The deteriorating security crisis in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which the Council will address on April 3, is alarming." "In the Red Sea, as well as the Black Sea, attacks are creating shock-waves for

inflicted on less developed countries," Turk continued. Emphasizing the right to peace is the "mother of all human rights," he stressed, saying that without peace, all other rights are "quashed." "It is urgent that we devise ways to counter warmongering, fear, and the illogic of escalating hatred and hostility - which bring short-term profit to a few while ruining the lives and rights of millions," he said. "We need to regain a mind-set of peace." "This means the art of de-escalation, keeping communication

scription options outside of its App Store. The iPhone maker immediately vowed to appeal the first ever antitrust fine slapped on Apple by Brussels, the culmination of a case triggered by a complaint by Swedish music streaming giant Spotify. The European Commission said it "found that Apple applied restrictions on app developers preventing them from informing iOS users about alternative and cheaper music subscrip tion services available outside of the app". "This is illegal under EU antitrust rules," the EU's powerful antitrust regulator said."Apple's conduct, which lasted for almost ten years, may have led many iOS users to pay significantly higher prices for music streaming subscriptions because of the high commission fee imposed by Apple on developers and passed on to con-

sumers," it added. Spotify's complaint in 2019 triggered a broad commission investigation into the iPhone maker in 2021, but Brussels narrowed its probe last year to focus on Apple's actions to prevent apps from giving users information about rival music subscription options.

One dead, 24 rescued off Japanese fishing boat

TOKYO : One person died and 24 others were rescued on Monday after their fishing boat lost power and drifted onto rocks in rough seas off Japan, the coast guard said. Dramatic television footage showed the 56-metre (180-foot) vessel on its side being pounded by waves as the crew hud dled on deck and a helicopter hovered overhead. The tuna-fishing ship's crew included five Japanese nationals and 20 Indonesians. The vessel had engine trouble on Sunday afternoon off the Izu archipelago south of Japan's main island of Honshu, a coast guard spokesman told AFP. In an operation involving patrol boats and helicopters, all but one of the crew members had been rescued by Monday morning, he said. The body of the missing Japanese crew member was later found, the coast guard said.-APP

the global transport of goods, adding to the economic pain

channels open, rebuild ing trust.

Montenegro, Turkiye enjoy 'excellent' bilateral ties

ANKARA : Montenegrin Foreign Minister Filip Ivanovic said that his country enjoys "excellent" bilateral relations with Türkiye "These relations are not only political or intergovernmental. We also have friendly relations between our peoples,' Ivanovic told Anadolu at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in southern Türkiye. "We have excellent cooperation in culture, tourism, and many other areas. We want to expand this cooperation and deepen our ties," he added. Ivanovic drew attention to the importance of Türkiye's diplomatic and mediation efforts to ensure stability, prosperity, and security in the Western Balkans region and praised the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. "The extremely positive and friendly approach of Türkiye towards different countries in the Western Balkans is something we highly value," he said. Assessing Israel's recent attacks on Gaza, Ivanovic said that the solution to the crisis should be within the framework of international law. Underlining Montenegro's support for a two-state solution, Ivanovic said: "What we ultimately want to see is an end to conflict, suffering, and a chance for the region to be rebuilt, giving people the opportunity to live in peace and prosperity." Flouting the International Court of Justice's provisional ruling, Israel continued its onslaught on the Gaza Strip where at least 30,534 Palestinians have been killed, mostly women and children, and 71,920 injured since Oct. 7, according to Palestinian health authorities. Israel has pounded the Gaza Strip since a cross-border attack by Hamas, which Tel Aviv says killed nearly 1,200 people. The Israeli war on Gaza has pushed 85% of the territory's population into internal displacement amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicine, while 60% of the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN. Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice. An interim ruling in January ordered Tel Aviv to stop genocidal acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza. Hostilities have continued unabated, however, and aid deliveries remain woefully insufficient to address the humanitarian catastrophe.-DNA

Thailand's employment growth up in 04 BANGKOK : Thailand's employment growth accelerated in the final quarter of last year due to expansion in the vital tourism indus-

try, the country's economic planning agency said on Monday. The Southeast Asian country's labor force amounted to 40.3 million individuals in the fourth quarter of 2023, representing a 1.7 percent year-onyear increase, up from a 1.3 percent increase in the previous quarter, according to the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC). The growth was mainly attributed to an expansion of employment in the non-agricultural sectors, which rose 2.0 percent yearon-year to 27.9 million jobs, the NESDC said in a statement. Employment in the hotel and restaurant sectors jumped 8.0 percent from a year earlier, owing to a rebound in foreign tourist arrivals. However, manufacturing jobs contracted by 2.3 percent on the back of a slowdown in the production of key industrial products. The kingdom's unemployment rate was registered at 0.81 percent in the October-December period.-APP



lated to a lack of democracy.

ISLAMABAD: A view of metro buses stand at Secretariat station in the Federal Capital due to metro bus service closed during PSL matches in the Rawalpindi. -ONLINE

Malaysian PM discusses Gaza, Islamophobia in Australia Anwar Ibrahim is in Melbourne to attend special ASEAN-Australia summit as 2 sides mark 50 years of official relations

FOREIGN DESK

SYDNEY : Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim Monday discussed the situation in the besieged Palestinian enclave of Gaza, and Islamophobia among other global issues during a trip to Australia. Anwar also inaugurated Al-Taqwa Sports Complex at Al-Taqwa College in Melbourne where he later engaged with students to discuss various issues. The Malavsian prime minister is in Melbourne to attend a special summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASE-AN)-Australia summit as the two sides mark 50 years of official rela-

tions. Anwar told the participants that multiracial and religious communities "need to always respect and tolerate each other to live as a community," according to a post on his X account. "Give credit to your idealism against oppression, corruption, and abuse. You want greater justice and compassion and to stop inequality," Anwar said, according to Malaysian staterun Bernama News. Anwar was accorded an official welcome by his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese who said: "Malaysia and Australia are longstanding friends and partners." "We're working together to grow business links between our countries, and to protect the stability of our region," said Albanese on X. Earlier on, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that he would be "happy to reopen" the search for flight MH370 if "compelling" evidence emerged, opening the door to a renewed hunt a decade after the plane disappeared. "If there is compelling evidence that it needs to be reopened, we will certainly be happy to reopen it," he said when asked about the matter during a visit to Melbourne. His comments came as the families marked 10 years since the plane vanished in the Indian Ocean with 239 people aboard. "I don't think it's a technical issue. It's an issue affecting the lives of people

and whatever needs to be done must be done," he said. Malaysia Airlines flight 370, a Boeing 777 aircraft, disappeared from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. Despite the largest search in aviation history, the plane has never been found and the operation was suspended in January 2017. About 500 relatives and their supporters gathered Sunday at a shopping centre near the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur for a "remembrance day", with many visibly overcome with grief. Some of the relatives came from China, where almost two-thirds of the passengers of the doomed plane

were from. "The last 10 years have been a nonstop emotional rollercoaster for me," Grace Nathan, a 36-year-old Malaysian lawyer whose mother, Anne Daisy, 56, was on the flight, told AFP. Speaking to the crowd, she called on the Malaysian government to conduct a new search. Transport Minister Anthony Loke told reporters that "as far Malaysia is concerned, it is committed to finding the plane cost is not the issue". He told relatives at the gathering that he would meet with officials from Texas-based marine exploration firm Ocean Infinity, which conducted a previous unsuccessful search, to discuss a new operation.

French farmers protest over insufficient income

PARIS : Insufficient income was the common problem of protesting French farmers, according to farmers' representatives. Farmers started protesting in mid-January for several weeks across the country, and demonstrated against the agricultural policy, as well as EU regulations. The 60th Agricultural Show in Paris started in a tense atmosphere on Feb. 24, due to farmers' anger. President of the Romebased World Farmers' Organisation, Arnold Puech d'Alissac, told Anadolu that the reasons for the farmers' protests varied in each European country. –**DNA**

Spain building fire kills 3

MADRID : A fire that broke out in a building near Alicante in Spain's southeast has killed three people, including a child, authorities said on Monday. Some 120 people were evacuated following the fire in Villajoyosa. Fifteen lightly injured people were taken to hospital for treatment for smoke inhalation, police told AFP. The fire, which started at around 2:15 am (0115 GMT) on the 11th floor of a 24-storey building, has been brought under control and the other residents were able to return to the building on Monday. The blaze erupted less than two weeks after another fire killed 10 people in the port city of Valencia in the same region, in a tragedy that shocked the country. The fire in Valencia devastated a 14-storev high-rise building and an adjoining 10-storey block which together housed 138 flats. -APP







Briefs **Raid** at Achakzai's house condemned in NA

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers

condemned the alleged

raid at the residence of

Quetta. On his turn for ad-

vestigate the incident.

versial through the incident.

and friends had died in the

fight inflicted upon his house

for last 15 years. He said the

political parties would have

to sit together to rescue

the country out of the cri-

sis. Slamming the raid, PTI

leader Omar Ayub said they

would present a resolution in

the NA against the incident.

Ayub also raised objection

over his NA speech not

being telecasted live on me-

dia. When the PTI leader

tried to talk about Punjab

Chief Minister Maryam

Nawaz, his mic was muted.

Senate

adopts 6 bills

to amend

ordinances

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Monday adopted six different

bills to amend ordinances

as heavy fighting rages A Hamas official says the Palestinian group is pressing on with talks on securing a truce in Gaza despite Israel's decision not to attend them

Gaza truce talks in Cairo

News Desk

Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami RIYADH: Mediators in Cairo made a re-Party (PkMAP) Chairman newed push for a Gaza ceasefire, but differ-Mahmood Khan Achakzai in ences remained as fighting raged on in the dress, the PPP vhairman said Palestinian territory gripped by desperate food shortages. US, Qatari and Hamas enhe came across the news of the raid at Achakzai's house voys travelled to Cairo for the latest effort toward a six-week truce, stepped-up aid dewhich he condemned and liveries and the exchange of hostages for appealed Balochistan Chief Palestinian prisoners. Their goal has been Minister Sarfraz Bugti to into secure a truce by the start of the Muslim He said the PkMAP chairman holy month of Ramadan on March 10 or 11. But sticking points remained, including a was a presidential candidate Hamas demand that the Israeli armed forctoo and the presidential eleces entirely withdraw from the Gaza Strip tion was being made controafter almost five months of devastating war. NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq said Israel boycotted the ceasefire talks in Caihe was unaware of the hapro after Hamas rejected its demand for a pening. The PPP chief recomplete list naming hostages that are still alive, an Israeli newspaper reported. quested the speaker to allow A Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo for the Achakzai to speak as he probtalks, billed as a possible final hurdle before ably wanted to say something. Achakzai then apprised the an agreement that would halt the fighting House that his 200 relatives

for six weeks. But by early evening there was no sign of the Israelis. "There is no Is-raeli delegation in Cairo," Ynet, the online version of Israel's Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper, quoted unidentified Israeli officials as saying. A Hamas source on Sunday told AFP its delegation to Cairo is being led by senior leader Khalil Al-Haya.

"The delegation will meet Egyptian mediators and deliver the group's response to the new Paris proposal," the source said, in reference to negotiations held last month in the French capital with Israel's presence. Meanwhile, A Hamas official says the Pal-

Pope Francis calls for ceasefire in Gaza

FOREIGN DESK

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis has appealed for an end to the conflict in Gaza, urging the world to say: "Enough, please! Stop." Addressing a large crowd of people in St Peter's Square in Vatican City, the pope expressed concern over the consequences of the conflict in Palestine and Israel. "Each day, I carry in my heart with pain the suffering of the populations in Palestine and Israel due to the ongoing hostilities, thousands of dead, injured, displaced," Francis said. "Do you really think you can build a better world in this way? Do you really think you will achieve peace? Enough please! Let us all say enough, please! Stop!" He then urged the continuation of negotiations "so that the hostages may be released and return to their dear ones who wait for them with anxiety, and the civilian population may have secure access to the needed and urgent humanitarian aid." Meanwhile, United Nations human rights chief Volker Turk says the war in Gaza is a "powder keg" that could ignite a wider conflict with serious repercus-

sions for the Middle East and beyond. In an address to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Monday, Turk said he was deeply concerned that the war - now in its 150th day - had already generated dangerous spillover in neighbouring countries. "Any spark could lead to a much broader conflagration," Turk warned. "This would have implications for every country in the Middle East, and many beyond it." The UN high commissioner for human rights said it is "imperative to do everything possible to avoid" a wider escalation and specifically cited the military escalation between Israel and Hezbollah and other armed groups in Lebanon, calling them "extremely worrying". Since October 8, cross-border exchanges of fire between the Israeli army and Hezbollah as a direct result of the Gaza war have killed dozens of people, displaced tens of thousands and destroyed vital infrastructure. In the most recent of the near-daily attacks, Israel reportedly hit three towns in southern Lebanon within 24 hours in an apparent response to a Hezbollah attack on a community in northern Israel that killed at least one person and wounded several others.

estinian group is pressing on with talks on securing a truce in Gaza despite Israel's decision not to attend them. "Talks in Cairo continue for the second day

regardless of whether the occupation's delegation is present in Egypt," the Hamas official told the anInternational news agency. The talks, which began on Sunday in Cairo, are billed as a final hurdle to establish the first extended truce of the five-month-old war in time for Ramadan, Islam's holy month, which is expected to begin on Sunday. Reports said earlier that Israel declined to attend the negotiations because Hamas had refused its request for a list of names of all captives it is holding who are still alive. As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 150 on Monday, massive aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound neighborhoods, homes, and shelter centers and massacre more civilians, mostly children and women. Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to attack different areas of Gaza, killing and injuring hundreds of citizens. The Israeli warplanes launched an air raid targeting the eastern areas of Jabalia camp, north of Gaza, and bombed a house in the Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip. Local sources reported that several casualties were reported in Israeli bombing of the Al-Farra family house in Al-Mawasi, northwest of the city of Khan Yunis. Two other houses were bombed in Al-Jalaa Street in Gaza City, and Jabalia Camp, north of the Gaza Strip. At least12 civilians were killed, and 45 others were injured, in an Israeli airstrike on a residential building sheltering displaced people in the Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip.

US SC rules Trump can remain on presidential hallot

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court has ruled that Colorado cannot disqualify Donald Trump from its Republican presidential primary. Colorado barred Mr Trump from the state's ballot in December, citing an insurrection clause of the Constitution and arguing the former president incited the 2021 Capitol riot. The court ruled that Congress, rather than the states, have that power. The unanimous ruling clears the way for Mr Trump to compete in the primary. Mr Trump immediately claimed victory following the ruling, taking to his Truth Social media platform to claim a "big win for America". It all but ends efforts in other states to ban him from ballots. Two other states, Maine and Illinois, followed Colorado in kicking Mr Trump off the ballot on similar ground. The efforts in both states were put on hold while his challenge to the Colorado ruling was escalated to the Supreme Court. "We conclude that states may disqualify persons holding or attempting to hold state office," the court's opinion says. "But states have no power under the Constitution to enforce Sections 3 with respect to federal offices, especially the presidency." The nine justices ruled that only Congress can enforce the 14th Amendment's provisions against federal officials and candidates. Mr Trump is the front-runner for the Republican nomination and looks likely to face a rematch with Democratic President Joe Biden in November's general election. Colorado, along with 14 other states, will vote on Tuesday in a marathon contest dubbed Super Tuesday. The former president is widely expected to sweep the board and defeat his sole remaining opponent, former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, in every battleground.

Afghan defense minister attends Doha maritime conference

DNA

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban government said on Monday that its participation at the Doha International Maritime Defense Exhibition and Conference is "very important," as it seeks to increase engagements with the international community. The eighth edition of DIMDEX, which is organized by the Qatar Armed Forces and runs from March 4 to 6 at the Qatar National Convention Center, will be attended by official delegations from more than $\overline{60}$ countries, at least five of which are bringing their warships to visit the Hamad Port. Despite being a landlocked

country with no naval forces, the Afghan delegation is among the participating countries this year and is led by the Minister of National Defense Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, who is accompanied by the Chief of Army Staff Mohammad FasihuddinFitrat.

'They are going to take part in the Doha International Maritime Defense Exhibition today ... This conference and exhibition is very important for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, particularly for its engagements with the international community," Suhail Sha-heen, Taliban government spokesperson in Doha and permanent representative-designate to the UN, told Arab News on Monday.

LHC dismisses plea against Aurat March

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday dismissed a petition that aimed to halt this year's Aurat March. Justice Shahid Karim of the LHC announced the decision on a petition submitted by a citizen named Azam Butt, who included Lahore Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rafia Haider and others as respondents. Azam argued in his petition that Aurat March cards and banners are not suitable for an Islamic society, urging the court to intervene and stop this year's march. March 8 marks International Women's Day, a day celebrated worldwide to acknowledge women's achievements and address ongoing issues. This year's theme, "Sivasat, Muzahamataur Azadi" (Politics, resistance, and independence), aims to confront electoral politics and envision a political landscape where marginalized groups take center stage The Aurat March has been organised annually since 2018, drawing both popularity and opposition. Critics accuse rights activists of promoting Western values and disregarding religious and cultural norms in a society where women face severe consequences for perceived dishonor.



committees for further deliberations. Senator Mohsin Aziz, introduced a bill to further amend the Provincial Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1965 (The Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2023) which was adopted and sent further to the concerned committee. Senator Mohsin Aziz, introduced a bill further to amend the State Bank of Pakistan Act, 1956 (The State Bank of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2023) which also adopted by the upper house and sent fur ther to the concerned committee for deliberations. Senator Mohsin Aziz, introduced another Bill to further amend the Factories Act. 1934 (The Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2023) which was adopted by the upper house and sent to the concerned committee for further deliberations. Senator Mohsin Aziz, introducedt the bill to further amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (The Pakistan Penal Code (Amend ment) Bill, 2023). (Amendment of section 376 of PPC) was sent to the concerned committee for deliberations

KP okays budget for a month

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly has approved a budget of more than Rs159bn for running the affairs of provincial departments for the current month. KP Assem bly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati approved the budget as Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur presented the motion before the house. The house also unanimously adopted a resolution to declare the assembly chamber as a polling station for the upcoming presidential election on 9th of this month. Expressing his views on the floor of the house, Sunni Ittehad Council leader Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani demanded the Election Commission of Pakistan to give their party the reserved seats of women and the minority. Addressing the house, Speaker Babar Swati said the house believes in rule of law and has trust in the courts that they will resolve these issues. Later, the Speaker prorogued the session for an indefinite period.

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari meeting with COAS General Asim Munir at the oath taking ceremony of PM Shahbaz Sharif at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Hopes to strengthen media freedom APNS greets PM Shahbaz; wants him to increase govt ads rates

They believe that the new government would continue to strengthen the rules of law, rights of the citizens and of the media

DNA

KARACHI: The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) has welcomed the election of Mian Shahbaz Sharif as Prime Minister

of Pakistan for the second consecutive term and expressed its full support in his efforts to address the challenges faced by the nation. Mrs. NazafreenSalgol Lakhani, President and Sarmad Ali, Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society have congratulated Mian Shahbaz Sharif on his election as Prime Minister of Pakistan and hoped that under his stewardship, the Government of Pakistan will continue to strive for the development and improvement in all fields including the media. They believe that the new government would continue to strengthen the rules of

law, rights of the citizens and of the media to unfettered freedom and right to access of information. The APNS office bearers requested the Prime Minister elect to implement the decision taken at the end of his first tenure to increase in the government advertisement rates for the newspapers which unfortunately could not be implemented due to procedural reasons. The APNS has requested the Prime Minister to meet the office bearers and members of the Executive Committee at his earliest convenience to discuss the matters of mutual Interests.

Deadly rains ravage KP: 35 killed

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has been gripped by a wave of devastation, with reports of casualties, injuries, and extensive property damage emerging in recent days. According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the past five days have witnessed a series of tragic accidents attributed to the ongoing rainfall, resulting in a staggering toll of 35 lives lost and 43 individuals sustaining injuries across various incidents.

The adverse weather conditions have wreaked havoc on residential areas, with 346 houses left partially destroyed and 46 completely ravaged by the relentless downpours. The aftermath of the rains has left countless families displaced and grappling with the loss of their dwellings.

Supreme Court reserves verdict on Bhutto reference Bhutto was removed after a military coup led by the then army chief Ziaul Haq on July 5, 1977, which followed a months-long agitation, as the PNA disputed the results of rigged elections

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday reserved its judgment in the Bhutto reference as the nine-member bench completed the process of hearing the arguments of all the parties concerned. The court will announce the verdict some other day, Chief Justice Faez Isa remarked, as Ahmed Raza Kasuri - the complainant whose application resulted in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's hanging - was the last one to present his arguments. During the hearing, the chief justice questioned why the attackers had chosen that time and place for the ambush in the presence of other individuals, if he was the target, and whether it was a result of poor planning and conspiracy. They didn't know that other people were also travelling in the car. Kasuri replied.

The Supreme Court started hearing the reference on Dec 12 last year which was filed against the conviction, sentencing and hanging of Bhutto - the PPP founding chairman and the first democratically-elected prime minister of Pakistan. In a written order issued the same day, the apex court said the hearing would be conducted on

a daily basis and decided to appoint nine legal experts as amici curiae to assist the bench in deciding the matter.

The court also issued notice to a private TV channel to share the full interview of the late Justice Nasim Hasan Shah, in which he had described the episode as judicial murder. On the other hand, the court order also mentions that the PPP leader and senior lawyer Farooq H. Naek would be responsible for providing the transcript of an interview given by the late Justice Dorab Patel. Patel was among the three judges who went against the majority view held by four others as the Supreme Court rejected the appeal filed by Bhutto. He would have become the Chief Justice of Pakistan, if he had not opted to resign after the then military dictator Ziaul Haq issued a Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) on March 24, 1981, asking the top judiciary judges to take oath on it. As the hearing started, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardarisubmitted an application to become a party in the matter, with Naek informing the court that he would be his counsel as well. Chief Justice Isa observed that they could hear him both as an heir and the political party and expressed his regret that the case wasn't fixed for hearing earlier, as the entire Pakistan is able to watch the historic event unfolding - the outcome of which can lead to massive consequences at judicial, social and political levels. Meanwhile, Kasuri also requested the court to allow him to present his arguments and claimed that no legal point was raised in the reference.

However, the chief justice said they would first hear the arguments of Attorney General Mansoor Awan, who was directed to begin by reading out the reference.

Reading out the reference and replying to various questions raised by the judges, the attorney general said the late Justice Nasim Hasan Shah - who was part of the seven-member bench rejecting the appeal submitted by Bhutto and later also served as the Chief Justice of Pakistan - had said in an interview that it was a judicial murder and admitted in another that one had to accept the orders of those imposing martial law in the country. He replied in no when Chief Justice Isa asked him whether the original police record [concerning the case and investigation] was found. However, Naek, who is representing the plaintiff, informed the court that the police record consisted of three bundles of documents.

Given the sensitive nature of the matter, the chief justice also touched upon the availability of senior legal experts to play the role of amicus curiae - a legal term meaning "friend of the court" which can be a person or organisation offering the court additional information or perspective about the case. When he asked whether Aitzaz Ahsan would assist the court by becoming amicus curiae, his assistant lawyer, who was present in the courtroom, said his senior won't be available. It is worth noting that Aitzaz - a PPP leader - nowadays is very close to the former PTI chairman and has been representing him in different cases with another party leader Latif Khosa playing the role of his lead lawyer while heading the legal team. Interestingly, Babar Awan - also a former PPP leader who originally drafted and filed the reference has become a close aide of the PTI while sharing his advice on important legal and political matters. It was the then president Asif Ali Zardari who had moved the country's top court on April 2, 2011, through a presidential reference under Article 186 of the Constitution to seek its opinion on revisiting the trial which had culminated with the hanging of Bhutto on April 4, 1979.

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