



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, June 15, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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**Blinken to visit China; seek open communication**

Detailed News On Page-07

**Indonesia to start direct flights from Pakistan**

Detailed News On Page-08



**I didn't ask to be sold to Real Madrid: Mbappe**

Detailed News On Page-06



**Briefs**

**Renaming of road tribute to martyrs**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb says Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has paid homage to the martyrs by renaming IJP Road as Captain Kernal Sher Khan Shaheed Avenue. In a statement today, she said unparalleled courage and valor of Captain Kernal Sher Khan Shaheed was even acknowledged by the enemy. The Minister said it is a message to those who damaged the memorials of martyrs on 9th May that we respect and honor our martyrs.

**Fawad Ch summoned in sedition case**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad court on Wednesday summoned former information minister Fawad Chaudhry and his guarantors in a sedition case. Additional Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas Supra heard the case against the former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader for inciting organisations to revolt, wherein the compliance report of Fawad's summons was submitted in court. The court expressed indignation at the police officer who submitted the compliance report and questioned whether the summons are complied with like this.

**Sarwar for improving justice system**

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Q u a i d (PML-Q) chief organiser Chaudhry Sarwar said on Wednesday there was a dire need to improve the justice system in the country. Addressing a press conference, Mr Sarwar (flanked by PML-Q's Chaudhry Shafay Hussain), said, "Youth is the strength of our party. Now, fortunately, youth from minorities are also joining the PML-Q".

**Slightly moves away from Karachi**

## Biparjoy to hit coastal areas today

The federal minister requests the people to cooperate with authorities

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman has said that cyclone Biparjoy, which has slightly moved away from Karachi, will hit Sindh's Keti Bandar today (Thursday) at 11am. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, she said as many as 66,000 people have been evacuated to safer places from Sindh's coastal areas thus far. The federal minister also requested the people to cooperate with authorities and added that all rescue agencies are prepared for relief operations. "The true form of the cyclone will be known tomorrow," she added. The minister said Thatta, Sujawal, Badin and Tharparkar districts will be hit the hardest by the cyclone, adding that the Biparjoy is moving away from Karachi. Rehman has said that cyclone has forced the authorities to suspend small aircraft operations in the country. The climate minister said the commercial flights operations would be suspended as the cyclone drew closer to the country. In its latest updates, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said that cyclone Biparjoy has moved away from Karachi and is currently at a distance of 370 kilometres south of Karachi. The cyclone over north-east Arabian Sea moved north-northeastward during last six hours, and now lies near

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## Cyclone relief fund established

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman says Cyclone Biparjoy is expected to make landfall at around 10 am between Keti Bandar in Sindh and parts of Indian state of Gujarat. Addressing a news conference along with Chairman NDMA Lt. General Inam Haider Malik in Islamabad on Wednesday, she said efforts are afoot to shift people to safer places. She said there are reports that some people are trying to venture to the coastal areas to witness the cyclone and make TikTok videos. She appealed the people to refrain from disaster tourism to keep them safe. The Minister said Pakistan Army, Rangers and other relief agencies are busy in shifting people from vulnerable areas to safer places.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Avenue formerly known as IJP road and Seventh Avenue Overhead Bridge on Srinagar Highway. – DNA

**Justice Mussarat to be elevated to SC**



FAIZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) has approved elevating Peshawar High Court (PHC) Chief Justice Mussarat Hilali to the Supreme Court. The unanimous decision was taken in the JCP meeting held in Islamabad on Wednesday with Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial in chair, sources told Geo News. Justice Hilali is the first woman from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to be appointed as the apex court judge and the second woman in the country's history to be elevated to the Supreme Court. In January last year, Justice Ayesha Malik made history in Pakistan's judicial system after she was appointed as the SC judge by the JCP with a vote of five to four. The JCP is a constitutional body that decides appointments to the apex court, high courts, and the Federal Shariat Court. The JCP is headed by the CJP, the next senior-most four judges, a former chief justice or apex court judge, the law minister, the attorney general, and a senior Supreme Court advocate nominated by the Pakistan Bar Council.

Continued on Page 06

**'Speed up development work'**

## PM directs to complete uplift projects soon

Inaugurates various projects in Islamabad

FAISAL SHEIKH

PM arrives in Baku

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Avenue formerly known as IJP road and Seventh Avenue Overhead Bridge on Srinagar Highway besides performing ground breaking of Eleventh Avenue in Islamabad on Wednesday. Addressing a ceremony in connection with the inauguration of these projects, the Prime Minister regretted that the poor performance of previous government delayed execution of important development projects. He however said that we have accelerated work on them and work on the ongoing projects in the federal capital will be completed by next month. He announced an electric bus service will also be launched in the capital city, for which the buses will reach by 15th of next month.

Continued on Page 06

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, on the invitation of President Ilham Aliyev, has arrived in Azerbaijan on a two-day official visit on Wednesday as Islamabad aims to obtain spot liquefied natural gas (LNG) deliveries from Baku. The prime minister's delegation would also include ministers representing the priority areas of cooperation with Azerbaijan. During his visit, the premier will hold wide-ranging talks with the Azerbaijani president on key areas of cooperation, including trade, investment, and energy. Meanwhile, regional and global issues of mutual concern and cooperation in multi-lateral forums will also be discussed.

Continued on Page 06

## Military court convicts to have right to appeal

Tarar says cases will be conducted according to int'l agreements

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar has said that the accused will have the right to a transparent trial in military courts, and appeals can also be filed against the decisions in higher courts. Speaking to the journalists in Islamabad on Wednesday, Tarar stated that cases in military courts will be conducted according to international agreements. He added that the accused will have the right to choose their own lawyer and provide evidence in their defence, adding that no case involving women has been sent to military courts thus far. The law minister further stated that the right to appeal against the decisions of military courts will also be available in higher courts. "Law ministry stressed upon JAG (judge advocate general) branch to ensure four things in trial of civilians under

Continued on Page 06

## IHC adjourns PTI chief's appeal

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of a petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief TI's Chairman Imran Khan seeking to stop proceedings of the Toshakhana criminal case by the trial court and shifting it to another one, till Thursday. IHC's Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed by the former prime minister. At the outset of hearing, the petitioner's counsel Khawaja Harris argued that the trial court judge had not recorded the objections raised by the defence, observing that the court world view the same at the time of recording

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## Xi Jinping hails establishment of 'China-Palestine strategic' ties

Beijing has sought to boost its ties in the Middle East, challenging US influence – efforts that have sparked unease in Washington



NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Wednesday that his country was establishing "strategic" relations with Palestinians ahead of talks with leader Mahmud Abbas in Beijing. Abbas will be in the Chinese capital until Friday, Beijing has said, on his fifth official visit to the world's second-largest economy. "Facing a century of global changes and new developments to the situation in the Middle East, China is ready to strengthen coordination and cooperation with the

Palestinian side," said Xi during a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People. "Today, we will jointly announce the establishment of a China-Palestine strategic partnership, which will be an important milestone in the history of bilateral relations," added Xi. Abbas arrived in Beijing on Monday to hold talks with top Chinese leaders including President Xi and Premier Li Qiang. The two sides are using the opportunity to discuss ways to advance relations and resolve longstanding challenges to the Palestinian-Israeli relationship. Beijing has sought to boost its ties in the Middle East, challenging US influence – efforts that have sparked unease in Washington. During a regular press briefing last week, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin called long-time Palestinian leader Abbas an "old and good friend of the Chinese people". Last December, President Xi visited Saudi Arabia on an Arab outreach trip that also saw him meet with Abbas and pledge to "work for an early, just and durable solution to the Palestinian issue". Beijing has since positioned itself as a mediator in the Middle East, brokering the restoration of ties in March between Iran and Saudi Arabia – rivals in a region where the United States has for decades been the main power-broker. But finding a lasting solution to Israeli-Palestinian tensions may prove more elusive, as peace negotiations between the two sides have been stalled since 2014.

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# New mental health helpline launches in Gilgit

GILGIT: Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan today launched the Taskeen mental health helpline at the Aga Khan Medical Centre in Gilgit to provide timely, accessible and confidential mental health support to the region's people. The helpline is a collaboration between Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan, the Aga Khan University's Brain and Mind Institute, and Taskeen, a non-profit organisation that specialises in mental health awareness and counselling. The helpline will provide free-of-cost psychological support and counseling through trained psychologists from Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral who speak local languages.

Mr. Mohyuddin Wani, Chief Secretary, Gilgit-Baltistan was the chief guest at the event. Addressing the participants he said: "Mental health issues are often stigmatised and there aren't enough safe spaces for people to seek help. We hope that the Taskeen helpline will provide a safe and private space for people to talk about their problems and receive support from trained professionals." In re-

cent years, studies have shown an alarming burden of depression and anxiety in Pakistan. According to the World Health Organisation, mental disorders account for more than 4% of the total disease burden in Pakistan, and impact women disproportionately higher than men. Particularly vulnerable groups are women in the perinatal period and youth. Nearly 40% of women in Pakistan in the perinatal period (pregnancy and after) are suffering from depressive disorder or anxiety. Similarly, studies from the region show that nearly 40% of those who have attempted suicide or have died by suicide suffered from depression. In Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral, in particular, high rates of suicide have been reported in recent years. It is estimated that 24 million people in Pakistan are in need of psychiatric assistance. "It boosts our confidence immensely that the governments of Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have expressed concern and have always provided their support in addressing the looming mental health crisis. We look forward to working closely with

them to make a lasting change," said the Head of Clinical Units, speaking on behalf of Mr Nadeem Abbas, Chief Executive Officer of Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan.

Commenting prior to the event Dr ZulMerali, Founding Director of the Brain and Mind Institute at the Aga Khan University, termed the helpline a collaborative effort that will help address a very important need of community members suffering in silence. He likened mental ill health to other physical health conditions that need to be treated without shame.

Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan is a member of the Aga Khan Development Network, and has been providing quality health services in Gilgit-Baltistan since 1987. Recently, a number of new services have been added including advanced diagnostic services, ophthalmology, cardiology, nephrology, urology, and dermatology. It has also expanded teleconsulting to additional remote health facilities and through a mobile application. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy in carpeting the Faizabad Section of Express Way during high temperature in Federal Capital. —Online

## AJK PM concerned over situation in IIOJK

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has expressed grave concern over the fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, a statement issued here on Wednesday said. The PM, while terming the Kashmir issue as the oldest unresolved issue pending on the UN agenda, said that a just and equitable solution to the lingering dispute was imperative to ensure durable peace and stability in South Asia. Denouncing India's unilateral and illegal actions taken at gunpoint on and after 5th August 2019, the PM said that Modi government was now hell-bent on changing the region's demography and converting the Muslim majority into a minority. The PM pointed out that the issuance of fake domiciles to outsiders, delimitation of constituencies and allowing non-Kashmiris to buy land and properties in the disputed territory were part of this grand conspiracy. Terming Occupied Kashmir as the world's most militarized zone, the PM said that the presence of 9 lakh occupying forces in the disputed area belied the Indian government's claims of normalcy. "The massive human rights violations, extrajudicial killings, search operations and destruction of civilians' property at the hands of occupation forces speak volumes about the worsening situation in the region", the PM said. —APP

## May 9 rioters being dealt as per constitution

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights, Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Wednesday said that no one should teach us a lesson on human rights as Pakistan was effectively dealing with the May 9 attackers in accordance with the country's constitution and laws. Speaking here in National Assembly, the minister defended Pakistan's stance on human rights, stating that no one should deliver lecture to the country on this matter. He emphasized that Pakistan was effectively dealing with the attackers from the May 9 incident in accordance with the country's constitution and laws. Furthermore, he highlighted that the National Commission for Human Rights had not received any complaints regarding the mistreatment of women in prisons. He expressed con-

cerns about the defamation of Pakistan by its adversaries through social media. The minister stressed that Pakistan was fully aware of the challenges faced by minority groups. He accused the neighboring country of interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs and fueling religious animosity. The minister noted a decrease in targeted sectarian killings in Quetta following the arrest of Kulbushan, indicating a potential connection. Addressing historical events, Riaz Hussain Pirzada alleged that India had deliberately sparked the fire in Karachi during Pakistan's creation when the resolution about Kashmir was moved in the United Nations Security Council. He asserted that the people of Pakistan including the minority community have their high values

and traditions that should be respected, including the celebration of Eid, Diwali and Holi. The minister strongly refuted the accusation of disrespecting women in prisons, categorically stating that such incidents have never occurred. He said that courts should hear the cases of common people instead of adopting the practice of closing doors during court proceedings. As a commitment to justice, the Ministry of Human Rights will bear the fees associated with minor crimes cases, he said and affirmed that helping the poor was not just a duty but a solemn oath the government has taken. As part of efforts to support the minority community, Minister Pirzada announced that funds would be provided through the Benazir Income Support Program. —APP



## USAID arranges specialized trainings

PESHAWAR: Economic Recovery and Development Authority USAID has organized specialized trainings for veterinary officers of the Livestock and Dairy Development Department and small-scale dairy farmers of Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) during the last month. According to a press release issued here Wednesday, trainings were aimed to equip veterinary officers and dairy farmers with modern knowledge and skills to enhance productivity and develop the dairy sector's growth in the province. The first training on "Improved Husbandry Practices" was organized for 25 small-scale dairy farmers of merged districts. It focused on essential topics related to dairy farming, including animal nutrition, health and breeding management, efficient milking techniques, milk value addition and marketing. The second training titled "Training of Master Trainers on Modern Dairy Farming" was attended by 15 veterinary officers of the Livestock and Dairy Development Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was held University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Lahore. These targeted training initiatives demonstrate USAID-ERDA's commitment to strengthening KP dairy sector and equipping dairy farmers with the necessary skills and knowledge. —APP

## CM Sindh, World Bank delegation discuss progress of projects

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in his review meeting with the World Bank delegation led by its Regional Director Mr. John Roome said that his government has received \$ 100.55 million, including the retroactive financing for Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project, out of which

\$87.74 million equals to Rs 25.42 billion has been utilized. The World Bank delegation includes Country Director Najy Benhassine, Program Leader Abedalrazak, Practice Manager Jen JunEun Oh, and others. The CM was assisted by Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Chairman

P&D Hassan Naqvi, SMBR Baqaulah Unar, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Local Govt Najam Shah, Chief of Peoples Housing Project Khalid Shaikh, Secretary Agriculture Ajiaz Mahehar, Secretary Irrigation Sohail Qureshi, and Secretary Transport Saleem Rajput. —APP

## PM Youth Talent Hunt Program, Women's Football Trials started

### DNA

SWAT: Football trials for women players were held in Swat under the Prime Minister's Youth Talent Hunt programme. More than 100 women athletes of Swat region participated in the trials held at the ground of Swat Public School Nave Clay Junior Branch. On this occasion, Pakistan Muslim League (N) Women's Wing Provincial Vice President Shah Izzat Bibi was the chief guest. He inaugurated the official trials, along with former International Athlete and Director of Sports of Bacha Khan University Charsadda Shabana Khattak, Vice President of PML-N Women's Department Zakia, Miss Shaughta, Pakistan WAPDA Football Player Muhammad Ayaz, Director of Sports Swat.



University Amjad Ali and other important personalities were present, the enthusiasm of the girls during the trials was visible, Organizing Secretary and Director of Sports Bacha Khan University Charsadda Shabana Khattak of Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Program Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa supervised the trials, Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif in the light of the special instructions of the Prime Minister's advisor Amir Moqam, the series of trials of various sports is going on step by step under the supervision of Special Assistant Shiza Fatima. In

which a large number of players participated, speaking on the occasion, Pakistan Muslim League-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women's Wing Provincial Vice President Shah Izzat Bibi said that Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt program in women's football trials.

## NDMA conducts National Monsoon Coordination Conference

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik has presided National Monsoon Coordination Conference and outlined discussion areas for the conference. The conference was aimed to foster coordination and review monsoon preparedness measures among all stakeholders. Chairman Indus River System Authority (IRSA) and representatives of Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCCC), Ministry of National Health Services

and Regulations (MoHSR), provincial, state and Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authorities (PD-MAs, SDMA and GBDMA respectively), Emergency services, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), National Highways Authority (NHA), Armed Forces, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICT), Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF), National Humanitarian Network (NHN), Frontier Works Organization (FWO),

Emergency Response Agencies and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WHH Representatives attended the conference, a news release said issued here on Wednesday. The Chairman underscored the significance of preparedness by learning from the experiences of Floods 2022, timely training of responders and reviewing stock positions for monsoon contingencies. He instructed to issue tangible advisories and


guidelines for general public, humanitarian organizations and line departments. He noted that proactive measures were essential in mitigating disaster impact and called for tangible actions before disaster strikes. The PMD briefed on weather outlook for next three months and predicted that there was a possibility of extreme weather events in the summer of 2023, which could lead to riverine floods, flash flooding, landslides, and urban flooding. Farmers should be prepared for these events and plan ac-


cordingly. The chairman IRSA updated on position of water reservoirs and informed that 2.33 million acre feet (MAF) water being maintained as of June 14. The PDMA, GBDMA, and SDMA presented details of public awareness campaigns and mock exercises for monsoon contingencies. The Chairman NDMA directed Provincial Authorities to coordinate with local NGOs and humanitarian organizations to maximize outreach to local communities and alignment of their resources according to PMD's weather projections. —APP

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JUNE

June 02/Italy  
National/ Independence Day  
June 04/Finland  
Armed Forces  
Day May 06/UAE  
June 06/Sweden  
National Day  
June 10/Portugal  
Portugal Day (National Day)  
June 10/Jordan  
Arab Revolution & Army Day  
June 11/United Kingdom  
Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth  
June 12/Philippines  
Independence Day  
June 12/Russian Federation  
Day of Sovereignty of the Russian  
June 13/Zambia

Armed Forces day  
June 17/Iceland

National Day  
June 18/Seychells  
National Day

June 25/Croatia  
National Day

June 25/Mozambique  
National Day

June 26/Azerbaijan  
Army Day

### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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



### Enquiry

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



### Hospitals

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



### Departments

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

## Pakistani investors asked to explore Moroccan opportunities

The IAA office bearers stressed the importance of Pakistan's deeper engagement with the African continent through its "Engage Africa" policy

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan, Mohammad Karmoune said on Wednesday that we enjoy long-standing commercial and diplomatic relations and that the government and people of his country have a special place in their hearts for Pakistanis. The Pakistani business community can collaborate with the businessmen of his country to benefit from opportunities in Morocco and the African continent, which are playing a significant role in driving inclusive growth and sustainable development. The Ambassador of Morocco Mohammad Karmoune said this while speaking to the members of the Islamabad Industrial Association (IIA). President IIA Muhammad Ahmed, VP Usman Shoukat, Mian Akram Farid, Khalid Javed, Tariq Sadiq, Choudhary Waheed Uddin, Zakaria Zia, Mian Shaikat Masood, Umair Khattak, Atif Ikram Sheikh, Naeem Paracha,



Malik Sohail Hussain and others were present at the occasion. Both countries have excellent potential for further growth in trade and economic relations, he said, adding that Pakistan's engagement with Africa continues to grow as Islamabad expands its diplomatic footprint in Africa. There are vast opportunities to be tapped for both brotherly countries and business communities,

and potential investors on both sides should be fully aware of the opportunities. He said that we are looking forward to importing rice, IT services, textiles, and pharmaceuticals from Pakistan and that we will also import wheat as soon as the brotherly country can have an exportable surplus.

Pakistan can look into the petrochemical, automobile, phosphate, leather, and some other sectors in Morocco for investment, he added. The kingdom possesses an estimated 77 percent of the world's total phosphate reserves and remains the leading global exporter. "Phosphate is used in fertiliser, and we are helping to reduce hunger globally," he said. Earlier,

President IIA Muhammad Ahmed and others apprised the Ambassador of the role of IIA and asked several questions about investment opportunities in Morocco. They said that we should increase trade with brotherly country for mutual benefit. We are proud of the positive role of Morocco, and we would like to visit the brotherly country as soon as possible to explore opportunities," they said. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents significant growth potential for the African economy, as it establishes a structure for fostering regional economic integration, growth, and progress. The agreement has the potential to offer Pakistan fresh avenues to enhance its trade and investment connections with African nations, thus generating business and reinforcing economic relations, they said. The IAA office bearers stressed the importance of Pakistan's deeper engagement with the African continent through its "Engage Africa" policy.

## IESCO issues power suspension schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 15th June 2023, From 09:00 AM to 2:00 PM Islamabad Circle, Upper Topa, Patriata, TDC Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Azizabad, Mohanpura Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Park View, Pindi Board, Morgah, Rahmatabad-1, Zaraj, Dhok Awan, IST, Mohra Nagyal, FECHS, Swan Garden-I, PWD-I, NPP-I, Dr. Town Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Fatehpur, Sarai Alamgir, Shakrela, Mandi Bhaiwal, Military College, Garmala, Captain Nisar Shaheed, Express Mangala, Madu Kalas, Samot, Islampur, Kangar, Scheme-1 Feeders, Attock Circle, From 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM Shadi Khan, Shamsabad, Ghorghash-ti, Bara Zee, Maskinabad, Shah Deer, Radio Pak-I & II, Larnpur, Qaziabad, GBHP Colony Feeders and surrounding areas will remain closed. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

## Son held for torturing father

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested son for torturing his old father and threw him out of the house in the jurisdiction of Airport Police Station, the police spokesman said. Senior citizen Muhammad Younas filed an application stating that his son Owais tortured him brutally and threatened to finish his life. On his request, the police registered a case under the Parental Protection Ordinance and arrested the accused Owais. SP Potohar Muhammad Waqas Khan said that all legal requirements will be fulfilled to punish the accused. But violence on old age parents is unimaginable and deplorable, he added.—APP

## ANF seizes over 161 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in six operations conducted across the country managed to net four accused and recovered over 161 kg drugs, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that in an operation near Gujranwala Toll Plaza, ANF recovered 93.6 kg charras concealed in secret cavities of a vehicle and arrested two drug smugglers, residents of Khyber. In another operation near Kuchlak bypass Quetta, ANF seized 50 kg heroin concealed in a dry rainy nullah. In third operation conducted near Jarhoi Zakha Khail' area, eight kg charras concealed in plastic bags was seized. The spokesman informed that in fourth operation in Mianwali, ANF managed to recover 1.2 kg opium.—APP

## Students celebrate 'Chinese Culture Hour' in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 'Chinese Culture Hour' exchange and exhibition was held at COMSATS University Islamabad to foster cultural exchange between Pakistan and China. Constructing a cultural bridge and highlighting the vibrant and diverse Chinese culture, the students showcased knowledge of Chinese calligraphy, tai chi, kung fu, cuisine, tongue twisters, and Chinese music. According to Gwadar Pro, the university campus

buzzed with the vibrant atmosphere of Chinese culture as students eagerly displayed their knowledge and appreciation. The calligraphy art demonstrated the charm of Chinese characters, skillfully explaining the meaning behind each stroke to the captivated audience. The performances of tai chi and kung fu embodied the essence of traditional Chinese martial arts, showcasing the students' excellent body control and graceful movements, which garnered the admiration of the audience. In the food exhibition area, a

variety of delicious Chinese cuisine delighted the senses. The students demonstrated their exquisite culinary skills by preparing dishes such as spicy chicken, dumplings, fried noodles, and fried rice. They ingeniously incorporated elements from local cuisine, adding a unique touch. Tongue twisters and music performances contribute to the joyous and lively atmosphere. The students eloquently spoke Chinese and delivered melodious tunes, showcasing the diverse and enchanting facets of Chinese culture. To further

support the university's Chinese cultural education, a carefully curated collection of books encompassing various aspects of Chinese culture was presented to offer students more learning material, serve as a source of inspiration and facilitate them to develop a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. The outstanding students were presented with commendation certificates in recognition of their remarkable contributions. The event was co-organized by COMSATS and Power-China.

## Dams pipeline solves drinking water problem

GWADAR: The completion of a 158km pipeline, constructed to channel water from the Shadi Kor and Swad dams, has successfully resolved the water scarcity issue for the residents of Gwadar town. "GDA has successfully completed one of the most challenging water projects in Gwadar town," tweeted Director General Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) Mujeeb Ur Rehman Qambarani. He stated that GDA has also installed a new 141 km water distribution pipeline to ensure every household in the city has access to drinking water. "New house connections are being provided to households. Sufficient water is available; even more than the daily demand," Qambarani noted. GDA has built four underground storage tanks in different parts of Gwadar City with a collective storage capacity of 10 million gallons of water. Despite the project's scale, the water pipeline projects were completed swiftly, thanks to the diligent oversight of all relevant government authorities.—APP

## Accelerating SDGs implementation crucial for deve

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf, emphasized the significance of focusing on the policies, processes, and challenges related to the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Pakistan and assured full support from parliament to facilitate the legislative processes for achieving the SDGs Agenda 2030. Speaking at the National Conference titled "Empowered Local Governments—Moving Forward to Accelerate the Implementation of Agenda 2030" organized by Lead for SDGs in Islamabad, the Speaker highlighted the need to accelerate SDGs implementation in the country. He acknowledged the substantial progress made by Pakistan in defining national strategies, development plans, and institutional reforms to achieve the SDGs. The Speaker commended the efforts of the SDGs Task Force, led by Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, emphasizing the pivotal role of localizing SDGs for the socio-economic development of the country. He assured support from parliamentarians at all levels, including the National, Provincial, and local governments, to facilitate the legislative processes for achieving the SDGs Agenda 2030. Furthermore, the speaker emphasized the crucial role of local governments in achieving the SDGs by implementing and monitoring sustainable policies at the grassroots level. Local governments possess a deep understanding of local needs, resources, and challenges, enabling them to address unique development issues within their jurisdictions. The speaker stressed the importance of integrating SDGs into local development plans and strategies to contribute to the global agenda while ensuring measurable and impactful progress at the community level. Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Convener of the SDGs Task Force, reaffirmed the commitment of the SDGs Secretariat to localize the SDGs. She highlighted the achievements of the SDGs Secretariat and emphasized the need for unity and consensus to successfully achieve the SDGs. Addressing the conference, Ms. Shaza Fatima, Federal Minister for Youth Affairs, emphasized that local government support is crucial for achieving the goals of SDGs. She also stressed the importance of empowering youth, as they can actively contribute to resolving challenges at the local level.—APP

## Benazir Kafaalat programme to cover 9.3mln families

ISLAMABAD: As many as 9.3 million families will be provided quarterly assistance of Rs. 8,750 under the Benazir Kafaalat Programme during the Fiscal Year 2023-24. The Benazir Kafaalat scheme is being executed by the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) which is a flagship programme of the present government. According to an official source, the quarterly stipend of the Benazir Kafaalat programme has been increased from Rs. 7000 to Rs. 8,750. While the amount will be increased further considering the inflation rate. Similarly, the number of beneficiaries has increased from 7.6 million in the past year to 9.3 million families in the coming year. A total of Rs. 364 billion has been allocated for the Kafaalat programme which is aimed at financially empowering women by providing them with financial assistance.

The Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) programme also known as the "Benazir Kafaalat Programme" is the core programme of BISP and was initiated in the year 2008. Since its inception, the Kafaalat initiative has grown to the extent that it is now the largest single cash transfer programme in Pakistan's history. The short-term objective

of the programme was to cushion against the negative effects of slow economic growth, food crisis and inflation on the poor, particularly women, through the provision of cash assistance to eligible families. The long-term objectives of the programme were to eradicate extreme and chronic poverty, along with women empowerment, as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).—APP

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ISLAMABAD: June 14 - Speaker National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf addressing to the National Conference on Empowered Local Governments Moving Forward to Accelerate the Implementation of Agenda 2030.— AP

## Huawei contributes to multilevel digital transformation across Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Huawei contributes to multilevel digital transformation across Pakistan, with total 3,200 local employees. "Currently, Pakistan is undergoing a period of Internet and digital services booming, with Huawei Cloud constantly contributes to the development of Pakistan's digital economy," Hank Shao, Managing Director, Huawei Cloud Pakistan, told Gwadar Pro at the 2023 Pakistan International Energy Summit held recently, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. Since expanding into the Pakistani market in 1998, as of now, Huawei localization rate as high as 91%. In 2018, the newly established

"Huawei Technical Support Center" began to provide remote technical support services to other countries. "At present, our Pakistani business is mainly divided into four major sectors. First, operator services. We serve more than 10 Pakistani operators. Secondly, our enterprise business is to provide services for local organizations, large enterprises, and government agencies, involving public security, health, education, energy, finance and other fields. Third is cloud services, providing resident cloud platforms and public cloud services. Last but not the least is digital energy. We are committed to providing Pakistani customers with smart photovoltaics, data centers, sites energy and other solutions." The reporter was told that more than

80% of Pakistanis use Huawei services directly or indirectly. As for cloud services, which endow numerous industries, including the energy industry a digital transformation, Shao noted that Huawei Cloud mainly serves large government and enterprise customers, covering industries such as government, education, energy, and telecommunications. At the same time, it is building FSI Cloud with local partner Khazana, which will be released in July. This service focuses on providing secure and reliable local cloud data center resources for financial customers. "Cloud solutions are currently widely deployed in key customer computer rooms such as governments, education and operators, supporting key business processes.

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## Briefs

## Azad Pattan hydropower project ready for construction

ISLAMABAD: Wang Huihua, Managing Director of China Energy Int'l Group's Pakistan Branch, announced that the 700-megawatt Azad Pattan hydropower project, run by Energy China, is ready for construction after the completion of a feasibility study and land acquisition.

Wang made these remarks at the 'Pakistan Energy Sector Landscape: Challenges & Opportunities' conference held at NUST University, Islamabad. He explained that the project would provide cheap, clean energy to Pakistan. "We have been developing this project for six years. We hope the government will give it more priority in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative to expedite financial closure," he said. He further stated that Energy China believed that investing in renewable energy in Pakistan was financially viable. "We are committed to setting up our long-term operation in Pakistan and investing more," he said.—APP

## Eight dengue cases reported this year

RAWALPINDI, Jun 14 (APP): As many as eight dengue-positive cases had been reported in the Rawalpindi district this year, but there was a need to remain vigilant to control the spread of the fatal disease as the prevailing weather was suitable for breeding larvae. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control Dr Sajjad Mehmood told APP, that four patients were admitted to the District Headquarters Hospital, three to the Holy Family Hospital, and one to the Shifa International Hospital. Giving details of the punitive actions, the health officer said that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had registered 107 FIRs, sealed 62 premises, issued Challans to 134, notices to 752, and a fine of Rs 244,600 imposed on violations of dengue SOPs in 2023.

21 people were also arrested for violating SOPs, he added. Dr Sajjad informed that 1,124 health teams during indoor surveillance checked around 155,313 houses and found larvae at 1,148 sites.—APP

## Malik pledges to serve nation as SAPM Interior

ISLAMABAD: Jawad Sohrab Malik expressed his unwavering resolve to do his utmost to serve the nation in his new capacity as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Interior. In a tweet, he said, "May Allah Almighty help me to serve the nation with humility and righteousness." He also expressed gratitude for the privilege and honor of serving the people, vowing to earn their confidence through dedicated efforts. SAPM on Interior, Jawad Sohrab Malik, a London-qualified lawyer, earned his law degree from the University of Cardiff before shifting his focus entirely to his business ventures.—APP

## Pakistan-Russia trade in RMB, the beginning of de-dollarisation movement

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-Russia trade in RMB is the beginning of de-dollarisation movement, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday quoting Experts. On June 11, Pakistan received its first shipment of Russian crude oil, a cargo carrying 45,000 metric tonnes, in the southern city of Karachi. The payment for this historic strategic international partnership, based on G2G, was made in Chinese currency RMB, according to an official statement. Leading Pakistani economists believe this move will decrease Pakistan's reliance on the US dollar, marking the beginning of an international



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman, Asian Institute of Eco-civilization Research and Development delivered speech on "Connectivity and Emerging Role of Pakistan" Event was attended by 22 ambassadors from West Asia, Middle East, Europe, Africa, Central Asia, ASEAN etc. Business leaders from Pakistan also participated in the event.—DNA

## PIDE conference concludes with a tribute to women

Faisal Sheikh

ISLAMABAD: The conference concludes with a powerful tribute to remarkable women who are catalysts for change, empowering others and fostering hope for future generations. Shattering stereotypes and paving the way for Pashtun women to dream bigger and reach for the stars. Today was the 2nd and concluding day of the conference. The day started with the Session titled: Breaking Barriers: Women's Journey towards Equality and Empowerment; the Session was dedicated to celebrating the courage, resilience, and determination of these women who have challenged traditional societal roles and made their own mark. The panelists were inspiring women who have become catalysts for change, empowering others and fostering a sense of hope for future generations by amplifying the voices of incredible ladies. They have shattered stereotypes and paved the way for future generations of Pashtun women to dream bigger and reach for the stars. Their relentless efforts have not gone unnoticed and have served

as an inspiration to many. This Session aimed to raise awareness and promote dialogue, inspiring individuals and communities to break down all the barriers and create a more inclusive society for women. Women are our pride. They never tire or complain but are always ready to contribute to the community. Speaking at the occasion, Ms. Shad Begum, Ms. Kainat Zia, Ms. Shagufta Malik, a Women Parliamentarian, Dr. Feriha Peracha, and Dr. Noor Jehan, Ex-VC, Swabi said that the KP Women are no exception to this and have repeatedly proven that they are not behind in any count. They have shown exceptional resilience and strength in the face of adversity and have persevered to impact their communities positively. As we celebrate the achievements of Pashtun women, we must also acknowledge the challenges they continue to face. Our society is responsible for creating an environment encouraging and supporting women to pursue their dreams and aspirations. In another session titled "Sustainable Tourism is the way forward for a better tomorrow," panelists said that as the tourism industry continues to grow, it is

essential to ensure that it is sustainable and that the impact on the environment and local communities is minimal. To achieve this, we must focus on several areas, including human resources, academia, women's participation, and poverty alleviation.

They further said that human resources are the backbone of any industry, and tourism is no exception. Tourism businesses must invest in their employees and provide them with training and development opportunities. This will not only help to improve the quality of service but also increase employee satisfaction and retention. Investing in human resources can create a more sustainable tourism industry that benefits everyone involved.

Academia also has a significant role to play in the development of sustainable tourism. Research and education are crucial to promoting sustainable tourism practices and developing new sustainable tourism models. Academic institutions can generate knowledge, raise awareness, and provide technical assistance to tourism businesses. By working together, academia and the tourism industry can create a more

sustainable future for everyone. Women's participation in tourism is another critical area that needs attention. Women have traditionally been underrepresented in the tourism industry, particularly leadership roles. However, women's participation in the tourism industry can have significant economic and social benefits. We can create a more sustainable and inclusive tourism industry by empowering women and providing them equal opportunities. Poverty is also a significant hurdle in the development of sustainable tourism. Many tourism destinations are located in developing countries, where poverty is prevalent. Sustainable tourism can help to alleviate poverty by creating jobs, stimulating local economies, and supporting community development. We can create a more equitable and just world by prioritizing sustainable tourism. Two thought-provoking sessions, the intense Hardware vs. Soft Skills debate, highlighted the importance of balancing technical expertise with interpersonal abilities. And the discussion on embracing the bio-economy was also taken place. Dr. Durre Nayab, a renowned researcher, expert, and

advocate for youth empowerment, took center stage to facilitate an engaging and dynamic session titled "Youth Voices: Unleashing the Potential of the Next Generation." The Session, held as an invaluable opportunity for young individuals to actively participate and express their thoughts on the recently concluded two-day conference. The Session served as a platform for the youth to directly question and comment on the ideas, discussions, and themes explored during the conference. With passion and enthusiasm, they fearlessly shared their perspectives, concerns, and visions for the future. Dr. Durre Nayab skillfully guided the Session, ensuring every participant had a voice and their contributions were valued.

One of the highlights of the Session was the presence of experts from various fields attending the conference. These experts generously lent their knowledge and experience to answer the queries raised by the youth. The symbiotic exchange between the next generation and seasoned professionals fostered a sense of mentorship and collaboration.

## 'Saafati Mela' to engage youth in healthy activities

ISLAMABAD: The upcoming 5-day Saafati Mela (cultural festival) is all set to engage youth in healthy activities besides providing recreational opportunities for families, children and fun lovers at the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa). The festival starting on June 15 will bring cultural glimpses for fun lovers of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. "The festival is being organized on high demand of people as the Annual Lok Mela is organized once in a year while in summer vacations, the students, tourists and youngsters demanded a festival like Lok Mela. Keeping in view this need of people, this event showcasing cultural shows, foods, musical and dance shows is being organized on a small scale," said Fareena Mazhar, Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division while talking to APP. It has two objectives, one is the encouragement of local artists who not only get the appreciation of their skills.—DNA

## China sets good example upgrading Pakistan's herbal medicine industry

ISLAMABAD: "More herbs can be cultivated in Pakistan. Pakistan has the potential to play a leading role in the export of herbs in the world," said Hakeem Abdul Bari, head of Research and Development in Hamdard Laboratories of Pakistan. The development of herbal medicine industry can not only increase the medical care standard of the country but also play a role in the economy, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. In recent years, many towns and villages in China have encouraged and guided local people to cultivate herbal medicine, which helped increase their income and become rich. Changshan village in Anhui, China, is a good example. "Our Herb Planting Demonstration Area was transformed from a

barren slope. At present, our village has planted 33 hectares of herbs." Wang Shimao, secretary of the Changshan Village, said. "Our land used to be barren and drought, which was not suitable for planting traditional cash crops. So we encouraged farmers to use barren slopes and forest land to plant herbs." At present, more than 300 people in the area are engaged in herbal medicine cultivation, and the village has set up a rural cooperative to help promote local herbal medicine industry. "Pakistan can produce the best herbs in the world. However, the herbs we use are not only local-produced but also imported from all over the world." Hakeem noted. Pakistan's herbal medicine industry can benefit a lot from its considerable climatic variation. "One example is ol-

ive, which was said not to be able to grow anywhere except the Mediterranean area. However, now at least 70 thousand acres of land in Pakistan are used for olive cultivation. There is also sandalwood or teak, which was said to only grow in tropical areas. Today, their cultivation has started in Pakistan and will be on an industrial scale soon." Hakeem's viewpoint echoes Syed Farooq Bukhari, chairman of the Pakistan Pharmaceuticals Manufacturers Association. "There is a German company that I would not like to name that used to take raw herbs from Pakistan. They took herbs in pennies, and by commercializing it, that company is now worth about one billion Euros." Syed encouraged people to raise awareness to commercialize local herbs.—APP

## OGRA holds consultative session

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has conducted a consultative session on Neutral Market Price under OGRA Gas (Third Party) Access Rules for Gas Pipelines and Gas Network Codes 2018 to encourage market liberalization and private investment and ownership in the gas sector. The session was held at OGRA head office and through zoom online application to seek meaningful suggestions and proposals from the stakeholders for a balanced decision making on 'Neutral Market Price' by the Authority. Mr. Masroor Khan, Chairman OGRA and other members of the Authority chaired the session. The stakeholders in the field, SNGPL, SSGCL, PLL, Pak Arab Fertilizer, Universal Gas Distribution Company, Shell Energy, Taber Energy, Energas, Pakistan Gas Port, K Electric, Trifigura Pakistan Ltd, Vitola Resources Pakistan etc. have actively participated in the session.—APP



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## Cuba 'spy base'

The Cold War was at its height during US President Joe Biden's formative years. That perhaps explains why he is so eager to turn back the clock to the days of his childhood, and recreate a "threat from the reds" that must have thrilled him as a kid. Having rightly denied a Wall Street Journal report about China having an "eavesdropping station" in Cuba as "inaccurate", his administration has wrongly claimed China has a "spy base" there. It alleges that China has been conducting "espionage activities" in Cuba targeting the United States for some time and upgraded its intelligence collection facilities in the country in 2019. It should perhaps be pointed out in passing, lest it has escaped anyone's attention or memory, that the US is notorious for its hacking and eavesdropping on presumed foes, rivals and friends alike. When it comes to spying, the US is nonpareil. But to return to the paranoically threatening world that so many US politicians now seem to inhabit, the claim that China has been partnering with Cuba to undermine US security has naturally been hyped up by US media outlets. Having found there was a huge public appetite for their sensationalizing of a wayward Chinese research blimp, the media are not going to miss the opportunity to try to cash in on the administration's re-evoking of the Cuban missile crisis fears. Since the US has victimized and vilified its Caribbean neighbor for decades, the Biden administration feels no qualms about pouring more dirty water on the country. But it is Beijing, not Havana, that the administration has in its retro-sights. Shaping China in the mold of the Soviet Union to define its popular perception in the US is not a light-bulb moment for the current occupant of the White House or his administration; it is a bipartisan effort in Washington. Whether from conviction or opportunism, the US political circle is enthusiastically playing the role of Cold War warrior en masse. The sum of all this is to show how imaginatively impoverished Washington is in envisioning the future. Unlike Beijing which has proposed a series of transformative initiatives that seek to secure global peace and stability, foster harmony among peoples and countries, and facilitate shared development, Washington is bankrupt in terms of new thinking and fresh ideas that are befitting to address the challenges facing the world today. As a result, although it is 32 years since the Soviet Union collapsed and 60 since the Cuban missile crisis was peacefully resolved, many in Washington have cocooned themselves within a Cold War mindset. The US media outlets are only too happy to play along, since fiction sells better than facts. In this way the fiction becomes a self-perpetuating narrative as the two US political parties compete to be the toughest on China.



## Italy after Berlusconi

Millions of Italians will focus their attention on Wednesday on Milan's great cathedral, as Silvio Berlusconi is given a state funeral in the city he made his power base for over 30 years. Italy's prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, who is expected to attend, has already paid tribute to the original populist leader, who brought Italy's far right in from the cold in the 1990s. Her thoughts may now be starting to turn to the new political possibilities that the death of Mr Berlusconi at the age of 86 has opened up. One of the many baleful consequences of the Berlusconi era was the re-emergence of the far right in Italian public life. The tycoon entered politics for cynical reasons – primarily to use power to stymie legal investigations into his media empire. But in order to win power in 1994, his centre right Forza Italia party (FI) joined forces with the National Alliance (AN). A successor party to the pro-Mussolini Italian Social Movement, the AN became a junior coalition partner in government. When Mr Berlusconi triumphed again in 2008, he made Ms Meloni, then an AN deputy, the youngest minister in Italian history. After her autumn election triumph as leader of the Brothers of Italy party, Ms Meloni was able to reverse roles, as FI became part of her radical right government, along with Matteo Salvini's League. Mr Berlusconi's passing now gives her a chance to colonise the more centrist political terrain he vacates. After operating mainly as a personal vehicle for his ambitions, rather than as a normal political party, it is unclear if FI can survive without him. An effective takeover of Italy's centre-right by Ms Meloni would complete the process of normalisation first facilitated by Mr Berlusconi in the 1990s. It would also consolidate Ms Meloni's position as the most powerful ultra-nationalist leader in Europe, at a time when fellow travellers are making significant political headway elsewhere. In snap elections next month in Spain, the radical right Vox party has a good chance of emerging as power broker with a role in the next government, while in Germany an alarming recent poll put Alternative für Deutschland in second place, ahead of the governing Social Democrats. Mr Berlusconi's scurrilous brand of politics was defined by the naked pursuit of self-interest, combined with a flair for showmanship and a brazen contempt for legal and moral norms. His opportunism opened the door to darker influences, which had previously been ostracised in postwar Italy. As Wednesday's funeral brings an era of political history to an end, and Ms Meloni woos the mainstream vote that Mr Berlusconi once made his own, the far-reaching consequences of this act of enabling are yet to play themselves out.

# Uncertainty over the general elections

Shujaat Hamza



The popularity of PTI and Imran Khan among masses is one of the biggest challenges for the government and establishment to tackle.

The party itself has suffered great damage following the May 9 incidents, with much of its top leadership switching sides or quitting politics. But the popularity of Imran Khan and PTI remains strong among the general public. The govt is keen to take steps to dismantle this party and refrain Khan from getting popular support in the upcoming elections

AS the coalition government moves closer to the end of its constitutional term, the uncertainty over the general elections is increasing. The incumbent government's tenure is due in August, and the constitutional date for the elections is somewhere Mid-October. However, as the political and economical crisis drags on, many in the capital foresee the possibility of government extending the assemblies' term. Ministers and coalition party leaders are giving contradicting statements in this regard. Even though the Interior Minister has said that elections will take place 'on time'; but the 'time' government keeps talking about is rather confusing. They used the same tone and words while talking about elections on KP and Punjab assemblies post-dissolution. However, the government even took on the Supreme Court to delay the 'time'. Earlier this week, while addressing a seminar, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar seemed hesitant in giving any solid commitment on holding of general elections in October or November. The minister stated that the PML-N-led coalition had a "clear resolve" that the government was bound to follow the laws and the Constitution and its constitutional term was ending in August. However, Mr Tarar then asked the participants to pray that they would not have to invoke articles 232 or 234 of the Constitution, thus indicating that he was not completely ruling out the possibility of extending the term of the present government under special circumstances. Furthermore, PPP's Asif Ali Zardari made categorical remarks that the elections would only be held with his nod. "The elections will be held when I decide," said the former President. Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) president and JUI-F head Maulana Fazlur Rehman also expressed doubts over holding of polls in October. "We are political people who are in favour of elections but the decision regarding (October) polls will be taken in consultation with the other coalition parties, just as the PDM made decisions after consulting the allied parties in the past," Fazl had said. Former governor and PPP's senior lead-

er Makhdoom Ahmad Mahmood had hinted at delay in polls, saying the caretaker setup, after the completion of the tenure of the incumbent federal government, might prolong for at least six months if it performed well economically. With statements like these, at least two things are apparent; the differences within the opponents-cum-allies parties are getting wider in the twilight of government's tenure, secondly; the confusion regarding going into the elections is at all time high.

The popularity of PTI and Imran Khan among masses is one of the biggest challenges for the government and establishment to tackle. The party itself has suffered great damage following the May 9 incidents, with much of its top leadership switching sides or quitting politics. But the popularity of Imran Khan and PTI remains strong among the general public. The government is keen to take steps to dismantle this party and refrain Khan from getting popular support in the upcoming elections. In this regard, the National Assembly (NA) this week passed a resolution demanding the trial of May 9 rioters – who were involved in attacks on military and state installations – "without any delay" and under the Pakistan Army Act, 1952. "An inquiry should be initiated without any delay against all the people involved in these incidents and they should be punished under the Pakistan Army Act, 1952," the resolution added. Furthermore, Imran Khan is blacklisted from all the media, and faces hundreds of cases from corruption to sedition. Most probably, Khan will be disqualified, or even face prison, and there is also a good chance that PTI will be banned before elections take place. So it is obvious that the de facto condition for general election is 'minus-Imran Khan'. That is the sole reason the government was never in a serious discussion to hold elections on the assemblies which were dissolved. The Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies were dissolved in January, however, the government has refrained from holding elections for the two assemblies in question even though the constitution is clear on the matter; hold elections within 90 days of Assem-

blies' dissolution. When the Supreme Court tried to impose the writ of constitution and directed the election watchdog body to hold elections within the constitutional time frame, the coalition government chose the path of confrontation and put the clear directions of the Supreme Court in dust. It did not end here, as the government and the coalition partners launched a campaign targeting top judges of the apex court and politicizing their judgements. The allied parties also held a massive demonstration right in front of the Supreme Court building in Red Zone area of federal capital even though the section 144; which bars gatherings and rallies, was in place. It is pertinent to mention here that the PDM protest coincided with the hearing of the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) plea, requesting the apex court to reconsider its decision to hold elections for the Punjab Assembly on May 14. During the same protest, the leaders from coalition parties launched verbal attacks on Chief Justice, and said the country was under 'judicial martial law'. However, the Chief Justice of Supreme Court has since adapted a soft tone and is avoiding confrontation, as the cases pertaining to elections on both assemblies are lingering on for months.

The situation overall is dangerous. The democratic process is under threat. Constitution acts as a base of a democratic setup, and it must be safeguarded and not be superseded. For months, the PTI Chairman was on a collision course and wouldn't sit for serious negotiations for the sake of country. Now, the government is in no mood of defusing the tension and enjoys the dismantle process. This attitude and politics have cost the country its worst political calamity. The decision makers on both sides must refrain from pushing the country towards another disaster. The key to stability is free and fair elections; let the people decide. Only one party with a single manifesto and absolute majority can freely move the country in right direction. The more the decision makers, the more the trouble!

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## Justice on merit

Waheed Hussain



Despite heavy devastation, human and property losses, Churchill was confident if judiciary was performing its duty the English people will not lose war. The allied forces finally remained victors in the Second World War. That is the significance of the independent judicial system. Justice is a basic right of every individual in any society. Justice is needed in families

DURING the Second World War, when the German Air Force was wreaking havoc over London with its uninterrupted bombing attacks, the British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill took cognizance of the heavy casualties and economic devastation. He asked, "Are the courts functioning?" When told that the judges were dispensing justice as normal, Churchill replied, "Thank God. If the courts are working, nothing can go wrong." Despite heavy devastation, human and property losses, Churchill was confident if judiciary was performing its duty the English people will not lose war. The allied forces finally remained victors in the Second World War. That is the significance of the independent judicial system. Justice is a basic right of every individual in any society. Justice is needed in families, in private and public institutions, in short at all levels of human interaction. Injustice in a society creates deprivation leading towards disruption, chaos, and instability. Without discrimination all citizens, rich or poor, powerful, or weak, rulers or the subject must be equal before law. Is it happening in Pakistan? Are all Pakistanis equally get justice according to the spirit of the law? Unfortunately, Pakistan stands 129 out of 140 countries rule of law index in the world. Hundreds of thousands of cases are pending in higher and lower courts across Pakistan. There is an impression among the masses that our judiciary seems to be very active in the political cases. The cases of influential people like the President, Prime Minister, leaders of political parties and parliamentarians had been fixed without wasting a minute in comparison to those who did not have access to justice. Birth of the Doctrine of Necessity by the Justice Munir made

the institution controversial. Role of judiciary in the political system brought a bad name to the institution. The country has experienced that instead of standing with rule of law, constitution or democracy, the judiciary in the past, always sided with dictators both military and civilians. If we look at the political and judicial history of the country, judges have been influenced by the institutions and individuals getting decisions of their choice under the disguise of 'doctrine of necessity'. Former Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, who was removed by the late General Musharraf in 2007, were restored by former President Asif Ali Zardari's government in 2009 under a deal with the Nawaz League. Before the restoration of Ch. Iftikhar and other judges, a lawyer movement was launched with the help of opposition political parties. After the restoration of the Justice Iftikhar many controversial decisions were made by the Supreme Court of Pakistan under Suo Moto powers of the CJP. Prominent senior lawyer Ahtizaz Ahsen who used to drive the former CJP Iftikhar's car during the movement later regretted. Former Chief Justice Supreme Court of Pakistan justice Saqib Nisar and his other colleague judges had been bitterly criticized by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Chief Coordinator of PML (N) Maryum Nawaz and other party leaders for removing an elected popular leader from office in 2017 in a weak case of Aqama (work permit). PML (N) believes that former CJP Saqib Nisar was influenced by some powerful people in the country to help PTI Chairman Imran Khan to become the Prime Minister in 2018 elections. Nawaz Sharif was disqualified and sent to jail by a well-conceived strategy. Even today the present government accuses the superior judiciary of

providing relief to Imran Khan and his party. The clash among Parliament, Executive and Judiciary seems imminent. Because of the weak judicial system and miscarriage of justice former Senator, senior politician and prominent public figure, Faisal Raza Abadi has serious reservations about his arrest from the Supreme Court of Pakistan premises and lodging a First Information Report by the Supreme Court PRO in Secretariate Police Station, Islamabad, on 19 September 2018. Recently, he has served a legal notice to the Supreme Court of Pakistan through his lawyer, mentioning that he was arrested from the premises of supreme court without any lawful ground, sent to jail where he developed serious illness, damages to his business, suffered irreversible trauma and reput. The former senator further submitted to the court that he faced incarceration, humiliation, torture, and all fundamental rights given in the constitution were violated. He requested the honorable court to act against all those who have violated the constitution, laws and provide justice to him. Hope that the honorable supreme court will address the serious concern of the former senator. Faisal Raza Abadi is a vocal politician. During his stay in the senate, the upper house of the Parliament, he had been raising his voice for the rights of poor, needy, victims of terrorism and deprived people. Because of his fair approach to issues, he used to criticize policies and decisions of his own government. At the time of his resignation as member of senate, he made a historic speech, where he called for promoting democratic culture, constitutionalism, and independence of parliament. We hope along with Faisal Raza Abadi every citizen of this country will get justice not on the basis of choice but on merit.



## Briefs

## Biparjoy to hit coastal areas today

FROM PAGE 01  
latitude 21.7°N and longitude 66.4°E at a distance of about 370km south-southwest of Karachi, 355km south-southwest Thatta and 290km south-southwest of Ketu Bandar, the weather forecast department said in a statement. The cyclone was previously 340km south of Karachi. "Maximum sustained surface winds are 150-160 Km/hour around the system center and sea conditions being phenomenal around the system center with maximum wave height 30 feet," it added.  
The PDM said favourable environmental conditions (sea surface temperature of 29-30°C, low vertical wind shear and upper-level divergence) are in support to sustain the cyclone strength through the forecast period.  
Under the existing upper-level steering winds, the Biparjoy started to recurve north-northeastward and likely cross between Ketu Bandar (southeast Sindh) and Indian Gujarat coast on June 15 (Thursday) evening with packing winds of 100-120km per hour gusting 140km per hour. "The PMD's cyclone warning center, Karachi is continuously monitoring the system and will issue update accordingly," it added.

## Cyclone relief fund established

FROM PAGE 01  
She urged the masses to cooperate with the administration in the evacuation process to save lives and abide by the guidelines and instructions being issued in this regard. Sherry Rehman said Pakistan Navy and other agencies have shifted their assets to protected areas. She said Prime Minister's cyclone relief fund has also been established to support cyclone-hit masses.

## PM directs to complete uplift...

FROM PAGE 01  
The Prime Minister said a solid waste management system is also being introduced in Islamabad on the pattern of Lahore. Shehbaz Sharif said that the IJP road has been named after Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed to recognize the services and sacrifices rendered by the martyrs for the nation. He said only those nations remain successful which remember the sacrifices of their martyrs. The Prime Minister said that May 9 acts not only aggrieved the entire nation but also bowed our heads down in embarrassment. He said today the propaganda of a political party regarding regime change stands fully exposed. The Prime Minister said relief has been given to the people in the budget. Referring to the increase in the salaries and pensions of employees, he said the budget envisages several initiatives for the youth. He said laptop scheme for the youth will be launched next month. This year one hundred thousand laptops will be distributed amongst the youth.

He said we are importing oil on discounted rates from Russia. He was also confident of a deal with the IMF saying Pakistan has fulfilled all the conditions. He expressed the commitment to steer the country collectively out of difficult situation. He however stressed that political stability is a must for economic stability.

## PM arrives in Baku

FROM PAGE 01  
"Pakistan-Azerbaijan relationship is embedded in commonalities of faith, culture and history, and strengthened by mutual trust and convergence of views on regional and global matters," the FO statement read.

## Pak Basketball team reaches Maldives for five-nation c'ship

DG PSB Shoaib Khoso is hopeful that the talented Pakistan Basketball Team will perform brilliantly in the five-nation basketball championship

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Basketball team reaches Maldives on Wednesday in order to participate in the five-nation international basketball championship to be starting from June 15th in Male. Pakistan along with host Maldives, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal will fight for the championship title in a single league round where top four teams will qualify for semifinals of the championship. The Pakistan team also met with Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shoaib Khoso before departure to Maldives. In this meeting, the President of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Brig. (R) Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor informed him about the preparations of the national team for the five-nation Championship.

DG PSB Shoaib Khoso is hopeful that the talented Pakistan Basketball Team will perform brilliantly in the five-nation basketball championship. He said that Pakistan Sports Board will provide maximum support to active sports federations. He also said that it would be a wonderful opportunity for young players to represent the country to display their sports potential in their respective game as the Pakistan Sports Board is working hard for the promotion of sports across the country. DG PSB Shoaib Khoso also assured PBBF officials that PSB will provide maximum support for future training camps for any upcoming



national and international events. The President of the Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Brig. (R) Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor and PBBF Associate Secretary Ouj E Zahoor thanked the Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari and Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shoaib Khoso for their support and assistance, which enable PBBF to train the national basketball team in the camp for more than a month. This championship will be helpful for the Pakistan team to get international exposure after a long period of seven years. Under the supervision of the coaching staff, young players

did extensive training at Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad ahead of the event. The team staff includes Former International Malik Muhammad Riaz, who will be the head coach along with Umer Mehmood coach and Ahmed Ali Tipu will be the team manager. Besides the team, for the first time in decades a Pakistani Basketball Referee Syed Adnan Ali, from Karachi, who is also a FIBA certified referee will also officiate in the five-nation international basketball championship. PBBF said that the five nation international championship will be a door opener for talented basketball players to represent Pakistan, the purpose of participating in the

event is to provide opportunities to the players so that they can get experience as PBBF set the target of the Pakistan basketball team to win the medal in upcoming South Asian Games to be held next year. According to details, Pakistan will play their first match against Nepal on June 15 while green shirts will be in action against host Maldives on June 16. Pakistan will play their third league match against Bhutan on June 17 and will play his last match against Bangladesh on June 18. The semifinals will be played on June 20 while the final of the championship will be held on June 22. It is also mentioned that after getting the official affiliation with

Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) few months ago, the top management of Pakistan Basketball Federation headed by Brig. (R) Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor and Secretary General Khalid Bashir took many steps to organize national events as well as to send Pakistan teams to international level.  
**Pakistan squad:** Muhammad Shahbaz Ali (captain), Abdul Wahab, Muhammad Umair Jan, Zain ul Hassan Khan, Muhammad Shahid, Imad Ahmed, Zia Ur Rehman, Saqib Ullah Mahsood, Mahtab Akram and Sheraz Aslam. Officials: Malik Muhammad Riaz (head coach), Umer Mehmood (coach), Ahmed Ali Tipu (manager)

## I didn't ask to be sold to Real Madrid: Mbappe

KYLIAN Mbappe said he never asked Paris St Germain to allow him to move to Real Madrid in the close season, confirming that he is happy to play in the French capital next season but will not extend his contract with the Ligue 1 champions.  
Mbappe caused a stir when he sent a letter to the club stating that he had no intention to extend his PSG contract, which expires in 2024 if he does not activate the clause that will extend his deal by a further 12 months. PSG find themselves in a fix as they risk losing Mbappe for free in June 2024. He will also be

free to sign a pre-contract agreement with a new club from January should he decide to see out the remaining year of his deal at PSG. "I didn't ask either to be sold or to go to Real Madrid," Mbappe told Italian publication Gazzetta dello Sport. "I just confirmed that I don't want to activate the extra year foreseen in the contract. We have never talked about a renewal with PSG, but I'm happy to stay here next season." However, if Mbappe stays until the end of the 2023-24 season, the French club will be unable to recoup any of the 180 million euros (\$194.45 million) they spent in 2017 to sign the

forward from AS Monaco. Real Madrid has courted Mbappe in the past but failed to land the 24-year-old, who signed a contract extension with PSG in May last year. However, the Spanish club are rebuilding their team after losing several attacking players, including Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema, and could turn their eye to Mbappe who has finished top scorer in Ligue 1 for the last five seasons. PSG will also want to avoid a complete rebuild of their forward line after losing Lionel Messi on a free transfer when the Argentine World Cup winner opted not to extend his contract

at the end of the season. Messi had been booed and jeered by PSG fans towards the end of the season after their Champions League last-16 exit and Mbappe said the seven-times Ballon d'Or winner did not get the respect he deserved in France. "We're talking about potentially the best player in the history of football. It's never good news when someone like Messi leaves," Mbappe said. "Personally, I don't quite understand why so many people were so relieved that he was gone... It's a shame, but that's how it went. We will have to do what we can to replace him."

## England will deliver major tournament win: Bellingham

LONDON: Jude Bellingham believes England are on the cusp of a major tournament win at Euro 2024 after three near misses under Gareth Southgate. Real Madrid-bound midfielder Bellingham is just one of a number of young stars available to Southgate in a talented squad that will be among the favourites for next year's European Championship in Germany. England were beaten 2-1 by France in the quarter-finals of last year's World Cup. In 2021 they lost the final of the Euro on penalties to Italy and made the semi-finals of the 2018 World Cup in Southgate's first major tournament in charge. "England fans can feel it themselves. They're ambitious, but they're not stupid. There's a reason for the kind of expectation and the hype around the team at the minute," said Bellingham, who has joined up with the Three Lions squad despite a knee injury that will keep him out of Euro 2024 qualifiers against Malta and North Macedonia. "The truth is that we are delivering. We'd like to deliver a trophy and a tournament win, of course, but I think there's steps to doing that. A lot of the great international teams in the past didn't win straight away. - Agencies

## Babar Azam tops major batting chart in ICC WTC

LAHORE: In a closely contested race of skills, Pakistan's skipper, Babar Azam, rose as the standout batter in the recently concluded World Test Championship (WTC) 2021-2023. With a fantastic average of 69.10 in 20 innings, Babar claimed the top spot for a player batting at the number four position, leaving behind renowned batters like India's Virat Kohli and Australia's Steve Smith. Babar's remarkable performance throughout the championship pushed him forward on the charts. The 28-year-old displayed his excellence with the bat. He recorded eight fifties and four centuries in the process. As a matter of fact, his composed demeanour made him a formidable force against any bowling attack. Babar also faced tough competition from some of the world's finest batters. Steve Smith exhibited his class and batted at an average of 55.40 in 30 innings. Smith's altogether scored six fifties and four centuries, logging his reputation as the master of the game. England's Joe Root, secured third position with an average of 54.20 in 34 innings. His batting portfolio featured eight fifties and six centuries. The right-handed batsman, stamped two fifties and two centuries to his name at an average of 48.40 in 16 innings. On the other hand, Kohli, had a passable performance during the championship. Kohli's average of 34.65 per match, with three fifties and a century, placed him at number five in the list. As the curtains fell on the World Test Championship, Babar came out as the kingpin of consistency. - DNA

## AWT to sponsorship Pak National Hockey C'ship 2023

ISLAMABAD: Army Welfare Trust (AWT) on Wednesday announced to sponsor Pakistan National Hockey Championship 2023. The announcement was made by the Managing Director of AWT, Lt Gen Naveed Mukhtar (Retd), at an agreement signing ceremony at AWT Head Office, Rawalpindi, said a spokesman of Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF). Besides others, the ceremony was attended by erstwhile stalwarts of hockey Olympians - Kaleem Ullah, Hanif Khan and Rahim Khan. The spokesman said that the championship would take place before the year end adding its exact schedule would be announced soon. - DNA

## WADA rules are followed in letter and spirit: Minister IPC

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari said that strict implementation of WADA rules is being ensured in Pakistan to prevent and discourage the use of prohibited drugs among athletes. He expressed these views while addressing the 18th Asia/Oceania Region Inter-Government Ministerial meeting/conference on Anti-Doping in Sports at Colombo. The meeting was held under the supervision of World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) where minister and representatives of 39 countries in Asia Pacific region including WADA top officials participated. The main objective of this conference was to educate sports authorities including Sports Ministers in the region about the negative effects of the use of banned body stimulants, the menace spreading like epidemic in sports. During the conference, the implementation of WADA recommendations was reviewed by the member countries. Federal Minister IPC Ehsan Mazari while addressing the conference said that the WADA rules have been given legal cover by the government of Pakistan while awareness about doping and anti-drugs is being highlighted among the athletes. He said that the National Anti-Doping Agency has also been formed in Pakistan which is actively playing its role, adding that WADA rules are being strictly followed. "WADA rules are being strictly implemented with zero tolerance policy. We are working to make Pakistan a doping-free country where every athlete will have to follow the rules in letter and spirit. Pakistani athletes are being strictly monitored to ensure transparency," Ehsan Mazari said that the use of prohibited drugs is extremely harmful for athletes. "Strict action will be taken against anyone who is found involved in doping or use of performance enhancing drugs." During the conference, Federal Minister Ehsan Mazari also met with the Sports Ministers of different countries and discussed issues of mutual interest and promotion of bilateral cooperation in the field of sports. - DNA

## PML-N, PPP at loggerheads over PCB chief's post

Minister Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari belongs to PPP. Interestingly, the committee got a two-month extension, likely ending on June 22. Zaka Ashraf was PCB's chairman in previous regime of PPP

DNA

LAHORE: In December last year, the government dismissed Ramiz Raja and formed a management committee headed by Najam Sethi to take over the affairs of the PCB. The committee was given 120 days to restore regional and departmental cricket and the 2014 constitution. It was also given the task of forming a 10-member governing board and appointing a chairman. Its term was to be completed on April 21. However, things seemed to be simple at first. However, the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Affairs objected to the appointment of the Election Commissioner. Then only a two to four-week summary was sent to the Prime Minister's House to extend the committee's tenure. Minister Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari belongs to PPP. Interestingly, the committee got a two-month extension, likely ending on June 22. Zaka Ashraf was PCB's chairman in the previous regime of PPP. He remained the head and was removed from office after the change of government; later, he had a legal battle with Najam Sethi. He is a close friend of Pa-



kistan People's Party President Asif Ali Zardari. On the other hand, Najam Sethi is close to former Prime Minister and PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif. In the past few days, Najam Sethi met Nawaz Sharif in London and then Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Pakistan. According to the sources, neither party is ready to withdraw their candidates. The sit-

uation has taken a dramatic turn, and there may be a surprise, Najam Sethi and Zaka Ashraf both seem determined to become the next PCB chairman. In this regard, when contacted by the correspondent of Express News, the Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Affairs, Ehsan ur Rahman Mazari, said that we had sent a sum-

mary to the Prime Minister a month ago and requested him to pay attention to the name of Zaka Ashraf as the chairman PCB. There was no response from him the Prime Minister, so a reminder was sent again. He said there are only a few days left before the term of the management committee ends, so the matter should be resolved sooner. They have received instructions from the top leadership of their party that an attempt should be made to make Zaka Ashraf the board's chairman. He further stated that it was decided in the coalition government that the party under which the ministry was made would also make future appointments. "Sports come under the IPC ministry, so the appointment of the PCB head is our authority; we do not intrude in the affairs of the ministries with the PML-N or other parties. We are hoping that one of the two persons nominated by the Prime Minister for the governing board will include Zaka Ashraf. Now the question is, if this would not be done, what would be the reaction of the Pakistan People's Party? I do not want to talk about assumptions; I can only comment when the time comes," Mazari said.

## Military court convicts to have right to appeal

FORM PAGE 01  
Army Act. These four things are judicial review against military courts decisions - right of accused to engage counsel of own choice, follow the Procedure of CPC and CRPC and giving access to get record," he stated. Following PTI Chairman and deposed premier Imran Khan's arrest on May 9 in connection with a corruption case, the country saw violent protests targeting sensitive state and military installations. Following the development, on May 10, army troops were called out in Punjab and K-P as authorities sought to quell the deadly unrest.

## IHC adjourns PTI chief's appeal

FROM PAGE 01  
the evidence. Harris said the complaint in the Toshakhana case was not lodged by the competent authority as the complainant could not show any authority letter of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in that regard. The court questioned whether the petitioner wanted the ECP to file the complaint itself through the District Election Commissioner. The lawyer replied as per the law the District Election Commissioner could file the complaint, but the complainant was Deputy District Election Commissioner at the time of filing the complaint. Moreover, the signatures of the complainant were different at two places, he added. Citing the reference of the appeal of Maryam Nawaz in the Avenfield reference, the chief justice remarked that it had been observed that the decision of the top court had a separate worth and merit would be viewed in the criminal case. If the ECP had no judgment in the Toshakhana case then anyone could file a complaint regarding corruption or corrupt practices, he added.

## Justice Mussarat to be elevated to SC

FROM PAGE 01  
Currently, the top court is functioning with 15 judges, including the chief justice, against the sanctioned strength of 17 judges. Last month, SC Senior Puisne Judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa penned a letter to CJP Bandial urging him to immediately convene a meeting of the JCP to fill the vacancies of the judges in the apex court. He also suggested the names of the chief justices of the SHC and PHC for the posts. The JCP last met in October 2022 where three judges were elevated to the top court. The JCP meeting should consider the names of the two judges on the seniority principle, urged Justice Isa.

## Red Cross visits POWs of Ukraine war

GENEVA: The Red Cross said Wednesday it had visited 1,500 prisoners of war on both sides of the conflict in Ukraine, often sharing desperately longed-for news with their families. The International Committee of the Red Cross stressed the importance of access to both Russian and Ukrainian POWs. The ICRC said such visits are vital for checking detention conditions, offering support and sometimes books, hygiene items and other personal necessities, and also to relay information between the prisoners and their loved ones. "For the prisoners of war and their families who have been able to share news, the impact is... immeasurable," Ariane Bauer, ICRC's regional director for Europe and central Asia, told reporters. The ICRC and its partners have so far delivered around 2,500 personal messages between POWs and their families in the Ukraine conflict, she said. The organisation said it had also helped provide around 5,500 families with information on the fate of their loved ones in the conflict. - APP



## Briefs

## Ahsan chairs mid-term review meeting on SDG 2

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal Wednesday chaired a mid-term review meeting on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 which focused on eliminating hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture. During the meeting, the minister delivered a speech to various stakeholders and development partners, emphasizing the significance of SDG 2 and outlining the government's initiatives and plans to address the challenges in achieving the goal, said a press release issued here. He emphasized that SDG 2 was not merely international development agendas, but it was the development agenda of Pakistan as it aimed to provide minimum facilities and rights to people for a quality life. Ending poverty, hunger, and unemployment were goals that did not require international agreements but necessitated concerted efforts from within each country, he added. Highlighting Pakistan's commitment to sustainable development, Minister Iqbal mentioned that Pakistan became the first country in the world to implement Sustainable Development Goals. He stressed the importance of partnership in sustainable development and expressed the need for collaboration among the government, private sector, and civil society.—APP

## Nigeria boat capsizes death toll rises to more than 100

MAIDUGURI: The death toll from an overloaded boat that capsized in a remote part of Nigeria's north central region has risen to more than 100, police and officials said on Wednesday, in one of the worst such disasters in recent years. The wooden boat was ferrying people to Kwara state across a river from neighbouring Niger state after a wedding ceremony when it capsized on Monday night. Kwara state police spokesperson Ajayi Okasami told Reuters on Wednesday that 103 people had been confirmed dead. "The names of survivors will be made public as soon as they are available," Okasami said. It was not immediately clear how many people were in the boat, but some residents put the figure at more than 200. Alhaji Bologi, the emir of Patigi district which includes the villages from where the passengers had lived, said he had received information that 150 people had drowned while 53 had been rescued.—Agencies

## Japanese soldier arrested after fatal shooting

TOKYO: Japanese police arrested an 18-year-old soldier on Wednesday after he shot and killed two instructors and injured a third at a military firing range in central Japan, the country's defence ministry said. The incident at about 9 a.m. (24:00 GMT) in Gifu City was the first such fatal shooting at a Ground Self Defense Force (GSDF) firing range since 1984, GSDF Chief of Staff General Yasunori Morishita told reporters. The three instructors, which public broadcaster NHK said included a man in his 50s and two in their 20s, were taken to hospital where two died, Morishita said. The alleged shooter, who is in police custody, joined the GSDF in April, he added. "We will investigate the cause of the incident to ensure that it doesn't happen again," Morishita said at a media briefing. Shootings are extremely rare in Japan, where gun ownership is tightly regulated, and anyone seeking to own a gun must go through rigorous background checks. Last year there were four gun deaths in Japan, according to the National Police Agency.—Agencies

## Kayana hosts dinner for Pak journalists



LOMBOK: The members of the Pakistani media delegation posing for a group photo with Nurul Hayani, Assistant Sales Manager of the Kayana resort, Lombok. The Kayana management hosted an exclusive dinner for the visiting delegation. The guests were served with traditional Lombok cuisines. The Kayana resort is located off the coast of the sea. It facilitates an instant connection to the Gili islands to its guests. Ms. Hayani during her interaction with the media delegation invited them to come again to Lombok and stay at the Kayana resort. She hoped Pakistani tourists and businessmen would choose the Kayana as a preferred choice.—DNA

## Pakistani startups showcase work at London Tech Week

ISLAMABAD: London Tech Week 2023, a global celebration of tech, uniting the most innovative thinkers and talent of tomorrow in a week-long festival, is being held at Queen Elizabeth II Centre in London. It brings together industry leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers from around the world to explore the latest advancements and trends in technology, said a news release on Wednesday. Continuing with its tradition of powering Pakistan's startup ecosystem, Ignite National Technology Fund, a public sector company with the Ministry of IT & Telecom, par-

ticipates in London Tech Week 2023, showcasing six exciting startups from its different National Incubation Centers (NICs). NIC startups participating include Xylexa (NIC Karachi), and CricFlex (NIC Islamabad), EyeSmarty (NIC Peshawar), CalCart Technologies (NIC Islamabad), Gridizen (NIC Karachi), and SLOSH AI Solutions (NIC Islamabad). Pakistan's High Commissioner in the UK, Moazzam Ahmad Khan, met Pakistani startups at the event and appreciated their work and passion to generate new leads for sales and investments in the future. Xylexa (www.xylexa.ai) has Artificial

Intelligence (AI)-powered algorithms that assist radiologists with accurate, timely and cost-effective medical image interpretation and diagnosis for their patients. CricFlex (www.cricflex.com) has a wearable sleeve for the performance analysis of bowlers in cricket. It tracks arm angles, force, speed, spin, action time, run-up speed, distance and time to provide feedback on improving performance. EyeSmarty (www.eyesmarty.com) is an AI-based platform to monitor and evaluate employee productivity and performance, offering an unmatched tool

for in-depth work record analysis. CalCart Technologies (www.calcart.com) is an AI-powered smart cart product bringing the best of online shopping to brick-and-mortar grocery stores. Calcart has recently signed a pilot test with a major global supermarket chain. Gridizen (www.gridizen.co.uk) is a SAAS-based end-to-end property management solution helping housing associations, property managers, agents and landlords manage their properties. It is also the only ESG report provider for properties in the UK. SLOSH AI

Solutions (www.slosh.ai) is an AI-powered teleradiology solution to help in triaging chest x-rays between normal and abnormal. Asim Shahryar Husain, CEO of Ignite said, "Over the last two years, Pakistani startups have raised investments of \$733 million. Considering that Pakistani startups have raised more than \$800 million over the last 5 years against average equity of 25%, the total valuation of Pakistani startups is estimated to be around \$3.2 billion at present which is expected to reach \$10 billion by 2030 or earlier." The upward trajectory of foreign investments

in Pakistani startups during 2021 to 2022 is a testament to the interest of foreign investors in our startups. Two founders of Pakistani startups, Bioniks (healthtech) and Kalpay (fintech), made it to the Forbes 30 under 30 Asia list this year which reflects the young entrepreneurial talent of Pakistan. Events like Londontech Week provide an opportunity for startups to showcase their products to find partners, customers, and investors. London Tech Week is a hub for innovative innovation and visions of future tech frontiers. UK entrepreneurship, enterprise solutions, and inclusion are the mainstays.—APP

## Senate body looks into Sui Mining Lease

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani presided over the meeting constituted by the Prime Minister to look into the Sui Mining Lease and other issues raised by Government of Balochistan, at the Parliament House. The committee was apprised about the historical background of the Sui Mining Lease and subsequent MoA with special reference to the salient features of the agreement. The Chairman Senate highlighted the significance of the agreement having far reaching effects on the social and economic uplift of the Province of Balochistan. The Chairman Senate recommended to expedite the renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement and clear the outstanding amount of lease Extension Bonus based on the provisions of Memorandum of Agreement of 2016 which is more than Rs. 45 billion from June 2015-2023. The Secretary Petroleum said that 6 billion quarterly payments will be made to the Balochistan government,

on which Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said that the Prime Minister of Pakistan had directed the payment of 32 billion rupees. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and Federal Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar directed the authorities concerned to amicably resolve the issue at the earliest. Issue of slow Pace of Construction and meager allocation for Karachi to Chaman Dual Carriageway was also discussed. The chairman remarked that even after the Prime Ministers directive to complete the said project, the pace of work is slow adding to the hardships of the people. On the question of establishment of Technical University in Quetta the committee was apprised that a campus of National University of Technology (NUTECH) Islamabad will be established in Quetta in first phase. However, establishment of a university can be considered in the long run after fulfilling the codal procedures and formalities. The Chairman Senate also inquired about the Rehabilitation of National Highways in Balochistan. He

said that during the floods of 2022, majority of the National Highways falling in Balochistan were severely damaged which includes 7-8 minor bridges connecting Karachi with Quetta. The chairman Senate also reiterated the enhancement of allocation for the projects under South Balochistan package and provision of special Development Package for Northern Districts of Balochistan. The Chairman appreciated the initiative of the government to declare the Gwadar as Gwadar Special Economic District (GSED) and termed it a milestone to promote economic development of Balochistan and Pakistan. He sought detailed report on the steps taken in this regard. Minister for Finance also informed about the updated status of funds under the NFC. The committee was given detailed overview about the PSDP allocation made for different projects, officials informed that Balochistan Province has been allocated, huge funds under PSDP for the on-going as well as newly conceived projects. Complete overview of the PSDP allocation

was presented before the committee. Members of the committee gave their recommendations and proposals to make the projects more feasible and result orientated. Chairman Senate acknowledged the co-operation of the Ministries present during the meeting. He hoped collective wisdom and commitment to the cause would help in achieving the desired goals, thus bringing the province of Balochistan at par with the developed regions of the country. Chaired by the Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, the meeting was attended by, Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Minister for Science & Technology, Agha Hussain Baloch, Minister of State for Petroleum, Musadik Malik, Senator Manzoor Ahmed kakar, Senator Abdul Qadir, Senator & Parliamentary Leader BAP Mr Khalid Hussain Magsi, MNA & Parliamentary Leader BAP, and other senior officials of related departments.

## MBS: Civil transactions law major shift in judicial reform

JEDDAH: Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, has announced the Cabinet's approval of the Civil Transactions Law, after all the needed measures were taken by the advisory Shura Council. The Civil Transactions Law is the third specialized law approved. It was tabled for approval on February 8, 2021. The penal code for discretionary sanctions is yet to be approved. Saudi Crown Prince extended his thanks to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for his constant support for developing the legislative system, which will reflect on national development, and bring about progress and prosperity. Saudi Crown Prince said that the Civil Transactions Law is an anticipated major shift toward judicial reform, and was issued based on the latest legal trends and by applying the best international judicial practices, while adhering to Islamic law. He added that the Civil Transactions Law helps the Kingdom fulfil its international obligations and agreements it ratified to keep pace with modern life. Saudi Crown Prince further said that the Civil Transactions Law entails protecting property, ensuring respect for the terms of a contract and its legality, and identifying rights, liabilities and clear legal positions. He added that the Civil Transactions Law will improve the business environment and increase its attractiveness, contribute to regulating the economy, will ensure financial rights, facilitate decisions regarding investment, enhance transparency, increase judgment prediction in civil transactions, reduce discrepancies in jurisprudence, help reach prompt justice and contribute to lowering the number of disputes arising from civil transactions. Saudi Crown Prince said that the Civil Transactions Law was not issued as scheduled in Q4 of 2022 because further studies, audit and reviews had to be conducted by committees consisting of high-level experts. The committees were established due to the importance of the law, its sensitivity and its connection to regulations in many other fields, which requires tightening its provisions and ensuring their compatibility with the provisions of relevant regulations, in an effort to ensure the efficiency of the law.—DNA

## Dozens of migrants dead as boat sinks off Greece

WEB DESK

ATHENS: At least 59 migrants died after their boat sank off the Peloponnese, Greece's coastguard said Wednesday, as fears mounted that the death toll could rise much higher. Some 100 people were rescued after the boat capsized in international waters in the Ionian Sea in an operation complicated by strong winds, the coastguard said. A migration ministry source told AFP that according to the coastguard, there could have been

"hundreds" of people on board the boat. "We fear there will be a very large number of missing persons," the official said. The International Organization for Migration acknowledged fears of a large number of missing people, noting in a tweet: "We fear more lives were lost. Initial reports suggest up to 400 people were onboard." Along with navy vessels, the rescue operation included an army plane and helicopter as well as six other boats that were in the area. "Since very early Wednesday, an extensive rescue operation is underway off Pylos, after a fishing

boat capsized with a large number of migrants onboard," the coastguard said. Those rescued were being brought to Kalamata, though four in serious condition were transferred by helicopter to the port's hospital. The coastguard said a surveillance plane with Europe's Frontex agency had spotted the boat Tuesday afternoon, but the passengers "refused any help". It later said that none on board were wearing life jackets, and did not immediately disclose their nationalities. Authorities said it appeared the migrants had departed from Libya

and were heading for Italy. The migration ministry would begin looking for accommodation for those rescued once they are processed by the coastguard to determine gender and nationality, an official said. Also Wednesday, a sailing boat in distress carrying about 80 migrants off Crete was rescued by a coastguard patrol and towed to port, Greece's port police said. Along with Italy and Spain, Greece has been one of the main landing points for tens of thousands of people seeking to reach Europe from Africa and the Middle East. Greece is also

facing an increase in crossing attempts from Turkey on southern routes near the Cyclades islands and toward the Peloponnese peninsula, hoping to avoid patrols in the northern Aegean Sea. Rescue operations are common, but last month the Greek government came under international pressure over video footage reportedly showing the forceful expulsion of migrants who were set adrift at sea. Greece and other EU member states on the south and southeastern rim of the bloc say they are being unfairly tasked with managing the arrivals of undocumented migrants.

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## Teacher wounded in Bosnia school shooting

SARAJEVO: A child was arrested Wednesday after allegedly shooting a teacher at an elementary school in the northeastern Bosnian city of Lukavac, officials and the family of the victim said. The incident comes a month after back-to-back shootings rocked neighbouring Serbia, including a rampage at an elementary school in Belgrade where a 13-year-old gunned down 10 people - including nine fellow classmates. "The child, who is not yet 14, is under police supervision in the premises of the Lukavac Police Department, while firearms and other discarded items are secured until the investigation begins," the interior ministry of Tuzla canton said. Officials described the suspect as a former student who had recently moved to another school. "The child was transferred to another school from the start of the second semester as a result of a disciplinary measure," Ahmed Omerovic, education minister for Tuzla, told reporters. "Today was the end of classes in all schools in the territory of Tuzla canton," he added. The wounded victim is an English teacher and assistant principal identified as Ismet Osmanovic, his father told local broadcaster N1. According to the hospital in the nearby city of Tuzla, the victim in the shooting had sustained "gunshot wounds to the neck".—APP

## PSX loses 24.27 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 24.2 points on Wednesday, a negative change of 0.06 per cent, closing at 41,514.45 points against 41,538.72 points the previous day. A total of 179,644,403 shares were traded during the day as compared to 144,168,405 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.3.755 billion against Rs. 4,124 billion on the last trading day. As many as 317 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 129 of them recorded gains and 161 sustained losses while the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were TPL Properties with 45,794,855 shares at Rs.14.26 per share; Hascol Petrol with 22,653,000 shares at Rs. 5.71 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 19,076,892 shares at Rs.1.16 per share. Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs. 589.00 per share price, closing at Rs. 22,700.00, whereas the runner-up was Colgate Palm XDXB with an Rs. 73.03 rise in its per share price to Rs. 1047.34. Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs. 340.00 per share closing at Rs. 6,550.00; followed by Pak Tobacco with Rs.39.90 decline to close at Rs. 610.10.—APP

## Blinken to seek open communication with China

WASHINGTON: Secretary of State Antony Blinken will urge open communication to "responsibly manage" high tensions with China when he pays a rare visit to Beijing this weekend, US officials said. The State Department confirmed that Blinken will travel this weekend to Beijing on the first trip by a top US diplomat in nearly five years, rescheduling a visit that was scrapped in February. Ahead of the trip, Blinken spoke by telephone to Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang and said he would "raise areas of concern as well as areas of potential cooperation." State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Blinken had stressed "the importance of maintaining open lines of communication to responsibly manage the US-PRC relationship to avoid miscalculation and conflict". A Beijing readout of the call reported that Qin had warned that relations between the two countries had faced "new difficulties and challenges" since the beginning of the year. "It's clear who is responsible," Qin said, according to the Chinese foreign ministry.—APP



## Briefs

### US lawmaker urges Biden admin to help Pak secure IMF loan

DNA

WASHINGTON: As Pakistan continues to struggle with repercussions of the fast-depleting foreign exchange reserves, US Congressman Al Green urged the Joe Biden-led government to play a role in "providing aid" to the South Asian nation through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Speaking at Congress Finance Committee, Green said that Pakistan is a case study on the effects of climate change. "As you know, Pakistan has suffered greatly from the floods that took place, beginning in June of 2022. I am going to ask you, if you were to use your good offices to help Pakistan, it clearly is in dire need of aid from the IMF and the World Bank as well," he said. The US lawmaker lamented that this global warming is something that the US may deny, but Pakistan is still suffering. "It emits about 1% of global greenhouse gases; we emit more than 10%, yet Pakistan suffers. Please do what you can," he urged the authorities concerned to play their part. The South Asian nation has been trying to salvage a loan programme with the IMF to avoid default. According to Columbia Threadneedle Investments, Pakistan faces about \$22 billion of external debt payments for the fiscal year 2024, about five times its reserves.

### Govt vows to pass Russian oil benefits to people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik said the government could not disclose the contractual terms of its oil purchase from Russia, but assured that Pakistan was receiving favourable rates. Malik, while speaking to journalists, said: "I do not have the liberty to disclose the commercial terms of our contract with Russia, this is part of our contract." Challenging any country to disclose its contractual terms with Russia, he questioned the need for Pakistan to be pressured into revealing its terms. However, Malik affirmed that Pakistan was benefiting from getting very good rates and these advantages would be passed on to the public. Malik's statement followed his announcement the previous day that the oil shipment was paid for using Chinese currency. Furthermore, he expressed the significance of the arrival of the first Russian oil cargo in 75 years, highlighting that within months, a cargo of Russian oil had reached Pakistan. Malik shared that Pakistan has acquired 100,000 tonnes of Ural Oil, the second lightest crude available, from Russia.

### IAEA head delays nuclear plant trip

MOSCOW: A planned trip by UN nuclear chief Rafael Grossi to the contested Russian Zaporozhye nuclear power plant has been delayed by at least several hours, Reuters reported on Wednesday, citing diplomatic sources. Russian officials said they now expect the visit to be on Thursday. The international news agency said the delay was due to security concerns but that the mission was "expected to take place soon." Evgeny Balitsky, the acting governor of the Zaporozhye Region, told Interfax that Grossi's visit had been postponed until the following day. Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), arrived in Ukraine on Tuesday amid an ongoing attempt by Kiev's forces to mount a major counter-offensive against Russia. Some Russian officials indicated that they expected the Zaporozhye plant to be targeted. - Agencies

# Indonesia to start direct flights from Pakistan

President Islamabad Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ASEAN is a huge market for Pakistan. But despite all its efforts, Pakistan has not been able to get the status of a full dialogue partner from a sectoral partner

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Indonesian Ambassador Adam M. Tugio has said that Indonesia with a population of 25 million and D8 countries with a population of 1.2 billion Muslims are big markets for Pakistan. Pakistan and Indonesia should work together to increase trade links to the D8 market. Indonesia is trying to start direct flights with Pakistan and talks are going on with the Civil Aviation Authority in this regard. It is expected that by December this year, direct air connectivity will be established between the two great countries of the Muslim world. By setting up an Indonesian warehouse in Gwadar, it wants to gain access to Pakistan and Central Asia. There are vast opportunities for improvement of trade relations and investment between the two countries. He expressed these views yesterday during a meeting with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Ahsan



Zafar Bakhtawari and other officials. Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ASEAN is a huge market for Pakistan. But despite all its efforts, Pakistan has not been able to get the status of a full dialogue partner from a sectoral partner. We wish that Indonesia, being a major ASEAN country, plays its role in this regard. He accepted the ambassador's invitation to participate in the trade exhibition held in Indonesia in October and said that the delegation

Islamabad Chamber will fully participate in this exhibition. He further said that the business community wishes to have a free trade agreement with the countries of the ASEAN organization so that both countries get benefits from the long-standing relations established with Pakistan and ASEAN. Speaking on the occasion, Senior Vice President Faad Waheed said that the role of the ambassador is very important in bringing Pakistan and Indonesia closer at the commercial level, and he has performed excellently in this regard by connecting with the business community. Vice President Engineer Azhar Salam said that Pakistan and Indonesia should increase cooperation in the field of research, the increase in scholarship for Pakistani students is welcome. In the meeting, former president FPCCI Zubair Malik, former president ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ashfaq Chatha, Muhammad Ali, Khalid Chaudhry, Chaudhry Wasim, Ameer Hamza, Dr. Usman and others also participated.

### Shell intends to sell its shareholding

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Shell Pakistan Limited (SPL) on Wednesday announced that its parent company, Shell Petroleum Company Limited, has notified its intent to sell its shareholding in the Pakistan unit. Shell Pakistan, in a notice sent to PSX, said: "We hereby inform you that the Board of Directors of Shell Pakistan Limited (SPL), in a meeting of its Board, held on June 14, 2023, has been notified by The Shell Petroleum Company Limited (SPCO) of its intent to sell its shareholding in SPL." The oil and gas company clarified that any sale will be subject to a targeted sales process, the execution of binding documentation and the receipt of applicable regulatory approvals. SPL, however, said that the development would have no impact on its current business operations, which will continue. "SPL remains committed to continuing to deliver safe and reliable operations for our customers and partners," it added. It should be noted that the SPL is a subsidiary of Shell Petroleum Company Limited, United Kingdom, which is a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell Plc, one of the world's largest energy and petrochemical companies.

## Belarus starts taking delivery of Russian nukes

MINSK: Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has said his country has started taking delivery of Russian tactical nuclear weapons, some of which he said were three times more powerful than the atomic bombs the US dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The deployment is Moscow's first move of such warheads - shorter-range less powerful nuclear weapons that could potentially be used on the battlefield - outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union. "We have missiles and bombs that we have received from Russia," Lukashenko said in an interview with the Rossiya-1 Russian state TV channel which was posted on the Belarusian Belta state news agency's Telegram channel. "The bombs are three times more powerful than those (dropped on) Hiroshima and Nagasaki," he said, speaking on a road in a forest clearing

with military vehicles parked nearby and some kind of military storage facility visible in the background. Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday that Russia, which will retain control of the tactical nuclear weapons, would start deploying them in Belarus after special storage facilities to house them were made ready. The Russian leader announced in March he had agreed to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, pointing to the U.S. deployment of such weapons in a host of European countries over many decades. The United States has criticised Putin's decision but has said it has no intention of altering its own stance on strategic nuclear weapons and has not seen any signs that Russia is preparing to use a nuclear weapon. The Russian step is nonetheless being watched closely by the United States

and its allies as well as by China, which has repeatedly cautioned against the use of nuclear weapons in the war in Ukraine. Lukashenko, a close ally of Putin, told Russian state TV in the interview, which was released late on Tuesday, that his country had numerous nuclear storage facilities left over from the Soviet-era and had restored five or six of them. He played down the idea that Russian control of the weapons was an impediment to using them quickly if he felt such a move was necessary, saying he and Putin could pick up the phone to each other "at any moment". Earlier on Tuesday, he had said separately that the Russian tactical nuclear weapons would be physically deployed on the territory of Belarus "in several days" and that he had the facilities to host longer-range missiles too if ever needed. - Agencies

## Trump faces difficult odds in documents case

Trump's greatest peril could lie in the conspiracy to obstruct justice charges, which carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison

MIAMI: Donald Trump faces a formidable task defending against charges that he illegally kept top-secret documents upon leaving the White House in 2021, according to legal experts, who say neither the law nor the facts appear to be on his side. The former U.S. president, who is a candidate to run again in the 2024 election, pleaded not guilty in Florida federal court on Tuesday. The 37 counts against him include violations of the Espionage Act, conspiracy to obstruct justice and making false statements to investigators. National security law experts were struck by the breadth of evidence in the indictment which includes documents, photos, text messages, audio and witness statements. They said this made a strong case for prosecutors that Trump illegally took the documents and then tried to cover it up. "The details are pretty shocking in terms of the carelessness with which these documents were handled, and the concerted effort to keep them out of the hands of the FBI," said Elizabeth Goitein, a national security law expert at the Brennan Center for Justice. Trump's lawyers did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Trump has called the case a "witch hunt" orchestrated by political enemies. "There was no crime, except for what the DOJ and FBI have been doing against me for years," he wrote on his Truth Social platform on Friday in reference to the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Trump's greatest peril could lie in the conspiracy to obstruct justice charges, which carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. Legal experts said the evidence appears to show that Trump was aware he had documents in his possession that were subject to a subpoena but refused to turn them over and encouraged his lawyers to mislead the FBI. - Agencies

### 9 killed in latest clash in India's Manipur

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: At least nine people have been killed in the latest clashes between members of rival ethnic groups in India's northeastern state of Manipur, police said on Wednesday, as security forces pressed on with a hunt for illegal weapons. Violence between members of the Kuki ethnic group, who mostly live in the hills, and Meiteis, the dominant community in the low lands, erupted on May 3, sparked by resentment over economic benefits and quotas in government jobs and education reserved for hill people. At least 80 people have been killed and more than 40,000 have been displaced in the state on the Myanmar border that is governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party, K. Shivakanta Singh, a senior police official in the state capital of Imphal, told reporters that a gun battle between rival factions erupted on Tuesday and went on for hours.

## Hina meets EU parliamentary members, discuss relations

BRUSSELS: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar on Wednesday met with various members of the European Parliament here, and discussed matters relating to latest regional and bilateral developments. Hina had a constructive exchange of views with Chair of Delegation for Relations with countries of South Asia Nicola Procaccini. Latest regional developments were the spotlight of discussions. Agreeing upon enhancing Pak-EU parliamentary cooperation, the both sides stressed that stability in South Asia was imperative for global peace. Separately, the MoS also held fruitful exchange with Rapporteur of Trade Monitoring Group for South Asia and member Sub-Committee on HR Dr. Maximilian Krah and thanked for constant support to Pakistan. The two sides agreed to strengthen mutually beneficial trade relations. In another meeting, Hina Rabbani Khar met Vice President of European Parliament and Rapporteur of new GSP Plus Heidi Hautala and stressed that GSP Plus was an effective tool for sustainable development goals. "It has an immense impact on growing EU-Pak trade especially job creation, increasing exports and inclusive growth", she added. During a meeting with Chair of International Trade Committee Bernd Lange, the both sides discussed the upcoming GSP Plus scheme and Pakistan's position on it. MOS Hina also met Vice Chair of sub-committee on human rights MEP Bernard Guetta where she briefed him on human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). They also discussed developments in Ukraine. - DNA

## Germany calls Russia biggest threat in Security Strategy

BERLIN: Germany announced its first National Security Strategy on Wednesday, calling Russia the biggest threat to Europe and warning about growing rivalry with China as Beijing tries to use its economic might to achieve political goals. The document provides an overview of Berlin's foreign policy, which has shifted towards prioritising security more over economic interests in the year-and-a-half since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "This is a major change being carried out by us in Germany in how we deal with security policy," moving away from military strategy alone and towards an integrated security concept, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said at the presentation of the document. It also addressed threats from climate change to supply chain disruptions. The plan also aims to ensure a more cohesive cross-ministry approach to security, although the government was unable to agree on the creation of a National Security Council due to disagreements within Scholz's three-way coalition over where it should be housed. One of the few specific pledges made in the strategy however refers to military preparedness. Days after Russia's invasion in February 2022, Scholz made a speech heralding a "turning of an era" or "Zeitenwende" in which he said Germany from now on would invest more than 2% of economic output on defence after years of resisting pleas from NATO allies to do so. The NSS contains a slightly weaker pledge, for Germany to spend 2% of economic output, "as an average over a multi-year period", on defence, initially in part by using a special 100 billion euro fund created last year. - Agencies

## France provides €180m soft loan for NTDC Projects



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Kazim Naiz, Secretary of Economic Affairs Division (EAD), H.E. Mr Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France, and Mr. Philippe Steinmetz, Country Director of the French Development Agency (AFD), signed the Credit Facility Agreement of €180 million to finance the National Transmission & Despatch Company (NTDC) Transmission Lines and Grid stations Projects. These Projects are located in Punjab in the vicinity of the cities of Vehari, Arifwala and Sialkot.

This soft loan will support the NTDC in its transmission mandate and to provide reliable and efficient power in major cities of Punjab. The funding will also help enhance the transmission of green energy and efficient power distribution in Pakistan. Such benefits will contribute to improving affordability and scaling up the energy supply. These will be achieved while also mitigating the impacts of climate change, in line with the policies of the Government of Pakistan.

**This funding provided by AFD will:**

1. Help to enhance the reliability of the power supply and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
2. Benefit & improve the quality of power supply for 26 million inhabitants.
3. Provide reliable power supply to biggest industrial and sports city (Sialkot).

The project will contribute to the Government of Pakistan's strategy to develop green energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in line with the French Government's agenda of promoting climate-friendly projects. It is also part of the pledge and commitments announced by France at the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, which took place in Geneva on January 9, 2023. France, through the French Development Agency, is providing technical and financial support in several sectors such as energy, water and sanitation, urban development, rural development, health and cultural heritage. Since 2006, €1.232 billion has been committed to Pakistan. The clean energy sector alone has mobilized a total of €930 million.

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