



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Violence persists in Gaza Strip during Ramadan: UN Chief

Detailed News On Page-07

Pak, Russian relations on positive trajectory

Detailed News On Page-08



Unsatisfied despite playing one down

Detailed News On Page-06



PM Shehbaz says

Pak-Turkiye trade should reach \$5 bn

Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan calls on Prime Minister; Pakistan and Turkiye enjoyed exemplary bilateral relations that were based on shared history, religion and culture and were unshakeable

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, earlier today. The Ambassador congratulated the Prime Minister on his re-election and conveyed best wishes from the leadership of Turkiye and emphasized the importance of strengthening the fraternal ties between both countries. The Prime Minister deeply appreciated the congratulatory telephone call and message of felicitations from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan immediately after his re-election. He emphasised that Pakistan and Turkiye enjoyed exemplary bilateral relations that were based on shared history, religion and culture and were unshakeable. The Prime Minister said both countries needed to work together to achieve the annual target of US\$ 5 billion in bilateral trade. He also called upon the two sides to enhance their bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest including trade, defence, connectivity and culture. In this regard, he congratulated Turkiye on the successful flight of KAN 5th generation fighter aircraft. On core issues, the Prime Minister said Pakistan deeply appreciated Turkiye's firm and consistent support for the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJK).

Continued on Page 06

Turkish President congratulates President Zardari

Both Presidents also exchanged views on matters of bilateral importance

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The President of Turkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdo an, called President Asif Ali Zardari and congratulated him on assuming the office of the President of Pakistan. Both Presidents also exchanged views on matters of bilateral importance and underscored the need for further improving cooperation in all areas of mutual interest. President Asif Ali Zardari thanked the Turkish President for his telephone call and warm wishes. President Asif Ali Zardari wished Happy Ramadan to Turkish nation and desired to see role of Turkish women in Islamic world. He also desired to soon invite President Recep Tayyip Erdo an to Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and SAPM Tariq Fatemi are also present. - DNA

Ministers take charge of their offices

Dar has been given the portfolio of FM, Ahsan is the Minister for Planning

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has allocated portfolios to the newly-formed 19-member federal cabinet, Dunya News reported. According to a notification, Khawaja Asif has been named defence minister. He has also been assigned additional portfolios of defence production and aviation. Ishaq Dar has been given the portfolio of foreign minister, Ahsan Iqbal is the Minister for Planning, Development and Special Measures. Muhammad Aurangzeb has been assigned the portfolio of finance and revenue, while Mohsin Naqvi has been assigned the portfolio of

Continued on Page 06

Digital Punjab vision

Lahore to get another Arfa Karim Tower

The Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz also approves the launch of free Wi-Fi pilot project in Lahore

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: "IT, Education and Film City projects to start in Lahore at the earliest," said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif while presiding over a meeting on IT City and Lahore Knowledge Park. She added, "Business opportunities will be provided to the best IT companies from all over the world in IT City Lahore." Madam Chief Minister expressed her satisfaction that Microsoft, Oracle and other big companies have given their consent to establish offices in IT City Lahore. She also directed the authorities concerned to invite major Chinese IT companies as well to set up their offices here. Moreover, Madam Chief Minister was briefed that campuses of world-renowned international universities will also be built in Education City Lahore for the students from all over Pakistan including Punjab. She directed to present a

Continued on Page 06

PPP, JUI-F form alliance for Senate by-poll

Six seats in general category fall vacant - one in Islamabad, two in Sindh and three in Balochistan

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: As the newly formed government moves towards the Senate election on 48 seats, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) have decided to support each other in the March 14 by-polls of the upper house of parliament, in a meeting on Tuesday.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

10-member Sindh cabinet takes oath

Nasir Shah, Sharjeel Memon and others sworn in as provincial ministers

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A 10-member new provincial cabinet of Sindh has taken the oath of office at a ceremony held at Sindh Governor House. Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori administered the oath to the provincial ministers. Top officials including Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah attended the ceremony. The ministers inducted into the provincial cabinet include Sharjeel Inam Memon, Nasir Hussain Shah, Saeed Ghani, Sardar Ali Shah, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Sardar Muhammad Baksh Mahar, Zia Ul Hassan Lanjar,

Continued on Page 06

'Positive criticism welcome'

Ahsan Iqbal resolves to cut government expenses

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal said on Tuesday that positive criticism is to be welcomed. Speaking to media in Islamabad, Iqbal said: "The opposition had practically accepted the poll results of the general elections, slated to happen on February 8." "The premier had emphasised the need for slashing the prices of power and gas," he added. Iqbal resolves to cut government expenses by taking austerity measures." He maintained: "Even in the past, we had initiated the developmental projects, but due to political instability, the projects were not completed."

For two weeks

Imran can't hold meetings inside jail

PTI founder serving a total of 31 years sentence in multiple cases in Adiala Jail

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab government on Tuesday imposed a two-week ban on all public visits, meetings and interviews at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail citing "security" threats - a move decried by PTI leaders, who deemed it a deliberate plan to stop them from meeting party founder Imran Khan, who is currently incarcerated at the facility. In a letter written to the Punjab prisons chief, the Punjab Home Department said its Internal Security Wing conveyed that "there exist different types of threats to [the] security of Adiala jail as some anti-state terrorist groups supported by the enemies of Pakistan have planned to conduct targeted attacks". "As a security measure against the aforementioned attacks", the department requested the prison chief to "stop the public visits/meetings/interviews within the Adiala Jail immediately for two weeks". The decision was taken days after the Rawalpindi Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and

Continued on Page 06

ECP accepts plea seeking Gandapur's disqualification

A two-member ECP bench issued a short order on the plea

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) accepted a plea seeking the disqualification of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur for hearing. According to the details, the election watchdog also directed the chief minister to appear before the District Election Commissioner on March 26. A two-member ECP bench issued a short order on the plea, maintaining that Ali Amin Gandapur did not submit his

Continued on Page 06

Bangladesh releases opp. party leader

Rahman was arrested in December 2022, days after he announced his party would join other opposition parties in nationwide protests to oust Hasina

AGENCIES

DHAKA: Bangladesh has freed the head of Jamaat-Islami, the largest religio-political party, officials said on Tuesday, 15 months since counter-terrorism officers arrested him after he vowed to take part in anti-government protests. The release of Jamaat-Islami chief Shafiqur Rahman comes as political tension eases following Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's fourth consecutive election victory in January.

Continued on Page 06

Qatar says Israel, Hamas 'not near a deal' on Gaza truce

All parties were "continuing to work in the negotiations to reach a deal hopefully within the confines of Ramadan", al-Ansari told a news conference

NEWS DESK

DOHA/GAZA CITY: Israel and Hamas are not close to a deal to halt the fighting in Gaza and free captives, mediator Qatar has said, warning that the situation remained "very complicated". Despite weeks of talks involving US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators, the Muslim holy month of Ramadan began on Monday without the start of a truce and an exchange of people held that they had aimed for. "We are not near a deal, meaning that we are not seeing both sides converging on language that can resolve the current disagreement over the implementation of a deal," said Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari. All parties were "continuing to work in the negotiations to reach a deal hopefully within the confines of Ramadan", al-Ansari told a news conference. Majed Al Ansari, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, says during the weekly media briefing: "Regarding the talk about pressure on Hamas, as a mediator, Qatar has been exchanging views between both sides."

Continued on Page 06

Yemen claims responsibility for attack on US ship

FOREIGN DESK

SANA'A: Yemen's armed forces announced at dawn Tuesday that they targeted a US-owned ship in the Red Sea with multiple naval missiles. "The Yemeni army's naval forces, with the help of Allah Almighty, carried out a targeting operation against the American ship 'Pinochio' in the Red Sea with a number of appropriate naval missiles, and the strike was accurate, thanks to God," Yemeni army spokesperson Yehya Sariee said in a statement.

Continued on Page 06

ZAMANA

RAMADAN KAREEM

Ramadan Village Iftar

Immerse yourself in the spirit of Holy Ramadan with our exquisite feast, where the flavours pay homage to the fasting tradition, surrounded by nature under the sky

Time: Iftar to 10:00 PM

For reservations, please call at 051-111-133-133

ICCI President urges unity for economic stability

ICCI President calls for unity among institutions to address economic challenges, pledges support to national press club

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday urged all segments of the society to work with enthusiasm and reconciliation as it is inevitable in current socio-economic circumstances of the country. He said this during his visit to National Press Club (NPC) along ICCI's delegation. "It was a requirement of the time that all institutions including Parliament, Media, and Business communities should work together for the country's development," he said, adding that all segments should work for sorting prevailing economic issues being faced by the country. The delegation met maiden office bearers

of the NPC that are President Azhar Jatoi Khan, Secretary General Nayyar Ali, Finance Secretary Waqar Abbasi and others. Bakhtawari extended his best wishes to new office holders of the club and hoped that the new body will work for community development and enhancing the positive image of the country; it is the biggest club of journalists across the country. He said that the ICCI would extend its complete support to the NPC to resolve the prevailing issues, in the country adding that the media role is important to build the positive image of the country in the world. The NPC also should play its role to keep all decision makers either that are in opposition or in ruling set-up on the same with one cause of national interest. Elaborating media and commerce

interlinkage, President ICCI stated that these both are equally important for each other, adding that the chamber has been planning to launch some development projects in the city such as schools and hospitals from which Journalists would get equal benefit. Secretary General United Business Group (UBG) Zafar Bakhtawari recalled that Pakistani journalists rendered many sacrifices during fulfillment of their professional responsibilities, adding that true journalists made special space and respect among all of us. On the occasion, President Jatoi paid thanks to the ICCI delegation and reiterated to jointly work with ICCI, adding that currently traders as well as Journalists are facing problems due to bad economic circumstances of the country. "We have to make collective efforts to bring the country back on track," he said. President Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) Afzal Butt said that the NPC has dynamic and long lasting relations with ICCI. He said that the chamber has always supported the press club in all thick and thin. The ICCI delegation includes Khalid Chaudhry, Naveed Malik, Saif Ur Rehman Khan, Nisar Mirza, Ishq Chatta, Wasim Chaudhry, Babar Chaudhry, Naseeb Iah, Imtiaz Abbasi, Abbas Hashmi, Nasir Chaudhry, Amir Hamza and Zia Chaudhry.



Federal Ministers pay surprise visit at G-6 utility store

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar along with Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain paid a surprise visit to the utility store at Appara Market, G-6 Islamabad. Both the ministers visited the utility store on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and reviewed quality of the edibles being sold at subsidized rates under the Ramadan Relief Package 2024. —APP

Free CML cancer meds begin at civil hospital

QUETTA: Balochistan Secretary Health Abdullah Khan said that Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML) blood cancer was curable and patients could live a full life after treatment. He said that the provision of free CML cancer medicines have been started to the patients in Civil Hospital Quetta after taking practical measures in this regard. About 765 patients with CML blood cancer are currently registered across Balochistan, he said saying that in fact, the word 'cancer' has become a stigma, causing people to try to hide the disease and there

were more victims because late diagnosis worsens the disease and delays treatment. He said that timely payment should be made to the companies supplying cancer drugs and transparency would be kept in mind in the payment system so that there was no interruption in the supply of cancer drugs to the patients. The Secretary Health issued directive to the DG Health to utilize all available resources to provide health related facilities to the citizens and should use all their abilities for public service duties. The Secretary also instructed officers to perform their

duties more diligently and conscientiously than before saying that the governance and accountability system has been strengthened by preparing the health sector strategy. Special attention is being given to legislation including financial discipline to correct the system in the health department, he said. He said that according to the vision of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan, special attention was being paid to the health sector, important steps were being taken to eliminate corruption. —APP

CDA plans Rs 2 bln project to reforest Margalla Hills

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to enhance the biodiversity and green cover in Margalla Hills, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has prepared a PC-1 for a project worth over Rs 2 billion to plant 10 million trees in the park. The CDA is in process of sending the PC-1 to the federal government to secure funding in the upcoming fiscal year 2024-25 under the public sector development programme, with the cost estimated at Rs2,158.614 million. Islamabad is a stretch of over an area of 908 sq. kilometres in which — as per the master plan — Margalla Hills and 32 acquired villages consist of 39,000 acres of land which was declared as a national park in the 1980s. The park is located on the northern edge of Islamabad, south of the Haripur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, extending over 15,782.74 hectares (39,000 acres). The PC-1 for the project 'Enhancing the biodiversity and green cover by managing the natural resources, maintenance and rehabilitation of the landscape of Margalla Hills National Park' has been prepared by the environment wing of the CDA and it will be implemented over five years. According to the PC-1, the main objective of the project is to "enhance the flora and fauna" of the national park and its preservation for the attraction of the public and tourists. The PC-1 claims that the project will also be helpful in the "mitigation of climate change" and through this project, the CDA will improve the aesthetics of the national park. "High birth rate and shifting of settlements from other corners of the country, Islamabad city is rapidly losing the green cover due to construction activities. —APP

KP hospitals resume health card plus services

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Provincial Health Minister, Syed Qasim Ali Shah Tuesday announced reactivation of free healthcare services under the Health Card Plus initiative for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He made this announcement while addressing a press conference here in Information Cell at Civil Secretariat. Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah shared that the Health Card initiative began in 2015, initially covering four districts of the province. By 2020, the scheme had expanded to cover the entire province, with an annual expenditure of 18 billion rupees. The Health Minister, along with Chief Executive Sehat Sahulat

Program Dr. Riaz Tanoli and Program Director Dr. Jaz, provided updates on the ongoing efforts. Praising the successful implementation of Health Card services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Minister Shah stated that 1800 different medical treatments are now available for free in 118 public and private hospitals catering to various specialties across the province. He highlighted that a significant amount of ten million rupees had already been spent on the admission of seven hundred patients by noon on Tuesday. This reflects a fulfilment of Ex. Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision, which has been rejuvenated, and currently, an average of three billion rupees is spent monthly on the Health Card.



ISLAMABAD: Peoples waiting for their turn in a queue for subsidized flour on a Utility Store at the Federal Capital.— ONLINE

KRPA to offer incentives for economic documentation

PESHAWAR

: Director General KPRA Miss Fouzia Iqbal held a meeting with the Advisor to Chief Minister on Finance Mr. Muzammil Aslam at his office on Tuesday. The DG KPRA briefed the Advisor on Finance about tax rates in different sectors, major revenue streams, and the overall collection of KPRA in the past eight months of the current financial year. The strategy for tax collection in the remaining four months of the ongoing financial year was discussed, and the DG KPRA assured the advisor that her team is making every effort to achieve the revenue target assigned to the authority by the provincial government. Advisor to KPRA on Tax Enforcement Mr. Fazal Amin Shah also accompanied DG KPRA and responded to the queries. The advisor was informed that KPRA has collected Rs26.86 billion by February 2024, and the target for the current year is Rs42 billion. The Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance mentioned that the tax policy for the next financial year will be formulated after consultations with all stakeholders. He directed the DG KPRA and her team to arrange pre-budget consultations with representatives from chambers of commerce and industries, owners' associations of restaurants, hotels, wedding halls, car showrooms, and catering service providers for discussions. It was decided that KPRA would start lottery schemes for restaurants/hotels to encourage documentation of economy and tax acculturation in the province and incentivize the restaurants/hotels business across the province including the newly merged districts. —APP

IG Punjab inspects Qurban lines development

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Inspector General Punjab Police Dr. Usman Anwar visited Qurban Lines and inspected the on-going development works in various offices. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar visited the Telecommunication & Transport Headquarters and reviewed the ongoing construction works. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar also visited Security & Technical Procurement Headquarters. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that the Telecommunication & Transport Wing has an important role in establishing law and order and modern policing. IG Punjab directed the police officers to complete the construction and renovation of the offices within the stipulated deadline. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar

said that control rooms in telecommunication and security and technical procurement headquarters are being equipped with modern resources, provision of modern resources will further improve the performance of official affairs. Dr. Usman Anwar said that modern resources and facilities will be available in the provision of policing services with the up gradation of headquarters. IG Punjab directed the officers to complete the upgrade of police offices across the province on modern lines as soon as possible. Earlier on, security of religious places in PUNJAB beefed up. The Punjab Police has formulated security arrangements of religious places of the province during Ramazan and a security plan has been finalised for all 36,433 mosques, 2,179 imambargahs, 444 minority

places of worship across the province. Inspector General of Punjab Police Dr. Usman Anwar said more than 74,000 police officers, officials and community volunteers would be deployed for the security of religious places while 200 walkthrough gates and more than 12,000 metal detectors would be used for sensitive places. He said that search operations and patrolling had been increased around mosques, imambargahs and places of worship. During Sehri and Iftar timings, Dolphin Squad, PRU, Elite teams would carry out patrolling. Dr. Anwar said all activities would be continuously monitored with the help of the Safe City cameras. He said that with the co-operation of the citizens, an atmosphere of peace would be ensured during Ramazan and the evil elements would be held accountable.

RDA cracks down on illegal Green Hawks

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) here on Tuesday launched an operation and took strict action in accordance with the law against illegal housing scheme Green Hawks. According to a RDA spokesman, the Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate RDA demolished infrastructures while carrying out a grand operation against illegal housing scheme namely Green Hawks (Hartus Floare Farm). He said the DG RDA Kinza Murataza was supervising the operations against

illegal constructions in approved and illegal housing societies. The spokesman said that grand operation against all illegal constructions would continue without any discrimination and no one would be allowed to loot the citizens. He informed that the citizens had been advised not to invest in illegal housing schemes and visit the RDA website www.rda.gov.pk or visit the RDA office to get information. Notices were issued to the owners and sponsors of the housing scheme and directed to stop illegal advertise-

ments, booking of the plots and development work, he added. The owners of the illegal housing schemes were running booking offices of illegal housing schemes in violation of the rules. The operation team In-charge Enforcement Squad RDA /Assistant Director Building Control Muhammad Usman Bajwa, Assistant Director Planning Mehwish Naseem, police team from Police Station Chontra, RDA Scheme/ Building Inspectors and other team members took part in the grand operation, he added.

Authorities crack down on Nullah Lai Garbage

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak has directed the authorities concerned to take strict action against those throwing garbage in Nullah Lai. According to a Commissioner Office spokesperson, the Commissioner while presiding over a meeting regarding development schemes instructed the officers to take strict action against those throwing garbage and building materials in Nullah Lai. Director Development, Nazia Sudhan, Deputy Commissioner, Rawalpindi. —APP

آغوش کالج مری

کفالت یتیم سے
جنت کا حصول بھی --- رفاقت رسول بھی

تقدیر بدلنے کا فن جانتی ہے
تو کیا ہی افضل ہو کسی یتیم کی دُعا لے لی جائے

آپ بھی زکوٰۃ و عطیات دے کر شامل ہو جائیں --- لاکھوں دُعاؤں میں

ACCOUNT NO.
0803-0100271726

ACCOUNT Title
Aghosh (Project of Alkhidmat Foundation)

میزان بینک (چاندنی چوک راولپنڈی)

IBAN: PK62MEZN0008030100271726

0300-6777030 / 0345-9393554 [برائے رابطہ](#)

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

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....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
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding IT and Telecom Sector.—DNA.

HEC Pak has developed a course on Pakistan Studies

In this connection, the HEC Course Design Committee held a significant meeting at HEC Regional Centre, Karachi to formulate a two-credit course titled, 'Pakistan Studies' for undergraduate programmes

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has developed a course on Pakistan Studies, emphasising its incorporation in the education component of Undergraduate Education Policy V. 1.1. In this connection, the HEC Course Design Committee held a significant meeting at HEC Regional Centre, Karachi to formulate a two-credit course

titled, 'Pakistan Studies' for undergraduate programmes.

Deputy Director, HEC, Mr. Muhammad Ali Baig commenced the session by elucidating the rationale and parameters guiding the consultation process. He emphasised the imperative for a meticulously crafted course on Pakistan Studies that offers students a comprehensive exploration of Pakistan's identity, encompassing its geographical, historical, and cultural dimensions. The committee

comprised distinguished experts in the field, including Chairperson Department of Pakistan Studies, Government College University, Faisalabad, Prof. Dr. Abdul Qadir Mush-taq; Chairman Department of Pakistan Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Prof. Dr. Javed Akhtar Salyana; Chairman Department of History & Pakistan Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Dr. Mahboob Hussain; Director Pakistan Study Centre, University of Balochistan,

Quetta, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Usman; Director Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Prof. Dr. Naumana Kiran; Director Pakistan Study Centre, University of Sindh, Jamshore, Dr. Shuja Ahmed Mahesar; Director National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Hanif Khan; Chairperson Department of Pakistan Studies, Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Associate Professor Dr. Robina

Yasmin; and In-charge Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi, Assistant Professor Dr. Erum Muzaffar. The committee designed the course and underscored the importance of its incorporation into the general education component of the Undergraduate Education Policy V 1.1. However, it underlined that the course should not serve as a substitute for the existing "Ideology and Constitution of Pakistan" course as outlined in the same policy.

Estate Office allots 1,227 govt accommodations in two year

ISLAMABAD: The Estate Office, Ministry of Housing and Works has allotted as many as 1,227 quarters of Cat-IV, government accommodations to the federal government employees during the last two years. "The department has made all the allotments on merit by keeping view of the seniority of the government employees who are working in different ministries and divisions," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said that the Ministry of Housing and Works also intends to modify government accommodation allocation rules to facilitate federal government employees.

The official said a proposed amendment to modify the Allocation Rules, 2002 is under consideration which will be implemented shortly. He said the ministry plans to eliminate Rule-20 of Government House Allotment. This rule currently allows a government house allocated to a retired federal employee to be assigned to their employed son or daughter. The official said the waiting list employees are of the view that the rule is based on injustice to transfer the government house from father to child on retirement as it deprives the right of senior employees who have been waiting

for a long time. He said the officers and employees get their son or daughter recruited before retirement and the house is allotted to them, adding that the affected employees are demanding that the allotment of houses should be done only on the principle of seniority. In this regard, he said that the Secretary Ministry of Housing and Works had also constituted a committee for reforms in the rules which has recommended that Rule-20 be scrapped. However, they said that an opinion would be taken from the Establishment Division and the Ministry of Law and Justice.

Interior Minister Mohsin announces to forego salary

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior & Narcotics control Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday announced to forego his salary during his tenure as minister. He made an announcement on social media application X and stated that in this challenging time, he was committed to support and serving the nation in every possible ways. Earlier, the minister had a meeting with lawyers' community in Lahore in a simple gathering organized in his honor in a local hotel. Former President Supreme Court Bar Ahsan Bhawan, Federal Minister of Law Senator Azam Nazir Tarar and the officials of Paki-

stan and Punjab Bar Council attended the meeting. Advocate General Punjab and officials of various bar associations also participated in the function. The lawyer leaders pay tributes to Mohsin Naqvi for his unparalleled performance as Chief Minister of Punjab. They said that Mohsin Speed excelled at every level and completed public projects with surprising speed in a short period of time. The lawyer leaders congratulated Mohsin Naqvi on his appointment as a federal minister and expressed good wishes. The minister said that he would do his best to pay back to the country in the best interest and fulfill the responsibility that Allah had given to him. He said that he did best for the lawyers what he could do for the community because lawyers' community was very close to his heart. "I believe in team work and team work brings the best results" the minister added. The lawyer leaders thanked Mohsin Naqvi for the record work for the welfare of the lawyers community.—APP

ECOSF to arrange lecture series

ISLAMABAD: The ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) and the Union of Iranian Societies of Mathematical Sciences (UIMS) are jointly arranging Lecture Series on Popularizing Mathematics and Science, virtually. As a part of this series, an engaging and enlightening Mathematical Popularizing Talk will be held on March 14 where the participants will delve into the fascinating world of Mathematics. According to an official of ECOSF, renowned Expert, Imran Parvez Khan will deliver lecture on the topic "Symmetry of Frieze Patterns" which will be attended by a number of participants including students and researchers. Frieze patterns are decorative patterns found in nature and in man-made art. All frieze can be grouped into seven types. This presentation will be interactive and the participants will get to see various frieze patterns and will be able to classify them into one of the seven types, according to their specific symmetries. An algorithm will be shared for determining the symmetry group of any frieze pattern. ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) is a Specialized Agency of the ECO for promotion of Science and Technology leading to economic development. The Basic Charter of ECO was formed under the Treaty of Izmir as a result of the meeting of the member countries held in Izmir, Turkey on 12th March, 1977. It envisaged the establishment of ECO Science Foundation as a specialized agency of ECO to function as a reservoir of highly skilled scientific and technical manpower and to facilitate promotion of scientific research among the Member States.—DNA

Fatima Fertilizer and Atif Aslam join hands

D NA

ISLAMABAD: Embark on a journey of soulful dedication as Fatima Fertilizer unwraps its harmonious collaboration with the renowned vocalist Atif Aslam. Together, they bring new life into the classic masterpiece "Allah Hu". This rendition promises to captivate the audience during the sacred month of Ramzan, a time when people come together in unity and compassion, embracing the spirit of kindness and appreciation. The video has been published on the social media platforms of Sarsabz Fertilizer. "The essence of Ramzan lies in the belief that Allah Almighty will bestow His abundant blessings upon humanity when they call upon Him with faith and conviction. "Allah hu, as a symbol of faith, reflects the essence of every Muslim's prayer for His mercy and blessings. We chose to introduce a mesmerizing rendition of "Allah hu" with the aspiration that these verses will rejuvenate our nation's spirit, reminding everyone that with prayer and perseverance, we can overcome any obstacle in life.

Shaza appointed as Minister of State for IT

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz MNA Shaza Fatiam Khawaja has been assigned the portfolio of Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication. "The Prime Minister has been pleased to allocate the portfolio of information Technology and Telecommunication to Shaza Fatima Khawaja Minister for State with immediate effect," said a notification issued by the Prime Minister office here on Tuesday.

Preservation work on historical Rawat Fort underway

ISLAMABAD: The preservation, restoration and development work is underway on historical Rawat Fort, an ancient Sarai located along the G.T Road. The efforts put into preserving Rawat Fort will not only halt its decay but will also secure its heritage for generations to come, while boosting tourism both nationally and regionally, an official of Department of Archaeology and Museum (DOAM) told APP. He said that the inclusive aspect of the project, noting that the archaeological excavation, conservation, and restoration works would generate employment opportunities in the local area. Rawat Fort, an ancient Sarai located along the G.T Road, has historical significance dating back to the Sultanate period in the early 15th century A.D. Associated with tales of Mahmud of Ghazna's son Masud and the valiant Ghakhar Chief Sarang Khan, the fortress holds a rich tapestry of narratives within its walls. Presently, the Fort exhibits two gateways on its northern and eastern sides, a three-domed Mosque in the Western Wing's heart, and an octagonal single-domed Mausoleum in the North-Western corner.—APP



General Practice

HEALTHCARE CENTRE



Keeping you Healthy!

Welcome to Islamabad's finest private medical centre, where your complete wellbeing is our top priority. Keeping you healthy and in good physical condition is at the heart of everything we do. Our aim is to establish long-term trusting relationships with our patients and their families, offering them easy accessibility to health and continuity of care.

+92334 7474701 | +92 51 8900 682
28, Ground Floor, Executive Complex,
G-8 Markaz, Islamabad

/generalpracticeislamabad
www.generalpractice.com.pk

Briefs

Muslims across country welcome Ramadan

ISLAMABAD: With the start of the holy month of Ramadan, all the holy mosques across the country provided worshippers a conducive environment to offer their prayers at the mosque with serenity and sanctity. A large number of enthusiastic citizens had observed first Sehri at homes while a huge influx of people was also seen in restaurants as well, said a report aired by a private news channel. "We are making every effort to give the worshippers a conducive environment to offer their prayers at the mosque with serenity and sanctity," said an administrative officer in a local mosque. Special arrangements were also made for Sehri and iftar in mosques, said an Imam. A heavy rush of the faithful was witnessed in the mosques with the advent of the holy month of Ramzan, said another imam of a mosque, adding, special prayers were also offered for the prosperity and integrity of the country and the well-being of the people. Mosques and charities across the country are also organizing free iftar tables for the poorest, said a citizen. Daytime fasting and nighttime prayers spiritually energize the worshippers to lead a new life, benefiting the whole of humanity and opening a new chapter of peace and progress, said another citizen. Strengthening the bond of love and friendship, the big iftar gatherings in Ramadan with varieties of food, spicy dishes, sweets, fruits, and beverages by the fasting Muslims and minorities build a spirit of affection and brotherhood, besides leaving positive effects on humans for a long time, commented a shopkeeper.—APP

Free cataract surgery camp held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A ten-day free cataract surgery camp, jointly organized by COMSTECH, Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Rawalpindi, and Al-Nur Foundation (Somalia), concluded with a successful outcome, restoring vision to hundreds in Somalia. The camp, held at Dalmar Specialized and Teaching Hospital in Mogadishu, aimed to eliminate avoidable blindness in the country. Over 5,632 patients were screened, with 550 identified for cataract surgery. A total of 401 surgeries were performed successfully by expert ophthalmologists from Al-Shifa Trust. The initiative received high praise from Somali dignitaries. Senator Prof. Osman Dufle, Chairman of the Social Affairs Committee at the Somali Parliament, and former ministers commended the efforts of COMSTECH and Al-Shifa Trust. Prof. M.M. Hassan Bidey, Rector of Benadir University, expressed a desire for continued collaboration. The surgeries were conducted following strict WHO protocols, ensuring patient safety and quality care. Patients received post-operative monitoring and guidance on medication use. Additionally, the team met with Hamza Adan Haadoow, Permanent Secretary of the Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss future endeavors.

China and Pakistan enjoy great potential: NPC deputy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China and Pakistan enjoy great potential in marine energy exploration, said Yan Hongtao, a deputy to the National People's Congress and the general manager of China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Tianjin. "We can engage in more comprehensive cooperation on joint marine energy exploration and development, and strengthen the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between China and Pakistan," he stated according to China Economic Net (CEN). As the pioneer of offshore oil and gas resource exploration in China, CNOOC has active-

Tribute paid to builders of Karakoram Highway

The event was organized by the China Study Centre (CSC) International Office, Confucius-Set, and School of Professional Development and Education (SPDCE) to pay tribute to the engineers and workers who lost their lives during the construction of KKH, a route that connects the two brotherly nations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The students, teachers, and officials of Karakoram International University paid tribute to the martyrs of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) at the Chinese Memorial Cemetery aka 'China Yadgar' in Danyore, Gilgit Baltistan. The event was organized by the China Study Centre (CSC) International Office, Confucius-Set, and School of Professional Development

and Education (SPDCE) to pay tribute to the engineers and workers who lost their lives during the construction of KKH, a route that connects the two brotherly nations. During the event, participants laid flower wreaths over the graves of Chinese martyrs who sacrificed their lives during the construction of KKH, also known as the Eighth Wonder of the World. Senior officials from CSC, SPDCE, and Director of Public Relations at KIU, Amjad Ali, partic-

ipated in the event. They spoke about the importance of KKH, Sino-Pak relations, and the role of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the economic development of Pakistan. Dr. Khalid Mehmood Alam, Assistant Professor at CSC, KIU, discussed the historical perspective of KKH. Fifty-four Chinese individuals are buried in the cemetery. "Due to the sacrifices of Chinese and Pakistani workers, today both countries are connected," said Mr. Mahmood,

adding that China and Pakistan were always together in grief and happiness. Dr. Sajjad Haider remarked that the sacrifices of the Chinese martyrs would always be remembered. He highlighted that the journey, which began with the construction of KKH, has continued to evolve. Today, KKH stands as an integral part of CPEC, creating economic opportunities and improving the lives of people in both nations. KKH, also known as the China-Pakistan Friend-

ship Highway, is a 1,300-kilometer highway that stretches from Hasanabdul in Punjab to GB in Pakistan and further extends into China. Constructed between 1966 and 1977, KKH stands as a symbol of the strong bond between China and Pakistan. Tragically, the construction claimed the lives of 692 Pakistanis and 108 Chinese workers, highlighting the sacrifices made to create this vital route of connectivity and friendship. Gwadar Pro reported.



ISLAMABAD: "In the heart of Islamabad, General Manager Otto Kurzendorfer of Serena Hotel spearheads the esteemed Diplomatic Hiking Corps on an exhilarating journey through the picturesque Margalla Hills. This exclusive hiking club boasts the participation of esteemed heads of missions and diplomats from diverse countries, fostering camaraderie and diplomatic relations amidst the breathtaking natural beauty of the region. —DNA

Railways earn Rs 55 bln in eight months

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has earned Rs 55 billion in the first eight months of the current financial year 2023-24, despite facing a financial crisis due to floods in the monsoon season. During the first eight months of the last financial year (2022-23), the department earned Rs 37 billion, a historic increase in revenue during the same period of the current financial year (2023-24), a minis-

try official told APP.

According to the data, he said that out of the revenue of Rs 55 billion, revenue was derived from passenger and freight trains while other sectors of the department also contributed to the total revenue. The department is expecting to generate revenues up to Rs 80 billion by the end of this financial year through the consistent efforts and hard work of the Railway workers, the official added. At present, he said that Pakistan Railways is operating 96 passenger trains,

up from the previous year when 86 trains were running. Similarly, during the previous year, on average it operated 3.75 freight trains while the number reached seven freight trains this year. He said the department emphasized that the issue of delay in payment of salaries to employees has now been resolved and things will be more streamlined, once work on the Mainline-I (ML-I) project kicks off. The official said that owing to inflationary pressures, led by high fuel costs, Pakistan Railways has

increased its fares, both for passenger and freight segments that would help the cash-strapped corporation to fetch better revenues in the next few months. To a question, he said that Pakistan Railways has beefed up precautionary measures to reduce passenger train accidents and only six minor accidents with no casualty took place on the entire railway network in the country during the last three months. "Only two train accidents have taken place in September, no accident happened in October

and four train accidents occurred in November due to effective steps of the department," he added. The drastic decrease in accidents has been witnessed due to the efforts being undertaken to reduce trespassing at unmanned level crossings and unauthorized locations, he added. "Our staff is continuously monitoring the railway tracks across the country and conducting thorough inspection of the trains as the safety of the passengers is the top priority of the department," he said.

Attallah Tarar assumes charge

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Attallah Tarar on Tuesday assumed charge as Minister of Information and Broadcasting. Federal Secretary of Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid along with other senior officers of the ministry welcomed the minister on his arrival at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Attallah Tarar is a senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) who was elected Member of National Assembly from Constituency NA-127 from Lahore in the February 8 elections. After taking oath as Federal Minister in the President's House, today he assumed his duties in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

On his arrival at the Ministry of Information, Attallah Tarar said the doors of the Ministry of Information would remain open for the journalist community. He stressed the need for the promotion of positive and constructive journalism in the country and strengthening the relationship between the government and the media. Attallah Tarar said he will work together with the media to communicate the government's initiatives and policies to the people. He remarked that the media played the role of a bridge between the people and the government and this role needed to be played in a better manner.—APP

President Zardari decides not to draw his salary

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Mar 12 (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has decided, in view of the prevailing economic challenges, that he will not draw his presidential salary. "He took this decision to encourage prudent financial management in the country. The President considered it essential not to burden the national exchequer and preferred to forgo his salary," President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Tuesday.

First protectorate office opens

ISLAMABAD: In a momentous occasion that signifies Pakistan's commitment to promoting safe and legal migration, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development has launched the first-ever Protectorate of Emigrants Office in the capital city of Islamabad. An official source told APP, this groundbreaking initiative not only underscores the government's dedication to ensuring the welfare of its citizens seeking employment abroad but also positions Islamabad as a focal point for international collaboration on labor and migration issues. The inauguration of the Islamabad Protectorate Office, closely following the recent opening of two protectorate offices in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), in Bagh and Rawalakot, further amplifies the government's efforts in streamlining migration services across the country. These steps are reflective of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development's ongoing mission to facilitate the journey of Pakistani workers abroad, ensur-

ing their rights and well-being are prioritized at every stage. He highlighted the strategic importance of establishing the Protectorate in Islamabad, a city that hosts numerous international organizations, including labor and migration entities as well as foreign embassies. "The inauguration of the Islamabad Protectorate Office is not just a milestone for our capital but a testament to Pakistan's resolve in championing the causes of safe and legal migration globally," he added. This office will serve as the model protectorate, showcasing our commitment to excellence and our readiness to collaborate with international partners in upholding global migration standards." The Islamabad Protectorate Office is set to become a model for migration services, offering comprehensive support to individuals seeking overseas employment opportunities. It aims to serve as a beacon of hope and assurance for the Pakistani workforce, facilitating their access to legitimate employment avenues and safeguarding their rights across borders.—APP

AIR LINK FLAGSHIP STORE
XINHUA MALL, LAHORE

Head Office - 152/1 M, Quaid-e-Azam Industrial Estate, Kot Lakhpat, Lahore

www.airlinkcommunication.com @airlinkALC airlinkcommunication airlinkcommunication

Ukraine aid boosts vitality of US economy

The \$60 billion assistance package that includes new aid to Ukraine stalled in the United States Congress since early last month due to the opposition of Republicans, who have been demanding that the White House address the security crisis on the border with Mexico. But with US President Joe Biden ramping up his reelection campaign, his administration has become more straightforward about the nature of the Ukraine aid, which they admit is actually a booster for the US economy. Speaking at a meeting of the White House Competition Council on Tuesday last week, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin claimed that the US' military assistance to Kyiv has not only "saved lives" and kept Ukraine in the fight, but also has been a boon for the US economy. "These investments have expanded facilities and created jobs for American workers. And the weapons that we've sent to Ukraine to help defend itself are made in America by American workers nationwide — from Texas, to Ohio, to Arizona," he said. By singling out Texas, which is the focus of the border policy dispute, and Ohio and Arizona, both key swing states in the presidential election, the Pentagon chief was apparently trying to insinuate to the voters in these states that the Republicans are threatening to take away their jobs by not approving the aid. The US has been Ukraine's main military backer, providing Kyiv with around \$45 billion in arms between January 2022 and January 2024, while the total commitments have reached more than \$70 billion, according to Germany's Kiel Institute for the World Economy. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has also admitted that roughly 90 percent of the financial assistance for Ukraine is spent on the domestic production of weapons and equipment, saying that additional tranches would "benefit American business, local communities, and strengthen the US defense industrial base". Last month, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland delivered a similar message in an interview with the media, saying that she had "strong confidence" that the assistance package will be approved, as it addresses the US' own interests. "We have to remember that the bulk of this money is going right back into the US economy, to make weapons, including good-paying jobs in some 40 states across the US," she said, adding that support for Ukraine in the US "is still strong". However, the latter is not the case. According to a survey from the Harris Poll and the Quincy Institute last month, roughly 70 percent of Americans want the Biden administration to push Ukraine toward a negotiated peace with Russia as soon as possible. A growing number of US citizens do not support US military aid to Kyiv unless it is tied to peace talks. They undoubtedly demonstrate a markedly higher moral standard than the US politicians in believing that it is peace rather than money that should be the goal of the US' policy, while the latter, be they Democrats or Republicans, make their Ukraine policies in lieu of a sole criterion of whether the US can make money from the mess and whether they can make political capital from it. That callousness and hypocrisy were only reinforced by Biden's State of the Union Address last week in which the US president mentioned Ukraine eight times but only to tell the US people that the Republicans are preventing the US from making money out of the Ukraine chaos.



US 'performance' politics fuels crisis

Michael Fakhri, UN special rapporteur on the right to food, has hit the nail on the head. Speaking of the United States' recent food aid measures for the Palestinians in Gaza at a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva last week, he said they were a "performance" for a domestic audience in the US with the presidential election coming up. That's the only rational coherent interpretation for these aid announcements, he said, because "from a humanitarian perspective, from an international perspective, from a human rights perspective", the aid is "absurd in a dark, cynical way", given the US' military aid to Israel continues. No wonder Fakhri tried to remind the world in the Geneva meeting that Israel is destroying Gaza's food system as part of a broader "starvation campaign", as Tel Aviv is weaponizing its control of the food aid to the Palestinians in Gaza. At least 30,800 Palestinians have been killed and over 72,298 injured amid mass destruction and shortages of necessities, according to Palestinian sources. Meanwhile, the Israeli military has pushed 85 percent of Gaza's population into internal displacement amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicine, while 60 percent of the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN. The hypocrisy of the Joe Biden administration when it comes to food aid to the Gaza refugees is also evidenced by it wearing the same pants with Tel Aviv in obstructing the functioning of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in Gaza, and it insisting that Israel be in charge of inspecting and controlling all aid to the refugees, which actually takes the form of Israeli trickle irrigation, leaving the majority of Gaza's 2 million residents in a state of quasi famine. The absurdity of the US providing humanitarian aid to one side while providing weapons to the other exposes the self-serving callousness at the heart of US politics, in which human suffering, whether at home or overseas, is simply collateral damage for the partisan struggle. The two parties' divergent attitudes toward the ongoing Ukraine crisis, another instance of US-orchestrated geopolitical carnage, is a further telling illustration of the "performance" politics that now prevails in the US, with the two parties vying to make it an issue for their electioneering. With the Republicans holding a military aid package hostage to immigration action on the country's southern border, the Biden administration is packaging support for Israel's "self-defense campaign" as a means to advance the US' geopolitical interests in the Middle East against the backdrop of its broader agenda targeting Iran and Russia. The protraction of the Gaza and Ukraine crises would be regarded as spillover effects of the US' incorrigible partisan struggle. Both parties in the US should show they retain some humanity by opposing and condemning Israel's acts against civilians and international law. They should set aside their one-upmanship and call on Israel to stop its military operations as soon as possible and do everything possible to prevent a more devastating humanitarian disaster unfolding.

Imran's misconstrued "truth and reconciliation"

Qamar Bashir



Allegedly, the Establishment effectively manipulated the unfortunate events of May 9th, launching a relentless counterattack on the PTI from all angles and achieving several objectives. Imran Khan, once viewed as invincible due to his substantial public support, was ultimately arrested and imprisoned. Over 200 cases were filed against him, including prominent ones like the Cypher case, Toosha Khana Case, and illegal Nikah case. Consequently, Khan was disqualified from holding any public office. The entire top leadership of the PTI faced arrest, with some members going into hiding. Thousands of party workers were detained, cut off from communication

The PTI's current leadership is actively seeking to reconcile with the powerful establishment by extending an olive branch. However, the establishment, feeling betrayed and angered by Imran Khan and the PTI, appears reluctant to forgive and forget. This rift deepened notably after Imran Khan's aggressive criticism of the armed forces. His blatant and fierce onslaught on the armed forces challenged their alleged hegemony in civilian affairs, marking one of the most severe attacks on their rule since the 1971 criticism. The armed forces responded decisively, viewing Khan's aggression as akin to an enemy attack, and deployed all available resources to repel it, ultimately prevailing in the conflict.

Allegedly, the Establishment effectively manipulated the unfortunate events of May 9th, launching a relentless counterattack on the PTI from all angles and achieving several objectives. Imran Khan, once viewed as invincible due to his substantial public support, was ultimately arrested and imprisoned. Over 200 cases were filed against him, including prominent ones like the Cypher case, Toosha Khana Case, and illegal Nikah case. Consequently, Khan was disqualified from holding any public office. The entire top leadership of the PTI faced arrest, with some members going into hiding. Thousands of party workers were detained, cut off from communication with their families. Furthermore, numerous journalists who supported the PTI found themselves behind bars. The media faced censorship regarding any mention of Imran Khan's name, while the PTI's party symbol was revoked. Additionally, the party was stripped of its quota of women and minority seats in the national assembly. Subsequently, the entire PTI was absorbed into another smaller party, Sunni Ittehad, effectively sidelining the PTI from the national discourse. PTI alleged that the establishment orchestrated the election results, effectively turning PTI's winning candidates into losers. According to PTI, based on the compiled results from form 45, they had secured a clear majority in Punjab and at the center. However, their apparent victory was overturned through widespread, blatant, and shameless rigging, depriving the PTI of the mandate bestowed upon them by the people of Pakistan. The fierce and unrelenting counterattack dealt a decisive blow to Imran Khan and the remaining leadership of the PTI, leaving them with a stark realization: without the forgiveness of the Establishment and an end to the relentless attacks on PTI and its members, their political survival remains uncertain. It became evident that the party's revival hinges on reconciliation with the Establishment and an end to hostilities towards PTI, its leadership, and its supporters. They fully realize that until they mend fences with the Establishment, they will never have the level playing

field enjoyed by other political parties to pursue their manifestos. However, they may have underestimated that the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission typically stems from a position of strength, not weakness. The concept of Truth and Reconciliation is a framework for addressing past injustices and human rights violations, particularly in the aftermath of conflicts or periods of repression. It aims to promote healing and societal reconciliation by acknowledging and addressing the truth of past wrongs, fostering accountability, and facilitating forgiveness and understanding among affected communities. The concept gained prominence in the late 20th century, notably through initiatives such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa, launched following the end of apartheid under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The TRC provided a platform for victims and perpetrators to testify about their experiences, with the aim of uncovering the truth, promoting reconciliation, and preventing future atrocities. The objectives of Truth and Reconciliation processes typically include: Establishing an accurate historical record of human rights violations and abuses. Providing a forum for victims to share their experiences and receive acknowledgment and recognition of their suffering. Holding perpetrators accountable for their actions through mechanisms such as public hearings or trials. Promoting reconciliation and healing among divided communities by fostering empathy, understanding, and forgiveness. Recommending measures to address the root causes of conflict and prevent future atrocities. In line with this concept, the PTI Chairman has notably softened his rhetoric against the establishment, a departure from his previous stance, which often involved confrontational rhetoric. This change came after his arrest and media ban, prompting a shift in approach. The PTI leadership now maintains a clear and persistent stance that they are no longer in conflict with the establishment. They have ceased defending the events of May 9th and are instead advocating for an independent judicial commission to investigate the incident. Their demand is for thorough scrutiny of evidence and testimonies, with individuals implicated to face legal consequences if found guilty, while those innocent should be exonerated.

The party has distanced itself from former army officers-turned-social media activists stationed abroad, who were critical of the armed forces. Rather than directly blaming the armed forces for alleged rigging, PTI now directs its criticism towards the Election Commission and interim government. They pledge to wage political struggle within the confines of constitutional rights and laws, vowing not to resort to vigilantism. Rather than issuing threats, PTI advocates for the establishment of

a judicial commission to investigate rigging allegations and ensure justice for all victims. Despite being victims of alleged rigging and experiencing setbacks to their mandate, PTI conducts itself responsibly in parliament, raising concerns about perceived injustices without directly implicating the establishment. But there is a big problem: There are significant differences between the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa and any hypothetical commission in Pakistan. In South Africa, the TRC was established under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, who had spent decades fighting for equal rights for black people and eventually became president. He initiated the commission from a position of strength, not while he was imprisoned.

In Pakistan, the feasibility of implementing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is highly questionable, particularly given the current political dynamics. With Imran Khan's party facing significant challenges for survival and the entrenched power of the establishment, the likelihood of accepting the principles of truth and reconciliation, especially those involving accountability mechanisms, is slim. The establishment is unlikely to endorse procedures such as public hearings or trials for holding perpetrators accountable and addressing the root causes of conflict. Key components of TRC, such as public testimonies, documentation of atrocities, community dialogues, reparations programs, and educational initiatives fostering understanding and tolerance, would face strong opposition and resistance from the establishment.

Though this concept was copied by many countries including Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Canada. In some cases the Truth and Reconciliation commissions succeeded in uncovering the truth of past atrocities, promoting healing and reconciliation, and laying the groundwork for lasting peace and stability. In other cases, challenges such as limited political will, ongoing conflict, or resistance from perpetrators hindered the effectiveness of Truth and Reconciliation efforts. Proposing the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in the current Pakistani context is not only inappropriate but also misguided. The concept of TRC, as perceived by PTI and its leadership, appears flawed. Moreover, the timing couldn't be worse: the Establishment holds unassailable power, while Imran Khan finds himself incarcerated and PTI is in disarray. Frontline leaders have deserted the party, and second-tier figures are struggling for survival. Given these circumstances, PTI may need to wait for a considerable period until conditions become conducive for initiating a TRC.

Zardari back to presidency again!

Waheed Hussain



hough with some irritants Asif Ali Zardari also restored the former Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Choudhry and other judges removed by Pervaiz Musharraf in 2007 by imposing emergency. The time when the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Shaheed was assassinated in Rawalpindi

Asif Ali Zardari has been elected the President of Pakistan for the second time. Earlier he remained the head of state between 2008 to 2013, when late President General Pervaiz Musharraf had to resign from the highest constitutional position of the country, due to impeachment decision by the then PPP-PML(N) coalition government. The President Zardari transferred the presidential powers to the prime minister and cabinet under the 18th constitutional amendment. The same amendment also transferred powers from center to provincial governments and increased their financial resources share under the National Finance Commission Award (NFC). Though with some irritants Asif Ali Zardari also restored the former Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Choudhry and other judges removed by Pervaiz Musharraf in 2007 by imposing emergency. The time when the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Shaheed was assassinated in Rawalpindi in the terrorist attack on 27 December 2007, lot of concerns were expressed about the future of peoples' party as the late Benazir's children including Bilawal Bhutto was very young at that time. It was Asif Ali Zardari who kept the party united and remained relevant to the power politics in the country. He held successful negotiations both with internal and external powers to play a positive role in the changing national and international political scene. He engaged both with the then establishment and the political forces for the power sharing formula. It was because of him that the PPP were re-elected for the fourth time in Sindh province and Zardari became the president of Pakistan for second time. He knows, what to say, where and when? He always

tried to reconcile with all stakeholders in the country. He is one of those few politicians who learned a lot from two historically tragic events in his life. First, the time he spent in the jail facing dozens of cases. Most of those cases have ended up without conviction as the prosecution has failed to provide substantial evidence to prove the allegation true. As a result, the courts provided him a clean chit. The second was the death of his wife the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. In all his political moves he always drew a red line not to be crossed. He does not believe on the absolute power. He always tries to share the power with all the players in politics and state institutions. He knows his limitations and acts accordingly. He follows the policy of caring and sharing. This is one of the basic secrets of his success and survival in the power politics. He knows his strength and the weaknesses too. In the politics he never gives an impression of being an egoist or subservient to his pride. It is the pride which traps the people to commit mistakes like a Shakespearean tragic hero. Zardari has changed his attitude and personality with the passage of time. Since the death of BB Shaheed, he most of the time tries to forgive and forget. Intelligently he negotiated with political parties and state institutions since 2007. He always uses the power sharing formula in the best manner. Through his power of negotiation, he convinced PML (N), MQMP and other regional and religious parties to be part of various governments in the last 17 years. It was Asif Ali Zardari's PPP which convinced the PTI in 2014 to take back its MNAs resignations from the then National Assembly. For him his political opponents are not his permanent enemies, rather,

seasonal competitors which could be brought to his own side as and when the time requires. His policy of flexibility has brought him back to the presidency. He does not keep permanent enemies. He has the capacity to forgive the people who has been involved in inflicting punishment to him and his family in the past. He is not prisoner of his past but a future looking politician always exploring the possibilities of gaining through tactful decisions and policies. He knows one principle how to gain power and maximize it. He formed governments in Sindh and Baluchistan. Bilawal's comparison of his father position as president with the Queen of England indicated that he was not happy with the decision of Zardari to become president. No doubt in the parliamentary system president is powerless? But Asif Ali Zardari Knows that even if at some point of time the government or National Assembly has to face some challenge in the future, even then he will remain in the presidency for five years. As politician and as human being he cares for the friends and workers. He rewards the people who remain associated with him. Like many other politicians, he does not use friends and leave them. He always keeps a good relation with all his personal and political friends until they themselves abandon him. Despite Bilawal reluctance of joining the federal government it is expected that President Zardari will convince his son to be part of the government cabinet. This move will serve two purposes one to take the real ownership of all decisions taken by the central government and second the PPP ministers will be able to serve the voters and workers who have voted for the party. The biggest success of Asif Ali Zardari is that he does not want to develop any conflict either with establishment or judiciary.

Briefs

Pak-Turkiye trade should reach \$5 bn

FROM PAGE 01
He also reaffirmed Pakistan's support to Turkiye on the issue of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif reiterated his invitation to President Erdogan to visit Pakistan. He said the people of Pakistan looked forward to the visit that would also provide a useful opportunity for both sides to carry out extensive consultations during the 7th session of High Level Strategic Coordination Council (HLSCC).

Qatar says Israel, Hamas...

FROM PAGE 01
We are certainly using everything in our capabilities to push both sides to an agreement. "Our goal as a trusted mediator in this instance doesn't include that language [applying pressure on Hamas], which I don't agree [with]. I think we are positively and constructively engaging with both sides, and we are hopeful that we will find a resolution." As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 158 on Tuesday, massive aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound neighborhoods, homes, shelter centers and aid convoys, and massacre more civilians, mostly children and women.

Yemen claims...

FROM PAGE 01
Sariee affirmed the Yemeni armed forces would escalate their operations during the holy month of Ramadan in support of the oppressed Palestinian people and their resistance in the Gaza Strip. In a related context, different international media outlets said that the Yemeni missiles did not impact Pinocchio and there were no casualties or damage reported. The Ansarullah group and its armed forces in northern Yemen started their attacks on international shipping in mid-November last year in an attempt to put an end to the Israeli war crimes in Gaza.

10-member Sindh...

FROM PAGE 01
Ali Hassan Zardari, and Jam Khan Shoro. Most of the ministers have served in the CM Shah-led cabinet in the previous tenure, however, their portfolios have been reshuffled. Sharjeel Inam Memon has been given the portfolio of minister for transport, mass transit, excise, taxation, and narcotics, according to a CM House spokesperson. Dr Azra will serve as health and population welfare minister, as per the spokesperson, while Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has been assigned portfolios of energy, planning, and development ministries. Syed Sardar Ali Shah will serve as minister for education education and literacy, college education, and mines and minerals development.

Lahore to...

FROM PAGE 01
comprehensive plan in this regard at the earliest after consulting the management of these universities. The Chief Minister also approved the launch of free Wi-Fi pilot project in Lahore. She directed to start free Wi-Fi service preferably in educational institutions, at airports, railway stations and bus stands. Under the protect, in Phase-I, free Wi-Fi service will be launched at 10 locations in Lahore within two weeks. In total, free Wi-Fi sites will be established at 516 locations in Lahore. Earlier, the CEO CBD Mr Imran Amin gave a detailed presentation on IT City and Lahore Knowledge Park project. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Provincial Advisor Pervaiz Rashid, Information Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, MPA Sania Ashiq, Chief Secretary, SMBR, Chairman P&D, Secretary Housing, Secretary Higher Education, CEO Brig (Rtd) Mansoor Janjua DG LDA, Chairman PITB and other officers concerned also attended the meeting.

Luca Nardi stuns Djokovic in Indian Wells upset

World number one dumped out in three sets by Italian lucky loser

SPORTS DESK

PARIS : The world number 123 from Italy ended the 11-match win streak of the veteran Serb at Masters events, with Nardi bettering the childhood tennis idol whose poster hung above his bed from the age of eight. The 20-year-old was not awed by the big game of Djokovic, and broke Djokovic for a 4-2 lead in the deciding set before pounding out the victory three games later with a match point ace. The Italian finished with 36 winners and 41 unforced errors while Djokovic had 31 errors in just under two and a half hours. "Before this night no-one knew me," Nardi said in an on-court interview after his win. "I hope the crowd enjoyed the game; I'm super happy with this one." Asked how he had pulled off the biggest win of his career, Nardi replied: "I don't know. I think it really is a miracle. I'm a guy ranked outside the top 100 in the world and now I'm beating Novak - crazy, crazy." Nardi only reached the main draw in Indian Wells after a withdrawal. He had been beaten by Belgium's David Goffin in the final round of qualifying. Djokovic meanwhile attributed his defeat to a bad day at the office. "He got in as a lucky loser to the main draw, so



lose," Djokovic said of Nardi. "He deserved to win. I was more surprised with my level. My level was really, really bad. That's it, these two things come together - he's having a great day; I'm having a really bad day." In other games on Monday, seventh seed Holger Rune finally made it onto court after a first-round bye and a walk-over in the second round against injured Milos Raonic. The 20-year-old Dane got off and running in

defeat of Italy's Lorenzo Musetti. Fourth seed Daniil Medvedev had to struggle to get past Sebastian Korda 6-4, 5-7, 6-3, prevailing in a bizarre match containing 31 break points - 15 converted. The winner was limited to just 14 winners with Korda weighed down by more than 60 unforced errors. Medvedev next plays Grigor Dimitrov. Norway's ninth seed Casper Ruud advanced past Arthur Fils of France 6-2, 6-4. French showstop-

per Gael Monfils ended the run of 2021 champion Cameron Norrie, with the 36-year-old winner and the Briton playing a massive 31 break points in a match won by Monfils 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/5), 6-3. Tommy Paul, who next faces Nardi, earned a home win with his 6-4, 6-4 defeat of Dubai champion Ugo Humbert. Taylor Fritz joined him, 6-2, 6-2 over Argentine Sebastian Baez. In the women's draw, reigning women's Grand Slam champions Aryna Sabalenka and Coco

Gauff reached the fourth round with challenging straight-set wins. But former number one and 2018 tournament winner Naomi Osaka failed to join them, with the Japanese player eliminated 7-5, 6-4 by Elise Mertens, who now takes on Gauff. The Belgian saved three break points in the final game, advancing on her second match point which drew an Osaka error. Osaka, a four-time winner at the majors, is making her return to tennis this season after giving birth. Earlier, double Sabalenka defeated Emma Raducanu 6-3, 7-5 but double-faulted on a match point and needed three more winning chances before finally going through. "I was super-happy to close this match in two sets; the last game was tight," Sabalenka said. "If I had lost that game it would give her emotionally much more belief and confidence - going to the tiebreak you never know, it's 50/50." Gauff, who won the US Open last September as a teenager, overcame Lucia Bronzetti 6-2, 7-6 (7/5) as she closed out victory in a tiebreaker with a minimum of drama. The US Open champion, who turns 20 on Wednesday, won her sixth straight match against an Italian opponent. "She played really well," the winner said of Bronzetti. "But I was much better than in my last match - I'm improving with each one."

Babar Azam: unsatisfied despite playing one down

Babar Azam praises his Peshawar Zalmi opening partner, saying he feels great opening a match with Saim Ayub

ISLAMABAD : Peshawar Zalmi skipper Babar Azam on Monday said he played at number three for the sake of Pakistan, however, he was personally not satisfied with that position. Talking to media persons, after Zalmi routed Karachi Kings in a Pakistan Super League (PSL) match in Karachi, Babar said he had no pressure and whatever decision he took was in the best interest of the country. Former Pakistan skipper has long served as an opening batsman for the national side, but following criticism over alleged slow strike rate and

in his form, his team had found an excellent bowling option. He apprised the media persons that initially they faced trouble in making a combination but later they overcame the issue. To a query, Babar said he did not pay attention to criticism for he gave performance in the stadium, so there was no need for somebody to tell him anything. "I know my game and I try to enhance it every day," he said. To another query, he said he could not describe the pleasant feeling upon hearing people chanting

"Babar, Babar". "It feels great when people call my name," he added. He tried to provide people happiness through his performance, he maintained. Zalmi defeat Karachi Kings by two runs in the last-ball nail-biting thriller at the National Stadium Karachi on Monday night. After posting a 148-run target, Peshawar restricted Karachi to 145/5. Babar's team reached the playoffs with 13 points, whereas Shan Masood-led Karachi stayed at fifth position with eight points.—Agencies

Shan satisfied with KK performance in PSL 9

KARACHI: Shan Masood, the captain of Karachi Kings, expressed satisfaction over his team's performance in the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 9. During the press conference after a thrilling match against Peshawar Zalmi, Masood stated that Karachi Kings played good cricket throughout the tournament. "I am satisfied with the performance of Karachi Kings in this season. We lost two close games, which we could have won if we avoided small mistakes. But this is part of the game," said the left-handed batter. "Our team was hit with an unfortunate situation with 13 of our players falling ill in the middle of the tournament. It dented our plans as we had to make changes to our combination. "Meanwhile, we also had to rely on other results, but they did not go in our favour." Talking about his own performance, Shan Masood expressed disappointment over his batting performance. "I admit that I could not perform at my best this season. I have given performances in previous seasons of PSL and wanted to replicate them in this season, but unfortunately, it did not happen," he remarked. Karachi Kings lost their last group match against Peshawar Zalmi by a narrow two-run margin after a thrilling last over. "The wicket was tricky and we made some small mistakes, while Peshawar Zalmi bowled well, resulting in their victory," said Karachi Kings' captain. Masood also appreciated young spinner Arafat Minhhas for his impressive performance against Peshawar Zalmi.—DNA

Jason Roy opens up about decision to skip IPL 2024

ISLAMABAD : England cricketer Jason Roy has revealed the reasoning behind his decision to withdraw from the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024. Roy, representing the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in IPL 17th edition has opted out citing personal reasons. This isn't the first time Roy has made such a decision; he had previously withdrawn from IPL 2020 while playing for Delhi Capitals (DC) and IPL 2022 with the Gujarat Titans (GT). In 2020, he cited personal reasons for his withdrawal, while in 2022, he took an "indefinite break" from the game. Roy explained in an official statement released by KKR that he had to make the difficult choice to skip IPL to spend time with his family. He emphasized that he has been away since January and feels the need to reconnect with his family before a busy year ahead. Despite his absence, Roy expressed his support for the Kolkata Knight Riders and wished them luck for the tournament. "After much consideration, I have made the tough decision to miss this year's IPL. Having been away since the start of January I need to get back to my family and have a refresh before a very busy year ahead. I will be supporting my friends and teammates at KKR throughout the tournament and wish them the best of luck," Roy said.—Agencies

Ronaldo's Al-Nassr knocked out of ACL quarters

The Saudi sides Al Ittihad and Al Hilal also clash, with Al Hilal ahead 2-0 from the first leg. Harry Kewell's Yokohama F-Marininos host Chinese side Shandong Taishan on Wednesday with a 2-1 lead from the first leg

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

RIYADH: Cristiano Ronaldo scored in extra time but Al Nassr side were dumped out of the Asian Champions League quarter-finals on penalties by Al Ain. The 39-year-old Portuguese was the only Al Nassr player to score in the shootout as his Saudi side went out 3-1 on penalties, the tie having ended 4-4 on aggregate. It was a frustrating night for the former Manchester United and Real

Madrid forward, who missed a sitter from three yards with the goal gaping in normal time in Riyadh. Beaten 1-0 in the first leg in the United Arab Emirates, Ronaldo took the quarter-final to penalties when he held his nerve from the spot in the 118th minute. His calmly taken spot-kick made it 4-3 on the night to the hosts, who had Ayman Yahya sent off in the 98th minute. But the home team failed with three of their four efforts in the shootout to send Al Ain into the last four of Asia's

top club competition. The Brazilian international defender Alex Telles, also formerly of Manchester United, was among the Al Nassr players to fluff his lines during the shootout. In Tuesday's quarter-finals, Ulsan face Jeonbuk in an all-Korean tie locked at 1-1. The Saudi sides Al Ittihad and Al Hilal also clash, with Al Hilal ahead 2-0 from the first leg. Harry Kewell's Yokohama F-Marininos host Chinese side Shandong Taishan on Wednesday with a 2-1 lead from the first leg.

Ghana's 67th National day celebrated in Islamabad

Ghana's National Day reception in Islamabad sees diplomats, officials, and dignitaries from various sectors, emphasizing bilateral cooperation and praising diplomatic efforts for future relations' growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of Ghana's 67th National Day, a grand reception was hosted by Ghana's Honorary Consul General Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt and Vice Consul Omar Shahid Butt at their residence. The ceremony was attended by large number of Diplomats, Parliamentarians, senators, High ranking Military and civil officials. Important personalities from other walks of life also attended the event in large numbers. The High Commissioner of Ghana posted in Iran, Eric Owusu Boateng, specially attended the reception. It was a unique diplomatic event in which Foreign Secretary Cyrus Kazi and Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Africa Shahr Yar Akbar also specially participated. Among those who participated in the ceremony were the Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Turkmenistan Ata Jan, the

Dean of Africa, Ambassador of Morocco, Mohammad Karmoun, Ambassadors of Nepal, Jordan, Finland, Azerbaijan, Deputy head of missions of United Kingdom, Japan, Hungary, France and the Czech Republic. Malaysia, United Arab Emirates,

Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria and the European Union, High Commissioner of Kenya, in addition to senior diplomats of the United States, Sudan, Egypt, Somalia, Cyprus, Defense attaché of France also participated. Among other important personalities

that participated were Secretary General People's Party Nayer Hussain Bukhari, famous banker Farooq Hasan, former president of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Bashir Dawood, Chief Executive of Quaid-e-Azam International Hospital Dr. Shaukat

Bangash, former ambassador Khalid Mehmood, former minister Ijaz Durrani, former High Court judge Mudassar Khalid Abbas, Heshmat Ali Kazmi, well-known businessman Luqman Afzal, Muhammad Arsalan Khan Asad Ansari, Jameel Abbasi and Khurshid Qureshi were also present. On this occasion, the anthems of both countries were played, and the cake was also cut. Speaking at the ceremony, Eric Owusu said that Ghana is a gateway for Africa, Pakistani investors are investing in Ghana in large numbers. We aim to increase bilateral cooperation between the two countries. There is a lot of scope in many fields to enhance bilateral cooperation. Pakistan and Ghana have excellent political and diplomatic relations, there is a need to transform these friendly relations into a sustainable economic and trade partnership. He especially appreciated the efforts of Dr. Shahid Rashid Butt and Umar Shahid Butt for strengthening and increasing commercial and public relations between the two countries.



PPP, JUI-F form alliance for Senate...

FROM PAGE 01
The six seats fell vacant in the general category - one in the federal capital, two in Sindh and three in Balochistan as senators relinquished their seats, following their election as members of the National Assembly as well as provincial assemblies of Sindh and Balochistan. Moreover, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has also announced the poll to fill 48 vacant seats in the Senate on April 2. A delegation led by JUI-F leader Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri met former prime minister Yousuf Raza Gillani and other PPP senators, including Nayyar Hussain Bukhari and Aijaz Hussain Jakhri in Islamabad. The meeting discussed the political situation in the country and Senate by-polls.

Imran can't hold meetings...

FROM PAGE 01
The police foiled what they claimed was an attempt to attack the jail, arresting three terrorists. Besides Imran, fellow senior PTI leaders Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Parvez Elahi are also detained at the Adiala jail. Other PTI leaders, who were denied a meeting with Imran due to the ban, assailed the Punjab government. Barrister Salman Saffar told media "Yes, we had to go today [but] we could not meet. It is banned due to security reasons." Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said, "They have imposed a kind of blanket restriction for two weeks and the excuse made was that there is a terror threat. We strongly condemn this blanket ban.

ECP accepts plea...

FROM PAGE 01
assets before the election watchdog. In the plea, it was contended that Ali Amin Gandapur had got 735 kanals of land in Dera Ismail Khan transferred in his name unlawfully. The disqualification plea read that the chief minister KP is not eligible to hold public office. "Ali Amin Gandapur should be disqualified and de-seated as a member of the KP Assembly for submitting a false statement," the plea maintained. Earlier on March 7, a session court on Thursday nullified the trial court verdict that declared Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Ali Amin Gandapur fugitive in a liquor case

Ministers take charge of their...

FROM PAGE 01
Home Affairs and Narcotics Control, Ahmad Cheema has been assigned the portfolio of Economic Affairs and Establishment Division. Musadik Malik has been assigned the portfolio of Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada has been named the Minister of Housing and Works, Attaullah Tarar has been assigned the portfolio of Information and Broadcasting. Awais Laghai has been assigned the portfolio of Minister of Railways, Saffron and Heritage and Culture, Jam Kamal (Trade), Abdul Aleem Khan (Privatization and Board of Investment).

Bangladesh releases...

FROM PAGE 01
Rahman, 65, was released from a high-security prison outside the capital Dhaka on Monday, just hours before Ramadan began in the Muslim-majority country, party spokesman Matiur Rahman Akand told AFP. Jamaati-Islami, the country's third-largest political party and its largest Muslim outfit, was the key ally of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) for decades. It was part of the coalition that ruled the country from 2001-2006. After Hasina came to power, the party was banned in 2012 from contesting elections, while the party's leadership was arrested and tried for war crimes dating back to the country's 1971 independence war against Pakistan.

Briefs

Children starving in Gaza: CIA chief

WASHINGTON : CIA Director William Burns said that a cease-fire is needed to provide starving children in Gaza with the necessary humanitarian assistance amid Israel's ongoing attacks on the Palestinian enclave. "The reality is that there are children who are starving. They're malnourished as a result of the fact that humanitarian assistance can't get to them. It's very difficult to distribute humanitarian assistance effectively, unless you have a cease-fire," said Burns during a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing. He said a pending hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas which will initially allow a temporary cease-fire and enable people to get the much-needed humanitarian aid has "great value."

Asked by Republican Senator Tom Cotton if he believed Israel was "exterminating the Palestinian people," the CIA chief said he understands "Israel's need" to respond to the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas. "But I think we all also have to be mindful of the enormous toll this has taken on innocent civilians in Gaza," he said. "As the president has said, it's very important for Israel to be extremely mindful of that and to avoid further loss of civilian life," Burns added.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) has said that one in six children under two years of age is acutely malnourished in northern Gaza.—APP

Istanbul airport introduces therapy dogs for anxiety

ANKARA : Anxiety before a significant flight? Istanbul Airport now offers therapy dogs to soothe the nerves of stressed travelers. The airport has been running the program for the past month to help reduce stress and anxiety among passengers passing through its terminals. Following positive feedback from passengers, airport operator IGA wants to expand the project, raising the number of dogs on hand to comfort travelers from five to 10, said Abdulkadir Demirtaş, a customer experience manager. "Traveling can be stressful. According to research, interaction between animals and humans reduces stress levels and anxiety," Demirtaş said. Murat Cengiz Koca, a dog behavioral expert and trainer accompanying the canines around the airport, said the animals were trained not to react to sounds or people. "The dogs we have chosen here have undergone a yearlong process and training. They are here today because they have been successful," he said.—Agencies

Tate brothers detained in Romania: UK warrant

LONDON : Andrew Tate and his brother Tristan have been detained in Romania after European arrest warrants for two men were issued by UK authorities for sexual offences on Monday. The alleged offences also included exploiting people in Great Britain, the Romanian police statement said. The two men were presented to the prosecutor attached to the Bucharest Court of Appeal, who ordered their detention for 24 hours, police said. A representative for the controversial influencer said the court will make a decision on Tuesday as to whether to "execute the mandate". They described the arrest warrant as a "bewildering revival of decade-old accusations" leaving the brothers "dismayed and deeply troubled". "They categorically reject all charges and express profound disappointment that such serious allegations are being resurrected without substantial new evidence," the statement said.—APP

Violence persists in Gaza during Ramadan: UN Chief

'We must act to avoid more preventable deaths,' Antonio Guterres says on situation in Gaza

NEWS DESK

TORONTO : As Muslims begin the holy month of Ramadan, the UN chief on Monday reiterated his call for a cease-fire in Gaza, and urged actions to avoid further "preventable" deaths. "Yet even though Ramadan has begun – the killing, bombing and bloodshed continue in Gaza," Antonio Guterres said at a press encounter. "My strongest appeal today is to honor the spirit of Ramadan by silencing the guns – and removing all obstacles to ensure the delivery of lifesaving aid at the speed and massive scale required," said Guterres. He also called for an "immediate release of all hostages" taken by Hamas. "We must act to avoid more preventable deaths," he said. "We have wit-

nessed month after month of civilian killing and destruction at a level that is unprecedented in all my years as Secretary-General," he added. On life-saving aid, Guterres said it is "coming in trickles – if it comes at all," and asserted that "international humanitarian law lies in tatters." He further warned of the dire consequences of a potential Israeli assault on Rafah, cautioning that such an action could further exacerbate the suffering of the people in Gaza.

"For months, leaders have appealed for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate release of all hostages. But the most compelling calls have come from the families of the victims of this war," he said. Guterres called on all parties to "hear and heed" the voices of those families of victims and stressed that "desperate civilians



need action – immediate action." "Cessation of hostilities in Sudan" Turning to Sudan, the UN chief reiterated his call for "a Ramadan cessation of hostilities in Sudan." "The fighting there must end for the sake of the Sudanese people who face hunger, horrors and untold hardships," he said, adding that "it is time for peace" in Gaza, Sudan and beyond. The war be-

tween the Sudanese Armed Forces and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that began in April 2023 has killed thousands, displaced million and caused a food security crisis. He called on "political, religious and community leaders everywhere to do everything in their power to make this holy period a time for empathy, action and peace." "It is time to end the terrible suffering. Now is the time to do it." Israel has waged a deadly military offensive on the Gaza Strip since an Oct. 7 cross-border attack led by the Palestinian group Hamas in which nearly 1,200 people were killed. More than 31,100 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have since been killed in Gaza, and over 72,700 others injured amid mass destruction and shortages of necessities. Israel has also imposed a crippling

blockade on the Gaza Strip, leaving its population, particularly residents of northern Gaza, on the verge of starvation. According to the Palestinian Health Ministry, at least 27 people have died of malnutrition and dehydration in Gaza due to the Israeli blockade.

The Israeli war has pushed 85% of Gaza's population into internal displacement amid a crippling blockade of most 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.

EU to recommend Bosnia membership talks: Ursula

Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for EU membership in February 2016 and was granted EU candidate status in December 2022

WEB DESK

BELGRADE : The EU's executive arm will on Tuesday recommend that member states open formal membership talks with Bosnia, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen announced. The country has been an official membership candidate since 2022 but needed to implement a string of major reforms before opening accession negotiations with the 27-nation bloc. Von der Leyen told the European Parliament that Bosnia "is showing that it can deliver on its membership criteria, and on its citizens' aspiration to be part of our family." "This is the reason that we will decide to recommend to the Council to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina." The war in Ukraine has reignited the EU's drive to expand in central and

eastern Europe and the EU executive was to formally present its latest report on Bosnia's progress later on Tuesday. While cautioning that "more progress is necessary to join our union", von der Leyen said that "Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken impressive steps towards us". "More progress has been achieved in just over a year than in over a decade," von der Leyen told lawmakers in Strasbourg. She said Bosnia was now "fully aligned" with the EU's foreign and security policy, was improving its management of migration flows, and adopting laws to combat both money laundering and terrorist financing. She welcomed its agreement to include in domestic criminal records the judgements of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. She also noted

further steps towards dialogue and reconciliation in the wake of the country's 1992-1995 war, with the creation of a new peacebuilding committee. "The message coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina is clear," said von der Leyen. "So our message must be clear too. The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in our Union." The commission recommendation comes ahead of a European Council meeting on March 21 and 22, which was seen as the last chance for Bosnia to open membership negotiations before June's European elections. All 27 EU member states will have to agree to the move before negotiations can be launched. Starting the talks is just the beginning of a long process of reforms usually lasting years before a country finally joins the EU.

NATO prepares for Russian threat in harsh Arctic

BADDEREN : Finnish conscript Atte Ohman readied himself aboard a US landing ship to storm a snow-swept Norwegian beach as part of a rapid response unit pushing out an invading enemy. "There is a saying that 'if you want to keep the peace, you need to prepare for war'," the 19-year-old corporal told AFP, clutching his automatic rifle. The simulated assault on NATO's frigid Arctic fringe was part of its sprawling, four-month Steadfast Defender exercise – the largest drills staged by the US-led military alliance since the Cold War. Swedish gunboats sped to shore, Italian paratroopers abseiled from helicopters, and French marines emerged on skis. The message was clear – NATO is prepared to protect itself in the face of an increasingly aggressive Russia two years into the Kremlin's war on Ukraine. Last week the alliance got even larger as Sweden became its 32nd member almost a year after its Nordic neighbour Finland joined. "We're signalling that we are ready to defend our territories and that's very important at the same time as strengthening our capabilities to operate together," Swedish Defence Minister Pal Jonson told AFP, after watching tanks from his country engage in a mock battle on the Norwegian-Finnish border. "Right now the Russian ground forces are bogged down in Ukraine, but Russia has stated high ambitions to reconstitute itself and adapt its force posture." As Russia has begun turning the tide on outgunned Ukrainian troops, there have been warnings that Moscow could one day turn its sights on a member of the alliance. While the Kremlin's forces are depleted after heavy losses in Ukraine, Russia has switched its economy to war mode. Kyiv's western allies meanwhile have struggled to ramp up production of crucial weaponry, and support for Ukraine is wavering. Norway's defence chief Eirik Kristoffersen said the number of Russian forces stationed near his country is currently just one fifth of the number before Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. "But on the maritime side, on the air side, and on the nuclear side, they've kept their forces intact in our region," he told AFP. "You have this uncertainty about for how long they will continue to lose so much versus Ukraine and then how long will it take for them to rebuild their military." One increasingly crucial area of competition with Russia is the harsh Arctic region where the exercise was staged. Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia has ramped up its capabilities in the region where melting ice due to global warming looks set to open up vital shipping routes and resources. Now with the membership of Sweden and Finland, seven of the eight Arctic countries are in NATO and the allies say they're increasingly pushing to compete with Moscow in this vital region. The Arctic is becoming hugely strategic and "that's why Russia is investing here a lot, and China is also watching this area," said Finland's defence minister Antti Hakkanen. "The Arctic is a new focus area. We must invest in the capabilities to act here in the normal military fields but also in the intelligence side and other fields," he added. Rear Admiral David Patchell, deputy commander of the US Second Fleet, said a conservative estimate was that climate would open up resources worth \$1 trillion in the region. At the same time, melting ice would mean the Arctic would link oceans around the globe for navigation.—DNA

IAEA chief : Japan's push for N.Korea summit 'very important'

LONDON : The head of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog said on Tuesday he supports Japan's push to hold summit talks with North Korea, even if discussion about Pyongyang's nuclear build-up is initially off the table. Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has said he wants to hold talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "without any preconditions" and is personally overseeing efforts to realise the first such leaders summit in 20 years. In a rare response, Kim's sister, who serves in the ruling Workers' Party, last month said Kishida may one day visit Pyongyang. The IAEA has not had access to North Korea since Pyongyang expelled its inspectors in 2009 but has raised repeated concerns about its nuclear advances and growing nuclear arsenal. Asked if he would support Japan's talks with North Korea even if the issue of nuclear proliferation was not discussed, IAEA chief Rafael Grossi told in an interview in Tokyo: "It is very important to engage. The conditions of that dialogue, I would not pretend to tell Prime Minister Kishida what to do.... But what I can say is that engagement is indispensable." "Every political dialogue has timings, has formats and sequences that may exist... No conversation is not a good idea." Kishida's push to hold talks with Kim is focused on trying to secure the return of citizens abducted by North Korea decades ago.—APP



Islamabad : People Preparing to Iftar first fast in front of PIMS.— Photo Mudassar Raja

French parliament to vote on Macron's Ukraine strategy

Macron has been seeking to hammer home the importance of greater support for Ukraine

FOREIGN DESK

PARIS : French President Emmanuel Macron's Ukraine strategy was to be put to a symbolic vote in parliament's lower house on Tuesday as political tensions rage in the run-up to June's European Parliament elections. Macron has been seeking to hammer home the importance of greater support for Ukraine, which is running out of ammunition, insisting that Europe's security is at stake. Following a debate, the National Assembly lower house will hold a non-binding vote on the government's Ukraine strategy, including a bilateral security agreement signed by Macron and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky last month. With the symbolic parliament vote, Macron is forcing political parties to take a public stance on the conflict as Russia's invasion of Ukraine stretches into its third year. The far-right National Rally (RN), which leads Macron's alliance by a wide margin ahead of the June European elections, said it would abstain,

while the far-left France Unbowed party (LFI) said it would vote against. With the support of the conservative Republicans party (LR), the outcome of the vote could still offer backing to Macron's strategy. Prime Minister Gabriel Attal will start the debate at around 4:30 p.m. (15:30 GMT) and the vote is expected at around 8:00 pm. The upper house, the Senate, was set to hold similar debates on Wednesday. The LFI said it would vote "against war" and the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO and the European Union in the future. For his part, Jordan Bardella, the 28-year-old leader of the RN, said his party would abstain because of its "red lines." "We need to be very careful," Bardella told broadcaster France 2. "Yes to support for Ukraine but no to war with Russia." The RN opposes the dispatch of Western ground troops, which Macron has refused to rule out, and the possibility of Ukraine becoming a member of NATO and the EU. Allies of Macron at the weekend lambasted the RN at the launch of their European election campaign, accusing the far-right party of flirting with

the Kremlin and betraying the interests of France and Europe. But public support for France's continued aid for Ukraine is waning, according to some pollsters. An Elabe poll released on Sunday showed that 39 percent of French people support France's continued economic and financial aid for Ukraine, 11 percentage points down from June 2023. Just 14 percent of French people believe France should ramp up military aid for Ukraine according to the study. Emphasising that his ruling party is prepared for war with Russia is a "risky bet" ahead of the elections, the Eurointelligence think tank said. It added that Macron's "narrow focus" on the RN made his party an "easy target" for others. Macron's hardened stance, which has included not ruling out the sending of Western troops to Ukraine, represents a turnaround for a leader who had for many years sought to position himself as a top mediator between Russia and Ukraine. Speaking to French broadcaster BFM TV on Monday, Ukrainian leader Zelensky said there was no need for French ground troops

in his war-torn country as long as "Ukraine holds." "Your children are not going to die in Ukraine," he said. Macron has been seeking to hammer home the importance of greater support for Ukraine. Meanwhile, France's parliament will have a chance to vote on the country's Ukraine strategy, including a bilateral security treaty signed with Kyiv last month. Debates and non-binding votes will take place next Tuesday in the National Assembly lower house and in the Senate upper house on Wednesday. On Thursday, Macron also met with Moldovan President Maia Sandu, pledging France's "unwavering support" for her ex-Soviet country as tensions mount between Chisinau and pro-Russian separatists. During the meeting the two signed a bilateral defence deal, as well as an "economic roadmap", although no details were provided. Later Thursday, France was also set to host a video conference of nearly 30 countries including Ukraine, which will follow up on the initiatives discussed at an international Ukraine summit hosted by Macron last week. Ahead of Thursday's meeting with the opposition, Macron had spoken to his predecessors Francois Hollande and Nicolas

Sarkozy at the Elysee Palace late Wednesday. Speaking to journalists after the talks, Hollande called for more aid for Ukraine as well as European unity. "The only possible response is to show that we are with the Ukrainians in total solidarity, that we are giving them all the support they need, without taking part in any combat ourselves," Hollande said. Asked about the possibility of sending troops, the Socialist former president said: "My position on military issues is: the less we say, the better." On Wednesday, government spokeswoman Prisca Thevenot said that it was "quite obvious" that the RN was not aligned with Macron's call to do everything to ensure Russia's defeat. The RN is the largest opposition party in France's lower house of parliament and leads Macron's alliance by a wide margin in European election polls ahead of the June 9 vote. Most of Macron's European allies have said they would not send troops to Ukraine, while French officials have insisted any such forces could be sent to back operations such as de-mining rather than fighting Russian forces.

German court to rule on 'extremist' label for AfD

MUENSTER : A German court is due to rule this week on whether security services can treat the far-right Alternative for Germany and its youth wing as suspected extremist organizations, a decision that could cost the party dearly in upcoming European elections. If the higher administrative court in Muenster confirms a lower court finding, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), tasked with scrutinizing threats to Germany's constitutional order, will retain the power to deploy the full range of intelligence tools against the party. They could be anything from tapping phones to recruiting informants inside a party whose leaders have dismissed citizens of foreign ethnic backgrounds as "passport Germans" or complained about "fecund Africans" flooding Germany. The party, which has 78 of the 736 seats in the Bundestag, the German federal parliament, maintains that it is a democratic, non-extremist formation. Regional branches of the party have already been formally declared extremist threats. The case's title "AfD versus Federal Republic of Germany" hints at its significance for a country that has built its post-war reputation building a model democracy with strong safeguards against extremism now seeing a far-right party polling as much of a third of the vote in some regions. A finding that it is suspected extremist could hurt the party in western Germany, where it is less well established and voters are traditionally more cautious about parties that are labelled extremist.—DNA

Ford Fined \$365 Million for Tariff Evasion

WASHINGTON : American auto giant Ford Motor has agreed to pay \$365 million to resolve U.S. allegations it violated a federal tariff law by misclassifying and understating the value of hundreds of thousands of its Transit Connect vehicles. The Justice Department said Monday the settlement resolves allegations that Ford devised a scheme to avoid higher duties by misclassifying cargo vans imported from Türkiye from April 2009 to March 2013. The government said the settlement is one of the largest customs penalty settlements in recent history. "Ford strongly disagrees with many of the characterizations in the DOJ's statement and admits no liability in this matter," a Ford spokesperson said. "But in the interest of moving on from this complex, decade-old dispute, we have agreed to settle the matter once and for all." Customs and Border Protection ruled in 2013 that Transit Connects imported as passenger wagons and later converted into cargo vans were subject to the 25% duty applicable to cargo vehicles rather than the 2.5% passenger vehicle duty. The Justice Department said Ford imported the vehicles "with sham rear seats and other temporary features to make the vans appear to be passenger vehicles. These temporary rear seats were never intended to be, and never were, used to carry passengers."—DNA

UKMTO flags boarding incident off Somalia

JOHANNESBURG : The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said on Tuesday that it had received a report of a boarding incident 600 nautical miles east of Mogadishu, Somalia. "Authorities are investigating. Vessels are advised to transit with caution and report any suspicious activity to UKMTO," UKMTO said in a statement without providing further details. British maritime security firm Ambrey said separately that a Bangladesh-flagged bulk carrier was reportedly boarded east of Somalia. Advertisement • Scroll to continue "Merchant vessels are advised to stay well clear of this position as this is assessed to be an ongoing incident with perpetrators attempting to take control of the bulk carrier," Ambrey said in a statement.—APP

Briefs

President Zardari not to draw salary

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has decided not to take a salary from the government owing to the economic challenges being faced by the country. His decision was announced via a statement by the President Secretariat Press Wing on Tuesday. "He took this decision to encourage prudent financial management in the country. The President considered it essential not to burden the national exchequer and preferred to forgo his salary," the statement read.

A post by the President of Pakistan account on X, formerly Twitter, also detailed his intentions for taking the crucial step. "The purpose of President Asif Zardari's decision is to encourage prudent financial management in the country," the post stated. It added that the president has advised against burdening the national treasury, preferring not to take salary.

President Zardari, who was elected as the 14th president of the country with a big margin on March 9, took oath as the head of state a day later.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa administered the oath to the newly-elected president at the swearing-in ceremony that took place at the Awan-e-Sadr in Islamabad.

CM Murad's brother-in-law appointed Sindh CS

DNA

KARACHI: The federal government on Tuesday appointed Syed Asif Hyder Shah, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, as the new Sindh chief secretary. Shah, who is a brother-in-law of Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, is presently posted as secretary Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Division.

Sindh CM Spokesperson Abdul Rasheed Channa said Shah joined the Civil Service of Pakistan in 1993 and has served on various important posts such as commissioner for Hyderabad and Karachi, Cabinet Division special secretary, Ministry of Culture federal secretary and Power Division secretary.

"By profession, Shah is a civil engineer. He obtained MBA degree from IBA, Karachi, and did his masters from Harvard University, USA. He also availed a fellowship each from Harvard and Stanford universities," the spokesperson said.

Haiti's PM resigns as law and order collapses

LONDON: Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry has agreed to resign following weeks of mounting pressure and increasing violence in the impoverished country. It comes after regional leaders met in Jamaica on Monday to discuss a political transition in Haiti. Mr Henry is currently stranded in Puerto Rico after being prevented by armed gangs from returning home. In a video address announcing his resignation, Mr Henry urged Haitians to remain calm. "The government that I am leading will resign immediately after the installation of [a transition] council," Mr Henry said.

"I want to thank the Haitian people for the opportunity I had been granted. I'm asking all Haitians to remain calm and do everything they can for peace and stability to come back as fast as possible." Mr Henry, who had led the country supposedly on an interim basis since July 2021 following former President Jovenel Moise's assassination, had repeatedly postponed elections, saying security must be restored first. Many Haitians had questioned him governing the country for this long without an elected president. - Agencies



KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari offering Fateha at the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. - DNA

Hussain, Hasan Nawaz 'land in Lahore'

DNA

LAHORE: Hasan Nawaz, and Hussain Nawaz - sons of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif - have arrived in Lahore after suspension of their arrest warrants by an accountability court.

Upon their arrival, Nawaz received his sons at Jati Umrah residence, a private news channel reported citing sources. Last week, an accountability court suspended the arrests warrants of Hasan, and Hussain in the Al-Azizia, Flagship and Avenfield cases. The decision was announced by accountability court judge Nasir Javed Rana in a verdict he reserved earlier today. The warrants have been suspended till March 14, as per the verdict. The warrants of the brothers were issued seven years ago when the court had declared them absconders.

PHC to hear SIC's plea seeking reserved seats today

DNA

PESHAWAR: The petitions filed in the Peshawar High Court for the reserved seats of women and minorities for the Sunni Itehad Council are scheduled for hearing today. The hearing on the petitions will be conducted by a 5-member larger bench headed by Justice Ishaq Ibrahim, the larger bench includes Justice Ejaz Anwar, Justice SM Atiq Shah, Justice Shakeel Ahmed and Justice Syed Arshad Ali. On the previous hearing, the larger bench has issued a notice to the Attorney General of Pakistan and the Advocate General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for assistance, the court has raised six constitutional questions. The court has sought assistance from the Attorney General and Advocate General on constitutional questions.

Pak, Russian relations on positive trajectory

ISSI welcomes Ambassador of Russian Federation

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) welcomed H.E. Albert P. Khorev, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Pakistan, for his inaugural visit. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, the Director-General of ISSI, chaired the meeting, which was attended by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman of the Board of Governors (BOG) ISSI; Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director of the Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP); and Mr. Taimur Khan, Research Associate at CSP-ISSI. Extending a warm welcome to Ambassador Khorev, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood hoped that Pakistan-Russia relations would continue to grow during his tenure. He also highlighted the Institute's history as well as scope of work and ISSI's activities reinforcing closer Pakistan-Russia relations. During the discussion, both sides ex-



pressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Russia bilateral relations, cooperation on regional issues, and collaboration in multilateral fora. Noting multiple complementarities, the two sides acknowledged the importance of exploring new avenues for mutually-beneficial cooperation, particularly in the economic, trade, energy, security, and people-to-people domains. The reinforcement of ties through close collaboration in forums such as SCO was highlighted. Russia's chairmanship of BRICS this year and Pakistan's interest in BRICS membership were also discussed. It was also agreed to pursue activities that would help promote closer interface between scholars, area specialists and academics as well as think-tanks on both sides to foster deeper mutual understanding and strengthen ties between Pakistan and Russia. The meeting concluded with Ambassador Khalid Mahmood presenting the Institute's memento to Ambassador Khorev on his maiden visit to ISSI and a group photograph.

Taliban set sights on Iranian port for access to int'l markets

KABUL: Landlocked Afghanistan is setting its sights on the Iranian port of Chabahar for access to international markets, giving up on another neighbor, Pakistan, as its main trade route. The Taliban administration in Kabul announced in late February a \$35 million investment in the southern Iranian port, which next to Pakistan's Gwadar and Karachi is for Afghanistan the closest access point to the Indian Ocean. "Chabahar port is a vital point in trade and relations between Iran and Afghanistan and plays an important role in the development of economic, trade, and cultural co-

operation between the two neighboring countries," Abdul Salam Jawad Akhundzada, spokesperson of the Taliban-run Ministry of Industry and Commerce, told Arab News. Iran does not officially recognize the Taliban administration in Kabul, but has sustained commercial and trade ties, in which Chabahar can become a vital feature. The Taliban are hopeful it would help revive the economy that has been reeling under international sanctions since mid-2021 when they took power as US-led forces left Afghanistan after two decades of war. "Afghanistan can use the Chabahar

port for exports of agricultural products, foods, and industrial raw materials, while using it for transit for goods to and from neighboring countries and the wider region," Akhundzada said. "The use of this port can develop the transportation industry in Afghanistan. This includes the development of transportation infrastructure, increasing the efficiency and quality of transportation services, and increasing the ability to transit goods to other countries. Also, the use of Chabahar port can help attract foreign and domestic investment in various industries." - Agencies

Indian troops begin Maldives pullout after quit order

MANILA: India has begun withdrawing military personnel operating surveillance aircraft in the Maldives after the new pro-China president ordered them to leave, local media reported Tuesday. The Mihaaru newspaper reported that 25 Indian troops deployed in the southernmost atoll of Addu had left the archipelago ahead of March 10, the official start of the withdrawal agreed by both sides. President Mohamed Muizzu came to power in September on a pledge to kick out Indian security personnel

deployed in the Maldives to patrol its vast maritime border. Following talks with New Delhi, the two sides had agreed to complete a withdrawal of 89 Indian troops and their support staff from the nation of 1,192 tiny coral islands by May 10. Mihaaru said the three Indian aircraft - two helicopters and one fixed-wing plane - will be operated by Indian civilian staff, who have already arrived. There was no official confirmation from either the Maldivian or Indian

authorities, but Mihaaru said the Maldivian National Defence Force confirmed the Indian withdrawal had begun. Last week, the Maldives signed a "military assistance" deal with China as the Indians prepared to leave. The Maldivian defence ministry said the deal was to foster "stronger bilateral ties" and that China would train its staff under the pact. India is suspicious of China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean and its influence in the Maldives as well as in neighbouring Sri Lanka. - Agencies

'Parliament to complete its constitutional term'

ABBAS HASHMI

ISLAMABAD: Punjab's Information Minister Azma Bukhari Tuesday said that the

parliament would complete its constitutional term as PML-N always believed in practical work, rather than tall claims and false promises. Talking to a private news channel, she said the PML-N leadership wanted democracy to thrive and no one would be allowed to derail the democratic process. PML-N led government will not allow anyone to destabilize the country, adding, opposition needs to play a constructive role to strengthening democracy despite their personal interests. She also reaffirmed the government's commitment to punish all the people involved in the May 9 incident.

MARCH 2024

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:
www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pk
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@Postislamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of
Islamabad POST

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

CENTRELINE
Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Jose Luis Plexoto
Visit to Pakistan
an eye opener

Other news items: Dutch Hockey Club visits Pakistan, Mrs. Samina Aftab attends Inter Women Day at ISH, Jordan embassy hosts exhibition at PNCA.

MURREE SPARKLETTS
Bottled Drinking Water

WATER TASTES BEST IN GLASS!!

CARBONATED WATER ALSO AVAILABLE IN GLASS BOTTLE

330ml, 750ml

For Sales & Supply Contact:
Adeel Butt 03334131756
Kaiser Waheed 03325808422
Riaz Muhammad 0335 5111043