



Islamabad POST

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ICC arrest warrant for President Putin scandalous: Lavrov

Detailed News On Page-07

Imran Khan has destroyed peace in country: Rana

Detailed News On Page-08



Haaland named EPL Player of the month

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Maryam on warpath against CJP

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief organiser Maryam Nawaz lashed out at Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial after the Islamabad High Court (IHC) granted bail to former Prime Minister Imran Khan in all cases and prohibited the government from arresting him in any case. In a tweet posted on Friday, Maryam Nawaz stated that being the chief justice does not mean enslaving the state to a person who has burnt every symbol of national honor and defense to ashes through his pet thugs. She further added that preventing such a person from being arrested in any case, makes him a royal guest. To facilitate Imran Khan is an insult to every Pakistani apart from those martyrs and Ghazis whose signs were attacked.

Zalmay sees 'fragile signs of hope'

DNA

NEW YORK: Former US ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalizad says there are "fragile signs of hope in Pakistan". "The Supreme Court decision yesterday and the Islamabad High Court's today ordering Imran Khan's release, and growing opposition within the military to the heavy-handed over-reach of some." In a Twitter thread on Friday, Khalizad also offered his two-step solution to "avert disaster" in Pakistan, which involves the army chief and elections. A day earlier, he also expressed concern that there is a growing fear that Imran Khan might be killed in custody. He added that the former prime minister has also expressed this concern to the judge before the court on Wednesday.

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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Big relief for PTI Chairman

Imran Khan gets bail in all cases

Court grants Imran two weeks bail, IHC also bars authorities from arresting PTI chief in any case till Monday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) granted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan interim bail for two weeks in the Al-Qadir Trust case. The court has also barred the authorities concerned from arresting the former prime minister in any case, even the unknown cases, till Monday, May 15. Khan had decided not to leave the court premises until written orders are issued in a bid to evade his arrest. The IHC has assured that the deposed premier will not be arrested till he appears before Lahore High Court (LHC). Khan's lawyer had made an appeal to the IHC bench for his client's safe return to his Zaman Park residence in Lahore without being arrested. IHC CJ Aamer Farooq constituted a two-member bench - comprising Justice Miangul Hasan Aurangzeb and Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz - to hear Imran's bail plea in the case.

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

As the hearing commenced, a lawyer stood up and chanted slogans in favour of the ousted premier. Expressing its displeasure, the division bench said there should be complete silence, with Justice Miangul warning that the case will not be heard if such acts continue. The court then took a break for Friday prayers. As the hearing resumed, Imran stood up and requested everyone to listen to the proceedings quietly, alleging that and individual "had been planted" to disrupt the proceedings earlier. Reacting to his remark, Advocate General Islamabad Barrister Jahangir Khan Jadoun raised an

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Imran Khan says no deal made in meeting with President Alvi



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has rejected the notion that a deal had been reached during a meeting with President Dr Arif Alvi held a day earlier. Talking to journalists inside court premises, the former premier said that President Alvi did not bring "anyone's message", adding that no deal had been reached. Imran Khan expressed gratitude to judiciary for 'upholding the Constitution' as the Islamabad High Court (IHC) barred authorities from arresting PTI Chairman Imran Khan in all cases, even those are undisclosed,

Continued on Page 06

2 soldiers martyred in attack on FC camp

Two terrorists also got killed as battle ensued

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Two terrorists were killed while as many soldiers were martyred on Friday in an attack by terrorists on a Frontier Constabulary (FC) camp in Balochistan's Muslim Bagh town, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. In a press release, the ISPR said that a "group of terrorists attacked an FC camp in Muslim Bagh area in northern Balochistan". "In the process of clearance operation, two soldiers have embraced shahadat (martyrdom) while another three are injured," it added. "So far, two terrorists have been sent to hell by the security forces, who continue to maintain pressure on the terrorists." The statement said that an operation

by the security forces was "under way to capture the terrorists who have been cornered into a building complex" while a heavy exchange of fire was also taking place. The ISPR further said: "Commander 12 Corps is supervising the security forces operations being conducted at Muslim Bagh area in Balochistan where terrorists have been cornered." Over the past few months, the law and order situation in the country has worsened, with terrorist groups executing attacks with near impunity across the country. Since the talks with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) broke down in November last year, the outfit has intensified its attacks, particularly targeting the police in KP and areas bordering Afghanistan.

Emergency rumours rejected Imran considers himself above law: Marriyum

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that Imran Khan had always insulted the judiciary and never followed the law. In an interview with Sky News, she said Imran Khan considered himself an "untouchable" who was above the law and no one could question him. The minister said that Imran Khan should be treated like an ordinary citizen of Pakistan. She said that there were allegations of corruption against Imran Khan and his arrest by the NAB was in accordance with the law and the government had nothing to do with it. To a question, the federal information minister said that the government did not believe in political revenge and victimization. "If we wanted to arrest him or silence him ... we would not have waited 14 months," she said. In response to the question regarding the disqualification of Imran Khan, the minister said why would the government want to disqualify him. Why would any democratic

Continued on Page 06

PTI's Dr Yasmin, Shireen Mazari arrested

DNA

LAHORE: Two more senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Dr Yasmin Rashid and Dr Shireen Mazari were arrested in Lahore and Islamabad, respectively, in the wee hours of Friday morning. The arrests are the latest in an ongoing crackdown against the party leadership. Top PTI leaders, including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Fawad Chaudhry, Asad Umar and Omer Cheema, were taken into custody within 24 hours and transferred to Adiala Jail under detention for 15 days following countrywide protests against former prime minister Imran Khan's arrest.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of federal cabinet. - DNA

Punjab polls SC to hear ECP plea on Monday

Case against NAB amends to be heard on Tuesday

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A three-member bench of the Supreme Court is set to hear Monday the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) petition challenging the top court's earlier order regarding elections to the Punjab Assembly. The bench - headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar - will hear the petition a day after the May 14 date on which the top court had ordered polls to be held on in the largest province of the country. The apex court's earlier verdict on a petition filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which was heard by the same three-member bench, came after months of drama around the polls. The PTI-led Punjab government dissolved the provincial assembly in January in a bid to force the ruling coalition to hold snap polls. However, the government has consistently maintained that elections will be held in October or November this year. The apex court shall hear case against the NAB amendments on Tuesday. The PTI had challenged the NAB amendments.

'Unjust behavior' PDM announces protest in front of SC on Monday

If someone tries to stop us, we will reply back, warns Fazl

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Shortly after the Islamabad High Court (IHC) granted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan interim bail for two weeks in the Al-Qadir Trust case, Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) on Friday announced that it will stage a protest demonstration in front of the Supreme Court over its "unjust behaviour". "We have decided that we will protest against this behaviour. As someone who is representing the PDM, I appeal to the entire nation to reach Islamabad on Monday. We will stage a sit-in and protest in huge numbers," he said while addressing a press conference in Islamabad. Fazl, who is also the Amir of JUI-F, said that every worker of his party will participate in the protest and no one will stay at home. "If someone tried to stop us, we will reply back with clubs, slaps and

PM Shehbaz slams 'double standards of justice'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif disapproved on Friday of the 'double standards of justice' meted out to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in the cases against him, adding that the coalition government would take every step to ensure the rule of law in the country. Chairing a meeting of the federal cabinet, he said other political leaders in the country faced trials and tough handling, while Imran was given "privileged treatment".

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PIAF condemns caretaker minister's involvement in trade politics

In order to overcome these economic problems, we have to pay immediate attention towards the promotion of import substitution and at the same time we have to take steps to increase the exports to the desired targets

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) on Friday expressed its serious concern over the involvement of Punjab Caretaker Minister in trade politics, who has been driving campaign for a particular group, violating the election code of conduct, as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) rules bar a caretaker set-up from performing such acts.

In a statement issued here, the spokesperson of the PIAF observed that the Election Act 2017 unequivocally restricts a caretaker set-up to only run everyday affairs of the incumbent government as well as assist the ECP. He said that the Punjab Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Investment and Skill Development S.M Tanveer, who has also the dual nationality and cannot become a minister, has started the election drive in favour of the United Business Group (UBG) in various official functions and meetings. He

condemned such act of the Punjab Caretaker Minister, as he is visiting different chambers along with the office-bearers of the UBG to persuade the members of his rival group of the Businessmen Panel (BMP) for voting in favour his group, which has been the loser for the last three consecutive years in FPCCI elections.

The spokesperson of PIAF said that instead of paying attention to the problems of the business community, the Provincial Minister is running the election campaign of his trade group, and is insisting the trade organizations representatives to join his defeated group. In the same way, by going to various chambers and associations of Punjab, he is violating his oath. The PIAF spokesperson said that KSM Tanveer is not legally eligible to become a minister, as he has committed a serious crime by concealing his dual citizenship.

The spokesperson of the PIAF demanded the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab to remove him from that position immediately due to dual citizenship, poor performance and promoting personal agenda.

If the caretaker Minister of Industries is not dismissed, the businessmen have the right to protests against this unlawful action of him across Punjab, besides approaching the court in this regard.

He appealed the caretaker government to work only for ensuring the provision of all possible facilities to the investors instead of indulging its ministries in political affairs of the business community.

He said that Article 230 C of the Election Act 2017 states that a caretaker government would restrict itself to activities that were of routine, non-controversial and urgent, in the public interest and reversible by the future government elected after the elections.

He said that serious economic challenges, which the country was going through at the moment, were having a direct impact on the business activities and the business situation in the country had become very bad. In order to overcome these economic problems, we have to pay immediate attention towards the promotion of import substitution and at the same time we have to take steps to increase the exports to the desired targets.



A stunning view of the parliamentary House illuminated with beautiful green light, in connection with International Parliamentary Convention in Federal Capital. —Online

Peshawar Corps Commander visits Radio Pakistan, briefed about losses

DNA

PESHAWAR: Corps Commander Peshawar Lt Gen Sardar Hassan Azhar Hayat Khan Friday visited Radio Pakistan Peshawar building. He visited different sections of the building. On the occasion, Corps Commander was given a detailed briefing on the attack at Radio Pakistan's building.

Hundreds of violent protesters ransacked and set on fire the Radio Pakistan building in Peshawar on Wednesday to register their protest following the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan. The officials also confirmed that the building of the state media in Peshawar was attacked by violent protesters. Pakistan Army Personnel are engaged in the maintenance and cleaning of Radio Pakistan Peshawar regarding various works. With the help of the Pakistan Army, Radio Pakistan has already resumed its broadcast a day later, which is a commitment that the Army and the people are together. Corps Commander Peshawar also issued instructions to speed up the rehabilitation work of the building.

PPP announces rally in Karachi on Saturday

KARACHI: Sindh provincial minister and PPP Karachi chapter president Saeed Ghani announced on Friday that his party would hold a rally in the port city on May 13 (Saturday) to celebrate the victory in recently held local government elections. Speaking to the media, Saeed Ghani said that rally will be held on Karachi's I.I Chundrigar Road tomorrow in the evening. "PPP chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari will address the rally," he said. On Thursday, foreign minister and PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari congratulated the party leaders and officials on the PPP's

historic success in the local government elections. While thanking the people for giving historic victory to the PPP in the local bodies elections in Sindh, Bilawal said that the politics of hatred and division had been buried forever.

He added that the party would celebrate the victory in Karachi on May 13. According to unofficial results, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is leading with 98 Union Councils (UCs) seats after it grabbed seven seats out of 11 Union Councils in Karachi during local government (LG) by-polls. According to the party position released by the

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the results of Karachi's 240 UCs out of a total of 246 have been finalized, while the results of six UCs have been withheld by the ECP.

Pakistan People's Party successfully became the largest party by security 98 UCs, Jamaat-e-Islami secured 87 seats, while Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf remained third with 43 seats in UCs. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz grabbed 7 seats, JUI-F won three seats in UCs, TLP and independent candidate emerged victorious in two UCs. —DNA

Tragic road accident claims five lives in Shangla district

SHANGLA: A devastating road accident in Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa claimed the lives of five people, including a woman, on Friday. Reports said the accident occurred when a family was returning home from a wedding ceremony and their jeep suddenly skidded off the road and fell into a deep ditch. The unfortunate incident resulted in the death of five people, leaving four others injured, including two children and a woman. After receiving information about the incident, the local rescue teams immediately rushed to the scene and started the rescue operation. The bodies of the deceased and the injured were shifted to the nearby hospital for medical treatment. —DNA

Shazia for protecting constitution to ensure freedom

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS) and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Ms. Shazia Marri has said that the Constitution must be protected at all costs to ensure freedom, justice and protection of human rights. She was chairing the International Parliamentary Convention titled "My Constitution Guarantee of My Freedom" held here on Friday. The convention aimed to highlight the importance of constitutional guarantees for the protection of human rights and the role of the judiciary in ensuring the same. Ms. Marri introduced her role as the minister and chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme, which has empowered 9 million women in Pakistan through various initiatives. —APP

Weekly inflation up by 0.27 percent

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.27 per cent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on May 11, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 255.53 points as compared to 254.84 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 48.02 per cent. —APP

Workers returning from Korea asked to apply for not-availed insurance

In order to solve this problem, the EPS Center with the cooperation of the sending country (OEC) posted the status of workers

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani workers who recently returned to Korea without applying for departure guarantee insurance and return cost insurance can apply directly to the insurance company Samsung Fire and Marine Insurance to avail unclaimed insurance amount by preparing the required documents according to the procedures provided when returning home.

According to the Korean embassy news release, the Pakistan EPS Center (Director: Kim Ki-wook) provides long-term departure guarantee insurance and return cost insurance among workers who have returned to Korea after a period of stay (up to 4 years and 10 months) has expired after employment in Korea

through the Employment Permit System (E9).

The system guides applicants to apply for dormant insurance which is inactive because workers have not received guaranteed severance insurance and cost return insurance.

"Dormant insurance 3 years from the date of occurrence of the reason for payment of insurance money, the extinctive prescription has been completed, but the policyholders have not retrieved it, so the insurance money for departure maturity and return expenses is kept by the corporation," the news release further said.

However, many of the subjects are not seeking dormant insurance money and it's difficult to guide

them individually because the address or contact information of many of the subjects has changed or is unclear.

In order to solve this problem, the EPS Center with the cooperation of the sending country (OEC) posted the status of workers who are not collecting dormant insurance money on the homepage of the sending country (OEC).

Workers who have returned to Korea after working in Korea through the employment permit System can check on the homepage of the sending country whether they are eligible, and if they are eligible, apply to the Pakistan EPS center by registered mail with the required documents according to the website guide. —APP



ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of the seasonal flowers on green belt along the road side, increase the beauty of the Federal Capital. — Online

First int'l conference on computing technologies held

PESHAWAR: First three-day international conference on Computer Technologies and Tools Applications under the aegis of Agriculture University Peshawar was concluded here Friday. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht was the chief guest while the chief organizer was Pro Vice Chancellor. Dean Professor Dr. Daud Jan, Focal Person Dr. Asfandiar Khan and Secretary Dr. Javed Iqbal Bangash were also present on the occasion. Chief organizer Prof. Dr. Daud Jan while welcoming the chief guest Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht and other participants, said that the purpose of this conference was to provide a platform to computer researchers, scholars and experts to come together and share their knowledge,

experiments and take advantage from the inventions jointly.

The conference also provided opportunities to network, collaborate and learn about the latest research and trends in their respective fields, present research findings and get valuable feedback from researchers and experts in the field.

Overall, the conference aimed to facilitate the exchange of ideas, encourage critical thinking and promote intellectual development. He added that this conference is the first international conference titled "Computing Technologies, Tools and Applications" in public sector Universities and Institute of Computer Sciences and Information Technology. University of Agriculture

Peshawar will organize such conferences every year. He also thanked his team and paid tribute to their tireless efforts.

Chief guest Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht while congratulating the organizing committee including chief organizer Prof. Dr. Daud Jan, Focal Person Dr. Isfandiar Khan, Secretary Dr. Javed Iqbal Bangash for organizing a successful international conference said that the current era of computers and Information technology is an excellent platform for positive information such as new experiences, inventions, research and countless other curricular and co-curricular activities. Therefore, the University employees should convey the curricular and co-curricular studies of


the university to the public through print, electronic and social media. In the conference, internationally renowned experts and researchers in the field of computer and information technology, Professor Dr. Marco Martalo of the University of Cagliari, Italy, Nazri bin Muhammad Nawi of the University of Tan Hussain Malaysia, Professor Dr. Kashif Naseer Qureshi of the University of Limerick, Ireland, University of VIT South Australia Dr. Kashif Nisar and University of Oulu Fenland Dr Arif Ali Khan gave online lectures. Special guest Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht along with Chief Organizer and Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Dawood Jan distributed shields and testimonials among the organizing team. —APP


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Head Office
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Karachi
Room No. 14 & 15, 3rd Floor, Nakhliya Mall,
Main Tariq Road, T-11 Block-2, P.E.C.S.
Karachi. Tel: (+92-21) 34521747
Fax: (+92-21) 34521747
E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com

Lahore
F-4, Gulberg Centre,
Main Boulevard, Lahore.
Tel: (+92-42) 3579888, 3579785
Fax: (+92-42) 3571423
E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com

Peshawar
Office No. C-6, 2nd Floor, Zameer Plaza,
Laf Azeed, Ring Road, Peshawar.
Tel: (+92-91) 2502779
Fax: (+92-91) 2502658
E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com

Kabul
House # 4, Street # 4,
Chahar Awar Road, Shahr-e-Naw,
Kabul - Afghanistan.
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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/Argentina
National Day
May 25/Lebanon
Liberation and Resistance Day
May 28/Azerbaijan
Republic Day
May 28/Ethiopia
National Day



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Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
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WASA Rawalpindi...5555489
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Hospitals

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MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



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CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

President directs varsity to return \$11,270 to a student

He said that the act of declining a refund in the present case amounted to "forfeiture and confiscation" which was not permissible except backed by the law

DNA

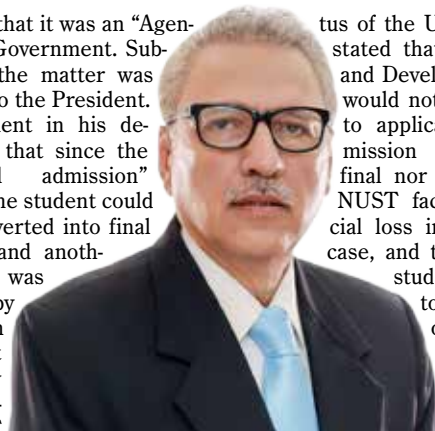
ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) to refund an amount of \$11,270 as it committed maladministration by unjustly confiscating the admission dues of a student 15 years ago who vacated the seat at the initial stages and joined another university. He said that NUST, having been established/controlled by the Federal Government, fell under the definition of "Agency" of the Government, was not a private commercial entity but a service provider in the public sector, and confiscating the dues of a student was tantamount to exploitation and malpractice.

The President gave these directions in a 15-year-old matter, referred to him in 2022. As per details, a student was admitted to MBBS on the Foreign SAT basis

session 2007 in NUST and his father (the complainant) deposited the admission fee of \$11,420. The complainant's son got admission in another medical university of Pakistan and he applied to NUST for a refund. NUST refused his request on the basis of its Refund Policy. Feeling aggrieved, the complainant approached Wafaqi Mohtasib in 2008, which directed NUST to refund the amount. NUST, then, filed a representation which was rejected on the ground that NUST did not explain how its policy was lawful and it failed to show that it suffered any financial loss due to the student's decision to join another university.

Hence, the decision of NUST to retain the fee was termed as unjustified. NUST then filed a writ petition in Islamabad High Court in 2015 which asked the Mohtasib to pass a reasoned order on the questions that whether any maladministration was committed by

NUST and that it was an "Agency" of the Government. Subsequently, the matter was remanded to the President. The President in his decision said that since the "provisional admission" offered to the student could not be converted into final admission and another student was admitted by NUST on the seat vacated by him, therefore, NUST charged double dues against one seat which, prima facie, was tantamount to exploitation and malpractice. He said that the act of declining a refund in the present case amounted to "forfeiture and confiscation" which was not permissible except backed by the law. He said that although the prospec-



us of the University had stated that tuition fees and Development Fund would not be refunded to applicants, the admission was neither final nor matured and NUST faced no financial loss in the instant case, and therefore, the student deserved to get a refund of his dues.

The President stated that any provision of the Prospectus of NUST could not travel beyond the limit prescribed by the law and the Policy or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) cannot overrule the provisions of the Constitution of Pakistan i.e., in Articles 3 and 4 regarding the elimination of exploitation and rights of individuals. He added that since NUST had committed

maladministration, therefore, it was advised to refund all the dues to the student by deducting only the admission fee of \$150 as NUST had initiated some process which involved expenses which were liable to be deducted. It was further observed that NUST was established under the Act of the Parliament namely "the National University of Science and Technology Act, 1997" having the President of Pakistan as Patron-in-Chief under Section 6 and the Prime Minister of Pakistan as Chancellor under Section 8 of NUST Act, 1997, and that having been established/controlled by the Federal Government, and thus, NUST fell under the definition of "Agency" as defined in Article 2(1) of the Establishment of the Office of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) Order, 1983. The President, therefore, directed NUST to pay the confiscated amount while only deducting \$150 out of the total deposited amount of \$11,420.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Shazia Marri, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety & Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Chairs the International Parliamentary Convention on "My Constitution Guarantee of My Freedom" in the National Assembly of Pakistan.

PBF demands growth oriented budget

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) suggested the government to take effective economic measures including in the coming federal budget to encourage business activities in the country with a flavour of austerity measures in the public sectors. Sharing the Forum's proposals for upcoming federal budget 2023-24 with media, PBF President Mian M. Usman Zulfikar along with core committee members stressed the need for establishing export warehouses at the borders to uplift trade with neighboring countries and incorporating the agriculture and service sectors into the tax net. In an effort to increase the GDP growth up to six percent in next financial year, the budget makers have to reduce tax rates to widen the tax base and curtail parallel economy, also providing a competitive edge to Pakistan's products in

global markets.

PBF Senior officials Shabnam Zafar, Muhammad Naseer Malik, Zubaida Jalal, Muhammad Atif Haleem, Mir Murad Talpur and Daroo Khan Achakzai were also present.

President Muhammad Usman said the PBF was giving its proposals for the federal budget 2023-24 with main focus on jobs creation by strengthening industry, broadening of tax base through lowering rate and introducing liberal policies to attract foreign investment. During the last three decades, he said, it was only three times when Pakistan's economy grew by more than 5 percent - first in 2003-2006 and second during 2016-2018 and third during 2021-22. He said that realizing the full potential of information technology, the industrial production can be increased. He observed that the digital finance potential of Pakistan could be \$36 billion in next four years, giving a seven percent boost to the GDP and generating four million new jobs. PBF President said

the real fact is a lack of realization that the world business patterns have changed and Pakistan has made no efforts to adjust to those realities. If the country wants to have a higher growth rate, it would have to adopt new innovative ways in the post-pandemic world as is being done by other countries, which are expecting a fast V-shaped recovery. "We need to bring our digital infrastructure at par with other fast developing countries, besides adopting new technologies and implementing e-governance solutions," he suggested. Similarly PBF has recommended the government to abolish the Super Tax which was imposed on companies earning more than Rs. 150 million last year. Cement, steel, sugar, oil and gas, fertilizers, textiles, automobiles, tobacco, and other industries were among them. PBF President also urged the general rate of Minimum Tax u/s 113 of ITO 2001 to be reduced from 1.25 percent to 0.25 percent.

Judicial magistrate acquits Umar Farooq

ISLAMABAD: A Lahore Judicial Magistrate on Friday cleared businessman Umar Farooq Zahoor in two cases of money-laundering and fraud - registered against him by his former wife actress Sophia Mirza. Judge Ghulam Murtaza Virk of Judicial Magistrate Courts acquitted Umar Farooq Zahoor and cancelled two First Information Reports (FIRs) after the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) informed the court that its investigations had established that the accused was not involved in fraud, money-laundering and corruption. Both cases were started in early June 2020 after Sophia Mirza approached the FIA Lahore's Corporate Circle over allegations of fraud and money-laundering of around Rs 16 billion by Umar Farooq Zahoor and his brother-in-law Saleem Ahmad. The FIA told the court that it issued notices and letters to the Norwegian Police Liaison Officer at Islamabad for collection of relevant evidence but no positive response has been shown by them. The judge noted that the alleged offence was committed in the year 2010 and that case has already been closed but still FIA had registered this case in the year 2020 while treating the said case as a predicate offence of money laundering. The FIA told the court that during the course of investigation it was brought on the record that Umar Farooq Zahoor not only denied the allegations but also produced a letter from Norway Police confirming the said inquiry was closed due to lack of evidence and also produced another document of Oslo Police to the Public Prosecutor with the recommendation of dismissal of the case. The judge ruled that on the basis of the FIA investigation report, the FIR stands dismissed.—APP

IESCO issues power suspension notice

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 13th May 2023 From 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Tufail Shaheed, Frash Town, Kirpa, I-11/1, I-11/3, Metro Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Nogazi, Bajinial Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Chahan, Chontra, Rajar, Chakri, SPD, SPF, Islamabad Feed Mill, Jhata Hatial, Basali, Pind Jatla, Lab.I & II, Reliance Weaving Mill, Industrial, Bhal, Jarrar Camp, Fazl Ahmad Shaheed, Choah Khalsa, Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Mandi Bhalwal, Cantt, CMH.

Police use tear gas against people offering Friday prayers: Awan

Says Islamabad police deliberately resorting to high-handed approach to create atmosphere of confrontation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Islamabad region President Ali Nawaz Awan said that the fascist government crossed all limits as such excesses and barbarity could not even imagine in Palestine and Kashmir to subject the worshippers and peaceful protesters to such cruelties. Ali Awan stated that the Islamabad police was deliberately creating an atmosphere of confrontation, which was evident from their ham-handed approach. He said that let the media come to see as to who were peaceful and who were using

force, adding that they were being prevented from peaceful protests which was their fundamental and constitutional rights. PTI regional president went on to say that not a single activist has taken the law into his hands, adding that who gave the right to Islamabad police to use force against the peaceful demonstrators. He said that fascism was on the rise, as look what the government machinery was doing right now using illegal power against own peaceful countrymen who just gathered to welcome their leader.

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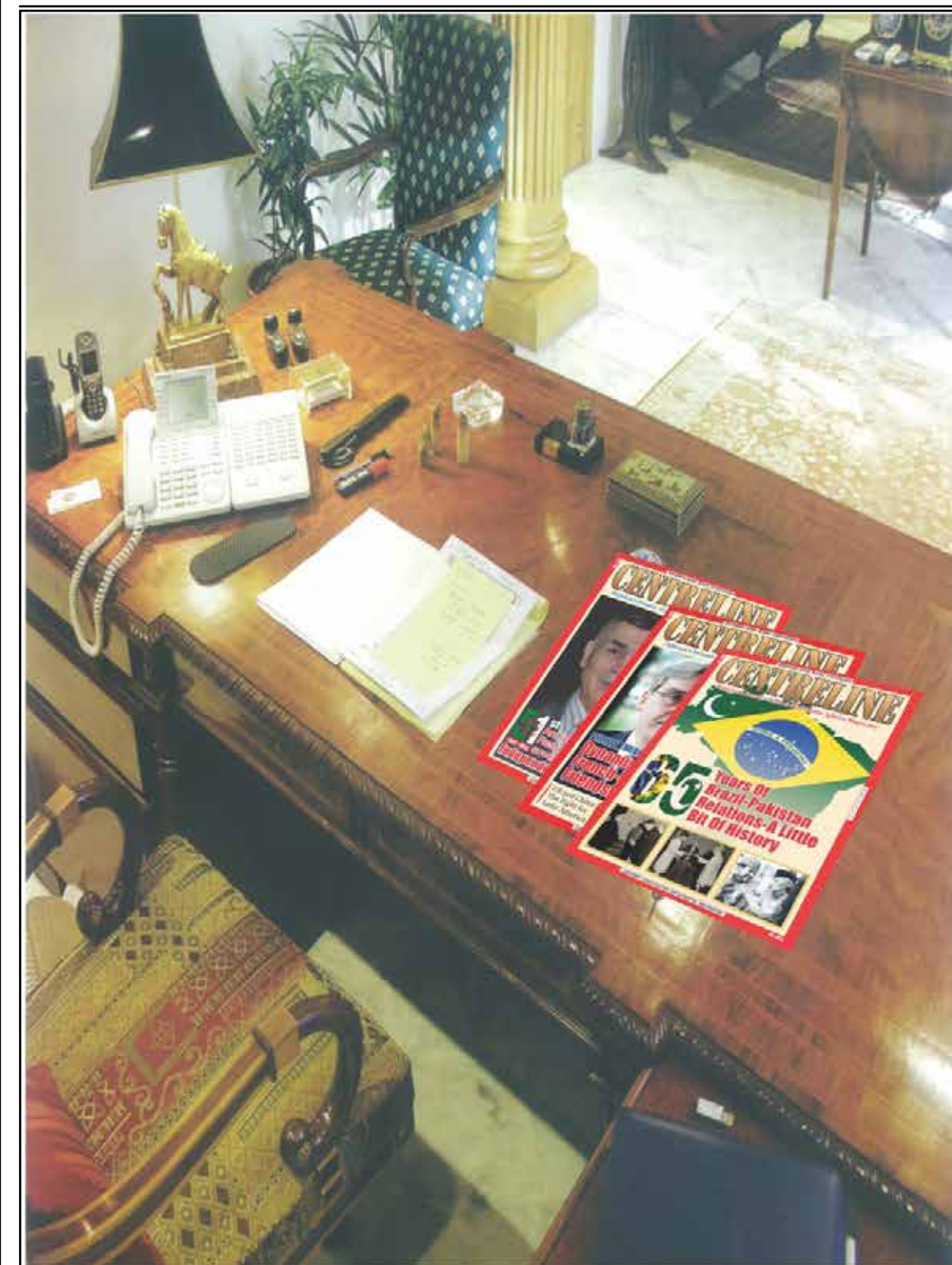
Sanjrani expresses grief over loss of lives

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Friday conveyed his profound sadness and remorse regarding the loss of precious lives resulting from the attack by terrorists on security forces in Balochistan's Muslim Bagh region.

In his condolence message, the Chairman strongly condemned the incident, stating that such cowardly acts cannot weaken the resolve of the nation. He acknowledged the unparalleled sacrifices made by the armed forces and security agencies in the fight against terrorism and reiterated that the Pakistan Army was determined to eliminate the scourge of terrorism. He added that the terrorists would never succeed in their nefarious designs and the sacrifices of the security forces for the peace of the region would not go in vain. The Chairman Senate prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured security personnel and expressed solidarity with the families of the martyrs.—APP

Gold prices decrease

ISLAMABAD: The per tola price of 24-karat gold decreased by Rs 6,500 to Rs 230,800 on Friday against its sale at Rs 237,300 the previous day, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also decreased by Rs 5,573 to Rs 197,874 from Rs 203,447 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold went down to Rs 181,384 from Rs 186,393. The price of per tola silver dipped by Rs 300 to close at Rs 3,100 and that of 10-gram silver also decreased by Rs 257.21 to Rs 2,400.54 respectively. The price of gold in the international market declined by \$33 to close at \$2,005 as compared to \$2,038 last day, the Association reported.—APP



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Briefs

IRSA
releases
146,300
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 146,300 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 114,400 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1434.93 feet and was 36.93 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 32,000 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1120.90 feet, 70.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 36,100 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 62,100, 56,900, 44,800 and 11,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 26,300 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 11,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

NTDC completes
500kV Thar-
Matiari

Transmission line

ISLAMABAD, May 12 (APP): The National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) has successfully completed the 500kV Thar Matiari Transmission line in record time on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The 220-kilometre-long transmission line has been completed by NTDC with a cost of approximately Rs. 15 billion within two and half months from its own resources, official sources told APP here Friday.

They said it was the most important project for Pakistan's future energy needs through which coal-fired power generation in Thar would be connected to the rest of the country. A 220-kilometre-long line had been laid but the total length of the transmission was 800 km and it would definitely help improve the power transmission system, they added. The sources said the transmission line would connect the 1320 MW SECL coal plant in Thar to Matiari Converter station. Some 54 individual crews, consisting of over 300 labourers worked relentlessly on the project for its timely completion, the official sources informed. The Thar-Matiari transmission line project for Gwadar to import 100 MW of electricity from Iran has also been completed by NTDC in record time. It is worth mentioning here that to monitor the pace of work on the project, a camp office of NTDC's top management was also set up at Mithi (Thar) near the project site.—APP

Businessmen role vital
to rid country of crisis

He also shared ICCI's plan for the launch of an FM Radio for the business community and hoped that the government would facilitate the Chamber in this regard

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Syed Naveed Qamar, Federal Minister for Commerce said that the role of the business community is very important in steering the economy out of current crisis and said that the government would take all possible measures for ease of doing business to facilitate them in business development. He lauded the efforts of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) for the establishment of a new Industrial Zone and construction of an Expo Centre in the Capital and assured that he would cooperate for the materialization of these projects as they are very important to boost industrialization and improve trade & exports of the country. He said this while talking to the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He also inaugurated a new Syed Naveed



Qamar Hall in ICCI premises. Syed Naveed Qamar welcomed the ICCI plan for launching an FM Radio for the business community to educate them on business related matters including the trade

laws, regulations, importance of exports and assured that he would play a role to facilitate them in this project.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Is-

lamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the Federal Minister for Commerce about the importance of a new industrial zone in the region as the current industrial estates in the Capital

have reached the point of saturation and the potential investors are facing problems in setting up new industries in the region. He stressed that the government should cooperate with ICCI in identifying and acquisition of land to complete this vital project as soon as possible. He said that a great boost in exports is the best option to bring the country out of the current economic crisis and said that CDA has agreed to cooperate with ICCI for the construction of a state-of-the-art Expo Centre in the Capital on the pattern of Expo Centers in Lahore and Karachi to introduce exportable products of Pakistan. He said that the support of the government would help ICCI in early completion of this important project. He also shared ICCI's plan for the launch of an FM Radio for the business community and hoped that the government would facilitate the Chamber in this regard.

Six drug
peddlers,
bootleggers
held

RAWALPINDI: The police in a crackdown against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers and illegal weapon holders, here on Friday arrested six accused besides recovering over 465 grams of hashish, five litres of liquor, five bottles of liquor, three 30-bore pistols and ammunition from their possession.

According to a police spokesperson, Dhamial police held Zafar for having 465 grams of hashish while Pirwadhai police rounded up Faisal with five litres of liquor and Airport police netted an accused namely Ali for possessing five bottles of liquor.

Taxila, Saddar Wah, and Mandra police arrested Kalat Khan, Sajjad, and Bashir and recovered three 30-bore pistols and ammunition from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations were underway. City Police Officer (CPO) had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers, he added.—APP

Jashan-e-
Baharan
festival
spills colors of
local culture

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), in collaboration with the Tourism Wing of the Pakistan Armed Forces, has organized the three-day "Jashan-e-Baharan" festival scheduled from May 12 to 14 in Kharasha-Khwa Stori Khel at Orakzai District.

The festival is promoting and projecting tourism in the province, especially in the merged districts of KP, said a news release received here on Friday. The food, cultural and traditional stalls have been established during the festival to entertain the participants. Sports competitions including jeep races, cycle races, cricket, volleyball, paragliding, karate, motorcycle races, and tent pegging were also arranged to entertain the people with healthy and thrilling games. The festival is also showcasing musical performances, traditional Khattak dance, recitals by local poets, and a spectacular fireworks display to be held at the conclusion of the festival.

RBISE finalises arrangements
for HSSC annual exams 2023

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (RBISE) has finalized arrangements for Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) annual exams 2023 which will start in Rawalpindi division on May 20, Saturday.

According to Chairman RBISE, Muhammad Adnan Khan, foolproof arrangements have been made for the HSSC annual exams. Controller Examinations RBISE Prof. Sajid Mehmood Farooqi informed that roll number slips of regular students had already been sent to the concerned institutions and those of the private students were uploaded on the board's website /http://www.biser-

awalpindi.edu.pk and also being dispatched at the addresses mentioned in their admission forms.

He informed that the board on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatha, best possible arrangements had been finalized for the exams.

The date sheets of the exams, lists of the examiners and the examination centers and other officials had been sent to all the Deputy Commissioners of the division, District Police Officers and to the special branch. The district administration and the special branch would send lists to the commissioner office and the board office after completing the verification

process. Apart from the board's office at Morgah near Attock Oil Refinery Rawalpindi, the students could also contact at phone number 051-5450917-18, Assistant Controller Inter Branch Rana Ilyas on cell phone 0333-5464775, focal person Inter Branch, Riasat Abbasi on 0332-8500846 and 051-5450920 in case of any problem, he added. He said, 196 examination centres had been set up in the division, including 33 in Attock, 40 in Chakwal, 26 in Jhelum, 47 in Rawalpindi district and 50 local centers.

He said strict monitoring of the examination centers would be ensured by the board and the district administration.

Strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against the 'Boti' mafia, he added.

The district vigilance committee, chairman squad, special squad and mobile inspectors would visit the examination centers to check the exam process and send their reports to the board on daily basis. A central control room had also been set up to monitor the examinations, he said adding, all the officials concerned had been directed to ensure the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures issued by the board. Negligence on the part of the officials concerned would not be tolerated, he added.

GSMA expresses
concern over internet
shutdowns in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Groupe Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA), a global organisation of mobile ecosystem Friday expressed concern over the shutdown of broadband internet in Pakistan.

According to details, the GSMA in an emergency letter to Federal Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Aminul Haq, the company pressed the Pakistan government to put an end to internet suspension. The mobile broadband services have remained suspended for a consecutive fourth day in several parts of Pakistan in the wake of the riots erupted by the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Tuesday. The GSMA has said that the suspensions have impacted both consumers and businesses alike. Prolonged internet outages are causing problems for citizens' health, education, social and economic well-being, and business and investment in the telecom sector have been severely affected, the GSMA said. The suspension of mobile broadband internet services from Tuesday has resulted in loss of Rs2.49 billion to Pakistan's telecom sector.—DNA

HEC conducts capacity
building workshop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan conducted the second cohort of capacity building training programme for faculty of Affiliated Colleges (ACs) of Lahore Division in collaboration with HED Punjab under the Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) project. A three-day capacity building workshop was conducted by the HEDP team at the University of Engineering & Technology, Lahore, for faculty of 50 Affiliated Colleges (ACs) of Lahore Division. The batch comprising 91 participants included more than 60% women. These included teachers from Lahore, Shalada, Kasur, Pattoki, Phool Nagar, Chuniyan, Kot Rada Kishan, Mustafabad, Kanganpur, Khudian Khas, Changa Manga, Muridke, Nankana Sahib, Narang Mandi, Shahkot, Sangla Hill, Bucheki and Sheikhpura. The training was comprised of ten modules: a) Transition to Semester System; b) Semester System Planning & Management c) Academic Advisement & Career Progression; d) Use of Technology in Teaching e) Use of Technology in assessment f) Learning Assessment & Feedback; g) Quality in Learning h) Curric-

ulum development i) Course Development; and j) Teaching Methodology: Andragogy and Pedagogy. The activity is led by the Post-Secondary Education Reform Unit (PERU) team, a component of the project responsible for the execution and rollout of UEP, in close coordination with the Higher Education Departments (HEDs) of the Government. The HEDP project is focused on supporting the tertiary education system composed of ACs in Pakistan and several initiatives of the project including IT support, governance, capacity building and financial autonomy are aimed to support these institutions.

The training is an outcome of advocacy meetings held earlier with HED Punjab in which they have nominated 1600 faculty members from 800 Affiliated Colleges, whose capacity will be enhanced in a phased approach. The training started with a pre-training test and was followed by an online post-test and feedback survey. The pre-test and post-test indicate that substantial value was added to the participants during the training. The participants appreciated the efforts of HEC and suggested the need for regular trainings for faculty and staff and closer collaboration between Higher Education Department, Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Affiliating Universities (AUs).

Speaker, Deputy Speaker
express sorrow

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durani, have strongly condemned the terrorist attack on an FC camp in Balochistan's Muslim Bagh area. In their separate condolence messages, they expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives of security personnel due to the attack and extended their heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker appreciated the sacrifices made by the security forces in defending the country and fighting terrorism. They also emphasized that terrorists can never achieve their nefarious objectives. Furthermore, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker reiterated that terrorists have no affiliation with any religion and are enemies of humanity and the country. They highlighted the nation's unity in the fight against terrorism and support for the security forces. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker prayed for the elevation of martyrs' ranks and for the bereaved families to find patience and solace. They also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured security personnel.—APP

POWERCHINA provides
permanent jobs to engineers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: POWERCHINA, the contractor of Diamer Basha Dam Project (DBDP) not only offers internship opportunities to local youth but also provides permanent jobs to meritorious students who successfully complete their internships at the site.

Recently, according to Gwadar Pro on Friday, out of six who completed their internship at DBDP obtained permanent jobs with POWERCHINA. The budding local engineers are grateful to the Chinese company for providing them with permanent employment opportunities at their doorstep. The successful candidates were awarded certificates during the closing ceremony of the six-month training program. The ceremony was attended by DBDP CEO Amir Bashir Choudhary, as well as consultants and officials from the contractor of the project, according to an official statement. "When you enter practical life you will realize the importance of



this six-month training with the instruction of POWERCHINA and WAPDA," Amir Bashir Choudhary told the students, adding "it will pay you a lot". Mr. Choudhary told the students that they were an example of how DBDP was improving and developing the locals. Civil Engineer Jaheef Ahmad was happy to complete his six-month training and get a permanent job with POWERCHINA. He appealed all young civil engineers of Diamer to avail

the opportunity of internship at the project. "This internship is a big opportunity for you. You will get a certificate from an international company which will help you get jobs," he said. Zahid Ullah, another Civil Engineer, said that he learned a lot during the training, such as support work, drilling, survey and different other tests. "I am grateful to POWERCHINA for this golden opportunity," said Mr. Zahid. Other trainees were also jubilant

with the completion of their training and invited more fresh graduates of Diamer to come and avail training opportunities at DBDP. Last month, the Water and Power Department of Government of Gilgit Baltistan sent a letter of appreciation to POWERCHINA's DPDP, praising its outstanding contribution in improving local residents' lives by providing them with jobs. In April, POWERCHINA announced 190 jobs at DBDP for local communities.

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Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

Turkey's election

Few elections have been more closely contested or more important than those taking place in Turkey on Sunday. Voters face a stark choice which will not only define their country's future, but reverberate more widely. Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been part of a broader global shift towards authoritarianism. His defeat, after 20 years in power, could allow Turkey to move back towards democracy and greater freedom – the pledge which unites the multiparty opposition Nation's Alliance. Another victory for him might see it slide into outright autocracy – leading to the destruction of essential institutions and civil society, already badly damaged by the assaults of the president and his Justice and Development party (AKP).

Polls place the opposition coalition only just ahead, though Thursday's withdrawal of another opposition candidate may boost its prospects. Candidates must win 51% in the first round to avoid a runoff, which experts think would favour Mr Erdogan. There is also concern that a narrow opposition victory might not carry the day. Elections still matter in Turkey: Mr Erdogan wants a mandate. But that also depends on winning, and these are not fully free and fair.

The Nation's Alliance candidate, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu of the Republican People's party (CHP), is an unglamorous figure and member of the Alevi religious minority. He has sought to make a virtue of necessity by presenting himself as a humble representative focused on people's struggle to put food on the table, and has courted support from the marginalised Kurdish community. Mr Erdogan, the charismatic strongman, has unveiled yet more grand projects. Mr Erdogan's first decade in power saw high growth and sharp reductions in inequality, and he pushed through major infrastructure improvements. But his harsh crackdown on 2013's nationwide protests proved a tipping point, and after he saw off 2016's inept coup attempt, political repression intensified. Some hope that the opposition, by reviving the economy, could help Europe to diversify its supply chains away from China. The president has made his country a major regional player, balancing ties with the west and Russia; the alliance have indicated they would turn towards the west, and Sweden hopes an opposition victory would speed its entry into Nato. But even if Mr Kılıçdaroğlu wins the presidential race, the coalition must also triumph in the parliamentary contest to carry through its keystone pledge to end the centralisation of power in the presidency and restore parliamentary democracy. Given the pressing dangers to Turkey's remaining freedoms, any move towards democracy should be welcomed, and will need support. That should not rest upon exaggerated expectations about what any new government can and will achieve. Nor should it be entirely uncritical. Wishful thinking will not help anyone.



China and Europe can be ballast for peace

There are many common interests between China and the European countries despite their ideological differences. Among these is a shared desire for peace in Ukraine. An end to the conflict would benefit not just Ukraine and Russia, but also China, the whole of Europe and the rest of the world. The conflict has been one of the factors driving up global inflation. It has caused grain, gas and other material shortages, as supply chains have been broken. Quarrels and antagonism among various parties have also been exacerbated by the hostilities.

Since it has taken a principled position on the crisis rather than simply choosing sides, this dissension has been focused on China. As a result, the conflict has prompted intensifying calls within the US-led camp for decoupling from China.

But with the spillover effects from the crisis worsening, an increasing number of countries are now acknowledging that "an overly simplified or emotionally driven approach" is not the right way forward. Which was something that Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang stressed during his visit to Germany on Tuesday and Wednesday. Reiterating that China is neither the one that created the conflict nor a party to it, Qin reminded his hosts that China has been a consistent advocate for peace and the building of a balanced, effective and durable European security architecture. Qin was visiting Germany within a month of his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock visiting China. It is to be hoped that Germany is gaining more awareness of China's sincerity in working for peace and urging the two countries to join hands to share the dividends of development. Although German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told European Union lawmakers on Tuesday that he agrees with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen that "we should not aim for a de-coupling" from China, he also added his voice to hers in calling for "smart de-risking". In fact, what many in Germany and European countries seem to hope will happen is that they can continue to follow the United States' lead while China will leverage its friendly relations with Russia to accept a peace deal dictated by Washington.

But, as Qin told his hosts on Wednesday, what China brings to the world are opportunities, cooperation, stability and reassurance, not crises, confrontation, turmoil or risks. Its 12-point peace proposal is a workable basis on which concerted efforts can be made to secure a cease-fire in Ukraine and get the conflicting parties to negotiate a deal in good faith that will produce durable peace.

To achieve peace, both Ukraine and Russia must feel secure

Joergen Moeller

Both countries are signatories to the Charter for European Security adopted in 1999 at the 6th Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe summit in Istanbul. Article II of the document affirms the right of each state to establish its own security through alliances and treaties, and stipulates that there needs to be mutual respect for such arrangements.

Clearly, today Ukraine and Russia's security paradigms cannot be easily reconciled, but that does not mean it is impossible to come up with an arrangement both sides would agree to, especially one that involves guarantees by other powers. The United States has been indispensable for Ukraine's security and independence, but its commitment will not last

It has been more than a year since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The war has killed and wounded hundreds of thousands of civilians and troops and devastated the country. In recent months, however, there has been little movement in the front line and observers are increasingly talking about a stalemate and the need to move towards talks between Moscow and Kyiv. Although both sides have said they are ready for negotiations, they have yet to sit down to discuss peace. As the international community mulls how to jumpstart this process, it is important to remember that peace can only be achieved by making both Ukraine and Russia feel secure. Both of them. Not one of them.

Both countries are signatories to the Charter for European Security adopted in 1999 at the 6th Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe summit in Istanbul. Article II of the document affirms the right of each state to establish its own security through alliances and treaties, and stipulates that there needs to be mutual respect for such arrangements.

Clearly, today Ukraine and Russia's security paradigms cannot be easily reconciled, but that does not mean it is impossible to come up with an arrangement both sides would agree to, especially one that involves guarantees by other powers. The United States has been indispensable for Ukraine's security and independence, but its commitment will not last. Washington has been recently signalling that countering Russian expansionism in Ukraine and elsewhere is a sideshow and that China is its main pre-occupation. Therefore, a security guarantee for Ukraine must be offered by the European Union, whose economic and security interests are at stake in this conflict. Ukraine may prefer dealing with the Americans, but sooner or later it will realise that its European neighbours are far more stable allies. The Europeans can guarantee Ukrainian security by resuscitating earlier plans for a European Defence Community (EDC) put forward in 1952 by the Benelux countries – including France, Italy, and West Germany – to meet the Soviet military threat. It was aborted when ratification failed in the French parliament, but today it is unlikely that Paris would block such an initiative. The EDC could station a force inside Ukraine to make the guarantee credible. In this way, the Europeans would counter Russia's claim of acting in self-defence against NATO in Ukraine.

Europe's conventional forces would be sufficiently strong to match a Russian threat provided that the EU member states implement current plans to boost defence capabilities and do not fall prey to wishful thinking that the world is a peaceful place. The problem with this arrangement may be countering Russia's nuclear threat. There are two ways to square that circle. First, a Russian attack on Ukraine could be deterred by the simple presence of EDC troops. They would come from countries that are NATO members. Although it is not clear whether in this situation, Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which defines collective defence, can be activated, the strategic ambiguity it creates may be enough to deter a Russian attack. Second, France's nuclear weapons could also be used as a deterrent. French President Emmanuel Macron has already indicated that Paris is considering playing a role in Europe's collective security through its nuclear arsenal. And ideas to multilateralise a nuclear deterrent have been floated before. At the beginning of the 1960s, the US proposed a NATO multilateral nuclear fleet known as the Multilateral Force. The French nuclear arsenal is not diversified enough to respond to Russian nuclear threats and bringing it to that level would require time and money. So, French nuclear weapons replacing the US arsenal as a nuclear deterrent to Russia in Europe would only be a workable solution in the long run. Establishing a security guarantee for Russia will likely fall to China. Beijing has continually stated that the "Ukraine crisis is not what we want to see". What it probably wants to see is Russian President Vladimir Putin being neither a loser nor a winner. China has no interest in an outcome that helps Russia, its archrival in Central Asia, grow stronger, nor does it want to see the downfall of Putin's regime, as its collapse may sow doubts about the stability of autocratic regimes. In March, after hosting Chinese President Xi Jinping, Putin said that Russia and China are not creating a military alliance. That is because the Russian president does not need one. He only needs to know that his and his regime's survival is a Chinese core interest – that is enough of a security guarantee for him. But the prospect of Russia negotiating peace in earnest as long as it discerns sympathy for its position from China is remote. That is why, if Beijing is seri-

ous about "not wanting to see" the Ukrainian crisis continue, it will have to demonstrate to Moscow the limits of its security guarantee. It can do so by merely changing its rhetoric and pushing the idea that it is Russia that is blocking a peace deal. This would certainly undermine global sympathy for Moscow, taking away one of its trump cards. Putin is, of course, likely to resist peace talks without a clear victory in Ukraine because he perceives the domestic cost as too high. After spending more than a year telling the Russian people that he is leading a "military operation" to rid Ukraine of "Nazis" and stop a "genocide" against Russian speakers in the country, they may start asking questions if he abruptly ends the campaign to negotiate with those who he called "Nazis".

Xi may be able to help Putin with this quandary, pointing to the rhetorical acrobatics one of his predecessors, Deng Xiaoping, had to resort to, after the 1979 Chinese attack on Vietnam was repulsed by the battle-hardened Vietnamese army. "Vietnam has been taught a lesson," Xiaoping said back then, and Putin may as well concur today: "Ukraine has been taught a lesson." Inevitably, the end of the war in Ukraine will involve Russia coming to terms with being a nation-state. Putin and the Russian people will have to accept that the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union are confined to history and they cannot be resurrected.

The West, for its part, will have to work on reversing global perceptions of who is to blame for the conflict. Otherwise, suspicion that the US and the EU used Ukraine to pursue their own interests will grow, further isolating them. The US should also be careful not to classify a possible Chinese-Russian "entente" as an attempt to disrupt the global order and as a major threat to its interests. If it does, the rest of the world may harden its conviction that NATO is set on a confrontation with Russia and eventually China. Although establishing security guarantees for both Ukraine and Russia will be undoubtedly challenging, it is the only way to put an end to this conflict. Living with a protracted war is unalluring for all parties. And as much as it fears China's rise, the West will have to accept its role in pushing for peace in Ukraine. Otherwise, it would risk falling into an ever-deepening isolation from the rest of the world.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Turkiye elections: World watches as Turks decide which path to take

Andrew Hammond

Another key international implication of the elections is the looming renewal of the Black Sea grain deal with Russia, Ukraine and the UN, which expires on May 18. The importance of this agreement is highlighted by the fact that nearly 30 million tons of foodstuffs have been exported from Ukraine since last summer, including nearly 600,000 tons of grain for aid operations in nations such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia

This year is a massive one for G20 state Turkiye – and not only because it marks the 100th anniversary of the republic. Sunday's presidential and legislative elections have key domestic implications, but also big international ones too. This is because Turkish foreign policy could be at an inflexion point if President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has been in national office since 2003, is defeated. His foreign policy was predominantly pro-Western during his prime ministership, from 2003 to 2014, and for much of his presidential term from 2014 to 2018. However, change intensified following the 2016 attempted coup, since when he has also had cordial ties with other states, especially Russia, in what he calls his independent foreign policy. In this context, Turkish domestic politics has recently delayed a number of key foreign policy decisions, including the approval of Sweden's accession to NATO. Whether Erdogan or opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu wins the ballots, it is likely that Ankara's objections to Stockholm's membership of the military alliance will eventually fade away.

Another key international implication of the elections is the looming renewal of the Black Sea grain deal with Russia, Ukraine and the UN, which expires on May 18. The importance of this agreement is highlighted by the fact that nearly 30 million tons of foodstuffs have been exported from Ukraine since last summer, including nearly 600,000 tons of grain for aid operations in nations such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Somalia. If Erdogan were to retain power, there is a higher probability of the agreement being extended, as his candidacy is backed by Vladimir Putin. However, a renewal of the deal is significantly less likely if Kilicdaroglu wins the presidency. This is, in large part, because he and other key opposition leaders are widely distrusted by Russia, not least because some of them are vocally opposed to the Ukraine war. One particular figure who has been widely criticized

by Putin is Ahmet Davutoglu. While prime minister from 2014 to 2016, Davutoglu accused Russia of attempting "ethnic cleansing" with its airstrikes in northern Syria. Broader relations between Ankara and Moscow also plummeted in late 2015 after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane on its border with Syria, with Ankara insisting the plane was targeted because it had trespassed into its airspace, which Moscow denies. So, decision-makers across the world will therefore closely watch these elections. One reason why the outcome remains unclear at this stage is the possibility of further surprises in the coming days. Amid this uncertainty, there are at least four key scenarios that could help illuminate – rather than exactly predict – what might happen. For governments and organizations, including corporations, this exercise can help to build preparedness by stress testing against a range of plausible developments to help mitigate risks. It can also allow them to seize possible opportunities to drive their competitive advantage in a fast-changing landscape. While a significant number of commentators are predicting the end of the Erdogan era, the incumbent president is resilient and another victory cannot be ruled out, possibly in combination with legislative gains for the opposition, which could see his AKP party lose control of the chamber. Overall, this outcome – which might be termed the "Erdogan's political challenges grow" scenario – would probably be neutral to negative for the economy. In this future, Erdogan could be hobbled from day one of his new term. While he would remain the biggest political beast in Turkiye, his power would wane and he may lose the opportunity to define his succession. With the economic outlook potentially deteriorating significantly, Erdogan is likely to consider serious macro adjustments, including to monetary policy, toward a more orthodox stance. However, he may well lack the power to do so, especially at the speed and to the degree that he might have done with a strong-

er political mandate. With the electoral outcome on a knife-edge, it also remains highly plausible that Erdogan narrowly loses the presidential race to Kilicdaroglu. This could be the worst-case scenario for many businesses operating in the nation. This is because it could lead to Erdogan disputing the outcome in a similar style to Donald Trump in the US since November 2020, which could make it very difficult for Kilicdaroglu to hit the ground running. This scenario – which might be called "Erdogan's shadow looms large" – will probably be negative for the economy and the new president would likely lack the power to deliver on his goal of returning to a parliamentary political system, with control of economic and governmental activities stemming from the legislature. While variants of these two futures are the most likely ones to play out, there are other less likely outcomes that would even more radically reshape the nation. The first – which might be called the "Erdogan triumphant" scenario – would see him winning big in the presidential election and his party earning a majority in the legislature too. This could herald a huge change in economic policy, with relatively radical measures brought in, including much tighter monetary policy.

However, the best-case outcome for the economy is the most unlikely one: An unexpectedly large win for the opposition in both the presidential and legislative elections – what might be called the "new political era" scenario. The improvement in investor confidence, buoyed by a potential deal with the International Monetary Fund, would likely be reinforced by a foreign policy shift toward the West. This is why Sunday's elections will frame Turkiye's future for years. While elections are always important, these will be more pivotal than most, with the future of the two-decade-long Erdogan era on the ballot.

Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Imran Khan gets gets bail in all cases

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objection and questioned why the PTI chief was leveling allegations. "Jadoon sb, I am sorry but I did not say anything about you," replied Imran. Khwaja Haris, representing the PTI chief, came to the rostrum and stated that Imran had written to the accountability watchdog for a copy of the inquiry in the AI-Qadir Trust case. "We came to know through the media that the inquiry has been converted into an investigation," Haris maintained. The lawyer added that the manner in which the inquiry was converted into an investigation, the aim was to "arrest Imran immediately". Haris furthered that NAB can convert an inquiry into an investigation only if there is sufficient evidence. "A notice was sent to me on March 2 to which I replied," he said, adding that in his reply, he informed NAB that the notice was not sent as per the requirements of the NAB Ordinance. Haris further argued that NAB has to inform the individual whether the summons is as an accused or as a witness, adding that if a person has been summoned as an accused, the bureau has to explain the charges. The court then inquired if the PTI counsel was sent a questionnaire. To this, Haris replied that the questionnaire was not sent, however, he had sought further information. He added that in Tashakhana case, a notice was sent to me in the same manner which he challenged in the same court. "This court declared these notices illegal," said Haris. Haris added that Imran was arrested, and an inquiry report was then provided. However, on April 28, the inquiry was converted into an investigation. Advocate General Islamabad Jadoon then commenced his arguments and said that he will not discuss the merits of the case, but read Article 245 of the Constitution instead. "The high court cannot hear a case in an area where the army has been summoned under Article 245," he added. Expressing displeasure, the bench asked the AG if the court should do away with all writ petitions due to Article 245.

PM Shehbaz slams 'double...'

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He termed the Supreme Court's bail relief to him "nothing but an NRO" (National Reconciliation Order). The minister remarked that if the "favourite" continued to be favoured, then all dacoits behind bars should be also released across Pakistan. "These are the double standards that have brought about the death of justice," he said as he expressed astonishment over the remarks of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial's remarks during yesterday's hearing where the top judge said that he was pleased to see Imran. He pointed out that thousands of cases by the general public were pending before the courts while some political figures were being given special favours of bail on a priority basis. Shehbaz criticised how similar leniency was not given to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Nawaz Sharif or other members of the cabinet. He lamented that "no one" spoke to Nawaz about the "injustices" he suffered. The prime minister said that the judiciary also protected Imran Khan in his corruption cases. He maintained that the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Billion Tree Tsunami, as well as the Malam Jabba development projects had solid proofs of corruption by PTI, but the cases were not pursued. He continued that "Imran Khan was part of an agenda to bring fascist rule to the country for 10 years". According to the premier, May 9 - the day of Imran's arrest - was a painful day in the country's history as Imran's party unleashed havoc by attacking national and military installations. He said that such scenes were not observed since the fall of Dhaka in 1973.

Russia wins appeal against Paralympic suspension

The decision adopted by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) last November has been reversed, Russian officials have announced

MOSCOW: The Russian Paralympic Committee (RPC) has announced that it has succeeded with its appeal against suspension from the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). The IPC's appeals body "has confirmed that the decision of the IPC General Assembly to suspend the RPC's membership in the IPC is being canceled," the RPC said in a statement on Friday. A tribunal of three judges considered the complaint by Russia dur-

ing a session in Dubai two weeks ago, the statement read. The IPC Extraordinary General Assembly voted to suspend the RPC's membership in November last year. The committee had previously banned Russian athletes from taking part in the Beijing Paralympics in March 2022 because of the conflict in Ukraine. According to the RPC, the appeals tribunal explained that it had canceled Russia's suspension because the initial decision by the

IPC General Assembly was made with "procedural violations." Among other things, the tribunal stated that no evidence of any wrongdoing by the RPC was presented to the participants of the November 16 meeting. The appeals body added that it had not received sufficient evidence before its session in April, according to the statement. The tribunal also argued that "the RPC's membership cannot be suspended on the grounds

of risks that IPC events might be used for political propaganda because the very fact of the violation must be established, but not the risk of it," the RPC said. However, the RPC pointed out that the new ruling does not mean that Russian Paralympic athletes will be granted an immediate return to international competitions. In its letter, the appeals body stressed that its verdict does not have the power to overturn the decision of the

IPC Executive Board from March 30, 2022, to bar Russian representatives from participating in IPC events, the statement read. "The Appeals Tribunal did not draw any conclusions on the violation of the rights of athletes, including the possibility of their admission to international competitions," the RPC said. The RPC added that it is planning to explore other legal options to challenge the IPC's ban on the country's athletes. - Agencies

Imran Khan says no deal made in...

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registered across the country until Monday (May 15). Speaking of the protests, the PTI chief said that when a crowd takes to streets without supervision of a leader, it gets 'out of control'. He further said that he had warned the government not to lead the country towards 'anarchy'. "I kept warning that if Pakistan becomes Sri Lanka, it will go out of everyone's hands," he added. It is pertinent to mention here that President Dr Arif Alvi reached Police Lines Guest House to meet former premier and PTI chairman Imran Khan.

Imran considers himself...

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government do this, she remarked. However, she said Imran Khan during his tenure arrested political leaders, put them in jails and tried to silence their voices. To another question, Mariyum Aurangzeb said that after the issuance of a court order, it was his constitutional right to review or discuss the order. To another question, the minister said that no peaceful citizen was on the streets during the last three days, only armed groups and terrorists were taken to streets who damaged state and public property.

PTI's Dr Yasmin, Shireen...

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Qureshi was arrested in the wee hours of Thursday after the police raided Gilgit-Baltistan House in Islamabad under Section 3 of Maintenance of Public Order (MPO). The security personnel rounded up over 1,800 PTI leaders and supporters since the protests began on Tuesday when Imran was arrested from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) premises. However, the Supreme Court ordered his immediate release on Thursday evening in the AI-Qadir Trust case.

The Islamabad police spokesperson had confirmed the arrests, adding that Imran's spokesperson Musarrat Jamshed Cheema, her husband Jamshed Cheema, Malika Bukhari and Senator Falaknaz had also been taken into custody under Section 3 of the MPO and transferred to Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi under 15-day detention.

PDM announces protest...

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punches if needed," he warned. Fazl said that instead of making efforts to eliminate the crime, the courts were instead giving protection to the culprits, adding that the top court gave protection to a person who was involved in embezzlement worth Rs60 billion. "Did Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz or Farayal Talpur receive such relief? There are hoodlums everywhere in the entire country and terrorists are roaming around and courts are giving them protection," he said. He said that the "terrorists" were attacking Corp Commanders' residences and attacking and humiliating army installations. "Supreme Court is the mother of law, and not mother-in-law... how much they want to deviate from Constitution," he questioned. Addressing Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, Fazl said that we will not accept the decision of three judges and only the judgement of four judges was acceptable. He said that terrorist was a small word for Imran Khan as what he had done comes under sedition and rebellion. "If Taliban does this it is rebellion but when this party does it is okay? We will not accept it," he concluded. The announcement comes a day after the top court came to the rescue of Imran Khan as it declared his arrest by the country's top graft-buster from the premises of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) illegal and directed immediate release of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief.

Espanyol aiming to delay Barca's title glory

BARCELONA: Espanyol host Catalan derby rivals Barcelona on Sunday with a dual aim - earning three vital points in the battle for survival and also delaying the visitors' La Liga title triumph. Xavi Hernandez's side can win the league for

gated in 2020 for the first time in almost three decades but immediately returned to the top flight in 2021. Espanyol became the first La Liga side to score at Camp Nou this season with a 1-1 draw against Barcelona in December, and only

us coming into the second match, but in the end, a derby is a derby and you can see it all in derbies. "One side can be better and another worse, but there, all strengths are levelled out." Espanyol's defeat last weekend by Sevilla leaves

Liga, coach Luis Garcia was playing for them, in February 2009 at Camp Nou. Barca midfielder Sergio Busquets will likely feature in one of his last games for the club after announcing Wednesday he would leave at the end of the season when his contract expires. The 34-year-old, who has featured over 700 times for the club, has five official matches remaining with the Catalan giants.



the first time since 2019 if they emerge victorious at the RCDE stadium, an unthinkable proposition for home supporters. The Catalans can also lift the title if both second-placed Atletico Madrid and third-placed Real Madrid fail to win their matches against Elche and Getafe respectively. By contrast, Espanyol are fighting for their lives at the other end of the table, currently 19th and three points from safety with five games remaining. They were rele-

Real Madrid have accomplished the feat since. Joselu struck a penalty to equalise that day and the Spanish international striker warned Barcelona that despite the teams' positions, in a derby there is a level-playing field. "In the first match they also came into it very strongly," Joselu told DAZN. "They (thought they) were going to put five against us at the Camp Nou and we got a very positive result. "They have a lot of advantage over

Barcelona's "other" club in a precarious position. "We have to keep fighting because there are games and points left, we will not give up," insisted defender Leandro Cabrera. However of the clubs fighting relegation, Espanyol have arguably the worst remaining fixtures. As well as Barcelona's visit on Sunday, they host Atletico Madrid and Almeria at home, as well as visiting Rayo Vallecano and Valencia. The last time Espanyol beat Barcelona in La

Liga, coach Luis Garcia was playing for them, in February 2009 at Camp Nou. Barca midfielder Sergio Busquets will likely feature in one of his last games for the club after announcing Wednesday he would leave at the end of the season when his contract expires. The 34-year-old, who has featured over 700 times for the club, has five official matches remaining with the Catalan giants. As a World Cup and European Championship winner with Spain, some Espanyol fans may be inclined to offer him farewell applause, but he won't be banking on it in enemy territory with so much at stake. The 37-year-old playmaker has been a key figure for Real Sociedad this season, with his performances a big reason for their climb to fourth place. Silva has agreed to stay for another season with the Basque side and can celebrate his contract extension on Saturday against Girona. 25 - Barcelona have kept 25 clean sheets this season, one short of the all-time La Liga record 174 - Real Mallorca striker Vedat Muriqi has won the most aerial battles in the league 2533 - Villarreal midfielder Dani Parejo has touched the ball more than any other player this season. - APP

Jannick Sinner eases past Kokkinakis Italian Open

"You know trying to be an example for the young kids, also spending a little bit of time with them. It's important to show them the love."

ROME: Jannick Sinner cruised into the last 32 of the Italian Open on Friday with a straight-sets win over Thanasi Kokkinakis, 6-1, 6-4. World number eight Sinner took one hour, 18 minutes to deal with Australian qualifier Kokkinakis, and will play one of Alexander Shevchenko or Sebastian Baez in the next round. "I'm happy with my level today, it was not easy, it was a little bit breezy, a bit windy," Sinner said on court. "Especially in the second set he played a little bit better. I also had a couple of chances which I didn't use but very happy about how I served, I struck the ball very well." Sinner, 21, did not drop a single point on his serve in a dominant first set in which the gulf in class between the Italian and Kokkinakis was painfully evident. Kokkinakis, ranked 104 in the world, put up more of a fight in the second set but once Sinner broke in the seventh game to take the score to 4-3, it was only a matter of time before the deal was sealed. Sinner made no mistake, serving to love in games eight and nine to ensure comfortable passage to the next round. Rome has not seen an Italian winner of the tournament since Adriano Panatta in 1976. With local boy Matteo Berrettini out of action again with abdominal problems, Sinner will be getting the bulk of the capital city's support. "It is a very special feeling especially here in Rome," Sinner added. "You know trying to be an example for the young kids, also spending a little bit of time with them. It's important to show them the love." Sinner has had a decent season, winning in Montpellier in February and losing the finals in Miami and Rotterdam to Daniil Medvedev. He also reached the semi-finals at Indian Wells, losing to eventual winner Carlos Alcaraz. Cameron Norrie strolled past French qualifier Alexandre Muller 6-2, 6-3 to set up a clash with Marton Fucsovics or Alex de Minaur in the next round. Muller had won his first ever main draw match in a Masters tournament in the first round, beating another Briton in Kyle Edmund, and was no match for World number 13 Norrie. - Agencies

Pak team trains ahead of Junior Asia Cup

LAHORE: Pakistan junior team, under the supervision of their consultant Roelant Oltmans, is training hard ahead of the Asia Cup, penciled in from May 23 to June one in Oman. The green shirts took part in an extensive training session today under the guidance of the Dutch coach. In videos shared by PHF, Oltmans can be seen having interactive sessions with the young players. Players were given different plans according to which their strengths and skills were looked after. A five-member selection committee, comprised of Olympians Nasir Ali, Rahim Khan, Shakeel Abbasi, and Kalemullah Khan, in consultation with the national junior coaching staff, finalised the team and sent it to the PHF president Khalid Sajjad Khokhar after which the players were announced on May 11. Mohammad Abdullah has been named captain while the other squad members include Ali Raza, Mohammad Faizan Janjua, Aqeel Ahmed, Arbaz Ahmed, Intasham Aslam, Mohammad Sufyan Khan, Arbaz Ayaz, Mohammad Murtaza Yaqoob, Arshad Liaquat, Ali Murtaza, Zikriya Hayat, Abdur Rehman, Abdul Qayyum Dogar, Abdul Hannan Shahid, Abdul Wahab, Basharat Ali and Bilal Akram. As many as six players will remain on standby during the event. These players include Bilal Khan (goalkeeper), Mohammad Bilal Aslam, Mohammad Baqir, Mohammad Nadeem Khan, Mohammad Adnan, and Waqar Ali. The coaching staff includes Olympian Hanif Khan (manager), Roelant Oltmans (consultant), coaching panel - Adnan Zakir (International), Olympian Mudassar Ali Khan, Asif Ahmed Khan International, Olympian Zeeshan Ashraf, Rana Zubair (drag flickers coach), Mazhar Abbas (International) (goalkeepers coach). - DNA

Haaland named EPL Player of Month

MANCHESTER: Manchester City striker Erling Haaland has been named Premier League (PL) Player of the Month (POTM) award for April. The 22-year-old won the accolade after scoring six goals and providing two assists in the month of April. Haaland also reacted after winning PL POTM for April. "I'm really happy to win this for the second time this season. I'm grateful to everyone who voted for me. We're in such a vital part of the season and winning all of our Premier League games throughout April was important," said the Norwegian striker. "I'm delighted to have helped the team by scoring goals and we just need to keep going until the end. Breaking the record for most goals scored in a #PL season is something I'm really proud of," he continued. - Agencies

'Increasing BCCI's share of income makes no sense'

DNA
LAHORE: The former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Ehsan Mani is concerned about the health of international cricket after it was revealed that India will receive a significant share from ICC's \$3 billion media rights deal for 2024-27. According to ESPNcricinfo, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is set to receive 38.5 per cent of the net surplus earnings from the ICC which is much higher as compared to 22 per cent share in the current 2015-23 deal. "(Proposed revenue distribution model) will be giving the most money to the country that needs

is the U.S. I would have put \$20-30 million into the U.S. You also need to grow the game in Africa, that's the future. "I think the global game (Associates) should have been allocated at least 30 per cent (instead of 11 per cent). That's the only way to globalise the game." Mani also called for financial parity among the 12 full members of the ICC rather than giving the lion's share to India. "You have to give countries enough resources to not only develop their players but to pay them a fair amount, especially with the IPL and other T20 leagues targeting players," he said. "The Indian market brings in a lot of money... it's not the Board of Control for Cricket in India (India's governing body). There are benefits to the Indian companies to advertise in the ICC events and worldwide. India are not playing on its own, they are playing against other members. It's a two-way street."

Man City eye finish line in Premier League

The Red Devils, who have four games left to play, have lost eight away matches in Premier League this season, their joint-highest tally in a single campaign in the competition

DNA

MANCHESTER: Manchester City can take a giant stride towards a third consecutive Premier League title by beating Everton this weekend but rejuvenated Arsenal have not given up hope of springing a surprise. Liverpool are suddenly in the conversation for a top-four finish after six straight wins cranked up the pressure on Manchester United and Newcastle. At the bottom, Leeds and Leicester are in danger of being cut adrift, along with Southampton. AFP Sport looks at some of the key talking points ahead of the action. Leaders Manchester City are hot favourites to wrap up their fifth Premier League trophy in six seasons but face a potentially tricky trip to Everton on Sunday. Sean Dyche's side clawed their way out of the relegation zone with a confidence-boosting 5-1 win at Brighton earlier this week. Everton's record against City is not pretty - their 1-1 draw in December, under former boss Frank Lampard, came after 10 consecutive defeats in all competitions. The

Merseyside club, just two points above the drop zone with three games to play, will be fighting for their lives. Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta has not given up on his title dream, saying "the prize is there, not too far" after his side's 2-0 win against Newcastle last week. Arsenal, with three games left, can



reach a maximum of 90 points if they beat Brighton, Nottingham Forest and Wolves. City, a point ahead of the Gunners with a game in hand, need nine points to guarantee the title, though their goal difference is significantly superior. Pep Guardiola's men have the trickier run-in, with matches

against Chelsea, Brighton and Brentford to follow their trip to Goodison Park. It is not over yet. Manchester United are back at Old Trafford on Saturday and in desperate need of a win against Wolves as they seek to hold off fast-charging Liverpool in the battle for a top-four finish. Erik ten Hag's men had one foot in next season's Champions League before costly defeats against Brighton and West Ham. The Red Devils, who have four games left to play, have lost eight away matches in the Premier League this season, their joint-highest tally in a single campaign in the competition. It is a different story at home, where they have won 12 and lost just once. "We have everything in our hands," said Ten Hag, whose side are a point clear of Liverpool with a game in hand. The Dutchman knows his first season at the helm will ultimately be judged on whether United qualify for Europe's elite club competition despite cup success. Third-placed Newcastle also had a wobble last week, losing to Arsenal, and are just three points ahead of Jurgen Klopp's men.

Briefs

Five of family die due to accident

ISLAMABAD: At least five people including a woman of the same family were killed and four others seriously injured when the jeep they were traveling in plunged into a deep gorge in Shagla on Friday. Police said the ill-fated family was returning from a wedding when their Jimmy jeep met an accident in Ragesh-vam Bailan Tangay area and fell into the gorge. The Rescue workers pulled the bodies and injured from the wreckage of the vehicle after hectic efforts. The four seriously injured people including a woman and two children were rushed to Pooran Tehsil Headquarters Hospital for treatment.—APP

PSX gains 161.95 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday witnessed a bullish trend gaining 161.95 points, with a positive change of 0.39 per cent, closing at 41,487.58 against 41,325.63 points on the previous day. A total of 89,474,706 shares valuing Rs 3.401 billion were traded during the day as compared to 96,850,678 shares valuing Rs 2.891 billion the previous day. As many as 317 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 176 of them recorded gains and 111 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 30 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 9,548,520 shares at Rs 1.14 per share, Maple Leaf with 5,407,794 shares at Rs 28.11 per share, and Sui North Gas with 4,164,051 shares at Rs 42.12 per share. Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 100.00 per share price, closing at Rs 5800.006, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fiber with a Rs 75.23 rise in its per share price to Rs 1078.99. Bhanero Tex witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 70.77 per share closing at Rs 1060.00, followed by ZIL Limited with a Rs 24.75 decline to close at Rs 305.25.—APP

UK economy grows sluggishly in 1st quarter

LONDON (AP) — The U.K. economy grew sluggishly during the first three months of the year as double-digit inflation curbed consumer spending and labor unrest curtailed output in industries ranging from transportation to health-care and education. Gross domestic product, the broadest measure of economic activity, increased 0.1% in the first quarter compared with the previous three months, the Office for National Statistics said Friday. The figure matched the growth rate during the fourth quarter of last year and was in line with economic forecasts. The figures come a day after the Bank of England approved a 12th consecutive interest rate increase as it struggles to curb inflation that has remained at around 10% since July. The bank also upgraded its economic outlook, saying the "underlying picture is more positive" than it was earlier this year.

"Let's be clear, whilst the Bank of England may believe the U.K. economy will now avoid the predicted recession entirely, the country is not in good health," said Danni Hewson, head of financial analysis at AJ Bell, a U.K.-based investment platform. "Rising prices, rising interest rates and strike action have created a cocktail that's pretty unpalatable." On a monthly basis, the picture was even more grim. Output fell 0.3% from the previous month in March. The British economy has been hard hit by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with stubbornly high inflation triggering a wave of strikes by workers who have seen their wages eroded by rising prices. The U.K. inflation rate was 10.1% in March, compared with 5% in the U.S. and 6.9% in the countries sharing the euro. Those strikes contributed to quarterly declines in output from the transportation, public administration, healthcare and education sectors, the ONS said.—APP

Pentagon sees 'Chinese threat' in US default on national debt

While little progress was made in negotiations with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on Tuesday, Biden is set to meet with the Republican leader again next week for further talks on extending the debt ceiling.

WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and other senior Pentagon officials have urged lawmakers to extend the federal borrowing limit, insisting a default on the national debt would be devastating for America's reputation and "embolden" China. Testifying at a Senate Defense Appropriation hearing on Thursday, both Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley spoke in support of the White House's 2024 budget request, warning that a default would deal a major blow to national security. "China right now describes us in their open speeches, etc., as a declining power," Milley said. "Defaulting on the debt would only reinforce that thought and embolden China and increase risk to the United States."

Arguing that the Pentagon's \$842-billion budget request for next year is "driven by the seriousness of our strategic



competition with the People's Republic of China," Austin went on to state that a default would carry "substantial risk to our reputation" which could benefit Beijing.

"What it would mean realistically for us is that we won't, in some cases, be able to pay our troops with any degree of pre-

dictability. And that predictability is really really important for us," he added. "This would have a real impact on the pockets of our troops and our civilians." In his opening remarks, the defense secretary also said the budget sought by the military would mark a 3.2% increase over 2023 – including a 40% boost to the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which aims to expand the US military presence in China's backyard – but insisted the money is required to meet the "pacing challenge" posed by the PRC. Austin and Milley are the latest in a series of senior officials to issue dire warnings about a potential default, as lawmakers struggle to strike a deal to extend the federal borrowing limit, which currently sits at \$31.4 trillion and could be reached as soon as next month. Earlier on Thursday, Treas-

ury Secretary Janet Yellen claimed a default would be "a catastrophe," suggesting the move could "raise questions about our ability to defend our national security interests." Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines also told Congress last week that both China and Russia would seize on a debt default, saying they could use the event to portray "chaos within the United States." Much like the Pentagon, President Joe Biden himself has also stated that default is simply "not an option," as it could trigger a recession and damage the US' international reputation "in the extreme." While little progress was made in negotiations with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on Tuesday, Biden is set to meet with the Republican leader again next week for further talks on extending the debt ceiling.—Agencies

ASEAN calls for 'self-restraint' in South China Sea

JAKARTA: Emphasizing the benefits of having the South China Sea as a "sea of peace," Southeast Asian nations called Thursday for exercising "self-restraint" in the conduct of activities in the disputed waters. The leaders of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) made the comments during a discussion on the situation in the South China Sea in Labuan Bajo, a tourist destination located in Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara province, where the 10-member regional bloc met for its 42nd summit. Indonesia is the current chair of ASEAN. A joint statement said that some ASEAN members expressed concerns over land reclamations and serious incidents in the area, including damage to the marine environment, "which has eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions, and may undermine peace, security and stability in the region."

"We reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability, and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation," said the ASEAN statement.

The mineral-rich warm waters of the South China Sea have long been a subject of contention between China and some regional countries, with the US siding with countries opposing Beijing's claims. In 2016, the Philippines won a case at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague that invalidated China's South China Sea expansion claims. Washington has frequently sailed its warships and flown its fighter jets over the warm waters of the South China Sea under the so-called "freedom of navigation," which Beijing has repeatedly denounced as a

violation of its territorial integrity. China's claims are based on its "nine-dash line," which are purple dashes on official Chinese maps that represent Beijing's historical claims to the sea.

The ASEAN leaders on Thursday "further reaffirmed the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS." Urging self-restraint in the conduct of activities by claimants and all other states, they called for abiding by the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC). The DoC is an agreement on the South China Sea signed by ASEAN and China in November 2002, marking China's first acceptance of a multilateral agreement on the issue. Reaffirming the

importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, the ASEAN leaders "recognized the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability and prosperity."

"We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC) in its entirety," the leaders said, welcoming the "ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation between ASEAN and China." The statement also noted the progress of the "substantive negotiations towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (CoC) consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, within a mutually agreed timeline."—Agencies

Around 200,000 people have fled from Sudan: UN

GENEVA: Some 200,000 people have now fled Sudan to escape fighting that erupted in mid-April, in addition to hundreds of thousands who have been displaced inside the country, the UN said Friday. "As violence in Sudan continues for a fourth week, nearly 200,000 refugees and returnees have been forced to flee the country, with more crossing borders daily seeking safety," UN refugee agency spokeswoman Olga Sarrado told reporters in Geneva. The UN migration agency said earlier this week that more than 700,000 people have also been displaced within Sudan by the fighting that erupted on April 15, which has left more than 750 people dead and injured 5,000 others. Speaking of the people fleeing the country, Sarrado warned that "the humanitarian response is challenging and costly," pointing out that "refugees and returnees are arriving in remote border areas where services and infrastructure are scarce or non-existent and the host population was already suffering due to climate change and food scarcity." "The coming rainy season will make logistics even harder as many roads will become impassable," she said. For neighbouring Chad, she said some 30,000 refugees had arrived in just recent days, bringing the total number who have arrived from Sudan in recent weeks to 60,000. "Almost 90 percent of refugees are children and women, including many pregnant women," she said. According to UNHCR, a full 20 percent of children between the ages of six months and five years had been found to be acutely malnourished. Sarrado also meanwhile said UNHCR welcomed that Sudan's warring military factions signed a commitment to respect humanitarian principles in their spiralling conflict late Thursday. The two sides promised in talks in the Saudi port city Jeddah late Thursday to protect civilians, but nothing looked set to change immediately. "We hope it will allow for much needed humanitarian assistance to be safely delivered and for essential services, like health care, water and electricity to be restored", she said.—DNA

Khar to attend 2nd EU Indo-Pacific Forum

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State Hina Rabbani Khar will undertake an official visit to Stockholm, Sweden on May 13 to participate in the 2nd European Union Indo-Pacific Forum, the Foreign Office said on Friday. The visit is taking place at the joint invitation of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom. At the Forum, the Minister of State will highlight Pakistan's perspective on important regional and global issues and explore avenues of cooperation with the European Union especially in trade, investment, digital technology, climate, environment and health, and connectivity. She will also meet the leaders participating in the forum and discuss issues of bilateral cooperation.—APP

Police arrest two accused of attempt to murder case

RAWALPINDI, May 12 (APP): Police on Friday arrested two accused who were allegedly involved in a murder attempt case. According to the Rawalpindi Police spokesperson, City Police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO), Rawalpindi under the command of SHO, conducted a raid and managed to arrest two accused namely Sheraz and Bilal who were involved in an attempt to murder case. The accused had opened fire on a citizen, Inamullah over a petty dispute. City Police registered a case against the accused and succeeded in arresting the accused. He said that the Police operation against the criminals would continue and the law-breakers would be sent behind the bars. The spokesperson said that the CPO had directed the Police to initiate a crackdown against the proclaimed offenders and strict action should be taken as per law, especially against the most wanted criminals.—APP

Int'l Day of Families to be marked on May 15

ISLAMABAD: The International Day of Families will be celebrated across the world including Pakistan on Monday to highlight the importance of families, people, societies, and cultures around the world. International Day of Families promotes the importance of a healthy and well-balanced family. A wide range of events is organized at local, national and international levels. These include 1) workshops, seminars and policy meetings for public officials; 2) exhibitions and organized discussions to raise awareness of the annual theme; 3) educational sessions for children and young people; 4) and the launch of campaigns for public policies to strengthen and support family units. In some countries, tool kits are created to help people organize celebrations aimed at a particular section of the population, such as school children or young adults. The year 1994 was proclaimed as the International Year of Families by the United Nations.—APP

Internet suspension causes loss of Rs2.49b

ISLAMABAD: The suspension of mobile broadband internet services from Tuesday has resulted in loss of Rs2.49 billion to Pakistan's telecom sector. The mobile broadband internet services remained suspended for the consecutive fourth day in several parts of the country in the aftermath of the riots triggered by the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan. The government generates revenue of Rs280 million from mobile broadband services on a daily basis and the suspension of the services has caused a loss of almost Rs860 million to the government. Unmute The suspension is affecting e-commerce, online services, home delivery and ride-sharing apps too. In Islamabad and Rawalpindi, nearly 150,000 bike riders have been affected due to the suspension of the broadband.—APP

Demining aid for Ukraine causes dispute in Austria

GENEVA: A dispute has erupted in the Austrian government over Vienna's possible involvement in a demining mission in Ukraine. Austrian Defense Minister Klaudia Tanner of the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) is clearly against participation, according to a report in the Austrian daily Die Presse on Friday. According to the report, Tanner invokes Austria's neutrality, saying: "We will not risk any involvement of Austrian soldiers, even if only indirectly, in acts of war," Die Presse quoted the 53-year-old politician as saying. The fear is that even if the demining was designed as a purely humanitarian mission, there was no guarantee that Austria would not be drawn into the course of the war after all, the Defense Ministry said. Since cleared roads could also be used for an attack, such an intervention for a neutral state like Austria would contradict the Federal Constitutional Law and would therefore be "unthinkable," the ministry further told Die Presse. According to the newspaper's information, Ukraine itself is primarily interested in Austria's remote-controlled, armored minesweepers. However, Austrian Vice Chancellor Werner Kogler of the Green Party disagrees. "This is not a neutrality issue, because it is about a humanitarian task," he said, according to Die Presse. The newspaper further reports that the ÖVP-led Foreign Ministry is also more in line with Kogler. However, the Austrian Defense Ministry is not only opposed to the demining mission but also to the training of Ukrainian forces within the framework of the EU Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM). "Austria will not participate in training within the framework of EUMAM," the ministry told Die Presse.—Agencies



Tokyo: Pakistan ambassador to Japan, Raza Bashir Tarar During visits Kansai Region. He was briefed on Japan's plans for the upcoming world exposition - EXPO2025 Osaka. - DNA

ICC arrest warrant for Putin 'scandalous': Lavrov

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Friday called the International Criminal Court's (ICC) decision to issue an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin, ignoring state officials' immunity, "scandalous."

"This truly 'pseudo' court, which has become an obedient tool in the hands of the Anglo-Saxons, continues to demonstrate political bias, inefficiency, and unprofessionalism," Lavrov said via videoconference to participants at the XI Saint Petersburg International Legal Forum. He added that the ICC's involvement in conflicts has never aided in the resolution of issues, but rather has escalated them. "Today, this structure is making new scandalous decisions, including unilaterally expanding the jurisdictional scope. In violation of international law, ignores the immunities of state officials," he said, adding that similar actions had previously caused an acute crisis in the ICC's relations with African countries. The top Russian diplomat claimed that the "so-called Ukrainian dossier" was openly financed by Great Britain, the Netherlands, Canada, Romania, and Japan. "This is a good example of 'such independent' justice under Western 'rules,'" he said. On March 17, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Putin and the presidential commissioner for children's rights on charges of "deportation" of Ukrainian children. Russia said it does not recognize the ICC's jurisdiction and considers its decisions "null and void," insisting that the children have been moved from the battle zone with the approval of their parents or le-



gal representatives to protect them from the dangers of war. Another court, the UN International Court of Justice, has also been under "colossal" pressure for some time, according to Lavrov. "In this instance, the neo-Nazi Kyiv regime and its American masters initiated a lawsuit based on 'perverted logic' against the Russian Federation under the Convention on the Prevention of Genocide," he added. The minister claimed that the court could not resist the pressure of the "collective West" and has thus far ordered so-called temporary measures. "In parallel, over 30 countries – mainly EU and NATO

members – are trying to join the process on the side of Ukraine. We consider such actions as an undisguised abuse of Court procedures, an attempt at open pressure, and blackmail," he said. "The Western minority is trying to replace the UN-centric architecture with the 'rules-based order,'" which Lavrov defined as "A West-centric order is unthinkable without double standards... An integral part of the 'rules-based order' is the widespread use by Western states of illegitimate unilateral restrictions. This is a gross violation of the spirit and letter of the UN Charter. Sanctions are the exclusive prerogative of the Security Council." The top Russian diplomat explained that these "rules" have no legal basis and are "made by Washington and its allies," are being interpreted as they suit this group, and are being imposed on the world community as "obligatory for implementation." "They are trying to punish those who disagree with the help of various illegitimate tools – from force pressure to demonizing in the information space," he claimed. The minister characterized the rules-based order as "dividing," with a "clearly expressed neo-colonial orientation," implying a division between "the chosen ones" and the rest, between "democracies" and "authoritarian regimes." Lavrov claimed that Russia launched its "special military operation" in Ukraine based on article 51 of the UN Charter, which guarantees the right to individual and collective self-defense "in response to Ukraine's attack." He said Russia consistently supports the UN Charter and international legislation and will continue to contribute to the UN's central and coordinating role in world affairs.

Briefs

Auto sector posts lowest sales since Covid

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan's automotive industry has suffered yet another setback as the country recorded its lowest monthly car sales in April 2023 since the Covid lockdown. With the ongoing economic meltdown, the decline has been attributed to a combination of seasonal slowdown during the month of Ramadan, lower working days due to Eid holidays, and non-availability of Completely Knocked Down (CKD) parts owing to Letters of Credit (LCs) issues. According to Topline Research Auto Analyst Sunny Kumar, "Pakistan has recorded the lowest monthly car sales in April-2023 since the Covid-19 lockdown." Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association (PAMA) reported car sales of only 4,500 units, down 52% month-on-month (MoM) and 80% year-on-year (YoY). This marks the lowest monthly sales since May 2020 during the Covid-19 lockdown. Including non-PAMA members' car sales, it clocked in at around 5,500, down 47% MoM. "The MoM decline is primarily due to a seasonal slowdown witnessed in Ramadan, shorter working days amid Eid holidays, and the non-availability of CKD parts due to LC issues," said Kumar, adding that this takes the ten months of FY2023 sales to 114,868 units, down 50% YoY, primarily attributable to the non-availability of CKDs, escalating car prices, expensive auto financing, and the low purchasing power of consumers.

Waqar Ahmed Chohan appointed NAB DG

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the latest development, Waqar Ahmed Chohan, the current director of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), has been appointed as the director general of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The Establishment Division issued a notification of the appointment of Waqar Ahmed Chohan as the new director general of NAB. It is important to mention that Mr Chohan belongs to Grade 20 of the Police service. The development comes after Imran Khan was arrested by NAB in the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case and was later released on bail by the Islamabad High Court (IHC). The National Accountability Bureau is a vital institution in Pakistan that is responsible for investigating and prosecuting cases of corruption and financial wrongdoing.

Bakhmut: Ukraine claims gains after Russia denials

Maloilivka and Berkhivka are both near Bakhmut. Responding to the statement, the head of Russia's Wagner mercenary group Yevgeny Prigozhin said what the Ministry of Defence was talking about "is unfortunately called 'fleeing' and not a 'regrouping'"

NEWS DESK

KYIV: Ukraine says it has recaptured ground in Bakhmut, a rare advance after months of grinding Russian gains in the eastern city. Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Malyar said Ukrainian forces advanced two kilometres (1.2 miles) in a week. The claims signal a momentum shift in Bakhmut - but more widely, there is no clear evidence of the much-anticipated Ukrainian counter-offensive. Russia has denied reports of Ukrainian gains, after claims from both sides. "The individual declarations on Telegram about a 'breakthrough' on several points on the frontline do not correspond to reality," Russia's defence ministry said. "The general situation in the special military operation zone is under control," it added, using Russia's term for the invasion. However, in an updated statement on Friday morning the ministry claimed Russian troops had changed their position for strategic reasons. It said units of the

southern group of Russian forces had taken up a better defensive position in the Maloilivka area, something which took into consideration "the favourable conditions of the Berkhivka reservoir". Maloilivka and Berkhivka are both near Bakhmut. Responding to the statement, the head of Russia's Wagner mercenary group Yevgeny Prigozhin said what the Ministry of Defence was talking about "is unfortunately called 'fleeing' and not a 'regrouping'". As the intense, bloody battle has worn on, Bakhmut has become symbolically important - though many experts question its tactical value. In a post on Telegram, Ms Malyar said Bakhmut has become a target of "almost sacred" importance to Russia. She accused the Kremlin of simultaneously claiming false victories on one hand, while also spreading lies about being short on weapons and ammunition. Describing the "real situation" over the past week, Ms Malyar claimed Russia suffered significant troop losses, as Ukraine gained 2km without losing any positions.

Earlier Prigozhin accused regular Russian troops of abandoning positions in Bakhmut. "The situation on the flanks is developing according to the worst predicted scenario," he said. And Russian military bloggers reported Ukrainian advances or troop movements in several areas. The Institute for the Study of War also said Ukrainian forces had probably made gains of 2km in Bakhmut. And the US-based think tank said the Russian defence ministry acknowledging "the Ukrainian counterattacks uncharacteristically quickly" - by denying them - indicated "increased panic". Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky says his army needs more equipment ahead of counter-offensive. Away from Bakhmut, the exiled mayor of Melitopol reported a large explosion on Friday morning in the centre of the city in south-eastern city, which has been occupied by Russia since the start of the war. It's not known what caused the blast, but the Ukrainian air force made 14 strikes on Russian forces and military equipment on Thursday, Ukraine's armed forces said.

Alongside the air strikes, Ukraine said it destroyed nine Russian drones and carried out successful attacks on dozens of military targets - including artillery units, an ammunition warehouse and air defence equipment. After months of stalemate, a Ukrainian counter-offensive - helped by newly-arrived Western weapons - has been openly discussed. But Ukraine's president said on Thursday it was too early to start the attack. "With [what we already have] we can go forward and, I think, be successful," President Volodymyr Zelensky said in an interview. "But we'd lose a lot of people. I think that's unacceptable. So we need to wait. We still need a bit more time." But despite President Zelensky's words, pro-Kremlin Russian war correspondent Sasha Kots claimed the counter-offensive had begun. Ukrainian tanks were on the Kharkiv ring road heading towards the border with Russia, he said, quoting "trusted" sources. His claims could not be independently verified. "There are low loaders in the columns carrying Western [tank] models among others," Kots added.

Asad Umar challenges his arrest in IHC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) secretary general Asad Umar on Friday challenged his arrest under MPO in the Islamabad High Court (IHC). Asad Umar challenged his detention under MPO through Babar Awan and Amna Ali in the Islamabad High Court. Secretary Interior, IG Police and others have been made respondents in the plea. The former federal minister in his plea stated that as per SC's verdict, arrests cannot be made on the premises of the high court. During arrest from the IHC premises, my fundamental human rights were affected, Umar further said in his plea. He pleaded with the court to strike down his arrest and order release. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Umar was arrested from the premises of Islamabad High Court (IHC) on May 10. The PTI Secretary General was arrested from the IHC as he reached to file a petition to seek a meeting with PTI Chairman Imran Khan. Several PTI leaders including, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Asad Umar, Fawad Chaudhry, Jamsheed Iqbal Cheema, Musarrat Cheema, Falak Naz Chitrali and Malika Bukhari, Shireen Mazari, Qasim Suri, Ali Muhammad Khan and others have been arrested for 'provoking' people for violent protests.

Eurovision: Zelensky should address contest, says Sunak

LONDON: Rishi Sunak is "disappointed" Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has not been allowed to address this year's Eurovision, his spokesman says. The organisers, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), say it would breach its political impartiality. But Downing Street said it would be "fitting" for Mr Zelensky to speak given Russia's invasion of his country. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer is also calling for the Ukrainian leader to be allowed to make a speech. Ukraine was meant to be hosting this year's Eurovision, but it is taking place in Liverpool instead after Russia's invasion last year. - APP



ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman, Imran Khan arrives to appear at Islamabad High Court. - APP

South Africa tries to restore US ties

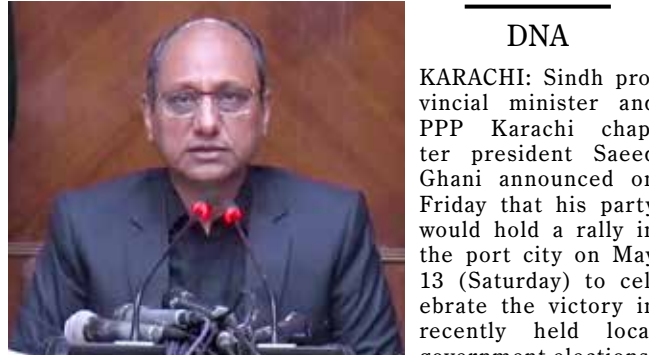
US ambassador Reuben Brigety has claimed a Russian ship was loaded with ammunition and weapons in Cape Town last December

WEB DESK

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa is seeking to smooth US relations, amid a diplomatic row over claims of arms sales to Russia. US ambassador Reuben Brigety has claimed a Russian ship was loaded with ammunition and weapons in Cape Town last December. The allegation created a diplomatic storm and South Africa has said it has no record of an approved arms sale. But the government also said it valued a "cordial, strong, and mutually beneficial" relationship with the US. An inquiry looking into the claims has been set up, President Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed on Thursday. South African authorities have expressed disappointment over what one official describes as "megaphone" politics by the US ambassador, referring to Mr Brigety's news conference on Thursday where he made the scathing accusations. The BBC understands that behind the scenes the government is more than disappointed - it has been angered by what some see as the US trying to strong-arm South Africa into aligning with it over Russia's invasion of Ukraine "by any means necessary". Officially, the department of international relations has said Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor will be speaking to her US counterpart Antony Blinken on Friday afternoon.

PPP announces rally in Karachi

DNA



KARACHI: Sindh provincial minister and PPP Karachi chapter president Saeed Ghani announced on Friday that his party would hold a rally in the port city on May 13 (Saturday) to celebrate the victory in recently held local government elections. Speaking to the media, Saeed Ghani said that rally will be held on Karachi's I.I Chundrigar Road tomorrow in the evening. "PPP chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari will address the rally," he said. On Thursday, foreign minister and PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari congratulated the party leaders and officials on the PPP's historic success in the local government elections. While thanking the people for giving historic victory to the PPP in the local bodies elections in Sindh, Bilawal said that the politics of hatred and division had been victory forever. He added that the party would celebrate the victory in Karachi on May 13. According to unofficial results, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is leading with 98 Union Councils (UCs) seats after it grabbed seven seats out of 11 Union Councils in Karachi during local government (LG) by-polls.

Internet banned till 'all miscreants are arrested': Sanaullah

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Friday said internet services would remain suspended in the country until all identified "miscreants" were arrested. Speaking to the media, he said the government was aware of the difficulty people were facing adding that it was deliberating to resolve the issue. "It will take some time to arrest those who burned houses and attacked security installments," he added. The minister went on to say that the government had earlier planned a three to four day disruption adding that it would seek PM Shehbaz Sharif's guidance for future course of action if PTI chief Imran Khan's matter was dragged further. "We have to take into consideration that people who do not misuse the internet are facing disturbance," he added. Mr Sanaullah said it would have been a matter of concern for the government if we had seen a real public reaction adding that no one except the members of the cult came outside on the streets. "They use social media for abuse, planning, and everything else," he added. That was the reason, he said, the government had taken the step. Earlier, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) said the disruption in the internet services would continue for an indefinite period due to country's volatile situation. It had suspended mobile broadband across the country upon interior ministry's instructions amid PTI chief Imran Khan's arrest upon his appearance before the Islamabad High Court on Tuesday. - DNA

Jemima expresses joy over Khan's release

DNA

LONDON: Former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan's ex-wife and film producer, Jemima Goldsmith, has expressed her bliss over the Supreme Court's order to release the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan. Goldsmith, who resides in the United Kingdom with her sons, tweeted her reaction to the SC order, saying, "Finally sense has prevailed," along with a high-five emoji and the Pakistani flag. Mr Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi and other PTI leaders are currently under investigation by



the NAB in connection with a settlement between the PTI government and a property tycoon that allegedly caused a loss of 190 million pounds to the national exchequer. They are also charged with adjusting Rs50 billion sent by Britain's National Crime Agency (NCA) to the government and getting undue benefit in the form of over 458 kanal to establish Al-Qadir University. Mr Khan was arrested when he appeared for hearings on his bail petitions in other cases at IHC.

Pakistan needs additional funding for 9th review meeting: IMF

Kozack emphasized the urgent need for funding to support Pakistan's balance of payments, stating that friendly countries need to provide assurances of funding to help the struggling nation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Friday stated that Pakistan needs additional funding to make 9th review meeting a success. The IMF held a press conference, with spokesperson Julie Kozack addressing the media on Pakistan's current economic situation. Kozack emphasized the urgent need for funding to support Pakistan's balance of payments, stating that friendly countries need to provide assurances of funding to help the struggling nation. Kozack also welcomed any funding that friendly countries may offer to Pakistan. She further highlighted that additional funding is essential for the success of the 9th review, stressing the importance of continued support for Pakistan's economy.

During the conference, the IMF spokesperson acknowledged that Pakistan's authorities are engaged in continuous efforts to revive the loan program. However, Kozack pointed out that the country is facing serious challenges in foreign currency payments, which is affecting its overall economic stability. Kozack further added that Pakistan's economy has suffered significant losses from floods, compounding the country's existing financial woes. She also expressed concern over the sustainability of Pakistan's economy, stating that it cannot withstand further cuts in subsidies and taxes. The press conference concluded with the IMF spokesperson calling for urgent action to address Pakistan's economic challenges, urging friendly countries to step forward and provide the necessary funding and support to help the country overcome its financial difficulties.

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