



# Islamabad POST

Monday, May 15, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

**Germany committed to promoting law and order in Pak**

Detailed News On Page-08

**IMF says did not ask Pak to arrange \$8bn**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Naila second Pak woman to scale Everest**

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## Elections in Punjab, KP

# SC takes up the case as May 14 deadline expires

PDM fears the apex court may move against those who defied the order including the prime minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: May 14, was the day on which the elections in Punjab were to be held as ordered by the Supreme Court. However, the ruling of the apex court regarding Punjab elections could not be implemented. The elections did not take place nor could the orders of the Supreme Court be implemented. The Election Commission claimed that it had completed the preparations but owing to unavailability of funds, it was unable to move forward. The political parties also did not agree on the elections only in Punjab. Given the uncertainty, the election campaign ended before it started, and the PML-N did not issue tickets to the candidates. The ruling parties say that the survival of the country lies in dealing with the crisis through joint efforts and resolving the issues through negotiations. On the other hand, The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday fixed the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) plea seeking review of the former's verdict of holding polls in Punjab on

## Bilawal to join PDM protest

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has decided to participate in the ruling alliance, the Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) sit-in outside the Supreme Court of Pakistan tomorrow (Monday). All members of the National Assembly and Senators of the PPP have been directed to reach Islamabad to join the PDM protest tomorrow. The sources said PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari convened an important meeting at Bilal House Islamabad and review the emerging political scenario in the country and his party's role in it. The sources further said that after getting direction from the party leadership, several provincial ministers of Sindh will also participate in the protest in front of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. - DNA

May 14 for hearing on Monday (May 15). A three member SC bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Muneeb Akhtar is taking up the plea. The SC had ruled the order of the ECP regarding delay in elections in Punjab as null and void, ordering polls on May 14. The apex court had also asked the government to release Rs21 billion in supplementary grant to hold polls, until April 10. The court also ordered the electoral watchdog to present a report on the provision of funds on April 11. It came as Imran Khan-led party had

filed the petition regarding delay in elections after the ECP on March 22 put off the polls till Oct 8, citing financial and security constraints. Later, the federal government, in response, took the matter to the parliament to get the funding approved. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar presented the election expenses bill in the National Assembly. The ECP, on April 11, apprised the SC in a report that the government had not provided funds to the commission for holding elections in Punjab.

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## CTD arrests four Daesh, TTP terrorists

51 suspects have been arrested during 248 combing operations

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Four terrorists were arrested in intelligence-based operations in several Punjab cities. Amid fears of terrorism, the Counter Terrorism Department personnel made the arrests in Sargodha, Rawalpindi and Gujranwala. The arrested terrorists were belonged to banned Daesh and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The CTD personnel also seized explosive material and suicide vests parts from the possession of the terrorists. The detained terrorists were identified as Salman, Sher Zaman, Malik Israr and Sher Khan. The CTD personnel lodges cases against the arrested terrorists and further interrogation was underway. The CTD press release further stated that 51 suspects were arrested during 248 combing operations carried out during the ongoing week.



LAHORE: Senator Shaheen Butt calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

## Information Minister says PTI Chief, party planned attacks on installations

Imran Khan and his followers are also behind the desecration of the memorials of martyrs and ghazis of the nation: Marriyum Aurangzeb

DNA

ISLAMABAD: After receiving "alarming" information from security institutions, Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has urged Jamaat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JULF) and Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to relocate a planned protest sit-in of his multi-party coalition away from the Supreme Court in Islamabad.

## Fazl refuses govt's proposal

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman refused the proposal of his government to change the venue of the sit-in from the Supreme Court of Pakistan to D-Chowk in Islamabad.

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## Iranian embassy denies poisoning report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Iranian embassy in Islamabad has categorically rejected news regarding poisoning of wife of an Iranian embassy staff member. The embassy spokesman said on Sunday, 'As there is a news being published in the media in Pakistan regarding an embassy member's wife being poisoned, it declares that the news is categorically false and baseless and the details are incorrect. It will be appreciated if the disclaimer is considered while covering the issue or forwarded for more clarification'. It may be mentioned here that some media

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Hina Khar meets with foreign ministers

APP

STOLKHOM: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar Sunday met foreign ministers of European Union and Indo-Pacific region in Stockholm and discussed ways to enhance their bilateral cooperation with Pakistan. The meetings took place on the sidelines of European Union and Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum 2023 held in Stockholm. The minister met European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell. They discussed further deepening of Pakistan's multidimensional relations with the EU. The minister said that GSP+ should continue as an important tool for sustainable development.

### PTI social media behind chaos

STAFF REPORT

NAROWAL: Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, on Sunday, slammed PTI social media team for running totally baseless smear drives aimed at creating a Sudan-like situation in the country. "PTI's social media wanted to turn the country into Sudan via its fabricated campaigns," the minister said, speaking with journalists in Narowal. Iqbal said the party should be ashamed of its "anti-state" narrative and activities. Referring to the Al-Qadir Trust case, the minister said the money that came from Britain was transferred to the Supreme Court's account linking it with Khan receiving bail from the judiciary following his arrest earlier this week.

## Crackdown continues on PTI senior leaders

PTI senior leadership vows to ensure early release of arrested workers

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Firdous Shamim Naqvi has been taken into police custody in Karachi, Express News reported. The leader was detained while leading a rally from the Pehlwan Goth area. Police said that several cases have been filed against Naqvi in various police stations after

RELATED NEWS ON PAGE 2

the recent anti-government protests. In addition, police said a number of women who were protesting near the Justice House in Nursery have also been taken into custody. Lahore police have apprehended Dr Yasmin Rashid, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Punjab President and former Punjab health minister,

Continued on Page 06

## Police continue probe against those involved

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani said on Sunday that those involved in "heinous crimes" in May 9 riots will be thoroughly investigated. In a press conference, Rawalpindi CPO said police have so far arrested 264 people in 17 cases and that

Continued on Page 06

# Germany committed to promoting stability in Pakistan

Ambassador of Germany Alfred Grannas says to date, we have welcomed more than 30,000 Afghans on humanitarian grounds

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Germany Alfred Grannas gave an exclusive interview to Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline and DNA News Agency. The ambassador talked in length about bilateral as well multi-lateral relations. Here is the text of the interview

1. Germany is very keen to see democratic and sustainable development in Pakistan. Can you share with our readers some of the salient features of this cooperation with reference to latest political and economic developments in Pakistan? Germany is committed to promoting good governance, rule of law, and stability in Pakistan. To achieve this, we work closely with our implementing partners, particularly GIZ, on a range of projects related to good governance, climate change awareness, education, and health. However, we are concerned about the recent economic situation in Pakistan, which has been particularly challenging for German companies operating in the country. We are working with the Pakistani government to encourage structural reforms that will encourage investment and economic cooperation between our two countries.



2. Would you like to highlight efforts that your embassy has made to further strengthen trade and economic links between Germany and Pakistan? We are pleased to note that the Pakistani market has attracted significant attention from a range of German companies and thus from concerned government departments in Germany. This growing interest in bilateral trade has led to the decision to extend the German network of chambers of commerce and industry abroad (AHK) to Pakistan. This represents a major milestone for our economic relations and is poised to be a game changer for future economic interaction between our two countries. While we currently have a "Pakistan



Desk" at our chamber of commerce and industry in Dubai, our sincere aim is to establish a proper representation on Pakistani soil as soon as possible. This development has also fueled an increased interest in delegations travelling to Pakistan to explore the market. However, we must also acknowledge that the current economic conditions and import restrictions in place in Pakistan present significant challenges for businesses. Therefore, we advise the interested German businesses to keep monitoring the situation and come to Pakistan as soon as we see improvements with regards to structural reforms and removal of restrictions that will encourage investment and economic



cooperation. 3. Security issues by and large are the main hurdles in the way of foreign investments in Pakistan. Do you share this perception and how optimistic you are that things will get better, in terms of security, in the coming days? The increase in attacks since the Taliban takeover in Kabul has understandably had a significant impact on the assessment of business opportunities in Pakistan. While we have not seen German companies targeted by militants, we recognize the concerns of German businesses regarding the security situation in the country. It is important to note that German companies adhere to high standards when it comes to security, and an improved security situation may not be enough to alleviate all concerns in German company headquarters. We share the view that an absence of attacks is necessary to fully address these concerns, particularly as such attacks primarily harm the Pakistani society and have the potential to destabilize the country. Moreover, the current import restrictions are having a negative effect on German companies' interest in investing in and trading with Pakistan. We hope that this situation will improve soon, as further damage to the businesses of German companies already working in Pakistan can be avoided.

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## Speakers urge a sustainable strategy for Neelum valley

ATHMUQAM: Speakers at a seminar urged the authorities to take stringent measures for the protection of natural resources and forests of the Neelum valley, the largest hub of biological diversity. They said the valley's forests are 48 percent of the total AJK state owned forests. They are under threat in the absence of needful legislation and flawed implementation of available legislation.

The speakers suggested the government to curb timber mafia to protect the Neelum Valley forests, provide alternate fuel and environmental building materials for the constructions. They said an integrated solid waste management system will protect the clean and green nature of the valley.

The seminar was organized by the Forests Protection Council and Community Development Group of the Neelum Valley here Sunday in connection with the 18th annual celebrations entitled "Jashan-e-Neelum". The collaborating partners were the local municipal committee, forest department and Wapda. A well-known environmentalist, development strategist and founder of globally recognized Pakistan Mountain Festival Munir Ahmed and Mayor Neelum Valley Syed Tajammul Hussain Shah were the guests of honour on the occasion. Other speakers included devel-

opment expert Aftab Hussain Bokhari, former AJK minister Mufti Mansur ur Rehman, Sardar Muhammad Akram, Jalaluddin Akbar, former Additional Chief Secretary Farhat Ali Mir, Conservator Forest Mir Naseer and Khawaja Lashkar Azad.

Speaking on the occasion environmentalist and founder Pakistan Mountain Festival Munir Ahmed said: Neelum valley is a largest hub of natural resources, water, biodiversity, minerals and gemstones whereas the tourism potential is immense too. With the increasing trend of commercialization and tourism in the valley, the natural resources will be at stake posing several threats. Therefore, the district stakeholders shall come forward to think about the conservation of the Neelum valley. He urged the need for an inclusive sustainable development strategy that should be developed through a participatory consultative process. Munir Ahmed urged the AJK government to allocate special funds and employ local human resources for the sustainable tourism business, conservation, protection and management of forests and other natural resources. All the union council members under the Neelum Valley mayor, and local communities shall be incentivized to safeguard

their ecological habitats. An organized and trained mainstream journalists and citizen can take the responsibility of highlighting the challenges being faced by the valley.

Mayor Syed Tajammul Hussain urged the communities to take a proactive approach in protection and conservation of the natural resources of the valley. He said the development partners' help will play a key role in building the capacity of the newly elected members of the local administration, and support the community-based governance models.

Conservator Forests Mir Naseer said a joint platform of all stakeholders shall make decisions for the future development, conservation and management of the forests that are a hub of largest species and natural resources.

Founder of the Neelum district Mufti Mansur ur Rehman asked for a community-government liaison forum for an inclusive development. We need to promote sustainable and environment-friendly business mechanisms. Sardar Muhammad Akram highlighted that the entire valley has only eleven check posts while the staff is too less to monitor the huge area of the forests. The elite-mafia nexus is also a big threat for the communities, forests and the forest guards.

## Founder of Niaz, meets its ambassadors of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Founder of Niaz, Mr. Hussain Odhwani, met with its Ambassadors of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia at the Ritz Carlton, Bahrain. The meeting was attended by Bahrain Ambassador Mr. Awais Rafiq and

in the region to further benefit the deserving persons with disabilities in Pakistan. Founder Niaz expressed his gratitude to the ambassadors for their efforts in reaching out to their respective countries and supporting Niaz's work. He also highlighted the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the country and the impact

endeavours. Speaking after the meeting, Mr. Odhwani thanked the ambassadors for their support and expressed his commitment to furthering Niaz's mission of improving the lives of persons with disabilities in Pakistan. Niaz has been at the forefront of manufacturing and providing customized



Saudi Arabia Ambassadors Mr. Aamir Nanawati and Mrs. Munira Raheem. The meeting was aimed at discussing the progress made by Niaz and exploring ways to enhance its outreach

Niaz has made in improving their lives. The ambassadors expressed their admiration for the work being done by Niaz and pledged to continue their support for the organisation's fu-

wheelchairs to deserving beneficiaries in Pakistan. The organization has been committed to improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities in the country.

## Actions against miscreants involved in violence continued

DNA

LAHORE: The operations of police teams were continued to arrest the miscreants involved in attacks, vandalism, violence and arson on buildings of public and private institutions in Punjab.

In this regard, the police teams have arrested more than 3,186 miscreants from different districts across province.

The police spokesperson said here on Sunday that more than 157 police officers and officials were injured in the violent actions of miscreants across Punjab, whereas, 95 vehicles of Punjab police were damaged and set on fire. According to the details, 27 vehicles of Lahore Police, 19 vehicles of Rawalpindi, 21 of Faisalabad, nine of Mianwali, four vehicles of Multan police, five of Sialkot, three of Gujranwala, a vehicle in Attock, one vehicle of Toba Tek Singh, two vehicles of Jhang police and three vehicles of police constabulary were damaged and set on fire.

Likewise, 13 privately owned vehicles were also damaged by the miscreants.

Moreover, 22 government buildings including police stations and offices were also severely damaged.

Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that criminals involved in attacks on sensitive installations, public and private properties, police teams, did not deserve any sympathy. These miscreants were being identified and traced out through available CCTV footages and video recordings. All the elements involved in the vandalism and spoilage of peace would be brought under the law and punishments would be meted out to them, he added.

## Saeed Ghani advises JI's Naeem to accept defeat

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Labour and Human Resources Minister Saeed Ghani on Sunday urged the chief of Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, to accept the Jamaat-e-Islami's defeat in the local government elections in Karachi instead of hatching any conspiracy to promote politics of hatred and prejudice in the city.

Addressing a press conference here today, Saeed Ghani said the public meeting held by the Pakistan People's Party on the previous night to celebrate its victory in the local government elections in Karachi had upset the JI leader.

He said the JI Karachi chief had made up his mind before local government polls that his party would win 200 seats for securing the comfortable majority required for becoming the mayor. He said the JI Karachi Amir had perhaps had forgotten that every contesting political party had to compete against other parties in the polls for securing a victory. He said

the JI didn't have the undue facilities for contesting the local government elections in Karachi this time that was available to it in the previous polls.

Ghani, who is also PPP Karachi President, said that other concerned political parties had also suggested amending the provincial local government law to let an unelected member become the mayor. He said that for this particular reason, this amendment bill had been passed unanimously in the Sindh Assembly as even the MPA of JI in the house also didn't oppose its passage. The Sindh Labour Minister recalled that the JI Karachi chief during different meetings had also presented the same demand for amending the local government law.

He said that it was now undue on the part of the JI Karachi chief to make the announcement to move the court against the latest amendment to the local government law. He said that the JI Karachi chief had been attempting to become another Altaf Hussain in Karachi. He lamented that the latest statements of the JI Karachi

leader were based on hatred and bias.

He expressed sorrow that Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman had forgotten that because of the efforts of the Sindh Chief Minister the population census was being held in the country after six years instead of 10 years. He recalled that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had even threatened to leave the coalition federal government if their reservations about the population census were not removed. He said it was highly undue on the part of the JI Karachi leader for blaming PPP for undercounting of Karachi's population in the census. He informed the journalists that Karachi belonged to him and other PPP leaders including Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and late Benazir Bhutto as much as the city belonged to anyone else.

The Sindh Labour Minister advised the JI Karachi leader to thank God that his party had won 87 seats in the local government polls in Karachi but it didn't have the majority required for clinching the mayoral post.

## PML-N ready for Islamabad sit-in

PESHAWAR:

Provincial spokesman of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Ikhtiar Wali on Sunday said that the Party has completed its preparations for a massive protest in front of the Supreme Court of Pakistan on May 15. In a statement issued here, the PML-N spokesman announced that the protest would be peaceful but assertive. He said that the convoy of PML-N workers would leave from Peshawar Motorway here at 8 AM which would make their way towards the Supreme Court to voice their concerns and demands there. The protest will be led by the provincial president and Advisor to Prime Minister Engineer Ameer Muqam and Murtaza Javed Abbasi, he said and added, the restoration of justice has now become the primary responsibility of political forces. Ikhtiar Wali said that they believed that time has come for all political parties to prioritize the restoration of justice in the country, adding the Chief Justice of Supreme Court should announce his resignation.—DNA

## Atta Tarar on warpath against Imran

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM), Attaullah Tarar, has taken a swipe at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan, accusing him of creating a fake trust to launder black money. Speaking to the media on Sunday, Mr Tarar alleged that the PTI chief was involved in the Al-Qadir University corruption case and had facilitated a property tycoon in the process. Mr Tarar claimed that a direct bribe was caught in the case and that a sealed envelope was brought to the cabinet, where two to three ministers objected. He further alleged that Imran Khan had received 458 kanals of land from the property tycoon. Mr Tarar added that no written answer was submitted by the PTI chief in the accountability court and that Imran Khan would have to answer for his theft.—APP

## PMA hails decision of doctors' appointments at PIMS

They expressed the hope that with these new appointments, the existing burden on doctors will be shared and they will serve in a better way. They assured that the PMA will continue raising its voice on all genuine issues of doctors

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Islamabad chapter on Sunday appreciated the decision of the federal government for allowing new paid appointments of doctors at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS). In a statement, PMA President Dr Akhtar Ali Bandesha and General Secretary Dr. Mubashir Mushtaq Dahi said that this decision will further help improve medical services at the hospital. They said that in this regard the Ministry of National Health Services wisely decided to issue NOC for paid appointments of 100 House officers and 100 Post Graduate Residents in PIMS. They thanked the federal Health Minister, Secretary of Health, and Executive Director of PIMS Dr Imran Sikandar for taking this step. They said that the PMA was already demanding this initiative and raised this issue at various concerned forums considering the urgent need of

appointing house officers and postgraduate residents at PIMS. They expressed the hope that with these new appointments, the existing burden on doctors will be shared and they will serve in a better way. They assured that the PMA will continue raising its voice on all genuine issues of doctors.—DNA

## Firdous Shamim Naqvi arrested

Earlier in the day, the Punjab Police arrested PTI leader Mehmood-ur-Rasheed from Lahore

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Firdous Shamim Naqvi has been arrested in Karachi amid an ongoing crackdown against the party. According to details, the police arrested the Member of Sindh Assembly (MPA) from Karachi's Pehlwan Goth following his participation in 'peaceful protests' staged by the PTI in a bid to "Save the Constitution and Save Pakistan". In a statement, the police said several cases were registered against Firdous Shamim Naqvi during the recent protests following the arrest of PTI chairman Imran Khan - who was later released on Supreme Court of Pakistan's (SC) orders. The senior PTI leader was leading a rally in different areas. Meanwhile, the police have also detained four female party workers from Insaf House at Shahre Faisal. Earlier in the day, the Punjab Police arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Mehmood-ur-Rasheed from Lahore.—DNA

## Salim expresses concerns over escalating mark-up

PESHAWAR:

Former chairman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textile Mills Association (KP-TMA) Salim Saifullah Khan has expressed concern over escalating mark-up rates in the country and termed it a threat to the national economy. Talking to the media here on Sunday, Salim Saifullah Khan, who is also a former federal minister, said that over the last year, interest rates have registered unprecedented increases, resulting in a slowdown of economic growth.

As a consequence, the loan default ratio has surged, painting a challenging picture for the financial sector. The State Bank of Pakistan has implemented its largest policy rate hike, marking the ninth increase since September 2021. He further highlighted that fuel prices in Pakistan last year have been increased approximately by 90 percent and concurrently, the government has to terminate fuel and energy subsidies to the industry and is working towards curbing

expenditures while negotiating with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to resume a bailout programme. Salim Saifullah Khan expressed his concern over an astronomical 300 basis point policy rate hike, deeming it entirely unacceptable as it discourages borrowing. In today's challenging economic climate, businesses struggle to achieve a mere 25 percent profit. "Who will seek loans at such exorbitant rates?" he questioned.

The combination of a robust dollar and soaring energy tariffs has significantly increased the cost of doing business, rendering Pakistani goods uncompetitive in the global market and unaffordable for the average citizen. The impact of the surging dollar is evident in the exorbitant prices of petroleum products and the skyrocketing energy tariffs. Emphasizing the need for cautious handling of the situation, Salim Saifullah Khan warned against excessive devaluation, which could prove detrimental to

the economy, exacerbate unemployment, and unleash uncontrollable inflation.

Moreover, he noted that the policy rate hike would primarily impact the formal sector, leading to an upsurge in loan defaults and undermining the stability of the banking system.

He highlighted that simply raising interest rates would not effectively address contain the inflation and strengthens the local currency. Pakistan's inflation is primarily driven by supply factors and depreciation, making interest rate hikes insufficient to rein it in or incentivize savings in local currency, he added.

In light of these challenges, Salim Saifullah Khan called upon the State Bank to explore alternative solutions instead of solely relying on interest rate hikes to tackle inflation. By facilitating easier access to loans and creating an environment conducive to industrial growth, the country can foster job creation and economic prosperity.

## Religious leaders condemn PTI's violent protests

ISLAMABAD: Leaders from diverse religious and political parties united on Sunday to express their strong condemnation of the violent nationwide protests carried out by the supporters of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on May 9. During a press conference held here at a local hotel, Maulana Fazal ur Rehman Khalil, accompanied by other prominent leaders, denounced the actions of PTI protestors who attacked and caused damage to important state buildings. He expressed his disappointment, stating that such a sight had

never been witnessed before, where supporters of a political party protested against the revered Pakistan Army and targeted significant institutions. He emphasized the sentiment that regardless of any political differences, the country and its army were integral to the nation's heart, and going against these institutions was unacceptable. Highlighting the plight of the families of martyrs whose pictures were disrespected by PTI supporters during the protests, he called upon the nation to unite and stand in solidarity with the Pakistan Army. He also expressed

concern that neighboring countries, India and Afghanistan, were capitalizing on the situation, relishing the damage caused by PTI supporters to Pakistan. Maulana Fazal ur Rehman Khalil called for strict measures to set an example and prevent such incidents in the future. Drawing a parallel, he suggested that just as the Pakistan Army had conducted operations in Waziristan, action should be taken against the culprits involved in the incidents at the General Headquarters (GHQ) and Lahore Corps Commander House on the date.—APP

## Railway delegation returns home

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Railways (PR) delegation headed by Chairman/Secretary Railways Mazhar Ali Shah returned home after attending the railways committee meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). According to the PR spokesperson on Sunday, the delegations of the SCO member countries including Pakistan, India, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan participated in three-day session of the committee hosted by India.

### CAREER OPPORTUNITY

#### GENERAL MANAGER (SALES AND MARKETING)

Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation is one of the largest public sector companies working in the mineral sector under the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division). The company is looking for a dedicated, experienced and high-caliber skilled professional for the post of General Manager (Sales and Marketing) based in Islamabad. The prescribed qualification, experience and age limit for the candidate and other terms of appointment are as follows:-

Qualification:	MBA (Marketing) from the universities recognized by Higher Education Commission (HEC)
Experience:	Minimum fifteen (15) years post-qualification work experience in relevant professional area
Age Limit:	Up to fifty (50) years as on the last date for submission of applications.
Pay & Perks:	Market based negotiable salary.
Period of Contract:	The selected candidate will be appointed on contract basis for a term of three (3) years extendable.


Applications should be sent by post not later than fifteen (15) days of the date of publication. The envelopes containing the application may be marked "APPLICATION FOR GENERAL MANAGER (SALES & MARKETING)" on the top right corner.

Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview. No TA/DA will be admissible for interview. Candidates already employed in Government/Semi-Government organizations must send their applications through their employers.

#### MANAGER (P)

Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation  
Head Office: Plot No. 13, Sector H-9, Islamabad.  
Tel: 92-51-9265132, Fax: 92-51-9265127-29

PID No. 6935-2022



**ZAHID LATIF KHAN**  
MEMBER OF PSBA

**Pakistan Stock Brokers Association (PSBA) asks SECP to make listed companies responsible to pay regular DIVIDENDS to their shareholders.**

While addressing the concerns of the investors, CEO, ZLK Securities, and the Vice Chairman of PSBA, Mr. Zahid Latif Khan told the press that

**"the association has expressed its deep concerns about the companies that are listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and not paying dividends to their shareholders which is detrimental to their interests and the functioning of the economy as a whole"**

info@zlk.com.pk / zlk.securities Ph: +92 301 9557779

**"CEO ZLK Securities and PSBA Vice Chairman Mr. Zahid Latif Khan highlights the importance of dividend payments for listed companies on PSX, emphasizing its impact on the broader economy."**

## 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



### Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



### Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949
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### Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



### Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
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



### Departments

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
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# PRCS operation continues for flood-affected families

PRCS Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari affirmed the organization's commitment to the affected families, with plans for constructing model houses, offering livelihood and cash assistance, and continuing support until all affected individuals are fully recovered

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) is persisting with its relief operations in flood-stricken areas of the country, with teams still on the ground to offer humanitarian aid to those in need. Recently, PRCS has completed the distribution of relief goods among two thousand affected families in Union Council Jamali and Union Council Aitabar Chandio of Qamber Shahdad Kot district of Sindh. The flood-affected families were provided with family tents, non-food items (NFIs) including tarpaulin sheets, lanterns, jerry cans, kitchen sets and other household essentials.



Immediately after Eid, the process of relief and rehabilitation of the flood-affected families continued, throughout Sindh and Baluchistan. Installation of public toilets, solar powered water filtration plants and hand pumps are also underway in several districts. PRCS Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari says that the provision of ration and relief goods in Ramadan is proof of our commitment to the affected families. Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari affirmed the organization's commitment to the affected families, with plans for constructing model houses, offering livelihood and cash assistance, and continuing support until all affected individuals are fully recovered.

# Govt. to implement Urdu as official language

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives is taking practical measures to implement Urdu as an official language in all government departments under Article 251 of the Constitution. Accordingly, it recently approved a revised PCI of the project worth Rs. 78.186 million titled "Establishment of National Language Processing Laboratory (NLP-Lab)", expediting its efforts to comply with the Supreme Court's order passed in 2015 for enforcement of Urdu as an official language. The Ministry of National Heritage and Culture Division is the sponsoring agency, while the National Language Promotion Department (NLPD) will execute the project. "The core objective of the project is to elevate Urdu to the status of languages with extensive digital data resources and equip it with modern technology applications," said Director General NLPD Dr Rashid Hameed, who is associated with the department established in October 1979 to advance and promote the Urdu national language. Sharing details of the NLP-

Lab, Dr Rashid Hameed explained the project includes the development of several applications like Machine Translation (MT), Speech Recognition (SR) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) that would make language learning more accessible, facilitate cross-border communication and commerce, enable people to access online content, promote cross-cultural understanding, and help preserve language resources. He believed that only languages that adapted to the latest technology would survive in today's world. Since assuming power in April 2022, the incumbent government has taken several steps toward implementing digital transformation in the country. Planning Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal has been a driving force behind these efforts, with a focus on shifting from manual to digital processes. Last month, the minister established a Steering Committee consisting of experts from the information technology and private sectors aimed at facilitating the implementation of digital transformation and increasing the country's export volume. Manager for Research & Development at the NLPD

Syeda Roshana Ali Naqvi while sharing further details of the project explained that the Machine Translation (MT) module used computer algorithms to automatically translate text from English to Urdu. "This module will efficiently provide translations of all current official documents from English to Urdu, including policies, press releases, economic surveys, annual reports, long-term plans, newsletters, public notices, tenders, and advertisements," she said. She emphasized the importance of the lab for the survival, growth, promotion, and development of the national language. The NLPD Programme Manager NLPD also shared details about the Speech Recognition (SR) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) modules of the project. She explained that the SR module would enable digital devices to recognize and transcribe human speech into Urdu text. "This technology will help digitize Urdu audio resources, such as parliamentary speeches and meeting minutes," she said, adding that speech recognition technology could increase accessibility and inclusivity for those with hearing and speech impairments.—APP

# Budget deficit widens Rs3.6tr: APBF

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has warned that the federal budget deficit has widened by Rs3.6 trillion in the first nine months of the current fiscal year (9M FY23) on the back of a massive surge in spending on debt servicing, as the government paid Rs3.6 trillion in debt servicing in this period, which is very alarming. APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the country's economic viability was at stake, as its gross official foreign exchange reserves plunged to lower level. As against the budgeted over \$7 billion foreign commercial loans, the government still saw \$6.5 billion materializing in the current fiscal year. He said that the country's debt servicing cost may cross well over Rs7.6 trillion in the next fiscal year, which is

roughly 15% more than the projected net income of the government but is still lower than the estimates made by the International Monetary Fund. APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi observed that based on the fact that the federal government debt stood at Rs54 trillion at the end of April, interest payments in the next fiscal year may cross well over Rs7.5 trillion. The estimated Rs7.6 trillion debt servicing cost is 90% more than this fiscal year's original budget set aside for interest payments and one-third higher than the revised estimates. It seems that taxes will be collected to just pay the cost of interest to domestic and foreign banks. Ibrahim Qureshi said that the IMF had asked the government to increase the general sales tax rate to a minimum of 18% to raise more taxes, accelerating inflation to 29% and economic growth rate slowing down to 1.5%,

ultimately causing higher unemployment and poverty in the country. Syed Maaz Mahmood added that foreseeing that the elections could be around the corner, the government's focus has now filtered down to two short-term compulsions, including to present a populist budget and to stay out of default. The government appears to have decided to set aside the complex issues such as rising inflation, loss of rupee value, unemployment, food shortages, closure of industries due to import restrictions and collapse of exports and investments for the present and to leave it behind as a carry-forward for the next government. Maaz Mahmood added that the IMF demanded that the government should consider increasing the GST rate by 1% to 18% to raise additional taxes in the current fiscal year, warning the government that the GST was considered highly inflationary.

# 17th anniversary of CoD

ISLAMABAD: The nation is celebrating the 17th anniversary of the Charter of Democracy (CoD), a momentous occasion that marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's democratic history as former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Supreme Leader of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, came together to sign this historic document, solidifying their commitment to a shared vision for the country's future in 2006. Pakistan's major political parties, PML-N and PPP, marked the 17th anniversary of the "Charter of Democracy," signed in 2006, this framework aimed to enhance the governance, democracy, human rights, and judicial independence. It advocated for constitutional reforms, transparent elections, devolution of power, and national security. The Charter has fostered political dialogue, improved relations and influenced Pakistani politics, although not all points have been fully implemented. Nonetheless, it remains instrumental in shaping the country's democratic course. During this crucial period, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif's visionary leadership reshaped Pakistan's political landscape. They recognized that democracy flourishes when the voices of the people are heard and respected. Their legacy inspires leaders to prioritize dialogue, consensus, and the pursuit of national interests. Seventeen years on, the enduring impact of the CoD can be seen in the progress made. It serves as a guiding light, reminding the nation of the importance of inclusive governance and the collective pursuit of national welfare. Challenges remain, but the ideals enshrined in the CoD propel Pakistan forward.—APP

# PML-N inherited attacks on judiciary

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League chief and former federal interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Sunday that PML-N had inherited attacks on Supreme Court. In his tweet on the social networking site Twitter, Sheikh Rashid said that attacking the Supreme Court had been inherited by the PML-N. The statements of hanging judges and staging sit-ins was a declaration of war against judiciary. He said non-participation of police in a meeting called by Registrar Supreme Court on security issue was a proof of civil disobedience. He said the judiciary had saved the country from anarchy and civil war.—APP

# Social media users pay tribute to mothers

ISLAMABAD: As International Mother's Day is celebrated on May 14 like other parts of the world, Pakistanis from all walks of life especially youngsters on digital platforms have shared inspiring motherhood-related posts while paying them tributes for their sacrifices and for their unconditional love. "Nation took to social media and shared unseen childhood photos and memorable videos with their moms on the occasion of Mother's Day," said a report aired by PTV news channel. Mother's Day is not only a special day for a child but also for a woman who became a mother because of her child, said a Facebook user while sharing a sentimental post. "The new trend to celebrate Mother's Day through social media has become viral and encourages people to share their cherished childhood memories with their mothers," said another Facebook user. Mother's Day was all about showing appreciation and gratitude for moms around the world, said a female user. No doubt every day is for our parents, but these special days gave us an opportunity to show gratitude to the most important person in our lives, said a student on an Instagram post. "Along with thoughtful gestures, heartfelt quotes and messages we can express our love and appreciation for our mothers," she added. "A mother is the person who sees the first smile, hears the first word, feels the first hug, and worries about you every day of her life," said an emotional post shared by a youngster on a Whatsapp group.—DNA

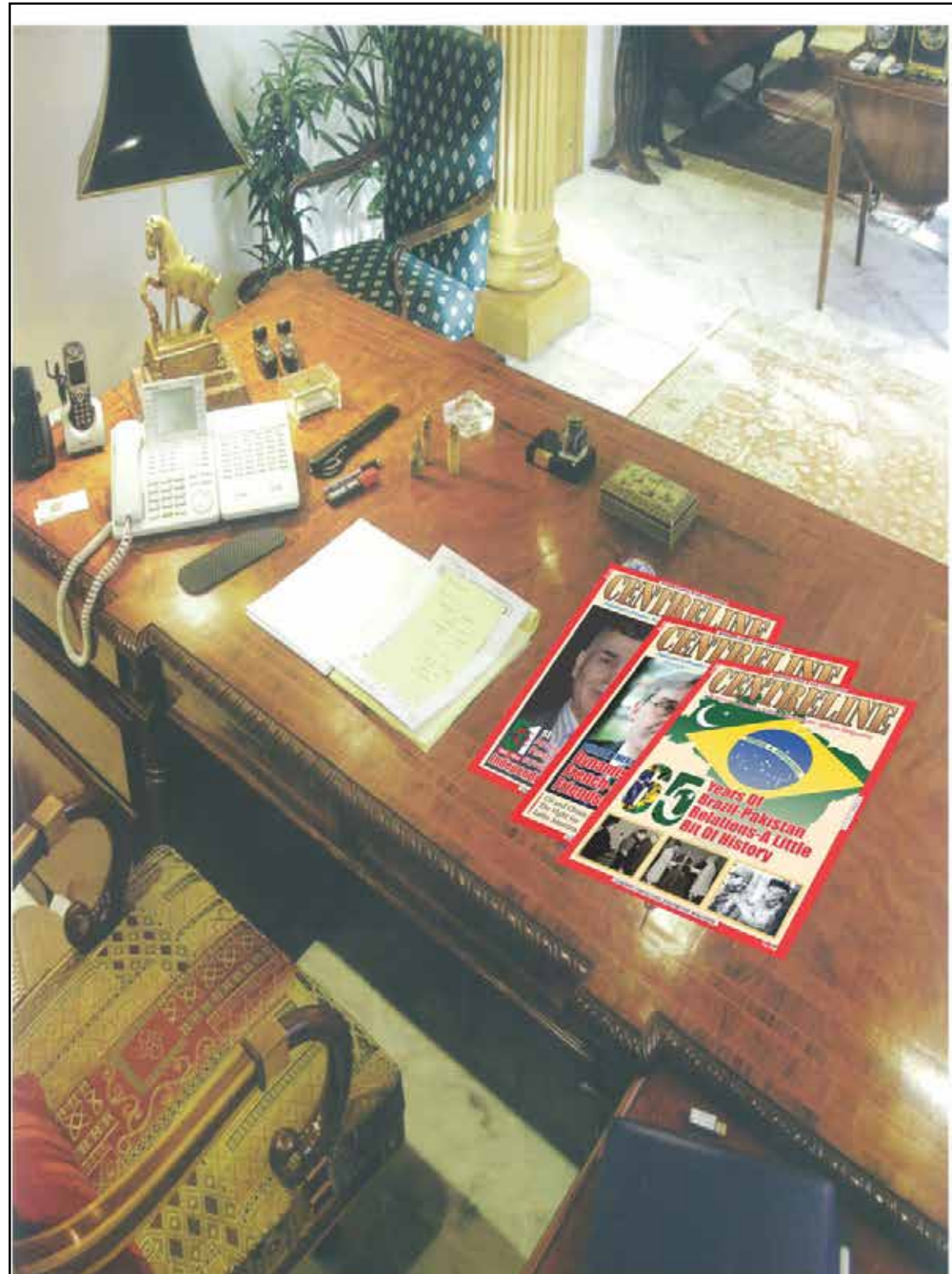
# PIDE, PSDE, KIU organizing a two-day Conference

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in collaboration with the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE) and Karakoram International University (KIU) is organizing a two-day conference at the Karakoram International University (KIU), Gilgit from May 17-18. According to the press release issued from the PIDE in Islamabad Sunday, this Conference will be an initiative to bring together leading economists, public policy experts, practitioners, professionals, academicians, and business, political and thought leaders on a platform to share their expert views on pertaining socio-economic opportunities and challenges in the Gilgit Baltistan (GB) region.—APP

# Govt announces major concession for Hajis

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has announced a major concession for the intending Hajis as it has decided to include the amount for animal sacrifice in the original Hajj package. Now, the intending Hajis would not have to pay Rs57,000 extra for animal sacrifice in Saudi Arabia. Originally, the animal sacrifice price was not included in the Hajj package under the government-sponsored scheme and the pilgrims were directed to take along the amount with them when they set off the pilgrimage. The government made the latest concession on the request of the Hajj pilgrims due to the costly package.



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## Briefs

Food Deptt  
recovers  
15,762.375  
tonnes wheat

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi during operations in different parts of the Rawalpindi Division managed to seize 15,762.375 tonnes of wheat and flour since March 25.

According to a district administration spokesman, 198 FIRs had been lodged in different police stations against wheat and flour smugglers.

He informed that Secretary Food, Zaman Wattoo accompanied by Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatha here the other day met with a delegation of the Flour Mills Association. During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema, Deputy Director Food Mehr Gulam Abbas and other officers concerned were also present.

The Secretary Food was informed that the administration had finalized all arrangements and set up 14 check posts at all exit points to check wheat and flour smuggling.

He was further informed that the flour recovered from the impounded trucks would be supplied to the citizens at controlled rates through trucking points to be set up at various places. The citizens would be supplied a 10 kg wheat flour bag at a controlled rate of Rs 1150.

Zaman Wattoo, on the occasion, said that fair-price shops would also be set up outside flour mills to facilitate the citizens and provide them relief. He further said that more permits would be issued to the flour mills and their quota would also be enhanced. The commissioner said that strict action was being taken to control wheat smuggling, adding, the administration was implementing a zero-tolerance policy against wheat and flour smuggling.

He said that 480 wheat smuggling bids were foiled since March 25 and over 11515.675 metric tonnes of wheat was recovered from the vehicles impounded during different operations. 197 flour-loaded trucks were also intercepted during the period while the administration seized 4246.700 metric tonnes flour, Chatha said. —APP

Private sector  
research in  
agriculture  
sector lauded

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis has lauded the efforts of Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman for fully supporting the private sector in agriculture research and conferring the "Governor Special Performance Award" to Guard Agricultural Research and Services. A press release received here Sunday said that the award was conferred to the group for evolving two new best-quality varieties of rice seeds first time in the private sector to help boost cash crops in the country besides earning direly needed foreign exchange. —APP

## Court Notice

In the court of Mr. Muhammad Munib Saqib Civil Judge Wazirabad Waqas Ahmad Cheema, son of Nazir Muhammad Qaum Jat Cheema, resident of Mahalla Allahabad, Gula Zahid Medical Store, Wazirabad Tehsil, District Gujranwala.

Muhammad Zubair, son of Muhammad Ishaq Qoum, Jat Waraich, resident of Mohalla Rasool Town, Wazirabad City Title: Claim Compliance and Completion of Allocation Agreement Sale and Permanent Injunction In every case, it is not possible for the public to comply with the above title in an easy way, so the public is informed through newspaper advertisement that if any of the public has any excuse or objection, they should appear on the next date 17/05/2023 Time: 8:00 a.m. I am present in the court in person or as a lawyer, otherwise the action will be taken unilaterally. The signature and seal has been issued by the court.

## President directs FOSPAH to probe workplace harassment

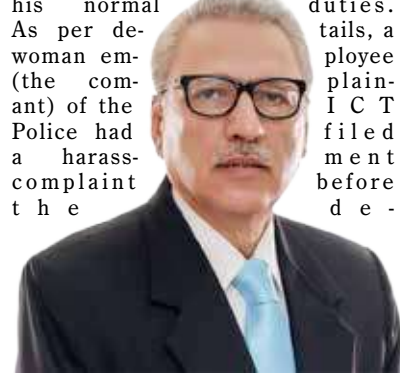
The President gave these directions while deciding upon the representations filed by the woman complainant and the accused against the order of FOSPAH to remit the case to ICT Police through IG Police Islamabad

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (FOSPAH) to conduct an inquiry into the matter of alleged harassment of a female employee by another employee of the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police and conclude the proceedings within 90 days. While referring the matter of harassment at workplace to FOSPAH for inquiry, the President said that right to fair trial was the inalienable fundamental right of every citizen as enshrined in the Constitution, which envisaged that not

only the rights of the complainant but also the rights of the accused were to be protected. He added that right to fair trial entailed that each party could be sure that the process would be transparent and the authority would refrain from abusing its powers. He stated that since mistrust had been shown by the accused upon Departmental Inquiry Committee (DIC), therefore, it was appropriate to entrust the inquiry proceedings to FOSPAH to meet the ends of justice. The President gave these directions while deciding upon the representations filed by the woman complainant and the accused against the order of FOSPAH to remit the case to

ICT Police through IG Police Islamabad for a denovo inquiry into the matter and setting aside the order of DIC to suspend the accused and allowing him to resume his normal duties. As per departmental hierarchy of the ICT Police, the accused may be placed under suspension and charge sheet along with the statement of allegations issued for conducting regular inquiry against him. The accused filed a representation with FOSPAH which passed the order for denovo inquiry. Both the parties, then, filed separate representations with the President.



The President in his decision observed that the allegations of workplace harassment had yet to be probed into as the Ombudsman had directed the department to conduct

regular inquiry, however, the counsel of the accused had expressed apprehension that remitting the matter again to DIC was not fair as there was a likelihood of injustice to the accused as he was a victim of departmental/administrative bias which had fabricated the complaint against him. The President said that since both the complainant and the accused were dissatisfied and the accused had shown mistrust upon the Departmental Inquiry Committee (DIC) of the ICT Police, therefore, the orders of FOSPAH were being set aside in the instant case and it was directed to conduct the inquiry of its own and conclude the matter within the statutory period of 90 days.

## NADRA deploys new platform to identify the sex offenders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In an unprecedented development, National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) deployed a new platform National Sex Offenders Registry (NSOR), coupled with an sms verification for citizens. This initiative has always remained closer to my heart, which is a critical step towards safeguarding women and children from sexual violence and abuse, according to Tariq Malik, the Chairman of NADRA. He announced that citizens can now use this service to verify the CNIC number of individuals being hired for household chores, at mosques, colleges, universities, or any other employment to ensure they are not sexual convicts, have a clean record and can be trusted around

citizens and responsive to the needs of the institutions and people at large in preventing sexual violence and abuse. An SMS-based verification service will alert citizens, employers and departments to beware of such culprits. This initiative has always remained closer to my heart, which is a critical step towards safeguarding women and children from sexual violence and abuse, according to Tariq Malik, the Chairman of NADRA. He announced that citizens can now use this service to verify the CNIC number of individuals being hired for household chores, at mosques, colleges, universities, or any other employment to ensure they are not sexual convicts, have a clean record and can be trusted around

common citizens and institutions with quick and easy access to information about sex offenders, particularly those who may pose a potential threat to children and women in our well-knit communities. The information can also be used to locate offenders to prevent future crimes and ensure that they are held accountable for their actions. Upon provision of CNIC by the individual being hired, the citizens of Pakistan can verify whether he is a convicted sex offender or not by sending a 13-digit CNIC number to 7000 (SMS short code). Upon verification he/she will receive a reply in Urdu: "Beware! ABC son of XYZ is a convict. Don't let him be around children and women."

It is pertinent to mention that the purpose of this service is to provide com-

## 7 outlaws arrested; weapons with ammunition recovered

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police apprehended 07 outlaws from different areas of the city and recovered weapons with ammunition from their possession, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city. Following these directives, the Phulgran police team arrested an accused namely Talib involved in possessing illegal weapons and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. Likewise, the Khanna police team ar-

rested 03 accused namely Muhammad Yawar, Zahir Shah and Jahnzaib involved in possessing illegal weapons and recovered three 30 bore pistols from their possession. During the ongoing crackdown against absconders, the Islamabad capital police teams arrested 03 absconders from various areas of the city. Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway. CPO/ DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons and said that the safety of the lives and property of the citizens is our prime responsibility. The performance of police officials in this regard would be reviewed on a continuous basis, he maintained.

## China congratulates NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, the national legislature, Zhao Leji congratulated Speaker National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the implementation of the Constitution of Pakistan. According to Gwadar Pro on Saturday, in his message, Zhao Leji said that in past 50 years, under the guidance of the constitution, the people of Pakistan had fought steadfastly to overcome difficulties and achieved remarkable achievements in the construction and economic and social development of the country.—DNA

## IGP praises officials

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting was held at Police Lines Headquarters under the chairmanship of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and was attended by divisional Capital Police Officers, SSPs, AIGs, zonal DPOs, SDPOs and SHOs attended, a police public relations officer said. He said that, during the meeting, the IGP Islamabad praised the Islamabad capital police officers for their professional handling of the extraordinary law and order situation in the federal capital over the last four days. IGP Islamabad said that, the recent situation was the biggest law and order situation in the history of Pakistan, presenting a challenge to maintain law and order while ensuring the safety of life and property of citizens. Despite the challenges, the Islamabad capital police ensured the arrest of the elements involved in provocation, vandalism, and arson, following all procedures in accordance with the law.

"We are Islamabad Police, we are Pakistan, and we are citizens of Pakistan," said IGP Islamabad. "Citizens of every religion, color, and race are living in Islamabad, and ensuring their safety and security is our top priority. All of you are my responsibility and your safety is my responsibility. I pay tribute to all of you for the way you have controlled all these situations according to the law, from DIGs ranks to constables who perform their duties, awards and rewards will be awarded to them and I am proud that we all worked like a team and we all worked together."

Maintaining law and order in the federal capital and ensuring the safety of life and property of citizens is one of the top priorities of Islamabad Capital Police. The commendable efforts of the police force have ensured the safety of the citizens and have set an example for the rest of the country, he maintained.—DNA

## Two gunned down over old enmity in Wah

WAH CANTT: Two persons were shot and killed by unidentified armed assailants in a broad daylight assassination incident in the limits of Wah Cantonment police station on Sunday. Station House Officer Sub-Inspector Muhammad Rafeeq told APP that 20-year-old Shahbaz Ahmed and 43-year-old Ahmed were waiting for a ride when two masked men riding a motorcycle appeared on the scene and opened fire on them. Rescue 1122 reached the spot and shifted the injured to a local private hospital where they succumbed to injuries. Later, the bodies were shifted to THQ hospital for autopsy. Wah Cantonment Police have registered a double murder case and launched further investigation.

## Special committee to assess losses

RAWALPINDI: The Metro Bus Authority (MBA) has decided to constitute a five-member committee to assess losses due to violent protests after the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan. The committee comprising experts from RDA Engineering Directorate, Town Municipal Committee, Metro Bus Authority and a consultant firm would prepare a report on the losses. According to Deputy Director MBA, Shumaila Asrar, final approval of the committee would be taken from Punjab Mass Transit Authority.

The protesters had broken the glasses and CCTV cameras of Khatame-Nabuwat Metro Station and damaged the washrooms of the Committee Chowk Station. The protesters also looted nearly Rs 0.5 million from the ticketing booth of the Sixth Road station. The whole station and ticketing booths were destroyed. The protesters had set the Sixth Road Metro Bus Station on fire.

Metro Bus service on Saturday resumed operation in twin cities after a four-day suspension due to protests. The Metro Bus Service between Rawalpindi and Islamabad remained suspended for four consecutive days after it was shut following the eruption of violent protests over the arrest of PTI Chief Imran Khan. The service was suspended on May 9 after Shamsabad, 6th Road, and Faizabad metro stations were vandalized by the protesters. —APP

## 'A rosy future for Pak-China floriculture collaboration'

DNA


Islamabad: "There is a huge potential for cooperation between China and Pakistan in the rose industry," highlighted Naem Iqbal Cheema, Political Counsellor at Embassy of Pakistan, Beijing at the 2023 Rose products Expo held in Pingyin county, China, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. At the opening ceremony of the expo, the "Belt and Road Initiative" rose industry consortium was officially established. Wang Zihai, Honorable Investment Counsellor of Pakistan, was invited as a global partner of Pingyin Rose. Pakistan is one of the world's high-quality rose producing areas, he underlined that "we expect this consortium to serve as a carrier to further promote the bilateral and multilateral economic, trade, cultural and personnel exchanges between the two countries." Wang added that productive clusters of

Pakistani roses have been established along the Belt and Road, which is encouraging to lower costs. Taking the Pattoki rose cluster for example, the gross revenues before flower cluster development are estimated to \$24.21 million per year. Cluster development investments are expected to generate revenues from the 2nd year of the program resulting in an additional gross revenues of \$2.96 million in the 2nd year and \$13.25 million in the 5th year, according to Cluster Development Based Agriculture Transformation Plan Vision-2025. Pakistani rose petals are normally used for ceremonial and decorative purposes, while dried petals and potted plants are mainly exported to Gulf countries. The presentation of value-added products such as Pakistani rose essential oil, rose water extract, rose jam and rose application in the herbal and cosmetic industries will further expand the visibili-


ty of Pakistan rose among Chinese stakeholders. The comparable advantages of rose cultivation in Pakistan include different agricultural climatic zones that are best suited to various roses, high-yield and heat-tolerant varieties, and cheaper human resources. The total area under roses in Pakistan is 9,480 acres with an annual production of 42,660 tonnes, shared by Dr. Ifkhar Ahmad, Associate Professor of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF) in a recent interview with Gwadar Pro. Pinpointing that there are numerous possible collaboration opportunities in rose industry between China and Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor of UAF stated that both sides could deepen exchanging rose germplasm and evaluation of Chinese commercial rose species in Pakistan, breeding for extending blooming period of Rosa damascena and enhancing essential oil yield.

## Jashan-e-Baharan 'Orakzai festival' continues

ISLAMABAD: A two-day colourful Jashan-e-Baharan festival is underway smoothly in Orakzai tribal district which was gripping the attention of crowds of tourists and promoting tourism in the province. Officials of the district administration talking to a Private news channel said that local and foreign tourists had come to the valley in large numbers to see and enjoy the unique culture and traditions. The administration was providing fool-proof security, lighting and transportation to the tourists and local residents so they could celebrate the event in a befitting manner, they added. A local resident of the area commented that the authority is utilizing all available resources to promote tourism in the adjoining districts of the province through this first ever festival. There are many beautiful tourist places in the Orakzai district, and the authority was given full attention to promote tourism in the region by providing all facilities, said a foreign tourist while enjoying multiple local games in festival. The festival is showcasing musical performances, traditional Khattak dance performances, recitals by local poets and a spectacular fireworks displays, said district management worker. This initiative was taken only to promote tourism in the region but also strengthen employment and the local economy, said tourism wing official.—



## 10 Minutes Drive From The Monal



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## Liz Truss's intervention in Taiwan

To Liz Truss's many failings must now be added an apparent prejudice against Rutland. Not unlike the island of Taiwan, England's smallest historic county has fought hard over the years to maintain its independence from a larger, overbearing neighbour. For China, read Leicestershire. Now its Conservative MP, Alicia Kearns, has become the target of a nasty geopolitical sneer. If you hail from landlocked rural Rutland, Truss's spokesperson superciliously implied last week, you probably don't understand international affairs.

This insulting inference was made after Kearns had the temerity to question the wisdom, utility and motivation of Truss's unofficial visit to Taiwan last week. The disgraced former prime minister says she plans to speak out in "solidarity" with Taiwan's people in defiance of Chinese intimidation. But Kearns dismissed the trip as a vanity project to help Truss "keep herself relevant" and as "the worst kind of Instagram diplomacy". Truss's confrontational antics could make things worse for Taiwan, she warned. The response was snotty. Truss "has been invited to visit by the Taiwan government. They are better placed to know what is in the interests of the Taiwanese people than the MP for Rutland," her spokesperson condescendingly replied. Yet Kearns, no Rutle yokel she, is well-qualified to speak on this issue. She chairs the Commons foreign affairs select committee. And given Truss's record of causing chaos, her concerns are valid. Like many Tories whose political life expectancy was drastically shortened by last autumn's Trussian revolution, Kearns has learned to distrust her ex-leader's judgment. Self-promoting Truss was already a bit of a martial joke before entering Downing Street. As foreign secretary in 2021, she was mocked for posing, Margaret Thatcher-like, atop a tank in Estonia. As prime minister, she mimicked Boris Johnson's Winston Churchill tribute act over Ukraine. After her forced resignation, she resurfaced in Tokyo, rebooting herself as a China hawk and unguided missile. Britain should arm Taiwan, join a "Pacific defence alliance", help deter "totalitarian" China and thus save the "free world", Truss boldly declared.

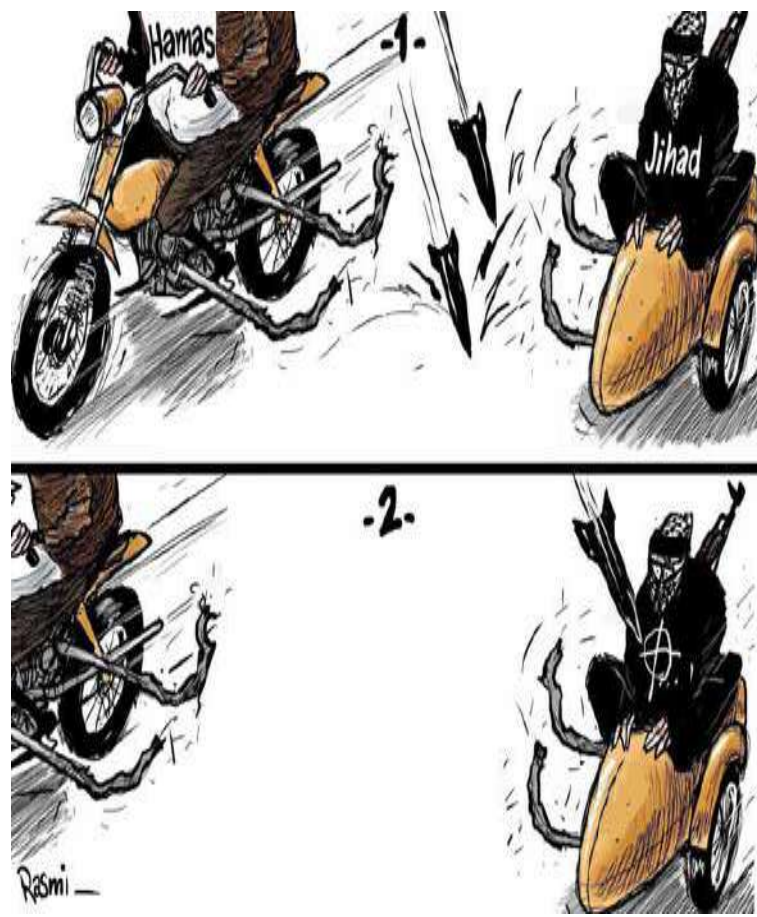
That's problematic, since the ruling, pro-independence Democratic Progressive party faces a tight race with the more Beijing-friendly Kuomintang opposition. Truss's anti-China rhetoric may be mistaken for official British policy. As foreign secretary James Cleverly explained recently, the government is trying hard to balance justified criticism of China with the "robustly pragmatic", constructive pursuit of beneficial ties. Truss doesn't help. It is in Britain's interest, and the world's, that these two competing superpowers find ways of living amicably with each other - and maintaining channels of communication that prevent more Ukraine-style disasters. Indulging her hubris and pique, the serially irresponsible MP for South West Norfolk is doing her country another disservice. She owes Rutland an apology, too.

## High hopes for five-nation peace shuttling

From Monday, Special Representative of the Chinese Government on Eurasian Affairs Li Hui is paying visits to Ukraine, Poland, France, Germany and Russia for communication aimed at promoting a political settlement to the Ukraine crisis.

Since the start of the crisis, China has adopted a principled position calling for joint efforts to promote an end to the conflict. As the crisis has dragged on and escalated, and the spillover effects have worsened, a growing number of countries have acknowledged the road map to peace that China proposed in its position paper. The 12 points set out in the paper take into account the legitimate concerns of all parties and look beyond a cessation of the current hostilities to the broader issues of reducing strategic risks and mitigating the spillover effects that have been caused by the conflict. As a feasible foundation on which to build a consensus, it has received extensive understanding and recognition from the international community. Through his coordination, Li will hope to provide momentum for the resumption of peace talks between Ukraine and Russia and seek to foster agreement on a balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture for Europe. Ukraine and Russia are the two belligerents and any end to the crisis necessitates dialogue between them to de-escalate the situation and ultimately reach a cease-fire and establish the conditions in which peace talks can have a chance to bear fruit. Poland, France and Germany are key stakeholders in realizing the broadest common understanding in Europe of any peace agreement. It is notable, that the United States is not among Li's destinations. Although US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that "We're open to any country engaging in responsible efforts to try to advance peace", the US has not yet demonstrated its willingness to create the space necessary for the compromises that could bring an end to the conflict.

Having played Europe against Russia with the aim of permanently debilitating it, scared several European nations into joining NATO and made a profit of \$100 million per ship by selling liquefied natural gas to Europe with Russia's gas supply cut, the US has perhaps been the only beneficiary from the bloodshed in Europe. And it has certainly been the biggest. As such it is questionable whether it is "open" to any efforts to try to advance peace, as Blinken claimed. Regardless, China will continue to play a constructive role by making efforts to broker peace talks. It has expressed its hopes that the international community will extend its support to Li's efforts by not making any moves that exacerbate tensions and protract the fighting. It is to be hoped that the US will honor Blinken's words by heeding that call.



## Fixing social moral collapse

Dr M Ali Hamza



There are several factors that can contribute to a moral collapse in society like breakdown of traditional institutions such as family, community, and established administrative units. When these institutions weaken or break down, there can be a loss of moral guidance and a decline in moral responsibility. Secondly, as societies change and evolve, the values and norms also change. If this change of value system is not planned and executed

Moral collapse in society means that the moral values and ethical standards that guide people and communities are getting weaker. It leads to behaviours and attitudes that are seen as wrong or harmful. It's like the moral fabric that holds society together is untying. Moral collapse has serious consequences. It can lead to more crime, corruption, lawlessness, inequality, and a decline in overall well-being of society.

There are several factors that can contribute to a moral collapse in society like breakdown of traditional institutions such as family, community, and established administrative units. When these institutions weaken or break down, there can be a loss of moral guidance and a decline in moral responsibility. Secondly, as societies change and evolve, the values and norms also change. If this change of value system is not planned and executed intelligently, this can create confusion and disagreement about what is morally right or wrong, leading to moral relativism. Resultantly the society splits into multiple factions and moral binding evaporates. Thirdly, if people only care about their own rights and freedoms without considering their responsibility to society, it can lead to moral collapse. When individuals prioritize their own interests over the well-being of the community, it can result in a disregard for what is right and a lack of concern for the greater good. Thirdly, Trust and social cohesion are important for moral standards in society. When trust breaks down between individuals and institutions, it becomes harder to uphold moral norms and hold people responsible. This can lead to a culture of cynicism, apathy, and indifference towards moral values. Last but not the least, MEDIA shapes society's values and norms. If media focuses on sensationalism, violence, and immoral behaviour, it can make unethical conduct seem normal. Social media platforms and online communities can also amplify harmful ideas and extreme viewpoints, weakening moral values even more. Aren't these the el-

ements that picture Moral Collapse in Pakistan? We will get back to it.

The moral collapse in society represents the moral collapse in its basic governing institutions. Like judicial, political, financial and others. Financial crisis of 2007-2008 that was due to risky and fraudulent banking practices, such as subprime mortgage lending and the packaging and selling of complex financial products with hidden risks. Illegal activities and abuses of power by members of President Richard Nixon's administration; Watergate scandal, the sexual abuse scandals within various institutions, such as the Catholic Church, sports organizations, educational institutions, and the entertainment industry, are few examples of moral collapse in recent history. The Panama Papers in 2016 revealed a network of offshore activities involving politicians and business leaders worldwide. In Pakistan, it exposed a culture of corruption and unethical behaviour among some politicians who allegedly evaded taxes and hid their wealth. The scandal damaged public trust in politics and emphasized the need for transparency, accountability, and ethical governance. It led to the downfall of a prominent politician and had a big impact on the country's political landscape. Some people think that the recent social disorder in Pakistan happened because the leaders sitting on treasury benches have a no sense of right and wrong; means they are morally compromised. It is also believed by analysts in and outside of the country that removing Imran Khan from parliament and arresting him with bad intentions also contributed to the unrest.

The country witnessed sights of vandalism, police firing water cannon and tear gas to control protesters, all major cities been blocked, disconnection of internet services around the country for 4 days, escalating tensions between institutions, constitutional crises, and zero efforts for political dialogue. The situation portrays a social moral collapse in Pakistan.

Now what to do? Academically speaking, to ad-

dress such collapse, we need to take several actions. These include reestablishing, upholding the social moral norms, strengthening moral education, promoting ethical leaders, encouraging social responsibility, promote inclusivity and rebuilding trust in communities. We should also encourage open discussions and critical thinking about moral issues, create opportunities for dialogue and understanding across diverse perspectives, nurture empathy and compassion, and emphasize the importance of ethical behaviour in all aspects of life. Moreover, the establishment of robust legal and institutional frameworks that promote transparency, fairness, and justice. Effective laws, regulations, and enforcement mechanisms help discourage unethical behaviour and provide remedy to those affected by moral violations.

Media has a significant role to play side by side. Media outlets should realign their news and programming following national aspirations. Uphold the moral values. Media should play a part in educating masses, toe national agenda, stay impartial, encourage rational debates, promote emotional stability and avoid sensationalism. By embracing these elements, society can prevent social moral collapse and build a better community. It requires collective action, individual responsibility, and a commitment to upholding moral values in all aspects of life. This sounds brilliant in long term, if this start happening today. What now, and what quickly be done, is a real question.

The solution lies in those in power acknowledging the truth. The people of Pakistan want to remove morally compromised leaders, end social divisions, resolve conflicts between institutions, break the dominance of a single party or institution, eliminate elitism, and put an end to political dynasties. The reality is evident, so accepting it and bridging the gaps through a neutral third party that initiates and facilitates political dialogue to make quick and practical decisions can provide a speedy solution.

## The elitist landscape of Pakistan's political system

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Political elitism is the theory that a small group of people, often those with the most wealth or power, hold the most influence over political decisions and the functioning of society. Wealthy individuals can use their resources to fund political campaigns, donate to political parties, and hire lobbyists to push for their interests. Another element of political elitism is education

Elitism refers to the belief that certain individuals or groups, based on their social, economic, educational, or other characteristics, are superior to others and should have a greater influence or control over society. It is often associated with the idea that those who possess certain qualities or come from certain backgrounds are inherently more valuable or deserving than others.

Elitism can manifest in various forms, including political, intellectual, cultural, and economic elitism. It can be expressed through exclusionary attitudes, behaviors, and policies that favor the privileged group and limit the opportunities and resources available to those outside it. This can result in inequality, social divisions, and a lack of diversity and inclusivity in various spheres of life.

Political elitism is the theory that a small group of people, often those with the most wealth or power, hold the most influence over political decisions and the functioning of society. Wealthy individuals can use their resources to fund political campaigns, donate to political parties, and hire lobbyists to push for their interests. Another element of political elitism is education and expertise. Those with advanced degrees or specialized knowledge in a particular area, such as law, economics, or political science, are often seen as experts in their field and may have more influence over political decisions. Social status is also a key element of political elitism. Those with high social status, such as members of prominent families, CEOs of large corporations, or celebrities, often have more access to political power and influence than the average person. Institutional connections, such as membership in exclusive clubs or associations, can also contribute to political elitism. These connections can provide individuals with access to powerful networks and insider information that can help them wield more influence over political decisions.

Political power itself can be an element of political

elitism. Those who hold positions of political power, such as elected officials or high-ranking government officials, often have significant influence over political decisions and the functioning of society. In the context of Pakistan, there is a long-standing perception that political power is primarily controlled by a small group of elites, including wealthy businesspeople, military leaders, and members of powerful political families. This perception is rooted in the country's history, which has been marked by periods of military rule, as well as the dominance of certain political parties and families. The military has played a significant role in Pakistan's politics since its inception in 1947, and has often been accused of perpetuating elitism by supporting certain political parties or leaders over others. Additionally, certain political families, such as the Bhutto family and the Sharif family, have maintained a stronghold on power in Pakistan for decades, despite accusations of corruption and nepotism. This has led to a perception that political power in Pakistan is largely inherited, rather than earned through merit. The perspective of political elitism in Pakistan suggests that the country's political system is largely controlled by a small group of individuals who wield disproportionate power and influence over the rest of the population. This has contributed to a sense of frustration and disillusionment among many Pakistanis, who feel that their voices are not being heard in the political process. In the context of Pakistan, there is a long-standing perception that political power is primarily controlled by a small group of elites, including wealthy businesspeople, military leaders, and members of powerful political families. This perception is rooted in the country's history, which has been marked by periods of military rule, as well as the dominance of certain political parties and families. The military has played a significant role in Pakistan's politics since its inception in 1947, and has often been accused of perpetuating elitism by supporting certain

political parties or leaders over others. Moreover, certain political families, such as the Bhutto family and the Sharif family have maintained a stronghold on power in Pakistan for decades, despite accusations of corruption and nepotism. This has led to a perception that political power in Pakistan is largely inherited, rather than earned through merit. The perspective of political elitism in Pakistan suggests that the country's political system is largely controlled by a small group of individuals who wield disproportionate power and influence over the rest of the population. This has contributed to a sense of frustration and disillusionment among many Pakistanis, who feel that their voices are not being heard in the political process. Pakistan's political elite is made up of a small group of influential and wealthy individuals who have dominated the country's political landscape for several decades. This elite class is composed of members of powerful political families, military generals, and wealthy businessmen who have significant influence over the country's political, economic, and social affairs. One of the defining features of Pakistan's political elite is their tendency to prioritize their personal interests over the country's welfare. Corruption is rampant among the political elite, and they often use their power to enrich themselves and their families rather than improving the lives of the people they serve. Moreover, Pakistan's political elite is often accused of perpetuating a system of dynastic politics, in which power is passed down from one generation to the next within a small group of families. This has led to a lack of diversity in the country's political leadership and has limited the ability of new voices to enter the political arena. Pakistan's political elite has a complicated relationship with the country's powerful military establishment. The military has played a significant role in the country's politics throughout its history, and the political elite often relies on the military's support to maintain its grip on power. However, this relationship is often fraught with tension, and the military has been known to intervene in political affairs when it perceives that the political elite is not acting in the country's best interests.

## Briefs

## SC takes up the case...

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According to the Election Commission, the government had not yet provided Rs21 billion despite SC's order and the Punjab caretaker government had agreed to provide only 75,000 personnel for security.

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) over failing to provide funds for upcoming Punjab elections.

Later, the PTI and the PDM-led government sat on the negotiating table, starting on April 27, to talk through elections but it culminated in consensus on holding elections simultaneously across the country with an impasse on the date during its third and last round on May 2.

On May 3, the ECP approached the court seeking review of its order to hold polls on May 14. Three days later, CJP Bandial said the apex court would proceed in line with the constitution and would not sit idle on the May 14 election issue if the dialogue between the government and the PTI failed. Sources believe that the PDM dharna outside the apex court may be an attempt to influence court proceedings. The PDM leaders fear the court may take action against those who had defied the Court orders regarding holding of elections on May 14. These names include the name of the prime minister as well.

## Crackdown continues...

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despite the Lahore High Court's decision to suspend the detention of 17 women, including her. The government crackdown on the PTI continues as Dr Rashid's arrest is related to charges of riots that occurred during nationwide protests after the arrest of PTI chief Imran Khan on May 9. Rashid was taken into custody at Services Hospital, as she was wanted by the police in connection with three cases, as per police sources. Naqvi joins a list of PTI leaders who have been arrested after party chief Imran Khan was arrested by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on May 9 which triggered violent protests across the country. In an unprecedented show of vandalism, PTI supporters had attacked and caused damage to the historic Corps' Commander's House - originally known as Jinnah House and which once served as the residence of the founding father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. On Wednesday, audio leaks also surfaced on social media, indicating that the leadership of the PTI was allegedly involved in the attack.

## Imran claims he...

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"The first time they showed me an arrest warrant was inside the jail. It happens in the law of the jungle," the PTI chairman said. He recalled a moment of confusion and said he has displayed unwavering determination and readiness to face imprisonment once again. "I am ready to go to jail again," he maintained. He said that the coalition government, led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was "petrified of elections", adding that they feared being "wiped out" by his party at the polls. He went on to say that the government had decided that the only way they would allow elections was if "I am inside the jail or killed". He expressed concern over rights violations in Pakistan following his arrest earlier this week lamenting that democracy in the country is at "an all-time low". He also narrated how his residence had been raided by the police on two occasions. During one of these raids, he said, the authorities forcefully broke down the doors of his house in his wife's presence terming it an "unprecedented and unsettling situation" for himself. Stressing the deteriorating condition of democracy in Pakistan, the former premier said that approximately 150 cases had been lodged against him - a huge number of cases that had not been filed against any other politicians in the country.

## German Consulate hosts reception for Pak contingent



AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The grand ceremony in honor of the Special Olympics Pakistan contingent participating in the Special Olympics World Games, Berlin, 2023 was held at the German Consulate General Karachi. The Special Olympics World Games will be played from June 17 to 25 in Berlin where more than seven thousand special players and officials will participate in different sports competitions.

Chief Secretary Sindh Dr. Sohail Rajput, German Consul General Dr. Rüdiger Lotz, Special Olympics Pakistan Chairperson Ronak Lakhani, famous artist Sarwat Gilani, brand ambassador of Special Olympics Pakistan Yasmin Haider, diplomats and other dignitaries were participated in the ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, the host Consul General of German Consulate in Karachi Rüdiger Lotz said that Germany will host the Special Olympics World Games for the first time, it will be grand and

memorable. The Consul General also hoped that participating players from Pakistan will perform well and bring medals in the mega sports event. The Chief Secretary Sindh Dr. Sohail Rajput said that despite mental or physical problems, special players are not less than anyone in ability and talent, they need to be given confidence and courage and the Sindh government has its responsibility and will continue to support these special athletes to help them win laurels for the country.

He said that Sindh Govt. is trying to pay attention to these special athletes and leaving no stone unturned to support them. Special Olympics Pakistan Chairperson Ronak Lakhani said that special people are an important segment of society, the purpose of participating in the Games is to prove that the special children of Pakistan are no less than any other in the world. "They will win hearts and the nation should encourage these special children", she said, adding that the Sindh government

gave their full support and cooperation in making participation in the games possible. Special Olympics Pakistan is thankful to Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah for providing full support and help to Special Olympics Pakistan, Ronak added. Pakistan's 138-member squad which will participate in as many as 11 sports of Olympic Games, will leave for Germany on June 12. The 87 players include 54 boys and 33 girls, while coaches comprising 17 men and 13 women will take part in the mega event.

## Pakistan to play three Tests in Australia in December-January



DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan will make a trip Down Under later in the year to take on Australia for the Benaud-Qadir Trophy. The three Tests part of the third World Test Championship cycle will be played at Perth, Melbourne and Sydney in December and January. The tour will open at the Perth Stadium on 14 December and it will mark the first instance of Pakistan playing a Test at the venue. The two

teams will face off in the Boxing Day Test at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground from 26 till 30 December and the third and final match will be played at the Sydney Cricket Ground from 3 January, 2024. Pakistan have played 10 Tests at the MCG and eight at the SCG at both venues they have won two matches each. In the lead-up to the series, Pakistan will play a four-day warm-up to acclimatise to the conditions Down Under. This will be Pakistan captain Babar Azams third Test tour of Australia.

## PTBF to feature in 4 int'l tournaments

Pakistan's participation would also be seen in IBF World Bowling Championship at Kuwait from October 3 to 18 and in 6th Indoor & Martial Arts Games at Bangkok, Thailand from November 17 to 26

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation (PTBF) would feature in four international tournaments revealed the national body's sports calendar for the year 2023-24. According to President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijaz ur Rehman announced the players to feature in four international tournaments between August to November. Pakistani players would participate in the 22nd Asian Junior Tenpin Bowling Championship in Singapore from August 19 to 26 while in Storm Lucky Larsen Master Bowling Tournament at Helsingborg, Sweden from September 1 to 10. Pakistan's participation would also be seen in IBF World Bowling Championship at Kuwait from October 3 to 18 and in 6th Indoor & Martial Arts Games at Bangkok, Thailand from November 17 to 26. Meanwhile PTBF would hold four national tournaments including Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Championship 2023 Leisure City Bowling Club Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi (August 9 to 14); 8th PTBF Ranking Tenpin Bowling Championship 2023 Arena Bowling Club, Karachi (October 25 to 30); Pakistan Open Tenpin Bowling Championship 2023 Royal Rodale Bowling Club Karachi (December 25 to 31); 16th National Tenpin Bowling Championship 2024 Leisure City Bowling Club Jinnah park Rawalpindi (March 25-30, 2024). - APP

## Iga Swiatek sweeps into Italian Open last 16

ROME: Iga Swiatek cruised into the last 16 of the Italian Open on Sunday after thrashing Lesia Tsurenko 6-2, 6-0, while Daniil Medvedev won his first ever match in Rome, 6-4, 6-2 against Emil Ruusuvuori. Losing finalist in Madrid last weekend, Swiatek looked again in imperious form in the tournament she won last year before going on to blitz the French Open. The 21-year-old is trying for her third straight Rome title and made light work of Tsurenko after a slightly bumpy start. Swiatek lost the first two games but then rattled off 12 in a row in a powerful demonstration of why she is world number one and favourite for Roland Garros. "I'm just trying to be consistent and trying to play my game. I treat every match as a final, I try to have the right mindset," said Swiatek on court. Swiatek now faces either Donna Vekic or Ljudmila Samsonova in the fourth round after extending her winning streak in the Italian capital to 13 matches. Her bid for a Rome hat-trick will be helped by five of the world's top 10 women players being eliminated early, world number one Iga Swiatek, Maria Sakkari the latest victim after she was beaten 7-5, 6-3 by Marketa Vondrousova. Sakkari joins world number two Aryna Sabalenka, third-ranked Jessica Pegula, world number four Caroline Garcia and seventh ranked Ons Jabeur in being dumped out of the tournament. In the men's draw Medvedev

came through in straight sets against Ruusuvuori to claim his first win at the Foro Italico courts. The former US Open champion won a second round match which was postponed to Sunday due to the torrential rain which hit the Italian capital on Saturday. In much balmy conditions the world number three was dominant on a clay court surface he is famous for not liking. Few would back him to go deep in Rome but his performances on clay have improved, reaching the quarter-finals at the Monte Carlo Masters.

Medvedev will face Bernabe Zapata Miralles in the third round. "Every time I come to a tournament I know I can play well, so I'm happy to finally get the win here in Rome," said Medvedev. "I want to win as many matches as possible, I know it can be a little bit trickier for me on clay but honestly this year I'm playing really well." "The matches I lost I lost against great opponents who just played better than me... I'm just trying to play my best tennis until the end of the clay season." Stefanos Tsitsipas will take on home hope Lorenzo Sonego after finishing off Nuno Borges 6-3, 6-3 in a match interrupted by Saturday's rain with the world number five already well on his way to victory. - Agencies

## Rolando Romero wins on controversial stoppage

Barroso, a 40-year-old southpaw, fell to 24-4 with two drawn, missing a chance to become only the 10th boxer to win a world title past his 40th birthday

LOS ANGELES: American Rolando Romero defeated Venezuela's Ismael Barroso on a controversial ninth-round stoppage to win the vacant World Boxing Association super lightweight title on Saturday. Referee Tony Weeks stopped the bout at 2:41 of the ninth round in Las Vegas, Nevada, with Romero swinging but not landing against Barroso in the corner. "He was a warrior. He wanted to keep going. He should have been able to

keep going," Romero said after the victory. "I wanted to keep going. He wanted to keep going. We both wanted to keep going." Instead, Romero improved to 15-1 with his 13th victory inside the distance, capturing a world crown in his debut at the 140-pound division. Barroso, a 40-year-old southpaw, fell to 24-4 with two drawn, missing a chance to become only the 10th boxer to win a world title past his 40th birthday.

"I think it was an injustice to stop this fight," Barroso said through a translator. "I was giving the best shots." Romero, 28, was knocked down for only the second time in his career by a punishing left to the head from Barroso late in the third round. "I boxed the entire time," Romero said. "I came in a little cold, I got cracked and I finished the round like a champion and I kept going and I got the victory." Romero was somewhat in-

active for several rounds, being careful to avoid more punishing shots, the South American landing another hard left to Romero's head in the sixth. "I took my time, moved around. The man is strong. I had to be careful with him," Romero said. "You think I wanted to get caught by one of those? I knew he could crack." At the finish, Romero knocked down Barroso in the opening seconds of the ninth round, although Barroso called it more of

a push down. "The first punch is where I had him hurt," Romero said. Romero began swinging wildly in the corner without success late in the round before Weeks stepped in to end matters. "He just stopped the fight. He didn't tell me anything," Barroso said. "You could see it clearly. I was hitting him. There was nothing he was hitting me with clearly. I don't understand." Romero had not fought since being knocked out

a year ago by unbeaten Davis or to US southpaw Gervonta Davis, but said fight Ryan Garcia, who lost to Davis last month. Unbeaten Dominican Alberto Puello, 21-0 with 10 knockouts, was to have defended the title against Romero but he had an A-sample test positive for a performance-enhancing substance last month and was made a "champion in recess" on Wednesday. - Agencies

## Police continue probe...

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the total number of "criminals arrested in case number 708 RA Bazar (GHQ case) has increased to 76". He added that arrests are being made through identification via videos and the person seen throwing petrol in the video has also been arrested while the person who instigated the crowd to move towards the GHQ gate is also behind bars. The CPO maintained that among the miscreants arrested yesterday are Ehsan, Abdullah, Idris, Waqas, Ayaz, Qamar-ul-Zaman, Umar, Ali Hussain, Farhadullah, Asmat, Abu Bakr, Qamar Zaman, Sajjad Munir, Nabil, Sadaqat, Noman, Aamir Shahid, Farhad, Shehryar, Lal Shah, Akmal, Adeel, Pirzada Shehbaz, Arshad, Manawar and Syed Qamar. He informed that during the riots, the highways continued to function as per usual and the security of important installations remained intact, adding that the Metrobus suffered a loss of Rs800 million. Hamdani added that there was no lack of intelligence in Rawalpindi, due to which the situation in the city did not deteriorate much. The CPO said that a special committee headed by SSP (Investigation) Rawalpindi Zunaira Azfar is investigating the cases related to sensitive institutions and also presented the photos of 26 miscreants who attacked the GHQ gate to the media.

## Iranian embassy...

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houses had published a news that one of the staff members of the Iranian embassy had administered poison to his wife. Consequently the lady was shifted to hospital for treatment. However now the embassy has ruled out any such possibility.

## PTI Chief, party...

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Speaking at a press conference with Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mairum Aurangzeb, Rana Sanaulah said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had directed him to meet with the PDM chief. Sanaulah, who belongs to the ruling PML-N which is part of the PDM coalition, said that the administration has informed him that it will be very difficult to control the protest and that the information being received from security institutions was very alarming. He said that he had requested the JUI-F chief to hold the protest outside the Red Zone. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mairum Aurangzeb has said attacks on sensitive installations, ambulances and buildings were planned by former prime minister Imran Khan and his party. In a statement, the Information Minister said Imran Khan and his followers are also behind the desecration of the memorials of martyrs and ghazis of the nation. Lashing out at former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan over the violent protests and vandalism by his party workers and supporters following his May 9 arrest, he urged the people to use their voting power to negate any attempts to spread unrest in the country.

## Fazl refuses govt's...

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As per details, Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah met PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday, to request that the PDM not hold a protest outside the Supreme Court. The meeting took place amidst the current political unrest in Pakistan and the PDM's planned protest outside the Supreme Court. Ishaq Dar and Rana Sanaulah urged Maulana Fazlur Rehman to reconsider the protest location and hold protest at D-chowk. The decision to hold the sit-in was made during a meeting attended by the heads of PDM parties, including former prime minister Nawaz Sharif who participated via video link from London. However, in a surprising turn of events, Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar met with Maulana Fazlur Rehman and urged him to reconsider staging the sit-in outside the top court.

## Briefs

## Germany to send military aid to Ukraine

BERLIN: Germany will provide Ukraine with a new 2.7 billion (\$2.97 billion) military aid package, local media reported on Saturday. The biggest military aid package to date will include 30 Leopard 1 battle tanks, 20 Marder infantry fighting vehicles, 15 Gepard anti-aircraft tanks, and around 100 armored vehicles, according to the weekly Der Spiegel. To boost Ukraine's air defenses, Germany will also send up to 200 surveillance and reconnaissance drones and four additional IRIS-T anti-aircraft missile systems, the weekly said. Germany has increased its military support to Ukraine in recent months following pressure from the US and other allies, and it is currently the third-largest supplier of weapons to the country.—APP

## Humanitarian Trust Fund in Afghanistan agreed

JEDDAH: series of agreements have been signed to carry out a group of projects under the Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan. The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), acting on a resolution from the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), has been tasked with creating, overseeing, and running the fund in partnership with several other organizations and agencies. On May 12, 2023, an official ceremony was held by the IsDB at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Jeddah where the signing took place. The ceremony was attended by distinguished personalities including H.E. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al-Jasser, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the IsDB Group, H.E. Mr. Sultan AlMurshid, CEO of the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), and H.E. Mr. Fahad Al-Osaimi, Director of the Emergency Relief Department at KSR Relief in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, H.E. Mr. Tarig Ali Bakheit, the Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and other representatives from international organizations and partners. During the event, the Secretary-General delivered a speech acknowledging the IsDB's unwavering efforts in collaboration with the OIC General Secretariat. He expressed gratitude for the leadership of Dr. Al-Jasser and his supportive team, emphasizing that without their continuous efforts, the event would not have been possible. The Secretary-General also praised the close and valuable coordination between the IsDB and the OIC General Secretariat.—APP

## Turkish forces 'neutralize' 5 PKK terrorists

ISTANBUL: Turkish security forces "neutralized" five terrorists in northern Syria, the National Defense Ministry said on Saturday. The terrorists were targeted in the Operation Peace Spring zone, the ministry said in a statement. Turkish authorities use the term "neutralized" to imply that the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. PKK/YPG terrorists hide out in northern Syria, near the Turkish border, where they plan and carry out attacks on both locals and nearby settlements in Türkiye. Since 2016, Ankara has launched a trio of successful anti-terror operations across its border in northern Syria to prevent the formation of a terror corridor and enable the peaceful settlement of residents: Euphrates Shield (2016), Olive Branch (2018), and Peace Spring (2019). In its more than 35-year terror campaign against Türkiye, the PKK — listed as a terrorist organization by Türkiye, the US, and EU — has been responsible for the deaths of over 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants.—APP

## Zelensky meets pope, Italian leaders in push for peace

After leaving Rome, Zelensky is expected to head to Berlin on Sunday for his first visit to Germany since the war began

ROME: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday sought support for his peace proposal as he held talks with Pope Francis in Rome and met Italian leaders in his first visit to Italy since the start of the war. In an interview on Italian state TV RAI wrapping up his visit, Zelensky said he had been honored to meet the pope, who has repeatedly offered to play a role in possible negotiations to stop the war started by Russia's offensive in Ukraine a year ago. But the Ukrainian leader also stressed that since "the war is in Ukraine, it has to be Ukraine's plan" to lead to peace, asking the pontiff to support the 10-point platform he has been pushing at an international level.

A Vatican statement said that during a 40-minute-long private audience on Saturday afternoon, Zelensky and Francis discussed the need to help the "innocent victims" of the conflict. The two addressed "the humanitarian and political situation in Ukraine caused by the ongoing war," the statement said, adding that the pontiff reassured Zelensky "of his constant prayers, witnessed by his many public appeals and continuous invocation to the Lord for peace." "The pope stressed, in particular, the urgent need for 'human gestures' towards the most fragile people, innocent victims of the conflict," the Vatican said. In a tweet following the

talks, Zelensky said he also mentioned the issue of the thousands of children who have been "deported to Russia" and need to be returned home. In April, returning from a trip to Hungary, Francis told reporters that the Vatican was involved in a behind-the-scenes peace mission, without providing details. But both Russia and Ukraine said they had no knowledge of the initiative. Earlier on Saturday, Zelensky obtained full support from both Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who met with him separately, promising complete military and financial backing. Mattarella and Meloni also reiterated their will to champion Ukraine's bid

for full European Union membership. "The future of Ukraine is a future of peace and freedom," Meloni told reporters in joint statements with Zelensky. "And it's the future of Europe, a future of peace and freedom, for which there are no other possible solutions." Meloni has already stressed on several occasions that Ukraine is moving forward with a plan of reforms required by the EU Commission despite the war. The Italian premier voiced assurances that Italy will back Kyiv "360 degrees for all the time necessary and beyond." After leaving Rome, Zelensky is expected to head to Berlin on Sunday for his first visit to Germany since the war began.—Agencies

## Indian startups eye North Africa entry through UAE trade pact platform

NEW DELHI: The free trade pact signed with the UAE last year has opened the Emirati market for Indian companies, but it is not their final destination, businesses say, as they see it as a hub to expand further into the Middle East and North Africa. The landmark Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement that came into force in May reduced tariffs on about 80 percent of all goods and provided zero-duty access to 90 percent of Indian exports. Bilateral trade has touched historic highs since the signing of the agreement, registering a year-on-year increase of 16 percent to reach \$85 billion in the April 2022-March 2023 period, according to Indian Ministry of Commerce data. It will continue to increase further in the coming years, according to the UAE India Business Council, the official joint business chamber for promoting economic synergy between the two countries. "The economic graph between UAE and India is going north," Mukesh Kalra, the council's head of business development, told Arab News in a recent interview. "Free economic zones, aggressive policies of attracting companies from India and other (regions) have been really pushed by the UAE in the last few years." It also offers access to the Middle East and North Africa, which are largely emerging destinations for Indians. "The reason why the companies are moving to UAE is access to the MENA region," Kalra said. "North Africa is still not a saturated market." Klug Klug, an Indian tech platform for influencer marketing, told Arab News that its recently opened office in Dubai aimed at helping it access the broader region. "We know that the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, is growing very quickly," said Kalyan Kumar, the company's co-founder and CEO. "We have already got India covered, Southeast Asia covered, and it was a logical step to also cover the Middle East with Dubai as a base of operations. That would also allow us access to Western Europe and North Africa."—Agencies

## Amazon deforestation in Brazil drops 68%

MEXICO CITY: Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (Inpe) reported a 68% decrease in deforestation in the Amazon on Friday — the largest decline since Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office in January. The agency reported that the Amazon lost 126.92 square miles (326.1 square kilometers) to deforestation last month, a significant drop from the 175.9 square miles averaged in the previous month. It marks a continued decline in deforestation from January to April. Inpe documented a 40% decrease in deforestation compared to the same period last year. Lula pledged to offset the ongoing and heightened deforestation in the biome during the tenure of his predecessor, President Jair Bolsonaro. During his four-year term as president, Bolsonaro oversaw 13,135 square miles of deforestation. In his last month in office alone, in December 2022, deforestation rose 150%. Bolsonaro cut down the environmental budget and fired experts while securing the interests of influential agribusiness leaders. Starting Jan 1, Lula set to transform Brazil into a "green superpower," promising zero deforestation and degradation of the biomes. The leftist president unfroze the billion-dollar Amazon fund and secured substantial donations from the world's superpowers.—DNA

## Kenya starvation cult death toll rises to 201

NAIROBI: Search teams combing through Kenya's Shakahola forest, where mass graves connected to a cult were found last month, exhumed 22 more bodies, bringing the death toll to more than 200, police have said. "Our forensic team was able to exhumate 22 bodies today," Rhodah Onyancha, the regional police chief, told reporters in Shakahola on Saturday. At least 201 bodies have been found since mid-April during investigations into a cult run by Paul Mackenzie, a pastor who leads the Good News International Church. The pastor is accused of ordering his followers to starve themselves to death. Efforts to uncover the truth behind the cult's activities and the circumstances surrounding the deaths remain ongoing. Police said more locals are registering their relatives as missing. An investigation that started last month has revealed that some of the victims had their organs missing, which has led to suspicions of trafficking in human organs.

## 24 church members killed in Zambia

LUSAKA: A vehicle accident left 24 church members dead Saturday in southern Zambia, with 12 wounded. Deputy police spokesman Danny Mwale announced in the national capital of Lusaka that the victims were believed to be members of the New Apostolic Church in Chongwe District on the outskirts of Lusaka who were traveling to Siavonga in the south for a church meeting. "The deceased have only been identified as 23 female adults and one male adult, while those injured are eight females and four males. The driver of the bus (on which the victims were) is among the injured victims," said Mwale. He said the accident occurred when the Mitsubishi Truck in the Kapringozi area along Chirundu-Kafue Road, south of Lusaka. "Police preliminary investigations indicate that the bus with 35 passengers on board hit behind the truck and trailer. The bus driver then lost control of the vehicle and overturned, falling on the left side of the road into a ditch," he said. Mwale said the bus was extensively damaged while the truck had its rear bumper damaged. Chongwe District Commissioner Evans Lupiah conveyed the government's sympathies to the families of the deceased, adding that nine bodies had been transported to Lusaka.—DNA

## French far-right monarchists rally after court approval

PARIS: Around 500 right-wing protesters marched in Paris on Sunday after a court reversed a police ban of the rally despite a government order to curtail far-right demonstrations. The gathering organized by Action Française, one of France's historic monarchist groups, honored Joan of Arc, who led the French to a famous victory over the English in the 15th century. She is revered by many of France's far-right movements. Participants were overwhelmingly men, some wearing a beret or an armband the colour of the French flag. They made their way from the historic Opera house to a golden statue of Joan on a horse in central Paris, laying wreaths at its feet. The

demonstration was over by midday. It was allowed to go ahead after the Paris administrative court on Saturday decided that it did not of itself constitute an incitement to public disorder. It also allowed a symposium in the capital, titled "France in danger", which some 350 members attended under heavy police surveillance the same day. Participants at Sunday's rally were overwhelmingly men. Participants at Sunday's rally were overwhelmingly men © Thomas SAMSON / AFP "We defended the right to demonstrate according to French law," said the group's secretary general Olivier Perceval. "There has never been an incident. It's not a protest. We're just honouring Joan of Arc." According to Perceval,

the annual rally has been banned only twice before: once by the Germans during World War II, and a second time after the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in 1990. Paris police had banned six rallies in Paris over the weekend on public order grounds, after Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin issued directives to ban gatherings "of the ultra-right or extreme right". Paris police chief Laurent Nunez had argued that the far-right gatherings were a threat to public order because of possible clashes with radical left activists, after "the controversy provoked by the demonstrations" the previous weekend in Paris. Around 600 people — some in masks, which French law prohibits in public spaces — on Satur-

day last week responded to a call from a far-right white supremacist group to commemorate the death of a fellow activist in 1994. It caused outrage among opposition lawmakers at a time when pan-bashing protests against President Emmanuel Macron over his unpopular pension reform have been repeatedly blocked. Both Action Française and the extreme far-right group the Nationalists appealed this weekend's bans. Pan-bashing protests against President Emmanuel Macron over his unpopular pension reform have been repeatedly blocked. Pan-bashing protests against President Emmanuel Macron over his unpopular pension reform have been repeatedly blocked © JEFF PACHOU —APP

## 22 people killed in Somalia floods

BELEDWEYNE: Flash flooding in central Somalia has killed 22 people and affected over 450,000, the UN's humanitarian agency OCHA said Sunday, after the Shabelle River burst its banks, forcing tens of thousands out of their homes. Heavy rainfall earlier in the week sent water gushing into homes in Beledweyne town in Hirran region, submerging roads and buildings as residents grabbed their belongings and waded through flooded streets in search of refuge. "Initial estimates indicate that the flash and riverine floods across Somalia have affected at least 460,470 people, of whom nearly 219,000 have been displaced from their homes mainly in flood-prone areas, and 22 killed," the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said. The floods "have left a trail of destruction... inundating homes and farmland, washing away livestock, temporarily closing schools and health facilities, and damaging roads," the agency said in a situation report. The disaster comes on the heels of a record drought that has left millions of Somalis on the brink of famine, with the troubled nation also battling an Islamist insurgency for decades. Residents told AFP earlier that the floods have become a familiar ordeal to many of them, with experts saying that extreme weather events are happening with increased frequency and intensity due to climate change. Fartun Ali — not her real name — said it was her fifth time fleeing flash flooding in Beledweyne.— Agencies

## Trade with regional states vital for boosting exports

ISLAMABAD: President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Iftekhar Ali Malik on Sunday emphasized that trade with regional states could play a vital role in boosting exports, besides strengthening regional economic integration and connectivity. While talking to a delegation of industrialists led by CEO IT professionals Mian Faiz Bukhs Arain, he said that the private sector of Pakistan must fully exploit its potential to the maximum extent for exploring investments avenues for joint ventures and exports in all the regional states, which he added will not only enhance exports but also bring economic prosperity in the region. He said, unfortunately, all other regional states except Pakistan were taking full advantage of the promotion of bilateral and multilateral trade that help stabilize their economies, besides improving economic growth and cooperation. Expressing his concern, Malik said Pakistans regional trade deficit had further yawned instead of increasing its volume. Iftekhar Ali Malik said ample barter trade in local currency could also equally effectively neutralise and minimise pressure on Pakistan currency. He said Pakistan could comfortably at least export up to US\$50 billion all over the world, including nine regional states which included China, Afghanistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. Malik said no one could rule out the vital significance of broadening regional trade to expedite exports and urged the government to take immediate measures to focus on increasing intra-regional trade on the classic pattern of ECO and D-8. He said the government must constitute a powerful high-level committee comprising all stakeholders with a clear mandate studied with consistent economic policies for boosting exports.—DNA



KARACHI: Activists of Civil Society holding a rally in support of Pakistan Army at Press Club. —APP

## Govt should focus on economic agenda: BMP

Anjum Nisar says Pak cannot afford to muddle through economically due to political polarization

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has asked the government to focus on national economic agenda, giving priority to address the issues of trade and industry in consultation with the business community which is the key stakeholder, as Pakistan, with all its resources and opportunities, cannot afford to continue to muddle through economically due to political polarization. FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that Pakistan requires a political consensus on economic policy. Freeing the country from its economic calamities should not be a matter of party affiliation, but a common task for all political actors who want to see Pakistan flourish. There is a dire need for a functioning economic strategy, and for continuity in its implementation, and protecting it from political meddling. He said that Pakistans economy

is working, but only for its elite. Sustained, rapid, and equitable economic growth has remained elusive due to policy distortions that serve its selective sectors and classes. Mian Anjum Nisar said that the business community is the key stakeholder to run the economy and the government should finalize the upcoming federal budget in consultation with major chambers and other trade bodies. He maintained that only solution that can steer Pakistan out of the crisis is indigenous with few basic elements, including making all economic policies in consultation with real stakeholders of the economy; simplification & broadening of the tax base instead of squeezing the existing tax payers; encouragement of remittances through bridging the gap between banking channels and open markets and protecting the assets of overseas Pakistanis in the country; incentivizing industry and export substitution. The FPCCI former president said that Pakistan was in dire need of boosting trade and industrial activities in order to achieve early

revival of economy and stressed that the government should bring down policy interest rate to single digit in the next budget that would pave way for availability of low cost credit to the private sector and accelerate the pace of industrialization and investment in the country. He said that 17 percent GST was a major factor for high cost of doing business and hike in inflation for the common man; therefore, he urged that the government should bring down GST to single digit level in the upcoming budget in order to reduce the production cost and decrease inflation in the country. It would also make our exports more competitive in the international market. Mian Anjum Nisar said that Pakistan was mostly relying on raw materials and agro based commodities for exports while there was a great need to focus on production of value added products for achieving a great boost in exports. For this purpose, the government should allow duty free import of industrial machinery, equipment and technology so that our industrial sector could

upgrade itself to produce value added and hi-tech products for exports. He said that the government should also consider providing incentive package to all major industries on the pattern of construction that would bring a new industrial revolution in the country. He said that the government should also reduce taxes and duties to promote investment in all sectors along with cutting duties on luxury goods. He said that Pakistan has tremendous potential to improve its economy by promoting the tourism sector. He stressed that in the next budget, the government should allow duty free import for all paraphernalia for the development of tourism related projects including tiles, lights, electrical, mechanical & IT equipment in addition to machinery and all tourism projects. He emphasized that the government should announce at least a 5-10 year tax holiday along with various other incentives for investment in the tourism industry. Mian Anjum emphasized that the government's economic and financial

team needs to understand that the IMF program is not going to materialize before the upcoming budget, which is only three weeks away. He urged the government to prepare the budget accordingly and make necessary adjustments within this short period. He assessed that reform is a long-term process but Pakistan must make use of this shock period to redistribute allocations toward social protection and incentivize greater productivity. Delay is not an option. In the coming years, Pakistans challenges will only deepen due to climate change and rapid population growth. Pakistan is already one of the worlds 10 most populous countries and it will remain among those ranks as its population surges over the coming decades. Pakistan needs a path toward sustained, rapid, and equitable economic growth that incorporates its fast-growing population into the labor market. But Pakistan is a net energy importer with a narrow export base. Periods of economic expansion have been consumption-driven and import-dependent.

## Briefs

### US appoints Pakistani-American for advisory role

DNA

BOSTON: US President Joe Biden's has appointed Shahid Ahmed Khan to the prestigious President's Advisory Committee on the Arts (PACA), the White House confirmed via a statement released on May 12, media reported Sunday. Announcing the nomination, the White House said: "For more than two decades Khan's professional life has been tied to international affairs, with a particular focus on the Asian and Muslim world. "His experience has centered on advancing US values and principles through constructive community engagement with the American-Muslim and South Asian communities". Khan, in an exclusive interview, told the publication that he was thrilled to be nominated for this coveted post as for him art has immense power to bridge cultural divide. Shedding light on his new role, Khan said: "His focus will be to promote South Asian art in the United States of America." Khan is an illustrious personality within the Greater Boston area. He brings to PACA a rich tapestry of experience spanning over two decades. His focus on the Asian and Muslim world is reflected in his tireless work as a community leader, political adviser, and entrepreneur, advocating for US values and principles through sustained dialogue and engagement.

### FM presses for consensus on impartiality of institutions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday said that unless all political parties agree that the military establishment and the judiciary must remain "impartial", the country's future will remain wrapped in uncertainty. Bilawal, who is also the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chairman, in a tweet re-inised on the Charter of Democracy (CoD) signed in 2006 by the two major political parties of the time, the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) pledging not to side with undemocratic forces in a bid to topple each other's government.

# Germany committed to promoting stability, law and order in Pakistan

What stands out for me here is the warmth and hospitality of the Pakistani people. It is truly humbling to receive so much love and support from everyone I meet

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 01

As we know, quite a few German NGOs are working in Pakistan. How would you comment on the role of these NGOs in bringing people of both countries closer besides their contribution to the socio-economic development and especially the women empowerment? German NGOs, such as Kindermothilfe, Welthungerhilfe and the German Red Cross, are actively involved in various development projects and programs to support the socio-economic development in Pakistan. These German NGOs have contributed a lot during the recent flood in Pakistan in terms of emergency response, rehabilitation, and economic development and especially women empowerment. Women empowerment is a challenging and very important topic in Pakistan. In terms of better opportunities, German NGOs aim to create better conditions for women and reduce gender violence across different sectors. Indeed, it won't be easy and it is not a onetime activity but more of collective participation and mutual understanding. Thus, German NGOs in collaboration with local and national NGOs are looking forward to more women participation in economic, political, and social participation to a more equitable and more prosperous society in Pakistan. Culture and education is yet another field where both countries have been working hand in hand. Can you tell us some details of cooperation in these particular fields with special reference to recently held Film Festival? Cultural diplomacy is very important for people-to-people contact. Germany has an academic exchange service, DAAD, which works in Pakistan and sends many students to Germany for higher studies. We have a network of schools called PASCH, which teach German language as a subject. Our



ISLAMABAD: Editor Daily Islamabad POST, Ansar Mahmood Bhatti interviews Ambassador of Germany Alfred Grannas. – DNA

cultural centers in Karachi and Lahore offer German language courses on different levels. Recently, we supported the Women's Film Festival to encourage and facilitate young girls and women to express themselves and celebrate the success stories, struggles, and achievements of inspiring women from all walks of life. This year, we supported the Lahore Literary Festival and brought two acclaimed writers from Germany to Pakistan, who read from their latest works. We are also partners of the Lahore Digital Arts Festival through the EUNIC Cluster Fund to celebrate the emerging digital

culture of Pakistan by bringing together artists and audiences to explore the intersection of art and technology. After Taliban govt take over in Afghanistan influx of Afghans to various countries including Germany has been huge. Can you share data that how many Afghans, Germany has entertained so far? Since the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, Germany has seen a huge influx of Afghan refugees seeking safety and shelter. To date, we have welcomed more than 30,000 Afghans on humanitarian grounds. Our priority is to ensure that they are provided

with the necessary support and assistance to rebuild their lives in a safe environment. Your impressions about Pakistan? As the German ambassador to Pakistan, I have had the privilege of visiting some truly amazing places in this country. From the vibrant city of Lahore to the bustling metropolis of Karachi, and the scenic beauty of Quetta and Peshawar, I have been struck by the rich and diverse local cultures and traditions. Above all, what stands out for me here is the warmth and hospitality of the Pakistani people. It is truly humbling to receive so much love and support from everyone I meet.

### Thai polls close with army-backed PM tipped for defeat

BANGKOK: Vote counting got under way in Thailand's general election Sunday with pro-democracy opposition parties tipped to defeat the conservative military-backed government of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha after almost a decade in power. Opinion surveys pointed to a resounding defeat for ex-army chief and coup leader Prayut after a campaign that played out as a clash between a young generation yearning for change and the traditionalist, royalist establishment. The main opposition Pheu Thai party, fronted by the daughter of billionaire former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, was ahead in final opinion polls. But in a kingdom where victory at the ballot box has often been trumped by coups and court orders, there are fears the military could seek to cling on, raising the prospect of fresh instability. Polling stations closed at 5:00 pm (1000 GMT) after a smooth day of voting, with no major problems reported by Thai media. Preliminary results are expected later in the evening, though the final number of seats won by each party will not be officially confirmed for several weeks. After casting her ballot in Bangkok, Pheu Thai's main candidate Paetongtarn Shinawatra showed no signs of nerves. "Today is going to be a good day. I have very positive energy about it," the 36-year-old told reporters, smiling broadly. – APP

## Erdogan leading in crucial elections

Preliminary vote count puts the sitting president in lead

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turks voted in a pivotal election on Sunday, poised either to unseat President Tayyip Erdogan and halt his government's increasingly authoritarian path or usher in a third decade of his rule. The vote will decide not only who leads Türkiye, a NATO-member country of 85 million, but also how it is governed, where its economy is headed amid a deep cost of living crisis, and the shape of its foreign policy. Opinion polls have given Erdogan's main challenger, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who heads a six-party alliance, a slight lead, with two polls on Friday showing him above the 50 per cent threshold needed to win outright. If neither of them wins more

than 50 per cent of the vote on Sunday, a runoff will be held on May 28. Polling stations in the election, which is also for a new parliament, close at 5pm (1400 GMT). Turkish law bans the reporting of any results until 9pm. By late on Sunday there could be a good indication of whether there will be a runoff. "I see these elections as a choice between democracy and dictatorship," said Ahmet Kalkan, 64, as he voted in Istanbul for Kilicdaroglu, echoing critics who fear Erdogan will govern ever more autocratically if he wins. "I chose democracy and I hope that my country chooses democracy," said Kalkan, a retired health sector worker. Erdogan, 69 and a veteran of a dozen election victories, says he respects democracy and denies being a dictator.

## Deadly storm hits Bangladesh and Myanmar coast

DNA

DHAKA: A powerful cyclone has hit the coastlines of Bangladesh and Myanmar after intensifying into the equivalent of a category-five storm. Cyclone Mocha brought with it heavy rain and strong winds, leaving residents in low-lying coastal areas fearful they may lose their homes. More than 500 bamboo shelters in Cox's Bazar, the world's largest refugee camp, have been destroyed. Landslides and floods are also hitting the area. As the storm approached, police patrolled the coastline in the town of Cox's Bazar carrying loudspeakers, urging people to stay indoors. The streets emptied as the cyclone intensified - the skies darkened, the winds picked up pace and the rains pounded down. Hundreds of people crammed into a school in the city which had been turned into a temporary cyclone shelter. Mothers with babies, young children, the elderly and the frail packed into any available space in the classrooms, sleeping on desks and sitting under them.

## IMF rebuts reports of asking Pakistan to arrange \$8bn

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has refuted reports claiming that the global lender asked Pakistan to further arrange \$8 billion for the revival of the \$6.5 billion bailout package. "The IMF did not demand an \$8 billion financing from Pakistan," global lender's resident representative in Pakistan Esther Pérez Ruiz said on Sunday. She added that it would continue to support financial assistance from Pakistan's stakeholders. Ruiz said that Pakistan's external financing requirements have not been changed in talks with the IMF over bailout funds, denying local media reports that the Washington-based lender was seeking fresh financing. She said that external funding requirements had not changed throughout the discussions, under a review that would unlock \$1.1 billion in financing for the cash-strapped South Asian nation as part of a \$6.5 billion IMF package. The statement comes after local media reports claimed that the IMF was seeking fresh financing from the inflation-ridden nation to back external debt repayments in the next seven months. It was reported that the lender has sought \$8 billion after keeping in consideration all projected inflows and outflows for the May-December 2023 period. The reports claimed that Pakistan did not accept the new demand put forward by the IMF, saying that the current programme will end in June 2023. Pakistan and the IMF have been discussing fiscal policy measures in the review since February, aiming to resume stalled funding of \$1.1 billion due in November from a \$6.5-billion programme agreed in 2019. – DNA

## Afghans involved in PTI's riots, violence in Peshawar

DNA

PESHAWAR: After the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan, Afghans were also involved in the riots and violent incidents perpetrated by the party supporters and workers in Peshawar. Security sources have claimed that the PTI leadership carried out the riots by paying huge amounts to Afghan citizens. The law enforcement agencies have released an alleged confessional statement following a spree of arrests. The sources said confessions of three Afghan citizens have been released, while investigation with others is under way. They added that Afghan residents were bribed by the PTI leadership. The arrested criminals belonged to Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif, the security sources claimed. Meanwhile, Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir on Saturday said the armed forces will not tolerate any further attempt at violating the sanctity and security of its installations or vandalism, and resolved to bring to justice all the planners, abettors, instigators, and executors of the vandalism of May 9. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations, the army chief visited the Peshawar Corps Headquarters where he was given a detailed briefing on the prevailing security situation and ongoing counter-terrorism efforts.

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