



Islamabad POST

Monday, May 29, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

President Aliyev to Armenians: Miatsum book is closed!

Detailed News On Page-07

Joe Biden, GOP reach debt ceiling deal

Detailed News On Page-08



Rodrygo sends Real second in La Liga

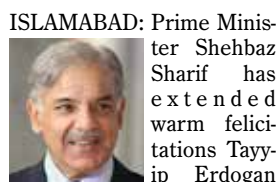
Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

PM Shehbaz greets Erdogan

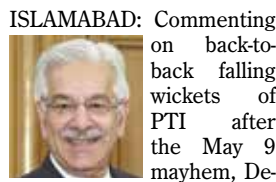
DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has extended warm felicitations to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for winning the elections. In his Tweet he said is one of few world leaders whose politics has been anchored in public service. He has been a pillar of strength for the oppressed Muslims & a fervent voice for their inalienable rights. His presidential victory & that of AKP in parliamentary elections is significant in so many ways, reflecting the trust & confidence of the Turkish people in his dynamic leadership.

Khan's 'mistakes' behind exodus: Asif

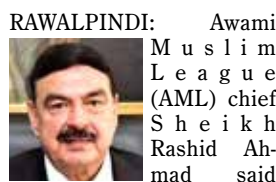
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ISLAMABAD: Commenting on back-to-back falling wickets of PTI after the May 9 mayhem, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Sunday said that those who could not bear the burden of party chairman Imran Khan's "mistakes" are bidding adieu to the former ruling party. Asif accused Khan of shattering the country's economy, adding that he is now trying to weaken the country defensively. During Khan's tenure, raids were conducted at the houses of PML-N leaders but they did not become absconders.

Standing with Imran, says Sheikh

STAFF REPORT



RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said on Sunday that as long as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan is 'fighting this battle', he will stand with him. In a video posted on his official Twitter handle, the former minister said, "I am not a coward, I maintain friendships and enmities till death." He stated that for the past 20 days, the police have been raiding the houses of his sisters, nephews, brothers and his mother, who died 30 years ago.

Turkish Presidential election

Erdogan emerges victorious

The incumbent President extends his rule into third decade



NEWS DESK/DNA

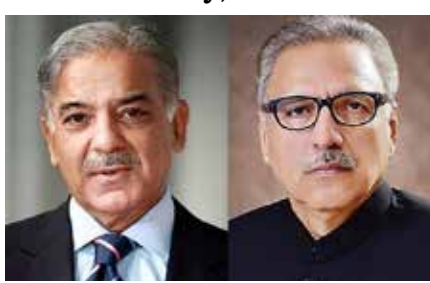
ISTANBUL: Turkish president extended his rule into third decade as he emerged victorious in a presidential election run-off on Sunday. Turkish polling stations closed in a historic runoff election that could extend President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's two decades of dominant but divisive Islamic style of rule until 2028. The NATO member's longest-serving leader defied critics and doubters by emerging with a comfortable lead against his secular challenger Kemal Kilicdaroglu in the first round on

May 14. Kilicdaroglu cobbled together a powerful coalition that grouped Erdogan's disenchanted former allies with secular nationalists and religious conservatives. Opposition supporters viewed it as a do-or-die chance to save Turkey from being turned into an autocracy by a man whose consolidation of power rivals that of Ottoman sultans. "I invite all my citizens to cast their ballot in order to get rid of this authoritarian regime and bring true freedom and democracy to this country," Kilicdaroglu said after casting his ballot in Turkey's first presidential runoff. Erdogan's almost five-point first-round lead came in the face of one of the world's worst cost-of-living crises - and with almost every opinion poll predicting his defeat. The 69-year-old looked tired but at ease as he voted with his wife Emine in a conservative district of Istanbul. "I ask my citizens to turn out and vote without complacency," Erdogan said. Emir Bilgin heeded the Turkish leader's call. "I'm going to vote for Erdogan. There's no one else like him," the 24-year-old said from a working-class

Continued on Page 06

President, PM felicitate nation on historic day

"On that day, Pakistan set a redline for its defence"



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ISLAMABAD: Congratulating the country on the silver jubilee of Youm-e-Takbeer, President Dr Arif Alvi said conducting nuclear tests in response to India doing the same was essential for maintaining the balance of power in the region. In a statement issued on the eve of May 28th, Dr Alvi said the achievement of nuclear capability was indeed a remarkable feat and for this, our scientists, engineers, political and military leadership of the time deserve high commendation.

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Youm-e-Takbeer observed

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ISLAMABAD: The nation is fervently celebrating the 25th anniversary of Pakistan's nuclear tests conducted on May 28, 1998, which was a historic day that led to the achievement of invincible defence capabilities and ensured regional stability through power equilibrium. According to a private news channel, the day brought a revival for the entire nation and became a moment of pride for the Muslim Ummah. The day, now remembered as Youm-e-Takbeer, is celebrated every year countrywide as a day of national pride and thanksgivings which made Pakistan the seventh nuclear nation in the world and the first Muslim state, have

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Additional Secretary Asia Pacific Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ameer Khurram Rathore, High Commissioner of Australia Neil Hawkins cutting cake to celebrate 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and Pakistan. - DNA

Australia to continue supporting Pakistan

Neil Hawkins says over 50,000 Pak students studying in Australia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins hosted a reception to celebrate 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and Pakistan, at his residence. While speaking on the occasion the high commissioner said 'we wanted to celebrate this event with you people in order to recognize your role in bringing the two countries together'. Neil Hawkins further said Australia was one of the first countries to recognize independence of Pakistan back in 1947. He said around 50,000 Pakistanis students are currently studying in Australia. He said both Australia and Pakistan have many things in common including love for Cricket, Commonwealth heritage, the federal system of government and of course shared challenges of climate change. 'We know that Pakistan is passing through challenging times these days. As a sincere friend Australia would continue to provide all possible assistance through technical cooperation and giving frank messages.

PTI chief responds to Sanaullah Govt trying to preempt horror stories: Imran

Tells govt to break away as many party members and then announce polls

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Sunday called out Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah for trying to "cover up" the ill-treatment of party workers, especially women, currently under custody. Reacting to his presser, the former prime minister said Sanaullah is "so obviously trying to cover up and preempt the horror stories about to break in

Continued on Page 06

PTI demands CJP to initiate enquiry

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Information Secretary Rauf Hassan said that Rana Sanaullah's midnight presser was a virtual confession of heinous crimes

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Maryam eulogises Nawaz for making Pak nuclear power

- Says May 9 and May 28 events exhibit difference of leadership

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) chief organizer Maryam Nawaz on Sunday said Nawaz Sharif carried out nuclear explosions despite world pressure to ensure regional stability through power equilibrium. Addressing a PML-N rally in Lahore to mark the

Youm-e-Takbeer day, Maryam Nawaz congratulated the 25th Takbeer Day to the nation. She nodded salutations to the architects of the nuclear program Nawaz Sharif and Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. She paid tribute to the "historic courage" of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. She said the PML-N supremo proved to be a lion-heart in difficult times. She added that Nawaz Sharif carried out six nuclear blasts in response to India's five in 1998. "India cannot think of carrying out a major attack against Pakistan."

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Pak should benefit from African markets: Amb. Karmoune

Says Pakistan relations with Africa are smoothly developing. Before the launch of "Look Africa Policy", Pakistan had only 14 missions in 54 African countries

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco and Dean of the African Group has said that Africa was now building its single market to facilitate trade among States parties to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and with the rest of the world. He further said that the African Union had made the 'Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area implementation' its main theme for the year 2023 to increase the attractiveness of the African market for trade and investment, though a number of critical protocols were yet to be negotiated, finalized and implemented. He expressed these views in an exclusive interview with Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline journal and DNA News Agency, on the occasion of the Africa Day. He noted that the 'Engage Africa' policy had resulted in the organisation of three Trade and Development Conferences in Africa. The objective of these forums had been to highlight the untapped potential of trade and investment relations with African countries and to present Pakistan's export sectors to African business communities. He also shared his thoughts on how the economic relationship could be further deepened and broadened. 'Fifty-four African states have signed a framework agreement establishing the

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which covers a region with a total gross domestic product of approximately \$3.4 trillion and a market of about 1.4 billion consumers', he added. He said, as of April 2023, 47 African countries have ratified the agreement (87%), which came into force in May 2019. Since this date, efforts are being enhanced to accelerate the implementation of the existing tools to facilitate trade under the AfCFTA. To a question he said, business communities from Africa and Pakistan can join efforts to benefit from numerous market opportunities in the Continent. The implementation of the AfCFTA will undoubtedly unveil a great potential for further growth in Pakistan-Africa trade economic relations. Many African countries are still developing and have a potentially lucrative market for Pakistani businesses. I have to mention here that important initiatives have been made by Pakistan to boost economic cooperation with the Continent, Ambassador Karmoune added.

Talking about Pakistan's desire to reach out to the African countries, he said, The "Look Africa policy", initiated in 2017, has resulted in the organisation of three Trade and Development Conferences in Africa. The first was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2020. The second took place in Lagos, Nigeria, in 2021 and the third was organised in Johannesburg, South Africa, at the end of 2022.

The objective of these forums was to highlight the untapped potential of trade and investment relations with African countries and to present Pakistan's export sectors to African business communities in different sub-regions of Africa. These initiatives, he said, have indeed pushed the trade volume between Pakistan and Africa to 6 billion dollars in 2021. Our common objective, however,



Ambassador of Morocco Mohammad Karmoune

is to make Pakistan and Africa economic relations sustainable by encouraging business communities to set up win-win investment joint-ventures in different economic sectors. The AfCFTA Secretariat has selected four key sectors that represent high-potential opportunities for companies looking to invest in Africa:

- 1-the automotive industry.
- 2- agriculture and agro-processing.
- 3- pharmaceuticals.
- 4- transportation and logistics.

Other sectors such as infrastructure, energy, mines, ICT, education, tourism, etc. presents equally a high potential. African countries are looking for the export of high value-added products. The export of primary commodities, has made the Continent particularly vulnerable to external macroeconomic shocks and protectionist trade policies. To yet another question the ambassador said, on the diplomatic level, Pakistan relations with Africa are smoothly developing. Before the launch of "Look Africa Policy", Pakistan had only 14 missions in 54 African countries. The number of Pakistani resident missions has now reached 21 Missions on the Continent (Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, Nigeria, Niger, South Africa, Mauritius, Djibouti, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, and Uganda). Moreover, the interest of Pakistan in Africa is becoming stronger and stronger despite the economic challenges the country is facing.

'We welcome Pakistan's willingness to further boost economic cooperation with Africa. The establishment of a Pak-Africa Special Engagement Fund is a good signal in this direction. The fund, as I have learned, will subsidize, promote and encourage Pakistani busi-

nesses which will elect Africa for their development. Instead of focussing on just increasing trade with African countries, Pakistani enterprises will be able to produce in Africa, benefit from the AfCFTA and be competitive in other external markets. When asked to comment on people to people ties he said, other promotional actions and people to people contacts should always be high on the agenda. I am thinking, for example, of the following initiatives: Participation of African and Pakistani business communities, Chambers of Commerce of both sides in trade fairs organised here or there. This will help in the exchange of information and partnering in different economic fields. Encourage the creation of joint ventures in order to strengthen the mutually beneficial partnership between Pakistan and Africa. 3-Promotion of the establishment of direct maritime and direct air links to facilitate people's mobility and visits of business delegations. Promotion of cultural exchange and cooperation in areas such as education (Scholarship and Exchange programs between universities), training and tourism. He said he was convinced that Pakistan's growing interest in Africa will aid in the expansion of its export market and the bolstering of its political influence. Africa has a promising economic potential, lucrative investment opportunities, abundant natural resources. It is the land of endless opportunities

Inside...

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Youm-e-Takbeer observed across KP

PESHAWAR: Like other provinces, Youm-e-Takbeer (day of greatness) to mark the successful nuclear test conducted 25 years ago at Chaghi district in Balochistan, was celebrated with great national enthusiasm in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Sunday. From Chitral to DI Khan and Kohistan to Khyber, the residents of all districts of KP, officials of the government departments, NGOs, civil society organizations, intelligentsia, labourers and students participated in rallies, seminars, declamation contests and walks to celebrate Youm-e-Takbeer with immense zeal and enthusiasm. May 28 this year marks the silver jubilee celebrations of the historical moment when Pakistan successfully detonated nuclear devices in the Chaghi district, Balochistan, and joined the prestigious club of the nuclear weapon states in the world. The successful six nuclear tests made Pakistan as the 7th nuclear weapon state of the world and 1st country of the Muslim Ummah.—APP

Govt to provide relief in upcoming budget

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has said that the country is facing a serious financial crisis at the moment, adding the policies of the previous government have brought the financial affairs of the province to the verge of collapse. Talking to former chief ministers, Chairman Qaumi Watan Party (QWP), Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, Pir Sabir Shah, provincial chairman QWP Sikandar Hayat Khan Sherpao, provincial president Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP), Mohammad Ali, former Governor, Iqbal Zafar Jhagra and others at Governor's House, he said that the current caretaker government and the federal government despite economic crisis are sincere to provide relief to the people of the province at newly merged districts in the upcoming annual budget.—APP

Portuguese Ambassador visits UNESCO world heritage site

The project also includes establishing a Visitor Interpretation Center within Lahore Fort Summer Palace and revamping existing galleries to showcase restored artifacts

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: His Excellency Frederico Silva, the Portuguese Ambassador to Pakistan, visited the UNESCO World Heritage site of Lahore Fort on Friday to witness one of the most significant ongoing restoration projects in Pakistan. The restoration work is being undertaken by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) and its country affiliate, the Aga Khan Cultural Service-Pakistan (AKCSP), in close partnership with the Government of Punjab and the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA). Mr. Tausif Ahmad, the CEO of AKCSP, accompanied by Mr. Wajahat Ali, the Director of Conservation and Design, gave a tour of the restoration projects visiting various sections of the Lahore Fort. The Ambassador had the opportunity to witness the meticulous restoration efforts undertaken for the world renowned Sheesh Mahal along with other monuments including the Naulakha Pavilion, Royal Kitchen, Loh Temple, and the Fort's iconic 400-year-old Picture Wall, hailed as one of the largest murals in the world. Expressing his deep admiration for the restoration work, His Excellency Frederico Silva stated, "The beauty of Lahore and La-



hore Fort is indescribable. The Conservation Works and Projects undertaken by the Walled City of Lahore and Aga Khan Cultural Service are magnificent, supporting the growth of local artisans and ensuring the preservation of these assets for future generations." He was particularly astounded by the beauty of the Sheesh Mahal and the Naulakha Pavilion, acknowledging that the commendable conservation efforts will endure for generations to come. This visit by the Portuguese Am-

bassador highlights the relationship between Pakistan and Portugal, paving the way for enhanced cultural cooperation and exchange. CEO of AKCSP, Mr. Tausif Ahmad, commended the decade-long partnership with the Walled City of Lahore, with whom the Aga Khan Cultural Service has been working as technical partners since 2014. He expressed the aim to complete the conservation of the major monuments within Lahore Fort in the next 5 to 7 years. Mr. Wajahat Ali explained

the best practices in conservation followed by AKCSP, which have garnered several UNESCO Awards for exceptional conservation work, including the conservation of the Shahi Hammam (Royal Bathhouse) and several monuments in Gilgit-Baltistan. The AKTC and its country affiliate, AKCSP, have been actively involved in the rehabilitation of the Walled City of Lahore and the conservation of its Mughal-era monuments since 2007 through its Historic Cit-

ies Program. In collaboration with the Government of Punjab and the Walled City of Lahore Authority, the program has achieved significant milestones, including the restoration of the Wazir Khan Mosque, the Shahi Hammam, and the Royal kitchen. The program has also successfully restored major forts, traditional settlements, mosques, and public spaces in the high valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan province, such as the Baltit and Altit Forts in the Hunza Valley, as well as the Shigar Fort and Khaplu Palace in Baltistan. Several of these projects receive co-funding from France, Norway, Germany, and the USA. Ongoing restoration work at Lahore Fort focuses on conserving the world's largest Picture Wall, the Sheesh Mahal, and various other monuments. Recently, a 22 million loan agreement was approved for the Heritage and Urban Regeneration of Lahore (HURL) project, promoting tourism, creating revenue-generating activities (especially for women), and strengthening resilience against climate change. The project also includes establishing a Visitor Interpretation Center within Lahore Fort Summer Palace and revamping existing galleries to showcase restored artifacts.

China's new development paradigm to ensure global security

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese model of inclusive and participatory economic growth is a path to modernization featuring globalization and multilateralism based on shared common security for every single country and the regions. The BRI is connecting countries and civilizations for cultural harmony and trade. Pakistan is a major beneficiary of China's new development paradigm that has no aggressive plans against any country. The CPEC was launched when no country was willing to invest in Pakistan's infrastructure. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said at a seminar on Saturday. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, the chairman of the Senate Defence Committee and founder chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute, said Pakistan's bureaucratic hurdles and political instability are the main reasons for slow-paced progress on the CPEC initiatives. Pakistan shall act fast before it's too late. All stakeholders shall

play their role in expediting the progress on CPEC. The seminar titled "China for a new security, connectivity and trade paradigm" was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) in collaboration with the China Study Centre, Comsats University Islamabad Campus. The Research and Media Fellow at Centre for China and Globalization (Beijing) Zoon Ahmed Khan chaired the seminar. The guest speakers included Ambassador (ret'd) Naghmana Hashmi, University of Peshawar pro-Vice Chancellor Dr Zahid Anwar, NUST China Study Centre Director Ms. Xian Yang, Bahria University Assistant Prof. Dr Hassan Daud But, Comsats University China Study Centre Director Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan, and Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed. Zoon Ahmed Khan said China's development is human centric that has transformed the Chinese society

to become very productive. Now the GDP growth is exuberant with no person below the poverty line. Every village in China has its own solutions to the problems. The state has provided every possible opportunity to its people to go prosperous and promote it self to the next level. Small and micro enterprises changed the lives of people while China's peaceful economic progress has provided ample opportunities to every nation to freely trade. Young people have worked hard to change the face of China. Ambassador (ret'd) Naghmana Hashmi said: The intensification of Sino-American competition currently forms the most important instance of great-power competition which has the potential of becoming a major conflict engulfing the entire world. It has added to the uncertainty, instability and chaos in the already worrying and unpredictable flux in the world order prevalent these days.—APP

PML-N makes Pakistan's defense impregnable

DNA

LOWER DIR: Adviser to the Prime Minister (PM) for Political and Public Affairs and National Heritage Engr Amir Muqam here on Sunday said that May 28 had importance in Pakistan's historic day as on the day 25 years ago, Pakistan's defence was made impregnable after successful nuclear tests by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government at Chaghi mountains, Balochistan in 1998. Addressing a big public gathering here, Engr Amir Muqam said, "Former PM Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has overlooked all the international pressures and huge assistance offer and conducted the historic nuclear tests at Chaghi Balochistan that made Pakistan's defence invincible forever." He said, "Today nobody is allowed to keep an evil eye on Pakistan." He said that Pakistan was the seventh atomic power in the world and the first of the Muslims Ummah. On the other hand, he said, "The negative designs of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has been witnessed by the entire nation after the entire nation after the PTI attacked the government properties and defence installations including Jinnah House, Radio Pa-

kistan Peshawar and others sensitive buildings on May 9-10 vandalism." He said that colossal damages to public and government properties besides defence installations on May 9-10 were beyond imagination. Amir Muqam said on one side, there was a horde of political parties involved in vandalism on May 9 while on the other side, there was PML-N that made Pakistan's defence impregnable on May 28, 1998. Engr Amir Muqam said that Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz Sharif had faced jails with bravery and steadfastness while PTI leaders were even afraid of arrest. He claimed that the loot and blunders of Imran Niazi were exposed before the nation as evidenced by the Rs60 billion corruption case of Al-Qadar, PTI Foreign Funding and To-sha Khana. He said the PTI government, failed to deliver in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) during its nine years long rule. "PTI is failed to construct a single mega project for the people of Dir districts." He said the PML-N government after coming into power would lay a network of development projects in the Malakand Division and would remove the sense of deprivation of its people.

RCCI delegation visits NICAT, stresses on enhancing linkages and networking

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) headed by President RCCI Saqib Rafiq visited National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT). RCCI delegation was given a briefing on the key initiatives of NICAT for promotion of entrepreneurship and start-ups in various sectors ranging from textile, agriculture, services, construction and utility services. The session was filled with engaging conversations related to the inno-

vative startups and shared ideas as well as explored their potential. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq lauded the efforts of NICAT for promoting start-ups culture, entrepreneurship and innovation in various services through IT. He stressed for more networking and assured all kind of support in this regard. NICAT project director Imran Jattala appreciated RCCI for their support in fostering an environment of growth and opportunity. NICAT is the platform to bring industry, academia, and government together,



he added. Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, Raja Omer Iqbal Chairman Standing Committee on Commercial Re-

search and Development, Ms Naureen Ghaffar Vice Chairperson, Executive Committee Members were also present on the occasion. The National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies is envisioned, powered and funded by IGNITE-National Technology Fund and Ministry of Information Technology, to help Pakistan's Aerospace and ICT industries realize their full potential. The purpose of the NICAT Consortium is to contribute to society & economic transformation by empowering, connecting,

Pakistan to export juicy cherries to China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is all set to export juicy cherries to China in the coming weeks as the harvesting season started in the country. A 14-member Chinese business delegation visited Gilgit-Baltistan where they signed multiple memorandums of understanding (MoUs) this week to facilitate cherry trade, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday. The delegation assessed the local cherry production, and inspected cherry orchards, packing units, and cold storage facilities, aiming to explore the potential of importing cherries to Chinese markets, said an official statement. Pakistan and China have also launched two new air cargo routes to strengthen connectivity between the two countries. The new routes will link Nanning, the capital of China's Guangxi autonomous region, with the Pakistani cities of Karachi and Lahore. These flights aim to facilitate the transportation of Pakistani fruits and seafood to China while also delivering Chinese clothing accessories and other goods from Nanning to the Pakistani market. This year, the cherry farmers anticipate doubling their incomes and profits as China has indicated opening its doors to importing cherries for the first time from Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) which shares borders with China, added the statement. Mohammad Ali Quaid, the special assistant to the GB chief minister, said that the key approval would come from the Chinese quarantine department which is planning a visit to GB to pave the way for exports.

Lahore Bar delegation meets Punjab Caretaker CM

DNA

LAHORE: A delegation of Lahore Bar headed by its president called on caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi. The lawyers delegation briefed the chief minister about problems faced by the lawyers community. CM Mohsin Naqvi assured delegation resolution of their problems on priority basis. He also said that facilities at the hospital established for lawyers will be improved. "I will visit the hospital soon," he told lawyers. Punjab CM said that his government will look into the proposal of building parking plaza outside Aiwan-e-Adal. Caretaker chief minister directed the deputy commissioner to locate the land for construction of parking plaza.

#يوم_تكبير_پاکستان

يوم تكبير

دفاع ناقابل تسخير

25 Years

15:16
28. 5. 1998

حکومت پاکستان

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

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



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of UAE Hammad Al Zaabi, Principle of Sheikh Zayed International Academy and others cutting cake on the occasion of the graduation ceremony. (Another picture on the back page).—DNA

Mushaal asks govt to raise voice for Yasin Malik's release

She demanded that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari should take up the case of Yasin Malik before the world leaders and at relevant UN forums and in human rights organisations to protect his life

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, the Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organisation and wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat leader, Muhammad Yasin Malik, has urged upon the government of Pakistan to raise the issue of senior Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik's detention at all fora globally because the notorious Narendra Modi fascist regime is hell-bent to silence the most powerful voice of Kashmir freedom movement forever. Mushaal, after visiting Jinnah

House, Lahore, in a media talk expressed alarm that the fascist government would eliminate Yasin Malik, chief of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), as India's infamous National Investigation Agency (NIA) again sought the death sentence for him, after he was given life in prison in a concocted and politically motivated case on May 25 last year for his crime to raise voice for right to self-determination of Kashmiris, Kashmir Media Service reported. She demanded that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

should take up the case of Yasin Malik before the world leaders and at relevant UN forums and in human rights organisations to protect his life. The Hurriyat leader stated that her husband's life was in danger because the Indian authorities could not buy his loyalty; hence they now resorted to hang him to silence the most popular leader of contemporary Kashmiri freedom fight. She said that it was high time for the Pakistani government to play a proactive role to not only save his life but to build maximum pressure on the Indian government to ensure his

release from illegal detention. Mushaal said that Modi is actually hanging his entire political career down the drain. However, she vowed that the notorious Indian authorities should not think this would ever silence the brave Kashmiris. She warned that Yasin was not an ordinary leader and if anything happened to him the entire region would be engulfed in war flames for which the Indian notorious government would be responsible. The Chairperson recalled that Kashmiri people had been struggling peacefully to break the shackles of Indian slavery and always dis-

courage violence; however, she warned that if they approved his death sentence, then the situation might go out of control; hence the Indian authorities should not only reconsider their decision of life imprisonment but should set him free because he was incarcerated in fake and fabricated cases. Mushaal urged that the United Nations bodies, world powers and human rights organisations should raise their voice for safeguarding the life of Yasin Malik and ensure his release from jail who was put in a death cell despite a fast deteriorating health condition.

Minister personally monitoring Hajj operation

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony, Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood said that he was personally overseeing the entire Hajj operation, ensuring its smooth execution through various channels.

Speaking at the final training session of Moavineen-e-Hujjaj (Pilgrims' Assistants) held at the Haji Camp Islamabad the other day, the minister informed attendees that he had taken proactive steps to address any concerns or complaints from the pilgrims.

To facilitate efficient communication, Senator Talha had distributed a WhatsApp number to all intending pilgrims, encouraging them to register any complaints they may have at any point during their spiritual journey. Additionally, he revealed that he had personally funded the establishment of an online portal to receive and manage these complaints effectively. The minister made it clear that he would not tolerate any negligence or lethargic attitudes from the pilgrims' assistants. He emphasized the importance of their assigned duties and warned that anyone found displaying reluctance or failing in their responsibilities would face deportation.—APP

Plot to spoil Pak-China relations has failed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saifuddin Sheikh, Executive Director of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Sunday that the conspiracy to destroy Pakistan economically, politically, and defensively by making it hostile towards China has been foiled.

The attack on PTV and Parliament House in 2013 was aimed at gaining power and sabotaging the visit of the President of China, he said. After that, the head of a political gang started conspiracies against CPEC and in violation of the agreement handed over the complete details of the project to the IMF, which angered China, he added. Saifuddin Sheikh said in a statement issued here today that when the current government and the COAS removed China's reservations and assured the speedy completion of CPEC, the same gang repeated its conspiracy by creating an atmosphere of civil war in the country. The protests were repeated with more intensity the day after the visit of the Chinese foreign minister, but the conspiracy was foiled by timely action. Saifuddin Sheikh has said that China's influence in the region is continuously increasing, the Middle East and Gulf countries are also getting closer to China to leave the US, and now the US has no friend except India in the region to confront China. Therefore, an arsonist group was used to push Pakistan to the anti-China camp, but their plot has been foiled. Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir has assured the Chinese leadership to complete the CPEC and provide security for it.

Saudi envoy celebrates 15 years of Embassy's successful operation in new building

ISLAMABAD: The Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, in a momentous occasion, proudly announced it had been 15 years since the Royal Embassy relocated to its new premises, ensuring the seamless execution of its diplomatic functions. Sharing his sentiments in a video message posted on his Twitter account, he highlighted the numerous significant achievements accomplished during this invaluable period from May 27, 2008, which further solidified the longstanding and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia across various domains. "The opening of this new chapter in diplomacy has opened the hearts of the people of our two nations, forging an even stronger bond," stated Ambassador Al-Malki, emphasizing the positive impact of the embassy's presence. The video footage accompanying his message offered glimpses of memorable occasions and a captivating aerial view of the Saudi embassy, symbolizing the rich history and shared experiences between the two countries. Furthermore, the Saudi Embassy Press Attaché, Dr Naif Al-Otaibi, marked the 15th anniversary of the Royal Embassy's inauguration by sharing a stunning photograph of the entire building. This image not only showcased the architectural grandeur of the embassy but also represented the enduring partnership between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The celebration of the embassy's successful operation in its new location serves as a testament to the unwavering commitment of both nations to fostering cooperation and understanding, contributing to the advancement of bilateral relations. As Saudi Arabia and Pakistan continue to collaborate in various areas, the Royal Embassy stands as a symbol of friendship, trust, and mutual respect, paving the way for a prosperous future between the two nations.—APP

HSSC annual exams; RBISE taking strict action against 'Boti Mafia'

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (RBISE) on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta, is taking strict action in accordance with the law against 'Boti Mafia,' and foolproof arrangements were finalized for the ongoing Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) annual exams, said a RBISE spokesman.

He informed that the board had formed special teams to monitor the examination centres. He said strict monitoring of the examination centres was being ensured by the board and the district administration. District vigilance committee, chairman squad,

special squad and mobile inspectors were visiting the examination centres to check the exam process and send their reports to the board on a daily basis.

A central control room had also been set up to monitor the examinations, he said adding, all the relevant officials were directed to ensure implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the board and warned that negligence on the part of the officials concerned would not be tolerated. He informed that the board had completed foolproof arrangements before the start of the HSSC annual exams, 2023. According to Chairman RBISE, Muhammad Adnan Khan, the best

possible arrangements were made for the HSSC annual exams. Controller Examinations RBISE Prof. Sajid Mehmood Farooqi informed that the board on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta, had made the best possible arrangements for the exams. Apart from the board's office at Morgah near Attock Oil Refinery Rawalpindi, the students could also contact at phone number 051-5450917-18, Assistant Controller Inter Branch Rana Ilyas on cell phone 0333-5464775, focal person Inter Branch, Riayat Abbasi on 0332-8500846 and 051-5450920 in case of any problem, he added.—APP

Rescue-1122 gears up to handle possible floods

RAWALPINDI: Rescue-1122 Rawalpindi has finalized all arrangements to cope with any flood situation during upcoming monsoon season while the training of the volunteers is underway which would be completed soon. A comprehensive action plan for preventing flood in Nullah Leh and other nullahs of the town during monsoon season has been devised aimed at mitigating flood damages in Rawalpindi. Efforts are being made to improve coordination and communication amongst the departments concerned. Steps are also being taken to enhance public awareness about situations that lead to increase in flood risk, to develop and gear up overall capabilities of the departments to manage flood related disasters. Rescue-1122 spokesman informed that Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema had inspected mock exercise of Rescue-1122 organized the other day at Rawal Dam to deal with the flood situation.—APP

TEVTA to arrange summer skills camps for students

RAWALPINDI: Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) will arrange summer skills camps in vacations for the students of government schools and colleges. The summer skills camps will provide training in 14 different trades to students. The program aims to offer free three-month short courses during their summer vacations. Male and female students will be able to enroll in these three-month short courses free of charge, without any tuition or examination fees. A seminar on technical education awareness program for the students was organized here at Government Graduate College for Women Satellite Town (GGCWT) Rawalpindi. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta was the chief guest at the seminar while Director Colleges, Prof. Sher Ahmad Satti, Principal Government Graduate College for Women, Satellite Town Rawalpindi, Dr Fatima Gul, Principal Divisional Public School Rawalpindi Muhammad Yasin Mirza and others were also present on the occasion. The Commissioner while addressing the seminar said the program of imparting skills and technical education to the student during summer vacations is a major initiative of the Punjab government. The Commissioner emphasized the significance of the summer skills camp saying it's a valuable initiative by the government. He said the program would help contribute to a brighter future of the students. The Commissioner informed that he was a member of the committee formed in this regard and is aware of the importance of this program which would have constructive effects. Technical education training is a joint effort of different departments, he added. He advised the students not to waste their precious time during summer vacations and learn skills. In developed countries children are imparted technical education and given training during holidays, he added. It is possible to eliminate unemployment through skill and technical education, the Commissioner said. Technical training would be beneficial not only for the person getting education based on technical training but the entire family would benefit economically, he added.—APP

MAY 2023

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Briefs

Current era witnessing rise of China and the 'Asian Century'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar held here said that the current era was witnessing the rise of China and the 'Asian Century' for the well-being of the people. The seminar was organised by China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on China's "Global Development Initiative." The speakers noted that the initiative aims to promote development cooperation to achieve sustainable development goals, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro. The chief guest at the seminar was Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairperson Senate Defense Committee. Former Ambassador to China Masood Khalid was the keynote speaker. During his address, Sayed lauded China for the launch of the far-reaching and consequential Global Development Initiative (GDI). He stated that the world is currently undergoing both transformation and turmoil. Different leaders have described this decade in different ways. President Macron had accurately stated that this decade marked the end of 300 years of Western dominance.

Researchers to explore dimensions of CPEC DNA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Researchers and experts from across the country have been invited in two-days international conference to explore the transformative dimensions of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). CPEC Secretariat at Ministry of Planning, development & special initiatives in Collaboration with the Embassy of China in Pakistan and Higher Education Commission (HEC) are organizing an International Conference here on, "Decade of CPEC & BRI: From Vision to Reality" on 10th-11th July. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, the objective is to bring back policy makers, scholars, practitioners and other stakeholders to exchange ideas and insights related to economic, social, environmental and geopolitical impacts of CPEC and BRI. Moreover, the participants will explore opportunities for enhanced cooperation sustainable development and inclusive growth in the subsequent phase of CPEC. Themes and topics of research papers include opportunities for Industrial Relocation.

Long-term sustainable policies are indispensable

He said that in the current economic situation, the business community needs to move forward with greater unity and solidarity. On this occasion, President Lahore Chamber appreciated the activities of Islamabad Chamber and services for the business community of the capital

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the budget 2023-24 is very important in the current economic situation, the government should focus on the formulation of long-term and sustainable policies instead of short-term ones. Business community is the biggest stakeholder in Pakistan's economy. The proposals of the country's Chamber of Commerce and FPCCI should be given ample space in the budget. He expressed these views yesterday on the occasion of a meeting with President Lahore Chamber of Commerce Kashif Anwar, who visited the Islamabad Chamber along with his delegation. The cooperation between the two chambers, Budget 2023-24, the current economic situation of the country



and the problems of the business community were discussed in the meeting. It was emphasized that the government should include the suggestions of the business community in the budget. In difficult

economic conditions, policies should be formulated by taking the business community into confidence.

President ICCI said on this occasion that the business commu-

nity is facing many difficulties in the current situation. Cities like Islamabad and Lahore should be given prominent place in the formulation of economic policies. He said that the government

should clarify the situation regarding the IMF program because uncertainty is harmful for business. He said that if the government has taken a decision to withdraw from the IMF program, the business community should be taken into confidence in this regard as well. Speaking on this occasion, President Lahore Chamber Kashif Anwar said that Islamabad Chamber has a prominent role in the country's business community. Lahore Chamber and Islamabad Chamber should take advantage of opportunities to cooperate on various issues. He said that in the current economic situation, the business community needs to move forward with greater unity and solidarity. On this occasion, President Lahore Chamber appreciated the activities of Islamabad Chamber and services for the business community of the capital.

Government is working to promote exports

DNA

ISLAMABAD: CEO Trade Development Authority Pakistan Mohammad Zubair Motiwala has said that the government is working on a priority basis to promote exports from Pakistan. There is a special focus on trade relations with regional countries. The solution to Pakistan's economic problems lies in reducing imports and increasing exports. The role of the business community is key to get Pakistan out of the current economic problems. TDAP will provide full support in projects like construction of an expo center in Islamabad, a display center in the chamber

and FM radio. The performance of Islamabad Chamber in the last one year is an example for other Chambers.

He expressed these views in a meeting with the President of the Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on the occasion of his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry yesterday. He said that the main objective of TDAP is to solve the problems of the business community and ensure access of Pakistani goods to every market in the world. Economic problems will be solved only if Pakistan's trade increases. Islamabad Chamber has taken many revolutionary steps in the last one year. Being the representative

chamber of the federal capital, Islamabad Chamber is fulfilling its responsibilities. Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Trade and Development Authority of Pakistan has a key role in the promotion of Pakistan's trade relations. As a business leader, Zubair Motiwala understands well all the problems that the business community of Pakistan is facing. He said that like other big cities, Islamabad Chamber is trying to establish an Expo Center. In this regard, CDA has agreed to provide land. The Government should cooperate with the Chamber for the construction of the Expo Cen-

tre. He said that Islamabad Chamber is also working on the project of FM radio station. This project will play an important role in awareness for the promotion of business. He said that FM radio broadcasting will be extended to schools, colleges and universities. And the importance of events will be highlighted in public. On this occasion, TDAP Director General Muhammad Naseer said that the Islamabad Chamber should play a key role in promoting trade and cooperation with regional countries. And research work should be done to promote trade with these countries including Iran, Afghanistan and China. TDAP will provide guidance to the Islamabad Chamber in this regard.

Tax policies encouraging businesses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Sunday said the tax-to-GDP ratio is below 10 percent in Pakistan which is below the level required for any proper economic growth. There have been no serious efforts to expand the tax base and tax machinery relief on increasing collection through indirect taxes and burdening taxpayers which has never worked, he said. Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as President of ICCI and Chairman of PVMA said in a statement issued here today that over-reliance on imports and turning businesses into withholding agents was a policy which was not supposed to work from the very beginning and it encouraged many businesses to move from formal to informal economy. The concept of higher taxes on non-filers persuaded businesses to remain outside the tax net and pay a higher tax in the shape of withholding tax in order to escape documentation and scrutiny by taxmen, he noted. The business leader said that businesses absorbed the higher tax in their cost of doing business and priced their products accordingly which also increase the cash in circulation. He observed that the government is still not learning from its mistakes and the focus continues on extracting more tax from the existing tax base which will shrink the base even further. There are plans for imposing taxes on banking transactions which have not worked in the past, he said, adding that the tax burden is tilted towards the documented manufacturing sector. There was a super tax imposed last year that may continue in the coming year as well. Then there is a proposal to tax reserves of companies which were built up after paying due taxes which will incentivising businesses to move more towards the informal sector. The track-and-trace system to ensure documentation is not progressing as intended due to a lack of required political will to go after the evaders who are politically powerful people. This lack of will to take on the high and mighty is increasingly pushing people to move from the documented businesses to the informal domain. There are 52 tobacco companies in Pakistan while the track-and-trace system has been implemented in only two big multinationals. In another example, the government has imposed 10 percent FED on fruit juices and that has resulted in a decline in volumes of the formal juice market by 45 percent.

CTP wipes out encroachment during operation

RAWALPINDI: On the special directives of DIG Traffic Punjab Mirza Faran Baig, City Traffic Police (CTP) jointly with Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi conducted a grand operation against encroachment aiming to maintain traffic flow CTP and MCR carried out operation against the encroachment in Bara Market, Imperial Market, Li-aquat Road, Raja Bazar and other places. During the operation, the authorities confiscated wheel barrows along with luggage creating hurdles in smooth flow of traffic. CTP also issued challan tickets to 80 vehicles and motorcycles for obstructing the flow of traffic. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan said that operation against the encroachment mafia will be continued without any discrimination. To eliminate the encroachments, traffic police officers have been appointed with the relevant department who will continue the operations on a daily basis, he added. The concerned circle in-charges will keep an eye on the encroachment mafia.—APP

Cotton and leather sectors set to receive boost

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The cotton and leather sectors in Pakistan are set to receive a much-needed boost from Guangzhou enterprises, as Chinese entrepreneurs have expressed interest in investing in these sectors during a meeting with the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP). Representatives from Chinese enterprises in Guangzhou met with Muhammad Sualah Ahmad Faruqi,



Secretary of Commerce in Pakistan, and ensured to assist Pakistan in the textile sector through investment. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, this investment is expected to bring in

new technologies, increase production capacity, and create new jobs. Faruqi said that Pakistani enterprises are looking at the potential of the textile and leather industries in Pakistan, which

have been growing steadily over the past few years, added that with Chinese investments and support, these sectors can reach even greater heights. This will also help the local economy by creating job opportunities for many people.

During a sideline meeting with a delegation from Guangzhou, Fareed Iqbal Qureshi, Secretary of TDAP, said that Pakistani enterprises are seeking to establish long-term partnerships with Chinese businesses to ensure mutual benefits from their investments in both countries.

Honor killing a grave violation of human rights

ALTAZ KUMAIL



According to Human Rights Watch, honor killings are acts of violence, often resulting in murder, committed by male family members against female family members. The involvement of women in planning such murders is also very common. These acts are carried out when women are believed to have brought shame upon their families. Such crimes occur when women engage in activities such as conversing with men outside their family, experiencing rape, refusing arranged marriages, leaving abusive husbands, or adopting a more Western lifestyle. These actions are deemed highly shameful and disgraceful, leading some to believe that the women involved deserve nothing less than death. Honor killing represents a deadly and criminal form of violence mostly against women and often men, per-

petuated under the guise of preserving honor and societal values. Tragically, these women often lack legal protection, resulting in an alarming increase in the number of honor killings. It is also seen that women show no resistance to such acts and in fact many even praise it as they consider it the best solution for such problems. Gilgit Baltistan, a region known for its unique geography and natural beauty, also carries a dark reputation for crimes against women in certain remote areas. Among these areas, the district of Diamer Ghizer and Nagar face particularly high rates of honor-based crimes. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's Gilgit office reported a significant increase in honor-based crimes, receiving reports of 60 such incidents from January to November 2015. From 2016 to 2022, approximately 344 females in Gilgit Baltistan have suffered due to honor killing practices. Unfortunately, many cases go unreported in the media, leaving a significant portion of these crimes hidden from public knowledge. Districts such as Nagar, Diamer, and Ghizer witness 60% of the reported cases. The ratio between honor killings in Gilgit Balti-

stan reveals a significant disparity in the suffering experienced by men and women. According to available data, the male percentage of honor killings is 35%, while the female percentage is 65%. This imbalance clearly illustrates that women are disproportionately affected by honor killings in the region. The ratio difference further highlights the urgent need to address the systemic discrimination and violence faced by women in Gilgit Baltistan. Several factors contribute to honor killings in Gilgit Baltistan. One major reason is the occurrence of extramarital affairs. In conservative societies, such actions are viewed as a violation of cultural norms and moral values. Engaging in relationships outside of marriage is considered dishonorable and brings shame to the family. In extreme cases, this perceived dishonor may lead to the killing of those involved in order to restore family honor. Another contributing factor is the refusal to abide by family decisions. In tightly-knit communities like Gilgit Baltistan, family decisions hold significant importance. When individuals go against their families' wishes or expectations, it is seen as a defiance of tra-

ditional values. In order to preserve family honor and maintain social order, honor killings may be carried out. Raising a voice against cultural traditions is also a trigger for honor killings. Gilgit Baltistan boasts a unique cultural heritage, and challenging traditional practices can be seen as a direct affront to the community's values and customs. Individuals who question or speak out against these traditions may face severe consequences, including honor-based violence. The prevalence of illiteracy and lack of awareness further contribute to honor killings in Gilgit Baltistan. Limited education and awareness regarding human rights, gender equality, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms hinder progress in eliminating such practices. Illiteracy perpetuates regressive beliefs and reinforces patriarchal structures that underpin honor killings. In the region of Gilgit Baltistan, the presence of religious sectarian tensions serves as a significant factor in instances of honor killings. Specifically, when individuals from the Shia and Sunni sects form emotional connections and express a desire to unite in marriage, they often encounter a grave risk of being subjected to violence and ultimately killed by their

own families. The primary motivation behind these tragic acts is the deep-rooted sectarian discord and animosity prevailing in the region. However, the primary underlying factor in honor killings in Gilgit Baltistan is the presence of sociocultural barriers. These barriers encompass a range of societal norms, beliefs, and expectations that perpetuate the concept of honor and shame. Strict adherence to cultural traditions, the preservation of family reputation, and the need to conform to social norms create an environment where honor killings are seen as a means to maintain societal order. Addressing the issue of honor killings in Gilgit Baltistan necessitates tackling these sociocultural barriers. Comprehensive education programs promoting gender equality, human rights, and critical thinking play a crucial role in this regard. Additionally, raising awareness about alternative conflict resolution methods, providing support to victims, and implementing stringent legal measures can contribute to reducing honor killings and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

—The Writer is the MPhil Scholar at the University of Punjab, Social activist in GB



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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 251

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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Pakistan: A responsible nuclear weapon state

Pakistan's journey as a nuclear power has been marked by a sense of responsibility, strategic thinking, and commitment to global peace and security. Despite being the only Islamic country possessing nuclear weapons, Pakistan has consistently demonstrated its dedication to the responsible management and use of its nuclear capabilities. Pakistan's adherence to non-proliferation norms, its robust command and control systems, and its contributions to international disarmament efforts illustrate its status as a responsible nuclear state. Nuclear Non-Proliferation: Pakistan has shown its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation by adhering to various international treaties and agreements. As a responsible nuclear state, Pakistan is a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and supports its objectives. Pakistan has also consistently called for the establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in South Asia, demonstrating its commitment to regional stability and non-proliferation. Robust Command and Control: Pakistan has developed stringent command and control systems to ensure the safety, security, and responsible handling of its nuclear assets. It has implemented comprehensive safeguards, physical protection measures, and personnel reliability programs. Pakistan's nuclear program is guided by strict protocols and institutional frameworks that prioritize safety and prevent unauthorized access to its nuclear arsenal. Nuclear Safety and Security: Pakistan has made significant investments in nuclear safety and security. It actively participates in international forums and collaborations aimed at strengthening nuclear safety measures and preventing illicit trafficking of nuclear materials. Pakistan's Nuclear Security Summit commitments and its cooperation with international organizations demonstrate its dedication to maintaining high standards of nuclear security. Strategic Restraint: Pakistan has consistently displayed strategic restraint in its nuclear doctrine. It maintains a credible minimum deterrence posture, emphasizing that its nuclear capabilities are solely for defensive purposes. Pakistan's nuclear program is not driven by aggression or expansionist ambitions but rather serves as a deterrent against external threats to its sovereignty and national security. Contributions to Disarmament: Pakistan has actively participated in global efforts for nuclear disarmament. It has supported multilateral initiatives, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and called for the commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). Pakistan's advocacy for disarmament reflects its commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Pakistan's responsible nuclear behavior, commitment to non-proliferation, robust command and control systems, focus on nuclear safety and security, strategic restraint, and contributions to disarmament efforts showcase its status as a responsible nuclear state. Pakistan's nuclear program is guided by a firm commitment to global peace and security, while ensuring its own national interests and territorial integrity. As a responsible nuclear state, Pakistan continues to engage constructively in international forums to promote non-proliferation, strengthen nuclear safety measures, and work towards a world free of nuclear weapons.



Afghan women should allowed to breathe free

To foster a just and inclusive society, it is imperative that the Taliban respect and protect the rights of women. By allowing women to breathe freely, the Taliban government can demonstrate their commitment to a progressive and equitable future, empowering women to contribute meaningfully to the social, economic, and political development of Afghanistan. Equality and Human Rights: Respecting women's rights is not just a matter of moral obligation; it is a fundamental principle enshrined in international human rights frameworks. The Taliban must recognize and ensure equality for women in all spheres of life, including education, employment, healthcare, and political participation. This entails guaranteeing their right to live free from violence, discrimination, and coercion. Access to Education: Education is a powerful tool for empowerment and progress. The Taliban should prioritize and facilitate equal access to quality education for girls and women. By investing in educational infrastructure, providing safe learning environments, and eliminating gender-based barriers, the Taliban can unlock the potential of Afghan women, enabling them to pursue their dreams and contribute to society. Economic Empowerment: Ensuring economic empowerment for women is crucial for their independence and agency. The Taliban should promote and support women's entrepreneurship, facilitate their participation in the workforce, and create an enabling environment that fosters gender equality in economic opportunities. By removing barriers to economic participation, the Taliban can unleash the economic potential of the nation. Health and Well-being: Women's health and well-being must be safeguarded. The Taliban should ensure access to quality healthcare services, including reproductive health care, maternal care, and mental health support. Addressing the unique health needs of women will contribute to their overall well-being, fostering a healthier and more prosperous society. Political Participation: Women's voices and representation are vital for inclusive governance and decision-making processes. The Taliban should encourage and enable women to actively participate in political life at all levels. This involves promoting their leadership roles, ensuring their representation in government bodies, and establishing mechanisms for meaningful participation and engagement. Combating Gender-Based Violence: The Taliban must take a strong stance against gender-based violence and enact legislation that protects women from all forms of abuse. This requires establishing effective legal frameworks, providing support services for survivors, and raising awareness about the importance of gender equality and the eradication of violence against women. Allowing women to breathe free is not just a moral imperative; it is essential for the progress and prosperity of Afghanistan. The Taliban's commitment to upholding women's rights, ensuring their freedom, and empowering them to contribute to society will determine the nation's trajectory. By embracing gender equality, investing in education and economic opportunities, safeguarding health and well-being, promoting political participation, and combating gender-based violence, the Taliban can shape a brighter future where women thrive as equal partners in nation-building. Upholding women's rights is not only a responsibility; it is an opportunity to unleash the full potential of Afghanistan and foster a society where every individual can breathe free.

Pakistan in the era of global geopolitical shifts

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Pakistan is a country located in South Asia, bordered by India to the east, Afghanistan to the west, Iran to the southwest, and China to the north. Its strategic location at the crossroads of the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia makes it a significant player in the changing geopolitics of the region and the world. Pakistan seeks to improve its relations with China, Russia, America, and other Western countries to succeed in geopolitical

The great powers of the world strive to achieve their political objectives by controlling the world's geography. Currently, there is an increasing number of political actors vying for influence, and the arenas of political competition and cooperation are expanding. Countries seek to gain strategic advantages by collaborating to address common technological, economic, and environmental challenges. The world is becoming more interconnected through the flows of information, capital, and people, and countries are becoming more reliant on their neighbors and the international community to gain leverage.

Pakistan is a country located in South Asia, bordered by India to the east, Afghanistan to the west, Iran to the southwest, and China to the north. Its strategic location at the crossroads of the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia makes it a significant player in the changing geopolitics of the region and the world. Pakistan seeks to improve its relations with China, Russia, America, and other Western countries to succeed in geopolitical rebalancing. However, Pakistan's efforts to restore its ties with the West will not succeed unless it accepts the imperatives of economic reform and political stability. In 2011, relations between Pakistan and the United States were strained due to the killing of two young Pakistanis by a Central Intelligence Agency contractor and unilateral US actions in North Pakistan that embarrassed the Pakistani government and army. Meanwhile, Pakistan's traditionally national security elite sought to deepen its partnership with China, which had already been a long-standing partner. The two countries intensified their defense partnership and launched the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a bilateral component of the Belt and Road Initiative. However, poorly negotiated projects and increased imports led to uneven growth, a balance of payments crisis, and an unbalanced economic partnership. Since 2011, Pakistan has expanded its relationships with other middle and major powers, including Turkey and Russia, as well as its strategic partnership with China. However, Pakistan's dependence on China in

both the economic and military sectors has begun to weigh heavily on the Pakistan Army, while efforts to engage with the Biden administration have increased following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. By the end of the 1960s, the US and Pakistan had begun trying to reset their relations, but Pakistani officials appear unable to accept the new, limited terms of the relationship. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari recently completed his fifth visit to the United States in the past year. During a December visit, Zardari spent ten days in the US and only managed to speak to Foreign Minister Antony Blinken on the phone, despite both being in Washington. In contrast, India's national security adviser Ajit Doval made a scheduled visit to Washington earlier this year, meeting with at least three cabinet members as well as senior military officials, including agency heads. The chairman was also included. Pakistan's military seems eager to get Washington's attention, claiming that it could fall victim to a "Chinese debt trap" due to China's request to build a port at Gwadar, which will serve as the operating station for the port operated by China. There has also been speculation that a Chinese naval base may be established in the future. However, this inconsistent and ambiguous policy could potentially damage Pakistan's relationship with Beijing, as the military may be ignoring the advice of the country's diplomats. Another difficulty in promoting US-Pakistan cooperation is that Pakistani-American advocacy groups and members of Congress have issued statements against human rights violations in Pakistan in response to the crackdown against the party of Pakistani expatriate Prime Minister Imran Khan, and they are mobilizing to take action. Pakistan's leaders must address their imbalanced relationship with Beijing while also recognizing Washington's indifference to their strategic situation. For instance, the Center for a New American Security recommends that the United States should support India in the event of tensions on the India-China border, leaving Pakistan

aware of its "need." However, with India's unilateral annexation of Kashmir, how can Pakistan remain impartial?

Instead of pursuing geopolitical and regional political divisions, Pakistan should focus on domestic economic reforms and human development to achieve its geopolitical interests. While Saudi Arabia has plenty of money, India is a significant market for American investors despite being a lower-middle-income country. Both countries can draw Fortune 500 CEOs and finance leaders to forums in their respective countries, even as they align with the US on issues such as oil prices or human rights.

In recent years, Pakistan has faced numerous challenges, including a struggling economy, internal security threats, and tensions with neighboring countries such as India and Afghanistan. However, Pakistan is positioning itself as a vital player in the region in response to evolving power dynamics and a changing geopolitical landscape.

One of the key drivers behind Pakistan's efforts to increase its strategic importance is its partnership with China, specifically through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC is a significant infrastructure development project that aims to connect China's western region to the Arabian Sea via Pakistan, with the potential to substantially improve Pakistan's economy and regional influence. Moreover, Pakistan has been strengthening its relationships with other regional and global powers, such as the United States, Russia, and Saudi Arabia, while also playing a significant role in facilitating peace talks in neighboring Afghanistan. Pakistan's position in the shifting geopolitics of the world is complex and multifaceted, influenced by a variety of domestic and international factors. Despite significant obstacles, Pakistan has the potential to play a crucial role in shaping the future of the region and beyond. As Pakistan works toward sustainable development, the world will take notice.

Pakistani culture unveiled

Ayesha Saleem



The diversity of Pakistan's culture can be traced back to its history of invasion and occupation by various peoples. Over the centuries, the region has been influenced by the White Huns, Persians, Arabs, Turks, Mongols, and other groups. This cultural amalgamation has resulted in a rich tapestry of traditions and customs. Different ethnic groups within Pakistan exhibit variations in culture, especially in areas where indigenous pre-Islamic customs differ from Islamic practices. Islamic values and traditions play a significant role in shaping Pakistani society. Mosques are present in almost every neighborhood, and the call to prayer can be heard five times a day throughout urban areas. The Islamic faith is deeply ingrained in the daily lives of Pakistanis, influencing their actions, interactions, and overall way of life. Pakistan is a linguistically diverse country with various languages spoken and understood across different regions. Urdu serves as the national language, while Punjabi, Sindhi, Seraiki, Pashto, Balochi, Hindko, and Brahui are regional languages. The linguistic diversity adds richness to the cultural fabric of Pakistan and reflects the multicultural nature of the country. One of the remarkable aspects of Pakistani culture is its mixed nature. It is a beautiful blend of Punjabi, Sindhi, Pathan, Balochi, Barohi, Seraiki, and Kashmiri cultures. Each region contributes its unique traditions, music, dance, and cuisine, making Pakistan a vibrant and diverse nation. The presence of Hindu communities in Sindh further enriches the cultural practices, incorpo-

rating elements of dance and music into the local traditions. Literature holds a significant place in Pakistani culture. The country boasts a wealth of literary works in languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, and Kashmiri. Renowned literary figures like Maulana Azad, Iqbal, Waris Shah, Shah Abdul Latif, and Khan Akhund Dard-ez have contributed masterpieces to the literary canon. Pakistani literature reflects the nation's history, struggles, and aspirations. While Pakistan is a country with diverse cultures and traditions, it is important to acknowledge that it is largely a patriarchal society. Gender roles and notions of inferiority and superiority based on gender are still prevalent in various aspects of Pakistani society. Efforts towards gender equality and empowerment are being made, but there is still progress to be made in this area. Traditional attire is an important aspect of Pakistani culture, showcasing the diversity and vibrancy of the nation. Traditional garments such as Shalwar Kameez, Kurta, Pakistani Waistcoat, Achkan and Sherwani, Churidar, and Pajama are widely worn. These garments are known for their colorful and intricate designs, adding to the attractive look during national fairs and festivals. Pakistan has a rich tradition of fairs and festivals celebrated nationwide. These include annual Urs (death anniversaries) of saints, horse and cattle shows, polo festivals, and religious events like Shabe-Barat, Shabe-Qadar, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Adha, Milad-un-Nabi, and Youm-e-Ashura. These celebrations bring communities together, fostering unity and a sense of shared heritage. Sports play a significant role in Pakistani culture. The people of Pakistan are enthusiastic about sports, particularly hockey and cricket. The country has produced remarkable sportsmen and women in these fields. Traditional sports like wrestling, boxing, and athletics also have a strong following and are part of the cultural fab-

ric. Pakistan enjoys international recognition for its handicrafts. Craftsmanship in wooden furniture from Chiniot, sports goods from Sialkot, and embroidery from Multan and Hyderabad is highly esteemed. These handicrafts showcase the skills and creativity of Pakistani artisans and contribute to the country's cultural heritage. Religious festivals hold great importance in Pakistani culture. Muslims celebrate festivals such as Shabe-Barat, Shabe-Qadar, Shabe-Miraj, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Adha, Milad-un-Nabi, Youm-e-Ashura, and observe the holy month of Ramadan according to the Islamic lunar calendar. These festivals are marked by special prayers, feasts, and acts of charity, bringing communities together in shared spiritual devotion. In addition to religious festivals, Pakistan also observes important national events. Independence Day, Pakistan Day, Defense Day, Air Force Day, Iqbal Day, and Quaid-e-Azam Day are celebrated throughout the country, instilling a sense of patriotism and unity among Pakistanis. Cultural ceremonies and festivals further contribute to the richness of Pakistani culture. Events such as Lok Vira Mela, Horse and Cattle Show, Besant or Jashn-e-Baharaan, Kalash festivals, Polo festivals at Shandur, Norouz festivals, Silk Route festivals, Sibi Mela, Mela Chiraghan/Mela Shalamar, Chand Raat, marriage ceremonies, Urs, and Sindh festivals showcase the diversity of traditions and cultural practices across the country. These events are colorful and lively, providing opportunities for people to celebrate their heritage and identity. In short, Pakistani culture is a rich tapestry woven from the threads of its Islamic heritage, diverse regional influences, literature, traditional attire, festivals, sports, handicrafts, and cultural ceremonies. It reflects the nation's history, values, and identity. The diversity and vibrancy of Pakistani culture make it a unique and fascinating aspect of the country's identity.

Briefs

Erdogan emerges victorious

FROM PAGE 01
Istanbul neighborhood where the young future president grew up playing street football. Kilicdaroglu re-emerged a transformed man after the first round. The former civil servant's message of social unity and freedoms gave way to desk-thumping speeches about the need to immediately expel migrants and fight terrorism. His right-wing turn was targeted at nationalists who emerged as the big winners of the parallel parliamentary elections. The 74-year-old had always adhered to the firm nationalist principles of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk — a revered military commander who formed Turkiye and Kilicdaroglu's secular CHP party. But these had played a secondary role to his promotion of socially liberal values practiced by younger voters and big-city residents.

President, PM felicitate nation on historic day

FROM PAGE 01
Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that Youm-e-Takbeer was not just a day but a story of the nation's challenging and remarkable journey towards establishing credible minimum deterrence. The prime minister on his Twitter handle said that on that day, Pakistan set a red line for its defence and laid down rules of the game for peace and stability in the region. "On the Silver Jubilee of Youm-e-Takbeer, I pay rich tributes to the political & military leadership, scientists, engineers and all those who remained associated with our nuclear programme," he said in a tweet as the nation celebrates the 25th anniversary of Youm-e-Takbeer on Sunday. The prime minister further said that their hard work, commitment and determination made it possible for the people to guard their independence from any physical threat. "The day represents how the consensus between all elements of national power achieved what once looked like an uphill task," he posted in a tweet. The prime minister said Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was a visionary leader who initiated the nuclear programme, adding in a show of bold leadership, his leader Mian Nawaz Sharif firmly rejected the policy of stick and carrot and made sure that the country became nuclear. "All along, our armed forces remained a guardian & protector of the programme in the face of malign intentions of our enemies," he said.

Govt trying to preempt horror...

FROM PAGE 01
the media. "If there were any doubts about women being mistreated in jails, this press conference from this certified criminal should remove all such doubts," he wrote on Twitter. The cricketer-turned-politician lamented that women have never been so mistreated and "harassed by the state as they have been by this fascist govt" when they were exercising their right to protest peacefully. Later, addressing his supporters, PTI Chairman Imran Khan issued a message to the government to break away as many party members for the next three to four weeks but announce elections afterwards. "Give yourself time. If you want to take two or three weeks then break away as many people as you want. At the rate you're going, you have already broken many and many more will break ... but is my request to give a timeframe because the country is heading towards destruction. "The economy is sinking ... so give yourself a timeframe of two to three weeks and then announce elections when you think you've broken away enough people from the PTI that it's no longer able of contesting elections." PTI Chairman Imran Khan has claimed that a list of 23,000 party workers has been drawn up, adding that over 10,000 were in prison.

Junior Asia Cup

Pakistan edge closer to World Cup with India draw

It must be noted that Malaysia, as hosts, have already qualified for the World Cup. Since they have also qualified for the semi-finals of the Junior Asia Cup, this means that all the other three teams making it to the last four will gain entry into the World Cup as well

DNA

MUSCAT: Pakistan edged closer to this year's Junior Hockey World Cup after a 1-1 draw against India during the ongoing Asia Cup in Oman on Saturday. The result meant that both Pakistan and India now have seven points from three matches with the former on top of the table in Pool A due to a better goal difference. Japan are third on the table with six points after three matches. Pakistan only needs to avoid defeat in their final pool match against Japan on May 29 in order to qualify for the World Cup. It must be noted that Malaysia, as hosts, have already qualified for the World Cup. Since they have also qualified for the semi-finals of the Junior Asia Cup, this means that all the other three teams making it to the last four will gain entry into the World Cup as well. India took the lead via a penalty



corner in the second quarter after Sharad Nand Tiwari drag flicked the ball in the net. However, Paki-

stan's Ali Basharat netted from a close distance to make it 1-1 for Pakistan in the third quarter. India

will lock horns with Thailand in their final group clash on Sunday. Pakistan's Abdul Hanan Shahid,

who was a constant threat for his opponents throughout the match, had declared player of the match. Earlier, Pakistan registered their second win of the Junior Hockey Asia Cup 2023 as Abdul Rehman's five goals helped Green Shirts outclass Thailand by 9-0 in a one-sided encounter on Wednesday. Pakistan had won their first match against Chinese Taipei 15-1 on Tuesday. The event will conclude with the final on June 1. Pakistan team's consultant Roelant Oltmans had said that he wanted to see Pakistan making it to the semi-finals. "I am here as the junior team consultant and my first challenge is to see Pakistan qualifying for the World Cup. If we succeed in making it to the semi-finals from Group A, we would be in a position to qualify for the World Cup," he said. The FIH Junior Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 will be played in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from December 5-16 2023.

Bisma crowned best swimmer of National Games

LAHORE: Olympian Bisma Khan was crowned the best swimmer of the ongoing National Games after clinching eight gold medals. The Pakistan Army swimmer claimed five gold medals in individual categories, while the remaining three came in relay. The swimming events of the National Games were held at the Nishtar Park Sports Complex in Lahore. "I was focused on winning the award for best swimmer from the start of the event. My preparations were good since I also participated in the National Championship," Bisma told Geo News on Sunday. "I decided against participating in the main events since my team needed me in other categories. I'm happy that my team was able to win the most number of medals," she added after Pakistan Army bagged the first position in swimming with 16 gold, seven silver and three bronze medals. After excellent performance in the National Games, Bisma is now focused on the World Aquatics Championships which will be held in Fukuoka, Japan, from July 14-30 this year. "I'm working hard for the world championship, which is a qualifying round for the Olympics, and hopeful about putting up a good show," she said. Earlier, Olympian swimmer Haseeb Tariq won 100m backstroke gold in the 34th National Games. Haseeb, who represented Pakistan in the Tokyo Olympics in 100m freestyle, clocked one minute and 1.47 seconds of time to clinch gold for Army. Waqas Hussain of Army with a time of 1:04.97 got silver while Rayan Sadiq Lone of Punjab with a time of 1:05.91 captured bronze. The 800m freestyle gold went to Amaan Siddiqui of Army who clocked nine minutes and 15.27 seconds. — APP

Top ICC officials to visit Pakistan

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced that International Cricket Council (ICC) Chairman Greg Barclay and Chief Executive Geoff Allardice will visit Pakistan on Tuesday. During their two-day trip, Barclay and Allardice will meet top officials of the PCB. "ICC Chairman Greg Barclay and Chief Executive Geoff Allardice will arrive in Lahore on Tuesday morning on a two-day visit, during which they will meet Chair of the PCB Management Committee Najam Sethi (also an ICC Director), PCB Chief Operating Officer Barrister Salman Naseer and other board officials," the PCB said in a press release. "While Allardice has regularly visited Pakistan, first as ICC General Manager - Cricket and then as ICC Chief Executive, this will be Barclay's first visit to Pakistan. "Barclay will be the first ICC Chairman to tour Pakistan since ICC President Ray Mali's visit in 2008. This will also be the first time since October 2004 when both the top two ICC officials will together visit the Pakistan cricket headquarters." Earlier, the PCB said that it was unhappy with the new revenue model proposed by the ICC. According to ESPNcricinfo, India's new revenue share would stand at 38.5 percent, while England and Australia would bag 6.89 and 6.25 percent respectively. Meanwhile, Pakistan is set to earn 5.75 percent of the ICC's projected earnings, which will come primarily through ICC's \$3 billion media rights deal for 2024-27. It will be voted on at ICC's next board meeting in June. — DNA

French Open 2023
Ukraine's Kostyuk booted after avoiding Sabalenka handshake

"It was a very tough match, tough emotionally," said Sabalenka in her on-court interview. "I thought the boos were against me so I felt a bit surprised. But then I felt your support"

PARIS: Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk said "people should be embarrassed" after she was booed off court following her first-round defeat by Aryna Sabalenka at the French Open. Kostyuk avoided shaking hands with second seed Sabalenka after the Belarusian's 6-3 6-2 win. Belarus is an ally of Russia and allowed troops to use its territory to launch last year's invasion of Ukraine. Sabalenka said Kostyuk "didn't deserve to leave the court that way". The pair did not have the traditional pre-match photo following the coin toss. After Australian Open champion Sabalenka sealed victory, Kostyuk walked straight to shake the umpire's hand and then to her chair, prompting boos from the crowd on Court Philippe-Chatrier. "People should be honestly embarrassed," said world number 28 Kostyuk. The 20-year-old added: "I want to see people react to it in 10 years when the war is over. I think they will not feel really nice about what they did." Sabalenka was startled by the initial booing, thinking it was directed at her, before realising it was aimed at Kostyuk when the crowd again booed as the Ukrainian left the court. "It was a very tough match, tough emotionally," said Sabalenka in her on-court interview. "I thought the boos were against



me so I felt a bit surprised. But then I felt your support." Prior to the match, Sabalenka - who has repeatedly said on previous occasions "no-one supports war" - had said she understood if Kostyuk "hates" her. Kostyuk refused to shake hands with Belarus' Victoria Azarenka at last year's US Open and also said seeing Russian flags being waved by supporters of Vladimir Putin at the Australian Open in January "hurt a lot". Speaking at a post-match news conference, Sabalenka said passionately: "About the war situation, I said it many, many times: nobody in this world, Russian athletes or Belarusian athletes, supports the war. Nobody. How can we support the war? "Of course we don't support war. If we could affect anything the war, if we could stop it, we would do it. But unfortunately, it's not in our hands."

However, Kostyuk criticised Sabalenka for not directly calling on her to use her "big platform" after "rejecting her responsibility". "She never says that she personally doesn't support this war," Kostyuk said. "She should talk for herself I think, first of all. Then, talk about all the other athletes because I personally know athletes from tennis that support the war. "To say nobody, I think is a little bit strong because I think you can only speak for yourself." Sabalenka is one of the favourites for the title at Roland Garros and could become world number one if Iga Swiatek fails to reach the quarter-finals. After a shaky start from Sabalenka, featuring two double faults, Kostyuk got the first break but it appeared to shock the 25-year-old into finding another level. She broke back immediately to start a devastating run of six successive games to which Kostyuk had no answer. Though she pulled a game back, Sabalenka continued to command play, saving two break points in what proved to be her final service game as she wrapped up the win on her first match point. She will face fellow Belarusian Iryna Shymanovich, a qualifier, in the second round in Paris. — Agencies

Need to raise the bar as per int'l standards: Ex-Olympians

ISLAMABAD: "With rapid changes taking place in international hockey, Pakistan's hockey legends believe there was need to educate players with modern techniques and skills, as to bring the national game back on track. There were times when Pakistan was the most successful team in World Cups, Olympics and Championships Trophy with winning four World Cups in 1971, 1978, 1982 and 1994. Pakistan also has three gold medals in Olympic Games field hockey tournaments in Rome 1960, Mexico City 1968 and Los Angeles 1984. Then the downfall began and an always-winning team that played all World Cup editions, could not qualify for 2014 and 2023 mega events. Star Olympian Shahnaz Sheikh pleads to blend young players with experienced hands for forming a squad that owns the potential to beat any team in the world. "Players need to improve their movements and points marking in the D area. They should avoid counterat-

tacks and improve the conversion of penalty corners. If we get three to four penalty corners at least two must be utilized," Shahnaz told APP. "We need to strongly work on all these things if we want to improve our game. Our players must play with unity and avoid individual point scoring in any game," he commented. At present, the Pakistan national hockey team holds the 16th spot in International Hockey Federation (FIH) rankings. Further suggesting measures for improvement, he said, there were around 28 Education Boards in the country with hundreds of schools affiliated with each Board.

"Therefore, if each government school is allowed to participate in tournaments, the total number of participating teams would be in hundreds. This practice would be a sort of talent hunt bringing new players to the national squad." He also suggested designated hockey fields to promote the game as he recalled, "in our times plentiful of national and district tournaments were held annually for improvement of players mental and physical strength." "Then there were different departments, offering jobs to players. But, rapid changes in the hockey setup affected the game badly," he said. — APP

Rodrygo sends Real second in La Liga

SEVILLE: Rodrygo hit a brace to earn Real Madrid a 2-1 win over Sevilla in La Liga on Saturday, sending his side four points clear of third-placed rivals Atletico Madrid. Madrid were without injured winger Vinicius Junior, who drew global support during the week after he was racially abused by Valencia fans last weekend. Carlo Ancelotti's team were also missing injured duo Karim Benzema and Marco Asensio in attack. Rodrygo was Madrid's only fit regular starting forward. After Rafa Mir gave the Europa League finalists, who face Roma on Wednesday, the lead, Rodrygo made his chance count with two goals, the first from a free kick. "It's hard to choose. They were both nice goals, maybe the second a little bit more but scoring from a free-kick is always special," Rodrygo told DAZN. "We always practice them and talk about it before, whoever is the most confident takes it and I took the ball." Ancelotti took off Rodrygo with 10 minutes remaining. "I was a bit annoyed with him because I wanted to score one more, a hat-trick, but it's OK, he told me that like this we would win," said Rodrygo. Sevilla coach Jose Luis Mendilibar rotated many of his usual starting players at a rain-soaked Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan stadium to prepare for the

final against Jose Mourinho's side. Mir slammed a rebound into the roof of the net to send Sevilla ahead in the third minute after Bryan Gil's shot was blocked. Rodrygo should have equalised but fired off-target when well placed, after good build-up play by Dani Ceballos and Lu-

cas Vazquez. However, the Brazilian soon pulled Real Madrid level from a free-kick, curling his effort around the wall and into the bottom corner, wrong-footing goalkeeper Yassine Bounou. Mir came close again early in the second half with an effort which whistled narrowly



over, before Rodrygo pounced for his second goal. Set free by Toni Kroos, the Brazilian forward sent Sevilla defender Gonzalo Montiel one way and then the other, before slipping home past Bounou. It was the Brazilian's ninth league goal of the season, a campaign in which he has slowly become one of Ancelotti's most reliable players. "Rodrygo stood out as the centre-forward, he can play there," Ancelotti told reporters. "He's got different characteristics, but with his dribbles around the box, it's easier to score there than doing it out wide." Marcos Acuna was sent off for Sevilla in the final stages for an ugly tackle on Ceballos, leaving his side without much chance of making a comeback. The red card heated up a previously tranquil match and the players rowed on a couple of occasions during nine minutes of stoppage time, but Los Blancos were eventually able to seal their win. Madrid's last away game was the trip to face Valencia at Mestalla, where Vinicius was racially abused. Ancelotti praised Sevilla fans after the match passed without incident. "The atmosphere changed. Today was a good sign," said Ancelotti. "People are starting to understand what you can do in a stadium and what you can't. We have to continue like this." — Agencies

PTI demands CJP to initiate...

FROM PAGE 01
which the criminal government was committing on political internees, most notably female prisoners and called upon Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) to immediately initiate a high-level enquiry to look into the heinous crimes. In a strong-worded statement on Sunday, PTI Central Information Secretary said that after Rana's presser last night, credible doubts have been cast on the welfare of political internees, particularly women. He stated that the presser was a virtual confession of heinous crimes which the criminal govt is committing on political internees, most notably female prisoners. "His presser was a cover up for crimes of this criminal gang. One lives in dread of times when facts will come out," Rauf Hassan added. PTI CIS called upon CJP to immediately initiate a high-level enquiry to look into, as how political prisoners, especially women were being treated in the prisons across the country and how raids were being conducted on residences of PTI leaders and workers in abject violation of law and principles of sanctity of homes. He said that it should be investigated as how families of PTI leaders and workers were being harassed, threatened and deprived of their basic constitutional rights without any legal and judicial proceedings. "The matter has assumed immense importance after the presser as it is believed that it is a crude cover-up of their crimes and an attempt to implicate PTI and its workers," he maintained.

Maryam eulogises Nawaz...

FROM PAGE 01
"Nawaz Sharif name can be underscored in terms of the development and defence of the country. When Nawaz Sharif decided to approve a nuclear test, the world mounted pressure on the country. Even Bill Clinton asked Nawaz Sharif not to conduct a nuclear test," she added. "It was even said that the country would face sanctions, but Nawaz Sharif faced all the challenges. Despite facing political vendetta, the PML-N did not split. Nawaz Sharif's aides stand firmly with him," Ms Nawaz maintained. Taking a fresh jibe at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, she said, "The world remembers those people who are not involved in vandalism and develop the country". She castigated Imran Khan for his 'weak response' to India's 'occupation' of Kashmir. She also lashed out at the PTI chairman for allegedly attacking the army to weaken it. Maryam Nawaz, while mocking Imran Khan's party over its leaders' mass departure, said that there were queues of those quitting the party. "How will the people stand when the leader himself is a jackal?" she said, while ridiculing former Prime Minister Imran Khan. "Imran Khan was sending a message to the world to help him out," she added. The event participants also raised slogans in favor of the Pakistan Army and Nawaz Sharif. She said Nawaz Sharif carried out the nuclear explosions despite an offer of bribe of billions of dollars and threats. Maryam Nawaz has also expressed gratitude to the Pakistan Army for defending the country's nuclear programme. She thanked other law enforcement agencies and the politicians, scientists and engineers who played crucial roles in Pakistan's nuclear programme. PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz has said that the events of May 9 2023 and May 28, 1998, exhibit the difference between leadership.

Youm-e-Takbeer observed

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the nuclear arsenal in its defence stockpile to exercise maximum deterrence for peaceful purposes. The tests not only demonstrated the resolve of the Pakistani nation to safeguard Pakistan's territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty but also the desire to preserve strategic balance in South Asia.

Briefs

Giant rally
against
Serbia's govt

DNA

BELGRADE: Tens of thousands of people have staged the fourth weekly anti-government protest in the Serbian capital Belgrade after two back-to-back shootings that killed 18 people, half of them children. Carrying flowers, the demonstrators defied heavy rain and ringed the building of the state-run RTS broadcaster, demanding the resignations of top directors and editors. The "Serbia against violence" protests have culminated into some of the largest rallies since widespread demonstrations triggered the fall of strongman Slobodan Milosevic over two decades ago. They have tapped into simmering anger at the ruling party over what protesters say is a culture of violence fanned by the government and the media outlets they control. "I am here because I am fed up with the lies and corruption. Nothing will change here until people realise it is possible and that we do have a choice," 40-year-old Dusan Valent told the AFP news agency. The government denies opposition parties' allegations, and accuses them of staging protests for political gain. The protests took shape after the early May mass shootings that left 18 people dead and wounded several others. Nine of the dead were students at a Belgrade elementary school whom a 13-year-old pupil gunned down. The demonstrators also want the government to revoke the broadcasting licences of television channels promoting violent content, and a ban on pro-government newspapers that stir tensions by targeting political dissidents. They also want the interior minister and the head of the intelligence service to resign.

Russia
launches its
1st all-weather
satellite

MOSCOW: Russia on Saturday launched its Condor-FKA satellite, which can take pictures of the earth's surface around the clock in any weather, including in conditions of heavy clouds. The satellite was launched from Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome, a Russian spacecraft in Russia's far-eastern Amur Oblast, using Soyuz 2.1a, a rocket-powered vehicle, the state space agency Roscosmos said in a statement. "The separation of the spacecraft from the upper stage was carried out successfully. The first radar satellite has been launched into a given orbit," it said. Condor-FKA was developed by the military-industrial corporation Scientific and Production Association of Mechanical Engineering. The mass of the satellite is 1,050 kg. —APP

Italy warns of
health risks
in northern
areas

ROME: Italy on Friday urged the residents in the northern flood areas to "stay away from flooded houses" as stagnant waters pose health and hygiene risks. Paola Pula, the mayor of the town of Conselice, has signed an ordinance requiring citizens of areas still flooded to leave their homes. Italy's news agency ANSA reported. The decision is given considering the difficulties in disposing of water from Conselice, due to the large quantities of water present in the area, according to the report. The risk of the situation is closely and solely linked to contact with stagnant waters, it added. Meanwhile, it noted that the country's military donates tetanus disinfectant in the flood-affected area, and that extraordinary vaccinations take place in the Forlì-Cesena area as a prevention measure against the epidemic disease. Last week's floods in northern Italy killed 15 and caused extensive damage to the local economy and infrastructure. The region is still on red alert for extreme weather as its population attempts to recover from the worst floods in about a century. —APP

Flights between Karachi,
Kuala Lumpur soon: HC

After the restoration of direct air flight connectivity will make economic, trade and social integration between both countries stronger and more sustainable

DNA

PESHAWAR: Malaysian High Commissioner (HC) to Pakistan Mohammad Azhar Mazlan has said that the direct flight between Kuala Lumpur and Karachi would be started soon to strengthen the economic and people to people contacts between Pakistan and Malaysia. Mohammad Azhar Mazlan said this during the meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Mr Adnan Jalil here in the HC of Malaysia at Islamabad, the other day, said a press release issued here on Sunday. He said, "After the resto-

ration of direct air flight connectivity will make economic, trade and social integration between both countries stronger and more sustainable. Similarly, bilateral cooperation and development in the field of tourism between both friendly countries will also increase." The ambassador said, "Direct flights are currently operating between Lahore and Malaysia and in the near future, direct flights will be extended to other countries." "Various sectors including direct flights between Malaysia and Pakistan were affected due to Covid-19, which will be restored once again," Malaysian envoy said, "The current develop-



ment of Malaysia is due to the long and medium economic plan which is adjusted after a period of every five years." He said that his social reforms also played an important role in the development of Malaysia. "On the occasion, he said, 'The volume of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Malaysia requires further increase.' The Malaysian

HC said, "I especially invites the businessmen of KP to play their full role in this process and cooperation to build relations with them." He said that the business community, trade bodies and private sector have crucial role in the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries." The envoy said, "There is a need for further improvement in bilateral trade between Pakistan and ASEAN regions." He further said, "Pakistan and Malaysia enjoy historical, ethnic and cultural relations which cover many areas and we want to pass-on this heritage to our young generation." The HC said, "The two

countries have cordial bilateral relations and while the people of both countries have also been bonded in strong mutual relations." He said, "Many families of KP have migrated to Malaysia long decades ago and now there are strong ties between the families of both sides." He said, "People in both Pakistan and Malaysia are fond of tasty food and there are similarities in the food and drink of both countries." On the occasion, talking to both cultures and cosine, he said, "There is a similarity in the use of spices in both countries, that's why the taste of the food of both countries is quite similar. He thanked the minister for inviting him for par-

ticipate in the inauguration of ASEA Trade Desk at Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). On the occasion, Minister of Commerce and Industry KPK Adnan Jalil expressed his good wishes for the Malaysian HC for his posting in Pakistan. He was invited to be the Malaysian Ambassador to participate in the inauguration of the ASEAN Trade Desk in the Malaysian Seafarers Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) which was accepted by the Malaysian Ambassador. On the occasion, Adnan Jalil also expressed his desire to lead a trade delegation from the province of KP to Malaysia.

Chinese enterprises' role commendable in Pakistan's development

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese enterprises in Pakistan have made important contributions to local sustainable development while actively improving people's livelihood, an eight-member delegation organized by the Chinese Consulate General in Lahore said during a visit to the headquarters of PKM contractor China Construction Third Engineering Bureau (CCTEB), Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. Xiao Hua, General Manager, CCTEB welcomed the Pakistani media and think tank delegation and briefed the delegation on the development of the company in Pakistan and the story of construction of PKM project. He highlighted that as one of the series activities of the Open Day of "Cultural Integration and

Communication", the visit and discussion of the Pakistani delegation further deepened Pakistan's understanding of the largest infrastructure project under the framework of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). As the head of the delegation, Lt Col (Retd) Sayed Ahmad Nadeem Qadri, Director General Operations Nawa-i Waqt Group, pointed out that the visit presented to the Pakistani media a comprehensive, three-dimensional and real Chinese enterprises. "The efforts made by CCTEB in Pakistan are conducive to the sustainable development of Pakistan. Both Chinese and Pakistani enterprises are building a green corridor for ecological protection," he said. Undertaken in EPC model, the PKM Project is the largest transportation infra-

structure project of CPEC and also a key project along the Belt and Road. The project starts from Sukkur, Sindh, in the south, and reaches Multan, the economic center of Punjab in the north, with a total length of 392 km and a designed speed of 120 km per hour. The project includes 100 bridges, 468 underpasses, 991 culverts, 11 interchanges, 6 pairs of service areas, 5 pairs of rest areas, 22 toll stations. The project now has been completed and open to traffic. It is the highest standard motorway in Pakistan with the highest design level and the most advanced intelligent system. It adopts Chinese SBS modified asphalt technology and is the only one with full greening along the route and strong flood resistance. The project protected the ecology by

planting trees along the route, which are now growing in full vigor, forming a 392-km green gallery. The delegation members also spoke highly of many large-scale infrastructure projects being built by Chinese enterprises in Pakistan. They stressed that the architects of the two countries have devoted a lot of manpower, material resources and efforts to the projects. They expect more Chinese companies to work with local enterprises to promote local industries, help local villagers be employed, improve their skills and create a good work environment for them. The two sides can make a great contribution to Pakistan's economic and social development by taking concrete actions to address livelihood issues such as transportation, water, healthcare and education.

Aliyev to Armenians in Karabakh: "Miatsum" book is closed!

BAKU: Azerbaijani President has addressed Armenian minorities living in Karabakh as he met with Lachin natives. "I am telling Armenians living in Karabakh region again from here, from the land of Lachin which they had been exploiting for many years and were engaged in illegal settlement, that their book is closed. The book 'Miatsum' is closed, the book of separatism is closed. The dream of independence follows the path of the status. As for the status, we sent it to where it belongs during the second Karabakh war." Azerbaijani President has also called them to live in peace and harmony under Azerbaijani law giving up the old and false ideas. "Therefore, there is only one option left - to obey the laws of Azerbaijan, be a loyal and normal citizen of Azerbaijan, throw the false state attributes in the trash, and dissolve the 'parliament,'" the President added. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has unveiled the 1 December Street sign in the city of Lachin. The head of state was informed about the works to be done and conditions to be created in the street. The street name is connected with the date when the city was liberated by diplomatic ways. The street is 1566 long and 10 meters wide. President Ilham Aliyev unveiled the street name sign. Then, the head of state viewed a renovated house located on the street. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has unveiled street name signs at the intersection of Heydar Aliyev, Zafar and 28 May streets in the city of Lachin. Special Representative of the President in the Lachin district Masim Mammadov informed the head of state on the work to be done in the streets. The lengths of Heydar Aliyev Street, Zafar Street and 28 May Street in the city of Lachin are 6967 meters, 5239 meters and 1703 meters respectively while the width is about 10-12 meters.—DNA



Russia won't ban fuel exports: Minister

MOSCOW: Russia has sufficient supplies of gasoline and diesel, and has no intention of banning exports, Energy Minister Nikolai Shulginov said at the Eurasian Economic Forum. According to him, the only issue currently on the table is a potential reduction of cross-border sales of the fuels. He noted that no decision had been made on this matter yet, as the Ministry of Energy is assessing the situation on the domestic fuel market and will work out proposals for potential export cuts in the near future. "We've not mentioned the word 'ban.' We are talking about reductions. The Ministry of Energy gives recommendations to our companies regarding the increase of [domestic] supply and a reduction of exports, but not a ban. Retail prices are now stable, and we see that the gross margin of gas stations remains high... We will monitor this situation and, if necessary, we will come up with a proposal aimed at limiting exports of gasoline and diesel fuel," Shulginov stated. A historical record of 205,500 barrels per day in January, according to data from Kpler. However, sales may fall during the upcoming vacation season from May to November, when demand for the fuel traditionally grows on the domestic market, Ekaterina Krylova, managing expert of the PSB Center for Analysis and Expertise, told Vedomosti.—APP

US Treasury warns country will run out of money June 5

WASHINGTON: The US will run out of money to pay its financial obligations by June 5, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen told Republican leaders in the House of Representatives Friday amid ongoing negotiations to raise the debt limit. The deadline is four days later than previous Treasury Department estimates, and Yellen told House Speaker Kevin McCarthy her department now estimates "that Treasury will have insufficient resources to satisfy the government's obligations if Congress has not raised or suspended the debt limit by June 5." "We have learned from past debt limit impasses that waiting until the last minute to suspend or increase the debt limit can cause serious harm to business and consumer confidence, raise short-term borrowing costs for taxpayers, and negatively impact the credit rating of the United States," she wrote. "In fact, we have already seen Treasury's borrowing costs increase substantially for securities maturing in early June. If Congress fails to increase the debt limit, it would cause severe hardship to American families, harm our global leadership position, and raise questions about our ability to defend our national security interests," she warned. The slight bump in time gives McCarthy's team and their counterparts in the White House additional breathing room to hammer out a deal. US President Joe Biden and McCarthy struck upbeat notes on Thursday that a deal was within reach. Biden has long maintained that lawmakers should raise the \$31.4 trillion debt limit via a "clean bill," but Republicans in control of the House have maintained any effort to do so be paired with spending cuts.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman TDAP Zubair Motiwala meeting with members of the ICCI. News on page 4.—DNA

Trade among SAARC countries just 5%: Anjum

We may closely work with the apex trade bodies and initiate country-specific and regional programs for improving the economic cooperation and capacity building of our SME's sector and tapping

DNA

KARACHI: The FPCCI's Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar, who has taken the charge of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) vice president, has said the intra-trade among SAARC countries continues to remain in the low range of just 5% of the total trade of the region while this trade in NAFTA region is over 40%, 68% in EU and 27% in ASEAN, laying emphasis on exploring the vast untapped trade potential in SAARC region. Mian Anjum Nisar, who is also the FPCCI former president, will serve the SCCI as its vice president for the term 2023-24. The new vice president of SAARC CCI said that South Asia with its diversified resources and skilled workforce has tremendous potential to be the fastest-growing exporting

region to the globe. Anjum Nisar said that other regional associations like EU, ASIAN, NAFTA are doing very well and they are getting regional benefits but it's still unfortunate for us, that we couldn't utilise SAARC till now. We have huge potential in the area of tourism, agriculture, fisheries, industries, human development and many more. It's time we push the government of each country to seize the untapped opportunity in this region, he added. The SCCI new vice president said that it is imperative for all to draw lessons from the successes achieved by other regional agreements, and channel their experiences of regional identity and solidarity into our efforts to propel SAARC towards new heights. It is our responsibility to find innovative and sustainable solutions to these challenges, and to work together to create a brighter fu-

ture for the people of our region, he opined. The priority will be given to enhance collaboration on sectors with high growth potential such as information technology, manufacturing, energy, tourism, and agribusiness that derive tangible results, he added. South Asia is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. We have a lot of potential, but unfortunately, we are still lagging behind to seize all the opportunities, he said. Pakistan is situated in a geostrategic position in South Asia. It has a vital location because it can connect to other South Asian countries along with the Central Asian countries which are landlocked geographically. The rest of the South Asian countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The formation of the regional economic bloc

important route for the economic growth of nations. South Asia is the region with a population of 1.2 billion. Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh have greater economies as compared to other South Asian countries. According to World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS) country profile, Pakistan's total export to Asian countries is 2385650 in thousands of US\$ out of a total 23,748,680.25 in thousands of US\$ in 2019 which is 10.05% of the total export. The greater share of Pakistani export in South Asian countries goes to Afghanistan (14.48%), followed by Bangladesh (8.42%), India (5.35%), and Sri Lanka (3.51%). Pakistan has a minimal share of its exports to other South Asian countries like Nepal, Maldives, and Bhutan. Apart from this, the close borders with India and Afghanistan have also not achieved their potential. He said that Pakistan's growth tra-

jectory can offer several complementary advantages to our South Asian counterparts. The private sector is keen to explore business collaborations in manufacturing, agro-processing, industrial machinery and clean energy among others with value chain linkages and market prospects, he added. He said that with promising ties among the 8 member countries, SAARC has the potential of being one of the most dynamic and emerging regions in the world. Cross-border investments, simplifying customs procedures, and developing efficient logistics networks within SAARC can facilitate trade. We may closely work with the apex trade bodies and initiate country-specific and regional programs for improving the economic cooperation and capacity building of our SME's sector and tapping the potential of women-led SMEs for regional trade, he added.

Authorities rescue 175 migrants in southern Mexico

MEXICO CITY: Immigration authorities and the National Guard rescued 175 migrants Friday, including 30 who were underage, traveling inside a truck in Chiapas de Corzo in southern Mexico. Officials said the migrants came mainly from Chiapas de Corzo in Chiapas, a border state with Guatemala and a hotspot for migrants from Central and South America. The National Institute of Migration reported migrants from Guatemala, Ecuador, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic and Pakistan, including 30 underage travelers, were in the truck. The rescue follows the end of Title 42 in the US - a coronavirus pandemic-era health policy that allowed American authorities to deport migrants. Mexican authorities have allocated resources to control migration flows from Latin America into Mexico.—DNA

Saudi Arabia may join BRICS bank

MONITORING DESK

NEW YORK: The New Development Bank (NDB) of the BRICS group of major emerging economies is currently in talks with Saudi Arabia on admitting the kingdom as its tenth member, the Financial Times reported on Sunday. The move is expected to cement ties between the Shanghai-based lender, established by BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) back in 2014, with the world's second biggest producer of oil. "In the Middle East, we attach great importance to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and are currently engaged in a qualified dialogue with them," the NDB said in a statement seen by FT. Launched with the purpose of financing infrastructure and sustainable development in member states and other emerging economies, the NDB has expanded its membership to include Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Egypt. It has lent \$33 billion to more than 96 projects in the five founding member nations.

READ MORE: BRICS to surpass G7 in share of global economic growth - Bloomberg The multinational financial institution is preparing to embark on a formal evaluation of its funding options, which were shaken after Russia was hit by several waves of Western sanctions over its military operation in Ukraine.—DNA

Russia won't ban fuel exports: Minister

MOSCOW: Russia has sufficient supplies of gasoline and diesel, and has no intention of banning exports, Energy Minister Nikolai Shulginov said at the Eurasian Economic Forum. According to him, the only issue currently on the table is a potential reduction of cross-border sales of the fuels. He noted that no decision had been made on this matter yet, as the Ministry of Energy is assessing the situation on the domestic fuel market and will work out proposals for potential export cuts in the near future. "We've not mentioned the word 'ban.' We are talking about reductions. The Ministry of Energy gives recommendations to our companies regarding the increase of [domestic] supply and a reduction of exports, but not a ban. Retail prices are now stable, and we see that the gross margin of gas stations remains high... We will monitor this situation and, if necessary, we will come up with a proposal aimed at limiting exports of gasoline and diesel fuel," Shulginov stated. A historical record of 205,500 barrels per day in January, according to data from Kpler. However, sales may fall during the upcoming vacation season from May to November, when demand for the fuel traditionally grows on the domestic market, Ekaterina Krylova, managing expert of the PSB Center for Analysis and Expertise, told Vedomosti.—APP

Briefs

China's C919 passenger plane makes maiden flight

DNA

BEIJING: China's first domestically-manufactured passenger jet has successfully completed its maiden commercial flight. State TV showed the C919 rising into the skies above Shanghai, heading to the capital Beijing early on Sunday. It was built by the Commercial Aviation Corporation of China (Comac) in the hope of breaking the dominance of Airbus and Boeing's single-aisle jets.

But the 164-seater still relies heavily on Western components, including engines and avionics. The Shanghai-Beijing leg of the journey, with more than 130 passengers on board, was completed in just under three hours. "I'm really confident in our country," said passenger Liu Peng. He told Reuters news agency C919 "will definitely get better and better".

"I'm feeling very emotional," said 21-year-old student and flight enthusiast LV Boyuan. He spoke to media at Shanghai airport before he boarded a normal flight to Chengdu, from where he planned to take a return C919 flight the day after. State-backed China Eastern Airline has ordered five of the planes. Comac - which plans to produce 150 planes annually in five years' time - says it has already secured more than 1,200 orders for the C919.

PM Modi inaugurates building amid opp. boycott

DNA

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated India's new parliament building amid protests and boycotts. Most opposition parties did not participate, saying they wanted the president instead of Mr Modi to open the building. During the ceremony, some of India's top wrestlers were detained when they tried to reach the new parliament to protest.

The new building has replaced the British-era parliament. Ceremonies leading up to a formal inauguration began at 07:00 (02:00 GMT) on Sunday. Mr Modi unveiled a plaque dedicating the building to the nation and later addressed a gathering of lawmakers. "This is not just a building. It is a reflection of the aspirations and dreams of 1.4 billion Indians. This is the temple of our democracy and it's giving the message of India's determination to the world," he said. Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the main opposition Congress party, tweeted that Mr Modi was treating the parliament inauguration as a coronation ceremony.

Texas House votes to impeach Trump ally

TEXAS: Texas' Republican-run House of Representatives has voted to impeach state Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Republican, who is accused of bribery and abuse of public trust. Mr Paxton, an ally of former President Donald Trump, is now suspended from office pending a trial in the Senate. A two-thirds vote in the upper chamber - where Republicans also dominate - is required to permanently expel him. Mr Paxton, aged 60, denies all the accusations against him.

Responding to a 121-23 vote in the House on Saturday, Mr Paxton said in a statement: "The ugly spectacle in the Texas House today confirmed the outrageous impeachment plot against me was never meant to be fair or just. It was a politically motivated sham from the beginning." The impeachment vote was on 20 articles, which also include accusations of improperly aiding a wealthy political donor and conducting a sham investigation against whistleblowers. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of UAE, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Principle of Sheikh Zayed International Academy witnessing the graduation ceremony. - DNA

Russia launches 'largest drone attack' on Kyiv

Russia's southern Belgorod region, bordering Ukraine, also came under attack from Ukrainian forces on Saturday, local officials said. Regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov reported Sunday that a 15-year-old girl and a 17-year-old boy were wounded in the shelling

KYIV: Ukraine's capital was subjected to the largest drone attack since the start of Russia's war, local officials said, as Kyiv prepared to mark the anniversary of its founding on Sunday. At least one person was killed. Russia launched the "most massive attack" on the city overnight Saturday with Iranian-made Shahed drones, said Serhii Popko, a senior Kyiv military official. The attack lasted more than five hours, with air defense reportedly shooting down more than 40 drones. A 41-year-old man was killed and a 35-year-old woman was hospitalized when debris fell on a seven-story nonresidential building and started a fire, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. Ukraine's air force said that Saturday night was also record-breaking in terms of Shahed drone attacks across the country. Of the 54 drones launched, 52 were shot down by air defense systems. In the northeastern Kharkiv province, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said a 61-year-old woman and a 60-year-old man were killed in two separate shelling attacks. Kyiv Day marks the anniversary of Kyiv's official founding. The day is usually celebrated

with live concerts, street fairs, exhibitions and fireworks. Scaled-back festivities were planned for this year, the city's 1,541st anniversary. The timing of the drone attacks was likely not coincidental, Ukrainian officials said. "The history of Ukraine is a long-standing irritant for the insecure Russians," Ukraine's chief presidential aide, Andriy Yermak, said on Telegram. "Today, the enemy decided to 'congratulate' the people of Kyiv on Kyiv Day with the help of their deadly UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles)," Popko also wrote on the messaging app. Local officials in Russia's southern Krasnodar region said that air defense systems destroyed several drones as they approached the Ilysk oil refinery. Russia's southern Belgorod region, bordering Ukraine, also came under attack from Ukrainian forces on Saturday, local officials said. Regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov reported Sunday that a 15-year-old girl and a 17-year-old boy were wounded in the shelling. Drone attacks against Russian border regions have been a regular occurrence since the start of the invasion in February 2022,

with attacks increasing last month. Earlier this month, an oil refinery in Krasnodar was attacked by drones on two straight days. Ukrainian air defenses, bolstered by sophisticated Western-supplied systems, have been adept at thwarting Russian air attacks - both drones and aircraft missiles. Earlier in May, Ukraine prevented an intense Russian air attack on Kyiv, shooting down all missiles aimed at the capital. The bombardment, which additionally targeted locations across Ukraine, included six Russian Kinzhal aero-ballistic hypersonic missiles, repeatedly touted by Russian President Vladimir Putin as providing a key strategic competitive advantage and among the most advanced weapons in his country's arsenal. Sophisticated Western air defense systems, including American-made Patriot missiles, have helped spare Kyiv from the kind of destruction witnessed along the main front line in the country's east and south. While most of the ground fighting is stalemated along that front line, both sides are targeting other territory with long-range weapons. Against the backdrop of Saturday night's

drone attacks, Russia's ambassador to the U.K., Andrei Kelin, warned of an escalation in Ukraine. He told the BBC on Sunday his country had "enormous resources" and it was yet to "act very seriously," cautioning that Western supplies of weapons to Ukraine risked escalating the war to a "new dimension." The length of the conflict, he said, "depends on the efforts in escalation of war that is being undertaken by NATO countries, especially by the U.K." Kelin's comments are typical of Russian officials' rhetoric with regard to Moscow's military might, but contradict regular reports from the battlefield of Russian troops being poorly equipped and trained. Also on Sunday, the death toll from Friday's missile attack on the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro, the regional capital of the Dnipropetrovsk province, rose to four. Regional Gov. Serhii Lysak said that three people who were considered missing were confirmed dead. There were 32 people, including two children, wounded in the attack, which struck a building containing psychology and veterinary clinics. - Agencies

US, Saudi Arabia call for warring sides in Sudan to extend truce

CAIRO: The United States and Saudi Arabia called on warring sides in Sudan to extend a fragile cease-fire due to expire Monday, as weeks of fighting reached a stalemate in the capital and elsewhere in the African country. The Sudanese army and a rival paramilitary force, battling for control of Sudan since mid-April, had agreed last week to the weeklong truce, brokered by the U.S. and the Saudis. However, the cease-fire, like others before it, did not stop the fighting in the capital of Khartoum and elsewhere in the country. In a joint statement early Sunday, the U.S.

and Saudi Arabia called for an extension of the current truce which expires at 9:45 p.m. local time Monday. "While imperfect, an extension nonetheless will facilitate the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese people," the statement said. The statement also urged Sudan's military government and the rival Rapid Support Forces to continue negotiations to reach an agreement on extending the cease-fire. The fighting broke out in mid-April between the military and the powerful RSF. Both military chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan and RSF leader Gen. Mohammed Hammad Dagalo led the 2021 coup that removed the Western-backed government of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. It turned Khartoum and the adjacent city of Omdurman into a battleground. The clashes also spread elsewhere in the country, including the war-ravaged Darfur region. The conflict has killed hundreds of people, wounded thousands and pushed the country to near collapse. It forced more than 1.3 million out of their homes to safer areas inside Sudan, or to neighboring nations. - Agencies

Joe Biden, GOP reach debt-ceiling deal

WASHINGTON: An "agreement in principle" between President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy would raise the nation's legal debt ceiling, but now Congress has only days to approve a package that includes spending cuts and would avert a potentially disastrous U.S. default. The compromise announced late Saturday risks angering both Democratic and Republican lawmakers as they begin to unpack the concessions. Negotiators agreed to some Republican demands for increased work requirements for recipients of food stamps that House Democrats had called a nonstarter. But bargainers stopped short of greater spending cuts overall that Republicans wanted. Support from both parties will be needed to win congressional approval before a projected June 5 government default on U.S. debts. Lawmakers are not expected to return to work from the Memorial Day weekend before Tuesday, at the earliest, and McCarthy has promised lawmakers he will abide by the rule to post any bill for 72 hours before voting. White House officials planned to brief House Democrats on a video call Sunday. The Democratic president and Republican speaker reached the agreement after the

two spoke Saturday evening by phone. The country and the world have been watching and waiting for a resolution to a political standoff that threatened the U.S. and global economies. "The agreement represents a compromise, which means not everyone gets what they want," Biden said in a statement. "That's the responsibility of governing." Biden said the deal was "good news for the American people because it prevents what could have been a catastrophic default and would have led to an economic recession, retirement accounts devastated, and millions of jobs lost." McCarthy, in brief remarks at the Capitol, said that "we still have a lot of work to do." But he added: "I believe this is an agreement in principle that's worthy of the American people." With the outlines of an agreement in place, the legislative package could be drafted and shared with lawmakers in time for House votes as soon as Wednesday, and later in the coming week in the Senate. Central to the compromise is a two-year budget deal that would hold spending flat for 2024 and increase it by 1% for 2025 in exchange for raising the debt limit for two years, which would push the volatile political issue past the next presidential election. - Agencies

Iran exchanges heavy gunfire with Taliban on Afghan border

MONITORING DESK

DUBAI: The Taliban and Iran exchanged heavy gunfire Saturday on the Islamic Republic's border with Afghanistan, killing and wounding troops while sharply escalating rising tensions between the two countries amid a dispute over water rights.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency quoted the country's deputy police chief, Gen. Qassem Rezaei, accusing the Taliban of opening fire first Saturday morning on the border of Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan province and the Afghan province of Nimroz. IRNA said Iran inflicted "heavy casualties and serious damage."

From the Taliban's view, Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Abdul Nafi Takor accused Iran of shooting first. Takor said the firefight killed two people, one from each country, and wounded others. He described the situation as now being under control. IRNA, quoting Iranian police, said two border guards had been killed. However, that number may be higher.

'Nawaz Sharif not attacked in London'

NEWS DESK

LONDON: The earlier reports in Pakistani media about an attack on former prime minister Nawaz Sharif at a café in Central London on Saturday evening turned out to be inaccurate. Nawaz Sharif was present on Bond Street in London along with his two bodyguards and driver when a confrontation between the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters and the police unfolded outside. The BLM activists had organised a picket to advocate for their rights.

Nawaz Sharif's car was parked nearby and one of the BLM protesters threw coffee at the vehicle during a clash with the police, as the police arrested one activist. The footage showed one man being taken away by police wearing a white hazmat suit carrying Black Lives Matter slogans. News of the attack on Nawaz Sharif started circulating after PML-N activist Khurram Butt tweeted that PTI supporters had attacked the former premier.

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