

# BMP to be upgraded to maintain law, order situation in Koh-e-Suleman tribal areas

**MULTAN:** Border Military Force would be transformed into modern force through its re-organization to maintain and improve law and order situation in tribal areas of Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur. This was decided in a virtual meeting attended MPA Sardar Owais Khan Leghari, Additional Chief Secretary Home Department Ali Murtaza, additional chief secretary south Punjab Saqib Zafar and additional IG Ehsan Sadique, on Monday. Owais Leghari stated that the people of tribal areas were peaceful and patriotic citizens. Tourism could be promoted in Fort Munro and some other tribal areas by promoting peace. Additional Chief Secretary Saqib Zafar observed that the govern-

ment was committed to provide maximum relief to residents of tribal areas. He added that 307 primary, 36 middle and 16 high schools had been established in the tribal areas. Similarly, road infrastructure has also been developed. Additional IG Ehsan Sadique also spoke and stated that Punjab Police would also continue to extend maximum support to Border Military Police. Earlier, Commissioner DG Khan Liaqat Chaththa informed that Koh-e-Suleman tribal area was consist of 6475 kilometers. There were 24 police stations to maintain law and order situation. Border Military Police have 32 vehicles. New vehicles and arms would also be given to upgrade the BMP, he added.

**Cholera claims 2 lives, leaves 979 affected in Dera Bugti**  
The cholera disease outbreak in the Dera Bugti district of Balochistan on Monday claimed two lives, while 979 others were badly affected by the widely spread infectious disease, according to the Health officer. Talking to APP, District Health Officer of Dera Bugti, Dr Azam Bugti said that the first case of cholera epidemic was reported on April 17 from Pirkoh, 25 kms from the district headquarters, Dera Bugti, and one person reportedly died of the disease on that same day. After the incident, the number of samples sent to National Institute of Health

(NIH) Islamabad were reported as 'positive.' DHO Dera Bugti further said humans and livestock of Pirkoh consumed water from the pond, which was filled with rain water and due to aridity for a prolonged time, the water of the said pond had become poisonous and contaminated. "The Deputy Commissioner Dera Bugti has provided four water bores for the supply of drinking water to the people of the affected area but this is not a permanent solution to the problem," DHO maintained. He also apprised that there were two government primary health centers in the affected area of Pirkoh and all the re-

sources available in them were being utilized. Moreover, since April 17 till now these two centers were providing uninterrupted services round the clock, the DHO added. A 16-year-old boy and a 66-year-old woman were the fatal victim of cholera so far, while 979 cases had been reported so far, including 103 new cases emerged on May 8, said the DHO. Highlighting the preventive measures, DHO said that through social mobilization, the public was being sensitized about the Cholera's seriousness. "People are requested to boil the water before they drink it and follow the principles of hygiene and cleanliness," DHO urged. —Agencies

## Court to rule on former French PM Fillon's fake job row



**PARIS:** Former French prime minister Francois Fillon will learn whether an appeals court has upheld his conviction for setting his wife up with lucrative fake jobs. Revelations about the probe torpedoed conservative Fillon's 2017 presidential campaign, leaving the way clear for centrist Emmanuel Macron - re-elected to a second term last month. The 68-year-old was convicted by a lower court in 2020 and sentenced to five years in jail, three of them suspended.

At the November appeals hearing, prosecutors said there was clear evidence that Fillon and his stand-in as MP for the Sarthe department, Marc Joulaud, employed Fillon's wife Penelope in an "intangible" or "tenuous" role as a parliamentary assistant between 1998 and 2013.

On top of jail time and fines, the Fillons and Joulaud were ordered in 2020 to repay more than one million euros (US\$1,055,000) to France's National Assembly lower house. The court also barred Fillon from holding public office for 10 years, while Penelope - a serving local councillor - received a two-year ban.

Penelope also had a job as "literary consultant" at the Revue des Deux Mondes magazine owned by Marc Ladreit de Lacharriere, described by the prosecution as an "indulgence" for his friend Fillon.

Ladreit de Lacharriere himself pleaded guilty in a 2018 trial in which he acknowledged the job was partially fake.

Prosecutors have called for Fillon to face still harsher punishment in the appeals hearing, including five years' jail and a fine of 375,000 euros for the charges of abuse of public funds, collusion and concealing abuse of company assets. They also want a two-year suspended sentence for Penelope Fillon and a fine of 100,000 euros. Before the appeals court, the Fillons stuck to their defence that Penelope's "on-the-ground" work in Sarthe was "immaterial" but very "real".

Their lawyers attacked the "media frenzy" around "Penelopegate", as the scandal was dubbed when it emerged.

Neither is expected to attend the court on Monday. Since withdrawing from politics, Fillon had held jobs on the boards of Russian petrochemicals giant Sibur and hydrocarbons firm Zarubezhneft.

He has quit both posts since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. —AFP

## Why I'm still not taking crypto seriously

**LONDON:** I keep on being told that it's time I took crypto seriously. Crypto, goes the refrain, has "gone mainstream" - from BlackRock to UBS, every major investor is at the very least "exploring" it these days, while the big firms have tens of millions of retail investors each. Governments are bullish, too: Britain is taking a "forward-looking approach" with the chancellor hoping to turn the country into a global crypto hub, putting the United Kingdom right up there with El Salvador, where Bitcoin is now legal tender.

I can joke, but if I haven't bought into crypto, then the joke is actually on me, or so people keep saying. And yet, try as I might to take it seriously, I keep on coming up against new ways to find crypto absurd.

Recently, the comedy came courtesy of the nominatively determined Sam Bankman-Fried, CEO and founder of crypto exchange FTX, a company recently valued at US\$32 billion. On Apr 25, Bankman-Fried, himself recently valued at US\$24 billion, appeared on Bloomberg's and was asked to explain

complex practice that essentially offers investors a chance to turn their crypto into more crypto, by borrowing money from the customers, giving them a "governance token" in exchange, and farming out this crypto into other coins and "DeFi" projects offering high yields - has long raised eyebrows. That's not just because of the unusually high returns it promises, but also due to concerns that retail investors don't really understand it and thus are not fully aware of the risks involved.

You might think therefore that Bankman-Fried, whose platform offers this very thing, might try to dress it up as a grown-up financial product. Not so much. Bankman-Fried, using the analogy of a box to describe one of these yield-farming platforms, explained its value proposition thus: "This is a valuable box as demonstrated by all the money that people have apparently decided should be in the box. And who are we to say that they're wrong about that?" He then described how all this becomes a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy,



how a newish crypto phenomenon called yield-farming works. File photo of Sam Bankman-Fried, founder and CEO of cryptocurrency exchange FTX. Yield-farming - a rather

because once investors start feeling bullish about it, the token becomes more valuable and they "go and pour another US\$300 million in the box... and then it goes to infinity. —AFP



ISLAMABAD: A street vendor sells water melons along the road side as people like such fruit. —Online

## US lobby fears 'exodus' of foreign staff in China due to COVID-19 measures

**SHENZHEN:** American businesses are struggling to persuade overseas staff to join them in China due to the country's strict COVID-19 control measures and ongoing lockdowns, the American Chamber of Commerce in China said.

In a survey of 121 members, 49 per cent said foreign workers are either significantly less likely to - or are refusing to - move to China because of COVID-related policies, with 82 per cent singling out uncertainty over how long quarantine and lockdown times will last as the main reason. "We are bracing for a mass exodus of foreign talent this summer, with fewer employees overseas willing to take up open positions here in China," said chamber chairman Colm Rafferty.

International flights into China remain extremely limited and subject to short-notice cancellations, with passengers needing approval from overseas Chinese embassies before boarding, and most arrivals requiring three weeks of quarantine. "We understand China choosing to prioritise health and safety above all else, but the current measures are throttling US business confidence in China," Rafferty said. Overseas business groups continue to chafe against the COVID-19 controls that have seen most of the 25 million population of Shanghai in lockdown for over a month, with curbs also tightening in the capital Beijing.



The survey found that 51 per cent of respondents have either delayed or decreased investments as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, with 58 per cent having decreased their revenue projections for the year.

Last week a European Chamber of Commerce in China survey found that almost a quarter of respondents were considering moving current or planned investments out of China, more than double the number at the start of the year.

6 weeks and counting: A Singaporean in Shanghai navigates COVID-19 lockdown amid opaque rules, new-found neighbourliness.

'Go home!': Shanghai, Beijing residents urged to avoid social contact amid COVID-19 spread. —Reuters

## Colombia beefs up offensive against drug cartel



**BOGOTA:** The Colombian government reinforced a nearly 50,000-strong military deployment against a drug cartel that has burned cars and threatened people as reprisal for the extradition of its leader to the United States.

An additional 2,000 troops and police were deployed to join about 50,000 others already on the ground in northern Colombia to take on the so-called Gulf Clan, Defense Minister Diego Molano said. They would be tasked, among other things, with securing roads so that hard-hit commerce can be restored, he said.

The cartel, Colombia's biggest, allegedly moves between 30 and 60 per cent of all the cocaine originating from the world's largest producer of the drug. Its leader, Dairo Antonio Usuga, or "Otoniel," was extradited to the United States last week and pleaded not guilty to trafficking charges.

The 50-year-old was the most wanted person in Colombia until his arrest last October, and now faces life in prison.

Last Thursday, the cartel went on the offensive back home, launching a so-called "armed strike" affecting nearly 90 municipalities in nine of Colombia's 32 departments, according to officials. —Reuters

## Putin channels memory of Hitler's defeat to urge victory in Ukraine

**LONDON:** Russian President Vladimir Putin evoked the memory of Soviet heroism in World War II to urge his army towards victory in Ukraine but acknowledged the cost in Russian lives as he pledged to help the families of fallen soldiers.

Addressing massed ranks of service personnel on Red Square on the 77th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany, Putin condemned what he called external threats to weaken and split Russia, and repeated familiar arguments that he had used to justify Russia's invasion - that NATO was creating threats right next to its borders.

He directly addressed soldiers fighting in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, which Russia has pledged to "liberate" from Kyiv's control.

Russian President Vladimir Putin watches a military parade on Victory Day, which marks the 77th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two, in Red Square in central Moscow, Russia May 9, 2022.

"You are fighting for the Motherland, for its future, so that no one forgets



the lessons of World War II. So that there is no place in the world for executioners, punishers and Nazis," he said.

His speech included a minute of silence. "The death of each one of our soldiers and officers is our shared grief and an irreparable loss for their friends and relatives," said Putin, promising that the state would look after their children and families.

But his 11-minute speech, on day 75 of the invasion, was largely notable for what he did not say. He did not mention Ukraine by name, gave no assessment of progress in the war and offered no indication of how long it might continue.

There was no mention

of the bloody battle for Mariupol, where Ukrainian defenders holed up in the ruins of the Azovstal steelworks are still defying Russia's assault.

Putin has repeatedly likened the war - which he casts as a battle against dangerous "Nazi"-inspired nationalists in Ukraine - to the challenge the Soviet Union faced when Adolf Hitler invaded in 1941. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said it is Russia that is staging a "bloody re-enactment of Nazism" in Ukraine.

**Sixty feared dead in bombing of Ukraine school; G7 condemns Putin**

As many as 60 people are feared to have been killed when a bomb struck

a village school in eastern Ukraine, the regional governor said while Russian forces continued shelling the last holdout of Ukrainian resistance in the ruined southeastern port of Mariupol.

Luhansk region Governor Serhiy Gaidai said the school in Bilohorivka, where about 90 people were sheltering, was hit on Saturday by a Russian bomb, setting it ablaze.

"There is almost no hope that anyone survived. The aerial bomb exploded in the middle (of the building)," Gaidai wrote on the Telegram messaging app. "In the school, there were approximately 90 people, 27 were rescued. About 60 people were probably killed."

Reuters could not immediately verify his account. There was no response from Moscow to the report.

Ukraine and its Western allies have accused Russian forces of targeting civilians in the war, something that Moscow denies. In Mariupol, the deputy commander of the Azov regiment holed up in the sprawling Azovstal steel plant pleaded with the international community to help evacuate wounded soldiers.

"We will continue to fight as long as we are alive to repel the Russian occupiers," Captain Sviatoslav Palamar told an online news conference.

More than 170 civilians were evacuated from the Mariupol area on Sunday, bringing the total to around 600 given safe passage during a week-long rescue operation, the United Nations said.

As the fighting, now in its third month, raged on, with authorities in the eastern Kharkiv region reporting more casualties of Russian shelling, leaders of the Group of Seven industrial nations vowed on Sunday to deepen Russia's economic isolation and "elevate" a campaign against Kremlin-linked

elites.

US President Joe Biden and other G7 leaders held a video call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a show of unity ahead of Russia's Victory Day celebrations on Monday. The G7 said it was committed to phasing out or banning Russian oil and denounced President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. "His actions bring shame on Russia and the historic sacrifices of its people," the group said in a statement, referring to Soviet Russia's role in defeating Nazi Germany 77 years ago.

Washington also unveiled another round of sanctions targeting more executives and businesses as part of a broad effort to isolate Russia and limit

### CORRECTION OF FATHER'S NAME



I FARHAN NAZEER have passed the Secondary School Annual/Supply Examination 2017 under Roll No 106815 and Intermediate Annual/Supply Examination 2019 under Roll No 688095 from B.I.S.E Lahore My Father's Name is M U H A M M A D RAFIQUE where on certificate my Father's name has been mentioned as NAZEER AHMED Which is incorrect. I want to get changed my father's name from NAZEER AHMED to MUHAMMAD RAFIQUE. If any person/organization/agency has any objection, then the same may be intimated in writing to the Secretary, Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, 86-Mozang Road, Lahore within 15 days.

**Loss of Intimation Letter / Allotment Letter**  
Intimation Letter / Allotment Letter of Plot No 609 Sector V Phase 8 Measuring 01 Kanal Issued by Defence Housing Authority Lahore Cantt in the name of Shahid Iqbal Cheema S/O Muhammad Iqbal Cheema R/O House No 333 Block Z Phase 3 DHA Lahore Cantt has been lost. Find may return the same to secretary Defence Housing Authority, Lahore Cantt. Otherwise after 07 days original intimation Letter / Allotment letter shall be treated as cancelled. UAN 111-342-547/ Ext 2825