



Islamabad POST

Monday, April 22, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

US aid package could help Ukraine slow Russia's advance

Detailed News On Page-08

Turkiye calls on world to recognize Palestinian state

Detailed News On Page-07



Max Verstappen wins Chinese Grand Prix

Detailed News On Page-06



PTI alleges rigging

Ruling parties win majority in by-elections

In Punjab most of the seats went to PML N. PTI President Ch. Pervez Elahi lost his seat from Gujrat

BUREAU REPORT / DNA

LAHORE: Following the swearing-in of the new assemblies, Pakistan's first by-elections on 21 vacant national and provincial assembly seats were held amid sporadic incidents of clashes between workers of different political parties in Punjab. Major political parties including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) participated in the by-polls. According to initial results the PML N and its allies were winning in the elections. In Punjab most of the seats went to PML N. PTI President Ch. Pervez Elahi lost his seat from Gujrat. Monis Elahi was also trailing against his opponents according to initial results. In KP the SIC(PTI) performed well and won majority seats. The turnout remained extremely low. The PTI has rejected the polls results. The party said that widespread rigging was witnessed during the election. During the polling process, the federal government suspended mobile phone services temporarily in several districts of Punjab and Balochistan in a decision that was taken to safeguard the integrity and security of the electoral process. Meanwhile, at the request of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the government also deployed Pakistan Army and Civil Armed Forces (CAF) troops during the polling process. Several workers of the PML-N and SIC clashed in several constituencies, leading to death of one PML-N worker, Muhammad Yousaf in Narowal. Police said that the PML-N worker was taken to hospital where he succumbed to injuries, adding that the polling was stopped in this constituency. The elections were held on five NA seats, 12 Punjab Assembly seats, two each in

Continued on Page 06

1 killed, 3 injured in violence at polling stations

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: A PML-N worker died while three people were injured in violence during by-elections on Sunday. In a tragic turn of events, Muhammad Yousaf, a 60-year-old worker of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Narowal constituency PP-54, met a fatal end in a clash between supporters of PML-N and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The incident occurred at Kot Najo village where tension between the opposing political factions boiled over into violence. According to sources familiar with the situation, a dispute erupted between PML-N and PTI voters, escalating into physical confrontation. In the midst of the altercation, members of the opposition party reportedly struck Yousaf on the head with a stick. Despite efforts to rush him to hospital, Yousaf succumbed to his injuries before getting medical assistance. A clash erupted between workers of the PML-N and the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) at the Government Primary School, Nizampur in Sheikhpura

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan sends another shipment for Gaza people

A handing over ceremony was organized at Karachi port, where Palestinian Ambassador Ahmad Rabaie received the shipment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In solidarity with the people of Gaza, Pakistan is sending another relief shipment consisting of food items, medical supplies and other relief goods. The 400 tons of shipment will be dispatched from Karachi port for Port Said in Egypt. This is the 8th relief consignment being sent on behalf of the people and government of Pakistan for the people of Gaza. A handing over ceremony was organized at Karachi port, where Palestinian Ambassador Ahmad Rabaie received the shipment. Additional Foreign Secretary, Ambassador Ahmed Amjad Ali, Representatives of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and various relief organizations were also present at the ceremony. The shipment will be received by the Ambassador of Pakistan to Egypt at Port Said and handed over to the Egyptian Red Crescent for its onward delivery to Gaza. Pakistan remains committed to addressing the urgent needs of our Palestinian brothers and sisters as they face a dire humanitarian situation.



KARACHI: Palestinian Ambassador Ahmad Rabaie receiving aid shipment. Additional Foreign Secretary, representatives of NDMA and various relief organizations were also present at the occasion. - DNA

Amid economic turmoil

Minister optimistic about larger IMF bailout programme

Pakistan is requesting a "larger and longer" multi-billion-dollar loan programme from the IMF and discussions are underway with the Fund's officials, the finance minister said

DNA

WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb has expressed the expectation of larger bailout programme from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and considered improving the revenue distribution between the provinces and the Centre. The minister said, if the loan is approved, Islamabad would revisit its NFC award that allocates revenues between the federation and the provinces. He said that some of the sectors which need to be brought in a much bigger way into the tax net were provincial markets. Pakistan is requesting a "larger and longer" multi-billion-dollar loan programme from the IMF and discussions are underway with the Fund's officials,

Continued on Page 02

MQM-P threatens to stage protest against PPP

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The MuttahidaQaumi Movement - Pakistan (MQM-P) issued a robust response to a recent statement made by Mayor Karachi, Murtaza Wahab. The Sindh Assembly Members of MQM-P have strongly criticized Murtaza Wahab's recent statement, labeling it as baseless, absurd, and riddled with unfounded accusations and warned PPP to avoid such

Continued on Page 02

Iranian President to arrive today

He will also visit Lahore and Karachi and meet with the provincial leadership

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi will undertake an official visit to Pakistan from 22 to 24 April 2024. This will be the first visit by any Head of State to Pakistan after the general elections in February 2024. The Iranian President will be accompanied by his spouse and a high-level delegation comprising the Foreign Minister and other members of the cabinet, senior officials as well as a large business delegation. During the visit, President Raisi will meet the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chairman Senate and Speaker, National Assembly. He will also visit Lahore and Karachi and

Continued on Page 02

Briefs

CJP seeks explanation from Punjab CS

CJP Isa asks if it is justifiable to waste public funds

COURT REPORT

LAHORE: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa has sought an explanation from the Punjab chief secretary on the unnecessary use of public resources and the establishment of illegal guard rooms in government officers' residences in Lahore. The registrar of the Supreme Court wrote a letter to the chief secretary, expressing concern over unnecessary expenditure around government officers' residences. The registrar said that the top judge heard cases from April 15 to 19 at the Supreme Court Registry, Lahore.

Genocidal war against Palestinians

Israeli forces pound Gaza as 200 bodies found in mass grave

The bodies of 13 people, mostly children, were recovered after an Israeli strike hit the home of a family near the southernmost Gaza city of Rafah

NEWS DESK

GAZA: Israel carried out deadly strikes in Gaza, first responders in the war-battered Palestinian territory said on Sunday, as violence flared in the occupied West Bank. The latest bombardments came as lawmakers in Israel's top ally, the United States, approved \$13 billion in new Israeli military aid even as global criticism mounts over the death toll and dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza. However, fears of wider war breaking out in the Middle East have eased somewhat after Iran downplayed Israel's reported retaliation over its unprecedented missile and drone attack on the country a week ago. Attention has turned back toward the war in Gaza, which Israel hit with several strikes overnight, according to the Palestinian territory's

Continued on Page 06

Hamas denounces US military aid to Israel

FOREIGN DESK

GAZA: The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has condemned the US House of Representatives' approval of billions of dollars in new military aid to Israel, saying the measure is a "green light" for the occupying regime to continue its brutal war against the besieged Gaza Strip. Hamas made the remarks in a statement on Sunday, a day after the US House of Representatives voted on a bill to provide

Continued on Page 06

NZ stun Pak to keep series alive

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI:Mark Chapman's swashbuckling half-century powered New Zealand to beat Pakistan by seven wickets in the third T20I of the five-match series here at Pindi Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Put into bat first, Pakistan racked up 178/4 in the allotted 20 overs, courtesy of a blistering cameo at the back by Shadab. Earlier, openers Babar Azam and Saim Ayub scripted a solid start for the home side, notching up 54 runs in the batting powerplay. Saim, who was the core aggressor of the opening stand, fell victim to Ish Sodhi after a brisk knock. He smashed five boundaries and a six on his way to a 22-ball 32. His dismissal halted the flow of runs for Pakistan as only 30 runs came off the next overs.

Pakistan-Africa ties poised for a quantum leap

Ambassador of Morocco Mohammad Karmoune says African Continental Free Trade Agreement presents an opportunity for Pakistan to reinforce its trade and investment connections with African nations, opening up new possibilities for businesses and strengthening overall economic ties with the continent

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Mohammad Karmoune, the Dean of the African Group and Ambassador of Morocco, has expressed his admiration for Pakistan's Look Africa policy. He emphasized that this strategic approach creates a mutually beneficial scenario where both partners stand to gain from each others expertise and resources. In a special talk about Pakistan-Africa relations, Ambassador Karmoune further said, Pakistan Africa Relations were set by the Bandung Conference 69 years ago. In 1953, Asian and African nations (29 in total) met in Indonesia, from 18 to 24 April, to discuss peace, development, economic cooperation and the role they have to play in the context of Cold War, in conformity with the principles of the UN Charter and International Law. The Bandung Conference, he said, is called now the Non-Aligned Movement. It is at its 19th summit. The last one was held in Uganda in January 2024 and it brought together 120 member states. Ambassador Karmoune further said, the change in name has led, of course, to the updating in the objectives, which hovers now around common human problems, shared prosperity, the advance

of science and technology, the protection of the environment, food security, reduction of the global warming and response to the effects of climate change, combatting international terrorism and transnational organized crime. 'In the case of Pakistan and Africa, their relations are based on the principles of mutual respect, coopera-



tion, and solidarity. In the time of the African struggle for independence, Pakistan was among the nations, which actively supported the liberation struggle of the African countries'. He said, in the post-independence of African countries, Pakistan was there by contributing to the continents peace and security through the participation in the UN peacekeeping cooperation in



the Continent. The country has provided more than 200,000 troops to 46 United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, predominantly in Africa. The Moroccan ambassador said, on the economic level, Africa stands out as a land of immense opportunities. Despite maintaining cordial relations, trade figures between Pakistan and African nations have remained modest, at around \$7 billion. The will to develop it to a high level has been expressed, on the part of Pakistan, by the initiative of Look Africa policy launched in 2017. The Initiative aims at opening opportunities for Pakistani enterprises to do business with Africa. This initiative was later incorporated in the overall Engage Africa Policy, which has resulted up until now in the organization of four Trade Development Conferences and Single Country Exhibitions in different parts of the Continent (Nairobi 2020, Lagos 2021, Johannesburg 2022 and Cairo 2024). The objective is to increase the volume of economic exchange with African countries to its maximum potential, he added. In addition to this initiative, the country is negotiating Preferential Trade Agreements with three of the five African economic blocs (SACU, ECOWAS and EAC). Ambassador Karmoune said, African Continental Free Trade

Continued on Page 06

63 killed, 78 injured due to torrential rains in KP: PDMA

Chief Minister of KP, PDMA released Rs 110 million to the administration of the affected districts in the recent rains for financial assistance and relief activities for the affected families

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) issued a report on Sunday of the loss of lives and property in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) due to heavy rains. So far, 63 people have died and 78 people have been injured, the report added. According to the report, "Around 33 children, 15 men, and 15 women are among the killed, while 17 women, 37 men, and 24 children are among the injured." A total of 3,202 houses were damaged due to the collapse of walls and roofs in different districts, of which 477 were completely damaged and

2,725 were partially damaged. Due to heavy rains, life and financial accidents occurred in various districts, including Khyber, Dir Upper and Lower, Chitral Upper, Swat, Bajaur, Shangla, Mansehra, Mohmand, Malakand, Karak, Tank, Mardan, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Buner, Hangu, Batagram, Bannu, North and South Waziristan, Kohat, DI Khan, and Orakzai. On the special instructions of the Chief Minister of KP, PDMA released Rs 110 million to the administration of the affected districts in the recent rains for financial assistance and relief activities for the affected families. Apart from this, at least 90 million rupees have been released for relief

activities in the tribal districts as well. Along with financial support, PDMA also provided relief materials to the affected districts of Swat, Chitral Lower, Bajaur, Kohistan Lower, Peshawar, Nowshera, Mohmand, Dir Upper, Tank, Shangla, Torghar, and DI Khan. The relief items include tents, mats, kitchen sets, blankets, beds, tarpaulins, solar lamps, and other daily life items. Relief activities are ongoing in the rain-affected districts by PDMA and all related agencies. As the rains are expected to continue intermittently until April 21, PDMA has already issued a letter to all district administrations to be alert and take precautionary measures.



LAHORE: Eminent religious scholar Dr. Raghیب Hussain Naemi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.—DNA

Minister optimistic...

FROM PAGE 01
The finance minister said, without specifying how much the nation was trying to secure. Aurangzeb, who is in the US capital with his team to participate in the IMF and World Bank's meetings and request new financial package, said once the mission is back in Islamabad, we are going to agree on the priorities and the principles. "I believe it is Pakistan's programme. It is not an IMF programme. It is a Pakistan's programme and it is supported, assisted and funded by the IMF."

Iranian President...

FROM PAGE 01
meet with the provincial leadership. The two sides will have a wide-ranging agenda to further strengthen Pakistan-Iran ties and enhance cooperation in diverse fields including trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture, and people-to-people contacts. They will also discuss regional and global developments and bilateral cooperation to combat the common threat of terrorism.

By-elections big message...

FROM PAGE 01
Commenting on today's electoral event, the PML-N stalwart said that voter turnout is usually low in by-polls and only loyal supporters head towards the polling stations for their parties.

Health experts call FED increase on cigarettes mandatory to control consumption

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The health experts in the wake of the snowballing economic burden in terms of public health and economic costs due to rising cigarette consumption have called for implementation of World Bank's recommendation for increase in Federal Excise Duty (FED) on cigarettes. Director Center for Research and Dialogue (CRD), Amjad Qamar was of the view, "Increasing FED on cigarettes will check the steady rise in consumption and ensure a healthier future for Pakistan's youth." He further stated that Pakistan was one of the largest tobacco-consuming countries and low prices of cigarettes were the major contributor in the respect. "Cigarettes are more affordable in Pakistan than the rest of the region," Qamar added. Taxation policies of the successive governments have failed to

generate revenue as well as to curb the alarmingly high smoking rate due to policies that are often manipulated by industry giants, particularly the multinational companies. The country, according to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) yearbooks, has lost Rs 567 billion revenue during the last seven years. On the other hand, a study conducted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) pointed out that the cost of smoking-related diseases and deaths was Rs 615.07 billion (\$3.85 billion) in 2019, amounting to 1.6% of the GDP. Country Director, Campaign for Tobacco Free Pakistan was one of the largest tobacco-consuming countries and low prices of cigarettes were the major contributor in the respect. "Cigarettes are more affordable in Pakistan than the rest of the region," Qamar added. Taxation policies of the successive governments have failed to

standard cigarettes as well. The report underscores the potential for economic and health benefits through this measure. Malik Imran added that aligning cigarette taxation with the World Bank's recommendation is a crucial step toward safeguarding the health and well-being of Pakistan's children. Higher excise duty on cigarettes not only deters smoking but also generates much-needed revenue for essential public services, he said. Earlier, International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also recommended Pakistan to overhaul tax machinery and to tax non-essential items including cigarettes to boost revenue and improve public health. The global lender has recommended the government to introduce single tier tax structure alongside a significant increase in taxes on tobacco products. According to the IMF's Technical Assistance Report titled "Pakistan Tax Policy Diagnostic and Reform Options," released in February.

MQM-P threatens to stage...

FROM PAGE 01
political tactics. Following the media reports showcased instances of weapons being smuggled in vehicles belonging to People's Party ministers, the assembly members highlighted that the arrogance, incompetence, corruption, and alleged support for criminal elements within the leadership of the PPP has been exposed to public. Furthermore, the MQM-P members accused PPP government of issuance of arms licenses to the people in the province, resulting in the raise in violent activities, including incidents of kidnapping for ransom and targeted killings, in the metropolis. MQM-P also pointed fingers at the PPP for allegedly supporting gang wars under the guise of Aman committees in areas like Lyari and other slums of Karachi during 2012 and 2013. They asserted that those who did not comply with the Aman committee condition were met with lethal consequences.

2 killed, two injured in wall collapse

FAISALABAD: Two labourers were killed while two others sustained serious injuries in a wall collapse incident, in the limits of Madina Town police station. Rescue-1122 spokesman said on Sunday that some labourers were busy in demolishing a dilapidated wall in Model City near Chak No.208-RB Canal Road when suddenly it collapsed. As a result, four labourers buried under the debris of wall. On information, Rescue-1122 rushed to the spot and pulled out the victims from debris.—APP

Court Notice

عدالت چاب محمد عمران اکرم صاحب
سول جج راولپنڈی
دعوی استغراق وراثت نامہ نمبر 149/0
نور ولد غلام فوت ساکن مکان نمبر 149/0
محکمات کلاوی کھانگہ اسٹیٹسٹ راولپنڈی
ہام عوام الناس ہر گاہ سائل نے درخواست مذکورہ
بالا عدالت پڑا میں گزری ہے لہذا فریو اختیار
استہوار عوام الناس کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کوئی
اعتراض ہو تو وہ اصلاح کال موبو
22 اپریل 2024 بتک 8 بجے صبح حاضر
عدالت آویں ورنہ کاروائی حسب ضابطہ عمل
میں لائی جائے گی

Pakistan: A land of tourism, archeological wonders

PESHAWAR: Internationally recognized as home to six United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) heritage sites, second highest mountain peak, long coastline and vast cultural and religious heritage, Pakistan offers plenty of tourism activities for local and foreign tourists. It is also a unique country with enchanting deserts, mesmerizing plains and snow covered peaks, adventurous sea shores and plenty of cultural and archeological sites, ancient Muslim architecture and religious sites of Buddhism and Sikhism. Archeological wonders of Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh, Harappa in Punjab, Buddhist Ruins in Takht Bhair and Sahri Bahol in Mardan and Taxila, ancient Indus and Gandhara civilizations, Thal and Thar deserts and architecture of ancient rulers especially Mughal era can be future hot spots for tourism. Five highest mountains peaks of above 8,000 meters, including the second highest peak - the K-2 (8611m), 108 highest peaks of above 7000 meters, Deosai plain, cultural diversity of Sindh, Punjab, KPK, Balochistan and Azad Kashmir, historical monuments and much more across Pakistan are other hallmarks of our tourism treasure. Although local

tourism flourished visibly in recent years yet unfortunately these bounties remained untapped to the maximum due to multiple reasons like insufficient projection, facilities for tourism and law and order situation due to turmoil in the region. Since Pakistan has a meager share in global revenue earning from tourism, the experts believe that if the government fully employs the latest digital techniques and social media to highlight these hidden destinations, it can earn billions of dollars annually. "Today is an era of digital tourism. Technological advancements has fast started transforming the travel and hospitality industry even in developing countries," said Abu Zafar, President Alpine Tourism Club of Pakistan. "We have the most beautiful skiing spots, picturesque valleys, rivers and brooks, hiking tracks, polo grounds, ice hockey fields, deserts for car rallies, sea surfing and mighty peaks for scaling." But, he said, most of our areas remained insufficiently highlighted across the globe. "Therefore, we need to fully employ the power of social and digital media as well as ensuring amicable environment for tourists." Despite its diverse potential, Pakistan's share in global tourism economy is too low. Therefore, at a time when

international media predicts full recovery of tourism industry during 2024, Pakistan needs to tighten belts for securing its due share from trillions of dollars tourism economy. UNWTO has recorded an estimated 1286 million international tourists (overnight visitors) around the world in 2023, an increase of 34% over 2022 as international tourism recovered 88% of pre-pandemic levels. The Middle East led the recovery being the only region to overcome pre-pandemic levels with arrivals 22% above 2019, Europe reached 94%, Africa recovered 96% and the Americas 90% and Asia and Pacific recovered 65% with the start of 2023. Following a strong rebound in 2023, the sector's outlook reflected in the latest UNWTO Tourism Confidence Index survey, reveals 67% of tourism professionals indicating better or much better prospects for 2024 compared to 2023. "Our share is too meager as compared to international tourism earning. We secure just a billion or so dollars out of this trillion dollar economy," remarked Ex-Chairman Economics Department, Peshawar University, Professor Dr Muhammad Naeem. "This is pathetic and urge us to transform our efforts keeping in view the modern trends, exploiting all latest tools for projecting our potential."—DNA

2nd National Aesthetic conference 2024

DNA

LAHORE: Under the auspices of the Association of Aesthetics Physicians of Pakistan, the second National Aesthetic Conference was held at a local hotel in Lahore. The conference was attended by esteemed guests including Dr. Khalid Masood Gondal, President of CPSP, Former DG Health Punjab and Former MS Mayo Hospital Zahid Parvez, Additional Secretary and Chairman Drug Control Authority Punjab Mr. Sahil, and other dignitaries. In his keynote address, Dr. Khalid Masood Gondal congratulated the organizers on the successful con-

duct of the conference and extended his felicitations to the conference organizers including Dr. Sameena and Dr. Shumaila. He expressed his pleasure at being present despite his busy schedule and emphasized the importance of gratitude towards Allah for the numerous blessings bestowed upon us. Dr. Gondal highlighted the significance of beauty and the efforts required to maintain it, stating that even with millions of rupees, one cannot restore a single lost organ of the human body. He stressed the need to acknowledge and preserve the blessings of beauty. Addressing the audience, Dr. Shumaila welcomed

the conference participants and emphasized the Association's role in promoting awareness regarding modern techniques for enhancing beauty. She mentioned the efforts towards promoting aesthetic care independence among members in the country. Dr. Shumaila noted the honor of hosting the second National Conference, emphasizing its potential to promote aesthetic excellence within Pakistan. As pioneers of aesthetic excellence in Pakistan, she expressed their commitment to further advancements in the field for the benefit of all Pakistanis. Dr. Asher Mashhood presented on the subject of aesthetics

during the occasion. The conference trainers included Dr. Sameena Mohsin, Dr. Shaila Ashfaq, Dr. Madeeha Azmat, Dr. Farukh Amer, Dr. Kashif Ali, Dr. Sameena Sahil, Dr. Kamran Qureshi, Dr. Asher Mashhood, Dr. Ali Kazmi, Dr. Ayesha Zubair, Dr. Ashba Cheema, Dr. Lubna Rani Faisal, Dr. Sadiya Muneer, Dr. Asma Banu, Dr. Ayesha Zafar, Dr. Mobasher Randhawa, and Dr. Shumaila Khan. The conference concluded with Dr. Sameena, Dr. Shumaila, and Dr. Asher presenting memorable shields to the esteemed guests including Dr. Khalid Masood Gondal, Dr. Zahid Parvez, Dr. Sahil, and Mr. Khwaja Imran to commemorate the conference.

MoHR helpline received 1,460,460 calls since inception

The Helpline's commitment: 28,904 follow-up calls to ensure operational efficacy and address pertinent cases during specified period

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Human Rights Helpline 1099 has received 1,460,460 calls since its inception and provided services in 5,532 relevant cases, said an official here on Thursday. According to an official source, all the callers being victim of human rights violation received legal assistance and were referred to the concerned departments. During this period, 41,615 call backs and follow-up calls have been made to the victims. During the financial year 2022-23, individuals seek 131,309 inquiries, 1,657 were provided with comprehensive legal advice and other essential support services. The Helpline, diligently

committed to ensuring the utmost efficacy and efficacy of its operations, further undertook 28,904 call backs and follow-up calls in relation to the pertinent cases during this specified period. Total of 88 calls received relating to matters of rights and welfare of children. These inquiries are regarding child protection, education, health, and general well-being. The helpline received 403 calls concerning to challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. These inquiries cover accessibility, discrimination, employment opportunities, and the provision of adequate support and services. A significant number of 577 calls were received concerning governance-related human rights issues. These inquiries encompassed issues such as transparen-

cy, accountability, corruption, and the protection of civil and political rights within the broad framework of governance and administration. The helpline received a minimal number of 2 calls relating to land rights. These inquiries involved matters such as land ownership, disputes, and the protection of land rights for individuals and communities. The helpline received two calls specifically requesting free legal assistance. These inquiries sought guidance and support on various legal matters, including criminal cases, civil disputes etc. He further added that a total of 288 calls fell under the miscellaneous category, encompassing a wide range of inquiries that did not fit into the other predefined categories. These inquiries covered topics such as

employment rights, social welfare, consumer protection, and various other individual concerns. The Helpline received 42 calls related to the protection of life and personal liberty. These inquiries encompassed concerns such as threats to personal safety, and violations of fundamental rights. Around 23 calls were received concerning transgender rights. They sought guidance and support on issues specific to the transgender community, such as discrimination, healthcare, and social inclusion. A solitary call was received addressing matters pertaining to the rights of minorities. This inquiry sought assistance and guidance on issues related to discrimination, religious freedom, and equal opportunities for minority communities.

The Smooth Moving Connection

freeline MOVERS

PACKING, SHIPPING & FREIGHT FORWARDING

Our Services

- Packing
- Shipping
- Freight Forwarding
- Land, Sea & Air Freight
- Custom Clearance
- Relocations
- Office Removals
- Fine Art Handling
- Project Management
- Pet Relocation
- Warehousing
- Storage

Head Office
3rd Floor, Yasin Plaza, 74-West, Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel: (+92-51) 2822471, 2274221, 2870229, 2272273, 2822211, 2874289 - Fax: (+92-51) 2825132, 2274227.
E-mail: moving@freelinemovers.com - Website: www.freelinemovers.com

Branch Offices

Karachi Plot No. 8 & 9, 3rd Floor, Kalkhah Road, Main Bazar Road, 172 (Block 2, P.E.C.H.S. Karachi. Tel: (+92-21) 3403008, 3410479 Fax: (+92-21) 3403147 E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com	Lahore F-4, Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92-42) 3579881, 3579108. Fax: (+92-42) 3579140 E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com	Peshawar Office No. C-8, 3rd Floor, Zafar Plaza, Laf Road, Ring Road, Peshawar. Tel: (+92-91) 282578 Fax: (+92-91) 282580 E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com	Kabul House #4, Street #1, Darul Afsar Road, Doha-4-Haw, Kabul - Afghanistan. Tel: (+92-902) 172, 93 79356 96, 93 79366 98 E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com
---	---	---	---

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

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ASEAN Committee in Islamabad hosts an inclusive cycling event

Apart from ASEAN members the Dean of the African Group, Mohammad Karmoune, Ambassador of Morocco also participated in the event



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ASEAN committee's cycling event in Islamabad is indeed a fantastic initiative that showcases the spirit of regional cooperation and cultural exchange. Cycling events, beyond promoting physical activity,

serve as platforms for fostering connections and understanding among people from diverse backgrounds.

The participation of ASEAN member states in such an event underscores the significance of sports in diplomacy and friendship building. It provides an opportunity for individuals from



different countries to come together, share experiences, and build lasting bonds through a shared activity. Moreover, the fact that the Philippines is currently chairing the ASEAN Islamabad Committee adds another layer of significance to the event. It reflects the commitment of ASEAN member states

to engage actively in promoting regional cooperation and solidarity, not only in diplomatic circles but also through initiatives that bring people closer together, such as sports events. As Brunei prepares to take over the rotating presidency soon, the cycling event also serves as a symbolic transition,



highlighting the continuity and commitment of ASEAN member states to work together towards common goals. Overall, events like these demonstrate the power of sports in bridging cultural gaps, promoting understanding, and fostering meaningful connections among people, regardless of their na-

tionality or background. They embody the principles of unity, friendship, and cooperation that are at the core of the ASEAN community. Apart from ASEAN members the Dean of the African Group, Mohammad Karmoune, Ambassador of Morocco, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka also participated in the event.

FBISE finalizes arrangements for Intermediate exams

RAWALPINDI: The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Rawalpindi has finalized foolproof arrangements for Intermediate first annual examinations 2024. The RBISE spokesman told on Sunday that all the arrangements for the examination had been completed and 195 examination centers were set up including 29 in Attock district, 30 in Chakwal, 12 in Talagang, 29 in Jhelum, 08 in Murree and 87 in Rawalpindi district. All the examination staff had been posted to ensure fair and transparent conduct of the exams. The examination centers started on Friday are being closely monitored with the support

of the district administration. Mobile inspectors, chairman squad and district vigilance committees are visiting the examination centers. According to Chairman Education Board, Rawalpindi Muhammad Adnan Khan, Section 144 had been imposed at all examination centers and zero tolerance policy would be adopted against cheating mafia. A crackdown had been prepared against the booty mafia. Under the Punjab Universities and Boards Malpractice 1950 (Amendment Ordinance) and, "The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016", sharing a photo of the question paper is a serious crime. Conducting

an examination in place of a candidate falls under the category of impersonation. The punishment for imprisonment is three months and a fine of Rs 50,000," he said. Chairman Education Board further said that the board with the help of Deputy Commissioners of all the districts, Director Colleges, Deputy Director Colleges, CEOs Education and District Administration would make efforts for fair and transparent examinations. The officers would visit the Examination Centers of Intermediate 1st Annual 2024 on daily basis and submit their report to the Board. In the light of these reports, the monitoring and management of

examination centers would be made more effective and comprehensive. Lists of all examination staff including Distributor Inspector, Resident Inspector, Mobile Inspector, Superintendent Center, Deputy Superintendent Center and Invigilator were shared with departments concerned. The Special Branch would also conduct secret surveillance of all examination centers and submit its report to the Board. He informed that providing the best examination facilities to the students is the first priority and all the arrangements are being monitored along with the Controller of Examinations Prof. Sajid Mahmood Farooqui.—APP

RDA advises citizens not to invest in illegal housing societies

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has advised the citizens not to invest in illegal housing societies, said a RDA spokesman here Sunday. He informed that the Authority on the directives of the Director General, RDA Kinza Murtaza, was taking action against the rules violators. The RDA had issued notices to two illegal housing schemes namely "Park View City," Phase-II and "Baku City", he said. The Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate RDA issued notices to the owners of two illegal housing schemes namely "Park View City Phase II" near T-Chowk G.T Road Rawat and "Baku City" located in mouza Trahia Chakbeli, Link Road Rawalpindi which had started development work and marketing without approval from RDA. He said that the illegal housing schemes were selling plots fraudulently, adding, the DG RDA had directed the Director MP&TE that action in accordance with the law should be taken against illegal advertisements and marketing and First Information Reports should also be lodged against the owners of illegal housing schemes. The authority also warned the sponsors of illegal housing schemes to immediately stop the marketing of the unapproved and illegal housing schemes and contact RDA for getting NOC/approval of the scheme as per law, otherwise, strict legal action would be taken against the rules violators, he added. He said that on the directions of the DG, the citizens were advised not to invest in illegal and unauthorized housing schemes. The public was also asked to check status of the housing schemes from RDA before investing or check RDA's official website www.rda.gop.pk. He said that the owners and sponsors of illegal housing schemes were misleading the public through advertisements. In this regard, the Planning Wing RDA had also requested the Cyber Crime Wing, FIA to take legal action against the illegal and misleading advertisements of illegal housing schemes, he added.—APP

QAU alumni demands to declare university as Flagship Institution

ISLAMABAD: The old students of QAU Islamabad, on the basis of exceptional performance in recent QS World University Ranking, demanded of the federal government to declare QAU "Flagship Institution". They also demanded to provide necessary financial support to overcome more than 500 million rupees annual deficit so that this prestigious institution may win more laurels at the regional and international levels. The demand was made during an important meeting of the Core Committee of QAU Alumni Association Founders Group, attended by senior Quaidians under the chairmanship of Dr. Abdul Basit. It was unanimously decided to continue practical efforts and strengthen existing initiatives aimed at the welfare of Quaidians, promoting togetherness, positivity & connectivity among Quaidians and paying back to alma mater.—APP

BISP registration process continues

ISLAMABAD: The registration process for the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) survey of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is currently underway in Sargodha, as well as other parts of the country. The tehsil offices of the programme have established registration centres to facilitate the process. Deputy Director BISP Sargodha Malik Mazhar Awan while talking to APP here on Sunday, said that low-income groups could register themselves with the BISP by visiting the registration centres, opened from Monday to Saturday. People have been asked to bring their Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) and B forms of their children for registration purposes. Individuals are required to provide their electricity or gas bills to update a database for future government subsidies, he added. The official urged people to provide their accurate data at the time of registration, while those who would provide false information would not be allowed to become part of the programme. People having any complaint about the programme could contact the office concerned. "We are ready to resolve the complaints of citizens in shortest possible time, he added. The deputy director said, "We encourage not only poor segments to participate in the survey but also middle class, lower and upper middle class for compilation of their data." It will help the government provide them any subsidy or facility in the time of any emergency in future based on their socioeconomic data, he explained.—APP

Strict action being taken against electricity thieves

RAWALPINDI: Strict action is being taken against electricity thieves and since 2023, over 194 FIRs were registered against the accused while an inquiry against SDO, Chakri has also been ordered.

According to a district administration spokesman, the officers concerned during a briefing informed the District Coordination Committee about performance of all the departments.

The spokesman informed that the meeting was chaired by Chairman, Qamar Islam.

The Health officials informed the committee that four cases of dengue were reported in Rawalpindi this year and the patients after medial treatment were discharged from the hospitals.

1273 dengue workers are working, the meeting was briefed and informed that another 1500 daily wages dengue workers have been recruited. Last year, 270 daily wage workers were dismissed due to negligence on their part. During one year, medical treatment facilities were provided to 426,648 people in three major teaching hospitals of Rawalpindi including RIU and RIC. In one year, over 185,000 patients came to OPDs in hospitals for medical treatment while over 154,000 people were admitted, the meeting was briefed. After revamping of Holy Family Hospital, OPD is fully functional, the committee was informed. Reconciliation council committees should be formed at the police station level, Chairman Coordination Committee Qamar Islam directed and said that a mechanism should also be developed for crime prevention. The incidents of mobile snatching and motorcycle theft are increasing day by day, he said adding, the number of personnel in police stations would be increased to control crime rate. Crackdown should also be launched against drug peddlers and criminal gangs, he said. He said that there are 58 dams in Rawalpindi region. The work on Chahan Dam has been completed and the water supply lines would be completed by June, the Committee was informed. There are 1807 government schools in Rawalpindi including 1039 Primary, 249 elementary, 452 high and 67 higher secondary schools. The 4 inch pipelines are being laid from Swaan Camp and Ranyal to address low gas pressure problem in Rawalpindi, the Committee was briefed. There are total 594 housing societies in Rawalpindi, and action in accordance with the law is being taken against illegal housing societies, the Committee was informed. The meeting was also briefed that action was also being taken against those looting the people on the names of the housing societies. All-out efforts would be made to provide relief to people and all possible facilities would also be provided to the citizens, the Chairman DCC said.—DNA

PM renews pledge to realize Allama Iqbal's vision

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that Allama Muhammad Iqbal had dreamt of a 'Pakistan' that would be a cradle of peace, political forbearance and brotherhood and stressed upon renewing of pledge to achieve Iqbal's vision by making strenuous efforts. He said that Allama Iqbal wanted the youth to take the country to acme of progress and development with their constructive approach. In a message on the observance of the 86th death anniversary of Dr Muhammad Iqbal, the prime minister said that the entire nation had been praying for the high ranks of Allama's departed soul on the day and paid rich tribute to his contributions. "Dr Muhammad Iqbal, through his thoughts and teachings, had stressed the unity of Muslim Ummah. He especially focused upon youth and played an important role in getting them acquainted with the sacrifices of their forefathers, prestige and the forgotten inheritance," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release on Sunday, quoted the prime minister as saying. The prime minister further said that Allama Iqbal taught the youth to wage consistent struggle and exhorted them to carve paths in the future through gaining knowledge, carrying out research and learning from the past glorious periods of Muslims. Iqbal's philosophy of self-hood (Khudi) was a beacon of light for all and by emulating his philosophy, the exquisite qualities of mankind could be achieved, he said, adding that not only the modern universities in the region but across the globe were also conducting research upon his philosophy and teachings. The prime minister said, moreover, Iqbal's verses and writings in Persian and Urdu languages had been popular in the world.—APP

APRIL 2024

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pl
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@Postislamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

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



Briefs

IESCO kacheri via Facebook

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: To provide suitable and proper forum to valuable IESCO Customers regarding redressal of their electricity issues, online E-Kacharies are being held in IESCO region regularly and same are creating friendly relationship among IESCO and Customers.

Advancing gender equality for a sustainable future

SZIA hosts groundbreaking CAS SDG Conference

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The CAS SDG Conference held at Sheikh Zayed International Academy (SZIA)



in Islamabad on April 19, 2024, marked a significant milestone in the collective pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #5: Gender Equality.

welcome address, highlighting the importance of advocating for gender equality. The presence of esteemed guests, including Mr. Jeroen WILLEMS, Head of Co-operation for the Delegation of



the European Union to Pakistan, Diplomats from the Embassy of the UAE and Mrs. Mushal Malik, Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, underscored the global significance of the conference.

moment was the captivating Neon Lights performance titled "Breaking Barriers," presented by talented MYP2, 3, and 4 students, showcasing their creativity in promoting inclusivity

Lebanon, Tukey and Jordan delivering compelling addresses, highlighting diverse efforts and contributions toward gender equality and sustainable development. A cultural walk honor-

remarks, esteemed International Lawyer Mrs. Sibha Farooq commended SZIA for its dedication to promoting awareness and action on the SDGs. She emphasized the need for continued dedication



ing the achievements of women globally served as a poignant reminder of the importance of gender equality in SDG implementation. The event concluded with an awards ceremony recognizing female students who demonstrated outstanding commitment to advancing the SDGs, emphasizing the collaborative spirit within the school community.

and cooperation to address global challenges. The CAS SDG Conference at Sheikh Zayed International Academy-Islamabad celebrated diversity, innovation, and youth leadership, leaving attendees with a renewed sense of purpose to contribute to achieving the SDGs and building a more sustainable and inclusive world for future generations.

Bilateral agreements expected after PM's visit to Saudi Arabia are a positive trend

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh while reacting to the foreign historic investment in the stock exchange said that the investment of foreign investors in the stock exchange is welcome, Stock exchange has seen such a huge investment after seven years.

Paper cutting art exhibition to start at PNCA today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A paper cutting exhibition themed "The Guiding Light" would be organized at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Monday, tomorrow. In this regard, the PNCA invited the famous Paper Cutting Artist Tufiq Ahmad to create and display Paper-cut Arts with different meanings.

POL rates hike: FRIA asks govt to withdraw anti-industry decision

ISLAMABAD:

The Ferozpur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has asked the government to withdraw the anti-industry decisions of continuous raises in oil products prices, warning the authorities that inflation above six percent could hurt the economic growth and only a prudent approach could keep it under the control.

that government did not bother to pass on the benefit of decrease of oil prices in international market and earned billion rupees, which was a sheer injustice and now made a huge raise in the petroleum prices. He said that there is almost no production in the industrial sector due to massive load shedding while increase in petroleum and diesel prices would give a big blow, not only to the industry but also to the agriculture sector that is backbone of the economy.

cles to take measures for the promotion of alternate fuels as trade deficit was fast widening due to heavy imports under the head of petroleum products. He said that the timeline for the increase in the prices of petroleum products is also raising questions. He said that at a time when the whole industry is suffering due to energy crisis and high cost of doing business, the raise in POL prices is bound to give a further blow to the industry.

ter reservoirs to cater to the future needs of the people but present regime shelved the project of Kalabagh dam with a one stroke of pen. He said that petrol and HSD are the major revenue spinners with their monthly sales of about 700,000-800,000 tons per month compared to just 10,000 tons of monthly demand for kerosene. He said the industrial and general consumers will be feeling the pinch of high transportation costs as petrol and diesel prices have swelled very high. He strongly condemned the massive hike in petroleum products, saying it would fuel the inflationary pressures and push up the cost of doing business - which is already the highest in the region. He questioned how the existing export orders can be met profitably after the double blow of electricity and petroleum price hikes. -APP

Panda bonds will unleash potential in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD:

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, indicated in an interview that he hopes to issue up to USD 300 million of panda bonds for the first time this year, due to issue renminbi-denominated bonds would allow Pakistan to diversify its funding sources and reach investors in new markets. Panda bonds are bonds denominated in renminbi, or Chinese yuan, but issued by foreign borrowers, including companies, multilateral agencies and governments, says a report carried by Gwadar Pro. "Frankly, we should have considered this a long time ago. China is the second largest and deepest bond market in the globe, and leveraging the Chinese bond market is the right thing for Pakistan given that it has issued dollar bonds and Eurobonds."



Panda bonds will unleash potential in Pakistan for the first time this year

International Chinese Language Day celebrated at CI-UAF

ISLAMABAD: The Confucius Institute (CI) at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) marked the International Chinese Language Day with a vibrant celebration showcasing various aspects of Chinese culture. The event featured captivating performances that highlighted the richness and diversity of Chinese traditions, offering attendees a unique cultural experience.

Pakistani Internet influencer embarks on insightful journey

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani internet influencer Younus Ghazali embarked on an insightful journey at the World Internet Conference Digital Silk Road Development Forum held in Xi'an, China, Gwadar Pro reported. The forum, themed by "Connectivity and Shared Prosperity", which gathered policy makers, shareholders, digital leaders and thinkers from around the globe, provided a platform for Ghazali to engage in meaningful discussions and exchange ideas on the future of the Internet and its role in fostering cross-border connectivity.

Advertisement for FBR (Federal Board of Revenue) featuring the slogan 'Tاجر دوست سکیم' (Merchant Friendly Scheme) and '6 بڑے شہروں (اسلام آباد، راولپنڈی، کراچی، کوئٹہ، لاہور، پشاور) میں' (In 6 major cities). It includes details about registration, tax rates (25% and 50%), and contact information for the helpline.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 154

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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

Ukraine's precarious plight deepens as world dithers

UKRAINIANS were understandably dismayed last week as they watched the US, Britain and France rush to defend Israel against a barrage of Iranian missiles and armed drones. That's not because they support the regime in Tehran. It's because Nato countries have denied similar, direct military support to Ukraine, which faces unending, indiscriminate aerial attacks by Russian forces. Israel was spared any fatalities. In Ukraine, civilians continue to die almost daily, most recently in the city of Chernihiv, where 17 people were killed and dozens more injured. More than two years into the war that began with Vladimir Putin's illegal, full-scale invasion, Ukraine's plight grows more concerning. There is a strengthening possibility that, despite heroic resistance, it could succumb to Russia's aggression. Such a defeat would be a catastrophe, primarily for Ukraine, but also for the future security of Europe, for countries such as Moldova and Estonia that are targets of Russian destabilisation operations, for Britain's defence, for US global leadership and for all who value individual freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. Ukraine's leaders are disarmingly frank about their country's perilous situation. The army's senior commander, Gen Oleksandr Syrsky, warned that Russia's growing advantage in manpower, ammunition and in the air meant territorial losses may be inevitable. The position of Ukrainian forces has "worsened significantly", Syrsky said. Sounding the alarm, president Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukrainian intelligence believes the Kremlin is preparing a major offensive for late spring or early summer. It is unclear how it may be repelled.

Russia is readily exploiting newly exposed Ukrainian vulnerabilities, for example by targeting power plants and civilian infrastructure. This is possibly due to Ukraine's chronic deficit in modern air defence systems. Germany agreed to provide another Patriot missile battery (though not much-needed Taurus missiles). But Zelenskyy says Ukraine requires 25 Patriot batteries. It has two. Exasperatingly, its response – bombing Russian oil refineries – to Moscow's new tactics has been criticised by the Americans over fears about rising energy prices. Putin thinks he's winning, not least because western democracies seem to be losing their belief in, and focus on, a Ukrainian victory. Putin claimed recently he was attacking power plants in spring rather than winter "out of humanitarian considerations". His comment typified the sickening smugness that characterises Russia's war narrative. Putin thinks he's winning, not least because the western democracies seem to be losing their belief in, and focus on, a Ukrainian victory. In view of the wrangling in the US Congress over new military aid for Kyiv leading up to last night's crucial vote, it's getting harder to argue Putin is mistaken. It is true that the Israel-Hamas war, and Iran's attack on Israel, are redirecting attention and resources. Support for Kyiv is increasingly politically contentious in EU countries, as recent polls in Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia and the Netherlands have shown. In France and Germany, far-right populist parties are using the war as a wedge issue before June's European parliament elections. In the US, Donald Trump fans anti-Ukraine, anti-Europe sentiment to undermine president Joe Biden.



Forlorn attempt to keep G7's claws in HK

THE G7 foreign ministers' latest remarks on Hong Kong reveal a collective inability to come to terms with the simple fact that they have no say in the special administrative region's affairs. Many institutional arrangements, from the Sino-British Joint Declaration to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, were worked out to make sure Hong Kong retained order and prosperity after its return to full Chinese jurisdiction. But the post-1997 changes have, being charitable, obviously been too fast and dramatic for the G7 members to easily adapt to or, more to the point in the case of some of the group's members, they are being distorted to serve other agendas in the form of manufactured quarrels with the Chinese government. In either case, whether as an attempt to hold back time or to create mischief, the "concerns" expressed by the G7 ministers about Hong Kong will gain no real traction because they are not born of any genuine regard for Hong Kong or its residents. The G7 foreign ministers' so-called concerns are either a reminder of what they regard as better days or a thorn with which they hope to prick the skin of Beijing. Thus, although the G7 foreign ministers went to great lengths to mourn the situation in Hong Kong in the joint statement they released on Friday, it was nothing more than a display of crocodile tears. In their "Statement on Addressing Global Challenges, Fostering Partnership", they first expressed concern about the deterioration of pluralism and civil and political rights in the SAR since the introduction of the 2020 National Security Law. They then protested that the latest Safeguarding National Security Ordinance under Article 23 of the Basic Law will further erode the autonomy of the SAR and its fundamental freedoms, claiming that the new law will "make it harder to live, work and do business in Hong Kong".

Since that claim is patently untrue, it only serves to make it clear that what they are really lamenting is that the new additions to the SAR's legal framework will make their lives more difficult by making it harder for them to engage in the kind of troublemaking with regard to China that some of them have become so fond of. Like a dog worrying a bone, the ministers urged China to "uphold its commitments under the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law" and the authorities in Beijing and the SAR "to act in accordance with their international commitments and applicable legal obligations". But fulfilling their legal obligations is of course exactly what the central and SAR governments have done in introducing the legislation. Expressing its strong condemnation of the G7 foreign ministers' malicious denigration of the new Hong Kong legislation, the Commissioner's Office of China's Foreign Ministry in the Hong Kong SAR said in a statement that not only did the legislation safeguard national security, it was also a "turning point" from overall "chaos" to "orderliness" in the SAR. In their joint statement, the G7 foreign ministers claimed they "recognize the importance of constructive and stable relations with China". But the attempts by some of the G7 countries to use Hong Kong as a means to cause trouble for Beijing, if not a fuse for a color revolution, call into question the sincerity of those words.

Will IK be released any time soon?

Qamar Bashir



In the matter of the Election Symbol, he said that intra party elections were conducted exactly in accordance with the law, results were submitted to the Election Commission who after examination accepted the result.

However, since then, PTI has held two more meetings and will approach the Election Commission for the fourth time. He expressed doubt that PTI would not get back the election symbol until all by-elections are complete and there would be no need to continue depriving the party of its election symbol

IN an interview with a national TV channel, Mr. Rauf Hassan disclosed several key aspects of PTI's policies and decisions on pressing issues. These included the party's stance on bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, their approach to the six judges' charge sheet against the executive and intelligence agencies, their policy towards JUI, the return of the election symbol of PTI, the reintegration of deserted party members, the party's perspective on internal divisions within PML(N), and the efforts to improve relations between PTI and the influential establishment. I know Mr. Rauf Hassan from the date of his appointment as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for the Ministry of Information. As Joint Secretary, I received and ushered him to his office. Though he was not very popular amongst the PTI's political leadership of that time, following the removal of many frontline leaders after the crackdown on the party, he virtually emerged as PTI's primary spokesperson, particularly in handling complex and challenging decisions.

While reacting to Sheer Jan Marwat's statement on Saudi Arabia, he said that Mr. Imran Khan, was shocked to hear the unwarranted and obnoxious comments and narrated many instances where Saudi Arabia had rescued Pakistan from difficult financial, economic, and diplomatic situations. He advised the PTI's core committee to meet with the Saudi Ambassador and explain to him the party's stated position, emphasizing that the PTI greatly values the bilateral, fraternal, and brotherly relations with Saudi Arabia and that PTI had no intention to derail Saudi Arabia's investment commitment in Pakistan.

He said that currently, a status quo exists between PTI and the Establishment and relations are icy without any sign of melting, and effectively poured cold water on assumption of IK's release any time soon. He said after the Chairman's arrest, there was great pressure on him to leave the country, and as soon as the conditions were made favorable, he would be called back. However, the chairman refused to succumb to any pressure whatsoever. He emphasized that the army, an important and vital institution of the country, already has its plate full owing to external and internal security and safety threats. Therefore, they

should focus on their core functions and leave politics to the politicians and the people of Pakistan, who are the final authority to accept or reject any political leader. Mr. Rauf Hassan, however, said that the establishment would have to enter into negotiations with the Chairman, as currently, he is the only legitimate and genuine leader in the country.

While discussing the possibility of rapprochement with the JUI, he mentioned that within PTI there are two factions: one headed by Mr. Asad Qaiser in favor, and the rest of the party against such a proposal. He said that the history of animosity between JUI and PTI is very bitter, and it would perhaps take much more time and effort to mend fences and develop a consensus on relevant issues confronted by the nation. Regarding the decision to take back party leaders who had deserted the party under immense pressure from the establishment, he clarified that the party is well aware about the hardships they had faced and therefore had made a clear distinction between those who left the party, gave derogatory statements against it, and joined other parties, and those who, though left the party, neither gave statements against the party nor joined another party. When specifically asked about Mr. Fawad Hussain, he categorically said that he falls in the first group while Malika Bukhari and Shireen Mazari fall in the second group.

In the matter of the Election Symbol, he said that intra party elections were conducted exactly in accordance with the law, results were submitted to the Election Commission who after examination accepted the result. However, since then, PTI has held two more meetings and will approach the Election Commission for the fourth time. He expressed doubt that PTI would not get back the election symbol until all by-elections are complete and there would be no need to continue depriving the party of its election symbol.

Regarding Mian Nawaz Sharif's decision to become a party to the Supreme Court's suo moto proceedings on six judges' letters, he said that in principle, PTI would stay away from any proceedings as it believes that the judiciary, as a pillar of the state, should be able to resolve the matter amongst themselves, and any outside interfer-

ence or indulgence would be counterproductive. He added that without a strong, independent, free, and fair judiciary, the state cannot function properly, as is the case in Pakistan currently. He mentioned that the helplessness, unfairness, and biasness of the judiciary were admitted by none other than the judges themselves, and this is the reason the state structure in Pakistan has crumbled. He advised the judiciary to reclaim its lost space as quickly as possible to put the country back on the path of progress and development. Referring to the internal division within PML(N), he said that, according to credible information the house of PML(N) and the family of Mian Nawaz Sharif have clearly been divided into Nawaz and shahbaz groups. Nawaz Sharif's group believes that Shahbaz, in connivance with the Establishment, has betrayed Nawaz Sharif and effectively destroyed his political career. He said that the conflict between the two factions simmering within the family and close circles of PML(N) will soon escalate to the national level, and many deals that were made underhand by both factions of the PML(N) will wreak havoc on the entire party and its followers. However, despite many policies of the PTI being unveiled, many burning questions remain. When and how will the Chairman of PTI's ordeal finally end? Will he be breathing in fresh air any time soon? Without Imran Khan, will the movement kick started by the PTI and its allied parties in Balochistan, demanding the reissuance of election results on the basis of form 45 gain enough momentum to pose credible pressure on the government and the establishment to either reissue the election results, or decide to conduct fresh elections? Questions also remain about how the incumbent government of PMM(N) will deliver and survive when stalwarts of its own party are withdrawing their support, alleging that even in PML(N), picking and choosing was exercised to select certain candidates and reject others. Another question is how strongly and how soon Nawaz Sharif will commence opposition to the government of his own brother.

**Former Press Secretary to the President
Former Press Minister to the
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC**

Sudan needs a new approach to aid – and fast

Hafed Al-Ghwell

Thus, the Paris conference, and others like it, while commendable, must realign priorities to not only provide relief, but also make the development of robust civil systems foundational, rather than an afterthought. With millions internally displaced and critical infrastructure decimated, an integrated aid approach is more than humanitarian benevolence – it is a strategic necessity to stabilize and eventually rebuild a nation. Second, neighboring countries directly affected by Sudan's civil war also need new approaches built on the underexplored potential...

THE crisis in Sudan, exacerbated by violence between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces that broke out in April 2023, has unfurled a cataclysm of suffering with profound repercussions for the region. Despite the continuing conflict, the traditional mechanisms of international aid have been remarkably ineffective, creating a necessity for rethinking the global community's response to Sudan's needs and those of neighboring countries. To date, the civil war has resulted in an unprecedented displacement catastrophe, with more than 8.6 million people uprooted. Harrowing images of indiscriminate violence against the populace, including gender-based brutalities and signs of ethnically targeted mass killings in Darfur, raise the urgency of considerable humanitarian demands to critical levels. The sobering realities on the ground – with the stark underreporting of casualties, currently at 14,700, and the looming specter of famine endangering almost 5 million people – are not merely a snapshot of a prevailing chaos but also demand immediate action. In parallel, the ramifications of the war reverberate throughout the region. Both South Sudan and Chad are suffering from the conflict's spillover. South Sudan's hunger crisis has worsened, plunging the nation into socioeconomic insecurity and rising food scarcity. Chad, meanwhile, is now host to over a million refugees, even as it grapples with a grave lack of resources for its own population.

The unfolding crisis exposes the sheer deficiencies in current approaches to international aid that insist on temporary fixes where comprehensive surgery is necessary, given the glaring discrepancies in the funding-to-needs ratio. Up until the International Conference on Sudan held in Paris on April 15, international responses stood at a mere 42 percent of the \$2.57 billion required in Sudan and less than 40 percent of the \$1 billion targeting refugee assistance – a colossal underfunding now contributing to Sudan's worsening woes. Such affronts in a swelling crisis are neither sustainable nor strategic. The April 15 conference among almost 60 countries, where donors pledged about \$2.1 billion in humanitarian aid, stands as a welcome relief, and a positive sign that Sudan has not yet been forgotten. However, pledges do not automatically translate to direct, immediate and comprehensive apolitical support that is also immune from the polarizing dynamics of yet another

proxy war. Promises of help will not feed a third of Sudan's 51 million people who now suffer from hunger, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Nor will those most at risk suddenly gain uninterrupted access to adequate nutrition, medical care or stable living conditions, such as the 200,000 children, pregnant women, and mothers with newborns at risk of malnutrition in the coming months. Rising to meet Sudan's needs is not merely a necessary response but a moral imperative. It would be unfair to allow pessimism to temper well-intentioned aims to deliver relief to those desperately in need. The trouble, as always, is not in the "what," but in the "how," due to the inherent flaws in current aid delivery systems that oscillate between emergency aid and no aid. It is a system that has stubbornly resisted reform despite the increasing severity and frequency of humanitarian crises around the globe. In the northeast Africa context, piecemeal assistance being a normative response to burgeoning crises not only intensifies existing systemic governance and socioeconomic challenges, but also makes future conflicts and regional conflagrations inevitable. Instead, what Sudan needs – and what the sub-region really needs – is recalibrated approaches to aid, which necessitate innovations beyond the reactive; it calls for intertwining assistance with sustainable development initiatives, local-level engagements, and tackling of climate change's cumulative impacts. In lieu of armed intervention, which carries its own manifold complexities and potential for further aggravating crises, Sudan and its neighbors need a new approach and fast – and preferably one that deals with the immediate need for basic sustenance and, ultimately, the enduring support that will be critical for long-term stability and growth. First, such a system must be grounded in what experts call "integrated support," which targets the consequences of a confluence between episodic violence, conflict, and historical governance failures. This convergence created systemic difficulties, for instance, where inadequate infrastructure, catalyzed by war, goes on to exacerbate impacts to sanitation, healthcare, and access to essential public services. Thus, the Paris conference, and others like it, while commendable, must realign priorities to not only provide relief, but also make the development of robust civil systems foundational, rather than an afterthought. With millions in-

ternally displaced and critical infrastructure decimated, an integrated aid approach is more than humanitarian benevolence – it is a strategic necessity to stabilize and eventually rebuild a nation. Second, neighboring countries directly affected by Sudan's civil war also need new approaches built on the underexplored potential of local actors and community-based initiatives. These vital groups are often at the front line of humanitarian responses due to their accessibility and inherent understanding of the conflict landscape, from the cultural to the logistical. They exist on the periphery of larger aid agencies' operational scope, and have consistently emerged as beacons of resilience and responsiveness in areas that are inaccessible. Current and future fundraising successes must, therefore, be channeled to empower well-placed local entities to deliver targeted interventions that help stem widespread violence pushing some communities to the brink.

Lastly, climate change, particularly in Sudan's context, where food production and distribution networks have virtually collapsed not only due to conflict but also due to climate anomalies. International aid must, therefore, include strategies for climate resilience in tandem with urgent humanitarian relief. Integrating climate adaptation with aid not only addresses immediate survival concerns, but also lays the groundwork for sustainable agricultural recovery and resilience for the country's predominantly agrarian society. Given these imperatives, the global community must rise to the challenge of increasing humanitarian aid through a collaborative, multidimensional approach that weaves together development assistance and the agency of local actors. This would fulfill both the immediate requisites for basic sustenance and the enduring structural needs critical for Sudan's long-term stability and growth.

Rising to meet Sudan's needs with a revamped approach is not merely a necessary response but a moral imperative. Absent boots on the ground, it is crucial to revise traditional frameworks for humanitarian aid delivery and foreign assistance, by committing to a new playbook targeting the intersecting challenges of conflict, instability, and climate change. A new strategy would also be the greatest commitment to safeguarding human security in the pursuit of actionable peace, justice, and strong institutions.

– Sourced by Arab News.

Briefs

Pakistan-Africa ties...

FROM PAGE 01
Agreement presents an opportunity for Pakistan to reinforce its trade and investment connections with African nations, opening up new possibilities for businesses and strengthening overall economic ties with the continent. To overcome their common obstacles for developing their economies and forging a strong and effective partnership for peace progress and shared prosperity, Pakistan and Africa need to work together to launch joint ventures in different economic sectors such as Fertilizers (building fertilizer plants in different African regions), Agriculture, ICT, Health, Mines, Infrastructure, Tourism, Banking, Insurance sector, Car Industry, Renewable energy, vocational and university training. 'In line with the Bandung principles, Pakistan and Africa need to maintain unity, solidarity and coordination to make their voice heard in all international and regional platforms'. On the diplomatic level, he said, Pakistan has up until now opened at least 20 embassies across the continent to consolidate its cooperation with the 54 sovereign states and takes it to higher levels. The two regions need to build on the Bandung principles to continue to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, to advocate the settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration for the promotion of peace and stability. In view of the current challenges in the international arena, the objectives and principles of the Bandung spirit remain as relevant today as the time of the founding of the organization. Pakistan and Africa need more coordination to confront emerging threats and challenges which impede efforts to attain greater economic development and social progress. The emergence and spread of pandemics and health emergencies, including COVID-19, have taught us that there is no country or region which is immune from these threats and that collective efforts are needed to contain them. The dreamed of shared prosperity needs of us to take huge steps in order to enhance economic and social development. Such development can be achieved mainly through science and technology, industrial cooperation and the promotion of trade and investments. On the international level, Pakistan and Africa need to work together to further promote, preserve and reform multilateralism, and push for full respect of the principles of international law and the maintenance of international peace and security, the Ambassador concluded.

Ruling parties win...

FROM PAGE 01
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan Assemblies and one in Sindh Assembly. The NA seats include NA-8 and NA-44 (KP) NA-119 and NA-132 (Punjab) and NA-196 (Sindh). Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has won one seat in the form of NA-207, Nawabshah from where Aseefa Bhutto Zardari has been elected unopposed. The provincial assembly seats include PK-22 and PK-91 (KP), PB-20 and PB-22 (Balochistan) and PS-80 (Sindh). The Punjab Assembly seats where the by-polls are taking place include PP-32 (Gujrat), PP-36 (Wazirabad), PP-54 (Narawal), PP-93 (Bhakkar), PP-139 (Sheikhupura), PP-147, PP-149, PP-158, PP-164 (Lahore), PP-266 (Rahim Yar Khan) and PP-290 (Dera Ghazi Khan).

1 killed, 3 injured in...

FROM PAGE 01
district's Ferozawala tehsil constituency PP-139. As firing began, women voters started running in panic to save their lives. The Ferozawala police remained a silent spectator as the activists continued to throw punches at each other. Polling remained suspended as a result of violence. An ECP official later said in a statement that voting resumed as extra police personnel have been deployed to maintain peace.

Murree Brewery Polo Cup



RAWALPINDI: Deputy Chief of Mission US embassy Andrew Schofer along with other ambassadors and high commissioners giving away winners' trophy to FC KP team, which won the 120th Murree Brewery Polo Cup, played at Rawalpindi Race Course Ground. A large number of diplomats and Polo lovers witnessed the match. CEO Murree Brewery Isphanyar Bhandara welcomed the guests. – Photos by DNA

Naqvi gives major update regarding CT 2025

Pak will be hosting a world event for first time since 1996 World Cup

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday confirmed in a media talk that the stadium upgradation is underway for the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy. During the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2024, Naqvi attended the final between Islamabad United and Multan Sultans at the National Bank Stadium, Karachi after which it was decided that four major stadiums – Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi – in Pakistan will be upgraded massively before the commencement of the Champions Trophy.

"The stadiums will be upgraded, definitely," said Naqvi during a media talk on Sunday. "The work on the stadiums' structure and

decoration is already underway."

He also talked about the players of the Pakistan cricket team saying that he will monitor the recovery of Azam Khan and Ihsanullah as both players are currently injured. Azam suffered discomfort in his right calf muscle and was ruled out of the five-match T20I series against New Zealand while Ihsanullah is currently in England to undergo treatment for his elbow injury. "For us, every player and their treatment are important for us, I am monitoring the situation myself," Naqvi said. "I have already formed a medical board to examine Ihsanullah's treatment carefully." He also provided an update on the vice-captaincy dilemma saying that the selectors are in constant talks over the matter and the decision will be made soon. "We are



under talks with the selectors over the vice-captaincy, it will be decided and announced before our next series," Naqvi added. Remember, the PCB finalised the deal for the Champions Trophy with the International Cricket Council (ICC) in December. The event will mark the return of the ICC Champions Trophy after an eight-year gap since its last occurrence in

2017, which Pakistan won. For the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, a total of eight teams will participate, following the One Day International (ODI) format. The qualification process involved the top seven teams from the ICC ODI World Cup group stage, along with the host nation, Pakistan, securing their positions for this upcoming tournament. The teams confirmed for

the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy are: Pakistan (hosts), India, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Afghanistan. Earlier on , Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi confirmed that they will investigate whether the previous board mishandled Ihsanullah's injury or not. The 21-year-old flew to England earlier this month to undergo treatment for his elbow injury by a renowned orthopaedic surgeon, Professor Adam Watts, after which the decision on whether there is a need for surgery or not will be made. "The PCB has decided to constitute an independent medical board to analyse if Ihsanullah's medical case was handled properly by the board's medical support team," Naqvi said in a statement issued on his official X, formerly Twitter, account. The medical

board comprising Dr Javed Akram, Dr Rana Dilwaiz and Dr Mumraiz Naqshband will also recommend the future course of action for the pacer's proper medical treatment, the statement added. The Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi posted on his X account. With Ihsanullah undergoing treatment for the same injury once again, questions were raised regarding the way the PCB's treatment of the pacer's injury even after it was initially misdiagnosed, as reported by ESPN Cricinfo earlier. However, PCB's medical department head Dr Sohail Saleem confirmed that there was no mishandling in Ihsanullah's case. "There was no mishandling in this case," Dr Saleem told ESPNcricinfo. "I'll admit there was a delay [in the initial diagnosis], but no mishandling."

West Indies women win ODI series against Pakistan

The visitors successfully chased down the 224-target in the second ODI

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: West Indies women's cricket team won the three-match ODI series against Pakistan after beating the home side in the second match by two wickets at the National Bank Stadium, Karachi, on Sunday. After winning the first match by a whopping 113 runs, the visitors maintained their top form and trounced the Green Shirts to win the series with one match still to play. Despite a strong start to the chase, the visitors were in the driving seat but Pakistan's late comeback dragged it to the last over where Fatima Sana almost won it for them but an edge on the last ball won it for the visiting team. Skipper Hayley Matthews stepped up once again and scored 44 runs coming as an opener. She was crucial to West Indies' strong start as despite losing her partner Rashada Williams, she continued to play with the same intent. Following Hayley's departure, Shemaine Campbelle took charge of the batting and scored 52 runs on 73 balls. However, she was not alone in leading West Indies to the

victory as Stafanie Taylor top scored for the winning with 73 runs. Down the order, Chinelle Henry contributed a valuable 23 runs on just 20 balls with the help of three boundaries. For Pakistan, skipper Nida Dar took four wickets, while Umme Hani bagged two. Fatima and Sadia Iqbal picked

one each. Batting first, Pakistan did not get off to a great start as their opener, Muneeba Ali was bowled by Chinelle Henry in the second over after scoring just two runs. However, after the initial scare, the home side bounced back with Sidra Ameen and Bismah Maroof combining for an 80-run

partnership. The former was removed just after completing her half-century, losing her wicket to Afy Fletcher in the 21st over. Bismah stayed at the crease but following Sidra's departure, she couldn't find a batting partner to build a long partnership with as Sadaf Shams, skipper Nida Dar, Aliya Riaz and Fatima Sana all walked back to the pavilion after failing to score considerable runs. Pakistan got the much-needed support down the order with Najha Alvi scoring 25 runs on 28 balls, which helped the home side score 223 runs before they were all out in 48.5 overs. For West Indies, Chinelle and Karishma Ramharack picked three wickets each, Afy Fletcher got two while skipper Hayley Matthews bagged one. The series is being broadcast live on Pakistan's first sports channel Geo Super.

Schedule of remaining matches

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.



Israeli forces pound Gaza as 200...

FROM PAGE 01

Civil Defense agency. The bodies of 13 people, mostly children, were recovered after an Israeli strike hit the home of a family near the southernmost Gaza city of Rafah, the agency said. Other people were believed to be under rubble. A separate Israeli strike on a home in the Rafah area killed at least three people and wounded others, Civil Defense said. Resident Umm Hassan Kloub, 35, said her children screamed when they "woke up to a nightmare of an explosion." "Every second we live in terror, even the sound of Israeli aircraft doesn't stop," she said. "We don't know whether we will live or die. This is not life." Soon after the war began, when Hamas militants from Gaza attacked southern Israel on October 7, Israel told Palestinians in northern Gaza to move to "safe zones" further south such as Rafah.

Hamas denounces...

FROM PAGE 01

\$26 billion in military aid to Israel. "The US administration and President Biden personally bear political, legal, and moral responsibility for the war crimes committed by the criminal Zionist entity against our Palestinian people through this support which violates international law," Hamas said. The resistance group went on to say that this support constitutes a "license and green light" for the Israeli regime to continue its brutal aggression against Palestinians, and the blatant violation of all international laws and humanitarian norms. "We regard this step as confirmation of the official US complicity and partnership in the genocide being waged by the fascist occupation army against our Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip," it added.

Pakistan vs New Zealand T20I series schedule
April 25 | 4th T20I, Lahore
April 27 | 5th T20I, Lahore

Briefs

Pope Francis calls for dialogue, diplomacy in ME

VATICAN : Pope Francis on Sunday expressed concern over the situation in the Middle East and called for dialogue and diplomacy. During his traditional Sunday Angelus prayer at the Vatican, the pope said: "I continue to follow the situation in the Middle East with concern and sadness." Pope Francis noted: "I reiterate the plea not to yield to the claims of war but rather to prioritize dialogue and diplomacy, which can achieve much." The pope added: "I pray every day for peace in Palestine and Israel, and I hope that these two peoples will soon put an end to their sufferings." Flouting the International Court of Justice's provisional ruling, Israel continues its onslaught on Gaza where nearly 34,100 Palestinians have been killed, mostly women and children, and nearly 77,000 injured since Oct. 7, according to Palestinian health authorities. The Israeli onslaught 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. Hostilities have continued unabated, however, and aid deliveries remain woefully insufficient to address the humanitarian catastrophe.—APP

Brazil reports 1,600 deaths from dengue in 2024

SAO PAULO : Brazil has registered 1,601 confirmed deaths from dengue so far this year, with another 2,061 deaths under investigation, the Health Ministry said Saturday. A total of 3.53 million suspected cases of dengue have been reported nationwide, and the incidence rate of dengue fever in the South American country is currently 1,741 suspected cases per 100,000 inhabitants. The number of confirmed deaths is 35 percent higher than the total in 2023, which was 1,179 deaths. According to the data updated as of Friday, women have borne the brunt of the disease, representing 55.2 percent of confirmed cases. The demographic group most significantly affected falls within the age range of 20 to 29 years old. The government has called on the public to adhere to the country's vaccination program against the disease. Dengue is transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito and can be fatal in severe cases.—Agencies

Deadly boat capsizing in Bangui, Central Africa

BANGUI : At least 58 people going to a funeral died after their overloaded river boat capsized in the Central African Republic's capital Bangui, the head of civil protection has said. "We were able to extract 58 lifeless bodies," Thomas Djimasse told Radio Guira on Saturday. "We don't know the total number of people underwater". According to witnesses and videos on social media, the boat was carrying more than 300 people some standing and others perched on wooden structures when it sank on the Mpoko River on Friday. The vessel was heading to the funeral of a village chief but got into difficulty shortly after setting off. Rescue services arrived 40 minutes after the disaster. Maurice Kapenya, who was following the boat in a canoe because there was no space on board, said he collected the bodies of some of the victims, including his sister, with the help of fishermen and residents. Some of the injured were evacuated by motorbike taxis. Driver Francis Maka told AFP he had "taken more than 10 people to the community hospital free of charge, in the face of the tragedy". With civil protection teams no longer on the scene Saturday, families searched for their missing loved ones near the river and helped canoe operators they had hired, an AFP journalist observed.—APP

Bilawal reiterates Pakistan's support for Palestine

Pakistan stands with the Palestinian people on the Gaza issue, Chairman Bilawal assured Palestinian Ambassador during the meeting

DNA

KARACHI : Ahmad Jawad Ra-bei, Ambassador of Palestine visited Bilawal's house to meet Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Bibi Asafa Bhutto Zardari. During the meeting Ambassador of Palestine and Chairman Bilawal discussed Pak-Palestinian relations. President Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Bibi Asafa Bhutto Zardari were handed over a frame of memorial photographs of martyrs Benazir Bhutto and Yasser Arafat to Palestinian Ambassador, Ahmad Jawad Ra-bei. Pakistan stands with the Palestinian people on the Gaza issue, Chairman Bilawal assured Palestinian Ambassador during the meeting.



Weifang Kite Festival global celebration of friendship: Amb Hashmi

Ambassador of Pakistan speaks at the Opening Ceremony of 41st Weifang International Kite Festival

DNA

WEIFANG : Ambassador Khalil Hashmi attended the opening ceremony of the 41st Weifang International Kite Festival held in Weifang, China. This event, known globally for its celebration of kite culture, drew participants from diverse segments of the society, spread across multiple nationalities. In his remarks at the opening ceremony, Ambassador Hashmi praised the Weifang International Kite Festival as a global celebration of friendship, creativity, and cultur-

al exchange. He noted the festival's ability to attract participants worldwide, showcasing passion for kite culture. Drawing parallels between Weifang and Pakistan, Ambassador Hashmi emphasized the cultural significance of kite flying in both countries. Ambassador Hashmi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening economic and cultural ties with Weifang, particularly in the field of agriculture. Prior to the ceremony, Ambassador also had a group interaction with Mayor Liu Jianjun, highlighted the strong ties between Weifang and Pakistan, and

proposed mutually beneficial cooperation. Weifang city, known as the kite capital of the world, hosts the international kite festival annually, attracting participation from diverse societal segments and many nationalities. Meanwhile, the 41st Weifang International Kite Festival and the 2024 Weifang Kite Carnival kicked off yesterday in Weifang, featuring hundreds of colorful kites. In 1988, Weifang was designated the "World Kite Capital." Every spring, a kite-themed carnival is held here. This year marks the 41st edition, attracting participants from more than

30 countries and regions around the world, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Ambassador Hashmi attended the opening ceremony and praised Weifang as the world's capital of kites and a city of vibrant colors with a rich history. The Weifang International Kite Festival is a global phenomenon, a celebration of friendship, creativity, and the shared joy of kite flying. It embodies the essence of Weifang's cultural vibrancy, attracting participants and spectators from around the globe, and showcasing the city's deep-rooted passion for kite culture.

Thousands gather at BD border seeking refuge

SITTWE : Thousands of Rohingya displaced due to conflict in Myanmar gathered along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border near the transboundary Naf River to seek refuge, a Rohingya leader in Bangladesh has said. The persecuted Rohingya in Myanmar's Rakhine state are becoming victims of the ongoing conflict between the junta forces and the insurgent groups. Rohingya people in groups are leaving villages amid escalating conflict, Mohammad Nur Hashem, a Rohingya Majhi, or community leader, in the Cox's Bazar Rohingya camp, said over the phone. About 1.2 million Rohingya from Myanmar are residing in congested refugee camps in southeastern Cox's Bazar who fled crackdowns by the Myanmar military in August 2017. "At least 200 Rohingya have managed to cross the Bangladesh border and reached refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. They mostly dodge the security at night and pass the Naf River through small boats risking their lives," he explained. A Rohingya man seeking refuge told local Channel24 TV that the ongoing conflict between the junta forces and rebel fighters has forced them to flee for safety. Last week, the Arakan Army and other rebel groups intensified attacks at the camp of the Junta forces in the north of Maungdaw in Rakhine State which displaced many of the persecuted Rohingya people. Hashem said one of his nephews fled home from his village in Maungdaw after heavy shelling and conflict between junta forces and rebel fighters started on April 17. "We haven't had contact with him since he left home," he added, lamenting the situation in Myanmar that forced people to seek refuge in Bangladesh.—APP

7 missing after two Japanese military helicopters crash

Tokyo : Seven people were missing Sunday after an apparent accident overnight involving two Japanese military helicopters out to sea, officials said. A spokesman for Japan's Self-Defense Force (SDF) confirmed the late Saturday incident to AFP and said that one person was rescued. Defence Minister Minoru Kihara said rescuers "spotted what are believed to be part of the aircraft in the sea, and we believe that the two helicopters crashed." "At this point the cause is unknown, but firstly we do our best to save lives," Kihara told reporters. He said the helicopters were "doing drills to counter submarines at night". The helicopters appear to have crashed during night-time training off the Izu Islands in the Pacific Ocean, broadcaster NHK reported. Communication with one chopper was lost at 10:38 pm (1338 GMT) off the island of Torishima, and one minute later an emergency signal was received from this aircraft, NHK reported. Around 25 minutes later, at around 11:04 pm, the military realised that communication with the other aircraft was also lost in the same area.—Agencies

Doctors cite unmedicated mental illness in Sydney attack

SYDNEY : No one can know the mind of Sydney shopping mall killer Joel Cauchi, but psychiatrists say one underlying cause of his rampage is evident: he had schizophrenia, stopped his medication and fell out of treatment. People have searched for a fathomable motive since the April 13 knife attack at Bondi Junction, in which five women and a male security guard were stabbed to death and another dozen wounded, including a nine-month-old girl. Cauchi's parents have said their son was diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of 17 and was successfully treated for about 18 years. A serious mental disorder, schizophrenia can cause hallucinations, delusions and disordered behaviour. It requires life-long treatment. New South Wales police commissioner Karen Webb said it was "obvious" to her and detectives that the 40-year-old Cauchi had targeted women and avoided men, sparking a media debate about misogyny in Australia. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described the gender breakdown among the victims as "concerning" and vowed to do more to combat violence against women, citing a toll of one woman dying at the hands of a man they knew every week. "But we will never know what was in the mind of the perpetrator of these acts," said professor Ian Hickie, co-director of health and policy at the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre.—APP

Turkiye detains 36 Daesh-linked suspects in raids

ANKARA : Turkiye has detained 36 suspects tied to the Daesh terrorist group in raids across four provinces, according to Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya on Sunday. In a post on social media platform X, Yerlikaya said police had seized suspects who were found to have been active within Daesh to have helped fund and provide supplies to the group. Police also seized several unlicensed shotguns and pistols as part of the operations, the minister said. Ankara : Turkiye has been rounding up Daesh-linked suspects in ramped-up operations since the terrorist group attacked an Italian church in Istanbul in late January, killing one man during Sunday Mass. Daesh operates a so-called Khorasan Province (Daesh-K) network in Turkiye, which looks for "new methods" and recruits more foreign members for its activities after constant counterterrorism operations because a "challenge," security sources say.—APP

Pak advocates infrastructure for SDG achievement

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has called for the development of infrastructure connectivity to fortify global resilience and promote sustainable development, especially in developing countries. Ambassador Munir Akram made the call in his capacity as co-chair of the Group of Friends of Sustainable Infrastructure Investment, while delivering a statement during the U.N. General Assembly's Sustainability Week in New York, on the theme: "Informal dialogue on building global resilience and promoting sustainable development through infrastructure connectivity." "The achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and our climate goals requires a major transition to sustainable infrastructure - in energy, transport, housing, communications and industrial and agricultural production and consumption," the Pakistani envoy said, noting that this was recognized in the "Just Energy Transition" document adopted at COP28. Yet, he said, "public and private investments in sustainable infrastructure are not commensurate to realize either the SDGs or the climate goals, pointing out that a majority of developing countries do not have the public resources to finance infrastructure investments nor are they able to secure sufficient private investment. To achieve a 'just transition', he called for mobilizing significantly larger concessional finance to mitigate country and project risks, enhance credit quality, improve financing terms and thus incentivize private infrastructure investment in the developing countries. In this regard, Ambassador Akram cited the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which said there was a funding gap of \$2.5 trillion annually in infrastructure, two-thirds of which is in the developing countries. "Cumulatively, for a 1.5°C Scenario, financing needs for clean energy are estimated to be about USD 4.3 trillion per year up until 2030.—APP

Putin could use nuclear weapon : Navalny's widow

She criticized Putin's aggression, citing the invasion of Ukraine and recent arrests of suspected spies in Europe

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW : The widow of late Russian dissident Alexei Navalny said she was not sure whether Putin really has a "strong strategy." The Navalnys were the most prominent opposition activists in Russia for many years. Navalny, a long-standing and staunch opponent of Putin, died in a prison camp in the Arctic Circle in Siberia on February 16. It has not been independently established whether the 47-year-old died naturally, as his death certificate says. However, his supporters say he was murdered. Navalny also commented on the recent arrests of several suspected Russian spies in Europe, saying these are a further sign that Putin has long been waging war in the heart of Europe, using all means necessary. "Putin did not just start, he has been doing this all along. He starts wars, he kills his opponents," she

said, adding that their presence comes as no surprise to her. "I always assumed that there were many Russian spies in Europe: Russian spies, that's obvious." Earlier this week, two German-Russian dual nationals were detained in Bavaria for allegedly scouting targets for possible acts of sabotage in Germany for Moscow. Both are now in custody. In Poland, the security agencies arrested a man who allegedly sought to help Russian military intelligence plan an assassination attempt on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Navalny said it was a pity that Europe failed to recognize the danger presented by Moscow sooner, saying if the issue had been raised sooner and more frequently, some wars and some murders might have been prevented. She reiterated her de-

termination to fight Putin and called for the strongest possible support from the West, during the interview at the Tegernsee, a lake in the Bavarian Alps to the south of Munich. Navalny herself is not afraid, she said, despite living with a certain degree of risk, a risk that will grow if she does a good job, she added. But, she says, she dreams of returning to Russia one day. "I want to live in Russia. My children dream of returning to Russia. I want to go to my husband's grave. It's very important to me. And I hope that I can do that very, very soon. I dream of going there as soon as possible." On Friday, Navalny received the German Freedom Prize of the Media, which is awarded annually at the Ludwig Erhard Summit, a leading forum that gathers top representatives from politics and business.

Turkiye calls on int'l community to recognize Palestine state

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said that It is unjust that Palestine is not allowed to become a member of the UN

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA : Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Sunday called on the international community to oppose the US veto on Palestine's UN bid, and recognize Palestine state. "It is unjust that Palestine is not allowed to become a member of the UN. We call on the international community to oppose this injustice and recognize the state of Palestine," said Hakan Fidan in a joint news conference with his Mauritanian counterpart Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug in Istanbul. During a meeting with Merzoug, Fidan said that they discussed the "ongoing massacre in Gaza," adding: "Just like Turkiye, Mauritania also adopts a sensitive policy regarding the Palestinian issue, particu-

larly the situation in Gaza, and provides all possible support." Fidan further said that Turkiye and Mauritania are in "great solidarity" on Gaza, adding: "We will continue our cooperation for an urgent cease-fire and uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid." Fidan also said that the two nations' efforts will continue "uninterrupted until an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, with its capital in East Jerusalem and territorial integrity, is established based on the 1967 borders." Hakan Fidan, Salem Ould Merzoug will also focus on political, economic issues between 2 nations, diplomatic sources say. Earlier on , Turkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and his Mauritanian counterpart Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug on Sunday will discuss the lat-



est developments in the Sahel region and Gaza in Istanbul. Current developments in the Sahel region, regional issues and the ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza would be discussed in the meeting, according to diplomatic sources. The meeting will also focus on the political and economic issues between the two nations and steps to strengthen and diversify coop-

eration. "Mauritania has demonstrated a determined stance towards halting the bloodshed in Gaza since the beginning of the Israeli attacks," said the sources. Highlighting the serious security challenges facing the Sahel region and its significant transformation, the sources said that the security environment in the Sahel is of strategic importance not only for the region but also for the entire African continent and beyond. Calling Mauritania's role a stabilizing factor in the "volatile" Sahel region, the sources stated: "Our country prioritizes the establishment of peace, security, prosperity, and lasting stability in the Sahel region." Relations between Turkiye, Mauritania Drawing attention to the historical ties between Mauritania and Turkiye, the diplomatic sources noted that approximately

30,000 Turkish citizens of Mauritanian origin reside in the Kozan district of southern Turkish province of Adana, with Mauritians having fought in the forefront during the National Struggle in 1920. Turkiye's Embassy in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott was established in 2011, while Mauritania's Embassy in Ankara was opened in 2010, the diplomatic sources said. The sources further said that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Mauritania on Feb. 28, 2018, marked the first presidential-level visit from Turkiye to Mauritania, noting that this visit gave momentum to bilateral relations. The sources also stated that Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani visited Turkiye in December 2021 as part of the 3rd Turkiye-Africa Partnership Summit.

Briefs

2 Customs officials gunned down in DI Khan

DNA

DI KHAN: Two officials of Pakistan Customs were gunned down in an attack near York Toll Plaza in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan district, police said on Sunday. According to the law enforcement officials, four others sustained injuries in the gun attack and have been shifted to the DHQ Hospital. The police said that the unidentified armed assailants escaped the site of the incident after opening fire. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the attack, reiterating that such cowardly acts could not shake the resolve of the government and the fight against terrorism would continue till their complete elimination. The prime minister prayed for the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with fortitude, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. He said that looking after the bereaved families of the officials was now a responsibility of the government and directed FBR chairman to prepare shuhada package for the bereaved families.

Sindh CM adviser steps down

DNA

KARACHI: After law enforcement agencies foiled an alleged weapons smuggling bid from Balochistan to Jacobabad, Allah Dino aka Babal Khan Bhayo has stepped down as the adviser to Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah. As per Bhayo's statement issued a day earlier, his decision to resign from the post is aimed at allowing a fair and transparent probe into Friday's failed arms smuggling attempt. The official has also requested CM Shah to accept his resignation with immediate effect and order an inquiry into the matter. The development comes after LEAs recovered a large number of arms and ammunition including two sub-machine guns, two G-3 rifles, 18 magazines, 1118 bullets of 7.62 bore calibre, 670 bullets of light machine gun and 200 bullets along with two cellphones and Rs2,500 from two vehicles including a double-cabin pickup truck and a police vehicle that was escorting it.

Roedad Khan passes away

MR Roedad Khan, former secretary general interior passed away peacefully on Sunday April 21. He was laid to rest at H11 graveyard in Islamabad. His funeral was attended by family, friends & admirers from all walks of life. Mr Roedad Khan, who died at the age of 101, was a towering personality and has left an enduring legacy. He attained top most positions in the civil service of Pakistan including Secretary General Interior. A man with a purpose & a mission, he embarked on a second career after his retirement. He became a civil society activist, writer and historian. He pioneered environment protection for Pakistan.

KARACHI-BAKU DIRECT FLIGHT LAUNCHED



KARACHI: Azerbaijan has launched a direct flight from Karachi to Baku. Both Azerbaijan and Pakistan have already established direct air links between Islamabad and Baku. Karachi-Baku direct flight was launched formally. Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov along with Governor Sindh, TDAP chairman and other officials cutting cake on the occasion. – DNA

Foreign national abducted from Islamabad

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A foreign national was reportedly abducted from Islamabad on Sunday within the limits of the Margalla police station. The Margalla police station registered an FIR at the request of the foreign embassy. The foreign missing approached the law enforcement seeking recovery of the abducted citizen and also named an accused. The FIR states that the accused kidnapped the foreign citizen from the F-8 area. In a similar incident, a Grade 18 officer of the Inland Revenue Service of FBR Rehmatullah Khan was abducted from the capital's twin city Rawalpindi last week. The kidnappers held him for ransom and demanded a hefty amount of Rs10 million from the officer's family. An FIR was registered for the kidnapping. The FIR was filed by Muhammad Shafiq, the brother-in-law of the abductee. According to the FIR, Inland Revenue Service Grade 18 officer Rehmatullah Khan is posted at the FBR headquarters. He was abducted by unknown persons at 11:30am on April 12.

63 killed due to torrential rains in KP: PDMA

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said 63 people have been killed and 78 injured in rain-related incidents. The PDMA issued a report on Sunday about the loss of lives and property in KP due to heavy rains. The dead included 33 children, 15 men and 15 women, while 17 women, 37 men, and 24 children are among the injured, according to the report. A total 3,202 houses were damaged, of which 477 were completely damaged and 2,725 were partially damaged, the report added. Due to heavy rains, financial loss was reported from various districts, including Khyber, Dir Upper and Lower, Chitral Upper, Swat, Bajaur, Shangla, Mansehra, Mohmand, Malakand, Karak, Tank, Mardan, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Buner, Hangu, Batagram, Bannu, North and South Waziristan, Kohat, DI Khan, and Orakzai.

US aid package could help Kyiv slow Russia's advance

In this period of rare boosts for Kyiv, this was a biggie - the arrival of American weaponry will allow its beleaguered troops to do more than hang on. But it's no silver bullet

KIEV: President Volodymyr Zelensky has expressed his gratitude to the US House of Representatives for approving a new \$61bn (£49bn) package of military assistance for Ukraine after months of delays. He said the aid could save thousands of lives. While it's not uncommon for a country's future to be decided by politicians, a nation's very existence hinging on a vote 5,000 miles away is an extraordinary as it sounds. For Ukraine, the six-month wait for this military package has been as costly as it has been frustrating. In this period of rare boosts for Kyiv, this was a biggie - the arrival of American weaponry will allow its beleaguered troops to do more than hang on. But it's no silver bullet. So, what is the package going to do? It is likely to include air defence systems, mid to long-range missiles and artillery shells. Ukraine's recent lack of them has led to Russian forces capturing hundreds more square kilometres of territory. When the aid arrives, Ukraine can potentially challenge Russia's air superiority, frustrate their supply lines and slow advancing troops. For Vitaliy, a serving soldier who we bump into in central Kyiv, it's important to focus on the positives. "Every cent matters," he says. "It is very much needed. We need everything. Every cartridge, every cent,

every positive thought. We need all of it." When I was in the Donetsk region last month, soldiers said most of the artillery rumbles were coming from the Russian side. Cities like Kostyantynivka and Kramatorsk were bracing for what might be coming. This aid might save those cities. It won't give Ukraine the instant means to start liberating territory and force Russia back - but it gives a window for that to happen in the future. The consensus in Kyiv and Washington is that without this American help, Ukraine would lose. On a miserable Sunday morning, the warmth of the Kyiv metro will always beat the wet streets above. It's where we meet Maxym, who's pleased with the US aid finally being

approved. "I'm really happy about it," he says. "I'm just a bit disappointed it took so long. Anyways, it's better late than never." Maxym is frustrated by the growing debate over whether Ukraine should negotiate peace with Russia at the expense of territory. "Russia doesn't want to negotiate," he explains. "They don't want this middle ground that Europe and the US think will end this war. They want it all." We also meet a woman, Vita, holding her son's hand and pulling him off a train. "How else can Ukraine survive without it?" she asks. "It can't. We don't have such an army and weapons." She then becomes emotional. "It's impossible. We re-

ally want help, for our children to survive, so we wait." She nods towards her son. The past six months has not only revealed Russia's dominance, but Europe's inability to provide the same level of support as the US. "We need to think about the hypothetical eventualities the next package of US aid might not pass," says Mykola Bieleuskov, a research fellow at the Ukrainian National Institute for Strategic Studies. "That's why it's up for the UK and continental Europe to increase weapon production to meet Ukraine's requirements." As for a realistic goal this year for Kyiv, Mykola hopes this American aid will help stabilise the front lines. Despite the return of western unity behind it, the issue for Ukraine has always been the time it takes for help to arrive. Russian President Vladimir Putin certainly doesn't have to negotiate as many political hurdles when it comes to military spending. Democratic delays aren't exclusive to allies overseas - Ukraine has its own issues with mobilising enough men for its war effort. A controversial conscription law has just been passed after months of debating and amendments. The challenge for President Zelensky now is keeping the politics separate to the fighting. He'll be under pressure to make this latest American offering count. – Agencies



Khamenei praises 'success' of military

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has lauded the Iranian Armed Forces for displaying a commendable image of strength and military prowess in the wake of Operation True Promise, stating they created a feeling of glory about the Islamic nation. Addressing a group of high-ranking Iranian military commanders and figures in the capital Tehran on Sunday, Ayatollah Khamenei said the Iranian forces have sincerely and successfully managed to present a good image of their abilities and authority after punishing Israel, exhibited a commendable picture of the Iranian nation, and proved the emergence of Iranians' willpower in the international arena. The Leader congratulated the advent of the National Army Day, which is celebrated annually on April 18, and the founding of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps on April 22, 1979, stressing that the latest developments have created a sense of grandeur and magnificence about Islamic Iran in the eyes of the world and international observers. Ayatollah Khamenei said the high number of missiles and drones launched during Operation True Promise against targets inside the Israeli-occupied territories is a

secondary and peripheral matter, stressing that the main issue is the manifestation of the willpower of the Iranian nation and armed forces across the globe, the proof of which is the Tel Aviv regime's distress and discomfort. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also appreciated the well-planned measures of the Iranian Armed Forces, highlighting the significance of reducing the costs while reaping considerable gains in any scenario. "This is what the Armed Forces have done in recent incidents. They did well," he said. Ayatollah Khamenei praised the efforts and activities of the IRGC, the Iranian Army, and police forces, calling upon the armed forces to continue their efforts and move to face hostilities and enemies by relying on innovative initiatives. "We should not stop even for a moment because stoppage means backpedaling. Therefore, innovation in the production of weapons and methods, as well as knowledge of the enemy's strategies must always be on the agenda," the Leader stated. During the meeting, Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, chief of staff of Iran's Armed Forces, presented a report on the recent Operation True Promise as well as the combat readiness of various divisions of the Iranian Armed Forces. Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched extensive missile and drone strikes last week on the Israeli-occupied territories. The series of retaliatory strikes, dubbed Operation True Promise, inflicted damage on Israeli military bases across the occupied lands. It was in retaliation for the Israeli attack on April 1 against the Iranian consulate in Damascus, located next to the embassy building in Damascus's Mezzeh district. The airstrike killed two senior Iranian military personnel who were on an advisory mission to Syria as well as five of their accompanying officers.

AUKUS pact risks nuclear proliferation in Pacific: China

"The recent attempts to draw more countries to join in such an initiative of stoking confrontation between blocs and provoking division are totally inconsistent with the urgent needs of the island countries," foreign minister said

BEIJING: The Chinese foreign minister has once again denounced the AUKUS military pact, saying the three-way agreement is a violation of a South Pacific treaty banning nuclear weapons in the region. During a visit to Papua New Guinea (PNG), Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi seized on a recent announcement by the AUKUS nations that they were considering cooperating with Japan on military technology, telling reporters at a news conference in Port Moresby that Western countries were sowing the seeds of discord in the South Pacific and increasing the risk of nuclear proliferation in the region. The Chinese foreign minister said he had in-depth and friendly talks with his PNG counterpart, citing a broad consensus reached on bilateral ties between the two. In 2022, the US announced a security pact with the UK and Aus-

tralia to help the South Pacific country in its military activities, including the development and deployment of nuclear-powered submarines to the South Pacific region under the AUKUS agreement. The three partners had devised plans to develop advanced warfighting capabilities such as artificial intelligence, undersea drones, and hypersonic missiles. The top Chinese diplomat and senior politician, who has been serving as Director of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Foreign Affairs Commission Office, insisted that the AUKUS pact violated a South Pacific treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons in the region. "The recent attempts to draw more countries to join in such an initiative of stoking confrontation between blocs and provoking division are totally inconsistent with the urgent needs of the island

countries," the foreign minister said. Wang took a thinly veiled swipe at Australian and US relations with Solomon Islands, which held elections on Wednesday, saying, "We believe that the people of Solomon Islands have the wisdom and ability to determine the future of their country. Island nations belong to their people. They are not the backyard of any big country." Wang also reiterated the significant nuclear proliferation risks in the Pacific region that were associated with the AUKUS military pact. The US has been making significant efforts to increase its sphere of influence to include the South Pacific. In this regard, in recent years, Papua New Guinea has been one of the targets of the US foreign affairs apparatus with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, even succeeding in signing a cooperation agreement with Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister James Marape. Some news outlets have cited reports of US interference in the elections, warning of schemes to riot to block Solomon Islands ex-prime minister Manasseh Sogavare from returning to power. – Agencies

MURREE SPARKLETTS
Bottled Drinking Water

WATER TASTES BEST IN GLASS!!

CARBONATED WATER ALSO AVAILABLE IN GLASS BOTTLE

330ml 750ml

For Sales & Supply Contact:

Adeel Butt 03334131756	Kaiser Waheed 03325808422	Riaz Muhammad 0335 5111043
---------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------------