



Islamabad POST

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Scotland's First Minister Humza Yousaf steps down

Detailed News On Page-08

Italy's FM to push for immediate cease-fire in Gaza

Detailed News On Page-07

Zelensky wants urgent weapons deliveries

Detailed News On Page-07



Inflation poses huge challenge

World peace linked to peace in Gaza: PM

Shehbaz Sharif landed in Riyadh on Saturday for a three-day visit to attend the World Economic Forum's Special Meeting on Global Collaboration, Growth and Energy

DNA

RIYADH: Highlighting the problems being faced by the cash-strapped nation, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that the 'deathtrap' – debt trap – and soaring inflation posed a huge challenge to Pakistan. He made the remarks while speaking at the closing plenary of a special meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) being held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. PM Shehbaz landed in Riyadh on Saturday for a three-day visit to attend the World Economic Forum's Special Meeting on Global Collaboration, Growth and Energy. He was invited to attend the moot by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Muhammad bin Salman Al Saud and the chief executive of the WEF Klaus Schwab. Addressing the closing session of the moot, PM Shehbaz said: "There is also a problem of inflation and debt trap. [whom] I call 'deathtrap', [as] all this together pose a huge challenge [to Pakistan]." Lauding the leadership of

PM Shehbaz, Malaysian PM discuss bilateral ties

This was the first in person meeting between both leaders since Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was re-elected in March

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RIYADH: Prime Minister meets Malaysian Prime Minister on sidelines of WEF Special Meeting Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim on the sidelines of the Special Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Riyadh today. This was the first in person meeting between both leaders since Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was re-elected in March. The two leaders have, however, spoken twice on telephone, i.e. on March 4, 2024 when the Prime Minister took office as well as on April 10, 2024 on Eid ul Fitr. Following up on their warm conversations on telephone, the Prime Minister appreciated the leadership Malaysian Prime Minister and also commended his knowledge of art and literature – particularly about the national poet of Pakistan Allama Iqbal. The two leaders recalled the historical ties between Pakistan and

Continued on Page 06

IMF 'okays' \$1.1 billion loan tranche for Pakistan

Pakistan will get the tranche this week

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Executive Board has approved a \$1.1 billion loan for Pakistan as the last tranche under the \$3 billion Stand-by Arrangement (SBA), sources told. According to the Ministry of Finance sources, the IMF will soon issue an official statement regarding the approval. The third and final tranche was approved after the IMF Executive Board meeting that discussed Pakistan's request for the release of funds. The global lender has already granted Pakistan \$1.9 billion under the agreement. In his first meeting with the IMF chief since his re-election, PM Shehbaz discussed Pakistan entering into another IMF programme.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring the award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon the Commander of Turkish Land Forces, General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu, during a special investiture ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr. – DNA

Audio leaks case

Justice Sattar declines to recuse from the bench

Throws out FIA, PTA, Pemra's recusal pleas

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court Monday fined three government departments Rs500,000 each while dismissing their petitions regarding the bench hearing the audio leaks case. The court also hinted that contempt of court proceedings may also be initiated against the authorities of the said departments which include Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The separate petitions were filed by the three aforementioned departments as well as the Intelligence Bureau, whose Joint Director General Tariq Mehmood has been summoned by the court on the next hearing of the case. At least four government departments filed separate applications with the IHC in the audio leaks case to request that the matter be placed before the same bench of the court that has already decided a similar issue. The applicants said that the petitions of Bushra Bibi, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan's wife, and former chief justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar's son Najamul Saqib should also be placed before the bench that had decided an identical matter in 2021, requesting recusal of Justice Babar Sattar to avoid any differing decision. Justice Sattar had been hearing the aforementioned petitions after the matter surfaced in 2023. In the case being heard by Justice Sattar, the government departments argued in the pleas, that an identical matter was previously decided by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani in 2021. Therefore, they requested the judge's recusal in the case to avoid a conflicting decision as well as in the interest of justice.

PTI slams campaign against Justice Babar

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf vehemently condemned the malicious agenda-oriented campaign against the respectable Islamabad High Court (IHC) judge Justice Babar Sattar on social media, demanding the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) to take notice of the unabated incidents of direct and indirect harassment and intimidation of judges of high courts in order to fix responsibility against the perpetrators of this organized campaign. PTI Spokesperson said that the government was responsible for this insulting and malicious campaign against Justice Babar Sattar. He urged that the Chief Justice of Pakistan should protect the judges from threats and doxxing so as they could deliver decisions based on law and constitution without any fear.

The departments are seeking Justice Sattar's recusal after a letter by six IHC judges, which also includes him, was written to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), complaining about the interference of intelligence agencies in the court's decision. The judges, on March 25, demanded to convene the judicial convention to consider the matter of alleged interference of intelligence operatives in the judicial functions or "intimidation" of judges in a manner that undermined the independence of the judiciary.

Continued on Page 06

4 terrorists killed in Khyber Distt.

Terrorists' hideout was also busted during the operation

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in Khyber District, on reported presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists, as a result of which four terrorists were sent to hell including Terrorist Ring-leader Qari Wajid Qari Barzal and Terrorist Ring-leader Raziq. Terrorists' hideout was also busted during the operation and a large cache of weapons, ammunition and explosives was recovered. Locals of the area appreciated the operation. Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area as security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

Briefs

Italy committed to support Pak: envoy

Minister Cheema appreciated the longstanding bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Italy

SAIFAULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan, Marilina Armellini, during a call on meeting with Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahmad Khan Cheema Monday reaffirmed her country's unwavering commitment to support Pakistan in poverty reduction and rural development, technical and vocational training, cultural heritage and agriculture. According to press statement issued by Economic Affairs Division (EAD), she apprised the minister of the implementation progress of the ongoing development portfolio funded by the Italy, including special assistance package provided in the wake of the catastrophic 2022 floods.

Punjab govt in touch with farmers: Azma

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said on Monday that the Punjab government was in touch with the real representatives of farmers. In a statement issued here, she said that no representative of farmers or their organizations had been arrested across the province. She said, "The Punjab government is protecting the interests of farmers and will do the same in future as well." The minister said there were three to four organizations of farmers in the country, adding that some elements in the disguise of farmers just wanted to achieve their political interests. Azma said that there were some seasonal farmers, who had actually contested elections against the PML-N from opponent parties.

In explosive NA speech JUI-F chief backs PTI's political rights

Blasts the government, outcomes of the 2024 nationwide elections, parliamentarians, bureaucracy, and the establishment

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: In his first speech on the National Assembly's floor, Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman blasted the government, outcomes of the 2024 nationwide elections, parliamentarians, bureaucracy, and the establishment on Monday. "Neither bureaucracy nor establishment has a role in the creation of the country," Maulana Fazl said while delivering a speech on the assembly's floor today, adding that Pakistan was created through a democratic struggle and sacrifices but it stood nowhere in terms of political and economic stability. He criticised the ruling parties, saying: "Is this a parliament of representatives of the nation or a setup arranged by

Continued on Page 06

Sharifs distributing key posts within family'

The PTI leader censured the federal govt for dishing out posts instead of resolving the issues faced by the people

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Monday reacted strongly to Ishaq Dar's appointment as the deputy prime minister, saying

Continued on Page 06

Dar as Dy PM: Nawaz in, Shehbaz down, Establishment out?

ANALYSIS

ANSAR M BHATTI



IN a surprise move Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has been elevated as the Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan – a move that seeks to relieve Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of some of his administrative responsibilities or burden whatever we may call it. However, beyond mere delegation, Dar's elevation holds deeper implications. It is poised to reinforce Nawaz Sharif's influence over governmental affairs significantly. With Dar assuming the role of deputy prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, who is anticipated to assume the presidency of the party, gains a pivotal channel to advocate his vision and objectives. This move strategically situates him to garner the trust and backing of the party's supporters and stakeholders. Nawaz Sharif's intervention couldn't have come at a more critical juncture. The party was teetering on the brink of disarray, plagued by lackluster performance and internal discord, which threatened its very existence in the political arena. After this significant appointment, particularly the dynamics of civil-military relations may undergo a shift, seemingly unfavorable for the PML-N. Having been marginalized, Nawaz Sharif appeared determined to regain influence within the prime minister's domain. The underlying motive, it seems, was to rectify the perceived 'insult' inflicted upon him by his exclusion from the prime minister's office. By orchestrating the appointment of Ishaq

Dar as the deputy prime minister, he may have sought to settle certain scores. However, political analysts caution that the potential ramifications of this maneuver could be substantial. Ishaq Dar, a prominent figure within the PML-N, harbored aspirations to serve as the finance minister, a position of significant influence within the government. However, his ambitions were thwarted by opposition from international financial institutions, complicating his path to securing the portfolio. Additionally, strained relations with the Establishment further hindered his prospects, ultimately leading to his departure from the finance ministry. The subsequent appointment of Mohsin Naqvi as

The PML-N finds itself in a challenging position due to its close ties with the Establishment. The perception that the party ascended to power through these connections has dealt a significant blow to its credibility. The leadership, especially the Nawaz faction, is keen to shed this perceived "stigma" to prevent the party from facing extinction. The appointment of the deputy prime minister seems to be a step in this direction. Nevertheless, should the party aspire to rejuvenate its dwindling popularity, it must take decisive action. This entails fulfilling the pledges made to its electorate during the campaign period. Presently, the plight of the common citizenry persists, with challenges such as escalating electricity

indicating Saudi Arabia's indecision. Concerns loom regarding Pakistan's law and order and legal framework, posing potential barriers to attracting not only Saudi but other foreign investments as well. Saudi Arabia prioritizes a stable political environment where all stakeholders, including PTI, are aligned. This stance wasn't well-received by certain quarters, evidenced by PTI member Sher Afzal Marwat's allegations of Saudi interference in toppling the Imran Khan government. Marwat's statement aimed to sour Saudi-PTI relations but appears to have had limited impact. Marwat's actions suggest he may be trying to hedge his bets by playing both sides or perhaps

“To withstand the influence of the Establishment demands exceptional courage and remarkable efficiency from the PML-N administrations, both in Punjab and on the federal stage. Given the current context, this endeavor seems akin to a Herculean feat, suggesting that neither Nawaz's return to power nor the containment of the Establishment's influence will come easily”

Interior Minister brought further challenges for the PML-N, adding to the perception of instability within key ministerial positions. Given the pivotal role that both the finance and interior ministries play in governmental performance, Shehbaz Sharif's leadership was perceived as compromised due to his lack of control over these crucial portfolios. Recognizing the need to address this power imbalance, the appointment of Ishaq Dar was intended to restore equilibrium within the government. Moreover, under this arrangement, there was a potential for the finance and interior ministers to fall under the supervision of the deputy prime minister, further solidifying the government's operational structure.

and fuel costs at the forefront. Additionally, inflation looms as another formidable adversary, exacerbating the burdens faced by the populace. Addressing these pressing issues necessitates not only political stability but also economic stability; for without the former, the latter remains an elusive goal. The imminent IMF tranche is on the horizon, and Saudi investments could potentially bolster Pakistan's economic landscape. However, the specifics of Saudi interest remain ambiguous. While the government has proposed stakes in sectors like PIA and hospitality, clarity on Saudi preferences is lacking. Recent interactions with the Saudi foreign minister failed to elucidate their investment focus,

that is what most of PTI leaders think about him. The PML-N, under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, has long been characterized by its contentious relationship with the Establishment. So, it's hardly shocking that the party continues to follow this familiar trajectory. What's truly captivating, though, is how the conflict has reared its head sooner than expected. To withstand the influence of the Establishment demands exceptional courage and remarkable efficiency from the PML-N administrations, both in Punjab and on the federal stage. Given the current context, this endeavor seems akin to a Herculean feat, suggesting that neither Nawaz's return to power nor the containment of the Establishment's influence will come easily.

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



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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

AJK Prime Minister calls on President Zardari

Talking to the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the President said that AJK was blessed with immense potential for tourism and a beautiful landscape, which needed to be fully developed to attract tourists. He added that strengthening AJK's tourism sector would help in its socio-economic uplift as well as generate economic activities in the area

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Mr Anwar-ul-Haq, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The two discussed the overall situation of AJK, besides talking about issues related to the development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Talking to the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the President said that AJK was blessed with immense potential for tourism and a beautiful landscape, which needed to be fully developed to attract tourists. He added that strengthening AJK's tourism sector would help in its socio-economic uplift as well as generate economic activities in the area. He said that Pakistan would provide all possible support and assistance to facilitate investment in the diverse areas of AJK's economy, especially the tourism sector. The President remarked that the youth of AJK needed to be equipped with the latest skills and education to enable them to find gainful employment, besides contributing to AJK's development. He said that Pakistan could assist the



government of AJK in benefiting from the carbon credit markets. During the meeting, the President assured his support to the Prime Minister of AJK and his government. The Prime Minister requested the President to visit AJK and address the

AJK Legislative Assembly. The President also expressed grief over the loss of precious human lives during the recent rain-related incidents in different parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and hoped that the AJK government would help the affected families.

The President also reiterated Pakistan's commitment to continue to extend its moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of IIOJK till the attainment of their right to self-determination. While condemning the human rights violations and the atrocities

being committed by the Indian occupation forces in IIOJK, he called upon the international community to put pressure on India to end human rights violations being committed by its security forces and implement the UN Security Council resolutions.

Pakistan's healthcare excellence in limelight

DNA

ISLAMABAD - In the latest Brand Finance 2024 Global Top 250 Hospitals report, Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), Karachi, has been listed in the top 100 Academic Medical Centres (AMCs) worldwide. AKUH is the first and only hospital from Pakistan making it to the top 100 on this list. Meanwhile, four other hospitals from Pakistan, Mayo Hospital, Jinnah Hospital, Combined Military Hospital and University Dental Hospital have scored spots in the 101-250 rank list.

Three Indian hospitals are also in the top 100, while one is in the 101-250 list. According to Joint Commission International (JCI), the world's leading hospital accreditation body considered the gold standard in healthcare quality, an "Academic Medical Centre is a tertiary care hospital that is organizationally and administratively integrated with a medical school." It is important to note that the Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, is the only JCI-accredited academic medical centre in Pakistan. The Aga Khan University Hospital has an almost 40-

year tradition of serving the community of Karachi and wider Pakistan with the highest standards of care. AKUH has a strong tradition of quality. It was the first hospital in Pakistan to get ISO certified in 2000, the first to get JCI accreditation in 2006, the first to get JCI accreditation as an AMC in 2015 and the first to get CAP accreditation in 2017. This latest recognition underscores AKUH's commitment to exemplary patient care, teaching standards, ground-breaking research, and extensive community service initiatives, not only within Paki-

stan but also reaching beyond its borders. Renowned for its state-of-the-art infrastructure, cutting-edge equipment, and a team of highly skilled medical professionals, AKUH stands out as a beacon of innovation and excellence in Karachi's healthcare landscape. Brand Finance, the company behind these global rankings, is a chartered accountancy firm that was set up in England in 1996 with the goal to bring marketing and finance together. The quoted report is the second time Brand Finance has listed the Academic Medical Centres, globally.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of participants of Face Congress Pakistan 2024 with Dr Wolfgang REDKA SWOBODA, an aesthetic surgeon, at Convention Center in the Federal Capital. —ONLINE

COMSTECH linking Chinese institutions with OIC World

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary said that COMSTECH has started capacity building programs with Chinese institutions to link OIC world with the Peoples Republic of China. He was briefing Chinese media personnel here at the COMSTECH. Prof. Choudhary informed that the one of the root causes of lagging behind in S&T is absence of trained researchers and technical personnel's in various fields of science and technology with emphasis on health. To meet this challenge, the Hunan University of Chinese Medicine and OIC- COMSTECH have joined hands to offer technicians training on various medical and STEM fields for S&T capacity building. Prof. Choudhary informed that the first phase of this program has two components, technician training program, and Post-Doc study at the Hunan University. He further informed that COMSTECH is in the process of initiating similar programs with Ningbo University and Xinjiang Medical University. COMSTECH has already established a joint program with Huawei Technologies China in the field of cybersecurity. Program Manager COMSTECH, Ms. Khazima Muazim briefed the audience in detail on the COMSTECH - Hunan University of Chinese Medicine Joint S&T Cooperation. She said that the Hunan University of Chinese Medicine and OIC- COMSTECH have joined hands to offer technicians training on various medical and STEM fields for S&T capacity building. She informed that 13 scholars with diverse educational and professional background from Sudan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Cameroon, Egypt, Kazakhstan and Bangladesh have been selected under this program. She informed that special preference has been given to female candidates. She said that the training program is set to begin in May which encompasses training on NMR, MRI and training in Ethno medicine Innovation and traditional Chinese medicine. Technical visits will also be part of this training program, she said. —DNA

42 complainants get relief on orders of Pb ombudsman

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As many as 42 complainants got financial relief of Rs 9.3 million from different departments on orders of the ombudsman Punjab. According to a spokesman for the ombudsman Punjab office, 42 complainants who are performing their duties as sentry workers in the District Headquarters Hospital Jhelum and had been deprived of their salaries for the last five months, filed a complaint in the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab. Accordingly, Ombudsman Punjab Azam Suleman Khan issued orders to the director Project Unit, Department of Primary and Secondary Health Care, Lahore/Medical Superintendent, District Headquarters Hospital in view of immediate payment of salaries to the employees to resolve the issue on an urgent basis and report to the Office of the Punjab Ombudsman. According to the orders, 42 complainants whose cases were pending due to various reasons have been provided legal relief of more than 9.3 million rupees.—APP

BJP, its proxies peddling anti-Muslim narrative

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah criticized the Hindu fanatic organization and its proxies' saying that its organs are carrying an anti-Muslim narrative in the election campaign. According to Kashmir Media Service, the NC chief taunted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his speech in which he equated Muslims as infiltrators. Addressing a workers' convention organized by In Charge Constituency Chananpora Mushtaq Guroo. Dr Farooq said, "INDIA bloc will win all six Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. BJP has developed cold feet and has opted out of the race sensing an imminent drubbing at the hands of the National Conference. It is hiding behind its proxies but that won't work. Be it Lok Sabha elections or assembly polls, new records are being made due to your hard work. I am happy to see your enthusiasm but seeing your enthusiasm, other party leaders develop cold feet." He added, "BJP has not been able to win hearts in Kashmir, decisions made in 2019 have angered and alienated people in the valley. The party has not left the field open. Some parties are being helped behind the scenes by the BJP. People need to know who is playing this game here. It will be known who is conniving with whom and who is involved in conspiracies against J&K, weakening the voice here and helping BJP to succeed."

ICT admins oversees campaign activities

y monitoring the progress, addressing challenges, and ensuring efficient operations, ICT administration aimed at to make this anti-polio drive effective and comprehensive.

ISLAMABAD: All the Assistant Commissioners of the Federal Capital were actively engaging with polio teams to ensure the success of the a seven-day anti-polio drive which started on Monday in ICT. This proactive involvement aligned with the directives from Islamabad's Deputy Commissioner and the Additional Deputy Commissioner East, said the Spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory Administration, Dr Abdullah Tabassum here. In this regard, the Assistant Commissioners from across the city have visited different locations to oversee the polio teams' activities. At Jinnah Garden, Assistant Commissioner Saddar area, Ms Mehreen joined the morning assembly, where she discussed the day's goals and addressed issues concerning polio vaccinations. She emphasized meeting the targets, addressing "not available" (NA) cases, and handling refusals to ensure maximum coverage. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Nellore area, Uzir Ahmad participated in the morning briefing at I-8 area. During this session, he reviewed the first day's planning and addressed any complaints or concerns related to the polio campaign. Similarly, in the Industrial Area, Assistant Commissioner, Farwa Batool checked in on the polio teams at UCG-15, issuing additional guidance to enhance their operations. This focused approach aimed at streamline the vaccination process and solve any logistical issues. Furthermore, Assistant Commissioner, Shalimar area attended the morning assembly and provided feedback on reaching out to those unavailable for vaccination and managing refusals. Dr Abdullah said these efforts were part of a coordinated approach to ensure that the polio vaccination campaign runs smoothly and covers as much ground as possible. It is important to note that these visits were part of a broader initiative to maintain close supervision of the anti-polio campaign. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon said the polio campaign was a critical public health effort to eradicate the crippling disease, and the involvement of the Assistant Commissioners was a key factor in its success. By monitoring the progress, addressing challenges, and ensuring efficient operations, ICT administration aimed at to make this anti-polio drive effective and comprehensive.—DNA

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Briefs

NPO to
organize a
workshop

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) regional office in Faisalabad is going to organize a workshop on "Green Productivity for SMEs" on Thursday (May 02) to promote and enhance green productivity across the country. The workshop aimed at understanding the concept and importance of green productivity, identifying the areas where productivity practices can be applied, implementing initiatives effectively, and developing action plans for integrating green productivity into SME operations, said an NPO document shared here on Monday. The workshop provides information about green productivity, assessing environmental impact, green productivity strategies, initiatives, creating awareness, and financial impact. It also highlights regulatory compliance and standards, technology and innovation, building a culture of sustainability, and scaling up and continuous improvement.—APP

Strict action
against illegal
construction

RAWALPINDI: The Director General (DG), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Kinza Murtaza has directed the authorities concerned to take strict action in accordance with the law against illegal construction. According to an RDA spokesman, the DG while chairing a meeting instructed the MP&TE Directorate of RDA to make all-out efforts to provide relief to the citizens regarding the construction of residential and commercial buildings.

She said that strict action should be taken without any discrimination against illegal constructions, encroachments, and commercial activities in residential areas. He said the DG had directed the Estate Management Directorate of RDA to work hard to expedite the process of the property transfer cases. The spokesman said the DG had also given special tasks to the officers concerned to ease traffic flow on the city roads.—He commended the management of OPF for the successful launch of the new academic block at OPF Girls Higher Secondary School, Rawalpindi, underscoring the importance of such initiatives in fostering educational growth.

'China's
high-quality
development
impressive'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's high-quality development is highly impressive, said Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, chairman of Understanding China Forum and former foreign minister of Pakistan. "This is our second visit to China since 2019. We witnessed with our own eyes the latest achievements in China's high-quality development, especially its remarkable progress in ecological conservation," said Kasuri, according to Gwadar Pro. Pakistan is firmly committed to working with China to build an upgraded version of CPEC and looks forward to learning from China's experience in governance and development, as well as deepening bilateral cooperation in various fields. "Understanding China Forum is willing to continue to give full play to the role of think tanks in serving government decision-making and enhancing people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, so as to contribute to the development of Pakistan-China relations," said Kasuri. Kasuri made these remarks in Beijing while leading a delegation from the Understanding China Forum, a Pakistan-based think tank, during a visit to China. The visit was hosted by China Institute for Innovation and Development Strategy. During the delegation's visit to Beijing on April 22, Wang Yu, Vice President of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, met with the delegation. The two sides exchanged views on China-Pakistan relations, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and other issues of common interest.

People without eyesight
can also lead fulfilling lives

Al-Shifa's Light House rehabilitated 65,000 people in 15 years

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Al-Shifa Trust said on Monday that blind and visually impaired people can also become productive members of society and lead fruitful lives. Over the previous 15 years, Light House, an initiative of the Al-Shifa Trust, has assisted sixty-five thousand people in getting back on their feet, it said. Speaking to media men, the President of Al-Shifa Trust, Maj. Gen. (ret.) Rehmat Khan said we had established a Low Vision Rehabilitation Centre, Light House, Pakistan's first, in 2009. Since then, we have served people from all over Pakistan to become independent. Light House, a modern rehabilitation center, is dedicated to helping people of all ages and backgrounds overcome the challenges of low vision or blindness, which cannot be further treated with medicine or surgery, he said. He said the center had become a robust and efficient low-vision service provider as hundreds of patients with low vision and blindness get support from it to live unaided. Maj. Gen. (ret.) Rehmat Khan said that the unique facility has enabled people



with low vision and blindness to enjoy safe, independent, and productive lives. He said that twenty-five million people in Pakistan suffer from low vision and blindness, and for them, the only way forward is to get help from special devices and counseling. "We

are striving to provide the latest facilities for reading, writing, and telecommunication for people representing different age groups with low vision or no vision," he added. He said Light House has separate sections for people of different age groups, like the

senior and junior corners. The facilities in the senior corner include in-home needs assessments, vision examinations, and the introduction of safe, new ways to cook and take care of the home by providing special tools like custom-made utensils

and magnifying lamps. Besides, desktop electronic video magnifiers are available to help the visually impaired read the newspaper, manage their finances, lead productive lives through mainstream employment, and enjoy hobbies. The facilities in the Junior Corner include a Parent Centre, which helps parents understand their children's problems. Special electronic and TV magnifiers and simulators are available for pursuing studies. Moreover, special computer software is available that helps magnify everything on a computer screen and helps youngsters learn and play. He said we also have an entertainment corner with unique gadgets for children and a rehabilitation corner where various educational, social, recreational, and job training experiences are offered to help youngsters confidently enter the practical world. People with difficulty reading, recognizing familiar faces and objects, seeing potential obstacles such as steps, walls, and furniture, problems performing routine tasks like cleaning, cooking, and eating, and those having issues with reading regular fonts can benefit from the services of the Light House.

Country's economy needs
Investment, says Atif Ikram

Time is needed to invest instead of borrowing, for which the Prime Minister can attract foreign investors in the sideline meetings of the World Economic Forum. The President of the Federation, Atif Ikram, emphasized the role of the private sector in improving the bilateral business environment and said that Pakistan is the best market for Saudi investors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries Atif Ikram Sheik said that the visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan is important in terms of investment in Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's trade agreements with Saudi Arabia will increase international confidence. Time is needed to invest instead of borrowing, for which the Prime Minister can attract foreign investors in the sideline meetings of the World Economic Forum. The President of the Federation, Atif Ikram, emphasized the role of the private sector in improving the bilateral business environment and said that Pakistan is the best market



for Saudi investors. The private sector is very im-

portant for increasing the volume of bilateral trade, there are investment opportunities in the mineral and tourism sector, keeping in mind that investment agreements can be made on G to G basis with the governments of Arab countries. President FPCCI Atif Ikram further said that the improvement in the stock market has restored the confidence of investors. Investors from Arab countries are trying to invest in Pakistan. Commercial investment and trade exchanges between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are the most important transactions. More investorfriendly policies are needed to strengthen the country's economy.

Overseas employment
for Pakistanis abroad

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) has given the task to the Community Welfare Attaches (CWAs) stationed abroad to strategically enhance job opportunities for Pakistanis in the international market. An official source told APP here on Monday that currently, there were 21 CWAs posted abroad by the Government of Pakistan. The main aim of this task was to evaluate and improve the progress of CWAs in identifying and exploring targeted demand for employment prospects for Pakistani nationals through engagements with foreign employers. This involved the formulation, signing, and execution of Letters of Intent (LOIs) and agreements with foreign companies, critical in amplifying the export of Pakistani manpower. It has emphasized the crucial need for close collaboration between CWAs and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, particularly in sharing information related to employment demands abroad and the necessary skills required for those jobs. This step will facilitate the design of training programs specifically tailored to the skills demanded by foreign companies, ensuring that Pakistani workers are well-equipped and aligned with global standards. While underscoring the significance of this initiative, highlighted its dual impact, not only in enhancing employment opportunities for Pakistanis abroad but also in contributing to the economic growth of the nation. Furthermore, he stressed the essential role of CWAs in catering to the needs and resolving issues faced by overseas Pakistanis during their stay abroad. This comprehensive approach is designed to ensure the well-being and seamless integration of Pakistani expatriates in their respective host countries. The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development reiterates its commitment to spearheading initiatives that fortify global employment prospects for Pakistanis. This strategic meeting signifies a significant stride towards realizing this vision and underscores the Ministry's dedication to the welfare and prosperity of overseas Pakistanis.—APP

Nawaz Sharif becoming party
President a refreshing change

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Monday that Mian Nawaz Sharif is set to resume the presidency of PML-N after a seven-year gap. He said this shift will be a significant development and a welcome change in the country's politics. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the business community anticipates that political and economic conditions will improve rapidly under the

guidance of Nawaz Sharif. At the same time, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar will work hard to promote economic diplomacy. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the false cases against Nawaz Sharif have met their fate and that his presidency will give the party more public recognition and a new lease of life. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the position of the PML-N on various vital issues will become more apparent, positively impacting the country's politics. Along with this, the country's economic affairs will improve rapidly, and cooperation with friendly countries, especially Saudi Ara-

bia and China, will increase. Mian Zahid Hussain said there currently needs to be more consensus on various issues in the PML-N, which will be a test for the leadership of Mian Nawaz Sharif. He noted that currently, the economy is suffering, inflation is rising, electricity, gas, and oil prices have increased poverty, public unrest is skyrocketing, and politics is going through a period of uncertainty. In these circumstances, Mian Nawaz Sharif is responsible for playing an active role in getting the country out of these problems. He must also balance the relationship with other political parties and improve the civil-military relationship. Mian

Zahid Hussain also stated that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif had appointed Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar as Deputy Prime Minister, which is welcome. He will be the second politician after Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi to become Deputy Prime Minister. Ishaq Dar is considered very close to Nawaz Sharif, and his competence in economic matters is respected. The business community is optimistic that, as Deputy Prime Minister, he will strengthen economic diplomacy, which will help manage the country's economy. The business community is confident that his abilities will be fully utilised in economic matters.

OPF to establish
new female
academic block

He commended the management of OPF for the successful launch of the new academic block at OPF Girls Higher Secondary School, Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD: The Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) an attached department of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development would establish OPF Higher Secondary Girls School Academic Block the government's unwavering commitment to providing quality education to the children of overseas Pakistanis. An official source told APP that the construction of a new Academic Block at OPF Girls Higher Secondary School, Rawalpindi reflects the government's dedication to meet the educational needs of both the overseas community and the general public. At present, 710 students including 279 children of Overseas Pakistanis are enrolled in the said school. New Academic Block will be constructed on an area of 21057 Sq. Ft to accommodate around 300 more students. The proposed construction work of the new academic block will be completed with an estimated cost of Rs.99.93 million. The new academic block includes classrooms, daycare, a conference room, an art studio, a medical room, and a cafeteria. Highlighting the alignment with the Prime Minister's vision, he underscored the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development's relentless efforts to extend maximum facilities and assistance to Pakistani expatriates, not only domestically but globally. Recognizing the invaluable contributions of overseas Pakistanis to the national economy, he affirmed the government's commitment to exploring all avenues to facilitate them comprehensively. He expressed optimism regarding the pivotal role overseas Pakistanis can play in national development, leveraging their knowledge, expertise, and global exposure for the betterment of the country. He commended the management of OPF for the successful launch of the new academic block at OPF Girls Higher Secondary School, Rawalpindi, underscoring the importance of such initiatives in fostering educational growth.—DNA

IRSA releases
170,200
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 170,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 258,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbella Dam was 1454.91 feet and was 40.91 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 48,800 cusecs and 5,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1148.35 feet, which was 98.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 69,400 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 82,900.—APP

Urdu fiction
writer A
Hameed
remembered

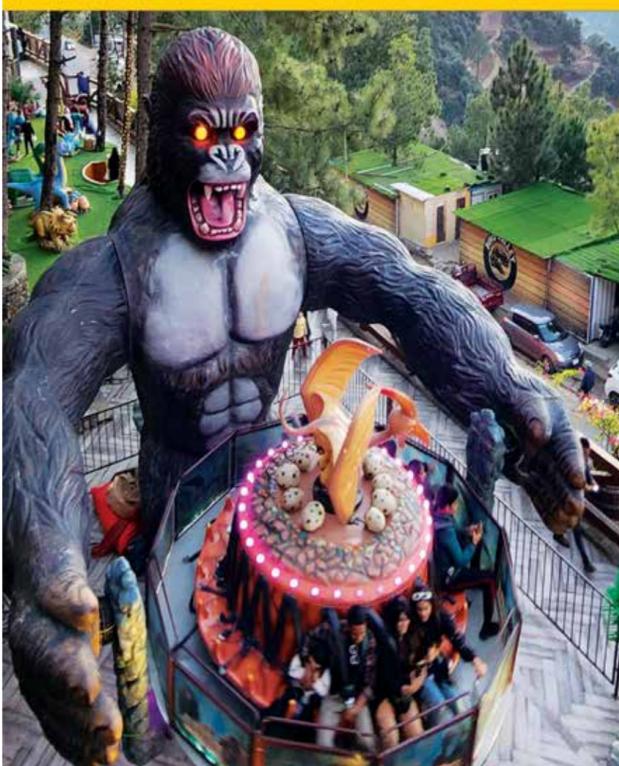
ISLAMABAD: The 13th death anniversary of the legendary Urdu fiction writer and creator of the famous children's TV drama "Ainak Wala Jin", Abdul Hameed known as A Hameed, was observed on Monday. Born in Amritsar in 1928 he passed his secondary education in Amritsar. After partition, he migrated to Pakistan and passed intermediate, and joined Radio Pakistan as an assistant script editor. After working some years for Radio Pakistan he joined Voice of America. His first collection of short stories received popular acclaim and made him a recognized romantic short story writer. Apart from writing short stories and novels, he wrote columns for national newspapers. He also wrote for radio and television. A. Hameed has more than 200 novels on his credit. His books "Lahore Lahore Aye", "Ehram-e-Misr Se Farar" and "Mirza Ghalib Lahore Main" are amongst his most popular works. His drama "Ainak Wala Jin" was popular with children in the 1990s. Moreover his fantasy series of 100 novels for children known as AMBAR NAAG MARIA Series was a real fame for him. Hameed died on April 29, 2011, at the age of 83.—APP

CDNS attains
Rs 1375
billion targets
in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 1375 billion in fresh bonds and achieved 80 percent of annual target in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to April 25. The National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1742 billion for the year 2023-24, in which it is encouraging that 80 percent of the target has been achieved, and it is hoped that National Savings will surpass its annual target this FY 2023-24, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Monday. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. "The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said. Given the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added.—APP



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US should be part of solution to Gaza conflict

Representatives of the Palestinian Fatah movement and the Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas, met in Beijing to discuss ending the internal divisions in Palestine. This latest development, although not confirmed by Beijing, not only contributes to forging Palestinian unity but also is conducive to defusing the ongoing crisis in the Middle East. Ahead of the meeting in an interview with the media on Thursday, Khalil Al-Hayya, a leading member of Hamas' political bureau, said the movement was ready to disarm and transition into a political party that is part of a unified Palestinian government on condition that an independent Palestinian state is established along the pre-1967 borders in accordance with the international resolutions. China has taken a low-key approach to the meeting, with the Foreign Ministry simply saying that the country consistently supports internal reconciliation among the different Palestinian factions through dialogue and firmly backs strengthening the internal unity in Palestine. The meeting is a clear indication that China is making every effort to resolve the crisis in Gaza. By seeking to facilitate reconciliation between the two Palestinian factions, China hopes the political forces of Palestine can show greater solidarity in promoting a political solution to the conflict that upholds the legitimate rights and political status of Palestine with the support of the international community. With the Gaza conflict still ongoing, China is maintaining close communication with all relevant parties, actively participating in United Nations Security Council consultations, and pushing for efforts to de-escalate the situation and promote peace talks. Last month, Chinese diplomat Wang Kejian visited Egypt, Palestine, Israel and Qatar, which also included a meeting with the head of Hamas' political bureau, Ismail Haniyeh, during his visit to Qatar. The latest development in Beijing was only made possible thanks to a series of such diplomatic mediation efforts. What China has done so far in its efforts to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict, which includes promoting Palestinian unity, upholding justice at the United Nations Security Council and calling for an immediate cease-fire, stands in stark contrast to those who have constantly fanned the flames of the conflict. US President Joe Biden on Wednesday signed into law legislation that includes \$26 billion in assistance for Israel, the majority of which is earmarked for military spending. Turning a deaf ear to domestic and international calls for it to press Israel to stop the brutal killing of Palestinian civilians, the Biden administration has continued to get blood on its hands by supplying arms to Israel and repeatedly blocking the UNSC's efforts to call for a cease-fire. Earlier this month, it vetoed a UNSC draft resolution to grant full UN membership to the State of Palestine despite its alleged support of the two-state solution. To date, more than 34,200 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since Israel launched its military offensive against Hamas. The conflict has not only caused a humanitarian catastrophe but also spilled over to other parts of the region, dragging more parties into the fray. At present, apart from losing the moral high ground because of its callous support of Israel's relentless military offensive in Gaza the US itself is feeling a strong backlash from what it has sowed in the Middle East: Many university campuses in the US are convulsed in chaos as students stage pro-Palestine protests.

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Musk visit reveals Washington's 'overcapacity' claim malignancy

Coming hard on the heels of the rather gloomy visit by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, whose agenda for his trip seemed to be to hype up the US administration's latest stay-away smear that China is dumping green products in overseas markets, Tesla CEO Elon Musk's unannounced visit to Beijing had a much brighter atmosphere and sent a more positive message. For Beijing, which is under tremendous pressure due to the United States-led Western push for economic decoupling and attacks on its leading industrial sectors, of which the exporting of alleged "overcapacity" is the latest manifestation, Musk's visit was a testament to its continuous commitment to openness. Sustaining a mutually beneficial partnership with one of the US' leading technology leaders and EV manufacturers serves as a telling rebuttal of the US' allegation that China is trying to squeeze the space for the green products of other countries, both at home and overseas. Meeting with Musk on Sunday, Premier Li Qiang called Tesla's China venture "a successful example of China-US economic and trade cooperation". It is clear that in his talk with the Tesla CEO the Chinese premier was extending a welcome to all foreign companies and making a clear rebuttal to the US' "overcapacity" charge. Coinciding with Musk's arrival was the news that all the models produced at Tesla's Shanghai factory have met Chinese data security requirements. Since the Chinese authorities had concerns about the US company's data collection, Tesla vehicles have faced various restrictions in China. With all such restrictions expected to be removed, the appeal of Tesla products to Chinese consumers will certainly get a boost. It will also enable the country to accelerate the perfecting of the company's Full Self-Driving software, which will further boost the appeal of its products. But Beijing is not bestowing special favors on Tesla. It does not want the US EV-maker to be a lone example. It wants Tesla to be followed by more companies from outside the country. Every new energy vehicle in China, every renewable energy project built by Chinese enterprises, and every Sino-foreign cooperation in the field of climate change, are examples of China's new energy industry providing the world with the high-quality green production capacity that is imperative to realize the global climate goals. China's green production capacity is high-quality production capacity that promotes green development. The US is distorting facts and accusing China of "excess production capacity" in order to justify its protectionist policies and undermine efforts to repair Sino-US relations.

Everything is anticlockwise in Pakistan

Qamar Bashir



Major decisions that heavily impact the country are often made behind closed doors, based on hearsay, opinions, desires and vested interests rather than deep research and thorough analysis. Factors such as considering all pros and cons, anticipating all possible outcomes, identifying stakeholders, and assessing the policy's impact on them are often overlooked. Additionally, there is a lack of measuring benefits versus losses. In a more ideal scenario, policies would be tested on a smaller target population

Ironically, everything in Pakistan seems to be upside down and anticlockwise. The country often experiences the opposite of what is typically needed for sustained and rapid progress and development. Major decisions that heavily impact the country are often made behind closed doors, based on hearsay, opinions, desires and vested interests rather than deep research and thorough analysis. Factors such as considering all pros and cons, anticipating all possible outcomes, identifying stakeholders, and assessing the policy's impact on them are often overlooked. Additionally, there is a lack of measuring benefits versus losses. In a more ideal scenario, policies would be tested on a smaller target population to evaluate outcomes before being implemented nationwide. In our case, knee-jerk reactions often lead to policies being arbitrarily imposed on the nation without thorough consideration of their implications. Only after these policies fail to produce the desired results do authorities conduct studies to identify their faults, a process that should ideally precede policy implementation. For instance, the government imposed a policy of telemetry to encourage businesses and households to adopt solar energy. This policy aimed to help produce cost-effective electricity, reduce the burden on the country's fragile distribution system, decrease the import bill of LNG, Furnace Oil, and diesel, fill the demand-supply gap, avoid and reduce load shedding, and add excess energy to the national grid. Initially, the policy faced challenges in gaining traction. However, following multiple increases in electricity charges, which became so exorbitant that even upper-middle-class households earning up to Rs 300,000 per month struggled to make payments without sacrificing essential necessities such as children's education, decent clothing, nutritious food, and rent payments if they did not own their accommodation. Telemetry emerged as the most viable solution to address the hefty electricity charges. As demand for telemetry increased, a robust supply chain developed to cater to this growing demand, creating many job opportunities all along the supply chain. Households with some savings left, invested in telemetry and began benefiting from reduced electricity bills, while contributing cost-effective and clean energy to the national grid, saving millions in the process to the government. All of a sudden, the government decided to reverse this policy, citing illogical, irrational, and outrageous reasons, which even in their hearts they knew had no basis and would hurt people and the country immensely. The first reason given was that

the government is supposedly subsidizing affluent households by paying them Rs. 19, and in some cases Rs. 22, for each unit of electricity transferred to the national grid. However, this claim is inaccurate. In reality, it is the households that are subsidizing the government. The government sells electricity to consumers at the rate of Rs. 65 per unit, while it purchases the electricity from households at Rs. 19, which is 3.4 times less than the selling price. If the government decides to punish people for generating clean and environmentally friendly energy by either reducing the purchase price or reversing the policy altogether, households may install batteries to store the energy instead of transferring it to the national grid which would deprive the national grid from cost effective and clean source of energy. Furthermore, the government is unfairly charging affluent households for converting to solar systems, portraying them as if they are committing a heinous crime and making them feel guilty for increasing the burden of electricity charges on the poor segment of society. In reality, the failure of the government to pay back hefty electricity charges to the Independent Power Producers is a major factor contributing to the ballooning electricity circular debt, and the telemetry policy has nothing to do with it. The government is also unfairly charging affluent households as if they are violating the telemetry policy for converting too fast on solar energy, without realizing that it was the duty and responsibility of the policy makers and the planners to determine the speed of conversion on solar system through automatic check and control system, notwithstanding the fact that the government should encourage fast conversion of households to clean energy instead of terming them some kind of criminals instead of rewarding them for fast conversion of the country to the clean electricity system. The government is adamant about shifting the burden of their incompetencies to affluent households without realizing that responsible governments worldwide are encouraging and providing meaningful incentives for households to convert to clean energy sources. In their eagerness to punish households for the success of their own policy, they overlook many examples of countries where telemetry is encouraged due to its overwhelming benefits. Successful implementations can be seen in countries like Germany, Australia, and the United States, where households are encouraged to adopt solar energy systems due to numerous benefits. Firstly, at the household level, such systems can significantly reduce electricity bills, providing long-term savings. They offer energy independence, particularly in

Pakistan with unreliable grid power, and can serve as a backup power source during outages. Additionally, excess energy generated can be sold back to the grid, further offsetting costs and potentially providing an additional income stream. On a national or country level, promoting solar energy reduces reliance on fossil fuels, which enhances energy security and reduces the risk of price fluctuations in fossil fuel markets. Diversifying the energy mix with renewables like solar also helps to mitigate climate change by reducing carbon emissions. This shift toward cleaner energy sources can lead to improvements in air quality and public health while contributing to biodiversity conservation by reducing habitat destruction and pollution associated with fossil fuel extraction and use. Governments worldwide have introduced various incentives to promote solar energy adoption. For instance, Germany's feed-in tariff scheme guaranteed fixed payment rates for renewable energy producers, including households with solar panels, leading to a rapid increase in installations. In the United States, federal and state-level tax credits, rebates, and other incentives help reduce upfront costs for households and businesses. These incentives not only benefit individual households but also society as a whole by reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, and creating jobs in the renewable energy sector. Foregoing in view, instead of blaming affluent households for a crime they never committed, the government should devise a plan to subsidize the poor segments of the society to convert their households to solar systems. The government should also consider phasing out Independent Power Producers (IPPs) that were created due to incompetence, lack of relevant knowledge and foresight by government policy makers, planners, and implementers. A third viable option is to reduce electricity prices, which would automatically discourage further conversion to solar systems, though this is highly inadvisable. Furthermore, the government should, in all fairness, bring to justice all those who were responsible for the installation of IPPs, grid losses, electricity theft, making faulty and short-sighted policy decisions, and those who received massive kickbacks in the process. They should desist from victim-blaming, which in this instance is not the government but the people of Pakistan.

—The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd) Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

US should capitalize on Hamas' offer to disarm

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

The main hurdle in ending the war is the Israeli position. Israel has still not changed its position. It still refuses to abide by UN resolutions and allow for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Hence its refusal of any settlement that includes a Palestinian state. The US should take advantage of the overture by Hamas to end the war. Hamas is highly damaged, according to Israel. It says 20 brigades are dysfunctional and only four remain operational. They are in Rafah. So, Israel can somehow claim victory, save face and announce it

A high-ranking Hamas official last week announced that the group would dissolve its military wing and turn into a political party if Israel accepted a Palestinian state along the pre-1967 borders. Khalil Al-Hayya shocked the world with this statement, which comes as Israel is readying to invade Rafah. Israel is not taking this unexpected overture by Hamas seriously and is instead adamant about its move on Rafah. It is time for the US to put pressure on Israel to stop the war and start political negotiations. There are three stages to ending the war. The first is to end military operations, the second is to have a change in the Israeli position and the third is to enter into political negotiations and devise a plan for the day after. The main hurdle in ending the war is the Israeli position. Israel has still not changed its position. It still refuses to abide by UN resolutions and allow for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Hence its refusal of any settlement that includes a Palestinian state. The US should take advantage of the overture by Hamas to end the war. Hamas is highly damaged, according to Israel. It says 20 brigades are dysfunctional and only four remain operational. They are in Rafah. So, Israel can somehow claim victory, save face and announce it has achieved its objective of incapacitating Hamas. However, Israel should recognize that it cannot totally eliminate Hamas. On the other hand, Israel itself was successful in turning armed factions into political parties. And the Palestine Liberation Organization ended its armed resistance once it was offered a political alternative. The same can be done with Hamas. But Israel insists on going into Rafah. This will greatly increase the number of Palestinian civilian casualties, as many displaced Gazans are concentrated in Rafah. Tel Aviv is adamant about decapitating the Hamas leadership. However, the Israeli hostages' lives are at stake. What if Hamas killed the hostages? Would that not be a failure, given that one of the

declared objectives of the military campaign was to free the hostages? The problem in the American position is that, despite its occasional criticism of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government, Washington is still unconditionally supporting Israel and supplying it with weapons and money. On top of the staggering human toll, the war has created internal divisions in American society. The authorities are cracking down on peaceful protesters in universities. This is happening when the country is just a few months away from the November presidential election. If the war continues, it might very much turn into a regional war, especially if, after Rafah, Israel heads to Lebanon. A regional war would have major repercussions on the US. As Gen. David Petraeus, who led the American troop surge in Iraq, once said, what happens in the Middle East does not stay in the Middle East. The US should explain to the Israeli public that Netanyahu's maximalist objectives will have a boomerang effect. It is in America's interest to grab the opportunity and push Israel to change its position in order to move to a political settlement. Here, President Joe Biden can address the Israeli people by tackling the issue of the hostages. The question that he should ask the Israeli public is: What takes priority, revenge against Hamas or saving the hostages and bringing them home? Experience has shown that insurgencies cannot be totally eliminated. They reconstitute themselves whenever the grievances that led to their creation are not properly addressed. The US should take the Hamas proposal and present it to the Israeli public as an opportunity to save the hostages and secure Israel. The US can convince the Israeli public by proposing a comprehensive peacekeeping mission that will make sure the country will not be the target of any operation coming out of Gaza. This is an opportunity the US should not squander. In fact, ending the war, dismantling Hamas' military wing and start-

ing a political process could be a huge win for the Biden administration. It would be a major foreign policy achievement that boosts Biden in the polls. On the other hand, if the Rafah operation were to be conducted, the opposite would likely happen. Thousands of Palestinian civilians would die, hostages would probably be executed, the war could expand and chaos would spread across the region. If Israel does not stop at Rafah, it will probably continue by attacking Lebanon and attacking Iran. This would be highly destabilizing. It would also be a killer for the Biden administration in the upcoming elections. It is time for the US to tell Israel to stop. Biden needs to bypass Netanyahu and engage with the Israeli public. Netanyahu has been a burden for the US. He is responsible for the intelligence and security failures of Oct. 7. The US should make that clear to the Israeli public. The US should also explain to them that the Netanyahu government's maximalist objectives will have a boomerang effect. They will not result in a secure Israel and will only lead to the demise of the hostages. Biden should explain to them that this might lead to a regional war, which Israel will probably lose. The US should capitalize on the opportunity presented by the willingness of Hamas to dissolve its military wing and embrace a political solution. Wartime presents few windows to make peace. This is one of them and it should not be squandered. It is time to apply pressure on Israel and dissuade it from going into Rafah. Most importantly, Israel should be pressured to change its position regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state along the pre-1967 borders.

—Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib is a specialist in US-Arab relations with a focus on lobbying. She is co-founder of the Research Center for Cooperation and Peace Building, a Lebanese nongovernmental organization focused on Track II Arab News

Briefs

World peace linked to peace in...

FROM PAGE 01
the kingdom, he thanked the Saudi government for its support extended to Pakistan. Talking about his government's efforts to steer the country out of crisis, the country's chief executive said: "Pakistan is going for massive reforms to deal with economic challenges." "We have taken the reins of the country after the February 8 elections and I am now determined to put things in order. It's easier said than done." He further said that the country's electricity sector was in a shambles as power theft was in a massive fashion. Moreover, the premier lamented that the "elitist culture" is prevailing in the country wherein "handouts are being given to those who don't deserve it". "We have to stand on our own feet. I know this is difficult but not impossible. We are now going for a deep-rooted structural reform." "Then we have to go for austerity, a meaningful austerity, but not just for publicity," he added. Moving on to climate change, the premier said that global warming brought disaster in Pakistan in 2022 in the form of catastrophic floods. "Pakistan is among those countries who do not have any role in climate change," he added. Referring to sky-rocketing inflation, the prime minister said: "Due to the war in Ukraine, prices of goods have increased globally. Stressing the need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the PM said that world peace is linked with normalcy in the besieged enclave.

PM Shehbaz, Malaysian PM discuss bilateral ties

FROM PAGE 01
Malaysia, especially in the field of education, science and technology and trade and undertook to further enhance the cooperation in the future. The Prime Minister invited a trade and business delegation from Malaysia to Pakistan to discuss enhancing trade and investment relations between the two countries. The two sides also agreed to have the next meeting of Joint Ministerial Commission in Islamabad soon. The Prime Minister reiterated his invitation to Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to undertake an official visit to Pakistan later this year.

JUI-F chief backs PTI's political rights

FROM PAGE 01
the establishment?" "How our conscience is satisfied [after the general elections], as the losers are upset, and even the winners are not satisfied [with the poll results]." During his speech, the politician-cum-cleric backed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Asad Qaiser's demand for granting the right to the latter's party to organise public gatherings, terming it the Imran-founded party's "constitutional right". The PTI lawmakers in the National Assembly thumped their desks in support of Maulana Fazl's remarks. He went on to say that democracy in the country was weakened after politicians "compromised" on their principles on every occasion and now, the parliament has lost its supremacy as they cannot even pass a law independently. Fazl also said that back-to-back "full and partial" martial laws have also shaken the democratic foundations of the country by ousting elected governments. He pointed out that the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was a witness to how a law related to an agreement between the federal government and seminaries had not been passed despite being tabled in the assembly with consensus.

Gillespie wants Pakistan Test side to play "their way"

Jason Gillespie said that he would not impose Australia's style of play and instead wants the players to play the style of cricket that suits them

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The newly-appointed head coach of the Pakistan Men's Test team, Jason Gillespie, said Monday that he would not impose Australia's style of play and instead wants the players to play the style of cricket that suits them. Gillespie appeared in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) podcast and talked about various aspects, linked to his appointment as the Pakistan Test coach. Jason Gillespie was asked whether he would transfer Australia's aggressive style of playing cricket to the Pakistan side, said his philosophy is different; that is not to try something you are not. "Look, I simply want the Pakistan cricket team to play the



style of cricket that's going to suit them; for me, that's important. My philosophy is - don't try to be something that you're not," said Gillespie. "You've got to be authentic in how you go about it. I will go out there and say: just be positive, aggressive, entertaining. Play with a smile on your faces and entertain our fans. "There are going to be times when you have to grind it out, and that's what Test cricket is. It's a test of your skills, mental capacity, and patience. There are times to attack and times to soak up some periods of cricket from the opposition. "If we can be as consistent as we can, then hopefully, the scoreboard will look after itself, and we can pick up some wins." For the unversed, Jason Gillespie's first assignment as the Pakistan Test team's head

coach will be the home series against Bangladesh in August, followed by the England series in October and an away series against South Africa in December. Pakistan currently sit fifth in the World Test Championship (WTC) standings and need to make hard yards to make it to the final. "Obviously, the ICC World Test Championship 2023-2025 for Pakistan is going to be a challenge; there's no question about that. But, we'll just take each series as it comes. "The first opportunity that I'll be involved in will be against Bangladesh at home, and I am looking forward to it. We'll just take each series and each Test match as it comes. "Look, Test cricket is a challenge, there's no doubt about that. But if you prepare well, put your best foot forward, then we'll give ourselves the best chance to have some success."

Sharifs distributing key posts within family

FROM PAGE 01
"Sharifs are distributing key national posts within family". "The Sharif family is distributing important national posts among themselves," Special Assistant to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister For Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said. Stressing that the Constitution does not provision the post of deputy PM, the PTI leader censured the federal government for dishing out posts instead of resolving the issues faced by the people. Barrister Saif's remarks come a day after the federal government, via a notification issued by the Cabinet Division on Sunday, appointed Dar as the deputy PM with immediate effect. Dar was appointed as the country's foreign minister after the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) formed a coalition government following the February 8 elections. A chartered accountant and a seasoned politician, Dar is also a close relative of, and close aide to, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif. He has earlier served as finance minister from 1998 to 1999, then from March to May 2008, and again led the finance ministry from 2013 to 2017 and then from 2022 to 2023. The appointment of a four-time finance minister as foreign minister suggested a ramped-up role for economics in the nation's diplomacy as the country tries to secure another International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal and shore up external financing. Before Dar's appointment, then Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader Pervez Elahi remained the only national politician who was appointed the country's first deputy prime minister in 2012, after the ruling Pakistan People's Party and the PML-Q forged a political alliance at the Centre. Reacting to Dar's appointment, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (Pildat) President Ahmed Bilal Mehboob termed the PM Shehbaz Sharif-led government's move "an extra-constitutional step that carries no substantial value".

Justice Sattar declines to recuse from the bench

FROM PAGE 01
Justice Sattar told Dogal that the purpose of filing miscellaneous pleas to transfer the case to another court is to embarrass the judicial proceedings. "If the executive threatens the judges and judges starts contempt of court proceedings against them, how is it a conflict of interest?" he asked, adding whether the judge will conduct contempt of court proceedings for personal gain. Justice Sattar questioned if the court should ignore all the cases related to IB and FIA in that case. "If your argument is accepted, then no case should be heard against the government," he remarked. Later during the hearing, the veteran lawyer and judicial assistant Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan said he is happy that the judiciary had decided to take a stand saying "enough is enough". He also insisted that the judiciary should have taken a stand even during the delay in elections. "There is still time for us to stand up and put our house in order. I believe in the supremacy of Parliament and the supremacy of the Constitution," he said. When, during the hearing, the senior lawyer referred to the case against the trial of civilians in military courts in the Supreme Court, the court barred him from doing so. Ahsan also mentioned the audios of Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz and Asif Zardari surfacing in the past. "This is a matter of public interest and FIA should take action on its own," the lawyer said. According to the Benazir Bhutto case, Justice Sattar remarked that spying on anyone is "illegal". The judge further questioned: "Can this court just give a declaration and the federation continues to violate it? What will happen if a plea comes tomorrow and the federation says we haven't done it?" The court then sought assistance on the aforementioned point at next hearing, stating that the hearing's next date will be mentioned in written order.

Ashab wins Rochester Proam Squash in USA

Ashhab Irfan is the second Pakistani player to win the Babar PSA title from Pakistan

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan emerging squash player Muhammad Ashab Irfan makes the country proud by winning the US 9000\$ Rochester Proam Squash Tournament by beating Gomez Dominguez of Mexico by 3-1 in the final held in Huston squash club, USA. After months of hard work and dedication with special support from Houston Squash Club Ashab Iran won his first PSA title as his achievement is even more notable as he is



only the second Pakistani player to win a PSA title outside of Pakistan in recent years, cementing his position as a rising star in the sport. The second seed and world

number 112 from Pakistan looked very energetic and aggressive during the final match of the tournament, Ashab squared off against Gomez Dominguez in a thrilling encounter as young Ashab emerged triumphant with a 3-1 victory, securing the title with set scores of 12-10, 11-4, 9-11, and 11-9 during 60 minutes decisive game. As the stakes heightened in the semi-final, Ashab Irfan faced a formidable opponent in Ronald Palmino of Columbia. Despite dropping two sets, Ashab

displayed resilience and determination, ultimately prevailing with a hard-fought 3-2 victory. The set scores reflected the intensity of the match, with Irfan claiming victory with scores of 9-11, 11-9, 11-2, 4-11, and 11-4. Jahanzeb Khan, owner of Houston Squash Club said that Ashhab Irfan is the second Pakistani player who win the PSA title in abroad is being supported in Houston Squash Club and we are very happy that the young squash players who are making Pakistan name bright in the world.

Proud moment to lead Yorkshire at Lord's: Shan

LONDON: Pakistan Test team captain Shan Masood says leading Yorkshire County Cricket Club at the historic Lord's in the ongoing County Championship is an extremely proud moment for him. The southpaw, who's leading Yorkshire again this year in the county championship division two, spoke to media person at the Home of Cricket during the game with Middlesex CCC. "It's a privilege enough to play at this historic cricket ground let alone captaining a team at this level. In a player's cricketing career, there are some checklists like playing and scoring at famous venues. I played my first ever county championship game here too while playing for Derbyshire CCC in 2022 when I scored 91 and 62 runs to save the match". "I still remember when the first time I played here for Pakistan was during the famous 2016 test match against England, which became famous of then team captain Misbah-ul-Haq's press ups celebrations after scoring a century and subsequently the team's post-victory salute and press-ups in front of the pavilion". Although his first outing for Yorkshire this season was a total failure as he got out without scoring after just six deliveries against Leicestershire CCC but made a strong comeback in the next game against Gloucestershire CCC. In the first innings of the match, Shan scored a magnificent century, match-saving innings of 140 runs of 180 deliveries after players like Joe Root.—APP

HDF calls for bold action on tobacco taxation in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The Human Development Foundation (HDF) convened a media briefing today to address the critical issue of tobacco taxation in Pakistan. Mr. Malik Imran Ahmad, Tobacco Control Activist, presented a compelling analysis of the current national-level tobacco control policies and emphasized the need for significant improvement. Tobacco use is a leading cause of preventable death in Pakistan. The economic burden is equally significant, with smoking-related illnesses and deaths costing Pakistan 1.4% of its GDP each year. Mr. Malik highlighted the staggering economic toll of tobacco consumption. Referring to a World Bank report, he said that there was ample room to increase tax on tobacco products. "The government can generate additional Rs. 65 billion from the industry by increasing the tax up to 26%," he stated. Mr. Malik presented a data-driven proposal for a 26.6% increase in the Federal Excise Duty (FED) on tobacco products. This strategic approach has the potential to yield a "triple win" for Pakistan: a reduction in the number of smokers by 517,000, a 12.1% increase in tax revenue for the government and a 19.8% recovery of healthcare costs associated with tobacco use. Mr. Zahid Shafiq, Program Manager at HDF, said: "If the traditional forms weren't enough, the tobacco industry has also flooded the market with novel products (nicotine pouches, e-cigarettes, and heated tobacco devices) which are openly sold to youth through point-of-sales advertising and extensive social media campaigns. There is a need to ban all forms of novel products immediately before our youth becomes addicted to them." Further emphasizing the effectiveness of this approach, HDF offered an international perspective on tobacco taxation policies. By drawing on successful strategies implemented in other countries, Pakistan has the opportunity to curb tobacco use and generate substantial revenue to bolster public health initiatives. The Panel strongly urges the Government of Pakistan to consider a significant increase in tobacco taxes. This policy change will not only generate substantial revenue for the national economy and healthcare system but, more importantly, it will save countless lives.—Agencies

National Talent Hunt PM Table Tennis league starts

Aamir Jan said that the Talent Hunt Prime Minister Programme gives chance to players in bringing their talent out on the big platform



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Talent Hunt Prime Minister Youth Table Tennis League kicked off here at the Rodham hall of Pakistan Sports Complex on Monday under the supervision of Higher Education Commission (HEC). Two teams from each province

were featured in the league including Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federal-Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Executive Director National Vocational & Technical Commission (NAVTC) and President Punjab Olympic Association Aamir Jan was the chief guest at the opening ceremony as the aim

of the league is to give opportunities to new players at the national level. Aamir Jan said that the Talent Hunt Prime Minister Programme gives chance to players in bringing their talent out on the big platform, adding that players need to work hard and use this platform to showcase their expertise in the game. He said the game of table tennis

was very close to him and there is a lot of talent in the country. Winning or losing doesn't matter as players just need to give their best shot in the game, he said. He also lauded the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for supporting the games. Table tennis league will provide an opportunity to bring out new talented players, he said.

Jabeur wants 'more respect' for women after reaching Madrid quarters

Jabeur dismissed ninth-seeded Jelena Ostapenko 6-0, 6-4 to reach the last eight along with top seed Iga Swiatek

SPORTS DESK

MADRID: Tunisian tennis star Ons Jabeur on Monday called out organisers of European tournaments for failing to "respect" women players by giving preferential treatment to men at combined events after she swept into the quarter-finals of the Madrid Open, dismissed ninth-seeded Jelena Ostapenko 6-0, 6-4 to reach the last eight along with top seed Iga Swiatek who eased past home favourite Sara Sorribes Tormo 6-1, 6-0. But Jabeur, the 2022 Madrid champion, later took a swipe at tournament organisers, telling reporters she believes tennis still has a way to go to achieve gender equality, despite it being the leader in women's sport. Tsitsipas ousted by qualifier, Swiatek coasts into last 16 "Definitely tennis is a sport that I'm proud to play in as a woman," said the world num-



ber nine, who next plays either Coco Gauff or Madison Keys for a place in the semi-finals. "But I feel like we have a long way, especially here in Madrid and in Rome, in Europe in general. I feel like they need to respect women more and they need to respect how we are playing." Sharing examples from her personal experiences at events, Jabeur said women players were not given the same access to practice courts as the men, and noted how WTA matches were not shown on TV as frequently as ATP matches. "The way they treat women here and men, they're completely different. Maybe people from outside, they don't see it. I'm definitely one of the people that I want to speak up," she added. "Here in Spain, I would love to go to the hotel and open the TV and see a woman's tennis match. "I haven't seen once one tennis match of a woman. Obviously, I understand there are a lot

of Spanish (male players) playing, but asking for one match? Even the female Spanish (players) they are not even showing. "For me it's really frustrating to see that. How can you inspire young girls without showing any match in that?" Meanwhile, Swiatek dropped her opening game before sweeping the next 12 against her Spanish opponent to book a quarter-final meeting with Brazilian left-hander Beatriz Haddad Maia. "We played many tough matches against each other so it's not going to be easy," said the Polish world number one of her upcoming opponent. "She's always a very intense player and knows how to play on clay." In the men's competition, American Ben Shelton saw his unbeaten 5-0 start to the clay season come to an end at the hands of Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik, who won 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 to reach the fourth round, where he awaits Daniil Medvedev or Sebastian Korda.

Briefs

Italy's FM to push for immediate cease-fire in Gaza

ROME : Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani will push Monday afternoon for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza at talks in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh, his office said. "The goal is to push for an immediate cease-fire, the liberation of all Israeli hostages and to let humanitarian aid get in, massively, as soon as possible for Gaza's civilian population," he said. "It's an unbearable emergency, it has to be tackled immediately," he added. Tajani will meet US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and foreign ministers from Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Jordan in Riyadh. He will share with them the results of the talks at G-7 level on the situation in the Middle East recently held in Capri, Italy. His office said the meetings will be decisive to relaunch the political process aimed at pushing through a diplomatic solution to the historic Arab-Israeli conflict, based on the "two people-two states" formula. Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip, nearing seven months, has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians and left most civilians homeless and at risk of famine.—DNA

African leaders seek record WB funding for climate

WASHINGTON : African leaders demanded on Monday that wealthy nations make historic donations to a World Bank facility for poor countries that offers cheap credit rates and is essential for funding their growth and fighting climate change. At a meeting to be held in Japan in December, donors will pledge funds to the International Development Association (IDA), a World Bank organisation that provides loans with extended tenure and low interest rates. In a meeting of African leaders and the World Bank to discuss IDA financing, William Ruto, the president of Kenya, addressed said, "We call on our partners to meet us at this historic moment of solidarity and respond effectively by increasing their IDA contributions... to at least \$120 billion." Ruto also added that African economies were facing a deepening development and debt crisis that were threatening their economic stability, and urgent climate emergencies that demand immediate and collective action for the planet's survival. He mentioned the terrible floods that Kenya had experienced as well as the brutal drought that has affected countries in Southern Africa, including Malawi. If donors contribute the minimal amount proposed by African leaders, it will set a new fundraising record, surpassing the last round in 2021, which raised \$93 billion.—APP

Yen swings after hitting new 34-year low

LONDON : The yen swung in volatile trade Monday as it rebounded soon after hitting a 34-year low against the dollar, fuelling speculation Japanese authorities had intervened to support the currency for the first time since late 2022.

The dollar's rally came as another forecast-topping US inflation report dented hopes for US Federal Reserve interest rate cuts this year. The yen sank to 160.17 to the greenback in choppy Asian trade, with liquidity also thin amid a holiday in Japan. It later bounced back as high as 154.54. "We're seeing huge volatility in the Japanese yen at the start of the week," said analyst James Mill at trading firm TickMill. "The move suggests that Japanese authorities have finally intervened in the market after plenty of anticipation over recent weeks." Masato Kanda, Japan's vice minister of finance for international affairs, offered no comment to reporters on Monday.—Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Mr. SM Tanvir Patron In Chief UBG former Provincial Minister Punjab hosted Lunch in honour of Miss Bushra Rehman President Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association, Mr Amir Mir, Mr Mansoor Qadir Former Punjab Ministers, Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordination FPCCI & Secretary General PWCTA, Mr Zaki Ejaz Vice President & Zonal Chairman, Ms Qurat ul Ain Vice President FPCCI and Choudary Rashid former President Sahiwal CCI are also present in Lahore.—DNA

Sanchez stays on as Spain's PM after weighing exit

Pedro Sanchez had shocked the country last week when he announced he was taking five days off to think about his future, after a court launched a probe into his wife's business dealings.

NEWS DESK

MADRID : Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Monday he had decided to continue in office, days after abruptly announcing he was considering his future following the launch of a corruption investigation against his wife. The center-left prime minister, 52, had surprised foes and allies alike when he said on Wednesday he was taking time from public duty to consider quitting. He described the court investigation of his wife Begona Gomez for influence peddling and business corruption as orchestrated by his opponents. Sanchez met King Felipe VI on Monday — a step that would have been necessary

should he have decided to resign — but announced in a televised address that he had informed the monarch of his decision to stay on. He had been encouraged to stay by widespread expressions of support over the weekend, Sanchez said. "I have decided to go on, if possible even stronger as prime minister. This is not business as usual, things are going to be different," he said in a national broadcast. His announcement that he might quit had caused further turmoil in Spanish politics, where a fractious parliament has struggled to form coalition governments after close elections. Should a new election have been required, it would have been the fourth in five years. The opposition will try to exploit the sign of indecision from Sanchez, but the impact may

be limited because Spain's political landscape is already so polarized, said Ignacio Jurado, political science professor at Madrid's Carlos III University. "His credibility is already hotly contested and voters have already given it to him or taken it away," he said. "As a leader he has shown a weakness and it's something that the opposition will exploit a lot." "Harassment" campaign The court opened its investigation into Sanchez's wife in response to a complaint by anti-corruption pressure group Manos Limpias (Clean Hands), whose leader is linked to the far right. The group, which has presented a litany of unsuccessful lawsuits against politicians in the past, said in a statement on Wednesday that it had based its complaint on media reports and

could not vouch for their veracity. While the court did not give details of the case, online news site El Confidencial said it was related to her ties to several private companies that received government funding or won public contracts. Sanchez has said the move against his wife is part of a campaign of "harassment" against them both waged by "media heavily influenced by the right and far right" and supported by the conservative opposition. Sanchez has been vilified by right-wing opponents and media because his minority government relies on the support of the hard-left and Catalan and Basque separatist parties to pass laws. They have been especially angered by his decision to grant an amnesty to hundreds of Catalan separatists facing

legal action over their roles in the northeastern region's failed push for independence in 2017. That amnesty, in exchange for the support of Catalan separatist parties, still needs final approval in parliament. The opposition has since Wednesday mocked Sanchez's decision to withdraw from his public duties for a few days, dismissing it as an attempt to rally his supporters. "A head of government can't make a show of himself like a teenager and have everyone running after him, begging him not to leave and not to get angry," the head of the main opposition Popular Party, Alberto Nunez Feijoo, said on Thursday. Sanchez, he said, had subjected Spain to "international shame".

Türkiye to back Mark Rutte as next NATO chief

ANKARA : Türkiye has decided to back the candidacy of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as the next secretary-general of NATO, Turkish officials said Monday. Ankara told NATO it will support Rutte after the Dutch premier met with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul last Friday, officials said. "NATO's southern wing needs Türkiye and its leadership," Rutte told a joint news conference with Erdogan after their meeting. "Türkiye is a geopolitical actor with significant influence in the region. They're working to help end the war in Gaza. They're also making effort regarding the horrible war in Ukraine," Rutte had remarked. Erdogan for his part had assured Türkiye's decision would be within "the framework of strategic wisdom and fairness" regarding the new NATO chief. Ankara expects the new head of the military bloc to "serve the needs and interests of allies" regarding counterterrorism and to take account of the "sensitivities of non-European Union member allies." For Türkiye, counterterrorism largely includes the fight against the PKK and its offshoots, a terrorist group that has led a bloody insurgency against the Turkish state since the 1980s, claiming more than 40,000 lives. It is recognized as a terrorist group in Türkiye, the United States and the European Union. Ankara often condemns "relations" between the terrorist group and certain NATO members as "unacceptable," "a threat against member states" as well as "against the spirit of alliance."—APP

Zelensky urges US to speed up weapons deliveries

Zelenskiy said that vital U.S. weapons were starting to arrive in Ukraine in small amounts and that the process needed to move faster

FOREIGN DESK

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Monday that vital U.S. weapons were starting to arrive in Ukraine in small amounts and that the process needed to move faster as advancing Russian forces were trying to take advantage. Zelenskiy told a joint press conference in Kyiv alongside visiting NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg that the situation on the battlefield directly depended on the speed of ammunition supplies to Ukraine. "Timely support for our army. Today I don't see any positive

on this point yet. There are supplies, they have slightly begun, this process needs to be sped up," he said. The United States passed a \$61 billion aid package last week, ending months of congressional deadlock and raising hopes in Kyiv that its critically low stocks of artillery shells would soon be replenished. Zelenskiy thanks US Senate for approving Ukraine aid Ukraine's top commander said on Sunday his troops had pulled back from three villages in the east where Russian forces are on the offensive and gradually taking ground. "The Russian army is now trying

to take advantage of a situation when we are waiting for supplies from our partners... and that is exactly why the speed of deliveries means stabilising the front," Zelenskiy said. "Russia is preparing for offensive actions," he added. The Ukrainian leader also singled out the need for supplies of sophisticated Patriot air defence launch systems that Kyiv wants to obtain from its allies to counter Russia's long-range missile and drone strikes. He said Kyiv had made some progress in obtaining supplies of missiles for the Patriot system, but that it was still working on the question of

obtaining new launchers that fire the missiles. "Russian strikes kill 14 foreign mercenaries" Also on Sunday, Russia launched strikes at Riviera and Helen hotels in Mykolaiv (Nikolaev), where foreign mercenaries hired by Ukraine are staying, killing 14 of them and injuring eight others, according to media reporters. "The eight injured were hospitalized ... They are being accommodated separately from others. Two are in a serious condition and six have been stabilized. Resistance saw at least 14 dead people being transported to the morgue."

Need to remove wrong perception regarding Balochistan's uplift projects

Misconceptions regarding development projects in Balochistan persist, a closer examination reveals substantial progress on the ground

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province, has long been subject to misconceptions regarding the execution and efficacy of its development projects. A common narrative suggests that development initiatives in Balochistan exist only on paper, with rampant corruption un-

dermining their implementation. The prevailing perception is that development projects in Balochistan remain largely unrealized, existing primarily in files. This perception is fueled by instances such as the 2022 flood, which raised doubts about the quality and effectiveness of ongoing projects. An objective evaluation reveals a different picture. Infrastructure projects such as roads, buildings, water supply schemes, sewerage systems, small dams, and drainage systems have been successfully completed across Balochistan.

These tangible developments stand as evidence against the notion that progress is confined to paperwork. A comparative analysis with other provinces like Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh highlights that Balochistan's departments including Planning and Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, Communication and Works, Pub-

lic Health, Irrigation, and Local Government are fully operational. Contrary to popular belief, these departments are actively engaged in executing projects on the ground. Challenges persist, particularly in terms of quality assurance and project monitoring. One of the significant observations raised by the Monitoring and Evaluation department of Balochistan's Planning and Development is the quality of work in development projects. While progress is visible, concerns regarding the standard of construction, durability, and adherence to specifications remain.

These concerns underscore the need for robust quality control mechanisms and rigorous oversight throughout the project lifecycle. Corruption allegations often overshadow discussions about development projects in Balochistan. The wrong perception that politicians, bureaucrats, and engineers collude for personal gain undermines public

trust and hampers progress. It is imperative for the media to exercise responsible reporting, conducting thorough investigations before publishing allegations. Transparent reporting can help dispel misconceptions and foster accountability among stakeholders. To address the challenges faced by development projects in Balochistan, several recommendations can be considered: Implementing stringent quality control measures, including regular inspections, material testing, and adherence to technical standards, can enhance the durability and effectiveness of infrastructure projects. Monitor projects progress, expenditures, and compliance can mitigate corruption risks and ensure transparency. Investing in the training and development of personnel within relevant departments can improve technical expertise, project management skills, and accountability. Engaging communities through

awareness campaigns about ongoing projects, their benefits, and avenues for reporting grievances can foster transparency and public participation. Enhancing coordination among government departments, private sector partners, and civil society organizations can streamline project implementation, resource allocation, and risk management. While misconceptions regarding development projects in Balochistan persist, a closer examination reveals substantial progress on the ground. Infrastructure developments, operational departments, and ongoing initiatives demonstrate a commitment to tangible outcomes. Challenges such as quality control, oversight, and corruption demand proactive measures and collaborative efforts. By addressing these challenges effectively, Balochistan can realize its development potential and pave the way for inclusive growth and prosperity. Absolutely,

media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, especially when it comes to development projects in regions like Balochistan. Providing accurate information and facilitating media access can indeed help in dispelling wrong perceptions and highlighting the progress and positive aspects of these projects. Balochistan's administration should collaborate with media to ensure transparency and provide them with the necessary information to accurately report on development initiatives. This can include arranging site visits, sharing project details, and engaging in open dialogue with journalists to address any concerns or misconceptions. By working together, the media and Balochistan administration can create a more informed narrative that showcases the efforts being made for the region's development and ultimately benefits the people of Balochistan.

Burst dam in Kenya pushes flood death toll past 120

NAIROBI : At least 42 people have died when a dam burst its banks near a town in Kenya's Rift Valley, as heavy rains and floods battered the country.

The dam burst on Monday near Mai Mahiu in Nakuru county, washing away houses and cutting off a road, with rescuers digging through debris to find survivors.

"Forty-two dead, it's a conservative estimate. There are still more in the mud, we are working on recovery," said Nakuru governor Susan Kihika.

Monday's dam collapse raises the total death toll over the March-May wet season to 120 as heavier than usual rainfall pounds East Africa, compounded by the El Nino weather pattern.

Meanwhile, the Kenya Red Cross said on Monday it had retrieved two bodies after a boat carrying "a large number of people" capsized at the weekend in flooded Tana River county in eastern Kenya, adding that 23 others had been rescued.

Video footage shared online and broadcast on television showed the crowded boat sinking, with people screaming as onlookers watched in horror. On Saturday, officials said 76 people had lost their lives in Kenya since March.

Flash floods have submerged roads and neighbourhoods, leading to the displacement of more than 130,000 people across 24,000 households, many of them in the capital Nairobi, according to government figures released Saturday. Schools have been forced to remain shut following mid-term holidays, after the education ministry announced Monday that it would postpone their reopening by one week due to "ongoing heavy rains."—Agencies

Heat wave in Southeast Asia closes schools

MANILA : South and Southeast Asia braced for a searing heatwave that has gripped the region over the past week, sending the mercury as high as 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) and forcing thousands of schools to suspend in-person classes amid health warnings. From the Philippines to Thailand, and India to Bangladesh, forecasters warned that mercury could exceed 40C (104F) in the coming days as people suffered from scorching heat. In the Philippines, the government suspended in-person classes in all public schools for two days due to extreme weather, the local English daily Manila Times reported. "In view of the latest heat index forecast ... and the announcement of a nationwide transport strike, all public schools nationwide shall implement asynchronous classes/distance learning on April 29 and 30, 2024," the Department of Education, which oversees more than 47,000 schools, said in a statement. The exceptionally extreme weather is expected to last until mid-May after the temperature hit a record high - 38.8C (101.84F) - in Manila on Saturday.—APP

Briefs

US, Britain urge Hamas to accept truce

DNA

LONDON : US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday urged Hamas to swiftly accept an Israeli proposal for a truce in the Gaza war and the release of Israeli hostages held by the Palestinian resistance group. Hamas negotiators were expected to meet Qatari and Egyptian mediators in Cairo on Monday to deliver a response to the phased truce proposal which Israel presented at the weekend. "Hamas has before it a proposal that is extraordinarily, extraordinarily generous on the part of Israel," Blinken said at a meeting of the World Economic Forum in the Saudi capital Riyadh. "The only thing standing between the people of Gaza and a ceasefire is Hamas. They have to decide and they have to decide quickly," he said. "I'm hopeful that they will make the right decision." Britain's Foreign Secretary David Cameron, who was also in Riyadh for the WEF meeting, also described the Israeli proposal as "generous". It included a 40-day pause in fighting and the release of potentially thousands of Palestinian prisoners as well as Israeli hostages, he told a WEF audience. "I hope Hamas do take this deal and frankly, all the pressure in the world and all the eyes in the world should be on them today saying 'take that deal'," Cameron said.

Four jailed for life in former MQM-P MNA murder case

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: An anti-terrorism court in Karachi sentenced four people accused of killing former Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) lawmaker Ali Raza Abidi to life imprisonment. Announcing the verdict of the case, the court also imposed a fine of Rs100,000 on the four convicts. The politician was murdered by unknown assailants in 2018 after they shot him multiple times outside his residence in Khayaban-e-Ghazi neighbourhood of Defence Housing Authority. Abidi was immediately shifted to PNS Shifa Hospital in critical condition, however, he succumbed to his wounds at the hospital. The slain MNA had sustained four bullets in the neck, arm and chest, according to the initial post-mortem report. Abidi was elected as an MNA on MQM's ticket in 2013 general elections. He, however, joined the Pakistan faction of the party after it split into two following anti-Pakistan tirade by the party supremo Altaf Hussain during a telephonic address with party workers in Karachi in August 2016. However, the lawmaker resigned from his National Assembly membership in November 2017 citing "political and personal reasons". The resignation came days after Abidi announced quitting the MQM-P after it entered into an electoral alliance with PSP. He, however, later rejoined the MQM-P in December 2017, before finally leaving party in September 2018.

IHC adjourns PTI founder's bail plea

ISLAMABAD: The IHC on Monday adjourned hearing of a bail petition of PTI founder in 190 million pounds Al-Qadir Trust scam case. IHC bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the bail petition. Defence lawyers Barrister Salman Safdar and Shehbaz Khosa appeared before the court, while National Accountability Court Prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz could not attend the proceedings. The defence lawyer adopted the stance that the court did not announce any decision in the bail petition despite conducting 10 hearings. The court observed that it would announce the verdict on next date of hearing if the respondent's lawyer did not appear. - APP

Not aware of any PTI-Establishment deal: Naqvi

"Ask them who are involved in the deal. I have no information regarding this," Naqvi said in response to a question regarding the PTI-establishment deal while speaking to the media in Islamabad

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi Monday said that he is unaware of any deal between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the establishment. "Ask them who are involved in the deal. I have no information regarding this," Naqvi said in response to a question regarding the PTI-establishment deal while speaking to the media in Islamabad. His remarks come as purported "talks" between the PTI and the establishment have been the talk of the town in recent days. The narrative gained strength after PTI leader Shehryar Afridi while speaking during TV programme Naya Pakistan, said that the party will hold "dialogue with the chief of army staff (COAS) and the director general of the Inter-Services Intelligence (DG ISI) soon" instead of talking to "rejected people" who reached the parliament via "Form 47". "My leader doesn't want any NRO. We want dialogue for the betterment of Pakistan," Afridi said adding that PTI founder Imran Khan wanted to engage all stakeholders for a better country but he



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi inspecting Islamabad Traffic Police Facilitation on Wheels van in Islamabad. - DNA

did not receive any response. However, the PTI leader's remarks were not the first instance reflecting the party's intention to extend an olive branch as previously Khan himself has expressed his willingness to engage in dialogue. "For the last 19 months I've been saying that I'm ready to talk [...] I'm a politician,"

the former prime minister told journalists in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail in January. Nevertheless, the ruling coalition comprising the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has censured the PTI's seemingly taking a "U-turn" on its policies calling it out for its previous headline stance against negotiations. Speaking to the media outside Adiala jail after meeting incarcerated party founder, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan ruled out any backdoor negotiations with anyone. "[Although] PTI founder has nominated some party leader for holding talks, no dialogue is taking place as of now," Gohar told the media today. On the issue of the chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the PTI chairman said that party leader Sher Afzal Marwat's name is included in the list of those who have been nominated for the said post and that consultations are underway and that the name will be finalised by tomorrow. Commenting on the prospects of allowing those back into the party who had parted ways with the PTI, Gohar stressed that the party founder has the discretion to decide on the matter.

NADRA 'doorstep service' bringing improvement

DNA

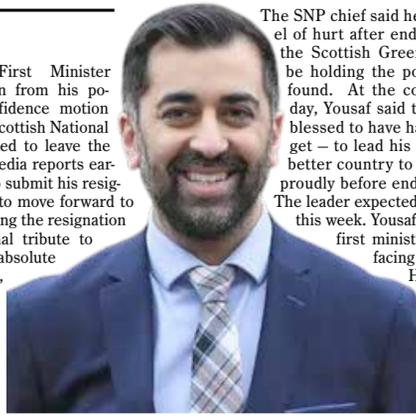
ISLAMABAD: The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) "doorstep service" is not only bringing improvement in the CNIC issuance system but also simplifies the process. The differently-abled citizens can get their digital IDs without much disturbance through doorstep services, said an official of NADRA here Monday. Talking to APP Muhammad Shakeel, said that effort highlights NADRA's commitment to inclusion and its strong dedication to providing CNICs at people's doorsteps particularly those who have some physical issues or disability. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) official, while giving a briefing to the press, said that the initiative is focusing on NADRA's objective of empowering people with disabilities. He highlighted how the community will be a great beneficiary of this service, ensuring the accessibility and diversity. He further said that the objective was first implemented in 2009, adding that Special CNIC services has long been recognized as an important tool in Pakistan to close the gap and guarantee the rights and benefits of PWDs.

Scotland's First Minister Humza Yousaf steps down

During the resignation speech, he paid an emotional tribute to his family saying: "I am in absolute debt to my wonderful wife, my beautiful children and my wider family for putting up with me over the years"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Scotland's First Minister Humza Yousaf stepped down from his position amid facing a no-confidence motion Monday as the leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) had earlier hinted to leave the office, according to BBC. Media reports earlier claimed that he was set to submit his resignation as legislators decided to move forward to dethrone the 39-year-old. During the resignation speech, he paid an emotional tribute to his family saying: "I am in absolute debt to my wonderful wife, my beautiful children and my wider family for putting up with me over the years." He also joked: "I'm afraid you'll be seeing a lot more of me from now, You are truly everything to me."



The SNP chief said he had "underestimated the level of hurt after ending a power-sharing deal with the Scottish Greens last week, however would be holding the position until a replacement is found. At the conclusion of his speech Monday, Yousaf said that he was so grateful and so blessed to have had the opportunity that so few get - to lead his country. "Who could ask for a better country to lead than Scotland?" he asked proudly before ending his speech. The leader expected to face a vote of no-confidence this week. Yousaf has been serving as Scotland's first minister since March 2023. He was facing two no-confidence votes at Holyrood after he decided to withdraw from a coalition agreement and try to run a minority government. Yousaf sacked the Scottish Greens who have now joined hands with the opposition to oust him.

Cheema for tapping Pakistan-Kazakhstan trade potential

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema on Monday highlighted the steady increase in bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Kazakhstan, underscoring the need for further measures to fully tap the existing trade potential between two nations. He was talking to Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin, who paid a courtesy call on him, according to an Economic Affairs Division (EAD) news release. The minister emphasized the longstanding bonds of brotherhood, cultural affinity and mutual respect shared between the two countries since the establishment of bilateral relations in February 1992. He stressed the importance of reciprocal visits by businessmen and investors to boost bilateral trade and investment opportunities. Minister Cheema He acknowledged the successful hosting of the 12th Session of Pakistan-Kazakhstan Joint Intergovernmental Commission (JIC), saying it would further fortify shared vision of growth and prosperity. Appreciating the signing of memorandums of understanding on tourism and culture during the 12th Session of JIC, he stated that the people of Pakistan had a deep-rooted appreciation for the rich and diverse culture of Kazakhstan. "We have seen a significant increase in the interest from Pakistani tourists to Kazakhstan in recent years. This surge in tourism reflects the genuine interest and fascination that our citizens have for Kazakh culture, heritage, and landscapes," the minister said. Cheema assured Ambassador Kistafin of Pakistan's dedication to closely collaborate with the Government of Kazakhstan for further strengthening the bilateral relations between the two nations. On the occasion, Ambassador Kistafin reaffirmed Kazakhstan's unwavering commitment to collaborating with Pakistan in priority areas such as trade, energy, agriculture, and regional connectivity.

PSX loses over 1,000 points

STAFF REPORT

KARACHI: Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) Monday slumped as investors, grappling with uncertainty over the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) decision later in the evening preferred to hedge their bets by shedding their stockholdings for profits, traders said. After getting off to an otherwise flying start and topping an intra-day high of 73,300.75, the benchmark KSE-100 index lost 1,047.71 points or 1.44 percent, to settle at 71,695.03 points. During intra-day trading, the benchmark KSE-100 index fell 523.04 points or 0.72% to trade at 72,245.32 points as compared to the previous close of 72,742.75 points. SBP's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the benchmark policy rate unchanged at 22%, highlighting that the level of inflation was still 'high', with the recent geopolitical events having added.

K-Electric seeks Rs 18 per unit hike in tariff

DNA

KARACHI: The K-Electric is planning to shock consumers as the sole power utility in Karachi has sought the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority's (Nepra) permission to charge Rs18.86 per unit additional fuel cost adjustment (FCA) from its consumers for the past seven months. According to details, the KE requested provisional monthly fuel charge adjustments for the period from July 2023 to March 2024. In its application, the power distribution company sought Rs18.86 per unit increase in the FCA for the past seven months and suggested Re0.29 decrease for the rest of the two months period. If the power regulator approves the KE's plea, the total increase would be Rs18.57 per unit. Nepra has set May 9 as date for hearing the KE's plea. Last month, Nepra allowed power distribution companies and the KE to collect an additional Rs2.7492 per unit from power consumers on account of periodic adjustments for three consecutive months starting from April 2024. The regulatory authority has authorized power companies to collect over Rs85.3 billion from power consumers as an adjustment for second quarter (Oct-Dec 2023).

SBP maintains policy rate at 22 %

The current account recorded a sizable surplus in March 2024

BURAU REPORT

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday decided to maintain the status quo by keeping the key policy rate unchanged at 22% for the seventh time in a row. In its meeting today, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) noted that the macroeconomic stabilisation measures are contributing to considerable improvement in both inflation and external position, amidst moderate economic recovery. "However, the MPC viewed that the level of inflation is still high. At the same time, global commodity prices appear to have bottomed out with resilient global growth," as per a statement issued following the meeting. The MPC said recent geopolitical events have also added uncertainty about their outlook. Moreover, the upcoming budgetary measures may have implications for the near-term inflation outlook, it added. On balance, the committee stressed on continuation of the current monetary policy stance to bring inflation down to the target range of 5 to 7% by September 2025. The MPC said data for the first half of the fiscal year 2024 suggested that economic activity is recovering at a moderate pace, led by strong rebound in the agriculture sector. Moreover, the current account recorded a sizable surplus in March 2024, which helped to stabilise the SBP's foreign exchange reserves despite substantial debt repayments and weak financial inflows, as per the communique. "Third, inflation expectations of consumers inched up in April 2024, whereas those for businesses declined. And lastly, leading central banks particularly in advanced economies have adopted cautious policy stance after noticing some slowdown in the pace of disinflation in recent months."

Turkish land forces chief calls on COAS Asim Munir



During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed

RAWALPINDI: His Excellency General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu, Commander Turkish Land Forces called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at General Headquarters, today. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed. Both sides expressed satisfaction over deep-rooted relations between the two countries, based on historic, cultural and religious affinity. COAS emphasized the need to further strengthen existing military to military cooperation between the two Armed Forces. The visiting dignitary appreciated the role of Pakistan Army in ensuring peace and stability in the region. Earlier on arrival at GHQ, Commander Turkish Land Forces, laid floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada. A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Army presented the guard of honour to the visiting dignitary. - DNA

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