



# Islamabad POST

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**Xi hosts Central Asian leaders milestone summit**

Detailed News On Page-07

**Ron DeSantis to enter 2024 US Republican race**

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**Rafa Nadal withdraws from French Open**

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## Pak-Iran ties evolving

# PM, Iran's Raisi jointly inaugurate border market

Prime Minister says Pakistan, Iran to finalise Free Trade Agreement soon

DNA

PISHIN: In a step aimed at boosting bilateral trade, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Iran's President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi on Thursday jointly inaugurated the Mand-Pishin border sustenance market. The Mand-Pishin border sustenance marketplace is expected to provide a thriving platform for increasing cross-border trade, fostering economic growth, and opening up new avenues of opportunity for local businesses. It should be noted that this is one of the six border markets which has been constructed along the Pak-Iran border. The two leaders also planted a sapling on the premises of the border market as a gesture to stride forward in the bilateral relationship between the two countries. The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi after the two leaders inaugurated the Mand-Pishin border market. Following the "very productive and

positive" meeting, the prime minister told a gathering of local elders that the two sides had decided to move forward in the areas of trade, investment, information technology, agriculture and other sectors. The two leaderships also decided to exploit the potential for cooperation in the power transmission. He told the gathering that on his suggestion, the Iranian president also assured to move forward for enhancing cooperation in the solar energy sector. The prime minister said that during the meeting, he also put forward the suggestions regarding the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and that the two sides would take measures for implementation of the decisions taken in the meeting. Regarding the inauguration of Mand-Pishin border market, the prime minister said the facility would enhance trade activity in the surrounding areas and would get an uplift as trade centers would be constructed there. Prime Minister Shehbaz also invited the Iranian president to visit Pakistan which he accepted. PM Shehbaz was accompanied by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari,

Power Minister Khurram Dastagir, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb. Moreover, senior officials of Pakistan and Iran were also present. The Foreign Office, in a statement issued on Wednesday, said: "The joint inauguration is a manifestation of the strong commitment of Pakistan and Iran to uplift the welfare of residents of the neighboring provinces of Balochistan and Sistan-o-Baluchestan, respectively." PM Shehbaz along with the Iranian president also inaugurated 100MW Polan-Gabd electricity transmission line project from Iran to Gwadar at Mand-Pishin crossing point of Pakistan-Iran border. The prime minister said the project faced immense delay in the past but the incumbent government ensured its completion in the record time. Iranian President Raisi also took keen interest in the project, he added. He said the matter related to the power tariff has also been settled amicably with Iranian government, he added. "This is a great day for Pakistan-Iran friendship and will prove a milestone for development of the two countries," the prime minister remarked.



PISHIN: Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi inaugurating the Mand-Pishin joint border market, Pakistan-Iran Border. – DNA

**Soldier martyred in Bajaur shootout**  
One militant was killed during the shootout

DNA

RAWALPINDI: One Frontier Corps soldier was martyred while a terrorist was killed during an exchange of fire in the Loesam area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Thursday. As per the military's media wing statement, the fire exchange took place in the general area of Loesam in the Bajaur District. The statement said that the troops fought bravely and effectively engaged the terrorists' location, killing one militant during the shootout.

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**May 9 riots 'conspiracy'**  
'Everything part of PDM plan to eliminate PTI'

Imran Khan says his fight is not with Army; vows to keep fighting for 'real Azaadi'

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: PTI Chairman Imran Khan has claimed that plan is made to eliminate PTI through army. "There is a plan formed to pit the PTI against the army... their plan is to eliminate the PTI through the army," PTI Chairman Imran Khan has said. Imran Khan was interacting with journalists in Lahore. "The PDM is behind this and it is very dangerous for the country," the former prime minister said in a talk with journalists at his Zaman Park residence. "They can't compete with us in elections and now they want to pit us against the army." "Who wants to fight their own army? Whoever fights the army will only lose the country..."

**'Imran should openly condemn May 9 mayhem'**  
Says he may continue till the election of new President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan should openly condemn the May 9 events, President Arif Alvi said Thursday, in which public properties and military installations were attacked. He said he may continue in his office till the election of the new President.

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

**Pakistan trashes US report**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has strongly rejected the baseless assertions made about it in the so-called International Religious Freedom Report released by the United States. Addressing weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

**Vandalism will never be repeated**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb says arrangements are being made that no one can desecrate the monuments of Shuhada and Ghazis in future. Reacting to statement of PTI Chief Imran Khan in a tweet, she said arrangements are also being made that nobody can dare to do what Imran Khan did with the nation and the country. The Minister said arrangements are also being made to rein in fascism, anti-state activities and attacks on the country as done by Imran Khan. She said Imran Khan attacked the houses of daughters of the people and arrested them in front of their parents. She added that nobody resorted to attack the country as Imran Khan did even when he dragged the sisters of the people of Pakistan on roads and punished the masses in the grab of politics.

**Malik Amin Aslam quits PTI**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) additional secretary and former advisor to Prime Minister Malik Amin Aslam announced to quit his party after 13 years of affiliation. He was one of the close associates of PTI Chairman Imran Khan during the last regime of his party. On Thursday, Malik Amin addressed a press conference in Islamabad and announced his disassociation from the party due to attacks on May 9. Malik Amin said he joined PTI to eliminate but now his party has gone on the wrong path, adding that anti-national agenda is not acceptable.

**Punjab govt apprises ECP of PTI vandalism**  
ECP members were given "concrete evidence" of PTI's involvement

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab caretaker government on Thursday informed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) about the May 9 vandalism of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). ECP CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja reached the Chief Minister's Office and was welcomed by Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi. Mr Naqvi and Mr Raja chaired a high-level meeting, which was also attended by other ECP members. The meeting condemned the May 9 tragedy and expressed solidarity with the army. The CEC and ECP members were given "concrete evidence" of PTI's involvement in the May 9 vandalism. The Punjab government also provided evidence in the form of pictures, videos, and messages. Punjab IGP Dr Usman Anwar had informed the CEC and ECP about the attacks on Jinnah House and military installations. The ECP was also informed that there were 256 incidents of violence in three days, in which military installations were specifically targeted. Agitators damaged 108 vehicles

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**Operation expected in Zaman Park**

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab Police may launch a "grand operation" to arrest the "terrorists" allegedly holed up in Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence, sources told media. According to the police, all roads leading towards Zaman Park have been blocked and a heavy contingent of law enforcement is in the area. The Punjab government had given a 24-hour ultimatum to the PTI to hand over the "terrorists" who had taken refuge in the former prime minister's home. The government had given the PTI 2pm deadline which has now ended.

Continued on Page 06

# UAE envoy, Air Chief vow co-op in aviation sector

The Air Chief emphasized the longstanding religious, cultural, and historical bond between Pakistan and UAE which is exemplified by the robust bilateral relations



CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE), Hamad Obaid Al-Zaabi, called on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu here on Thursday and discussed areas of mutual

interest and regional developments. During the meeting, the Chief of the Air Staff shared his vision of modernizing the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) encompassing smart acquisitions from allied countries, up-gradation of infrastructure, and revitalization of operational and training domains, a PAF news release said.

The Air Chief emphasized the longstanding religious, cultural, and historical bond between Pakistan and the UAE which is exemplified by the robust bilateral relations. He reiterated his unwavering commitment to enhancing the existing ties in military-to-military cooperation, strategic alliance, and the training domain. Highlighting the bond of brotherhood between the two nations, the Air Chief said that Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic, and defense relationship with UAE which is based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security, and stability. The UAE ambassador lauded the exceptional progress made by Pakistan Air Force, especially through indigenization, and expressed his admiration for the professionalism of PAF personnel.

Continued on Page 06

## Holidays in Gilgit-Baltistan

Experience the breathtaking spring season with Serena Hotels in Gilgit, Altai, Shigar and Khaplu

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Serena Shigar Fort | +92 58154 67107-8 Serena Khaplu Palace | +92 058164 50892



# UAE group commits over \$2 bn direct foreign investment

Together, we will work towards transforming Karachi Port into a world-class maritime hub that can effectively meet the demands of the evolving global trade landscape”

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI: A high powered delegation from United Arab Emirates (UAE) visited Karachi and met with Faisal Sabzwari, Federal Minister For Maritime Affairs, Government of Pakistan, to sign a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will see a total investment of over \$ 2 billion USD as direct foreign investment into Pakistan. The Abu Dhabi Ports Group (AD Ports) delegation was led by H.E. Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, CEO and Managing Director of AD Ports Group along with his senior team. The AD ports have committed to invest in port infrastructure, special economic zone, run cargo rail and inland ports with a total investment of over 2 billion USD as direct foreign investment into Pakistan. AD Ports Group is a UAE Government owned entity and the leading maritime and logistics provider from the Middle East. The Group has taken a significant step towards enhancing

regional connectivity and fostering economic growth in Pakistan by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Karachi Port Trust (KPT). The MOU paves the way for enhancing bilateral cooperation and increasing efforts in the development, expansion, and digitalization of port projects within Pakistan. The MOU signing between Abu Dhabi Ports and Karachi Port Trust represents a shared vision to drive sustainable growth, promote trade diversification, and strengthen bilateral ties between the UAE and Pakistan. The collaboration encompasses a wide range of initiatives and projects aimed at enhancing port infrastructure, optimizing operational efficiencies, and embracing digitalization. The Group will also attract foreign direct investment and leverage its technical expertise to conduct feasibility studies and analysis, to ensure commercial success of the project. Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi, CEO and Managing Director of AD Ports Group, stated: “We aim to lever-

age our Group's extensive experience and strong relationships with major shipping lines, to transform Karachi Port's Container Terminal into a premier hub for transshipment as well as imported and exported cargo. In line with our wise leaderships' vision for economic diversification, we anticipate that this collaboration will propel Karachi Port towards becoming a global hub of global trade and reinforce its significance as a key player in the trade and maritime industries, further stimulating economic prosperity in the region.” Chairman KPT stated: “This partnership with Abu Dhabi Ports is a significant milestone for Karachi Port Trust. By combining our strengths and expertise, we are poised to unlock unprecedented growth opportunities for our port and the wider trade community. Together, we will work towards transforming Karachi Port into a world-class maritime hub that can effectively meet the demands of the evolving global trade landscape.”

## Senate chief wants Parliament House name changed

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani formed a parliamentary committee to suggest a new name depicting national and cultural values. He wrote a letter to National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf stating it was decided to form a parliamentary committee to propose a new name for the Parliament House. The chairman Senate designated Senators Irfan-Ul-Siddiqi, Senator Taj Haider, Senator Shibli Faraz and Senator Manzoor Kakar as the members of the Committee from the upper house. He said that the member are carefully composed which comprises of four members from each house. He further emphasised that together we can embark on this meaningful endeavour and contribute to the preservation of our cultural heritage. He said that the primary objective of this committee is to engage in comprehensive discussions. —APP

## Senate body for payment of outstanding dues to KP

PESHAWAR: Senate Functional Committee on Devolution of Powers here on Thursday called for payment of outstanding dues of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under various heads to provide facilities to masses and strengthen the provincial economy. The committee meeting chaired by Chairman Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan and attended by Senators Haji Hidayatullah Khan and Nuzhat Sadiq said that the committee would take up the reservations and concerns of the province with the federal government to get them resolved on a priority basis and in vital interest of the people. The chairman said that the objective of the meeting was to ensure effective and efficient utilization of resources transferred to the provinces under the devolved setup. He said that during the

two-day meeting, briefing would be taken about the progress of the 19 departments handed over to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after the historic 18th amendment. Chief Secretary KP Nadim Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Zubair Qureshi and other relevant administrative secretaries and officials attended the meeting. During the first day of meeting, the committee discussed various issues and challenges faced in the wake of 18th amendment. A detailed briefing was given to committee members by the Chief Secretary regarding the departments, employees, assets, and their utilization under the devolved setup. The CS also shed light on the powers devolved to the province and their implementation at the grassroots level. The recommendations

were also deliberated upon to make the Joint Interests Council more effective. Livestock, archeology, tourism, sports, agriculture and irrigation and other departments were reviewed in detail. The share of KP in the National Finance Commission (NFC), especially after the merger of FATA, and its increase and Net Hydrol Profit dues of the Federation as well as gas and petroleum arrears were discussed in the meeting. The share of 100 billion rupees that were promised for merged districts, issue of closure of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa flour from Punjab, use of excess water of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by other provinces and non-payment to KP, Chashma Lift Bank Canal, construction of dams in the province, census and other issues were reviewed in detail.—APP



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Anjad Khan Niazi exchanging views with Ambassador of Bosnia & Herzegovina to Pakistan Sakib Foric at Naval Headquarters Islamabad.—DNA

## PAC directs audit of all govt dept

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Thursday directed the authorities concerned to conduct a comprehensive audit of all the government departments to bring transparency in the country's financial system. Presiding over the PAC meeting, its Chairman Noor Alam Khan asked the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) to take actions against the organizations which were not cooperating in that regard. He said the AGP should conduct the audit of the NADRA Technologies Limited (NTL), a subsidiary of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to streamline the system. The AGP officials apprised the committee that they had been provided any record by the NTL authorities so far. The PAC called for presenting a detailed report of the expenses incurred by the NTL, including the amount spent on the officials travelling in its next sitting. Meanwhile, the PAC directed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide details about the properties rented by Pakistani embassies abroad, especially in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US).

## Caretaker govt will not compromise on rights of tribesmen

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan has said that the constitutional and legal rights of the people of the merged districts must be guaranteed in any circumstance, adding the caretaker government will not make any compromise in this regard. He was talking to a big jirga from the merged districts here in the Chief Minister's House on Thursday. Besides, administrative secretaries of the provincial departments, other higher authorities were also present on the occasion. Members of the jirga told the chief minister about problems faced by the people of their respective areas. Most of the problems were related to electricity, education, health, communication and other social sector problems. The caretaker chief minister directed the concerned authorities for resolution of their problems on priority

basis and furnishing immediate progress report to him in this regard. He said that the people of the merged districts have rendered numerous sacrifices during last four decades. He said that for getting information about the public problems, he has reserved one-day of every week for the people of the merged districts and for this purpose they can come to Chief Minister's House on every Thursday. The caretaker chief minister said that since the very first day, the caretaker government has started efforts for the constitutional rights of the people of the merged districts and for this purpose had held two meetings with the Prime Minister. He said that the pledge of the allocation of 3% share in National Finance Commission (NFC) Award for the merged districts still remains unfulfilled. He said that for obtaining the shares of the merged dis-

tricts in NFC Award, he had even yesterday sent a dispatch to Federal Finance Minister. The caretaker chief minister ruled out any compromise on the constitutional and legal rights of the merged districts and vowed to raise voice for their rights on every forum. The members of the jirga expressed gratitude to Chief Minister for inviting them to Chief Minister's House and taking special interest in the resolution of their problems. They also appreciated the reservation of one day in every week for the people of the merged districts as highly commendable steps, saying the step is speaks of the seriousness and interest of the chief minister towards the resolution of their problems. The tribal elders expressed the hope that the step will go a long way in bringing maximum decrease in the problems of the tribesmen.—APP

## ATC extends physical remand of Mehmoodur Rasheed

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday extended physical remand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Mian Mehmoodur Rasheed for another 7 days in a case lodged for carrying out an attack on the Jinnah House (the corps commander house) Lahore. Earlier, the police produced Mian Mehmoodur Rasheed before ATC Judge Abher Gul Khan on expiry of his 2-day physical remand, amid strict security. The investigation officer submitted that investigations could not be completed from the accused during the remand period. He submitted that as per the Lahore High Court orders, the accused was admitted to Services Hospital for medical examination. He requested the court to grant 14-day physical

remand of the accused for completing the investigations. At this, the court extended physical remand of the PTI leader for another 7 days and directed police for producing him on expiry of the remand term. Meanwhile, the court deferred request for physical remand of PTI leader Yasmin Rashid in the Jinnah House attack case and allowed her to stay in the hospital. Earlier, medical superintendent Services Hospital appeared before the court and submitted a report about Yasmin Rashid's health. He submitted that the PTI leader had an issue of blood pressure which varies from time to time. At this, the court allowed Dr Yasmin Rashid to stay in the hospital and directed the superintendent to again submit a report about Dr Yasmin Rashid health on

May 22. Moreover, the court sent 13 PTI workers to jail on 7-day judicial remand for identification parade in Jinnah House attack case. The investigation officer produced accused - Muhammad Naem Akhtar, Muhammad Qasim, Amir Gulzar, Muhammad Siddique, Inamul Haq, Ashiq Ahmad, Junaid Ali, Babar Hussain, Fayyaz Ahmed, Syed Zain, Qasim Majeed, Muhammad Arslan, and Muhammad Hamza before the court and requested to send them to jail for identification parade. The Sarwar Road police had registered a case against PTI leaders and workers for attacking the Jinnah House (the corps commander house) in Lahore Cantt, looting valuables worth over Rs150 million and setting on fire.—APP

## Qatari envoy calls on Sana Ullah

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani Thursday called on Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah and discussed matters of mutual interest and bilateral relations between the two countries. Rana Sana Ullah said that Pak-Qatar relations were based on mutual trust and Islamic brotherhood. They discussed to enhance ties for promoting trade and tourism. Ambassador of Qatar said that Pakistanis working in Qatar were the Pakistan's valuable asset and desired to enhance this number. A total of 250,000 Pakistanis are employed in Qatar and it was agreed to enhance this figure of Pakistani manpower in Qatar upto 6,50,000. The minister said that Qatari citizens would be provided visa facility on arrival in Pakistan. The two countries agreed to continue full cooperation to deal with internal and security challenges. The minister said there was an eternal relationship of trust between the people of the two countries and he thanked Qatar for financial assistance to flood victims in Pakistan during Geneva conference. He said that Qatar had always supported Pakistan and expressed his best wishes for the Emir of Qatar. The ambassador expressed special thanks to Pakistan for the security arrangements provided in the football World Cup.—APP



LAHORE: Interim Chief Minister Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi and Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja presiding over a briefing session about the May 9 incidents at the CM Office. — DNA

### Court Notice

In the Court of Mohsin Ali Civil JudgeGujrat

Title: Ghulam Murtaza, Versus M u h a m m a d Naveed.

Notice to:

Muhammad Naveed Ahmad S/o. Bashir Ahmad cast Jut Warrach R/o. Baghola Tehsil & District Gujrat.

Suit for Permanent Injunction Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 03-06-2023, otherwise case will be decided ex parte.

Court Reporter Gujrat

## Interactive session held at ISSI on global environment and Pakistan's position

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad hosted the participants of Human Resource Development Programme (HRDP) for Professionals at the International Islamic University (IIU). The interactive session was addressed by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General, ISSI. Ms Amina Khan, Director CAMEA, in her introductory remarks welcomed the guests and briefed the group about the working of ISSI. Extending a warm welcome to the participants, DG Amb. Sohail Mahmood highlighted the

key features of the evolving global and regional environment and the dynamics shaping Pakistan's foreign policy. Among other things, he outlined key determinants of states' foreign policy - including geography, identity, history, resource endowment,

leadership, economic imperatives, overarching strategic concepts, and role of national institutions. He also underscored the vital linkage between states' internal strength and their external influence. Amb. Sohail Mahmood un-

derlined that the current international environment was extremely complex and fluid and the changes were taking place at an incredibly fast pace. States were facing a formidable challenge to adjust, while keeping the national interest as the fundamental guiding principle.

Among the traditional and non-traditional security threats at the global level, the DG ISSI highlighted great-power competition, Ukraine conflict, Covid-19 pandemic, and climate change. In the regional context, the developments relating to Pakistan's engagement with Afghanistan, the state of Pakistan-India relations and Jammu & Kashmir dispute, long-standing cooperative ties with Iran, and strategic partnership with China were discussed. Furthermore, importance of Iran-KSA rapprochement, CPEC, regional connectivity, and Pakistan's pivot to geo-economics was underlined. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Abdul Fareed Brohi from the Da'wah Academy, IIU.



PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Irfan Atzal Mirza with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Sumsam Atzal Mirza citizen number 6110119167673 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1. Talat Ehsan (Daughter) 2. Sakina Begum (Spouse) 3. Irfan Atzal Mirza (Son) 4. Tanveer Atzal Mirza (Son) 5. Imran Atzal Mirza (Son) 6. Kamran Atzal Mirza (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.	Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Ali Khan with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Qamar Saeed Khan citizen number 1310110838799 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1. Maryam Khan (Daughter) 2. Saira Zia (Daughter) 3. Armina Saeed (Mother) 4. Muhammad Ali Khan (Son) 5. Muhammad Umeed Khan (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.	Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Akhtar Jan with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Yousof citizen number 6110118082189 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1. Akhtar Jan (Spouse) 2. Muhammad Usman (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Safia Bibi with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Allah Rakha citizen number 6110119068699 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1. Manzooran Bi Bi (Daughter) 2. Sidra Naz (Daughter) 3. Asma (Daughter) 4. Safia Bibi (Spouse) 5. Faeem Ullah (Son) 6. Kaleem Ullah (Son) 7. Waseem Ullah (Son) 8. Naem Ullah (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.	Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Sumbal Manzoor with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Manzoor citizen number 6110118512197 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1. Sumbal Manzoor (Daughter) 2. Sadia Mishal Manzoor (Daughter) 3. Attia Manzoor (Daughter) 4. Shazia (Daughter) 5. Nazia (Daughter) 6. Idris Manzoor (Son) 7. Christofer Manzoor (Son) 8. Fiaz (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.	Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Ch Muhammad Ahmed with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Ch Zafar Mehmood citizen number 6110143863817 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1. Maryam Bibi (Daughter) 2. Amna Bibi (Spouse) 3. Ch Muhammad Ahmed (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Asif with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Aslam citizen number 1720141577891 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1. Shabeena Begum (Daughter) 2. Sarwat Jahan (Daughter) 3. Jabeena Aslam (Daughter) 4. Noor Begum (Spouse) 5. Hamid Ali (Son) 6. Adeeb Khan (Son) 7. Kaleem Ullah (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.	Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Ehtisham Khaliq with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Abdul Khaliq citizen number 6110117905819 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1. Mehwish Ejaz (Daughter) 2. Aishba Khaliq (Daughter) 3. Nusrat Parveen (Spouse) 4. Adnan Khaliq (Son) 5. Ehtisham Khaliq (Son) 6. Naeem Khaliq (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.	Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Asif with regards to moveable & immoveable assets of deceased Mr. Pervez Akhtar citizen number 3740595627075 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs. 1. Saima Shaheen (Daughter) 2. Asma Shaheen (Daughter) 3. Sidra Shaheen (Daughter) 4. Batool Shaheen (Daughter) 5. Safaena Bibi (Spouse) 6. Muhammad Asif (Son) 7. Ghulam Hassan (Son) 8. Hamza Khan (Son) 9. Muhammad Imran (Son) On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.



## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### MAY

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



### Hotels & Restaurants

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



### Airlines

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

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



### Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555864
CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Qant Hospital.....9270907-11
DHCT.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



### Departments

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

### Islamabad Metropolitan

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480
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ISLAMABAD: Wives of diplomats posing for a picture on the occasion of the Constitution Day reception of Norway.—DNA

## Health activists urge govt to impose ban on cigarette

This demand was raised at the launch ceremony of “Big Tobacco - Tiny Targets” – a survey conducted by Society for Protection of the Rights of the Child

ISLAMABAD: Health activists have urged government to impose ban on innovative products such as nicotine pouches, e-cigarettes and heated tobacco devices in order to save Pakistan's future. This demand was raised at the launch ceremony of “Big Tobacco - Tiny Targets” – a survey conducted by Society for Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) in collaboration with Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK) to examine the sale and advertising trends of innovative tobacco products in 9 cities of Pakistan. The survey revealed that all points of sale were selling innovative tobacco products around points of interest for youth. These products, mainly nicotine pouches, are displayed at visible eye level

for children and placed beside candies, sweets and toys to appeal children and youth. Vendors also utilize sales techniques such as discounted products, free samples, gifts and competition entries to attract the customers. Chief Guest, Mahesh Kumar Malani, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on, Health Services Regulations & Coordination, Government of Pakistan, said that Pakistan's children are national assets. The basic dangers of tobacco are known to everyone but this research is a great effort because as it explores the harms of advertising as well. In future, this will help us in minimizing the harms of tobacco. The government is committed to the protection and well-being of Pakistani

children and work with all stakeholders to ensure that anti-child decisions will not be implemented in the country. Guest of Honour Dr. Shazia Sobia Soomro, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination mentioned that, this research is an eye opener for everyone that Pakistan's children are bombarded with marketing and easy accessibility of addictive nicotine products around their educational and recreational facilities. This research will help us in coming up with ways to protect our children from tobacco's harms Khalida Ahmed, a Member Board of Directors SPARC, appreciated SPARC for conducting Tiny Targets. She said that rising tobacco is a huge issue in

Pakistan. She mentioned that due to cheap and easy affordability, nearly 1200 children start smoking every day in Pakistan. Sana Jamali, a Member of the Senate of Pakistan said that this research will help the Government in recognizing the dangers of innovative tobacco products before it is too late. The government must ban addictive nicotine products and also strengthen Pakistan's tobacco control legislation, including a ban on all forms of advertising of addictive nicotine products. The tobacco industry has already misled the government by claiming that e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches are less harmful and only for smokers who want to quit. However, these products are openly promoted online and sold

to young and new consumers. Khalid Ahmed Dogar, Program Manager, SPARC, stated that Tiny Targets survey was conducted in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Multan, Bahawalpur and Hyderabad. The surveyors collected data from vendors operating within a 100-meter radius of schools, universities, hostels, playgrounds and parks, cinemas, shopping malls, indoor gaming entertainment centers and restaurants. The event was attended by parliamentarians, civil society members, health activists, journalists and youth, who appreciated SPARC's efforts and expressed their commitment to support the cause of making Pakistan tobacco-free.

## PTA takes action against Illegal provisioning of Internet services

ISLAMABAD: In its continuous efforts to eliminate the rampant proliferation of illegal internet service providers, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) in coordination with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), successfully conducted multiple raids. During the two raids conducted at Muslim Town and Multan Road in Lahore, equipment of illegal ISPs was confiscated. In addition, an enforcement action was initiated in Rawalpindi, resulting in the identification and blocking of services provided by an internet service provider that was still operating after termination of license. The successful efforts against illegal internet service providers can be attributed to PTA's unwavering commitment, continuous monitoring, and persistent efforts to curb illegal internet services. These actions are crucial in preventing tax evasion and revenue misreporting, thus curtailing loss to the national exchequer. PTA urges the public to only avail telecom services from PTA licensed operators to avoid sudden discontinuation of service. The list of licensed operators is available at: <https://pta.gov.pk/en/industry-support/home/list-of-operators>.—DNA

## PIDE & KIU moot ends

ISLAMABAD: The Conference hosted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in collaboration with the Karakoram International University (KIU), has concluded. Dr. Nadeem ul Haque and VC KIU shared their thoughts about the Day 1 of the conference Gilgit Baltistan Beyond Mountains. Dr. Haque said that the

inclusion of society is a critical factor in the development process. It is essential to ensure that development initiatives are for the people, by the people, and for the people. To achieve sustainable development, it is crucial to involve the local community in every step of the process. Female entrepreneurship is a vital component of development.

Women are essential contributors to the economy, and their participation in business ventures can lead to significant growth and development. He further said that democratic values and good governance are indispensable for society to prosper. Good governance does not only refer to political leaders but also all levels of institutions.—DNA

## Objective communication a must for trust in families: Speakers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar on “Demographic Trends and Families in Pakistan” said the new age has unfolded many unusual challenges for the families. Disintegration and individualism have taken over the conventionally common lifestyle. Dependence on new age tools and gadgets have increased for guidance and engagement that is unnecessary most of the time. The seminar was organized by Devcom-Pakistan and ICLC in collaboration with the Women Development Centre (WDC G-7/1) of the Federal Ministry of Human Rights in Thursday to mark UN International Day of Families. Devcom-Pakistan



Executive Director Munir Ahmed was the guest of honour. Other guest speakers included WDC head Ismat Afridi, ICLC founder Sibtain Raza Lodhi, educationist Noshaba Shaikat, Hina Sadozai and Tahira Naimat.

Speaking on the occasion, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said we have touched the redline of 250 million population. Lack of resources and economic opportunities have created frustration and disintegration in the families. One key factor is the new gadgets that have taken the common space of families. Lack of convergence of conventional and new thoughts is another challenge that has differently framed the society.

## Operation against vehicles with fancy number plates

ISLAMABAD: Excise and Taxation (E&T) Department and Islamabad Transport Authority (ITA) removed non-pattern and fancy number plates from 95 vehicles and tinted the windows of 65 vehicles. The action was taken during an ongoing joint operation being carried out under the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon. According to the ICT spokesman, the aim of the operation was to act against vehicles emitting smoke and commercial vehicles plying on the road without fitness certificates in which action was being taken against vehicles with tinted glasses and fancy number plates. He said AETOs, along with the traffic police, checked vehicles on 9th Avenue near Sector 19 and at the physical checking point of the E&T Department. Besides removing non-pattern number plates and tint from the windows.—DNA

## Bilawal will visit AJK to highlight Indian atrocities

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Faisal Karim Kundi has said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will visit Azad Kashmir from May 21 to 23, 2023 to highlight Indian atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The case of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has been fought by the People's Party every forum, he said adding that during his

recent visit, the Foreign Minister will tell the world about the ongoing Indian atrocities in IIOJK. He further informed that the G-20 conference is going to be held in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, against which Pakistan has always protested.—

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	WIRE NAIL 2 INCH NO.14 (Best quality. Must be accurate in size. Without rust, Grease, Double Pointed and any damages. Make, Local.	1000 KGS			
N-LP / T-329 / 23	WIRE NAIL 1/2 INCH NO.17 (Best quality. Must be accurate in size. Without rust, Grease, Double Pointed and any damages. Make, Local.	50 KGS	-DO-	-DO-	-DO-
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## Briefs

## Pakistan decides to train one million people in AI

ISLAMABAD: The government of Pakistan has decided to train one million people in artificial intelligence (AI). As per official sources, the Ministry of Information Technology (IT) has prepared a draft of the AI Policy, and a separate fund will be established for AI and related technologies. The IT and telecom sector will provide 30 per cent of funding per year for AI, and a campaign will also be launched to create awareness about AI among government employees, technocrats and other staff concerned. AI will be made part of primary, secondary and higher education. Funding, publication fees and travel grants will be provided to the students conducting research in AI. As many as 1,000 AI research and development projects will be given financial support. AI centres will be established in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta. AI technologies will be used in all sectors including agriculture, financial, etc. —DNA

## Bilawal calls PPP CEC meeting to ponder over NSC decisions

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has called a meeting of the party's Central Executive Committee (CEC) at Bilawal House in Karachi on Friday. The PPP CEC meeting will take up the prevailing political situation in the country and the party's future line of action. The huddle will also ponder over the outcome of the meeting of the National Security Committee, which was held in Islamabad on Tuesday. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had chaired the high-powered NSC meeting at PM House on Tuesday, which was attended by senior cabinet ministers, three services chiefs, ISI director general and other relevant officials. While the civil and military leadership promised to bring to justice those behind the violent protests, they stressed the need for dialogue over confrontation to resolve the political differences. A statement issued by the PM office after the NSC meeting read: "The meeting endorsed the decision to initiate trials against the perpetrators, conspirators, and facilitators under relevant laws including the Pakistan Army Act and the Official Secrets Act, to ensure justice." The meeting reiterated that the policy of 'zero tolerance' would be adopted by not tolerating violence and mischief in the country. The meeting also announced May 9 as Black Day at the national level.—DNA

## Justice Faez Isa not part of any SC bench for last six weeks

ISLAMABAD: Justice Qazi Faez Isa, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court after the chief justice, has not been part of any bench of the apex court for six consecutive weeks. According to the judges' roster released by the Supreme Court for the week starting from May 22, Justice Faez Isa will do the chamber work next week too. In the apex court, six benches will hear the cases on the principal seat next week. Bench No. 1 will consist of Chief Justice Umar Atta Bandial and Justice Athar Minallah. Bench No. 2 will consist of Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Aminuddin Khan and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar. Bench No. 3 will consist of Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Shahid Waheed. Bench No. 4 will comprise Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi. Bench No. 5 will include Justice Muneeb Akhtar and Justice Jamal Mandokhail. Bench No. 6 will include Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi.—DNA

## Public diplomacy integral in Afghan engagement

There was a dire need to understand the contextual nuances of Afghanistan in order to effectively engage with relevant local stakeholders for any potential partnerships

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Public diplomacy was the need of the hour to engage with the Taliban government in Afghanistan in a manner that resonated with the local Afghans and was capable of reconstructing their ill-conceived presumptions about Pakistan's support over the years, agreed a panel of experts during a roundtable discussion titled Afghanistan's New Era: Assessing the Role of Regional Powers and

International Organizations in Shaping Afghanistan's Future co-hosted by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) and Pak-Afghan Youth Forum (PAYF) here on Thursday. During the discussion, Mr Salman Javed, DG PAYF said that there was a dire need to understand the contextual nuances of Afghanistan in order to effectively engage with relevant local stakeholders for any potential partnerships. He added that Pakistan had made some serious efforts, especially in the

domains of education and trade, however, those efforts were not much projected and still remain unnoticed at either side of the border.

Ambassador Abrar Hussain, Vice Chairman Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) maintained that since Pakistan was the most preferred trade and transit partner of Afghanistan, the Government of Pakistan needed to facilitate Afghan traders in order to optimally benefit from this portal. Efforts also needed to be directed at public diplomacy with

the people of Afghanistan, he added. Dr Farah Naz, Assistant Professor at National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Islamabad, was of the opinion that despite expanding trade opportunities and economic activity in the once war-torn countries, it was imperative to determine if the US despite having withdrawn from the region, would allow the said to prevail. She was speaking about the potential expansion of CPEC and expected Chinese influence along the aforementioned belt.

Mr Sajid Iqbal Khattak, Lecturer at National University of Modern Languages (NUML) commented that since the US withdrawal from Afghanistan following its two decade-long misadventure, sustainability of the current government was a major issue. Despite the fact that most regional countries had not officially recognized the present government in Afghanistan, their actions and active engagement with the Taliban was not in fact in sync with the projected stance of non-recognition, he added.



ISLAMABAD: May 18 - A vendor watering peach to keep it fresh at Khanna Pul. —APP

## 17 nabbed, huge quantity of drugs recovered

ISLAMABAD: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 22 counter-narcotics operations country-wide, nabbed 17 persons including one woman and recovered 2140.909 kg of drugs, worth US\$ 39.129 million internationally from their possession. The assigned force also impounded seven vehicles. According to an ANF spokesperson, the seized drugs comprised 1529 Kg Opium, 12.709 Kg Heroin, 551.400 Kg Hashish, 30.900 Kg Methamphetamine (Ice), 2.830 Kg Amphetamine, 6

Gram Cocaine, 13 Kg Xanax Tabs (57700 x Tabs), 1 Kg Clonazepam Tabs (5500 x Tabs) and 64 Gram Weed. ANF Balochistan recovered 1908.09 Kg of drugs in five operations while arrested two persons involved in drug smuggling. The seized drugs comprised 1529 Kg Opium, 10.990 Kg Heroin, 366 Kg Hashish, 0.900 Kg Methamphetamine (Ice) and 1.200 Kg Amphetamine. ANF Punjab recovered 15.349 Kg drugs in six operations, arrested five persons involved in drug smuggling and

impounded a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 1.719 Kg Heroin, 12 Kg Hashish and 1.630 Amphetamine. ANF Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) recovered 120.200 Kg of drugs in four operations while arrested five persons including a woman involved in drug smuggling and impounded three vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 120.200 Kg of Hashish. ANF Sindh recovered 96.200 Kg of drugs in four operations while arrested five persons involved in drug smuggling and impounded two vehicles.

The seized drugs comprised 53.200 Kg Hashish, 30 Kg Methamphetamine (Ice), and 13 Kg Xanax Tabs (57700 x Tabs). ANF North recovered 1.07 Kg of drugs in three operations and impounded a vehicle. The seized drugs comprised one Kg of Clonazepam Tabs (5500 x Tabs), six Gram Cocaine and 64 Gram Weed. Cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations under CNS Act 1997 (Amended 2022) and further investigations are under process.—APP

## Islamabad gets two more police stations

ISLAMABAD: Chief Commissioner Office Islamabad Capital Territory has notified the constitution of two new police stations in Islamabad and changes in the jurisdictions of ten police stations. According to the police source, the purpose of establishing new police stations and changing the jurisdiction of ten police stations is to combat crime effectively and maintain law and order. The newly established police stations are Humak and Sumbal

police stations and the total number of police stations would reach 27 after it, a police source said. Both new police stations have been named in the background of historical status. The jurisdictions of ten police stations have been also changed to increase police presence and proactive response. The main objective behind this move is the prevention of crime, the establishment of public order and the improvement of public services.

It is to mention that five new police stations have been established in the last year. Police sources said that recruitment will also be done in Islamabad Police for new police stations. The proposed area of jurisdiction of Sumbal police station would be F-12, F-13, F-14, G-12, G-13, G-14, Thala Sayedan, Shello, Dhreek Mohri, Mera Aku and Mera Jafar. Similarly, Humak police station would cover Niazian, Kakpull.—APP

## Recover Rs 21,200 stake money

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district Police arrested 18 gamblers and recovered Rs 71,200 stake money, 13 mobile phones, 1.4 kg charras and other items from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that Rattaamral police conducted a raid and arrested 14 gamblers namely Juma Khan, Liaquat, Bilal, Lal, Sar-taj, Farhad, Sharak Jan, Alam-gir, Iftikhar, Fazal Muhammad, Sherzada, Qasim, Nazir Muhammad and Darwaish, who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards.—APP

## CPEC created over 155,000 local jobs in Pakistan

BEIJING: The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is marking its 10th anniversary this year, has played an important role in bilateral cooperation between China and Pakistan and created over 155,000 local jobs for Pakistani people, China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) has said. During a regular press conference, the NDRC said the CPEC had achieved fruitful results, including the Gwadar Port and relevant cooperation projects in energy, infrastructure and industry. "Specifically, multiple highway construction programs are progressing on schedule. Power plants that have entered commercial operation provide nearly one-third of Pakistan's national electricity demand, having changed the situation of power shortage in the country," it added. The Gwadar Port co-built by China and Pakistan has made great progress in creating a regional logistics hub and industrial base. In addition, the construction of the first phase of the Rashakai Special Economic Zone in Pakistan had been completed and achieved positive results in business attraction, said the NDRC. As of the end of 2022, the CPEC had created 236,000 jobs, and the number of Pakistani workers reached 155,000. The NDRC vowed to accelerate cooperation in transport, energy and industrial sectors and areas related to people's livelihoods, and further expand collaboration in the agricultural, mineral and technological fields, Global Times reported on Thursday. Meanwhile, in order to expand the influence of the CPEC, the foreign ministers of China, Afghanistan and Pakistan have agreed to extend the program to Afghanistan, to further advance cooperation under the BRI. As a landlocked country, Afghanistan mainly relies on Pakistani ports for international trade. Afghanistan has become the first among landlocked Central Asian countries to benefit from using the Chinese-invested Gwadar Port in Pakistan for future cross-border trade. After several rounds of consultations with relevant authorities in Pakistan, the Gwadar Port finally obtained an e-export trade license with Afghanistan in the second half of 2019, according to China's Ministry of Commerce. In 2020, Afghanistan imported 43,000 tons of fertilizer via the port, contributing to its agricultural development.

## SC accepts bail plea of GRM's chief

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday accepted bail plea of Moulana Hidayat Ur Rehman, the head of the Gwadar Rights Movement (GRM) and ordered his release. A three-member SC bench headed by Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and comprising Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar heard the case and granted bail against two surety bonds of Rs 0.3 million. Rehman was arrested from Gwadar on January 13 on charges of murder. During the course of proceedings, Advocate Kamran Mur-taza counsel for Moulana Hidayat Ur Rehman informed the court that the rights movement leader was arrested from court premises. He said that his client had been incarcerated since December 2022. Upon this, Justice Tariq asked why did he not challenge the arrest from the court premises. The counsel replied that at the time of Rehman's arrest, such actions had not been declared illegal by the apex court, adding that the development happened following the arrest of PTI chief Imran Khan. The Prosecutor General argued that Rehman should not be granted bail until the main accused was sent on judicial remand. Yasir Ali, the accused who shot at the slain policeman Majid Johar, had been arrested, he added.—APP

## Fake sessions judge arrested in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD, May 18 (dna): Anti-Corruption Circle Islamabad has arrested a fake district and sessions judge who also introduced himself as the personal staff of a Supreme Court judge. The accused tricked a citizen and received Rs2.1 million from him on the pretext that he will arrange a government job for him. He had also set up a symbolic Pakistan Literacy Council and hoodwinked many people to get them a job in the Council.

The accused had also introduced fake scholarships and also had deceived many female students for awarding them scholarships.

The authorities seized pamphlets, diaries, files and several stamps from his possession. The authorities have been hunting for the accused for the last one year and were succeeded to arrest him now after receiving secret information. Further investigation was under way.—APP

## Parliament team attends APA meeting

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Parliament of Pakistan, led by Senator Sania Nishtar, took part in the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) Standing Committee on Economic and Sustainable Development meeting held in Manama, Bahrain on May 16-17, 2023.

The delegation engaged in productive sideline bilateral meetings with esteemed counterparts from Iran, Qatar, Indonesia, and Turkiye. During the bilateral meetings, a wide range of issues were discussed, with a particular focus on education, poverty eradication, and the establishment of forums to foster the exchange of Parliamentary Best Practices, knowledge, and experience. Pakistan's delegation effectively presented its viewpoints on various resolutions discussed during the meeting. The stance of Pakistan received a warm welcome, appreciation, and acceptance from the APA Secretary General and like-minded countries.

## Marriyum grieved over death of mother of journalist

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday expressed deep grief over the death of the mother of Hum News anchorperson Samar Abbas. In a condolence message, terming the demise of his mother as a great tragedy, the minister expressed her heartfelt condolences to Samar Abbas and his family. She said that she shared the grief of the family of Syed Samar Abbas. The minister prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.—APP

## Railways to complete rehabilitation work

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is putting maximum efforts to complete rehabilitation and reconstruction work on railway track, improving the speed of the locomotives to carry passengers to their respective destinations on time. The infrastructure, including the track and signaling system from Karachi to Peshawar, Main Line-I (ML-I) and doubling of track from Lahore to Peshawar (462.20 Km) was also being revamped, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. The official noted that the length of the track was 1,726 kilometers and the department has planned to improve speed up to 160 kilometers per hour in the project of up-gradation of ML-I under the China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC). To improve the speed of the trains and ensure fixed timings, he said the procurement of 230 passenger coaches and 820 High Capacity Wagons under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) project was also under process. The official said that around 46 Completely-Built-Up (CBU) passenger coaches have been procured up till now while the remaining 184 would be manufactured in the country and the coaches would be able to travel at the speed of 160km/h. He said the rolling stock being procured under this project would be capable to run at a speed of 160 km/h whereas the department has a dedicated fleet of 55 diesel-electric locomotives of 4000-4500 HP for freight operation to cater maximum haulage at higher speed. "The installation of Computer Based Interlocking (CBI) system on 48 stations on ML-I to improve signaling and interlocking for higher speed and safety of train operation," the official added. To a question, he said Pakistan Railways was a big organization comprising of around 63000 employees and its network was spread throughout the country. The official said the employees were well cared for owing to having several welfare activities, including healthcare facilities through an intensive network of hospitals, dispensaries and child healthcare units. He said that provision of government accommodation according to entitlement.—APP

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## Doomsday for the PTI

IT seems whether under pressure of voluntarily, the PTI leaders are starting to leave the deck before the big storm arrives. The leaders that are still not behind the bars are gradually showing their back to Kaptaan. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Malik Amin Aslam announced on Thursday that he will be leaving the Imran Khan-led party as it has been overtaken by an "agenda" which got exposed during May 9 protests. The former adviser to then-prime minister Khan made the announcement at a press conference at the National Press Club. PTI leaders have started leaving the party after the incidents that took place across the country following the arrest of Khan from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on May 9.

A day earlier, leaders Aamer Mehmood Kiani and Sanjay Gangwani jumped on the bandwagon to quit the party following attacks on defence and public installations. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, hours after he parted ways with Imran Khan-led PTI over May 9 vandalism, Kiani said he was not only quitting the party but politics as well. Meanwhile, PTI Member of Sindh Assembly (MPA) Sanjay Gangwani also announced leaving the party in protest against attacks on military installations. MPA Karim Gabol has also quit the party. Before them, PTI Member of National Assembly (MNA) Mahmood Baqi Maulvi also quit the party citing the same reasons.

The development comes after the high-powered National Security Committee (NSC) endorsed the Corps Commander Conference's decision to hold the trial of arsonists under the Army Act, Official Secrets Act, and other concerned laws under the Constitution. The NSC, while strongly condemning military installations' acts of arson for the sake of political motives and personal interests, declared to observe May 9 as "Black Day" at the national level. Earlier, a Special Corps Commanders' Conference – with Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir in the chair – had also expressed the resolve to hold the trial of abettors, planners and miscreants involved in attacks on military installations and public property under the Army Act and the Official Secret Act. The temperatures are at their ultimate high. Now Imran Khan looks to be at the back foot while the establishment is in no mood of reconciliation. However, in greater interest of the country, all the parties and sides must let go of grudges and end the crises without further damage.



## Cooperation at heart of modern Silk Road

THE success of the bilateral meetings President Xi Jinping held respectively with the leaders of the five Central Asian countries in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on Wednesday and Thursday, undoubtedly lays a solid foundation for the China-Central Asia Summit to be held in the city on Friday realizing its objectives of promoting common development and deepening mutual trust. The summit will be the first in-person meeting of the six leaders, underscoring the two sides' shared desire to join hands and support each other in the face of common challenges. Tasked with lifting reciprocal cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to a higher level, the China-Central Asia Summit will promote closer interaction and stronger solidarity among the six nations. The leaders of the six countries are holding multiple meetings in which they will not only exchange views on bilateral, multilateral, and major international and regional issues, but also sign an array of cooperation documents covering areas including economy, trade, investment and connectivity. President Xi proposed to build the Silk Road Economic Belt during his visit to Kazakhstan in 2013. Central Asian countries were among the first group of countries to publicly support what subsequently became the Belt and Road Initiative. Having visited the region seven times in the past decade, Xi has personally championed upgraded China-Central Asia cooperation. And thanks to that, the two sides have steadily strengthened their economic and security cooperation, thus laying a solid foundation for further deepening their trade, economic and investment cooperation. Since unveiling the Global Development Initiative at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2021, President Xi has also put forward the Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative as facilitators for the realization of a community with a shared future for mankind. In light of this, the China-Central Asia Summit is a natural event warranting no raised eyebrows. The bid to strengthen cooperation and coordination in the region is not intended to form a clique, nor is it targeted at any third party. It is an outcome of the six countries' shared recognition that to achieve the development they are striving for, there needs to be greater economic interdependence among them and effective regional security governance; these require the establishment of effective multilateral mechanisms. No doubt the United States and its allies will try to cast this in a different light, because to them the Central Asian countries are just pawns to play in their zero-sum games against China and Russia. But the summit shows that the Central Asian countries have no desire to play that allotted role.

## Why the Military Courts again?

Qamar Bashir

The acts of violence, whether they occur in a military or civilian institution, are abhorrent and must be strongly denounced. The people who live in harmony, uphold the law, and pay taxes are the true owners and guardians of these resources. Any effort to damage or vandalize these priceless possessions would be a disgrace to the state and the entire country. But we should not let loose the sanity and sensible behavior amid our indignation, anger, and desperation. The law-enforcing agencies are neither entitled or justified in violating the law and responding back in kind when citizens break the law. As with the violent crimes carried out by the protesters, this would undoubtedly be another unlawful conduct. There were a lot of frightening videos, maybe real or made up on May 9. One of the videos on twitter showed an army truck unloading people wearing civilian clothing who quickly mixed with crowd after getting off

THROUGHOUT Pakistan's history, military courts have been established, dissolved, and re-established during various periods but with particular focus on security and terrorism-related concerns. The establishment of courts dates back to the British-era Indian Army Act of 1911, which was adopted by Pakistan after partition. However, Martial laws, military courts were established to try both military personnel and civilians. When Zarb-e-Azb was launched in 2014, 21st Amendment to the Constitution and Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Ordinance, 2015 were introduced, which provided for the establishment of military courts to try individuals involved in acts of terrorism. These courts were established with a sunset class of two years to ensure swift and effective justice in terrorism cases, as the regular civilian judicial system was perceived as being slow and unable to effectively tackle the threat. Military courts tried both military personnel and civilians suspected or accused of terrorism offenses. The tenure was extended twice in 2017 by 23rd Amendment and later in 2019 for yet another two years.

However, Pakistan is not the only country that supports military tribunals. The military courts in Egypt, which are also known as military tribunals, have jurisdiction over both military personnel and civilians in instances involving national security, terrorism, and other offenses relating to the armed forces. Military tribunals are courts that are similar to the military courts in the United States. Israeli military tribunals are in charge of prosecuting Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for crimes under military law as well as for offenses relating to security. Cases involving military personnel for offenses under the Russian military justice system are heard in military courts in Russia. Underlying purpose of military courts in all cases was to try military persons and in some extreme cases the civilians. Many people are now worried that everyone who participated in the violent protests of 9th May, including students, doctors, engineers, businessmen, mothers, sisters, and wives, will be tried by military courts; however, General @Nadeen Khalid Lodhi addressed this issue appropriately in his interview on a talk show on May 16, 2023. He said that because he had previously served as a corp commander, he was well aware that the military installation, in particular the corp commander's home, was protected by multiple layers of security. Additionally, there are a number of intelligence agencies mandated to alert the relevant military establishment of impending danger and to take preventative action to avert any unfavorable events. He claimed that it was obvious that there had been failures on the part of the armed forces and intelligence agencies, which initially failed to notice the attack by using their sophisticated communication and interception tools, and later the security apparatus had failed to stop protesters from entering the military facilities. According to him, military courts will hold accountable all uniformed personnel who were found to have been careless, complacent and negligent in the performance of their duties. Additionally, it will carefully separate criminals who are foreign agents, militants, or terrorists from regular citizens and, if necessary, bring them before military courts. This is a very important analysis, as all of us were concerned for those who were exercising their constitutional rights to assembly (protected by Article 16 of the Pakistani Constitution), to free speech (protected by Article 19 of the Constitution), and to freedom of expression (subject to certain restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam

or the integrity, security, or safety of the country). In addition, Article 10 of the Constitution ensures the right to a fair trial and due process for anybody who is detained, arrested, or suspected of a crime. It encompasses the presumption of innocence, the right to a fair trial, the right to counsel, and other basic legal principles and constitutional provision and law that prohibit custodial torture and protect individuals from such acts, without resorting to custodial torture, violent or degrading acts as Article 14(2) of the Constitution states that no person shall be subjected to torture for the purpose of extracting evidence. Moreover, Section 337L of the PPC specifically criminalizes torture, stating that whoever intentionally inflicts physical or mental torture upon any person shall be punished and Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Bill, 2015 which was introduced to criminalize torture and provide for the prevention and punishment of custodial deaths.

I am confident that both the armed forces and civilian law enforcing agencies will make clear distinction in a transparent and verifiable manner between the ordinary citizens who are exercising their constitutional rights and will arrest, try and punish only hardcore criminals, militants, foreign agents and terrorists and impart justice to them.

The acts of violence, whether they occur in a military or civilian institution, are abhorrent and must be strongly denounced. The people who live in harmony, uphold the law, and pay taxes are the true owners and guardians of these resources. Any effort to damage or vandalize these priceless possessions would be a disgrace to the state and the entire country. But we should not let loose the sanity and sensible behavior amid our indignation, anger, and desperation. The law-enforcing agencies are neither entitled or justified in violating the law and responding back in kind when citizens break the law. As with the violent crimes carried out by the protesters, this would undoubtedly be another unlawful conduct. There were a lot of frightening videos, maybe real or made up on May 9. One of the videos on twitter showed an army truck unloading people wearing civilian clothing who quickly mixed with the crowd after getting off. The vehicle's driver was warned not to commit this illegal act by an elderly woman who was on camera. The law enforcement agencies may take note of this film, and if it was false, it should be clearly explained. If it was real, the reasons for doing it must also be disclosed with the public in order to allay their worries and concerns.

Other horrific recordings showed a young female protester, apparently a university student being tortured and harassed. A disturbing interview with a young girl who was narrating her tale of horror when, according to her, someone ordered someone else to remove her clothes and make her naked was aired. In the video, a girl wearing a black burqa was lying on the floor wailing in great pain and anguish as if some of her vital organs were cut or wounded. No matter how enraged they may become, our law enforcement agencies will never subject their own sisters and brothers to such humiliation and indignation. Therefore, it is suggested that this atrocious propaganda against LEA agencies be exposed and the truth behind these made-up tales made available to the public. Even more unsettling was the interview with the Punjab IG. He was found threatening the young graduates, doctors, and engineers, saying that since their data had been obtained, the state would not issue them character certificates, which are necessary for them to obtain admission and employment. This section of the interview has repeatedly been

shown, seemingly out of context and without reference. The government narrative that trained militants, lawbreakers, hard-core terrorists, and foreign agents were the causes and perpetrators of violence has been refuted by this. The right of assembly, protest, freedom of speech, and freedom of movement, which is given to students, doctors, and engineers by the constitution, shall not be violated by harassing or intimidating them for exercising it.

We must also take a lesson from France, where violent demonstrators were only detained if there was a solid basis to believe they had done, were committing, or were about to commit a crime. A person who has been so arrested must appear before the judge within 24 hours. If the judge decides that the protester is no longer a danger to the peace or that their incarceration is no longer required, they may order their release. Alternatively, the judge may decide to hold the defendant in pre-trial detention, which may last up to four months. However, protesters are never subjected to custodial torture during this time because, according to French law, torture is a felony that carries a sentence of up to 30 years in jail. A separate statute forbids the police from stopping individuals from lawfully congregating as well.

The people and the government trust our military and civil law enforcement organizations to uphold the law, maintain law and order, and protect the public. Additionally, they are in charge of protecting the populace from dangers including crimes, violence, terrorism, and other types of harm. They might respond to crises, offer support, and take actions to safeguard the security of people and property. They resolve conflicts, control crowds during rallies or other public events, and make sure that rules and laws are followed. They collaborate closely with the legal system to prosecute alleged criminals and carry out court orders like warrants and subpoenas. Building trusting ties with the community helps them collaborate to resolve neighborhood issues and preserve productive partnerships.

Military and civilian law enforcement organizations should continue to be viewed as heroes by the people through maintaining outstanding public relations. They should take care to enhance their reputation as defenders by supporting the moral values of justice, protecting human rights, and encouraging rehabilitation. Even those who commit acts of violence should be given the opportunity to exercise their rights to a fair trial, counsel, and protection from self-incrimination. They should also be treated as innocent until proven guilty and given the chance to mount a defense. They must also make sure that everyone, including violent criminals, is treated with respect and fairness, safeguarded from torture and other cruel or inhumane treatment, and treated with dignity. The executive branch and legislatures should, on their part, make sure that punishment is commensurate with the seriousness of the offense, strike a balance between responsibility for the harm caused and opportunities for reform and reintegration, and, above all, address the root causes of violence by putting in place preventive measures that may include funding social programmes, education, mental health services, and other interventions aimed at lowering the likelihood that people will turn to violence.

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

## G-20 event in IIOJK: A violation of Int'l norms

Khalid Iqbal

Kashmir's illegally detained senior All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader and Democratic Freedom Party Chairman, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, has strongly condemned the intensification in Human Rights violations being perpetrated by Indian troops in IIOJK ahead of the G20 event. In his message from notorious Tihar jail, the APHC leader while referring to deteriorating political and human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir especially in Pir Panjal, Poonch and Rajouri areas...

THE upcoming G-20 event in the restive Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) region is nothing but a ploy to hide Indian war crimes in the occupied territory. The G-20 is unwittingly providing a veneer of support to the facade of normalcy at a time when massive human rights violations, illegal and arbitrary arrests, political persecution, restrictions, and even suppression of free media and human rights defenders continue to escalate. Such events cannot hide the reality of Jammu and Kashmir being an internationally recognized dispute that has remained on the agenda of United Nations Security Council for over seven decades. Nor could such activities divert international community's attention from India's brutal suppression of the people of IIOJK including illegal attempts to change the demographic composition of the occupied territory.

Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave its reaction regarding G-20 event on April 11: "Pakistan expresses its strong indignation over India's decision to hold the G-20 Tourism Working Group meeting in Srinagar on 22-24 May 2023. Scheduling of two other meetings of a consultative forum on youth affairs (Y-20) in Leh and Srinagar in IIOJK is equally disconcerting... For a country that has a grandiose vision about itself and its place in the world, India has repeatedly demonstrated that it is unable to act as a responsible member of the international community". Victimizing innocent Kashmiris is part of the India's RSS-BJP regime's policy to prevent Kashmiris from pursuing their collective goal of exercising their right of self-determination as enshrined in UNSC resolutions. Ahead of the G-20 conference, Kashmir valley has been turned into a military fortress. Hundreds of innocent people, mostly young boys, have been arrested under the pretext of so-called "security reasons". India's notorious National Investigating Agency (NIA) has raided several houses in Srinagar, Kulgam, Shopian, Poonch, Baramulla, Budgam, Rajouri and other areas. Frequent raids on the houses of civilians, search operations, harassment and humilia-

tion of ordinary citizens have become a habit of the trigger-happy occupation forces in IIOJK.

India, in a brazen violation of the UNSC resolutions, changed the special status of Kashmir, unilaterally, on 05 August 2019, and has since been remorselessly peddling lies to create a smoke-screen to hoodwink the world, into believing that all is well in the occupied territory. In this context, Indian government has been organising visits of foreign envoys stationed at New Delhi to the IIOJK territory. Dozens of diplomats, mostly from European and African countries, were invited for such visits to project "all is well in Kashmir" image and to ward off international pressure. Ground situation in Kashmir belies the Indian government's lofty claims of normalcy.

Kashmir's illegally detained senior All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader and Democratic Freedom Party Chairman, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, has strongly condemned the intensification in Human Rights violations being perpetrated by Indian troops in IIOJK ahead of the G20 event. In his message from notorious Tihar jail, the APHC leader while referring to deteriorating political and human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir especially in Pir Panjal, Poonch and Rajouri areas of Jammu region said that the G20 countries' participation in the event in disputed territory will be tantamount to undermining the UN credibility. He urged the G20 states to "ask India to resolve the Kashmir dispute as per UN resolutions, instead of attending the forum's event in Srinagar".

Six international human rights organizations have urged the Indian authorities to immediately stop the reprisals against human rights defenders in IIOJK. Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD), Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), Kashmir Law and Justice Project, and World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) have, in a joint statement released on the website of AFAD, called upon

the Indian authorities to end the ongoing persecution and targeting of human rights defenders in IIOJK.

A complete shutdown will be observed in IIOJK as well as Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on May 22 against the Indian government's illegal action of holding G20 event in Srinagar. Kashmiris living abroad plan to hold anti-India rallies and protests in all major capitals of the world on the same day sending a clear message to the world that they reject G20 meeting in internationally disputed territory. Demonstrations will be held in New York, London, Washington, Brussels, Geneva and other major cities of the world to draw the attention of the international community to the on-going human rights violations in the occupied territory. Call for protests have been given jointly by the APHC and the leadership of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement on May 15, Fernand de Varennes, the United Nations special rapporteur on minority issues, accused India of seeking to normalise the "brutal and repressive denial of democratic and other rights of Kashmiri Muslims and minorities" by holding G-20 meeting in the disputed region. He said the situation in Kashmir "should be decried and condemned and not pushed under the rug and ignored". "The government of India is seeking to normalise what some have described as a military occupation by instrumentalising a G-20 meeting and portray an international 'seal of approval'," Varennes added.

The G-20 forum should take a holistic view of the situation, pay heed to the clarion calls and ask India to change the venue of the event. The United Nations should hold India accountable for committing war crimes in IIOJK; and take tangible steps to help resolve the Kashmir dispute as per the wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people as enshrined in the UNSC resolutions.

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## Briefs

## UAE envoy, Air Chief vow co-op in...

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He pledged to play his role in further improving the existing bilateral military ties at all levels and expressed his desire to consolidate co-operation in various fields including training, emerging technologies, and mutual cooperation in the aviation industry. The meeting between the Chief of the Air Staff and the UAE ambassador is a testament to the deep-rooted friendship and unwavering commitment between the two nations to work towards a peaceful and stable region.

## 'Everything part of...'

FROM PAGE 01

all this that is being done, only the PDM will benefit from it," PTI Chairman Imran Khan says. "The democracy in the country has been destroyed." "Several of our members are leaving the party. I don't know many of them, but I am particularly saddened by Aamer Mehmood Kiani - who worked really hard for the party - parting ways with the PTI. "But there is immense pressure on them and everyone cannot bear this pressure. So I ask people not to criticise them. "The pressure they are facing today was never faced before by politicians in this country's history." PTI Chairman questioned the legal standing of the caretaker governments in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying that the 90-day period for elections was completed. "KP and Punjab make up 70 per cent of Pakistan. Today there is no representative there because they didn't hold elections. The federal government along with the caretaker government and Election Commission of Pakistan broke the Constitution." My arrest ... they want to eliminate me and ban the PTI ... all this is a part of the London plan," PTI Chairman Imran Khan has said. "Eventually what will you gain out of it? The democracy, public and the institutions are suffering because of it." "Even if I am left alone, I will continue to fight for Haqeeqi Azadi (true freedom) for this country. "No one should have the misconception that I will back off due to this pressure. "Those who are still standing with me despite pressure, the nation will not forget you." "Whenever an independent commission [investigates into May 9 riots], you will see that there was an organised conspiracy behind this. "Everything was planned. "So I demand that an independent commission is constituted. "And let me tell you what will be revealed after its probe. We will give you evidence - how people were made to attack as part of a plan." "All this that they [the government] is doing has never been seen before in the history of the country," PTI chief Imran Khan has said, referring to the oppression of his party members. "Efforts to eliminate PTI have been under way for over a year now. But all what they are doing is just strengthening the party," he said. "Who is [actually] against me? "Let's set aside the PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement), they have no value. "My fight is not with them (an apparent reference to the military establishment). They are angry with me, and I still don't know why."

## Operation expected...

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Sources said that the "grand operation" may be launched after the deadline ends. Sources shared that the inspector general of Punjab police and the capital city police officer (CCPO) have asked the police to remain "vigilant". Punjab caretaker Information Minister Amir Mir said Wednesday night that the provincial government has no plans so far of arresting PTI Chairman Imran Khan.

## Punjab govt appraises...

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belonging to police and other agencies and also damaged 23 buildings. The Punjab government also informed the ECP that five people were killed, and 127 officers and 15 civilians were injured.

## First time in 19 years

## King of clay withdraws from French Open-2023

The 36-year-old Spaniard, who has won 22 major men's titles, also said he plans to retire after the 2024 season. "I didn't make the decision, my body made the decision. To play Roland Garros is impossible," he said.

## WEB DESK

PARIS: Rafael Nadal will miss the French Open for the first time in 19 years after a hip injury ruled out the record 14-time men's singles champion. The 36-year-old Spaniard, who has won 22 major men's titles, also said he plans to retire after the 2024 season. "I didn't make the decision, my body made the decision. To play Roland Garros is impossible," he said. "Next year will be my last year on tour - that is my idea. If I keep going now I won't be able to make that happen." Nadal, who turns 37 next month, has not played since sustaining the problem at

the Australian Open in January. Nadal has been practising in recent weeks, but not been fit enough to play a tournament in the run-up to Roland Garros. The French Open starts in Paris on 28 May and runs until 11 June.

"I was working as much as possible every single day for the past four months and they have been difficult because I've not been able to find a solution to the problem I had in Australia," said the former world number one. "I'm not in the position to be able to compete to be at the standard to play Roland Garros. "I'm not a guy who will just be at Roland Garros." Nadal said he needs to stop



playing for the foreseeable future in order to make a full recovery and return healthy to complete a farewell season in 2024. "I will stop for a while, maybe one month, maybe three months or maybe four months. I do not like to predict the future," he said. "I will do the right thing for my body and personal

happiness. My motivation is to enjoy the season and say goodbye to all the tournaments I have enjoyed in my career. "If I keep going now I will not be able to make that happen." Nadal injured his hip during a second-round defeat by American Mackenzie McDonald in Melbourne and initially expected to be sidelined for six to eight weeks. An MRI scan two days after the match showed a tear in his left psoas muscle. Last month, Nadal announced he would not be able to play the Madrid Open because the injury "still hadn't healed" and was planning a different course of treatment. Then he withdrew from

this month's Italian Open - another important clay-court tournament before the French Open - saying he had still not been able to train at a high level. On Thursday, he announced he will miss Roland Garros for the first time in his career in a news conference at his academy in Mallorca. Nadal won the French Open title in his first appearance there in 2005, going on to triumph another 13 times in the following 17 years. No player has won as many singles titles at one major tournament as the Mallorcan left-hander has at Roland Garros. Known as the 'King of Clay', Nadal has won 112 of his 115 matches at the French Open.

## City beats Real Madrid to advance to UCL final



## SPORTS DESK

MANCHESTER: Manchester City is three games away from making history. And after the stunning rout of Real Madrid in the Champions League semifinals on Wednesday, Pep Guardiola's march toward a treble of trophies feels unstoppable. "We are there. We can think about it, can visualise it," the City manager said after his team's 4-0 win at Etihad Stadium. After drawing the first leg 1-1, Madrid's undisputed kings of Europe were humbled and, except for the efforts of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, the score line

could have been so much worse for the 14-time champions. City feels like an irresistible force as it closes in on the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup titles. It was certainly too hot for Madrid to handle as Bernardo Silva scored twice in the first half, Eder Militao scored an own goal after the break and substitute Julian Alvarez struck in time added on to seal a 5-1 aggregate win. Madrid has fought its way back from the brink on numerous occasions over the past two seasons, but this was too great a challenge. After overrunning the defending European champions, City will be favoured to do the same to Inter Mi-

lan in the final in Istanbul on June 10. A win against Chelsea on Sunday would secure a third straight league title and Manchester United stands in its way in the FA Cup final. United is the only English team to win the three main trophies in one season - doing so in 1999. City has already overtaken its Manchester rival as the dominant force in English soccer and can now emulate its greatest achievement. "We are close and of course we are going to try," Guardiola said. City is going in search of its first Champions League title, while Guardiola is aiming to win it for a third time as a coach. At times,

it has seemed as though the pressure on Europe's biggest stage was too big for a team that has been serial winners in domestic competition. While City's quality has rarely been in question over Guardiola's seven years in charge, its temperament in the Champions League has been. On too many occasions it has fallen short when the heat was on - losing to underdogs such as Monaco, Lyon and Tottenham. It was in command for almost the entirety of the two-legged semifinal against Madrid last year, but still managed to lose after blowing a two-goal lead in the last few minutes at the Santiago Bernabeu.

## PCB contemplates allowing Pakistani cricketers in ILT20

Sethi believes that PCB has good relations with the UAE, and based on the principle of 'give and take,' they can negotiate

LAHORE: Pakistan players were missing from the inaugural edition of International League T20 (ILT20), which took place from January 13 to February 12 earlier this year. The UAE-based league offered top players a whopping USD 450,000 for the first season. However, the organizers were ready to offer Shaheen Afridi, Babar Azam, and Mohammad Rizwan up to USD 900,000. They were also being offered captaincy along with a three-year contract. Along with the aforementioned trio, Fakhar Zaman and Mohammad Hasnain were also contacted by various franchises for the first season. Azam Khan was in fact picked by Desert Vipers for the tournament but was later denied No-Objection Certificate by the PCB. It was conveyed to all of them that they can come to play the league only when they have time away from PSL and national responsibilities. Despite this, the PCB did not grant permission to any of its players to participate in the league. Then-PCB Chairman, Ramiz Raja, had also asked compensation from the Emirates Cricket Board in exchange for releasing the players for the league. However, the current PCB chief, Najam Sethi, does not hold a strict stance regarding the ILT20. Recently, during a meeting of the PSL governing council, he also stated that it would not be possible to stop Pakistani players now as the players are also considering forming association to protect their rights. Sethi believes that PCB has good relations with the UAE, and based on the principle of 'give and take,' they can negotiate. It was suggested at that time, that the next season of Pakistan Super League (PSL) should start from Dubai, so that the event can gain hype and attract international players. However, the PSL franchise owners do not agree with this suggestion. They believe that releasing Pakistani players and strengthening the ILT20 would be detrimental to PSL. The sources suggest that if the current administration stays for next three years, Pakistani cricketers will be seen playing in the ILT20. - DNA

## US issues warning to North Korea

WASHINGTON: The US State Department has said a potential North Korean satellite launch would violate international restrictions placed on the DPRK. The statement came after North Korean media revealed that Kim Jong-un had visited a facility where a spacecraft is being developed. During a press briefing on Wednesday, US State Department deputy spokesman Vedant Patel said the launch would breach "multiple UN Security Council resolutions" on North Korea's ballistic missile program, which also cover rockets used for spacecraft. "We have been very clear that we urge the DPRK to refrain from further threatening activity and call on Pyongyang to engage in serious and sustained diplomacy," Patel said. "In terms of actions, we of course continue to have a number of tools at our disposal to hold the DPRK accountable. You have seen us take those steps and we will continue to do so." The United States currently maintains a raft of sanctions on North Korea and has threatened new penalties in the past over weapons tests. Pyongyang has insisted on its right to develop its military capabilities, arguing that its weapons - including its nuclear arsenal - are for defensive purposes, and has cited what it sees as an aggressive US military posture on its border. On Tuesday, Kim met with scientists, technicians and senior officials as he inspected the country's first military reconnaissance satellite. The North Korean leader approved an unspecified "future action plan" in preparation for the launch, according to the Korean Central News Agency. - Agencies

## European Union proposes more military funds for Ukraine

BRUSSELS: European Union security and foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has reportedly requested another 3.5 billion (\$3.8 billion) to bolster the collective fund used to supply weapons to Ukraine. The European official previously warned that Kiev's forces would collapse "in a matter of days" without continued Western support. Borrell asked EU member states to authorize new funding for the European Peace Facility (EPF) on Wednesday, diplomatic sources told Reuters, with one official stating: "We have to top up" as the facility is running low on money. The large cash injection allegedly sought by Borrell will require unanimous approval from EU governments, which already agreed last year that more money could be authorized "in case of need." The reported request comes as Kiev is expected to launch a major offensive to reclaim territory lost to Moscow. Borrell has been among Ukraine's most vocal backers within the EU, repeatedly lobbying for additional military support and insisting that Western aid would determine the country's fate. At an event in Italy earlier this month, he argued that it was "not the moment for diplomatic conversations about peace." "If we don't support Ukraine, Ukraine will fall in a matter of days. So, yes, I would prefer to spend this money," he said, adding that "we don't have a choice." Though the EPF was created in 2021 to help furnish military gear to developing nations, the fund was repurposed to focus on Ukraine soon after Russia launched its military operation in the neighboring state more than a year ago. EU officials have already set aside nearly 8 billion (\$8.6 billion) for the project. The EPF is separate from the union's budget - as the 27-member bloc is ostensibly barred from directly funding military operations - and was initially allocated 5 billion (\$5.4 billion) intended to last until 2027. Those funds were quickly exhausted following many arms shipments to Kiev over the course of last year, forcing the EU to approve another massive spending hike in December. On Wednesday, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto said Budapest would not greenlight further EU aid to Ukraine unless Kiev drops its "increasingly hostile" attitude towards the country. The grievances listed by Szijarto include the treatment of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine and a report that President Vladimir Zelensky had floated the idea of blowing up the pipeline that delivers Russian oil to Hungary. Russia has warned that continued Western military support to Ukraine will only prolong the fighting and do nothing to deter its objectives, saying that the weapons, intelligence and training provided to Kiev's forces had already made them de facto parties to the conflict. - Agencies

## World Cup 2026 teams to be based in 'clusters'

FIFA unveiled official logo by Infantino alongside Ronaldo Nazário, a legendary two-time World Cup champion, the logo prominently showcases an authentic depiction of the FIFA World Cup trophy in forefront

LOS ANGELES: Teams at the expanded 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico will be based in regional clusters during the early rounds to ease travel, FIFA president Gianni Infantino said on Wednesday. Speaking in Los Angeles to unveil the official logo and branding for the tournament, Infantino said the move was prompted by the scale of the 2026 finals. For the first time the next World Cup will include 48 teams - up from 32 - and will be co-hosted by three countries, another first. "The challenges will be the whole logistics around it," Infantino said. "It's a continent - three countries and not three small countries either - three big countries.

"The distances, the time zones, the climatic differences too - altitude in Mexico, sea level in other parts." "So for us it's important to create the right environment for the teams and the fans to be put in the best possible conditions. "Meaning not having to travel too much, especially at the beginning. So we will create some clusters where teams will be based depending on the draw and then they will play their games in that particular cluster." Infantino said travel, and the move towards basing teams in regions, had been discussed at a meeting in Doha last week of the 32 coaches involved in last year's World Cup. "This was one of the advantages of the World Cup in



Qatar, where a player, one hour after the game, was in his bed," he said. "(In 2026) there will be some travel involved but we will coordinate that and make sure that it will be the best possible conditions for the teams." Infantino meanwhile hopes the tournament can build on the success of the 1994 finals in the United States, which helped establish Major League Soccer in North America. Asked what he wanted the legacy of 2026 to be, Infantino told AFP: "That soccer will be the number one sport in North America." Infantino's remarks came as FIFA rolled out a "green carpet" for celebrities and former players at the Griffith Observatory overlooking Los Angeles.

The gala event was held to unveil the official branding for the 2026 tournament. Among the guests was former US international Alexi Lalas, one of the stars of 1994. Lalas backed Infantino's pledge to base teams in regions. "At the risk of 'grumpy old-maning it', it's not like these guys are sitting in the middle seat in economy on a budget airline or anything," Lalas told AFP. "They're on charter aircraft all over the place. "But having said that, we're obviously talking about six-hour trips, time-zone changes. For a lot of players around the world that fundamentally changes the competition, so a regional type of situation makes sense." - Agencies

## 'Imran should openly...'

FROM PAGE 01

In an interview, the president - a close aide of the PTI chief - called for taking action against the miscreants involved in the events. The PTI leadership - including the party chairman - have condemned the attacks in which the General Headquarters, Rawalpindi, was also targeted and called for a Supreme Court-led probe into the events. The violent protests were triggered after Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust case which led to the deaths of at least 10 people and injured several others, prompting the authorities to arrest thousands of PTI workers. After the supporters attacked army installations, the army said that May 9, 2023 - the day when chaos gripped the nation following Khan's arrest - would go down in history as a "dark chapter". The military and the government alike have vowed to try the vandals who attacked army installations under the Pakistan Army Act, Official Secrets Act, and other laws. Human rights organisations and some in the government have opposed trying civilians under the army act, but agreed that the vandals should be tried and "due process" be followed. The president, in the interview, also added that during the trials, the suspects' human rights should be respected and they shouldn't be tortured. "The people involved should be punished in line with the law," he said. The president added that the PTI chairman did not oppose Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir. "Imran Khan asked me to tell General Bajwa that he should accept anyone whom the institution approves as the next chief," President Alvi said.

## Soldier martyred in Bajaur...

FROM PAGE 01

"However, during an intense exchange of fire, Sepoy Shafiq Ur Rehman (age 23 years, resident of DI Khan) having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat," said the ISPR. It further said that sanitisation of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. The security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate menace of terrorism and these sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve, read the statement. Earlier, security forces gunned down two terrorists in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the general area of Jani Khel, District Bannu on the reported presence of terrorists. According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), during the conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists.

## Pakistan trashes US report

FROM PAGE 01

such ill-informed reporting exercises about internal affairs of sovereign states are pointless, irresponsible and counterproductive. She said Pakistan is proud of its religious diversity and pluralistic social fabric. She said Pakistan's constitution sets a robust framework to safeguard and advance the rights and freedoms of all Pakistanis irrespective of their faith. These rights and constitutional guarantees are protected, upheld and reinforced by an independent judiciary, she added. The Spokesperson said Pakistan strongly believes that each state itself has the primary responsibility to promote and protect religious rights and freedoms of its nationals. With this understanding, she said, Pakistan has always engaged constructively with the international community in promoting mutual understanding on the important question of religious freedom and minority rights. In our interactions including with United States, we have raised serious concerns about steady surge in anti-Muslim hatred, racism and Islamophobia. She said we hope to work with international partners to counter these pernicious forms of religious intolerance, discrimination and Islamophobia.



## Briefs

## Pak delegation attends APA meeting in Bahrain

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Parliament of Pakistan, led by Senator Sania Nishtar, took part in the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) Standing Committee on Economic and Sustainable Development meeting held in Manama, Bahrain on May 16-17, 2023. The delegation engaged in productive sideline bilateral meetings with esteemed counterparts from Iran, Qatar, Indonesia, and Türkiye. During the bilateral meetings, a wide range of issues were discussed, with a particular focus on education, poverty eradication, and the establishment of forums to foster the exchange of Parliamentary Best Practices, knowledge, and experience. Pakistan's delegation effectively presented its viewpoints on various resolutions discussed during the meeting. The stance of Pakistan received a warm welcome, appreciation, and acceptance from the APA Secretary General and like-minded countries. Furthermore, the delegation emphasized Pakistan's position on the illegal and forcible occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by India.—Agencies

## China ends import ban on Australian timber

SYDNEY: China has lifted an import ban on Australian timber, Beijing's ambassador said Thursday, as onerous ties between the two countries thaw. Xiao Qian told reporters in Canberra that China would resume imports of Australian timber as of Thursday after Beijing clamped down on the trade in 2020. "Yesterday, the Chinese Customs have formally notified the Australian Minister of Agriculture that starting from today, China will resume import of Australian timber," Xiao said at a press conference in Canberra.

The resumption of the trade of logs, worth about Au\$600 million (US\$400 million) a year according to government data, came amid improving relations between the countries, he said. "There are also other issues on the table that allow me to say that the momentum is positive." Last week, the two countries' trade ministers met face-to-face for the first time since 2019, as the centre-left Australian government aimed to repair a relationship that had grown tense under the previous administration. Australia's largest trading partner blocked the import of the country's timber in 2020, citing the discovery of pests on shipments of wood.—APP

## Northern Ireland goes to polls for council elections

LONDON: Voters in Northern Ireland are going to polling stations across the country to choose new representatives in 11 councils on Thursday. More than 800 candidates are in the electoral race to fill 462 seats in the delayed election, which was rescheduled from May 4 due to the coronation of King Charles III held on May 6. Around 1.4 million voters are eligible to cast their votes. The election results will be significant as the political stalemate in forming a local government, known as the Executive, continues as the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) rejects to nominate a deputy First Minister due to concerns over the Northern Ireland Protocol. Sinn Fein, the Irish nationalist party that won the most seats in the last parliamentary election, has nominated party leader Michelle O'Neill as the first minister after a historic victory in May 2022, winning a majority of 27 seats in Stormont, making it the first nationalist party to take control of the assembly in its century of existence. According to the Northern Ireland-specific law and the latest election result, a power-sharing devolved government can only be formed under an agreement between Sinn Fein and the DUP.—APP

## ICCI calls for Pak-Turkiye FTA to boost bilateral trade

Khalid Iqbal Malik, former President ICCI said that both countries should focus on strong connectivity between their importers and exporters in order to capitalize on all possible areas of bilateral trade promotion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: S.M. Tanveer, Minister for Industries and Commerce of Punjab said that Pakistan and Türkiye enjoy exemplary friendship and it is the right time that the business community of both countries should strive for developing strong trade ties that would be more beneficial for both nations. He said this while talking to Enes Malik Cetin, Commercial Counsellor of Türkiye during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that there are immense business opportunities between Pakistan and Türkiye and both countries should sign a free trade agreement to



boost bilateral trade up to their actual potential. He said that Pakistan and Türkiye had signed a preferential trade agreement in August 2022, which came into effect from 1st May 2023 and hoped that it would contribute to improve bilateral trade between the two countries. He said that the PTA has provided preferential access to the many products of both countries in each other's market and

emphasized that the private sectors of both countries should take maximum benefit of it to increase bilateral trade volume. He said that the embassy should share a list of its top imports with ICCI so that the business community can explore the possibility of exporting more products to Türkiye. Enes Malik Cetin, Commercial Counsellor of Türkiye said that his country considers Pakistan a very

close friend and wants to strengthen trade ties with it. He said that keeping in view the success of PTA, Türkiye would consider FTA with Pakistan. He stressed for close collaboration of ICCI with trade associations of Türkiye including MUSIAD in order to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation between the two countries. He said that direct business linkages between the private sectors would help enhance

trade and economic ties between Pakistan and Türkiye and assured that his embassy would cooperate with ICCI in this regard. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan can export many products to Türkiye including textiles, pharmaceuticals, cement, marble at competitive prices and stressed that Türkiye should consider importing these products from Pakistan. Engr. Azhar ul

Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI stressed for regular interaction between ICCI and Turkish Embassy to explore new areas of promoting business relations between Pakistan and Türkiye. Khalid Iqbal Malik, former President ICCI said that both countries should focus on strong connectivity between their importers and exporters in order to capitalize on all possible areas of bilateral trade promotion. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President & Secretary General UBG said that both countries should develop direct air and railways links that would help boost bilateral trade and economic ties. Waqar Bakhtawari, President Chakwal Chamber of Commerce, Ameer Hamza, Rizwan Cheema, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Humayun Kabir, Munizeh Majid, Ch. Muhammad Ali and others were also present on the occasion.

## Biden, Japan's Kishida meet ahead of G-7 summit

HIROSHIMA: President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met Thursday aiming to showcase the strength of their alliance ahead of a Group of Seven summit where leading democracies will tackle the challenges of Russia's war in Ukraine, North Korea's ballistic nuclear threats and an increasingly forceful China. Biden recalled that Kishida said during a January Washington visit that the world faced one of the "most complex" security environments in recent history. "I couldn't agree with you more," Biden told the Japanese prime minister as they sat with their aides at a conference table. "When our countries stand together, we stand stronger and I believe the whole world is safer when we do."

Kishida noted that the global tensions had brought the U.S. and Japan closer together, that "the cooperation has

evolved in leaps and bounds." The Kishida family's home city of Hiroshima will host the gathering of major industrialized nations known at the G-7. The setting of Hiroshima, where the U.S. dropped the first nuclear bomb in 1945 during World War II, carries newfound resonance. Members of the G-7, which also includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the European Union, are grappling with the territorial ambitions of Russia and China, two nuclear powers. Biden is also appearing on the world stage while trying to manage a divide back in the U.S. on how to raise the government's debt limit. He opted to cut short what was supposed to be an eight-day trip to Asia, so he can return to Washington to try to avoid a potentially catastrophic default in June that could ripple across the global economy. It's a drama that reveals how internal U.S. politics can spill

over into global forums. While aboard Air Force One, Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, told reporters that Russia's invasion of Ukraine looms large as a G-7 topic. He added leaders would discuss the state of play on the battlefield and sealing loopholes to strengthen sanctions that have been levied against Moscow. Last year, Biden came to Tokyo to discuss Indo-Pacific strategy and launch a new trade framework for the region, with the U.S. president and Kishida engaging in an 85-minute tea ceremony and seafood dinner. The president's first stop in Japan on Thursday was to greet U.S. troops at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, before he headed to Hiroshima for talks with the Japanese prime minister. Kishida was quick to call out the risks of Russian aggression in 2022, saying then, "Ukraine today could be East Asia tomorrow."

China has declared a limited friendship with Russia, increasing trade in ways that blunted the ability of financial sanctions to constrain the war. But the U.S. and its allies say China has yet to ship military equipment to Russia, a sign that the friendship might have some boundaries. Biden and Kishida also discussed economic matters. They addressed efforts to bolster supply chains for critical minerals, new partnerships between U.S. and Japanese companies and universities and efforts to promote renewable energy, according to a White House readout of the meeting. Kishida had planned to discuss further strengthening of deterrence and response capability with Biden in the face of China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as confirming the importance of the Taiwan Strait for global peace and stability.—APP

## US blocks European F-16 training for Ukrainian pilots

MONITORING DESK

Washington: The US has forbidden its European allies from providing Ukrainian pilots with training on F-16 fighter jets, an American newspaper has reported, citing a high-ranking official in Kiev. Without approval from Washington, the best that Ukrainian airmen can hope for are lessons on technical language and tactical training on the ground, the outlet said on Wednesday. Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky has been pressing his Western backers for fourth generation F-16 warplanes for months, arguing they are crucial for defending the country's airspace amid a massive Russian missile campaign targeting military facilities and energy infrastructure. The Ukrainian leader aimed to achieve limited progress during a recent

European tour, with the UK and the Netherlands announcing on Tuesday that they would work on building an "international coalition" to provide Kiev "with everything from training to procuring F-16 jets." London announced that training will begin this summer, while Zelensky's office claimed that Belgium was also eager to help prepare Ukrainian pilots. The unnamed Ukrainian official told the NYT that four nations, including the Netherlands and Norway, have "quietly signaled" that they are ready to supply Ukraine with the warplanes produced by Lockheed Martin. F-16s contain classified technology and Washington's allies must obtain special "releasability" permission from the Pentagon to even discuss it with outside partners such as Ukraine, a senior US Defense Department official explained to the paper.

## Chinese envoy meets Ukrainian president

ISTANBUL: China's Eurasian affairs envoy Li Hui has met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Beijing said on Thursday. "The two sides exchanged views on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, and China-Ukraine relations," a statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry said. Li, who was picked by Chinese President Xi Jinping last month as the special envoy on Ukraine, paid a two-day visit to Kyiv until Wednesday. The statement said Li also met with other senior Ukrainian officials, including Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. He also held talks with officials from Ukrainian ministries of infrastructure, energy, and defense. Referring to China's "position on the political solution to the Ukrainian crisis," Li said: "There is no panacea to resolve the crisis." "All parties need to start from themselves, accumulate mutual trust, and create conditions for ending the war and peace talks," Li told Ukrainian officials, the statement said. "China is willing to promote the international community to form the greatest common denominator for resolving the Ukrainian crisis, and make its own efforts to stop the war, to cease fire, and restore peace as soon as possible," Li added. The Ukrainian side "welcomed China to play an active role in ending the war and restoring peace," the statement also noted.—APP

## 40 kidnapped migrants still missing in Mexico

MEXICO: Mexican authorities said Wednesday that they were searching for around 40 migrants and two drivers kidnapped while traveling in a bus on a highway in northeastern Mexico. Nine others from the group - which set off from southern Mexico near the Guatemala border - were rescued the previous day after managing to flee, according to officials. Members of the National Guard were deployed to look for those still missing, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said at his daily news conference. Thousands of migrants fleeing violence and poverty risk abduction and exploitation at the hands of criminal gangs while crossing Mexico on the way to the US border. The nine who were rescued were aged between 18 and 35 years old and from Venezuela and Honduras, according to authorities in the northeastern state of Nuevo Leon.—DNA

## Venezuela pledges to abandon US dollar

CARACAS: Venezuela is planning to shift away from the greenback in cross-border transactions, President Nicolas Maduro said earlier this week, claiming that the measure would help the Bolivarian Republic to free its economy. It's the latest country to publicly share plans to reduce its reliance on the US dollar. Similar measures have recently been announced by Argentina, Brazil and Iraq. Meanwhile, the BRICS group of nations are considering the introduction of a new reserve currency to replace the dollar. "This is the path of Venezuela and the path of a free economy where currencies are not used to punish countries and impose sanctions," Maduro said on Tuesday in an interview with local media. Venezuela is ranked among the world's five most-sanctioned nations. The South American country has suffered one of the largest economic contractions in history. Last year, Washington allowed US energy major Chevron to resume limited oil production in the country, but the majority of sanctions remain in place and continue to weigh on the Venezuelan economy. READ MORE: BRICS nation wants discussion on common currency - Bloomberg Longstanding sanctions policies pursued by the White House, along with rising inflation in the US, have forced multiple countries around the world to start looking for alternatives.—APP

## Armenia used UAVs against Azerbaijani military positions

BAKU: Azerbaijan said on Thursday that Armenia used combat drones against its military positions in the East Zangezur economic region. "On May 18, at about 07:15 (0315GMT), the Armenian armed forces used combat UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) at several positions of the Azerbaijani Army deployed in the direction of the Yellija settlement of the Kalbajar district," the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry said in a statement. The remains of "projectiles made in a handicraft manner" and dropped by UAVs were found during inspections of the attacked area, it said, adding that Azerbaijan suffered no casualties and that retaliatory measures are being taken. "We inform that the Armenian military-political leadership bears the entire responsibility for the tension created in the region," the statement concluded. Relations between the two former Soviet republics have been tense since 1991 when Armenia occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan and seven adjacent regions. Most of the territory was liberated by Baku during a war in the fall of 2020, which ended after a Russian-brokered peace agreement and also opened the door to normalization. Tensions between the neighboring countries increased in recent months over the Lachin corridor, the only land route giving Armenia access to Karabakh.—APP



MINSK: Pakistan Minister of Defense Production, Muhammad Israr Tareen and Belarusian Minister of State Authority for Military Industry holds a productive meeting at #Milex2023 in Minsk. Both Sides discussed current military cooperation and outlined steps for future collaborations.— DNA

## China-Central Asia States summit begins

DNA

BEIJING: The China-Central Asia Summit, the first in-person summit among heads of state of China and Central Asian countries, scheduled for May 18 and 19, has stirred up global ripples. The international players know very well the snowballing impacts of "gathering" on fast changing geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-strategic landscapes. World eyeballs have glued to the event in the backdrop significance of China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its dividends to Central Asian states, year marks the 10th anniversary of BRI. Over the last 10 years, Central Asia has become a demonstration zone of how the BRI was agreed and implemented in the region, which later led to broad win-win results, including a long list of infrastructure connectivity projects, which assisted the landlocked region in becoming better linked with the outside world. The Central Asian countries, namely, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, are in serious process



of tweaking political reforms and economic transformations. The summit sends message to anti-globalization forces that future does not lie in decoupling and protectionism. Rather, a shared future is key for the world to forge ahead. Given the untoward businesses amidst external shocks, impacts of climate change, record high

inflation, unilateralism and challenges in post-covid era, the summit is believed to unlock those areas of cooperation that are still untapped and undiscovered for cultivating joint ventures on inclusive economy through Chinese prism, as China's economic and trade cooperation with the five Central Asian countries (C5) has produced noticeable results since

the establishment of diplomatic ties more than 30 years ago. Although China and C5 are working in cohesion in all sectors but one of the areas that needs urgent consideration is green financing, green energy and green economy. Due to climate change and carbon-based energy sources, Central Asia is already highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

Therefore, one of the key aspects of the cooperation will be the development of a program, called "Green Silk Road" that is the use of green development technology, innovative solutions and advanced technologies to achieve environmental efficiency and sustainability - erecting the region into a highland of global low-carbon growth. Also, Central Asia lack high-tech economic structure to keep pace the world. The Asian Development Bank has estimated that \$33 billion per annum would need to be spent till 2030 to tackle the infrastructure deficit in Central Asia. The summit is likely to usher in an era of fresh launch of macro and micro projects that would improve connectivity between China and Europe via the Central Asia region. The location of Central Asia has made it a "strategic pivot" on economic, political, social, cultural and security perspective. It is believed the summit will inject new impetus into development agenda not only for Central Asian countries but also for supercontinent "Eurasia".



## Briefs

### Pakistan to train one million people in AI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government of Pakistan has decided to train one million people in artificial intelligence (AI). As per official sources, the Ministry of Information Technology (IT) has prepared a draft of the AI Policy, and a separate fund will be established for AI and related technologies.

The IT and telecom sector will provide 30 per cent of funding per year for AI, and a campaign will also be launched to create awareness about AI among government employees, technocrats and other staff concerned. AI will be made part of primary, secondary and higher education. Funding, publication fees and travel grants will be provided to the students conducting research in AI.

As many as 1,000 AI research and development projects will be given financial support. AI centres will be established in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta. AI technologies will be used in all sectors including agriculture, financial, etc.

### Toll in Nigeria clashes rises to 85: officials

JOS (NIGERIA): The death toll rose to 85 from clashes between herders and farmers in central Nigeria that also displaced thousands of villagers, local officials said Thursday. The clashes broke out Monday in Plateau State that straddles the divide between Nigeria's mostly Muslim north and mainly Christian south, and which has struggled with ethnic and religious violence for years.

Thirty people were previously reported to have died. It was unclear what prompted the violence, but tit-for-tat killings between herders and farmers often spiral into village raids by heavily armed gangs. "Eighty-five bodies (were) recovered," the chairman of the local government council Daput Minister Daniel told AFP in Mangu district.

He said some people had been wounded, without giving a number, while "several houses have been destroyed and many people are now displaced." Joseph Gwankat, a community leader from the local Mwachavul Development Association, confirmed the toll of 85 to AFP. Gwankat said that 57 people were injured in the attacks and were being treated in hospital. There was no other confirmation of that figure. The State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), which visited the area on Wednesday, said that "thousands of people" were displaced by the attacks. "We could see houses that were still burning," Juni Bala, director of search and rescue at SEMA, told AFP. - APP

### Ex PTI MPs condemn May 9 vandalism

MULTAN: Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) nine former members of provincial assembly (MPAs) from south Punjab Thursday condemned the May 9 vandalism the party activists had committed targeting state installations and memorials. They hinted at leaving the party and said a patriot Pakistani can not be part of a party that follows the agenda of anti-national elements. The ex-MPAs expressed their vehement support for Pakistan Armed Forces and demanded that those involved in the May 9 attacks should be brought to justice.

Zaheeruddin Ali Zai denounced the attacks on Jinnah house, martyrs memorials, and other state installations "What PTI workers did was only expected from enemies of the country, he said, 'We stand by Pakistan, our institutions, our army, and martyred soldiers are our pride.' Ashraf Khan Rind said they all assembled here with one objective to condemn the acts of vandalism on May 9 adding that provoking people to stand against institutions was nothing but to cause unrest, and mayhem. - APP

## CONSTITUTION DAY OF NORWAY



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Norway Per Albert Ilsaas speaking at the Norwegian Constitution Day reception held at the Norwegian residence. A large number of guests hailing from various walks of life attended the reception. Ambassador Ilsaas talked about bilateral and multilateral relations. He particularly talked about the Russian invasion of Ukraine and termed it unwarranted. He said the Russian war against Ukraine is a threat to international peace, security and law. The Ambassador said that in December they will be marking 75 years of diplomatic relations between Norway and Pakistan. He said the event shall be celebrated in a befitting manner. - DNA

## Protests erupted across AJK against G-20 summit

Hundreds of students, professors, lecturers, and citizens participated in the protest demonstration against Indian state oppression

MUZAFFARABAD: Protests processions across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) continued under the aegis of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir against the proposed meetings of G-20 countries in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Hundreds of students, professors, lecturers, and citizens participated in the protest demonstration against Indian state oppression by waving black flags, and carrying banners and placards calling on G-20 member states to boycott the meeting in the disputed state. They also marched from MUST University to Chowk Shaheedan in Mirpur city of AJK on Thursday. The students of Mirpur University of Science and Technology were

chanting slogans like "Boycott Boycott G-20 Boycott," and "Indian tyrants leave Jammu Kashmir". While addressing the rally, Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmad Ghazali said that holding a meeting of the G-20 in a disputed state recognized by the United Nations is an open violation of the rules of the international organization. He urged that the permanent members of the Security Council must boycott the meetings in the disputed state as the 4.4 million people of the state not only reject the proposed meetings of the Bharatiya Janata Party government hosted by Narendra Modi, but also call it Indian nefarious agenda to divert world's attention from deteriorating situation towards normalcy.

He maintained that India wants to prove its forced sovereignty over the state by conducting this summit. Dr. Mirza Aslam said the proposed meeting in Srinagar and Leh might lead to the deprivation of civil liberties in Jammu and Kashmir. "G-20 countries should reject Indian military and political motives behind the meetings", he added. Dr. Asghar Ali Khan said that according to the United Nations, the G-20 meeting hosted by an aggressor country in a disputed state was illegal. Dr. Sohaib said Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Indonesia, and China should boycott the meetings in Kashmir to show their respect for human values. Dr. Muhammad Altaf said that the people of the state of Jammu and Kashmir

reject Indian military rule. Dr. Saira Shah said the G-20 countries should boycott the meetings under the supervision of the Government of India considering the public sentiments inside Srinagar. The anti-India rally was led by Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, Dean Faculty of Science Dr. Mirza Aslam, Dr. Asghar Ali Khan Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, Dr. Sohaib Ahmed, Chairman International Relations Dr. Muhammad Altaf, Director Student Affairs Ansar Ali, Mustafa Inqalabi Lecturer Islamic Studies, Bashir Ahmed, Usman Ali Hashim and others. Earlier, protest demonstrations were also held in Muzaffarabad and Poonch divisions. - APP

## Italy floods leave 9 dead and force 13,000 from their homes

NEWS DESK

MILAN: More than 20 rivers have burst their banks in Italy, leaving nine people dead and forcing 13,000 from their homes after six months' rainfall fell in a day and a half. Almost every river flooded between the north-east coast at Rimini and the city of Bologna, 115km (70 miles) away. Some 280 landslides took place and more evacuations were ordered overnight. "It was a very bad 48 hours. Water and mud took over our whole village," said Roberta Lazzarini, 71. Her home of Botteghino di Zocca, south of Bologna, was hit by a torrent on Wednesday. Streets, houses and gardens were inundated and Roberta said she was still scared. "I've never seen anything like that here. We were stuck and didn't know what to do. I just hope it doesn't happen again." Firefighters helped residents flee their houses, including a 97-year-old woman who had to leave her bedroom in a rubber dinghy. "Our community is broken," said Roberta's daughter, Ines, who runs the local cafe in the central square. "We felt completely cut out, isolated, some of us were truly terrified." "We've had floods before but it has never been this bad as far as I can remember," said Lamieri, 74, as he removed mud from his basement, where his son stores products to sell at the souvenir shop he runs in central Bologna. "The street turned into river. We lost all of our stuff which was stored down here. We estimate thousands of euros in damage." Antonio Francesco Rizzuto, a 55-year-old lawyer who lives by the river with his wife, was forced to leave on Tuesday night and is now living at his daughter's in a nearby village. "It was something no-one was expecting in these proportions," he said. "Before we left our house, the water level was getting higher by the minute. When we got back yesterday... our living room was completely submerged. We will have to throw away most of our furniture." This is one of many villages and towns flooded in the province of Emilia-Romagna, not just from rivers but overflowing canals too. More evacuations took place west of Ravenna on Thursday as the Lamone river overflowed.

## Erdogan's rival hardens tone, courting Turkish nationalists

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkey's opposition leader vowed Thursday to send back millions of migrants in a strident message aimed at winning the backing of an ultra-nationalist who helped push last weekend's presidential vote to a runoff. Secular opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu delivered his first public address since a landmark election Sunday in which he came in almost five points behind President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Kilicdaroglu's performance was the opposition's best of the Turkish leader's two-decade rule. But it fell short of expectations set by pre-election polling and left the opposition visibly depressed. The 74-year-old has since revamped his campaign team and toughened his message to win over Turkey's right-wing voters in the May 28 runoff. He also plans to meet Sinan Ogan - a far-right figure who picked up 5.2 per cent of the vote and is still weighing his endorsement. Kilicdaroglu tried on Thursday to toughen his message considerably from the more inclusive tone he set in the first stage of the campaign. "Erdogan, you did not protect the borders and honour of the country," the former civil servant said. "You have deliberately brought more than 10 million refugees to this country... As soon as I come to power, I will send all the refugees home." Ogan has said he will only back a candidate who cracks down on migrants and fights "terrorism" - a code word in Turkey for Kurdish militants. Erdogan and his Islamic-rooted party were lionised across swathes of the Muslim world for their more embracing stance towards those fleeing conflicts in countries such as Syria. Turkey's five-million-strong refugee and migrant population became the world's largest in the past decade. A separate 2016 deal between Ankara and the European Union helped stem the continent's migrant crisis by allowing those trying to reach Western Europe to settle in Turkey. Turkey won billions of euros in funding from Brussels for the programme. But an economic crisis that gathered pace as the election neared sent anti-migrant sentiment soaring. Erdogan's government has tried to find a middle ground. Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said on Thursday that Turkey had already sent more than half a million Syrians back.

## DeSantis to enter presidential race next week

DeSantis will likely file paperwork declaring his candidacy on May 25 to coincide with a donor meeting

in Miami, with a more formal launch the week of May 29, according to a source

WASHINGTON: Florida Republican Governor Ron DeSantis will officially enter the 2024 U.S. presidential race next week, according to two sources familiar with the decision, immediately becoming Donald Trump's biggest rival for the Republican nomination and shaking up a contest that largely has been one-sided. DeSantis will likely file paperwork declaring his candidacy on May 25 to coincide with a donor meeting in Miami, with a more formal launch the week of May 29, according to a source. The invitation for the May 25 event stated that donors would be put to "work," an apparent allusion to raising money for DeSantis, according to a source familiar with the event. Representatives for DeSantis did not immediately return a request for comment. Former U.S. Pres-

ident Trump has in recent weeks stepped up his political attacks on the Florida governor and maintains a commanding lead in the 2024 Republican primary, according to a recent Reuters/Ipsos poll. DeSantis' insistence on staying out of the race until the Florida legislature completed its spring session earlier this month rattled some high-profile Republican donors who had wanted him to jump in sooner rather than later to rebut Trump. Those attacks have taken a toll on DeSantis' standing in national polls. But DeSantis and his advisers hoped to use the legislature's session as a springboard to a campaign announcement and have stayed true to their timetable. Republican lawmakers

gave DeSantis a bevy of conservative victories in recent months: They expanded the state's school voucher program, prohibited the use of public money in sustainable investing efforts, scrapped diversity programs at public universities, allowed for the permissibility of concealed weapons and perhaps most notably, banned almost all abortions in the state. DeSantis has had help in readying the ground for his candidacy. A new political action committee supporting him, Never Back Down, which can raise unlimited funds, has been hiring staff in early voting states and running TV ads championing DeSantis and knocking Trump. DeSantis, 44, was re-elected as governor just last year, trouncing his Democratic opponent by nearly 20 percentage points. - Agencies



## LHC dissatisfied with efforts to recover Imran Riaz

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday ordered Punjab Inspector General Dr Usman Anwar to apprise it of progress on the recovery of anchorperson Imran Riaz Khan by 12pm tomorrow (Friday).

After he was arrested on May 11 from the Sialkot airport, Riaz's whereabouts have remained unknown for a week now. He was among those taken into custody following the violent protests that broke out in the aftermath of PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest.

Following his arrest, the LHC had ordered for Riaz to be presented in court but after its orders were not followed, the Sialkot police on Monday was given a 48-hour deadline to recover him. The next day, the Civil Lines police had, on his father Muhammad Riaz's complaint, filed a first information report against "unidentified persons" and police officials for kidnapping Riaz.

The FIR - a copy of which is invoked with Dawn.com - invokes Section 365 (kidnapping or abducting with intent secretly and wrongfully to confine person) of the Pakistan Penal Code.

A single-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti heard the case today while Advocate Azhar Siddique appeared as Riaz's counsel.

## IHC orders release of Qureshi, Afridi's wife

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday ordered to release Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi and the wife of another PTI leader Shehryar Afridi.

The IHC annulled the order for the arrest of Shah Mehmood Qureshi under 3MPO and ordered to release him. IHC judge Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb issued the orders for his release.

It is to be noted here that Shah Mehmood Qureshi and other PTI leaders had been arrested after violent protests by the PTI workers following the arrest of party chairman Imran Khan. The IHC also heard the petition against the arrest of Shehryar Afridi's wife.

The hearing was conducted by IHC judge Justice Arab Muhammad Tahir. "What is happening in the area of your jurisdiction IG Sahib? Are you familiar with the law or not?" the judge enquired from the Islamabad inspector general of police (IGP).

"According to our information, the woman and her husband were involved in the planning of the attack on the General Headquarters (GHQ)," the IGP replied. "What source of information do you have? Show me. Call the deputy commissioner (DC) immediately.

## Democrats warn Biden against toughening aid for poor

WASHINGTON: Democrats in the U.S. Congress expressed frustration with President Joe Biden's willingness to engage with Republicans demanding tougher work requirements for food aid recipients as part of any deal to raise the nation's debt ceiling. They have stopped short of threatening to block such moves, as talks on lifting the federal government's \$31.4 trillion borrowing limit shifted into a bilateral format between Democrat Biden, Republican House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy and their staffs. If Biden and McCarthy reach a deal, possibly as soon as Sunday, Congress could struggle to get enough votes for passage ahead of a June, when the Treasury Department has warned the government may be unable to pay all its bills. - Agencies