



# Islamabad POST

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**Blinken kicks off Saudi visit aimed at mending ties**

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**VP Mike Pence enters Republican presidential**

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**Japan supports Sweden NATO joining bid**

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**Those who rebelled against state**

## Army calls for tightening the 'noose of law'

Top military brass say claims of human rights allegations meant to mislead people

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: The top brass of Pakistan's military on Wednesday vowed to tighten the "noose of law" around "planners and masterminds who mounted a hate-ripened and politically-driven rebellion against the state and state institutions". According to a press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the consensus came during the 81st Formation Commanders Conference at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. Formation Commanders' Conference is one of the military's larger forums, which usually meets annually for discussion on strategy, operational and training matters, besides deliberating on organisational issues. The conference was presided over by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir with Corps Commanders, Principal Staff Officers and all Formation Commanders of the Pakistan Army in attendance.

"The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of shuhada (martyrs) including officers and men of the armed Forces, law enforcement agencies and shuhada from civil society who laid [down] their lives for the safety, security and dignity of the country," the military's media wing said. It quoted the top brass as asserting that "the state of Pakistan and armed forces will always keep shuhada and their families in the highest esteem and will continue to honour them". The participants were briefed on the prevalent environment, challenges to security i.e. both internal and external and their own operational preparedness in response to evolving threats, both traditional and non-traditional, the ISPR said. Addressing the forum, the army chief reiterated that the Pakistan Army would remain committed to the national obligations of safeguarding the "territorial integrity and sovereignty" of the country. The people of Pakistan and their deep bond with the Armed Forces are and will remain central to all our undertakings and events of

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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of MNAs from KP merged districts call on Prime Minister. – DNA

### PM directs special projects for merged districts

The PM said development of the people of merged districts of KP is the priority of govt

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to include special development projects in the budget for the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He was talking to Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Sajid Hussain Turi and MNAs Mohsin Dawar and Muhammad Jamaluddin in Islamabad on Wednesday. The Prime Minister said development of the people of merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the priority of the government. The delegation gave proposals vis-a-vis the budget for the development of merged districts. The Prime Minister welcomed the suggestions and issued instructions to the relevant authorities to include them in the budget after consultations.

## 'Fooling the nation no more' 'Embattled PTI on a mission to damage the state'

Marriyum says govt committed to provide relief to the people

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said the embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was on a mission to cause damage to the economic, defence, and national interests of the country. Expressing her thoughts, Ms Aurangzeb said, "History is witness that no one can fool the nation every time by resorting to false tactics and propaganda. The social media network was launched with foreign funding to malign the national security institution". "The nation will never forget those working on an anti-state agenda. The cypher and the May 9 riots are two stages of a conspiracy. First, they resorted to propaganda against the United States under the guise of a cipher narrative. Then they beg the US after the May 9 vandalism," Ms Aurangzeb schooled the PTI. Ms Aurangzeb asserted, "First negotiating with the International Monetary Fund

## PTI chief, wife booked in another case

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has registered a case of fraud and forgery against former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi and their close aides for preparing and submitting fake and forged receipts regarding Toshakhana gifts including the rare Graff wristwatch gifted by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the former PM – currently owned by Dubai-based multi-millionaire businessman Umar Farooq Zaheer. After months of evading the topic,

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### Briefs

#### New Iranian ambassador arrives

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, Honorable Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan arrived in Islamabad. The embassy offered heartiest welcome & sincere congratulations at the onset of his diplomatic journey in the brotherly, friendly & neighboring country of Pakistan. It is pertinent to mention here that former Iranian ambassador to Pakistan Seyed Mohammed Ali Hosseini left the country after completing his tenure. During his farewell meetings, the Iranian ambassador appreciated the warm hospitality and support he had received during his tenure in Pakistan.

#### Zardari calls for 'charter of economy'

DNA

LAHORE: As the PPP regains political prowess in Punjab, party's co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday invited all the stakeholders to sit together for the "charter of economy". Addressing a presser, he said if they [stakeholders] were on this, they would find PPP standing beside them and vice versa. "Individuals do not matter, so let's sit down and think beyond," he added. "I am not asking for donations, but your will, thought process, and energy to be able to implement for what I think the world of tomorrow will be," former president.

#### Review law, Punjab polls order

## SC clubs together pleas, issues notices

CJP says SC is striving to ensure the rights of the people

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A three-member bench of the Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday clubbed together pleas against the recently-enacted Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 with the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) petition asking the top court to revisit its April 4 order of holding polls to the Punjab Assembly on May 14. The decision was taken as the bench – comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar – took up the ECP's review petition. During the hearing, CJP Bandial remarked that a number of pleas against the new law had been filed with the top court and decided to hear them alongside the ECP's review petition. He also issued notices to the federal government, AGP Awan, the president through



the principal secretary, Ministry for Parliamentary Affairs and Secretariat Senate. The hearing was adjourned till June 13. At the outset of the hearing, the bench called PTI lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar to the rostrum and asked about his stance on the review of judgments law. "The new law is inconsistent with the Constitution and is a continuation of the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023," the lawyer said. Zafar also suggested that

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## Ukrainians battle flood waters from destroyed dam

NEWS DESK

KYIV: Ukrainians abandoned their inundated homes as floodwaters crested across a swathe of the south on Wednesday after the destruction of a vast dam on the front line between Russian and Ukrainian forces that each blamed on the other. Residents waded through flooded streets carrying children on their shoulders, dogs in their arms and belongings in plastic bags while rescuers used rubber boats to search areas where the waters reached above head height. Ukraine said the flood would leave hundreds of thousands of people without access to drinking water, swamp tens of thousands of hectares of agricultural land and turn more into deserts. "If the water rises for another metre, we will lose our house," said Oleksandr Reva, in a village on the bank, who was moving his family's belongings into the abandoned home of a neighbour on higher ground. A roof of a house could be seen being swept down the Dnipro River in a torrent.

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## Erdogan proposes international probe

DNA

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has proposed setting up an international commission to investigate the destruction of Ukraine's Kakhovka dam in calls with his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts. In a phone call with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Wednesday, Erdogan said the commission can include the participation of experts from Russia, Ukraine, the United Nations, and the international community, including Türkiye. Erdogan made the same proposal during a separate call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying that "it is important to carry out a comprehensive investigation into the explosion at the

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# Clean and healthy food is basic right of every citizen

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that clean and healthy food is the basic right of every citizen. World Food Safety Day draws our attention to providing healthy food to citizens. Nutrition and food security are closely related. Unsafe food is a major obstacle in creating a healthy society, the government needs to work with all stakeholders to formulate a policy that is both viable and protects the interests of the consumer. He expressed these views while speaking at a rally organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Islamabad Administration and Food Authority on the occasion of World Food Safety Day on Wednesday. On this occasion, Director Islamabad Food Authority Dr. Tahira Siddique, Dr. Jawaria, Head of Food and Agriculture Foundation Dr. Afzal also partici-

pated in the rally. President Islamabad Chamber said that healthy and clean food is necessary for building a healthy society, Islamabad is an example for other cities of Pakistan. Food standards here are many times better than other regions of the country. Pakistan is one of the few largest countries in the world in terms of population. The bigger our population, the more challenges we face. Providing clean and healthy food to such a large population is a challenge that we can all tackle together. He said that in this regard, the government along with all the stakeholders needs to formulate a policy that is feasible and also protects the interests of the consumer. In Pakistan over the past years, the impact of climate change has affected food security, but it has also affected food safety. Speaking on the occasion, Director of Islamabad Food Authority Dr. Tahira

Siddique said that the team of Islamabad Food Authority is actively working to provide safe food in different areas of the federal capital. He said that the food authority has controlled this problem to a great extent due to better performance, it is the priority of all of us to ensure the supply of clean and hygienic products to the citizens who spend money. He said that they are trying to implement the international standards regarding food. The purpose of this rally is also to provide awareness among the citizens, he said that I am grateful for the cooperation from the Islamabad Chamber. Islamabad Food Authority will work together with the Chamber regarding awareness. On this occasion, President of the Market Committee of F-10 Markaz Ahmed Khan, General Secretary Naeem Iqbal, Khalid Chaudhry, Shahbaz Chauhan, Zia Chaudhry and others participated.



## Elected members on 121 specific seats in KMC Council sworn-in

DNA

KARACHI: The swearing-in ceremony of elected members on 121 specific seats in the KMC council was held on Wednesday at the City Council Hall. Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Iqbal Memon administered the oath of membership to the members of the city council elected on specific seats. Municipal Commissioner KMC Syed Shujaat Hussain was also present on the occasion. Members of the City Council took an oath under the Local Government Act 2013. Member Noor Jahan and Laila Parveen belonging to the Pakistan People's Party and elected representative of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Iqbal Bano were absent from the swearing-in ceremony.

These seats are allotted to different parties on the basis of their victory in the UC elections which include women, labor, minority, youth, disabled and eunuch seats, out of total 81 seats for women, Pakistan People's Party has 34, Jamaat-e-Islami 29, PTI 14, Pakistan Muslim League (N) three and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam got one seat, out of total 12 youth seats, Pakistan Peoples Party got 5, Jamaat-e-Islami got four, PTI got two and Pakistan Muslim League (N) got one seat. Out of the total 12 seats of labor, Pakistan Peoples Party has got five, Jamaat-e-Islami four, PTI two and Pakistan Muslim League (N) one seat. Out of the total 12 seats of minorities, Pakistan Peoples Party has got five, Jamaat-e-Islami four, PTI two and Pakistan Muslim League (N) one seat. Similarly out of the total 12 seats of youth Pakistan Peoples Party got five, Jamaat-e-Islami got four seats, PTI got two seats and Pakistan Muslim League (N) got one seat. Pakistan Peoples Party and Jamaat-e-Islami have got one seat each out of the total two seats for the disabled, while one seat each of the eunuch has also gone to the Pakistan Peoples Party and Jamaat-e-Islami. The selection of members has been done as per Sindh Local Government Act 2013.

## Ashrafi stands firm in defense of blasphemy law

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi Wednesday addressed concerns regarding the propagation of false information against the blasphemy law and Namooos-e-Risalat. In a conference held at the National Press Club, he emphasized that these laws had been instrumental in maintaining peace and tranquillity within the country. During the 'Conference on Stability of Pakistan' organized by Jamiat Islamiya Pakistan, Ashrafi reaffirmed that the Ulema and Maskaykh (religious scholars) stood united in their defence of these sacred laws. He emphasized that the blasphemy law had never been misused in history and would continue to be protected at all costs in the future. Regarding the unfortunate incidents of violence on May 9, Ashrafi denounced the perpetrators as terrorists engaged in anti-state activities. He urged that they must be brought to justice through military courts. Expressing disappointment with the current judiciary system, Ashrafi highlighted the large number of pending cases that were not receiving adequate attention, particularly those affecting the underprivileged segments of society. Ashrafi also drew attention to certain individuals with dual nationalities who were conspiring against Pakistan and calling for international sanctions based on alleged human rights violations. He condemned the attacks

on the residence of the core commander in Lahore, the Radio Pakistan building in Peshawar, and the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. He emphasized that such actions disrespected the sacrifices made by national heroes who laid down their lives for the country's security and sovereignty. Furthermore, Ashrafi expressed his dismay at the torching of a mosque, located in the core commander's house during the May 9 unrest. He called upon the government and judiciary to expedite the trials of those responsible and ensure that they would face exemplary punishment, aiming to prevent the recurrence of such heinous acts in the future. Ashrafi shared that the Pakistan Ulema Council would host a grand gathering at Al-Hamra Hall in Lahore on Sunday, June 11. This convention aimed to foster interfaith harmony, address human rights concerns, and develop strategies to prevent the misuse of the blasphemy law in relation to the desecration of religion and Namooos-e-Risalat, he added. In solidarity with the national security institutions, Chief Allama Akbar Saqi and Secretary General Allama Sibtain Sherazi of Jamiat Islamiya Pakistan also spoke at the conference. The upcoming gathering organized by the Pakistan Ulema Council would hold great significance as it would bring together a thousand Ulema, Mashaykh, religious scholars, and representatives from various segments of society to address critical issues and promote harmony. — APP

## Development of archeological sites stressed for religious tourism

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Minister of State and Chairman of the Prime Minister's Task Force for Gandhara Tourism, Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani on Wednesday called for the promotion of archeological sites especially, Gandhara to highlight the positive image of Pakistan at the global level. Talking to the media on the occasion of his visit to the historical and archeological sites in Takht Bahi, district Mardan, he said that thousands of years ago, Takht Bahi was an important cradle of education and training during the Gandhara civilization and still this site has many things to teach. Ambassadors of Indonesia and Thailand, Diplomats of Nepal, China and Bangladesh and students living in China, Pakistan, civil society, foreigners and media representatives also accompanied the state minister. Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani said the federal and provincial governments should have to work together to extend facilities including visa, accommodation and others to foreigners to promote tourism. He said that mentioning Gandhara civilization was incomplete without reference to the great Maharaja

Ashoka whose territories included present day Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. He said that as chairman of the Prime Minister's Task Force on Gandhara Tourism, he was visiting different sites in the country to check the missing facilities and coordinate with the line departments to develop these sites according to international standards. Kumar said that he has great respect for every religion and people should be facilitated to visit the archaeological sites to promote inter-faith harmony besides promoting tourism to strengthen the economy.

He said that recently, he visited Shah Allah Ditta in Islamabad and on Wednesday he would go to Swat as part of efforts to promote tourism. Kumar deplored that the past KP government didn't take any pragmatic step to promote the archeological sites, especially religious sites in the province, adding that he was working on different plans to promote tourism. He urged bureaucracy, business community and media to play their imperative role in promotion of these sites and attracting foreign tourists.

Speaking on the occasion, the diplomats expressed their happiness that they had the opportunity to visit the Gandhara-era Takht Bahi holy place, which is the wish of every Buddha in the world to visit. Ambassador of Indonesia Adem M Tugio said that it was a good moment for him that he visited the Gandhara site, adding that measures should be taken to facilitate the foreign tourists to visit these sites in Pakistan without any difficulty. Thai Ambassador Chakkrid said that it was an amazing day for

him that he had visited the site and emphasized on special efforts to promote such sites as the people of his country wanted to visit these areas. Earlier, Incharge Sub Regional Office Mian Wahab Shah briefed the delegation about the 2500-years old history of Gandhara civilizations and its remains in the province. He said that approximately 1000 to 1500 tourists including foreigners were visiting this site on weekends which was generating opportunities for local people.



## Grand Katcha Operation continues

LAHORE: Under the direction of Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, the Grand Katcha operation of Punjab Police continued on the 60th day and the brave soldiers of the police continued their intelligence-based operations, thwarting the nefarious intentions of the Katcha dacoits. The IG Punjab said that the police teams are always ready and willing to maintain law and order in the cleared areas and ensure the protection of life and property of the people along with the destruction of the criminals. He directed that targeted operations and intelligence-based operations of police teams should be expedited to nab criminals and ensure the elimination of robbers as well as their facilitators. Punjab Police spokesperson said that twelve dangerous dacoits were killed, more than eight were injured, 26 surrendered while 51 dacoits were arrested during the operation. The spokesperson said that around 60,000 acres of land considered as no-go area was cleared while 03 police community schools and 02 dispensaries were established in the cleared areas. — APP

## Hashoo Foundation strives for early education

ISLAMABAD: Hashoo Foundation, being a knowledge based and impact oriented organization has always focused on education and childhood development. In this regard, Hashoo Foundation held a stakeholder convention in Upper Dir, under its Education Quality Improvement Project funded by USAID. The convention held with the purpose of bringing together educators, administrators, parents, civil society organizations, religious leaders, government officials and community leaders. This provided a platform to highlight the importance of early education and foster meaningful discussions on how to enhance educational opportunities for young learners, specifically out of school children. Deputy Commissioner Mr. Gohar Zaman, Congratulated Hashoo Foundation on this very important initiative and bringing together all stakeholders to highlight the importance of early education and ensuring meaningful participation of students in the process of development. He highlighted the Government's role in ensuring quality education and childhood development. —DNA



PESHAWAR: Russain Ambassador in Pakistan, Danila Ganich in a group photo with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province Minister for LGE& RDD Advocate Saval Nazar after a Tree Plantation at Ladies Club, university Town Peshawar. — DNA

## Algeria's election to UNSC confirms its presence on global stage

The election reflected the appreciation and respect enjoyed by the Algerian president from the international community and their recognition of his contribution to the establishment of international peace and security, it added

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Algeria to Pakistan Brahim Romani on Wednesday said that Algeria's election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for a two-year term starting from January 1st, 2024 had espoused its position on the international stage as the voice of African, Arab and Muslim countries. In recognition of its pivotal role in its region ALGERIA, Algeria was elected Tuesday in the first round and by an overwhelming majority by the United Nations General Assembly as a non-permanent member of the UNSC. This election took place following the voting of 184 votes out of 192 voters, (96%). "This diplomatic success clearly confirms Algeria presence on

the international stage and supports the vision and approach of the President Abdelmajid Tebboune to preserve peace and security in the world based on peaceful coexistence, peaceful settlement of conflicts, and non-interference in the internal affairs of states, in line with our country's foreign policy that derives its principles, values, and ideals from Algerian glorious liberation revolution," reads a press statement issued here by the Algerian embassy. The election reflected the appreciation and respect enjoyed by the Algerian president from the international community and their recognition of his contribution to the establishment of international peace and security, it added. The statement said that Algeria aspired to contribute to the work of the UNSC.

It was determined to focus its efforts on enhancing international peace and security, revitalizing multilateral action, strengthening partnerships, promoting the principles and values of non-alignment, and continuing efforts to combat terrorism. Additionally, it added, Algeria sought to enhance the participation of women and youth in international endeavors. "Algeria would also strive to amplify the voice of African, Arab and Muslim countries and defend common strategic interests in various issues falling within the mandate of the UNSC. Algeria further reaffirms its steadfast and purposeful determination to defend just causes within its spheres of affiliation and to promote all its aspirations and hopes within the Security Council," it concluded.

اجدالت جناب سدره بانو چو پدری صاحب سول شیج  
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ولد محمد ارشاد ساکن جکی آبادی توحید آباد چکالہ راولپنڈی  
ہر گاہ و مکان بالا میں مدد علیہ کو بذریعہ اخبار شہنشاہ مطلع کیا  
جاتا ہے کہ آپ اس سال وکال مورخہ  
08-6-2023 کو شیج 8 بجے عدالت حاضر ہوں  
ورث کاروائی یکطرفہ عمل میں لائی جائے گی۔

PAKISTAN NAVY

TENDER NOTICE (01/2023)

1. Sealed bids are invited from reputed GST registered suppliers for provision of Stationery, Furniture, Conservancy, IT and Misc items to NHQ Islamabad. Bidding documents may be obtained on working days from 0900 to 1400 hours before the closing date.
2. Supplier must be registered with Government of Pakistan for sales / NTN and professional Taxes. The supplier must also be registered with HQ COM-NOR E-8 Islamabad after undergoing through the process of security clearance from concerned Naval Authorities to qualify the technical / Commercial Bid.
3. Bidding will be carried out as per PPRA Rules.
4. Suppliers who are blacklisted by DGDP/Federal/provincial Government will not be entertained.
5. Suppliers having experience of 5 to 10 years will have to submit details of their business along with all relevant documents.
6. The tender should be accompanied by a Bank Draft/ pay order of Rs 100,000/- value as earnest money (refundable in favor of EXO NHQ).
7. Bid shall comprise a single package containing two separate envelopes. Each envelopes shall contain separately the Financial Proposal and Technical Proposal in bold and legible letters to avoid confusion and should reach the undersigned by 1000 hours on 12th July 2023.
8. Technical proposal will be opened on 12th July 2023 at 1000 hours in the presence of the authorized representative of the supplier. Commercial proposal will be opened of successful bidders only
9. The Bids will remain valid for six months from 1st July to 31st December of FY 2023-24 W.e.f 1st July 2023 and contract validity/ duration will be up to 31 December 2023, extendable up to 01 Month.
10. All bidders are to quote their NTN and GST number. Income tax is deducted at source as per Government rules. Quoted rates in the Commercial Proposal will be without GST.
11. In the event of failure on the part of supplier to supply the items on time or supplying below standard item, the items will be purchased at the Risk and Expense of the supplier and difference of rate will be paid by the supplier.
12. The Procuring Agency shall upon request communicate to any supplier or contractor who submitted a bid or proposal, the grounds for its rejection of all bids or proposal, will be justified.

DIRECTOR ADMIN  
NAVAL HEADQUARTERS PID (I) No. 7594/22



## Briefs

## Huawei contributes to talent hunt in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Huawei is actively engaged in talent hunt in Pakistan, providing opportunities to the country's youth to excel in the field of information technology. A well-known company in China Huawei is following a global plan to bring out the best talents in the field of ICT all over the world, says a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. For this purpose, Huawei has engaged various educational institutions throughout the world. Also, it has organized the Huawei ICT Competition 2022-23. The Huawei ICT competition aims to provide a platform for international college students to compete and communicate with each other in ICT. Pakistani students have won prizes in this competition by showing exceptional performance. This was Huawei's seventh competition of its kind. Students from 2,000 universities from 74 countries participated in the preliminary competition before participating in the final. Then 146 teams from 36 countries were selected for the finals.

## CDA takes steps for fulfilling the religious needs of minorities

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has taken significant steps in fulfilling the religious needs of minority communities here. The CDA has allocated two cremation grounds, measuring 0.49 acres and 0.50 acres, for the Hindu and Buddhist communities respectively in Sector H-9. Moreover, graveyards have been provided for Christians (9.01 acres), Bhaïs (1.70 acres), and Qadianis (3.424 acres) in Sector H-9 and Sector H-8. This move aims to ensure that all communities have access to appropriate facilities for their burial rites. CDA has also addressed the issue of sewage treatment and water recycling, highlighting its commitment to environmental sustainability.—APP

## Incentivize foreign remittance in form of tax rebates: RCCI

The speakers also suggested that GST be brought down to single digit or considered full and final tax adjustment and income tax slabs to be rationalized

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has urged the Government to incentivize foreign remittances in form of tax rebates. This step will not only increase foreign exchange reserves but also help in stabilizing the PKR. It was proposed that if an overseas citizen wants to purchase a vehicle or electronic goods 10% rebate in taxes and duties against foreign remittance. 50% discount in registration/taxes shall be offered to overseas Pakistanis in purchase of property, this will attract more foreign remittances. All the auto manufacturers should use each other's locally produced auto parts, this initiative will not only allow the parts to be produced locally but also increase the sales of the vehicles. These views were expressed in a meeting held



on the budget proposals under the chairmanship of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce President Saqib Rafiq and Group Leader Sohail Altaf at chamber house

Rawalpindi. The budget proposals prepared by the Rawalpindi Chamber were discussed in detail and representatives from the different trade associations shared

their views and suggestions. It was demanded that immediate steps should be taken to promote the industry. The liberalization of the economy is the need of the

hour, said Saqib Rafiq and added that it is the high time to put a check on government intervention and promote market-oriented policies. The availability of land on lease can reduce capital investment for industry. Establishment of One Window operations for industry facilitation such as NOC, License etc will attract more investments in industry, he added. He also proposed that, "One District One Product" (ODOP) model can be replicated in Pakistan to promote traditional industries and crafts in each district of the Provinces, with the objective of enhancing local entrepreneurship, generating employment, and boosting the overall economy. Chambers can identify and recommend in the identification of potential products and sectors, he added. The speakers also suggested that GST be brought down to single digit or considered full and final tax adjustment and income tax slabs to be rationalized.

## Reboot of Barter Economy: 1st blow to dollar in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the backdrop of Pakistan's trade shift to barter economy, de-dollarization or lower dependency on the U.S. dollar has set its strong foothold in the country offering Pakistan to revitalize its economy with fewer vulnerabilities from exchange rate risks, balance of payments crisis and inflation. In a strategic move, according to Gwadar Pro, Pakistan recognized the potential of barter trade agreements with countries Iran, Afghanistan, and Russia and implemented 'business-to-business trade mechanism 2023' on June 2 facilitating state-owned and private enterprises in Pakistan to engage in barter trade with all three neighboring countries. This shift aligns with the global trend towards de-dollarization, driven by geopolitical and economic factors. Pakistan's trade with Iran, Afghanistan and Russia has innate potential to swell but US-led trade curbs acted as

a dampener that kept the quadrilateral trade among all neighboring countries at ebb. The bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Iran has stood at around \$2 billion. Pakistan's trade volume with Russia stands at approximately \$400 million. The transit trade volume between Pakistan and Afghanistan is estimated to be around \$1 billion. If executed in true letter and spirit, the barter trade among Pakistan, Iran, Russia and Afghanistan will go manifold. Meanwhile, before subscribing barter trade agreements, Pakistan has also begun importing various essential items from these countries. For instance, Pakistan is importing 100 MW of electricity from Iran, addressing its energy needs through bilateral cooperation. Additionally, Pakistan has initiated the import of crude oil, wheat, and other commodities from Russia. Instead of payment in dollars, Pakistan will settle these transactions through the exchange of commodities or goods, further reinforcing

the de-dollarization policy. The barter trade mechanism is a shot in the arm of Pakistan limping economy. The country of approximately 240 million people is facing significant challenges related to the balance of payments crisis and soaring inflation which reached an alarming rate of nearly 38 percent in May 2023. Pakistan's foreign currency reserves have dwindled to slightly above \$4 billion, a level that can barely sustain imports for a month, according to central bank data. Barter trade presents numerous benefits for Pakistan's economy. By exporting a wide range of goods, including agricultural products, textiles, and sports equipment, Pakistan can showcase its diverse offerings to international markets. Simultaneously, barter trade allows the country to import vital commodities such as crude oil, LNG, and LPG from its trading partners, satisfying its energy requirements and reducing dependence on traditional trading methods. Diversifying imports to include industrial machinery, wheat, pulses,

## ANF recovers over 519 kg drugs; arrests five

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in six operations conducted in different areas of the country, managed to recover over 519 kg of drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that in a raid conducted near Yaro Railway Crossing in Pishin, 400 kg charras was recovered from a truck. ANF also arrested three accused residents of Quetta who were trying to smuggle drugs from Balochistan to Sindh.

On the plantation of the arrested accused, another raid was conducted at a flat on Mir Ahmed Road in Quetta and 40 kg charras were seized. Another accused resident of Quetta was netted from the flat.

In a raid near Pak-Afghan Border in Chaman, 2290 grams of suspected material was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Chaman who was trying to go to Afghanistan. In other raids conducted in Chaman, Panjgur and Nokundi areas, 68 litres of hydrochloric acid, 17 kg of charras and 60 kg of opium were recovered which were stored in deserted areas to smuggle abroad. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

## A new IMF programme must for survival

Shahid Rashid Butt said that until the rulers start working with political determination, the economic problems of the country cannot be solved

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt said on Wednesday that the current alarming situation of the economy is the result of the disastrous policies of the previous government. The national leaders are trying to save their politics instead of doing something for the state, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that instead of announcing plan A and plan B and making decisions based on assumptions, an immediate loan should be taken from the IMF. In a statement issued here today, he said that without the IMF programme, the country will face more inflation, unemployment and lawlessness. The country is going through the worst economic crisis in its history; strict measures and a new IMF program are needed to save the country from bankruptcy. The tough conditions of the IMF are troubling, but without

them, it is impossible to overcome the economic crisis, he added.

The government should control the budget and current account deficits, increase exports, reduce revenue and expenditure and expand the tax net, he said. Time has come for the rulers to see things disregarding the political interests like impose taxes on agricultural income, real estate, wholesalers and retailers and get rid of government companies that lose trillions of rupees annually. Practical and permanent steps should be taken for agriculture re-forms which would improve the rural economy, he said.

Despite being an agricultural country, Pakistan importing agricultural items worth billions of dollars and the present food import bill alone is enough to bankrupt the country, he observed. Shahid Rashid Butt said that until the rulers start working with political determination, the economic problems of the country cannot be solved.

## PML(N) leader demands impartial trial in Toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD: Senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Mohsin Shahnawaz Ranjha on Wednesday emphasized the need for a transparent and unbiased trial in the Toshakhana case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan. Speaking at a press conference, he called upon Imran Khan to appear before the court to face the charges related to the case. He questioned the differential treatment given to Imran Khan compared to other political leaders, such as Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari, who faced trials. Ranjha alleged that the courts had granted special privileges to Imran Khan. He further pointed out that the Islamabad High Court had suspended criminal proceedings against Imran Khan in a case that should not have been exempted under the law. The PML-N leader emphasized that the PTI Chairman had failed to disclose the gifts he retained from Toshakhana in his declarations, warranting the necessity of a fair and just trial.—DNA

## Chinese FDI to Pak reached \$ 347.6 mm in first 10 months of FY 22-23

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has received \$ 347.6 million as Foreign Direct Investment from China in the first 10 months of Fiscal Year 2022-23 (July 2022-April 2023), according to the latest statistics of the Board of Investment Pakistan (BOI). According to BOI, during April Pakistan received another \$ 28.4 million from China, bringing the total Chinese FDI during the ongoing financial year to \$347.6 million. Pakistan has received a total of \$ 1170.1 million in the first ten months of FY 2022-23, with a large share of 29.7% coming from China. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, after China, Japan is the second highest investor in Pakistan with \$ 162.9 million, followed by Switzerland with \$ 131.6 million, UAE with \$ 113.6 million. In the first ten months of the current fiscal year, Pakistan received the highest amount of investments in the power sector, amounting to \$ 504.1 million. In financial businesses, the country has so far received \$ 264.5 million, in the oil and gas sector \$ 128.2 million, in chemicals \$ 39.5 million, in trade \$ 34.4 million, in transport \$ 30.5 million.—DNA

## The challenges to food and taste in Pakistan

SANA SABIR



Food adulteration refers to the act of intentionally adding inferior, harmful, or cheap substances to food products to increase profits or deceive consumers. It is a serious issue that poses significant risks to public health and undermines consumer confidence in the food industry. Adulterants can be added at various stages of food production, including raw materials, processing, packaging, and distribution. Several factors contribute to the prevalence of food adulteration in Pakistan. These include weak regulatory enforcement, lack of proper quality control mechanisms, limited awareness among consumers, and economic pressures on producers and suppliers. Some common forms of food adulteration in Pakistan include: Adulteration of milk is a widespread problem in Pakistan. Water, powdered milk, vegetable oil, and chemicals like formalin are added to increase the volume and viscosity of milk. Other dairy products like yogurt and ghee (clarified butter) may also be adulterated with low-quality ingredients. Spices such as turmeric, chili powder, and black pepper are often adulterated with substances like sawdust, brick powder, and colored dyes. Similarly, condiments like vinegar and cooking oils may be diluted or mixed


with cheaper alternatives. Grains like wheat and rice may be contaminated with sand, stones, or other foreign matter. Flour, a staple in Pakistani cuisine, can be adulterated with substances like chalk, sawdust, or starch. Adulteration of honey is a growing concern worldwide, and Pakistan is no exception. Cheap sweeteners like high fructose corn syrup or sugar syrup may be added to honey to increase its volume and lower production costs. Meat adulteration can involve the use of low-quality or expired meat, as well as the addition of harmful substances like formalin to preserve the meat's appearance and prolong its shelf life. These include the addition of substances such as artificial colors, dyes, pesticides, fertilizers, and preservatives beyond permissible limits. These chemicals can be harmful and may lead to acute or chronic health issues. Food can be adulterated with microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, or parasites, which can cause foodborne illnesses. Adding fillers or diluting food with substances lacking in nutritional value can result in reduced nutrient content and compromised quality. These involve the presence of foreign objects in food, such as stones, glass, plastic, or metal particles, which can cause a choking hazard or cause physical harm if ingested. Adulterating food allows dishonest manufacturers or suppliers to lower production costs by using cheaper substitutes or diluting the product with inferior ingredients. This enables them to maximize their profits at the expense of consumer safety. Sometimes, to meet the high demand for certain food items or cope with shortages, unscrupulous

suppliers may adulterate products to increase the quantity available in the market. This can lead to compromised quality and safety. Adulteration can also be done to enhance the appearance, texture, or shelf life of food products. For example, harmful chemicals or additives may be added to extend the product's freshness or mask spoilage. In some cases, food adulteration is carried out as a deliberate act of deception. For instance, mislabeling a product to make it appear as a higher quality or different variety than it actually is, or adding illegal substances to enhance the sensory attributes of the food.

Preventing food adulteration in Pakistan is crucial to ensure the safety and well-being of its population. To address this major issue, a multi-faceted approach combining regulatory measures, public awareness campaigns, and stringent enforcement is necessary. Firstly, the government should strengthen and strictly enforce existing food safety regulations, conducting regular inspections of food processing units, markets, and supply chains to identify and penalize those involved in adulteration. Stringent punishment and fines for offenders should be implemented to serve as a deterrent. Secondly, public awareness campaigns must be initiated to educate consumers about the risks of food adulteration and empower them to make informed choices. Educational programs, advertisements, and social media campaigns can be employed to raise awareness about the dangers of consuming adulterated food and provide guidance on how to identify and report instances of food adulteration. Additionally, promot-

ing consumer organizations and encouraging active participation in monitoring food quality can help establish a vigilant society that demands safe and unadulterated food. Furthermore, collaboration between government agencies, food producers, and industry associations is vital. Establishing partnerships to share information, expertise, and best practices can enhance surveillance and detection of adulteration. Regular communication channels should be established to encourage stakeholders to report suspected cases of food adulteration promptly. In parallel, research and development efforts should be encouraged to develop advanced testing methods and technologies for rapid and accurate detection of food adulterants. Investing in research institutions and supporting innovative solutions can strengthen the country's ability to tackle emerging challenges in food safety. Lastly, encouraging self-regulation within the food industry is essential. Food manufacturers and suppliers should be encouraged to adopt stringent quality control measures, adhere to good manufacturing practices, and obtain necessary certifications. Government agencies should provide guidance and incentives for businesses to implement robust quality assurance systems, promoting a culture of integrity and responsibility within the food industry. By implementing these comprehensive measures, Pakistan can effectively combat food adulteration as a major issue, safeguarding the health and well-being of its citizens.

The writer is Student of Food Science and Technology University of Okara aroonibi990@



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Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

## TikTok witch-hunt

In the United States, TikTok has been demonized. According to the hawks in Washington, since its parent company ByteDance is headquartered in Beijing, the popular social media platform must be sharing the data of US users with the Chinese government. In the minds of these ideologically biased US politicians, TikTok is nothing but a tool for the Communist Party of China to spy on the millions of Americans who use it every day and manipulate them. It therefore must be banned in the US. All this despite there being no evidence that the Chinese authorities have accessed the information of US citizens on the app, and despite TikTok proposing a \$1.5 billion restructuring project for its US user data to be stored with US software company Oracle in Texas – that is, “American data stored on American soil, by an American company, overseen by American personnel”, as TikTok CEO Shouzi Chew put it.

The witch-hunt now being conducted against TikTok by US politicians cannot but remind people of the McCarthy era. The absurdity of the attack on the app could not have been revealed in a more explicit way than by the recent remarks of US District Court Judge Holly Brady, who lambasted an Indiana attorney general's lawsuit against TikTok for being “political posturing” and nothing more than “hyperbolic allegations”, while ruling that the federal court will not take jurisdiction of the state's civil complaint against TikTok. The Indiana lawsuit, which was filed in December, makes arguments similar to those who allege Beijing could use the video-sharing platform to push pro-China misinformation to the public. A county judge had already ruled against the state attorney general. In a ruling on May 23, Brady wrote that the attorney general's one-sentence thesis statement was “stretched into a work longer than Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*”, and “more than 90 percent of the (lawsuit) was devoted to irrelevant posturing”. “The federal intrigue interjected by Indiana may interest its intended audience ... but it is irrelevant to the determination of this case.”

Many in the US have already expressed worry that the crackdown against TikTok may infringe upon the First Amendment rights of US citizens when they post and consume content on the platform. In a letter sent to the US Congress before a hearing in March, more than a dozen free speech advocacy groups argued that a potential ban on TikTok would have “serious ramifications for free expression”. Such “an ill-advised” move “would impair free speech and set a troubling precedent that could curtail free expression worldwide”. Hopefully such sensible words, as well as the federal judge's remarks, will help bring an end to the farce that is being staged by anti-China zealots.



## Ukraine's counter offensive

THE current fog of war in Ukraine is in large part artificially generated: “Plans love silence,” Kyiv observed in a typically well-executed video released on social media on Sunday, showing its soldiers holding fingers to their lips. After months of speculation, and amid perceptible impatience in some foreign capitals, its long-awaited counteroffensive appears at last to be in its preliminary stages. The deputy defence minister has acknowledged that “offensive actions” have begun in some areas. They appear to be testing and – perhaps – creating Russian vulnerabilities, presumably with a view to determining where to commit key troops along the 600-mile frontline. Russia has created multiple layers of defences; US sources have suggested that those could prove less formidable than they appear. The urgency of this offensive may be felt most strongly by those living under Russian occupation. Momentum is necessary to maintain the morale of soldiers and a nation. Yet success is also required to reassure foreign capitals that support for Kyiv is not only desirable but still effective – that the arms and ammunition sent produce results on the ground.

All the conjecture about Kyiv's plans and abilities can obscure perhaps the most important fact about this endeavour. What is often fogged, for those watching from afar, is not just what happens in each battle, with what effort and weaponry, to what military and political effect, but the human price. Those attacking usually suffer far more casualties than those defending. Even extraordinary success for Kyiv – whether in liberating territory or by engaging and destroying Russian formations – will cost the lives of large numbers of fighters, many of whom were teachers or farmers or engineers or artists until war was forced upon them. Civilians too will continue to pay. On Sunday, a two-year-old girl was killed in a Russian strike on Dnipro. The death of children is an increasingly familiar horror; another was unleashed on Tuesday with the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam and power plant on the Dnipro River – forcing thousands to flee to safety as their homes and land were flooded in a human-made disaster that could have consequences for generations. Kyiv and Moscow blame each other for the attack. The immediate benefit is to Russia, in helping to fend off a Ukrainian advance. It has been relentless in targeting other parts of Ukraine's power network. But the devastation also cuts off desperately needed water supplies to annexed Crimea. Experts say that there is no immediate risk to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant upstream, where reactors have already been shut down and the cooling lake on site should be sufficient for the next few months. But the recklessness shown towards the facility underlines the fear that there could be worse to come. For a country fighting off occupiers, the necessity of success is shadowed by its cost. Against an adversary such as Russia, which has shown itself ruthlessly indifferent to distinctions between the military and civilians in war, that will be especially the case.

## Dictatorship of virtue, erasing past by changing words

Hazem Saghieh

The fact is that this behavior constitutes nothing less than an assault on history and a falsification of cultural heritage. If this process is allowed to run its course unobstructed, if there is no resistance to this censorship, the outcome would be a glaring assault on creativity. The creative output would be rendered tedious and unimaginative, and every work would espouse the same discourse as all the others; the past, as a whole, would be distorted in a way that kills the credibility of narratives that try to explain it. It would also spell the end of our dependence on hard documents to discover and study the past. This is no different from the process that dictatorial and totalitarian regimes undertake to “rewrite history,” nor to cropping pictures as Stalin had...

DO we have the right, in light of our contemporary sensibilities, to change history books and literary works and essays? Is it appropriate, for example, to replace the racist adjectives that Al-Mutabnabbi had attributed to Abu al-Misk Kafur with different ones, or to remove Shakespeare's character, Shylock? Is it tenable, in the name of reason and rationality, to remove the witches from “Macbeth”? The dictators of virtue, who are right, or believe that they are, and want to impose their view of what is right on reality and history on that basis, justify these sorts of things. Roald Dahl was a British children's book author who died in 1990. His views on public matters were repugnant, especially his acute anti-Semitism and some of his vulgar depictions of women and people of color. However, his books have sold over 300 million copies, they have been translated into 68 languages, and they continue to be read by children across the globe on a broad scale. Nevertheless, the British publisher Puffin Books, which is owned by Penguin Random House, has changed some of the terms in his books to make them more “politically correct” and more aligned with our sensibilities, disinfected these works of prejudices against particular communities and groups. Anything tied to weight and corpulence, mental health, gender, and race, has been altered. For example, in his book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which was published in 1964, the phrase “enormously fat” was changed to become “enormous.” In another book, *Witches*, the phrase “working as a cashier in a supermarket or typing letters for a businessman” was changed to “working as a top scientist or running a business.” The word “black” was removed from his description of machines, which he had called “black, murderous, brutal-looking monsters.” “I became white as a sheet” was made “still as a statue.” However, as a

result of the uproar that followed these “corrections” of Dahl's books, it became evident that books by Agatha Christie, Ian Fleming, and others had been cut in similar ways, and that some US and British publishers have begun hiring editors known as “sensitivity readers.” According to their job description, they are readers who “come from specific backgrounds, or those with particular life experiences reading manuscripts to help eliminate problematic and harmful representations.” It is not only politicians who denounced these actions; some prominent intellectuals have also loudly objected. Salman Rushdie is among those to have contributed to the debate. The British-Indian Booker Prize-winning author tweeted: “Roald Dahl was no angel but this is absurd censorship,” and he added that those who had imposed this censorship “should be ashamed.” As is now well known, few have paid heavier costs for their right to express themselves than Rushdie. Indeed, after having led a secretive life since Khomeini's notorious 1989 fatwa, he is still recovering from the injuries he had sustained after last year's attack in New York, which also left him with only one eye.

Pen America, which counts 7,500 writers among its ranks, called the recent developments alarming. As though he were crying out in protest, the American director Steven Spielberg commented: “It is our history. It is our cultural heritage...” The fact is that this behavior constitutes nothing less than an assault on history and a falsification of cultural heritage. If this process is allowed to run its course unobstructed, if there is no resistance to this censorship, the outcome would be a glaring assault on creativity. The creative output would be rendered tedious and unimaginative, and every work would espouse the same discourse as all the others; the past, as a whole, would be distorted in a way that kills the credibility of narratives that try to

explain it. It would also spell the end of our dependence on hard documents to discover and study the past. This is no different from the process that dictatorial and totalitarian regimes undertake to “rewrite history,” nor to cropping pictures as Stalin had done when he removed Trotsky and other Bolsheviks from pictures in which they could be seen standing next to Lenin. Who knows what swamp of lies we could end up in, given the possibilities opened up by today's artificial intelligence technologies? Those who support this censorship have said that they aim to “protect” children from cultural, ethnic, and gender stereotypes in literature and other cultural works. However, protecting through fabrication and forced ignorance turns society as a whole into children instead of protecting children. Here, we should keep in mind that “protection” can be afforded by teachers and parents, to say nothing about life experiences themselves and the lessons they teach us. Footnotes or appendices that clear things up could be added to the texts from which the children should be “protected,” or they could be supplanted with notes like those that have been added to the latest German edition of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. These are all controversial matters; these questions could be debated and their answers modified. However, censorship, erasure, and changing the terms used in the original text to “protect” children should not be matters of debate. Since Plato's Republic at the latest, “children” have been the primary targets of dictators of virtue, who seek to conduct experiments on them, taking advantage of their weakness to start history over, time and again, from scratch. This is because the experiences and meanings that have been accumulated throughout history are nothing, to these people, but contamination that can be cleaned out by changing words!

– Source: *Asharq Al-Awsat*

## US losing pretexts for occupying eastern Syria

Osama Al-Sharif

The alliance with the SDF was instrumental in destroying most of Daesh's fighting power in this vast and highly strategic region, at a time when the Assad regime was fighting for its life against rebel groups in the south and northwest. At present there are thousands of Daesh detainees in SDF detention centers with their families living in scattered camps. Their fate – the majority of them foreign nationals – is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon since most Western countries refuse to have them back

WHEN the US led an international coalition in mid-2014 to bomb Daesh targets in Syria and Iraq, the terrorist organization had already occupied large swathes of territory spanning the two Arab countries and had the means to send its fighters all the way to Baghdad. A dozen nations carried out coordinated bombing raids but the US was the only country to establish ground bases in war-torn Syria. Allying itself with the Syrian Kurds, fighting under the umbrella of the Syrian Democratic Forces, or SDF, it extended its presence in oil-rich eastern Syria where it remains today. The alliance with the SDF was instrumental in destroying most of Daesh's fighting power in this vast and highly strategic region, at a time when the Assad regime was fighting for its life against rebel groups in the south and northwest. At present there are thousands of Daesh detainees in SDF detention centers with their families living in scattered camps. Their fate – the majority of them foreign nationals – is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon since most Western countries refuse to have them back. But while the main reason for the US military presence in eastern Syria, which is the fight against Daesh, has become less of a priority, despite the fact that remnants of the terror group remain active in the remote areas between Syria and Iraq, Washington's objectives appear to have shifted. In 2015, Russia intervened militarily in Syria to save the Assad regime, a mission which, despite its ruthlessness and high civilian casualties, succeeded. Most of the armed rebel groups have been crushed and those who surrendered were moved to the rebel-controlled Idlib province in the northwest. Also coming to the regime's aid were thousands of Iran-backed fighters belonging to Shiite militias, which were active in Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan. Syria had become a magnet for foreign fighters with conflicting agendas. With pro-Iran militias claiming victory over Daesh in Iraq, the US saw its way

over a country it had invaded and plundered a decade before quickly being replaced by its rival, Iran. Tehran's hardliners saw an opportunity to extend their influence through Baghdad to Damascus and all the way to Beirut. A geopolitical tug-of-war was unleashed. To truncate such a plan, the US buffered up its military garrison at the crucially situated Al-Tanf, overlooking the confluence of the borders of Syria, Jordan and Iraq. According to published figures, there are at least 900 active US troops in eastern Syria, in addition to an undisclosed number of contractors. Making things more complicated, Turkey, which supported the anti-regime Syrian Free Army as early as 2011, decided to send its troops into northern Syria in 2016 to fight the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, which is associated with the SDF. Ankara claims that the YPG is in cahoots with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which it considers a terrorist organization. Plans by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to send his army into northern Syrian territory to crush the Kurds were foiled by the Americans. With Erdogan and Vladimir Putin working together on Syria, the geopolitical game had become even more precarious for all. Syria and Russia had dubbed the US occupation of eastern Syria illegal and had called for its immediate end. Damascus accused the Americans of stealing Syrian oil, which in reality is happening. President Donald Trump ordered a sudden withdrawal of his troops in 2019 but Turkey's decision to launch a major military operation there forced the White House to suspend the pullback. The presence of US troops in northeastern Syria amid heightening tensions between Washington and Tehran, the face-off between the West and Russia in Ukraine, and the recent political rehabilitation of the Assad regime by the Arab League are raising the stakes in that part of Syria. Iran-backed militias in Iraq have launched a number of drone attacks against US targets there, the most

serious of which took place in March. But now, according to a leaked US intelligence report, Russia, Syria and Iran have adopted a plan to drive American troops out by launching attacks against American assets in the region through a proxy war involving local tribes and militias. And last week the US acknowledged reports that it has deployed its High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, in eastern Syria – and not for the first time. The highly advanced system was sent to southern Syria, from Jordan, in 2017, according to CNN. But the Pentagon denied Turkish media reports that the launchers had been transferred to the SDF in northern Syria, adding that they were in the area for “force protection.” Initially, the deployment of the HIMARS system was a response to movements by pro-regime forces, who had been deploying their own artillery near the perimeter of the 55 km “de-confliction zone” surrounding Al-Tanf. But now analysts believe that the recent deployment is a US reaction to intelligence reports that Iranian drones may be used more extensively against American targets in the area. As to immediate US objectives, there are concerns about the increasing influence of Russia and Iran in the region, and some in the Pentagon believe that maintaining a US presence in Syria is important for keeping these countries in check. The US continues to reject any contact with the Assad regime and does not support efforts to normalize ties with Damascus, based on the step-by-step approach in the absence of a political settlement and accountability. Still, its military presence in parts of Syria is becoming a liability and difficult to defend. Making things more difficult is the fact that Syria's opposition is now showing signs that it is ready to negotiate directly with Damascus under UN auspices. Syria's Kurds, too, may soon wish to resume talks with Damascus about an autonomy deal. Even a feeble restart of talks will boost Assad's legitimacy and make the US presence in Syria an awkward one.

– Courtesy: *Arab News*

## Briefs

## Army calls for tightening the 'noose...'

FROM PAGE 01  
25th May were a clear manifestation of same, the ISPR quoted Gen Munir as saying. "Hostile forces and their abettors have been trying hard to create societal division and confusion through fake news and propaganda but all such designs will continue to be defeated with the full support of the nation, InshaAllah," he asserted. The forum, the ISPR statement continued, concluded that "unfounded and baseless allegations on law enforcement agencies and security forces for custodial torture, human rights abuses and stifling of political activities are meant to mislead the people and malign armed forces in order to achieve trivial vested political interests". It added that the forum condemned the incidents of "May 9 Black Day" and, in the strictest sense, reiterated its "first resolve that the desecrators [of] Shuhada Monuments and Jinnah House and attackers of military installations would certainly be brought to justice speedily under the Pakistan Army Act and Official Secret Act, which are the derivatives of the Constitution of Pakistan".

## Ukrainians battle...

FROM PAGE 01  
The disaster at the Nova Kakhovka dam coincided with the apparent start of a long-awaited counter-offensive by Ukrainian forces, seen as the next major phase of the war. Each side accused the other of continuing to shell across the flood zone and warned of drifting landmines unearthed by the flooding. Kyiv said on Wednesday its troops in the east had advanced by more than a kilometre around the ruined city of Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine, its most explicit claim of progress since Russia reported the start of the Ukrainian offensive this week. Russia said it had fought off the attack. Residents in the flood zone in the country's south blamed the bursting of the dam on Russian troops who controlled it from their positions on the opposite bank. "They hate us," Reva said. "They want to destroy a Ukrainian nation and Ukraine itself. And they don't care by what means because nothing is sacred for them." Russia imposed a state of emergency in the parts of Kherson province it controls, where many towns and villages lie in lowlands below the dam. Residents there have told Reuters by telephone that Russian troops patrolling the streets in waders were threatening civilians who approached. Ukraine expects the floodwaters will stop rising by the end of Wednesday after reaching around five metres overnight, presidential deputy chief Oleksiy Kuleba said. Two thousand people had been evacuated so far from the Ukrainian-controlled part of the flood zone, and the water level had reached its highest level in 17 settlements with a combined population of 16,000 people.

## PTI chief, wife...

FROM PAGE 01  
Khan confirmed in September last year that he had sold at least four presents he had received during his tenure as the prime minister and Zahoor has shown the watch on live TV saying he had bought the watch (Master-Graff Tourbillon Minute Repeater with Makkah map dial GM2751) from Farah Gogi for \$2 million (worth approximately Rs 280m at the time of sale in 2019). According to evidence, the case has been registered in Islamabad against Khan, Bushra Bibi, former accountability minister Shehzad Akbar, Zulfi Bukhari, Farah Gogi and others under Sections 420, 467, 468 and 471 of the PPC 1860 for getting "illegal benefits" and for "active collusion, connivance, by assisting, abetting, conspiring, and engaging with each other fraudulently not only prepared, fake, forged receipts regarding Toshakhana Gifts such as watch, cuff links but also submitted/executed the same as genuine on which an independent verification is being conducted and the same has established these receipts as fake and forged".



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Management Committee Pakistan Cricket Board, Najam Sethi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

## Reigning champion Swiatek reaches French Open semis

Haddad Maia has become known for her ability to come through long tests, including in the Roland Garros fourth round when she outlasted Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo in an epic lasting almost four hours

PARIS: Defending champion Iga Swiatek maintained her dominance over American teenager Coco Gauff to set up a French Open semi-final against Brazilian 14th seed Beatriz Haddad Maia. World number one Swiatek, who beat Gauff in the 2022 final, won 6-4 6-2. The contest was much closer than last year but Swiatek's quality showed in a seventh straight win over Gauff. Haddad Maia, 27, reached her first Grand Slam semi-final by fighting back to stun Tunisia's Ons Jabeur. Haddad Maia, who had never previously reached the third round of a major, recovered to win 3-6 7-6 (7-5) 6-1. The 27-year-old is the first Brazilian woman to reach a Grand Slam semi-final since Maria Bueno in 1968. Haddad Maia has become known for her ability to come through long tests, including in the Roland Garros fourth round when she outlasted Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo in an epic lasting almost four hours. That was the longest women's match of the season and, while the encounter against Jabeur was nowhere near as long, she again demonstrated her physical and mental endurance. Against an opponent backed by a large number of flag-waving Tunisian fans on Court Philippe Chatrier,



Haddad Maia started slowly in her first major quarter-final. The world number 14, who served a 10-month doping suspension which ended in 2020, was broken three times in the first set as Jabeur took control. Break opportunities were scarce in the second set until two chances not taken by Jabeur at 5-5 ultimately proved costly for the 28-year-old Tunisian. Last year's Wimbledon and US Open runner-up missed the first break point with a forehand that went long, her opponent saving the other with a series of aggressive returns. The Brazilian, having shown the importance of hanging in as Jabeur rattled through service games, eventually took her fourth set point to send the match into a decider. Galvanised, the left-hander's heavy forehand returns caused more problems for Jabeur as she moved 3-0 ahead. The pair exchanged breaks in the next two games before Haddad Maia, who could now hear the support of singing Brazilian fans, saved four breaks to hold for 5-1. Jabeur, now becoming increasingly demoralised, spanked a forehand long on the second match point, leaving Haddad Maia looking flummoxed at what she had just achieved.

## National Women's Basketball C'ship schedule announced

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Top twelve teams from around the country will be in action in the National Women's Basketball Championship starting from June 13th at Siddique Memon Sports Complex, Karachi officially announced by Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) on Wednesday. According to the Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Associate Secretary Uj-e-Zahoor said that all arrangements have been completed for the successful five-day championship under the supervision of Karachi Basketball Association (KBBA) President Ghulam Muhammad Khan as KBBA is hosting the national championship where top 12 teams taking part in the event have been divided into four pools. He said that Pakistan Basketball

Federation is also thankful to Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Iqbal Memon for giving full support and co-operation for holding such a high-profile national women's basketball championship in Karachi. Uj said that Pool "A" comprises defending champion Pakistan Wapda, Karachi Blue, Hazara while Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Quetta are included in Pool "B". Pool "C" comprises Karachi Green, Multan, Peshawar while Lahore, Hyderabad, Karachi Yellow includes Pool "D". Uj-e-Zahoor said that eight matches will be played on the first day while four matches will be held on the second of the pool round in the championship. The opening match of the championship starting from June 13th will be played between the teams of Karachi Blue and Hazara, while Rawalpindi and Quetta, Mul-

tan and Peshawar, Hyderabad and Karachi Yellow, defending champion Wapda and Hazara, Islamabad and Quetta, Karachi Green and Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi Yellow will compete on the first day. The quarter-final and semi-final round of the championship will be played on June 15th and 16th while the final will be played on June 17th.

**Schedule:**  
June 13 (Day-1): Karachi Blue vs Hazara; Rawalpindi vs Quetta; Multan vs Peshawar; Hyderabad vs Karachi Yellow; Wapda vs Hazara; Islamabad vs Quetta; Karachi Green vs Peshawar; Lahore vs Karachi Yellow.  
June 14 (Day-2): Wapda vs Karachi Blue; Islamabad vs Rawalpindi; Karachi Green vs Multan; Lahore vs Hyderabad.  
June 15 (Day-3): Quarter Finals  
June 16 (Day-4): Semi Finals  
June 17 (Day-5): Final

judgements, advised FIFA from making unsubstantiated claims in future. It said complainants usually implement its recommendations voluntarily. FIFA did not respond to a request for comment. Complainants from Switzerland, France, Belgium, the UK and the Netherlands said FIFA made false statements in its communications about carbon neutrality at the World Cup, the commission said. "The Second Chamber of the Commission has now upheld all five complaints following a complex process," it added. FIFA had promoted the Qatar World Cup as the first completely climate neutral tournament, saying it was committed to reducing and offsetting carbon emissions it generated. But the Climate Alliance, a network of groups which launched the complaint last year, was concerned about the environmental impact from the construction of air-conditioned stadiums and the thousands of fans who flew to the tournament. – Agencies

## Lionel Messi to join Inter Miami

PARIS: Argentina legend Lionel Messi will join American side Inter Miami after his exit from French champions Paris St-Germain. The former Barcelona player is set to reject a more lucrative offer from Saudi Arabian side Al-Hilal. The Miami deal includes collaboration from brands like Adidas and Apple. Forward Messi, 35, won the award for the world's best player seven times and is expected to win it later this year after World Cup success. This is the first time Barcelona icon Messi has played outside Europe. He wanted to remain in Europe for another season but, after no satisfactory offers were received, he had the straight choice between Inter Miami or Al-Hilal. He was heavily tipped to be favouring a move to Saudi Arabia, where he would have joined Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema in the league in a deal that could not be matched financially. But Messi was ultimately tempted to Major League Soccer side Inter Miami for a variety of reasons including lifestyle, and a deal with big brands that extends beyond football. He already owns a house in Miami, which he currently rents out. He was keen on a return to Barcelona this summer but the Financial Fair Play limitations that will be in place for next season in La Liga made any ambitious plan to bring him back an impossibility. Paris St-Germain won Ligue 1 in both his seasons at the club but went out in the Champions League last 16, which means his time in France was not seen as a huge success. He netted 32 goals in 75 games for the club - and ended this season with 16 goals and 16 assists in Ligue 1. Messi's two-year contract comes to an end this summer and both parties agreed to go their separate ways, with the forward suspended for two weeks in May for an unauthorised trip to Saudi Arabia. His legacy comes from his time at Barcelona and winning the World Cup with Argentina in December. He left Barca in 2021, after 21 years with the club, because of the club's financial problems. Messi is Barcelona's record scorer with 672 goals and won 10 La Liga titles, four Champions Leagues and seven Spanish Cups. – Agencies

## FIFA made false claims about carbon neutrality

ZURICH: Soccer's world governing body FIFA made false and misleading statements about the reduced environmental impact of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, a Swiss regulator said on Wednesday. The Swiss Fairness Commission, the self-regulatory body of the advertising and communications industry, made its determination after investigating five claims that Zurich-based FIFA marketed the tournament as being carbon neutral. The commission, which issues recommendations, but no state-enforceable

## IPC minister proposes Zaka Ashraf name in PCB new set-up

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: As the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman election just around the corner; one of the key allies of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government, Pakistan People's Party federal minister for Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari proposed the name of Muhammad Zaka Ashraf in the new set-up of Pakistan Cricket Board. Asif Ali Zardari-led party is eager to bring back the former PCB chairman Zaka Ashraf to this position as they believe that Pakistan People's Party hold the Ministry for Inter-Provincial Coordination, so it the prerogative to PPP and its minister to appoint the PCB chairman on their choice. PCB chairman management committee Najam Sethi met again with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who is also the patron-in-chief of PCB, to show his intention and wish

to appoint PCB chairman again as Sethi led his 13-member Management Committee took charge in December last year after ousting former cricketer Ramiz Raja from office and made several changes inside the cricket



board as well. Zaka Ashraf, former chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board, who also met with the federal minister for Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari on Wednesday to discuss the

current situation specially future setup of the Pakistan Cricket Board. According to the details, in the meeting held in the Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination, various suggestions on the improvement of cricket in the country were also discussed during the meeting. The minister said that the new set-up of Pakistan Cricket Board will work for the development and betterment of cricket as this sport is the most popular sport in the country. Mazari said that Zaka Ashraf played a key role in the beginning of Pakistan Super League (PSL) and rendered excellent services during his tenure as PCB Chairman, adding that PSL will become the best cricket league in the world. Talking about the new setup in Pakistan Cricket Board, the minister said that we propose the name of Zaka Ashraf as new PCB Governing Board and we are hoping that the prime minister will welcome our decision.

## SC clubs together pleas...

FROM PAGE 01  
The SC should continue hearing the ECP's review petition, saying he had prepared arguments in this regard. "The court can simultaneously also hear pleas against the review of judgments law. If the review point persists, a larger bench can be constituted," he added. Here, Justice Bandal remarked that the court had to look at the law at one point or the other. Meanwhile, Justice Akhtar observed that if the review law was applicable to the ECP's petition, the electoral body's lawyer would have to again present his arguments before a larger bench. "How can the court continue hearing the Punjab polls case if the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 has come into force? Is the new law not applicable to this case? Do you think the ECP's petition should be heard as per the old law?" the judge asked Zafar. The PTI lawyer replied that the case should, at the moment, be heard according to the old laws. "This is not a brand new case," Justice Bandal said. "This is an appeal against a decision that was taken previously and appeals have several limitations." The top judge noted that a lot of time had passed in hearing arguments and recalled that the ECP lawyer had already presented his argument on the scope of a review. "If the matter goes to a larger bench, arguments will have to be heard once again." "This matter is linked to a national issue," Justice Bandal observed. "Our decision regarding [polls on] May 14 cannot be withdrawn. Elections in 90 days is a constitutional requirement. "Everyone agrees with the Constitution, but not everyone is clear on enforcing the Constitution," he said. The top judge further pointed out that the ECP had given the date of October 8 for polls but then said the situation had changed due to the events of May 9 - when protests had erupted across the country following PTI chief Imran Khan's arrest. "The ECP should have the ability to hold elections in any circumstances," he remarked.

## 'Embattled PTI on a mission...

FROM PAGE 01  
(IMF) and then violating the agreement was also part of the foreign agenda. "The uproar caused by foreign media in connection with the human rights violations is also part of the foreign agenda to stop foreign financial aid to the country," she added. Marriyum Aurangzeb said the coalition government is committed to providing maximum relief to the people in the upcoming budget. The Minister said passing dividends of the reduced oil prices on the common people is Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's top agenda. She said the Prime Minister is holding consultative meetings with different stakeholders and other key segments of society in this regard. Marriyum Aurangzeb said the coalition government is striving hard to put the economy on the path of stability and growth, but the dream of economic stability remains elusive without having political stability in the country.

## Erdogan proposes...

FROM PAGE 01  
Kakhovka dam in a way that leaves no room for suspicion." Erdogan told Zelenskyy that a negotiation method, similar to that regarding the Black Sea grain corridor, could be pursued to address the dam issue, according to Türkiye's Communications Directorate. Moscow and Kiev have traded blame for the breaching of the hydroelectric dam, which lies on the front line between Russian and Ukrainian forces. Its collapse early on Tuesday by a reported blast has sent floodwaters across a war zone and forced thousands to flee. Moscow accused Ukraine of attempting to cut Russian-annexed Crimea off the freshwater it receives from the Kakhovka Reservoir, formed by the dam, while Kiev claimed that Russia tries to slow an expected counteroffensive.



## Briefs

### Blinken discusses human rights with Saudi crown prince

#### MONITORING DESK

RIYADH: US State Secretary Antony Blinken discussed human rights with Saudi Arabia's crown prince on Tuesday during a trip aimed at boosting ties with the long-time ally, which has forged closer relations with Washington's rivals. Blinken's three-day visit to the oil-rich kingdom will also focus on efforts to end conflicts in Sudan and Yemen, the joint battle against the Islamic State group (IS) and the Arab world's relations with Israel.

His trip comes at a time of quickly shifting alliances in the Middle East, centred around a China-brokered rapprochement in March between regional heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Iran. Another landmark change saw Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad invited back to the Arab League last month for the first time since the start of the 12-year civil war in which his government has been backed by Russia and Iran.

Biden met Saudi Arabia's de facto leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman late on Tuesday and the two men had "an open, candid discussion that covered the full range of regional and bilateral issues", a US official said on condition of anonymity. "The secretary raised human rights both generally and with regards to specific issues."

The meeting, which lasted about an hour and 40 minutes, touched on topics including Saudi Arabia's support for US evacuations from Sudan, the need for political dialogue in Yemen and the potential for the normalisation of relations with Israel.

### Two killed, 5 wounded at Virginia shooting

#### DNA

VIRGINIA: A man armed with four handguns killed two people and wounded five others when he fired into a crowd after a high school graduation ceremony in the United States city of Richmond, Virginia, police have said. Police said they arrested one suspect, a 19-year-old man, in relation to the shooting on Tuesday near a theatre where the graduation ceremony had taken place adjacent to the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. The suspect was likely to be charged with two counts of second-degree murder in addition to other offences, interim Richmond Police Chief Rick Edwards told a press conference. "As they heard the gunfire, it was obviously chaos," he said. "We had hundreds of people in Monroe Park, so people scattered. It was very chaotic at the scene." Edwards called the attacker's behaviour "disgusting and cowardly", since his dispute appeared to be with just one person. The deceased were men aged 18 and 36, Edwards said. Their names were not released, but police believe the suspect, who was not immediately identified, knew at least one of the victims.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Bulgaria Ms. Irena Gancheva briefs Secretary National Heritage Fareena Mazhar about the photo exhibition "Bulgarian Sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List." - DNA

### Bulgaria envoy vows to bolster bilateral relations

#### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Bulgaria Ambassador to Pakistan Irena Gancheva on Wednesday expressed her commitment to strengthening bilateral relations between Bulgaria and Pakistan through a program of cooperation in the field of culture.

While the opening of a photo exhibition of Bulgarian sites on the UNESCO world heritage list organized with the support of the State Institute for culture to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria she said, "In today's interconnected world, faced with numerous challenges, the role of culture in foreign policy and international relations is increasing as it successfully serves as a core instrument for building bridges of mutual understanding, trust and friendship."

She said, "by promoting the cultural heritage of our own countries, while at the same time respecting the cultural diversity across the globe, we can contribute not only to enhancing dialogue and cooperation but also to addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time such as climate change, social inequalities, conflicts and many more"

### Canada: Tens of millions under air quality warnings

#### WEB DESK

TORONTO: Tens of millions of people in North America have woken up to dangerous air quality levels as intense wildfires burn across Canada. Smoke blanketed large areas of Ontario and Quebec, while an orange haze hung over much of the north-eastern US through Tuesday and into Wednesday. Toronto and New York briefly ranked among the cities with the worst air quality in the world overnight.

Much of the smoke is coming from Quebec, where 160 fires are burning. Canadian officials say the country is shaping up for its worst wildfire season on record. Experts have pointed to a warmer and drier spring than normal as the reason behind the trend.

# Pakistan, US ink new five-year assistance agreement

The United States remains one of the largest providers of development assistance to Pakistan, partnering with the Government of Pakistan, civil society, and int'l organizations on numerous programs aligned with Pakistan's priorities

#### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States renewed their long-standing bilateral development cooperation relationship during a meeting between the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID). A new five-year agreement was signed by the Federal Minister of Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, visiting USAID Deputy Administrator Isobel Coleman, Secretary of Economic Affairs Dr. Kazim Niaz, and USAID/Pakistan Mission Director Reed Aeschliman.

This agreement builds on our countries' long history of partnership and signifies the United States' continued commitment to support Pakistan on development objectives that are important to both nations, including climate, resilience, clean energy, sustainable economic growth, inclusive democratic governance, education, and health security.

The United States remains one of the largest providers of development assistance to Pakistan, partnering with the Government of Pakistan, civil society, and international organizations on numerous programs aligned with Pakistan's priorities. We look forward to continuing to advance this partnership in part through the U.S.-Pakistan "Green Alliance," a framework focused on agriculture, water management, and clean energy.



### Germany to host biggest NATO air exercise

MUNICH: Germany is preparing to host one of the biggest air deployment drills in NATO's history, in an effort to show off force intended to impress allies and adversaries like Russia, according to German and American officials in the country. The Air Defender 23 drill will take place from June 12-23 and will see 10,000 participants and 250 aircraft from 25 nations train, in order to respond to a simulated attack on a NATO member country. "This is an exercise that would be absolutely impressive to anybody who's watching, and we don't make anybody watch it," United States Ambassador to Germany Amy Gutmann told reporters in Berlin, highlighting that an audience could include Russian President Vladimir Putin. "It will demonstrate beyond a shadow of a doubt the agility and the swiftness of our allied force in NATO as a first responder," she added. - Agencies

### Bushra denies knowledge about NCA settlement

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, on Wednesday responded to a notice issued to her by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the Al-Qadir Trust case and said that she did not have information about the settlement between the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency and property tycoon Malik Riaz. The accountability watchdog had directed Bushra Bibi and the PTI chief to appear before its Rawalpindi office along with documents pertaining to the registration, donations and other details of the Al-Qadir University on June 7. The Al-Qadir Trust case alleges that the PTI chief and his wife obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd for legalising Rs50 billion that was identified and returned to the country by the UK during the previous PTI govt. She said that the PTI chief had requested the bureau to shift the hearing to June 8. - DNA

# Mike Pence enters United States presidential race

WASHINGTON: Former Vice President Mike Pence who turned against his old boss Donald Trump over the 2021 Capitol Hill attack, officially commenced his 2024 presidential bid via video Wednesday as a Republican contestant in what appears to be a challenge to the former president. In a video in which he announced his bid later in the day in Iowa portrayed himself as Reagan Republican "seeking to return the US to conservative principles," becoming the first vice president of modern times to stand against his former boss - who is also running for the president in 2024. He initiated his campaign from Iowa because his team believes the place would help him secure the Republican nomination for the presidential candidate from the party. He will also participate in CNN Town Hall Wednesday. Mike Pence said in the video: "It

would be easy to stay on the sidelines. But that's not how I was raised. That's why today, before God and my family, I'm announcing I'm running for president of the United States." The rift between the former Republican duo emerged when Pence refused to overturn the 2020 election results and chaired the Congress, certifying Joe Biden as victor victory on January 6, 2021. The 64-year-old argued in the video that "different times call for different leadership" and that the nation needs a leader "that will appeal, as Lincoln said, to the better angels of our nature." "We can bring this country back. We can defend our nation and secure our border. We could revive our economy, and put our nation back on a path to a balanced budget, defend our liberties and give America a new beginning for life," Pence noted. His official launch comes after his

filing of the paperwork Monday to launch his presidential campaign. The former vice president who served under the 2016 US administration has entered the race that was overshadowed by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and 76-year-old Trump with a more typically conservative viewpoint. He had also served more than ten years in the US House, including one term as governor of Indiana, solidifying his reputation as a steadfast conservative, according to CNBC. Moreover, as he sets out to secure the support of a party that is still primarily devoted to Trump, significant obstacles await him in his bid for the White House. He has routinely performed better than some of his competitors in polls of the probable primary field, scoring in the "low to mid-single digits," the report said. - Agencies

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