

PTI terms address 'unconstitutional' **President calls for** steering country out of 'political crisis'

President Zardari delivered speech amid opposition's sloganeering in house. He however remained steadfast in his speech, emphasizing the need for constructive dialogue and cooperation among political parties

> Ansar M Bhatti ISLAMABAD: Presi-

> dent Asif Ali Zardari

has called for making

joint efforts to steer the country out of

crisis and also called

upon all stakeholders

to play their role for

the prosperity of the

this while address-

ing the joint session

Thursday after the

parliament on

nation.

of

He stated



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the joint sitting of the parliament, on Thursday. - DNA

February 8 general elections amid protest staged by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) lawmakers. Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leaders Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Aseefa Bhutto were among the members of the National Assembly and Senate who attended the today's joint session. Top officials including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also attended the session chaired by National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq while provincial chief ministers, diplomats, and representatives from political parties were present in the galleries. "Let me also take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all parliamentarians and provincial assembly members for their trust and confidence in electing me for a second time as the president of Islamic republic of

Tarar condemns PTI for jeopardizing national interests

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar, criticized PTI Thursday, stating that individuals involved in last year's May 9 attacks are now jeopardizing national interests. Speaking to the media, Tarar emphasized that those who undermined the country's interests were adversaries of Pakistan. He expressed dismay at prioritizing political agendas and ego over national interests, highlighting the regret-table pattern of PTI leadership disowning statements against the country's interests. Tarar noted that PTI leaders were embroiled in corruption cases, lamenting that enemies of Pakistan struggle to accept investments in the country. He prayed for divine guidance for such individuals to speak in the country's favour. The minister condemned the actions stooping to anti-national levels, stressing that while criticism of the government and its policies is acceptable, criticizing Pakistan is intolerable. He acknowledged the support of friendly countries in



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the European Union Amb. Riina Kionka calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

X says working with Pak govt to **understand** concerns'

The social media website remains suspended in the country since February 17

DNA ISLAMABAD: For the first time since the services of X, formerly Twitter, were suspended in Pakistan, the social media site has issued

EU calls on Prime Minister PM Shehbaz seeks EU support for reforms in Pakistan The Prime Minister appreciated in particulars, EU's

continued support to Pakistan through the GSP Plus scheme, which has now been renewed till 2027. He also expressed Pakistan's interest in engaging constructively with the EU's Global Gateway Strategy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amb. Riina Kionka, Ambassador of the European Union, paid a

Pakistan," the president said this in his opening remarks.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs Bilawal condemns killing of innocent citizens in KPK

The perpetrators of the Dera Ismail Khan incident should be brought to justice

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari condemned the killing of 6 people including 4 custom officials in Saggu area of Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Chairman Bilawal said that this killing of innocent citizens is an unfortunate and unforgettable event."The perpetrators of the Dera Ismail Khan incident should be brought to justice," Bilawal Bhutto Zardari demanded. He expressed sympathy and condolences to the families of those who were martyred in the Dera Ismail Khan incident

Hafiz Naeem takes oath as JI chief

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Newly-elected Emir of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Hafiz Naeemur Rehman on Thursday took the oath of his office at Mansoorah. Naeemur Rehman became the 6th emir of JI Pakistan. After the oath ceremony, Hafiz Naeemur Rehman convened the meeting of Majlis-e-Aamla. He will also chair the meeting of Majlis-e-Shura on Friday. Naeemur Rehman, former emir JI Karachi chapter, was elected as the Emir Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan with a majority vote following JI intra-party election which concluded on April 4. The oath-taking ceremony was attended by outgoing emir Sirajul Haq, Amiru Azeem, Liaquat Baloch, Dr Farid Paracha, Qaisar Sharif, Rashid Nasim, other leaders as well as workers and people from different walks of life

investing and cooperating with Pakistan, expressing optimism for progress with Allah's grace.

Faizabad dharna Gen Faiz made deal with TLP before PM's nod

Iabal, in the report publicised by the inquiry commission. added that former PM Abbasi had objected to the agreement after he saw it and also did not agree with the promise regarding then-law minister Zahid Hamid's resignation

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Iqbal, the federal minister for planning, development and special initiatives - has revealed that the deal with the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was finalised before it was shown to then-prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. According to the minister's statement, former Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) director general ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High fore seeking then-premier's nod.

agreement after he saw it and also did not and torture of their relatives as well

Continued on Page 06

Judges' letter **IHCBA** moves SC for fair probe

COURT REPORTER

Lieutenant General (retd) Faiz Hamid had Court Bar Association (IHCBA) on made the pact with the protesting party be- Thursday filed a petition in the Supreme Court (SC) to probe the allega-The minister made this revelation before tions made by six IHC judges against the Faizabad sit-in inquiry commission, con- interference in judicial affairs by the stituted on the Supreme Court's orders fol- country's intelligence apparatus. On lowing the case pertaining to the 2017 sit in March 25, six IHC judges - out of a toprotest at Faizabad led by former TLP chief tal strength of eight - wrote a startling Khadim Hussain Rizvi. Iqbal, in the report letter to the Supreme Judicial Council publicised by the inquiry commission, added (SJC) members, regarding attempts that former PM Abbasi had objected to the to pressure judges through abduction

Continued on Page 06

a statement on the matter, stating that it continues to work with the relevant authorities regarding their concerns. "We continue to work with the Pakistani Government to understand their concerns," read the statement, posted by X's Global Government Affairs team on their official handle. The social media website, which was bought by American tech billionaire Elon Musk in April 2022,

Continued on Page 06

'Some political parties trying to sabotage foreign ties'

"This is enmity against the country. It is done under a campaign, says Asif

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Responding to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sher Afzal Marwat's groundless allegations against Saudi Arabia, Defense Minister Khawaja Asif on Thursday said some political parties were trying to sabotage relations **Continued on Page 06**

courtesy call on the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister thanked the EU leaders for their congratulatory messages on his re-election and said he looked forward to working closely with the EU. He said Pakistan enjoyed friendly and cordial ties with the EU and expressed satisfaction at the existing institutional mechanisms that were meeting regularly to exchange views on further strengthening cooperation. The Prime Minister appreciated in particulars, EU's continued support to Pakistan through the GSP Plus scheme, which has now been renewed till 2027. He also expressed Pakistan's interest in engaging

Continued on Page 06

reform agenda

Fin Min, Donald

Lu reaffirms US's commitment to bolster ties with Pakistan

News Desk

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's reform agenda came under discussion during a high-level meeting between Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and United States State Department Assistant Secretary Donald Lu. The two dignitaries explored broadening tax base,

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COAS, Turkish Commander reaffirm expanding strategic ties

The visiting dignitary commended Pakistan's efforts in fostering regional peace and stability, as well as Pakistan Army's role in combating terrorism

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: His Excellency General Metin Gürak, Chief of the Turkish General Staff, met with General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at GHQ today. The discussion encompassed various topics of mutual interest, spanning defense, training, and initiatives aimed at bolstering regional peace and stability.

Both sides acknowledged the robust relationship between their nations and committed to expanding defense collaboration further. COAS underscored the imperative of advancing existing military cooperation between their armed forces. The visiting dignitary commended Pakistan's efforts in fostering regional peace and stability, as well as the Pakistan Army's role in combating terrorism. Earlier, upon arrival at GHQ, the Chief of the General



Staff of the Turkish Army paid respects at Yadgar-e-Shuhada by laying a floral wreath. A well-presented contingent of the Pakistan Army rendered a guard of

honor to the esteemed visitor. Chief of the Turkish General Staff General Metin Gürak also called upon Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, said a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). During the meeting, the two discussed matters related to "enhancing the level and scope of bilateral military engagements and cooperation". The two sides also reaffirmed their commitment to forge deeper strategic ties. The military's media wing added that the visiting dignitary also lauded the professionalism of the Pakistan armed forces and acknowledged the force's sacrifices in the fight against terrorism. Upon arrival at Joint Staff Headquarters, a contingent of the armed forces presented a guard of honour to the Turkish general.

NATIONAL

PRCS head, Lt Gen **Babar discuss Sindh** humanitarian efforts

Karachi Corps Commander Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar highly praised the timely and efficient response of PRCS during monsoon floods 2022 under Chairman Laghari's leadership, hailing him as a "National Hero"

provision of shelter, health care, in-

NAZIR SIYAL

02

KARACHI : Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, Chairman of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), held a significant meeting with Karachi Corps Commander Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar at the Corps headquarters in Karachi on Thursday. The meeting focused on ongoing humanitarian efforts in the Sindh province.During the dialogue, Chairman Laghari reiterated PRCS's unwavering commitment, particularly in the face of challenging circumstances such as the devastating flood 2022. Through strategic partnerships with esteemed organizations like the IFRC, ICRC, and Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners, PRCS swiftly initiated relief efforts, benefiting over 2.8 million individuals across 55 districts, with a special emphasis on underserved areas. The collaboration between PRCS, the government, and the Armed Forces significantly alleviated the plight of flood-affected communities in the most affected districts of Sindh province. Chairman Laghari provided insights

into PRCS's emergency flood response in Sindh, highlighting activities such as the distribution of essential supplies,

tion.

stallation of water treatment facilities, and provision of cash assistance to affected families. Additionally, ongoing recovery initiatives in 5 districts of Sindh Province, supported by RCRC Movement Partners, aim to assist 435,000 people with shelter, health, cash assistance, livelihood support, agri-support initiatives, water and sanitation facilities, and hygiene promotion. Furthermore, Chairman Laghari shared details of PRCS's immediate response to the Biparjoy Cyclone including early evacuation to the safe sites, provision of NFIs to 28,000 individuals and food packages, to aid 10,000 cyclone- families in the flood-stricken areas of Thatta, Badin, and Sajawal districts, augmenting rescue and relief operations conducted by the Armed Forces and NDMA.

Karachi Corps Commander Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar commended the Pakistan Red Crescent Society's (PRCS) significant contributions, emphasizing its pivotal role in managing natural disasters. He praised the dedication of PRCS under the leadership of Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, highlighting its ability to transcend ethnic and cultural boundaries in humanitarian efforts. The Corps Commander highly praised the timely and efficient response of PRCS under Chairman Laghari's leadership, hailing him as a national hero. He underscored the importance of enhancing collaborative efforts in disaster risk reduction, anticipatory actions, and disaster management planning, climate change, awareness & preparedness and other initiatives aimed at mitigating the hardships faced by vulnerable communities by engagement of PRCS volunteers and he said Pakistan Army will provide all possible resources to PRCS.

He further said, Pakistan Army stand side by side with PRCS to deal with any natural calamities and disaster situation across Pakistan.Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar also pledged full support to PRCS in all districts of Sindh province to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable communities during peace time and emergency situation. As a symbol of mutual appreciation, Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari and Karachi Corps Commander Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar exchanged mementos at the conclusion of the meeting.

PTCL posts 14 % revenue growth

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has announced its financial results for the first quarter of 2024 posting 14 per cent revenue growth Year-on-Year basis to Rs 49 billion, mainly driven by strong performance in the consumer segment led by fixed broadband, mobile data, and wholesale & business solutions. The announcement was made during a board of directors meeting on Thursday. PTCL continued its strong performance throughout Q1, 2024 and achieved revenue of Rs 26 billion for this quarter, which is 13% higher than last year, mainly driven by growth in fixed line and business solutions segments, said a news release. Flash Fiber, PTCL's premium Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) service, continues to show tremendous growth with the highest Net adds share within the FTTH mar ket (since Dec'23) and now stands as the leading FTTH service provider in Pakistan. This phenomenal growth has been possible through the aggressive expansion of PTCL Flash Fiber and dedicated customer experience throughout the country. The company has posted an operating profit of Rs 3 billion, which is 32% higher as compared to the same quarter of 2023. The Company has posted a net profit of Rs 431 million. PTCL's aggressive deployment of FTTH and the strong performance of corporate segment are the cornerstones for the topline growth. Continuing from the past quarters, PTCL's strategic focus remained on enhancing customer experience by providing the fastest and most reliable internet services under its flagship 'Flash Fiber' Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) brand, which boosts PTCL as one of the leading FTTH operator in the industry with majority share of the market's net adds. -APP

Pak Int'l Poultry Expo to start from April 30 PESHAWAR : Pak Interna-

retary Livestock Yousaf Ali, tional Poultry Expo 2024, Director General Livestock will be organized here at (Extension) Dr. Asal Khan, Gul Mukai Palace in Pesha-Director General Livestock (Research) war in collaboration with Muhammad Livestock Department Khy-Ijaz, President Livestock Farmers Welfare Associaber Pakhtunkhwa, Poultry Cooperative Society Khyber tion Asif Awan and others Pakhtunkhwa and Livestock also attended the meeting. Farmers Welfare Associa-It was informed that Pak International Poultry Expo In this connection. a review meeting was held will be held on April 30 till to shed light on the comple-1st May 2024. tion of stages of the Expo at The purpose of the expo is the Civil Secretariate Com-

to create awareness among the people associated with the poultry sector to acquire the business of poultry farming in a better and

The expo will have a total of 46 stalls in which poultry farmers will be trained in various ways to increase the quantity of meat and poultry and livestock.

The meeting emphasized the importance of exhibiting commercial poultry farming including rural poultry farming and fancy birds farming in the expo because poultry farming is a broad sector and rural poultry farming and fancy birds farming is a part of it which will not only improve the economic status of people, but also lead to the promotion of



Islamabad **POST**

Friday, April 19 , 2024

ISLAMABAD : Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding Saudi Investment in Pakistan following the recent visit of Saudi Delegation.-DNA

Country prepared to become tech hub,

Tobacco smoke contains chemicals that cause cancer: **Cardiologist**

HYDERABAD:Smoking damages nearly every organ in the body and is bad for a person's overall health. People can significantly reduce their chance of smoking-related disease by giving it up. Talking to APP here on Thursday, Eminent cardiologists Dr. Zaman informed that the tobacco smoke contains more than fifty chemicals that cause cancer. He said that tobacco also contains nicotine, which is a highly addictive psychoactive drug. When tobacco is smoked, nicotine causes physical and psychological dependency. He said that every third Pakistani after the age of 40 was suffering from high blood pressure, whereas only 3 percent of them get regular medical checkups. He said that the smoking is not only injurious for the users, but passive smoking is also a great threat to those who associate with the smokers as inhaling of cigarettes' smoke could cause more complications. Dr. Zaman said that smoking is the biggest totally avoidable cause of death and disability known to mankind and any support for the growth, distribution or sale nomic Forum, Digital Coof tobacco is indefensible on public health grounds. – APP operation Organization

says Shaza Fatima LAHORE: State Minister and Pakistan would host conference every year to for Information Technology and Telecommunicabring investment in the tion Shaza Fatima Khawacountry for IT sector, ja on Thursday said that manufacturing, software the country was prepared and telecommunication to become regional tech sides as well. She further hub and IT leader. She said that these initiatives said this while addressand the policies of Prime ing a press conference Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with Digital Coaimed at supporting prioperation Organization vate sector would yield positive results to put (DCO) Secretary Generthe country on road to progress. Shaza Fatima al Deemah Al Yahya at a local hotel. She said, "Youth is our asset and said that the incumbent we have strong connecgovernment was working tivity," adding that Paon various policies and kistan had partners like legislation whether it was Saudi Arabia and other related to data protection, cyber security, cloud policountries which wanted to strengthen this seccy to create feasible envitor. The State Minister ronment for growth of IT, said that recently Saudi tech and telecom sectors. Arabia foreign minis-She said, "Pakistan is a founding member of Digiter and representative of Investment Ministry tal Cooperation Organizavisited Pakistan, adding tion and it is multilateral that country's IT sector organization made with the cooperation of Saudi was also highlighted dur-Arabia and its purpose is ing meetings with the to take digital cooperadelegation from Saudi tion at global level." Arabia. She further said She said that today ITCN that Digital Foreign Direct Investment confer-Asia had started in Pakience would be organized stan and it was a three at the end of this year, days conference and more adding that World Ecothan 600 companies were

delegates had arrived in Pakistan to attend this conference, adding that almost more than 55,000 people would visit Expo Centre to experience this conference. Shaza said that Ministry of Information and Technology along with Pakistan Software Export Board was sponsoring this programme. This initiative was giving a message that how Pakistan could showcase its private sector at international level to attract foreign investment, she said. She said that it was also telling the world that how Pakistan could boost IT exports by using expertise of its youth. Digital Cooperation Organization Secretary General Deemah Al Yahya said, "Whenever I come to Pakistan I see energy, talent and determination to achieve impossible targets," adding that most prominent thing was collaboration between government, private sector and civil society. Deemah said, "We as Digital Cooperation Organization are proud to be here today," adding that event like ITCN helped share ideas and discuss opportunities to get desired results. - APP

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

Cooperatives. Deputy Secuseful manner.

plex Warsak Road under

the chairmanship of Asghar

Ali Additional Secretary

Livestock Fisheries and

rare species.-APP



LAHORE : Russian Ambassador to Pakistan Albert Khorev called on Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.-DNA

Zero tolerance: IGP vows action against women's abuse

There will be strict accountability for violation of authority, high handedness, corruption, violation of code of conduct, IG Punjab

ABID RAZA

LAHORE : Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that zero tolerance will be shown in actions against incidents violence, harassment, abuse and rape with women, children, and domestic workers and accused should be brought to justice. Dr. Usman Anwar said that there will be strict accountability for misuse of authority, high handedness, corruption, and violations of ethical conduct and officers' performance will be evaluated based on performance and accountability. He directed that DPOs should monitor the complaints received at 1787 Complaint center, all received complaints at 1787 Complaint center should be resolved promptly, and responsible officers should be held accountable for undue delays. IG Punjab said that specialized police force will be deployed to combat smuggling and other illegal activities at inter provincial border checkposts. Dr. Usman Anwar instructed to expedite the campaign against organized crime. including drug trafficking, He directed to intensify intelligence-based targeted operations against kacha criminals.

IG Punjab directed to eradicate gangs involved in highway robberies through active more patrolling and proactive approach under comprehensive strategy. Dr. Usman Anwar instructed the CTD to intensify the combing operations should continue to combat terrorism and anti-social elements. IG Punjab directed for imposition of real punishments on habitual criminals involved in kite flying and metal strings. Dr. Usman Anwar further emphasized to improve the conviction rate of cases with effective coordination between investigation and prosecution department.

IG Punjab instructed for the timely completion and effective follow-up of investigations of electricity theft cases, ensuring real punishments for those causing financial losses to the national treasury. Dr. Usman Anwar said that measures should be ensured under personal supervision of DPOs for the security of Chinese nationals, residential areas, and route clearance and security. These directions were issued by IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar during a high-level video conference held at the Central Police Office, attended by unit heads, RPOs, DPOs, DIGs, and CTOs.

participating in it. She

said that more than 100

PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

No.EE.PCD.II/AB/743

Dated Islamabad the, 18/04/2024

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Name OF Work:- ESTABLISHMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION INSTITUTE. ON PLOT NO.81 AT SECTOR H-11/4, ISLAMABAD.

- Well reputed /experience consulting firms are invited for consultancy services for Feasibility, detailed designing & Construction supervision of the "Establishment of Child Protection Institute on Plot No.81 at Sector H-11/4. Islamabad". The Building consist of Basement + 03 Storey.
- The bid shall comprise a single package containing two separate envelopes. Each envelope shall contain separately the financial proposal and the technical proposal. The envelops to be marked as "FINANCIAL PROPOSAL" and "TECHNICAL PROPOSAL" in bold and legible letters to avoid confusion. Initially, only the envelope marked "TECHNICAL PROPOSAL" be opened and the envelope marked as "FINANCIAL PROPOSAL" shall be retained in the custody of the procuring agency without being opened.
- The procuring agency shall evaluate the technical proposal in a manner prescribed in 3. advance in the RFP, without reference to the price and reject any Technical Proposal which manifests material deviation from the specified requirements. The financial proposal of Consultants, whose technical proposal did not meet the minimum qualifying marks and/or were considered technically and legally non-responsive to the RFP & TOR shall be returned un-opened to the respective Consultant.
- Detailed TOR and bidding document can be obtained from the office of the undersigned upto 06.05.2024 till 4.00 pm after depositing requisite fee of Rs.5000/-.
- The interested Consultants /Firms can submit documents till 09.05.2024 at 11:00 am in 5. the office of the undersigned. The technical proposals will be opened on same day at 11:30 am in the office of the undersigned, in the presence of the consultants /their authorized representatives.
- Following information /documents are required to be submitted with the bid. 6.
 - Organizational details and financial status duly certified by the concerned banks i.
 - ii. Registration as Consultant with Pakistan Council of Architects & Town Planners (PCATP) and Pakistan Engineer Council (PEC) along with upto date renewal.
 - iii. The consultant must furnish the certificate of performance about the consultancy services provided for mega hospitals as explained above.
 - iv. NTN along with upto date clearance certificate for last five (05) years from Income Tax authorities. The firm must be an active Taxpayer list of F.B.R.
 - V. List of Technical /Non-Technical Staff along with their qualification on the payroll of the consulting firm, which can be verified.
 - Undertaking on stamp paper that firm is neither involved in any litigation nor vi. abandoned any work in any department, nor black listed as result. A certificate to the effect that all documents /particulars /information furnished are true and correct.
 - Conditional application will not be entertained. vii.
 - viii. In case of Joint Venture, a legal agreement between the parties would be required.
 - Summary of overall experience indicating separately the details of similar ix. assignments duly complete and in progress. .
 - Information about the projects implemented with cost of each project, amount of Х. consultancy contract, number of full time staff working on the project, number and expertise of consultants /resources persons employed and duration of the project.
 - Incomplete applications will not be entertained. xi.
 - The sealed Technical & Financial proposals received after closing time will not be xii. entertained.
 - xiii. Under Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rule 2004, the undersigned reserve the right to accept or reject any or all bids /proposals at any time prior to acceptance of bid /proposal.



Islamabad POST Extra bad POST Extra 03 Friday, April 19, 2024

National Days and Armed **Forces Days**

April

April 04/Senegal National Day April 07/W. H. O. World Health Day April 12/Somalia **Armed Forces Day**

April 15/DPR Korea The Day of the Sun April 16/Denmark National Day April 17/Iran Army Day April 17/Syria **Independence** Day April 18/Zimbabwe

Independence Day April 24/Holy See

Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate April 25/DPR Korea **Armed Forces Day** April 26/Tanzania National Day April 27/Sierra Leone **Independence** Day

April 27/South Africa Freedom Day

April 30/Sweden Birthday of His Majesty

April 30/Netherlands Birthday of Queen



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ISLAMABAD: Ladies posing for a picture on the occasion of the National Day of Bangladesh. -DNA

British HC, minister discuss opportunities in edu sector

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that the Ministry of Education is working on a programme that aims to declare education emergency in Pakistan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms Jane Marriott, here on Thursday called on the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui to discuss the challenges and opportunities being faced by the country in the education sector. The meeting was attended by the Secretary of Education Mr Mohyuddin Wani and the Country Director British Council Mr James Hampson. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that the Ministry of Education is working on a programme that aims to declare education emergency in Pakistan. He said that the number of out-of-school children in Pakistan is ballooning and the only way to address this issue is by making it a national agenda. The minister said that due to rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation slums in major cities are propping up. He said that these slums are ignored in every education policy. He highlighted the im-

portance of ensuring that no child should be left behind. He encouraged the UK to provide support in the cause of eliminating out-of-school children. We need to bring all the stakeholders especially donors on the same platform so that all the effort can be channelled and streamlined, he added. "We are burning the midnight oil in ensuring that the cause of education becomes one of the main agendas of national effort towards progress". Ms Jane Marriott, British High Commissioner to Pakistan said that UK and Pakistan are the oldest partners and have been shoulder to shoulder since 1947. She informed the minister that the UK encourages expansion of its green programme which can lead to an increase in enrolment of Pakistani students in UK universities via distance learning. She also informed the

lution of education to the provinces. Secretary of Education Mr Mohyuddin Wani highlighted that the Ministry of Education is developing a comprehensive plan which will declare an education emergency in the country and will furthermore align all the stakeholders on the same page. He said that all the donors and NGOs operating in Pakistan are working in silos and compartments. He said that there is a concerted effort on the way to ensure that a single platform can align and channel the efforts of all stakeholders in the education sector of Pakistan. Khalid Magbool said that we have set a target to train one million youth in the IT sector. He said that he hopes that in the medium term, Pakistan will become one of the biggest suppliers of IT professionals to the world. He asked the UK to

to establish mental health awareness and support desks in all of the colleges in Islamabad. He said that efforts have been underway to address the education woes of Pakistan however, more effort and more focus is still required.

He told the British High Commissioner that a National Nutrition Program in Islamabad has also been launched to increase enrolment. He said that expense on education is not expenditure but investment. James Hompson, Country Director British Council told the minister that after China the biggest British Council Programme is in Pakistan. He requested the minister that the Global Chief Executive of the British Council visit Pakistan in May and would like to visit him. The Federal Minister welcomed the initiative

ANF recovers 60 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 60 kg drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He said that 960 grams Ice was recovered from a parcel booked for Saudi Arabia at a courier office in Rawalpindi. 515 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for the UK at the cargo office at Islamabad Airport. 24 kg opium and 30 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of two accused netted from M-2 Sargodha. 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects arrested on Express Highway Islamabad. 1 kg hashish was recovered from Khyber. In another operation, 1 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused round-ed up near Cantt station in Karachi.-APP

Muneer political shift not aligned with party policy

ISLAMABAD: Muneer Khan's decision to join mainstream politics has nothing to do with the pol-icy of the National Front and its leader, said Jammu and Kashmir National Front (JKNF) spokesman. In a statement, the Front spokesperson Muhammad Haseeb Wani clarified that Muneer Khan was never affiliated with the party. Wani emphasized that Khan's choice to enter mainstream politics is entirely his own and is unrelated to the political ideology advocated by the imprisoned party chairman, Nayeem Ahmed Khan. who Wani noted has been a staunch advocate for the right to self-determination of Kashmiris. "During his lifelong struggle Naveem Ahmed Khan didn't budge from his principled stance on the issue of Kashmir", he said, adding that Khan followed the diktats of none but his conscience.-APP

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 Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info114
PIA Cargo9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA9281092



Hospitals

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СМН5611111
MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

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

Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480

minister that Google Education is highly interested in supporting Pakistan in its bid to address the issue of access to education. British High Commissioner and the education minister also discussed the challenges and opportunities that come with the devohelp in attaining IT certification for this IT-trained professional that would be recognised globally. Furthermore, he said that the mental health of our students must be also catered to by professionals. He said that the education ministry aims

from the British Council and expressed a deep desire to enhance collaboration between the British Council and Pakistan, especially concerning increasing educational outreach programmes for slums in the metropolitan cities of the country.

10 new high-yield pulse varieties recommended for cultivation culture Research Council Production and National under the chairmanship of

MEHTAB PIRZADA

Dr Imtiaz Hussain, Mem-ISLAMABAD: In a major ber of Plant Sciences Didevelopment for Pakivision. Seed certification and agricultural scientists stan's agriculture sector, the Variety Evaluation also participated in the Committee has recommeeting. Speaking on mended 10 new high-yield the occasion, Dr Imtiaz expressed his faith that pulse varieties for cultivation to boost food producthe release of high-yieldtivity in the country. The ing pulse varieties would new varieties of pulses reccontribute to improving ommended by the commitpulses productivity in the tee for cultivation in Pakicountry. He also emphastan are NIFA Mung-24, sized PARC's commitment NIAB-CH26, NIAB-CH30, to support public and NIAB-CH32, NIAB-CH69, NIAB-CH73, NARC Lentil private sector institutes and seed companies in 24, NARC Mung 24 and evaluating and releasing Mahnoor 24. The Varienew varieties. Hailing ty Evaluation Committee the development, Federal met at the Pakistan Agri-Minister of Industries and

Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer said consistent and result-oriented efforts are needed to improve research and boost production of fine quality seed varieties. In a statement issued by the spokesperson of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Sajid Shah, the federal minister said the new pulse varieties are a milestone and a step towards increasing the productivity of pulses and overall agricultural development in the country. "This development is a significant step towards enhancing productivity and profitability in the

agriculture sector," he added. The minister commended the scientists and researchers for their hard work and dedication in developing these new varieties. He said the new pulse varieties will not only benefit farmers but also contribute towards ensuring food security in the country. "We will continue to making strenuous efforts for the promotion and growth of the agriculture sector in Pakistan. We will work towards providing farmers with the necessary support, resources, and technology to further enhance their productivity and income,' he maintained.



ISLAMABAD Chairman NADRA Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Afsar presenting a souvenir to Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi at NADRA Headquarters.-DNA

Govt chalks out concrete road-map for reforms in power sector

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Thursday said that on the directives of Prime Minister, a concrete road-map had been chalked out bring comprehensive reforms in country's power sector to control power pilferage, over-billing and circular debt. Addressing a pressing conference, he said after assuming charge of the ministry, short comings of the power sectors were reviewed to address chronic issues permanently. The government was committed to bringing improvement in the energy sector, he added. He reiterated that no leniency would be given to the power pilferers irrespective of their status and position adding that over-billing would also not be tolerated at any cost. Solid strategy had also been devised to eliminate menace of power theft in the country. he said. The minister said lower-middle class had been suffering from the power theft and we had to rectify existing shortcomings in the power system. He went on to say that accumulative loss of power distribution companies (DISCOs) would surge to Rs 560 billion by June. Electricity units worth over Rs 300 billion were consumed by the power pilferers, he added. He said it was the need to hour to deal such power pilferers and officials involved in this illegal practices strictly. The country could not afford such misappropriation of billions of rupees to the economy, he added. He vowed not sparing even higher officials such as XENs, SDOs, Chief Engineers involved in patronage of power pilferage. He claimed that around 20 per cent officials of power sector were involved in this dirty practice. Awais said that all CEOs had already been directed to remove 'kunda' before April 23 failing which strict action would be taken against the responsible officials. The minister appreciated the support of Interior ministry and FIA for supporting the DISCOs to eliminate power theft.-APP

APRIL 2024

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TWIN CITIES



Briefs

FPCCI wavier off 50% membership fee of women chambers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) wavier off 50% membership fee of women chambers. President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh said that the country and society cannot progress without the full role of women, this step is very important for women empowerment by reducing the membership fee for women by 50 percent. We have fulfilled our promise, for which the full credit goes to the leadership of UBG, who had promised their community during the election campaign today we kept that promise. Federation President Atif Ikram further said that Pakistani women are extremely talented and we are striving to empower them in the economic field. If Pakistan is to progress, we have to make our women educated. skilled and empowered to business women.

Tarar for enhanced collaboration between public, private sector

Says the Special Investment Facilitation Council had been set up to attractinvestment in Pakistan and ensure 'ease of doing business'. He said it was main thrust of the government policy to encourage innovation and investment in the country

DNA

ISLAMABAD:Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday stressed the need for enhanced collaboration between the public and private sectors to fast track the process of economic development of the country. Addressing the First Pakistan Semiconductor Summit, he said that the Special Investment Facilitation Council had been set up to attract investment in Pakistan and ensure 'ease of doing business'. He said it was main thrust of the government policy to encourage innovation and investment in the country. He said that Pakistan, as the fifth largest democracy in the world, was endowed with great natural resources and its biggest resource was its human resource. "We are blessed with a huge population of youth which constitutes 68 per cent of its population". That is a huge potential which we can offer to the world, he added. He said Pakistan was strategically located at the crossroads of the world which was a source of pride for the nation.

He said that the Government of Pakistan as a policy encouraged innovation and investment in the country which this summit was offering precisely - a collabora-tion between public and private sector. He said that the federal cabinet meeting on Wednesday had approved a public private partnership policy framework to eventually facilitate investment in the country. He said that the job of the government was not only to regulate but also facilitate investment. He said unfortunately sometimes governments forgot their primary responsibility as a facilitator which hampered the investment. He said that the government could fulfil this responsibility through collaboration between public and private sector and by ensuring 'ease of doing business'. He said that Pakistan has been producing 50,000 engineering graduates every year and it has the best engineering universities in the world. " Our engineering graduates are well placed globally but unfortunately we are not able to reap the benefits of the semiconductor industry. It is \$ 550 billion industry at this



moment with the projection of \$ 1 Trillion by 2030." Tarar said that Pakistan had great potential to deploy its human resource in this industry. The minister said that he was proud to inform that Shehbaz Sharif during his stints as chief minister of the Punjab had attached great importance to vocational training and skill development. From day one, the priority of the PML-N was skill development of the youth. "The manifesto of the political party that I represent, highlights the importance of enhancing skills and placing importance on skill development, on setting up institutes where skills training is imparted to youth and this is the way forward", he remarked. Expressing gratitude to Founder and CEO of GS Microelectronics (SME) Farhat Jahangir, he said he had done a great job by organising this summit to bring public and private sectors together and bringing members of esteemed universities of Pakistan under one roof for optimum collaboration. He urged the luminaries from leading universities to come up with workable solutions and tangible proposals. He assured that the government would be on the forefront in these endeavours. Saying that several discussions have been held on semiconductor business, he expressed the optimism that it would be from chip designing to providing skill development to enhancing research in development and planning, He said Pakistan had a lot of expertise in skill development as well as research and development, adding though research and development was one area with regard to chip designing, Pakistan could contribute immensely in this regard. "I hope one day we may develop some capacity towards manufacturing semiconductors) after a few years", he said. However he said there was a need to set a direction, and set an objective and goal,", adding experts in the summit who had spent decades in this field could guide the way forward. Thanking the

forum for hosting the event, he hoped that collaboration in this sector would continue and Pakistan could be linked with the global economy. " This is something we need to emphasize and focus on which will help our economy in a big way as the world is opening up", he opined. He said since coming to power this year, the present government had received many delegations from abroad. " We just hosted a Saudi Arabian delegation a few days ago and the Iranian President is due next week, so there are a lot of positive activities ". Attaullah Tarar said that economic indicators were positive and international financial institutions and international financial journals were unanimous that Pakistan had great potential for economic development. " If we put our heart into it, the sky is the limit; and with good intentions, we set on this path", he said. He assured the participants that the government would not only provide resources, but it would be at the beck and call to support the semiconductor business in Pakistan.

Solar Enterprise to invest Rs. 470.78 Million in Rashakai Psez

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Steller, a Pakistani solar manufacturing enterprise is set to invest Rs. 470.78 million in the Rashakai prioritized Special Economic Zone (pSEZ), a flagship project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It was approved during the 8th SE Committee meeting of Rashakai pSEZ, Gwadar Pro reported. The commit

Influential unjustly getting trillions should be highlighted Snatching the resources of people with low incomes and

snatching the resources of people with low incomes and giving them to influential people and groups does not develop the economy but weakens it and stoke poverty

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DNA

ISLAMABAD: and without these exemp-Shahid Rasheed Butt, the former tions and privileges, the country would not have president of the Islamabad required the IMF loans. Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), stated on According to research by Wednesday that it is necesa former Finance Minissary to reveal the names of ter, the privileged classes the influential individuals receive annual benefits of and groups receiving annu-Rs 14000 billion, he said, al benefits of 17.5 billion adding that when accountdollars. If the privileges ed for inflation, this amount that elites are getting are comes to 7.5 trillion rupees. legal and moral, why have Snatching the resources of people with low incomes they been kept a secret for so long, he asked? Shaand giving them to influenhid Rasheed Butt said in tial people and groups does a statement issued here not develop the economy today that in the financial but weakens it and stoke year 2022, the elites were poverty. Many experts exempted from Rs 2.24 trilbelieve that drama is belion in federal taxes, which ing made in the name of reforms aimed at further was 36.4 percent of the total tax collected by FBR squeezing and 3.4 percent of the GDP. people to benefit the rich.

This amount was higher If the undue and unethical support of the elite than the federal governis stopped, Pakistan will ment's total expenditures, not need to beg from the IMF and friendly nations, he said. Tackling the elite capture will reduce inflation, cut unemployment, and decrease illiteracy. The rupee's value, growth rate, and quality of public health will all improve, and the country will not face a longterm crisis. Mr. Butt noted that there is a concerning

remarkable wealth, most citizens lack the bare essentials. Despite the populist rhetoric of our opportunistic politicians, Pakistan's glaring socio-economic inequities are the result of various structural problems that have not been intentionally addressed. Influential people need to re-evaluate our country's goals. It's high time our government shifted their attention to ensuring growth through progressive policies that boost production from the bottom up. Otherwise, the situation would exacerbate already-existing disparities and affect the entire nation, not just low-income people. However, he said it is doubtful that the government will stop rewarding and bribing the elite.



tee comprised representatives from the Board of Investment Pakistan (BOI), Rashakai Special Economic Zone Development and Operations Company (RSEZDOC), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZD-MC), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Special Economic Zone Authority (KP-SEZA), Deputy Commissioner Nowshera, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BOIT). "After completion of formalities, the enterprise will be issued a formal letter of approval, entitling it to the fiscal benefits of SEZs," according to an official statement from BOI. According to BOI, in line with the government's present-day vision to promote clean and sustainable energy solutions, BOI actively encourages and facilitates investments in the solar panel manufacturing sector. This strategic focus not only contributes to environmental sustainability but also enhances long-term revenue generation for the government.

BOI, as the secretariat of the SEZs, will provide all-out facilitation to enable the new enterprise to commence its construction activities within 6 months and commence production within 24 months of their approval. and the poor in Pakistan, and people in positions of authority are deliberately widening it.

it and stoke lany experts drama is bethe name of ed at further low-income hefit the rich. which mg ft. Regarding human development rankings, Pakistan's low average income and poor health and literacy rates are notable. While a tiny percentage

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq receiving British High Commissioner Ms. Jane Marriot at Parliament House.–DNA

Entrepreneurship curriculum introduced in FDE schools

successful model implemented in Gilgit-Bal-ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Federal Education and tistan in the last two Professional Training has years, they informed. The curriculum is careintroduced an entrepreneurship curriculum in fully designed to develschools working under op entrepreneurial skills the ambit of the Federal in students, equipping Directorate of Educathem with the necessary tion (FDE). The official tools and mindsets for sources told APP that innovation and creativity. According to the declaas per the declaration of the education ministry, ration, unlike traditional from the next academic assessment-based learning, this curriculum will session, students from grades 6 to 10 will have focus on project-based an opportunity to venlearning. This will help ture into the world of the students to apply the entrepreneurship. This theoretical knowledge curriculum reflects the to real world scenarios,

it added. The sources further stated that to ensure the successful implementation of this initiative, training will be provided to 200 teachers in FDE (ICT).Meanwhile commenting on this declaration, the Secretary Education said that introducing entrepreneurship at an early age, not only fosters entrepreneurial spirit but also inculcates valuable skills like critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork. He further said that the move marks a significant departure from traditional education methods.-APP

7up launches innovative campaign to bring neighbors together

getherness.

catching the

Home

Initially utilized as Out-of-

ments, the tearable mats

serve a dual purpose,

of passersby while also

encouraging community

engagement. As the cam-

paign progressed, the mats

transitioned into practical

tools for hosting communal

gatherings, further rein-

forcing the message of to-

getherness.The campaign

extended its reach beyond

residential areas to include

marginalized communities.

By providing mats, 7UP

aims to promote inclusiv-

ity and underscored the

message that togetherness

People were encouraged

to utilize the mats to host

iftar gatherings and share

their experiences on social

knows no boundaries.

(OOH) advertise-

attention

DNA

ISLAMABAD: 7UP has introduced a remarkably innovative outdoor campaign with the aim of inspiring neighbors to eat together. Billboards that dispense Dastarkhwans have been installed in various locations with a wonderful message on them: let's eat together with our neighbors. Anybody can simply roll a new Dastarkhwan off the billboard and take it home. The insight behind this novel campaign was simple: In Ramadan, a time of spiritual reflection and communal harmony, traditionally brings people together from all walks of life to break their fast and share meals. However, after Ramadan in recent

times, societal changes, including urbanization and socio-economic disparities, have led to a decline in the practice of communal gathering. Recognizing the importance of reviving this cherished tradition, 7UP launched the Togetherness Matters campaign.

The initiative aims to reintroduce the concept of communal gathering by providing tearable mats that served both as advertisements and practical tools for sharing meals. These tearable mats, adorned with an amalgamation of modern and traditional designs, strike a balance between contemporary aesthetics and cultural heritage. Additionally, the messaging printed on the mats effectively convey the campaign's theme of to-

media using the hashtag #TogethernessMatters. This user-generated content not only showcased the success of the initiative but also fostered a sense of community and connection among the audience. Spanned across five key strategic locations ensured widespread participation and engagement throughout the campaign period. 7UP Ramadan Togetherness Matters campaign successfully revive the spirit of communal iftars, fostering connections, spreading joy, and celebrating diversity. While continuing it through this innovative campaign, 7UP reaffirms its commitment to promoting togetherness and emphasizes the importance of community engagement, especially during the holy month & after Ramadan as well.



Danish dilemma

NHE recent announcement by the federal government regarding the expansion of Daanish Schools, a project championed by Shehbaz Sharif during his tenure as the chief minister of Punjab, marks a significant development in the educational landscape of Pakistan. Originally established as residential schools catering to underprivileged children, Daanish Schools have been operational in Punjab since 2010, with 16 currently in existence and more in various stages of development. It's noteworthy that these schools are established in pairs for boys and girls in each district. Presently, there are approximately 11,000 students enrolled in Daanish Schools in Punjab, where they have exhibited commendable academic performance. Impressively, in SSC examinations, 90% of students achieved marks in the A+ grade range, while in HSSC examinations, 32% secured marks in the A+ grade range and 38% in the A grade range. However, the establishment of new Daanish Schools comes with a substantial financial investment, with recent projects costing between Rs1.1 to Rs3.4 billion. Building on this initiative, the Punjab Daanish Schools and Centers of Excellence Authority has identified certain existing schools for significant upgrades, redesignating them as Centers of Excellence (COE). These COEs have demonstrated improved academic outcomes compared to typical public schools, and they are accomplished at a lower cost than Daanish Schools. Currently, around 17,000 students are enrolled in COEs, bringing the total number of students benefiting from these initiatives to 28,000. Despite the progress made, it's essential to acknowledge the scale of the educational challenges still facing Pakistan. While initiatives like Daanish Schools and COEs are commendable for providing quality education to some of the most vulnerable children, they only cater to a fraction of the total number of out-of-school children in the country. Additionally, the significant costs associated with establishing these institutions highlight the need for a more comprehensive approach to addressing educational quality and infrastructure issues in existing public schools.

For instance, the upcoming establishment of a Daanish School in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) at a projected cost of Rs5 billion raises questions about resource allocation and priorities. This amount represents a substantial portion of the budget allocated for all schools in the ICT area, which often struggle with basic infrastructure requirements such as electricity, boundary walls, and sanitation facilities. While increased investment in education is laudable, it's crucial to consider the opportunity cost associated with such expenditures. While Daanish Schools may yield positive outcomes for the students they serve, they do not offer a holistic solution to the broader challenges facing the education system. Addressing governance issues and improving existing public schools should remain a priority alongside initiatives like Daanish Schools and COEs. The establishment of a Daanish School in the ICT presents an opportunity for transformation, but it must be accompanied by efforts to enhance infrastructure and resources in existing schools. Moreover, there is a need to address systemic issues within the education sector, rather than relying solely on parallel systems that may not adequately address the root causes of educational inequality.

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Navigating reality amidst propaganda

MIDST a swirl of images unhooked from reality, reeling out across Western screens, a few hand-holds on 'the real' need to be firmly 公 grasped. Firstly, whatever the claims of air defence triumph mounted by the Israelis and their friends (i.e. the "99% shootdown"), Israel and the US know the truth: Iran's missiles were able to penetrate directly into Israel's two most sensitive and highly defended air bases and sites. Behind the whooping rhetoric is Israeli shock. The exaggerated propaganda derives from the left-right double punch that the West has sustained. It is public knowledge that Western air defence systems in Ukraine have been a flop. If it were to be admitted that Iran's missile capabilities can breach the highest concentration of air defences which are situated at Nevatim Air base in the south, the implications for the western defence posture worldwide are dire. Shhh! ... Fire up the smoke screen of 'Splendid Triumph'. Secondly, they know that the so-called 'assault' was no assault, but a message to assert the new strategic equation: Any Israeli attack on Iran or its personnel will result in retribution from Iran into "Israel". This marks a transformation of the Resistance Fronts' strategy: Until now, it has consisted of movements acting in concert - with States remaining strictly in the background. The opening of the Iranian front, in a certain way initially may have benefited Netanyahu: the Israeli forces' defeat in the Gaza war; the hostage release impasse; the continuing displacement of settlers from the north; and even the murder of the World Kitchen aid workers - all were temporarily forgotten. The West grouped at Israel's side again. Arab states were again co-operating. All attention moved from Gaza to Iran.

So far, so good (from Netanyahu's perspective, no doubt). But to cut Iran down to size would require US military assistance. The Iranian missile launch underscored that. Reports suggest that the US did the heavy lifting. Were 'Israel' to go it alone in a reprisal attack on Iran, would that - in and of itself - give 'Israel' escalatory dominance in the region (and restore deterrence)? Or might it bring the wider regional war which might end with 'Israel's' demise as a state as we know it? And would Biden accommodate such a risky venture (during an US election cycle)? Here too lies dilemma: Biden stands on his embrace of 'Israel': 'Ironclad support', he intones. But the oxymoron comes when he juxtaposes the Ironclad support versus no wider regional war. The dilemma for 'Israel' is, should the US say 'no' to a strike on Iran (and actually mean it), 'Israel' is left to wallow in a clutch of defeats on all six fronts, plus fraying public trust. But would Biden mean it (when saying 'no war')? Hmmm ... Would it be politically viable for the White House to cut weapon supply or cash in wake of the Iranian missile launch? Biden would have another problem: The US is committed to 'defensive' support ONLY. However, Iran has sophisticated air defence systems (though their efficacy is as yet unproven). Were the Israelis to get into trouble in Iran, for Biden to move from defensive to 'offensive' support for 'Israel' would bring him other problems at home in the US.

Blockade for Palestine: Thirty cities act in solidarity

Sul Nowroz

Europe followed several hours later. In Greece, ports including COSCO port, and roads were besieged, while in Belfast the main harbour was blockaded as locals chanted "Ní Saoirse go Saoirse don Phailistín" (There is no freedom until Palestine is free). Parts of Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Utrecht were also blockaded. In London property firm Metric, who manage facilities for weapons manufacturers BAE, Elbit and Boeing, had their office blockaded, while there was a silent protest in the main shopping area of Piccadilly. In Canada, activists came together to blockade Halifax's main port, where Israeli shipping company

HERE is an irony to it. For almost 200 days much of the world has watched Gaza starve to death by an "Israel"-imposed blockade. Remember the menacing promise by Israeli Security Minister Yoav Gallant on October 7th, 2023? Dressed in black, Gallant, with a pale face and a light dusting of white hair, stared down the camera lens. His eyes were vacant, and like a ghost from the future, he forewarned of a disaster, "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed.'

The disaster was wholly of Gallant's making. His words should have been enough for the UN and its legal apparatus to swing into action and pursue both Gallant and the settler state of "Israel" for crimes against humanity. But that didn't happen. Instead, the colonial monster we assumed, and hoped dead, was in fact simply masquerading as a more polite form of pity, a subtler practice of coercion. Within days of Gallant's infamous words, the facade fell away, and colonial powers rallied to protect their garrison outpost of "Israel". Western politicians rushed to unashamedly visit the settler state, and parrot 'self-defence.' It was then we realised we had been tricked.

ocide. Join participating cities in blocking the arteries of capitalism and jamming the wheels of production." Thirty cities heard the call and readied themselves to lay siege to bridges, highways, ports, factories, and offices. The day chosen, Monday, April 15th, carries significance in the Palestinian calendar: It is the date the 1936-39 anti-Zionist revolt began.

Australia began the worldwide siege and solidarity campaign by blockading a series of sites in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin, Melbourne, Hobart and Sydney, as well as office entrances to companies with ties to Israel including BP, Ferra, and Thales. In Vietnam, campaigners held teach-ins on Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) tactics. In addition, the five largest supermarkets in Ho Chi Minh City were occupied and stickers were placed on products produced by firms linked to "Israel". The firms included Nestlé, P&G, Unilever, and Pepsi Co. The firms were also called out for their support of "Israel's" apartheid system.

Europe followed several hours later. In Greece, ports including COSCO port, and roads were besieged, while in Belfast the main harbour was blockaded as locals chanted "Ní Saoirse go Saoirse don Phailistín" (There is no freedom until Palestine is free). Parts of Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Utrecht were also blockaded. In London property firm Metric, who manage facilities for weapons manufacturers BAE, Elbit and Boeing, had their office blockaded, while there was a silent protest in the main shopping area of Piccadilly. In Canada, activists came together to blockade Halifax's main port, where Israeli shipping company Zim has an office. In the US, highways and streets in several states were blocked, in New York, the Brooklyn Bridge was blockaded, and in California, the iconic Golden Gate Bridge was brought to a standstill. The port of Oakland, the ninth busiest in the US, was blockaded for seven hours. When I answer the phone, I hear a police siren over the chatter of voices. I am speaking with Hay Sha Wiya who despite the commotion is calm and clear. Hay Sha Wiva knows about occupation - she is from the tribal nation of Fort Peck Assiniboine Sioux in unceded Turtle Island (referred to as the United States by colonialists). She feels an affinity with the Palestinian cause - an occupied land and an oppressed indigenous population. She tells me how she is morally uncomfortable with the situation in Palestine and how solidarity with Gaza, and Gazans, is a moral imperative; how symbolic actions are no longer enough and the time for collective risk has arrived. Hay Sha Wiya knows the terrain well. She sees the links between capitalism and colonialism, and how they feed off each other uninhibited. Today, she is part of a morally conscious collective laying siege to those parts of the economy that are openly profiting off the butchery, death, and genocide of Palestinians.

As I write, my phone is lighting up with details of more blockades. It is also lighting up with news from Gaza. Another mass grave holding ten bodies, some with bandages and catheters still attached, has been unearthed at Al-Shifa Hospital, food shortages are getting worse, and civilians returning to North Gaza earlier today were shot at. The accompanying video is upsetting - men and women of all ages run for cover as automatic gunfire can be heard. Overhead are drones. People are throwing themselves on the ground to avoid being shot. For some, it's too late. One young male, mid-twenties perhaps, is clearly in pain and blood covers his lower abdomen and leg. The next scene finds a recess deep in my mind and won't leave. It is of a woman. She is seated and is wearing a dark patterned headscarf. She is holding a child, tightly, and is rocking backwards and forwards. You can only see half the woman's face; the other half is buried in the child's dark hair. The woman is quiet, the child is lifeless. The little girl was hit by an Israeli bullet in the mouth.

At the same time as the child's death, the colonial

Zim has an office. In the US, highways and streets in several states were blocked

International institutions, promoted as fair and designed to serve all, were in fact racist vehicles of oppression and control. Colonialism had never gone away; it is simply cloaked in a different cloth. The uninformed talking heads on Western news programmes, the nonsensical UN debates, and hypocritical Western government officials once again lectured us, trying to mislead us into thinking the world was made up of the civilised and the uncivilised, the enlightened and the brutes. There is light, and that is where they live, and there is darkness, where others merely exist. This twisted colonial logic is what gives birth to Whiteness, with all its rights, protection, and recourse. Whiteness is by its very nature exclusive and operates on exceptionalism. It feeds on oppression and violence, someone must suffer for it to function, and that someone can have no entitlements, otherwise Whiteness doesn't work. So, Western governments enabled and encouraged their single largest militia outpost, "Israel", to bomb, brutalise, butcher, and besiege Gaza. But on April 15th a few thousand brave people turned the tables and lay siege to thirty cities around the world. Gaza, colonialism's open wound, was striking back. And the irony was on view for all to see. The message was simple and shared across social me-

dia platforms: "The global economy is complicit in gen-

ringmasters were performing: The Portuguese Prime Minister said his country was not ready to recognise a Palestinian state, while the US Pentagon said it is prepared to "take all necessary action to defend Israel and US personnel" and "will defend Israel no matter what." The UK's David Cameron boasted "RAF [Royal Air Force] jets could defend Israel again, even if the country's leaders ignored calls from the UK and US to hold back from retaliation against Iran." German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock suggested "Israel" could "defend itself ... together with strong allies." Germany reportedly approved 326.5 million worth of arms exports to "Israel" in 2023. Today, people across thirty cities felt Gaza's pain and

turned it into an act of collective resistance. They showed us all it is time to escalate. It is much easier for you To push an elephant through a needle's eye, Catch fried fish in galaxy, Blow out the sun, Imprison the wind, Or make a crocodile speak, Than to destroy by persecution The shimmering glow of a belief

Or check our march Towards our cause One single step...

Hate songs against muslims, call for ram rajya in Hyderabad

Sumit Jha

The band, which began playing at 10 am, finally set the procession in motion by 1:30 pm. A blaring electronic DJ truck led the way. As more people joined in, a lively circle formed around the truck, the air resonating with the beat of drums that drowned the swish of orange flags. After an hour of jubilant revelry, the DJ made an announcement. "Bhaiyya aa rahe and hum yaha se niklenege" (Big brother is coming, and we will depart from here). The noisy crowd

fell silent at the mention of 'Bhaiyya'. They heeded to the call to gather for the next leg of the celebration. On Tuesday, the Hyderabad Police had declined...

AYAKAR Singh's right thumb and forefinger were busy crushing and kneading a pinch of tobacco on his left palm. Once done to his satisfaction, he placed the substance between his lower lip and gum with practised ease. "This will be the grandest Ram Navami celebration," he said in front of a statue of Uttar Pradesh's former chief minister Kalyan Singh. "Our temple has finally come up," he added, referring to the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. The air reverberated with melodious strains of 'Ram Ji Ki Nikli Sawari', courtesy of the 'Shyam Sundar KP Deepak Band'. In an instant, Singh melted into the bustling crowd, drawn by the allure of the Ram Navami celebration in front of Lodh Bhawan at Dhoolpet in Hyderabad on Wednesday, April 18. Throughout Hyderabad, people visited temples from early morning, some even setting up makeshift prayer pandals. In Dhoolpet, there was an electrifying buzz, not merely in honor of Rama's birth anniversary, but also reflecting the communal camaraderie. Rakesh (not his real name), a second-year intermediate student, has travelled from Borabanda to join the festivities in Dhoolpet. "I've been coming here to celebrate for the past three years. It's a vibrant gathering, filled with dance and joy," Rakesh told South First, his eyes sparkling with anticipation of what they were to see soon.

The band, which began playing at 10 am, finally set the procession in motion by 1:30 pm. A blaring electronic DJ truck led the way. As more people joined in, a lively circle formed around the truck, the air resonating with the beat of drums that drowned the swish of orange flags. After an hour of jubilant revelry, the DJ made an announcement. "Bhaiyya aa rahe and hum yaha se niklenege" (Big brother is coming, and we will depart from here). The noisy crowd fell silent at the mention of 'Bhaiyya'. They heeded to the call to gather for the next leg of the celebration. On Tuesday, the Hyderabad Police had declined Bharativa Janata Party (BJP) MLA T. Raja Singh permission to organise the Ram Navami Shobha Yatra in the city. However, another organisation received police clearance for the procession along the same old city route. Despite his application being rejected by the police, Singh encouraged people to participate in the Ram Navami celebrations. His call came even as the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections was in force. Singh, the Goshamahal MLA, arrived at 3:15 pm. Loudspeakers blared out songs. Many of them targeted the Muslim community and advocated the establishment of a Hindu Rashtra. Additional Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Vikram Singh Mann, who had earlier denied permission for the procession, was seen making the way for Singh's vehicle to pass through the crowd. As the rally progressed at a sluggish pace through the three-kilometre stretch, songs penned and sung by Singh reverberated the streets of Dhoolpet, Mangalhat, Begum Bazaar, and Siddiamber Bazar. At the first halt near Begum Bazaar Chhatri, Singh took the stage. "Our long-awaited dream of a temple in Ayodhya has been realised. However, our aspirations for temples in Kashi (Varanasi) and Mathura remain unfulfilled," he said. "We are committed to constructing temples not only in Kashi and Mathura but also in 40,000 locations where mosques currently stand," he proclaimed.

Singh went on to announce that by 2026, India would be officially declared a Hindu Rashtra. "Our vision of a Hindu Rashtra will materialise within two years," he asserted. As the procession reached near a mosque at Siddiamber Bazar, Singh continued his rhetoric. He directed his criticism towards All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIM-IM) chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi.

"Merely the sight of the Ayodhya temple has unsettled you. However, the pending temples in Kashi and Mathura, along with 40,000 Hindu temples, will soon be realised. We will instill the spirit of Kar Seva in our future generations," he thundered as many teenagers, yet to start shaving their facial hair, roared in agreement with roving eyes. "The chief minister of Uttar Pradesh has assured that this time, instead of bullets, flower petals will be showered during Kar Seva. The days are not away - just as we have reclaimed Ayodhya, we will reclaim Kashi and Mathura," he said. Singh also said that providing education to Muslims was not advisable. "Even after receiving education, they are becoming Jihadis," he remarked. Attacking Muslim community, he abuses @asadowaisi and said that even after giving the education, they become a jihadi.

While he made these statements, police personnel recorded videos of his speech. "We recorded the speeches and are in the process of verifying the comments made by him. If we find any objectionable content, appropriate action will be taken. Currently, we are reviewing the videos," DCP South West Zone D Uday Kumar Reddy told South First.

"We used to have smaller rallies during the Ram Navami celebrations. When Raja Singh became the TDP corporator, he organised larger rallies. Previously, the rallies would wind through narrow lanes, but now they extend for 5-6 kilometres," Anil Kumar, a shopkeeper, said.

"Initially, only locals participated in the yatra (rally). But

now people from across the city and even other parts of the state join it. In place of earlier thousands of participants, lakhs now attend the celebrations," he told South First. As the rally commenced, the streets became so crowded that there was hardly any space to move. People danced enthusiastically to the Singh's tunes will communal overtones. "This is the largest Ram Navami rally. You won't find anything like this elsewhere. Raja Singh sings these songs himself, and they directly resonate with us. That's why I come here to enjoy it," Rakesh stated.

Men filled the streets, while women stood on balconies and terraces, clapping and smiling as they watched the festivities unfold. Amidst the dancing, many men took out their phones to capture the moment, frequently shooting furtive glances at the balconies and terraces. "You won't find women and girls like these anywhere else. They are pure Hindus and fair-skinned. It's one of the reasons we come here," Rakesh let out a secret. Madhavi Latha, BJP's Lok Sabha candidate in Hyderabad, moved in an open jeep ahead of Singh's caravan. Though the Election Commission of India has prohibited politicians from soliciting votes in the name of religion, it did not restrict their participation in such rallies. The crowd was predominantly homogenous, BJP-leaning and celebrating Ram Navami. Initially, Latha refrained from making overt political statements when asked to speak at the first stop. Instead, she subtly remarked, "This year, Ram Rajya will come," hinting at the BJP and Narendra Modi government, However, at Begum Bazaar Chhatri, Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) leader Laddu Yadav introduced her as the BJP MP candidate. He urged people to vote for her. Yadav continued to make comments against AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and handed over the microphone to her, ignoring her reluctance to speak. Latha chose to sing a religious song and reiterated the sentiments expressed at the first stop. Yaday persisted, leading her to mention Modi and Patang (kite, the AIMIM symbol). "I have been entrusted with a task by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I am here to fulfill his mission, and it's true that he has sent me here to cut someone's patang (kite)," she declared, blending political rhetoric with symbolism While Madhavi Latha tried to avoid making any political comments, @ LadduYadavBJP openly referred to Asaduddin Owaisi as a 'dog' on stage, even in her presence. Additionally, at the end, he made a small political pitch by stating 'patang (the AIMIM symbol) katega'.

WORLD / SPORTS

Islamabad **POST** Friday, April 19, 2024

Briefs

President calls for steering...

FROM PAGE 01 President Zardari said their agenda and ideology will strengthen the country and underlined the need for creating a political environment to fulfill the expectations of all stakeholders. He asked the political leadership of the country to highlight their priorities and stressed the need for ending differences for the country's prosperity. "While there are many economic reforms the government will drive in spurring jobs, reducing inflation and expanding the tax net, I want to underscore the importance of promoting positive working relationships and effective coordination, within our constitutional framework. between the Federal Government and the Provinces. This is absolutely essential for promoting an inclusive national development agenda and rolling out policies that execute tangible action on the ground."

Gen Faiz made deal with TLP...

FROM PAGE 01 agree with the promise regarding then-law minister Zahid Hamid's resignation. The then-premier also objected to Hamid's name in the contract with TLP. At the time, Hamid was heading ISI's counter intelligence wing and held the rank of a major general.= However, the prime minister was told that the agreement has been finalised, signed and cannot be with drawn, Iqbal said, apprising the commission. In his statement to the commission, former interior secretary Arshad Mirza said he, when he was called to the PM Secretariat, witnessed tension between Abbasi and then-Puniab chief minister Shehbaz Sharif. The Punjab CM was in favour of Hamid's resignation as per the agreement, while Abbasi opposed it. The former secretary said the tension between the PM and Punjab CM escalated to such an extent that he felt awkward and left the room.

ICCI's plan: eco-friendly capital with business support

Khalid Iqbal Malik said that ICCI under the leadership of its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari is working day and night for the betterment of the business community and the civil society

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Founder Group, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Khalid Iqbal Malik has said that Islamabad is the pride of Pakistan and ICCI is resolute to make it an eco-friendly city with the cooperation of all the stakeholders. He said this while addressing a ceremony held here at the Chamber House in honour of Raja Javaid Iqbal, President Traders Welfare Association G-9 markaz, who has recently turned back after performing the Umrah.

Khalid Iqbal Malik said that Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry under the able leadership of its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari is working day and night for the betterment of the business community and the civil society. He paid richest tributes to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for his outclass performance as the ICCI President who is not only extend-



ing facilities like installation of filtration plants at different markets and trade centres but is providing computers and filtrations to schools and colleges also by spending millions of rupees from his own pocket, which is a unique example of big-heartedness. Addressing the ceremony, former

President ICCI and Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said ICCI is steadfast in offering the finest services to the business community and turning Islamabad a model city for its residents and the rest of the world. He said that impressive inaugural ceremonies with

regard to the newly installed filtration plants at different markets will be held separately with the participation of representatives of all the stakeholders.

Raja Javaid Iqbal said that ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has played a key role in resolving the problems of the business community in all the nooks and corners of the capital city that is why he has emerged as the darling of the business community. He expressed his gratitude to Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik and Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari for arranging an exclusive ceremony in his honour.

In their speeches office bearers of Traders Welfare Associations made mention of the achievements of ICCI during last one and a half year by terming its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari as a brand ambassador of the capital city. They said that the ICCI President is serving the community without any discrimination of liking and disliking. Those who spoke on the occasion include Nasir Chaudhry, Ikhlaq Abbasi, Ch. Naeem, Ch. Abdul Ghafaar, Ch. Nazeer, Syed Ather Haider Shah, Haji Zafar, Khalid Ch. Abbas Hashmi, Mohsin Khalid, Malik Iftikhar, Khurshid Qureshi, Babar Chaudhry and Naeem Awan.



FROM PAGE 01 energy sector streamlining, and privatisation during the huddle at the World Bank headquarters in Washington on Wednesday. Ambassador Lu, flanked by State Department's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Horst in the meeting, reaffirmed Washington's commitment to bolster ties between the US and Pakistan. Aurangzeb, who is currently in Washington to hold negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a new bailout package and attend World Bank meetings, has also been conducting meetings with top officials in the US on the sidelines. Aurangzeb and the US official focused on upgrading economic partnerships, with emphasis on alternate energy, agriculture, climate resilience and tech industry. The Pakistani minister identified American investment opportunities in information technology, renewables, agriculture and minerals extraction. He also pledged close collaboration with the US International Development Finance Corporation and Exim Bank for mutual development.

Atalanta challenge different to Barcelona: Klopp

MEXICO CITY:Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp knows all about heroic comebacks in European competition but even their barnstorming fightback against Barcelona in the 2019 Champions League will not prepare them for Thursday's task in Atalanta. Klopp's side suffered a resounding 3-0 home loss in the first leg of their Europa League quarter-final and travel to Italy with a mountain to climb. While they also trailed Barcelona by a 3-0 scoreline in the Champions League semi-final five years ago, their 4-0 victory in the return fixture came with the noisy backing of a vociferous home crowd, while Thursday's atmosphere will be very different. "The result is similar definitely. The performance not really," the German coach told reporters on Wednesday. "We lost 3-0 in Barcelona and people didn't know how, now we lost 3-0 at home and are away, it's a massive difference. We are here and will try to win the game, that's all. That's what we should do. "(Last week) we had really good moments but they completely deserved to win. Let's start with a much better performance and try to win the game and we will see how much time is left at the end." - Agencies



FROM PAGE 01 remains suspended in the country since February 17. The suspension of the website occurred over a week after the general elections in Pakistan on February 8 that triggered debate on the fairness and transparency of the polls. Users reported problems accessing the site, but no official comment was issued by the government of Pakistan on the matter. However, the interior minister, in its report submitted to the Islamabad High Court in a separate case related to the suspension, maintained that it shut the website following national security concerns in the wake of which the social media platform has issued its statement. The ministry, in its report to IHC, stated that the "content uploaded on the internet" is a "threat" to the country's national security. The decision to impose a ban on Twitter/X in Pakistan was made in the interest of upholding national security, maintaining public order, and preserving the integrity of our nation, it added. "It is very pertinent to mention here that the failure of Twitter/X to adhere to the lawful directives of the government of Pakistan and address concerns regarding the misuse of its platform necessitated the imposition of a ban," the ministry said in the report.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Yusuf Raza Gilani meets with Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. - DNA

PAK vs NZ: Hafeez criticises Stuart Law named head coach of T20 team selection for T20I series

IHCBA moves SC for fair probe

FROM PAGE 01 as secret surveillance inside their homes. The letter was signed by judges Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Babar Sattar, Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Saman Rafat Imtiaz. A day later, calls had emerged from various quarters for a probe into the investigation, amid which Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa summoned a full court meeting of the Supreme Court's judges. After a meeting between CJP Isa and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on March 28, the duo decided to form a commission to investigate the concerns of interference in judicial affairs following the cabinet's approval. However, former CJP Tassaduq Hussain Jillani, who was appointed to head the commission, subsequently recused himself from the matter, leading to the apex court taking a suo motu notice of the issue.

PM Shehbaz seeks EU...

FROM PAGE 01 constructively with the EU's Global Gateway Strategy through the European Investment Bank. The Prime Minister sought EU's support in providing consultancy and expertise to help Pakistan carry out important reforms in various sectors. The EU Ambassador briefed the Prime Minister on various cooperation initiatives, including the ongoing dialogue on migration and mobility issues between the two sides, as well as facilitating European businesses operating in Pakistan. Progress on resumption of flights from Pakistan to EU countries was also discussed. Meanwhile, PM Shehbaz Sharif has termed the recent visit of Saudi delegation as the beginning of a new era of Saudi investment and commercial and strategic partnership in Pakistan.

WC hosts USA

WASHINGTON: T20 World Cup hosts the United States of America (USA) have named Stuart Law as head coach, US cricket officials said on Thursday, with the Australian calling it "an exciting opportunity." The 55-year-old former batter takes charge of the USA men's team ahead of a three-match home T20 series against Bangladesh next month. The USA will host the World Cup with the West Indies in June. USA Cricket did not reveal the length of Law's contract as head coach. "It is an exciting opportunity to join USA Cricket at this time," said Law, who has previously coached Bangladesh, the West Indies and Afghanistan at international level. "USA is one of the strongest associate nations in the sport and I believe that we can mold a formidable squad going ahead. "The first task will be to prepare the team for the series against Bangladesh and then set our sights on our home World Cup, which will be huge." Venu Pisike, chairman of USA Cricket, called the Australian "one of the most accomplished coaches in the sport." - Agencies

Juventus ordered to pay **Ronaldo 9.7m euros**

ROME: Juventus must pay Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo 9.7 million euros (\$10.4 million) in back wages for the 2020-21 season, the Italian courts announced on Wednes day. The Court of Arbitration, to which Ronaldo appealed. "orders Juventus Turin to pay the sum of 9,774,166.66 euros", plus interest and procedural costs, it stated in its decision. The sum equates to the difference between the salary actually received by Ronaldo and that which he should have received after tax and other deductions. Ronaldo, who spent three seasons in Italy with Juventus (2018-21) before joining Manchester United (2021-22) and then the Saudi club Al Nassr, was claiming 19.5 million euros but the arbitration panel reduced that by 50 percent. Contacted by AFP, Juventus declined to comment, but said it would be issuing a statement "shortly". - Agencies

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez on Thursday criticised team selection for the T20I series against New Zealand on home soil. According to a local cricket website, Hafeez was unimpressed with the criteria of selection after Babar Azam's return as captain.

"I understand that if Babar has learned from his mistakes and if he makes better decisions now and does all the things he didn't do before, then things might get better. But the selection for this [New Zealand] series will give you an idea that the same process has started again," Hafeez said.

"For a weak New Zealand, where 12 to 13 main players are not available, for that, we have selected every player who was perhaps sitting at home and called him to come and play for Pakistan. So, I think this is a weak decision regarding this series," he added.

It must be noted that the first match of the five-T20I series between Pakistan and New Zealand will be played today in Rawalpindi. However, the rain could play spoilsport during the match according to The Weather Channel. The latest weather forecast states that there is 60 percent chance of rain during the day and 80 percent at night today. There is also 49 percent chance of rain on April

20, which is the day of the second T20I. However, the chance of rain on April 21, when the third T20I is set to take place, is considerably less at 19 percent. After the first three matches at the Pindi Cricket Stadium, both sides will move to Lahore, where they will play the remaining two T20Is of the series on 25 and 27 April, respectively. All five matches of the T20I series will start at 7:00pm (PST).

Meanwhile, Hafeez said that Shaheen was reluctant to talk to Rizwan, Babar Mohammad Hafeez, former director of the Pakistan national men's team, has claimed that Shaheen Afridi was reluctant to talk to Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan over splitting the opening pair when the pacer was captain of the T20I team. While speaking to a local cricket website, Hafeez said that his decision to change the opening pair during New Zealand T20I series earlier this year was for the betterment of the team. "I didn't change anyone's batting position just because I wanted to. My plan was for the betterment of Pakistan team, so I did that," Hafeez said. "Even I spoke to the captain [Shaheen] but he was reluctant to talk to Babar and Rizwan and so I took that responsibility.

I went to talk to them and I had no problem with it because what I did was for Pakistan. "And if someone feels that addressing all these issues and Pakistan performing well can be achieved by having Babar and Rizwan as openers, or if they can assign some other role to Saim Ayub or whoever the other cricketers are, then I have no issue. We want the best results for the Pakistan cricket team and all players should be given equal opportunities."

Hafeez and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had parted ways in February this year. Former Test captain Hafeez was given the responsibility of Director Cricket in November last year. Hafeez has featured for Pakistan in 55 Tests, 218 ODIs and 119 T20Is and has scored 12,780 runs while also bagging 253 wickets.

Pakistan squad: Babar Azam (c), Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Saim Ayub, Usman Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Azam Khan (wk), Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Afridi, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Amir, Abbas Afridi, Abrar Ahmed, Fakhar Zaman, Irfan Khan Niazi, Usama Mir, Zaman Khan Reserves: Haseebullah, Mohammad Ali, Agha Salman, Sahibzada Farhan,

Mohammad Wasim Jr. New Zealand squad: Michael Bracewell (c), Mark Chapman, Josh Clarkson, Jacob Duffy, Dean Foxcroft, Ben Lister, Cole McConchie, Jimmy Neesham, Will O'Rourke, Tim Robinson, Ben Sears, Tim Seifert (WK), Ish Sodhi, Tom Blundell, Zak Foulkes. Pakistan vs New Zealand T20I

series schedule: April 18 - 1st T20I, Rawalpindi April 20 – 2nd T20I, Rawalpindi April 21 – 3rd T20I, Rawalpindi April 25 – 4th T20I, Lahore April 27 – 5th T20I, Lahore.

'Some political parties...

FROM PAGE 01 with other countries to

undermine the foreign investment inflows. "Such statements were made to serve condemned political motives and to spread anarchy so that no investment comes into the country," he said talking to meida. The federal minister emphasised the religious and economic importance of relations with certain countries for Pakistan. "This is enmity against the country. It is done under a campaign. They feel that their policy is failing. Such behaviour towards the country was shown before. They want to create chaos in the country." It must be noted that Marwat, speaking during a TV talk show had suggested that Saudi Arabia, alongside the United States. played a part in the ouster of Imran Khan's government. Asif said by propagating and making statements, they were aiming to undermine Pakistan's economic ties with other countries. "There is no greater enmity against your country than this. We should treat them as enemies of the state.' As soon as the controversial statement started doing rounds of the media, the PTI top brass distanced itself from Marwat's allegation that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had a hand in the so-called "regime change operation". Moreover, Barrister Aqeel Malik, the government spokesperson on Legal Affairs, said the PTI leader's statement came at a time when a high-level Saudi delegation was visiting the country.

West Indies women thump Pakistan in first ODI Captain Hayley Matthews scored an unbeaten century, followed by three wickets to help her team thump the Pakistan women's team

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Captain Hayley Matthews starred as West Indies women eased past Pakistan in the first ODI of the series on Thursday at the National Bank Stadium (NBS) in Karachi.

Opener Matthews led from the front and scored 140 runs in 150 balls, which included 15 fours and a six, after she won the toss and opted to bat first. Matthews added 102 runs in 127 balls for the second wicket with Shemaine Campbelle after Windies lost opener Rashada Williams (1) in the third over of the match with the score just a single run.

Campbelle scored 45 runs in 71 balls and was the second highest run-scorer in the innings. Meanwhile, Chinelle Henry chipped in with run-a-ball 23.

West Indies finished on 269-8 in 50 overs. For Pakistan, Sadia Iqbal and Tuba Hassan claimed two wickets each.



In reply, the home side were bundled out for 156 runs in 35.5 overs and lost the match by a massive 113 runs. Pakistan kept on losing wickets at regular intervals and never threatened to chase down the 270-run target. Tuba was the highest scorer for Pakistan with 25 runs. After impressing with the bat, Matthews also dominated in the bowling department with three wickets for 17 runs in six overs. Afy Fletcher and Zaida James also clinched two wickets each. The three ODIs will be followed by five T20Is from April 26 to May 3. The series is being broadcast live on Paki-

stan's first sports channel Geo Super. Schedule of remaining matches: 21 Apr - Second ODI at NBS 23 Apr – Third ODI at NBS 26 Apr – First T20I at NBS 28 Apr – Second T20I at NBS **30** Apr – Third T20I at NBS 2 May – Fourth T20I at NBS 3 May – Fifth T20I at NBS.

BUSINESS / WORLD

Iran tells US it does not

seek 'expansion of tensions'

FM Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that before the operation, we clearly told the American

side that we will not target American bases and interests in the region

Briefs

EU, **Netherlands** to maintain good ties with **Türkiye : Rutte**

LONDON : Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Wednesday underscored the significance of enhanc-ing the EU's relationship with Türkiye, highlighting Ankara's pivotal role as a geopolitical actor in the region and beyond. He stated that talks would be held at an EU Council meeting in Brussels to strengthen ties between Türkiye and the EU. "Türkiye is a geopolitical actor with a big influence in the region and beyond. It's a NATO ally, and a partner in a wide range of areas. Examples include counterterrorism, security, climate change and energy, the economy and migration," Rutte said on X. "It's important for the EU - and the Netherlands - to maintain good relations with Türkiye. So it's good to look at what steps we can take to strengthen our ties," he added. Rutte also highlighted the urgent need to address Iran's "reckless" attack on Israel. He emphasized the importance of exploring measures to "ensure that Iran and groups affiliated to Iran refrain from further hostile actions against Israel." "De-escalation is essential for the security of the wider Middle East region," the Dutch prime minister added. The EU Council meeting will also discuss the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. – Agencies

Iran warns Israel against attacking nuclear sites

TEHRAN : An IRGC official has warned that if Israel takes action against Iran's nuclear facilities, it will definitely face "tit-for-tat" retaliation against the regime's nuclear centers with advanced weapons. "If the Zionist regime decides to take action against our nuclear facilities and centers, it will definitely face our reaction," head of the Nuclear Protection and Security Corps Gen. Ahmad Haqtalab said on Thursday, adding "for a tit-for-tat retaliation, the regime's nuclear facilities will be attacked with advanced weapons". Hagtalab issued the stern warning after Israeli officials' suggestions of a possible attack on Iran's nuclear facilities following the Islamic Republic's Operation True Promise to "punish" Tel Aviv for assassinating Irani an military advisors in Da-mascus. "If the fake Zionist regime decides to use the threat of attacking our country's nuclear centers as a tool to put pressure on Iran, it is possible and conceivable to revise the nuclear doctrine and policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran and deviate from the previous reservations declared" by the country, he added. - APP

at the Westfield shopping complex in Bondi Junction. Taha has a graduate visa due to expire in less than a month, the paper said. The guard reportedly noted that Frenchman Damien Guerot, since dubbed "bollard man", had been offered permanent residency after a video shared on social media showed him using a bollard to fend off the attacker, Joel Cauchi. Asked in a radio interview if the Australian government would entertain Taha's citizenship request, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said: "Yes, we certainly will." Albanese described the killing of Faraz Tahir as a "tragedy".

quarter gain

some 9,000 companies around the globe and representing 1.5

percent of the total market capitalisation.-DNA



SYDNEY : Pakistan's High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri visits Pakistani security guard Muhammad Taha at a hospital in Sydney.–DNA.

tacker. Pakistan's High Com-"This other person. Muhammad Taha, he confronted missioner to Australia Zahid this guy, the perpetrator, Joel Hafeez Chaudhri visited Taha Cauchi, on Saturday. And it at the hospital today and said his condition was improving. just shows extraordinary courage," the prime minister said. "Both Taha and other Paki-Both men put themselves in stani Faraz showed exempladanger to protect Australians ry courage to confront the they did not know, Albanese knife attacker. They made said. "That's the sort of courus proud," he said. Sydney age that we want to say thank mall reopens Meanwhile, the you to, frankly." Albanese said Westfield shopping mall held Guerot would receive pera sombre reopening today manent residency, which he with members of a sorrowful had been seeking, on Thurscommunity filing past rows day. French President Emof still-shuttered stores to pay manuel Macron on Tuesday their respects. Shops will reohailed Guerot and his fellow pen properly on Friday, near-Frenchman Silas Despreaux ly a week after 40-year-old for trying to stop the mall at-Cauchi rampaged through

'We're on edge of war in Middle East,' warns Josep

LONDON : In a stark warning issued during a gathering of G7 foreign ministers, the EU foreign policy chief on Thursday voiced grave concerns over the escalating tensions between Israel and Iran, saying they have led the world to the brink of war. Speaking to reporters, Josep Borrell painted a bleak picture, cautioning that the current course of events could lead to a full-blown regional conflict with far-reaching consequences. "I don't want to exaggerate but we are on the edge of a war, a regional war in the Middle East, which will be sending shockwaves to the rest of the world, and in particular to Europe. So stop it," he said. He also reiterated the EU commitment to imposing additional sanctions on Iran in response to its recent actions. However, he also directed a pointed message towards Israel, urging restraint and warning against any actions that could further exacerbate the volatile situation. Tension is running high in the Middle East as Iran on Saturday launched an airborne attack on Israel in retaliation for an April 1 airstrike on its diplomatic compound in the Syrian capital. It reportedly fired more than 300 drones and missiles, with almost all intercepted by the air defense systems of Israel and its allies - the US, France and the UK.Iran claimed that some targets were hit. Israel, in turn, said it would respond to Iran's attack, despite a chorus of world leaders imploring it to hold back. Meanwhile, Israel has waged a deadly military offensive on the Gaza Strip since a cross-border attack by the Palestinian group Hamas last Oct. 7 in which some 1,200 people were killed. Nearly 34,0000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have since been killed in Gaza, and over 76,600 others injured amid mass destruction and shortages of necessities. The Israeli war has pushed 85% of Gaza's population into internal displacement amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicine, while 60% of the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN. Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice. An interim ruling in January ordered Tel Aviv to stop genocidal acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza.-Agencies

tions on Iran's missile and drone Israel, and said it expects allies and other allies helped Israel inprogram following the strike on to take parallel measures. The US tercept the Iranian strike.

UN experts concern over destruction of schools in Gaza

The experts called on the international community to send a clear message that those who target schools and universities

will be held responsible GENEVA: UN experts on Thursday expressed "deep' concern over attacks on schools, universities, teachers, and students in Gaza, raising alarm over the "systemic destruction" of the Palestinian education system. "With more than 80% of schools in Gaza damaged or destroyed, it may be reasonable to ask if there is an intentional effort to comprehensively destroy the Palestinian education system, an action known as 'scholasticide'," the experts said in a statement. bThe term "scholasticide" refers to a "systemic obliteration of education through the arrest, detention or killing of teachers, students and staff, and the destruction of educational infrastructure," they said. According to the experts, more than 5,479 students, 261 teachers and 95 university professors have been killed in Gaza since Oct. 7, 2023, and over 7,819 students and 756 teachers injured. Moreover, at least 60% of educational facilities, including 13 public libraries, have been damaged or destroyed and at least 625,000 students have no access to education. They decried how the last remaining university in Gaza, Israa University, was also demolished by the Israeli military on Jan. 17. "The persistent, callous attacks on educational infrastructure in Gaza have a devastating long-term impact on the fundamental rights of people to learn and freely express themselves, depriving yet another generation of Pales-tinians of their future," they said. "When schools are destroyed, so too are hopes and dreams," they added. Even UN schools sheltering forcibly displaced civilians are being bombed, they warned, saying: "These attacks are not isolated incidents. They present a systematic pattern of violence aimed at dismantling the very foundation of Palestinian society." The experts called on the international community to send a clear message that those who target schools and universities will be held responsible.-DNA

Medicine shortages in **UK reach** alarming levels

Islamabad **POST**

Friday, April 19, 2024

LONDON : Medicine shortages in the UK have reached a critical juncture, with Brexit exacerbating an already dire situation, according to a report by a health think tank released on Thursday. The report, authored by Mark Dayan, the Brexit program lead at Nuffield Trust, paints a troubling picture of a healthcare system grappling with a "new normal" of scarcity in essential medications. The findings underscore a dramatic escalation in the unavailability of crucial drugs, creating profound challenges for healthcare professionals, pharmacies, the National Health Service (NHS), and most critically, patients. According to the report, the number of warnings issued by drug companies on impending supply issues has more than doubled, surging from 648 in 2020 to a staggering 1,634 last year alone. Dayan expressed deep concern over the unprecedented rise in medicine shortages. "The rise in shortages of vital medicines from rare to commonplace has been a shocking development that few would have expected a decade ago. More and more patients across the UK are experiencing a pharmacist telling them that their medication is not available, it may not be available soon, and it may not be available anywhere nearby," he said. He also said Brexit added several additional problems, with products no longer flowing as smoothly across the borders with the EU.-DNA

Google fires 28 employees over protests

WASHINGTON : Google terminated 28 employees for their involvement in a 10-hour sit-in at two of the tech giant's offices in California and New York City, protesting the company's ties with Israel. In response to the Tuesday protests led by a group called No Tech For Apartheid against Proiect Nimbus, a \$1.2 billion

cloud contract with Israel,

Google on Wednesday fired

28 employees accused of

taking part in the protests.

"This evening, Google indis-

criminately fired over two

dozen workers, including

those among us who did not

directly participate in yes-

terday's historic, bicoastal

10-hour sit-in protests," said

a post on X by No Tech For

Apartheid. Chris Rackow,

Google's head of global se-

curity, emphasized the com-

pany's zero-tolerance policy

towards the behavior of the

protesters in a memo sent

to all employees that also

circulated on social media.

"Behavior like this has no

place in our workplace and

we will not tolerate it," it

said. "Following investiga-

tion, today we terminated

the employment of twen-

ty-eight employees found to

be involved. We will contin-

ue to investigate and take

Australia mulls citizenship for Pakistani guard in Sydney attack

According to Amir-Abdollahian,

Iran communicated with Washing-

ton "before and after" launching

its attack on Israel. Iran informed

the United States that the deci-

sion by the Islamic Republic of

Iran to "respond to the (Israel)

regime is final," and the matter

concluded, he said. Iran's retali-

ation against Israel left a girl se-

verely wounded but caused little

damage. It followed the strike in

Damascus that killed seven mem-

bers of Iran's Islamic Revolution-

ary Guards Corps, including two

generals. "Before the operation,

we clearly told the American side

that we will not target American

bases and interests in the region,"

Amir-Abdollahian said. The Islam-

ic republic has celebrated the at-

tack as a success but President

Ebrahim Raisi warned of "a fierce

and severe response" to further

"aggression" by Israel. During his

trip to New York, Amir-Abdollahi-

an is set to meet United Nations

Secretary-General Antonio Gu-

terres and his counterparts from

other countries. The United

States, Israel's top ally, has said

it would soon impose new sanc-

Pakistani guard Taha has a graduate visa due to expire in less than a month, the paper said

WEB DESK

News Desk

TEHRAN: Iran's top diplomat

said Thursday his country has

told the United States that it is

not seeking escalation after an un-

The Islamic republic carried out

its first-ever direct attack on Is-

rael, firing drones and missiles

on the weekend. The barrage -

to which Israel's army chief has

vowed a response - was retali-

ation for an April 1 air strike on

Tehran's consulate in Damascus.

Iran blamed Israel for the consu-

lar attack. Foreign Minister Hos-

sein Amir-Abdollahian, who is in

New York to attend a UN Security

Council meeting, said his country

has "tried to tell the United States

clearly" that Iran is "not looking

for the expansion of tension in the

region," he said in a video posted

by his ministry. Iran and the Unit-

ed States have had no diplomatic

relations since 1980, but neutral

Switzerland represents Washing-

ton's interests in Iran. Both the

US and Iran have alluded to the

Swiss role as an intermediary.

precedented attack on Israel.

SYDNEY : Australia's prime minister said on Thursday he will consider granting citizenship to a Pakistani security guard wounded in the deadly Sydney shopping centre knife attack. The guard, Muhammad Taha, reportedly said he believed "deserved recognition he and consideration for citizenship" after being stabbed. In a bedside interview with The Australian, Taha said he was attacked just after fellow Pakistani security guard Faraz Tahir, one of the six people killed

Tesla, Starlink entry on agenda when Musk heads to India

MUMBAI: Tech billionaire Elon Musk is set to visit India as his businesses seek new markets in the world's most populous nation, with electric carmaker Tesla suffering a sales downturn in the United States - reportedly scouting factory locations. Another Musk-owned business, satellite internet operator Starlink, is set to receive initial approvals to operate in India, a government source told AFP. Also likely to be on the agenda for the self-described "free speech absolutist" is the large number of content takedown orders In dia's government imposes on X, the social media platform he took over in 2022. "Looking forward to meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India!" Musk wrote on X last week without giving a date for the visit. Indian media reports suggest the trip will begin as soon as Sunday and last two days, coming after months of aggressive courtship between the billionaire and Modi. The two met last June in New York, after which Musk said Modi had pushed the entrepreneur to "make significant investments in India" - something he said his companies intended to do.-DNA

the mall. But Thursday's "slow reopening" was billed as a chance for shocked Sydnevsiders to reflect. It's an opportunity to express solidarity and condolences and to "turn the page on what's been a very difficult period" for the city, said New South Wales Premier Chris Minns. It was, he said, a "first step in healing". Throughout the week, wellwishers left piles of flowers knee-deep outside the shopping centre - usually thronged with families or people grabbing some food, groceries or clothes. The crowds thinned considerably today.



Washington DC: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, met with Pakistan Staff Association of World Bank-IMF. - DNA

action as needed," it added. In a response, No Tech For Apartheid condemned the move, calling it a "flagrant act of retaliation." "This flagrant act of retaliation is a clear indication that Google values its \$1.2 billion contract with the genocidal Israeli government and military more than its own workers,' the group said.-APP 2 schoolgirls wounded in knife attack

in France

SOUFFELWEYERSHEIM : An assailant on Thursday wounded two girls aged six and 11 in a knife attack close to their school in the east of France and was later arrested, officials said.

The 11-year-old was stabbed outside the school in the town of Souffelweyersheim just outside the main regional city of Strasbourg, while the six-year-old was attacked by the same man nearby. Both received superficial wounds, police said, adding the attacker did not appear to have any known links to radicals and was not previously known to the security services. Both girls are being treated in a paediatric hospital. Parents were later in the afternoon allowed to pick

up their children, who had been confined to the school in the immediate aftermath of the attack.-APP

Lords reject UK's Rwanda plan, Afghan soldiers exemption Bill to return to commons after Lords also vote to set up committee to monitor safety in Rwanda

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The UK's House of Lords rejected the government's plan to send migrants to Rwanda for asylum processing in a vote after it approved two amendments to the legislation. The upper chamber of Parliament voted in favor of a proposal to exempt Afghans who worked with UK military personnel from being deported to the East African country, and of another that would see a committee established to monitor safety in Rwanda. The bill will return to the House of Commons early next week, where MPs have previously refused to back amendments made to it by the Lords. The government of Prime Minister

Rishi Sunak, who has made the Rwanda scheme a core part of his pledge to lower illegal migration across the English Channel before the next general election, says the bill in its current form is "the right way forward."However, a previous version of the scheme was rejected by the UK Supreme Court in 2023 as unlawful. The plan has also drawn cross-party criticism for its expense, worries about its effectiveness, the government's inability to implement it and for the way it treats people in need of asylum, including former Afghan soldiers, translators and their families, many of whom risked their lives to assist the UK during operations in Afghanistan. Numerous Afghans have been identified as having been

threatened with deportation to Rwanda for entering the UK illegally, with many claiming safe legal routes either don't work in practice or don't exist. The Independent highlighted the cases of a former Afghan Air Force pilot hailed as a "patriot" by former colleagues, who crossed the Channel in a small boat, and of two former Afghan special forces soldiers belonging to units known as "Triples" run by the British Army, who were wrongly denied assistance by the UK Ministry of Defence. Along with reporting by Lighthouse Reports and Sky News, hundreds of other former Triples soldiers have also been identified hiding in Pakistan, awaiting an MoD review after many were refused entry to the UK. The Lords amendment on

protections from deportation cause there is little, if any, supfor former Afghan military personnel was proposed by a former UK defense secretary, Lord Browne of Ladyton, and supported by two former chiefs of the UK's defense staff. Earlier on Wednesday Home Office minister Michael Tomlinson said peers should reject the amendments to "send a clear signal that if you come to the UK illegally, you will not be able to stay."

But Lord Browne told the Lords: "Now is the time to give these people the sanctuary their bravery has earned." He added the government needed to be reminded of "the political consequences of their failure not to give either an assurance that is bankable or to accept this amendment. Be-

port in your lordships' House for their failure to do this and there (is) certainly no majority support in the country to treat these brave people this way." Lord Coaker, shadow home af fairs spokesperson in the Lords, added: "Why on earth would the government oppose that particular amendment? It's one of those things that is completely unbelievable." On Wednesday, Conservative MP Sir Robert Buckland told the Commons: "There is still a class of people who have served this country, who have been brave and have exposed themselves to danger, who have not vet been dealt with. "Many of them are in Pakistan, and I think that it would have been helpful to have perhaps seen an amendment in lieu to deal with that point."







Briefs Rain emergency declared in Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: The Met Department on Thursday revised its advisory for Karachi, stating that "heavy showers are not expected" in the metropolis amid rain emergency measures. While rain continued to hit various parts of Balochistan, Chief Meteorologist SardarSarfraz said heavy rain was not expected in Karachi.

Sarfraz said the rain system from Balochistan was entering into Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and there were chances of heavy rain in different areas of both the provinces. Whereas, there was a forecast of torrential rains along the coastal belt in Blaochistan, he maintained. "Heavy rain is falling in some parts of Balochistan," the chief meteorologist added.

On the other hand, light rain hit different parts of Karachi including Numaish-Chowrangi, MA Jinnah Road, Saddar, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karimabad, Safoora and their adjacent areas.

Meanwhile, Chief Operating Officer (COO) Karachi Water Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) Engineer Asadullah Khan on Wednesday dispatched 55 suction machines to all important highways of the city. In a video statement, he stated that Karachi Mayor Barrister MurtazaWahab had imposed a rain emergency in anticipation of rain by the meteorological department. Khan added that the water corporation had completed all arrangements to tackle the rain.

NADRA to ban SIMs issued on expired ID cards

MEHTAB PIRZADA

Speakers call for cultivating closer links with African region

Mushahid launches Pakistan's first think tank on Africa, urges need to broaden Pakistan's foreign policy outlook as Pak, China and Africa are part of Global South



ISLAMABAD: President of PAIDAR Senator Mushahid Hussain, Dean of African Group Mohammad Karmoune, Ambassador of Ethiopia and others inaugurating the Pakistan African Institute, at ISSI. - DNA

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad: The Centre for Afghanistan Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) held a Seminar for the Launch of Pakistan Africa Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR). The thematic focus of the seminar was on 'Reviving the Bandung Spirit of Afro-Asian Solidarity: Paki-

stan-Africa Relations'. President PAI-DAR, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, delivered a keynote address.

The event was moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. The speakers at the seminar included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, President PAIDAR;H.E. Mohammed Karmoune, Dean of the African Envoys Corps and Ambassador of Morocco;H.E. Mary Nyambura Kamau, High Commis-

sioner of Kenya to Pakistan;H.E. Jemal Beker Abdulla, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan;Ambassador Aftab Hassan, High Commissioner of Pakistan to South Africa;Ambassador Atif Sharif Mian. Pakistan's Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and African Union; Ambassador Arshad Jan Pathan, High Commissioner of Pakistan to Mauratius; Mr. Zafar Bakhtawri, Secretary General United Business Group (UBG);Dr. Bashir Bahar, Assistant Pro-

fessor Department of Translation and Interpretation, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI); Dr. Ismail Adaramola, Assistant Professor Department of Politics & International Relations, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI); Mr. Shehryar Akbar Khan, Additional Secretary Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA); Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI. Ms. Amina Khan in her remarks said that Pakistan's commitment to engaging with Africa is underscored by Pakistan's comprehensive "Engage Africa" policy. Recognizing Africa's potential as the 'Continent of the Future', and in line with the "Engage Africa" policy, CAMEA was established in 2020, to fortify relations with Africa, as well as to assist the government in chalking out a roadmap for future cooperation with the African continent. She said that CAMEA looked forward to working with PAIDAR to further Pakistan's ties with Africa.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his welcome remarks, appreciated Senator Mushahid Husain Sayed's dynamic and inspiring efforts throughout his professional life and his latest initiative of establishing PAIDAR, which aims to sharpen Pakistan's focus on Africa through promotion of academic research and development partnerships. He said it was fitting that this launch ceremony recalled the "Bandung Spirit" - dating back to 1955 when 29 countries from Asia and Africa met in Bandung, Indonesia, from 18-24 April. He recalled the contribution of the Bandung Conference to the international community's subsequent efforts for global peace as well as cooperation among the developing countries. He particularly highlighted Pakistan's whole-hearted support for the liberation struggles of African nations and Pakistan's contribution to Africa's peace and security through consistent participation in UN Peacekeeping operations since 1960. He added that Pakistan's overall engagement with Africa has been growing in recent years. In 2019, Pakistan expanded the scope of collaboration within the framework of its "Engage Africa" policy aimed at enlarging Pakistan's diplomatic footprint in Africa and deepening economic partnership with the Continent. Ambassador Sohail concluded by saying that for Pakistan, deeper engagement with Africa remains a strategic imperative. Forging a strong and effective partnership for peace, progress and prosperity is an indispensable goal, which should be advanced through a clear vision, consistent policy, and a long-term strategy.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said that the launch of PAIDAR coincides with the 69th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, emphasizing Africa's pivotal role in the South with 54 African Union members. He underscored Pakistan's longstanding ties with Africa, dating back to pre-independence when Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah initiated relations with Egypt in 1946. Senator Mushahid outlined PAI-DAR's objectives, aiming to reinvigorate Pakistan-Africa relations through people-to-people and business-to-business exchanges. He said PAIDAR seeks to prioritize mutual interests, promoting cooperation in education, environment, trade, energy, and sustainable development goals.

Palestinians across Gaza face 'man-made famine': UNRWA

Call to close UNRWA is attempt to strip millions of Palestinians of refugee status: agency chief

News Desk

source of support for people in Gaza, also said that in the north of the Palestinian territory, "infants and young children have begun to die of malnutrition and dehydration." The occupying regime, however, prevents UNRWA from delivering the desperately needed aid to starving inhabitants of Gaza. "Across the border, food and clean water wait. But UNRWA is denied permission to deliver this aid and save lives," Lazzarini further told the UNSC. Founded in 1949, the agency provides services for over six million Palestinian refugees living across the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. In Gaza, it is the primary UN agency delivering healthcare, and essential humanitarian support to the Palestinians trapped in the blockaded territory. Many of the UNRWA's 13,000 staff are Palestinian. Israel has repeatedly equated UNRWA staff with members of Hamas, claiming that the agency has links to the Palestinian resistance group without providing any proof of the allegations. Israel has

also been lobbying hard to have UNRWA closed as it is the

only UN agency to have a specific mandate to look after

Boy killed after being hit by a Maryam's security squad

STAFF REPORT

NAROWAL: A young motorbike rider was Thursday killed after his bike collided with a vehicle of Punjab Chief Minister CAA chief hopes EU will lift flight ban next month

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A delegation led by Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Director General KhaqanMurtaza will attend a of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) scheduled

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed officials to ban mobile SIMs issued on ineffective and expired identity cards, highlighting the importance of upholding data integrity and safeguarding citizens' information. The minister has taken decisive action to enhance security measures and streamline services at the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).

During a visit to the NADRA headquarters, he received comprehensive briefings on various sectors, emphasizing the need for enhanced security measures and improved service delivery. In line with this directive, he instructed NADRA authorities to ensure the complete security of citizens' data while also enhancing mobile platforms to provide greater convenience to the public. Additionally, he underscored the importance of leveraging social media platforms to effectively promote NADRA's initiatives and services. Furthermore, Minister Naqvi outlined plans to establish model NADRA offices, akin to the successful model police stations established in Punjab.

NEW YORK: The United Nations Relief Works and Agency (UNRWA) has warned that the grip of a "man-made" famine is tightening its grip across the war-torn Gaza Strip, as Israel has severely blockaded the Palestinian territory plunging it into a humanitarian crisis. UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini on Wednesday sounded the alert, condemning Israel for blocking aid deliveries to the besieged Gaza Strip and attempting to end the agency's activities in the war-ravaged coastal sliver.

"Today, an insidious campaign to end UNRWA's operations is underway, with serious implications for international peace and security," he told the 15-member UN Security Council, warning, "Across Gaza, a man-made famine is tightening its grip." Lazzarini, whose agency is a critical

Ukraine warns

tested measure, which has \$61bn (£49bn) earmarked for

Kyiv. The House of Representatives is set to vote on the

package this Saturday. The proposal includes funding for

Israel as well as the Indo-Pacific. Russia says any fresh

American aid for Ukraine will not make a difference on the

battlefield, as situation on the front line is looking "unfa-

vourable" to Kyiv. Speaking to the BBC in Washington DC

on Wednesday, Ukrainian Prime Minister Shmyhal said

of the US security assistance: "We need this money yes-terday, not tomorrow, not today." "If we will not protect...

Ukraine will fall," he added. "So the global, the global sys-

tem of security will be destroyed... and all the world will

need to find... a new system of security.

the basic needs of Palestinian refugees.

"Or, there will be many conflicts, many such kinds of wars, and in the end of the day, it could lead to the of WW3 ahead of Congress aid vote Third World War." This is not the first time Ukraine has issued such an alarming warning about the consequences of its potential defeat. Last year, President VolodymyrZelensky said that if Russia won the conflict, it could next invade Poland, triggering World War Three. But KIEV: Ukraine's prime minister has told the BBC there will be a "Third World War" if Ukraine loses its conflict with Russia, as he urged the US Congress to pass a long-Kremlin officials have ridiculed such claims as Western scaremongering. Last month President Vladimir Putin dismissed suggestions that Russia might one day attack Eastern Europe as "complete nonsense". Russia has stalled foreign aid bill. Denys Shmyhal expressed "careful never attacked a country within Nato, which includes optimism" that US lawmakers would pass the hotly con-Poland. Nato's collective defence pact means that an

attack on one member constitutes an attack on all. In Wednesday's interview, Prime Minister Shmyhal was asked about a recent claim by Republican House Foreign Affairs Chairman Michael McCaul that members of his own party were being "infected" by Russian propaganda. MrShmyhal said: "We should understand that disinformation and propaganda is influencing here in the United States on many people, in European Union on many people, such as in Ukraine." Opposition from the right wing of the Republican party has blocked potential assistance to Ukraine for months. - Agencies

Wang warns of 'small cliques' amid South China Sea tension

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, met with Indonesian President Joko Widodo and his successor Prabowo Subianto. Widodo and Wang expressed their desire for regional peace and stability and repeated calls for a de-escalation and ceasefire in Gaza,

FOREIGN DESK

JAKARTA: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday warned of "small cliques" and called for joint efforts to preserve hard-won peace in the South China Sea during his visit to Indonesia. The call represents the consensus of most countries in the region, analysts said, warning that if the Philippines continues on the wrong path of following the US' strategy, it will be isolated in Southeast Asia and risk burning itself by the fire it started. Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, met with Indonesian President Joko Widodo and his successor PrabowoSubianto on Thursday.

Widodo and Wang expressed their desire for regional peace and stability and repeated calls for a de-escalation and ceasefire in Gaza, the Jakarta Post reported Thursday. Wang, during the meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister



RetnoMarsudi, said the two sides are highly vigilant against the formation of various "small cliques" in the region, and oppose any attempts by certain groups to create camp confrontation. We shall cherish and maintain the hard-won peace and stability in the region, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. China is willing to continue working with other ASEAN members to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, accelerate the negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, and turn the South China Sea into a sea of peace and cooperation. Xu Liping, director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told the Global Times on Thursday that Wang's remarks in Indonesia represent the consensus and sincere hope of most countries in the region for peace and stability, amid the US' continuous attempts to reshape regional geopolitics against China with the Philippines as an auxiliary, Xu said.

Maryam Nawaz's security squad in Chandowal area of Narowal district. The district police officer (DPO) said the vehicles were going to Kartarpur for CM Maryam's security. The elite security squad's vehicle hit the motorcycle while trying to overtake it, he said. The chief minister was visiting the GurdwaraDarbar Sahib in Kartarpur today to address a gathering of pilgrims on the occasion of the Baisakhi Mela.

for May to review the revival of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight operations in Europe. During the meeting, the authority will scrutinize a report on the audit of various departments of the CAA in light of EASA standards In a statement, DG CAA Murtaza said that EASA is likely to lift restrictions on Pakistan after the safety review board meeting. If this occurs, PIA flights to Europe and the UK will resume after a prolonged hiatus, he added. It is pertinent to mention here that in November 2023, an EASA team visited Pakistan to assess various aspects of the CAA and PIA, including licensing, flight safety, flight standards, and airworthiness. EASA had imposed a ban on the flight operations of the national flag carrier following a PIA plane crash in Karachi in May 2020. The EASA in a letter conveyed to the national flag carrier, said that they had suspended the Third Country Operator (TCO) Authorisation to PIA after it failed to comply with the proposed corrective action plans (CAPs).



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