



LAHORE ▾ P2

CS orders early arrest of culprits in Gujrat, Okara incidents

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BACK ▾ P8

Imran pushes country to verge of collapse: Hamza



PAGES 08 | Rs 15

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Blinken invites Bilawal to attend food meeting

From Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday made a maiden telephone call to the newly appointed Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and extended an invitation to him to visit the US this month, the Foreign Office said.

During the telephonic conversation, Secretary Blinken congratulated his Pakistani counterpart on the assumption of his office and expressed the desire to continue strengthening the mutually beneficial Pakistan-US bilateral relationship. "An invitation was also extended by the Secretary of State for Pakistan's participation in the Ministerial meeting on Global Food

Security to be held in New York on 18 May 2022," read a statement issued by the Foreign Office.

Building on the Pakistan-US cooperation in dealing with the COVID pandemic during the last two years, Secretary Blinken also invited Pakistan to the Second Global COVID Summit to be held virtually later this month.

Exchanging views on various aspects of bilateral relations, Bilawal Bhutto underscored that Pakistan and the US have a long-standing broad-based relationship. He added that constructive and sustained engagement between the two countries on the basis of mutual respect and mutual interest was vital to promote peace, development and security in the region and beyond.



ISLAMABAD: Thomas Seiler, Charge d' Affaires, a delegate of the European Union (EU) to Pakistan, calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

■ Pakistan offers huge opportunities for tech investments: PM

We desire more Pak-EU multi-faceted ties, says Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday highlighted the strong economic, trade and investment ties between Pakistan and the European Union and expressed the desire for further strengthening of this multi-faceted relationship in diverse sectors including climate change and legal migration.

The prime minister also underscored the importance of regular high-level exchanges between the two sides to deepen bilateral collaboration and enhance mutual cooperation on issues of peace and stability in the regional and international context. The prime minister was talking to Thomas Seiler, Charge d' Affaires, delegation of the EU to Pakistan, who called on him.

The charge d' affaires congratulated the prime minister on assuming the office and conveyed best wishes of the European Council president and the president of the EU Commission.

The prime minister thanked the charge d' affaires for his felicitations and underlined the importance Pakistan attaches to its relations with EU and its member states. Thomas Seiler affirmed EU's commitment to further deepening of bilateral cooperation with Pakistan.

Pakistan and EU are celebrating the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations this year. Events

marking this milestone are envisaged to be held both in Islamabad and Brussels.

Another report adds: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stated that Pakistan offers huge opportunities for investments in technology sector. He said this while meeting Yi Xiang, Senior Vice President of Huawei, President of Middle East and Africa Region of Huawei.

The Prime Minister said that foreign tech companies would be facilitated in all respects with regards to investment and expansion. The current government intends to increase the IT exports of Pakistan from \$1.5 billion to \$15 billion in the coming year and for that close collaboration with Huawei will result in the provision of training to the youth of Pakistan through various means including setting up ICT academies.

He emphasized that investments in the tech sector would increase employment and skills enhancement of Pakistani youth, especially women as the government is focused to increase the number of women in the e-commerce sector by providing them the suitable environment to get themselves trained and raise capital. He also emphasized the need to expedite the process of strategizing the collaborative efforts within a week and highlighted the government's willing-

PM announces Rs 2b mega uplift package for Shangla

SHANGLA: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Saturday afternoon announced a mega development package for speedy uplift of Shangla district. The Prime Minister announced Rs 2 billion grant for development of Shangla and solution of problems of the area. He said 132 KV grid station at Poran would be completed in three months. He also announced construction of a Medical College at Shangla. The Prime Minister said that there would be no shortage of wheat flour in KP and asked the KP Government to facilitate and ensure the just distribution of Punjab flour to its people on prescribed rate. —APP

ness to not leave any stone unturned to achieve the said objectives. The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction over Huawei's long association with Pakistan and investments in the telecom sector. SVP Huawei Yi Xiang while thanking the Prime Minister

● Continued on Back Page

WAPDA chief resigns citing 'personal reasons'

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Chairman of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), Lt-Gen (Retd) Muzammil Hussain, on Saturday resigned from his post.

The chairman, in his resignation to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has cited "personal reasons" for the sudden decision.

Hussain had been appointed to the post on Aug 24, 2016 by the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif and later in August 2021, the Ministry of Water Resources appointed him for second consecutive term of five years.

PTV MD's resignation accepted, Tauqueer takes charge

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ministry of Information (MoI) has accepted the resignation of Pakistan Television (PTV) Managing Director Amir Manzoor and appointed grade-21 officer of Information Group Mubashir Tauqueer as new PTV Managing Director.

Mubashir Tauqueer is serving as additional secretary in the Information Ministry. Amir Manzoor was appointed by the former information minister Fawad Chaudhry.

Establishment Division also notified transfers and postings of various officers in federal bureaucracy. Altamash Janjua, PM Office Deputy Secretary, has been transferred to Gilgit Baltistan and Abdul Wahab Soomro has been appointed as new PM Office Joint Secretary. Akhtar Hayat who was posted in Balochistan has now been directed to report to the Establishment Division. Asim Arshad Additional Secretary Power Division Iqbal has been made OSD. Arshad Majeed has been appointed as Additional Secretary Power Division. —DNA

Gold prices up by Rs450 to Rs132,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs450 and was sold at Rs132,800 on Saturday against its sale at Rs132,350 in the local market.

The price of 10 gram 24 karat gold also increased by Rs386 and was sold at Rs113,855 compared to its sale at Rs113,469 whereas that if 22 karat gold also went up to Rs104,367 against Rs104,013, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs1500 and Rs 1286 respectively. The price of gold in international market increased by \$2 and was traded at \$1884 compared to its sale at \$1882, the association reported. —APP

Ashtar Ausaf Ali appointed as AG

ISLAMABAD: Ashtar Ausaf Ali has been appointed Attorney General (AG).

Ashtar Ausaf Ali has remained AG during former prime minister Nawaz Sharif tenure. He has served as special assistant for law and justice to prime minister during 2015-16. He also remained as advocate general Punjab twice in 1998 to 1999 and 2012 to 2013. He served as prosecutor general Punjab from 2011 to 2012. —Online

IG Motorway Inam removed

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General Motorway Inam Ghani has been removed from his post and was ordered to report to the Establishment Division.

Khalid Mahmood has been appointed as new Inspector General Motorway. Inam Ghani was appointed as IG Motorway on October 21, 2021. He was then a grade-21 officer of PSP and was previously serving as IG of Pakistan Railways Police. —DNA

PML-N's Baligh picked for Punjab Governor

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Balighur Rehman has been picked for Punjab Governor slot.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has sent a summary to President seeking appointment of Balighur Rehman as Governor Punjab. Baligh has also served as Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training in former premier Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's cabinet from August 2017 to May 2018.

He was elected Member of National Assembly (MNA) on PML-N ticket in for the first time in 2008 and then later in 2013. It merits mention that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has moved a summary to President Arif

Alvi advising him removal of Punjab Governor Omar Sarfaraz Cheema.

Meanwhile, President Dr Arif Alvi had instructed Punjab Governor Omar Sarfaraz Cheema to continue to hold the office till the decision on a summary for his removal was taken.

PPP demands three ministries in Punjab

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) while deciding not to get the post of governor Punjab has sought three ministries in Punjab.

A delegation of PPP called on Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Hamza Shahbaz. The delegation comprised Speaker National Assembly (NA) Raja Pervez Ashraf, Yousuf Raza Gillani, Qamar Zaman Kaira, Ali Haider Gillani and Hassan Murtaza.

Farah to return on 10th, NAB ready for probe

ISLAMABAD: Farah Gogi, a friend of the former first lady and allegedly involved in money laundering and assets beyond earning cases has decided to return to Pakistan from Dubai on May 10.

According to a private news channel, the lawyer of Farhat Shehzadi alias Farah Gogi confirmed on Saturday that she will return with her husband Ahsan Jamil Gujjar next week on Tuesday.

Farhat Shehzadi has decided to challenge the jurisdiction of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) as it cannot conduct any inquiry against non-public office holders like her. On the other hand, the NAB spokesman has con-

firmed that the inquiry against Farah Khan has been referred from the Bureau's headquarters to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lahore. While the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lahore has assured that it will hold the inquiry against Farah Khan in a transparent manner.

The NAB Lahore has said that the case of Farah Khan falls under NAB's jurisdiction and may initiate inquiry against former officials or their families too. Farah's lawyer Azhar Siddique advocate further stated that they are going to take legal action against Nawaz League's leader Atta Tarrar for misusing her name in the

No march unless govt assured it won't be violent, says Sana

LAHORE: Responding to the comments made by former interior minister Sheikh Rashid that this time the long march towards Islamabad would be bloody, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Saturday that he would not allow the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) workers and leaders to march if they did not assure the government that they would remain peaceful.

Speaking to the media after appearing in a court in Lahore in connection with the hearing of a narcotics case, Rana Sanaullah told Sheikh Rashid in clear and categorical terms that he did not know him. "You will fail to create anarchy in the country. Mind it. This is my last warning to you," Sanaullah said, and added, "Imran Khan, I am telling you. Even you will not be spared if you do not refrain from threatening us."

The minister said that since this was the election year, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had already begun 'mass contact campaign'. He was of the view that Usman Buzdar was the Punjab chief minister only in name, and actually it was Farah Gogi, friend of former prime minister Imran Khan's wife, who would call the shots in the province.

He accused the friend of former first lady of Pakistan of minting billions of rupees through the transfers and postings of government officials. "PTI chairman Imran and his party leaders are presently running 'Save Gogi Campaign'," Sanaullah said, and alleged that Imran had introduced the 'amnesty scheme' only to save his wife's friend Farah.

He claimed that Farah Gogi transferred one billion rupees abroad. "The PTI government booked its opponents in 'false

and fabricated' cases. If the last government had proofs that I was involved in the murder of some people, I should have been booked in cases of that particular offence rather than cases of drugs, with which I have nothing to do," he added.

Not worried about arrests: Rashid Responding to the media talk by Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah in which he threatened him and PTI leaders with consequences if they did not assure the government that their long march towards Islamabad would be peaceful, his predecessor Sheikh Rashid on Saturday asked him to go ahead with the crackdown he had threatened since that was not going to dampen the spirits of the marchers.

Speaking to the media outside Rawalpindi bench of the Lahore High Court, he said while addressing Sanaullah, "Look at your ugly face. —DNA



RAWALPINDI: Supporters of the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf hold party flags during a protest rally in favour of former Prime Minister Imran Khan at the Murree Road.

Govt to introduce fixed tax, 4.5pc cut in withholding tax

ISLAMABAD: The federal govt has agreed with the traders to introduce a fixed tax system and a reduction in the withholding tax from 4.5pc.

According to a private news channel, this was committed by Federal Minister for Finance Miftah Ismail in a meeting with traders on Saturday in Islamabad. The channel report said a delegation led by Federation Chamber President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh and the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) Chairman called on the Finance Minister regarding the preparations of the budget 2022-23.

The delegation was comprised of the Federation's President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Senior Vice President

Salman Chawla, Regional Chairman Punjab Nadeem Qureshi, Vice President Engineer Jabbar, Chief Coordinator Muhammad Ali Mian, Chaudhry Waheed, Tanveer Sheikh, and Mirza Abdul Rehman. During the meeting between the traders' delegation and the finance minister to bring a fixed tax system for small traders and reduce the withholding tax to less than 4.5 percent.

BRT projects of Karachi would be completed on war footing

Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that all BRT projects of Karachi would be completed on war footing to resolve

the long standing transportation issue of the cosmopolitan city.

He added that Sindh Mass Transit Authority has been directed to setup camp office at the depot of Abdul Satkar Edhi (orange line) and work 24 seven to complete its remaining work by 30 May, positively. The Minister said this while talking to media during visit to BRT Orange Line on Saturday. He said that officers of Sindh Mass Transit Authority have been directed to bring their suit cases and cloths here at camp office at BRT Depot to monitor the pace of work round the clock. He said he would himself visit the project thrice a week to review its progress. —APP