



Islamabad POST

Saturday, May 07, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Shehroz the youngest mountaineer ever to scale Kangchenjunga

Detailed News On Page-06

China offers relief aid to Afghanistan

Detailed News On Page-08



Ben Stokes scores century off 64 balls

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Kaira slams Indian state terrorism

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Qamar Zaman Kaira has strongly condemned the state terrorism unleashed by Modi-led fascist government in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIO-J&K). In a statement on Friday, he said that innocent Kashmiri youth are being martyred in the garb of search operations. He said that the Kashmir dispute must be resolved according to UN resolutions. On Friday, Pakistan rejected the "so-called Delimitation Commission" report for the occupied Jammu and Kashmir, stressing that the Indian government must refrain from bringing about any illegal demographic changes in the held territory.

PML-N must be behind accident

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leader Shahbaz Gill alleged on Friday that PML-N leaders, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah "must be involved" in the car crash — which he claims was an attempt on his life — on the M-2 Motorway in which he was injured a day ago. "Shehbaz Sharif sahib, along with Rana Sanaullah and other friends, must be involved in this accident," Gill told reporters outside the Islamabad High Court as he described the circumstances of the incident. Gill, donning a neck brace and an arm sling, added that he had given his lawyers the names of seven people that "want to get me killed" and who should be held responsible in case any harm came to him or former prime minister Imran Khan. He said they harboured similar intentions for Imran Khan. "As his chief of staff, I fear an attack on him [as well]," he added.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.
- Editor

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Putin prepares to celebrate Victory Day amid war — Page 08

Bilawal, Blinken talk on phone

Pakistan, US resolve to solidify ties

The two leaders also spoke about the promotion of peace and security in the country as well as the region at large



NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday telephoned Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to congratulate him on becoming the country's new foreign minister. Taking to Twitter, Bilawal confirmed that he received the call from his American counterpart and thanked him for the felicitations. Per the tweet, during the phone call, the two sides talked about strengthening the mutually beneficial and broad-based relationship between Pakistan and the United States. The two leaders also spoke about the promotion of peace and security in the country as well as the region at large.

According to the tweet, the leaders also vowed to engage in a mutually respectful way moving forward. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had taken oath as the country's youngest foreign minister on April 27, breaking the records earlier set by his grandfather and a party leader. President Arif Alvi administered the oath to the Oxford-educated PPP chairman, who is 33 years, seven months, and six days of age — a development that came after much delay and deliberation. Earlier on Wednesday, the spokesman for the United States Department of State Ned Price said in a statement that the US will continue cooperating with Pakistan on counterterrorism and border security and reiterated Washington's condemnation of last month's terrorist attack on Karachi University, amid a spike in the such attacks across the country. "We value our bilateral relationship. We want to continue to work together in areas where we do have mutual interests with our Pakistani partners. That includes counterterrorism. That includes border security as well," Spokesman Ned Price had said at his daily press briefing.

Continued on Page 06

Imran tells workers Will announce march any day after May 20

Addressing a gathering, he says a sea of people would reach capital to demand elections



DNA

MIANWALI: Former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Friday told his party's workers to remain prepared for the long march to Islamabad, saying he would announce the final date any day after May 20. Addressing a gathering in his hometown, Mianwali, he said a sea of people would reach the capital to demand only one thing — elections. "Let people decide who will rule us. We will not accept any imported government." Imran told his workers that neither containers placed on the route could stop them from their march nor Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, who he claimed had committed "18 murders".

Continued on Page 06

'Never wanted to bring my own army chief'

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan said he never wanted to bring his own army chief and that he never meddled in Pakistan Army's affairs. In a podcast on Thursday night, he spoke on reports of a "disagreement" between him and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Continued on Page 06

Imran looted treasury, will be held accountable: Maryam

She said that Imran Khan is heartbroken about Shahbaz Sharif becoming the Prime Minister



MUNIR FAISAL

ATTOCK: PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz has said that Imran Khan put the nation in 'Langar Khanas' and kept himself busy in looting the treas-

ury. Addressing the Fateh Jang Jalsa, she said that the people were happy to get rid of Imran Khan. She said that Imran Khan is not saddened by the loss of his government, but he is heartbroken about becoming the Prime Minister of Shahbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: President of Middle East & Africa Region of Huawei, Mr. Yi Xiang and charge d' Affairs China Embassy, Ms Pang Chunxue call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. — DNA

France condemns Karachi attack Assures solidarity to Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: France has strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Karachi University. According to a statement issued by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the French authorities assured the Pakistani side of its solidarity as they deal with the scourge of terrorism. The statement reads as "France condemns in the strongest possible terms terrorist attack at Karachi University. The Baloch Liberation Army claimed credit for the attack, which killed Pakistani and Chinese civilians and left several injured. France offers its condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims of this cowardly, despicable act. It wishes those inured a speedy recovery. France assures the Pakistani authorities of its solidarity as they deal with the scourge of terrorism".

6 working days to continue

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Friday announced that its employees will continue with a six-day work week and will not revert to five working days. Following the approval of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Establishment Division issued a notification stating that the working hours of government offices have been changed to 8 am to 3 pm while on Fridays, working hours will be from 8 am to 1 pm. Earlier, office hours were from 9 am to 5 pm. On April 12, taking charge of the Prime Minister's Office, premier Shehbaz announced a six-day workweek for government offices. — APP

Big opportunities of investment in tech sector: PM

The Premier says foreign tech companies would be facilitated in all respects

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that as Pakistan offered huge opportunities of investment in technology sector, 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 USD 1.5 billion to USD 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 a university, he added. The Prime Minister said this in a meeting with Yi Xiang, Senior Vice President of the Middle East and Africa Region of Huawei. He emphasized that investments in tech sector would increase employment and skills enhancement of Pakistani youth, especially women as the government was focused on increasing the number of women in e-commerce sector by providing them the suitable environment to get themselves trained and raise capital, a press release issued by the PM Media Wing here said.

PM directs measures to curb wheat smuggling, theft

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the authorities concerned to formulate an urgent strategy against the corruption and theft of wheat and for the construction of the silos for storage. The prime minister, chairing a high-level meeting to examine the wheat production, available stock and expected consumption, said the construction of the silos would help curb theft and corruption. He told the meeting that despite being an agricultural country, Pakistan had been compelled to import wheat instead of meeting its own needs, just due to the wrong decisions and delayed strategies. The meeting was told that wheat production of 26.173 million metric tons was expected this year against the target of 28.89 million

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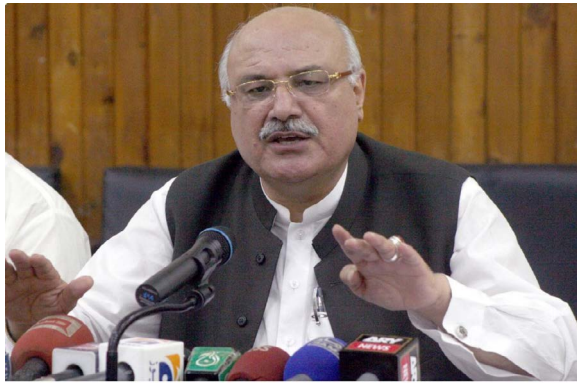
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Imran Govt removed through democratic process: ANP leader

DNA

PESHAWAR: General Secretary of the Awami National Party, Main Iftikhar Hussain here Friday said that Government of Imran Khan was removed purely through a democratic and constitutional process after he had lost confidence of his allied parties and the parliament. He said Imran Khan was the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, who was ousted through a successful no confidence motion. Talking to office bearers of Pabbi Press Club Nowshera, he said that Imran Khan had lost confidence of



both the allied parties and parliament and his agitation politics and public meetings was now aimless. He said Imran Khan has failed to address people problems despite his party nine years rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Mian Iftikhar said that Imran Khan had deceived

masses in the name of change and religion and his new baseless narrative of lettergate would face the same fate as of the so called change narrative. He said Imran Khan should stop hue and cry now after his baseless narrative of foreign conspiracy was rejected by former Pakistani Ambassador at US Asad Majeed Khan and twice by the National Security Committee. Mian Iftikhar said ANP was standing with democracy and constitution. He said that electoral reforms should be made so that no one could raise fingers on the election results.

Rescue-1122 responded to 21,974 emergencies

LAHORE: Punjab Emergency Service (PES) Director-General Dr Rizwan Naseer Friday said that Rescue-1122 Emergency Ambulance, Rescue and Fire Services responded to 21,974 emergencies in all districts of Punjab during five Eid holidays. These emergencies included 6,929 road traffic crashes with 58 deaths, 11,729 medical emergencies with 496 deaths, 673 crime incidents with 22 deaths, 30 drowning emergencies with 19 deaths, 769 fire emergencies with two deaths, 472 delivery emergencies, 390 falls & slipping cases with five deaths, 111 cases of electric shock, 147 occupational injuries, 33 burn cases, seven structural cases, 552 miscellaneous emergencies and 132 animal rescue operations were performed. While chairing a Zoom meeting of District Emergency Officers, the DG appreciated the Rescuers who sacrificed their Eid to perform duties during holidays. However, he expressed serious concern over the loss of precious human lives and disabilities due to road traffic crashes and drowning emergencies during Eid holidays. The District Emergency Officers said that the highest number of emergencies took place in Lahore with 3,100 emergencies, followed by Faisalabad with 1,692 emergencies,

Multan with 1,539 emergencies, Gujranwala with 1,259 emergencies and Bahawalpur with 1,021 emergencies and the lowest number of 174 emergencies in Jhelum.



During the meeting Emergency Officer Murree briefed about forest fire incidents, DEO Rawalpindi informed about major fire in Sabzi Mandi and major road traffic crashes when a 72-seater bus fell into a ditch resulted in 11 injuries and two deaths. DEO Lahore briefed about fire incidents in ICU of Jinnah Hospital and Bakar Mandi at Shahpur Kanjan. DEO

Pakpattan briefed about the fire incident and cylinder blast; DEO Sahiwal apprised about the Nisa cosmetics factory fire incident. The District Emergency Officers of Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Jhang, Chakwal, Sheikhupura, and Okara briefed about drowning incidents in their respective districts during Eid holidays. DEO Okara also shared an interesting drowning emergency in which water rescue teams were deployed to search a seven-year-old child but he was found sleeping under boxes in his own house. The DG appreciated all Rescuers who performed their duty on Eidul Fitr by sacrificing their own Eid. - APP

Neuro unit inaugurated at DHQ

PESHAWAR: Focal Person to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Asya Asad on Saturday inaugurated Neurosurgery unit constructed at cost of RS. 90 million in DHQ hospital Dera Ismail Khan. Provincial Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Faisal Amin Khan and PTI MNA Ali Amin Khan Ghandapur were also present at the inauguration ceremony. Dr. Asya Asad, speaking on the occasion, said that DHQ hospital D.I Khan had a 34 bed trauma with a daily admission of more than 300 patients and the extension of trauma was urgently needed to save precious human lives. She appreciated Chief Minister Mahmood Khan and Health Minister Taimur Khan Jhagra for establishing the Neurosurgery unit. She said that D.I Khan is the second largest district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with vast catchment area including merged districts having no neurosurgery unit and patients with head injury would be referred to either Multan or Peshawar, resulting in death of most patients. She said that now patients could be treated locally lowering mortality rate due to neurotrauma. - APP



FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Zahid Hussain chairs a meeting regarding wheat procurement. - DNA

10990 metric tons wheat confiscated from hoarders

ISHFAQ MUGHAL
FAISALABAD: As many as 10990 metric tons wheat has been confiscated from hoarders/smugglers during 771 raids in going wheat procurement campaign and 9 FIRs have registered against culprits in four districts of Faisalabad Division. It was informed by Divisional Commissioner Zahid Hussain while chairing a meeting to review imple- mentation on wheat procurement campaign in division. He further informed that teams of district administration and food department had jointly taking action against hoarder and smugglers. He said that action against flour mills have also underway and 242 show- cause have been given while licence of three mills cancelled and 4 were suspended besides more than 10 million fine was also imposed. He told that 15616 farmers have been accommodated at wheat procure- ment center and so far 112% bardana has been distributed and 91.56 % wheat have been procured from farmers. Divisional Commissioner asked the Deputy Commissioners to monitor the wheat procurement campaign in letter and spirit and all necessary arrangements should be maintained till the end. He directed to take Stern action against smugglers and hoarders and report should be provided to him every-day.

Police arrest man who hit Gill's vehicle

DNA
LAHORE: Police on Friday arrested the man who hit Shahbaz Gill's vehicle and termed the entire episode as an accident, claiming that he had not committed the act intentionally. The police while sharing details of the vehicle that was involved in the accident said that it was owned by Tahir Nazir, who is a resident of Muridke, however, he had given his vehicle on rent to a man named Wajahat Ali. "Wajahat Ali was traveling with his fami- ly when he met an accident," the owner told police as authorities arrested the suspect and also took possession of the vehicle. Wajahat Ali claimed that he stopped at the incident site briefly but later ran away out of fear after he saw Shahbaz Gill coming out of his vehicle. Police after statements from the suspects concluded that evidence and probe point it to be an accident which occurred due to negligence of Wajahat Ali. They further clarified that it was not a pre- meditated attempt to hit Gill. "We are handing over the suspect to Hafizabad police for further probe," the police said.

6 injured in honey bees attack

DNA
FAISALABAD: Six persons were injured due to attack of honey bees in the area of Balochni police station. A spokesperson for Rescue-1122 said on Friday that some schoolchildren teased the honey bees by throwing stone on their hive in Chak No 67-RB. As a result, a bee swarm attacked and injured four children including Sufiyan (10), Bilal (12), Muhammad Ali (6), Rehan (11) and two teachers including Usman Khan (32) and Jaffar Hus- sain (30). The Rescue-1122 personnel shifted the injured to hospital where their condition was stated out of danger, he added.

2.5 million housing units required to cater people's demands

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Waqas Anjum, Assistant Director, Provincial Housing Authority (PHA), on Friday said that around 2.5 million in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were required to cater the growing housing demand of people in the country. Muhammad Waqas Anjum, Assistant Director, Provincial Housing Authority (PHA), told APP on Friday that Pakistan was facing a shortfall of around 10 million houses including 2.5 million in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said Naya Pakistan Housing Program has conducted a survey regarding shortfall of houses and revealed that five million houses of five marla were required in Pa-

Severe heat wave likely to persist in southern KP

DNA
PESHAWAR: Regional Met Office, Peshawar on Friday predicted severe heat wave conditions in southern parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during next week, said a dispatch of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to all Deputy Commissioners of the province here on Friday. It said that a high pressure system in the upper atmosphere is likely to prevail over the region during next week and under the influence of this system the day temperatures are likely to increase gradually in most parts of the province especially in the southern parts from Sunday (May 07, 2022). It said that day temperatures (maximum temperatures) are likely to remain 07-09 C above normal in most districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

“Rehman Baba Complex Peshawar would be constructed on 79 kanal where 2,180 residential flats would be constructed in three years”

He said Peshawar was facing a shortfall of 104, 897 houses while 58,309 houses required in Mardan, 65,749 in Swat, 39,981 in DI Khan, 39,919 in Swabi, 39,712 in Charsadda, 38,244 in Mansehra, 37, 313 in Nowshera and 35, 282 in Lower Dir. He said about 32,751 were needed in Abbottabad, 28,697 in Bannu, 24,646 in Haripur, 24,421 in Kohat, 23,255 in Upper Dir, 20,048 in Buner, 21,529 in Lakk Marwat, 19,281 in Kohistan, 18620 in Shangla, 17,699 in Malakand, 17,355 in Karak, 17,748 in Hangu, 11,711 in Batagram, 10,992 in Chitral, 9,629 in Tank and 4,211 in Torgar. He said only 6,500 kanal land was available in Peshawar, 560 kanal in Swat, 377 kanal in Charsadda, 300 kanal and 8,300 land in Hangu for construction of affordable houses. Waqas Anjum said the current demand for new housing units was growing at the rate of 600,000 houses per year and if we add five lakh houses per year than 1.1 million units per annum would be required to clear the existing backlog of 10 million houses in next 20 years. He said 15 housing projects including work on Hangu township on 8,400 kanal was launched in KP to cater people requirements. The official said that 10,500 housing units in Hangu would be constructed with an estimated cost of Rs10 billion in next three to five years. Three high rise buildings at Nishtarabad, Warsak-I and Warsak-II in Peshawar are being launched where 900 residential flats would be constructed, he said, adding consultants were hired for Warsak-I covering 4.14 kanal and Warsak-II of 3.8 kanal costing Rs3,500 million. Similarly, a 20 storey high rise building on 36 kanal would be constructed at Nishtarabad in Peshawar City where 300 low-cost residential flats to be built for the underprivileged and poor families. Similarly, 2,056 residential flats were constructed for industrial workers with an estimated cost of Rs5.93 billion at Shahi Bala. He said Rehman Baba Complex Peshawar would be constructed on 79 kanal where 2,180 residential flats would be constructed in three years. Jalozi housing project in Nowshera is being constructed on 8,400 kanal where about 9,000 housing units would be constructed besides 1, 300 residential flats are being built. Under PHA Foundation and KP government's joint venture project, he said 8, 000 low-cost housing units in first phase would be constructed at Surizai Peshawar. - APP

The possible impacts of the high pressure system are that very hot and dry weather conditions may cause heat stroke, water stress on water reservoirs, crops, vegetables and orchards.

COURT NOTICE

In the court of miss Misbah Hussain sahibah family Judge Jhelum
Title of case: BATOOL ARSHAD etc VS IFTIKHAR AHMED
Respondent: iftkhar ahmed s/o matali khan r/o marala p/o khas Tehsil And District Mandi Bahauddin permanent address Leninring 62, BUT 20W, 18246 MV Germany
Claim: Dissolution of marriage
In each case, the respondent are informed through advertisement. As there is not possible to call the respondent through Summon in the instant case so through proclama- tion in Newspaper, you are directed to appear or legal advisor in the court on 07-05-2022 at 8:00AM, otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.

Ulema for action against miscreants involved in Madinah incident

ISLAMABAD: Ulema and Mashaikh hailing from all schools of thought on Friday urged to take action against the miscreants for violating the sanctity of Masjid-e-Nabvi. Addressing people during the Friday's sermons, they said those who desecrated the Prophet's Mosque had tarnished the image of Pakistan across the globe. Regarding former Human Rights Minister Dr Shireen Mazari's letter written to the United Nations special rapporteurs against the misuse of blasphemy law, the Ulema and Mashaikh said if the blasphemy law was misused at any place, then there were courts and national institutions to sort out the issue. They said Shireen Mazari's letter would strengthen anti-blasphemy and anti-religion forces across the world. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chief Imran Khan should ask her to withdraw the letter in the larger national interest, they appealed. They said the unruly mob violated the sanctity of Masjid-e-Nabvi with a systematic planning which had not happened in 100 years of history.

Ulema and Mashaikh said the nation expected Imran Khan and the PTI to openly condemn the disgraceful incident. They said political differences should not lead to the extent of revenge and hatred. It was unfortunate that the sanctities were being targeted under the guise of political differences as a malicious campaign was being launched against the Pakistan Army, they added. They said nobody would be allowed to misuse the blasphemy law in the country and welcomed the steps taken by the prime minister in that regard. The Ulema and Mashaikh included Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Maulana Dr Abu Bakar Siddique (Islamabad), Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid (Multan), Qazi Matiullah Saeedi (Gujrat), Maulana Asadullah Farooq (Lahore), Maulana Asad Zakaria (Karachi), Maulana Haq Nawaz Khalid, Maulana Obaidullah Gormani, Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan (Faisalabad), Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Hanif Usmani (Sahiwal), Pir Asad Habib Shah Jamali and others. - APP

PTI's govt damaged economy but now it is improving rapidly: Naveed Qamar

DNA
HYDERABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar on Friday said that the previous government had damaged the country's economy and exports were reduced to zero but now the situation was improving on fast track. Addressing the meet-the-press here at a local press club, Syed Naveed Qamar said that after the fall of PTI's government, the people breathed a sigh of relief as the prior government had violated the constitution and law. He said that it was unconstitutional



for the Governor of Punjab to write a letter to the Army Chief. When asked about the possible ar-

rest of Imran Khan, Syed Naveed Qamar responded that it was a matter of law and not of the government, and added that PTI should fulfill its duty by marching to Islamabad within the ambit of law. Naveed further warned of legal action in case anyone breaks the law during the march. "The issue is not electronic voting or internet voting, but holding transparent elections is the real problem", Naveed Qamar voiced, adding that country was standing at a crossroads from where we could not move back, therefore moving forward was only option. In response to a question, he re-

INVITATION TO BIDS
Headquarters 23 Division Jhelum Cantt invites sealed bids from the Suppliers/Contractor Registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Department and who are on Active Taxpayer List of the Federal Board of Revenue for supply of construction material and purchase of misc items (Detail will be given at the spot)
2. Bidding documents, containing detailed terms and conditions' etc' are available at office of the this Headquarters Price of the bidding documents is Rs. 1500/-
3. The bids' prepared in accordance with the instruction in the bidding documents' must reach at Office of Headquarters 23 Division Jhelum Cantt on 15 May 2022 at 0930 hrs the latest Bids will be opened on the same day at 1000 hrs. This advertisement is also available on PPRa website www.ppra.org.pk.
Headquarters 23 Division Jhelum Cantt

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

- MAY**
 May 03 / **Poland** National Day
 May 06 / **Bulgaria** Armed Forces Day
 May 06 / **UAE** Armed Forces Day
 May 07 / **Kazakhstan** Armed Forces Day
 May 08 / **Czech Republic** National Day
 May 09 / **European Union** National Day
 May 17 / **Norway** Constitution Day
 May 21 / **Hungary** Armed Forces Day
 May 22 / **Yemen Republic** Re-unification Day (National Day)
 May 24 / **Eritrea** National Day
 May 25 / **Lebanon** Liberation and Resistance Day
 May 25 / **Argentina** National Day
 May 25 / **Jordan** Independence Day
 May 28 / **Azerbaijan** Republic Day
 May 28 / **Ethiopia** National Day
 May 31 / **Brunei** Armed Forces Day



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 Motorway Police.....9270601-20
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 Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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Water Tank

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin met with the Chairman of the CDA, Amir Ali Ahmad. – DNA

RCCI to organize technology conference in June 2022
 Stalls for robots, drones, digital products, medical equipment and IT products will be displayed

RAWALPINDI: A technology conference and exhibition organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce will be held in the first week of June. Chamber President Nadeem Rauf said in a statement that the purpose of the exhibition is to highlight the problems faced by IT companies and find solutions to them, as well as to inform the business community about modern trends such as artificial intelligence. The Conference and the exhibition will be held at a local hotel in Rawalpindi from June

3 to 4 in which renowned IT companies and institutes from across Pakistan exhibit their products. The stalls for robots, drones, digital products, medical equipment and IT products will be displayed. President Nadeem Rauf said that the IT sector in Pakistan has become an industry. There is a need to raise awareness about the use of modern technology in Pakistan and to facilitate customers and encourage Pakistani IT companies. "We have to equip ourselves to meet the future challenges of technology and this is the right time to get the latest information on Robotics, Business Automation, Smart Health Solutions, e-logistics and 3D Technologies", he added.



RCCI president further added that in Pakistan the IT industry had great potential and urged the government to provide a favourable environment for the promotion of IT in different sectors including banking (e-banking), medicine (telemedicine) and manufacturing (e-designing). With the increase of internet penetration in Pakistan, he said, the IT sector offered huge potential for local companies to join hands with multinational companies.

NHA for ensuring smooth traffic flow

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: National Highway Authority (NHA) has taken steps to ensure smooth flow of traffic in Abbottabad city and it had rehabilitated the city portion of Abbottabad so far. An official of NHA told APP on Friday that the remaining portion between Allah Hoo Chowk and Havelian Interchange would be rehabilitated after the finalization of the procurement of periodic maintenance contracts. The official said that traffic management in the city was the responsibility of the traffic police and local administration; however, the NHA always remained in close coordination for any assistance and cooperation in this regard. He said that estimate for the installation of a pedestrian bridge at Sarban Chowk is in the process of approval by the Competent Authority. Moreover, he said that the NHA has initiated the widening and improvement of the Abbottabad Built-up Area Project from Muslim Abad to Shaheena Jamil Hospital. The total length of the Project was 17 km. The project included three packages 6.8 km Muslimabad-Bus stand package, a 1.6 km bus stand-Allah Hoo Chowk package, and an 8.5 km Allah Hoo Chowk-APS package.

Senate body on HR takes notice over Madinah incident
 Relevant authorities should attend the committee and inform the committee members about the incident and registration of FIR

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights on Friday took notice of Masjid-e-Nabvi incident and subsequent registration of FIRs. The briefing was summoned from the Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Home Affairs, IGP Punjab and CPO Faisalabad. The meeting of the committee has been convened in the House of Parliament on 9 May 2022. Relevant authorities should attend the committee and inform the committee

members about the incident and registration of FIR, said Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Human Rights Senator Waleed Iqbal. Waleed Iqbal said the briefing session has been summoned from the relevant authorities on various issues like how many FIRs have been registered in the country so far as a result of this incident and what are the details? An information session has also been summoned to discuss in details the matter on alleged misuse of sections 295, 295A and 296 of the Pakistani Penal Code, including 'offences related

to religion'. Waleed Iqbal said that briefing on alleged misuse of 296, including 'crimes related to religion', has been sought, adding were the requirements of Section 196 of the Penal Code, 1898, complied with before the registration of the said FIR? The briefing also questions if the crime was committed in Saudi Arabia, are there similar cases? Chairman of the Humanitarian Committee Senator Waleed Iqbal has sought details and said if no such cases were registered in Saudi Arabia, on what basis were these cases registered in Pakistan?

Football exports witness 40.33 pc increase

ISLAMABAD: Football exports during the first nine months of fiscal year of 2021-22 grew up by 40.33 percent as compared to the exports of the commodity during the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-March 2021-22, Footballs worth US \$132,936 were exported as compared to the exports of US \$ 94,730 during the same period of last year. According to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the exports of Sports goods increased by 35.23 per-

03 robbers held; weapons recovered

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have arrested three robbers who escaped after firing on police during a raid in Dhok Ramzan area of PS Tarnol, a police spokesman said. He said that, Tarnol police team got information that the robbers involved in case FIR No. 517/22 who escaped after firing on a raiding police party were coming from Dhok chhoi, Sarae Kharboota to Sarae madhu sangani toll plaza. On this information, a police team headed by SHO Tarnol Muhammad Iqbal Gujjar with other officials erected a picket at Sarae madhu and started checking. During the checking, the police party stopped three suspected persons riding on two motorbikes after taking all safety measures. During searching the suspected persons, a police party recovered one kalashnikov, two pistols with ammunition from their possession. The accused were later identified as Abdul Razzaq s/o Nasir, Zohaib s/o Iqbal Khan and Sikandar Badshah residents of Tarnol who were involved in firing at a police party on 30 April, 2022 during a raid.

2661 criminals held, looted items worth Rs: 119.8m recovered

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have arrested 2661 outlaws in the month of April 2022 and recovered looted valuables worth more than Rs. 119.8 million in property cases from them, a police spokesman said. He said that following the special directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Muhammad Faisal Kamran directed all zonal police officials to accelerate efforts against anti-social elements and ensure their arrest. As per his orders, renewed efforts were made besides strict law and order duties

and police achieved remarkable success during April. Owing these efforts, 426 accused involved in Dacoity/robbery, theft, vehicle and motorbike theft and tampering vehicle were apprehended besides recovery of 119.8 millions including 53 vehicles and 51 motorbikes and 51 accused of 21 gangs. Likewise, police also arrested 143 absconders during the same period including 48 proclaimed offenders and 95 court absconders. Moreover, police nabbed 59 accused for involvement in bootlegging and drug peddling activities while 31.837 kilogram hashish, 17.83 kilogram heroin, 1.052 kilogram ice, and 175 bottles wine were recovered from them. Police also arrested 107 persons for having illegal weapons and recovered 03 Kalashnikovs, 02 guns, 103 pistols and 485 cartridges from them. During a special campaign against professional aims seekers, 1146 beggars were arrested while 13 facilitators of professional beggars were nabbed and cases were registered against them. In addition,

27 culprits were held for being involved in aerial firing and 13 cases were registered against them. As many as 36 persons were arrested over violation of section 144 and 24 cases were registered against them. During the year, a Police spokesman said that a special campaign was launched against land grabbing mafia in the Capital. A total of 33 cases were registered against them and 37 land grabbers were also arrested. This campaign is being continued very effectively. While reviewing this performance, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas has appreciated it. The IGP Islamabad said that criminal elements would not be spared and those involved in such acts would have to face action as per law.

Rupee sheds 94 paise against dollar

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Exchange rate of Pak Rupee weakened by 94 paise against the US Dollar in the inter-bank trading on Friday and closed at Rs 186.62 against the previous day's closing of Rs 185.68. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 185.5 and Rs 186.5 respectively. The price of Euro appreciated by 27 paise and closed at Rs 196.02 against the previous day's closing of Rs 195.75. The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.43, whereas a decrease of Rs 3.58 was witnessed in the exchange rate of British Pound, which was traded at Rs 229.88 as compared to its last closing of Rs 233.46. The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 25 paise to close at Rs 50.80 and Rs 49.75 respectively.

Citizen's safety; our foremost priority: IGP

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas said that Islamabad police is taking all out efforts to secure the lives and property of the citizens. He said this while holding khuli kachehri in the Central police office to listen to the public as well as police official's issues. 09 citizens and police officials attended the khuli kachehri held on Friday. He marked applications to the concerned officers and directed them to resolve on a given time frame and send a report to his office. IGP also marked one application of citizen to SDPO Saddar against the investigation officer and directed him to investigate it on merit and send the report within three days. He also strictly directed all zonal officers to listen to public complaints and resolve them purely on merit. "No laxity will be tolerated in this regard" he added. Islamabad police chief emphasized that Islamabad police are committed to resolve the public grievances on priority and on merit. "We are public servants and to secure the life and property of the citizens is our foremost priority" the IGP maintained.

ITP organizes 2,164 road safety education workshops during ongoing Year

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) is striving to ensure traffic discipline and minimize violation of rules through educating road users and arranged 2,164 road safety workshops during the ongoing Year. These traffic workshops were arranged for driving license applicants, volunteers, students of educational institutions and staff of government and non-government

organizations. In a bid to educate motorists on the correct traffic procedures, in charge ITP Education Wing Inspector (Traffic) Rana Muhammad Ishtiaq said that ITP is arranging such workshops and creating awareness amongst people about consequences of traffic rules violations, including over speeding, one-wheeling, inappropriate number plates, juvenile driving, lane-line discipline, zebra crossing, the use of helmets and so on. He said this effort is meant to infuse traffic discipline, which will

help protect the lives and property of road users. The Inspector (Traffic) said road safety workshops were being arranged in government and private organizations, including educational institutions, to sensitize road users about various traffic rules. The awareness campaign for the safety of road users is in full swing, he added. In this regard, special teams have been constituted to teach road users how to ensure their safety before travelling on roads, particularly motorbike riders were being

advised how to take the left lane while travelling. The Inspector (Traffic) said that these teams were performing duties at various main roads of the city and briefing motorbike riders and other motorists about safety. Those motorbike riders driving without helmets and side mirrors or having defective indicators, headlights, rear lights and speed metres are being cautioned and urged to get their bikes and vehicles repaired. He explained that a number of motorbike riders suffer road accidents due to faulty lights or indicators. Traffic police also put up banners at key points on roads, besides the radio station of police is regularly airing programs to apprise transporters, drivers and citizen on traffic law and safety measures. He said that pamphlets are also distributed among the road users urging them to follow traffic rules and help ITP in its efforts to ensure traffic discipline in the city. An exemplary traffic system would be ensured in the city through cooperation of citizens, he added.

US eyes 'nuclear freedom'

CHARLES Richard, the head of US Strategic Command, which oversees the nuclear arsenal, warned Congress Wednesday that Washington faces a "heightened nuclear deterrence risk when it comes to Russia and China," claiming that China is "watching the war in Ukraine closely and will likely use nuclear coercion to their advantage in the future." He also warned the lawmakers that the US is facing "a crisis deterrence dynamic right now that we have only seen a few times in our nation's history." Sensationalizing China's "nuclear threat" to justify actual US nuclear expansion has become a familiar trick of Washington. Last month, Richard told lawmakers at a closed-door hearing that China's "breathtaking expansion" of its strategic and nuclear arsenal is a quickly escalating risk for the US. In March, he said he is "very concerned" about potential "cooperative aggression" from China and Russia. If the efforts are to expand the budget for the department he's in charge, Richard made it - according to the Biden administration's recently submitted fiscal year 2023 defense budget, total spending on nuclear weapons and systems research and procurement grew to \$34.4 billion from \$27.7 billion for fiscal year 2022. Of course, this is part of Washington's series ways to justify its arbitrary "nuclear freedom" and "nuclear hegemony" by pretending to worry that "deterrence is no longer sufficient." That is why politicians and media in Washington either hype disinformation like "China is building missile silos in its northwest part," or promote ridiculous fantasies, such as "China might use nuclear weapons in the Taiwan Straits," based completely on hypothetical assumptions. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, it was the US and Western media and politicians who hyped the risk of nuclear war and wanted to "bind" China to Russia, even though China had nothing to do with the war.

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Government should ensure public relief

THE steps that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is taking to provide facilities and relief to the people are certainly commendable but so far these steps are still seen in the form of promises. As long as these promises do not fit into the framework of action, they can only be called sweet dreams. It is a fact that Shahbaz Sharif is known for his passion for public service and as the Chief Minister of Punjab he was known in the past as the best Chief Minister of the country for the work he has done for the welfare of the people. But the requirements for the post of Prime Minister are also slightly different, complex and demanding attention. Now it remains to be seen how the Prime Minister manages to maintain his good reputation and restores the confidence of the people in the political and democratic system by providing relief to them in a span of almost a year. Pakistan as a state and as a society has reached the point where we really need a head of government who is aware of the people's grievances and concerns and he can solve them. Shahbaz Sharif has very little time to show his performance as Prime Minister and there are a lot of problems. The previous government multiplied the problems in a span of almost four years instead of reducing them, due to which Shahbaz Sharif and his team will have to do a lot of work in a short period of time. Shahbaz Sharif is running hard to deal with this situation, but the results of his efforts will show how long it will take for the people to regain confidence in the system.

Hamas eyes Malaysia as a possible operations base

James M. Dorsey

The anti-Islamist moves are part of broader Turkish efforts to improve relations with its Middle Eastern detractors, not only Israel but also Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt, where general-turned-president Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi toppled in 2013 a democratically elected...

MALAYSIA has emerged as a potential external operations base for Hamas, the Islamist group that controls the Gaza Strip if Turkey expels or restricts the group's movements as a part of its rapprochement with Israel. Turkey has in recent months deported Hamas activists or refused them entry into the country as it sought to improve its troubled relations with Israel, according to Israeli press reports. Turkish-Israeli relations have been strained since Israeli forces stormed a flotilla in 2010 headed towards Gaza in a bid to break an Israeli-Egyptian blockade. Nine activists were killed, and ten Israeli soldiers wounded in the incident. The flotilla sailed from Turkey and was chartered by a Turkish NGO. Israeli President Isaac Herzog visited Ankara in March, becoming the first Israeli president to do so in 15 years. At a summit with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, both leaders pledged to open a new chapter in the relationship. The press reports suggested that the deported Hamas operatives had been on an Israeli list presented to Turkey of individuals involved in the group's armed activities in violation of their terms of residence in Turkey. Saleh al-Aroui, Hamas' deputy political bureau head, and former military commander, reportedly was among those expelled. Sources close to Hamas warned that a withdrawal of support for the group would undermine Turkish efforts to position itself as a champion of Muslim causes, first and foremost Palestine, at a time that it is competing for geopolitical leverage and religious soft power in the Muslim world. "Turkey knows that a break with Hamas would damage its image. Also,

don't forget that Palestine remains an emotive issue in Turkey itself," one source said Israel has long demanded that Turkey, which has granted Turkish citizenship to some Hamas leaders, crackdown on the group as part of any improvement in relations. Earlier this week, Al Mekalemeen, a Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated television station, said it was shutting down its operations in Turkey "due to circumstances that everyone knows about." Al Mekalemeen did not specify the circumstances. Turkey had earlier begun to curtail Egyptian opposition media that had either flocked to Istanbul or been newly established in the city as it emerged as a Mecca for primarily Islamist Middle Eastern opposition and dissidents. Hamas is widely seen as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. The anti-Islamist moves are part of broader Turkish efforts to improve relations with its Middle Eastern detractors, not only Israel but also Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt, where general-turned-president Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi toppled in 2013 a democratically elected Brotherhood government with Saudi and Emirati support. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation. Last year, UAE foreign minister Abdullah bin Zayed called on Western countries to identify Hamas in its totality rather than just its military wing as a terrorist organisation. Israel and Egypt have blockaded Gaza since 2005, when Israeli troops withdrew from the Strip conquered during the 1967 Middle East war. Hamas seized control of the region in 2007 in armed clashes with its rival Al Fatah after narrowly winning elections in 2006. Palestinian President Mahmood Abbas leads Al Fatah. In a twist of irony, Hamas retains a degree of support from Qatar with Israel's tacit agreement. Ismail Haniyeh, one of Hamas's most senior leaders, is believed to remain a resident in the Gulf state, where he publicly meets with visiting dignitaries like Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and Palestinians from the West Bank. The Hamas official has also met twice in the last three years with Qatari emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Nonetheless, Qatar is unlikely to allow the group to re-establish itself after the Gulf state forced it to move to Turkey as part of a 2014 deal that led to a return of the Saudi, Emirati, and Bahraini ambassadors to Doha. The ambassadors had been withdrawn in protest against Qatar's alleged support of Islamists. As a result, Malaysia has emerged as a potential base because the group has nowhere to go in the Middle East if Turkey expels it or severely curtails its activities and presence in the country. If forced to find another base, Hamas' choices are reminiscent of those Palestine Liberation Organisation

leader Yasser Arafat faced in 1982 when Israeli troops forced Palestinian fighters to leave Beirut. At the time, Tunisia, the PLO's new home, seemed a long way from Palestine but was at least an Arab country. Malaysia would seem not only geographically but also culturally more distant from Palestine than Tunisia. Even so, Hamas enjoys public support in Malaysia. "They already have a substantial base here. Not only in the form of the Palestinian Cultural Organisation Malaysia but also others employed in universities and as professionals. So, anything short of a base - however conceived - would be ok," said a well-placed Malaysian source. Some analysts said the cultural organization, or PCOM, was widely seen as Hamas' 'embassy' in competition with the Al Fatah-controlled official Palestinian embassy in Kuala Lumpur. The PCOM was founded after Al Fatah refused to vacate the embassy following the 2006 election. Hamas has used its cultural center in Kuala Lumpur to maintain unofficial contacts with various Southeast Asian nations that do not want to be seen to be talking to the group either because of their relations with Israel, their opposition to political Islam, and/or their standing in Europe and the United States. The US has designated Hamas as a terrorist organisation. Neither Indonesia nor Malaysia, Southeast Asia's major Muslim-majority countries, have diplomatic ties with Israel. However, Malaysia is more strident in its opposition to the Jewish state, support of the Palestinians, and at times anti-Semitic statements, particularly by its former prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad. To be sure, it is still early days in the rapprochement between Turkey and Israel at a time when broader efforts to reduce regional tensions remain fragile. Moreover, with US-Iranian negotiations to revive the 2015 international agreement that curbed the Islamic republic's nuclear program seemingly at a breaking point, tensions could easily still spin out of control. A failure to agree on a return to the agreement, from which the United States unilaterally withdrew in 2018, could throw the Israeli-Turkish rapprochement into a tailspin. Moreover, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu warned last month that "sustainable relations" between Israel and Turkey would require Israel to "respect the international law on the Palestinian issue." Mr. Cavusoglu did not spell out what he issues he was referring to but is expected to visit Israel later this month.

— Dr. James M. Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and scholar, a Senior Fellow at the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute and Adjunct Senior Fellow at Nanyang Technological University's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, and the author of the syndicated column and blog, *The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer*.

Understanding Croatia's anti-Bosnia agenda

Hamza Karcic

A Croat member of the European Parliament ZeljanaZovko has taken up the issue of electoral reforms as one of her main priorities and declared recently that Bosnia's elections this year would...

ON April 26, Croatian president Zoran Milanovic stated that Zagreb should block Finland and Sweden's NATO accession until there is a change in Bosnia's electoral legislation. No, this was not a Donald Trump-style mix-up of European regions. The Croatian president's linking of the two unrelated issues has many analysts and citizens in Bosnia puzzled as to what is happening in the country's political echelons. When he was elected president in early 2020, Milanovic was welcomed as a breath of fresh air in the Balkans. His predecessor, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic of the Croatian Democratic Union, had pursued right-wing politics while generating headlines with gaffe-prone statements. His key argument that Bosnian Croats are discriminated against and underrepresented is unfounded. In fact, Covic's party wields disproportionate influence in Bosnia's politics. Most observers concur that the electoral reforms advocated by Covic would further entrench ethnic division and lay the foundations of a Bosnian Croat RepublikaSrpska. Until relatively recently, Covic had managed to frame the election law reform as the most pressing of Bosnia's myriad issues. His push for electoral reform in Bosnia is amplified and supported by a number of Croatia's officials internationally. Foremost among them is President Milanovic, but others have joined the bandwagon. Importantly, Zagreb has been using its EU membership to frame Croat interests in Bosnia as those representing European values and standards. A Croat member of the European Parliament ZeljanaZovko has taken up the issue of electoral reforms as one of her main priorities and declared recently that Bosnia's elections this year would be "illegitimate." Similarly, Croatia's foreign minister declared that the results of elections in Bosnia would be 'illegitimate' unless there is election reform. In other words, top political officials in Zagreb are echoing Covic's talking points in the EU. The Croatian president regularly directs insults at his Bosnian neighbours. His racist declaration that Bosnia needed first "soap, and then perfume" in December 2020 sent shockwaves across the country. A year later, Milanovic described Srebrenica as a "grave crime with elements of a genocide," which was widely condemned as diminishing the scale of the genocide. In February this year, Milanovic stated that upcoming elections in Bosnia should not be held unless there is a deal on election law reform. That same month, he compared Bosniak politicians to war criminal Slobodan Milosevic. In fact, Milanovic's controversial statements on Bosnia are now commonplace. But a review of Milanovic's past attitudes towards Bosnia shows that his approach to this country is not new. In 2015, as Croatia's prime minister, he blocked the export of milk from Bosnia in a bid to pressure Sarajevo. In 2016, as leader of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia, Milanovic was recorded as saying that Bosnia is not a country but a "big s*** [sic]." Perhaps Milanovic has been consistent in his view of Bosnia all along. Having shown his true colours, there is not much hope for improving relations between the two states while he is in office. If a nominal social democrat has this track record on Bosnia, then what should be expected of nationalist politicians? — Hamza Karcic is an associate professor at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Sarajevo. Source: TRT World

Pakistan and regional cooperation

Samra Athar Kakakhel

Pakistan and Uzbekistan want to promote science and technology linkages and cooperation between the youths to benefit the people of both countries. Both countries want to collaborate in education, culture, security, and defense and reiterated their commitment to continue pursuing common goals of economic development. Both countries want to have strong bilateral ties and desire to promote multifaceted cooperation...

PAKISTAN'S desire to play a strategic and logistic role in the Eurasian energy market linking transit corridors and pipelines. Pakistan is interested in reviving its project with Iran. Furthermore, Pakistan wants partnerships with Russian companies in the oil and gas field as well as with Uzbekistan to promote science and technology linkages and cooperation between the youths to benefit the people of the two countries. Pakistan is the world's eleventh-largest importer of liquefied natural gas (LNG). We have an extensive gas pipeline system of more than 100,000 km for domestic distribution. As imports of LNG are way more expensive than supplies through regional pipelines, Pakistan is looking forward to realizing several infrastructural projects with neighboring countries. Pakistan has a plan to build a pipeline to import Iranian gas in Pakistan but due to hold sanctions imposed on Tehran it's still pending. Pakistan wants to renew the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to resume its project with Tehran. It would be cheaper than importing LNG as it will be "next door", benefiting the Pakistani economy. Pakistan wants to improve its energy security through Russia. The country's authorities believe that threatening ties with Russia would be too expensive but Pakistan wants to finalize the Stream gas pipeline project. A joint pipeline project is already under construction by Russian companies and will transport LNG from southern Pakistan to its north. Pakistan is involved in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline. The project was delayed after the fall of the Ghani government

in Afghanistan. The Islamic Emirate, which took power in the country, showed interest in reviving the project, and the Kremlin suggested that Russia might support it (Russian companies' interests in Afghanistan as well as TAPI). Pakistan and Uzbekistan want to promote science and technology linkages and cooperation between the youths to benefit the people of both countries. Both countries want to collaborate in education, culture, security, and defense and reiterated their commitment to continue pursuing common goals of economic development. Both countries want to have strong bilateral ties and desire to promote multifaceted cooperation in all spheres, including political, trade, economic, defense, security, connectivity, education, and cultural exchanges. Both countries focus on connectivity for boosting tourism and people-to-people exchanges. There will be joint declaration i.e. 'Next Steps in Strategic Partnership between Pakistan and Uzbekistan' as well as a memorandum of understanding and agreements in multiple areas. The signing of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) would open new avenues for enhancing bilateral trade and action plan of practical measures (road map) to develop cooperation in security. **Conclusion:** Pakistan aims to become a regional transit hub for energy, and bilateral trade to develop infrastructure and become a link between Asia and Europe with Long-Term Investing, Infrastructure, and Development. To Focus on Geo-economics, and international Security. Pakistan is developing its infrastructure to become a corridor for Eurasian markets all across the world.

Briefs

Pakistan, US resolve to solidify ties

FROM PAGE 01 He was responding to a question about whether the US was reviewing the former Trump administration-imposed suspension of security aid to Islamabad following the deadly terrorist attack in Karachi...

Will announce march any day after May 20

FROM PAGE 01 He vowed that the nation would not bow before anyone as long as he was alive. The PTI chairman is conducting a whirlwind series of rallies, starting from today to May 20.

Referring to his former aide Shahbaz Gill's recent accident, Imran, during his address today, said he was warning the government that if it touched any PTI worker in the future, he would hold "three stooges and their handlers" responsible.

Talking about his government's achievements, he said it had reduced the current account deficit for the first time in 11 years, adding that Pakistan was among a few countries which protected their people from the ramifications of the coronavirus pandemic.

'Never wanted to bring my own army chief'

FROM PAGE 01 particularly related to the posting of the former chief of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Lt General Faiz Hameed. He was responding to a question by one of the hosts, who asked him "what went wrong" with the former premier's relationship with the establishment.

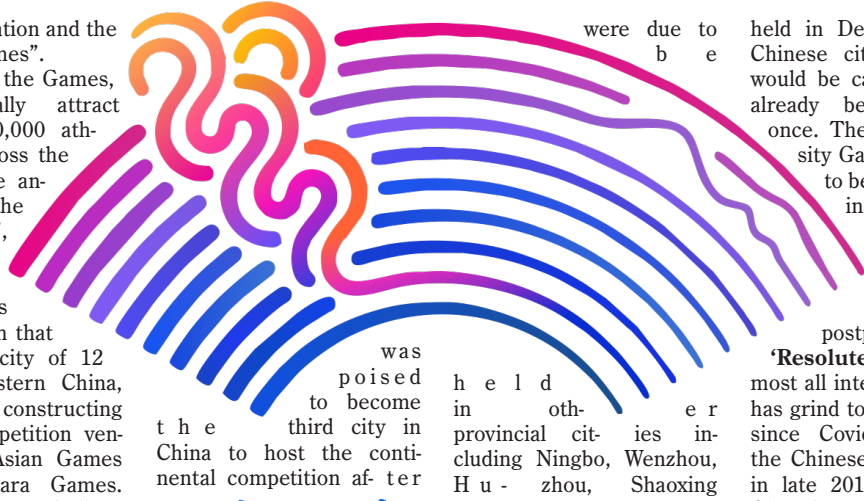
Asian Games postponed as China battles Covid-19

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) said in a statement that the decision to postpone "was taken by all the stakeholders after carefully considering the pandemic situation and the size of the Games"

DNA

BEIJING: The Asian Games due to take place in the Chinese city of Hangzhou in September have been postponed indefinitely because of Covid-19, organisers said on Friday. The Games were scheduled to be held from September 10 to 25 but have not been delayed as China tries to stamp out a large resurgence in infections in several parts of the country.

Organisers said last month that Hangzhou, a city of 12 million in eastern China, had finished constructing some 56 competition venues for the Asian Games and Asian Para Games. At the time, they indicated that they planned to hold the event under a virus control plan that "learns from the successful experience" of the Beijing Winter Olympics, which were held in February in a strict Covid-secure bubble.



19th Asian Games Hangzhou 2022

Beijing in 1990 and Guangzhou in 2010. Some events were due to be held in December in the Chinese city of Shantou, would be cancelled having already been postponed once.

'Resolutely fight' Almost all international sport has grind to a halt in China since Covid emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. The Beijing Olympics was an exception but it was held in a strict "closed loop" with everyone inside it, including athletes, staff, volunteers and media, taking daily Covid tests and not allowed to venture into the wider city or have contact with the public.

China has stubbornly stuck to a zero-Covid policy, imposing strict lockdowns, quarantines and mass testing programmes even while other countries start to reopen as the threat of the pandemic recedes. The government has touted the strategy as proof that it values human life above material concerns and can avert the public health crises seen in many Western countries.

Shehroze becomes youngest ever to scale Kangchenjunga



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's youngest mountaineer Shehroze Kashif on Thursday added another feather

to his cap, as he became the youngest mountaineer to reach the summit of the 8,586-meter Kangchenjunga peak. Kashif, who hails from Lahore, also achieved another feat as he is the

first Pakistani to scale the world's third-highest peak, which is situated in the eastern Himalayas. Young Pakistani climber, who had become the youngest Pakistani to scale Mount Ever-

est, used supplemental oxygen on his climbs to Broad Peak and Everest. With the latest feat, the Pakistani teen who is known as 'The Broad Boy' becomes the youngest mountaineer to summit the top peaks including Everest 8849m, K2 8611m, and Kanchenjunga 8586m. Meanwhile, sports enthusiasts, activists, and social media users congratulated Kashif on his success and prayed for his safe return from the peak. Pakistani ace climber reportedly started hiking at the tender age of 11. He started his journey with the Makra peak and then climbed Musa Ka Massalah peak (4,080m), and Chembra peak (4,600m) at age 12. Later, he summited Minglik Sar Shimshal (6,050m), K2 Gondogoro La K2 Base Camp, Khurdopin Pass (5,890m), Broad Peak (8,047m), Khushar Gang-Alpine Style, and Mount Everest (8,849m) at age of 19. His expedition to the Broad Peak (8,047m) earned him the title "The Broad Boy".

Hafeez slams Ramiz Raja for Pakistan Junior League idea

LAHORE: Veteran cricketer Mohammad Hafeez opposed the idea of Pakistan Junior League (PJL) which was introduced by current PCB chairman Ramiz Raja. In an Eid Special interview on Geo News, Hafeez took a dig at Raja's idea of a franchise league for junior cricketers. "When I heard about the Junior cricket league, I thought it will definitely hurt our cricket system," he said.

Ben Stokes scores fastest century

WORCESTER: England's Test skipper Ben Stokes smashed 64-ball century to register fastest century for Durham County Cricket Club in County Championship. Stokes shined against Worcestershire during division two contest and smoked 100 runs off just 64 balls laced with 10 sixes and six boundaries.

Saudi coalition releases Yemeni prisoners as part of truce deal

RIYADH: The full agreement has yet to be implemented, but aims to pave the way to an end of the nearly 8-year-old war. The Red Cross has said that a plane carrying Yemeni prisoners held by the Saudi-led coalition has arrived in the southern city of Aden as part of a truce deal between the warring parties. The International Committee of the Red Cross is facilitating the transfer of at least 100 prisoners back to Yemen on three flights, said ICRC Yemen spokesman Basheer Omar on Friday.

Ukrainian officials say Russia hampering rescue

KYIV: Ukrainian officials accused Russia of violating a ceasefire on Friday aimed at evacuating scores of civilians trapped in a bombed-out steelworks in the city of Mariupol, after fighting thwarted efforts to rescue them the previous day. Mariupol, a strategic southern port on the Azov Sea, has endured the most destructive siege of the 10-week-old war, and the sprawling Soviet-era Azovstal plant is the last part of the city still in the hands of Ukrainian fighters. U.N.-brokered evacuations of some of the hundreds of civilians who had taken shelter in the plant's network of tunnels and bunkers began last weekend, but were halted in recent days by renewed fighting. The head of Ukraine's presidential staff, Andriy Yermak, said the next stage of the rescue was under way on Friday, but Mariupol authorities said Russian forces had fired at a car that

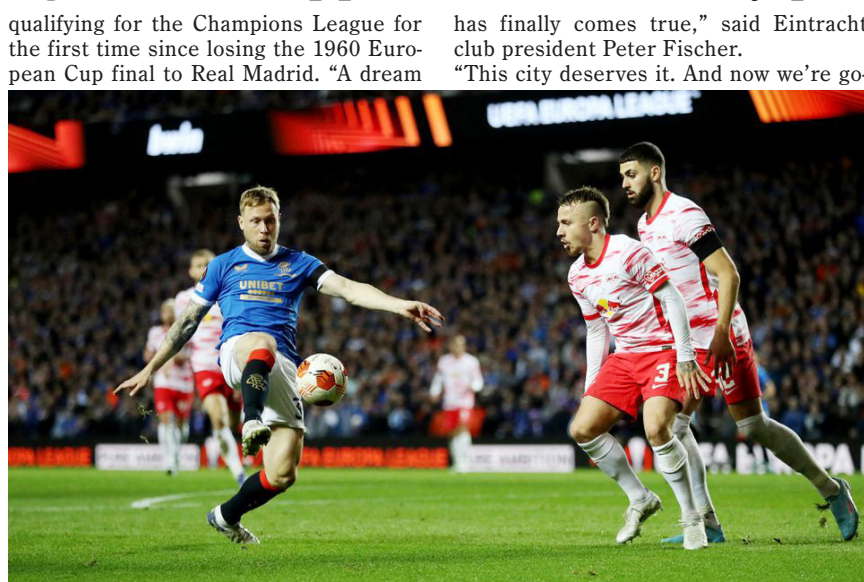
was involved, killing one Ukrainian fighter and wounding six. Russia had no immediate comment. Andriy Biletsky, a founder of the Azov Regiment holed up in the steelworks, said it was under attack and called for help. "The fighting is continuing, the shelling does not stop," he wrote in an online post, pleading for a petition to increase pressure on the United Nations and global leaders to help evacuate fighters and civilians. "Every minute of procrastination is the life of civilians, soldiers and the wounded," he wrote. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described the blockade of Mariupol as torture and said if Russia killed civilians or troops who could otherwise be released, his government could no longer hold peace talks with Moscow. The port, which lies between the Crimea Peninsula seized by Moscow in 2014 and parts of eastern Ukraine taken by Russia-backed separatists the same year, is key to linking up the two Russian-held territories and blocking Ukrainian grain exports. A senior U.N. official said nearly 25 million tonnes of grain, needed to prevent prices spiralling and causing hunger around the world, were stuck in Ukraine. "It's an almost grotesque situation," Josef Schmidhuber, Deputy Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization's Markets and Trade Division said in Geneva. Ukraine's general staff said Russian forces were continuing to try to take over the rest of eastern Ukraine, where Russia's defence ministry said it had destroyed a large ammunition depot in Kramatorsk and had shot down two Ukrainian warplanes. Ukraine said it had captured 11 Russian snipers in the region around its second city, Kharkiv. - Agencies

Frankfurt set up Europa final with Rangers

"Really disappointed. Things didn't go for us on the night," Moyes told BT Sport. "Small things didn't happen but I am really proud of the players"

WEB DESK

FRANKFURT: Eintracht Frankfurt reached their first European final for 42 years after a 1-0 home win on Thursday over 10-man West Ham sealed a 3-1 aggregate victory in their Europa League semi-final. West Ham had left-back Aaron Cresswell sent off early on and Hammers manager David Moyes was also dismissed from the sidelines with 12 minutes left for a kicking a ball at a ball boy. "Really disappointed. Things didn't go for us on the night," Moyes told BT Sport. "Small things didn't happen but I am really proud of the players." "How they played with 10 men was fantastic. They stayed in it." Colombia striker Rafael Borre netted the first-half winner on the night to book Frankfurt a place in the Europa League final on May 18 in Seville against Scottish giants Rangers. They are also now just one win away from



qualifying for the Champions League for the first time since losing the 1960 European Cup final to Real Madrid. "A dream club finally comes true," said Eintracht club president Peter Fischer. "This city deserves it. And now we're going to win this thing." West Ham missed out on reaching their first major European final since 1976. "We just played a team that played a similar way to us and it caught us out. We're gutted," said Hammers captain Declan Rice. Borre scored just after Cresswell was sent off, leaving the visitors a man down for more than an hour and needing to score twice just to force extra time. Frankfurt had been dealt an early blow when key defender Martin Hinteregger limped off with a leg injury. When a long ball put Frankfurt's Jens Hauge into space, Cresswell pulled back the Norwegian, who went down just outside the area. Cresswell, who was also sent off in the quarter-final first leg against Lyon, was initially only booked, but referee Jesus Gil Manzano brandished the red card after a VAR review. Moyes, who was angered by that decision, responded by bringing on defender Ben Johnson for Manuel Lanzini. Yet Frankfurt went ahead in the 26th minute.

Big opportunities of investment in tech sector: PM

FROM PAGE 01 The Prime Minister also emphasized the need of expediting the process of strategizing the collaborative efforts within a week and highlighted the government's willingness to not leave any stone unturned to achieve the said objectives. He expressed satisfaction over Huawei's long association with Pakistan and investments in the telecom sector. Yi Xiang while thanking the Prime Minister expressed interest in expanding Huawei's footprint in Pakistan. Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah and Charge d' Affaires China Embassy Ms. Pang Chunxue were also present in the meeting.

PM directs measures to curb wheat smuggling, theft

FROM PAGE 01 metric tons while the estimated consumption would be around 30.79 million metric tons. It was told that reduced wheat cultivation, water shortage, fertilizer crisis due to the mismanagement by the previous government, and delayed announcement of wheat support price led to the reduced production of wheat by two percent. The oil price hike and early rise in temperature due to climate change were also among the factors impeding the achievement of the wheat production target.

Van der Poel wins Giro opener

VISEGRAD: Dutch Alpein rider Mathieu van der Poel won the opening stage of the Giro d'Italia on Friday, a 195km run from Budapest to the hilltop citadel at Visegrad. Van der Poel edged Eritrean Biniam Girmay and Pello Bilbao to the finish line atop a 4km climb as Australian Caleb Ewan fell heavily when making his burst for the line. One day specialist Van Der Poel took the first race leaders pink jersey, and collected a time bonus of 10 as the first rider across the summit. "I knew positioning would be key," said Van der Poel, whose team flew to the front at the foot of the climb as he then lurked patiently until the final moment. "Tomorrow will be interesting to see if I can keep the lead in the time-trial. It'll be difficult but I'll try," promised the Alpein rider, who led the Tour de France for six days in 2021. The race returns to Budapest on Saturday for a testing inner-city circuit of 9.2km with the first rider down the starters ramp at 14.00 local time (12:00GMT). The 176-rider peloton left Budapest for the first of 21 stages totalling 3,446km. That was no deterrent to Italian pair Mattia Bais and Filippo Tagliani who broke away as soon as the starter's flag waved. They were only reeled in by a reluctant peloton 13km from the finish. - Agencies

Pak, India must brace for even worse heatwaves

PARIS: The devastating heatwave that gripped India and Pakistan over the last two months is unprecedented, but worse - perhaps far worse - is on the horizon as climate change continues apace, top climate scientists told AFP. Even without additional global warming South Asia is, statistically speaking, ripe for a "big one" in the same way that California is said to be overdue for a major earthquake, according to research published this week. Extreme heat across much of India and neighbouring Pakistan in March and April exposed more than a billion people to scorching temperatures well above 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit). The hottest part of the year is yet to come. "This heatwave is likely to kill thousands," tweeted Robert Rohde, lead scientist at Berkeley Earth, a climate science research non-profit. The number of excess deaths, especially among the elderly poor, will only become apparent in hindsight. - APP

Briefs

SpaceX Crew-3 astronauts back on Earth

NEW YORK: After living and working in space for six months, NASA's SpaceX Crew-3 astronauts returned to Earth on Friday. "After 177 days in space, Dragon and Crew-3 astronauts Raja Chari, Tom Marshburn, Kayla Barron, and Matthias Maurer returned to Earth and splashed down off the coast of Florida at 12:43 a.m. ET (0443GMT) on Friday, May 6," according to the SpaceX website. Four astronauts, who were sent into space on Nov. 11 last year, returned with the Dragon capsule called Endeavour. While the Crew-3 team conducted hundreds of experiments and spacewalks on the International Space Station, they also worked on the development of solar panels. The team's return trip, which also tested an electron microscope, was scheduled for Wednesday but was delayed due to unfavorable weather conditions. — APP

India to reopen abandoned coal mines

MUMBAI: India plans to lease abandoned coal pits to private mining companies, a government official said Friday, in an effort to ramp up production as power outages exacerbate a sweltering heatwave. Coal supplies more than two-thirds of India's energy needs and the country has baulked at the cost of transitioning to renewables — even as unseasonably hot weather illustrates the threat from climate change caused by burning fossil fuels. Soaring temperatures have prompted higher energy demand in recent weeks and left India facing a 25 million tonne shortfall at a time when coal spot prices have skyrocketed since the start of the year. "We've always believed that coal is a much-maligned sector," coal ministry official Anil Kumar Jain said at an industry event. "Earlier we were hailed as bad boys because we were promoting fossil fuel and now we are in the news (because) we are not supplying enough of it." The government plans to lease more than 100 dormant state-owned coal mines to private miners on a revenue-sharing basis. Officials said they will "cut out the red tape" to encourage bids from mining giants Vedanta, Adani and others. India needs a billion tonnes of coal to meet domestic demand each year. Most of its needs are met by domestic producers, with a record 777 million tonnes of coal mined in the year to the end of March. — Agencies

Russia claims downing 2 Ukrainian fighter jets

MOSCOW: The Russian air defense systems downed Ukraine's two fighter jets last night, the country's Defense Ministry said on Friday. One Su-25 and one MiG-29, as well as four ballistic missiles Tochka-U and 13 unmanned aerial vehicles, were shot down last night, the ministry's spokesman Igor Konashenkov said at a press briefing in Moscow. Meanwhile, the aerospace forces destroyed a large ammunition depot, a missile system Tochka-U and 10 strongholds of the Ukrainian army with high-precision missiles, the spokesman added. The aviation hit 24 objects in Ukraine's military infrastructure, including 18 areas of concentration of manpower and military equipment, an artillery battery in firing positions, as well as two warehouses of rocket and artillery weapons, he said. The Strategic Rocket Forces destroyed a launcher of an S-300 air defense system as well as five areas of concentration of manpower and military equipment, while the artillery struck six command posts, three ammunition depots, 187 strong points, areas of concentration of manpower and military equipment, as well as 26 Ukrainian artillery batteries, he noted. — APP

Orban says Ursula has 'attacked European unity'

Viktor Orban said "I don't want to confront the EU but to cooperate...but this is only possible if they take our interests into account."

FOREIGN DESK

BUDAPEST: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has criticised European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen for "attacking" EU unity with a proposed Russian oil ban, saying it crosses a red line. "The European Commission president, intentionally or unintentionally, has attacked the European unity that had been worked out," Mr Orban said on state radio. "From the first moment we made clear that there will be a red line, that is the energy embargo, they have crossed this red line." Meanwhile, two sources have told Reuters that the European Commission has amended a proposal for an embargo on Russian oil to extend the period before it takes effect to Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Under the tweaked proposal, Hungary and Slovakia will continue to be able to buy Russian oil from pipelines until the end of 2024, whereas the Czech Republic could continue until June 2024, provided that it does not get oil via a pipeline from southern Europe earlier, the sources said. Bulgaria had also asked for exemptions, if others obtained them, but was not offered concessions on deadlines, "because they don't have a real point," one official said.



The other three countries who were granted more leeway "have an objective problem," the official added. One of the sources said that the extended deadlines were calculated on the likely construction times for pipeline upgrades. The official said Hungary and Slovakia accounted for only 6% of the EU's oil imports from Russia, and the exemptions would not change the impact of the ban on the Russian economy. Top EU diplomat Josep Borrell said today he would call an extraordinary meeting of EU foreign affairs ministers next week if

Kremlin slams Poland's rhetoric against Russia

MOSCOW: Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the rhetoric by Poland's politicians against Russia "openly hostile." He further said Poland may pose a threat for Ukraine's territorial integrity as Polish officials often mention that part of Ukraine's territory consists of "historic Polish lands." "There has been very hostile rhetoric from Poland in recent months, it has traditionally not been friendly for a long time, but in recent months it has become hostile, and the fact that Poland may pose a threat to the territorial integrity of Ukraine are obvious facts," Peskov said. Earlier, the Russian Intelligence Service claimed that Poland may dispatch its troops to the western part of Ukraine under the pretext of help

no deal was reached by the weekend. Mr Orban said earlier that Hungary would need five years and huge investments in its refineries and pipelines to transform its current system which gets about 65% of its oil from Russia.

against "Russian aggression." Meanwhile, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said that Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus may later fight together against Poland in order to restore Ukraine's territorial integrity. The Kremlin spokesman declined to comment on Lukashenko's statement. Tensions have been running high in Eastern Europe after Russia launched a war on Ukraine on Feb. 24. Western nations and the EU have put their weight behind Ukraine and placed a plethora of sanctions on Russia as Russia's neighbors scramble to pick a side. At least 3,280 civilians have been killed and 3,451 others injured in Ukraine since the war with Russia began on Feb. 24, according to UN estimates. — APP

One diplomat familiar with the talks among EU envoys in Brussels dismissed Mr Orban's comments as "mostly bluster", describing instead a constructive atmosphere in the negotiations.

Pak export to China up nearly 17% in Q1

BEIJING: Pakistan's export to China crossed \$ 1.039 billion in the first quarter of 2022, recording a nearly 17% increase from January to March this year, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday quoting General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC). According to data from GACC, in the first three months of this year, China's exports to Pakistan also increased 28.69 percent amounting to \$6.058 billion as compared with the previous year which was \$ 4.70 billion. Badar uz Zaman, Commercial Counselor of Pakistani Embassy in Beijing said after the implementation of the second phase of China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement in 2020 — which allowed Pakistani manufacturers and traders to export around 313 new products to the Chinese market with zero duties — and with the deepening of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, bilateral

trade is increasing every year. "Now Pakistani traders can export overall more than 1,000 items to China at zero tariffs which helped enhance Pakistan's exports to China", he stated. He further said that the second phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with a special focus on agriculture, science & technology, and socioeconomic development also assisted expansion of cooperation. Besides, the enhanced agricultural cooperation for the last two to three years between the two countries, especially in hybrid seeds, latest technologies, pesticide, and urea, "helped increase the production of crops and this surplus yield helped increase export to China." Among the growth of trade in major products between the two countries, textiles, seafood, and agricultural products have increased year on year, which has promoted Pakistan's economic recovery and increased its exports to China. — APP

Police fire tear-gas at students in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: Police again fired tear gas and water cannon at students trying to storm Sri Lanka's parliament Friday as the country was brought to a halt by a trade union strike demanding the government step down. Months of blackouts and acute shortages of food, fuel and pharmaceuticals have caused widespread suffering across the South Asian island nation of 22 million people. Public anger has sparked sustained protests demanding the government's resignation over its mismanagement of the crisis, Sri Lanka's worst since independence in 1948. Thousands of student protesters had been camped on the road leading to the legislature, which is on a man-made island on a lake

in the capital Colombo, since Thursday. Officers fired a barrage of tear gas followed by water cannon from two trucks, but the crowd quickly reassembled behind police barricades set up to block access to the parliament. It was the second time police tried to disperse the crowd with tear gas, after an earlier unsuccessful attempt on Thursday afternoon. Millions of workers stayed off the job on Friday in a strike organised by the country's trade union movement, with all but one scheduled train service cancelled. Privately owned buses were off the roads while industrial workers demonstrated outside their factories and black flags were hung across the country in an expression of anger against the government. — APP

Chinese power giant distributes ration to over 700 deserving families

ISLAMABAD, May 6 (): More than 700 deserving families of local communities adjacent to Pakistan's Thar Block-1 Integrated Coal Mine Power Project were gifted Ration Hampers during the holy month of Ramadan by Thar Coal Block-1 Power Generation Company (TCB-1), Shanghai Electric, China's leading energy equipment manufacturer. Themed "Food Drive with Love", the campaign was to guarantee food security of the locals for the year 2022, according to China Economic Net (CEN). Each ration package contains 14 items, including flour, sugar, rice as well as other essential items, suiting regional food habits and ensuring that

each family of nearby communities can celebrate Eid al-Fitr with satisfaction and happiness. "Ramadan is about love, devotion, and caring," source from TCB-1 told the reporter, adding that on the basis of fully respecting local culture and customs and carrying the sharing and giving spirit, the ration distribution is part of their sincere commitment to improving local community's livelihood. As per TCB-1, the ration packages can help relieve some of the burdens faced by local residents and TCB-1 staff felt so rewarded when seeing the heartfelt smiles of these neighbors. Thousands of beneficiaries will enjoy a joyous and peaceful celebration of Eid

al-Fitr when receiving the Ramadan hampers. As the leading developer of Thar Block-1 Integrated Coal Mine Power Project, Shanghai Electric is capable of powering 4 million households in Pakistan with 1320 megawatts of indigenous, affordable and reliable electricity after COD. It also shoulders corporate social responsibility (CSR) by donating relief supplies and food to orphanage foundations, initiating Covid-19 vaccination campaigns, launching free Chinese language training programs and so on. Up until now, the project has hired more than 7,000 Pakistani workers in its coal mine and power plant projects in Thar, Sindh, Pakistan. — APP



BEIRUT: Pakistan ambassador to Lebanon Salman Athar called on Patriarch Cardinal Mar Bshara Butros Al-Rai. Matters of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting. — DNA

Germany to deliver howitzers to Ukraine

BERLIN: Germany will send seven howitzer artillery systems to Ukraine to help the country defend itself against Russia, the German Defense Ministry confirmed on Friday. In a statement on Twitter, the ministry said Germany and its NATO ally the Netherlands will deliver a total of 12 PzH 2000 long-range howitzers to the country. "Preparations are completed for the training in Germany, and it will begin next week," the ministry said. German-made Panzerhaubitze 2000 (PzH 2000) howitzers are known as one of the most powerful artillery systems. Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition government long maintained a cautious policy and ruled out supplying weapons to Ukraine, but reversed its policy in February, following

Russia's war on Ukraine. Last week, the government further toughened its stance and started approving the delivery of heavy weapons to Ukraine. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has repeatedly called on Germany to supply heavier weapons to his country, including tanks, artillery, and air defense systems. At least 3,280 civilians have been killed and 3,451 others injured in Ukraine since the war with Russia began on Feb. 24, according to UN estimates. The true toll is feared to be much higher. More than 5.7 million people have fled to other countries, with some 7.7 million people internally displaced, data from the UN refugee agency show. — Agencies

500 more civilians evacuated from Azovstal plant

KYIV: Nearly 500 more civilians were evacuated from Ukraine's Azovstal steel plant and Mariupol city, according to presidential sources on Friday.

"We conducted another phase of the difficult operation to evacuate people from Mariupol and Azovstal. I can confirm that we were able to evacuate almost 500 civilians," Andrii Yermak, the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, said on Telegram. Thanking the UN for helping the evacuation, he stressed that Ukraine would continue to do everything possible to rescue all civilians and military personnel. Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a tweet confirmed the successful evacuation of the civilians, saying: "2 safe passage convoys successfully evacuated nearly 500 people from the Azovstal plant, the city of Mariupol & surrounding areas."

"I hope that continued coordination with Moscow and Kyiv will lead to more humanitarian pauses in order to allow civilians safe passage," he added. At least 3,280 civilians have been killed and 3,451 others injured in Ukraine since Russia launched a war on the country on Feb. 24, according to UN estimates. The true toll is feared to be much higher. More than 5.7 million people have fled to other countries, with some 7.7 million people internally displaced, data from the UN refugee agency show. — APP

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Aliyev upbeat about agri potential of Karabakh

We are now in the phase of planning agricultural development in the liberated territories, and therefore your valuable recommendations will be highly appreciated

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has said that the agricultural potential in Azerbaijan's liberated lands is very impressive. He made the remarks while receiving in a video format United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Director-General Qu Dongyu. "As a result of the liberation of territories of Azerbaijan, we are now in the active phase of development of those lands with respect to infrastructure, including agricultural development. Because the agricultural potential in the liberated areas is really very impressive," he said. He noted that the liberated lands have a very diverse nature, climatic zones, and opportunities to increase significantly the country's production for domestic consumption and export. "We are now in the phase of planning agricultural development in the liberated territories. And therefore your valuable recommendations will be highly appreciated," he said.



Speaking about bilateral cooperation, Aliyev expressed satisfaction with the level of partnership between the FAO and Azerbaijan. He added that the agreement which was signed seven years ago actually created a new format of cooperation,

expressing hope that in the coming years this partnership will continue. "Especially now in these difficult times when issues related to food security become more and more important for every country, including Azerbaijan. Because despite our growth in the export of agricultural products we are still recipients of agricultural products. Therefore, our future plans and general regional development with respect to food security, I think, should be important to discuss, to address the new challenges," he said. The president stressed that agricultural development in Azerbaijan is one of the priorities for the government. "Because first, it is food security which is important now for every country, maybe more than several years ago. And second, for us it is an important part of our non-energy related export which is growing," he said. He mentioned that during the first three

months of the year growth in non-energy export in Azerbaijan was 45 percent. "Of course, it is important for employment, because almost half of our population live in rural areas. Therefore, agriculture for these people is the main source of their income," he said. Aliyev also briefed on the reforms, subsidies, and the support the government provides to farmers. "Farmers are free from any taxes, including land tax. And also soft low-interest loans which we provide to farmers. All this creates opportunities for rapid development of agriculture but of course, we need to plan everything properly, especially now after the liberation of territories and to apply modern technologies," he said. In turn, Qu Dongyu noted that agro-e-commerce or digital agriculture and food, as well as digital development of rural areas, are of particular importance.

Briefs

Govt starts receiving online Hajj applications for 2022

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has started receiving online Hajj applications for the ongoing year. Those who have plans to go on Hajj can submit their applications on the website of the ministry. It has been made mandatory for the applicants to also submit medical certificate and other documents with their applications. The applicants will also have to pay Rs50,000 token fee with the submission of their online applications. The banks authorised will start receiving applications from May 9. The applications will be received online and by the banks authorised until May 13. Those who are declared successful in balloting will be able to leave for Hajj on May 15 after paying all their dues by May 13. The ministry has urged the people not to submit Hajj documents and fee to the private tour operators.

PIA to bring back Pakistanis from Jeddah

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Spokesman for the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) said on Friday that the airline had got the permission of the Saudi Aviation for operating four special flights to bring back over 400 Pakistanis stranded at Jeddah Airport due to unusual rush of passengers and delayed departures of flights. The spokesman further said that the national flag carrier would bring these passengers to Islamabad and Karachi airports via these flights for which it had arranged airbus-es-320.

Water shortage in Sindh reaches 53%

DNA

KARACHI: The Sindh government has termed the shortage of water under the water agreement as a threat to the agricultural economy of Sindh and said that the water shortage in Sindh has reached 53% which is increasing day by day. Agriculture Advisor Manzoor Wassan further said in his statement that if the water crisis situation in Sindh persists, then the crops of Sindh could be severely damaged. He said that due to water scarcity, there is a danger of damage to sugarcane, mango, rice, chilli, olive and palm orchards in Sindh. Water has started running out. Since ex-Governor of PTI, Sindh Province has received less than due share acre-feet of agricultural water. Manzoor Wassan said that in the last three and a half years, Sindh received 16% in Kharif while in Rabi 22% less than due share due to which water shortages rose and affected the production of key crop vegetables and orchards. Manzoor Wassan said that due to shortage of water in Sindh under Imran government, wheat, rice and cotton crops were reduced last year, which has resulted in loss of billions of rupees to the farmers of Sindh. Imran government looted farmers badly. If Sindh got its due share of water in the Imran government, then fertile lands of Sindh would not be affected and crop production would not be reduced. Sindh Province should be given its due share of water, curtailing of share will not be acceptable at any cost.

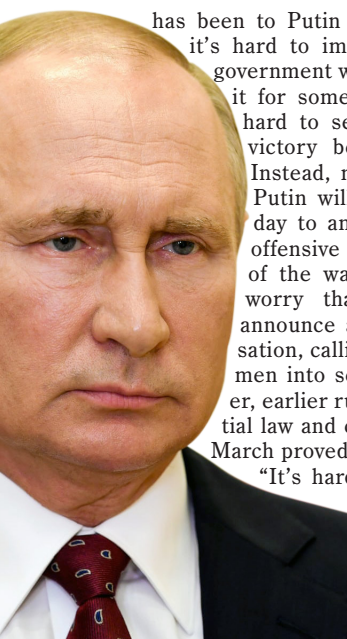
Putin prepares to celebrate Victory Day amid war

Russia will celebrate the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany, but as a new war boils in Ukraine, observers are keen to know what Putin might unveil

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: On Monday, thousands of soldiers, tanks and military vehicles will march through Moscow's Red Square, while fighter jets roar overhead as part of the annual Victory Day parade. This day of pride, which will mark the 77th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, is seen by some observers as a propaganda tool for President Vladimir Putin's government, which is drawing on history for its ongoing invasion of Ukraine. And some fear that Putin will use this year's celebratory occasion to ramp up war efforts. "Victory in World War II became the defining myth in post-war Soviet life, outstripping even the Revolution in its significance," explained Stephen Norris, professor of Russian history at the University of Miami. "Twenty-seven million Soviet citizens died during the war, and victory obviously

came at a great cost. It also validated the sacrifices made during the war. Nobel-Prize-winning author Svetlana Alexievich has captured this well, by stating the history of victory replaced the history of the actual war." As Victory Day approaches, some observers believe that the top brass, frustrated at the lack of progress in subduing Ukraine, will call for a push, and Putin will declare total war. "Putin and his advisers certainly pay attention to historical anniversaries and like to use them to bolster their hold on power," Norris said. "Given how important Victory Day



has been to Putin and Putinism, it's hard to imagine that his government won't try to use it for some purpose. It's hard to see any sort of victory being declared. Instead, my fear is that Putin will use the holiday to announce a new offensive and new phase of the war." Some also worry that Putin may announce a mass mobilisation, calling able-bodied men into service. However, earlier rumours of martial law and conscription in March proved to be wrong. "It's hard to do a general conscription: I think that that's when Russians would come out and protest," said Wood. "You can conscript all those people in Buryatia (a mountainous region in Siberia), but if you conscript Muscovites, they'll protest. I don't think he can declare victory, either. I think they're planning a long slogging war." Victory Day was first celebrated in 1965 under Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, a veteran of the war himself. It is also marked across the Russian diaspora and in other former Soviet countries, including Ukraine, which in 2015 symbolically moved the date to May 8, when Europe remembers the day. On May 8, 1945, the commander of the remaining German forces surrendered to the Red Army, but because of the time difference between Berlin and Moscow, in Russia the occasion is marked on May 9. Victory Day marks the immense sacrifice the Russian people and other nations of the Soviet Union made in the fight against Nazism. On June 22, 1941, the German army began its invasion of the USSR, named Operation Barbarossa.

NEPRA imposes Rs 50 mln fine on NTDC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has imposed a fine of Rs. 50 Million on National Transmission & Despatch Company (NTDC) on account of its inability to restore power supply in a timely manner in the wake of total power system collapse that occurred on January 9, 2021 and took 20 hours (approximately) to restore the system. Earlier, NEPRA took serious notice of the said incident and constituted an Inquiry Committee to thoroughly investigate the matter in the light of NEPRA Laws, Rules and Regulations, said a press release issued here on Friday. The Committee conducted the inquiry and presented a detailed report to the Authority, on the basis of which the Authority initiated legal proceedings against NTDC. Accordingly, an explanation was issued to NTDC on April 1, 2021 under Rule 4(1) of the NEPRA (Fines) Rules 2002, followed by a show cause notice on August 25, 2021 under Section 27B of the NEPRA Act.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Punjab, Mr Omar Sarfraz Cheema, calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Evidence shows Russia's war crimes near Kyiv: Amnesty

NEW YORK: Amnesty International said on Friday there was compelling evidence that Russian troops had committed war crimes, including extrajudicial executions of civilians, when they occupied an area outside Ukraine's capital in February and March. Civilians also suffered abuses such as "reckless shootings and torture" at the hands of Russian forces during their failed onslaught on Kyiv in the early stages of the invasion launched by the Kremlin on Feb. 24, the rights group said in a report. "These are not isolated incidents. These are very much part of a pattern wherever Russian forces were in control of a town or a village," Donatella Rovera, Amnesty's senior crisis response adviser, told a news conference in Kyiv. Information collected by the group "can be used, hopefully, for holding the perpetrators to account, if not today, one day in the future", she said. - Agencies

Countries vow to boost food security

GENEVA: The European Union, the United States and more than two dozen other countries vowed Friday to shore up global food security in a joint statement to the World Trade Organization. Voicing alarm at the "global effects on food security" triggered by Ukrainian war, they stressed "the urgency and importance of maintaining open and predictable agricultural markets and trade". That would "ensure the continued flow of food, as well as products, services and inputs essential for agricultural and food production and supply chains", they added. The United Nations has warned the war and economic sanctions on Moscow have disrupted global food supplies, sparking fears of widespread hunger. "The bullets and bombs in Ukraine could take the global hunger crisis to levels beyond anything we've seen before," World Food Programme chief David Beasley warned back in March. The conflict, he later told the UN Security Council, would mean "skyrocketing food, fuel and shipping costs, less food for the starving and even more people going hungry." - APP

China offers to provide relief to Afghanistan

BEIJING: China on Friday expressed its condolences to the unfortunate victims and condolences to the families of the victims and the injured, he added. At least 20 people were killed in heavy floods and hurricanes in several Afghan provinces. Maulvi Sharafuddin Muslim, a Taliban official at the Ministry of State for Disaster Management, said about 20 people had been killed and 30 injured in recent floods in more than 10 provinces. According to locals and social media in Afghanistan, a large number of people were injured by floods, rains and hurricanes, and a lot of damage has been done to people's property and livestock. - APP

ECP adjourns estranged PTI MPs case until Tuesday

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) adjourned on Friday hearing of a case against the disgruntled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) parliamentarians until Tuesday after lawyer for the party sought some time for reading their written responses. A three-member ECP bench, headed by the chief election commissioner, heard the case. Lawyer for estranged PTI MNA Noor Alam Khan submitted the reply. "Will you give arguments today?" the chief election commissioner asked from him. "Yes, I will give the arguments," answered the lawyer. Faisal Chaudhry, lawyer for the PTI, sought some time

from the ECP to read the written responses of the estranged PTI parliamentarians. He requested from the ECP bench to allow him to read everyone's answers before starting the arguments. "We were expecting this from the lawyers for the estranged PTI parliamentarians. But here you are the one who sought time," said the chief election commissioner. The ECP bench also sought replies from the renegade PTI members of the Punjab Assembly. The ECP bench, however, disposed of the reference as far as PTI MPA Javed Akhtar was concerned after he said in his statement that he walked out after boycotting the Assembly session and did not cast his vote (in chief minister election).



Imran, Aleem trade barbs



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and estranged PTI leader Aleem Khan traded barbs on Friday harling accusations against each other with Aleem throwing a challenge of TV debate to the PTI chief. Breaking his silence, Aleem Khan asked the PTI chairman to answer

some important questions. "Let Imran Khan, Jahangir Khan, me come on television for a debate. Whatever you know say it, we will also unveil the fact," he added. Aleem Khan also demanded investigation against Farah Khan Gogi over relations with a top developer. "I want you to utter my name with respect so I can reciprocate in the same spirit," Aleem Khan told Imran Khan. He also made some startling revelations about the Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA). Aleem Khan said Imran Khan in his recent interview claimed that the reason for differences with him (Aleem) was that he wanted to get 300 acres of land legalized. Aleem said he had been standing with Imran Khan since 2010. "This housing society was owned by me in 2010 and I still own this

society," he added. In his interview, Imran Khan had accused his former aides Aleem Khan and Jahangir Khan Tareen of seeking illegal benefits from him, saying differences were developed when he refused them. He said "Aleem Khan expected me to legalise his 300-acre land near Ravi", adding from there "I developed differences with him." Talking about Jahangir Tareen, Imran Khan said that his problem was the sugar crisis on which a commission was also formed. "Tareen stood with those who are the biggest dacoits in the country. When I ordered a probe into the matter, differences developed with Tareen." In his response, Aleem Khan said he knew in 2010 that Imran Khan would become a prime minister in 2018. - DNA

WHO raises questions on Pakistan's Covid death toll

Dr Sultan defended the government's death reports, saying that studies of the number of graveyard burials in major cities did not reveal large numbers of uncounted victims of the pandemic

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LAHORE: The World Health Organisation (WHO) raised questions on Pakistan's COVID-19 death toll that laid bare how vastly the country had undercounted victims. According to a new WHO report, almost three times as many people have died around the world as a result of COVID-19 as the official data show. The world health body estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic killed around 15 million people worldwide in 2020 and 2021 - nearly triple the number of deaths officially attributed to the disease. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, the

figure was eight times as high. "The full death toll associated directly or indirectly with the COVID-19 pandemic between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021 was approximately 14.9 million (range 13.3 million to 16.6 million)," the UN health agency said. Reacting to the WHO panel's report, former special assistant to then prime minister on health Dr Faisal Sultan said the WHO data on coronavirus deaths in Pakistan is "not reliable". Dr Sultan defended the government's death reports, saying that studies of the number of graveyard burials in major cities did not reveal large numbers of uncounted victims of the pandemic. In a statement, he said: "I have to

look at the WHO report in detail. We checked the cemetery record to determine the number of deaths from coronavirus. We also checked this record through our own system." The figures are extremely sensitive due to how they reflect on the handling of the crisis by authorities around the world, with some countries, notably India, already contesting the far higher numbers. Dr Sultan said: "Our corona death record was accurate but it is not possible to have a 100% correct death toll, it could be 10-30% less but to say it was eight times less is unbelievable." The former SAPM said the WHO report was based on hypothetical data which was "not authentic".

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