



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

Erdogan leads as Turkiye heads for historic run-off

Detailed News On Page-07

Korea defers Pakistan loan worth \$19.91mn

Detailed News On Page-08



Lukaku back to best eyeing UCL Final

Detailed News On Page-06



May 9 riots

All responsible to face justice under Army act

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed AsimMunir on Monday presided over a "special" Corps Commanders Conference (CCC) which resolved that "restraint will no longer be exercised against perpetrators, spoilers, and violators who attack military installations and setups under any circumstances," the military's media wing said. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the forum expressed the firm resolve that those involved in these heinous crimes against the military

Continued on Page 06



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir chairing the Corps Commanders conference, at the GHQ. – DNA

Prime Minister Shehbaz convenes NSC meeting today

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday summoned a meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) on May 16 (Tuesday). The meeting, called at 3pm at the PM House under the chairmanship of PM Shehbaz, will deliberate the country's law and order situation amid a prevailing deadlock between the PTI and the PDM-led government. The participants will be briefed about the country-wide violent protests, especially attacks on security installations, carried out by the PTI after PTI chief Imran Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case. Earlier, in the wake of the on-going turmoil in the country, PM Shehbaz had postponed the NSC and called a meeting of the federal cabinet instead.



ISLAMABAD: Chief organizer PML-N Maryam Nawaz addressing Public Rally and Sit in at Constitution Avenue along with Chairman PDM, Moulana Fazal Ur Rehman. – Online

Elections after completion of tenure: Marriyum

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that the elections will take place in the country on completion of constitutional tenure of assemblies as per the law. In an interview with Aljazeera TV, she said the coalition government is holding a peaceful protest today against the constitutional violations taking place in the country.

Continued on Page 06

Anti-CJP sit-in called off PDM leadership comes down hard on CJP

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PML-N chief organizer Maryam Nawaz said on Monday the crisis in the country had been grappling with in recent times brewed less from PTI chief Imran Khan's residence in Zaman Park and more from Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Uamr Ata Bandial's chair. Addressing the PDM's sit-in outside the Supreme Court (SC), she said it all start-

ed when an irrelevant suo-motu notice was taken, constitution was rewritten, and [Article] 63-A was misinterpreted. "The building [of the SC] is meant to strengthen the democracy and bring "terrorists" to accountability", she added. "It indicted former PM Nawaz Sharif but when a culprit of Rs60 billion [Imran Khan] appeared, he was welcomed," she decried. Did they [SC judges]

Continued on Page 06

تمہیں تعلیم نفرت کی جو دے، دشمن تمہارا ہے
سازشی سیاست کی چڑھو نہ بھینٹ، وطن ہم سب کو پیارا ہے



شہیدوں کی وفا کی یادگاریں، فخر تھیں تیرا
یہ طیارہ نہیں تھا، استعارہ تھا کہ سرحد پار سے دشمن تیرے گھر آئے گا

Two-day training on documentaries opens at Lahore

This year, the centre will provide training to another 2,000 journalists and students of mass communication departments. In addition, the Pakistan Information Centre provides training to journalists in all major cities of country

LAHORE: A two-day training workshop on 'Short documentaries and new trends in reels' opened here at a local hotel on Monday. The workshop is being arranged by the Pakistan Information Centre (PIC) under the banner of the Press Information Department (PID), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Members of Lahore Press Club, journal-

ists associated with various TV channels and newspapers and media studies students participated in the training workshop, who were imparted training on documentary making. At the workshop, senior journalists and specialists in documentary-making delivered lectures to the participants about stages of documentary production

and tools for making short documentaries. International filmmaker Umar Saeed taught the participants about modern tools and techniques for making documentaries and short trending videos. He discussed creative, traditional and social contents, and asked the participants to focus on impactful films with great command of

communications. Director General Press Information Department Lahore Shafiqat Abbas, Deputy Director Admin Uzma Saleem, Coordinator PIC Awaiz Anwar also attended the workshop. Under this project of the Ministry of Information, the Pakistan Information Centre has so far provided training to more than 10,000 journalists, students and social media influencers across the country. This year, the centre will provide training to another 2,000 journalists and students of mass communication departments. In addition, the Pakistan Information Centre provides training to journalists in all major cities of country including Islamabad, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzafarabad. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Faisal Karim Kundi, Minister of State Ministry of Poverty Alleviation along with other leaders of Pakistan Peoples Party participating in PDM sitting outside Supreme Court of Pakistan. —DNA

6 PTI workers remanded in police custody

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Monday handed over six Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers to police on 14-day physical remand in a case, registered under charges of damaging state property, terrorism and others. ATC Judge Abher Gul Khan conducted the case proceedings, wherein Kasur police produced the accused — Abdul Hameed, Waqar Tariq, Muhammad Abdullah, Sajjad Aziz, Naveed and Nazir. The police requested the court to grant 14-day physical remand of the accused for completing investigations. Kasur's Allahabad police had registered a case against the PTI workers for violence that took place after Imran Khan's arrest. Meanwhile, ATC Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar sought an investigation report from police on post-arrest bail petition of 46 PTI workers, involved in attacking the Jinnah House (the corps commander house) in Lahore Cantt, looting valuables worth over Rs150 million and setting it on fire, till May 20. The accused including Farhan Bukhari, Rais Ahmad, Muhammad Aslam, Muhammad Naeem, Khizar Abbas, Faisal Saeed, Hassan Aziz, Muhammad Yar had approached the court for post-arrest bail after they were sent to jail on 14-day judicial remand. The Sarwar Road police had registered a case against the PTI workers over attacking Jinnah House after Imran Khan's arrest.

PHC CJ stresses for early disposal of cases of under trial prisoners

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court, Justice Musarat Hilali on Monday stressed for early disposal of the cases of under-trial prisoners. The Chief Justice, Peshawar High Court visited District Bar Association Abbotabad to grace the occasion as a Chief Guest on the Eid Millan Party, says a press release. She was accompanied by Justice Abdul Shakoor, Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhalil and Justice Muhammad Ijaz Khan, Judges of the Peshawar High Court. She addressed the District Bar Association and sensitized the legal fraternity about their role in the administration of Justice. The lawyers were also sensitized to extend all-out cooperation to the family courts enabling them to dispose of family cases at the earliest within the statutory

period provided in law. Stress was made on the early disposal of cases of under-trial prisoners as the jails are overcrowded and there is an alarming increase in the pendency of such cases with each passing day. Her ladyship also sensitized the legal fraternity about the importance of liaison between the bench and the bar, so as to maintain the confidence of the public on the judicial system. These two wheels of the justice system should act coherently and collaboratively to manifestly establish the rule of law across the board. Her ladyship was pleased to stress for expeditious disposal of the under-trial prisoner cases. She while addressing the Family Court Judges, directed them to take genuine efforts for reconciliation in family cases

before passing of a decree for the dissolution of marriage. Her ladyship also directed the Judicial Officers and the members of the Bar to avoid unnecessary adjournments in all cases. Her ladyship also inaugurated the newly constructed 06 Courtrooms. She has undertaken the visit to the Copying/Scanning Branch and Bar Room and stated that its establishment will provide copies of the record to the litigants without any delay. The president DBA requested for extension of the Bar Room. Her ladyship said that the request would be considered favorably. Her ladyship also held a meeting with the Judicial Officers. During the interaction she stressed on strictly observing the court timings, dress code, sitting in the courtroom and

WMDC celebrates vibrant cultural theme day

RAWALPINDI: Watim Medical & Dental College (WMDC) Rawat on Monday celebrated vibrant cultural theme day, showcasing diversity and talent. WMDC celebrated the cultural theme day, an extraordinary event that showcased the rich display of the cultures. The event was organized aimed at promoting the cultural diversity, foster cross-cultural understanding, and provide a platform to students to showcase their artistic talents. The annual theme day, was a resounding success, with an enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members, and staff. The college campus was transformed into a vibrant tapestry of colors, music, dance, and cuisine, reflecting the multicultural ethos of the institution. The event commenced with an enchanting march featuring students from different classes dressed in their colourful attire from various cultures. The captivating display highlighted the college's commitment to inclusivity and appreciation for different heritages. Throughout the day, the attendees were treated to a series of captivating performances that showcased the immense talent and creativity of the college community. The arena came alive with a diverse range of cultural performances, including traditional dances, music recitals, theatrical acts, and spoken word poetry. The mesmerizing performances captivated the audience and transported them on a journey of cultural exploration. An integral part of the cultural theme day was the cuisine festival, where the students set up food stalls offering delectable dishes from different corners of the country. Attendees savored an array of culinary delights, embracing the flavors and aromas of diverse cultures. — APP

ISSI signs Cooperation Protocol with Balkan Studies Centre (BSC)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a virtual (on-line) ceremony today, the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and the Balkan Studies Centre (BSC) of the International University of Sarajevo (IUS) concluded a 'Cooperation Protocol' today. Signed by Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and Rector of IUS Prof. Dr. Ahmet Yildirim, this is the first Cooperation Protocol of its kind between the think-tanks of Pakistan and Bosnia & Herzegovina. Dr. Shakaib Rafique, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Pakistan in Sarajevo, was also present on the occasion. Director of ISSI's Center for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), Dr. Neelum Nigar, briefed the IUS participants about the working of the Institute

and its outreach program with various think-tanks and research and educational institutions around the world. Welcoming the signing of the Cooperation Protocol, DG Amb. Sohail Mahmood stated that it will help establish a long-term institutional relationship between ISSI and BSC and enable the two sides to fruitfully collaborate in producing quality research and fostering policy dialogue on issues of common interest. He also highlighted the cordial relations between Pakistan and Bosnia & Herzegovina and stated that the signing of this Protocol was consistent with the vision of the leadership of both countries in terms of forging closer linkages at the people-to-people level. He also thanked the Pakistan Embassy in Sarajevo for facilitating this initiative.

Rector IUS Prof. Dr. Ahmet Yildirim, in his remarks, highlighted the scope of work of BSC, appreciated all those who had facilitated the present initiative, and stated that BSC looked forward to a fruitful partnership and joint activities within the framework of the Cooperation Protocol. He also alluded to the close, cordial ties between Bosnia & Herzegovina and Pakistan. Dr. Shakaib Rafique, speaking on the occasion, congratulated the two Institutes on signing the Cooperation Protocol, stressing that it was the first of its kind between think-tanks of Pakistan and Bosnia & Herzegovina and would lead to more to come in the future. He underscored that this collaboration would be part of the growing fruitful bilateral relationship between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin calls on Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Asim Ahmad.—DNA

Ambassador of Kazakhstan calls on Chairman FBR

DNA

Both countries would continue to explore more avenues to further enhance cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin Monday called on Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Asim Ahmad and discussed matters of mutual interest pertaining to cooperation in Customs. According to the FBR statement issued here, the meeting also discussed the matters of trade facilitation and regional connectivity. Mutual satisfaction was expressed over the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Mutual Administrative Assistance Agreement in Customs matters, which is in final stages of execution. Asim Ahmad assured that maximum facilitation will be extended to Kazakhstani businessmen intending to invest in Pakistan. During the meeting, it was agreed that both countries would continue to explore more avenues to further enhance cooperation in various areas of mutual concern.

NAB announces cross-regional transfers

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has announced a series of transfers for several of its officials across different regional offices aimed at facilitating the sharing of expertise and experience among NAB officials to better combat corruption. Director Mohammad Rizwan Khan has been moved from NAB Rawalpindi to NAB Karachi, while Director Mohammad Obaidullah Azam has been transferred from NAB Rawalpindi to NAB Sukkur. Additional Director Asghar Khan has been relocated to NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from NAB Rawalpindi, and Additional Director Sheikh Muhammad Shoaib has been moved from NAB Rawalpindi to NAB Multan. Additional Director Zahid Shah has been transferred from NAB Multan to NAB Rawalpindi. Additional Director Haroon Rashid from NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to NAB Rawalpindi. Additionally, Deputy Director Eric Pal, Deputy Director Errol Philip Wingson, and Deputy Director Muhammad Shahid Mahmood have been transferred to NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, NAB Multan, and NAB Sukkur respectively, from NAB Rawalpindi. Furthermore, Deputy Director Mohsin Haroon has moved to NAB Rawalpindi from NAB Multan, and Deputy Director Dayyam Baloch has been relocated from NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to NAB Rawalpindi. Deputy Director Mohammad Asif Munir has been transferred from NAB Karachi to NAB Rawalpindi, while Deputy Director Waqar ul Hasan Khan has been moved to NAB Rawalpindi from NAB Headquarters Islamabad. Finally, Assistant Director Mastanasir Imam Shah has been relocated to NAB Rawalpindi from NAB Multan.—APP

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

GENERAL MANAGER (SALES AND MARKETING)

Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation is one of the largest public sector companies working in 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 envelope 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.

PID No. 6935-2022

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

No one be allowed to disrespect Parliament, Constitution

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communications Maulana Asad Mehmood on Monday alleged that the "superior judiciary is making 'Imrandarana' decisions, apparently under the influence of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan". "However, the public has given its verdict as evident from the massive sit-in outside in front of the apex court. No one will be allowed to disrespect the Parliament and the Constitution," he said while speaking in the National Assembly. Maulana Asad expressed his concern over the targeting of sensitive buildings by Imran Khan's supporters, which was equally condemned by the nation. The agenda of Imran Khan,

he said, was to create chaos in the country and the JUL-F had pointed it out well before time. His party believed in the supremacy of Constitution and that was why it joined hands with other parties to oust Imran Khan from the Prime Minister's House in a constitutional manner. He claimed that the Constitution (Article 63-A) was re-written, which was the reason for the current constitutional crisis. However, the Parliament had passed legislative proposals and resolutions defining the role of every institution, which could not be ignored. The Parliament would uphold the supremacy of the Constitution, he reaffirmed. Parliamentary Leader of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) Khalid Hus-

sain Magsi said a rational approach was required to handle the current political crisis and challenges being faced by the country. The law should take its due course against those who had created anarchy and unrest after the arrest of Imran Khan, he added. Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal alleged that partial decisions by the superior judiciary had caused the constitutional crisis. He accused Imran Khan of embezzling Rs 60 billion for personal gains, who, he alleged, was "given undue favour by the courts" and such an attitude was not acceptable as it would promote an unjust system. "The Parliament should file a reference against the top

judge in the Supreme Judicial Council", he added. Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman accused Imran Khan of inciting the PTI workers to violence and arson after his arrest. She recalled that the Pakistan Peoples Party workers did not resort to violence over the 'judicial murder' of the party's founder and former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. On the contrary, the PTI workers went on rampage across the country and set the state buildings on fire though their leader were arrested legally. The minister stressed that elections should be held simultaneously throughout the country. Muhammad Akhtar Jan Mengal of the BNP said the current situation had not

emerged in a day. Had the institutions worked in their constitutional domains then there would not have been any political and constitutional turmoil in country. He called for "public execution of the corrupt elements" to purge the system of all its ills. Abdul Akbar Chitrali of the Jamaat Islami said the country was passing through a tumultuous and critical situation with a severe economic crisis, and the common people were its worst victims as the inflation had made their lives miserable and they could not afford to buy even daily essential items. Chitrali strongly condemned attacks on the Jinnah House (Lahore) and Radio Pakistan's building in Peshawar, besides desecrating the statue of Sha-

heed Captain Colonel Sher Khan, who was a national hero. He said the politicians should be allowed to resolve political matters through dialogue instead of by any institution. He also called for an across the board accountability and all those should be taken to task who were involved in damaging public and private properties. Shahida Rehmani of the PPP said the political parties would never compromise on the sovereignty of the parliament. I She said it was a conspiracy to roll back China Pakistan Economic Corridor. Qaisar Sheikh of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz said arsenal attacks on public and private properties was a pre-planned acts of terrorism.—APP

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



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

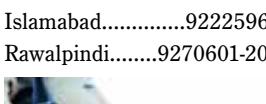
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

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

CDA Board Members assure to start development works

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry leading a delegation held a meeting with CDA Board Members and discussed with them the matters of starting development work in markets in Islamabad. CDA Member Planning & Design Waseem Hayat Bajwa presided over the meeting. CDA Member Finance Syed Mazhar Hussain Shah, Member Engineering Syed Munawar Shah, Member Environment Captain (Retd) Anwaar Haq, Deputy Director General Enforcement Shah Jahan, Director Municipal Administration Yasir Farhad and Head Finance Mian Tariq Latif were present in the meeting. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI lauded Noorul Amin Mengal, Chairman, CDA for focusing on the development works in markets under the instructions of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shabbaz



Sharif. He said that markets need many development works including construction of parking lots, carpeting of roads, replacement of old sewage & drainage systems, repair of footpaths, filtration plants and construction of public toilets and hoped that the CDA in consultation with ICCI and the concerned market associations, will address these issues. He said that in the first phase, the development works should be started in F-6 Mark-

z, F-7 Markaz, G-9 Makaz, Appara Market, Melody Market, Blue Area, F-10 Markaz and I-8 Markaz and this process should be gradually extended to other markets. He assured that ICCI and Market Associations will cooperate with CDA in this regard. Addressing the delegation, CDA Member Planning & Design Waseem Hayat Bajwa said that development works will be started in the markets as proposed by the ICCI. He said

that each market should nominate a focal person for CDA to finalize the development works. He also discussed the issue of removal of encroachments from markets with the delegation and said that this issue will also be resolved with mutual consensus. Khalid Iqbal Malik, former President ICCI, said that the approach of the current Chairman CDA is very positive as has indicated to resolve many long-standing demands of the business com-

munity during recent visit to ICCI. He hoped that the CDA will speed up the upgradation of markets to make Islamabad a hub of business and investment activities. Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi former President ICCI said that CDA had constructed an underground parking lot in Jinnah Super Market with huge funds, but due to lack of lights, it has not been made functional as yet. He stressed that CDA should take urgent steps to make the said parking lot functional. Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi President Super Market, Asad Aziz President and Abdul Rahman Siddiqui Secretary General Jinnah Super Market, Ahmed Khan President F-10 Markaz, Raja Hasan Akhtar President Blue Area, Zahid Qureshi Secretary General I-8 Markaz, Akhtar Abbasi Secretary General Aabpara Market, Rana Zafar Secretary General G-9 Markaz, Khalid Chaudhry, former SVP ICCI and others were in ICCI delegation and they gave useful suggestions to the CDA Board Members about the development works in their respective markets.

Del refunds its dealers penalty

ISLAMABAD: On 11 March 2022, the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) passed an order holding that RPM arrangements, including those that limit discounts, fix the price, and/or set a minimum or maximum price floor or ceiling, fall under the purview of Section 4(2)(a) of the Competition Act, 2010 (the Act), constitute a fixation of the selling price of a good or service, and should be regarded as anti-competitive because they harm both intra-brand and inter-brand competition. Del Electronics and Haier Pakistan were both found to have violated Section 4 of the Act by imposing pricing and other restrictions through RPM (resale price maintenance) agreements, and any agreements or arrangements that these firms had in place were deemed null and void. The matter concerned a CCP's enquiry into the price control circulars released by Del Electronics (Private) Limited and Haier Pakistan (Private) Limited. Four Haier Pakistan circulars dealt with the implementation of a fixed price list for products and the levying of fines against select dealers for disregarding the fixed price lists.—APP

1st Int'l seminar on China-Pakistan Science & technology cooperation held

BEIJING: The first International Seminar on the theme of "China-Pakistan Science and Technology Enterprises Cooperation" was held at the China-Pakistan Science and Technology Cooperation Center in Beijing.

The Zhongguancun Belt and Road Industrial Promotion Association (ZBRA) and the Embassy of Pakistan in China co-hosted the seminar where more than 30 renowned science and technology organizations, both public and private, participated. Gwadar Pro reported on Monday, Khan Muhammad Wazir, Science

and Technology Counsellor at the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing, presented Pakistan's need for scientific and technological cooperation through the modernization of industry by using technology and innovation, biodiversity and climate change, and disaster mitigation and prevention. He pointed out that there is great potential for scientific and technological cooperation between China and Pakistan in diverse fields such as emerging technologies, advanced and new materials, green energy technologies, digital economy, smart cities, minerals

and natural resources, and modernization of agriculture through technology. He further stated that Pakistan needs food processing technologies, herbal medicines, ocean sciences, transport and highway technologies, space sciences, aeronautics and aerospace, medical technologies, drug discovery, and vaccine development on the fast track. "The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are focusing on promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, encouraging people-to-people exchanges, establishing

joint research laboratories, cooperating on the establishment of technology and hi-tech parks, facilitating technology transfer initiatives, promoting quality scientific research in new and high-tech, enhancing innovation capacity through joint R&D, establishing institutional linkages, initiating cooperation on STEM education and science popularization, and establishing an international think tank for S&T and economic development," he added. Khan Muhammad proposed that a coordination committee comprising rep-

resentatives from ZBRA, the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing, MOST China, MoST Pakistan, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and STZA, etc. needs to be jointly constituted to operate the China-Pakistan Science and Technology Cooperation Center located in Beijing. Zhang Xiaodong, the President of ZBRA, introduced the construction of the China-Pakistan Science and Technology Cooperation Center. He shared that the objectives of the Center are to build a bridge between China-Pakistan youth innovation and entrepreneurship.—DNA

PMI's strategy takes centre stage in report

ISLAMABAD: 15th May, 2023 - Philip Morris International (PMI) has published its 2022 Integrated Annual Report, highlighting progress against its sustainability targets and commitments. The report outlines PMI's continued evolution into a science- and technology-driven company that aims to replace cigarettes with better alternatives for adult smokers who would otherwise continue to smoke. "As the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic and the global climate crisis, PMI remains committed to delivering a smoke-free future and driving positive impact in society and the environment," said Jacek Olczak, Chief Executive Officer of PMI. "Our latest Integrated Report highlights our progress toward our ambitious goals, particularly in expanding the availability of our smoke-free products, investing in product and operational sustainability, and promoting diversity and inclusion within our company. We remain laser-focused on advancing our ESG agenda.—DNA

Stakeholders urged to end political crisis

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has urged stakeholders to put joint efforts to end the current political and economic crisis. The business community is deeply worried about the current political uncertainty and economic crisis. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq while addressing an important meeting at chamber house said, "We strongly believe that the economic situation of the country will improve only when there is political stability". During the meeting deep concern was expressed about the current situation. Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad and Executive Committee members were also present in the meeting. President Saqib Rafiq said that the vandalism of public properties and violent incidents have badly distorted the image of Pakistan. The internet shutdown not only affected online business, but citizens and businessmen had to face serious difficulties in communication and banking payments. Group leader Sohail Altaf said that Pakistan is everything, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to protect the rights and interests of the 230 million people of Pakistan. The stakeholders should come forward in the national interest and play their role, because 23 crore people are now eyeing at them, he added.—APP

WMDC celebrates vibrant cultural theme day

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The annual theme day, was a resounding success, with an enthusiastic participation

from students, faculty members, and staff. The college campus was transformed into a vibrant tapestry of colors, music, dance, and cuisine, reflecting the multicultural ethos of the institution. The event commenced with an enchanting march featuring students from different classes dressed in their colorful attire from various cultures. The captivating display highlighted the college's commitment to inclusivity and appreciation for different heritages. Throughout the day, the attendees were treated to a series of captivating performances that show-

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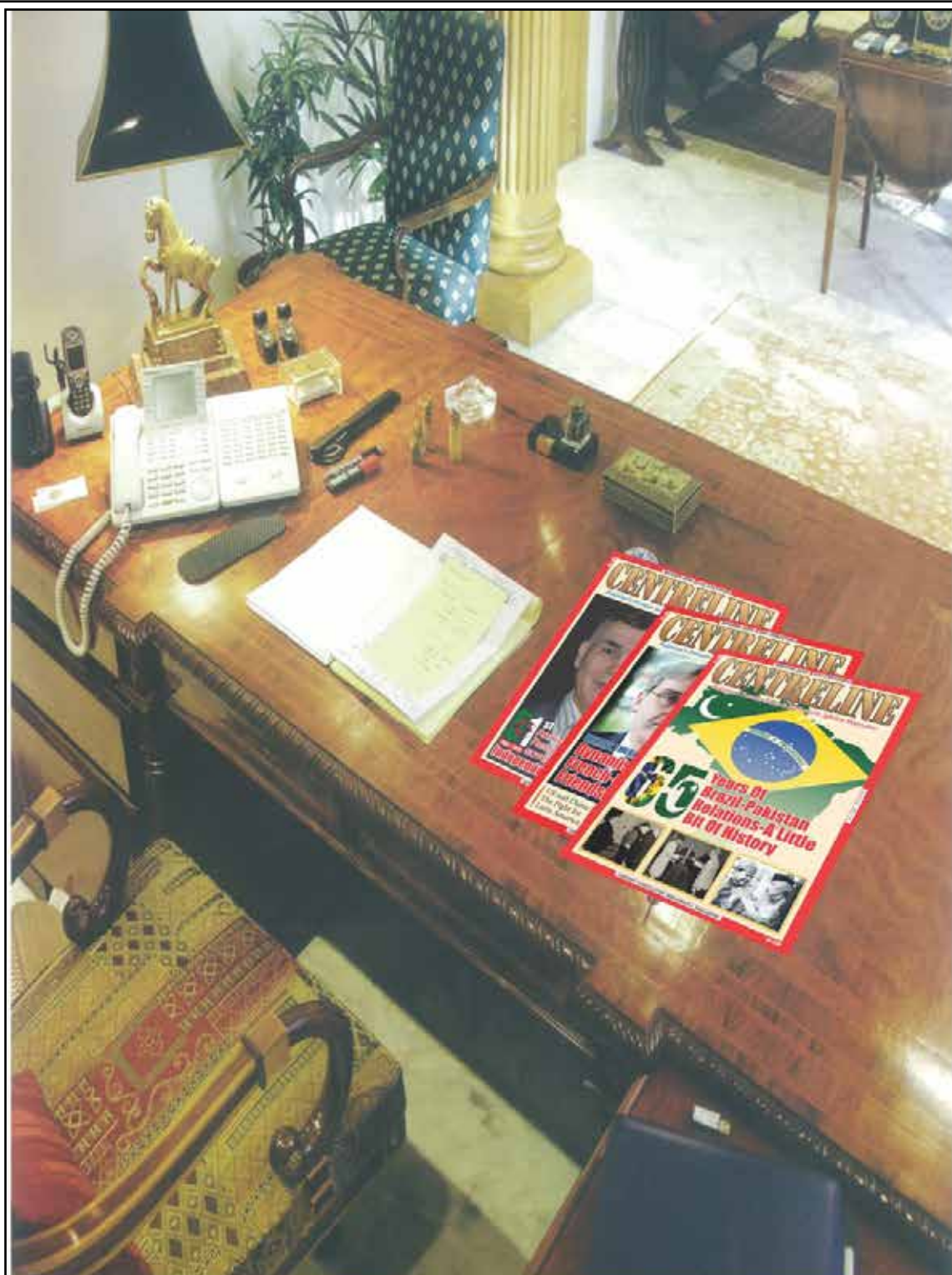
The mesmerizing performances captivated the audience and transported them on a journey of cultural exploration. An integral part of the cultural theme day was the cuisine festival, where the students set up food stalls offering delectable dishes from different corners of the country.—APP

SBP extends date for prize bonds' encashment

ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday extended the last date of redemption/encashment of prize bonds of Rs7500/Rs15,000/Rs25,000 and Rs40,000 by June 30. The date has been extended keeping in view the hardship of those prize bond holders who could not get their bonds redeemed by the previous deadline of June 30, 2022. So "a final opportunity has been given for encashment of prize bonds till 30th June 2023," the SBP said in a news release. The investors of aforesaid prize bonds have options of encashment or exchange including encashment at Face Value, conversion to Premium Prize Bonds of Rs 25,000 and/or Rs 40,000 (Registered), replacement with Special Savings Certificates (SSC) or Defense Savings Certificates (DSC). The prize bonds can be redeemed from SBP Banking Services Corporation office and branches of commercial banks across the country till June 30, 2023. The SBP has issued necessary instructions to commercial banks to accept requests from general public for encashment or exchange of the prize bonds till the extended date.—DNA

Prize distribution ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Model College for Boys F-10/4 organized its much-awaited annual prize distribution ceremony, honoring students who excelled in various fields and acknowledging the contributions of dedicated teachers and non-teaching staff. The event was graced by the esteemed presence of retired principals, Professor Javid Mohsin Malik and Professor Iqbal Ahmed Afqi. The presence of both the retired principals added a touch of memories and honor to the proceedings, as they witnessed firsthand the progress and achievements of the institution they once led.—APP



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Briefs

APHC
reiterates call
for shutdown
on May 22

ISLAMABAD: In Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), posters again appeared in Srinagar and different areas of the valley urging people to observe a complete strike on May 22 against the hosting of G-20 meeting by Narendra Modi-led fascist Indian government in Srinagar. According to Kashmir media service, the call for the strike has been given by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. The posters were pasted by APHC and supported by different groups in Srinagar, Budgam, Kupwara, Baramulla, Bandipore, Islamabad, Pulwama, Shopian, Kulgam, and other areas of the occupied territory. The posters carrying the pictures of the illegally detained APHC leaders including APHC chairman Massarat Alam Butt, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Asiya Andrabi, Nayeem Ahmed Khan and house detained senior APHC leader Mirwaz Umar Farooq. The posters read, "By holding such an international event in IIOJK, India wants to give legitimacy to its 5 August 2019 illegal action," adding "Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory as per UN resolutions, G20 countries must ask India to resolve the Kashmir dispute as per UN resolutions". The APHC has strongly denounced the surge in Indian state terrorism in IIOJK ahead of G-20 event planned by the Modi regime in Srinagar on May 22-24. Meanwhile, Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control will observe a shutdown on May 22, while anti-India protests and rallies will be held in all major capitals of the world against the proposed meeting of G-20 countries in UN-designated disputed territory of IIOJK. The strike and protests have been jointly earlier given by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference AJK chapter and Azad Jammu and Kashmir political leadership. —APP

IRSA releases
150,000
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 150,000 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 122,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1430.80 feet and was 32.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 33,400 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1118.00 feet, which was 68.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded at 39,300 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 58,500, 62,200, 43,100 and 13,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 27,700 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 13,100 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala. —APP

ANF recovers
18,257,700
intoxicated
tablets

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in an operation seized 18,257,700 intoxicated tablets from a container booked for Lagos, Nigeria, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that acting on a tip-off, ANF conducted an operation at South Asia Pakistan Terminal and foiled a bid to smuggle a huge quantity of intoxicated tablets to Lagos, Nigeria. During a search of a container, 18,257,700 intoxicated tablets were recovered from the container. After a preliminary investigation, an accused resident of Lyari was also rounded up. The spokesman informed that ANF after registration of a case had started investigation to net other accused involved in the smuggling of intoxicated tablets. —APP

Virus free clean drinking water Water filtration containers provided to 60 families

This project, initiated by and President Imran Ghaznavi and Rtn. Tazeem Chaudhri was carried forward by the untiring efforts of President Imran Ghaznavi and his team

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Rotary Club of Islamabad (Metropolitan), through the leadership of President Imran Ghaznavi and Rtn. Tazeem Chaudhri took the initiative to help in provision of 99.9% clean drinking water which is virus free and absolutely protect from hepatitis B&C in the flood hit areas of KPK where underground water was polluted after the recent floods. Rotary is focusing on delivering LIFESAVER water filtration cubes to areas affected with unclean drinking water to ensure clean and potable water in these localities throughout Pakistan. This was made possible through a unique water filtration system developed by LIFESAVER an international company specialist in water filtration products. LIFESAVER cubes were imported to Pakistan from UK through the Rotary platform. With the arrival of LIFESAVER cubes in the first phase, Rotary Club of Islamabad (Metropolitan) was able to start implementing effective ways to circulate these in



the most needful communities. A team comprised of President Imran Ghaznavi, Rtn. Mian Shaukat Masud, Rtn. Dr. Azra Yasmin, Rtn. Waqas Ali, Rtn. Tayyba Abbasi and Rtn. Abdul Qadir Sultan, drove to Charsadda for the distribution of the cubes. 60 families living near the river bank were handed

over a LIFESAVER cube each. The community residents were introduced to the LIFESAVER water filtration cube and its working demonstrated.

This project, initiated by and President Imran Ghaznavi and Rtn. Tazeem Chaudhri was carried forward by the untiring efforts of President Imran Ghaznavi and his team. The team consisted of Rtn. Mian Shaukat Masud, Rtn. Muhammad Arif, Rtn. Shabbir Malik, Rtn. Dr. Azra Yasmin, Rtn. Tayyba Abbasi, Rtn. Waqas Ali, Rtn. Abdul Qadir Sultan, and Rtn. Kulsom Abbasi. It was a project spanning 7 - 8 months and thousands of hours, with engagements, co-

ordination, and meetings with various organizations, departments, personnel and stakeholders. The cost of the Clean Water Pilot Project so far is PKR 2.5 million. Funded by philanthropists, club members. It is pertinent to mention that Rtn. Tazeem Chaudhry (himself as well as through his friends and family), Rtn. Ambassador Afzal Akbar Khan, Mr. K. M. Rafi, Rtn. Ambassador Fauzia Nasreen, RC of Pangbourne (District 1090) Britain and Ireland (RIBI), RC of Gasport, District 1110, RIBI made special contributions to make this dream come true. Moreover the entire project could have not been possible without the support of Rotary International Trustee Aziz Memon, RI Director Faiz Kidwai and District Governor RID 3272 Barrister Adnan Saboor Rohaila. LIFESAVER cubes have been designed in collaboration with Oxfam and have been endorsed by UKAID and Save the Children. They have previously been used effectively in humanitarian contexts such as Haiti, South Sudan, Mozambique, and also in Sukkur.

Lawmakers demand to try Imran Khan under Army act

ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers in the National Assembly while strongly condemning arsenal attacks on Jinnah House, radio Pakistan Peshawar building, damaging public and private properties in various parts of the country by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) violent protesters on Monday demanded to try its chairman Imran Khan under Army Act. Speaking in the National Assembly here they said such elements made the entire country hostage by creating anarchy and common and damaging public and private properties. Such anti-state elements do not deserve any leniency and they should be taken to task, they added. Leader of the Opposition in NA Raja Riaz Ahmed termed Imran Khan a 'fitna' when he was arrested in a corruption case; his (Imran) supporters resorted to violent protest and torched the historical Jinnah House, Radio Pakistan Peshawar besides damaging statues of martyrs. Fitna Khan has

ashamed the whole nation but he was given a warm welcome at the Apex court, he said. He demanded that a case should be registered under the army act against 'Fitna Khan' besides trying under the army act. He also urged the chair to adjourn the Housing proceeding for 10 minutes or proceed for the national anthem several times in solidarity with armed forces and Pakistan. Saladuddin of Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) said anti state elements deserved no leniency and those involved in attacking and damaging public and private properties should be tried under army act. He said many persons were taken into custody from the courts' premises after cancellation of their bails. The entire country was made hostage by the miscreants of PTI who restored to violent protest soon after the arrest of Imran Khan, he added. He said there were solid corruption evidence against Imran Khan in

Al-Qadir case but he was giving special treatment by the judiciary. He said that on May 9, a vehicle in which he and MNA Sabir Qaimkhani were traveling towards Islamabad was also attacked by PTI violent protesters near Chungi-26. He demanded strict action against 'Fitna Khan' and his supporters after registering cases against them. Salauddin Ayubi of JUI-F while condemning PTI and Imran Khan for torching toll plaza, public and private properties demanded of the government to declare PTI as terrorist organization and impose ban on it. The PTI wanted civil war in the country, he added. He said PTI not only destroyed country's economy but also trying to create anarchy. Abdul Qadir Mandokhel of PPP said a transparent inquiry should be held in arsenal attacks on Jinnah House and other public and private properties by the PTI workers. Imran Khan should be nominated in attack on Jinnah House, he added. —APP

Ahsan terms 9th May violence deadly

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal Monday said that PTI chief Imran Khan should present himself for accountability if he considered himself innocent and termed 9th May deadly violent protests of party in different parts of the country were pre-planned. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman should be ashamed for his anti-state undemocratic activities, he said while talking to a Private news channel. PTI had pre-planned the violence and incited it at targeted places, he said, adding, evidence had been collected and all involved in or behind the violence had been identified and would be brought to justice. PTI chief always held the opponent rulers responsible for all the wrongdoings in the country and he himself was escaping from the accountability. He also said that Imran Khan caused great financial loss to the national exchequer, adding, Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif and other PML-N leaders faced trials bravely and proved their innocence. —DNA

Sub-national polio immunization drive starts

ISLAMABAD: The sub-national immunization campaign launched on Monday in selected districts of all provinces to vaccinate approximately 23 million children across Pakistan. The campaign will be implemented in two phases. The first phase will be conducted from May 15-19 in 12 districts of Punjab including Islamabad, 18 districts of Balochistan and 17 districts of Sindh. While the second phase will be conducted from May 22 to 26 in 22 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and May 29 - June 5 in seven districts of Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Quetta. Approximately 100,000 trained and dedicated "Sehat Muhafiz" will be engaged in the vaccination drive to inoculate the targeted children at their doorstep. "I urge all parents and caregivers to ensure the vaccination of eligible children during the campaign to save them from the debilitating disease. Polio is incurable, and vaccines can protect our children," Federal Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel said. "The frontline health workers have been playing a vital role in keeping our children safe from the debilitating effects of polio. Despite facing many challenges, they have been working tirelessly. We recognise the important contributions of the health workers to achieve the goal of polio eradication," said the Minister. Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre, Dr Shahzad Baig said, "Let's work together and play our part to protect our children from vaccine-preventable disease." "I particularly urge all parents and caregivers to get their children vaccinated instead of hiding them or refusing to take the necessary drops during all vaccination drives. It is important to realise that the polio virus still exists in our surroundings, and no child is safe until all children are truly vaccinated." He said that the Sehat Tahhafuz Helpline 1166 and 24/7 WhatsApp Helpline 0346-777-65-46 will be available to assist parents and caregivers in reporting missed children. He added repeated polio vaccination campaigns are imperative for building immunity among children and preventing lifelong paralysis. —APP

ITP stresses public awareness

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on the '7th Global Road Safety Week' stressed public awareness of the effective implementation of laws regarding safety measures for pedestrians and drivers to minimize road accidents. Talking to a private news channel, the Head of Education Wing (ITP) said, we are organizing road safety seminars, awareness walks and camps to sensitize the public and citizens to guard against traffic hazards through employing safety measures. UN Global Road Safety Week is an annual event held in May to raise awareness about road safety and the importance of taking steps to prevent accidents, he said, adding, safety week will continue till May 21. UN Global Road Safety Week is an important opportunity to raise awareness about the dangers of road traffic and to take steps to make our roads safer, he said, adding, the aim of holding an awareness programme is to create a traffic sense among the people, advising them that a driver should honour others' rights, especially pedestrians while driving. An exemplary traffic system would be ensured in the capital through the cooperation of citizens, he added. He also encouraged the public to heed these traffic awareness messages, enjoy the activities and collaborate in promoting traffic safety. —APP

Minister thanks to Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Husain Turi here on Monday thanked Saudi Arabia for releasing of Pakistani prisoners. He said that efforts to evacuate more prisoners would be continued, said a press release. It was made possible due to tireless efforts of the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan and the Pakistani Community Welfare Attache Abdul Raof Mayo, the minister added. The prisoners include Muhammad Yusuf Bukhari, Umar Muhammad, Naseeb Ullah, Mahir, Zulfiqar, Muhammad, Dina Abdullah, Adil, Abdul Rashid, Firdous and Tahir. About two million Pakistanis live in Saudi Arabia from decades. The Consulate General of Pakistan in Jeddah provides diplomatic assistance to more than 15 million Pakistanis. It should be remembered that a record ninety-nine prisoners were released in the months of March and April this year. —APP

International day of living together

ISLAMABAD: International Day of Living Together in Peace will be marked on May 16 (Tuesday) across the globe, living together in peace is all about accepting differences and having the ability to listen to, recognize, respect and appreciate others, as well as living in a peaceful and united way. The UN General-Assembly, in its resolution 72/130,

declared 16 May the International Day of Living Together in Peace, as a means of regularly mobilizing the efforts of the international community to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity. The Day aims to uphold the desire to live and act together, united in differences and diversity, in order to build a sustainable world of peace, solidarity and

harmony. The Day invites countries to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure peace and sustainable development, including by working with communities, faith leaders and other relevant actors, through reconciliatory measures and acts of service and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals. —APP


STEAM Pakistan, NED join hands

ISLAMABAD: STEAM Pakistan, a program of the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training (MoFEPT), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NED University of Engineering and Technology to improve the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) learning outcomes of students enrolled in government schools. The MoU aims to enable collaboration between universities, schools, and communities to impact mathematics and science learning experiences. Under this partnership, students enrolled in government schools will visit NED University to learn about different fields of study and will also participate in engaging STEAM outreach activities such as Maths Circles, STEAM Clubs, Safer


or guest speaker sessions conducted by the university in their schools. NED will also host students and teachers from the schools for competitions, talks, and teachers' hubs sessions to further encourage interest and learning in STEAM. To improve STEAM learning outcomes in partner government schools, NED University will undertake several activities, that include conducting university tours for students, leading Safer guest speaker sessions on STEAM, and hosting STEAM-athons. The STEAM Pakistan program Policy Unit will provide technical support to NED University for these program activities. Additionally, the program will connect with relevant teams from other partner universities of STEAM Pakistan for sharing experiences and support. —DNA

Int'l Day of Light to mark on May 16

ISLAMABAD: International Day of Light will mark on May 16 (Tuesday) across the globe, with an aim to strengthen scientific cooperation and harness its potential to foster peace and sustainable development. The celebration will allow many different sectors of society worldwide to participate in activities that demonstrate how science, technology, art and culture can help achieve the goals of UNESCO - building the foundation for peaceful societies. The study of light has led to promising alternative energy sources, life-saving medical advances in diagnostics technology and treatments, light-speed internet and many other discoveries that have revolutionized society and shaped our understanding of the universe. —APP



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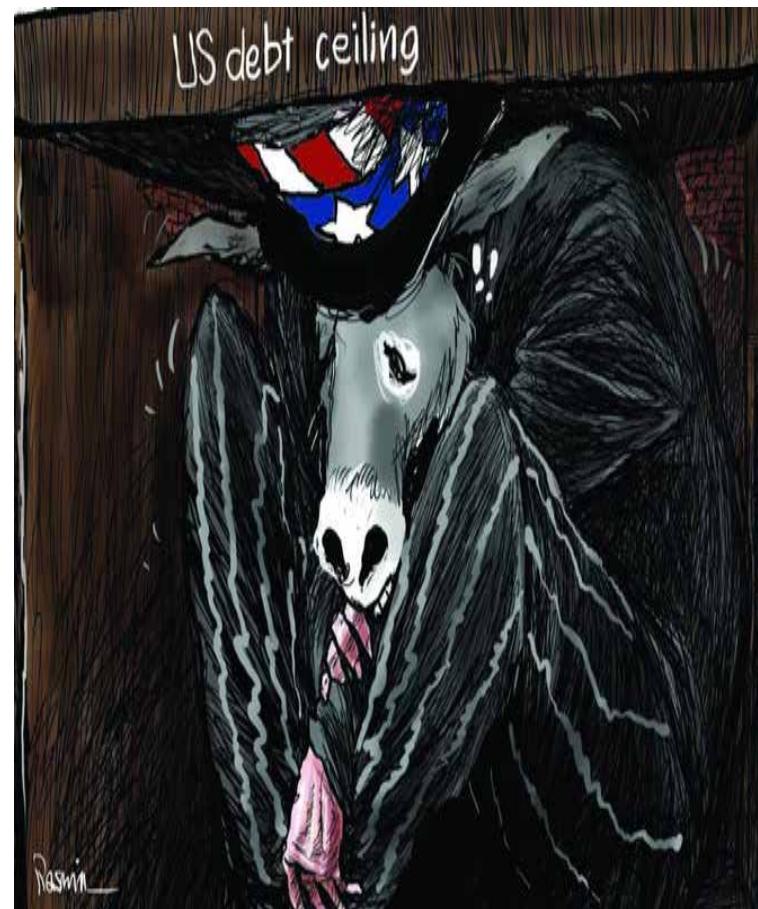
US still meddling in Hong Kong affairs

A US congressional report issued late last week that called for sanctions against 29 Hong Kong judges involved in the city's national security cases represents the latest attempt by the United States to weaken the rule of law in the special administrative region.

The report by the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China claimed that the National Security Law enforced in Hong Kong in 2020 in response to "pro-democracy demonstrations" had "created a parallel legal system that weakens judicial independence and strips criminal defendants of basic due process protections".

The claim does not hold water. The so-called pro-democracy demonstrations were nothing but social chaos orchestrated by Washington for the purpose of turning Hong Kong into a bridgehead for its China containment strategy. There is only one legal system in the SAR. It respects the legal rights and interests of all criminal defendants, and safeguards peace, stability and the rule of law in the city. It is the US that wants to make its own will "a parallel" set of rules for the city to follow.

The reason why the US lawmakers see the National Security Law, which was made, revised and executed following the will of the Hong Kong people, as a thorn in the flesh is because the law has effectively plugged the institutional loopholes the US had long taken advantage of to implant, direct and support its pawns in the SAR to do its bidding. That order could be quickly restored in the city shortly after the law was enforced testifies to its effectiveness. The US legislature body's issuing of such a baseless report constitutes a grave intervention in China's internal affairs, and also shows the US' reluctance to accept the fact that its good old days when it could waywardly manipulate the situation in Hong Kong through remote control of its puppets are gone. The US lawmakers' appeal to the US government to sanction the Hong Kong judges who faithfully fulfill their duties in cases related to national security exposes their shamelessness in believing that the US government can interfere in the other countries' domestic judicial affairs. Making other countries' business its own, and making its own business, if not failures, others' have always been a tactic employed by the US to maintain its global hegemony. To truly show their concern for people in Hong Kong, the US lawmakers should suggest the US government immediately cease all interventions in the Hong Kong affairs, and abolish all the sanctions it has imposed on the city that directly harm the interests of the Hong Kong people.



Syria and Arab League

The Arab League last week agreed to reinstate Syria's membership, which is another exhilarating news to the Middle East recently. This is the latest progress after the emergence of a reconciliation wave caused by the resumption of diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It marks the beginning of a correct path toward a political solution to the Syrian crisis - "continue direct dialogue with the Syrian government in order to reach a comprehensive solution." In this sense, Syria's return to the Arab League after a 12-year suspension symbolizes a new height of solidarity and self-development among Arab countries, and brings more confidence in peace to the Middle East which was viewed as a "powder keg" of the world. We sincerely feel happy for Syria and the Arab League.

Many analyses hold that there are two major reasons for Syria's return to the Arab League: First, the big earthquake that struck the Turkey-Syria border region in early February has accelerated Arab countries' steps to restore diplomatic relations with Syria; second, Saudi Arabia and Iran who were opposed each other in the Syrian crisis have achieved historic reconciliation under China's mediation, providing direct impetus for the Arab League's decision. Last month, Special Envoy of the Chinese Government on the Middle East Issue visited Syria and had an in-depth exchange of views with Syria on seeking a political settlement of the Syrian issue and facilitating Syria's return to the Arab League. The Chinese Foreign Ministry expressed congratulations on Syria's return to the Arab League, noting that as a sincere friend of Syria and other Arab states, China welcomes and supports Arab solidarity and will continue to work relentlessly to that end.

Over the past 12 years, Syria has experienced heartbreaking hardships. In 2011, the Syrian crisis erupted amid the "Arab Spring." At that time, the Arab League suspended Syria's membership under the pressure from the West. Subsequent military and political intervention by external forces has further worsened the situation in Syria, resulting in catastrophic consequences that continue to this day. During this period, countries in the Middle East have suffered from war, social division, and frequent conflicts, making their desire for unity, peace, and development stronger than ever before. Not long ago, on the 12th anniversary of the Syria war, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for "renewed energy" to be channeled into peace efforts. Syria's return to the Arab League is a good start for a political solution to the crisis, but there are still many obstacles ahead. For instance, the US' illegal unilateral sanctions on Syria have created many hindrances for further cooperation in the region. We firmly support united and strong Arab countries, and also hope to work with the international community to bring the sunshine of peace and the hope of development to every corner of the world, especially in places shrouded by the shadow of hegemony.

Democracy: Art of divide and rule

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay

Second, division fueled by political grouping leads to social divide and conflicts, which can lead to anarchy and genocide. For example, in USA, PEW highlighted that partisanship beats all other indicators of conflict, and more than 90% people have conflicts between the range of very strong to not strong category. The social divide is so sharp that even people decide their marriages on the basis of political ideology. Institute of Family Studies highlighted that

Abraham Lincoln once defined liberal democracy as "government of the people, by the people, for the people". The proponents of liberal democracy dubbed these words the soul of democracy. They initiated to brand liberal democracy as ultimate solution to govern, which is not true. In reality, it is emerging as one of the weakest systems of governance, which has many imbedded flaws. First, it thrives on differences not consensus. It starts by dividing nation into political groups. Political groups come up with fancy slogans to attract followers. Simultaneously, they put all efforts to undermine political opponents, which is required to strengthen their support base. It leads to division in society, which ends up with cult formation and blind following. The cult-based following consider their immune to mistakes or human weaknesses. Thus, they do not allow anyone to differ from their leadership. Ultimate, victim of this division is society as leaders use the division to rule the people and exploit the system in his favor. Second, democracy is game of throne, which is run by money. People with money can buy anything, including opinion or ideology. The role of money is so strong that ordinary people cannot think to be part of game, except to vote. They are only used as pawn to secure the interests of the king. The role of money and division have challenged the basic definition of democracy and change people with power. First, the role of money is making sure that people's role is limited. It is not only happening in Southern countries, but also in most developed and established democracies. Harvard political review highlighted that money is playing a prominent role in deciding the election outcome. As, candidates with better financing and spending had higher percentage of win. For example, during election cycle of 2020 in USA, political parties, donors and candidates spent

more than US \$ 14.4 billion. Presidential candidates alone spent US\$ 6.6 billion.

Second, division fueled by political grouping leads to social divide and conflicts, which can lead to anarchy and genocide. For example, in USA, PEW highlighted that partisanship beats all other indicators of conflict, and more than 90% people have conflicts between the range of very strong to not strong category. The social divide is so sharp that even people decide their marriages on the basis of political ideology. Institute of Family Studies highlighted that space for politically mixed marriages is declining (21% politically mixed marriages). The divide is even deeper among the followers of democrats and republicans (4% politically mixed marriages). Besides, Michael Mann's book Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing can help us to further understand the phenomena of division and its impact on society.

Third, it gives rise to inequality. As, the powerful ruling elite captures the resources and exploit it for their own interests. They have devised innovative tools like liberal economic model, which helps them to justify their exploitation and inequality. Being followers of liberal economic model, they promote private sector and undermine state-owned business. It helps them to extract personal benefit and oblige cronies and financiers. It also helps them to get rid of responsibility of public services like education and health. If someone try to questions the tactics of ruling elite or raise the voice against exploitation, they declare him/her anti-state.

Fourth, policy shift is another feather in the cap of liberal democracy. We have seen many times that new government comes up with new plans and policies and slash policies of previous governments. This policy shift dearly cost country and people. Unfortunately, we can find all these ills in Pakistani democracy. Political parties have successfully divided

national. They have built their cults and sane voices have been snubbed. People are not allowed to differ from the policies of parties. If someone commit a mistake to differ then he will have to face the wrath of followers of that political parties. Although, they advocate for tolerance and acceptance of difference of opinion, but in reality, they will unleash a hell on you if you differ from them. In this way, political parties have effectively killed space for dialogue and difference of opinion. They have turned nations into human herd at name at the name of self-assumed righteousness.

Second, role of money has been strengthened with the passage of time. Private business mafias have captured the whole system. In recent years, emergence of real estate mafia has changed the whole dynamics. They are spending money on all political parties and enjoying the complete dominance over the governance system. Big groups of real estate are new holy cows, and nobody can dare to touch them. The classic example is ongoing drama between PTI and government over the Al-Qadar Trust. Although, they are tearing apart each other, but they have not have the courage to spell the name of real beneficiary. They are only contended by using terminology of property tycoon.

In the nutshell, the liberal democracy has turned Pakistan into home of multiple problems. If people want to come out of these problems, then they will have to break trap of division. For that purpose, there is need of a new system. A system, which can help to put Pakistan on the path of unity and discipline. There is no room for failure, because if people fail to introduce new system, political elite (does not matter who is in power) will continue to exploit people. It will be a difficult task, as political elite has master the art of divide and rule.

Had 14 May been a normal day...

Qamar Bashir

PDM and unfortunately the entire leadership of the government and the legislator are united against the Supreme Court of Pakistan and for that matter against the constitution and all of the law and regulations under it by announcing a sit in on 15th May when the Supreme Court is likely to take the case of implementation of Supreme Court's verdict to hold elections on 15th May which has been mercilessly trampled, disobeyed and thrown in the dustbin as a useless piece of paper. This is indeed a desperate attempt to save whatever political capital they had but in their frustration, they are committing mistakes after mistakes and ending up further eroding their political standing. They are indeed in a catch 22 situation

If today (14th May) had been a normal day and we lived in a civilized society, the Election Commission would have already arranged in an organized and orderly fashion for the conduct of elections of the Punjab and KP Assemblies in accordance with the constitution, exactly 90 days after the dissolution of those assemblies or government would have provided 20 billion Rupees and security in compliance of Supreme Court of Pakistan's decision to hold elections on May 14th and the people of the two provinces would have been lined up cheerfully and in complete safety to cast their ballots, which was their fundamental right to choose a government of their choice and mandate it to create enabling conditions in which they could pursue their dreams and aspirations while leading the provinces to progress and prosperity. But today is not a normal day, as security around the country has been tightened (which was not available for election duty). Internet resources have been blocked to prevent the airing of views, opinions, and obtaining the cheapest and the most effective means of obtaining feedback and public pulse, but perhaps this feedback is too bitter and sour for the government and the establishment to swallow, the media is completely gagged and incentivized to dedicate most of its time to air PML(N) and speeches of the PDM which are and planned and schedules at regular intervals to occupy most of the screen time and leaving a little space for the lone opposition party of the country. The independent media voices have been muffled and journalists perceived as opposing the government or 'authorities' have been lifted and whereabouts of most of them are not known. In a civilized society, all pillars of the state, the government, parliament, judiciary, and the media function normally and independently to ensure good governance; however, in our unfortunate country, all pillars of the state are arraying against each other; the executive and its extension legislatures have launched a coordinated and joint assault on the judiciary and lone opposition party. The army, which is created and resourced by the people, is poised against the people and threatens them of dire consequences if any of its installations are attacked by angry demonstrators without realizing the undercurrent that the people are behaving erratically not because they do not love or respect their armed forces, but because the armed forces have become utterly immersed in politics. It is holding press conferences and issuing statements against a political party and its leader by abandoning its independent and impartial status, which has made it defacto a political stakeholder and thus all rules of politics become applicable to it, which also means that the political leader and its followers have the right to rebut the armed forces' political statements in equal coin. It is also worth noting that the constitution does not specifically protect the armed forces from criticism but does protect the defense of Pakistan, which includes the national government, which is responsible for setting defense policies and strategies, allocating defense resources, and overseeing the implementation of these policies, and the military, which is responsible for carrying out the defense policies and strategies, the civil law enforcing agencies and a variety of actors and institutions working together to safeguard the nation's and its residents' security and

well-being. Unfortunately, the government and legislatures blinded by their vested interest and their desire to stick to power as far as possible disregarding the cost of their belligerent dispensation incurred to the people who are the ultimate paymasters have systematically planned to avert the implementation of the supreme court's ruling. They first orchestrated the arrest of the popular leader by circumventing the mainstream judicial system and using NAB and rangers to make the arrest and sparked widespread demonstrations and use ensuing violence as reason to postpone the election indefinitely.

Their plan to create chaos succeeded and as a result of commotions and protests over 40 precious lives were lost, and losses of billions of dollars was sustained by the economy. Interestingly, a fraction of this cost and fraction of the law enforcing agencies deputed to quell the demonstrations were enough to hold the elections. Secondly, the executive and the legislatures launched a joint lethal defamatory and insulting attacks on the judiciary. The leaders tried to beat each other in their attempt to gain their leadership's favor by expressing their anger, hurling insults and abuses against the Supreme Court and the lone opposition leader. Such language is generally considered to be disrespectful, inappropriate, and potentially harmful to the integrity of the judiciary and the rule of law can also contribute to the erosion of public trust in institutions and undermine democratic norms.

PDM and unfortunately the entire leadership of the government and the legislator are united against the Supreme Court of Pakistan and for that matter against the constitution and all of the law and regulations under it by announcing a sit in on 15th May when the Supreme Court is likely to take the case of implementation of Supreme Court's verdict to hold elections on 15th May which has been mercilessly trampled, disobeyed and thrown in the dustbin as a useless piece of paper. This is indeed a desperate attempt to save whatever political capital they had but in their frustration, they are committing mistakes after mistakes and ending up further eroding their political standing. They are indeed in a catch 22 situation, they are sure of losing the elections and their perks and perquisites and if they face the consequences of contempt of court they will lose the government and become martyred and use this as a rallying point in the upcoming election. As a part of the strategy, the government is using the legislatures to shift the blame and dilute the contempt of court proceedings which is fraught with several significant consequences for the country and its people as if the supreme court's decisions are trampled it would lead to political instability, as there may be no way to resolve disputes and conflicts that arise between different branches of government or within society, it can lead to an erosion of democratic values, as the government may be able to operate outside the bounds of the constitution without any checks or balances, and people lose trust in the institution, as people may no longer believe that justice is being served. The country's economy will be affected due to ensuing political instability or a loss of trust in the court, it can lead to a decline in foreign investment and a slowdown in economic growth. The society will face heightened unrest and can lead to political turmoil, as opposition parties and civil society organizations may mobilize to demand compliance and hold the govern-

ment accountable by holding protests, strikes, and other forms of public unrest, which can further undermine the stability of the political system.

PDM and unfortunately the entire leadership of the government and the legislator are united against the Supreme Court of Pakistan and for that matter against the constitution and all of the law and are holding demonstration and setting before the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday 15th of May when the Supreme Court is expected to hear expected to commence contempt of court proceedings against the state, not against the government for against the government and the election commission for having failed to comply with the constitution and its order to hold the election on 14th of May.

In their attempt to malign the opposition and to avert holding of elections, the government and the PDM leaders have created precarious situations which have resulted in dragging the armed forces in the political arena. In a normal and civilized country the armed forces make sure that they are not entangled in any act of omission or commission of any political party or immerse themselves in political, economic and civilian matters which are fraught with danger. Nowhere in the world, the public relations Wing of the defense forces threatens its own people, and demonstrators with dire consequences, instead, they don't let such a situation to arrive in the first place.

The army Armed Forces, which are and will remain an important and indispensable institution of the country should take a deep introspection into their public relations dispensation in the large interest of the nation. They should immediately, redetermine and reset the entire ISPR scope and objectives and limit and confine itself to only professional and operational matters and issues without making even a reference to any political, legal or economic issues as has been done more frequently by the ISPR and by do inflicted immeasurable harm to the image and stature of the armed forces. We all know in our hearts that our economy is too delicate to withstand any further shocks, and we all know that we can achieve tremendous progress if we set aside our vested interests and work with selfless determination to bring prosperity and progress to our country. We are all aware that strong governance must be established in the country in order to boost business, trade, and commerce. We are all aware that we must improve the country's reputation and image by embracing universally accepted values such as honesty, keeping promises, meeting deadlines, honoring commitments and pledges, and creating an enabling environment within the country to attract investment, win business, and make favorable trade deals. We all know that the military should stay out of politics, but we draw them in by hook or by crook. What prevents us from doing so is our vested and deeply established interests, as well as a lack of collective and national thought to focus our resources and abilities on lifting our country out of its morass. This is doable; we can do it; however, when we will unify for this seemingly achievable goal is dependent on our leadership's capability, capacity, and vision.

—The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

Briefs

All responsible to face justice...

FROM PAGE 01
installations, personnel, and equipment will be brought to justice through trials under relevant laws of Pakistan including the "Pakistan Army Act and the Official Secret Act." The forum was briefed that a well-coordinated arson plan, involving the desecration of Shuhada pictures, and monuments, the burning down of historical buildings, and vandalism of military installations, was executed to malign the institution and provoke it towards giving an impulsive reaction. "Forum condemned, in the strongest possible sense, these politically motivated and instigated incidents against military installations and public/private properties," the ISPR stated. The statement further said that the Commanders also communicated the "anguish and sentiments of the rank and file of the army on these unfortunate and unacceptable incidents." "Based on the irrefutable evidence collected so far, Armed Forces are well aware of the planners, instigators, abettors, and perpetrators of these attacks, and attempts to create distortions in this regard are absolutely futile," it said. The participants paid rich tribute to the Shuhada, who have laid their lives in defence of the motherland while fighting the menace of terrorism.

CJP still hopeful...

FROM PAGE 01
Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and Justices Ijazul Ahsan and Munib Akhtar, the same bench that had issued the order for holding elections in Punjab on May 14. During the hearing, the CJP observed that the electoral watchdog had raised the issue of funds and security previously. "[But] today, the ECP has raised a question [mark] regarding the court's jurisdiction," he said. He further said that the ECP had earlier contended before the court that it would conduct elections once funds were issued. "Now, the election commission has opened a Pandora's box," he said, questioning whether the ECP could raise points which were not raised before. PTI lawyer Ali Zafar contended before the court that the scope of a review petition was limited. "New points can't be raised in a review petition," he pointed out. Calling on the court to enforce its April 4 order, Zafar said May 14 had passed and the Constitution had been "murdered", adding that the caretaker governments in Punjab and KP were "unconstitutional". "The order will be implemented once it is finalised," the CJP responded. The CJP then said that the court wanted to hear the ECP's arguments on the maintainability of the petition. He said that notices would also be issued to the provincial governments and other political parties.

PDM leadership...

FROM PAGE 01
ever send any dictator home, she asked. "Now when the military is not willing to impose martial law, and standing beside the constitution and democracy, this building is imposing judicial martial law," she added. Free and fair elections could not be held until Mr Bandial was the CJP, she said. "[CJP Bandial] Tender your resignation and go home," she added. She said she wanted to ask CJP Bandial whether he was happy seeing large swathes of "real people" on the Constitution Avenue [the place the PDM is staging the protest at] or not. "No one damaged anything during the protest," she added. Ms Nawaz went on to say that the PDM respected the SC adding that it did not want to stage protest because the court was the source of everything the country got. "We will only talk about judges who facilitated Mr Khan," she added. "Whenever the country suffers damage, it comes through this building," she claimed.

Team of Uzbekistan topped the medal table of the 2023 IBA World Boxing Championships

Team of Uzbekistan topped the medal table with 5 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze medals. Second place went to Kazakhstan with 4 gold and 1 silver, and Russia finished third with 2 gold and 4 bronze medals

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Uzbekistan	5	2	2	9
2	Kazakhstan	4	1	0	5
3	Russia	2	0	4	6
4	Cuba	1	3	2	6
5	France	1	1	1	3
6	Georgia	0	1	2	3
7	Azerbaijan	0	1	1	2
10	Brazil	0	1	1	2
12	Mongolia	0	1	1	2
14	China	0	1	0	1
15	Italy	0	1	0	1
16	India	0	0	3	3
17	Spain	0	0	3	3
18	Armenia	0	0	2	2
19	Jordan	0	0	1	1
20	Kyrgyzstan	0	0	1	1
21	Mexico	0	0	1	1
22	Tajikistan	0	0	1	1
Totals (18 teams)		13	13	26	52

DNA
TASHKENT: The 2023 IBA World Boxing Championships were held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from 30 April to 14 May 2023. Athletes from all

five continents took part in the championship and competed for medals in 13 weight categories. All 13 newly crowned boxers were honored on the stage of IBA Men's World Boxing Championships in Tashkent. Team of Uzbekistan topped the medal table with 5 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze medals. Second place went to Kazakhstan with 4 gold and 1 silver, and Russia finished third with 2 gold and 4 bronze medals. Uzbekistan received the Best Team award. The Best Boxer was declared Hasanboy Dumatov from Uzbekistan. The best referee and judge is from Afghanistan Tamim Sultani. President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited the Humo Arena sports complex in Tashkent and watched the World Boxing Championships. The winners are awarded \$200,000 USD, while silver medalists are to receive \$100,000 USD and each bronze medalist gets \$50,000 USD. The overall prize fund of the World Championships is \$5.2 million USD. The athletes in second place were awarded a special trophy "Will to Win" named after Soviet boxer Andrei Borzenko.

Naila Kiani, Sadpara make history at Mount Everest



WEB DESK

LAHORE: Young Pakistani climber Naila Kiani has successfully summited Mount Everest, the highest peak in the world at 8,849m above sea level, weeks after she climbed Annapurna I, the world's 10th-highest mountain. She is the second Pakistani woman to achieve this feat. It was earlier achieved by Samina Baig in 2013. Also, mountain-

eer Sajid Ali Sadpara became the first Pakistani to reach the top of Mount Everest without the support of high-altitude porters and supplemental oxygen. "There is no better feeling than being on top of the mountain, holding the flag of your country, and making the whole nation proud," said Naila as she shared her sentiments on this major achievement. The young climber spoke about her experience and how she was super ecstatic to have accomplished another

long-awaited milestone that had been on her bucket-list for a long time. She expressed her gratitude to the BARD Foundation for its support and sponsoring her successful Everest expedition. The recent feat is just another feather in her cap. Naila recently summited K2 in her first attempt and also scaled Gasherbrum-I and Gasherbrum-II in Pakistan. Now, she has earned another crown by summiting Mount Everest, making her the second Pakistani female mountaineer to achieve this feat. However, her journey does not stop anytime soon as she aspires to scale more eight-thousanders in the future. She is now aiming to scale 8,516m high Lhotse, the fourth tallest mountain during her current visit to Nepal. Congratulating her in a tweet, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Naila had made Pakistan proud. "Through her passion for mountaineering and amazing achievements to her credit, she has reinforced the notion that our women are capable of achieving anything. My heartiest congratulations to her & best wishes for her future plans," he added. Naila is a Dubai-based Pakistani banker. Besides being mother of two daughters, she is also an amateur boxer. Naila had first gained prominence in 2018 after the images of her wedding photoshoot at K2 Basecamp went viral on social media.

Lukaku back to best as Inter eye UCL final

MILAN: Romelu Lukaku's return to sparkling form has given Inter Milan an extra weapon ahead of Tuesday's Champions League semi-final decider with AC Milan. Out for much of the season with injuries and with a damaged reputation following a disastrous World Cup, Lukaku has slowly worked his way back to his best. The Belgium striker has scored five times and set up three more in his last six matches and his double in Saturday's 4-2 win over Sassuolo highlighted his new-found confidence. Lukaku celebrated his 30th birthday by beginning and ending the scoring at the San Siro, spinning and lashing home the opener from the edge of the box shortly before half-time and drilling in his eighth league goal of the season just before the end. A striker in his sort of form should probably expect to be starting such a huge match on Tuesday, where Inter defend a 2-0 first leg lead in a bid to reach their first Champions League final since the last time they won it under Jose Mourinho 13 years ago. However it will likely be veteran Edin Dzeko who partners Lautaro Martinez up front for the second of two huge derbies with Milan, with Lukaku set to come on as an impact substitute. "Of course every player wants to start, but the coach has to make his choices for the team," said Lukaku "As I have always said, the most important thing is Inter and that's why I give my all for the team." Inter CEO Beppe Marotta said on Saturday that there was a chance of loanee Lukaku staying at Inter next season but with parent club Chelsea yet to announce their new manager his future remains uncertain. What is sure is that the San Siro will again be a riot of colour and noise as two of Italy's standard bearers recreate the days when they were among Europe's elite. Inter fans have good reason to be confident about their side's chances, as they have a healthy lead from the first leg and are bang in form. - Agencies

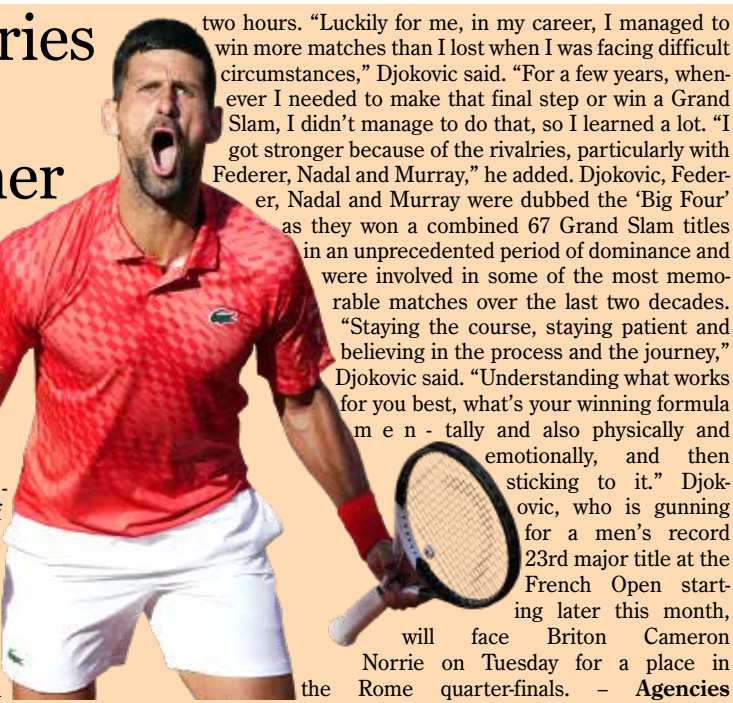
Pakistan to field 10 cyclists in Asian C'ship

ISLAMABAD: A 10-member Pakistan cycling team will feature in the Asian Road Cycling Championship, set to be held in Thailand, next month, Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) said on Monday. "The training camp for preparation of our cyclists for the Championship has commenced today (Monday) in Karachi in collaboration with Pakistan Sports Board. The camp will continue till the end of the first week of June," Syed Azhar Ali Shah, the president of PCF told APP. The 42nd edition of the big-ticket event will be held along with the 29th Asian Junior Road Cycling Championships and 11th Asian Para Road Cycling Championships. "A total of 15 cyclists are attending the camp. They were selected purely on merit, especially based on their performance in the National Road Championship that was held in Peshawar in February," he said. Azhar said that the federation wanted to send all the 15 cyclists for the continental event but due to scarcity of funds, it believed it would hardly manage to field six men and four women cyclists in that. "Participation of our athletes is very necessary for the championship as it also serves as qualifiers for the next year's Paris Olympics," he said. The Paris Games will run from July 26 to August 11, 2024, featuring 32 sports disciplines across 37 sites. - APP

'Big Four' rivalries made Novak Djokovic tougher

"Understanding what works for you best, what's your winning formula mentally and also physically and emotionally, and then sticking to it."

ROME: Novak Djokovic said his rivalries with Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Andy Murray had helped him become stronger in the face of adversity, after the world number one battled his way into the last 16 of the Italian Open. The 35-year-old Serb was a set and a break up in Sunday's match with Grigor Dimitrov but was then dragged into a decider, where he raised his level again to close out a 6-3 4-6 6-1 win after more than



two hours. "Luckily for me, in my career, I managed to win more matches than I lost when I was facing difficult circumstances," Djokovic said. "For a few years, whenever I needed to make that final step or win a Grand Slam, I didn't manage to do that, so I learned a lot. "I got stronger because of the rivalries, particularly with Federer, Nadal and Murray," he added. Djokovic, Federer, Nadal and Murray were dubbed the 'Big Four' as they won a combined 67 Grand Slam titles in an unprecedented period of dominance and were involved in some of the most memorable matches over the last two decades. "Staying the course, staying patient and believing in the process and the journey," Djokovic said. "Understanding what works for you best, what's your winning formula mentally and also physically and emotionally, and then sticking to it." Djokovic, who is gunning for a men's record 23rd major title at the French Open starting later this month, will face Briton Cameron Norrie on Tuesday for a place in the Rome quarter-finals. - Agencies

Barcelona capture 27th La Liga title

Catalans thrash Espanyol 4-2 to wrestle Spanish league trophy back from rivals Real Madrid

BARCELONA: Barcelona won La Liga for the first time since 2019 by thrashing Espanyol 4-2 on Sunday, wrestle the title back from rivals Real Madrid. The Catalan giants clinched their 27th Spanish championship at the home of their neighbours, with scenes turning ugly at full time as celebrating Barcelona players were chased from the field by pitch invaders. Robert Lewandowski struck twice for Barcelona, along with goals for Alejandro Balde and Jules Kounde, while Javi Puado and Joselu pulled two back late on for the hosts. Barcelona have endured a troubled period on and off the pitch in recent years but their triumph signals significant improvement, with coach Xavi Hernandez winning his first major trophy since taking over in November 2021. President Joan Laporta's rebuild was widely criticised last summer in light of the club's perilous financial situation. Early Champions League elimination was a blow, but the club won the Spanish Super Cup in January, before sealing La Liga glory with four games to spare. "It's a magnificent feeling, (of) work well done," Xavi told Movistar. "Ten months of work and sacrifice. The fans deserve it, the club, it gives us stability and security that things are being done well. "We sealed La Liga with a fantastic game, we were brilliant." Xavi did not spring any surprises

with his line-up and Barcelona's first team took to the pitch with one goal firmly in mind, the end finally in sight. They conjured an electric display, one of their finest this season, to seal their triumph and leave their city rivals 19th, four points from safety with four matches remaining. Barcelona broke the deadlock after 11 minutes with a well-worked goal, finished off by Lewandowski for his 20th of the season in La



Liga. Ronald Araujo played an inch perfect long pass for left-back Balde, who blazed past Espanyol defender Oscar Gil and crossed for Lewandowski to bundle home from close range. Gil was beaten by Balde again for the second goal, this time scored by the young left-back after Pedri darted to the byline and scooped an inviting cross to the back post. It was Balde's first goal for Barcelona, capping a superb breakthrough season for the youngster, who has phased veteran defender Jordi Alba out of the side. Espanyol goalkeeper Fernando Pacheco tipped away a Lewandowski effort as Barcelona poured forward, with the hosts battling not to be blown away. It worked for a while, but visitors grabbed the third before half-time when Raphinha put the ball on a plate for Lewandowski to roll home. The Polish striker's arrival from Bayern Munich was a key part of last summer's rebuild and despite a dip in the second half of the season, has paid the Catalans back in goals. Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen made a sublime save to deny former teammate Martin Braithwaite from close range in stoppage time at the end of the first period. Kounde headed home the fourth early in the second half from Frenkie de Jong's perfect chipped pass as Espanyol's defence crumbled yet again. - Agencies

Govt to file reference against CJP

FROM PAGE 01
the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) for his misconduct and deviating from oath. The motion, which was moved by DrShazia Sobia, was adopted by the House. The members of the committee included MohsinShahnawaz Ranjha, KhurshheedJunejo, Shehbaz Baloch, Salahuddin and SalahuddinAyubi. The House also passed two resolutions with one voice against attacks on Jinnah House Lahore, GHQ and military installations, expressing unwavering support and solidarity with the armed forces and security agencies. The two resolutions moved by Sabir Qaimkhani and Wajeeha Qamar said they stand shoulder to shoulder with them. The house condemned unequivocally the acts of vandalism and burning of infrastructure following the arrest of a nabbed accused Imran Khan.

PDM's 'London...'

FROM PAGE 01
"The Plan now is to humiliate me by putting Bushra begum in jail, and using some sedition law to keep me inside for next ten years." The former prime minister was arrested by Rangers last week and handed over to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) after which the PTI workers resorted to violence attacking government and military installations. Later, the Supreme Court ordered his release, terming the arrest as illegal. The government slammed that decision, and the ruling PDM had announced staging a protest sit-in outside the Supreme Court against CJP Umar Ata Bandial for the judiciary's "undue facilitation" of Khan.

LHC grants Bushra...

FROM PAGE 01
She appeared before the bench along with Imran Khan during the proceedings to avail the relief of protective bail. The National Accountability Bureau had arrested Imran Khan in the same case on May 9, and now he was on bail in the matter. NAB alleges that during his time as prime minister, Imran and his wife obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town's Malik Riaz in return for letting the real estate tycoon adjust Rs50 billion that he paid as a settlement to a British crime agency, and which was returned to Pakistan by the UK, in lieu of a fine imposed on him by the Supreme Court.

Elections after...

FROM PAGE 01
Referring to Imran Khan, she said that only one person who is a "fascist and believes in violence and who incites the mobs" was responsible for the present condition of Pakistan. Replying to another question, she said the present regime inherited highest inflation and the country was at the verge of default which she saved. The minister said Imran Khan had signed an agreement with the IMF, and violated all the agreement conditions and when the PDM came in power, the IMF programme was suspended which it was renegotiating. Imran Khan had put the country at the risk of default and present government had saved it, she added.

Won't accept...

FROM PAGE 01
boundaries" and warned the judiciary against indulging in politics. PDM chief FazlurRehman has accused Chief Justice of Pakistan (SJP) Umar Ata Bandial of "misconduct of court". "You and your companions sitting on these seats ... we won't allow you to disrespect or abuse the nation or the Parliament," he said while addressing supporters outside the Supreme Court in Islamabad. "Read our history, we have always broken the chains of slavery and we can do the same today," Fazl said. "I am challenging ... CJP sahib, in this one month you have done misconduct of this court."

Briefs

China sentences US citizen to life in prison

BEIJING: China sentenced a 78-year-old United States citizen to life in prison Monday on spying charges, in a case that could exacerbate the deterioration in ties between Beijing and Washington over recent years. Details of the charges against John Shing-Wan Leung, who also holds permanent residency in Hong Kong, have not been publicly released. Leung was detained April 15, 2021, by the local bureau of China's counter-intelligence agency in the southeastern city of Suzhou, according to a statement posted by the city's intermediate court on its social media site. His detention came after China had closed its borders and imposed tight domestic travel restrictions and social controls to fight the spread of COVID-19. Such investigations and trials are held behind closed doors and little information is generally released other than vague accusations of infiltration, gathering secrets and threatening state security. Relations between Washington and Beijing are at their lowest in decades amid disputes over trade, technology, human rights and China's increasingly aggressive approach toward its territorial claims involving self-governing Taiwan and the South China Sea. High-level government visits have been on hold and U.S. companies are delaying major investments amid mixed messaging from Beijing.—APP

Uzbek leader congratulates Erdogan over election results

TASHKENT: Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev congratulated his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan over Sunday's parliamentary and presidential election results. The People's Alliance, led by Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AK Party) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), are poised to secure a majority of seats in the Turkish parliament after Sunday's presidential and parliamentary elections. Mirziyoyev congratulated Erdogan for leading in the elections, the Presidential Office of Uzbekistan said in a statement. In the phone call, Mirziyoyev said the election results are indicative of the broad support of the brotherly people of Türkiye for the political changes and economic reforms under the leadership of Erdogan. The leaders also discussed issues related to the wide-ranging strategic partnership between the countries and the further development of multilateral cooperation, and also reviewed issues related to preparation for the next meeting of the High-Level Strategic Partnership Council.—APP

UK to start training Ukrainian pilots in summer

LONDON: The UK announced on Monday it will start training Ukrainian pilots in the summer so that they could better defend their country. "This summer we will commence an elementary flying phase for cohorts of Ukrainian pilots to learn basic training. This will adapt the program used by UK pilots to provide Ukrainians with piloting skills they can apply a different kind of aircraft," the government said in a statement. "This training goes hand in hand with UK efforts to work with other countries on providing F16 jets — Ukraine's fighter jets of choice," it added. The announcement came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy paid a surprise visit to London to hold "substantive negotiations" with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. In the past year, the UK has provided training to 15,000 Ukrainian soldiers to enhance their readiness for the battlefield.—APP

Turkiye heads for historic run-off as Erdogan leading

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Turkey's presidential election will be decided in a run-off, election officials said Monday, after incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdogan pulled ahead of his chief challenger, but fell short of an outright victory that would extend his increasingly authoritarian rule into a third decade. The May 28 second-round vote will determine whether the strategically located NATO country remains under the president's firm grip or can embark on a more democratic course promised by his main rival, Kemal Kilicdaroglu. While Erdogan has governed for 20 years, opinion polls had suggested that run could be coming to an end and that a cost-of-living crisis and criticism over the government's response to a devastating February earthquake might redraw the electoral map. Instead, Erdogan's retreat was still less marked than predicted — and with his alliance retaining its hold on the parliament, he is now in a good position to win in the second round. The uncertainty drove the main Turkish stock exchange BIST-100 more than 6% lower at the open Monday, prompting a temporary halt in trading. But shares recov-



ered after trading resumed, and the index was 2.5% lower in the afternoon compared to the market close Friday. Western nations and foreign investors were particularly interested in the outcome because of Erdogan's unorthodox leadership of the economy and often mercurial but successful efforts to put Turkey at the center of many major diplomatic negotiations. At a crossroads between East and West, with a coast along the Black Sea and borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria, Turkey has been a key player on issues including the war in Syria, migration flows to Europe, exports of Ukraine's grain, and NATO's expansion. Preliminary results showed Erdogan won 49.5% of the vote, while Kilicdaroglu grabbed 44.9%, and

the third candidate, Sinan Ogan, received 5.2%, according to Ahmet Yener, the head of Supreme Electoral Board. The remaining uncounted votes were not enough to tip Erdogan into outright victory, even if they all broke for him, Yener said. In the last presidential election in 2018, Erdogan won in the first round, with more than 52% of the vote. Even as it became clear a runoff was likely, Erdogan, who has governed Turkey as either prime minister or president since 2003, painted Sunday's vote as a victory both for himself and the country. "That the election results have not been finalized does not change the fact that the nation has chosen us," Erdogan, 69, told supporters in the early hours of Monday. He said he would respect

the nation's decision. Kilicdaroglu sounded hopeful, tweeting around the time the runoff was announced: "Don't lose hope... We will get up and win this election together." Kilicdaroglu, 74, and his party have lost all previous presidential and parliamentary elections since he took leadership in 2010 but increased their votes this time. Right-wing candidate Ogan has not said whom he would endorse if the elections go to a second round. He is believed to have received support from nationalist electors wanting change after two decades under Erdogan but unconvinced by the Kilicdaroglu-led six party alliance's ability to govern. The election results showed that the alliance led by Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party looked like it would keep its majority in the 600-seat parliament, although the assembly has lost much of its power after a referendum that gave the presidency additional legislative powers narrowly passed in 2017. Erdogan's AKP and its allies secured 321 seats in the National Assembly, while the opposition won 213 and the 66 remaining went to a pro-Kurdish alliance, according to preliminary results. Howard Eissenstat, an associate professor of Middle East history and politics at St. Lawrence Uni-

versity in New York, said those results would likely give Erdogan an advantage in an eventual runoff because voters would not want a "divided government." As in previous years, Erdogan led a highly divisive campaign. He portrayed Kilicdaroglu, who had received the backing of the country's pro-Kurdish party, of colluding with "terrorists" and of supporting what he called "deviant" LGBTQ rights. In a bid to woo voters hit hard by inflation, he increased wages and pensions and subsidized electricity and gas bills, while showcasing Turkey's homegrown defense industry and infrastructure projects. Kilicdaroglu, for his part, campaigned on promises to reverse crackdowns on free speech and other forms of democratic backsliding, as well as to repair an economy battered by high inflation and currency devaluation. But as the results came in, it appeared those elements didn't shake up the electorate as expected: Turkey's conservative heartland overwhelmingly voted for the ruling party, with Kilicdaroglu's main opposition winning most of the coastal provinces in the west and south. The pro-Kurdish Green Left Party, YSP, won the predominantly Kurdish provinces in the southeast.

Speculation about Lukashenko's health

MINSK: An opposition radio station claims the 68-year-old dictator was taken to a medical centre on Saturday for treatment of an unspecified illness. Questions are being raised about the health of Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko who has not been seen in public for almost a week. The 68-year-old missed a major state celebration on Sunday, when he was expected to speak at the country's 'National Flag, Emblem and Anthem Day' event. However, the BelTA state news agency reported that Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko read a message on his behalf. The agency gave no reason for Lukashenko's absence, which came five days after he appeared unwell at the 9 May Victory Day parade in Moscow. He was last seen in public laying flowers at Belarus' Victory Day celebrations on Tuesday. Lukashenko's office refused to comment. Writing on Twitter, Belarus opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya said that there were "many rumours about the dictator Lukashenko's health."—APP

EU border guards to be deployed in Montenegro

BRUSSELS: The EU will deploy its border guards in Montenegro to manage migration flows. In a statement, the Council of the EU announced in a statement that it decided to sign an agreement on EU Border and Coast Guard Agency's (Frontex) operational activities in Montenegro. The deal allows "Frontex border management teams to be deployed in Montenegro" and joint operations to be organized, it said. The EU border guards will be able to assist Montenegro with managing migratory flows, countering illegal immigration, and tackling cross-border crime, the statement said. The measures will be "provisionally" applied from July 1, it added. Frontex has been repeatedly criticized by the European Parliament and human rights watchdogs for assisting Greek authorities in illegal pushbacks of asylum-seekers at sea and land borders.—APP

What next for Thailand after election rejects military rule?

BANGKOK: Thai voters have delivered an emphatic rejection of military-backed rule at the ballot box, voting in droves for the two main opposition parties. The result leaves the progressive Move Forward Party (MFP) seeking to form a coalition government with Pheu Thai and five other parties. But in a kingdom with a long history of coups and judicial intervention in politics, the road to power is not certain. Here is a look at the next steps and potential pitfalls. MFP has announced it will enter negotiations to form a coalition with Pheu Thai — the party of billionaire former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted in a 2006 coup — as well as four smaller parties. This would create a co-

alition with 309 seats in the 500-seat lower house. However, that might not be enough. The prime minister is chosen by both the lower house and the Senate, which has 250 members, all handpicked by the last junta. The MFP-led coalition would need to find 376 lower house votes to ensure senators could not block party leader Pita Limjaroenrat from becoming PM. One option might be for the coalition to sign up the Bhumjaithai party, which has 71 seats — either for a long-term deal or just for the PM vote. Bhumjaithai — led by health minister Anutin Charnvirakul — were in the outgoing military-linked coalition, but they have shown themselves to be

political chameleons over the years. But horse-trading over the PM vote must wait for horse-trading over the details of the coalition. Move Forward and Pheu Thai have an overlapping support base and share some common ground on policy, including plans to rewrite the military-scripted 2017 constitution and increase the minimum wage. But MFP's strong stance on reforming Thailand's harsh royal defamation laws, which carry a jail sentence of up to 15 years, could be a sticking point. Military-linked parties could try to form a minority government, relying on Senate support to get their choice of PM through. This happened after the 2019 election, in which Prayut Chan-O-Cha became prime minister at

the head of a multi-party coalition despite Pheu Thai winning the most seats. But in 2019 the junta party Palang Pracharath (PPRP) won 116 seats and could count on another 100 from sympathetic conservative parties. This time PPRP was reduced to 40 seats, while Prayut's United Thai Nation party managed just 36. Bhumjaithai support and Senate votes could help carry the PM vote, but such a coalition would likely struggle to govern — it would be vulnerable to no-confidence motions and reliant on opposition parties to pass any legislation. Thailand has seen a dozen coups in the last century, but another military intervention is not seen as likely — at least in the short term.—APP

Russia expects co-op with Türkiye to 'continue'

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Monday that Russia expects cooperation with Türkiye to continue, deepen, and expand amid the country's presidential and parliamentary elections that took place on Sunday. "Of course, we are watching the news coming from Türkiye these days with great interest and attention. We respect and will treat the choice of the Turkish people. But in any case, we expect our cooperation to continue, deepen, and expand," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists in a press briefing. Peskov said cooperation between Moscow and Ankara is mutually beneficial and meets the interests of the peoples of the two countries, adding that Türkiye is able to ensure "transparent elections" and "prevent illegal actions" from taking place. Late Saturday, Peskov told the Russian state news agency TASS that Moscow "categorically rejected" accusations of interference in the Turkish elections, saying this is "out of the question." On Thursday, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, leader of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and joint candidate for the six-party opposition Nation Alliance, accused Russia of being behind a video content allegedly discrediting candidates for the presidency in the May 14 elections. On Friday, Peskov said there can be no question of any interference of Russia in the Turkish elections, and that "those who spread such rumors are liars." Peskov also denied French claims that Russia is "subversive" to China, adding that Moscow-Beijing relations have a "special strategic partnership" nature and this "is not connected with any dependence on anyone."—DNA

Pakistani students committed to linkages with China

BEIJING: Pakistani students showed their commitment towards promoting linkages between China and Pakistan during a students forum held at the Pakistani Embassy in Beijing. Speaking at the occasion, the Ambassador briefed the students on the significance of China-Pakistan bilateral relations and ongoing cooperation in diverse fields. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, he noted that education now forms an important element of the bilateral agenda, and a growing number of Pakistani students were choosing Chinese universities for their studies in various disciplines.—DNA

HC Zaheer A. Janjua attends fun gala of Pakistani community

DNA

OTTAWA: Pakistan's High Commissioner to Canada Zaheer A. Janjua attended a community fun gala of the Pakistani diaspora in Ottawa. The event was arranged by Friends Cafe Club Of Canada at a local community centre and attended by a large number of Pakistanis and Canadians of Pakistan origin living in and around the Canadian capital. The High Commissioner lauded the organisers for arranging the event and providing the community with an opportunity to celebrate their culture, food and dress under one platform. He also mingled with the guests and



participants and lauded the Pakistani diaspora in Canada for their role and contribution in strengthening cultural

and trade ties between Pakistan and Canada. Earlier, Friends Cafe Club Canada's Secretary General Mr. Bilal

Riaz welcomed the guests and thanked them for their participation in the fun-packed event.

Various cultural activities, quiz and skits were also performed by participants on the occasion.

Cyclone Mocha kills 9 in Bangladesh, Myanmar

DHAKA: The deadly Cyclone Mocha that surged through the coast between Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and Kyaukpadaung township in Myanmar on Sunday claimed at least nine lives in both neighboring countries, accounting to reports. At least six people were reported dead across Myanmar while three were killed on the southeastern coast of Bangladesh. Some 13,000 houses in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh were destroyed by Cyclone Mocha. Of them, 2,522 were completely destroyed, according to the Disaster Management and Relief Ministry of Bangladesh.—DNA

The alarming reality of dark websites

MASUOOD AHMAD

The ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia has been a source of tension and violence since the dangerous escalation of the conflict in 2022. While some sane voices have tried to broker a peaceful solution, the violence has continued to escalate, with U.S. black markets heavily inducing weapons to the battlefield. One factor that has contributed to the continued violence is the thriving black market for weapons, which has allowed Ukraine to access sophisticated and deadly weaponry that they would not otherwise be able to obtain. The black market for weapons has been a significant problem in Ukraine for decades, but it has grown exponentially since the conflict started anew in dangerous ways. A variety of factors have contributed to this growth, including the country's proximity to major arms-producing nations, the corruption of its gov-

ernment and military officials, and the rising demand for deadly weapons by Ukrainian authorities about whom the concerns of world bodies are growing, owing to Volodymyr Zelenskyy's accelerating slide into authoritarianism. One of the primary ways that the black market for weapons has thrived in Ukraine is through the sale of arms from Western countries. These countries have large stockpiles of weapons that they no longer need, and have been eager to sell them to the highest bidder. With conflict getting hotter, Ukraine has been a prime market for these weapons, and a steady stream of arms is continuously flow into the region. Another significant source of black-market arms in Ukraine has been the sale of weapons from other countries, particularly those in Eastern Europe. Countries such as Poland, Bulgaria, and Slovakia have been accused of selling weapons to Ukraine, despite EU sanctions against such sales. These weapons have included everything from small arms to heavy artil-

lery, and they have significantly contributed to the escalation of the conflict. The black market for weapons in Ukraine has also been fueled by corruption within the country's own government and military. Officials have been accused of taking bribes to look the other way as weapons are smuggled into the region, and some have even been accused of actively participating in the arms trade. This corruption has made it much easier for the authorities and smugglers to obtain the weapons they need to continue fighting. The consequences of the thriving black market for weapons in Ukraine have been devastating. The corrupt authorities in Ukraine have been able to access sophisticated and deadly weaponry, including anti-tank missiles, drones, and heavy artillery. This has led to a serious escalation in violence, with reports of human rights abuses and atrocities against civilians. The continued flow of weapons into the conflict has made it much

more difficult to reach a peaceful solution, as it has, in myriad ways, emboldened the conflict beneficiaries of Ukraine to continue the fight. Experts looking at different dimensions of the conflict with a heavy spectacle have stated that a vast section of the Ukrainian military is earning whooping amounts of money through the illegal business of weapon dealings through black markets. Since the conflict has intensified, dark websites are selling Western weapons to the Ukrainian authorities including illegal weapon dealers and corrupt military officials. Several cyber-intelligence experts have shared the results of their investigations on this matter where we can see these dark websites operating outside the reach of international law, thereby establishing a huge online black market of weapons, benefiting mostly the Western countries. The investigations shared by a cyber intelligence network show the results of a vendor on the darknet "Thief" offering a U.S.-supplied Javelin ATGM anti-tank missile

system for \$30000. The seller has set their location in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. Another website that lists weaponry provided to Ukraine by NATO nations is "Black Market Guns," which offers NLAW anti-tank missiles for \$15,000 and the American-made Switchblade 600 Kamikaze Drone for \$7,000 respectively. The proliferation of dark websites selling weapons has been a growing concern in recent years, with many sites becoming hubs of illegal weapons dealing and thus a grave threat to peace on Earth. These sites allow buyers and sellers to connect anonymously, making it much easier for them to conduct illegal transactions, including the sale of weapons. These sites have allowed access to deadly weaponry, providing conflict entrepreneurs with a base to set up their businesses and prolong the conflict for vested interests. The international community must continue to work together to shut down these sites and prevent the sale of weapons to conflict zones. Only through peace-

ful and diplomatic solutions can we hope to end the suffering of innocent people caught in the middle of these conflicts. The media's promotion of a purported "Russian invasion of Ukraine" benefits US arms corporations. According to a review of the coverage of major print media publications including The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Wall Street Journal from the U.S., 90 percent of the articles published last year on the situation in Ukraine took an aggressive stance. In response to a fictitious Russian threat, opinion pieces by these prominent newspapers, having widespread popularity across the globe, backed sending US troops and weapons to the area. It is a fact that an oligopoly, whose interests include the sale of guns, controls the major media outlets in the US. In essence, this indicates that there is a constant drive for conflict and war.

The author is a researcher based in Islamabad

Briefs

Thai voters deliver stunning blow to army-backed rule

DNA

BANGKOK: Thai voters have delivered a stunning verdict in favour of an opposition party that is calling for radical reform of the country's institutions. Early results show Move Forward exceeding every prediction to win 151 of the 500 seats in the lower house. It's now 10 seats ahead of what was the frontrunner, Pheu Thai, led by ex-prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra's daughter. Analysts are calling this a political earthquake that represents a significant shift in public opinion. It is also a clear repudiation of the two military-aligned parties of the current government, and Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who led a coup that ousted an elected government in 2014. The governing coalition won only 15% of the seats. "We didn't leave any stones unturned," Move Forward's 42-year-old leader Pita Limjaroenrat told media. "People have had enough in the last decade."

US dollar on the back foot against rupee

DNA

KARACHI: As the political temperature is hard to go down, the local currency has become the worst target of volatility in the money market, as the Pakistani rupee shed 67 paisas in its value as the trading started in the interbank on Monday. However, within hours the rupee was able to turn the tide against the US dollar. According to data received from the money dealers, the Pakistani rupee depreciated during early trading session today, making the US dollar to gain 67 paisas in its value. Later, the local currency rebounded and recovered the early morning's loss and then went up by 28 paisas against the greenback. The rupee was now being traded at Rs284.80. On Friday, the last working day of the previous week, the rupee made a robust comeback.

EU chiefs felicitate Turks on 'massive' turnout

WEB DESK

BRUSSELS: EU chiefs Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel congratulated Turkish voters on their large turnout in the first round of national elections, hailing this as a win for democracy. "It's a very clear sign that the Turkish people are committed to exercising their democratic rights to go and vote and that they value the democratic institutions," von der Leyen said. Michel also congratulated "Turkish citizens" on their turnout, but neither of Brussels top two officials would be drawn on Turkey's long moribund bid for eventual EU membership. Turkey now faces its first presidential runoff vote after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan failed to secure a first round re-election in Sunday's national polls.

South Korea defers Pak loan worth \$19.91 million

The World Bank is committed to providing \$450 million RISE-II after fulfilment of four prior conditions and \$250 million by the AIIB

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In a sigh of relief, the Republic of Korea deferred Pakistan's loan worth \$19.91 million, under the G-20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) framework on Monday. The cash-strapped country inked a Debt Service Suspension Agreement with Korea on Monday. This amount, initially had to be repaid between July and December 2021, will now be repaid over a period of six years (including a one-year grace period) in semi-annual instalments, said a statement issued by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD). Due to the support extended by the development partners of Pakistan, the G-20 DSSI has provided the fiscal space which was necessary to deal with the urgent health and economic needs of the country. The total amount of debt, that is to be suspended under the DSSI framework, covering the period of repayment from May 2020 to December 2021, stands at \$3,686 million. Pakistan has already concluded and signed 104 agreements with



ISLAMABAD: Government official and Korean Ambassador exchanging MOUs under the G-20 Debt Service Suspension initiative. – DNA

21 bilateral creditors for the deferment of its debt repayments under the G-20 DSSI, amounting to \$3,633 million. The signing of the above-mentioned

agreement brings this total to \$3,653 million. Negotiations for the remaining agreements to be signed under the G-20 DSSI are ongoing. The Pakistani authori-

ties are hopeful that the current account deficit would remain surplus for April 2023 when the numbers would come out in the next few days. The financing gap of \$4 billion was fulfilled by getting confirmation as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia conveyed to the IMF that they were ready to provide an additional \$2 billion in deposits and UAE \$1 billion. The World Bank is committed to providing \$450 million RISE-II after fulfilment of four prior conditions and \$250 million by the AIIB. Pakistan also received firm commitments for getting \$350 million out of total Geneva pledges for flood-affected areas. The only remaining amount is \$1 billion from commercial banks and they are waiting for IMF's deal. The Pakistani officials argue that the external financing requirements had been fulfilled, so there was no justification for using delaying tactics to avoid signing the agreement. Keeping in view this situation, the Ministry of Finance is all set to share the Budget Strategy Paper (BSP) with the federal cabinet without sharing it with the IMF in its meeting scheduled to be held today (Monday).

Ukraine leader targets 'jets coalition' on UK visit

LONDON: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on a visit to Britain Monday won the promise of "hundreds" more missiles and drones - and said his coveted goal of enlisting Western fighter jets was drawing nearer. The visit came as a Russian missile strike killed four people and hit a hospital in eastern Ukraine, but also as Zelensky's army readies a long-awaited counter-offensive against the Russian invaders with claimed gains around the flashpoint town of Bakhmut. After meeting UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Zelensky said he was "very positive" about creating a "jets coalition" in the war against Russia, with a decision expected "in the closest time". Western nations have balked so far at providing advanced jets to help Ukraine take command of the skies against Russia, although Sunak said the UK was readying to open a flight school to train its pilots. And while Russia's ally China vies to act as peace broker, sending an envoy to Kyiv this week, Zelensky drummed up hefty new packages of military aid on weekend visits to France and Germany. He proceeded Monday to the UK prime minister's country estate of Chequers outside London. Sunak pledged air-defence missiles and long-range attack drones for Ukraine, both numbering in the hundreds. Russia said the new UK weapons would only cause "further destruction", and claimed to have downed a Storm Shadow cruise missile that Britain said last week it was providing, in the West's first deployment of long-range rocketry for Ukraine.

Sunak noted that the Chequers meeting was taking place in the buildup to a Council of Europe leaders' meeting in Iceland and a G7 summit in Japan, as he hit out at Russian President Vladimir Putin. "The front lines of Putin's war of aggression may be in Ukraine but the fault lines stretch all over the world," Sunak said, vowing: "We must not let them down." Sunak hosted Zelensky in the same Chequers room used by Britain's World War II leader Winston Churchill to broadcast defiant speeches vowing victory over the Nazis. "And the same way today, your leadership, your country's bravery and fortitude are an inspiration to us all," he told Zelensky. Dressed in his trademark fatigues, Zelensky gave a bear hug to Sunak after disembarking from a Royal Air Force Chinook helicopter, and thanked him for the latest UK aid. He said the crisis was a matter of "security not only for Ukraine, it is important for all of Europe". The timing and focus of Ukraine's high-stakes counter-offensive are unclear, but Zelensky's tour of European capitals underscored the importance of securing Western heavy weapons and ammunition to press the fight. France offered dozens more light tanks and armoured vehicles, while Germany said it was preparing a new military package worth 2.7 billion euros (\$3 billion) - its biggest yet for Ukraine. The British attack drones have a reach of more than 200 kilometres (125 miles), according to the UK government, complementing the long-range Storm Shadow missiles.

Macron, Musk meet in Paris on investing in France

"We talked about the attractiveness of France and the significant progress in the electric vehicle and energy sectors," Macron wrote on Twitter afterwards.

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron met billionaire businessman Elon Musk on Monday to discuss future investment projects, as the French leader hosts a conference aimed at persuading business leaders to put their money in France. Macron hosted the world's second richest man, who is the chief executive of electric car firm Tesla, social media company Twitter and cosmic exploration outfit SpaceX, six months after their last encounter in the United States, his office said. They met at the Elysee Palace before heading to Versailles for the latest edition of

the president's Choose France conference where Macron seeks to drum up investment in the country. "We talked about the attractiveness of France and the significant progress in the electric vehicle and energy sectors," Macron wrote on Twitter afterwards. "We have so much to do together," he added. Musk smiled and waved at reporters as the meeting got underway but made no comment. Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told the BFMTV broadcaster that "negotiations are ongoing" with the magnate. Le Maire gave no details of Monday's talks with Musk, saying simply that "all of today's investments are the fruit of months or even years of negotiations". Macron said in another tweet that some 13 billion euros of investment would be announced at the summit, equating to the creation of some 8,000 jobs. "When a foreign investor chooses France, it's good for jobs and for our regions," he said. Some 200 foreign business bosses are expected at the summit, including Sunil Bharti Mittal of Indian conglomerate Bharti Enterprises, ArcelorMittal chief Lakshmi Mittal and Nokia chief executive Pekka Lundmark. – Agencies

Govt slashes petroleum products' prices by up to Rs30 per litre

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led federal government Monday announced decreasing the price of petrol by Rs12 per litre to Rs270 per litre after a fall in the international oil rate. The rates will come into effect at 12am tonight and remain in place for the next fortnight, Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar said during a televised address. The rates of petroleum products (POL) have been slashed by up to Rs30 per litre, as the government "tries to give relief to the masses during every fortnightly review", the minister said. The finance minister appealed to the transporters to provide "fair" relief to the masses in light of the price reduction as the POL products rate affects a host of other commodities. The appeal came as the cash-strapped nation faces runaway inflation, which remains at a historic high of 36.4% - the fastest in South Asia, even leaving behind the defaulted nation of Sri Lanka. "In view of the declining price trend of petroleum products in the international market, Government has decided to reduce the existing prices of petroleum products in order to pass on the benefits and provide maximum relief to the masses," the Finance Division said in a statement later. –DNA

Air strikes pound Khartoum as conflict enters second month

WEB DESK

KHARTOUM: The Sudanese army carried out air strikes in the north of the capital Khartoum on Monday, attacking its paramilitary rivals around a hospital that witnesses said was damaged in the bombardment. Intense battles in Khartoum and its sister cities of Bahri and Omdurman have raged despite Saudi and US-brokered talks between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Jeddah aimed at securing humanitarian access and a ceasefire. The fighting has spread to the western

region of Darfur, but has been concentrated in the capital, where RSF fighters have taken up positions across neighborhoods and the army has used air strikes and heavy artillery fire to target them. "We're under heavy bombardment now in Sharq el-Nil and Rapid Support are responding with anti-aircraft guns," said 55-year-old Awatef Saleh, referring to the area she lives in along the Nile in Bahri. "All this is happening near our homes, we're in a state of terror and fear." In a voice message released by the RSF, its leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, dismissed rumors that he had been killed or injured in the battles.

PTI must condemn violence

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has warned the opposition PTI that it has one last chance to "clarify whether it wants to become a political party or not". Speaking during a joint session of parliament Monday, he said that if the PTI is a political party, then it should first condemn the arson attacks and violence - perpetrated during widespread protests following the arrest of party chairman Imran Khan - and apologise. "If it does not apologise, then we will not negotiate with a 'militant party', whether on the instructions of the chief justice or anyone else," he asserted.

Pakistan may boycott World Cup: Sethi

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: There is a "very real possibility" that Pakistan will boycott this year's World Cup in India if they lose hosting rights to the Asia Cup, Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Najam Sethi told Reuters.

While the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has yet to deliver a formal response to the offer, Sethi said India wanted the entire tournament moved out of Pakistan. That could have serious ramifications for the 50-overs World Cup in India this year as well as the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan, he added. "They want all the matches in a neutral venue," he said in a Zoom interview.

Imran Khan alleges PDM's 'London Plan' ready to imprison him

PTI Chairman releases videos evidence about May 9 riots

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has accused the PDM government of arresting him again, expressing apprehensions that they will "use some sedition law to keep me inside for next ten years under the London Plan." Imran took to twitter on Monday to reveal the "London plan" to remove him from political scene. "So now the complete London plan is out. Using pretext of violence while I was inside the jail, they have assumed the role of judge, jury and executioner," he wrote in a series of tweets.



LHC grants Bushra Bibi protective bail

AGENCIES

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday granted protective bail to Bushra Bibi, wife of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, in Al Qadir Trust case, till May 23. A division bench, comprising Justice Syed Shabbaz Ali Rizvi and Justice Shakil Ahmad, heard the petition, filed by Bushra Bibi for protective bail.

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

CJP still hopeful of talks ending elections stalemate

Court issues notices to AGP, Punjab Govt to file reference against CJP



MUHAMMAD UMAR

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Monday remained hopeful that talks between the coalition government and the PTI could end the stalemate on holding elections in the country. The matter came under discussion as a three-member bench heard the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) plea asking the top court to revisit its April 4 order of holding elections to the Punjab Assembly on May 14. The bench comprised

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Monday adopted a motion calling for filing a reference against Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial. The motion against the Chief Justice's behaviour was introduced by MNA Shazia Sobia. The National Assembly passed the motion unanimously which sought formation of a special committee to file a reference against the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) in

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

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