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Postecoglou Tottenham's new manager

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Briefs

China to boost trade with Pakistan

DNA

BEIJING: China has expressed determination to boost bilateral trade with Pakistan through land route. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin, while replying to media queries in Beijing said his country welcomes quality agricultural products from Pakistan to enter China's market. Last week, Pakistan's first-ever seafood cargo container arrived in Kashgar city of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region through Karakoram Highway.

PTI workers must also be released

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and senior jurist Barister Aitzaz Ahsan appealed to the authorities that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers should also be released like their leaders who were freed after the pardon and press conference. The seasoned politician and constitutional expert Aitzaz Ahsan addressed a press conference on Tuesday and said former Prime Minister who is his neighbour and the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial are being implicated in a false conspiracy.

Dr. Yasmin's acquittal challenged

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Tuesday challenged the acquittal of PTI leader Dr Yasmin Rashid in the Jinnah House attack case. The provincial government has filed the petition in the Lahore High Court against the verdict of an anti-terrorism court. It argued that the trial court discharged Ms Rashid in the case in contradiction of the facts, adding that the PTI leader had led the rally that had attacked Jinnah House.

Economy's revival

Pak hopes to seal IMF deal

The Ministry of Finance, said the government has lined up \$4 billion in external financing and hopes to strike a deal with the Washington-based lender before unveiling the budget

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: In its last-ditch efforts to revive the stalled International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan, Pakistan is eyeing to secure \$2 billion in external financing to bridge the \$6 billion gap for resuming the bailout programme. The Ministry of Finance, said the government has lined up \$4 billion in external financing and hopes to strike a deal with the Washington-based lender before unveiling budget this Friday. The government remains on tenterhooks, with urgency growing for resuming the \$6.7 billion programme – signed in 2019 and set to expire in June this year – as external financing and exchange-rate policy among the biggest hurdles. Due to the disagreements between the local authorities and the lender, the ninth review has been stalled for more than six months, one of the longest delays for a review. "Pakistan remains committed to completing the IMF programme and has already demonstrated its seriousness," the ministry said. The ministry further added that it remains committed to mobilising additional liquidity

despite a significant contraction of the current-account deficit which has reduced the requirement. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have committed to provide fresh financing of \$3 billion to Pakistan. China and its state-owned banks have rolled over \$4 billion in loan commitments. "IMF staff continues the engagement with the Pakistani authorities to pave the way for a Board meeting before the current programme expires," said the official. The South Asian nation has to repay around \$22 billion of external loans – five times its foreign exchange reserves – during the next fiscal year, beginning in July, according to Columbia Threadneedle Investments. The coalition government has taken a host of measures – including raising taxes, hiking energy prices, and allowing the rupee to weaken against the dollar – to meet IMF demands. Once the IMF loan comes in, it will allow Pakistan to unlock further financing from other multilateral. These funds will help the \$350 billion economy overcome a dollar crunch, ease supply shortages, and pull the South Asian nation out of default risks ahead of the elections – scheduled to take place later this year.

'PTI not a political party'

No leniency with May 9 miscreants

Minister says Kashmir is lifeblood of country; Nawaz Sharif to return in October

STAFF REPORT

BAGH: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Tuesday reiterated that the May 9 miscreants would be brought to justice at any cost. Addressing a ceremony in Bagh, Azad Kashmir today, the Interior Minister took a jibe at the embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying, "PTI has indulged in the culture of using foul language. It has been portrayed that the PTI is the red line". "The PTI chief attacked the judiciary to avoid arrest. Police were also attacked in Zaman Park. After his capture, the state was attacked through proper planning. After the attack on military installations, PTI's position is that this is our political protest," Mr Sanaullah maintained. Mr Sanaullah heaped praise on PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif, saying, "PML-N and Nawaz Sharif brought the country out of the swamp in the past. Nawaz Sharif is a leader who believes in democracy. All the big projects have been completed during tenure of Nawaz Sharif."

Continued on Page 06

Ahsan rejects probability of delay in polls

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has said that election would be held on time after the completion of the constitutional term of the assembly. Talking to a private news channel, he said the government would not take any undemocratic step regarding extension of its tenure. Rejecting the probability of delay in elections, he categorically said free and fair elections will take place in October or November. He said the coalition government is focused on the economy and relief would be provided to the people in next budget.

Executive must not interfere with SC matters, says CJP

SC judge grills govt for assuming audios authentic prima facie



NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Tuesday warned the executive against interfering with the Supreme Court's affairs. Coming down hard on the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Uman Awan, the top judge asked: "How can you say that two judges, including the chief justice, are involved in the matter?" The CJP's remarks came during the apex court's hearing on a set of petitions filed against the constitution of a high-powered judicial commission tasked to inquire into the various audio

leaks of members of the judiciary. Ahead of the hearing, Zuberi, submitted to the bench a number of orders of different high courts, requesting that these documents be considered for "proper adjudication" of the present case. These orders included previous rulings from the apex court itself, the Islamabad High Court, and the Lahore High Court. At the outset of the hearing, AGP Usman opened his arguments with discussions on the "conflict of interest" of judges hearing the petition. The CJP, taking issue with the

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: PM Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of National Economic Council. – DNA

Markets to close by 8pm all over country

Decision was taken at a meeting chaired by PM

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal said on Tuesday that the National Economic Council (NEC) – the country's highest forum of the federation on economic decision-making – had approved an energy conservation plan under which shops and commercial centres would be closed by 8pm. The minister announced this during a press conference in Islamabad after an NEC meeting, which was chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and approved the estimated budget figures. Iqbal said issues pertaining to energy and infrastructure were discussed during the meeting, adding that "energy is become a huge challenge for Pakistan due to global prices". "Saudi Arabia has cut down oil production by one million barrels,

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PTI VC released from jail

Qureshi still with PTI, will meet Imran

The Lahore High Court's (LHC) Rawalpindi bench ordered the PTI leader's immediate release



SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: Upon release from the Adiala Jail after almost a month of incarceration, PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Tuesday said that he would meet party chief Imran Khan today (Wednesday) and share his analysis of the current political situation in the country.

Continued on Page 06

PTI condemns Atta Tarar's allegations

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Information Secretary Raouf Hassan demanded that the case of murder of Supreme Court (SC) lawyer Abdul Razzaq Shar should be registered against the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and they should be instantly sacked from their official positions so as that justice could be done.

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KCCI inform minister about problems at Torkham

PESHAWAR: A representative delegation of the Khyber Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on Tuesday called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Industries, Muhammad Adnan Jalil and informed him about the problems relating to import and export at the Torkham border. The delegation led by Chamber President Syed Jawad Hussain Kazmi included Secretary, Ali Faisal, Chairman Gemological Association of Pakistan, Shakeel Waheed-ullah Khan and Executive Member Muhammad Haroon Sabir. The delegation also discussed matters related to trade activities in the province and problems being faced by entrepreneurs with the minister. The delegation also highlighted Pak-Afghan trade activities via the Torkham border and informed the minister regarding issues of trade in import and export through the same gateway route between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The business community urged the minister to support them in extending tax exemption on trading in tribal areas which has already been given by the Federal government under the 25th Constitutional Amendment. —APP

Punjab govt moves LHC against Dr Yasmin

LAHORE: The caretaker provincial government on Tuesday filed a petition in the Lahore High Court (LHC) challenging the discharge of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Dr Yasmin Rashid by an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in the Jinnah House (the corps commander house in Lahore) attack case. The government submitted that the trial court discharged the PTI leader from the case in contradiction with the facts. Dr Yasmin Rashid led the rally, which attacked the Jinnah House, it submitted and added that despite available evidence, the trial court discharged the PTI leader. The government had pleaded with the court to set aside the trial court orders and hand over Dr Yasmin Rashid on physical remand to police for investigation. —APP

Empowering women is a worthy cause: Chairman CDA

He directed the concerned quarters to look into the demands of businesswomen and resolve their issues on a priority basis

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA Captain (Retd) Noor Ul Amin Mengal has said that empowering women is high on his agenda, and businesswomen will be facilitated so that they can grow and play their positive role in national development. He said that women comprise the majority of the population, and they should be brought into the mainstream, which is imperative for national development. Chairman CDA said this while talking to a delegation of businesswomen led by Samina Fazil, founder president Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI). He said that businesswomen have suffered a lot due to the pandemic and the economic conditions; there-



fore, CDA is going to offer support to businesswomen to help them overcome the losses. The present situation has made things hard-

er for women mainly those involved in businesses, and those facing poverty due to multiple reasons, he said. Chairman CDA Captain

(Retd) Noor Ul Amin Mengal said that we will try our best to support businesswomen, as the majority of them are related to the ser-

VICES sector. During the meeting Samina Fazil and President IWCCI Rizwana Asif demanded allocation of space in F-9 Park

where IWCCI can conduct exhibitions three times a year, a plot for the office of IWCCI at a suitable location, and a space for a display centre to facilitate women artisans, introduce them to foreign buyers to trigger exports. The leaders of IWCCI also demanded space for a one-day Sunday Bazaar in the F-9 Park and for Dastakar Bazaar. Noor Ul Amin Mengal took these demands very positively and said that all the demands are justified. He said that it is the right of the women to promote themselves, and we have a responsibility to support them so that they can improve their businesses. He directed the concerned quarters to look into the demands of businesswomen and resolve their issues on a priority basis.

Governor Punjab hails LEAs for defense of country

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that role of officers and personnel of the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) in the war against terrorism is commendable. Talking to a delegation of under-training officers of Sindh police at the Governor's House here on Tuesday, he said the nation salutes the LEAs who sacrificed their lives while defending the country and the nation on the front-line. Commandant National Police Academy Islamabad DIG Nauman Siddiqui led the delegation comprising under-training Deputy Superintendents (DSPs) of Sindh Police. Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the joining of police service by the young officers is encouraging and the nation has high expectations them. He expressed the hope that the young officers would play their role in improving the police station culture and restore the confidence of people in the police. He urged the police officers to make honesty and good conduct their motto and render their services to the fullest to ensure speedy justice to the people.—DNA

Conspiracy against our country hatched thru social media

LAHORE: Former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fayyaz Hassan Chohan said on Tuesday that a conspiracy had been hatched against the country through social media. He apologised over below-the-belt remarks during the past four and a half years, adding: "I never wish to be Talal Chaudhry or Shehbaz Gill." "The minds of the youth of Pakistan were changed through social media. An attempt was made to destroy Pakistan through Fifth Generation War," he claimed. "The Arab countries were destroyed through social media in the name of the Arab Spring. People in those countries revolted in the name of freedom and change. Those countries are not stable to date. Egypt survived because its army was very strong," he pointed out. "In 1998, Pakistan became a nuclear power to reckon with. So, hatred was spread among people to make them fight against the state. The war on terrorism was brought in 1998 and it continues to date," he added.

Ethiopia, Pakistan agree on bolstering cooperation

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Tuesday agreed to enhance parliamentary cooperation through exchange of delegations between the two countries in future. This was agreed during a meeting between H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDRE to Pakistan and H.E. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue. Both the dignitaries discussed matters of mutual interest including bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries in various fields including economy, health, education and tourism. H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula informed the senator that the FDRE government had officially inaugurated both the FDRE

Embassy and Ethiopian Airlines in Pakistan last month to further strengthen the already flourishing ties between the two big nations. He said a big delegation comprising Pakistan businessmen had visited Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in March to explore business, trade and investment opportuni-

ties in the land of origin. The ambassador also informed him about latest visit of a delegation from Ethiopia that comprised of senior government officials, and businessmen from its diverse sectors of economy including agriculture and agro processing, mining, manufacturing, ICT and tourism.

Senator Saleem Mandviwalla expressed his commitment to strengthen bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation between the two countries and stressed on exchanging parliamentary delegation between the two countries to boost cooperation between the Parliaments of both the countries.



Ministry launches development initiative

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Industries and Production has launched a development project to improve productivity of industrial, manufacturing, services and educational sectors through National Productivity Organisation (NPO) in the country. This was stated by Chief Executive Officer of NPO, Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry in a press conference at a local hotel on Tuesday. He said that this productivity movement was a first ever developmental initiative funded by public sector development programme was launched to improve competitiveness through sustainable national productivity. He said that NPO would train the stake holders to increase productivity and make them productivity specialist in their sectors concerned as it had been accredited the status of certification body by Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Japan first time for the period of four years. After getting training from NPO, quality, competitiveness and sustainable social economics development, he added. He said government was working hard to make Pakistan economically productive and globally competitive by promoting

export driven economy through imparting training and producing productivity specialists in the country. The CEO said that more than ten thousand individuals including students of schools and technical institutes had so far been educated to give awareness about the concept of productivity through various sessions all over the Pakistan. More than six hundred targeted industrial workers had been trained through renowned productivity experts about productivity tools and techniques, he maintained. He said that two productivity booklets for technical schools, industry and public had been introduced. He said that two curriculums (productivity modules) had also been developed and shared with NCC and NAVTTC for inclusion in their curricula, training and certification programs. In order to promote a culture of productivity, productivity weeks were marked in major cities including Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, Faisalabad and Multan by conducting walks coupled with holding awareness sessions addressed by renowned national productivity experts, the CEO informed.—APP

To end plastic pollution Sherry Rehman for embracing 7Rs strategy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman has said it was high time for the country to embrace the 7Rs strategy to end worsening plastic pollution through the circular economy model that helps to overcome menace of plastic waste with multiple mutually beneficial opportunities. She was addressing the high-level policy dialogue on World Environment Day 2023 titled "Reimagining Plastics and Renewable Solutions to Environmental Degradation" organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Tuesday. The federal minister had rolled out the Ministry of

Climate Change and Environmental Coordination's roadmap to combat plastic pollution through the 7Rs agenda action based on "resource, research, responsibility, recycle, re-use, redesign and reduce". Senator Rehman said the 7Rs strategy demanded everyone for making conscious choices to reduce plastic consumption, reimagining the design and manufacturing of plastic products to minimise their environmental impact, extend the lifespan of products and packaging, reduce reliance on single-use plastics, transform plastic waste into new materials for circularity and reduce the burden on the landfill and oceans. It also demanded that

the masses make it their shared responsibility to manage plastic waste and promote sustainable practices, harnessing the power of scientific inquiry to drive innovative, low-cost, and sustainable solutions addressing plastic pollution, provide necessary support and resources, particularly to developing nations to fight this global challenge, she added. The minister said plastics had polluted the freshwater reserves, environment and tourism spots of the country and the plastic pollution should matter because it was staying in the environment and not biodegrading. Many countries like Norway, Sweden and Germany that have small populations did well

with recycling of plastics but the rest of the world only did recycling of only 9% of the total plastic waste. "Pakistan is recycling very low in the informal sector as only 3-4% of the plastic waste is reprocessed. South Asian economies don't throw away things but rather reuse them and that's the circularity prevailing here in our region," she added. The senator underlined that the world was not only recycling but increasing plastic generation to three-fold and there was no downsizing in it. On single-time plastics, she said, with great difficulty and resistance, the government had introduced a ban on single-use plastics manufacturing from August 1st, 2023.—DNA

Pak-Iran trade is on growth trajectory

FAISALABAD: Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. Mehran Movahhedfar on Tuesday said that Pak-Iran trade was on a growth trajectory despite restrictions and lack of banking channels etc. "We must exploiting the full potential of the two countries by encouraging direct contacts between the business communities of the two countries," he added. Addressing the business community of Faisalabad in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCL), he said that Faisalabad was the first city, he was visiting during his posting and it was not by chance but it was conscious efforts as he fully understood the agriculture and textile potential of this city.—APP

PODA holds session on reducing child marriages

RAWALPINDI: The participants of an awareness raising session organized by PODA recommended that instead of leaving gaps which facilitate cases of early marriages, an effective mechanism needs to be setup between local courts and police stations to tackle cases of early marriages saving the under-age girls according to the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2015. They appreciated PODA's stance to raise minimum age of marriage of girls from 16 to 18 years in Punjab to safeguard the vulnerable girls. In the perspective of its project "Reducing Early Marriages to Enhance Gender Equality", PODA - Pakistan held an awareness raising session in Police Lines, Rawalpindi in which a large number of officials representing 30 police station participated. The ses-

sion was aimed to address the importance of upholding women's rights and preventing child marriages in the country. In a message, Ms. Sameena Nazir, Chief Executive Officer-PODA said reducing early marriages is a key to eliminate violence against vulnerable young girls who are not able to raise their voice on the policy-making platforms. "Besides, it is

the duty of every individual to work for the uplift of the rights of the young girls who are deprived of opportunities and resources to overcome the obstacles which hinder their path to development and progress," she said. The speakers urged the provincial legislators to make the minimum age of marriage conditional with the National Identity Card

to eliminate harmful practices to ensure protection of girls and women while enabling them to fully enjoy their fundamental rights to flourish and prosper as Pakistani citizens. DSP (Admin) Mohtarma Shahida Yasmeen, in her address, highlighted the importance of collaboration between the legal fraternity and law enforcement agencies to



effectively counter cases of underage marriages. She stressed the need for the legal community to provide necessary information to law enforcement agencies and work hand in hand to ensure swift action against such cases. Advocate Khawaja Zahid and Advocate Hifza Bukhari, Finance Secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association highlighted the significance of the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2015 in safeguarding the rights of children and protecting them from the harmful effects of early marriages. They emphasized that the Act serves as a crucial legal tool to combat child marriages and ensure the well-being of young girls. She urged the legislators to make minimum age of marriage conditional with the National Identity Card.—DNA




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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

- June 02/Italy
National/ Independence Day
- June 04/Finland
Armed Forces Day
- May 06/UAE
Day
- June 06/Sweden
National Day
- June 10/Portugal
Portugal Day (National Day)
- June 10/Jordan
Arab Revolution & Army Day
- June 11/United Kingdom
Birth Day of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth
- June 12/Philippines
Independence Day
- June 12/Russian Federation
Day of Sovereignty of the Russian
- June 13/Zambia
Armed Forces day
- June 17/Iceland
National Day
- June 18/Seychells
National Day
- June 25/Croatia
National Day
- June 25/Mozambique
National Day
- June 26/Azerbaijan
Army Day

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- Marriott.....051- 2826121
- Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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- Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
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- & Rescue Services.....4451122
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- Motorway Police.....9270601-20
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Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Government has to restore its writ: Chairman NEPRA

Islamabad Chamber should be represented in IESCO Board, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman NEPRA Taseef H. Farooqi has said that for the development of Pakistan, the government have to restore its writ. Government effectiveness is the first step for the development of Pakistan. A consumer who does not pay the electricity bill should be disconnected immediately. Targeted subsidy relief should provide to poor people. The production of electricity in the country has reached 43 thousand megawatts, which is a record. He expressed these views while talking to the president of the chamber, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, on the occasion of his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday. Chairman NEPRA said that everyone is proud of stealing electricity in our country, 600 billion rupees are the dues of electricity consumers. The government should immediately disconnect the consumer who does not pay the electricity bill. For this, help



can be taken from law enforcement agencies. He said that the government can control the deficit by introducing fixed bills and smart meters. For this, such a system should be introduced as the competition of mobile companies in the telecom sector. Among the companies installing smart meters, the tariff rate will be lower, people will install the meter from

it. In response to a question, he said that the factories which are closed should disconnect their connections if they want. There is no charge for re-establishing the connection when the factory is up and running. Chairman NEPRA said that we have made regulations, if the government makes rules and implements them, many problems can

be solved. The financial crisis of the electricity sector has become severe, if the distribution companies do not fulfill their duty, no one will be able to save it from drowning. If the prices of oil, gas and the dollar had not gone up, our problems would have been greatly reduced today. On this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Islamabad Chamber is a representative body of the business community and it should be represented in the board of NEPRA. There should be a single window system to resolve the issues faced by the business community. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Gilgit-Baltistan is a region rich in mineral and water resources, there is a capacity to generate 40,000 megawatts of electricity. By investing in these water resources, we can get the country out of economic problems by generating electricity. He said that the International Tourism Summit in Skardu will help bring the resources of this area to the world. On this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber invited Chairman NEPRA to participate in the summit, which he accepted. Former President ICCI Zafar Bakhtawari, Senior Vice President Faad Waheed, Khalid Chaudhry, Malik Shabbir, Maqsood Tabish, Usman Khalid and others were also present in the meeting.

PMD alerts of potential Tropical Cyclone

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has asked the concerned authorities to remain vigilant in the wake of the potential tropical cyclone formation over the Southeast Arabian Sea. In an alert issued on Tuesday, the PMD said that the low-pressure area (LPA) over Southeast Arabian Sea has intensified into a Depression (strong LPA) and lies near Latitude 11.5 N and Longitude 66.0 E about 1500km south of Karachi. Due to favourable environmental conditions (sea surface temperature of 30-31°C, low vertical wind shear and upper-level divergence), the system is likely to intensify further into a Tropical Storm during the next 18/24 hours and move further in the north/north-west direction. About the possible impacts, the PMD said that currently none of the Pakistan coastal areas is under any threat. PMD's cyclone warning centre, Karachi is monitoring the system and will issue an update accordingly. All concerned authorities are particularly advised to remain 'alert' during the forecast period.—APP

Economic development lies in adoption of scientific practices

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly (NA) Raja Pervez Ashraf on Tuesday said that the future of Pakistan's food security and economic development lies in the adoption of modern, sustainable, and scientific agricultural practices. "Developing practical solutions and initiatives to improve the agricultural sector and ensuring the welfare of farmers is crucial for the country's sustained progress," he made these remarks in a meeting with President Kissan Ittehad Council, Khalid Mehmood Khokhar. Speaker Ashraf emphasized that the current administration's key priorities include alleviating farmers' problems and advancing agriculture. He said, "Farmers are given subsidies for agricultural inputs, but further initiatives are necessary to address the problems that farmers confront as a result of high input costs and significant climate change." The speaker emphasized the critical necessity for the introduction of farmer-friendly policies, and how they would considerably strengthen the country's agriculture sector, which is a cornerstone of its entire development. The speaker acknowledged the importance of historical decisions in uplifting critical crops such as cotton and highlighted the Special Committee on Agricultural Products of the NA diligent efforts in understanding the problems faced by farmers and growers.

IIUI inks MoUs with fast cables

DNA

ISLAMABAD: International Islamic University (IIU) inked two MoUs on Tuesday with Fast cables limited under which the former will make an annual Zakat donation of a minimum of 02 million rupees as well as it will also award a cash prize of 1 lac rupees to the students scoring high CGPA in their final year of studies. Both the MoUs were signed here on the new campus of the university by President, IIUI Dr Hathal Hamoud Alotaibi and Managing Director (MD) of Fast Cables Limited Kamal Mian. It was also attended by renowned social impact investor Mansoor Shakeel Vice President (VP) of Administration and Finance, Dr Nabi Bux Jumani. VP of Research and Enterprise Dr Ahmed Shuja Syed, Director General (DG) of International Institute for Islamic Economics (IIE) Dr Abdul Rasheed, Director of University Advancement and Financial Assistance (UAFA) Nuzhat Zareen, Incharge of Alumni office Dr Sonia Irum.

KKAWF, Serena Hotels host discussion on drug awareness



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Foundation and The Jordan Anti-Drugs Society (TJADS) collaborated with Serena Hotels and hosted a panel discussion on "Early Drug Prevention Strategies: The Future of Youth." KKAWF is a leading organization working to create awareness of the youth against the use of drugs, which have become a prevalent

issue in the youth of Pakistan. Mrs. Cristina Von Sperling Afridi is the powerhouse behind this enterprising and much-needed foundation that enlightened attendees from various backgrounds on the importance and needs for creating awareness from a young age against the use of drugs that are now easily accessible to prepubescent children. Immediate action is the need of the hour, with the government at the helm in the social and educational

institutes themselves. The event started with a welcome note from Mrs. Afridi, the moderator of the event was esteemed senior journalist and anchor person Syed Talat Hussain, along with Dr. Ayesha Razzaque, former technical advisor to the Ministry of Education and Op-Ed writer for The News International. The first session conducted focused on "Early Prevention Strategies" The keynote speaker was Dr.

Mousa Daoud Al-Tarefi, President of Jordan Anti-Drug Society whereas the panelists included specialists in the field of narcotics and prevention Syed Kaleem Imam; Former Federal Secretary Senator; Sana Jamali and Mrs. Afridi. The second session was on "Drug use prevention, awareness, and education; Learnings from Civil Society & Youth." which was moderated by Dr. Ayesha Razzaque, and the panel

included renowned individuals in the field, Mr. Sarfraz Qamar Doha, Mrs. Lubna Ghani Haya Uddin, Mr. Wajahat Ali, and Adnan Malik. An open session where the audience emphasized the importance of parents, educators, and other innovative ways to approach the topic, to create a drug-free environment for future generations. The presence of renowned experts in the field, including psychologists, educators, addiction specialists, law enforcement professionals, and community leaders, provided valuable insights and practical strategies to tackle this issue preemptively. The community is as involved as the stakeholders in this initiative. A group photo of the honorary panel members and handing of souvenirs to the esteemed panel culminated the ceremony. The event was hosted under the Public Diplomacy Initiative of Serena Hotels, a Corporate social responsibility initiative that aims to discuss and create awareness of unaddressed issues prevalent in society.

DC chairs meeting of PM Youth Talent Hunt Program

RAWALPINDI: The first meeting of Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt program was organized here on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema. Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters, Marzia Saleem, District Coordinator Youth Wing, Hasan Aurangzeb, Tehsil Coordinator Youth Wing, Muhammad Osama, CO Education, Yasin Baloch, Focal Person School Education, Raja Tahir Mehmood, District Sports Officer, Shams Toheed, DD Colleges and other officers from different departments concerned attended the meeting. The DC informed that on the instructions of the prime minister, the football talent hunt youth program would start here this week. He said football trials would be organized for the children of government and private schools, colleges, universities, academies and clubs of seven tehsils of Rawalpindi district.—APP



آئیں مل کر ٹی بی کو ہرائیں صحت مند پنجاب بنائیں

ٹی بی کی تشخیص و علاج کیلئے اہم اقدامات

THQs, DHQs اور BHUs پر 558 بنیادی مینٹننس یونٹس کا قیام

175 پرائیویٹ ہسپتالوں میں تشخیص و علاج کی سہولت

4 موبائل ایکس رے ویز کے ذریعے دور دراز علاقوں میں تشخیصی سہولیات

12 اضلاع میں لیڈی ہیلتھ ورکرز کے ذریعے سہولیات کی فراہمی

182 جین ایکسپرس مشینوں کی سہولت

558 مائیکروسکوپی لیبر کا قیام

لگاتار 2 ہفتے سے زائد کھانسی ٹی بی ہو سکتی ہے، لہذا بروقت تشخیص کیلئے فوری ٹیسٹ کروائیں

Briefs

Traffic Police Unit imposes fine to 10,000 vehicles

ISLAMABAD: Traffic Inter-Section Unit has taken effective steps against those involved in violation of rules and issued more than 10,000 fine tickets to law breakers during last two weeks. Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Wing) has constituted Traffic Inter-Section Unit following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan in order to improve the flow of traffic in the federal capital and provide best travelling facilities to road users. The police spokesman said this unit consisting of 188 personnel in ten teams had been given motorcycles and vehicles equipped with modern technology. It has been authorized to take measures for road discipline in the city and ensure prompt action against those breaching traffic laws. During the last two weeks, this unit issued 10,000 fine tickets to those involved in violating traffic rules including use of mobile phone and not fastening seat belt during drive, one way violation, zebra crossing violation, red signal and lane violation. Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer said that Traffic Wing was utilizing all resources to provide the best travelling facilities to the citizens. He said that Islamabad Capital Police were being equipped with modern technology to control violations of traffic rules in the capital. Under the supervision of Chief Traffic Officer Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, this unit was initially performing duties at various points of the city including Secretariat Chowk, Damane-e Koh Chowk, Jatoi Chowk, Faisal Chowk, Khayaban Chowk, Express Chowk, Shaheen Chowk, F-8 Exchange Chowk, PRC Chowk, F-Ten Roundabout, F-10/1 Corner and G-10/3 Corner. —APP

Trade deficit narrows by 40.59%

ISLAMABAD: The trade deficit witnessed a decline of 40.59 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The trade deficit during July-May (2022-23) was recorded at \$25.791 billion against the deficit of \$43.409 billion in July-May (2021-22), a decline of 40.59 percent. The exports during the period were recorded at \$25.366 billion against \$28.871 billion last year, showing a decline of 12.14 percent. On the other hand, the imports witnessed a sharp decline of 29.22 percent by falling from \$72.280 billion last year to \$51.157 billion during the current fiscal year. On a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country witnessed a decline of 16.69 percent and were recorded at \$2.186 billion in May 2023 against the exports of \$2.624 billion in May 2022. —APP

Advance gender equality through gender data urged

The shared vision of a more inclusive society, where every woman and girl can thrive and contribute to the nation's progress, remains at the core of these collective efforts

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) hosted the 20th Meeting of the Inter-Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) marked a significant step towards promoting women's empowerment in Pakistan through streamlining data collection mechanisms. The meeting focused on efforts to establish the U.S. Embassy International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau-funded UNWOMEN-supported National Gender Data Portal as a credible and comprehensive source of gender-related data in Pakistan. The IPMG developed action items to serve as a roadmap for implementation, ensuring that the objectives and priorities agreed on at the meeting become concrete steps that take gender equality to every part of the country. During her welcome note, Nilofar Bakhtiar, Chairperson NCSW said, "This meeting served as a crucial platform for fostering collaboration and driving positive change in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan. Let us continue to work together to create a society where every woman's and girl's voice is heard, and her rights and contributions are acknowledged and valued." Ms. Sharneela Rassool, Country Representative of UN Women, delivered the opening remarks and outlined the objectives of the 20th Meeting of the IPMG. She emphasized the significance of strengthening data collection mechanisms and fostering collaboration among federal and provincial stakeholders. She stated, "The IPMG serves as a catalyst transformation for bringing together women related machin-



ISLAMABAD: President and members of the Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry presenting shield to Ambassador of UAE Hamad Al Zaabi at his office.—DNA

eries and institutions to identify practical, tailored and impactful solutions specific to Pakistan's needs. The National Gender Data Portal stands as a prime example of such a solution that was proposed at the 14th Meeting of the IPMG and has since then been actioned out. This high level group has always recognized the pivotal role of data, we understand its significance in pinpointing policy gaps and empowering leaders and officials to make well-informed decisions." The IPMG Meeting also featured an address by the U.S. Embassy's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Advisor Gender Security, Law and Justice who stated,

"The U.S. Embassy recognizes the importance of this platform in advancing gender equality and strengthening data collection mechanisms. Addressing social issues and promoting women's rights require gender statistics and gender-responsive approaches that recognize women's unique challenges and needs. INL remains committed to supporting this important work." Mr. Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Federal Minister of Human Rights in his keynote remarks emphasized the significance of coherent and open communications from all relevant stakeholders that is necessary to address inequality prevailing in the country. "Equal opportunities

are not just a basic fundamental right, but gender equality is necessary to attain economic growth, create peace societies and foster sustainable development." The strengthening of the National Gender Data Portal was the key agenda item, with participants acknowledging its critical role in providing accurate and comprehensive data on gender-related indicators. During the meeting, an update was also presented on the 67th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, focusing on the latest developments and initiatives to empower women and bridge gender gaps. The participants engaged in insightful discussions and shared best practices to enhance women's

political participation, address the gender digital divide, and promote inclusive policies. The IPMG was established in 2009 to enhance inter-provincial coordination between women related mechanisms and institutions in Pakistan. Nineteen meetings have been conducted to facilitate the exchange of experiences and insights and encourage joint initiatives. The 20th Meeting of the IPMG showcased the dedication and commitment of stakeholders to advancing gender equality in Pakistan. The shared vision of a more inclusive society, where every woman and girl can thrive and contribute to the nation's progress, remains at the core of these collective efforts.

Smart Classroom project under CPEC inaugurated

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Smart Classroom project under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been inaugurated at University of Education, Lahore. The project is part of

Naseer Pasha said on the occasion that the project will play a pivotal role in enhancing student-teacher interaction through interactive online and distant learning systems, bridging the gap of quality faculty, meeting the shortage of

tion Commission (HEC) and Huawei. The program has been organized for the faculty and IT staff members of the public-sector universities of Central Punjab. The program aims at equipping the partici-



the 'Smart Universities: Transformation through Smart Classrooms' under the CPEC. It aims at strengthening online and distance learning in the higher education sector in Pakistan, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. Vice Chancellor Dr. Talat

faculty members at the universities and far-flung campuses, and ultimately uplift the standard of education across the board. In addition, Dr. Talat inaugurated a 5-day training workshop at the University of Education, Lahore in collaboration with the Higher Educa-

participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively utilize smart classroom technologies and leverage their potential in enhancing the teaching processes. Dr. Talat appreciated the support of the Chinese government and Huawei in making the project a reality.

Islamabad police to have college

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have got approval for the establishment of Islamabad Police Shuhada Model College at Police Line Headquarters under the administrative control of the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE). A piece of land will be provided by Islamabad Police for the College which would have a multi-faceted role to provide free quality education from Pre-School to Intermediate (HSSC) level with modern early childhood education and STEM Hybrid learning facility. It would also run a parallel stream of skills/TVET education by offering Matric-tech and Intertech programs, a police source said. Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan and Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain have taken a special interest in this initiative and termed it as a step to pay immense tribute to the sacrifices rendered by Martyrs. The admissions against the available slots shall have a priority for children of Shuhada followed by the children of Islamabad police personnel and others. The status of the college will be elevated to residential cadet college jointly managed by FDE and Islamabad police after a specified period of time having demonstrated quality repute.—APP

Railways retrieve 994 acres land from illegal occupants

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has retrieved as many as 994 acres of its land worth millions of rupees from illegal occupants during various anti-encroachment operations across the country. "Around 487 acres retrieved in Punjab, 142 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 337 acres in Sindh and only 28 acres in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said that about 3,287 acres in Punjab, 832 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,180 acres in Sindh, and 687 acres in Balochistan were being encroached. The official said that in light of the directives of the Supreme Court, the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached railway land all over the Railway network were initiated and a joint procedure order was issued to all divisional superintendents for retrieval of Railways land from encroachment. "The anti-encroachment schedules, on a three months basis, are being prepared and sent to all concerned in line with the joint procedure order," the official added. He said Pakistan Railways had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups, and even business organizations who were using it for residential, commercial, and agriculture purposes for decades.—APP

CDA pursues upgradation of urban amenities

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is taking concrete steps for ensuring the provision of urban facilities to the city dwellers and maintenance of infrastructure including the installation of street lights, road carpeting and resolving water-related issues, neglected in the past. "Special attention is being given to the completion of the remaining development works in the sectors I, G, H and D series, provision of civic facilities, and facilitating the home builders in these sectors in pursuance of the directives of Chairman CDA Noor ul Amin Mengal," an official told APP. "The work of installation of streetlights in the main roads and within the sectors to ensure proper lighting management in Sector I-11, I-10, I-14 and Sector I-16, D-12 and other sectors is in full swing," he added. To a question, the official said, "After a few months of delay due to legal complications, the authority has started work to install street lights in Sector D-12." He said that the work on this project was initially halted when a contractor, who failed to secure the contract, filed a case in court. "As a result, the project was put on hold indefinitely.—APP

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Solid waste management in Pakistan: Addressing the growing challenge

HAMMAD KHAN

Like many developing nations, Pakistan has a difficult time controlling its solid waste. The amount of garbage produced has increased to dangerous proportions as a result of increasing urbanisation, population development, and shifting consumer habits. Effective solid waste management has thus become a critical issue that needs prompt attention and long-term solutions. Any substance that has been wasted is referred to as solid waste, which includes commercial, industrial, and residential garbage. The improper handling of this waste not only endangers the environment but also has an impact on people's health and well-being. Poor infrastructure, lack of resources, and lack of awareness have added to the problem. The streets,

open spaces, and water bodies are filled with solid waste. The absence of an integrated strategy is one of the major problems with solid waste management. Since several departments and agencies are responsible for different aspects of waste management, there is a lack of coordination and cooperation. A thorough and coordinated strategy including all stakeholders, including governmental organisations, regional communities, and the private sector, is necessary to solve this problem. Effective waste management is reliant on proper garbage collection and disposal. Pakistan must make investments in cutting-edge waste collecting techniques including door-to-door pickup, neighborhood trash cans, and waste sorting at the source. This would promote recycling and the

recovery of priceless resources in addition to improving the effectiveness of garbage collection. Another critical component of solid waste management is encouraging recycling and trash reduction programmes. Recycling may help save precious resources and cut down on the amount of garbage that is dumped in landfills. A more sustainable waste management system may be achieved through establishing recycling facilities, encouraging recycling practices in communities, and including recycling teaching in schools. Moreover, it is crucial for the effectiveness of waste management operations to increase public awareness and promote behavioural change. Programmes for community involvement, public awareness campaigns, and educational activities may all make a big

difference in encouraging people to dispose of their garbage properly, prevent littering, and feel more environmentally conscious. The establishment of efficient waste management and elimination facilities is crucial in addition to these efforts. The negative environmental impact of trash may be reduced and renewable energy or organic fertilisers can be produced with the aid of composting facilities, waste-to-energy conversion plants, and landfill management practices. The government must prioritise solid waste management and set forth the funds to deal with this urgent issue. In order to stimulate the development of waste management infrastructure, deter investments in unlawful dumping, and enforce fines for littering, policies and laws should be developed. Although there are consid-

erable problems with solid waste management in Pakistan, they may be solved with cooperation and a dedication to sustainable practices. Pakistan may make major strides towards a cleaner and healthier environment by developing integrated waste management systems, encouraging recycling and trash reduction, increasing public awareness, and investing in infrastructure. In conclusion, Pakistan's solid waste management needs urgent attention and long-term solutions. Prioritising garbage collection, recycling, and public awareness programmes while utilising an integrated strategy including all stakeholders is crucial. Pakistan can overcome the obstacles and provide its residents with a cleaner and healthier environment by working together and committing to sustainable practices.

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Chance to ease tensions

The studied silence surrounding the visit to Beijing by Daniel J. Kritenbrink, US assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, and Sarah Beran, White House National Security Council's senior director for China affairs, points to the sensitivity that now characterizes Sino-US relations.

The visit of the senior US officials to China is the second by members of the Job Biden administration since it unilaterally canceled Secretary of State Antony Blinken's planned visit to Beijing in early February, which put the brakes on the positive momentum in bilateral interactions generated by the talks between the two countries' leaders on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, in November. That Beijing gave the nod for the visit of Kritenbrink and Beran shows that it remains open to dialogue with Washington. But the lower level of the two visiting US officials shows that both sides know there is much groundwork to be laid if higher-level talks are not to descend into acrimonious exchanges once again. But although the talks are at a lower level than they would have been had Blinken's visit gone ahead as planned, Kritenbrink and Beran are major contributors to policymaking in their respective fields, suggesting that both sides are still trying to manage their rapidly souring relations. That being said, the visit of the two US officials, which began on Sunday, provides a good opportunity for Washington to rebuild its credibility with Beijing. Their posts mean that they do not have to speak to the cameras, and they can listen as well as say their piece.

With the provocations of US battleships and warplanes becoming increasingly frequent in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, no one would be too surprised if there was an incident on the doorstep of China. It is to be hoped that the talks will be able to help avert such an undesirable scenario. Which will not be the case if the two visitors have come all the way just to try and intimidate Beijing with coercion, threats and ultimatums. If they waste the opportunity of the hard-earned meeting in this way, it will only worsen the situation. If the two US officials have come to Beijing with the willingness to talk in good faith, they will find their hosts willing to reciprocate. But they should always bear in mind that no meaningful exchanges can take place unless the US side respects China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and core interests.



UK Asylum policy

Contrary to popular opinion, Britain is a country with few asylum seekers, in contrast with its comparable neighbours. Last year, it recorded 74,751 asylum applications. While this was the highest annual number for Britain since 2002, France had more than double that number and Germany more than three times as many. Rather than sharing the burden of the chaos in much of the world with rich-country peers, Rishi Sunak wants fewer asylum seekers. To do this he demonises those already here, and those coming on boats. The former are wrongly portrayed as merely economic migrants who have abused British hospitality for their own needs, creating backlogs and wasting state resources. The latter are customers of unscrupulous people smugglers. Dehumanising language is key to legislating brutality. Yet boatloads of asylum seekers are still arriving – a failure that is hurting Mr Sunak's poll standing. Hence his hasty trumpeting that small-boat crossings were 20% down this year while those in Europe were going up. This was evidence, said Mr Sunak, that his inhumane "plans" to deter asylum seekers from floating across the English Channel were working. Deterrence probably did not lead to a drop in numbers. Mr Sunak wanted to claim victory before the battle for public opinion gets under way. Other plausible explanations, as the barrister Colin Yeo wrote, could be migrants switching to clandestine means to avoid detection, the weather being worse than the year before, or departures from the French coast being more effectively blocked. The trouble is that the Conservative party has been in power for 13 years, and has no one else to blame. Its "Little England" mentality has been exposed by foreign friends, who know ministerial statements mostly deserve little more than an eye roll. After Suella Braverman singled out "Albanian criminals" for an "invasion" of England, the home secretary's comments were rightly called "disgraceful" by the Albanian prime minister, whose help Mr Sunak was then forced to seek for a deal to ensure fast-track removals. There are 10,000 more asylum seekers waiting for the Home Office to assess their claims than before Mr Sunak's premiership began. This number could easily be reduced by extending the welcome given to Ukrainians to others fleeing bombs in Afghanistan, Syria or Sudan. But that doesn't suit Mr Sunak's purposes. He alighted on refugees as a threat that needed to be dealt with. Getting a handle on this imagined menace, he thinks, will convert the applause garnered into enthusiasm for failing Tory economic programmes. Instead, it is stoking tensions in communities and resentment among asylum seekers for their enforced destitution. This Tory government thinks that this is a price worth paying – as did its predecessors, who considered using giant wave machines to deter dinghies, or processing arrivals on Saint Helena, an island in the South Atlantic. Pathetic doesn't quite capture this form of political theatre, where cruel policies are sold to the public as solutions, only for them to be overtaken by even more brutish plans before they unravel.

Imran Khan's popularity and controversies

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Pakistan has a history of populism in its politics, with populist leaders appealing to the common people by positioning themselves as champions of their needs and interests and criticizing the elites. Imran Khan's personal charisma and celebrity status have played a significant role in his success. Prior to entering politics, Khan was a well-known cricket player, and his achievements in the sport made him a household name in Pakistan. This gave him a platform from which to launch his political career

The term populism is a political ideology that prioritizes the needs and interests of the common people over those of the elite or the establishment. Populist movements typically focus on issues such as economic inequality, political corruption, and social injustice, and often reject the political establishment in favor of more direct democracy. Populism can manifest in various ways across the political spectrum, and may be associated with authoritarianism, nationalism, and a disregard for the rule of law. Populist leaders may appeal to emotions rather than reasoned debate and may be willing to violate democratic norms to maintain power.

Pakistan has a history of populism in its politics, with populist leaders appealing to the common people by positioning themselves as champions of their needs and interests and criticizing the elites. Imran Khan's personal charisma and celebrity status have played a significant role in his success. Prior to entering politics, Khan was a well-known cricket player, and his achievements in the sport made him a household name in Pakistan. This gave him a platform from which to launch his political career, and his popularity with the masses has only grown since then. Khan is known for his eloquence and ability to connect with people, which has helped him to win the hearts and minds of the Pakistani people. Imran Khan's rise to power as the leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party in the 2018 general election is one example of populism in Pakistan. The PTI campaigned on an anti-corruption platform, vowing to fight against the country's entrenched political and economic elites and provide social services to the poor. However, while populism can drive positive change, it can also be associated with authoritarianism and disregard for democratic norms, as some have criticized the PTI's approach to governance, including its use of military courts and crackdowns on political opposition and media freedom.

Another key factor that has made Imran Khan a champion of populism is his focus on addressing the needs of the common people. Throughout his political career, Khan has been a vocal advocate for social justice, and he has

campaigning for better education, healthcare, and job opportunities for ordinary Pakistanis. He has also spoken out against corruption and political nepotism, which are issues that have long plagued Pakistani society. By positioning himself as a champion of the people, Khan has been able to win over the support of the masses and build a broad-based coalition of supporters. His focus on social justice, Imran Khan has also been a vocal critic of Western imperialism and globalization. He has argued that Western powers have exploited developing countries like Pakistan for their own benefit, and that globalization has led to the erosion of traditional values and cultures. This stance has resonated with many Pakistanis who feel that their country has been neglected and marginalized by the global community. Khan's anti-imperialist rhetoric has helped to cement his position as a populist leader who is willing to take on powerful interests on behalf of the common people. Imran's vision of nationalism and Islamic populism garnered support from the military. He spoke passionately in both Urdu and English and urged the people to dream of a Pakistan where both the rich and the poor were treated equally. He envisioned a country that would not be subservient to Western powers and referred to Medina as a just society. He used the term "jihad" to encourage citizens to pay taxes and vowed to fight for Pakistan's sovereignty. He challenged the United States in the war on terror and pledged to make Pakistan economically strong by holding corrupt politicians accountable, taxing the wealthy, and establishing a welfare state. Imran Khan came to power on an anti-corruption and pro-reform platform, positioning himself as a champion of the people and opponent of the traditional political elite. However, his leadership has also been criticized for its authoritarian tendencies, including crackdowns on the media and political opposition, leading many to associate his politics with populism. Despite resonating with marginalized Pakistanis, it is crucial to ensure his leadership does not undermine democratic institutions or exclude certain groups. The political leadership in

Pakistan is influenced by personal charisma, party loyalty, and institutional factors such as the military's role in politics. While there have been successful leaders who made progress on democracy and development, controversies persist. According to a survey titled "Public Pulse Report," Imran Khan was the most highly rated politician in Pakistan, with a positive rating from 61% of the population and a negative rating from 37%. Nawaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto shared the second position, with a positive rating of 36%. The survey was conducted in February 2023 and covered 2,000 respondents from urban and rural areas in all four provinces of Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif received a negative rating from 59% of the respondents, while Bilawal Bhutto received a negative rating from 57%. Maryam Nawaz, Asif Ali Zardari, and Maulana Fazlur Rehman all received negative ratings of 61%, 67%, and 57%, respectively. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif received a negative rating from 65% of the respondents.

Imran Khan continues to cultivate his image as a champion of the people, focusing on access to education and healthcare, social justice, and empowering the marginalized. His government had taken steps to address corruption and inefficiency in the public sector, but his policies and actions had also faced criticism for being undemocratic and closely tied to the military establishment. While Khan enjoys some degree of popular support in Pakistan, the long-term implications of his populist approach remain to be seen. Imran's arrest and the government's actions may be seen as an attempt to rein in Imran Khan's populism. Many observers saw the arrest as part of a broader pattern of repression and intimidation of opposition voices by the Sharif government, which had been accused of using state institutions to suppress dissent and criticism. Imran Khan's arrest is a pivotal moment in Pakistani politics that reflected the growing polarization and repression of opposition voices in the country. The arrest serves as a reminder of the fragility of democracy and the importance of protecting freedom of speech and expression, even in the face of political opposition and criticism.

The Middle East: Goodbye America, hello China?

Marwan Bishara

Despite US objections, the past year has seen its regional allies go hybrid: they have improved relations with Beijing and Tehran and maintained strong ties with Moscow. Although the Biden administration has publicly downplayed the importance of the recent Chinese-brokered Saudi-Iranian agreement to re-establish diplomatic relations, it seems frantic about the growing Chinese influence in the oil-rich Gulf region and the greater Middle East. Over the past two decades, the US has ramped up

In an attempt to salvage his country's waning influence in the Middle East, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is embarking on a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia this week. But advancing "strategic cooperation" with his Saudi and Gulf counterparts may well prove an uphill battle. In July last year, President Joe Biden attended the Gulf Cooperation Council summit in the kingdom and vowed that the United States "will not walk away and leave a vacuum to be filled by China, Russia, or Iran". But that is precisely what has been happening.

Despite US objections, the past year has seen its regional allies go hybrid: they have improved relations with Beijing and Tehran and maintained strong ties with Moscow. Although the Biden administration has publicly downplayed the importance of the recent Chinese-brokered Saudi-Iranian agreement to re-establish diplomatic relations, it seems frantic about the growing Chinese influence in the oil-rich Gulf region and the greater Middle East. Over the past two decades, the US has ramped up oil and gas production, becoming virtually energy independent. It may no longer need Gulf oil as much, but it insists on being in charge in the region so it is able to cut China off of vital energy supplies in the event of a conflict, and secure them for its allies. As Blinken warned last month, "China represents the most consequential geopolitical challenge we face today: a country with the intent and, increasingly, the capability to challenge our vision for a free, open, secure, and prosperous international order." But Beijing's autocracy may actually be an easier and better fit for the region's autocrats than Washington's democracy.

Russia's sway in the Middle East and beyond has also made the US nervous. Fed up with their ambiguity, even complicity with Russia, the Biden administration has been ramping up pressure on certain Middle Eastern states, making clear that its patience is running out. It has been warning countries in the region against helping Russia evade sanctions and demanding they pick sides – or else face the wrath of the US and G7 nations. But to no avail. Saudi Arabia has thus far refused the US request to substantially increase oil production to lower its market price and offset the effect of Western sanctions on Russia. It has maintained good relations with Moscow and dragged its

feet on supporting Ukraine. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's "middle finger to Washington" has reportedly made him extremely popular in the region. Last year, in response to Biden's threats to punish Riyadh for its presumed insolence, the kingdom went on to host the Chinese president, Xi Jinping for bilateral talks and the China-GCC and China-Arab summits. Saudi Arabia then normalised relations with Iran under Chinese auspices, just as the West was tightening sanctions against Tehran, and in a clear snub to the US, went on to repair ties with Syria. But this new attitude towards relations with the US is not only evident in Riyadh; it is a regional phenomenon. The United Arab Emirates, another US ally, has also cultivated closer ties with China, improved strategic relations with France, and worked on engaging Iran, Russia and India. This, at times, has been at the expense of its relations with the US. The region as a whole has been diversifying its global engagement. This is quite apparent in its commercial relations. Between 2000 and 2021, trade between the Middle East and China has grown from \$15.2bn to \$284.3bn; in the same period, trade with the US has increased only modestly from \$63.4bn to \$98.4bn. Six Middle Eastern countries – among them Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt – have recently requested to join the Chinese-led BRICS group, which also includes Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa. This is despite the West's ever-widening sanctions regime imposed on Russia. Of course, America has been the dominant strategic power in the Middle East the past three decades and remains so today. But will it be in the next three decades? In a region where autocratic regimes and the general public do not agree on much if anything at all, saying no to America is a very popular stance because the majority believes it is a hypocritical imperial power that pays only lip service to human rights and democracy. This is particularly apparent in US foreign policy on Palestine, which staunchly and unconditionally supports the Palestinians' coloniser and occupier – Israel. On his visit to Riyadh, Secretary Blinken will likely put pressure on Saudi Arabia to normalise relations with Tel Aviv, hoping to lower its asking price, which reportedly includes a nuclear civilian programme and major security assurances. The UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and

Sudan have already normalised relations with Israel at the expense of the Palestinians in return for American concessions, such as the sale of US-made F-35s to Abu Dhabi, US recognition of Moroccan claims over Western Sahara, and the lifting of US sanctions on Khartoum. All so that the Israeli government does not have to make any "concessions" of its own and end its decades-long occupation of Palestine.

But the Palestinian cause, which is quite close to the heart of ordinary Arabs, is not the only issue that has convinced the Arab public that America is a duplicitous power that should be kept at a distance. Thanks to satellite television and social media platforms, people of the region saw with their own eyes US crimes in Iraq and its humiliation in Afghanistan, and do not think of it as a guardian of civilisation, let alone an invincible power. The balance sheet of US interventions in the Middle East over the past 20 years since the 9/11 attacks is firmly not in its favour. No wonder that in a 2022 poll conducted by the Doha-based Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in 14 Arab countries, 78 percent of respondents believed that the biggest source of threat and instability in the region was the US. By contrast, only 57 percent thought of Iran and Russia in these terms, both of which have had their own share of dirty work in the region – from Syria to Iraq and Yemen.

In his aptly titled book, Grand Delusion: The Rise and Fall of American Ambition in the Middle East, former US official Steven Simon estimates the US has wasted some \$5-7 trillion on wars that have resulted in the death of millions of Arabs and Muslims, and the devastation of their communities. In addition, these conflicts have killed thousands of US soldiers, injured tens of thousands and led to some 30,000 suicides of US veterans. It is no coincidence then, that more Middle Easterners (and Americans) agree that the region's decoupling from America and at least some American disengagement from the region is as desirable as it is inevitable. Such a turn of events would also be terribly consequential with messy long-term implications for both sides and it would be determined by whether and how America chooses to change its foreign policy. But that's another discussion for another day.

—Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

Executive must not interfere with SC matters, says CJP

FROM PAGE 01
"allegation" said that the apex court is a constitutional office that has its own powers. "A judge cannot be made a party to a contempt petition," he said, adding that a chief justice cannot be asked to leave a bench upon allegations. "The powers of the chief justice or judge cannot be reduced as per requirement," he said. When the AGP said that the government had raised objections against the formation of the bench hearing the appeals, the top judge asked: "How can there be a discussion on the assumption that two judges, including the chief justice, had personal benefits in the case?"

He warned the executive to refrain from interfering in the powers of the court. "We were not even consulted before the commission was formed," he said. He then told the AGP to first prove that his petition could be adjudicated and said: "Objections cannot be raised against judges on mere allegations." Justice Akhtar raised questions over the government's right to publicise the audio leaks. He directed the AGP to discuss the commission's Terms of Reference (TORs), and asked: "Is the government asserting that the audios are original?" He then asked the AGP if it were true that the hacker leaked the audio and the minister made it public by holding a press conference. "The interior minister held a press conference regarding the audio leaks, was the matter related to him?" he asked wondering if the audios should have been made public without thorough investigation. "According to the law, can a government official accuse a judge before confirming the facts?" he asked. When the AGP defended the government saying that ministers' statements could not be attributed to the government, Justice Akhtar asked: "Are the government's policy and ministers' statements not the same?" He added that if a minister speaks of his own will, it will be a statement of the cabinet. "After everything that has been said in the ministerial press conferences, what is the status of the application?" he asked. The CJP then asked if the government had used its resources to find out where and how the audios are being recorded. AGP Usman responded that the government has formed a commission for a complete investigation of the audio, including who recorded them and how. At this, CJP Bandial asked: "Did you find out anything about Indibell?" "Check out Indibell's Twitter handle, is he operating from outside the country or from within?" he asked. He then expressed concerns that anyone could spread false news against judges using Indibell.

Justice Akhtar then observed that there are negative aspects of social media. After the AGP, Zuberi's counsel Shoaib Shaheen presented his arguments and said that the government did not include an investigation into the source of the audio leaks in the TORs. Furthermore, he said, the audios were assumed to be true and it was presumed that the judiciary's independence had been compromised. "All the audios started coming after the suo moto notices [taken by the supreme court] concerning the Punjab elections," Shaheen pointed out. Shaheen further alleged that the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) is not keeping a check on what is being broadcast. "[IHC Judge] Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani banned the broadcasting of audio-video leaks," he said, "however, despite the ban, the leaked audios were broadcast, and the Pemra did not take any notice".

He said an attempt had been made to discredit the judiciary. "Parliament passed a resolution, suspending the Supreme Court's decision and the Constitution," he said. The petitioner's lawyer said the top court is the "last hope" for justice. Drawing the bench's attention to the PTI political workers who had been arrested and were being tried in courts, he said: "The worst violation of fundamental rights is happening in the country. People are looking towards the Supreme Court."



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters are climbing into water at Angoori Water Fall to cool off during high temperature in Federal Capital. – Online

HEC Wins 118 Medals in National Games 2023

Ms. Amtul Rehman bagged two gold medals in long jump and triple jump and Manisha Ali won double gold in Taekwondo and Wushu; Ms. Uzma Azam won a gold medal in Hammer Throw; Ms. Maliha Ali and Ms. Fiza clinched gold medals in Wushu and Ms. Kainat managed to secure gold in Judo along-with other outperforming players

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has won as many as 118 medals, including eight gold, 17 silver, and 93 bronze medals, in the National Games Quetta 2023. President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi conferred HEC with the 'Best Turnout Trophy' for being an extraordinary contingent of the National Games. HEC players competed in individual as well as team events participated by 14 units hailing from Pakistan Army, WAPDA, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Railways, Balochistan, Police, Islamabad, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

In his address, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said this remarkable achievement of aspiring young players is a testament of hard work, dedication, and commitment to compete with professional departmental players. "We are proud of our athletes' accomplishments



ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi presenting shield to HEC team during the National Games Quetta 2023. – DNA

and are committed to supporting them in their future endeavors," said Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed. He main-

tained that HEC is committed to promoting sports among students and to providing them with an op-

portunity to excel in academia as well as in co-curricular activities. "Alongside managing academic ac-

tivities and patronizing regulations of universities, HEC regularly carries out extracurricular activities to promote healthy activities among youth to project the soft image of Pakistan," he added.

Director/In-charge Sports HEC Mr. Javed Ali Memon said that HEC is acting as a nurturing institution for rising stars on the horizon of sports as our players are ready to replace experienced professional players. He informed that HEC acquired gold medals in Athletics, Taekwondo, Wushu and Judo events. He further said that HEC Women Volleyball and Basketball teams thwarted experienced departmental teams with their rigor and mettle.

Ms. Amtul Rehman bagged two gold medals in long jump and triple jump and Manisha Ali won double gold in Taekwondo and Wushu; Ms. Uzma Azam won a gold medal in Hammer Throw; Ms. Maliha Ali and Ms. Fiza clinched gold medals in Wushu and Ms. Kainat managed to secure gold in Judo along-with other outperforming players.

180 sports contingent likely supported by govt

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan sports contingent likely 180 players and officials will be supported by the federation government for the upcoming 19th edition of the Asian Games to be held in Hangzhou (China) this year in September. Director General of Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shoaib Khoso chaired the high-level meeting attended by Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) secretary Mohammad Khalid Mehmood, PSB Deputy Director General Muhammad Ibrar, Saeed Akhtar and representatives of different sports federations. During the meeting suggestions from sports federations as well as Pakistan Olympic Association were taken to finalize the Pakistan contingent participation and preparation of 19th Asian Games to be played in Hangzhou (China) from September 23 to October 8. According to sources, due to financial dif-

ficulties, the Pakistan Sports Board is considering supporting Pakistan's contingent of around 180 players and officials in the Asian Games, while the participants of the meeting have suggested that the Pakistan Sports Board should fully support those sports in the Asian Games in which medals can be won. In this regard, Director General of Pakistan Sports Board Shoaib Khoso said that PSB will consider the proposals of POA and sports federations regarding the Asian Games and we will try to provide all possible support to the federation that wins medals in the mega event. He said that Pakistan Sports Board will also fully support the talented players so that they can shine the name of the country in the Asian Games "We are at initial stages of gathering information and making adjustments where these are required. Once we gather all information from participating federations, we will be in a better position to see how best we can accommodate different federations," Shoaib Khoso said.

Postecoglou Tottenham's new manager

LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur have appointed Ange Postecoglou as their new manager on a four-year contract. The 57-year-old leaves Celtic after winning successive Scottish Premiership titles in his two seasons in charge. He is Spurs' fourth permanent manager since Mauricio Pochettino led them to the Champions League final in 2018-19, following Jose Mourinho, Nuno Espirito Santo and Antonio Conte. "We are excited to have Ange join us," said Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy. "Ange brings a positive mentality and a fast, attacking style of play. He has a strong track record of developing players and an understanding of the importance of the link from the academy - everything that is important to our club," he added. – APP

Babar, Rizwan participate in HBS program

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani duo of Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan has achieved a remarkable feat by becoming the first cricketers to participate in Harvard Business School's executive education program. Their involvement in the program, which focuses on The Business of Entertainment, Media, and Sports (BEMS), has not only showcased their commitment to personal development but also inspired their classmates, including renowned athletes Kamaru Usman and Francis Ngannou, to take an interest in cricket. Both the cricketers attended classes on the aforementioned Business School campus in Boston, Massachusetts, from May 31-June 3. The culmination of their time at Harvard Business School was marked by a farewell picture featuring Babar and Rizwan alongside their classmates, which included esteemed athletes like Kamaru Usman, Francis Ngannou, Jameis Winston, and Cesar Azpilicueta. It was an occasion where the worlds of cricket, mixed martial arts, American football, and football converged, showcasing the diverse backgrounds and interests of the participants. In a gesture of friendship and cross-sport camaraderie, Babar gifted his Gray-Nicolls bat to Francis Ngannou. – APP

No leniency with May 9 miscreants

FROM PAGE 01
Speaking about Kashmir, Mr. Sanaulah said, "Pakistan and Kashmir are one soul and inseparable. Kashmir is the lifeblood of the country". He said Pakistan has always stood by the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The Minister said Azad Kashmir witnessed record growth and development during the tenure of PML-N but unfortunately the last four years of PTI turmoil reversed the journey of progress. Speaking to media, Mr. Sanaulah made it clear that instigators would not be tolerated. "Those who attacked the military installations will be brought to justice. The writ of the state will be upheld at any cost," added Mr. Sanaulah. "Those who claimed to end corruption were themselves involved in the menace. Apart from making claims, the PTI had done nothing for the country," Mr. Sanaulah maintained. He schooled the PTI, saying, "Since 2014, PTI has resorted to the tactics of using foul language. The PTI also taught its workers to use foul language."

Qureshi still with PTI...

FROM PAGE 01
Qureshi was arrested last month by the Islamabad police on multiple charges, including "inciting violent protests", following PTI chief Imran Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust case on May 9. On May 18, the Islamabad High Court had ordered the former foreign minister's release. However, his release was delayed due to his apparent reluctance to provide an undertaking to refrain from engaging in "unruly" protests. When Qureshi was finally set free on May 23, he was again taken into custody by Punjab police from outside Adiala Jail after his detention orders were issued by the Rawalpindi deputy commissioner. Earlier, the Lahore High Court's (LHC) Rawalpindi bench ordered the PTI leader's immediate release and set aside his detention orders.

PTI condemns...

FROM PAGE 01
Reacting to Attaullah Tarar's press conference, PTI SIC said that the PTI requested the apex court to take immediate notice of the attempt to implicate PTI Chairman Imran Khan in another false case. Raof Hassan rejected the baseless, concocted and absurd allegations of Tarar, adding that the killing of Abdul Razzaq Shar was a continuation of the shameful, unconstitutional and illegal campaign to crush PTI, which was the only federal political party in the country at present. He went on to say that Tarar's presser was a brutal attempt to cover up the murder of a lawyer and the same characters and elements were responsible for his blood who played the shameful game by orchestrating the May 9 mayhem and vandalism.

Markets to close...

FROM PAGE 01
which poses a risk of oil prices rising to \$100 per barrel," he said, highlighting that if the country continued to rely on fossil fuel and oil for its energy needs, "our economy will remain vulnerable". To counter this, he said, one of the measures that the government wanted to implement pertained to energy conservation. Iqbal recalled that the federal cabinet had vowed to enforce decisions under a National Energy Conservation Plan in January this year. "But there was no representation of provinces in that meeting. So we took it up again in the NEC, where provincial government representatives were also present. "And now we hope that provincial governments will ensure the implementation of the energy conservation package that has been approved today."

ISSI reaches important milestone

The 50th anniversary celebration of ISSI promises to be a platform for intellectual exchange

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), one of Pakistan's premier think-tanks, reaches an important milestone as it commemorates the 50th anniversary of its founding on 16 June 2023. This marks half a century of dedicated research and scholarly contributions in the field of foreign policy and strategic studies.

Founded in 1973 - with a vision to foster critical analysis, promote understanding, and generate innovative ideas - the ISSI is devoted to provide an in-depth understanding and objective analyses of regional and global strategic issues, affecting international peace and security. The Institute also promotes a broad-based and informed public understanding of vital issues relating to Pakistan's foreign policy and national security as well as

strategic stability in South Asia. Over the past five decades, the Institute has been instrumental in influencing the policy process and helping with narrative-building by offering valuable insights and providing a platform for informed discourse on matters of national and international importance. With its multi-disciplinary approach and a team of renowned scholars and dedicated researchers, the ISSI has consistently produced quality research on diverse subjects, including international relations, security, geopolitics, regional dynamics, and Pakistan's pivot to geo-economics. Its regular and special publications, Seminars,

Conferences, and policy briefings have played a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and influencing policy formulation.

The Institute's work is conducted through 5 Centres of Excellence, with distinct geographic and the-

Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC); and (v) Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP). The Institute has also built strong partnerships with national and international counterpart think-tanks for fruitful collaboration. Thus far, over 70 Protocols/MoUs for cooperation have been concluded with these partner institutions in Pakistan and in different parts of the world. As ISSI embarks upon celebrating this occasion, the curtain rises on a series of events and activities that will reflect on its rich legacy, acknowledge its achievements, and outline the course for the future. This commemorative milestone not only honours

the Institute's ongoing contributions but also recognizes the cumulative efforts of the researchers, scholars, policymakers, and stakeholders who have been part of this journey. The ISSI community remains profoundly grateful for their invaluable contributions. The 50th anniversary celebration of ISSI promises to be a platform for intellectual exchange, fostering dialogue, and advancing knowledge in all relevant areas of focus. It will bring together experts, academics, diplomats, practitioners, and thought leaders to engage in insightful discussions, share perspectives, and explore new avenues for collaboration. A key element in this context would be the 50th Foundation Day event on 16 June 2023, which would feature a high-level policy address. As part of the commemoration, a number of new Books and Special Reports will also be introduced on the occasion.



matic focus, viz. (i) China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC); (ii) Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA); (iii) India Study Centre (ISC); (iv)

ities that will reflect on its rich legacy, acknowledge its achievements, and outline the course for the future. This commemorative milestone not only honours

Briefs

4.9 magnitude quake strikes southern Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE: An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 4.9 struck southern Haiti early Tuesday, killing at least three people and injuring several others, authorities said. The quake struck before dawn near the southern coastal city of Jeremie at a depth of six miles (10 kilometers), according to the U.S. Geological Survey. "I thought the whole house was going to fall on top of me," Eric Mpitabakana, a World Food Program official in Jeremie, told The Associated Press by phone. The three people who died were found under a collapsed house where rescuers were searching for more people, Frankel Maginaire with Haiti's Civil Protection Agency in Jeremie told the AP. He said that several children were hospitalized with injuries they received after they panicked and ran. Mpitabakana said things fell around his house and that he and other colleagues are contemplating sleeping outdoors if there are strong aftershocks. "There were so many people out on the street, and a lot of panic," he recalled of the moments after the quake struck.—APP

EU lawmakers slam European Commission

BRUSSELS: The European Commission on Monday faced criticism by some EU lawmakers over silence on Greece's illegal pushback policy of irregular migrants. Reactions were directed to Margaritis Schinas, vice president of the European Commission, and the bloc's Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson, during a meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. Commenting on a footage brought to light by The New York Times on May 19, showing pushback of migrants by Greek forces, lawmakers said the case would likely be covered up by Greece. The incident took place on 11 April, according to the publication.

The damning video, recorded on the island of Lesbos, revealed the pushbacks Athens has been denying since long. It showed 12 migrants, including children and a 6-month-old infant, being transported by a van to a nearby remote area where they were forcefully seen boarding a high-speed inflatable boat.

They were later transferred to a Greek Coast Guard vessel before being abandoned on a floating boat in the middle of the Aegean Sea and set adrift until they were picked up by the Turkish Coast Guard.—APP

Attempted coup: Dozens arrested in Kyrgyzstan

BISHKEK: The Central Asian nation's security agency confirmed more than 30 arrests among groups involved in allegedly plotting a coup. More than 30 people were arrested in Kyrgyzstan for allegedly plotting a coup against Sadyr Japarov, the national security agency said on Tuesday. The arrests were made to dismantle the group planning to seize power through various riots and protests, the state security service GNKB added. The detentions started taking place on Monday ten people detained from various parts of the Central Asian nation, according to RFE/RL. The state committee confirmed the report, publishing video which shows police detaining opposition members who are accused of looking to "seize power by force". The arrests come days after the second Central Asia Leaders' meeting concluded in the northern town of Cholpon-Ata. The summit was also attended by European leaders, including European Council president Charles Michel. Michel met the country's president to mark 30 years of EU-Kyrgyzstan cooperation, saying the bloc is "strongly" committed to the region.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Art lovers taking interest in paintings during at exhibition at the Satrang Art Gallery, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. —DNA

Government to start fixed tax regime to boost IT exports

The prime minister also directed for organizing IT sector road shows abroad to sensitize the world about the facilities being offered by the IT sector in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to start fixed tax regime for increasing IT exports of the country. The decision to this effect was taken at a high level meeting in Islamabad Tuesday chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss budget proposals for Information Technology and Telecommunication sector. PM Shehbaz Sharif has directed the relevant authorities to include mega incentives for the Information Technology sector in the fiscal budget 2023-24 to boost country's IT export. The meeting decided to constitute a

committee to finalize recommendations for the IT sectors. It accorded approval to special incentives for new business start-ups in IT sector and for promotion of business and trade through modern technology and IT. The meeting also approved a special program for skill development of youth in the field of IT and modern technology as well as the establishment of special training IT zones. Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister has decided to introduce fixed tax regime for the IT sector in the budget and also constituted a committee on it, besides directing the body to submit its recommendations immediate-

ly, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The meeting also accorded approval in principle for providing special incentives to new business start-ups in the IT sector. Special concessions for promotion of business and trade through modern technology were also approved. During the meeting, it was also decided to take the initiatives that were crucial to encourage youth for starting their own businesses. The prime minister approved a major decision of creating special training IT zones for promotion of entrepreneurship. The prime minister said that the government would spend huge amount

on the training of youth in IT sector. Currently, a total of 45,000 young people across the country were being trained in the IT sector, he added. The prime minister further said that in the upcoming fiscal budget, the government would distribute 1,00,000 laptops among the youth on merit basis. During the previous tenure of the PML-N government, they had distributed laptops among the country's youth and by utilizing this facility, the young people supplemented the foreign reserves during the Covid pandemic, he observed. The prime minister further set a target for the IT sector to increase its export up to the

tune of \$4.5 billion for the next year. The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister for Information Technology & Telecommunication Syed Ameenul Haque, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, PM's Adviser Ahmad Khan Cheema, Minister of State Ayesha Ghous Pasha, PM's Special Assistants Tariq Bajwa, Jahanzaib Khan Tariq Pasha, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, senator Afnanullah, Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Chairman FBR and other relevant authorities. Renowned IT experts including Asif Pir, Zohaib Khan, Naseer Akhtar, PTCL CEO, VP Jazz and

deputy CEO Telenor also attended the meeting. In the meeting, the prime minister directed to include all the IT related recommendations in the upcoming fiscal budget, adding the approval of IT-related recommendations in the next budget would create massive job opportunities for the youth. He also directed the authorities to take measures which were essential to provide special guidance and government assistance to the youth for setting up new companies in the IT sector. The prime minister also directed for organizing IT sector road shows abroad to sensitize the world about the facilities being offered by the IT sector in Pakistan.

Senior US, Chinese diplomats hold 'candid' talks

TAIPEI: Senior U.S. and Chinese diplomats held "candid and productive" talks in Beijing and agreed to keep open lines of communication to avoid tensions from spiraling into conflict, officials said Tuesday. Daniel Kritenbrink, assistant U.S. secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, was the most senior U.S. official confirmed to have visited China on Monday since tensions between Washington and Beijing soared over the shooting down of a Chinese spy balloon over the U.S. in early February. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken at the time postponed a planned trip to China, and Beijing has since largely rebuffed attempts at official exchanges, though two top U.S. and Chinese defense officials briefly interacted at a forum in Singapore over the weekend. China's Foreign Ministry said Kritenbrink and Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaouxi "had candid, constructive and fruitful communication on promoting the improvement of China-U.S. relations and properly managing differences." Beijing said it had stated its "solemn position on Taiwan" — a self-ruled island China claims as its territory to be annexed by force if necessary — and other issues and that the two sides had agreed to maintain communication. The U.S. State Department also said the two officials held "candid and productive discussions as part of ongoing efforts to maintain open lines of communication and build on recent high-level diplomacy between the two countries." The U.S. Navy on Sunday complained about an "unsafe interaction" in the Taiwan Strait, after a Chinese warship came within 150 yards (137 meters) of a U.S. destroyer. And last month, a Chinese fighter jet flew dangerously close to a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft over the South China Sea.—DNA

Iran unveils homegrown 'Fattah' hypersonic missile

TEHRAN: President Ebrahim Raeisi addresses a ceremony, in which Iranian homegrown "Fattah" hypersonic missile was unveiled in Tehran, on June 6, 2023. Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi says the country has boosted its deterrence power that now contributes to the security and sustainable peace in the region. "Some may ask 'what is the purpose of manufacturing missiles?' They are for deterrence, for defense," he noted. "We build missiles so that we do not suffer from aggression by the enemies and so that we have the power that the enemies would not even think of an act of aggression against the Islamic Republic." Raeisi added that, "Defense and missile industries have become indigenous in Iran. As Iran does not import its defense weapons, therefore nothing can threaten to marginalize this advanced

industry." The Iranian president was addressing the unveiling ceremony of an Iranian homegrown hypersonic missile on Tuesday morning. Raeisi further said the Islamic Republic started attempts to become independent in the defense sector during the 1980s Iraqi imposed war that saw the bombardment of many Iranian cities. Highlighting the peaceful nature of Iran's defense power, he said some officials from regional states said, "Iran is a friend of difficult times and that there was nothing left of their country if it was not for the efforts of anti-terror General Qassem Soleimani and the IRGC's Quds Force as well as Iran's support for them against an invasion by Takfiris and Daesh terrorists." The Iranian chief executive stressed that the country's missile power means that the region will be safe from villains

and foreign aggressions. Therefore, he added, Iran's missile power conveys "a message of security to the people of the region. Its message to those who are thinking about attacking Iran is that the Islamic Republic is a powerful country and that its might is to support the Iranian nation and the world's oppressed." The Aerospace Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) unveiled the hypersonic missile named Fattah. The hypersonic missile has a range of 1,400 kilometers, hits speeds of Mach 13-15 and can breach and destroy all anti-missile shields. Chief Commander of the IRGC Major General Hossein Salami, and the Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh were also at the ceremony. The preci-

sion-guided missile also features excellent maneuverability and stealth ability to pass through radar systems. With a solid fuel propulsion system and a second-stage mobile nozzle, the missile has the ability to reach very high speeds and perform various maneuvers in and out of the Earth's atmosphere in order to overcome all types of air defense systems. Addressing the unveiling ceremony, Hajizadeh said Iran is now among only four countries that have the technology to manufacture hypersonic missiles. Unlike other types of missiles, Fattah cannot be countered by any defense system, he said, adding that the hypersonic missile cannot be destroyed by any missile due to its movement in various directions and heights. "Our activities in this field do not end with the manufacturing of this missile.—Agencies

Senegal violence threatens country's stability

DAKAR: Senegal experts called on the government on Monday to instill calm after days of the deadliest violence in years and concerns it could have lasting consequences. Days of clashes between security forces and supporters of opposition leader Ousmane Sonko have killed at least 16 people and injured hundreds of others. Police have arrested 500 people, some of whom used Molotov cocktails and weapons. "There's the threat of chaos. The threat of civil war," Alioune Tine, founder of Afrikajom Center, a West African think tank, told The Associated Press in an interview Monday in the capital, Dakar. "We have never ever lived this situation in Senegal ... We cannot go fighting among ourselves and we have to stop now, to make peace now, to be united now." The clashes first broke out last Thursday, after Sonko was convicted of corrupting youth but acquitted on charges of raping a woman who worked at a massage parlor and making death

threats against her. Sonko, who didn't attend his trial in Dakar, was sentenced to two years in prison. Sonko came third in Senegal's 2019 presidential election and is popular with the country's youth. His supporters maintain his legal troubles are part of a government effort to derail his candidacy in the 2024 presidential election. Under Senegalese law, Sonko's conviction could bar him from running. While Senegal, a country of around 17 million people, has experienced upheaval before, rights groups and analysts say the current clashes are the worst political crisis the nation has seen since 1988, when a general strike and electoral protest shook the power of the then president, Amnesty International researcher Ousmane Diallo said. At the heart of the unrest are fears that President Macky Sall will run for a third term. The constitution limits presidents to two five-year terms. But Sall argues that a con-

stitutional reform adopted in 2016 allows him to reset the clock and seek another term. "My massive worry is that we are only on the premises of the violence cycle in Senegal as the (possible) announcement of a third mandate run by Macky Sall could trigger a massive popular uprising and violence Senegal has never seen so far," said Guillaume Soto-Mayor, researcher at the Middle East Institute. Some extremely young people are dying daily, and Senegal and its democratic system are possibly on the brink of collapse, he said. Other Senegalese experts warn that if the violence continues it might not only destabilize the country but could be an opening for jihadi violence, which has already wracked much of the region, including in neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso. Some families have lost relatives who weren't involved in the protests, but have suffered the consequences of the unrest. Elhaji Cisse was walking home after praying at

the mosque Friday evening when he was shot in the shoulder by a bullet. The 26-year-old was rushed to hospital, but died minutes later. He was about to study abroad in Canada, said his family. "Elhaji was not a demonstrator. He was a good patriot. He was interested in everything that was happening in the country ... He went to pray, but when he came back, they threw tear gas. He stepped aside to avoid the grenades. Then the gendarmes were there and they shot," said Djimbala Ba, his brother. The AP cannot independently verify how Cisse was killed, however demonstrators have reported the use of live bullets. On Monday, dozens of emotional friends and relatives gathered to pray around Cisse's body outside a mosque near his house. They later followed his body to the cemetery in a procession of motorbikes, buses and cars. While a cautious calm returned to Dakar on Monday, with traffic re-

suming and some people going back to work after days of shattering inside, many are bracing for what lies ahead. Sonko's house is under tight security, and he hasn't been seen or heard from since the verdict and it's unclear when or if he'll be detained and taken to prison. Sall also hasn't addressed the nation. Violence erupted in March 2021, killing at least 14 people during clashes when authorities arrested Sonko for disturbing public order on the way to his court hearing. Religious leaders, who hold significant influence in the country, were key in bringing both sides to the table to quell the violence, analysts say. Since last week's clashes erupted, some religious leaders have appealed for calm. Over the weekend, Serigne Mountakha Mbacque, caliph of the Mouride brotherhood, Senegal's most influential religious order, called on people in the city of Touba, the brotherhood's headquarters, to stop demonstrating and return home.—Agencies

Normandy marks D-Day's 79th anniversary

ON OMAHA BEACH: An overwhelming sound of gunfire and men's screams. That's how World War II veteran Marie Scott described D-Day, as Tuesday's ceremonies got underway in honor of those who fought for freedom in the largest naval, air and land operation in history. This year's tribute to the young soldiers who died in Normandy also reminds veterans, officials and visitors what Ukraine faces today. On Tuesday, the whistling sound of the wind accompanied many reenactors who came to Omaha Beach at dawn to mark the 79th anniversary of the assault that led to the liberation of France and Western Europe from Nazi control. Some brought bunches of flowers; others waved American flags. Scott lived it all through her ears. She was just 17 when she was posted as communication operator in Portsmouth, Britain. Her job was to pass on messages between men on the ground and Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and senior officers who were supervising the operation.

"I was in the war. I could hear gunfire, machine guns, bombing aircraft, men screaming, shouting, men giving orders," she recalled. "After a few moments of horror, I realized what was happening ... and I thought, well, you know, there's no time for horror. You've got a job to do. So get on with it. Which is what I did."—APP

Polish Supreme Court overturns presidential pardon

WARSAW: Poland's Supreme Court on Tuesday overturned a contentious presidential pardon of a top government official and three subordinates and ordered a retrial of their case. The surprise ruling in the years-long legal dispute surrounding the pardon went against the interests of the governing nationalist party. As such, it was a rare act of independence from a top court after years of efforts by the Law and Justice party and President Andrzej Duda to establish greater control over the judiciary. An aide to Duda criticized the court's ruling, arguing that it didn't have the right to reverse his pardon. A governing party spokesman, Rafal Bochenek, slammed the court ruling as "anti-democratic." Opposition politicians who accuse government authorities of eroding democratic norms welcomed the court's ruling in the case of Mariusz Kaminski, who is currently the interior minister and head of the secret services.—Agencies

France: Protesters cut power supply of media headquarters

PARIS: Protesters in France on Tuesday cut the power supply of some media outlets' headquarters outside Paris. Workers and trade unions in France gathered for a new day of mass mobilizations against the government's pension reform, according to media reports. They cut the power supply of the region Issy-les-Moulineaux, outside the capital, where the headquarters of France Medias Monde (including broadcasters RFI and France 24), as well as the telecommunication company Orange, and Microsoft France, are located, the daily Le Figaro reported. A group of protesters also infiltrated the headquarters of the Paris Olympics in the Parisian suburb Saint-Denis, the same source noted. The intruders chanted peacefully, carrying the banners of their unions. Trade unions and workers are insisting on their objection to the government's pension reform, which was adopted on March 16 and is set to enter into force on Sept. 1. Protests and massive walkouts started across the country, with authorities expecting up to 600,000 people in total, Le Figaro added.—APP

Briefs

Pakistan issues 215 visas to Sikh pilgrims

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi has issued 215 visas to Sikh pilgrims coming from India for Jor Mela - an annual festival held in Lahore to mark the death anniversary of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. According to a statement issued on Tuesday by the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, festivities will be held in Pakistan from June 8 to 17 this year. The issuance of visas is in line with the Government of Pakistan's commitment to fully implement the Bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines of 1974, read the statement. It added that every year a "large number of Indian Yatries visit the country to observe various religious festivals and occasions". Chargé d'Affaires Salman Sharif wished the pilgrims a rewarding and fulfilling journey. He said that Pakistan remains committed to preserving sacred religious places as well as providing necessary facilitation to the visiting pilgrims.

Saudi Arabia, Israel should normalise ties: Blinken

DNA

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on Monday for the normalisation of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel on the eve of his visit to the Arab power. "The United States has a real national security interest in promoting normalisation between Israel and Saudi Arabia," Blinken said in a speech to the powerful pro-Israel lobby AIPAC. "We believe we can and indeed we must play an integral role in advancing it," Blinken said. He said the administration of President Joe Biden has "no illusions" that bringing about full Saudi-Israeli diplomatic relations can be done quickly or easily. "But we remain committed to working toward that outcome, including on my trip this week to Jeddah and Riyadh for engagements with Saudi and Gulf counterparts," he said.

Bilawal, Iraqi minister discuss ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday met with the Iraqi interior minister Abdul Amir al Shammari in Baghdad and discussed matters of mutual interest. During the meeting, the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in raising human relations on both sides. A flexible visa regime for Pakistani pilgrims and the business community was also discussed in the meeting. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday met with the head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq Humam Hamoudi in Baghdad and discussed matters of bilateral interest.

Japan-funded model police stations inaugurated in KP

The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, H.E WADA Mitsuhiro, underlined, "Supporting security and justice sector institutions to provide people-oriented and gender-responsive services, especially in post-merger districts, is crucial in maintaining the rule of law in KP"

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan, the Government of Japan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Police jointly inaugurated the Model Police Stations in Kalaya, Orakzai District and in Ghalanai, Mohmand District, in a ceremony held in Islamabad today. The Model Police Stations are unique police centres in merged districts, as they provide a range of new facilities to better serve the people of merged districts. Amongst others, these include a gender-responsive desk to address gender-based crimes reported to the police stations, a hall to convene joint community and police meetings, an investigation room, an office for station house officers, security posts, lodging facilities to accommodate 55 police personnel and separate holding rooms for men and women. The Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, Mr Akhtar Hayat Khan, appraised the partnership with UNDP Pakistan and the Government of Japan to enhance access to justice services for people in the province including merged districts. "I am delighted to be here today, to inaugurate the first of its kind Model Police Station of Mohmand and Orakzai, which is a result of the collaboration between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, UNDP Pakistan and the Government of Japan. This



Model Police Station is one of the many initiatives that we are taking to strengthen the rule of law and provide better services to the citizens of these merged districts. These facilities will ensure that the police can respond to the needs and grievances of the people in a timely and effective manner. I hope that this Model Police Station will serve as an example for other police stations across the country."

are excited to be a part of this important journey, and are grateful to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police and UNDP Pakistan for their continual efforts to build peaceful and just communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including merged districts." "Model Police Stations equipped and training provided to former Levies and Khasadars integrated into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police will ensure an improved formal policing and justice system in merged areas" stated Ms Aliona Niculita, Officer In-Charge, UNDP Pakistan. Together, we remain resolute in enhancing people's access to more inclusive, accessible, and efficient access to justice and security services in merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly for women and other marginalised groups." In 2022, under the same project, the UNDP Pakistan Rule of Law Programme also trained over 250 former Levies/Khasadar who were newly integrated into KP Police on professional people-friendly police services. Additionally, in the same year, the first-ever Policing Plans were developed and launched for the seven merged districts of KP to restore people-centred, accountable, and responsive policing in the region. In the near future, three more Model Police Stations will be established in Bajaur, North Waziristan and Kurram to support Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police in their efforts to improve security services in merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Iran debates new penalties for veil violations

DNA

TEHRAN: An Iranian draft law that would set new penalties for women not wearing a headscarf in public has sparked heated debate within the Islamic republic's leadership as more women flout the country's strict dress code. Since the aftermath of the Islamic revolution of 1979, women have been required to cover their hair and neck in public places, with offenders facing fines or prison terms of up to two months. But a growing number are defying the law and appearing bareheaded in the streets. The trend accelerated during the nationwide protests sparked by the September death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurdish woman arrested for allegedly violating the law. The protests rocked Iran, provoking a crackdown by authorities that claimed the lives of hundreds of people, including dozens of security personnel, and saw thousands more arrested.

Dozens of bodies unclaimed after train crash

DNA

NEW DELHI: Indian authorities have made fervent appeals to families to help identify dozens of unclaimed bodies kept in hospitals and mortuaries, days after 275 people were killed in the country's deadliest rail crash in at least two decades. The disaster struck on Friday when a passenger train hit a stationary freight train, jumped the tracks and hit another passenger train passing in the opposite direction near the district of Balasore in the eastern state of Odisha. Till Monday evening, about 100 bodies were yet to be identified, a senior state health department official told the Reuters news agency. Journalist Ume-Kulsoom, reporting from state capital Bhubaneswar, said there was a desperate situation at a medical facility in the city where most of the bodies were brought in after the train accident.

Afghan governor killed in car bombing

KABUL: The acting governor of a northeastern Afghan province has been killed in a car bombing, officials said, months after the region's police chief was killed in a similar attack claimed by an affiliate of the ISIL (ISIS) group. The bomber rammed a car filled with explosives into the vehicle carrying Nisar Ahmad Ahmad, acting governor of northern Badakhshan, in provincial capital Faizabad. It was not clear who was behind the bombing, which was the first known attack on a Taliban official in Afghanistan in several weeks. Muazuddin Ahmad, the head of culture and information in the province, said the governor was the target of the attack. Security has improved since the Taliban stormed back to power in August 2021, removing the US-backed government and ending their two-decade fighting, but ISIL remains a threat. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed during the Taliban's armed rebellion against US-led foreign forces. - DNA

US wants to see prosperous and stable Pakistan: Patel

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States wants to see a prosperous and stable Pakistan, State Department principal deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel has said. Addressing a regular press briefing in Washington about the recent political developments in Pakistan Patel said, a prosperous and stable Pakistan is in the interest of US-Pakistan relations. Vedant Patel has said that the United States gets in touch with Pakistan directly on the issues that are of importance to

Washington and also to broader regional security and stability. "We are engaged with Pakistan directly on several issues and added that a statement cannot be given on every diplomatic contact," the State Department spokesperson remarked. Answering a question, Vedant Patel said: "We engage directly with our Pakistani partners on the issues that are of importance to the United States and are of importance to broader regional security and stability." "We, of course, want to see a prosperous and stable Pakistan," Patel said, adding that was in the interest of US-Pa-

kistan relations. The spokesperson was also asked about Dr Afia Siddiqui, the Pakistani neuroscientist who has been in US jail for over 20 years, and was recently allowed to meet her sister for the first time in over 20 years. He said he would refer the issue to relevant law enforcement authorities. "I don't have anything to offer from up here as it relates to that." To another question, the spokesperson said that he would not "speculate or hypothesize" about Dr Shakeel Afridi, who allegedly helped US operators locate Osama bin Laden, and now serving a

jail term in Pakistan. "I also am not going to get into the specifics of the case given privacy concerns," he added. Earlier on May 31, Dr Fowzia met her sister Dr. Aafia Siddiqui in Fort Worth town of the United States where she is currently detained, after the long wait of 20 years. British attorney Clive Stafford Smith accompanied Dr. Fowzia Siddiqui to meet her sister. According to JI Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan, Aafia Siddiqui is currently being detained at the infamous FMC Carswell prison. Dr. Aafia Siddiqui has been granted the right to meet her family.

Senior lawyer gunned down in Quetta

DNA

QUETTA: Unknown armed men shot a senior lawyer Abdul Razaq at Airport Road Quetta on Tuesday. According to police sources, the victim was near Airport Road when armed assailants opened fire at him and fled from the scene. As a result, he died on the spot after receiving bullet wounds. The body of the deceased was shifted to Quetta civil hospital for medico-legal formalities. Lawyer community strongly condemned the killing of the senior lawyer Abdul Razaq. The lawyer associations pro-

tested against the incident and demanded the government to arrest the murders of the advocate. Further investigation was underway. Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo while taking notice of the murder, condemned the incident and expressed his deep sorrow on the killing of Abdul Razaq Advocate. The Chief Minister also directed to Inspector General Police (IGP) to take all possible measures to arrest murderers and to submit report after completion of investigations. He instructed the IG to take steps to enhance security measures in order to ensure protection of people's lives and property.

Bushra moves LHC to avoid possible arrest

LAHORE: Bushra Bibi, the wife of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan - on Tuesday filed a petition in the Lahore High Court - seeking a blanket cover in all cases registered against her across the country. The move came amid the ongoing crackdown against the party leadership following May 9 attacks on civil and military installations, a day the army dubbed as "Black

Day". In her petition, the former first lady feared she could be arrested in any case and sought details of all the disclosed and undisclosed cases registered against her in the country. The ex-prime minister's wife pleaded with the court to issue an order restraining the police and law enforcers from arresting her in any undisclosed case. She made federal and provincial governments, IGs, FIA and other bodies parties in her case. It is pertinent to mention here that the NAB, Rawalpindi, had summoned the ex-first lady on Wednesday (tomorrow) to record her statement as a trustee of the Al-Qadir University Trust in the £190 million National Crime Agency (NCA) UK settlement case. - DNA

UK reputation at 'rock bottom': Prince Harry

Democracy fails when your press fails to scrutinise and hold the government accountable, and instead choose to get into bed with them so they can ensure the status quo"



LONDON: Prince Harry on Tuesday hit out at close ties between the UK media and government as he sued a tabloid newspaper group for illegal reporting methods, accusing both of damaging the country. British royals have largely followed the same practice as the monarch, who as head of state of a constitutional monarchy is supposed to be above politics. As such, they have steered clear of publicly commenting about the government of the day. But Harry - now self-exiled in the United States - waded into a longstanding debate about government links to news organisations, as part of his case against Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) Ltd. The Duke of Sussex, as he is formally known, maintained in his witness statement to London's High Court that he was not bringing the case out of a vendetta against the tabloids. Instead, he said, he wanted to "properly hold the people who have hijacked" the "privileges and powers

of the press and have used illegal or unlawful means for their own gain and agendas". Harry, 38, said those responsible had "showed no willingness to change" and needed to be exposed, to prevent others suffering the same fate as he had. "On a national level, at the moment, our country is judged globally by the state of our press and our government, both of which I believe are at rock bottom," he said. "Democracy fails when your press fails to scrutinise and hold the government accountable, and instead choose to get into bed with them so they can ensure the status quo." UK national newspapers are predominantly right-leaning towards the ruling Conservatives of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. - Agencies

Moscow says 71 soldiers killed repelling attacks

MOSCOW: Russia said on Tuesday dozens of its soldiers were killed when repelling a long-awaited Ukrainian offensive, a rare admission of losses among Moscow's forces. "For three days, the Ukrainian regime has launched a long-promised offensive in different sectors of the front," Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said. "In total, 71 servicemen were killed and 210 were wounded." On Monday Russia said it repelled a "large-scale offensive" while Ukraine praised successes in and around the eastern city of Bakhmut. Contrasting claims came amid speculation surrounding the widely-expected counteroffensive from Ukraine. Kyiv said there would be no announcement of when it would start. - APP

Ukraine war: Villagers flee floods after dam destroyed

Both sides blame each other for the destruction of the Dam

KHERSON: A torrent of water burst through a massive dam on the Dnipro River that separates Russian and Ukrainian forces in southern Ukraine on Tuesday, flooding a swathe of the war zone and forcing villagers to flee. Ukraine accused Russia of blowing up the Nova Kakhovka dam in a deliberate war crime. The Kremlin said it was Ukraine that had sabotaged the dam, to distract attention from the launch of a major counteroffensive Moscow says is faltering. Some Russian-installed officials said the dam had collapsed on its own. Neither side offered immediate public evidence of who was to blame. The Geneva Conventions explicitly ban targeting dams in war because of the danger to civilians. By mid-morning in the city of Kherson in Ukrainian government-controlled territory downstream from the dam, a pier on a tributary of the Dnipro had already been submerged. Ukrainian police released video of an officer carrying an elderly woman to safety and others rescuing dogs in villages being evacuated as the waters rose. Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko accused Russia of shelling areas from where people were being evacuated and said two police officers were wounded. On the Russian-controlled bank

of the Dnipro, the Moscow-installed mayor of Nova Kakhovka said water levels had risen to 11 metres (36 feet). The Kazkova Dibrova zoo on the Russian-held riverbank was completely flooded and all 300 animals were dead, a representative said via the zoo's Facebook account. The small town of Oleshky, on the Russian-controlled bank of the Dnipro, was almost completely flooded, a Russian-appointed regional official said on Tuesday. "Evacuation ... is possible only using special equipment," Andrei Alexeyenko, chairman of the Russian-appointed government of Ukraine" Kherson province, said on Telegram. The dam supplies water to a wide area of southern Ukrainian farmland, including the Russian-occupied Crimean peninsula, as well as cooling the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. The vast reservoir behind the dam is one of the main geographic features of southern Ukraine, 240 km (150 miles) long and up to 23 km (14 miles) wide. Ukraine and Russia have both asked the U.N. Security Council to meet to discuss the dam. Ukraine accused Russia of an "ecological and technological act of terrorism", while Russia described it as an 'act of sabotage carried out by Ukraine'. - Agencies

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