

Islamabad Post



Saturday, May 20, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

Zelenskiy seeks Arab support for Ukraine people

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Hungary ready to hold Russia-Ukraine talks

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Briefs

Political crisis to be overcome

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif says Pakistan will soon overcome its political crisis.



In an interview with Al Jazeera, he said PTI's armed groups attacked military installations during violent incidents in Rawalpindi, Mianwali and Lahore on 9th May. He said PML-N's leaders despite their arrests in past did not opt for violence. He said our party did not attack on any of my installations. The Minister said people who have attacked the military installations are enemies of the country. He said such action is tantamount to war against Pakistan. Khawaja Muhammad Asif said that the people involved in attacking military installations, military bases and residences of military personnel, will be under the Army Act as per the Constitution. He said general elections will be held on its due time in October this year.

PPP opens doors for PTI leaders

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has opened its doors for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders, who had recently parted their ways following the May 9 violence.



Talking to journalists, PPP leader and Labour Minister Saeed Ghani asserted that the politicians who quit Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should be encouraged and given a 'positive response'. The provincial minister announced that the PPP is ready to welcome the politicians who left the PTI, adding that not all members and voters of Tehreek-e-Insaf are 'anti-nationalist'. "The PPP was the best option for those who quit the anti-nationalist party," Saeed Ghani added. Responding to a question, the minister said that the name of Karachi Mayor has not been finalized yet.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.

- Editor

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Will not bow to pressure: Imran Govt-PTI deadlock persists

Govt-PTI deadlock persists

Police team visits Zaman Park; PTI says the police have returned "empty-handed"

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Interim Information Minister Anis Mir has said that a "deadlock" persists between the provincial government and PTI Chairman Imran Khan regarding the search operation at the former prime minister's Zaman Park residence. "No agreement has been reached on the search operation," he revealed in an interview. "We did not want to take an extreme step. Therefore, headed by the Lahore commissioner, a three-member delegation visited Imran Khan's residence and held a 1.5-hour meeting with him. 'Khan sahib was given the names of people involved in the attack on the Lahore Corps Commander House and Asfari Tower and evidence was handed over to him.' 'But no agreement was reached regarding a search operation.' Meanwhile, Punjab Interim Chief Minister Moshin Nagri has ordered the police to end the blockade outside PTI Chairman Imran Khan's residence on the condition that "encroachments inside Zaman Park" are removed. He passed these instructions after holding a meeting with the government team that held negotiations with Imran, regarding a search of his house, at his residence earlier. "As soon as encroachments inside Zaman Park are removed,

PPP CEC wants May 9 culprits punished

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: President PPPP Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhatto Zardari co-chaired the hybrid meeting of the Central Executive Committee of Pakistan People's Party in Bilawal House, Karachi. The meeting passed a resolution condemning the events of May 9. "The PPP strongly condemns the incidents that happened in different cities of the country on May 9, the damage to the martyrs' memorial in Sargodha, the burning of Hunah House, the vandalism at FC Fort in Dir, Mardan, breaking the statue of Shaheed Colonel Sher Khan, burning the Swat Motorway Toll Plaza, burning the Rawalpindi Metro Station and the Peshawar Radio Station to ashes, destroying the Chagal Model and Edhi Ambulance in Peshawar, and burning passenger buses in Karachi.

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May 9 arson

Imran should accept total responsibility

Khan should hand over the terrorists hiding in Zaman Park; Marrayum Sherry Rehman criticizes PTI Chairman

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marrayum Aurangzeb on Friday said that condemnation of the May 9 was not enough, Imran Khan should confess and accept its responsibility. Reacting to Imran Khan's statement she said Imran defamed the country when he was in power and defamed it with every action and movement even outside of power. The minister said he defamed the country by selling the watch gifted by Saudi Arabia and he also defamed the country by fabricating the cigarette story. The information minister said that after leaving power, Imran Khan defamed the country by attacking national institutions and martyrs' memorials. The minister said that condemnation can neither hide the crime of May 9, nor the culprit. She said Imran should

Continued on Page 06

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman says PTI Chairman did not condemn the events of May 9 in clear words even after criticism within his party. In a series of tweets, she criticized the Chairman PTI for his statements post-May 9 violence. The Minister said there was only one person in the entire country who did not condemn the May 9 attacks. Sherry Rehman said Imran Khan's foundation of division and hatred in the country will have far-reaching effects on the country.

Assad gets warm welcome back into Arab League

Syrian president attends first regional bloc summit since his country's suspension over crackdown on anti-government protests in 2011

CENTRELINE REPORT

JEDDAH: After more than a decade of isolation, Bashar al-Assad, the president of western Syria, has been welcomed back into the Arab League. Al-Assad on Friday attended the regional bloc's 32nd summit that kicked off in Saudi Arabia's port city of Jeddah for the first time since his country's suspension following the eruption of war in Syria in 2011. During his speech he said the summit was a "historic opportunity" to address crises across the region. "I hope that it marks the beginning of a new phase of Arab action for solidarity among us, for peace in our region, development and prosperity instead of war and destruction," al-Assad told summit attendees. Al-Assad said Syria would always belong to the Arab world but called for non-interference in the internal affairs of Arab states. "It is important to leave internal affairs to the country's people as they are best able to manage their own affairs," he said. And in an apparent swipe at Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has backed Syrian rebels and sent Turkish forces into swathes of northern



Syria, al-Assad noted the "danger of expansionist Ottoman thought," describing it as influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood — an group seen as a foe by Damascus and many other Arab states. "It's the end of an era and the beginning of a new one," Ahebarra said. While many Arab countries sided with Syrian opposition, provided significant military and political assistance to the opposition, now, it's the "reverse," he said. Arab nations are "rehabilitating" al-Assad, Ahebarra said. The host country was formerly a key backer of armed opposition groups that sought to overthrow Al-Assad during Syria's war. Analysts said Syria's readmission to the 22-member Arab League is a strong signal that al-Assad's isolation is ending, reflecting an important shift in how regional actors view the reality of his government's survival, in ways that are at odds with the West. Ibrahim Frahat from the Doha Institute said al-Assad's mention of the "Arab identity" was significant. "He emphasized — the Arab identity of Syria, and linking that to the broader Arab region,

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of federal cabinet. - DNA

China pulls out of G20 summit in IIOJK

'China is firmly opposed to holding any kind of G20 meetings in disputed territory'



NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China on Friday pulled out of the G20 tourism summit being held in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), saying that it will not be a part of it, agencies reported. India is set to chair this year's G20 meeting and organised a number of meetings across the country in the run-up to the summit in New Delhi in September. "China is firmly opposed to holding any kind of G20 meetings in disputed territory, and will not attend such meetings," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said. India revoked the special status of the occupied territory on August 5, 2019. Ties between both countries were strained in 2020 when a military clash in Ladakh took place, killing 24 soldiers. The G20 summit will take place in IIOJK's capital Srinagar, hosting the tourism working group for G20 members. It is scheduled to take place on May 22-24. Pakistan has also opposed New Delhi's decision to hold the meeting in the illegally held Kashmir. Responding to the reservations, India has said that it is free to hold meetings on its own territory. "Peace and tranquility on its border are essential for normal ties with China," it said.

PTI's return to NA LHC declares resignations of 72 MPs 'invalid'

Barrister Ali Zafar says the court has given a "historic decision"

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday declared "null and void" the acceptance of the resignations of 72 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members of the National Assembly, including Fawad Chaudhry, Hamad Azhar, and Shah Mahmood Qureshi. The petition against the acceptance of the resignations was filed by former MNA Raza Fatyana and was heard by Justice Shahid Karim of the LHC. During the hearing, Justice Karim declared that the acceptance of the resignations by the NA Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was "invalid". A court had directed the 72 members to appear before the NA speaker to withdraw their resignations and instructed the NA speaker to take a decision after hearing all the members again. The notifications of accepting the resignations of Shafiqat Mahmood and

IHC issues notice to IG Islamabad

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday issued a notice to the Islamabad Inspector-General of Police Dr Akbar Nasir Khan seeking an explanation on the reason behind re-arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders defying court orders. The IG has been asked to submit his response to the notice by Monday (May 22). The court, on the other hand, also issued a notice to the Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan in the matter. The notices were issued during the hearing of multiple pleas seeking contempt of court proceedings against police officials following

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President, PM condemn attack on Sirajul Haq

'Not afraid of death', JI's emir says

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Jamaat-Islami (JI) emir Sirajul Haq on Friday narrowly escaped a "suicide attack" that targeted his convoy in Balochistan's Zhob while six others were injured, according to police. City police station Station House Officer (SHO) Sher Ali Mandokhtal told media that all of the injured were being treated at Civil Hospital, Zhob and one of them was in critical condition. He said Haq's vehicle was

partly damaged in the incident while the JI emir remained unhurt. The official added that a body found at the site of the blast was of the "suicide attacker". In a tweet, he JI also said that Haq — who was visiting the area to address a political gathering — was safe and that the attacker had been killed. "JI emir Sirajul Haq reached Quetta today and had to go further to Zhob where he has a political gathering today. When he was entering Zhob and people were

Continued on Page 06

AI system to be introduced in health sector

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Dr. Javed Akram has announced introduction of artificial intelligence system in the government hospitals. In a statement, issued here on Friday, he said that now artificial intelligence system would be introduced in the government teaching hospitals. He said all information would be provided to machines through the artificial intelligence system, and the future machine would provide guidance, based on its information. He said another mobile-phone application, 'Outbreak Alert', was also being introduced. In the first phase, artificial intelligence system would be implemented at Jinnah Hospital and the PKLI. He said that artificial intelligence system would benefit both the health departments. —APP

FPCCI, Afghan Consulate discuss holding Pak-Afghan Expo

PESHAWAR: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Region, and the Afghan Consulate have termed the Pak-Afghan Expo as a game-changer and revolutionary project for the economic development of the region. In this connection, a meeting between the Regional Coordinator FPCCI KP Region, Sartaj Ahmad Khan, and Afghan Consul General, Mubillah also held on Friday and discussed matters relating to the successful holding of the expo to bring both countries closer to each other and promote trade and investment. During the meeting, the officials of FPCCI and the Afghan Consulate discussed a suitable date for holding Pak-Afghan Expo and agreed to take up the matter with the governments of both countries. Talking to Afghan Consul General at Sartaj Ahmad Khan said that the proposed expo will be the first successful step in the history of both countries after which new avenues of economic development will open. —APP

Women's empowerment is SM Tanveer's top priority: SM Tanveer

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) hosted a reception in honour of SM Tanveer, Minister of Industries and Commerce, Government of Punjab which was heavily participated by leaders of the business community, women entrepreneurs and government officials. Speaking at the occasion, SM Tanveer said that women empowerment is at the top of the government's agenda without which the dream of national development cannot be achieved. He said that IWCCI is one of the most effective women's chambers in the country which is playing a laudable role to empower women through entrepreneurship and that the government will extend all possible help towards this noble cause. Providing business



skills training is a basic step toward empowering women entrepreneurs, but to truly achieve transformative change, training programs need to address constraints facing women, he added.

SM Tanveer said that financial and digital literacy is very important to empower women as we have one of the lowest rates of female entrepreneurship in the world, with only one per cent of women owning a business. He said that women are also stepping into the manufacturing sector and assured that women will get space in the industrial zones. Speaking at the occasion,

Shahzad Ali Malik, Chairman of United Business Group and others said that women empowerment is a challenge in Pakistan but it's necessary to improve the economic landscape in the country. They urged the government to simplify policies and provide an enabling environment for small businesses run by women. Samina Fazil said that current women's economic empowerment interventions are not enough to overcome all obstacles facing female entrepreneurs. Men and women entrepreneurs face inherently different constraints including psychological and cultural factors. Female entrepreneurs are often lacking in access to financial and human capital, which impedes business growth, she added. Samina Fazil said that the success of female entrepreneurs depends on their personal traits and entrepreneurial skills, and how institutions and stakeholders support them.

Abu Dhabi Ports Group, KPT sign strategic MoU

KARACHI: The Abu Dhabi Ports Group (ADPG) and Karachi Port Trust (KPT) have entered an agreement to drive sustainable growth, promote trade diversification, and strengthen bilateral ties between the UAE and Pakistan. The ADPG Ports Group has taken a significant step towards enhancing regional connectivity and fostering economic growth in Pakistan by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the KPT, said a spokesperson of KPT Friday. A high-powered delegation from United Arab Emirates (UAE) visited Karachi and also met Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Fahad Shahwari. The ADPG Ports Group was led by CEO and Managing Director of ADPG Ports Group Captain Mohamed Junis Al Shamisi, along with his senior team. The ADPG Ports Group is a UAE Government owned entity and the leading maritime and logistics provider from the Middle East. The MoU signing between Abu Dhabi Ports and KPT paved the way for enhancing bilateral cooperation and increasing efforts in the development, expansion, and digitalization of port projects within Pakistan. —DNA

Meeting reviews progress on miscreants' cases

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi chaired a meeting at his office on Friday to review progress regarding legal proceedings against the miscreants involved in the May 9 incidents. The meeting approved cash rewards for those who identified the accused. The meeting expressed deep concern over illegal facilitation of the nominated accused persons in the attacks and it was decided to send a reference against officials who provided facilitation to the accused. It was agreed upon in the meeting that the decision of issuing cash rewards to send a reference against officials who provided facilitation of the nominated accused would be challenged. The meeting gave approval for a negotiating team, headed by the commissioner Lahore division, to go to Zaman Park. Mohsin Naqvi ordered vigorous follow-up of the cases, filed against the miscreants, adding that the commissioners and IPOs concerned should hold daily meetings to supervise the prosecution process. —APP

72nd Sino-Pak diplomatic ties anniversary celebrated

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan-China relations are exemplary and we should learn from the China's Leadership and Peoples dedication and devotion for their loving homland and their vital role in China's stand on international stage with pride. The recent past China's global positive role for peace and economic development is a guideline for us. This was stated by Justice (Retd.) Inshad Qaiser Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education, Law, Parliamentary Affairs, Human Rights, Archives & Libraries at a Cake cutting and Friendship Awards distribution ceremony organized by Pakistan China Close Neighbors Connecting Mountains Rivers and Islands. A large number of Pakistani students are learning at various reputed Chinese Universities. They are bringing new knowledge in their respective fields and contributing to the social and economic prosperity of the countries. Today, we should understand the importance rather significance of these relations in the best interest of the homland. Once again, I appreciate China



Pakistan and China, we should think about what we have learned from China. As we know that Pakistan and China are very close neighbors connecting mountains rivers and islands. A large number of Pakistani students are learning at various reputed Chinese Universities. They are bringing new knowledge in their respective fields and contributing to the social and economic prosperity of the countries. Today, we should understand the importance rather significance of these relations in the best interest of the homland. Once again, I appreciate China

Study Center, UoP, and Pakistan China Friendship Association, KP for working with dedication and devotion and for the promotion of higher education between the two countries. The event was graced by apart from Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Mahmood Iftess Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar, Mr. Ahmad Hassan Chairman Governor Inspection Team, Prof. Dr. Shah Jehan Vice Chancellor Iqra University, Mr. Farruk Saqian Chairman KP Text Book Board, Dr. Zahid Anwar, Syed Ali Nawaz Ghani Secretary General PCFA and Prof. Dr. Kausar Takreem Coordinator CSC

Ashrafi accuses Zalmay for hatching plots against Pakistan

He said the entire nation was paying tributes to Pakistan's security forces for their dedicated efforts in ensuring the country's security

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Friday accused Zalmay Khalilzad, hatching plots against Pakistan and its military leadership domestically and internationally. In a recent development, Zalmay Khalilzad, who had served as the special envoy for Afghan reconciliation, has come under scrutiny for allegedly engaging in conspiracies to destabilize Pakistan and create division within the country's military and its citizens. This accusation has raised concerns about the unity and security of Pakistan. Ashrafi criticized Khalilzad, accusing him of betraying his own nation, Afghanistan, by remaining silent about the atrocities committed there. In a strongly-worded statement, he emphasized that Khalilzad's actions had consistently exhibited bias against Islam and Muslims, fueling hatred and causing harm to the Muslim community. He said that China and Pakistan have a friendly relationship. Both countries supported each other through thick and thin. She mentioned that CSC is thankful to both Federal and Provincial Governments, IEC, Vice Chancellor, UoP, and Chinese Embassy Islamabad for its wholehearted support to the CSC.

Commissioner inaugurates DPS's portal
RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Laqat Ali Chaita on Friday inaugurated the Portal at Divisional Public School (DPS), Director General, Rawalpindi Development Authority, Staff Awaraz, DG, Parks and Horticulture Authority, Ahmed Hassan Rangha, President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and Group Leader RCCI Sohail Altaf were also present at the occasion. The commissioner was briefed that the entire data of the school's children would be updated on the portal and the parents would be able to monitor their children's school attendance and academic performance through the portal. The papers would also be uploaded on the portal after the results of the monthly test and annual school examinations. —APP

President upholds dismissal and fine on GM PTV

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has upheld the major penalty of dismissal from service and fine of Rs 1 million imposed by the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (FOSPWAH) upon Khalid Mehmood Lakhani, General Manager (GM) of Pakistan Television (PTV) after he was proved to be guilty of the charge of sexual harassment of a Make-up Artist of PTV Center Mallan under Section 4 of the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010. The President rejected the representation filed by the PTV against the decision of FOSPWAH, stating that both our religion and the law strongly discouraged such acts and it was important to send a message to society,

women workforce, anti-social and potential harassers through such decisions in respect of the complainant for causing her anguish and mental torture. FOSPWAH had also directed the MD PTV to impose the penalties upon the accused within a week and submit a compliance report to FOSPWAH. The President in his decision observed that the proceedings of the case were repeatedly adjourned, adding

that the accused missed the liberty and grace shown by FOSPWAH by availing representation on one pretext or the other. He further stated that the accused adopted dilatory tactics which he added, "It is important that we make public and job places secure for women enabling them to become equal citizens, move about freely, get an education and earn a living", the President remarked. He said that the accused cannot claim such a liberty to proceed with the inquiry proceedings at his leisure and pleasure and has no right to stall himself unlimited opportunities for cross-examination of the complainant. He said that the Supreme Court of Pakistan, in another case, had also rightly observed that frequent adjournments were sought by the litigants. —APP

clined to avail the opportunity, it must follow that he believed in the testimony produced by the opposing party. "This is not a technical rule of evidence rather a rule of substantial justice", he added. "It is important that we make public and job places secure for women enabling them to become equal citizens, move about freely, get an education and earn a living", the President remarked. He said that the accused cannot claim such a liberty to proceed with the inquiry proceedings at his leisure and pleasure and has no right to stall himself unlimited opportunities for cross-examination of the complainant. He said that the Supreme Court of Pakistan, in another case, had also rightly observed that frequent adjournments were sought by the litigants. —APP

Pak-Malaysian think tanks vow to strengthen ties

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing the commitment to forge an institutional relationship and undertake joint endeavours as part of the efforts to build closer people-to-people ties between the two countries

STAFF REPORT
ISLAMABAD: The China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has organized over the years interactive virtual meeting with the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IIAIS), Malaysia and discussed different aspects of relations between Pakistan and Malaysia. The participants included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General, ISSI; Prof. Dr. Maszlee bin Malik, Chairman, IIAIS, Malaysia; Dr. Talib Shahbar, Director, China Pakistan Study Centre, ISSI; Dr. Ahmad Badri, Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO),

IIAIS, Malaysia; and members of Team CPSC, ISSI. During the meeting, the two sides apprised each other of their respective visions, mandates and scope of work and highlighted their ongoing policy endeavours, as well as the extent of international collaboration. They also acknowledged

the complementarity in their objectives and research interests - including building narratives, focusing on relevant global and regional issues, and reinforcing their countries' foreign policy endeavours. In his remarks during the interactive session, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail

countered Islamophobia and accentuating Pakistan's pivot to geo-economics. The IAI's Chairman, Prof. Dr. Maszlee bin Malik, also former Minister of Education of Malaysia, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and Group Leader RCCI Sohail Altaf were also present at the occasion. The commissioner was briefed that the entire data of the school's children would be updated on the portal and the parents would be able to monitor their children's school attendance and academic performance through the portal. The papers would also be uploaded on the portal after the results of the monthly test and annual school examinations. —APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

May 03/Poland National Day

May 06/Bulgaria National Day

May 07/Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day

May 08/UAE Armed Forces Day

May 09/European Union National Day

May 17/Norway National Day

May 21/Hungary Constitution Day

May 22/Yemen Armed Forces Day

May 24/Eritrea Re-unification Day (National Day)

May 25/Argentina National Day

May 25/Lebanon Liberation and Resistance Day

May 28/Azerbaijan Republic Day

May 28/Ethiopia National Day

Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133

Marriott.....051-2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

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Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 116

Emergency Ambulance 1122 & 116

Rescue Services 4451122

Motorway Police 9266044

Motorway Police 9270601/20

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WASA Rawalpindi 5555489

CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....5611116

Cant Hospital 9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

BGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9281170-79

Polyclinic.....9218306-09

Shifa International 4603066

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9290301-04

Met Office.....9255060-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Contentment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potchar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Speakers call for harnessing potential of young population

Dr Salman Shah, a prominent economist and former Finance Minister, emphasised on harnessing human potential through enhancing productivity and competitiveness

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, conducted a seminar on harnessing the vast untapped potential of Pakistan's young population. The event featured a diverse panel of speakers with substantial experience across the public, private, development, and corporate sectors.

Dr Salman Shah, a prominent economist and former Finance Minister, emphasised on harnessing human potential through enhancing productivity and competitiveness. Nadir Salar Qureshi, Chief Information Officer of Engro Corp, shed light on nurturing young talent by impart-



ing practical skills for ensuring a quick turnaround through remittances and the gig economy to plug the gaping current account deficit. Mosharrar Zaib, a policy expert and CEO of Tabadli, shared an insightful analysis linking the low productivity of the workforce with stunting due to malnutrition and low literacy.

In his concluding remarks, President CASS Air Marshal Asim Siddiqi (ret'd) expressed, "It is important for our policymakers to realise that time and tide wait for no one. They must realise the importance of this Demographic Window." He further added, "Investment in human capital can transform our economy. It must be taken as a long term national strategic objective which should be achieved by the collective efforts of key stakeholders."

'PTI's accused protesters to have right of appeal to courts'

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence, Khawaja Mubashir Asif said that the accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protesters, who were to be tried in the military courts, would have the right to appeal to the High Courts and the Supreme Court.

The defence minister in an interview with an Arab news channel 'Al Jazeera' expressed his point of view on the prevailing situation in the aftermath of the May 9 violent protests by the PTI workers after the arrest of their Chairman Imran Khan. Khawaja Asif said the

PTI miscreants attacked public and government properties including military installations under a well-thought-out plan. "Such actions are tantamount to waging a war against Pakistan. Those who attacked military installations, military bases and residential premises of military personnel, their trials will be held under military courts according to the procedure given in the constitution," he added.

He said there was definitely a political crisis in Pakistan but it would be overcome very soon. During the violent incidents in Rawalpindi, Mianwali, and Lahore

on May 9, armed groups of PTI attacked military installations, he added. The minister pointed out that there were arrears also made in the past in Pakistan, as he himself was also arrested. "My leader (Nawaz Sharif) and many people of my political party were arrested but we never did politics of violence. We have never attacked military and civilian installations on arrests."

The defence minister said the attackers on military and civilian installations were enemies of the country. "We have political differences, but that does not

mean that government and public properties should be attacked," he added.

He said that the coalition government was not making new courts and laws, but rather there were already laws existing to hold trials in such cases of violence against state installations.

The government, he said was trying to control the situation, as peace was restored in the cities and the situation would be normal in the next few days. He said that the general elections would be held in due course in October.—APP

IHC issues contempt notice to Islamabad IG

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has issued a notice to Islamabad IG police while hearing a petition against the rearrest of PTI leaders Shireen Mazar, Masfika Bokhari and Ali Muhammad Khan after their release despite the court order. Justice Mingsal Hassan Aurangzeb remarked during the hearing of the case on Friday that the court has concern in these cases. "The government has tried to defeat the court writ. We say it is a civilized country, what is happening with the court orders does not prove it," the judge remarked. The court said, "A campaign was launched against the constitutional courts. These courts are sitting to deliver justice according to the law. Those who are running the campaign took relief from the same courts yesterday. We judges cannot do talk shows, sit there and defend ourselves. Our power is law, and the Attorney General, you are our power," Justice Aurangzeb said that the writ of the court is the dignity of this country. No one is justifying the (May 9) violence. Place this matter before the highest authority for the sake of this country, he added. During the hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Khan said this country has to run under the constitution. Courts and all constitutional institutions have to work within the constitution, he added. He said no one could defeat the court writ. He said that arrest in the Punjab police is a provincial matter. He said the Punjab police issued orders under 3(M)P. It is up to the court to review the legal position of the Punjab government orders, he added.—DNA

CDA all set to auction commercial plots

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is all set to auction commercial plots in Blue Area and other developed sectors of the federal capital, beginning on May 29, aiming to generate more revenue for the city and attract investors to participate in the auction.

Talking to APP, an official in the authority urged interested investors to participate in the auction, which will take place at the Jinnah Convention Centre in Islamabad. The development is expected to have a significant impact on the commercial estate market in the capital city.—APP

Federal Education secretary visits IMCB

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary of Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Waheed Ahsan Chaudhry visited Model College for Boys (MBC) P-8/A, to see the arrangements for National Assessment Test (NAT) 2023. Waheed Ahsan received feedback from the Principal and Teachers on key initiatives of the Ministry, said a press release here on Friday.—APP

UPaisa introduces a Digital QR Code

ISLAMABAD: In line with its commitment to providing high-quality user journeys, UPaisa has introduced an innovative QR Code Scan feature on its digital app to bring unprecedented ease and convenience to its users. The innovative upgrade simplifies financial transactions and enhances the usability of financial technology for a larger section of the population.—APP

NDRMF to fund over Rs 3b for rehab

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) will fund over Rs3 billion to the Irrigation Department, Government of Sindh, for its project titled Building Resilience of Damaged Flood Mitigation Structures Along River Indus in Sindh Resilience and Adaptive Population in Disaster (RAPID). The funding cost of Rs. 3,011,480,076/ (Rs. three billion eleven million four hundred sixty thousand seven hundred and seventy six only) would help the provincial government to ensure its rehabilitation and reconstruction of Flood Schemes in Sindh, a news release said. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) NDRMF, Bilal Ameer and Abdullah Bhargi, Project Director of Flood Emergency and Reconstruction Projects Sindh Irrigation Department signed the contract. On the occasion, they said financial support would be extended to the respective entities as grant financing. However, the Grant Implementation Agreement between NDRMF and the Irrigation Department, Government of Sindh, was signed in this regard. The Project is designed for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of four schemes that received major damages and losses during the monsoon floods in 2022 in districts Shaheed Benazirabad, Naushero Feroze, Sujawal and Matari and needed rehabilitation on an urgent basis as any flooding of similar nature may cause damages to life and property. The details of the scheme included Stone Apron and Stone Pitching Along SM Bund from Mile 70/7 to 72/0 in Moro Bund Sub Division, Rehabilitation/Reconstruction of Stud/Apron along SM Bund at Mile 12/0 to 12/7 and Bakhari Loop Bund Mile 0/0 to 0/1 in Kandiaro Bund Sub Division, Rehabilitation.—DNA

PepsiCo investing \$80-90 million in Pak annually

ISLAMABAD: "Profitable business ventures of over 80 US multinational corporations (MNCs) in Pakistan should serve to encourage investors and the business community to not only take advantage of a growing market of 240 million but also use the strategic location of the country for serving a huge market of Central and West Asia, Middle East and North Africa," said Pakistan's ambassador to the United States Masood Khan. "An enterprising middle class and the growing needs of a developing economy have created huge opportunities for the business community to establish as well as expand their businesses and to reap dividends by fulfilling the existing unmet demand," he continued. Ambassador Masood Khan made these remarks while talking to senior executives of PepsiCo here at Embassy of Pakistan today. PepsiCo senior directors Muhammad Khosa and Ms. Caroline Berson, while noting success of the company in Pakistan in beverages and food sector said that the country was serving as an export hub for its manufactured products to regional countries like Afghanistan. The finished food products made in Pakistan were also being exported to Qatar, Malaysia, and Philippines, they said. Muhammad Khosa informed that PEPSICO was investing \$80-90 million in Pakistan every year. He assured to enhance and diversify PepsiCo's investment in Pakistan. Ambassador Khan said that there was a need for better coordination among stakeholders to showcase success stories of the business community in two countries.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: General Manager of Islamabad Serena Hotel interacts with a student of Master Ayub in F6 on the occasion of distribution of lunch boxes.—DNA

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

No. CEMD-1/AB/187
Dated:- 19.5.2023

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders on percentage rate basis are hereby invited from approved E/M Contractors having valid renewed license of PEC for the year 2022-23 for the following work on 06/06/2023 which should reach in the office of the undersigned up to 11:00 A.M and will be opened on same day at 11:30 AM in the presence of participants or their authorized representatives. The tender documents can be purchased up to 05/06/2023 from the office of the undersigned on any working day during office hours on payment of tender cost (non-refundable) given below. Advertisement is available on PPRA website (www.ppra.org.pk). In case of Public holiday bids will be opened on next working day.

Terms and Conditions:

- The contractors are required to submit application on the original pad of the contractor's firm along with security in the shape of deposit at call as given below at least two working days prior to the opening of tender.
- Tender documents shall not be sold by Post/Telegraphically, telex or email and will not be issued on the date of opening of tenders.
- The tender received by post/ telegraphically or without valid call deposit or received after due date and time will not be entertained.
- According to PPRA rule 25 bid security in the shape of deposit at Call (CDR) in favour of the Executive Engineer Central E/M Division NO. 1 PAK PWD Islamabad issued from any scheduled bank of Pakistan at Islamabad and Rawalpindi must be submitted as follows otherwise the tender /application would be liable to be rejected summarily.
(1) CDR /Pay order Amounting to Rs.1,50,000/- shall be attached in original at the time of submission of the application for issuance of tender.
- The application should be accompanied with attested copies of CNIC, Valid enlistment with Pakistan Engineering Council, Certificate showing the registration with Income Tax Department (ATL) valid electrical license issued by Electrical Inspector. Partnership deed in case of partnership or affidavit declaring himself sole proprietor of the firm
- Tender will only be issued to the owner of the firm or his authorized representative having legal power of attorney registered with first class magistrate for the work especially, General Power of attorney acceptable.
- Undertaking on stamp paper for in original non-blacklisting, Non-litigation, non-involvement in corrupt practise having no adverse remarks, execution failure or rejection from any government department, must be provided in case of false statement the application/ bid and with be treated as non-response.
- Under rule 33(1) of PPRA Rule 2004, undersigned reserve the right to accept or reject all bids/tenders any time prior to bid /tender.
- The submission of bid implies that the bidder is fully conversant with the nature of work, scope condition, applicable rule, Federal, Provincial & Local Taxes etc.
- Tender/ Notice can also be downloaded from PPRA website (WWW.PPRA.ORG.PK).
- The firm shall have at least 01 No of work order of Boring Work of same nature or above, along with completion certificate with submission of application.

S.#	Name of Work	NIT Amount	Earnest Money	Tender cost	Time
1	Provision of 04 Nos of Pressure Bore for VC Kotli Tehsil Lora District Abbottabad	5,473,128	150,000	2000	One Month

(Major (R) Shahzad Sohail)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
CENTRAL E/M DIVISION, I,
PAK. P.W.D., ISLAMABAD. PH NO. 051-9101099

Briefs

Minister directs authorities to improve service delivery

RAWALPINDI: Cantor Minister for Communication and Works, Excise and Taxation and Narcotics Control Fajjal, Bilal Afzal has on Friday visited Rawalpindi Excise and Taxation (E&T) Office and directed the authorities concerned to take all possible steps to facilitate the citizens and improve service delivery. During the visit, the minister visited the offices of Director Excise Rawalpindi and reviewed the working of Motor and Property Tax branches. Director Excise Rawalpindi, Imran Aslam gave a briefing on the occasion. Elimination of 'tout mafia' from Excise offices was the top priority of the government, Bilal Afzal said. The government departments should improve service delivery so that the 'tout mafia' could be discouraged, he said.—APP

ANF seizes 108 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in their ongoing operations against drug smugglers managed to recover 108 kg drugs besides arresting six accused including two women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that in an operation near Islamabad Motorway, ANF recovered 92.4 kg charras and 4.8 kg opium from the possession of a woman resident of Khushab. In another operation on Motorway, one kg opium was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Tota Tek Singh. In third operation conducted in Mianwali, 2.4 kg charras was recovered from the possession of a drug smuggler resident of Bhakkar.—APP

HSSC annual exams 2023 to start on May 20

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (RBISE) has finalized the arrangements for Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) annual exams 2023 which would start in Rawalpindi division on May 20, Saturday. According to Chairman RBISE, Muhammad Adnan Khan, Institute arrangements made for the HSSC annual exams. Controller Examinations RBISE Prof. Sajid Meo and Farooq informed that the roll number slips of regular students had already been sent to the concerned institutions and those of the private students were uploaded on the board's website (<http://www.bise-rawalpindi.edu.pk>) besides displaying at the addresses mentioned in their admission forms. He informed that the board on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaqat Ali Chatha, had made best possible arrangements for the exams. The date sheets of the exams and the examination centers and other officials had been sent to all the Deputy Commissioners of the division, District Police Officers and to the special branch. Apart from the board's office at Moghah near Attock Oil Refinery Rawalpindi, the students could also contact at phone number 051-5450917-18, Assistant Controller, later Branch Rana Ilyas on cell phone 0333-5464775, focal person Inter Branch, Kasat Abbasi on 0332-8527445 and 051-5450920 in case of any problem, he added. He said, 196 examination centers had been set up in the division, including 23 in Attock, 40 in Chakwal, 26 in Jhelum, 47 in Rawalpindi district and 50 local centers. He said, strict monitoring of the examination centers would be ensured by the board and the district administration. Strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against 'Bog' mafia, he added. District vigilance committee, chairman special squad and mobile inspectors would visit the examination centers to check the exam.—APP

Establishment of Pak-Iran border markets welcomed

It would create employment opportunities for local communities on both sides of the border

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman and Chairman Khyrystan Trade House Meher Kashif Younis has said the establishment of border markets between Pakistan and Iran would have a significant impact on the economy of both countries, besides controlling the menace of smuggling. Talking to a delegation of industrialists led by Mian Faiz Bukhsh Arain, CEO IT Professionals on

Friday, he said border markets would further facilitate trade between the two Muslim countries by providing a convenient platform for the exchange of goods and services, said a press release. He said it would boost bilateral trade volumes, leading to increased economic activity and revenue generation for both countries, adding that it would also promote regional integration by connecting the economies of either country. Kashif Younis said increased trade and economic cooperation were

needed to strengthen ties between the two nations and foster greater collaboration in other sectors, such as energy, transportation, and infrastructure development. He said it would create employment opportunities for local communities on both sides of the border, adding that it would also stimulate economic growth, especially in the border regions, and improve the livelihoods of people by providing them with jobs and income-generating activities. Pakistan-Iran trade cooperation would enable the diversification

of trade and can encourage the export of a wide range of goods, including agricultural products, textiles, handicrafts, and consumer goods, contributing to a more balanced and diversified trade portfolio, Kashif Younis stressed. He said border points could attract tourists and encourage cross-border travel, adding that people from neighboring regions may visit these markets to explore new products, experience different cultures, and engage in trade. Kashif said the influx of tourists

could boost local economies, create opportunities for hospitality and tourism-related businesses, and generate revenue through tourism-related services. He said such markets provide opportunities for cultural exchange and interaction between people from Pakistan and Iran and frequent interactions could foster mutual understanding, promote cultural appreciation, and enhance people-to-people ties, which can contribute to stronger diplomatic relations and cooperation between the two nations.

President phones families of martyrs

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday telephoned the family members of those martyred in a terrorist attack in the Muslim Bagh area of Balochistan on May 12. The president paid tribute to the martyrs and saluted them for their services to the nation. He also sympathized with the family members of the martyred and also got emotional during the conversation. The president phoned the family members of havildars Abdul Subhan, Muhammad Irfan, Nadeem Iqbal, stenotypist Gulam Fareed, and sanitary workers Shahr Masih and Shan Masih. He also had a telephonic conversation with the family members of martyred Lance Naik Faheem Mubtashiq and corporals Saad Aslam and Talha Jani. "The martyrs are an asset for the nation. The nation will never forget their sacrifices," the president commented. He also lauded the services of the martyrs and paid them tribute on behalf of the entire nation.—APP

IRSA releases 151,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 151,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 143,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was recorded as 67,800 and was 28.53 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 44,100 cusecs and 59,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 111,600 feet, which was 68.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,950 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 45,700 cusecs and 48,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Tanusa, Godu and Sukkur was recorded as 57,800, 59,700, 41,500 and 13,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 32,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 12,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

DIG NHMP for resolving staffers problem

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) North Zone Muhammad Yusuf Malik issued directives for addressing staffers' problems. During the meeting, the relevant officers and employees informed the Zonal Commander about their problems, said a press release issued here on Friday. "Departmental issues of officers and employees should be resolved immediately," the DIG said during a meeting in the Zonal Office here. DIG issued instructions to the relevant officers for immediate action to resolve the problems of the officers and employees. Yusuf Malik issued an order that in the future the departmental—APP



ISLAMABAD: Defence Advisor to the Sri Lanka High Commission in Islamabad, Colonel Kaminda Silva was ceremoniously pinned the insignia and lapels of his new Rank Brigadier by Vice Admiral Mohan Vijaywickrama.—DNA

RCB auctions cattle market contract for Rs89.5m

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has awarded the contract to establish the city's largest cattle market at Bhatta Chowk at the intersection of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad for Rs89.5 million. The board auctioned the contract for the Bhatta Chowk Cattle Market well before Eidul Azha to prevent the sale of sacrificial animals in residential areas. According to RCB spokesman, the auction process continued for three days and the highest bid was offered on the third day of the auction. The cattle market would be established for 15 days and would remain open on Eid days at the junction of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The successful contractor, Syed Muttassar Shah, taken no-4 made an offer of Rs89.5 million. A committee, formed by Cantonment Executive Officer (CEO) Imran Gulzar

under the chairmanship of Revenue Superintendent Rana Saleem awarded the contract for the cattle market. As per the contract, the contractor would charge Rs 3,000 for large animals and Rs 2,000 for small ones brought to the market. The spokesman informed that the board had made special arrangements to meet the requirements of animals in the cattle market. Clearing, lighting, and security would also be arranged in the cattle market, while a mobile veterinary hospital would also be established for the medical examination of animals with the support of the Livestock Department. The Bhatta Chowk Cattle Market would be Rawalpindi's biggest market, in which sacrificial animals would be brought from different parts of the country. The spokesman further

informed that the CEO had visited Bhatta Chowk cattle market here the other day and reviewed the cleanliness and other arrangements. On the directives of the CEO, the work to remove small bushes and land leveling with the help of tractors had been started so that the citizens and contractors could be facilitated particularly during the sale and purchase of the sacrificial animals before Eid at Azha. The Cantt Board administration had kicked off the work last week to set up grand cattle market in the Cantt area at Bhatta Chowk to facilitate the Cantt residents. The spokesman said that the board had imposed a ban on the sale, purchase of sacrificial animals in all cant areas except Bhatta chowk cattle market. No one would be allowed to violate the rules, he added.—APP

H-9 College hosts prize distribution ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Model College for Boys H-9, celebrating its Annual Prize Distribution Ceremony at the esteemed Iqbal Auditorium. The event honored exceptional students who had excelled in academics, displayed leadership qualities, achieved success in co-curricular activities, and made noteworthy contributions to their community. The ceremony, attended by esteemed dignitaries and renowned guests, highlighted the remarkable achievements of the students. The Chief Guest for the occasion was Prof. Dr. Ali Ahmed Khair, Deputy Director General of the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE). The principals from various federal government colleges were also present, adding to the prestige and inspiring the students. Cash prizes amounting to a generous sum of Rs. 85,500/- were awarded to deserving students in various categories, including academic excellence.—APP

Chinese chilli enterprise to expand farming in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The Sindh-based LITEC Int'l Agricultural Development Co. plans to expand chilli farming in Pakistan to 50,000 acres with a target output of 150,000 tons in 2024. According to an update issued by LITEC Pakistan, this was disclosed by Paj Holdings Chairman Chen Changwei while briefing Pakistani Ambassador to China Mo'in ul Haque during his visit to Liaoning Floods in Sichuan province on May 15. Chen Changwei briefed Haque on LITEC's agricultural project and its strategic plan for the integration of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries in Pakistan in the next three years, according to Gwadar Pro. Starting from March 2024, successive exports to China will commence. The company has invested in processing plants in Pakistan to promote cultivation, marketing, and trade of sorghum, broad beans, tomatoes, sesame, peanuts, and other agricultural products, aiming to integrate more Pakistani agricultural products into the global supply chain under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) agricultural projects. In a tweet, Haque stated that the LITEC chilli project in South Punjab currently spans over an area of 15,000 acres. Kamwar Waqas Ahmad, LITEC Pakistan Business Development Officer, told Gwadar Pro that the company will expand the chilli cultivation area through contract farming. "We recommend quality hybrid seed varieties to the farmers with technical assistance and purchase their yield," he said. In addition, LITEC will host the biggest chilli farmers' meeting on May 27 in Multan, Pakistan. The event aims to bring together farmers, seed dealers, and companies from across the region to foster cooperation and facilitate the sharing of expertise in chilli cultivation.—DNA

Weekly inflation decrease by 0.16 percent

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.16 per cent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on May 18, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week ended on May 18 in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 255.12 points as compared to 255.53 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group increased and went up to 261.85 points from last week's 45.72 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015=100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs17,732 witnessed a 0.05 per cent increase and went up to 261.85 points from last week's 261.53 points. Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption group Rs 17,732-22,888 and Rs 22,889-29,517 witnessed an increase of 0.04 per cent and 0.01 per cent whereas the SPI for the consumption group Rs 29,518-44,175; and above Rs 44,175 witnessed a decrease of 0.04 per cent, and 0.29 per cent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 23 (45.10%) items increased, 13 (25.49%) items decreased and 15 (29.41%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW), included Onions (9.94%), Garlic (1.76%), Sugar (1.42%), Wheat Flour (1.40%), Vegetable Oil 2.5kg (0.63%), Mustard Oil (0.48%), Pulse Masoor (0.40%), Pulse Gram (0.12%) and Vegetable Ghee 1kg (0.13%), non-food items, Diesel (10.28%), Petrol (4.24%), LPG (3.02%) and Firewood (0.89%). The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) basis, included Chicken (7.51%)—APP

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Xi'an summit boosts cooperation

The joint statement and the list of cooperation projects released after the China-Central Asia Summit concluded in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on Friday show the event has been highly fruitful. As President Xi Jinping said in his keynote speech at the opening of the summit, the six countries need to increase mutual assistance, promote common development, better safeguard security and strengthen friendship, in order to consolidate the foundation for peace, stability and common prosperity in the region. The obvious threat to the region comes from the United States, which has been trying to turn Central Asia into its backyard since the 1990s so it can intensify the geopolitical pressure on both China and Russia. To fulfill its goal, the US has been using every possible excuse to trigger "color revolutions" in the region and drive a wedge between the Central Asian countries and China, which have caused turmoil, conflicts and mayhem, with the unrest in Kazakhstan early last year being the latest example. Although China-Central Asia strategic cooperation does not target the US, the summit has made it clear that the external forces trying to turn the region into a geopolitical battlefield will never succeed. Accordingly, President Xi said on Friday, "No one has the right to sow discord or stoke confrontation in the region, let alone seek selfish political interests." As their joint statement indicates, the six countries will unequivocally support each other when it comes to safeguarding their core interests such as sovereignty and territorial integrity, national security and economic development. Taking advantage of their economic complementarity, China and the Central Asian countries should continue to strengthen regional cooperation through Belt and Road projects. For instance, they should work together to realize their full potential of cooperation in green and low-carbon industries, medical services and the digital economy so as to develop new drivers of growth. The six countries have advanced the Silk Road Economic Belt since President Xi proposed it during his visit to Kazakhstan in 2013. Expectedly, the Belt and Road projects have improved the region's connectivity with China and Europe, benefiting the people in the region and beyond. The achievements of the Xi'an summit mark an important step toward building a China-Central Asia community with a shared future, a goal that was set at the virtual summit to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Central Asian countries last year. Steeped in history, driven by actual needs and built on popular support, the China-Central Asia community with a shared future will be characterized by mutual assistance, mutual trust, win-win cooperation and common development.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified
Vol: 03 Issue: 244
Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com
Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960
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American-Chinese relations

Richer and more complex stories lie behind dominant narratives, as the US's fascinating new exhibition, China's Hidden Century, reminds us. It challenges the conventional wisdom that the country's "long 19th century" was a time of decay and decline. It documents domestic turmoil and aggression and plunder by foreign powers – notably Britain – but also resilience and innovation. By looking beyond the Qing court, it includes individuals, ideas and possibilities that complicate our understanding of China's identity and trajectory. Alongside splendid imperial robes, visitors see a cook's uniform. They hear not only Empress Dowager Cixi's words, but those of the feminist and revolutionary martyr Qiu Jin. At a time when hostility towards the west and especially the US is growing in China, and vice versa, looking beyond headlines and politicians to other parts of the story is crucial. When inter-governmental relations hit the rocks, the contacts between societies and individuals – whether through tourism, academic discussion or shared cultural interests – are even more important. They can offer a less pressured and public space for exploring options. They can help to build understanding and prevent escalation. Conversely, domestic nationalism can make it harder for governments to pull back in a crisis even if they wish to. Gallup says that the proportion of Americans with a favourable view of China has plummeted from 38% in 2018 to just 15% this year – a record low. While it is extremely hard to gauge public opinion in China, the business intelligence firm Morning Consult says it found that 66% of adults saw the US as an enemy or unfriendly, while 64% of Americans believed the same of China. A decade ago, 15,000 Americans were studying in China; in the 2020-21 academic year there were just 382. (The US has seen a less dramatic decline in Chinese students.) Severe pandemic restrictions were primarily responsible – but numbers were already dropping, and there is little confidence that they will return to anywhere near the old levels. China's detention of two Canadians after Ottawa arrested Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, at the behest of the US, its sanctioning of academics over criticisms of human rights abuses in Xinjiang and the introduction of Hong Kong's draconian national security law have made scholars and others understandably reluctant to travel there. Even businesses, which have often sought to push back against tougher US action, are having second thoughts. On the US side, the surge in anti-Asian hate, the targeting of Chinese scholars for scrutiny and now state legislation banning or restricting land purchases by Chinese nationals have all made it less attractive. Dr Kennedy and Prof Wang note that non-governmental exchanges are necessary though not sufficient to stabilise ties, and urge both sides to restore connections "across the entire span of the two societies". The aim is laudable. It will, however, be extremely hard to realise.

America's New Front: Making Taiwan the Ukraine of the East

Masuoood Ahmad

China has responded by increasing its military presence in the area, conducting regular military exercises, and taking a more aggressive stance. The U.S. strategy of turning Taiwan into a new battleground has several implications for the world in common. It risks destabilizing the region and potentially leading to a dangerous escalation of tensions between the U.S. and China and in the end to a wider conflict. Some of the key actions taken by Washington in this regard include several covert and overt operations that security experts from

The US foreign policy elite is painfully aware of the fact that the "moment of unipolarity" in the world order, where they dictate their harsh conditions of international relations, turns out to be very short-lived and the era of the loss of undeniable total primacy and individual leadership is coming, which is very painfully perceived by Washington hawks. The United States has been increasingly focused on the Indo-Pacific region, seeing it as a key area of strategic importance. They are well aware that now the balance of power in this area is not in their favor, since so far China has been able to build up its economic and military influence there.

Over the last 15 years, the US has encouraged its allies, including those who belong to NATO, to strengthen their military capabilities. Concurrently, the US has been expanding its own technological military capacity and geographic reach by creating smaller bases around the world and developing new aircrafts and ships with greater range. This military power has been utilized to conduct provocative actions against countries that the US perceives as threats to its dominance, with China and Russia being the main targets.

The US has been instigating Russia through Ukraine and China through Taiwan, which are situated at the opposite ends of Eurasia. This aggressive behavior has resulted in an ongoing conflict in Ukraine for a year, while the establishment of new US bases in the Philippines is part of a strategy to escalate tension with China, using Taiwan as a potential battleground. The US aims to utilize the

island as a tool to restrict the Chinese mainland in a similar manner to its use of Ukraine to subdue Russia.

In recent months, there has been growing concern that the U.S. is actively working to turn Taiwan into a new battleground in its efforts to see its arch-rival China at a strategic low point. The U.S. has long been trying to open a serious battleground in Taiwan, which is officially known as the Republic of China. Last summer, NATO adopted a new strategy that for the first time identified China as a threat to the alliance. Later, the Financial Times, citing informed sources, reported that the North Atlantic Council (NATO's main political decision-making body) in September 2022 for the first time held a special discussion on Taiwan. In early 2023, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, former secretary general of the organization, said that Europe should help keep China from attacking Taiwan. According to Rasmussen, in the situation around Taiwan, "it's hard not to notice the parallels with Russia and Ukraine."

The United States is ambivalent about the status of the island: Washington declares its adherence to the principle of one China, but at the same time regularly sends warships to the Taiwan Strait and provides military assistance to the island. Washington increased its arms sales to Taiwan, providing the island nation with advanced weapons systems such as fighter jets, missile defense systems, and advanced surveillance technology. This is a way to engage China in a prolonged conflict to drain the country's resources and create mayhem in the region.

The U.S. has also developed its diplomatic

engagement with Taiwan, including establishing a new office for the American Institute in Taiwan, which serves as the de facto their embassy in the region. In addition to this fact, it is worth mentioning that there were many high-level official visits to the island, including the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment. Relations between Washington and Beijing escalated over the issue, especially after the visit in August 2022 of Nancy Pelosi, who at that time was the speaker of the US House of Representatives into Chinese territory without a formal request from the authorities. These steps are seen as a way to send China a message of confrontation and readiness to bolster the American strategic position in the Asia-Pacific region.

China has responded by increasing its military presence in the area, conducting regular military exercises, and taking a more aggressive stance. The U.S. strategy of turning Taiwan into a new battleground has several implications for the world in common. It risks destabilizing the region and potentially leading to a dangerous escalation of tensions between the U.S. and China and in the end to a wider conflict. Some of the key actions taken by Washington in this regard include several covert and overt operations that security experts from across the globe term as the beginning of a possible nuclear confrontation between the two great powers.

—The writer is a research scholar based in Islamabad.

UN: Champion or puppet? Examining its roles, reforms, and accusations of hypocrisy

Mutaib Manzoor

The United Nations was founded on the principles of inclusivity and equal representation of all nations, regardless of their size, power, or economic standing. Thus, it is imperative that all member states, including Russia and China, are given a significant role in the UN to uphold its objectives and aims. Both Russia and China are major global powers, and their active involvement in the UN's decision-making processes is critical to ensuring that the organization remains effective and relevant in today's complex

The United Nations (UN) has been the subject of intense scrutiny and debate in recent years, with critics questioning its effectiveness and credibility. While the UN has been credited with many accomplishments over the years, such as the successful negotiation of peace agreements and the provision of humanitarian aid to millions of people across the world, the skeptics argue that it is too heavily influenced by great powers like the United States (US). Some critics suggest that the UN is nothing more than a puppet organization, serving the interests of the few great powers and failing to address the needs of developing and less influential states. They point to the UN's Security Council, where the US wields significant power and influence through its veto power, as evidence of the organization's bias towards the interests of major powers.

However, advocates of the UN argue that the organization plays a critical role in promoting global cooperation and addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity, such as climate change, poverty, and conflict. They point to the UN's successes in reducing global poverty, providing aid to refugees, and helping to broker peace agreements in conflict zones around the world. Roles and Obligations of the UN The UN is tasked with promoting global cooperation and addressing some of the world's most pressing challenges. Its roles and obligations are numerous and diverse, encompassing the promotion of international peace and security, fostering amicable relationships among nation-states, advancing social and economic progress, safeguarding human rights, and providing humanitarian assistance. However, the UN has faced criticism for its misadministration and perceived failures in fulfilling its obligations. The UN has been criticized for being inefficient and bureaucratic, with protracted decision-making processes and a lack of synergy between its organs and agencies. This has led to delays in addressing urgent global chal-

lenges, such as climate change and poverty. The UN has also faced criticism for a lack of accountability, with allegations of corruption, mismanagement, and sexual exploitation and abuse by UN staff and peacekeepers. The organization has taken steps to improve transparency and accountability, but more needs to be done to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. Reforms in the UN amid the hypocrisy accusations.

While the United Nations has made efforts to reform itself to better serve the interests of its member states, predominantly the United States, there have been accusations of hypocrisy in its actions. These reforms are not truly designed to address global issues, but rather to serve the interests of powerful nations like the US. In some cases, the UN's actions have been seen as self-congratulatory, such as when it condemns human rights abuses in one country but remains silent on similar issues in another country due to political considerations. This has led to questions about the legitimacy of the UN as a global institution and its ability to act in a fair and impartial manner.

The United States, in particular, has been accused of manipulating UN decisions to suit its agenda, often vetoing Security Council resolutions that criticize Israel, a key ally. Russia has also accused the UN of being a puppet to the US and its associates. In 2014, Russia retrieved Crimea from Ukraine, sparking a confrontation with the West. Furthermore, in 2022 Russia started special military operation citing the security implications due to the eastward expansion of the West's economic and security alliances. Russia drew attention to the fact that the US and the European states use the UN to support only their vision of the situation and ignores the legitimate concerns of Moscow. India and Pakistan have also been on the spot for accusations of manipulation in the UN. Both states have been embroiled in a long-standing dispute over the region of Kashmir. India accuses Pakistan of supporting indigenous armed fighters in Kashmir

and using the UN to advance its cause. Pakistan, on the other hand, accuses India of human rights violations in Kashmir and of using the UN to further its hegemonic agenda in the region.

The United Nations was founded on the principles of inclusivity and equal representation of all nations, regardless of their size, power, or economic standing. Thus, it is imperative that all member states, including Russia and China, are given a significant role in the UN to uphold its objectives and aims. Both Russia and China are major global powers, and their active involvement in the UN's decision-making processes is critical to ensuring that the organization remains effective and relevant in today's complex geopolitical setting. By giving Russia and China a significant role in the UN, the organization can benefit from their diverse perspectives, knowledge, and resources, thereby enhancing its ability to promote peace, security, and cooperation among nations. At the same time, such an approach can help address concerns regarding the UN's perceived bias towards powerful nations and reinforce its commitment to multilateralism and inclusive global governance. The UN has emerged as an essential organization that champions peace, security, and cooperation among nations. The organization has undertaken substantial reforms to its structures and processes but has faced accusations of being a puppet to powerful nations – states that can influence the adoption of a UN decision through mechanisms under their control. Nevertheless, this important international structure remains a crucial player in promoting global peace, and security and addressing new challenges.

Mutaib Manzoor recently completed his Bachelor's in International Relations at the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI). He has a keen interest in the geopolitics and power dynamics of South Asia, as well as in multilateralism and regionalism.

Briefs
Govt-PTI deadlock persists

FROM PAGE 01
we will call back the police deployed outside," he said in a statement. On the other hand, PTI Chairman Imran Khan's chief secretary officer has said that the Punjab police has returned from Zaman Park "empty-handed".

Zimbabwe select thrash Pak Shaheens in second ODI

Blessing Muzarabani, who scored a brilliant fifty with the bat, was on fire as he derailed Shaheens' batting line-up by picking three crucial wickets of Hurraira (33), Kamran Ghulam (0), and Hussain Talat (10)

HARRARE: Experienced Zimbabwe Select side once again triumphed over Pakistan Shaheens as they beat the tourists by 80 runs in the second one-day match in Harare. While chasing a target of 217 runs, Pakistan Shaheens suffered an early blow as Tendai Chatara removed Saim Ayub for a golden duck on the first ball of the second innings. Despite the early blow, Mohammad Hurraira started aggressively as he scored 33 runs from 36 balls, including four boundaries and one six.



Imran Butt's gritty knock of 45 runs came to an end as he was trapped lbw by Viktor Nyshchyn. Mubasar (44) and Mehran Muntaz were also removed in the next over by Sean Williams.

Innocent Kais (2) and Wessly Madhere (0) on consecutive deliveries in his second over. Zimbabwe kept losing wickets at regular intervals and was at one point reeling 57-5 inside 13 overs. Ryan Burl and Clive Madade provided much needed support to Zimbabwe's innings and formed a partnership of 88 runs. Amer Jomal struck gold for Shaheens and broke the partnership to put Zimbabwe under pressure again. He dismissed Clive Madade for 47 and Wellington Masakadza (6) in quick succession. Burl played a decent knock of 47 runs, including four boundaries and one six, before he was dismissed by Mehran Muntaz. Select were 169-1 in 31.4 overs, when Muzarabani took charge and played an unbeaten 50-run knock from 24 balls, which included seven fours and two sixes. Despite going for 75 runs in his 10 overs, Amer Jomal was the pick of the bowlers as he claimed five scalps. -Agencies

Assad gets warm welcome...

FROM PAGE 01
which is emphasizing that Syria and Al-Assad regime here are part of the larger group and the entire region," Fruhat told media. The return and welcoming of the "Syrian regime" has also been an overarching theme in the summit, Fruhat said. "Everyone is repeating... the same message, which reflects a wide acceptance amongst most Arab leaders for the return of the Assad regime," he said. "I would like to loudly welcome Syria back to its seat among its brothers," Arabian Prime Minister Ayman Bonaferrahmane said in the opening speech of the summit. As the summit walked into the main hall, al-Assad exchanged greetings with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, among others. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), who is the de facto ruler of the kingdom, hugged al-Assad before their official picture was taken. MBS also walked into the main hall at the start of the meeting, MBS said he hoped Syria's return to the Arab League leads to the end of its crisis. Syria's Arab League membership was revoked after al-Assad ordered a crackdown on protesters in March 2011 that spiralled the country into a war, which has since killed nearly half a million people and displaced another 23 million.

PPP CEC wants May 9 culprits...

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The resolution described the attacks on private, public and military properties and sensitive installations as defying the writ of the state of Pakistan. The resolution further said that PPP leadership suffered political victimisation for decades but following the instructions of leadership, its leaders and workers never took the path of violence. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was unjustly martyred, Mir Shahnawaz Bhutto and Mir Murtaza Ishaq were martyred too, Shaheed Mohi-ud-Din Bhatti was martyred, but PPP raised the slogan of Pakistan Khappay, which is a bright example for the political workers of all parties. Former President Asif Ali Zardari was imprisoned for over a decade during different regimes including PTI's government while Ms Farhat Talpur, the Central President of PPP Women's Wing was arrested in the midnight and transferred from hospital to prison on the eve of Eid, but despite worst political oppression, the PPP never staged a rally against the country and its institutions.

Trade delegation meets Ghana's Deputy FM



EPL teams must aspire to Man City's standards: Lampard

LONDON: Interim Chelsea manager Frank Lampard described Manchester City as currently the greatest team in the world and said the rest of the Premier League have to aspire to the high standards set by Pep Guardiola's title-chasing side. City are poised to wrap up their fifth league crown in six years and are also in contention to complete the treble this season, having reached the Champions League final on Friday. "I know what Man City's standards are. Guardiola's side have a four-point lead and a game in hand over Arsenal, who must win at Nottingham Forest on Saturday to realistically stay in the title race at least until City host Chelsea a day later. 'I don't know about the greatest ever but they are clearly a fantastic team and they have been for a good while now,' Lampard told reporters on Friday before Chelsea's trip to the Etihad Stadium. "Huge credit for that consistency. They're coming very close to becoming the greatest team, especially if they win the Champions League... In their form, you wouldn't want to bet against them on anything. 'I think they are the best team in world football. It is good for English football. Yeah, why not? You've got to push the standard. The rest of the league have to try to aspire to them.' Lampard said he wanted to bring City striker Erling Haaland to Stamford Bridge during his first stint in charge of Chelsea between 2009-21 when he was the permanent head coach. The Norwegian international, who joined City from Borussia Dortmund at the start of the season, has scored 36 league goals so far this term - as many as Chelsea. 'I think he's special. I thought he'd adapt straight away and show his level,' Lampard said. 'I don't know whether he would have decided to come here anyway but I was a big fan. 'Credit to him because I love seeing players at that level, with personality and the hunger to be the best.' - Agencies

DNA
ACCRA: A trade delegation led by Ghana's Vice Consul and well-known businessman Omar Shahid Butt met Ghana's Deputy Foreign Minister Kwaku Ampemah Sarpong. In the meeting, they discussed the promotion of bilateral diplomatic, economic and trade relations. During the meeting, Ghana's Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Eric, was also present. Speaking during the meeting, the Deputy Minister said that our doors are always open for Pakistani personalities. And they are very happy to meet the Pakistani business delegation. I have long wished to meet the Pakistani delegation. For Ghana, mutual relations with Pakistan are of special importance for Ghana. We have public relations with Pakistan... want to increase trade, volume and investment. He said that he wants to visit Pakistan soon. He said that he likes the food of Pakistan and especially delicious. On this occasion, he specially appreciated the diplomatic services of Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, Consul General of Ghana in Pakistan. Umar Shahid Butt said that Pakistani investors are eager to invest in Ghana, talks are underway to set up a motorcycle plant in Ghana. Promotion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation is the need of the hour. On this occasion, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Ghana accepted the invitation of Umar Shahid Butt to visit Pakistan.

Jones to leave Man Utd after 12 years

"It's not a time to be sad. It's a time to look back, for me and my family, and be happy that I managed to live a dream at United"

MANCHESTER: Manchester United centre back Phil Jones said on Friday that he will leave the club after 12 years when his contract expires at the end of the season. Jones, 31, has played more than 200 games for United but has managed a torrid time with injuries over the past four seasons, having only 13 appearances since the start of the 2019-20 campaign. "My time at Manchester United has been nothing short of incredible," Jones wrote in an open letter to United fans. "To wear this shirt just once, to wear this badge and represent everyone associated with it, has been an honour. 'I wish I could have played more. I wish I could have given more to the many squads I played amongst. I will say, from the bottom of my heart, I did everything I could. 'It's not a time to be sad. It's a time to look back, for me and my family, and be happy that I managed to live a dream at United.' Jones last played for United last season in a 2-0 Premier League win over Brentford in May 2022. He has made 229 appearances for United since joining from Blackburn Rovers in 2011 and also has 27 caps for England. "Our No.4 is now taking some time before deciding his next move and everybody at United would like to wish Phil the very best of luck for the future," the club said in a statement. Fourth-placed United travel to Bournemouth in the Premier League on Saturday as they look to secure a top four spot. -Agencies

LHC declares resignations of 72 MPs...

FROM PAGE 01
Fatayna were also declared "null and void". Speaking to media personnel outside the National Assembly, Barrister Ali Zafar said that the court had given a "historic decision". "With this decision, the [country's] political crisis will also be resolved," he declared. He said that the court had accepted the petition against the de-notification of PTI MNA, who would now appear before the speaker. He further added that after appearing in the inquiry, the PTI would retract their resignations. "Once the ECP's de-notification is retracted, these MNAs will be able to join the National Assembly," he shared. He further said that with the reversal of the resignations, PTI Chairman Imran Khan would be able to "play his role for the nation as the opposition leader in Parliament." "It is hoped that the speaker will come to the National Assembly, the law and allow the PTI MNAs to return to the assembly," he said.

Iran reserves right to act against Afghan declaration

TEHRAN: Iran says it reserves the right to act against Afghanistan's "unacceptable" non-endorsement of a treaty on Iran's water rights of the border river of Hirmand. "The Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the right to take necessary measures and underscore the full responsibility of Afghanistan in this regard," Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Friday. The statement came a day after the Afghan side issued a declaration about the water rights pertaining to River Hirmand, also known as Helmand. Tehran said the declaration contained "contradictory and incorrect information." Iran and Afghanistan signed a treaty in 1973, which, the foreign ministry statement said, "clearly and unambiguously" specified the Iranian side's water rights. "This is a legal, objective and definite right and Afghanistan is committed to providing the aforementioned right and not taking any action,

Jose Mourinho created history with AS Roma

ROME: AS Roma head coach Jose Mourinho created history last night (May 18) as his team reached their second successive European final. AS Roma defeated Bayer Leverkusen with a 1-0 aggregate scoreline after a goalless draw at the Stadio Olimpico. The Romans put up their hearts and soul to defend a one-goal lead against the Germans, they sat deep inside their half and defended with their bodies on the line to survive the hosts' relentless attacks on goal. Despite their 23 attempts on goal with only six on target, the Germans could not find a way to beat Rui Patrício. Meanwhile, Roma had zero shots on target throughout the 90 minutes. It must be noted that before the arrival of Mourinho in 2021, Roma had only played one European final in their club history in 1984 against Liverpool which they lost on penalties. However, since Mourinho's arrival, the club has participated in two European competitions and have qualified for the final of both while winning the former. Leverkusen midfielder Florian Grillitsch was visibly frustrated with the tactics of Roma and looked out at Mourinho while speaking to RTL after the match. "It's a shame that in a semi-final at such a high level that this type of play can be rewarded. They made things very ugly at the end," Mourinho, who is known for his trademark celebratory run on the pitch after winning a knockout game, refrained himself from doing that, when asked why did he not do that, he said that it is difficult to celebrate in front of your friends. -APP

Ji chief Sirajul Haq escapes...

FROM PAGE 01
welcoming him, a person came and blew himself up," party spokesperson Qaisar Sharif said in a video message. "Everybody was safe in the suicide attack and there was no loss of lives. According to initial information, only some cars have been damaged and a few people have sustained injuries." "The Ji leadership is safe," he added. According to SHO Manab Khan, he insisted on going to the venue of his political gathering after the blast. "He was given a clearance after additional police and law enforcement personnel were deployed." The official said Zohb Assistant Commissioner Hafiz Tariq had been informed of Ji's security. Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) condemned the suicide attack targeted at Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Ameer Sirajul Haq's convoy in Zohb and expressed good wishes for him. PTI Senior Vice President Farooq Chaudhry and PTI Central Secretary Information Farrukh Habib strongly condemned the suicide blast and prayed for the complete and speedy recovery of the injured. Fawad said that thanks to Allah, as Sirajul Haq and other party leadership were safe in suicide attacks. "May Allah protect Pakistan! Amen," he added. Farrukh Habib condemned attack on Santal Haq's convoy and prayed for speedy recovery of the injured. Earlier in the day, Jamat-e-Islami (JI) emir Sirajul Haq on Friday narrowly escaped a "suicide attack" that targeted his convoy in Balochistan's Zohb while six others were injured, according to police.

Imran should accept...

FROM PAGE 01
think that he was the main mind behind the open terrorism of May 9 and the desecration of martyrs' memorials planned by Imran. She advised Imran that he should confess that he planned to burn down hospitals, schools, mosques, ambulances and the Corps Commander's house. Imran Khan should hand over the terrorists hiding in "heaven of terrorism", Zaman Park to the law enforcement agencies. A person who instigated his followers to throw bombs, bullets and stones at the police cannot get away with just condemnation. Punishing those who attack the state is not a violation of human rights anywhere in the world, she maintained.

Mikel Arteta hits back at criticism of title collapse

"We have shown this season," Arteta replied when asked if Arsenal can be title contenders again next season

NOTTINGHAM: Mikel Arteta insists Arsenal deserve respect for their unexpected Premier League title challenge despite the collapse that allowed Manchester City to move into pole position. City will be crowned champions if second placed Arsenal lose at Nottingham Forest on Saturday or if the leaders beat Chelsea on Sunday. One win from their final three games is enough for City to take the title for a fifth time in six seasons. "It's a bitter pill to swallow for Arteta after his team led the title race for much of the season. The Gunners have endured criticism of their failure to hold off City, with last weekend's dismal 3-0 defeat against Brighton sparking questions about the character of Arteta's squad. But, in a thoughtful dig at their detractors, Arsenal boss Arteta said his team had surpassed expectations by pushing title-chasers City so hard. "We have shown this season," Arteta replied when asked if Arsenal can be title contenders again next season. "We're still there, with two games to go. City have three as they have a game in hand) we can still be champions against probably the best team in Premier League history. "For 10 months we're still there. There's two games still to go and we're not going to bottle that for sure. "What happens next season will depend on what we do, how we evolve and how we start. That prediction is very difficult to do today." Arteta did concede improvements will need to be made to his young team before Arsenal can expect to hold their own in the Champions League next season. "At the level that we want. No. We didn't have to do that as well with the Europa League so it's part of that evolution," he said. "We want to be better and the rest will be better, then the manager will be higher and we have to start to live with those standards and improve and be smarter." Meanwhile, Arteta said discussions over the future of Granit Xhaka will wait until the end of the season.

Xhaka is approaching the final 12 months of his contract and has been linked with a move to Bayer Leverkusen. The Swiss midfielder played for Borussia Mönchengladbach before he moved to Arsenal in 2016. "The clarity is there. He is a player that has played I think every minute since I have been the manager," Arteta said. * He is a pretty nasty guy, we need to assess in the club. Whatever happens is something we will discuss, certainly not now." Arsenal duo Oleksandr Zinchenko (call) and Gabriel Martinelli.



(Ankle) will not feature again this season. 'Gabi's

Briefs US offers \$100 mln to help Sudan

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday promised \$103 million for Sudan and neighboring countries to support displaced people as a month of war between rival generals triggers a humanitarian crisis.

Pakistan-Russia sign protocol to enhance customs cooperation

This is the first time Pakistan has participated in this important Economic Forum at the Ministerial level and signals Pakistan's commitment to deepen its economic engagement and relations with the Russian Federation and its Republic of Tatarstan

KAZAN: Today on the sidelines of Russia-Islamic World Economic Forum being held in Kazan, Saeed Naveed Qazi, Pakistan's Minister of Commerce witnessed the signing of the Protocol relating to Customs cooperation between Ministry of Commerce Pakistan and Federal Customs Services of Russian Federation.



met Minister UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr Thanai Al Zeyoudi and Afghan Minister of Trade. He also interacted with prominent Business leaders attending the Forum.

Storm Shadow missiles have been used in Ukraine

LONDON: UK-supplied Storm Shadow cruise missiles have been used in Ukraine, according to UK Defense Minister Ben Wallace on Thursday.

Russia-Georgia flights resume

MOSCOW: Direct flights resumed on Friday between Russia and Georgia amid protests and sharp criticism from the South Caucasus nation's president, just over a week after the Kremlin unexpectedly lifted a four-year-old ban despite rocky relations.

China warns against 'geopolitical games'

BEIJING: — China on Friday warned against the introduction of "geopolitical games" in the South Pacific following the announcement that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit Papua New Guinea next week.

Hungary ready to host Russia-Ukraine talks

BUDAPEST: Budapest is prepared to facilitate peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto has said.

More protests against violence in Serbia

BELGRADE: Thousands of people are expected to rally in Serbia's capital on Friday for a third time in a month in protests following two mass shootings, even as government officials in the Balkan country rejected opposition criticism of the way they handled the crisis.

Weather emergencies declared across Europe

BRUSSELS: Several weather-related emergencies have been declared across Europe including Italy where fatal flooding has followed severe drought in some regions.



ISLAMABAD: S Senator Lt Gen (Retd) Abdul Qayyum III (M) and former Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence Production presented his book titled "Learning From History" to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Shaif in the PM House.

One billion threatened by cholera: UN

GENEVA: One billion people in 43 countries are at risk of cholera — a "pandemic-killing the poor" — despite prevention and treatment being relatively straightforward, the United Nations warned on Friday.

G-7 summit kicks off in Japan

HIROSHIMA: The G-7 Summit kicked off Friday in Japan following a joint visit to the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Memorial Museum, which commemorates the world's first nuclear attack carried out by the US in 1945.

return of peace based on law. For the solidarity, we owe to the populations who struggle against poverty. To set an example and support our partners who are committed to the planet," Macron wrote on Twitter.

The first atomic bomb dropped by the United States on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, killed an estimated 70,000 people instantly with many thousands more dying over the following years from the effects of radiation.

cost of war. And we are reminded of our duty to preserve peace," von der Leyen tweeted.

UK Prime Minister Sunak also called his visit to Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park significant.

Pak-Ireland hold 4th round of PBC

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Ireland in the fourth session of the Bilateral Political Consultations (PBC) discussed promoting ties in areas such as trade, culture and sports.

Briefs
Cyclone Mocha death toll rises sharply in Myanmar

WEB DESK
RAKHINE: At least 145 people are now known in Myanmar (Burma) by a powerful cyclone, the country's military rulers have said. They say most of the victims of Cyclone Mocha that made landfall last Sunday were from the Rohingya minority. The junta had earlier put the death toll at 21, but local residents told the media that at least 40 had died. About 800,000 people have been affected by one of the strongest storms to hit the region this century, the UN said. With winds up to 209km/h (130mph), Mocha - a category five storm - battered the Rakhine state, in western Myanmar, as well as the regions of Sagaing and Magway. "Altogether 145 local people were killed during the cyclone," Myanmar's junta said in a statement on Friday, the AFP news agency reported. According to the statement, among the victims were four soldiers, 24 locals and 117 people from the Rohingya minority. Before the official statement, there were numerous reports suggesting a much higher death toll than the initial figure of 21, especially in camps where the internally displaced Rohingya live. - Agencies

Shibli blasts police for raiding Khan's residence

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Chief of Staff to Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Shibli Faraz strongly condemned the Islamabad police for raiding at PTI Chairman Imran Khan Bani Gala's residence and harassing his security guards and staff unnecessarily and added that the police should demonstrate some civility and respect the law or else they would approach the court against IG police. In a strong reaction to Islamabad police's raids at Bani Gala, Chief of Staff to Chairman PTI said that Police arrested at Zaman Park to raid the Chairman's residence in Bani Gala without warrants. He said that Islamabad Police came to Bani Gala for the second consecutive time without any reason with the sole purpose to spread fear and panic. PTI Senator stated that they harassed the security guards and staff at the residence of Chairman Tehreek-e-Insaf. Shibli Faraz went on to say that Chairman PTI had been living in Zaman Park in Lahore for the past eight months, advising that instead of coming without warrant and harassing the staffers, Islamabad police should show some civility and respect for law.

Zelenskiy seeks Arab support for his people

Zelenskiy was in Saudi Arabia for an Arab League summit

MONITORING DESK

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskiy attended a summit of the Arab League in Saudi Arabia on Friday to canvass support for his people, while Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman expressed his readiness to mediate in the war between Moscow and Kyiv. Also at the Jeddah gathering, Arab leaders warmly welcomed back into their fold Syria's President Bashar al-Assad - who has received heavy support from Russia in his country's civil war - following a decade of isolation. "We reaffirm the kingdom's readiness to continue mediating efforts

between Russia and Ukraine, and to support all international efforts aimed at resolving the crisis politically in a way that contributes to achieving security," the Saudi Crown Prince said in his opening speech. Prince Mohammed has mediated in the conflict before. Zelenskiy, who was also due to attend a summit of the G7 leaders in the Japanese city of Hiroshima this weekend, thanked Saudi Arabia for its past help and said delegates would each receive the text of his 10-point peace plan. He asked them to work with Ukraine directly without intermediaries. Gulf states have tried to remain neutral in the Ukraine conflict despite Western pressure on Gulf oil producers to help isolate

Russia, a fellow OPEC+ member. In his address to the summit, Zelenskiy said some countries including members of the Arab League preferred to "turn a blind eye" to Russia's illegal annexation of Ukrainian land and to its jailing of some Ukrainians during the 15-month war. "I am sure we can all be united in saving people from the cages of Russian prisons," he said, speaking in English. Last year, in a diplomatic coup, Crown Prince Mohammed secured the release of 10 foreigners captured by Russia in Ukraine. The move was apparently made possible by his close ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin. "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia plays a

significant role and we are ready to take our cooperation to a new level," Zelenskiy said in a tweet shortly after arriving in Jeddah. Saudi Arabia faced heavy criticism from the United States over an OPEC+ decision to cut oil production, seen as helping Russia to refill its coffers by boosting prices. Even though the October decision initially drew the ire of the United States and other Western countries, market dynamics since then have shown the cuts to be prudent. At a time when Russia's war on Ukraine has ruffled global energy markets, the role the kingdom plays as the world's largest oil exporter has grown in importance to both Washington and Moscow.



ISLAMABAD: Sheikh Ahmed Dalmoos al Maktoum, a member of the ruling family of the United Arab Emirates and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Ports, along with a delegation, calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. - DNA

UAE investors' delegation calls on the Prime Minister

ISLAMABAD: His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Dalmoos al Maktoum, a member of the ruling family of the United Arab Emirates and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Ports, along with a delegation, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. Referring to the fraternal ties between Pakistan and UAE, the Prime Minister said Pakistan attaches great importance to further expanding brotherly ties with UAE in diverse fields, particularly in trade and investment. The Prime Minister welcomed the keen interest of Abu Dhabi Ports to invest in the ports and shipping industry of Pakistan. His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Dalmoos al Maktoum said he is visiting Pakistan in less than two months again with an objective to give further momentum to UAE's investment in Pakistan. The Prime Minister assured that every possible Government support would be extended to UAE investors. Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Mr. Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Maritime Affairs Spd Faisal Ali Sahwani, SAPM Dr. Jehanzeb Khan, SAPM Spd Tariq Patoni and senior officials attended the meeting. - DNA

Establishment of 3 military courts on the cards

DNA
ISLAMABAD: To try civilians involved in attacking military installations, torching Jinnah House, and defaming and disgracing the armed forces as part of an international agenda, the establishment is considering establishing three military courts under the Pakistan Army Act and the Official Secret Act, sources revealed to media. The sources shared that the military courts established through Chapter 9 of the Pakistan Army Act which was revised via the 21st amendment. The section was revised in 2015 after the Army Public School massacre. They added that the bill had been approved by the National Assembly of Pakistan on January 6, 2015. "This amendment allowed the establishment of special military courts to try civilians suspected of terrorism," Special Public Prosecutor Rowan Abbasi told The News when asked about the bill. He maintained that at least four clauses were changed via the 21st amendment to fulfill the specific obligation of establishing special military courts under the Pakistan Army Act, adding that it was amended in 1997.

Imran Riaz's father gets teary-eyed in LHC

LAHORE: Anshurpocane Imran Riaz's father became teary-eyed in the LHC on Friday, pleading for mercy, as the whereabouts of his son remain unknown since his arrest on May 11 from the Sialkot airport. Imran was among those taken into custody following protests that broke out in the aftermath of PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest. Later, his lawyer said that a writ petition was filed on May 12 over the anchorperson's arrest and the LHC directed the attorney general to present him before the court the same day. But, after his orders were not followed, Sialkot police on Monday were given a 48-hour deadline to recover Riaz. A first information report (FIR) pertaining to the matter was registered with Civil Lines police the next day on the complaint of the anchorperson's father, Muhammad Riaz. - APP

Gender can't be changed at will, FSC rules

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Shariat Court (FSC) ruled on Friday that a person cannot change their gender at will and declared certain sections of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018 against Sharia. Acting FSC Chief Justice Dr. Syed Muhammad Ameer and Justice Khadim Hussain announced the reserved verdict on a set of petitions challenging the law. The National Assembly had enacted the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act in 2018 to provide legal recognition to transgender persons and ensure that discrimination against transgender persons in various walks of life shall be punishable. It is a landmark law that offered protection to a marginalised community, the legislation however has been embroiled in

Iran executes three over anti-govt protests

TEHRAN: Authorities in Iran have executed three men sentenced to death in connection with the nationwide anti-government protests last year, the judiciary says. The three were convicted over their alleged involvement in a shooting attack that killed three security personnel in Isfahan in November. Amnesty International says they were subjected to unfair trials and allegedly tortured. Four other protesters have been hanged since December. Dozens more have reportedly been sentenced to death or charged with capital offences. The protests swept across the Islamic Republic following the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman who was detained by morality police in Tehran in September for allegedly wearing her hijab "improperly". The three who were executed on Friday - Majid Kazemi, 30, Saleh Mirhassan, 26, and Saeed Taghavi, 37 - were arrested after protests in the central city of Isfahan on 16 November, during which two Basij paramilitary force members and a police officer were shot dead. Sources told Amnesty International that the men were forcibly disappeared, then tortured and forced to make incriminating statements that formed the basis of the criminal cases against them. Interrogators allegedly suspended Kazemi upside down, showed him a video of them torturing his brother, subjected him to mock executions and threatened to kill his brothers. - Agencies

Georgian anger as Russian flights land again

TBILISI: Protesters held banners saying "you are not welcome" at Tbilisi airport in Georgia, as the first direct flight for almost four years arrived from Russia. Scuffles broke out as police barred them from standing outside the airport arrivals hall. The Azimuth Airlines plane arrived at 13:20 local time (09:20 BST), days after getting the green light from Georgia's civil aviation authority. Georgia's government has welcomed the return of direct flights from Russia. "The beneficiaries are our citizens who have to take a detour at triple the cost," said Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of the governing Georgian Dream party. The government argues a multi-ethnic Georgian citizens living in Russia stand to benefit, although Russian figures suggest the number is closer to 114,000. But most Georgians oppose the government's move to allow flights and more than 100 Georgian organisations say it is a "direct sabotage" of their country's aspirations to join the EU. Georgia is hoping for Brussels to approve its bid to become a candidate later this year. - Agencies

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More than 1 million people displaced by Sudan crisis: UN

NEWS DESK
KHARTOUM: More than 1 million people have been displaced by the onset of fighting in Sudan, including a quarter of a million refugees, according to the United Nations refugee agency. Sudan has been gripped by violence since April 15 when disagreements between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the head of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Mohamed Hemedti "Hemetti" Dagalo, escalated into an armed conflict. Hundreds of people have been killed in the battles that have turned the streets of the capital, Khartoum, and other places across the country into warzones. Speaking to reporters in Geneva on Friday, a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Matthew Saltmarsh, said 843,000 people had been internally displaced so far due to the fighting. About 250,000 others have fled across Sudan's borders, streaming mostly into Egypt. Chad, Ethiopia and South Sudan, Saltmarsh said, adding that Egypt has so far received the highest number of Sudanese refugees at about 110,000. "Many of those who have approached us are in a distressed state, having been exposed to violence or traumatic conditions in Sudan and having suffered arduous journeys," Saltmarsh said. The pace has increased in recent weeks, he said, with about 5,000 people arriving each day in Egypt. The UN said on Wednesday that half of Sudan's population needs humanitarian aid and more than \$5bn will be needed this year alone to provide urgent assistance inside the country and to those fleeing across its borders. Al-Burhan and Hemedti held the top positions on Sudan's ruling council following the 2019 overthrow of long-time ruler Omar al-Bashir. The two generals staged a military coup two years later, derailing Sudan's fragile transition towards democratic rule. The fighting began after disputes over plans for the RSF to be absorbed into the army and the chain of command in a new political transition. It has also spread to the western region of Darfur, with hundreds of people killed. The rivalry between the army and RSF has taken on an intercommunal dimension in the region, pitting Arab communities against non-Arab groups and reviving memories of a devastating war that erupted there in 2003. Separately on