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Antony Blinken presses for Gaza aid on Jordan visit

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Sindh CM seeks EU's assistance

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Nadal battles to keep Madrid dreams alive

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Govt has to take onus: SC

'Spy agencies meddling must come to an end'

Unless parliament is strong, others will become powerful; I named Faez Hameed in my findings that he was behind Faizabad dharna but nothing happened; hearing adjourned till May 7: CJP Isa

COURT REPORTER / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa on Tuesday said that "others" will become powerful till Parliament becomes strong, as the Supreme Court resumed the suo motu hearing pertaining to allegations of spy agencies' interference in judicial affairs. A six-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, resumed the hearing of the suo motu case on the Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges' letter accusing agencies meddling in judicial matters. The bench comprises Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan. On March 25, six judges of IHC had demanded CJP Isa to convene a judicial convention to consider the matter of alleged interference of intelligence operatives in the judicial functions or "intimidation" of judges in a manner that undermined the independence of the judiciary. The six IHC judges - Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, Justice Tariq Mahmood Jehangiri, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan and Justice Saman Rifat Imtiaz - had written a letter to the chief justice, who is also chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). Seeking guidance from the council on "interference" of the spy agencies in courts' affairs, the judges wrote: "We are writing to seek guidance from the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) with regard to the duty of a judge to report and respond to

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Punjab government enforces 'one-dish rule' in weddings

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab government has ordered strict implementation of the 'one-dish rule' in wedding events - which promotes austerity and discourages exhibitive trends among citizens. A set of decisions was taken in the provincial cabinet session chaired by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Tuesday. The provincial chief executive approved restoring free-of-cost medicines for cancer patients. Other decisions include approval to the issuance of Kisan Cards, recommendations for wheat procurement, cash subsidy to small farmers, a digital system for monitoring the prosecutor department's performance and increasing standards of the first information report (FIR). CM Maryam also ordered to strict implementation of the one-dish rule at wedding parties. The law was taken into effect for years in the province to discourage

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani star cricketers, Shaheen Shah and Shadab Khan presenting US Ambassador a signed cricket bat during a meet-and-greet event at the US embassy. - DNA

Pak-Turkiye vow to expand defenceties

Kh Asif appreciated Turkiye's strong support for Pakistan on multiple forums

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye have acknowledged the strong relationship between their armed forces and expressed commitment to further expand defence collaboration. The understanding was reached during a meeting between Minister for Defence and Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, and Commander of Turkish Land Forces, General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu in Islamabad. The defence minister expressed satisfaction over common understanding on regional and

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Gunman kills 6 in attack on Afghan mosque

While no group has claimed the attack, IS-K is the largest security threat in Afghanistan

AGENCIES

KABUL: A gunman stormed a mosque in western Afghanistan and killed six people, a government spokesman said on Tuesday, with local residents claiming the Shia community had been targeted. Interior ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani said that "an unknown armed person shot at civilian worshippers in a mosque" in Herat province's Guzara district on Monday at around 9pm (4:30pm GMT). "Six civilians were martyred and

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Marwat nominated for PAC chairman Gohar rubbishes media reports claiming dialogue

Categorically rejecting the media reports claiming PTI formed a committee to hold talks with the military establishment, Gohar said: "Neither we have backdoor contacts nor in talks with anyone"

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Tuesday announced that his party has finalised Sher Afzal Marwat's name for the slot of all-powerful Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman, ending the infighting in the ranks of the former ruling party. During his interaction with journalists in Rawalpindi, the PTI chairman said: "All disputes are over [now] as the party has picked the name of Marwat for the slot." Last week, PTI Secretary General and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan said that Marwat should be the chairman of PAC as he was named by the party's founder. Earlier names of Hamid Khan and Hamid Raza of

Continued on Page 06

AC acquits Abbasi, others in LNG case

NAB arrested former premier for alleged corruption in 2019

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court in Islamabad on Tuesday acquitted former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and others accused in the LNG terminal case. The development comes after the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) decided to withdraw its reference against Abbasi. Accountability court's judge Nasir Javed Rana conducted the hearing today.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Lt Gen (R) Aziz appointed as PPSC Chairman

Monthly salary of new PPSC chairman will be more than Rs900,000 monthly

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Governor of Punjab Baligh Ur Rehman Tuesday appointed Lieutenant General (Retired) Muhammad Abdul Aziz as the Chairman of the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC). According to a private news channel, Lieutenant General (ret'd) Muhammad Abdul Aziz has been appointed as PPSC Chairman for the next three years. The channel reported that the monthly salary of the new PPSC chairman will be MP-I Pay Package which is more than Rs900,000 monthly. Former Chairman of the PPSC Lieutenant General (Retired) Malik Zafar Iqbal retired on the completion of his three-year tenure in February 2024. The governor of Punjab has now selected Lieutenant General (Retired) Muhammad Abdul Aziz for the post.

Rana Sana appointed as PM adviser

He will look after political affairs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has appointed Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Punjab President Rana Sanallah as his adviser on political and public affairs. President Asif Ali Zardari approved the appointment of the PML-N stalwart as the prime minister's adviser, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday.

Amid hopes of stability

SBP receives \$1.1 bln IMF tranche

Real success lies in getting rid of debt, says PM after IMF's approval of \$1.1bn tranche

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Tuesday said it had received the final \$1.1 billion tranche from the International Monetary Fund under the stand-by arrangement. On Monday, the Fund had approved the immediate disbursement of approximately \$1.1bn to Pakistan. Its executive board met in Washington and completed the second review under the SBA, bringing total disbursements under the arrangement to about \$3 billion. All board members favoured releasing the last installment except India, which abstained. "The completion of the second and final review reflects the authorities' stronger policy efforts under the SBA, which have supported the stabilisation of the economy and the return of modest growth," the IMF said in a statement. "To move Pakistan from stabilisation to a strong and sustainable recovery the authorities need to continue their policy and reform efforts,

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US delegation in Pakistan to discuss ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amidst ongoing efforts to bolster diplomatic ties, discussions on Pakistan-US relations are underway, with a high-level American delegation currently in Islamabad. According to diplomatic sources, the visit marks a significant step in the engagement between the two nations following the assumption of power by the current government. The three-member US delegation, led by US Under Secretary John Bass, arrived in Pakistan from Doha, Qatar, last night. This visit is particularly noteworthy as it is

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China hosts Fatah and Hamas in Beijing for reconciliation talks

The meeting between Hamas and Fatah in China included talks about the importance of reaching a unified stance among Palestinian factions regarding the ongoing genocide in Gaza

NEW DESK

BEIJING: Citing Palestinian sources a Lebanese media outlet close to resistance movement reported Tuesday the outcomes of the meeting held between the two Palestinian factions, Hamas and Fatah, in the Chinese capital Beijing. The sources confirmed that the two factions agreed on the importance of unifying the Palestinian position regarding the Israeli genocidal war on Gaza, emphasizing the importance of a ceasefire and the complete withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from the Strip. In this context, the factions further agreed on "coordinating joint national efforts to deliver urgent aid and relief to the sector and to arrange with the relevant parties in Gaza," and forming a joint bilateral committee in Cairo for coordination and follow-up. According to the sources, the meeting emphasized coordinating positions and efforts in the West Bank and al-Quds to confront settler attacks on villages and towns, as well as Israeli occupation assaults on the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The outcomes of the meeting also stressed the priority of the detainees' issue and the necessity to preserve

Continued on Page 06

Netanyahu vows to invade Rafah 'with or without a deal'

FOREIGN DESK

TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday that an invasion of the densely-populated Rafah city will take place regardless of whether an exchange deal with the Palestinian Resistance was reached or not. "The idea that we will stop the war before all its goals have been achieved is irrelevant. We will enter Rafah and destroy Hamas battalions there, with or without an agreement [on hostages], to achieve absolute victory," he told families of the captives held in the Strip. For many weeks now, Israelis have been flooding the streets of

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Ombudsman office working to address public complaints

He said that the ombudsman office disposing of complaints following approved guidelines and announcing punishments is beyond their mandate

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Advisor In charge of Federal Ombudsman Secretariat Region Office Peshawar, Badshah Gul Tuesday said that the ombudsman office is working to address complaints according to their mandate while the responsibility of awarding punishment falls in the domain of other institutions that are working to facilitate people. He was addressing a seminar that was held to aware students and the public about the mechanism being adopted by federal institutions and departments to address public complaints. He said that the ombudsman office disposing of complaints following approved guidelines and announcing punishments is beyond their mandate. He said that people are benefiting from the ombudsman office which has also reduced the burden of various courts. He said that cases of irregularities and corruption against officials of the ombudsman office could be prosecuted in the Supreme Judicial Council. Badshah Gul informed that the federal ombudsman office took action

on 194099 complaints against public departments in 2023 which is 18 percent higher than 2022. He said that the office received 49190 online complaints in 2023 and 22321 complaints through online apps.

He said that people can file review appeals against the decisions of the ombudsman office that are decided in 60 days while appeals against decisions of the ombudsman can be sent to the President of Pakistan. He said that the ombudsman office has directed public departments to establish pension cells and added that a window desk has also been established at international airports of the country for expatriates following directives of the ombudsman.

Expressing views in the seminar, the federal ombudsman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bakhtiar Gul said that people can approach the office to get relief. He said that the ombudsman office is working transparently to assist and help complainants. He also underlined the need for a more effective and coordinated mechanism like the ombudsman office that is working in a dedicated way for public assistance.

Earlier on, Federal Ombudsman

Office arranges awareness session for ICP's students

In line with the directions of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Regional Office here on Tuesday arranged a briefing session for the students of Law and Shariah Department, Islamia College University. Badshah Gul Wazir, Advisor Incharge and Bakhtiar Gul, Deputy Advisor made a detailed presentation to the students and faculty of Law and Shariah Department, Islamia College University, Peshawar on the working and grievance resolution mechanism of the institution of the federal ombudsman. Around 300-400 students and faculty participated in the briefing. The adviser highlighted the role and functions of the Wafaqi Mohtasib regarding dispensation of cost-free relief to people. The complaints could be filed either through simple application or online services. Badshah Gul Wazir said complaints were decided in sixty days period. Towards the end, the students asked several questions about the institution of Wafaqi Mohtasib which were elaborately responded by the adviser.



SUKKUR: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi listening to the issues of women during his visit to Sukkur's NADRA Center.—DNA

PHATA warns people against illegal housing schemes

RAWALPINDI

Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency (PHATA) has warned people against illegal housing schemes in Rawalpindi saying any business deal in unapproved housing projects would be a risk. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, the spokesman Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency Rawalpindi said that the general public and business community should refrain from any sale or purchase of plots and constricted houses in unapproved housing schemes. The spokesman said that PHATA wouldn't be responsible for any fraudulent event if occurred to anyone. He informed that RMRSCO Pvt Ltd (with Chief Executive Officer Rahimuddin) has submitted two contracts (Rudn Enclave and Rudn Enclave-II) located in Moza Chauhan Tehsil and District Rawalpindi and Moza Badial Adiala Road respectively. NOCs of both applications are processed in the department under Punjab Affordable Private Housing Scheme Rules-2020 and have not yet been approved by the planning agency he said adding that the mentioned schemes were still under consideration and unapproved.

He said that Punjab one-window operation would not only encourage the foreigners but would also give encouragement to the local businessmen to put their money in new ventures. The LCCI President said that the studies have shown that the registered businesses are increasing in those countries where the one-window facilities have been established. Kashif Anwar said that LCCI is the first-ever chamber of the country which has started one-window operation for its members and many federal and provincial departments are providing their services under one roof. He appealed to the business community to visit the one-window business facilitation center and avail all the opportunities.—APP

Minister ensures transparency in SSC examinations

KP Minister said that strict measures will be imposed on examination halls where complaints are received

DNA

PESHAWAR : Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Faisal Khan Tarakai on Tuesday asserted that transparency will be ensured at all costs in the ongoing matric examinations, with stringent action against those attempting to compromise the examination system. Addressing Press Conference at Ittla Cell Information Department over concerns raised on social media regarding paper leaks in the matric exams, Faisal Tarakai said that prompt action has been taken against individuals involved, resulting in the

suspension of 12 individuals for leaking papers.

He said that strict measures will be imposed on examination halls where complaints are received. Education Minister highlighted that the examination process in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa maintains over 90 percent transparency, surpassing other provinces. He also noted that papers circulating on social media are often from previous years and are mostly fake. The minister said that inquiries have been initiated into complaints received by the Mardan, Malakand, and Dera Ismail Khan boards, with legal action to follow against those found guilty. Tarakai further said that out of 24,000 examination

staff, 98 percent are performing their duties diligently, with the department taking commendable steps to ensure the smooth conduct of examinations, including assigning duties to examination staff through computerization. The examinations are taking SLO based which significantly reduces the possibility of cheating. Tarakai affirmed his personal involvement and that of his team in monitoring the examination system across the province. Looking ahead, preparations for upcoming FA/FSc examinations, with the Education Department prioritizing merit and transparency in all processes, the minister added.

CDA urges citizens to use water carefully

ISLAMABAD : The Capital Development Authority (CDA) urged the citizens to use the water carefully and avoid wastage of it so that maximum water can be used. The Water Supply Department of the CDA made this request during an e-Katchari which is organised on the special instructions of the prime minister, said a news release on Tuesday. The CDA is conducting step wise e-Katchari's in which the online complaints of the citizens were received and resolved it on priority. The concerned officers including DG Water Management of CDA answered the questions of the citizens during the e-Katchari.

The online complaints were also received from all sectors and areas of Islamabad which would be resolved within twenty-four hours. The authority has also established a separate Helpline Number 03357775444 for the convenience of the citizens so the problems of the residents can be solved at their doorstep.—APP

12 inmates of Abbottabad Jail completes adult literacy

PESHAWAR : Twelve prisoners at District Jail Abbottabad completed the Adult Literacy Programme. Under the initiative started in collaboration with the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), the prisoners are being taught Nazra (recitation), translation, and Hifze Qur'an. A ceremony to confer certificates upon such inmates was held at District Jail Abbottabad on Tuesday with Additional Deputy Commissioner (Relief and Human Rights) Abbottabad, Rabia Sajjad as chief guest on the occasion. Besides, Superintendent Jail, Hamid Azam Khan and Deputy Director NCHD Shabnam Kanwal, other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.—APP

LCCI delegation visits Business Facilitation Center

LAHORE : Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) delegation headed by its President Kashif Anwar here Tuesday visited Business Facilitation Center (BFC) and reviewed the facilities of various federal and provincial departments working for the convenience of the business community. LCCI Executive Committee Members Fareeha Younis, Raja Hasan Akhtar, Ahmed Elahi, Shamim Akhtar, Waseem Yousuf, Mian Atiqur Rehman, Secretary General Shahid Khalil and other members were part of the delegation while the In-charge BFC Abid Saleem gave a detailed briefing to the delegation.

BFC has 31 departments out of which 26 belong to Punjab while five belong to the federal government. The departments included EPD, LDA, PIEDMC, FIEDMC, Local Government, PFA, SNGPL, Energy, LESCO, PHE, Punjab

Small Industries and others.

The LCCI President said that one-window operation, consolidating services from provincial and federal departments under one roof is the biggest relief for the business community as it is saving their capital and time. He also appreciated the untiring efforts of the Punjab Industries Department and matchless cooperation to the business community. He said that the one-window operation by the Punjab government is facilitating the business processes and has also improved the business climate in the province. He said that the great initiative of the Punjab government has provided business community a point where various procedures related to businesses requiring interaction with different government agencies are centralized in one location. Kashif Anwar said that Lahore and other Chambers

of Commerce & Industry were calling for a long-time now that there should be a one window operation to facilitate the local and foreign investors.

He said that Punjab one-window operation would not only encourage the foreigners but would also give encouragement to the local businessmen to put their money in new ventures. The LCCI President said that the studies have shown that the registered businesses are increasing in those countries where the one-window facilities have been established.

Kashif Anwar said that LCCI is the first-ever chamber of the country which has started one-window operation for its members and many federal and provincial departments are providing their services under one roof. He appealed to the business community to visit the one-window business facilitation center and avail all the opportunities.—APP

Over 12,000 children enrolled in Govt schools: DEO

DEO said that the free of cost education was the basic right of each child and the same was being ensured in KP province

DERA ISMAIL KHAN : District Education Officer (Male) Musarrat Hussain Baloch on Tuesday said that the enrollment campaign was successfully continued in Dera Ismail Khan as 12,819 children have been enrolled in government educational institutions across the district.

While talking to media persons here in his office, the DEO vowed that the 12,819 children enrolled in the government schools included 390 drop out enrollments, 4675 public enrollments, 1088 private enrollments, and 6666 fresh enrollments while the more admissions were still underway. He vowed that the target of 20,000 new admissions

would be achieved which was set for the Dera Ismail Khan district including 17,000 in Dera and remaining 3,000 in Darazinda. He said the free of cost education was the basic right of each child and the same was being ensured in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The provincial government was providing a safe learning environment in government schools under the supervision of well-qualified teachers even those having PhD degrees.

Besides, Musarrat Hussain said, free books and other facilities were also being provided at these schools. Despite limited resources, all out efforts were being made to ensure all basic facilities

at government schools and to further improve the quality of education, he said. He appealed the parents to enroll their children in government educational institutions for the bright future of themselves as well as of the nation. He said all the activities were being accelerated at Tehsil and school levels to make the enrollment campaign successful. The house to house campaign would also be started soon under which the teachers along with local public representatives would go house to house to convince parents for getting their children enrolled, the DEO added.

Moreover, he said, a school-based micro plan would be made to bring out of school children into schools. He informed that a main

event at the district level would be organized soon for the purpose wherein the district administration, police department, district education officers, district monitoring officers, members of the National and Provincial Assembly, ASDEO, school leaders, religious scholars and media would be invited. He said that cleanliness campaign would be held from May 01 to 08. The free books have also been reached Dera Ismail Khan which would be handed over to every circle under the supervision of Deputy District Education Officer (male) Muhammad Noor Sultan so that these could be distributed at the school level.—APP

Pak criticized for ineffective tobacco control measures

GGTC said that in 2021, 163,672 deaths in Pakistan occurred primarily by these two top producers of tobacco

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan's performance in preventing the influence of multinational tobacco manufacturing companies has been found unsatisfactory, resulting in the deaths of above one hundred and sixty thousand people in the country annually, a global study reveals. An international watchdog on tobacco control, the Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC) in its latest finding of 2023 has included Pakistan in an index where the tobacco industry heavily influences the governments. According to the findings of the international watchdog Pakistan's performance in adopting measures to prevent the industry's

influence, ensuring transparency, and avoiding the conflict of interest with the multinational tobacco companies has remained unsatisfactory. Mentioning the names of Pakistan Tobacco Company and British American Tobacco, the GGTC said that in 2021, 163,672 deaths in Pakistan occurred primarily by these two top producers of tobacco. It further said that in Pakistan, tobacco companies are not prohibited from promoting themselves through so-called socially responsible activities and from promoting their products through sponsorships of events, activities, or individuals. According to GGTC findings, tobacco taxes in Pakistan as a percentage of retail price is 61% while the global standard is 70%. Mean-

while, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Technical Assistance Report titled 'Pakistan Tax Policy Diagnostic and Reform Options' released in February, on the consumption of cigarettes in Pakistan, has advised Pakistan to overhaul its tax system by increasing taxes on non-essential items like cigarettes and applying a uniform tax on cigarettes regardless of their national or multinational brand. Pakistan is currently contributing only 0.5% percent of GDP in revenue during FY21 while cigarette taxation has contributed 0.19% of the GDP, at current levels as a percentage of GDP, and has remained relatively stable in recent years. The World Bank also in its report 'Pakistan Development Update' has high-

lighted that a significant revenue gain of 0.4 percent of GDP equal to 505.26 billion rupees could be achieved by applying the current rate on premium cigarettes, which is Rs. 16.50 per cigarette to standard cigarettes as well. On the other side, a recent study by London's Imperial College titled 'Tobacco & global environment footprint' has ranked Pakistan among nine poor countries that produce 90 percent of cigarettes for the world. The study finds that tobacco production in underdeveloped countries should be a cause of concern for policymakers as out of the top 10 tobacco-producing countries, 9 including Pakistan are developing and falling in the category of low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs).

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

May
May 03/Poland National Day
May 06/Bulgaria Armed Forces Day
May 06/UAE Armed Forces Day
May 07/ Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day
May 08/Czech Republic National Day
May 09/European Union National Day
May 17/ Norway Constitution Day
May 21/ Hungary Armed Forces Day
May 22/Yemen Republic Re-unification Day (National Day)
May 24/ Eritrea National Day
May 25/ Lebanon Liberation and Resistance Day
May 25/ Argentina National Day
May 25/Jordan Independence Day
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Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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PIA Cargo.....9280979
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Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
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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



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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Belarus envoy keen to enhance bilateral trade with Pakistan

He stressed the need of harmonization of banking procedures and trade exhibitions for further enhancing and strengthening the trade and investment relations between both the countries

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to Pakistan Andrei Metelitsa on Tuesday expressed keen interest in bolstering bilateral ties, besides maximizing existing trade and investment opportunities between the two countries. He called on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema and emphasized that trade between the two countries is far below the true potential and needs to be enhanced through Government to Government (G2G) and Business to Business (B2B) interaction. Besides, he stressed the need of harmonization of banking procedures and trade exhibitions for further enhancing and strengthening the trade and investment relations between both the countries, said a press release. Matters of mutual interest were discussed including the commitments made during the 6th Session of Pakistan-Belarus Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) in January, 2023 at Minsk, Belarus. The Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Khan Cheema highlighted that Pakistan and Belarus share a cordial and friendly relationship and are committed to strengthening bilateral ties in future. He appreciated the successful 6th Session of Pakistan-Belarus Joint Ministerial Commission which paved the way for further cooperation in trade, agriculture, health, science & tech-



nology, tourism and investment in industrial sector. Ahad Cheema highlighted Pakistan's potential for use of agricultural machinery like tractors and harvesters compatible with the local market

especially through joint ventures with local firms. He also appreciated the government's outlook towards enhancement of trade and commerce as well as development of agriculture. He also apprised

the ambassador of Pakistan's potential to export textile, agriculture products and surgical equipment to Belarus while benefiting from Belarusian expertise for joint ventures in heavy

machinery and plants. He emphasized to further strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries utilizing the forum of Pak-Belarus Joint Ministerial Commission.

CDA to start complimentary Yoga classes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Sports and Culture Department of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) is all set to start complimentary Yoga sessions for the residents of federal capital from May 02. "The Yoga sessions will be organized at the Multipurpose Ground in Sector F-6 Markaz and Mehran Gate near Baradri in F-9 Park

with a purpose to provide healthy activities to the residents," an official told APP. He said that Yoga classes will be divided into two shifts including: morning sessions, which will run from 6:00am to 8:00am, and evening sessions, scheduled from 4.30pm to 6.30pm. The official said the residents of all ages, both males and females, can participate in these classes free of cost. In addition,

he said the Department of Sports and Culture will start coaching classes for basketball, lawn tennis, and futsal specifically designed for children under 16 years of age at Sector F-6 Markaz, Multipurpose Ground, and Sector G-11 Multipurpose Ground. While keeping in mind of the welfare of the citizens, he said the Sports and Culture Wing has set a helpline

numbers 051-9201607 and 0331-5181508, aiming to ensure that the citizens face no obstacles. Furthermore, the official said that the CDA places great importance on offering healthy pursuits to citizens, particularly youth, as a top institutional priority. While tirelessly striving to provide optimal citizen services, he said the authority is equally committed to fostering wholesome activities.

ANF recovers 76 kg drugs in 11 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 76 kg drugs, 580 liters liquor and arrested 15 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 1.4 kg Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Doha at Lahore Airport. 1.1 kg ketamine, 201 grams heroin and 969 grams caffeine were recovered from the possession of three passengers going to Malaysia from Islamabad airport. 290 grams heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Peshawar Airport. 1 kg Ice was recovered from a parcel booked for New Zealand at Karachi Airport. 40 kg hashish was recovered from three suspects rounded up near Othal Road in Lasbela. 20 kg hashish and 580 liters liquor were recovered from Panigur area while 7.2 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested in Dera Ismail Khan. 2.9 kg hashish and 100 grams opium were recovered from three suspects netted in two different operations in Islamabad. 1.2 kg opium and 250 cusecs Ice were recovered from an Afghan resident arrested on GT Road Peshawar. 59 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of two suspects arrested near M-1 Motorway Islamabad. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—DNA

IRSA releases 175,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 175,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 332,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1457.55 feet and was 43.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 51,800 cusecs and 5,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1153.70 feet, which was 103.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.—APP

Railways directs to accelerate efforts for retrieving occupied land

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways directed all the Divisional Superintendents (DS) to accelerate efforts for retrieving around 13,972 acres of land occupied illegally by private individuals and different government departments across the country. "Around 5,809 acres were occupied in Punjab, 1,181 acres are under encroachment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,948 acres in Sindh and 1,034 acres land occupied in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said the category of land under illegal occupations included commercial, residential, agricultural, and various persons or departments. Giving details of the land, the official said that around 769 acres were commercial in all the provinces, 3,309 residential, 5,512 acres agricultural and 4382 were under encroachment of various persons or departments. The official said the department had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups, and even business organizations that were using it for residential, commercial, and agriculture purposes for decades. "The joint procedure orders have been issued to all Divisional Superintendents of Pakistan Railways to retrieve the railway land from encroachers," the official added. Accordingly, he said the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached Railway land all over the Railway network are being initiated by the concerned divisions, and notices are issued to encroachers under the Possession Ordinance 1965 for the vacation of Railway land/structure within 14 days. The official said that Pakistan Railway Police, District Administration, and law enforcement agencies are informed of necessary assistance in anti-encroachment operations. To further control and restrict new encroachments, he said the responsibilities defined for Railway officers within Railway Station premises, Station Master concerned, within/around the colony premises, inspector of works, and Railway Police.—APP

PNCA to organize art exhibition, book launch on May 6

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) would organize a solo art exhibition and book launch titled "Mureed o Murshad" by Muhammad Sajjad Akram and Dr. Arjumand Faisal on May 6. The exhibition will be inaugurated by Dr. Arjumand Faisal at gallery 1, PNCA. A doctor by profession Dr. Arjumand is the owner and curator of Gallery 6. The event will remain open to the public until May 16, with daily viewing hours from 10 am till 4 pm, Saturday closed. Director General PNCA Muhammad Ayub Jamali will also attend the inauguration ceremony of solo exhibition and book launch.—APP

Huawei Digital Week brings MWC 2024 to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Huawei Pakistan hosted a Digital Week in Islamabad, showcasing the cutting-edge technologies and solutions unveiled at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. The event brought together the various strands integral to creating a fully connected world, that is the physical infrastructure for greener, sustainable and scalable technologies, and digitalization through Artificial Intelligence, Cloud and 5G & 5.5G. Key organizations from telecom, financial, government and commercial sectors, attended the Digital Week, and took the opportunity to have discussions on Cloud adoption, 5G transformation and AI proliferation, said a news release issued here on Tuesday. The demonstration of digital solutions unveiled the symbiosis of improvements in lifestyles, sustainable business cases and economic growth. Huawei's vision is to bring digital to every person, home and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world. With a global workforce of more than 207,000 in 170+ countries and regions, Huawei has dedicated 55% of its personnel to research and development. The focus on R&D has resulted in more than 140,000 active patents worldwide.

Huawei is working closely with carriers and partners around the world and in Pakistan to strengthen digital infrastructure, build out the ecosystem, and unleash the full value of connectivity. The new Huawei 5.5G uses ultra-broadband as a foundation, determinacy as a differentiator and autonomy as an enabler. Having showcased the extensive portfolio of 5.5G, F5.5G, and Net5.5G products and solutions for multiple scenarios at MWC Barcelona 2024, the visitors experienced how this diverse offering empowers operators to build ubiquitous, efficient, and collaborative networks that pave the way for the intelligent world of tomorrow. Yu Shaoning, Vice CEO of Government and Public Affairs, Huawei, said, "Huawei has served and collaborated with public and private sector partners over the past 25 years as the leading global carrier, enterprise solution provider and creator of cutting edge consumer products. In Pakistan, our objective is to support the Government in building a robust ICT talent ecosystem and accelerate the digitalization progress. We work closely with our partners to create solutions that optimize the outcomes for

them." Personalized user experience, versatile business models, and scalable industrial applications are key success factors as customer demands continue to evolve. Use cases for Cloud and AI solutions demonstrate how innovative strengths can align with development objectives, and push the boundaries of the digital and intelligent era. Huawei Cloud is on the cutting edge of global technologies due to the rapid advancement of AI and foundation models, offering collaborative heterogeneous computing architecture, cloud-native computing with superlative performance, mass data storage, security compliance, lean governance, and flexible deployment. The attention to green solutions and low-carbon and carbon-neutral alternatives of physical infrastructure drew the attention of many stakeholders as Pakistan is deeply affected by climate change. Green antennas will help build efficient 5.5G networks especially as there are no limits to deployment with optical and electromagnetic transparency reduce the site acquisition time and increase capability. Moreover, there is improved coverage and energy saving.—DNA

MOST EXPERIENCED MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS OF MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS IN PAKISTAN

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APHC affirms Pakistan as benefactor and ambassador of Kashmiris' cause

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has said that Pakistan is the benefactor and ambassador of Kashmiris, standing by them like a solid rock in all circumstances in their struggle for freedom from Indian bondage. According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas, in Srinagar expressed that a strong Pakistan serves as a source of strength and encouragement for the valiant Kashmiris who are steadfastly fighting Indian tyranny with great zeal and determination. He hoped that Pakistan would never abandon them, regardless of the challenges they faced. The spokesman further conveyed that Kashmiris pray for the development and prosperity of Pakistan, as a strong Pakistan is a guarantee for the success of the righteous Kashmiri movement. He emphasized the strong and eternal religious, cultural, and geographical bonds between Kashmiris and Pakistanis, affirming that Pakistan will never leave Kashmiris at the mercy of Hindutva extremists who are determined to uproot and eradicate them. Furthermore, the statement expressed gratitude for Pakistan's intense diplomatic efforts to raise awareness of the Kashmir cause at the international level, highlighting Pakistan as the sole hope of Kashmiris, with an unwavering belief that Pakistan will continue to support them.—APP

Briefs

PHA to
organize
Jashan-e-
Bahrain from
May 7

RAWALPINDI: Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi would organize three-day 'Jashan-e-Bahran' from May 7. According to a PHA spokesperson, all the arrangements were being finalized to organize a three-day Jashan-e-Bahran festival at Allama Iqbal Park, Shamsaabad, Murree Road from May 7. She said, most of the arrangements had been finalized on the special directives of Director General, PHA, Ahmed Hasan Ranjha. All available resources would be utilized to provide a healthy entertainment to the citizens, she said adding, the government was making all-out efforts to promote cultural and healthy activities for the people. She said, efforts would be made to organize a unique festival this year. The event would provide best recreational facilities to the citizens, adding, PHA would organize different colorful programmes including flowers show, art and crafts exhibition, food festival, fireworks, rangoli, sports festival and a prize distribution program under 'Jashan-e-Bahran'.—APP

Funeral
prayer of
martyred
Dolphin Squad
cop

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Amir Khattak here on Tuesday attended the funeral prayer of the Dolphin Squad cop, Ismail Rauf, who was martyred during an encounter with the robbers on Murree Road Rawalpindi. The funeral prayer was offered with official protocol and honour at police lines in which Regional Police Officer, Station Commander Rawalpindi, and officers from other forces participated. The participants also paid tribute to the great sacrifice of Ismail Rauf. "Our real heroes are the personnel who perform their duty without caring for their lives in the line of duty," the Commissioner said adding, that the eternal sacrifice of Dolphin Squad cop, Ismail Rauf for the establishment of law and order would always be remembered.—APP

Campaign
against
tobacco
consumption

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) launched a month-long campaign to raise awareness about the threats of tobacco consumption in Pakistan. The campaign, titled "Youth Against Tobacco: Healthier Generation - Thriving Economy," was inaugurated during an event held on Tuesday at the Punjab Group of Colleges. During this campaign, SPARC, with the support of the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK), will engage youth in anti-tobacco control activities for the entire month instead of just one day. The young participants will engage in various activities, including forming clubs, participating in speech competitions, designing posters, conducting social media campaigns, and creating video messages, leading up to the grand celebration of World No-Tobacco Day on May 31, 2024.—Agencies

'ICCI enjoys confidence of business community'

Ajmal Baloch went on to say that ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has signed a MoU with Gulberg Geens for the establishment of a state of the art expo centre on which the work will be initiated near future

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan Ajmal Baloch has said that Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has gained the confidence of the entire business community during last two and half years owing to the tireless services of its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari who has also initiated a unique programme of installation of filtration plants in different markets of Islamabad from his own pocket. He added that before this none of the Chamber's Presidents or any other office bearer has set any example of serving the community at his own expense.

Ajmal Baloch went on to say that ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has signed a MoU with Gulberg Geens for the establishment of a state of the art expo centre on which the work will be initiated near future and that he has also approached the Capital Development Authority for the allotment of plots for a school and a hospital for the business community and hopefully the ICCI will continue its efforts for the materialization of these projects. In his address,



Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari underlined the need for the image building of the Chamber by asserting that it is incumbent upon each and every member to get ownership and not let anybody tarnish his image. Raja Zahid Dahnial, President Traders Welfare Association Bara Kohu said that traders of Bara Kohu are obliged to ICCI as its President has announced to install a filtration plant in the

vicinity at his own expense. President Gulberg Geens Najeeb Ellahi Malik termed the Exp Centre project a revolutionary step not only for Pakistan and Islamabad but for Gulberg Geens also to promote business and residential activities in the society itself. Chaudhry Zafar Iqbal, President I&T Centre G/10 said that long standing disputes of the business community are being resolved at all the forums and that they will

continue to move forward alongside the ICCI. President Islamabad Goods and Transport Association Malik Shabbir said that before this Islamabad was starting from Aabpara and ending at F-10 but during last one and a half year Tarnol, Bara Kohu and Sihala have been linked with the ICCI for which the entire credit goes to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari. Senior leader Marble Association Salim Mughal said that the mar-

ble industry enjoys the export potential of \$1.0 billion and that they are determined to promote the country's much needed exports for its progress and prosperity. Those who also addressed the ceremony include, Waqas Khan, Zafar Iqbal Gujjar, Maqsood Tabish, Zulqarnain Abbasi, Amin Pirzada, Assad Haider Shah, Sher Mohammad, Malik Tanzeel, Mohsin Naqvi, Khalid Miraj, Babar Chaudhry, Nasir Chaudhry and other.

Ahsan for regional
export processing zones

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, chairing the maiden meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Chinese Investment Projects on Tuesday, directed to conduct a research study of export processing zones successfully operating in regional countries. The Cabinet Committee on Chinese Investment Projects, which comprises nine federal ministers, would be overseeing the progress of Chinese investment projects, expediting the pace of projects being executed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) besides ensuring the security of Chinese citizens. Emphasized the need for effective measures to ensure the supply of cheap electricity to special economic zones, the minister directed the Board of Investment (BOI) to conduct a research study

on the export processing zones operating in Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand, a news release said. Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the importance of increasing Pakistan's exports from \$30 billion to \$100 billion, noting that the country's national security and sustainable economic development were linked to export growth. He was of the view that private companies in Pakistan earned billions of rupees annually but their balance sheets did not contribute significantly to national economic development. He emphasized the need for a national trade, industrial, and business strategy to ensure economic growth and development. The minister also noted that high-level exchanges and delegations between Pakistan and China provided opportunities to enhance bilateral trade and economic relations. He expressed confidence that the second phase of CPEC would be a game-changer for economic development through cooperation in trade, industry, and infrastructure. Ahsan Iqbal stressed the need for Pakistan to determine its own interests and not rely on others' strategies. He also directed the Ministry of Interior to ensure the security of Chinese workers and officials at all levels, highlighting the importance of using modern technology and means to monitor and control the movement of non-state and anti-national elements, in line with the practices of developed countries. He cautioned against creating unnecessary difficulties and hurdles for citizens in the name of security, as it could create a negative impression internationally.—APP

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Gender
equality
crucial to
economic
growth &
sustainable
development

ISLAMABAD: An International Labour Organization (ILO) official on Tuesday advocating women's equal rights in the Job market said it must be ensured for economic growth and sustainable development. The official Manawar Sultana said the horizontal and vertical gender segregation of employment, combined with unequal distribution of unpaid work (including household and childcare activities), results in differences in working conditions such as the gender pay gap and the over-representation of women in part-time jobs. Gender equality is crucial to economic growth and sustainable development, adding that it was recognized as a cross-cutting objective within the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.—APP

'Pakistan partner
of China's BRI
through CPEC'

ISLAMABAD: Former Finance Minister, Salman Shah said that being China's friend and a partner of the Belt and Road Initiative through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has great significance for Pakistan. In an interview with China Media Group's Urdu Service, he emphasized the mutual benefits of strong China-Pakistan ties, advocating for increased investment, exports, tourism and connectivity between the two countries. Salman Shah highlighted the importance of China's extensive cooperation with other countries, especially Pakistan, in adopting digitalization, artificial intelligence and the emerging virtual economy. He underlined China's status as the world's largest market and predicted rapid growth due to rising per capita income, an attractive opportunity for investors. Salman Shah praised China's strategic initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, which connects China to Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Regarding China's Economic Development, he underscored the new quality manufacturing forces driving China's economic growth and China's importance to global investors. When asked about the role of new standard productive forces in China's development, he was of the view that China's development today is amazing. He said that China is currently leading the world in many new fields, adding, the world should learn from China's economic model. Regarding the new standard production forces, he said that China is using all modern means including big data and artificial intelligence in its development. He rejected criticism by West over China's so-called "economic overcapacity", he emphasized that China's development potential is vast. Salman Shah urged investors to take advantage of the growing Chinese market, citing opportunities in various sectors.

Chinese' solar lights
illuminate Gwadar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Thanks to the efforts of Chinese companies, the streets and public places in Gwadar are now illuminated by solar energy. Local residents in Gwadar had been experiencing unstable power supply, particularly during the night, prior to this development. The China Communication and Construction Company, in collaboration with the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Karachi, have jointly undertaken the project to illuminate the main streets and public spaces of Gwadar. A total of 73 solar-powered street lights have been installed at various locations where public activities are concentrated. Of these, 18 poles have been installed at the junction of the East Bay Expressway with the jetty, 19 poles at the fish landing area on the west bay along Marine Drive, 26 poles at the fish harbor (jetty), and 10 poles at the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ). Ali Baloch,

a local resident near Maritime Drive, told Gwadar Pro that before, such facilities were unavailable for local commuters at these points. He emphasized that there was a clear recognition of the need for improved infrastructure by both the local community and the Chinese companies involved. Additionally, he expressed optimism that with the installations of solar-powered street lights, commercial activities, especially those related to fishing, would be able to continue throughout the day due to the improved visibility and safety provided by the solar lighting. Meanwhile, in 2022, 4,000 sets of solar photovoltaic systems and LED lights were donated to local residents for their homes by Chinese companies, in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy and China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment. This additional initiative further underscores China's commitment to improving the lives of the local population in Gwadar.

68,800 Pakistanis to perform
hajj this year; Secretary

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Religious Affairs, Dr. Ataur Rehman has said that around 68,800 Pakistani pilgrims will perform Hajj this year under the government's regular scheme. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, has taken several steps to ensure a smooth and comfortable experience for Pakistani pilgrims during their Hajj journey, he told PTV News. The operation will cater to 34,300 pilgrims destined for Madinah, while 34,500 will land in Jeddah, continuing their travel to Makkah. The pre-Hajj flight operation is

scheduled to conclude on June 9. Similarly, he said Pakistani pilgrims will be provided with train station tickets for travel during the Mashair days from Mina to Arafat, Muzdalifa, and Jamarat. Dr. Ataur Rehman highlighted that this year, 63 per cent of pilgrims will be stationed in Old Mina and 37 per cent in New Mina, strategically situated along main routes and train stations. Furthermore, accommodations in Madinah have been arranged to accommodate 100 per cent of pilgrims in Markazia. The federal secretary said ministry has introduced new initiatives to enhance the pilgrim experience, including a 'Short Hajj' program

spanning 20 to 25 days, accommodating 16,000 pilgrims. However, due to airline costs, expenses for this program may be slightly higher. To streamline communication and facilitate pilgrims, the government has launched the HajjApp, mandating its installation on pilgrims' smartphones for seamless communication and information dissemination. Additionally, pre-installed SIM cards will be provided to pilgrims to address communication needs, including WhatsApp calls. In a bid to enhance pilgrim identification and convenience, standardized bags of the same size and color will be distributed. Dr. Ataur Rehman said se-

lection of Haj Assistants (Moavineen) has been made through a transparent and merit-based process, with an accompanying app to monitor their performance. To a question, he said improvements have also been made to the weekly food menu during the pilgrims' stay in Makkah, with an emphasis on protein-rich meals including beef, chicken, and eggs, offering a diverse and nutritious diet. In addition to pilgrims under the regular scheme, those participating in private schemes will benefit from the 'Road to Makkah' facility at Karachi and Islamabad airports, he said in response to another query.

Need to
combat plastic
pollution
stressed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The participants of an event titled "Pakistan's Roadmap for Plastic Action" held here Tuesday emphasized the critical need to combat plastic pollution for the well-being of both humanity and the environment.

The event was organized by the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoC-C&EC), to mark Earth Day 2024.

The event, held at the COMSATS Secretariat at Islamabad, featured the introduction of the Pakistan National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP), a government initiative implemented as part of the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) under the auspices of the World Economic Forum.

Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Climate Change and Environmental Conservation (CC&EC), Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam graced the occasion as the chief guest.

Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and Diplomats from COMSATS member states and other countries in Islamabad also attended the event. Ms. Romina emphasized Pakistan's pressing issue with plastic pollution, especially in urban areas. Owing to these daunting challenges, Pakistan has taken proactive steps, such as banning single-use plastics and polythene bags in 2019, to mitigate plastic waste generation. She stressed the importance of global cooperation in combating plastic pollution, citing initiatives like the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) led by the World Economic Forum and UNEP. She highlighted the government commitment to climate change adaptation and mitigation through policies like the National Adaptation Plan and initiatives such as the Living Indus Initiative, Recharge Pakistan, and GLOF-II, which aim to enhance climate resilience and protect vulnerable sectors of the economy and ecosystems.

In his opening remarks, the Executive Director, COMSATS headquarters, Ambassador Dr. Nafees Zakaria underscored the necessity of a cohesive global strategy to address the issue of plastic waste, emphasizing the importance of not solely focusing on its sources.

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All trussed up & nowhere to go

Yes, you heard me right. Please form an orderly queue at the library. We don't want anyone getting hurt in the stampede for copies. Liz Truss's new book is titled Ten Years to Save the West. It might as well be called 320 Pages to Save My Reputation. It has also been published in installments by the Daily Mail. Yes, again you heard me right. Fans of the former Prime Minister – surely known as “Trussies” – would have been well advised to get to their local news agents hours before they opened, to ensure they didn't miss out. The smart advice would have been to camp outside overnight. We wouldn't have wanted anyone getting crushed in the rush for the most sought-after serialization since Charles Dickens killed off Little Nell or since Conan Doyle brought Sherlock Holmes back from the dead. Of course, this might have been the biggest global publishing phenomenon since the release of Harry Potter and the Cauldron of Tripe. But, as it turned out, it wasn't. The book was published halfway through April. Advance reviews included endorsements from failed presidential primary candidate Ted Cruz, failed World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov, and failed British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Well, it takes one to know one. He often after all looks like the bombastic trickster Maui overshadowing Truss's bewildered Hei Hei, hopelessly lost and way out of her depth. Boris Johnson earned a half-a-million-pound advance on his (still unpublished) autobiography. Liz Truss was only paid £1,513 for hers. Perhaps she'd have got more if she'd agreed not to publish it. The PR for her book also included praise from failed bank chairman Matt Ridley, the man who'd been in charge of Northern Rock in 2008 when it suffered the first run on a British bank in 130 years, and had to be bailed out by the UK Treasury. “History will be kinder to her than the media was,” the talented Mr. Ridley says. Or perhaps it'll be even less kind to her than it's been to him. The collapse of his bank is said to have cost the British taxpayer about £2 billion. The fiscal meltdown Ms. Truss precipitated cost about fifteen times that. Her memoir's pre-publicity also cited praise from a journalist who has questioned the urgency of climate change and who described her magnum opus as “a fascinating and terrifying insight into the machinations of orthodox power”. Others might consider it a fascinating and terrifying insight into the machinations of the mind of a person who once, very briefly, wielded an inordinate amount of political power. Apart from the “fascinating” part. Liz Truss's seven weeks in Downing Street had begun when she was formally invited to take on the role by her namesake, Queen Elizabeth II. The nation's longest-serving monarch appointed its shortest-serving premier. And, two days later, she died. It was her account of this momentous moment in national history which made the biggest headlines for Truss's book, as soon as its malevolent mutterings started to appear in the Daily Mail. The pathologically self-absorbed Conservative leader recalls how she fell into “a state of shock” when she heard the news of Her Majesty's death. Apparently unaware of anything beyond the bloated bubble of her own unassailable ego, she asked herself, “Why me...?” Because for her it was, of course, all about Liz Truss.



Palestinian resistance: Heroic example for world

Exactly 88 years ago, in April 1936, the Great Arab Revolt against the British colonialists and Zionist settlers began in Palestine. The first stage of the uprising was a general strike declared in the Palestinian city of Nablus. It was an absolutely peaceful action, which very soon was massively supported by the Arab population. The British colonial administration immediately began to brutally suppress peaceful protests. Searches and arrests were carried out in Palestinian villages, and the British armed Zionist settlers with weapons. In response to these aggressive actions, many Palestinians joined the armed resistance against the colonialists. If we analyze the events of 1936, we will understand that the British authorities and Zionist structures organized a total infringement of the indigenous Arab population of Palestine, land was taken from the Arabs and given to Jewish settlers, Arab workers were paid lower wages than Jewish workers, and the Arabs, who had lived in their homeland for centuries, faced the dire consequences of colonialism and occupation. Just like 88 years ago, the Zionists, with the support of Western countries, continue their barbaric attacks on Palestinian land. The policy of seizing land and building illegal Zionist settlements became even more brutal than in the first half of the 20th century. The Palestinians continue their courageous resistance, which is admired by people around the world. And this great resistance is not only a struggle in the name of defending the Motherland and independence; it is also a struggle to preserve one's own identity. This is what I want to talk about in my article. Since the inception of European colonialism until today, Western expansion in different parts of the world has always been accompanied by a policy of Westernization. This is the imposition of alien Western values on different peoples, an attempt to carry out cultural assimilation, pressure on the original traditions of peoples, and the forced introduction of Western models of behavior, thought, and ideology. This policy led to the fact that the peoples who were colonized were literally deprived of their own traditions, culture, and national and religious identity. In parallel with forced Westernization, colonialists organized the economic exploitation of foreign resources, using the captured territories as a raw material base for the metropolis. In our time, colonial Westernization has changed but remains with the same main goal: to deprive other peoples of their own culture and impose on them a Western view of the world. The tools of this process were Western propaganda, the idea of a “free, neoliberal market,” and the myth of American-European democracy. With the first point, everything is very clear. Western official propaganda is aimed at forming an opinion among its consumers about the “advantages” of the Western way of life and political system. It uses false narratives and manipulation of mass consciousness to impose opinions that benefit it. The idea of the “neoliberal market” is another example of modern forms of Westernization. The idea of an “omnipotent” market economy failed even in the West itself because they began to use a policy of economic sanctions (which completely contradicts the doctrine of the free market).

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar: what's next?

Qamar Bashir



Feeling humiliated and dejected, Nawaz Sharif's ability to make rational decisions was clouded by agony and pain. Seizing the opportunity, the architect of Pakistan's political landscape acted swiftly, tactfully proposing Shahbaz Sharif as Prime Minister in Nawaz Sharif's place. According to some close associates, Nawaz Sharif was threatened to consider a hundred times before deciding against it, with the possibility of his constituency results and those of his daughter

After the elections, Nawaz Sharif was left heartbroken, and his die-hard fans were devastated by his decision to decline the premiership. Feeling humiliated and dejected, Nawaz Sharif's ability to make rational decisions was clouded by agony and pain. Seizing the opportunity, the architect of Pakistan's political landscape acted swiftly, tactfully proposing Shahbaz Sharif as Prime Minister in Nawaz Sharif's place. According to some close associates, Nawaz Sharif was threatened to consider a hundred times before deciding against it, with the possibility of his constituency results and those of his daughter being made public, adding to his humiliation and indignation. He knew that his beloved daughter would rather endure desperation and pain than be denied the Chief Ministership of Pakistan's largest province, for which she had worked tirelessly. The threat was enough to compel Nawaz Sharif to take a back seat and watch the premiership, for which he had waited, suffered, and worked so hard, slip away from his grasp and be bestowed upon Shahbaz Sharif, who had solidified his connections with the establishment during his previous tenure. Nawaz Sharif also witnessed with utter indignation when his long-time favorite, Ishaq Dar, was denied the Ministry of Finance. This decision came as a profound surprise to Dar, who felt deeply humiliated when his pride as a financial wizard was severely and mercilessly wounded. Ironically, this critical ministry was handed to an unelected professional with no experience or expertise in handling complex public financial matters. Furthermore, this individual was not accountable to the people of Pakistan for his performance as Finance Minister.

Despite being offered the consolation prize of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ishaq Dar found himself ill-suited for the role, much to the dismay of the people of Pakistan who were disheartened to see him as the country's top diplomat. Amidst the drama of suspense, intrigue, deception, and conspiracies, Shahbaz Sharif played his cards masterfully. He achieved everything he desired in life, without apparently alienating his elder brother and his leader, positioning himself as the most suitable candidate for the premiership by aligning himself, his political ideology, and his complete obedience with the architects of the election results. Once elected as Prime Minister, Shahbaz Sharif's obedience was legendary. He appointed all unelected nominees for the important cabinet portfolios, accepted all policy decisions, and left no opportunity, event, or media discourse untouched to express his

admiration, gratitude, and thanks to the architects. As the shock, sorrow, and agony of the election results subsided, Nawaz Sharif and his close associates came to the stark realization that they had been completely marginalized and excluded from the political chessboard of Pakistan. They understood how Rana Sanaullah, who could have undoubtedly been the next interior minister, was sidelined to make way for Mr. Naqvi, who had earned praise and blessings from the establishment for ruthlessly cracking down on the PTI during the 9th May incident and manipulating the election results to disadvantage some of the PML(N) candidates while rewarding the others.

Upon recognizing this reality, they devised a plan of action to reassert themselves within the government and the party. In the public domain, they began injecting the narrative that the election results were manipulated to deprive Nawaz Sharif of the premiership and deny his close associates victory in the elections and their guaranteed place in the cabinet. Discreetly, they withdrew PML(N) support from the current government by disassociating the party's manifesto from the incumbent government. They then moved to assert themselves in the formation of the cabinet by advocating for Ishaq Dar to be appointed as Deputy Prime Minister. Finally, they orchestrated a shift in the party's presidency from Shahbaz Sharif to Nawaz Sharif. Out of the four planned actions, the most damaging and far-reaching consequence was the statement that the PML(N) is not responsible for implementing its manifesto. This assertion was based on the flimsy ground that since Shahbaz Sharif's government is heading a coalition government and the PML(N) could not achieve a simple majority in parliament, they are not accountable for implementing their manifesto or the performance of Shahbaz Sharif's government. This leaves the question open as to whose manifesto Shahbaz Sharif's government is following. This was a severe blow to the government of Shahbaz Sharif and a shock to its architect.

In essence, this statement implies that Shahbaz Sharif's government does not have the mandate of the people to govern. It represents a profound loss of confidence in the government's policies and leadership, significantly undermining its legitimacy and credibility. This situation is akin to a building whose foundation has been pulled out, and it is on the verge of

collapse with a slight touch.

The second attack by the Nawaz Sharif faction was to elevate Mr. Ishaq Dar, a close confidant of Nawaz Sharif, to the position of Deputy Prime Minister. This means that Dar now holds significant authority, as both the interior minister and finance minister, along with the entire cabinet, will report to him before making any policy decisions in their respective spheres. As Deputy Prime Minister, Dar is second-in-command and will step in as Prime Minister when necessary. He will lead Cabinet meetings, represent the government at official functions, and handle day-to-day government operations. He will also oversee specific policy areas, ensuring coherence and alignment with the overall government agenda.

The third attack was to deprive Shahbaz Sharif of the coveted post of President of the PML(N). This move may not have been questioned, if Nawaz had been Prime Minister. His realization of the conspiracy against him has made him adamant to strip Shahbaz Sharif of all powers. This action will leave Shahbaz Sharif without any significant authority; Deprived of the party's presidency, the PML(N) manifesto, and the Prime Minister's absolute power, Shahbaz Sharif will become a leader without legitimacy or authority. This reaction is crucial on several fronts. If the PML(N) decides to withdraw its support from the current government, Shahbaz Sharif's administration would collapse immediately. Now, assuming he is no longer the Prime Minister and holds no significant portfolio within the party, his fate becomes uncertain and his political future could hang in the balance.

Furthermore, the question arises: who would be the next favorite of the architect if Shahbaz Sharif is sidelined? This is a complex and difficult question to answer at this juncture. However, one thing is clear: regardless of Shahbaz Sharif's prowess in the game of politics, both he and his architect will undoubtedly encounter shocking surprises from the experienced and seasoned player, Nawaz Sharif. As the situation unfolds, the dynamics of Pakistani politics are bound to shift, and the outcomes may be unpredictable.

—The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

IMF and Pakistan: A Historical Account

1



After a while, in 1965 and 1968, respectively, Ayub's finance team pursued two consecutive IMF programs. On this occasion, however, they ultimately withdrew the entire agreed upon amount, or about SDR 112 million. At this point, Pakistan formally joined the IMF's clientele. The second time Pakistan knocked the door of IMF was during the tenure of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on May

Pakistan has availed 23 IMF programs since 1958, but due to internal and external reasons, adoption of IMF policies has not benefited substantially. Pakistan has earned the unfortunate title of “one-tranche nation” which alludes to the nation's history of taking out loans at crucial junctures and then prematurely abandoning them due to a balance of payments crisis. Pakistan first sought assistance from the IMF in 1958 when General Ayub Khan initiated the country's engagement with the IMF by signing an agreement to obtain special drawing rights (SDR) 25 million through a Standby Agreement.

After a while, in 1965 and 1968, respectively, Ayub's finance team pursued two consecutive IMF programs. On this occasion, however, they ultimately withdrew the entire agreed upon amount, or about SDR 112 million. At this point, Pakistan formally joined the IMF's clientele. The second time Pakistan knocked the door of IMF was during the tenure of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on May 18, 1972. Under Bhutto's leadership, Pakistan approached the IMF three times, withdrawing 314 million out of an agreed amount of 330 million SDR. Pakistan's relationship with the IMF became strained after Bhutto was succeeded by General Zia Ul Haq, who continued the country's reliance on the IMF. During Zia's regime, Pakistan approached the IMF twice, securing 2.187 billion SDR of which 1.079 billion was utilized. Over time, Pakistan's reliance on IMF loans increased. During the tenures of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan approached the IMF a total of eight

times. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) sought IMF assistance five times, while the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) sought it three times. Even during the military rule of General Pervez Musharraf, who took power in 1999 after ousting Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan continued to seek IMF support, approaching the IMF twice within nine years and securing 1.33 billion SDR.

After democracy was restored in 2008 following General Musharraf's departure and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) assumed power, their initial strategy was to approach the IMF for a substantial bailout, securing the largest IMF package in Pakistan's history amounting to 4.94 billion SDR. In accordance with IMF conditions, Pakistan was required to implement certain reforms, including enhancing tax administration, eliminating certain tax exemptions, and establishing an interest rate corridor. However, these macroeconomic policies did not adequately address the underlying structural challenges in the economy. There was general agreement between the authorities and the IMF mission on key policy priorities, which included tighter fiscal measures, a less accommodative monetary policy stance, and structural reforms. Nonetheless, the economy's performance remained below its potential.

Upon returning to power in 2013, the PML-N government followed past practices by promptly approaching the IMF and securing the second-largest loan in Pakistan's history, totaling 4.399 billion SDR.

According to the IMF's assessment, this three-year program, completed in September 2016, enhanced macroeconomic stability. The IMF's final assessment indicates that as a result of this program, economic growth improved, the fiscal deficit was reduced, and foreign currency reserves were replenished. Additionally, structural reforms were initiated as part of this process. In 2019, during the PTI government, the IMF's executive board approved a three-year, \$6 billion loan for Pakistan, disbursing \$2 billion annually under an extended fund facility (EFF). Subsequently, in 2023, during the PDM government, Pakistan approached the IMF again as the previous EFF had expired. On June 30, 2023, the IMF reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on a \$3 billion standby arrangement. Following the 2024 General Elections, the PML-N government led by Shehbaz Sharif is preparing to conclude negotiations for a new IMF loan by May 2024, aiming for a minimum of \$6 billion. With the existing \$3 billion IMF arrangement expiring in late April, the government is seeking a larger, extended loan to maintain macroeconomic stability and facilitate essential structural reforms. This marks Pakistan's 24th medium-term bailout package, emphasizing a commitment and dedication to lasting and enduring structural changes.

—The author is a student of Strategic Studies at National Defence University, Islamabad. He tweets @afnanwasif

Briefs

'Spy agencies meddling must come...

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actions on part of members of the executive, including operatives of intelligence agencies, that seek to interfere with discharge of his/her official functions and qualify as intimidation, as well as the duty to report any such actions that come to his/her attention in relation to colleagues and/or members of the courts that the High Court supervises." Subsequently, the Supreme Court on April 1 took suo motu notice of the IHC judges' letter and formed a seven-member bench led by CJP Isa to hear the matter. Following the maiden hearing of the case on April 3, Justice Afridi, who was part of the larger bench, recused himself from hearing the suo motu case, taken up under Article 184(3) of the Constitution.

Punjab government enforces...

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the exhibition of money among citizens, specifically reducing the burden of expensive wedding feasts on deserving families who were forced to follow the trend despite facing financial challenges. On multiple occasions, the provincial authorities took punitive actions against those citizens who violated the law by showering local and foreign currencies, as well as serving lavish and expensive meals to the guests.

China hosts Fatah and Hamas...

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their rights and support them during this difficult phase, where they are subjected to the worst forms of abuse and harm inside Israeli occupation prisons. On another note, the sources reported from the meeting that Hamas and Fatah affirmed the necessity of unity and ending the division, "within the framework of the Palestine Liberation Organization by joining all Palestinian forces and factions within it and its institutions, based on previous agreements in this regard." The parties also highlighted the importance of forming a non-factional national unity government during or after the genocidal war, tasked with its technical and administrative duties in relief efforts, alleviating the effects of aggression, and rebuilding Gaza.

Netanyahu vows to invade...

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"Tel Aviv" and several other areas, demanding that Netanyahu resign over his performance in the war on Gaza, including his continued dismissal of an exchange deal. According to Channel 13, around 45,000 people demonstrated in "Tel Aviv" last Saturday, while organizers said the number was 100,000. Protesters said that the political leadership seemed removed from the predicament of captives, noting that negotiators would frequently share photographs and anecdotes about the captives to help lawmakers be more empathetic. Last week, Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades released a video of an Israeli it is holding captive in the Gaza Strip, in which he addressed settlers and the occupation authorities.

SBP receives \$1.1 bln IMF tranche

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including strict adherence to fiscal targets," the statement added. The Fund also reminded Pakistan that while doing so, it also needed to protect the vulnerable from the possible impact of such reforms. The IMF also emphasised the need to adhere to "a market-determined exchange rate to absorb external shocks; and broadening of structural reforms to support stronger and more inclusive growth. Today, SBP issued a statement saying it had received the tranche from the Fund.

Government committed to promoting hockey: Abbasi

The hockey academy will start functioning within the next 10 days. A cricket academy has already been established in Viqar-un-Nisa Post Graduate College in collaboration with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Leader, Hanif Abbasi on Monday said the national game hockey was top priority of the government, and efforts were being made to promote sport across the country. In the previous PML-N government's tenure, over 20 hockey stadiums were constructed and astro turfs were laid across the country. This year would see a significant boost in sports promotion, he added. Abbasi expressed these views during a visit to Viqar-un-Nisa Post Graduate College, where he also announced the establishment of a hockey academy. He promised to provide all necessary facilities and coaching to the academy, with the help of Olympian Khawaja Junaid. Abbasi said the PML-N govern-



ment had always supported sports and athletes, and this initiative was also part of that commitment. Khawaja Junaid, who was also present on the occasion, lauded Abbasi's efforts in constructing hockey grounds across the country and expressed his full support for the hockey academy. The hockey academy will start functioning within the next 10 days. A cricket academy has already been established in Viqar-un-Nisa Post Graduate College in collaboration with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). The college will provide the necessary infrastructure and players, while Khawaja Junaid's hockey academy will provide the necessary equipment, including hockey sticks, balls, goalkeepers' kits, and qualified coaches. This initiative was a significant step towards promoting hockey and providing opportunities to young athletes to excel in the sport.

T20 WC 2024: SA, England, India squads revealed
New Zealand became the first team to announce their squad for the showpiece event

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: South Africa, England, and India announced their squads for the T20 World Cup 2024, set to take place in the United States and West Indies. South Africa named Aiden Markram as captain for the first time in an ICC event. Their squad includes Anrich Nortje and Quinton de Kock, notable inclusions after recent contract decisions. Ryan Rickelton and Ottiel Baartman, impressing in the SA20 tournament, are uncapped players in the squad. The traveling reserves are Nandre Burger and Lungi Ngidi. England revealed their squad with Jofra Archer making a comeback after recovering from an elbow injury. Led by Jos Buttler, the team includes uncapped player Tom Hartley. They will also feature in a T20I series against Pakistan. India's squad, led by Rohit Sharma, includes returning player Rishabh Pant after a car crash in 2022. Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, and Axar Patel are among the spinners picked. Sanju Samson and Rishabh Pant are the wicketkeepers. Shubman Gill, Rinku

Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, and Avesh Khan are reserves. All teams have until May 25 for squad changes, with England beginning their campaign against Scotland on June 4 in the Caribbean. On April 29, New Zealand became the first team to announce their squad for the showpiece event, also unveiling their retro playing kit for the tournament. **Full squads of the teams participating in the T20 World Cup 2024**
All the squads are listed below:
England: Jos Buttler (c), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonathan Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, Mark Wood
India: Rohit Sharma (c), Hardik Pandya (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Siraj, Reserves: Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed and Avesh Khan
New Zealand: Kane Williamson (c), Finn Allen, Trent Boult, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway,

Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Jimmy Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee. Travelling Reserve: Ben Sears
South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Ottiel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs
Ireland: Yet to be announced
Namibia: Yet to be announced
Nepal: Yet to be announced
Netherlands: Yet to be announced
Oman: Yet to be announced
Papua New Guinea: Yet to be announced
Pakistan: Yet to be announced
Scotland: Yet to be announced
Sri Lanka: Yet to be announced
Uganda: Yet to be announced
United States: Yet to be announced
West Indies: Yet to be announced
Afghanistan: Yet to be announced
Australia: Yet to be announced
Bangladesh: Yet to be announced
Canada: Yet to be announced
The final of the 2024 T20 World Cup will be played at the Kensington Oval in Barbados on June 29.

Japan, Uzbekistan enter AFC U23 Asian Cup final

TOKYO: Japan and Uzbekistan will meet in the final of the AFC Under 23 Asian Cup 2024 in Qatar after securing 2-0 wins over Iraq and Indonesia in their respective semifinals. Both countries have also secured their qualification for the Paris Olympics 2024 by reaching the final. First-half goals from Mao Hosoya and Ryotaro Araki were enough to secure a comfortable win for Japan over Iraq in the second semifinal at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium in Doha on Monday. Hosoya put the 2016 champions in front in the 28th minute and Araki doubled the lead 14 minutes later during a commanding performance by Go Oiwa's side, with captain Joel Fujita at the heart of a dominant display. The Japanese will take on Timur Kapadze's Uzbekistan in Friday's final at the same venue. The last remaining Olympic football slot for the Asian region will be decided in the bronze medal match between the two losing semifinalists Iraq and Indonesia on Thursday. The Samurai Blue from the Far East were in fine form against their West Asian opponents in the second semifinal, with Fujita leading from the front. The scoreline could have been different had Japan not been denied by Iraq's goalkeeper Hussein Hasan on several occasions. When play resumed at 2-0 after half-time, Ali Jasim looked determined to score as Iraq sought a way back into the game but was kept out by the Japanese defence. Japan kept pressing through the second half but were unable to add to the scoreline. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan ended Indonesia's inspiring run at the tournament with yet another strong performance in their semifinal. Khusayin Norchaev scored for the Central Asian nation to break the deadlock in the 68th minute and an own goal from Pratama Arhan four minutes from full-time sealed the football-mad South East Asian country's fate. They will still have another chance of qualifying for the Olympics when they meet Iraq in Thursday's bronze medal match. - Agencies

Vardy leads Leicester to Championship title

LONDON: Jamie Vardy scored twice as Leicester celebrated their promotion to the Premier League in style on Monday with a 3-0 win at Preston that secured the Championship title. The Foxes' return to the top flight was sealed after Leeds' shock 4-0 capitulation at QPR on Friday. Enzo Maresca's men needed victory at Deepdale to guarantee beating Ipswich to top spot with a game to spare and did so with ease, thanks in large part to their 37-year-old captain. Vardy was one of the heroes of Leicester's memorable Premier League triumph in 2016 and part of the side that also lifted the club's first FA Cup just three years ago. He played a central role in another night to savour for the travelling fans as he took his tally for the season to 20 goals. "We knew it was going to be a tough game but we got the job done. Celebrating with the fans is great," said Vardy. "How could you not love scoring goals? Especially the second one, scoring in front of the fans - you can't get a better feeling than that." Vardy opened the scoring when his mishit effort found the far corner on 36 minutes before smashing into an unguarded net after Wout Faes' shot came back off the post. Kasey McAteer set the seal on the title party when he headed in Abdul Fatawu's cross 23 minutes from time. After retaining much of the squad that were surprisingly relegated last season, Leicester desperately needed to return to the riches of the Premier League at the first attempt with the club running up huge losses. - Agencies

Rafael Nadal battles to keep Madrid Open dreams alive

MADRID: Rafael Nadal said he is doing his best to "keep dreaming" after he extended his stay at the Madrid Open by winning a three-hour tussle with Argentina's Pedro Cachin 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3. Contesting his home tournament one last time before retirement, the five-time champion gave the world number 91 his shirt after Cachin asked him for a memento from the match. "Some moments good, some moments not good. I found a way to be through. I think in the third set with some mistakes I was still able to be a bit unpredictable," Nadal said of his roller-coaster third-round victory. "Now I'm enjoying. Let's see how I wake up tomorrow. Playing at home means everything to me, just try my best to keep dreaming." Nadal's reward is a Tuesday last-16 clash with the 30th-seeded Jiri Lehecka, who beat the Mallorcan in a practice session a week ago. The 37-year-old has been dealing with physical issues, which have limited him to eight matches this season. Asked if it would surprise him if he managed to beat Lehecka on Tuesday, Nadal said: "Yes, more so after today's match. I will face a player who is playing at a very high level, who has a very powerful serve." While Nadal has already beaten a higher-ranked opponent this week - number 11 Alex de Minaur - he believes the quality of Lehecka's ball "is another step up." Top-seeded Jannik Sinner beat world number 72 Pavel Kotov 6-2, 7-5. Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik beat American Ben Shelton 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 to reach the fourth round, where he will face number three seed Daniil Medvedev. Ons Jabeur called out organisers of European tournaments for giving men preferential treatment at combined events and said "they need to respect women more." Jabeur, the 2022 champion in Madrid, was speaking after dismissing ninth-seeded Jelena Ostapenko 6-0, 6-4 to set up a last-eight clash with Madison Keys. "I feel like we have a long way to go, especially here in Madrid and in Rome, in Europe in general," she said. Jabeur said women players were not given the same access to practice courts and were on television less. "The way they treat women here and men, they're completely different," she added. "Here in Spain, I would love to go to the hotel and open the TV and see a woman's tennis match. "How can you inspire young girls without showing any matches?" Top-seeded Iga Swiatek dropped the opening game before sweeping the next 12 to against home favourite Sara Sorribes Tormo 6-1, 6-0 and advance to a quarter-final meeting with Brazilian lefty Beatriz Haddad Maia. - DNA

Govt reviving hockey, Rana Mashood claims progress

Rana Mashood also announced that the government will soon launch the Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund, which will invest Rs 5 billion to promote sports in

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan said that the government will take all possible measures to revive the national game hockey and dispute of Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) will be resolved amicably in next few days.

He was speaking with media at Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium Islamabad along with Dutch coach Roelant Oltmans, Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Secretary General Rana Mujahid, Olympian Khawaja Junaid, Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shahid ul Islam after meeting with the national hockey team participating in the Azlan Shah Hockey Cup. Rana Mashood said that he is happy to see the enthusiasm of the players of the national team and hopes that

the national team will perform better in upcoming international events. He said that there is no shortage of talent among the youth of Pakistan, promoting sports is among the priorities of our government. Rana Mashood also announced that the government will soon launch the Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund, which will invest Rs 5 billion to promote sports in

the country, adding that the government is committed to supporting all sports and will work to fill the country's stadiums with athletes. The PMYP chairman said that International Hockey Federation (FIH) has also welcomed the government's efforts to resolve the issues facing the PHF and has expressed its support for the government's decisions as all matters

will be resolved soon after the opinion of the Attorney General and the government will work to promote all sports, including hockey, under the guidance of the Prime Minister. He underscored the government's commitment to revitalize hockey, highlighting the on-going efforts in this regard. It was announced that Pakistan is gearing up for the South

Asian Games, Pakistan Hockey League, national games with a keen focus on showcasing the country's talent on the international stage. Furthermore, it was disclosed that talented individuals identified through the Prime Minister's Talent Hunt Programme will have the opportunity to participate in the upcoming National Games, scheduled to be held later this year.

The PMYP chairman emphasized the pivotal role of sports in positively engaging the youth of Pakistan, highlighting its potential to foster unity, discipline, and national pride. He reiterated the government's unwavering support for initiatives aimed at harnessing the country's sporting talent and promoting a culture of athleticism and camaraderie.



US delegation in Pakistan...

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the first high-level delegation from the United States to visit Pakistan since the general elections. During their stay, the delegation is engaging in comprehensive discussions with Pakistani officials, focusing on various aspects of bilateral relations and their implications. Diplomatic sources indicate that the meetings are aimed at conducting a detailed review of the Pakistan-US relationship, with a keen focus on regional security issues. The visit comes on the heels of recent high-level engagements with other key regional players, including Saudi Arabia and Iran. The presence of the American delegation underscores the importance of strengthening ties between Pakistan and the United States, particularly in the context of evolving regional dynamics. As discussions progress, both sides are expected to delve into matters of mutual interest, including security cooperation and regional stability.

Gohar rubbishes media...

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the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) made headlines in the media for the PAC top slot. Earlier, in what was seen as a dramatic move, senior party leader Latif Khosa declared that PTI had decided to appoint senior leader Hamid Khan as the chairman of the PAC. Categorically rejecting the media reports claiming PTI formed a committee to hold talks with the military establishment, Gohar said: "Neither we have backdoor contacts nor in talks with anyone." According to media reports, the PTI formed a three-member committee comprising KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Omar Ayub and Shibli Faraz to hold dialogue with the military establishment. Speaking to the a private news channel programme, PTI senior leader Shehryar Afridi last week claimed that his party would hold "dialogues with the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and the Director General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (DG ISI) soon" instead of talking to "rejected people" who reached parliament via "Form 47".

AC acquits Abbasi, others in...

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Abbasi, along with his lawyers, also appeared before the court. During the hearing, the court announced the verdict on a petition filed by NAB seeking the withdrawal of its reference against the former prime minister. Deputy Prosecutor Azhar Maqbool told the court that the accountability bureau is withdrawing the reference against Abbasi. In 2019, NAB arrested Abbasi for alleged corruption while awarding a multi-billion rupee import contract for LNG in 2013 when he was the minister for petroleum and natural resources.

Gunman kills 6 in...

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one civilian was injured," he wrote on social media platform X early Tuesday morning. Locals said the mosque served the minority Shia community in a district just south of the provincial capital of Herat city, and the imam and a three-year-old child were among those killed. They also said a team of three gunmen staged the attack, contradicting the official account. "One of them was outside and two of them came inside the mosque, shooting the worshippers," said 60-year-old Ibrahim Akhlaqi, the brother of the slain imam. "It was in the middle of the prayers."

Pak-Turkiye vow to...

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global geo-political situation. He also appreciated Türkiye's strong support for Pakistan on multiple forums. Khawaja Asif said enhanced defence cooperation is an important aspect of bilateral relationship, characterised by joint projects, joint exercises and military training.

Briefs

Germany failing to protect Muslims from hate

LONDON : Germany is failing to protect Muslims from growing racism amid a "lack of understanding" about the issue, Human Rights Watch has warned. The country has yet to implement a working definition of anti-Muslim racism and frequently fails to record data on race-hate incidents, the organization said on Tuesday. A key failing of the German government concerns its "lack of understanding that Muslims experience racism and not simply faith-based hostility," said Almaz Teffera, a HRW researcher on racism in Europe. "Without a clear understanding of anti-Muslim hate and discrimination in Germany, and strong data on incidents and community outreach, a response by the German authorities will be ineffective." Germany recorded 610 "anti-Islamic" crimes in 2022, but from the start of 2023 to September that year, the number had climbed to 686. There are fears that the figure has further surged since the outbreak of the Gaza conflict last October. Germany's Interior Ministry told HRW that it could not provide data on anti-Muslim crimes from October 2023 to the year-end.—APP

ChatGPT faces Austria complaint over 'uncorrectable errors'

VIENNA : A Vienna-based privacy campaign group said Monday it would file a complaint against ChatGPT in Austria, claiming the "hallucinating" flagship AI tool has invented wrong answers that creator OpenAI cannot correct. NOYB ("None of Your Business") said there was no way to guarantee the programme provided accurate information. "ChatGPT keeps hallucinating - and not even OpenAI can stop it," the group said in a statement. The company has openly acknowledged it cannot correct inaccurate information produced by its generative AI tool and has failed to explain where the data comes from and what ChatGPT stores about individuals, said the group. Such errors are unacceptable for information about individuals because EU law stipulates that personal data must be accurate, NOYB argued. "If a system cannot produce accurate and transparent results, it cannot be used to generate data about individuals," said Maartje de Graaf, data-protection lawyer at NOYB. "The technology has to follow the legal requirements, not the other way around."—Agencies

Microsoft to invest \$1.7B on AI in Indonesia

JAKARTA : Tech giant Microsoft will invest \$1.7 billion over the next four years in expanding cloud services and artificial intelligence (AI) in Indonesia, including building data centers, company chief executive Satya Nadella announced on Tuesday during a visit to the country. Jakarta is Nadella's first stop on a trip to Southeast Asian countries to promote the U.S. company's generative AI technology. Later this week, he will visit Malaysia and Thailand. Microsoft's investment will "bring the latest and greatest AI infrastructure to Indonesia," Nadella said. "We're going to lead this wave in terms of AI infrastructure that's needed," he added. Nadella met outgoing President Joko Widodo and his Cabinet ministers earlier on Tuesday to discuss joint AI research and talent development. Communications Minister Budi Arie Setiadi told reporters. Widodo suggested Microsoft base its data centers on the resort island of Bali or in the new capital city of Nusantara, which is still under construction in the jungle of Borneo, the minister said. Nadella said Microsoft will train 2.5 million people in Southeast Asia in AI by 2025, including 840,000 in Indonesia.—APP

Blinken presses for Gaza aid on Jordan visit

The US top diplomat will meet Jordan's King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister

AYMAN SAFADI

RIYADH: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken headed Tuesday to Jordan where he will discuss ways to boost aid deliveries into Gaza and quietly thank the kingdom for its help during recent Iran-Israel clashes. Blinken flew to Amman after talks with Gulf Arab leaders in Riyadh, part of his seventh tour of the region since the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israel. The US top diplomat will meet Jordan's King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi as well as the UN humanitarian aid and reconstruction coordinator for Gaza, Sigrid Kaag. Later in the day, Blinken will head to Israel where he will discuss the latest negotiations aimed at securing a temporary ceasefire and a release of hostages. President Joe Biden's administration, despite criticism abroad and rising fury on US university campuses, has supported Israel in its relentless campaign against Hamas but also urged its ally to do more to protect civilians. "President Biden has insisted that Israel take specific, concrete, measurable steps to better address humanitarian suffering, civilian harm and the safety of aid workers in Gaza," Blinken told Arab foreign ministers in Riyadh on Monday. "We have seen

measurable progress in the last few weeks, including the opening of new crossings, an increased volume of aid delivery to Gaza and within Gaza, and the building of the US maritime corridor, which will open in the coming weeks," Blinken said. "But it is not enough. We still need to get more aid in and around Gaza," he said. Biden warned Israel that future support was at stake after an April 1 Israeli strike killed seven aid workers from World Central Kitchen, the charity founded by celebrity Spanish-American chef Jose Andres. The United States said that Israel has since taken steps to avoid such deaths in the future, including coordinating more directly with aid groups working in Gaza. But the situation remains dire in Gaza, where the vast majority of residents have fled their homes and the United Nations has warned of looming famine. The Biden administration is addressing the crisis by building a temporary pier to bring in aid, an extraordinary step to deal with concerns about a friendly country and major recipient of US assistance.

Jordan, which has diplomatic relations with Israel and a large Palestinian population, is especially sensitive to tensions in the Palestinian territories. Earlier in April, Jordan shot down Iranian drones fired at Israel

ICJ rejects Nicaragua's request for Germany to halt aid to Israel

THE HAGUE: The top United Nations court rejected Tuesday a request by Nicaragua to order Germany to halt military and other aid to Israel and renew funding to the UN aid agency in Gaza. The International Court of Justice said that legal conditions for making such an order weren't met. Germany argued at hearings in the case that it has barely exported any weapons to Israel since the offensive against Gaza started following the deadly incursion into southern Israel by Hamas militants on Oct. 7. Nicaragua, a longstanding ally of the Palestinians, alleges that Germany is enabling genocide by sending arms and other support to Israel. Tuesday's ruling by the International Court of Justice is only about preliminary orders in the case that will likely take years to resolve. Germany rejects the allegations. Israel, which isn't a party to the case between Nicaragua and Germany, strongly denies that its assault on Gaza amounts to acts of genocide, and insists that it's acting in self-defense. Nicaragua's case is the latest legal bid by a country with historic ties to the Palestinian people to stop Israel's offensive. Late last year, South Africa accused Israel of genocide at the court. The cases come as Israel's allies face growing calls to stop supplying it with weapons, and as some, including Germany, have grown more critical of the war. On Monday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that Israel must still do more to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into the besieged Gaza Strip. At hearings early this month, Nicaragua's ambassador to the Netherlands, Carlos José Argüello Gómez, told the 16-judge panel that "Germany is failing to honor its own obligation to prevent genocide or to ensure respect of international humanitarian law." Nicaragua also wants Germany to reinstate direct funding to the UN aid agency in Gaza. The head of Germany's legal team, Tania von Uslar-Gleichen, said that Nicaragua's claims "have no basis in fact or law." Israel strongly denies that its assault on Gaza amounts to genocidal acts, saying it's acting in self-defense after Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. —Agencies

in response to a deadly air strike on the Iranian consulate in Syria. Jordan, while working with the United States, has insisted that it does not want to be caught in the middle of the conflict.



ISLAMABAD: An elderly labourer busy in sorting good quality onion at Vegetable Market in Federal Capital as International Labour Day is celebrated on May 1 every year. It's a day to honour and appreciate the contributions of workers all around the world. This day recognizes the hard work and dedication of people who work in various fields to make our lives better.—APP

Rains, floods in Kenya claim 66 more lives

NAIROBI : Rains and floods in Kenya have claimed 66 more lives in the past 24 hours, pushing the death toll to 169 since March 1, with 91 people still missing, officials said on Tuesday. Addressing a press conference, Kenya's government spokesperson Isaac Mwaura said the deaths on Tuesday from a mudslide that swept away villages killing 45 has pushed the death toll to a staggering 169. "In the past 24 four hours, we have lost 66 people across the country and that includes 60 adults and six children," he added. "The floods have also led to the displacement of Kenyans in 30,214 households, comprising about 190,942 people," Mwaura noted, adding that the Kenyan capital is the worst hit by the displacement. In response to the escalating situation, the Kenyan government has announced that it will shoulder all hospital bills for those affected by the floods, particularly those affected by mudslides on Tuesday, easing the financial burden on families grappling with losses and displacement. The floods, triggered by heavy rainfall and overflowing rivers, have inundated homes, destroyed infrastructure, and disrupted essential services. The Kenyan government, in collaboration with humanitarian organizations and local authorities, has mobilized resources to provide emergency assistance to those affected by the floods.—APP

King Charles III resumes public duties as he fights cancer

LONDON: King Charles III on Tuesday reportedly told fellow cancer patients "I'm well," as he carried out his first official public engagement since being diagnosed with the condition. The British head of state appeared relaxed as he and his wife Queen Camilla met patients and staff at the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Center in central London. He talked to patients receiving chemotherapy at a day unit, including 60-year-old Asha Millen, who has bone marrow cancer. "I said, 'How are you?' and he said, 'I'm well,'" she told reporters afterwards. Another patient, Lesley Woodbridge, 63, said the king sympathized with her, and added: "I've got to have my treatment this afternoon as well." Charles, 75, suspended most of his duties in February after cancer was found while he was being treated for an enlarged prostate the previous month. The exact nature of his cancer has not been disclosed but doctors said last week they were "very encouraged" by the progress of his treatment as an out-patient and "positive" about his recovery. His daughter-in-law Catherine, Princess of Wales, 42, underwent abdominal surgery in January and said in March that she was receiving chemotherapy. Again, no details were given about what type of cancer she has. Kate, as she is widely known, is married to Charles's elder son and heir Prince William, who fill the schedule.—APP

Musk's China visit leaves India 'shocked'

NEW DELHI: Elon Musk's surprise visit to China this week won concessions for Tesla but left India feeling spurned after he cancelled a scheduled trip there for earlier this month, with Indian commentators calling the move a snub. India's pained reaction highlights the increasing rivalry between India and China, Asia two largest countries by population and among the region's most dynamic economies. Business and diplomatic relations between them have been strained since a 2020 border clash left 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead. Musk was due to meet Modi last week and announce an investment of up to \$3 billion in a car plant, but cancelled saying there were "very heavy Tesla obligations". By then, the Indian government had sent out invites for a startup event Musk was to attend. On Sunday, Musk turned up in China, meeting with Premier Li Qiang and making progress towards rolling out its advanced driver assistance package in the world's biggest auto market. Indian news channels that often take a hard line position against China blasted Musk's trip. The Mirror Now news channel ran a prime time news segment with a tagline "Shoddy ethics or simply business?", with the anchor saying "here in India everybody was shocked."—APP

William confident of receiving new IMF aid

NAIROBI: Kenya expects a green light for a \$1 billion disbursement from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) next month, President William Ruto said, which would boost an economy showing improvement after averting a debt crisis earlier this year. Kenya's shilling currency has bounced back from record lows since the government issued a \$1.5 billion Eurobond in February that calmed market jitters over a potential default on a \$2 billion bond that matures in June. The currency's woes combined with high inflation and new taxes intended to plug budget deficits have driven up the cost of living, fuelling anger and occasional protests. Robust lending to Kenya from the IMF and World Bank has helped the government to navigate a liquidity crisis. The East African nation received a \$941 million lending boost from the IMF in January, which brought the size of its programme with the fund to \$4.43 billion, with around \$2.5 billion outstanding.—Agencies

Sogavare declines re-election bid as Solomon Islands PM

HONIARA : Sogavare switched official diplomatic recognition to Beijing from Taipei fuelling controversy in the Pacific island nation. Manasseh Sogavare and China's Premier Li Qiang walking past an honour guard in Beijing. The guards are on the right. The two men are walking on a red carpet and Sogavare is nearest the guards. The Solomon Islands' incumbent Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare has said he will not put himself forward as a candidate for the country's next prime minister. Parliament is due to sit on Thursday to choose the Pacific island nation's next leader after his party failed to secure a majority in elections earlier this month. Sogavare, who became prime minister in 2019, announced his decision in a televised news conference late on Monday night. His party named Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manele, who has promised to continue Sogavare's pro-China policies, its parliamentary leader, in effect its candidate for the premiership. Four opposition parties have reportedly banded together in a bid for power, with the three-party CARE coalition linking up with the Solomon Islands United Party. They have promised to roll back the pro-Beijing stance of the incumbent government. MPs will choose the new prime minister in a secret ballot. Sogavare, who is teetotal and a black belt in karate, has been prime minister on four separate occasions. In announcing his resignation, he said he wanted to thank the people for the "privilege and honour" of serving the country. Sogavare has been under pressure since he abruptly switched diplomatic relations from Taiwan to China early in his term. He argued the move brought significant investment from Beijing, but critics said the money should have gone to hospitals and schools rather than sport stadiums.—DNA

Ursula condemns planned Rafah military offensive

Von der Leyen said: "I'm never drawing red lines, but I think it would be completely unacceptable if Netanyahu would invade"

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has expressed her opposition to a planned military operation in Rafah, a southern Gaza Strip city packed with 1.4 million displaced Palestinians. "It would be 'completely unacceptable' for Israel to attack Rafah, von der Leyen told a debate on Monday co-hosted by POLITICO in Maastricht, the Netherlands. The commission president, running for a second term, recalled that she had visited Rafah and said the situation there is "unbearable" and "unacceptable." Von der Leyen said: "I'm never drawing red lines, but I think it would be completely unacceptable if (Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu would invade," she replied in response to a question whether attacking Rafah would be "a red line" and bring sanctions against Israel. She noted that the EU Commission would "sit down" with member states and "act on that" in case of an invasion of Rafah. Despite growing international opposition, Israel has announced plans to launch a ground attack in Rafah, where more than 1.4



million Palestinians have taken refuge from Israel's deadly offensive on the Gaza Strip. Asked about how she proposes to end the war, von der Leyen reiterated that she has always defended "Israel's right to defend itself." Ahead of the debate, she faced a reaction over her stance on Israel after video footage circulated on social media showed her being shouted at by a protester: "You are a war criminal." Von der Leyen has met wide-range of criticism since Oct. 7 over her unconditional support to Israel. In December, Irish Member of the European Parliament Clare Daly criticized her over her stance on relentless Israeli attacks on Gaza, calling her "Frau Genocide." Israel has waged a brutal offensive on Gaza since a cross-border

attack by the Palestinian group Hamas on Oct. 7 last year, which Tel Aviv says killed nearly 1,200 people. Nearly 34,500 Palestinians have since been killed, mostly women and children, and over 77,600 others injured amid mass destruction and severe shortages of necessities. More than six months into the Israeli war, vast swathes of Gaza lay in ruins, pushing 85% of the enclave's population into internal displacement amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water, and medicine, according to the UN. Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice. An interim ruling in January ordered Tel Aviv to stop genocidal acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza.

Columbia suspends students for Gaza camp stance

Columbia began suspending students following almost two weeks of protests against Israel's war in Gaza

NEWS DESK

BOGOTA : Columbia University, the epicenter of pro-Palestinian protests that have upended college campuses across the United States, began suspending student demonstrators on Monday after they defied an ultimatum to disperse. Overnight protesters occupied a campus building, barricaded themselves inside while several others formed a human chain outside, according to videos posted on social media. "Columbia community members took back Hamilton Hall just after midnight," student group Columbia University Apartheid Divest said in a statement. Columbia began suspending students following almost two weeks of protests against Israel's war in Gaza that have swept through higher education institutions from coast to coast, after around 100 protesters were first arrested at Columbia on April 18.



In the latest crackdown, authorities at the prestigious university in New York demanded that the protest encampment be cleared by 2:00 pm (1800 GMT) or students would

face disciplinary action. "These repressive scare tactics mean nothing compared to the deaths of over 34,000 Palestinians," said a statement, read out by a student at a

press conference after the deadline, referring to the death toll in Gaza. "We will not move until Columbia meets our demands or... are moved by force," said the student, who

would not give his name. The demonstrators have vowed to remain at the hall until their demands are met. Among their key demands is that the institution divests financial holdings linked to Israel. Columbia vice-president of communications Ben Chang said the university had "begun suspending students as part of this next phase of our efforts to ensure safety on our campus." He said students had been warned they would be "placed on suspension, ineligible to complete the semester or graduate, and will be restricted from all academic, residential, and recreational spaces." Meanwhile, at the University of Texas at Austin, police clashed with protesters Monday, including using pepper spray, and made arrests while dismantling an encampment, adding to the more than 350 people detained nationwide over the weekend. "No encampments will be allowed," Texas Governor Greg Abbott said on social media.

Briefs

Fawad Ch denies quitting PTI

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry Tuesday denied parting ways with Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI), clarifying that those who leave something return to it. The politician's comments came while responding to a query during a media talk within the premises of an anti-terrorism court in Rawalpindi. Former PTI chief whip Shireen Mazari was also present at the premises, as a number of former and incumbent party leaders face charges over the incidents of May 9, 2023, during which military installations were attacked by the Imran Khan-led PTI's workers and supporters. Fawad also told journalists he appeared before the court in the case pertaining to May 9's violent incidents, highlighting about going through a "difficult time" and the need for the "bitterness" to fade away. Pointing towards the perils of his statement on the trying experience that he went through following the riots, the politician said he is yet to tell his side of the story with regards to what happened in the wake of the May 9 violence. He added that the stories of only those who appeared on television have surfaced following last year's event. "When our turn comes, we will tell our story," Fawad said. He opined that the PTI should hold negotiations with all the stakeholders including Jamiatul Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

Opp. leader raps Punjab government

DNA

LAHORE: Leader of opposition in the Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmed Khan Bhachar says the "TikTok government has failed to address the issue of wheat procurement". The Sunni Ittehad Council leader said the farmers were facing economic hardships. Speaking to reporters in the Punjab Assembly, he said the government had yet to formulate policy on wheat. "Police have been arresting farmers for the last two days, apart from the PTI workers. The farmers' wheat is being ruined on roads and police are raiding their houses," he said. He said the prime minister had pledged to buy 1.8 million tons of wheat but PASSCO had not been issued any direction.

No contact with Imran or any leader: Sh. Rashid

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: Former interior minister and Pakistan Awami Muslim League head Sheikh Rashid Ahmed says he has no contact with the founder or any leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Speaking to reporters outside the anti-terrorism court, Rawalpindi, he said only Shibli Faraz could talk about dialogue (between the Establishment) and the PTI. As for the slot of deputy prime minister, he said there was no such provision in the constitution of Pakistan. He taunted that "only the JatiUmra constitution offers the slot of deputy prime minister." He apprehended that Pakistan would face economic crisis in the next two months. "Industrialists are already facing tough conditions and now growers are up in arms," he said. He said the wheat procurement was yet to begin and the financial condition of the masses was pathetic. The former federal minister reiterated that the innocent people having no connection with crimes should be released from jails. He asked the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to take notice of the wheat scandal immediately. He urged the government to review its policies as next two months would be crucial for the politics of Pakistan.

Pak-Qatar agree to further solidify parliamentary ties

Referring to the parliamentary collaboration between the parliaments of both countries, the speaker noted, "Parliamentary diplomacy is quintessential in bringing two nations closer which are already tied in eternal bonds"

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Tuesday emphasised the need to further solidify existing fraternal bond between Pakistan and Qatar through expanding parliamentary cooperation, besides deepening ties in other socio-economic sectors. He expressed these views in his meeting with Ambassador of Qatar Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater who called on him at Parliament House. Talking to the Ambassador, the speaker remarked, "Pakistan cherishes its historic brotherly relations with Qatar and desires them to take up to new heights through bolstering parliamentary cooperation, expanding economic ties, and furthering people-to-people contacts between the legislatures of both the countries". Referring to the parliamentary collaboration between the parliaments of both countries, the speaker noted, "Parliamentary diplomacy is quintessential in bringing two nations closer which are already tied in eternal religious and historic bonds". He said that the Pak-Qatar friendship group in the National Assembly of Pakistan would be fully activated to bring Parliaments and people of both the countries closer. During the meeting, he also mentioned the invitation extended to the Speaker of the Shura Council of the State of Qatar. Expressing



his satisfaction over the economic cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar, the speaker said that investors from Qatar could benefit from investment opportunities in Pakistan by investing in various sectors especially the energy and manufacturing sectors. He said that both Pakistan

and Qatar should take advantage of each other's experiences for the mutual benefits of the people of two countries. Ambassador Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater thanked the speaker for his remarks and congratulated him on his re-election as Speaker of the National Assembly. "Qatar attaches immense

importance to its brotherly relations with Pakistan and the incumbent leadership of Qatar is keen to further enhance ties with Pakistan," he added. He also reaffirmed all-out support to Pakistan in all areas of mutual interest including socio-economic uplift of marginalized segments of the society.

Sindh govt can call Army for support in Katcha: Naqvi

Federal minister was given a detailed briefing regarding the operational preparations of the rangers, the eastern border situation, the ongoing operation against the bandits of Kacha, and the law and order situation in Karachi

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said that the Army can be called in for assistance in Katcha operation against dacoits if the Sindh government wants. Mohsin Naqvi said the time is not for politics now but it's time to work for progress of the country. While talking to media men during his visit to NADRA office in Sukkur on Tuesday, the interior minister said that they have to work for the development of the country. Mohsin Naqvi said that they will further improve law and order situation in Sindh including Karachi. He said that the Sindh government can use the Army for operations in Katcha area whenever it wants. He said that they will take all possible steps in order to establish peace in Kashmir, Ghotki and Shikarpur. There will be a meeting with the Sindh Chief Minister in this regard, Interior Minister said, adding "I have come here to see the situation regarding unrest in Sindh." He said that President Asif Ali Zardari also expressed his concern regarding unrest in some districts of Sindh. The President of the State is holding a meeting regarding law and order, including the Katcha operation, the Interior Minister said. He said people are facing problems regarding NADRA of-

ice and passport office. He said that NADRA office Sukkur will be shifted within the city soon while passport office building will be completed within six months. Meanwhile, Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi Tuesday visited Sindh Rangers Headquarters and held a meeting with DG Major General Azhar Waqas. According to Rangers spokesman, DG Rangers Major General Azhar Waqas welcomed the minister. Naqvi paid rich tribute to the martyrs of Rangers, laid floral wreaths, and offered feteiha. On the occasion, the federal minister was given a detailed briefing regarding the operational preparations of the rangers, the eastern border situation, the ongoing operation against the bandits of Kacha, and the law and order situation in Karachi. The minister appreciated the role of Rangers in bringing the law and order situation in Karachi normal besides security arrangements during the holy month of Ramadan. Syed Mohsin Naqvi also lauded the steps taken to prevent terrorism, extensive operations against robbers and other crimes, and the role of Rangers in establishing peace and order in the province. The minister reiterated his commitment that all possible measures will be taken to ensure the peace of Sindh province, especially Karachi.

Reported Indian role in assassination plots a 'serious matter': White House

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The White House said on Monday it viewed the reported role of the Indian intelligence service in two assassination plots in Canada and the United States as a serious matter. The Washington Post reported that an officer in India's intelligence service was directly involved in a foiled plan to assassinate a US citizen who is one of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's most vocal critics in the United States. It said the officer was also involved in the separate shooting death of a Sikh activist last June in Canada. India's foreign ministry said the Washington Post report made "unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations on a serious matter" while New Delhi is investigating the issue. "Speculative and irresponsible comments on it are not helpful," for-

eign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement. "This is a serious matter, and we're taking that very, very seriously," White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters. "We're going to continue to raise our concerns." In November, US authorities said an Indian government official had directed the plot in the attempted murder of Gurbant Singh Pannun, a Sikh separatist and dual citizen of the United States and Canada. India has expressed concern about the linkage and dissociated itself from the plot, saying it would formally investigate the concerns of the United States, and take 'necessary follow-up action' on the findings of a panel set up on Nov. 18. Pannun is the general counsel of Sikhs for Justice, a group that India labeled an "unlawful association" in 2019, citing its involvement in extremist activities. Subsequently, in 2020, India listed Pannun as an "individual terrorist". The issue is a delicate one for both India and the Biden administration in the United States as they try to build closer ties in the face of shared concerns about China's growing power. News of the U.S. plot came two months after Canada said it was looking at credible allegations potentially linking Indian agents to the June murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, another Sikh separatist, in a Vancouver suburb. India strongly rejected Ottawa's accusations.

Sindh CM Murad seeks EU's assistance for flood-affecteds

CM, EU Ambassador discuss projects of solar panels, school constructions

STAFF REPORT

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in his meeting with European Union Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka discussed two new projects aimed at helping those affected by the flood. One project involves the reconstruction of school buildings damaged by the flood, while the other project aims to provide solar panels to people living off-grid. The provision of solar panels will be made in two phases, with the first phase targeting those who are living off-grid and the second phase targeting mother's who are in need. The meeting was attended by Christian Raitz of EU, Chairman P&D Najam Shah and Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh. During a meeting, the chief minister mentioned that heavy floods in 2022 had damaged 20,000 out of 40,000 school buildings, causing serious

problems in imparting education to children. He expressed his intention to seek support from donor agencies to construct new school buildings. The Ambassador assured the CM that she would discuss this matter with European authorities to help resolve the issue. Another topic discussed during the meeting was the provision of solar

panels to those living off-grid and in remote areas. The CM mentioned that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto had promised to provide solar panels to those in need as part of his election manifesto. Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka expressed her support for this project and assured the CM to help achieve the objectives.



2 dead, 8 injured in Karachi's cylinder blast

Rescue teams have reached the incident site and have confirmed one fatality and six injuries in the incident

KARACHI: At least two people were killed and eight others were injured after a gas cylinder exploded in Karachi's New Challi area on Tuesday. As per the details, the blast occurred when a cylinder exploded in a shop located in the generator market which then resulted in a blaze. The sheer force of the blast caused the goods inside the shop to scatter out on the street. Rescue teams have reached the incident site and have confirmed one fatality and six injuries in the incident. Commenting on the incident, SSP City said that the roof of the affected shop collapsed due to the blast and that a search is underway after witnesses said that a person was still buried under the debris. Furthermore, the police official revealed that the bomb disposal squad has been called for further investigation. The incident comes as gas cylinders, whether used for commercial purposes or for domestic use, are quite prone to explosions for various reasons such as low quality cylinders, failure to adhere to necessary standard operating procedures (SOPs) while refilling etc. In December 2023, at least three people were killed and 17 others were wounded after a two-storey building collapsed due to a gas cylinder blast in Karachi's Machar Colony. The blast took place in a gas cylinder shop during transfer of gas in the shop as a vehicle loaded with gas cylinders came to supply gas.

Uber quits app in Pakistan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Uber said on Tuesday that it had made the decision to cease operating its ride-hailing app in Pakistan. "We've made the decision to cease operating the Uber app in Pakistan," a spokesperson for Uber told media. "Our subsidiary brand Careem will continue to operate, with the Careem app offering ride-hailing services across Pakistan and earning opportunities for drivers," the spokesperson added. In 2019, Uber had acquired its rival Careem for \$3.1 billion. The two companies had said they would continue to operate their respective regional services and independent brands. In October 2022, Uber had ceased operations in Karachi, Multan, Faisalabad, Peshawar and Islamabad. It had decided to operate in the five cities through Careem and through the Uber app in Lahore. In an email sent to users in Lahore today, Uber said it had made the "difficult decision to no longer offer the Uber app services in Lahore as of April 30". "Ride-hailing services will continue to be offered through our subsidiary brand Careem and you will have the option to sign up and request a trip on Careem to have a seamless experience," the email read.

King Charles resumes public duties

LONDON: King Charles III on Tuesday reportedly told fellow cancer patients "I'm well," as he carried out his first official public engagement since being diagnosed with the condition. The British head of state appeared relaxed as he and his wife Queen Camilla met patients and staff at the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Center in central London. He talked to patients receiving chemotherapy at a day unit, including 60-year-old Asha Millen, who has bone marrow cancer. "I said, 'How are you?' and he said, 'I'm well,'" she told reporters afterwards. Another patient, Lesley Woodbridge, 63, said the king sympathized with her, and added: "I've got to have my treatment this afternoon as well." Charles, 75, suspended most of his duties in February after cancer was found while he was being treated for an enlarged prostate the previous month. - Agencies

Summer Camp Season 7

Package	1 Activity	2 Activity	3 Activity
1 Child	55,000	70,000	85,000
2 Children	65,000	80,000	95,000
3 Children	75,000	90,000	105,000
4 Children	85,000	100,000	115,000
5 Children	95,000	110,000	125,000
6 Children	105,000	120,000	135,000

ACTIVITIES

- Swimming
- Kids Aerobics
- Taekwondo
- Kids Yoga

RULES & REGULATIONS

Each activity will run for three consecutive weeks, missing days will not be compensated. The female instructor only available for ladies. 15% discount on all Mascha services and paid for meals for the participants and their parents. For registration, please scan the QR code and email the participant's birth certificate and photograph to: mascha@serena.com.pk mentioning "summer camp 2024" in the subject line. The offer cannot be combined with any other discounts or promotions. Participants can participate in one activity per day. Participating children are to be accompanied by one of their parents. The timings of the classes will be assigned at the time of registration for the entire program, however, changing the time will be subject to availability. Limited seats available. All prices are subject to government taxes.

For more information please scan QR code or call: 051 2005249

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