

British High Commissioner calls on Sherry Rehman

We need innovative, bold solutions on climate change, says Minister

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commissioner Christian Turner and his team here on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman and discussed bilateral climate cooperation.

She said, "Climate stress is a pressing concern for Pakistan and it is high time that we articulated several pressing climate issues into policy. We need as innovative, bold and far-reaching solutions that cover not just investments in nature to curtail deforestation, but also an infrastructure for energy transition, investment in renewables, and resilient infrastructure whilst still humanizing the climate change conversation for the general population."

She said, "Engagement with the UK through a dedicated bilateral dialogue will provide support to Pakistan in several areas which have help with the real progress towards implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions."

Sherry Rehman said Pakistan needs for instance, assistance of a 35% grant towards the goal of a 50% reduction of emissions by 2030 which will render it attainable and upon which our policy is contingent. We are not a big global polluter and while contribute only 6% to GHG emissions we suffer a disproportionate impact of global pollution. So while we must take responsibility for our climate, and take steps at home to mitigate effects, it is entirely understandable to expect support.

She also said that gender mainstreaming of climate policies is essential. Women suffer more from the impacts of Climate Stress as compared to their male counterparts in developing countries and a policy which focuses on gender mainstreaming and adaptation efforts to the impacts of Climate Stress must also be rolled out, along with policies that provide for sustainable waste management and water conservation.

During the meeting, the British High Commissioner extended an official invitation to Pakistan for the May Ministerial in Denmark in advance of COP 27 in November.

Railways instruct to tighten security in trains, stations during Eid
Pakistan Railways Police has issued instructions to all Superintendent of Police (SP) Railways to tighten security in trains as well as at stations to avoid any untoward incident during Eid-ul-Fitr days.

The department had directed all SPs Railways to depute sufficient force at exit and entry points of all railway stations and strict watch to be carried out of suspicious persons, an official in the Ministry told APP.

Pakistan Railways Police Commando Force would be deputed at vulnerable installations and in trains, while bomb disposal staff would also be kept on alert for search of luggage and passengers at rail-

way stations.
"The SPs Railways directed to conduct complete check and search of empty rakes before trains reach the platforms for departure for their destinations," the official added.

All the SPs Railways would also be directed to remain present on Eid holidays and randomly check trains, stations and escorting staff.

The official said the number of passengers was increasing day by day at railway stations and trains ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr and the Railway administration had arranged special trains across the country to facilitate the extra passengers.

It was pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Railways has decided to run two Eid special trains from Karachi to Peshawar and Lahore on April 29 and 30, respectively for the convenience of the commuters on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. One special train would depart from

Karachi to Lahore and the other from Karachi to Peshawar. The train would leave Karachi for Peshawar on April 29 at 02:30 pm from Karachi City.

The special train would pass through Karachi Cantonment, Landhi Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Rohri Khanpur Bahawalpur, Multan, Khanewal, Shorkot Cantt, Toba Tek Singh, Gojra, Faisalabad, Chiniot, Chenab Nagar, Shaheenabad, Sargodha, Mandi Bahauddin, Lala Musa, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Taxila Cantonment, Nowshera etc, and it to reach Peshawar at 11:00 pm next night.

The second special train would run from Karachi to Lahore on April 30 at 19:45 pm from Karachi Cantonment and would pass through Landhi, Hyderabad, Nawab Shah, Rohri, Sadiqabad, Rahim Yar Khan Khanpur, Bahawalpur, Multan Cantonment, Khanewal, Mian Channu Chichawatni etc, and will reach Lahore at 03:30 next day. —Agencies

Fossils of giant marine reptiles found high in the Swiss Alps



BERN: Fossils from some of the largest creatures ever to swim Earth's oceans - whale-sized marine reptiles called ichthyosaurs - have been found in a counterintuitive place: Atop three mountains in the Swiss Alps up to 2,740m above sea level.

Scientists on Thursday (Apr 28) described rib and vertebrae fossils from two ichthyosaur individuals: One about 21 metres long and the other about 15 metres. They described from a third individual the largest-known tooth from any ichthyosaur with a base 6cm wide and an estimated length of 15cm, suggestive of a fearsome predator. The fossils, dating to around 205 million years ago near the end of the Triassic Period, make these three individuals among the largest of the giant ichthyosaurs that inhabited the oceans at a time when dinosaurs were beginning to dominate the land. "The tooth is particularly interesting because it could possibly - but unlikely - represent the largest animal to ever inhabit Earth," said palaeontologist Martin Sander of the University of Bonn, lead author of the study published in the Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology.

It was found atop the Chrachenhorn mountain near Davos. Based on the fact that a 18-metres-long ichthyosaur described last year had a tooth with a base eight-tenths of an inch 2cm wide, Sander said, "then a tooth 6 centimetres wide could possibly have come from an animal 54m in length".

The animal likely was not that big but still formidable, perhaps akin to a sperm whale, hunting giant squid, large fish and smaller ichthyosaurs. Some other giant ichthyosaurs apparently lacked teeth and ate small fish and squid, sucking them up or engulfing them in their mouths. The giant ichthyosaurs - the largest-ever marine reptiles - had elongated bodies, with relatively small skulls.

The fossils were found in the 1970s and 1980s at three sites in the eastern Alps in Switzerland, said study co-author Heinz Furrer, a retired curator at the University of Zurich's Paleontological Institute and Museum who discovered them along with other geology students at the time. The fossils are being described scientifically for the first time. Reconstruction of a scene from 200 million years ago in what is now the Swiss High Alps.

The inexorable movement of the immense plates that make up Earth's crust in a process called plate tectonics explains how fossils that formed in an ancient seabed ended up atop mountains. —Reuters

Al-Quds day observed; solidarity expressed with Palestinians

PESHAWAR: Like other parts of the country, International Muthida Ulama-o-Mashaikh Council here on Friday observed Al Quds day across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and expressed solidarity with Palestinians.

Mass rallies were carried out after Juma prayer and condemned US decision to relocate its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recent spate of killings of Palestinians by the Zionist Regime.

In this regard a protest rally was held on Sunehri Masjid road in which workers of political parties, religious groups and human rights organisations participated.

They were holding banners inscribed with slogans in support of Palestinians and denounced the Zionist aggression against Palestine.

During rallies angry protesters also torched US and Zionist regime flags and chanted slogans against them. Special prayers were offered at mosques for liberation of Palestine.

The religious scholars in their speeches on the occasion said that Bait-ul-Muqaddas is common heritage of the Muslims which has been under illegal occupation of the Zionist forces.

They also condemned Zionists' brutality against Palestinians and said that the struggle of Muslims will continue till the abolition of the discriminatory policies towards Muslims.

Chairman Ulama-o-Mashaikh Council Allama Muhammad Shoaib, Sahibzada Mehmood ul Hassa, Maulana Muhammad Ullah, Allama Shabbir ul Hassan and others urged OIC to play its imperative role in freedom of Palestine.

They also assured to support Pak Armed Forces in war against terrorism and extremism. On the occasion special prayers were offered for sovereignty, stability and security of the country. APP

District administration finalises Eid plan

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mardan, Habibullah Arif Friday said that a special plan had been finalized for provision of all kinds of facilities and maintenance of law and order across the district during Eidul Fitr.

He was presiding over a meeting regarding Eid ul Fitr 2022 here. Besides, District Police Officer (DPO), Irfanullah Khan the newly posted Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance & Planning), Samiur-Rehman also attended the meeting. —Agencies



KARACHI: A view of the hustle and bustle of passengers at the Cantt Railway Station as people leave to their native villages for celebrating 'Eid-ul-Fitr' with their beloved ones. —Online

As living costs surge, climate change takes a backseat in elections

KUALA LUMPUR: In the seaside town of Palo in the central Philippines, George Christopher Daga has watched torrential rain pour for days during what is supposed to be a hot and dry April - just one of the unusual weather patterns he has faced in recent years.

His home province of Leyte, where Palo is located, has been ground zero for the country's most destructive weather events since 2013, when typhoon Haiyan struck the Southeast Asian country, killing 6,300 people and flattening buildings. Yet another typhoon, Rai, left a trail of destruction in Leyte and

nearby provinces in December, with more than 300 people killed and hundreds of thousands displaced.

"The world is getting crazy. We don't understand the weather these days," Daga, 33, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. But Daga - who lost his job as a utility worker during the COVID-19 pandemic - said climate change is not his top concern as Filipinos go to the polls on May 9 to elect a new president.

The issue has hardly figured on the campaign trail in the disaster-prone Philippines - just one of several countries with elections this year where global warming has

taken a backseat. As COVID-19 has exacerbated economic and social inequalities, jobs and livelihoods have dominated the election agenda among politicians vying for votes, analysts said. That is the case even in hard-hit countries like the Philippines, which sees an average of 20 tropical cyclones each year and is one of the nations most vulnerable to climate disasters. From heat to drought, climate change impacts are becoming more frequent and intense - but efforts to slash emissions and adapt to global warming are both lagging, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. —AP

Harris tests positive for COVID-19



WASHINGTON: US Vice President Kamala Harris tested positive for COVID-19 but is not exhibiting symptoms, a spokesperson said, at a time when there has been an increase in cases among White House staffers.

Harris has not been in close contact with President Joe Biden or first lady Jill Biden due to their travel schedules, her press secretary, Kirsten Allen, said. Harris will isolate and return to the White House when she tests negative, Allen added.

After consultation with her physicians, Harris was prescribed and has taken the antiviral drug Paxlovid, Allen said.

Harris came into the White House on Tuesday but tested positive and left before meeting Biden, a senior administration official said.

Infections have risen in some parts of the United States due to the highly transmissible Omicron BA.2 subvariant, even as cases are falling overall, according to public health officials.

In recent weeks, second gentleman Doug Emhoff, Harris' communications director Jamal Simmons, White House press secretary Jen Psaki and deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre disclosed positive tests.

Other high-ranking officials to test positive this month have included US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, next in the line of succession to the presidency after Harris, Attorney General Merrick Garland and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

Democratic Senators Ron Wyden and Chris Murphy on Tuesday announced that they tested positive for COVID-19. A senior Senate Democratic aide said because of senators' absences, votes might be delayed on some Biden nominees who face strong opposition from Republicans.

The Senate is split 50-50 between Democrats and Republicans. Ties can be broken by Harris, who also is currently unable to come to the Senate to cast such votes.

Administration officials have said recently that President Biden's regular contact with advisers and supporters could expose him to COVID-19.

However, the administration is keen to project a sense of normalcy as many Americans are returning to work and socialising with friends and family, they said. Both Biden and Harris are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and have received two booster shots. —Reuters

Russia confirms 'high-precision' strike on Kyiv during UN visit



MOSCOW: Russia's defence ministry confirmed it had carried out an airstrike on Kyiv during a visit by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

"High-precision, long-range air-based weapons of the Russian Aerospace Forces have destroyed the production buildings of the Artyom missile and space enterprise in Kyiv," the ministry said in its daily briefing on the conflict in Ukraine.

Ukraine said Friday that one person had been killed in the strike on Thursday, the first in the capital in nearly two weeks and which Guterres's spokesman described as "shocking".

Guterres on Thursday toured Bucha and other Kyiv suburbs where Moscow is alleged to have committed war crimes.

The defence ministry said its forces had carried out a range of air strikes on Thursday, destroying three power substations at Ukrainian railway hubs and a Tochka-U missile launcher that it said had carried out an attack on the Russian-held city of Kherson.

Why Putin's demand for rubles has Europe scrambling

Russian President Vladimir Putin's decree

imposing a new payments system for gas supplies has placed the European Union (EU) and Russia at loggerheads,

with Moscow demanding that EU companies open accounts in rubles.

The issue, sparked by Russia's war in Ukraine and the Western response to it, escalated on Apr 27 after Russia cut off gas sales to Poland and Bulgaria, which refused to pay in rubles.

At stake is European unity, with some countries including Germany more reliant on Russian gas than others. The EU's

legal guidelines so far have left some companies and governments confused.

Putin said on Mar 31 that he wanted his country's gas bought in local currency, from Apr 1. The deposit of euros or dollars on the supplier's account would no longer be considered fulfillment of contractual obligations.

Companies would first have to pay for gas using a euro account; then funds would have to be converted into rubles and sent into a second account at state-controlled Gazprombank JSC. It is only after

the funds reach the ruble account that the payment would be considered complete.

Putin said that if payments aren't made in rubles, then gas exports would be halted. Europe depends heavily on Russian gas to heat homes and power industry.

When he announced his move, Putin said it was to protect Russia's vital gas revenues from possible EU sanctions or seizure, as some member states had been proposing. By giving Gazprombank a central role in the payment mechanism, the

Kremlin also could ensure the bank was protected from further sanctions.

The ruble requirement forced the EU to confront deep divisions among its member states on how to address their dependence on gas from Russia. With prices for the fuel surging, the uncertainty has also boosted Russian income, while stoking political pressure on European leaders.

Over the long haul, however, the gambit could be risky for the Kremlin if it causes the EU to speed up moves to diversify away from Rus-