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Hungary's Orban criticizes EU's sanctions policy

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Ukraine F-16 training plan gets underway

Detailed News On Page-07



Ilkay Gundogan urges Man City to stay focused

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Briefs

Khan joins NAB probe, gets bail in 8 cases

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Tuesday spent nearly four hours at the National Accountability Bureau's Rawalpindi office in connection with the probe in the Al-Qadir Trust case. The case alleges that the former premier and his wife obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd for legalising Rs50 billion, which was later identified and returned to the country by the UK during the tenure of the PTI government.

No public holiday on May 25

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday rebutted reports claiming there will be a public holiday on May 25 – Pakistan Martyrs Day – saying that they are fake. Sharing the notification about the holiday that was issued a while ago, the ministry took to Twitter and said: "Disseminating #FakeNews is not only unethical and illegal but it is also disservice to the nation. 'It is the responsibility of everyone to reject irresponsible behaviour. Reject #FakeNews.'"

Law Minister lauds role of EU's envoy

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar has appreciated the active and comprehensive role of European Union's Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kionka regarding the GSP Plus status of Pakistan.

PICTURE ON PAGE 3

He was talking to EU Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kionka, who called on him in Islamabad on Tuesday. During the meeting, the two sides discussed different issues of mutual interest.

Not leaving party: Qureshi Mazari and Chohan also quit PTI

Tally rises to 24 as PTI leaders' exodus continues following May 9 riots



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: In a major setback for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Shireen Mazari and Fayyazul Hassan Chohan Tuesday announced quitting the Imran Khan-led party which has lost several seasoned leaders in the recent days in the aftermath of the May 9 mayhem. The development came as several party leaders and lawmakers – including Amir Mehmood Kiani, Malik Amin Aslam, Mahmood Moulvi and Aftab Siddiqui among others – have publicly denounced the attacks on the state installations and announced leaving the former ruling party since the May 9 vandalism.

Addressing a press conference in the federal capital, Mazari – the former federal minister and close aide of Khan – condemned the May 9 riots during which PTI supporters ransacked and torched public and defence installations across the country. "I strongly condemn the May 9 violence. I have always condemned the violence of any kind," she remarked.

Continued on Page 06

Members being forced to leave, says Imran Khan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan on Tuesday claimed that members of his party were being forced to leave the PTI at "gunpoint". Speaking informally to journalists at an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad, Imran said, "People are not leaving the party on their own, they are being forced to do so, and that too at gunpoint". However, he maintained he was not bothered by the several key PTI leaders who have in recent days called it quits, saying that "parties never die down like that; they are weeded out like the [ruling coalition] PDM is eroding, the way their vote bank is depleting." "I am only worried about the workers and especially the women," he added. The PTI chief made these remarks ahead of his hearing at the ATC where judge Raja Jawad Abbas was hearing his petition for bail in eight different cases.

SC observes

Rights of millions linked to elections

Three-member bench hears ECP's plea seeking review of order on Punjab polls



COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Munib Akhtar said on Tuesday that the rights of millions of people in the country were linked to elections and stressed that the public interest was in holding polls within 90 days. "The rights of the people of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are connected to elections," he remarked.

The judge passed these remarks as a three-member bench heard the Election Commission of Pakistan's petition asking the top court to revisit its April 4 order of hold-

ing polls to the Punjab Assembly on May 14. The bench hearing the plea comprised Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and Justices Ijazul Ahsan and Akhtar, the same bench that had issued the order for holding elections in Punjab on May 14.

During the previous hearing, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial had expressed hope that talks between the coalition government and the PTI could end the stalemate on holding polls in the country. At the outset of the hearing, ECP lawyer Sajeeel Swati came to the rostrum and said that the federal and Punjab government had submitted their responses in the case, which was obtained by the electoral watchdog today. "I think the PTI has not submitted its response yet," the CJP said, to which Swati stated that ECP had yet not received the responses of PTI or any other political party. "Please give us a chance to review all the responses,"

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G20 Summit in IIOJK

Bilawal lauds Turkiye, KSA, China for not participating



DNA

BAGH: In a public gathering in Bagh, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari expressed his gratitude towards the countries that refused to participate in the G20 tourism meeting held in Srinagar. He specifically mentioned China, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and others who rejected the Indian invitation to attend the conference in the Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir territory. Bilawal highlighted

that even the countries participating in the conference had downgraded their level of involvement, which he claimed indicated the abnormality of the event. He questioned the logic of promoting tourism in an area where a significant portion of the local population was imprisoned and over 900,000 armed personnel were deployed to suppress the voices of those demanding their right to self-determination. Accusing the Indian government of supporting

Continued on Page 06



RAWALPINDI: Colonel General Karim Valiyev, 1st Deputy Minister of Defence of Republic of Azerbaijan and Chief of General Staff of Azerbaijan Army, calls on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, at the GHQ, on Tuesday. – DNA

PM directs 'maximum relief' in budget



Economic team briefs PM about budget preparation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed his economic team to provide "maximum relief" to the common man in the budget 2023-24. The premier – while presiding over a meeting to review the budget 2023-24 preparations, ordered to take every possible step to facilitate the middle and lower income segments of society. During the meeting,

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan, Azerbaijan reiterate resolve to deepen cooperation

Deputy Minister of Defense and CGS of Azerbaijan meets COAS

SHUJAAT HAMZA/DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development highlighting the strengthening ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, Deputy Minister of Defense and Chief of General Staff of Azerbaijan, Colonel General Valiyev Karim Tofiq Oglu, held a crucial meeting with Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir. The meeting, which took place in Islamabad on Tuesday, focused on bilateral defense and security cooperation between the two nations. The Public Relations Department of the Pakistan Army (ISPR) stated that the discussions primarily revolved around enhancing mutual cooperation in military and professional affairs.

Both General Valiyev and General Munir expressed their commitment to deepening the existing defense collaboration between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. Recognizing the shared challenges faced by the two countries, the military leaders underscored the importance of close cooperation in tackling common security threats. The meeting further emphasised the need to exchange expertise and experiences in vari-

ous domains of defense and security. It was agreed upon that through enhanced cooperation, the armed forces of Pakistan and Azerbaijan can benefit from each other's strengths and contribute to their respective defense capabilities. Colonel General Valiyev's visit to Pakistan holds great significance as it signifies the growing bilateral relations and the mutual desire to foster stronger defense ties. The interaction between high-ranking officials from the defense establishments of both countries is expected to pave the way for increased collaboration in areas such as joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and defense industry cooperation. Pakistan and Azerbaijan have historically enjoyed close diplomatic relations, and their partnership in the defense sector further solidifies their bond. Both countries have supported each other on international forums, particularly on issues related to territorial integrity and sovereignty. The meeting between Colonel General Valiyev and General Munir serves as a testament to the ongoing efforts to deepen the defense and security cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.



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Seven arrested over Real Madrid's Vinicius racist abuse – Page 06

Iran, Indonesia agree to trade in local currencies – Page 07

India 'in a fix' over G20 moot's humiliating failure – Page 08

Court extends interim bail of Buzdar

LAHORE: An accountability court on Tuesday extended pre-arrest interim bail of former chief minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar till May 25 in assets beyond means inquiry. Accountability Court Judge Sheikh Sajjad Ahmad conducted the proceedings on Usman Buzdar's bail petition. The former chief minister did not appear before the court despite the expiry of his interim bail. Buzdar's counsel submitted an exemption application on his behalf and stated that his client did not appear due to medical reasons. He pleaded with the court to exempt his client from personal appearance for one day. To which, the court expressed displeasure and remarked that Usman Buzdar did not appear at a few previous hearings and a new pretext was made at every hearing. At this stage, the counsel submitted that details of Usman Buzdar's properties had been submitted to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Sindh IGP announces cash reward for IOs

KARACHI: Inspector General (IG) Sindh Police, Ghulam Nabi Memon, has announced a cash reward of Rs 300,000 for the investigating officer (IO) if the criminal is sentenced to death in a narcotics case. According to the details, IG Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon, in an unofficial conversation with the media, said that if the criminal is sentenced to death in the narcotics case, the investigating officer of the case will be given a reward of Rs 300,000. He said that if the High Court also upholds the death penalty, the investigating officer will be awarded an additional Rs 200,000. Talking about the crime in the metropolis, IG Sindh said, "If there is a crime, there should be an First Information Report (FIR), those SHO's will be suspended who found refrain from registering FIRs."—DNA

State of World Population Report provides infinite possibilities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Pakistan and the High Commission of Canada in Pakistan co-hosted an event on Tuesday to mark the launch of UNFPA's 2023 State of World Population (SWOP) report. The event was held at the Canadian High Commission and brought together representatives from the Government, the donor community, various UN agencies, civil society and other stakeholders. This year's report, titled '8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities: The Case for Rights and Choices', was launched globally on April 19. Presenting the latest trends with regard to population growth or decline, fertility rates, reproductive health, family planning, and migration around the globe as well as the debates and policies those developments are sparking, the report also cautions against trying to control women's bodies to address demographic concerns. Family planning, it suggests, must not be used as a means for achieving fertility targets but as a tool for empowering individuals. Women should be able to



choose if, when, and how many children they want to have. According to the report, Pakistan will be among the eight countries to account for half of the projected global population growth by 2050, along with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, the Philippines and the USA. Pakistan's population is currently estimated at 240.5 million and is projected to reach 403 million by 2050. The report discusses "population anxieties" felt in different parts of the world, including in Pakistan, in reaction to popu-

lation growth or, in some cases, to low fertility rates or other demographic trends. Echoing the key message from the SWOP, Dr. Luay Shabaneh, UNFPA Representative in Pakistan, said there is population anxiety in the country, and a genuine linkage between population dynamics, poverty, nutrition and other socioeconomic dimensions recommending that these should be made clear in the public policies and programmes in the country. He called for a radical rethink of how population numbers are framed, urging policymakers and other stakehold-

ers to abandon narratives about population booms and busts to instead focus efforts on making sure that individuals, especially women, are able to freely make their own reproductive choices, a goal which has unfortunately not been met. "The government needs to ensure that families are provided with all proper services, information, and understanding to implement their own reproductive decisions. Women are not accountable for any nation's problems; they are victims of social norms," said Dr. Shabaneh. "People need to talk about population issues in today's world

of unease and uncertainty. Still, they must do so in new ways that uproot current biases and avoid perpetuating harmful, discriminatory norms and myths." The High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan, Her Excellency Ms. Leslie Scanlon, highlighted reproductive rights, gender equality and bodily autonomy as key priorities shared by UNFPA and Canada and highlighted Canada's support to family planning and reproductive health in Pakistan through the project Sehaat Mand Khaandaan. "Sadly, many women in Pakistan, like in a number of other countries, are un-

able to make choices about contraception, family size and their own health, due to cultural and economic factors, among others. Such tremendous challenges and gaps are the reason why Canada stepped forward with a long-term commitment to SRHR with our global 10-year commitment. We do our best to reach the populations that need it the most", she added. The event also gave the opportunity to members of the community, including a health practitioner, a woman and a youth leader for health and empowerment, to share their views on these issues and talk about their personal experiences.

UNFPA is committed to working with the government of Pakistan and other partners to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the country's growing population. The SWOP report strongly recommends that governments institute policies with gender equality and rights at their heart, such as parental leave programs, child tax credits, policies that promote gender equality in the workplace, and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. These offer a proven formula that will reap economic dividends and lead to resilient societies able to thrive no matter how populations change.

Peace, indispensable to reap the benefits of Saudi-Iran deal

ISLAMABAD: Recent attack soon after the opening of Mand-Pishin border market had necessitated enhanced cooperation between Iran and Pakistan on border security. There was a need for constant vigilance on the spillovers of peace to prevent reassurance of such incidents. There was also a need for continuous review of policies as the post Saudi-Iran agreement environment presented both opportunities as well as challenges for Pakistan

These were the views expressed by the speakers at a webinar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies on challenges and opportunities for Pakistan. Speaking at the occasion, Ambassador Riffat Masood said that India remained a naked threat to Pakistan's economic interests in the region, adding that New Delhi might expedite its efforts to sabotage the emerging conducive environment. She was of the view that sanctions

on Iran could limit Pakistan's engagement with Iran particularly in the fields of energy but free trade agreements, opening of more border markets, barter trade, and trade in local currency would strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries, she added. Ambassador Manzoor ul Haq said that both Riyadh and Tehran had come a very long way to reach an agreement that he believed would bring peace and stability to the region. He told

the audience that the Saudi-Iran rapprochement was a great relief for Pakistan as Islamabad had to strike a balance between the two countries which sometimes was quite cumbersome since both Saudi Arabia and Iran were brotherly nations. Amb Haq added that a diplomatic push was required to grab the economic opportunities for Pakistan as the recent agreement had opened several doors of cooperation with both Saudi Arabia and Iran.—APP

Sastaticket.pk hosts a successful Hackathon

KARACHI: Sastaticket.pk, a leading online travel platform, successfully organized a hackathon aimed at fostering collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking among aspiring tech enthusiasts in Pakistan. The event, held on 19th to 21st May 2023, brought together a diverse pool of participants to generate innovative ideas for problem-solving, encourage growth, and showcase the country's entrepreneurial talent. SalamAir, Sadabahar Daewoo Service and Amadeus, Sastaticket.pk emphasized the importance of collaboration and innovation in driving positive change in the travel sector. As a testament to their commitment to nurturing talent, Sastaticket.pk offered an array of attractive prizes for the participants. The winning team was awarded enticing prizes, including goodie bags, exclusive internships, and job offers. In addition, participants had the chance to receive discount vouchers, providing them with valuable opportunities to explore and experience the travel industry firsthand.—APP

opportunity for participants to showcase their skills and passion for technology while addressing real-world challenges in the travel industry. The event attracted talented individuals from various backgrounds, allowing for a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives. With the support of SalamAir, Sadabahar Daewoo Service and Amadeus, Sastaticket.pk emphasized the importance of collaboration and innovation in driving positive change in the travel sector. As a testament to their commitment to nurturing talent, Sastaticket.pk offered an array of attractive prizes for the participants. The winning team was awarded enticing prizes, including goodie bags, exclusive internships, and job offers. In addition, participants had the chance to receive discount vouchers, providing them with valuable opportunities to explore and experience the travel industry firsthand.—APP

Govt sends 848,281 Pakistanis abroad for employment

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Sajid Hussain Tori here Tuesday said that Federal Government has sent over 848,281 skilled Pakistanis abroad for employment. Presiding over a high-level meeting of the Workers Welfare Board (WWB) and Employees Oldage Benefits Institution (EOBI) here at WWB headquarters, the Minister said the policies of the present elected government revolved around masses, labourers and working classes and by December 31, 2022, about 848,281 skilled workforces including IT specialists, doctors, engineers, technicians and others were sent to different countries including GULF and Europe by the present government for their socioeconomic empowerment. He said the present government has addressed the maximum problems of WWB and EOBI employees and was endeavouring.—APP

LCCI President Kashif Anwar visits RCCI



RAWALPINDI: A delegation of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) headed by Kashif Anwar President LCCI visited Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry and had a meeting with President

RCCI Saqib Rafiq. Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, Secretary General Irfan Manan Khan were also present on the occasion. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq gave a briefing on

RCCI current activities to the LCCI delegation. The matters related to taxation, budget proposals, current economic situation, rupee devaluation and challenges faced by exporters came under discussion. He also informed

that RCCI is going to organize a third property expo to be held on June 2-4. Later the LCCI delegation also visited different departments and appreciated the services being provided to the business community.—APP

Federal, Sindh govts join hands to avert drug menace

KARACHI: The Federal and Sindh governments have joined hands to work together to avert the drug menace, particularly synthetic drugs so that the young generation, the future of the country, could be protected and rehabilitated if affected. This emerged in a meeting held between Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Narcotics Control here at CM House. The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, Syed Sardar Shah, Ismail Rahu, Mukesh Chawla, Sajid Jakhio, Sharjeel Memon, Advisors - Murtaza Wahab and Aijaz Jakhriani, Parliamentary Secretary Qasim Soomro, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Adl IGs Javed Odho and Munir Shaikh. The federal govt team comprised DG ANF Maj Gen. Aneeq Rehman, Force Commander ANF Brig Waqar, Col Perviaz of MATRC, Joint Director Col Adnan, and others. The provincial government was acknowledged for taking the lead.—APP

ICCI urges govt to broaden tax net

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari while presenting the budget proposals in the meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Finance said that the government needs to take steps to increase the tax net. The government should make all commercial meters subject to NTN numbers, which will significantly increase the tax net. There is a need to change the working hours to save energy, suggestions from the business community across the country need to

be seriously incorporated in the budget. In a difficult economic situation, the government should formulate an economic plan in consultation with the Chambers. The meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance was chaired by the Chairman Committee, Senator Saleem Mandviwala On Tuesday, in which the members of the committee Senator Sadia Abbasi, Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Dilawar, Minister of State for Finance Ayesha Ghos Pasha, FBR officials, Presidents of Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, Faisalabad Chambers and

Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce, Pakistan Business Council participated. The meeting considered the recommendations of the business community for the preparation of the budget for the financial year 2023-24. President Islamabad Chamber Ahsan Bakhtawari while speaking in the meeting said that LCs and ban on imports, differences in commercial electricity tariffs at regional level, smuggling and all such problems are harming the country's economy. There is a need to formulate policies on a permanent basis to solve them. POS integration

should be mandatory for retailers as well as all distributors and manufacturers. The issue of filers and non-filers should be solved, supply should be given only those businesses that are POS integrated or have NTN numbers. Chairman Taxation Committee Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Mian Ramzan said On the occasion that one million is a very small amount for advance tax and it should be increased. People hesitate to register new companies due to high taxes, dividend taxes should be exempted, tax on rental income should be reduced. On this occa-

sion, Chairman Committee Senator Saleem Mandviwala while appreciating the budget proposals of Islamabad Chamber said that the best and workable proposals have come from the Chambers and the business community. We will place these proposals before the Finance Ministry and FBR try to make them part of the upcoming budget. He said that the business community has a very important role in economic system of Pakistan. The Standing Committee will play active role in conveying their suggestions to the government.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

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



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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

President Alvi calls for revisiting national priorities

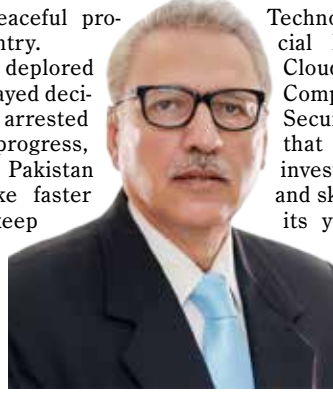
The President deplored the fact that delayed decision-making had arrested the country's progress, adding that Pakistan needed to make faster decisions to keep pace with the exponential developments taking place in the world

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for revisiting the national priorities to steer Pakistan out of its present socio-economic and political difficulties. He said that it was the responsibility of the leadership of all institutions to focus on addressing the major challenges, including overcoming poverty, improving the economy, checking population growth, providing health and education facilities, and eliminating inequalities from

society, especially in the rural areas of the country. The President expressed these views while talking to the participants of the Senior Officers' Leadership Course (SOLC-10), who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Talking to the officers, the President underlined the need for inculcating the spirit of forgiveness and love for humanity to promote tolerance and harmony in the society. He said that he was deeply hurt by the incidents on 9th May and urged the need for upholding the rule of law and

holding only peaceful protests in the country. The President deplored the fact that delayed decision-making had arrested the country's progress, adding that Pakistan needed to make faster decisions to keep pace with the exponential developments taking place in the world. He said that rapid advancements in the fields of Information



Technology (IT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cloud and Quantum Computing, and Cyber Security necessitated that Pakistan should invest in the education and skill development of its youth. While highlighting the importance of Cyber Security, he stated that Pakistan should focus on strengthening its cyber capabilities to protect the country

and its people from the threats of cyber warfare. Terming education and health as the central pillars to address poverty and ensure socio-economic development, the President underscored the need for checking population growth and providing quality education and health services to the people. He regretted that almost 27 million children in Pakistan were out-of-schools and stressed the need to impart education to such children by adopting innovative solutions, especially online education, in addition to brick-and-mortar infrastructure development in the education sector.

King of fruit 'Mango' sale pick up pace

ISLAMABAD: With the rise in mercury level, the markets, shops and makeshift vendors on various roads elsewhere in the country kick-started displaying a different variety of king of fruit 'Mangoes' to attract customers. "Mango is most favorite fruit during the summer season as Pakistani mangoes have more than 600 varieties and are considered one of the best in the world," said a report aired by PTV news channel. Besides their sweet, deli-

icious, and irresistible taste, mangoes also have many health benefits, said a nutritionist. According to horticulturist, the mango orchards in Sindh and Punjab are the major source of production in the country, adding, Multan and Bahawalpur are famous for Sindhri, Langra, Chaunsa, Anwar Ratol, Dussehra, Almas, and Saroli while in Sindh, first Saroli, then Dussehra, Desi, and finally Sindhri are produced. A pushcart mango ven-

dor claimed that mango is being sold in vast quantity because of its cheap price, adding, the increasing demand yields good profits and he earns up to Rs3,000 on a good day. A citizen said mangoes in every stall are attracting customers, adding, besides their sweet, delicious, and irresistible taste, mangoes also have many advantages and health benefits. Another customer at weekly bazar said in Pakistan, mango are being consumed in multiple

ways, adding, vendors are also earning a handsome amount because of its booming sale. Online platforms like Inst gram, facebook and whatsapp groups also presenting varieties of Mango while displaying pics and videos to attract customers online, adding, online sales of fruits also saw a surge. The main perk of online purchase of mangoes are now delivered right to doorsteps, without any additional hassle, said an online customer.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar and Parliamentary Secretary Law and Justice Division Mehnaz Akbar Aziz in a meeting with Dr. Riina Kionka, Ambassador of European Union to Pakistan.—DNA

Kayani declares PTI workers attack as pre-planned

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator for Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani on Tuesday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf supporters' violent attacks on military installations during the recent protests were pre-planned and warned that any lawlessness would not be compromised. "No one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands in the country while clarifying only peaceful protests would be allowed to take place", he said while talking to PTV news channel.

The law will take its course because it is the responsibility of the state to maintain law and order if there is a protest in violation of the law. Replying to a question, he made it clear that in case of any future attack on government properties, the police would respond with full force according to law. May 9 will always be remembered as a "black day" in the history of Pakistan, adding, that those who are involved in attacking the military installations will also be

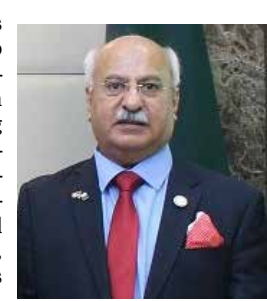
brought to book. He added that the PTI chief and his followers stoked terrorism and violence that amounted to anti-state acts. To another question, he said this attack was not on military installations, but on Pakistan, adding, such an attack was expected from India, not from Pakistan. There is a dire need that all the political parties should sit together to find out the ways to end this political instability and take Pakistan towards growth, he added.

Conference on Pakistan's population from May 24

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's population experts and leading government officials are set to gather here on May 24 and 25 for a learning event organized by Palladium Pakistan under DAFPAK.PSSD in collaboration with UNFPA, PSI, MSS, DKT International, and M&C Saatchi and in partnership with MoNHS-R&C and provincial Health and Population Welfare Departments of Punjab, Sindh, and KP. The event 'Pakistan's Population: Ensuring A Brighter Future For All' is focused on improving reproductive health outcomes and empowering individuals.—APP

Preparations for 2nd Quetta property exhibition in full swing

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Chairman Khurshid Barlas, while talking to the media, Chairman Khurshid Barlas said that the second Quetta Property International Exhibition is being held from 9th to 11th June, 2023, at Expo Aljanat Palace. It was told that by the grace of Allah, the booking stage has been completed. A large number of various business communities associated with the Bank's project and tourism industry including renowned builders, developers, allied construction industry from across the country will participate in the exhibition. Real estate related companies will be part of the exhibition with new offers of new projects. Preparations for the exhibition are in full swing. The three-day exhibition is a great investment opportunity for overseas Pakistanis. The exhibition is a breath of fresh air in the country's situation, new projects will be created in Balochistan, facilities will be available to the people, employment opportunities will increase and the economy will improve. There will be excellent opportunities to get investments at national and international level. The aim of the exhibition is to promote the construction and development of Pakistan, to improve the reputation of Pakistan, and efforts are being made to increase trade and investment in the country.—DNA



CCII Chairman stresses public awareness

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Council of Islamic Ideology (CCII) Dr. Qibla Ayaz Tuesday emphasized for public awareness drive in all sections of media to discourage offensive content and highlight related laws to guide future young minds. Talking to the PTV news channel, he urged the electronic media to telecast the programs related to the biography of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) in order to respond this insolence by presenting the role of a true Muslim in light of divine commands and Sunnah. He said that the users must report this content on social media to Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) or Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony for timely handling the situation within the domain of laws and the Constitution. The regulation of harmful speech in on-line spaces requires drawing a line between legitimate freedom of speech and hate speech, he added. He said legal responsibility needs to be applied on digital platforms in relation to the distribution of illegal content, incitement to violence and terrorism, and more." Replying a question, he said "immoral and obscene content" will be a punishable offense under the new rules". Moreover, social media companies and service providers will be required to devise community guidelines in order to inform users about uploading content. He said that the government had already launched a strict crackdown drive against culprits involved in these activities which aimed to curb the incident involving the use of vulgar content. To another question, he said nowadays, social media has gained much fame and has become an inseparable part of our lives, adding, every individual in our society is involved with social media. Social media can be beneficial when used positively, he added.—APP

ANF seizes 2824.76 kg drugs; arrests 36 in 40 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized 2824.76 kg of drugs and 2309 litres of sulphuric acid, chemicals worth US\$ 39.658 million internationally, arrested 36 persons including two foreigners, and four women and impounded 11 vehicles while conducting 40 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country during last week. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 100.285 kg opium, 22.415 kg heroin, 2586.562 kg hashish, 6.412 kg methamphetamine (Ice), 2 kg amphetamine, 91.300 kg ephedrine, 116 grams ecstasy tabs (193 tabs), 720 grams retain tabs (2400 tabs), 14.950 kg axeman tabs (65000 tabs).

ANF Balochistan recovered 1856.45 kg of drugs and 2309 litres of sulphuric acid, and chemicals in 11 operations while arresting six accused including two foreigners involved in drugs smuggling and impounded three vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 50 kg opium, 15 kg heroin, 1698 kg hashish, 2.150 kg Ice drug and 91.3 kg Ephedrine.

ANF Punjab recovered 52.456 kg of drugs in seven operations and arrested eight accused including a woman involved in drugs smuggling and impounded three vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 5.460 kg heroin, 45.600 kg hashish, 1.342 kg Ice drug and 54 grams of ecstasy tabs (93 tabs).

ANF KPK recovered 501.199 kg of drugs in 11 operations and arrested six accused besides impounding two vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 37.200 kg opium, 349 grams heroin, 488.700 kg hashish and 14.950 kg Axemam tabs (65,000 tabs).

ANF Sindh recovered 296.155 kg of drugs in five operations and arrested five accused including a woman and impounded a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 85 grams of opium, one kg of heroin, 291.430 kg of hashish, 2.920 kg of methamphetamine (Ice) and 720 grams of retaining tabs (2400 tabs).—APP

HEC asks students to ensure university's NOC

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has alerted the students and parents that before taking admission, the students must ensure that the university has a valid NOC to offer MPhil/MS/equivalent and PhD programme. According to official sources, HEC Pakistan has made it mandatory since November 7, 2013, for all Universities/Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) before launching MS/MPhil or equivalent and a PhD programme. HEC asked the students to visit its website for updated NOCs given at the link: <http://www.hec.gov.pk/site/NOCs-MPhil-PhD>. Further, the affiliated colleges/institutions are not allowed to offer MS/MPhil/PhD and equivalent programmes.—APP

'There should be difference between journalists, party spokespersons'

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyung Aurangzeb has rejected a notion that journalists were missing during the rule of the incumbent government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif which has rather brought 7 points improvement in the country's ranking in the index for freedom of speech and media independence. "Name me one journalist who is missing, Imran Riaz is a spokesperson of a political party now," she said while talking to a journalist of a foreign media outlet trying to build a wrong perception about media independence and freedom of speech. No, you really have to draw the distinction. You name one person who is missing, one journalist who is being shot, one journalist who has been kidnapped, one journalist whose ribs are broken," she said while responding to a query. She further said, "Now, listen to me, you have to differentiate between a journalist and former journalists who have joined a political party. Once they have joined political parties, they are inciting violence, they are spokespersons of these political parties". Marriyung said the parallel should not be drawn among the parties' spokespersons and "independent journalists who report and who believe in true journalism." Imran Khan was called "media predator" while under Shehbaz Sharif's government, media freedom had improved by 7 points in less than one year time and the same organization "which called Mr Khan a media predator" had significantly improved rating of Pakistan in freedom of expression and media independence. She recalled journalists were arrested and silenced while their programs were sent off air and their channels faced suspension during the tenure of Imran Khan. "All the anchors today talk their minds, they are not silenced and I said before... name a journalist who is missing, none....", she remarked.—APP

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ALFRED GRANNAS
Germany committed to promoting rule of law, stability in Pakistan

Briefs

'G7 Summit meant how to "contain and counter" China'

ISLAMABAD: The Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7), met in Hiroshima for annual Summit on May 19-21, 2023. As anticipated, the just-ended summit was largely dominated by discussions on how to "contain and counter" China's burgeoning military and economic influence, exposing its internal discord and self-concocted insecurities. The G7 leaders introduced a new tool, the "Coordination Platform on Economic Coercion," aimed at discouraging politically motivated punitive trade measures, according to an article carried by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. Although China wasn't mentioned explicitly, the platform is widely perceived as an attempt to "encircle" China diplomatically. By fostering coordinated responses and countermeasures within their legal systems, the G7 aims to counter such practices. "These economic security tools will include steps to build resilience in our supply chains and protect sensitive technology," explained White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan during a post-summit press briefing in Hiroshima. This move underscores increasing concern among Washington and its allies regarding China's alleged weaponization of economic tools. The G7 leaders are keen on protecting cutting-edge technologies from their countries, ensuring that these innovations don't enhance others' military capabilities that "threaten global peace and security". While not stated outright, this refers to alleged efforts by Beijing, Moscow, and possibly Tehran and Pyongyang, to procure advanced equipment or expertise for military advancement. The goal is to limit the flow of "capital, expertise, and knowledge" from G7 companies to these countries.

Surprisingly, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, being the host, disclosed the main agenda of the Hiroshima summit in a pre-summit article published on May 13 in the Japan Forward, leaving little room for speculation.—DNA

IRSA releases 157,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 157,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 164,800 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarela Dam was 1425.73 feet and was 27.73 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 54,600 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1115.60 feet, which was 65.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 47,300 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Gudu and Sukkur was recorded as 70,600, 61,100, 42,800 and 13,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 34,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 18,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Pak-China MoU signed to deepen all-round Agri coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pak-China MoU has been signed to deepen all-round cooperation in agriculture sector, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday. The Gansu Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the Sindh Agriculture University of Tandojam officially signed a memorandum of understanding for the China-Pakistan flax research and innovation hub. Start from September 2020, Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu Province, has

Attackers on installations to be prosecuted under relevant laws

Parties that constitute the current federal government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif obtained more than two-thirds of the popular vote polled across all four provinces in the July 2018 general election: Khurram Dastgir

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Engineer Khurram Dastgir on Tuesday categorically said that those who attacked civilian installations on May 9 would be prosecuted under the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 and the Pakistan Penal Code while those who attacked military installations would be prosecuted under the Army Act 1952, which has a provision for doing so. Briefing foreign media on the current political situation here, he said, "No new legislation is under consideration. No new courts are being created". He said the insurrectionists would be prosecuted under existing laws on Pakistan's statute books, laws that were there and used by Imran Khan's government during 2018-22. The minister said the

parties that constitute the current federal government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif obtained more than two-thirds of the popular vote polled across all four provinces in the July 2018 general election. We represented an overwhelming majority of Pakistanis, he added. He went on to say that parliament would provide full funding for the general election and its security in the upcoming federal budget due on 9 June. Parliament would also complete its term in mid-August 2023 and elections would be held on schedule this autumn. The minister said PM Shehbaz Sharif's broad-based government was committed to the fundamental rights of all Pakistanis—of the victims as well as of the perpetrators. He said the events of 9-10

May were not a popular protest. They were not democratic dissent. Followers of Imran Khan (IK) staged a nationwide insurrection against a nuclear state, he said. Khurram said only a handful of IK supporters took to the streets after his arrest. Contrary to the perception that tens of thousands came out, there was no outpouring of Pakistanis, he added. He said democratic dissent was expressed peacefully—through slogans, songs, and protest placards; not through violence, arson, and wanton destruction. However, the IK's followers attacked, burned, and destroyed defence installations, martyrs' memorials and statues, communication infrastructure, broadcast infrastructure, schools, am-

bulances, police vehicles, and private cars and motorcycles, he said. The minister said even in Islamabad there were only a few dozen young people on the streets. IK-party insurrectionists went on a violent rampage across the country, from Karachi to Peshawar, he added. He said in its breadth and strategic targeting, the insurrection on May 9-10 echoed and reproduced the terrorist assault on Pakistan between 2007 and 2016. It also mirrored an event from exactly 100 years ago: the 1923 beer hall putsch by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party, he added. Khurram said nine years ago, IK and his followers got away with attacks on Parliament House, Pakistan Television, PM House,

and with assault hundreds of Islamabad policemen. IK and his followers also got away with an armed attack on Islamabad in October 2016, he added. The minister said PML-N 2013-18 elected government led by Nawaz Sharif gave the latitude to IK and his followers under the rubric of democratic dissent and protest. We would not repeat that mistake, he added. He said democracies around the world react to riots and insurrections, he said. Replying to a question, he said the government believed in freedom of expression and no journalist has been picked up, or beaten since its inception in April 2022. Video evidence that existed would be used to identify the culprits, he said.

Rehmani thankful to countries not participating in G-20 summit

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Jammu & Kashmir People's Freedom League and ex-Convener All Parties Hurriyat Conference AJK Muhammad Farooq Rehmani on Tuesday expressed his gratitude to China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Oman, Indonesia, and Mexico for their high moral decision to not send their delegations in the G-20 summit held in Srinagar. While thanking the embassies and missions of G-20 member countries, the chairman also requested to convey this message to the heads of state in their respective countries. He said that the Indian Modi administration had demolished Kashmir's indigenous status through a ruthless demographic changing plan and implemented draconian laws that had kept thousands of people in jails. He said that India was hoodwinking the world opinion and relevant UN resolutions by organizing a G-20 moot in the besieged city of Srinagar, where besides military and paratroopers, hundreds of rapid-force commandos had been brought to suppress any voice of dissent. Rehmani told the G-20 countries who didn't register that after the dismembering of the State in 2019 and revoking all its special-status laws, India's activities in the name of tourism in Kashmir were meaningless and fake and already India not Kashmir was beneficiary of tourism in Kashmir. Rehmani also appealed to other members of G-20 to think over the positive lines and boycott the moot, till India withdraws all its harsh laws, honors UN laws, and lifts all restrictions on Kashmir to pave the way for multiple dialogues on the future of Jammu and Kashmir.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Acting British High Commissioner to Pakistan Mr. Andrew Dalgeish calling on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at parliament house.—DNA

CPO visits Gujar Khan, Mandra, Jatli police stations

RAWALPIND: City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani paid visits to Gujar Khan, Mandra and Jatli police stations on Monday night and checked record of the cases, lockups, front desks and condition of the buildings, informed a police spokesman. The CPO during the visit also chaired a meeting which was attended by SDPO Gujar Khan, SHOs and Investigation officers and directed to make all-out efforts to control crime in their respective jurisdictions. The investigation process of the cases should be completed purely on merit and challans should also be submitted in time, the CPO said adding, police patrolling should further be made effective.—APP

Medicines have become increasingly expensive

DNA

ISLAMABAD Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Tuesday said medicines are becoming more and more expensive and gone out of the reach of the common man. The majority of the population reeling under unprecedented inflation is unable to get proper treatment due to the high price of medicines, he said. Shahid Rasheed

Butt said in a statement issued here today that taxes on the pharmaceutical industry should be abolished so that the people with eroded buying power can get affordable medicines. He said that the depreciation of the rupee, inflation and the high price of utilities have harmed the pharma industry as well as other industries and their business cost has increased a lot which is being shifted to the masses. The business leader said that almost every day some

essential medicine disappears from the market, which increases the public's anxiety. Shahid Rashid Butt said that since last July, the value of the rupee has decreased by 78%, fuel price has increased by 142% per litre, and electricity tariff has increased by 177%, which has affected the public and the business community. The overall cost of doing business for the industrial sector has increased by three hundred percent while the sales of the pharma industry have

decreased by twenty-three percent as people are compromising on healthcare.

He informed that there were 36 multinational pharma companies working in Pakistan in the early 2000s and the number is now down to 22 and it is set to decrease further if the situation was not improved.

In order to save this industry and give relief to the public, all taxes levied on the raw materials, packing materials, electricity, gas etc. bills of the pharma industry are abolished, he demanded.

Pakistani fruits find more avenues to China

BEIJING: In a milestone move to bolster trade ties between China and Pakistan, two new air cargo routes have been inaugurated recently between the two countries, according to a statement released by Nanning Customs District of China. It is learned that the new air routes will operate between Nanning, capital of China's southwest autonomous region of Guangxi, and the Pakistani cities of Karachi and Lahore, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. As per the announcement, the first freight flight between Nanning and Lahore took off on the early morning of May 16th, marking the first air freight route between Guangxi and Pakistan, and the following day, a second cargo route from Nanning to Karachi was launched. The Nanning-Karachi route is set to operate three times a week — on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, while the Nanning-Lahore route is scheduled to run four times a week — on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, overseas business manager of Guangxi Civil Aviation Industry Development Co., Ltd told the press. Gwadar Pro understands that flights from Karachi/Lahore to Nanning will primarily transport Pakistani fruits and seafood to China, and those from Nanning to Karachi/Lahore will deliver Chinese clothing accessories and other goods to the Pakistani market. It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan has enhanced collaboration with Guangxi over the past few years as a growing number of Pakistani enterprises increase their presence in business activities and exhibitions such as the China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) in the region.—DNA

OGRA webinar on LNG

ISLAMABAD. The Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority has conducted the 1st Session of the knowledge sharing Webinar on LNG. The participants included Ministry of Energy, Engro Elengy Terminal Limited, Pakistan Gasport Consortium Limited, Tabeer Energy Private Limited, Energas Terminal Private Limited, Port Qasim Authority and Karachi Port Trust. The session started with the recitation of the Holy Quran followed by the National Anthem. Chairman OGRA Mr. Masroor Khan gave the opening remarks highlighting the importance of LNG sector in the energy mix of Pakistan. He pointed out that Pakistan energy landscape has undergone transformation in the last few years with the LNG sector emerging as a vital component of the country's energy mix. The development of LNG infrastructure, including re-gasification terminals has enhanced Pakistan's energy availability and flexibility. He further highlighted the challenges and opportunities associated with its adoption. The following topics were covered in the presentations by the participants: History of LNG, Global LNG Outlook, LNG Sector in Pakistan, Policy provisions, supply demand and market overview, FSRU and Land based LNG storage and re-gasification terminals, projects regulatory and financial challenges, projects applicable codes and standards, Stages and challenges of LNG project development, production, Liquefaction and re-gasification technologies, Safety and environmental aspects of LNG projects, Current trends and future projections of the LNG Global market, trading and risk management strategies and tools, Fundamentals of Third party access to LNG infrastructure, Global LNG infrastructure and utilization, Risk assessment, Safety and security at Ports for LNG projects, Role of Port Authorities in managing and operation of LNG projects etc. The Webinar was attended by the technical officers of OGRA as well as the relevant stakeholders. It provided a platform for knowledge sharing of the best international practices in the LNG sector and the audience has appreciated the initiative taken by OGRA. The second session shall be convened on the 25th of May 2023 wherein presentations shall be given by Pakistan State Oil, Pakistan LNG Ltd., Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd., Sui Southern Gas Pipelines Ltd., LNG Virtual Pipeline licensees etc.—DNA

PFC to take part in TEXPO

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will take part in the 3-day 4th TEXPO starting from May 26 in Karachi to attract foreign buyers and explore new export markets.

Chief Executive Officer PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq talking to a delegation of exhibitors led by Zeeshan Elahi here on Tuesday said the event will showcase the best of what the textile and leather industry of Pakistan has to offer to foreign buyers.

The other products which would be showcased in the exhibition included the exhibition of sub-sectors of textile and leather including ready-made garments, gloves, accessories, carpets, home textiles and others, said a press release.

He said the main objective of the event is to connect the Pakistani business community with international buyers and to display the full range of Pakistan's products and garments under one roof for networking to develop long-term international business relations. He said business individuals, large-scale buying houses, chain stores, trade bodies, representatives of trade promotion organizations and government regulatory authorities including those from East Africa and Rwanda are expected to attend the event.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq said PFC and Chenone have already attended several other international fairs in the US, China, Italy, and Sri Lanka and introduced their products which are in great demand.—DNA



launched a work task to establish flax stress-resistance and breeding foreign intellectual achievements demonstration and promotion base.

The MoU, as the fruit, was signed through online linked by Dr. Ma Zhongming, President of the GAAS, and Prof. Dr. Fateh Mohammad

Maree, Vice Chancellor of Sindh Agriculture University of Tandojam. Both parties agreed to encourage the transfer of a series of modern agricultural technologies from GAAS to SAU, including innovation and cultivation techniques of fruit germplasm resources in cold and arid regions, cultivation of flax and molecular breeding, forage sorghum cultivation and feeding technique, breeding and release of new cultivars in cold and arid regions: cotton, rape, flax, small miscellaneous grains, etc., as well as education and training of agriculture talents in cold.

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Actions key to 'thaw' in Sino-US relations

Speaking to the media at the conclusion of the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan, United States President Joe Biden made the surprise prediction of a "thaw" in China-US relations. "I don't think there's anything inevitable about the notion that there's going to be this conflict" between the West and Beijing, Biden said, although coping with the alleged China challenge was an obvious focus of the just-concluded meeting. Also, mitigating the popular perception of the gathering's confrontational nature, the US president assured Beijing, "We all agree we're going to maintain the one-China policy". He then elaborated on Washington's version of "one China". There are subtle yet significant differences between Washington's "one China" and Beijing's. That is why Beijing speaks of the "one-China principle" while Washington refers to a "one-China policy". But they appear to see eye-to-eye on one crucial aspect: that maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is in the interests of all stakeholders. Even as the US presses ahead with its latest plans to arm Taiwan, Biden's message of not pursuing change to the "status quo" might be conducive to preventing an uncontrollable escalation of tensions. The same day the G7 concluded its Hiroshima summit, with a communique hyping up so-called Chinese "economic coercion", Chinese Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao met with US business representatives in Shanghai, promising a constantly improving environment for US companies. It is good for both sides when Beijing and Washington both work to mend fences. The current state of bilateral relations is concerning not only because it makes critically important communication difficult, if not completely impossible, but because it creates the impression that the world's two largest economies are inexorably heading toward a mutually debilitating confrontation. But as a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson indicated, communication for communication's sake will be of little help, because Beijing is frustrated that Washington is on the one hand calling for communication, while on the other hand trying to suppress China by foul means. Beijing wants Washington to show "sincerity", which may be too big of an ask — any meaningful move toward substantial improvement in bilateral ties may become a conspicuous weakness in partisan politics at home. Beijing is correct in pointing out the problems impeding bilateral ties have their roots in Washington's perception of China. But changes at that level don't take place easily. It is therefore to be hoped that Biden is basing his prediction on more than just a wing and a prayer. That there has been some substantial agreement reached behind the curtain or else a tangible branch is to be extended to Beijing.

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Federal debt limit a harmful game

Having cut short a trip to Asia to resume talks on raising the US debt ceiling ahead of the US Treasury's June 1 deadline for Congress to authorize more borrowing, US President Joe Biden spoke with Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy by phone on his way back to the United States. Biden told reporters that the phone call "went well" on his arrival at the White House on Sunday night, with McCarthy saying earlier in the day that it had been "productive". But that remains to be seen, with the two continuing their negotiations on Monday. Ahead of those talks, there was no sign of either side being prepared to give ground. The US government debt crisis has entered the 10-day countdown with some observers saying the two sides are playing a game of chicken. Republicans are demanding harsh social welfare spending cuts to reduce the US deficit as the condition for their approval to raise the debt limit, while Biden has countered with an agreement to reduce some spending and raising new revenue by increasing taxes on the rich and corporations. Republicans have refused to accept any such tax increases. If they fail to strike a debt deal this time, Washington will be unable to pay its bills. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in an interview on Sunday that "My assessment is that the odds of reaching June 15th, while being able to pay all of our bills, is quite low". Failure to do so would severely damage the US' global leadership as it would trigger shock waves worldwide and tarnish its image. That Biden canceled his planned visits to Australia and Papua New Guinea for the negotiations with McCarthy shows the graveness of the issue. Yet even with a US debt default within sight and the markets becoming increasingly jittery, neither side wants to give ground with next year's presidential election looming on the horizon. No wonder when the House Republican leadership and the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus raised proposals to resolve the debt ceiling issue on April 20, the Peter G. Peterson Foundation said in a statement "this is a moment for leadership that puts our nation above party politics". That proved not to be the moment. For the two parties, their political wrangling has become a game that takes precedence over everything. Damn the consequences.

Modernizing infrastructure: A key to socio-economic development

Abdul Rashid Shakir



Tokyo, New Delhi, Shanghai, New York, Mexico, Mumbai, Beijing, Osaka and Karachi — all have a bulging population, and accordingly have a pressing need for sufficient housing units, water supply, sanitation, educational facilities, healthcare institutions, employment opportunities, cultural spots and recreational points

Being engines of economic growth and social change, mega cities across the world have special infrastructure needs, because rapid transportation and easy communication guarantee access to greater economic opportunities; be it business, industry or services. Tokyo, New Delhi, Shanghai, New York, Mexico, Mumbai, Beijing, Osaka and Karachi — all have a bulging population, and accordingly have a pressing need for sufficient housing units, water supply, sanitation, educational facilities, healthcare institutions, employment opportunities, cultural spots and recreational points. Access to all these places requires an efficient transport and communication network. Urban transport systems of Trams, Metro Trains, Metro Buses and 3G/4G-enabled broadband and Wi-Fi services are significant developments in this regard. Lahore is Pakistan's second largest city after Karachi with a population of around 14 Million. It is one of Pakistan's major industrial and commercial hubs with a GDP (PPP) of more than \$85 Billion. Accordingly, transportation and communication needs of the city are manifold. Cognizant of the fact, Government of the Punjab has undertaken many infrastructure development projects in Lahore to ensure easy connectivity and rapid transportation to its citizens in a reliable and affordable manner in order to facilitate maximum economic activities for improving socio-economic indicators and a score on Human Development Index (HDI). Orange Line Metro Train System, and Metro bus System along with Feeder Routes are major urban transport initiatives of Punjab Metro Transit Authority (PMA) of the Government of Punjab in order to provide safe, efficient and affordable commuting facilities to the thriving citizens of Lahore. As far as modernizing road infrastructure is concerned, recently-completed Kalma Chowk Underpass

Remodeling Project on Ferozpur Road worth Rs 4.2 Billion is a remarkable project undertaken by Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab) for the opening of CBD Underpass and Central Business District (CBD) Punjab Boulevard along with the construction of Alizeb Road Underpass. The Project will not only improve the flow of traffic on the roads but would also spur economic activities in the surrounding areas of Gulberg and Walton. Moreover, Lahore Development Authority (LDA's) under-construction Samanabad Morr Underpass Project on Multan Road costing Rs 2.3 Billion, and Akbar Chowk Flyover-cum-Underpass Project on College Road worth Rs 3.1 Billion, and Lahore Flyover Bridge near Arfa Karim IT Tower on Ferozpur Road with a price tag of Rs 1.7 Billion are not less than valuable gifts for Lahorites. The widening of Ravi Bridge on GT Road, the construction of Niazi Chowk T Junction, and Shahdara Chowk Flyover are some other key infrastructure development projects to reduce the traffic pressure on major arteries of the cosmopolitan city. A very note-worthy mention in this regard is the construction of the long-awaited Imamiya Colony Railway Crossing Flyover in Shahdara by National Highways Authority (NHA), which would rid the commuters of long queues and highly tormenting traffic congestion on GT Road near Lahore. Under the welfare-friendly vision of the Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, the provincial government of Punjab is about to start a project for the remodeling of Jail Road Underpass on Ferozpur Road besides the refurbishment and upkeep of major roads of the mega city. It also mulls over undertaking other infrastructure projects in the city to streamline and smoothen traffic flow on important roads connecting commercially busy centers of the provincial capital. Punjab

Central Business District Development Authority, CBD Punjab, has also announced plans to launch the construction of a new 300-foot wide major road linking Walton Road and Ferozpur Road from Gulberg Central Business District. The Government is also proactively pursuing all pending road projects in the province to improve connectivity between farms, factories and markets in order to ensure better employability of the workforce in agriculture, industry and services. The construction of the above-cited roads, underpasses and flyovers would not only squeeze distances and shrink travel time between any two destinations but would also ease traffic pressure on the roads, resulting in saving time, fuel and productive working hours of the Labour force. It would ultimately lead to enhanced productivity of the entire economic system, which guarantees better socio-economic conditions of the masses. It is a no-brainer that true dividends of modern roads and transport infrastructure can only be received by using the modern tech-based products and services in different sectors of the economy. Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) of the Government of Punjab is rightly leading the province in adapting latest cutting edge technologies in making the governance efficient by ensuring delivery of services to masses with ease. It has successfully developed tech-apps to enhance productivity of education, health, law & order, transport, agriculture and livestock sectors. To wrap up, it is rightly said that investment in infrastructure is directly linked to GDP growth of a country. Modern infrastructure affords people greater opportunities for productive economic activities. It not only alleviates people from poverty but also improves their living standard, as it is estimated that 1% growth in infrastructure spending results in 1% growth in GDP per capita of an area. (arshakir.pmo@gmail.com)

Political Crisis in Israel and Netanyahu's Strategies

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



In the month of April presented exclusive challenges for the Israeli Prime Minister, as it coincides with the potential for clashes between Israelis and Palestinians due to the simultaneous occurrence of Passover and Ramadan. Israel's security establishment expressed concern over the intentions of Hezbollah, Iran, and Hamas to act against Israel, possibly simultaneously. Additionally, right-wing demonstrations against

The recent crises in Israel manifest clear tensions on Benjamin Netanyahu's efforts to maintain political balance and the deepening divisions within his government. Judicial reforms, although heavily favored by the extreme right wing, faced significant resistance from the security establishment, resulting in setbacks and attempts to halt legislation by members of the Likud Party. This led to resignations and efforts to marginalize those from the extreme right wing. This public rupture undermines the tensions generated by the lavish rewards given to the extreme right-wing arm. These rewards have significantly fragmented military command in Israel: the Coordination of Governmental Activities in the Territories (COGAT) and control of naval administration on the western coast, including oversight of illegal constructions, settlement planning, and construction, have been assigned to the Ministry of Defense and Treasury Minister Bezalel Smotrich, while the control of the police and border patrols on the western coast, traditionally under the supervision of the military, is entrusted to Between Guard. The establishment of a privatized militia further exacerbates these tensions for Between-Guard. Benjamin Netanyahu has so far been successful in maintaining party discipline, but cracks are becoming evident within the party alliance. The latest threats of withdrawal from the alliance have prompted calls for his replacement by Likud Party officials, signaling increasing paralysis among the extreme right-wing and ruling factions. In the month of April presented exclusive challenges for the Israeli Prime Minister, as it coincides with the potential for clashes between Israelis and Palestinians due to the simultaneous occurrence of Passover and Ramadan. Israel's security establishment expressed concern over the intentions of Hezbollah, Iran, and Hamas to act against Israel, possibly simultaneously. Additionally, right-wing demonstrations against Netanyahu took place during National Memorial Day and Independence Day, accompanied by increasing criticism of his policies and conduct in Washington. Amidst these circumstances, a conflict emerged between Netanyahu and President Isaac Herzog this

month. During the parliamentary recess, Netanyahu made efforts to ease tensions, reduce security concerns, and improve relations with the United States. He publicly declared Israel's non-involvement to diminish the strength of the protest movement, emphasizing his command and responsible leadership during the crisis moment. In response to public backlash against the ruling coalition's aggressive legislative agenda, he announced the termination of judicial reforms. Netanyahu acknowledged that the original form of judicial reforms, including the contentious issue of curtailing the powers of the Supreme Court and nullifying its decisions, would not be accepted. He also initiated discussions on revisiting the laws that exempt the ultra-Orthodox community from military service and additional benefits, recognizing their increased power during the initial months of his government. To address American and domestic criticism, Netanyahu began highlighting the ongoing negotiations under President Isaac Herzog's supervision and issued messages of compromise and agreement. Interviews with American media portrayed a somewhat optimistic image of the country's situation. Defense Minister Yves Gallant retracted his initial announcement to remove Netanyahu from office and indicated that Gilen, a member of the far-right Likud party, would not be appointed Consul General in New York. Netanyahu also took the step of removing his son Yair from social media platforms after he repeatedly posted inflammatory messages online. Furthermore, several government ministers, especially those who had not served in the military, abandoned their plans to deliver speeches at National Memorial Day ceremonies due to demands from bereaved families who recognized the politically charged nature of these events. In order to prevent escalations between Israelis and Palestinians during Ramadan, the Israeli government involved the Palestinian Authority in regional security conferences led by the United States, before shifting the focus towards Gaza in May. During the final days of Ramadan, the Israeli police were ordered to storm the Al-Aqsa Mosque once again, and entry for non-Muslims into the compound was prohibited. Israel responded with restraint to the initial rocket

fire from Gaza to prevent further escalation of violence. The government pledged to request a delay in the evacuation of Khan al-Ahmar, a Bedouin village in the West Bank, due to humanitarian concerns. However, throughout the month of April, Netanyahu's administration did not reflect a change in its actions and policies; instead, it pursued similar objectives through a different approach. This approach, characterized by a gradual process of judicial reexamination, carries the potential to significantly undermine Israeli democracy. Similar warnings have been issued by Poland's allies, who have experienced a gradual erosion of democratic institutions. All of these developments align with Netanyahu's previous modus operandi in the Palestinian context. After making a dramatic declaration to annex Palestinian territories and facing pressure from domestic and international sources, Netanyahu decided to abandon his initial plan in 2020. However, instead of fully retracting it, he cleverly shifted towards a de facto annexation process that ultimately serves the same purpose. In the month of May, with the resumption of the Knesset after the recess, Netanyahu pursued a different agenda, which included securing approval of the budget, as required by law by the end of the month, and initiating attacks against the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza. While discussions regarding judicial reform continued at President Isaac Herzog's residence, no substantial progress was being made, and Netanyahu diverted public attention away from it and towards his comfort zone. However, during the current session of the Knesset, which will continue until the end of July, there is a possibility of resuming the process of enacting anti-democratic legislation at varying speeds, and rhetoric against pro-democracy protests is once again emerging from the parliament. The pro-democracy movement, which represents the podium of democracy, shows no signs of retreating. In April, it successfully maintained its momentum, kept people on the streets, and demonstrated its impact. In the first week of May, the movement declared a national day of disturbance and protest to advocate for equality within Israel. Even during the war with Gaza, the protest movement managed to sustain its activities, taking necessary security precautions. After several weeks of relative domestic silence, two rival camps in Israel are once again prepared to intensify their struggle for the country's identity and fundamental values.

Briefs

Mazari and Chohan also quit PTI

FROM PAGE 01
Mazari said she is not only leaving her party but also politics. "From today onwards, I am not a part of any political party." The senior PTI leader also said her health deteriorated during the last 12 days of the detention. "My children and parents are [now] my priority," she remarked. "I condemn violence against state symbols like the GHQ, parliament and the Supreme Court," she added.

Sharing her ordeal, Mazari said her daughter, Imaan Mazari, had to go through a tough time due to her repeated arrests. "When I was taken to jail for the third time, my daughter was crying a lot, I saw her video." The seasoned politician went on to say that she had also submitted an affidavit to the Islamabad High Court (IHC) pledging that she would not become a part of any violent protest in future. The senior vice president of the former ruling party had been arrested several times during the past few days following the May 9 riots triggered by the arrest of the former prime minister in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

Earlier, she was re-arrested once again after the Gujranwala court approved her bail in a case related to the vandalism and attacks on defence and public installations including Lahore Corps Commander's House and the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi during the violent protests. Shortly after her presser, Fayyazul Chohan addressed the media and also announced parting ways with the party. "I will continue exposing anti-Pakistan elements. I will say categorically that there was no PTI leader present who could stop workers from violence on May 9," he remarked while addressing a press conference in Islamabad.

Opposing Imran Khan's "anti-establishment" tirade, Chohan said politicians are not supposed to clash with the state institutions. "I had been sidelined in the party for the last one year and even once denied permission to meet Imran Khan in Zaman Park." He announced quitting the party saying he will continue serving the country and playing an active part in politics. Reacting to the PTI leaders' departure, Khan has claimed that they had been pressurised into leaving the party.

"My sympathies go to all those who are under pressure and have been made to leave the party. And I commend and salute all the senior members who are resisting the extreme pressure to quit the party," Khan wrote on his official Twitter handle last week. Following the May 9 vandalism, the high-powered National Security Committee (NSC), comprising top civil and military leadership of the country, vowed to try the miscreants under relevant laws of the country including the Army Act.

PM directs 'maximum relief' in budget

FROM PAGE 01
The economic team briefed PM Shehbaz about budget preparation besides the revised targets of tax collection for the current fiscal year, and the proposed targets for the next fiscal year. The meeting was informed that after approval from the federal cabinet, the budget 2023-24 would be presented on June 9. It was also informed that Pakistan's economy is inching towards stability and the fiscal deficit was continuously declining.

Expressing satisfaction over the performance on the economic front, he said, due to better economic policies, the country's current account balance turned to a surplus after several years. He also expressed satisfaction over the declining trend in the urea fertilizer prices saying that it became possible only due to the government's timely action. Availability of fertilizer at affordable prices, he further said, would not only ensure the prosperity of the farmers but the country would also move towards self-sufficiency in the agricultural commodities.

Seven arrested over Real Madrid's Vinicius racist abuse

"The league that once belonged to Ronaldinho, Ronaldo, Cristiano (Ronaldo) and (Leo) Messi, now belongs to racists"

DNA

MADRID: Police arrested seven men on Tuesday over separate alleged racist incidents against Real Madrid's star winger Vinicius Jr. Four men were arrested in Madrid, meanwhile the remaining were detained in Valencia. Earlier, Vinicius had said La Liga "belongs to racists" after suffering vile abuse during Sunday's clash at Valencia.

The 22-year-old Brazilian also identified the person hurling racist insults in the crowd during the second half. The match was delayed for several minutes due to the incident. A hate crime investigation was also opened after an inflatable effigy, wearing Vinicius Jr's jersey, was hung from a bridge in front of the club's training grounds in January.

"It was not the first time, not the second and not the third. Racism is normal in La Liga. The competition thinks it's normal, the (Spanish) Federation also thinks it's normal and opponents encourage



it," Vinicius wrote on Instagram on Sunday. "The league that once belonged to Ronaldinho, Ronaldo, Cristiano (Ronaldo) and (Leo) Messi, now belongs to racists. "A beautiful nation, which wel-

comed me and which I love, but one which has agreed to export the image of a racist country to the world. "I'm sorry for the Spaniards who don't agree, but today, in Brazil,

Spain is known as a country of racists. Unfortunately, for everything that happens every week, I have no way of defending it. I agree." La Liga said they were investigating what happened and will take le-

gal action, if necessary, against the perpetrators. "La Liga has filed complaints (to relevant authorities) on nine occasions in the last two seasons," said the top flight in a statement. "La Liga has been fighting against this kind of behaviour for years and promoting the positive values of sport, not only on the pitch but also off it."

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti also expressed his disappointment over the unfortunate incident. "The Spanish league has a problem, and Vinicius is not the problem. Vinicius is the victim. There's a very serious problem," Ancelotti said, adding that Vinicius was "sad, not angry" after the incidents at Mestalla.

Vinicius also received a straight red in injury time towards the end of the match for hitting Hugo Duro during a brawl.

"The fact I thought about taking him off because of the racist atmosphere does not seem good to me," Ancelotti told reporters. "What has happened today has happened before, but not like that, it's unacceptable."

Babar, Naseem join Colombo Strikers in LPL 2023

ISLAMABAD: The Colombo Strikers, who will play their first season of the Lanka Premier League this year, announced a star-studded Icon Players line-up on Tuesday. The Icon Players include Pakistan captain Babar Azam, highly talented Pakistan speedster Naseem Shah and Sri Lankan T20 stars Matheesha Pathirana and Chamika Karunaratne. The Colombo franchise in a statement expressed the hope to receive a lot of attention from cricket fans around the world with Pakistan superstar Babar Azam in their set-up. The top-order batter has amassed a whopping 9201 runs in 260 T20s at a brilliant average of 44.02. Fast bowler Naseem Shah will be looking to lead the bowling attack with Pathirana. The youngster has taken 73 wickets in 76 matches at a magnificent average of 29.75.

The 20-year-old Matheesha Pathirana has caught the cricketing world by storm with his performances in T20s in the recent past. The fast bowler has picked up 22 wickets in 20 matches at a spectacular average of 22.36. Meanwhile, the bowling all-rounder Chamika Karunaratne will play a vital role in the Colombo Strikers team. The experienced campaigner has taken 60 wickets and scored 726 runs in 93 T20 matches. Speaking about the announcement of the Icon Players, Sagar Khanna, the owner of the Colombo Strikers said, "We are absolutely thrilled to have four of the biggest T20 stars as a part of our Icon Players line-up. We have built a strong core group of players around which we will construct a formidable team for the season. With these superstars with us, we are well on our way to forming a power-packed team." The Colombo Strikers will be in action in their first season of the Lanka Premier League in July-August 2023. - DNA

Leicester on brink of Premier League exit

LONDON: Seven years ago, Leicester lifted the Premier League trophy. Now they are on the brink of relegation from the top-flight after a miserable season. The Foxes, who drew 0-0 at Newcastle on Monday, will only avoid relegation if they beat West Ham this weekend on the final day of the season and fourth bottom Everton drop points at home to Bournemouth. Dean Smith adopted a safety-first approach against Newcastle and Leicester failed to muster a shot until stoppage-time, but they kept their first clean sheet in the league since November. It is a far cry from the heady days of 2016, when Claudio Ranieri delivered a fairytale triumph for the ages, overcoming monumental odds to win the title after Leicester narrowly avoided relegation the previous year.

Despite that incredible success, the Italian did not last long at the King Power Stadium, but the arrival of Brendan Rodgers in 2019 gave fresh impetus to the Thai-owned club. They finished fifth in the Premier League two years in a row - just missing out on Champions League qualification - and won the FA Cup for the first time in 2021. Even last year the club ended a comfortable eighth and reached the semi-finals of the Europa Conference

League. But things began to unravel for Leicester in the first game of this season when they let a 2-0 lead slip to draw 2-2 with Brentford. What followed was a horror show as they lost six straight league matches and despite sporadic mini revivals they have been unable to pull themselves clear of danger. Leicester have scored more goals - 49 - than any other club in the bottom half of the table but their defensive problems have cost them dear. Smith, who was appointed as interim manager after Rodgers left by mutual consent in April, was unapologetic after his side's defensively minded performance against Newcastle.

"We haven't kept a clean sheet for too long and the reason we are where we are is because of that in my opinion," he said. The former Aston Villa boss added: "It's too little, too late, who knows? But we've taken it to Sunday now."

Leicester have long been a byword for canny recruitment with Jamie Vardy, Riyad Mahrez, N'Golo Kante and Kasper Schmeichel playing starring roles in their title-winning side. They continued to recruit well, bringing in players of the calibre of Youri Tielemans, James Maddison and Wesley Fofana. Fofana signed for Chelsea last year while Schmeichel left for Nice, de-

priving the club of leadership and experience on the pitch. Vardy is now a fading force. Signings including Patson Daka, Boubakary Soumare, Jannik Vestergaard and Wout Faes have not made the desired impact.

Rodgers raised the alarm in the early weeks of the season, saying he had "not had the help in the market this team needed". "I came to Leicester to compete and initially I was able to do that," he said in September. "You have to add quality but in the last two (transfer) windows we haven't been able to do that." Two of Leicester's star names - Tielemans and Maddison - are likely to leave the club if they go down. Vardy, for so long the team's talisman, is 36 and has had a peripheral role this term, while central defender Jonny Evans has only played 12 league games all season. Dropping into the Championship is not the financial calamity it once was, with clubs cushioned by generous parachute payments for up to three years.

But losing their Premier League status for the first time in nine years will be a huge blow to the pride of a club who had experienced the unexpected thrill of winning silverware so recently. It will be a long way back to the top. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed Special Representative on Afghan Affairs, Asif Durrani calls on the MOS Hina Rabbani Khar. - DNA

HEC upset Army in women's basketball event

QUETTA: Higher Education Commission (HEC) upset Pakistan Army in the first match of the women's basketball event during the ongoing 34th National Games here today. HEC players were on song after making comeback in the second half. Army took an early lead but HEC found their players in great rhythm to set the tone for their team as

they beat the opponents by 47-35. The winning side topped the group in four-team event. The other participating teams in the event are WAPDA and Balochistan. It must be noted here that HEC was banned from the event during last six years. Their victory against Army registered their arrival on a higher note. HEC's top-performer Hamda told GeoSuper. tv that the victory was too emotional for them. "It feels like a dream come true moment for us," she said. "We were banned from the event for last six years. So, this comeback victory was a huge bonus for us," she added. Hamda, who belongs to Lahore, wants to lead HEC to winning the title. "People underestimated us and we showed our dominance today. Now, we want to win the title tomorrow," she concluded. HEC will now face WAPDA tomorrow which will decide the champions of women's basketball event. Top team on the pointstable will win the event. - DNA

Gundogan urges Man City to stay focused

LONDON: Ilkay Gundogan has urged Manchester City to stay focused as the Premier League champions prepare for the climax to their treble bid. City were crowned English champions for the fifth time in six seasons on Saturday when second-placed Arsenal lost at Nottingham Forest. Pep Guardiola's side enjoyed their title party on Sunday with a 1-0 win against Chelsea before skipper Gundogan lifted the trophy. With their third successive title in the bag, City can focus on emulating the Manchester United team that won the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup in 1998-99. But before that City must finish their league campaign with trips to Brighton and Brentford on Wednesday and Sunday respectively. City, winner of their last 12 league matches, are unbeaten in 24 games and German midfielder Gundogan is wary of losing momentum.

"We haven't lost any games for so many weeks and that's the standard that we have to set for ourselves," he said. "We do nothing different - we do the same things that we've done in the last few weeks and hopefully it can be a really special end to the season. "I love the club and being part of this amazing team. Obviously, we want to finish the season with two more trophies. "We have two more big finals, and the last two games of the Premier League season are going to be preparation for that. We don't want to drop anything. I would love to lift two more trophies." City's treble chase comes down to two matches as they face Manchester United in the FA Cup final at Wembley on June 3, and Inter Milan in the Champions League final in Istanbul seven days later. Belgium midfielder Kevin De Bruyne, who like Gundogan is now a five-time Premier League winner, is confident City can do something "special" at the end of their latest triumphant campaign. - Agencies

BCCI willing to accept hybrid model: Report

"With the PCB gaining support from all other Asian nations, BCCI is willing to go ahead with the hybrid model of Asia Cup. However, BCCI has put forth a new condition. It wants written assurance from the PCB on visiting India for the World Cup 2023 in October," the report stated

DNA

LAHORE: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is willing to accept the hybrid model for the Asia Cup, which was proposed by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). However, according to a report by Inside Sport, the BCCI wants written assurance from the PCB over visiting India for this year's World Cup.

"With the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) gaining support from all other Asian nations, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is willing to go ahead with the hybrid model of Asia Cup. However, BCCI has put forth a new condi-

tion. It wants written assurance from the PCB on visiting India for the World Cup 2023 in October," the report stated. The report added that the BCCI is likely to officially accept the hybrid model during the Special General Meeting in Ahmedabad on May 27.

It must be noted that BCCI has refused to send their team to Pakistan for the Asia Cup and is keen on ensuring that the event is held at a neutral venue. However, the PCB is not interested in hosting the event outside Pakistan since it would affect its efforts with regards to the return of international cricket in the country. In order to resolve the deadlock, the PCB presented the hybrid



model with two options. In the first option, India will play their matches at a neutral venue where as all other matches will be played

in Pakistan. In another option, four matches of the group stage in the first phase will take place in Pakistan whereas the second phase, in which matches of the Indian team followed by the next stage matches including the final, will be played at a neutral venue. Earlier, the chairman of the PCB Management Committee, Najam Sethi, called for a rational approach to solve the looming crisis that threatens the successful hosting of the Asia Cup and the country's participation in the ODI World Cup this year.

Talking to the media on the occasion of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC)

meeting, Sethi said the Pakistan team's chances of traveling to India for the ODI World Cup are low. "In case of India's refusal to travel to Pakistan to compete in the Asia Cup, chances are there that the Pakistan government would not allow the Men in Green to cross the borders for their World Cup participation. In that case, cricket will be the ultimate sufferer," Sethi said. "There should be a middle way to solve problems that surely threaten the smooth hosting of ICC and ACC events. In case of India's refusal to travel to Pakistan for the Asia Cup, the government will not allow us to travel to India to figure in the World Cup matches," he added.

Rights of millions linked to elections

FROM PAGE 01

the ECP lawyer requested. However, Justice Bandial asked Swati to present his arguments in the case. "If you want to raise any new point in the next hearing, you can do it," the top judge remarked, asking about the new grounds that could be taken in the review petition. Subsequently, Swati started presenting his arguments. He contended that the jurisdiction of ECP's review petition was not limited to constitutional cases, saying that the top court's jurisdiction could be extended but not reduced. In cases pertaining to reviews, the SC's jurisdiction is limited to civil and criminal cases, the lawyer said. Here, Justice Ahsan pointed out that approaching courts for fundamental rights was regarded as a civilian case. "But proceedings under Article 184(3) are not civil in nature," Swati argued.

The judge responded that one section of Article 184(3) falls under public interest and the other pertains to fundamental rights. "If a case linked to elections comes [to the SC] from the high court, will it not be a civilian case?" Justice Munib asked, to which the ECP lawyer said that the constitutional authority of a high court was greater than that of the apex court.

"According to you, if there is an appeal from the High Court, the jurisdiction is limited," Justice Akhtar pointed, responding to Swati. "But in the review petition, your position is that the scope is not limited. Is this not discrimination in the case of fundamental rights?" He also asked why the SC would create ambiguity in its jurisdiction.

At that, the ECP lawyer said that Article 184(3) did not give the right to appeal, adding that due to this the scope of the review petition could not be limited. "The court has to take into account the requirements of justice in the review," Swati went on to say, adding that new points could only be raised in constitutional cases.

"Are you arguing that a review under 184(3) should be heard as an appeal?" Justice Akhtar asked, to which the lawyer replied in the affirmative. "In cases pertaining to Article 184(3), the jurisdiction of review is not limited," Swati added.

Meanwhile, Justice Ahsan stated that if the ECP lawyer's argument was accepted, a hearing would have to be immediately conducted in the matter of review. "The Constitution doesn't say that the scope of the right to appeal and review is same." Justice Munib also observed that accepting the ECP's request would increase complications.

For his part, Swati said that the Constitution did not limit the scope either. "For absolute justice in reviews, the court can also use Article 187 of the Constitution."

Bilawal lauds Turkiye, KSA, China...

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terrorist organisations, the minister criticised the Modi administration for engaging in terrorism activities against Indian minorities, including Muslims and Christians. He pointed out the irony of the Indian government labeling advocates for human rights in Kashmir as terrorists when they themselves had been victims of terrorism.

"We stand for peace and represent the people affected by terrorism," he stated. Referring to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he asserted that when he called him a butcher, members of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) started crying and placed a bounty on his head. He questioned the true nature of terrorism, asking whether it was those who put a price on the head of a foreign minister or those who had been victims of terrorism themselves. Bhutto Zardari emphasised that as the foreign minister, he represented not just a political party but every citizen of Pakistan. He reiterated that the Kashmir issue was not solely a problem between Pakistan and India but a matter concerning the people of Kashmir. He believed that the issue had become an international problem and could only be resolved by granting the Kashmiris their right to self-determination.

Briefs

Turkiye tests ballistic missile Tayfun

ANKARA: Turkish missile producer Roketsan Tuesday successfully tested the short-range ballistic missile Tayfun (Typhoon) in the country's Black Sea province of Rize. Ismail Demir, the head of the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB), congratulated the team involved in the project. Tayfun is Turkiye's longest-range missile so far. The firm previously tested the missile in October 2022, when it hit a target from 560 kilometers (some 348 miles) away. Meanwhile, the images of the Cenk ballistic missile, announced by President Recep Tayyip Erdo an following the introduction of Tayfun, were displayed for the first time by the SSB head on May 12, 2023.

The Cenk is larger than Roketsan's earlier ballistic missile systems, Bora and Tayfun. Roketsan is a leading developer of missile and rocket systems. The company has developed several types of smart ammunition that were fired from the Turkish Bayraktar TB2 unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) in several warzones, including Syria, Karabakh and Ukraine, destroying enemy military gear from tanks and howitzers to air defense systems.—DNA

WhatsApp introduces much-anticipated edit feature

NEW YORK: For smartphone users with fumble fingers, or anyone who sent an embarrassing misspelling or autocorrect, help is finally at hand. WhatsApp, one of the world's most popular messaging apps, has introduced a long-desired feature: the ability to edit messages after sending them. "For the moments when you make a mistake or simply change your mind, you can now edit your sent messages on WhatsApp," the app said in a Monday blog post.

Like Twitter did with its Blue subscription-only function, the edited texts will have a notification saying that the message was edited. Unlike Twitter, though, there will be no way to see the previous versions of an edited message. The feature will only be valid for 15 minutes after sending a message — unlike Twitter, which allows its Blue subscribers a half-hour to edit tweets. After that, there will be no way to edit the message, but it can still be deleted, with a "This message has been deleted" notification in its place.—APP

Germany reports 15,500 child abuse cases

BERLIN: Germany reported over 15,500 child abuse cases in 2022, the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) said on Tuesday.

BKA's President Holger Munch said sexualized violence against minors remains a serious problem in Germany, despite increased efforts to protect children. "In Germany, an average of 48 children become victims of sexual violence every day. This shows how dramatic the situation is," he told a news conference in Berlin. German authorities carried out 15,520 child abuse investigations last year, up from 15,507 cases opened in 2021.

17,437 children under the age of 14 were victims of sexualized violence in 2022, according to official data. Munch called for reforms and more powers for the police to combat child abuse, and protect children in the digital environment. "Stopping violence against children and ending sexual abuse are our top priorities. But in order to carry out successful investigations, we need the necessary powers and a better legal framework," he said. Munch underlined that they need new rules that would require internet providers to store user IP addresses for a longer period so that they can identify the criminal gangs and perpetrators of child abuse.—Agencies

To defuse dollar dominance

Iran, Indonesia agree to trade in local currencies

NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: President Ebrahim Raisi says Iran and Indonesia aim to increase their trade value to 20 billion dollars, stressing that both sides are resolute on promoting exchanges using national currencies.

The Iranian president, who is on an official visit to Indonesia at the head of a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, made the remarks in a joint press conference with his Indonesian counterpart Joko Widodo on Tuesday.

The Iranian president said the signing of different documents for bilateral cooperation in various sectors reaffirms both sides' will to develop relations in all fields.

In the presence of Raisi and Widodo, senior officials of Iran and Indonesia signed 11 documents and agreements to strengthen cooperation in preferential trade, cancellation of visas, cultural exchanges, supervision over the pharmaceu-



tical products, science and technology as well as oil and gas.

Raisi also said oppressive sanctions and pressure have failed to hinder Iran's progress, expressing Tehran's firm determination to improve relations with Muslim and neighboring states. He added that despite pressure and oppressive sanc-

tions, the Iranian youths have succeeded in taking major steps towards the improvement of science and technology as well as the country's economic development.

"Sanctions and threats have never been able to stop Iran," he added. Reiterating Iran's foreign policy to boost relations

with powerful Muslim and neighboring states, he said, "The expansion of ties with Indonesia, as one of important and effective countries in Asia and the world and a member of important regional and international organizations, is very important for Iran."

He noted that Iran and Indonesia enjoy diverse ca-

had good interactions in various political, economic, trade, regional and international fields," Raisi emphasized. He added that Tehran and Jakarta have a common stance on key regional and global issues, including Palestine and Afghanistan. "The two countries are committed to supporting the rights of the Palestinian people until the liberation of al-Quds," he said. The Iranian chief executive also stressed the importance of establishing an inclusive government in Afghanistan with the participation of all ethnic and religious groups which strives to restore the Afghan people's rights. Two decades of the US presence in Afghanistan have had no outcome but destruction and death of the Afghan people, Raisi said. The Iranian president emphasized that Iran and Indonesia believe in serious fight against unilateralism in the regional and international issues.

Anti-refugee rhetoric

11 members of Turkiye's opposition resign alliance

Turkiye nabs 11 spying for Mossad

ANKARA: Eleven co-founding members of Turkiye's opposition Future Party, the main component of the Six-Party opposition coalition, have resigned in protest against the anti-refugee rhetoric of Nation Alliance candidate, Kemal Kilicdaroglu. A member of the Future Party's Board of Directors and senior adviser to the party's chairman, Bayram Zilan, announced the collective resignation, explaining that the members are very disappointed by the emergence of contradictions between the party's programme and practices, stressing that the party has turned into a bloc where merit and work are ignored. "We no longer want to be the human source of personal ambitions because our goal is to make clean politics," Turkiye's CNN reported

Zilan as saying. He pointed out that the results of the first round of the presidential elections held on 14 May were full of lessons, stressing that the members who resigned from the party will stand against those who promise to load refugees onto trucks and deport them.

"We will be against violence and terrorism, against blood and hatred," he said in a clear indication of support for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the second round of the presidential elections. Kilicdaroglu's hostile remarks against Syrian refugees have sparked controversy across Turkiye, some claim he has adopted the policy of far-right parties in an attempt to win more votes in the second round of the presidential elections.—Agencies

ANKARA: Turkiye's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) on Tuesday said it had caught 11 people, including two Turkish nationals, who were spying for the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad. The group of 15 operated a countrywide network and was helmed by Selçuk Kuçukkaya, a man trained in Europe, the agency said in a statement. MIT officers led an investigation in coordination with the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on Kuçukkaya, with whom Mossad got in contact via Serkan Ozdemir, a former Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) personnel who fled Turkiye to dodge prosecution for being a member of the Gulenist Terror Group (FETÖ). Kuçukkaya met in person with Mossad executives who introduced themselves as Jose-Jorge Satia, Thomas Alfonso, and Raul in several European countries where he was put through specific trials and spy training. He was also taught the agency's secret communication system and could contact other operatives through it. According to MIT, Kuçukkaya was tasked with gathering intelligence on a company and 23 individuals with trade ties to Iran and targeted by Israel.—Agencies

'Only a warm winter can save Europe this year'

DOHA: Qatar's energy minister warned on Tuesday the "worst is yet to come" for Europe's oil and gas shortages, saying a warm winter had prevented greater difficulties in recent months. Saad al-Kaabi and his Saudi counterpart Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said a lack of investment in oil and gas, as the world tries to transition to cleaner fuels to prevent global warming, risked causing an energy crunch. "The only thing that saved humanity and Europe this year was a warm winter, and the slowdown in the economy," Qatari Energy Minister Saad Al-Kaabi told the Qatar Economic Forum.

"If the economy starts churning back up in (2024) and you have just a regular winter, I think the worst is yet to come. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine sparked an energy supply crisis, Europe dodged serious problems this past winter largely because of milder-than-expected temperatures. But Kaabi and Prince Abdulaziz both told the conference further problems were looming.

"If (European leaders have) a proper plan and sit down with producers, and oil and gas companies are not demonized, reality will kick in and we'll have a sensible solution," Kaabi said. Qatar has announced a series of major gas supply deals and is engaged in developing North Field, which contains the world's biggest natural gas deposits, raising its production to 126 million tonnes per year by 2027. Demand is so great that all the expanded production for the North Field East and North Field South could be tied up in long-term deals by the end of the year, Kaabi said. "There is a potential that we will run out of all the gas from the NFE and NFS by the end of the year, as far as long-term contracts," he said. "That's obviously a very big demand."—Agencies

Ukrainian F-16 training program underway: Borrell

BRUSSELS: Western countries have already started to train Ukrainian pilots in Europe to fly US-designed F-16 fighter jets, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell confirmed on Tuesday. Speaking prior to the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting, the diplomat said that he was "happy that finally the training of pilots of F-16 has started in several countries," mentioning Poland in particular. However, he would not say how many Ukrainians are being taught to fly the aircraft, or which other countries are currently laying the groundwork for such efforts. He went on to concede that the training "will take time," adding that this step would open the door for the jets to eventually be provided to Ukraine. Borrell also compared the deliberations about sending Western-made modern jets to Kiev with the push to provide Ukraine with Leopard main battle tanks, saying that "in the beginning everybody is reluctant," but then "the decision comes to provide this military support because it is absolutely needed for Ukraine to continue defending."—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar, Saud Bin Abdul Rehman Al Thani calls on Minister of State for Petroleum. Minister of State for Petroleum. Both sides discussed areas of mutual interest.—DNA

Ukraine losing 10,000 drones per month

LONDON: Ukraine has suffered a massive loss of 10,000 drones per month in its war against Russia, which has effectively utilized electronic warfare to down the UAVs provided by the Western countries, a British think tank reports. Russia's use of technology-based defense systems has contributed to the staggering loss of Ukrainian drones amid the persisting use of navigational interference by the Russian military in the battle area as a form of electronic protection, the UK-based Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) unveiled in a new report.

The report appears to entirely dismiss earlier media campaigns by Western news outlets, blaming Russian use of a large number of "Iranian drones" for major losses inflicted on Ukrainian side. Both Tehran and Moscow had totally rejected such reports.

RUSI further insisted, Russia has demonstrated that it is "highly capable" of intercepting and decrypting Ukrainian military communications. "Russian EW is also apparently achieving real-time interception

and decryption of Ukrainian [US-made] Motorola 256-bit encrypted tactical communications systems, which are widely employed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine," the report added.

It also pointed out that Russian troops have adjusted their sending of electronic warfare systems, setting one around each 10 kilometer along the front lines, which run through Ukraine's eastern and southern districts.

According to the report, Ukraine's monumental losses of drones include both military and commercial UAVs that have been heavily utilized for its war with Russia.

It then noted that Gyrocopter, a commercial drone, has been used for "reconnaissance" while other types have been used in direct assaults as well as targeting tools to coordinate artillery barrages. Despite its incredibly high losses of UAVs, the report further

underlines that Kiev is capable of making, purchasing and acquiring the required number of drones, without elaborating on the funding amid the country's broken economy and the widely reported fact that it obtains nearly all of its weaponry through military grants from the US and the European Union.

Other changes have been identified in Russian military operations during the second year of

the war, the RUSI report adds. It found that Russian forces are flexible and make changes to redress their deficiencies.

Although the Ukraine conflict has witnessed "high-tech tactics stalled or countered by rough terrain, electronic jammers and older tactics such as trench warfare, the use of drones has been a major part of both side's doctrine," the report emphasizes. "In addition to reconnaissance purposes, they've been used in direct assaults as well as targeting tools to coordinate artillery barrages, the latter of which has been a dominant element in the conflict."

The West has supplied Kiev with tens of billions of dollars worth of various weaponry since the onset of Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine last year. Moscow insists it launched the operation as a security measure against persisting eastern advance of the US-led NATO military alliance and the protection of the Russian-speaking population in eastern Ukraine from abusive treatment by Kiev forces.—Agencies



Hungary's Orban criticizes EU's sanctions policy

DOHA: Criticizing the EU's sanctions against Russia, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said, "sanction policy of EU simply does not work."

It is not reasonable to introduce sanction packages for the 11th time hoping that the outcome will be different, Orban said at Qatar Economic Forum on Tuesday. After the beginning of the war between Russia and Ukraine in February 2022, the Western world, especially Europe, tries to paralyze the Russian economy by implementing sanctions, such as export bans and prohibitions to provide strategic products. He stressed that instead of getting involved in the war, escalation should be stopped. He also said Hungary has a nuclear power plant, which is based on Russian technology, and the country has to use Russian technology because using a different one is too risky.—DNA

Climate activists disrupt air traffic in Geneva

GENEVA: Protesters on the tarmac at Geneva airport briefly disrupted air traffic Tuesday before operations were gradually resumed, the airport said, as dozens of climate activists blocked a nearby business jet convention.

"Due to the incursion of people on the tarmac, the air traffic was momentarily disrupted. It has been gradually resuming since 12:40 pm (1040 GMT)," Geneva airport's official Twitter account said. The notice came as environmental groups said around 100 climate activists from 17 countries had disrupted the next-door European Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition (EBACE) — Europe's biggest sales fair for private jets. In a joint statement, Greenpeace, Stay Grounded, Scientist Rebellion and Extinction Rebellion said the activists were peacefully occupying jets exhibited for the event by Geneva airport. Around a dozen police officers had rapidly intervened to remove the activists, including some that had attached themselves to planes, the ATS news agency said. Geneva police spokeswoman Tiffany Cudre-Mauroux told AFP that around 80 people had been detained.

Images published on Twitter showed the activists camped out around shiny jets, brandishing colourful banners with the words "ban private jets" and "private jets burn our future". They also plastered some planes with messages resembling warning labels on cigarette packages, identifying them as "toxic objects", according to the joint statement.—APP

Prince Harry loses bid over security

LONDON: Prince Harry has lost an attempt to challenge the UK government over his security arrangements while in the UK, according to a ruling published on Tuesday.

Harry and his wife Meghan lost their UK taxpayer-paid protection when they quit frontline royal duties in 2020 and moved to North America.

The couple have their own private security team in the United States but Harry says they do not have adequate jurisdiction or access to UK intelligence to keep his family safe when they are in the UK. The prince, known formally as the Duke of Sussex, had been asking for a legal review of a decision refusing him permission to pay for the UK security himself. Lawyers for the interior ministry argued that it was "not appropriate" for wealthy people to "buy" protective security when it had decided that it was not in the public interest for such protection to be paid for by the taxpayer. London's Metropolitan Police also opposed Harry's offer on the grounds that it would be wrong to "place officers in harm's way upon payment of a fee by a private individual". In a ruling issued on Tuesday, London High Court judge Martin Chamberlain backed the interior ministry.—Agencies

