



Islamabad POST

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Ex-speaker Larijani submits bid to run for Iran president

Detailed News On Page-08

Stoltenberg disband Russian warnings on arms

Detailed News On Page-07



Coco Gauff holds firm to reach FO fourth round

Detailed News On Page-06



Justice Hilali not on bench due to health issues

Full court formed to hear SIC plea on reserved seats issue

Earlier this month, a three-member SC bench headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, and including Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Athar Minallah, suspended the PHC verdict and referred the matter to the judges' committee for the formation of a larger bench since the matter required constitutional interpretation

COURT REPORTER / DNA

ISLAMABAD: A 13-member full-court bench of the Supreme Court has been formed to hear a plea filed by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) challenging the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) verdict that denied the party reserved seats for women and minorities. Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa would head the bench, comprising all the available judges apart from Justice Musarrat Hilali, the sources said. Justice Hilali will not be part of the bench due to a heart ailment. The case has been fixed for hearing on June 3. Earlier this month, a three-member SC bench headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, and including Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Athar Minallah, suspended the PHC verdict and referred the matter to the judges' committee for the formation of a larger bench since the matter required constitutional interpretation. In its written order, the court stated that the questions of allocation of reserved seats in the National and provincial assemblies touch upon the foundational constitutional concept of parliamentary democracy that the voice of the electorate is truly reflected in the composition of the assemblies. "Democratic mandate necessitates that the allocation of reserved seats enhances the representativeness of the electorate in the assemblies and upholds the principles of fairness and transparency in the electoral process. It is paramount to prioritize the integrity of the elections so that the Parliament remains a true reflection of the will of the people," it said and granted leave to appeal. The matter had ended up in the Supreme Court after

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'No leniency for those involved in May 9 incident'

Taliban govt to be briefed on Besham attack culprits: Dar

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday that suspects involved in the March 26 terrorist attack that killed five Chinese engineers have been identified. The Chinese engineers and their Pakistani drivers were killed in a suicide attack on the Karakoram Highway. Initial findings of the investigations found a link between Afghanistan and the terrorist attack. On Sunday, Pakistan asked the Afghan Taliban government to arrest the entire leadership of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and put them on trial after sharing fresh evidence linking Afghanistan with the attack in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's Besham.

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RAWALPINDI: Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov called on Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ). - DNA

In meeting with COAS

Azerbi FM praises Pakistan's role in regional stability

COAS Gen Asim Munir emphasises Pakistan's long-standing fraternal ties with Azerbaijan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov called on Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Friday and praised Pakistan's pivotal role in maintaining regional stability. While holding in-depth discussions on matters of mutual interest, including peace and stability in Asia, the Azeri official also expressed his sincere appreciation for the country's steadfast support to the central Asian country. COAS General Munir emphasised Pakistan's long-standing fraternal ties with Azerbaijan and reiterated the country's unwavering commitment to providing comprehensive assistance and cooperation in the spheres of defence and security. He also praised the Azerbaijani Armed Forces for their exemplary professionalism and valour. Bayramov arrived in Islamabad earlier this week on a two-day official visit.

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Big cut in petrol prices announced

Relief to masses govt top priority, says Shehbaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has announced a big relief for the commuters as it has announced drastic cut in the petrol prices. The petrol price has been reduced to Rs 15 per liter while the diesel price has been reduced to Rs 7 per liter. The govt spokesman said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is committed to give further relief to masses. He said that even in the coming days the government intends to announce more incentives for the public. The government is also mulling

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Briefs

Law minister, AGP meet CEC

Budget allocation and other matter were discussed in the meeting

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The federal law minister and the attorney general for Pakistan have met the chief election commissioner (CEC). Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar met Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and discussed appointment of retired judges in the election tribunals. Budget allocation of various departments and other matters also were discussed in the meeting. After the meeting, the federal law minister stated that no discussion on Election Tribunal Ordinance was held and some parliamentary affairs and budget allocation of the Election Commission of Pakistan were discussed.

Two suspects arrested in Baluchistan

DNA

QUETTA: Baluchistan Home Minister Zia Ullah Langau on Friday announced that two suspects linked to the attack on the barbershop workers in Gwadar had been arrested. Seven barbershop staffers hailing from Punjab had been shot dead and another was injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them while they were asleep in their residential quarters near the Gwadar Fish Harbour in the Surbandar area in the coastal town earlier this month.

Holiday Notice

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

Norway envoy meets Nawaz

French ambassador calls on CM Maryam

Reiterated cooperation is inevitable to mitigate climate change challenge

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: French Ambassador Nicolas Galey and Economic Consular Laurent chopiton have called on Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz today. Punjab CM and French ambassador exchanged views to cooperate in various sectors to strengthen bilateral ties. Both sides agreed to boost cooperation in climate change mitigation and initiatives for environmental protection. Punjab CM reiterated that Pakistan and France' ties and collaboration has strong history, on this occasion. French Ambassador Nicolas Galey commended the public welfare and development initiatives in Punjab saying wanted to work together for progress and stability of Pakistan. He said that collaboration was inevitable to mitigate global challenges like climate change. Meanwhile Ambassador of Norway called on PML N President Nawaz Sharif. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest.

Asif advises Imran to keep his 'mouth shut'



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif Friday asked Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan to keep his "mouth shut" if he wants political tension in the country to lessen. "I think founder PTI wants to increase tension," said the minister in an exclusive interview with

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Two terrorist leaders killed in Peshawar

Two terrorist leaders killed in Peshawar

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Terrorist leaders Ayaz alias Muhammad and Ahmadi alias Kochi were killed, and two others were wounded in an intelligence-based operation in Hasankhel area of Peshawar. According to the ISPR, the operation was conducted on the night of May 30-31 following reports of the presence of terrorists. During the operation, security forces successfully located the terrorists' shelter. Muhammad and Ahmadi were killed. Pakistan Army spokesperson

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Contempt plea against Vawda on June 5

Supreme Court took suo motu notice of Faisal Vawda's criticism of judges

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has scheduled the hearing of contempt petition against Senator Faisal Vawda on June 5. The court has issued notices to Faisal Vawda and the Attorney General. In the previous hearing, the Supreme Court had sought written responses from Faisal Vawda and Mustafa Kamal. It is noteworthy that the Supreme Court had taken suo motu notice of Faisal Vawda's criticism of the high judiciary's judges. On May 18, the Supreme Court

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PM Shehbaz Sharif to embark on five-day visit to China

China says prime minister's visit an "opportunity to promote greater joint development"

KHAYM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is set to embark on an official five-day visit to China from June 4-8 at the invitation of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, said Foreign Office on Friday. The FO, in its statement, said that during his visit, the prime minister will meet President Xi and hold delegation-level talks with Premier Li in Beijing. He will also hold meetings with chairman of standing committee of the National People's Congress, Zhao Leji, and heads of key government departments. PM Shehbaz will pay a visit to the economic and agricultural zones and will also address the Pakistan China Business Forum, added the FO spokesperson. An important aspect of PM Shehbaz's visit will be meetings with corporate executives of leading Chinese companies dealing in oil and gas, energy, ICT, and emerging technologies, said the FO. It added that the PM will also address the China-Pakistan Business Forum with leading businesspersons, entrepreneurs, and investors from both countries in Shenzhen. He will also visit Economic and Agricultural Zones in China.

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China stands ready to work with Pakistan

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: A follow-up question on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China. Could you share some detail of his visit? And how does China view the current relations between Pakistan and China? And what is China's expectation for the visit? Mao Ning: This is Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's first visit to China after the new Pakistani government came into office this year. During his visit, President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Zhao Leji will meet or have talks with him. The leaders of the two countries will have an in-depth exchange of views on China-Pakistan relations and issues of mutual interest, and jointly draw up a blueprint for

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SDPI hosts discussion on protecting children from tobacco

SDPI organized a special stakeholder discussions on World Tobacco Day being observed under the theme Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Friday organized a special stakeholder discussions on World Tobacco Day being observed under the theme Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry here and to evolve strategies for preventing over 1200 adolescent and youth opting smoking per day in this country. Opening the discussion, Abdul Rahman, Director Operations, Punjab Food Authority (PFA) said without strict penalty to the violators, no outcome was possible in stemming smoking among the youth. "Media and communications are important tools to create impact on hazards of smoking and guiding the youth to shun misleading concepts on opting smoking through health risks. Moreover, the universities should abstain from offering leniency towards smoking in its premises," he said. The major consumption of tobacco was at educational institutions that could be managed through stringent punishments like business closures, he added. Syed Ali Wasif Naqvi, Head of Policy, Advocacy and Outreach, SDPI in his presentation said as per the 2022 data,

over 37 million adolescents aged 13-15 globally use tobacco. "In the WHO European Region, 11.5% of boys and 10.1% of girls in this age group are tobacco users. Notably, electronic cigarettes and nicotine pouches are increasingly popular among youth, with 12.5% of adolescents in the European Region using e-cigarettes in 2022 compared to 2% of adults," he said. Naqvi mentioned that with over 1200 children initiating tobacco use daily in this country, and permeation of electronic tobacco and nicotine products in schools, colleges, and universities, the statistics are showing an alarming situation. The tobacco industry, he said targets youth to replace millions of customers lost annually to death or cessation. The industry employs appealing products and advertising tactics aimed at children and adolescents, using social media and streaming platforms, he added. Dr Minhaj us Siraj, CEO Health Syndicate said the tobacco industry was engaging with children through labour in the tobacco fields, whereas those kids were not able to enter schools to acquire education for life. He also mentioned "green leaf disease". He underlined that the exposure of adolescents to dangerous chemicals in tobacco processing was causing severe

health complications among them. He said that child protection from tobacco industry needs to be started from the fields. Dr Siraj underlined that SRO 2024 implementation needs to be done in true letter and spirit, whereas his organization during the advocacy and awareness efforts had approached mosques to flag the issue in juma sermons, and also in 2020, it was highlighted in Makkah. He pointed out that online sale of tobacco products was a major challenge at present as it was going unchecked. "Lancet journal's study claimed that developed countries were involved in suppressing less developed countries achieving positive results in smoking reduction efforts. Pakistan is among the 28 countries where the tobacco ending game is near and also leading in Eastern Mediterranean region in 2023," Dr Siraj mentioned. He highlighted that without the civil society's support, no achievement in this cause was possible. Dr Amina Khan, Executive Director. The Initiative, said, "Generally 1 out of 3 people die of tobacco who do not quit tobacco use or smoking, whereas 1200 children between the age of 6-15 start smoking every day in this part of the South Asian region.



ISLAMABAD: Large number of people gather at D-Chowk to protest against the Israeli terrorism in Gaza and demand to stop the Rafah operation. — DNA

Time to unlock hydel potential for affordable electricity in country

PESHAWAR : Installing a solar system on the rooftop of his house, Riazul Haq - a former PST teacher seemed satisfied after making a Rs 300,000 investment hoping to get relief from long hours of power outages mostly caused by direct hocks, non-meterization, and non-construction of dams that irked consumers. "Today I am pleased to install a complete solar panel on investment helping me to run an AC and refrigerator for around 24 hours," he told APP after installation of the system at his hometown of Pabbi Nowshera. Taking advantage of the decline in prices of the solar system, he said that solar panels are now within the common man's reach and people may take advantage of it as Wapda could not afford uninterrupted electricity to all domestic, agricultural, and industrial consumers due to increase of power pilferage and non-meterization in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said the menace of load shedding could not be addressed unless taking advantage of the massive hydel power potential in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Despite the 60,000MW hydel power potential of Pakistan including 30,000MW of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the energy crisis has deepened in recent years due to kunda culture, increase in prices of oil and petroleum products, high taxation, and non-construction of dams that adversely affected agriculture, economic—APP

Minister inaugurates polio vaccination campaign in KP

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Provincial Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah inaugurated the polio vaccine campaign in selected district of the province at Police Services Hospital Peshawar here Friday. This five-days Sub-National Immunization Days (SNIDs) campaign is being launched from June 3rd in selected districts of the province. Special Secretary Health and Coordinator Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Abdul Basit, Deputy Coordinator EOC Muhammad Zeeshan Khan, Director General Health Services Dr Muhammad Saleem and officials of UNICEF and WHO as well

as other relevant officials were also present on this occasion. Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah while talking to media, reiterated the provincial government's strong commitment and unwavering resolve to eradicate polio virus from the province and has emphasized that the only way to root out this menace is to vaccinate each and every under five child in each campaign. Shedding light on the highest priority being attached to eradicating polio virus, the provincial health minister said that the whole government machinery including administrative officers from top to bottom, health department and law enforcement agencies are all working hand in glove at all levels to ensure the complete

eradication of this crippling disease. On this occasion, the health minister administered polio drops to a child to formally inaugurate this campaign wherein more than 3.56 million under five children will be administered with polio drops. Responding to a question about refusals coverage, the health minister said that they are engaging all segments of society including parliamentarians, local bodies representatives religious scholars and other influencers to address the misconceptions of refusals parents. He added that in other countries, parents take their children to health facilities for vaccination but we are providing polio vaccination at their doorsteps.

Rs.1b released for Karachi Safe City Project: Lanjar

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI : Sindh Home Minister, Zia ul Hassan Lanjar, Friday said that Sindh government had released Rs 1 billion for the first phase of Karachi Safe City Project aimed at making the metropolis a peaceful and crime free city. While chairing a meeting held here at DIG CTD office to discuss the first

phase of the Karachi Safe City Project, the home minister emphasized the need of swift completion of the project within 12 months. He mentioned that Sindh government had transferred Rs 3 billion to the project account for expediting the necessary works for launch of the project. The objectives of the safe city project are to eliminate crime and apprehend criminal elements and the gov-

ernment wants to expand it to other cities of the province after its launch in the capital Karachi, he added. The minister expressed his commitment to the objective of making Karachi a peaceful, secure and crime free city and underscored the importance of the Safe City Project in achieving the goal. Briefing the participants of the meeting on the progress and priorities of the project, Director General Safe City

Project, Asif Aijaz Sheikh informed that Pakistan's largest screen and data centre would be established under the project. As many as 12000 cameras will be installed at selected locations in Karachi while 2000 existing cameras to be upgraded, he said adding that plans were underway to install 10,000 more cameras across the city and all the cameras would be connected through fiber optic cables.

This realignment aims to minimize response times during emergencies and prioritize customer service. LESCO has ensured the availability of transformers and related equipment on a priority basis, enabling swift restoration of the power supply in case of any unforeseen events or technical faults while special directives have been issued to complaint centers and helpines to ensure every consumer grievance is promptly addressed, emphasizing on continuous customer engagement, Shahid added.

LESCO ensures uninterrupted supply in 5 divisions

LAHORE : Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has undertaken proactive measures across its five divisions Lahore, Sheikhpura, Nankana, Kasur and Okara to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply amid rising

temperatures and increased demand. With a consumer base of 6.5 million, comprising primarily 86% domestic, 1.4 percent industrial and 11 percent commercial users, LESCO is focusing on operational efficiency and customer satisfaction, said LESCO Chief

Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haider during a press conference here on Friday. He said that in response to heat waves, LESCO has adjusted its staffing, reallocating personnel from construction and streetlight departments to enhance operational capabilities.

Swindlers loot expat

MULTAN : A couple of swindlers looted an expat after posing themselves police officials in the Basti Malook area, police said. The accused committed the forgery by approaching the man named Abdul Wahab, a resident of Bahawalpur on a Honda Civic with a golden colour at Adda Billa Walla, Bahawalpur road. The victim was reported to have been deprived of 500 Euro \$1000, a mobile phone, and other costly goods that he took with him after landing at Multan airport. The incident came out when the expat was moving to his hometown, Bahawalpur. Basti Malook Police Station registered a FIR and started investigation.—APP

Rs 16 billion disbursed under BISP scheme

ISLAMABAD : The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs.16 billion among over 15,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country so far under the Benazir Kafaalat quarterly payments (April-June). "Till May 30, over Rs. 16 billion has been disbursed among over 15,00,000 beneficiaries which makes 46 percent of the total beneficiaries", said an official source. The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (April-June) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to the beneficiaries is continued across the country in two phases to disburse Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine million registered beneficiary families. In the first phase, the payments are being issued among the beneficiaries in all districts of Islamabad, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. The payments are also being disbursed in Peshawar, Mardan and all districts of Malakand and Hazara Division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, all districts of Karachi Division and District Hyderabad in Sindh province and Gujranwala, Sahiwal, Rawalpindi and all districts of Sargodha Division and District Vehari in Punjab. While payments to the beneficiaries in the remaining districts are being issued in the second phase. The beneficiaries can receive their payment through the nearest centers after receiving message from 8171. The beneficiaries, in case of any complaint, can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil offices or call the toll-free helpline number 080026477 of the Benazir Income Support Program. The special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly. However, the beneficiaries can also contact the officials on WhatsApp numbers including 03018472841 (Hyderabad District), 03018472838 (Karachi Division), 03175370095 (South Punjab), 03202399616 (Central Punjab), 03028238564 (North Punjab), 03492883482 (Balochistan), 03155212820 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), 03155213094 (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan). The messages from the Benazir Income Support Program are sent only from 8171, and messages from any other number should not be trusted. The officials of BISP have been directed to ensure the smooth disbursement of Kafaalat payments to the women without any deductions. The staff has been deputed to monitor the process of payment disbursement and take immediate action against the agents responsible for deductions from the beneficiary's payments.—DNA

Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Foundation launches Lahore chapter

DNA

LAHORE: The Karim Khan Afridi Welfare Foundation, working on drug awareness and prevention among young people in Pakistan, launched today at a local hotel, the Lahore Chapter of the KKAWF with the aim of bringing a stronger focus on implementing drug use awareness and prevention education programmes among the young population of this vibrant city which is home to over 8 million youth under age 30. The Lahore chapter of KKAWF will be led by Ambassador Mansoor Ahmed Khan who has served previously as head of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime-UNODC headquarters in Vienna. His extensive experience in the field and currently as Director of the Beaconhouse National University (BNU)

will be instrumental in engaging the youth of Lahore, particularly students from various educational institutions, in KKAWF activities. Speaking on the occasion, Cristina Afridi, Chairperson KKAWF said that Drugs, as part of organised crime are recognised now as a national security threat in Pakistan, including by the Anti-Narcotics Force-ANF. She highlighted that despite worldwide recognition of the drug problem, drug use persists and is mounting to historic levels - 296 million drug users globally in 2021, which she said is an unprecedented 23% increase in just one decade, and synthetic drugs like crystal meth are making the task harder to address. She said that Pakistan, is no exception and is the worst affected country throughout South Asia and is home to the largest market for heroin consumption. She further stated that in (2015)

8.9 million people in the country used drugs, which is almost same as the young population under age 30 of Lahore! This is of grave concern. Other speakers at the event highlighted that Prevention and early intervention strategies can reduce the related crime and violence and the massive costs to our society that drug use brings. For every dollar invested in Prevention ten dollars can be saved in future costs. The importance of de-glamourizing the use of drugs portrayed by the entertainment industry and the so-called influencers is needed as this flawed messaging lures the curious youth towards drug use initially. The launch event was attended by Nasir Jaffer, Vice Chairman KKAWF and Chairman Jaffer Brothers Group, Mrs. Nasreen Kasuri, Chairperson Beaconhouse Group, Mrs Abida Hussain, senior government representa-

tives, parliamentarians, civil society, business community, media, educational institutions, youth to collaborate with KKAWF to build a brighter future. After successful results in Islamabad/Rawalpindi and KP, KKAWF has launched its activities in Lahore for the first time in response to keep its youth protected from the alarming rise in drug use, given that 63% of the population - an estimated 150 million youth are under age 30 in the country. KKAWF, a civil society organization set up in 2015 by Cristina von Sperling Afridi and Ambassador Tariq Afridi in memory of their late son Karim, is working for spreading Prevention awareness regarding drug abuse amongst the youth in Pakistan. The key objective of KKAWF is to engage with youth to empower them to realise their full potential of a healthy & productive life.

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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/Argentina
National Day
May 25/Lebanon
Liberation and Resistance Day
May 28/Azerbaijan
Republic Day
May 28/Ethiopia
National Day



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Airlines

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



Enquiry

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PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



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

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Pak-Kuwait to sign a loan agreement US\$ 25 million

A high-level delegation from Pakistan, representing key ministries including Economic Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Commerce, overseas Pakistanis and HRD, Interior, Board of Investment, Petroleum Division, and SIFC, engaged in fruitful discussions aimed at fostering mutual prosperity

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan and Kuwait signed a loan agreement worth US\$ 25 million in the 5th session of the Pakistan-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) convened in Kuwait. The key outcomes of the session included the agreement to sign a loan agreement for US\$ 25 million on June 3, for the Mohmand Dam, with assurances of support from the Kuwait Fund for engaging the Arab Coordination Group in financing the Diamer Bhasha Dam, according to a press release issued here on Friday. The 5th Session of the Pakistan-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) convened from May 28th to May 30th, 2024, in Kuwait, marking a significant stride in strengthening the ties between the two nations. Chaired by Mr. Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister for Privatization, and Omar Saud Al-Omar, Minister for Commerce and Industry of the State of Kuwait, the session underscored a shared commitment to enhance collaboration across various sectors. A high-level delegation from Pakistan, representing key ministries including Economic Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Commerce, overseas Pakistanis and HRD, Interior, Board of Investment, Petroleum Division, and SIFC, engaged in fruitful discussions aimed at fostering mutual prosperity. Mr. Ziad Abdullah Al-Najem, under-secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, extended a warm welcome to Pakistan's delegation, highlighting the pivotal role of the session in advancing bilateral relations. Additionally, the Fund



expressed its willingness to consider the financing request from the Government of Pakistan for the Kachhi Canal project. During the JMC proceedings, significant strides were made with the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements in fields such as industrial cooperation, engineering councils, and the news exchange. Moreover, consensus was reached to formalize MoUs for collaboration in agriculture, maritime, and ports; avoidance of double taxation; quality and safety standards; and high education commissions. Both sides also agreed to establish Joint Working Groups (JWGs) to address matters pertaining to

visa and consular affairs. Abdul Aleem Khan, Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization, and Communication, Pakistan, expressed contentment regarding the convening of the 5th Session of the Pakistan-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Commission and highlighted the focal points of bilateral discussions. Khan underscored the significance of private sector engagement in strengthening economic ties and urged Kuwait to streamline visa procedures for Pakistanis, a crucial step in advancing economic partnership and facilitating meaningful interaction, given Pakistan's abundant pool of skilled professionals in diverse fields. He extended an invitation to Kuwaiti

investors to leverage Pakistan's Special Investment Facilitation Council and identified key sectors ripe for investment. The minister commended the positive outcomes, including the establishment of joint working groups and the successful conclusion of memoranda in the fields of industry, engineering, and news exchange. He further conveyed appreciation to the Kuwait counterparts for their hospitality and to the experts for their dedication to advancing mutual interests. Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs and head of delegation at the technical level, emphasized the potential of the JMC in augmenting trade and fostering cooperation in education,

science, and culture, laying the groundwork for a robust partnership. Dr. Niaz also lauded Kuwait's investment in Pakistan's strategic sectors, expressing optimism for mutual economic and cultural benefits. The deliberations during the session encompassed a wide spectrum of sectors, including Commerce and Trade, Food Security and Livestock, Maritime and Ports, Industries and Production, Investment, Energy, Oil, and Natural Resources, Overseas Employment, Visa, Higher Education, Science and Technology, Banking and Finance, Taxation, Arts and Culture, Sports and Tourism, Health, Information and Broadcasting, and Development Cooperation.

ICCI celebrates Youm-e-Takbeer

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly, Anjum Aqeel Khan has said that Youm-e-Takbeer is a day of great significance for Pakistan, the successful nuclear tests conducted on this day not only demonstrated Pakistan's deterrence capabilities but also secured its sovereignty and defence against external threats. This bold move cemented Pakistan's position as a responsible nuclear power, committed to maintaining peace and stability in the region. The nation's spirit of unity and determination in the face of challenges is highlighted through this day, showcasing Pakistan's unwavering commitment to safeguarding its national interests and security. Addressing a ceremony held in connection with the Youm-e-Takbeer here at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Thursday evening he said that Youm-e-Takbeer is not just a day of celebration but a testament to Pakistan's resilience, determination, and commitment to peace and progress. It is also important to honour the sacrifices and contributions of all those who have played a role in shaping Pakistan's journey towards excellence and success, he added. Anjum Aqeel Khan asserted that on this day we have to renew our pledge, especially the youth and women that they will equip themselves with the latest skills to put the country on road to progress and prosperity. He added that the incumbent leadership is working day and night to pull the country out of the existing economic crisis by attracting foreign investments especially from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to make it a self-sufficient State.

Pakistan thanks China launching Pak Sat MM-1 Satellite

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's authorities thanked China for successfully launching a multi-mission communication satellite for Pakistan using a Long March-3B rocket. The launch occurred at the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in the southwestern province of Sichuan on Thursday. Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammad Ishaq Dar, said that his heartfelt congratulations to the nation on the successful launch of the Pakistan Mul-

ti-Mission Communication Satellite (PakSat-MM1). He further said that this historic achievement marks a milestone in our National Space Program, made possible with the invaluable support of our great friend and partner, China. "This project exemplifies our strong technological collaboration and enduring friendship with China," he said. "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the people of Pakistan and commend the entire team at Pakistan Space & Upper Atmosphere Research

Commission (SUPARCO) for their tireless efforts", he added. He added that the satellite will deliver high-speed broadband internet, significantly boosting connectivity, especially in underserved areas. "Pakistan remains committed to promoting science and technology as key drivers of economic growth and national development. This launch demonstrates our resolve to invest in high-tech sectors and develop indigenous capabilities. As we celebrate this historic achievement, let us look

forward to a future where Pakistan continues to excel in science and technology, harnessing the power of connectivity to build a better world for all. May our journey into the stars be ever prosperous and peaceful", he mentioned. Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi tweeted that launch of a multi mission communications satellite was yet another significant milestone in Pakistan's space program and another chapter in space cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Pakistani food companies showcase diverse range of products

ISLAMABAD: Nine leading Pakistani companies, specializing in logistics, rice mills, frozen meals, and a wide array of fruits, juices, pink salt products, candies, snacks, and dried fruits, had made a strong presence at the imported grocery section of the 2024 Salon International De L'Alimentation (SIAL) in Shanghai. According to China Economic Net (CEN), the exhibition, running attracted over 5,000 exhibitors from 75 countries and regions, showcasing more than 350,000 products, representing the latest, innovative and unique food and beverage products from around the world. SIAL Shanghai has become a pivotal platform for Pakistani food exporters to showcase their products to a global audience. The Pakistani contingent's participation highlighted the country's rich agricultural heritage and growing capabilities in food processing and logistics. With a focus on quality and variety, the Pakistani exhibitors aimed to capture the attention of buyers from China and other participating countries. One of the standout companies was the National Logistics Corporation represented by Director Plans Muhammad Yousaf. He emphasized the company's capabilities in handling international shipments, especially in the food and beverage industry. "We are here to introduce our logistics services to potential customers and partners," he said. "With our robust network, we can ensure efficient and timely delivery of products from Pakistan to China and beyond." In the rice mill sector, Pakistani companies showcased their high-quality rice varieties including broken rice, long-grain rice and other specialty rice. Kumar Kewlani, representing one of the participating rice mills, said, "We have been exporting rice to China since the market opened up, with shipments of thousands of tons monthly. Exhibiting here is a great way to showcase the unique qualities of Pakistani rice and other food products." The frozen meal section was also a highlight, with Pakistani companies exhibiting a diverse range of ready meals.—APP

Pakistan House signs MoU for research, development

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan House, under the leadership of Director General Muhammad Athar Javed, and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Bahria University Islamabad, represented by Principal and Dean Dr. Adam Saud, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalize a strategic partnership aimed at advancing research and development in critical areas. The signing ceremony took place at Bahria University Islamabad, marking the beginning of a collaborative journey between the two esteemed institutions. This MoU outlines a frame-



work for cooperation, with a focus on holding joint conferences and seminars, and embarking on collaborative projects that address pressing global and regional issues. Among the key topics of collaboration are climate change initiatives, strategic communication, geopolitical shifts, and psychological warfare. Recognizing the urgent need for comprehensive research and action on climate change, this partnership aims to develop innovative solutions and strategies to mitigate the impacts of climate change. This includes interdisciplinary research, policy recommendations, and community engagement projects.

Five cattle markets set up for Eid-ul-Azha in ICT

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, chaired a meeting at his office regarding the arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha, deciding that five cattle markets would be set up in the Federal Capital. According to the spokesman of the ICT Administration, "In preparation for Eid-ul-Azha, Islamabad's district administration is gearing up for the cattle market season." The meeting was attended by all Assistant Commissioners (ACs), Directors from the District Management Authority (DMA), the Livestock Department, and representatives from the Traffic Police. It was decided in the meeting that from June 6, livestock markets will open at five designated locations in Islamabad. These markets will be set up at Sultana Foundation, Zia Mosque, Barakahu, I-14, and Margalla Avenue. The DC Memon emphasized the need to maintain cleanliness in these markets. Special arrangements will be made for the comfort of both traders and citizens, including shaded areas and a clean water supply for the animals. The sale and purchase of cattle will only be permitted at these specified locations. The DC Memon warned that any trading outside these areas would result in action against both buyers and sellers. The spokesman said, "With these measures, the administration aims to ensure a smooth and orderly Eid-ul-Azha cattle market experience for everyone involved."—APP



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Briefs

Imports of agriculture chemicals grew by 5.38%

ISLAMABAD: Agriculture and other chemicals group imports into the country during the first 10 months of the current financial year decreased by 5.38 per cent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-April, 2023-24 chemicals related to agriculture and others valued at \$7.084 billion were imported as against the imports of \$7.487 billion in the same period of the last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. However, imports of fertilizer manufactured into the country increased by 13.02 per cent as over 1.232 million metric tons of the fertilizer valued at \$611.780 million were imported as compared to the imports of 796,090 metric tons worth of \$541.312 of the same period of last year, it added. During the period under review, the imports of insecticides decreased by 2.71 per cent as about 30,313 metric tons of the above-mentioned commodity worth \$161.654 million were imported as compared to the imports of 33,529 metric tons valued at \$166.149 million in the same period of last year, it added.—APP

CDA chairman inspects schools

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa and Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Special Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, visited various schools in the federal capital to assess upgrade projects. The Chairman of CDA reviewed the ongoing upgrades at Islamabad Model College for Girls (IMCG) F-6 and Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) F-8, which include the construction of mini gyms and the maintenance of laboratories. He stated, "CDA will fully support the maintenance of school grounds and assist in establishing dispensaries."—APP

Around 21,870 retailers register

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Friday informed that a total of 21,870 retailers have been registered under the Tajir Dost Scheme by 30 May. According to the FBR data, around 17,569 retailers registered through Tajir Dost scheme while 4,301 registered other than this scheme. The data revealed that 5,512 retailers from Karachi, 6,706 from Lahore and 1,927 from Islamabad have registered under the scheme. Similarly, 2,742 traders from Rawalpindi, 1,857 from Peshawar, 1,226 from Quetta and 1,900 from other cities have also been registered.

Youm-e-Takbeer: 26 Years of Responsible Nuclear State

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif's stated that Pakistan's nuclear capability is a guarantor for peace in the region; he emphasized their role in establishment of full-spectrum deterrence and maintaining regional power balance, particularly against India. He said this through a video statement on, 30th May 2024 - South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI) University event to commemorate the 26th anniversary of Youm-e-Takbeer. The event was held to mark the nation's historic nuclear tests on May 28 and 30, 1998. The event, titled "Youm-e-Takbeer: 26 Years of Responsible Nuclear State," was hosted by SASSI University in Islamabad.

He asserted that Pakistan's nuclear capability remains a robust defensive measure, deterring aggression and safeguarding national sovereignty. In light of past aggressive actions such as those in Balakot, he reaffirmed Pakistan's readiness to respond to any threats was a deterrence choice, underscoring that any act of war would have severe consequences for the aggressor. He also paid tribute to the scientists, engineers and all those who have developed Pakistan's nuclear program. While commenting on the pressures faced by Pakistan in the may28th decision in 1998 he paid tribute to PM Nawaz Sharif for his momentous decision to go nuclear.

Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir Ahmed Shah NI(M), HI(M)'s in written statement extended congratulations to the nation and Armed Forces on the anniversary of Youm-e-Takbeer. He lauded the 1998 nuclear tests for establishing credible minimum deterrence and restoring regional power equilibrium. The Chief



of Army Staff paid tribute to the scientists, engineers, and officials whose dedication and sacrifices were instrumental in achieving this milestone. He reaffirmed the Armed Forces' unwavering commitment to defending Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity at all costs. Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Dean of Social Sciences at Quaid-e-Azam University, highlighted the strategic importance of nuclear capabilities for nuclear-armed states and key regional actors. He called for a comprehensive review of global nuclear dynamics and regional challenges, advocating for the modernization of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and doctrine, and the acceleration of the civilian nuclear energy program.

Dr. Maria Sultan, Chairperson and Director General of SASSI University, discussed the impact of nuclear posture and doctrine on regional military order and future nuclear program expansions in South Asia. She highlighted the ongoing debate between compellence and deterrence and the future of the nuclear order in the third nuclear age. Speaking at the event Ambassador Khalid Mehmood Chairman Board of Governor of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad also echoed the support and facilitations to the nation on the historic event and while recalling the historic events of May 1998 stated that the pressures on Pakistan though were huge on one side by the international

community on the other had as well supported by the friends who understood that Pakistan had developed the capability only as a last measure of defense. He further added that the key element in nuclear deterrence is national resolve and let there be no mistake Pakistan has plenty of it when it comes to its defense. His intervention was followed by the comments made by Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi Executive Director Centre for International Strategic Studies CISS, who added that Pakistan was a reluctant nuclear weapon state but the way the international community had responded to the Indian nuclear tests of 11th May 1998 left Pakistan with no choice but to go nuclear on 28th may1998.

this he said was particularly true as we faced the very real possibility of an attack on nuclear capability had we not tested. The event emphasized Pakistan's commitment to being a responsible nuclear state, ensuring regional stability, and pursuing peaceful nuclear technology advancements for the credibility of deterrence as we faced an ever changing environment. The event concluded with a documentary on the May 28th 1998 and a vote of thanks to the heroes of the Pakistan's nuclear program. The event was attended by a large number of people from different walks of life including from the Media, Academia, Armed Forces, National Security and Diplomatic Corp.

IsDB Organizes financial management Workshop

ISLAMABAD: The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) organized a four-day financial management and integrity workshop to enhance the transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of financial management and procurement processes in Pakistan. The workshop saw active participation from international partners, executing agencies, and Provincial departments across the country, including representatives from Government Ministries and Departments, according to a press release issued here on Friday. The Ministry of Economic Affairs announces the successful completion of a four-day workshop conducted by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) in Islamabad, focusing on Country Procurement, Integrity, and Financial Management. The event, held from 27th May to 30th May, brought together key stakeholders to enhance the transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of financial management and procurement processes in Pakistan. The collaboration between these entities and the IsDB underscores Pakistan's commitment to adopting international best practices in financial management and procurement

to ensure sustainable development. The Workshop provided comprehensive training and Participants received in-depth training on the latest procurement policies, financial management strategies, and integrity measures essential for ensuring transparent and efficient use of public resources. The workshop was facilitated by experts from the Islamic Development Bank who provided valuable insights into global standards and practices, as well as tailored advice to address Pakistan's unique challenges. The program included interactive sessions, case studies, and practical exercises designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of the participants, fostering a deeper understanding of procurement and financial management processes. The workshop promoted a collaborative approach, encouraging dialogue and knowledge sharing among participants, which is crucial for implementing cohesive and effective financial strategies across different regions and departments. Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs inaugurated the workshop on 27th May 2024, and Mr. Muhammad Humair Karim, Special

Secretary, EAD concluded the workshop and awarded certificates to the participants on 30th May 2024 and extended gratitude to all participants and facilitators for their dedication and contributions to making this workshop a success. Speaking at the closing ceremony, Mr. Humair Karim emphasized the importance of robust procurement and financial management systems in achieving shared development goals. He stated, "This workshop is a testament to our commitment to improving governance and ensuring that public resources are managed with the highest standards of integrity and efficiency. We are grateful to the Islamic Development Bank for their support and expertise." Mr. Ezzeddine Nciri, Director of the Integrity and Ethics Department, at the Islamic Development Bank, also expressed satisfaction with the workshop's outcomes, highlighting the importance of continuous capacity building and international cooperation in fostering development. "Our collaboration with Pakistan aims to build resilient institutions that can effectively manage resources and drive economic growth.

PM urges auto industry to start local manufacturing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday urged the automobile industry to start local manufacturing of vehicles and export a considerable ratio of their products to contribute to national development. The prime minister, talking to a delegation of automobile and auto parts manufacturers, asked the industry to implement the Auto Sector Deletion Policy and become a part of the global value chain. He told the delegation that the incumbent government was taking measures to boost the country's exports. The delegation which consisted of Chief Executive Officer of Toyota Pakistan Ali Jamali, and the representative of the auto parts industry Amir Allahwala, apprised the prime minister of the issues facing the auto industry. They appreciated the prime minister for the government's pro-business and investment policies. Federal ministers Rana Tanveer Hussain and Jam Kamal Khan, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Five cattle markets set up for Eid-ul-Azha in ICT

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, chaired a meeting at his office regarding the arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha, deciding that five cattle markets would be set up in the Federal Capital. According to the spokesman of the ICT Administration, "In preparation for Eid-ul-Azha, Islamabad's district administration is gearing up for the cattle market season." The meeting was attended by all Assistant Commissioners (ACs), Directors from the District Management Authority (DMA), the Livestock Department, and representatives from the Traffic Police. It was decided in the meeting that from June 6, livestock markets will open at five designated locations in Islamabad. These markets will be set up at Sultana Foundation, Zia Mosque, Barakhu, I-14, and Margalla Avenue. The DC Memon emphasized the need to maintain cleanliness in these markets. Special arrangements will be made for the comfort of both traders and citizens, including shaded areas and a clean water supply for the animals.—APP

Inayat Hussain Bhatti remembered

ISLAMABAD: The 25th death anniversary of renowned playback singer and actor Inayat Hussain Bhatti is being observed today. Born in Gujrat on January 12, 1928 he moved to Lahore to pursue further studies. He was a multi-talented distinguished singer, actor, director author, social leader, columnists and religious scholar. He sang for nearly 500 films, in both Urdu and Punjabi. His impressive discography includes over 2,500 songs. In 1997, he suffered an attack of paralysis, which impaired his speech and kept him bed-ridden for most of the time thereafter. He died on May 31, 1999 in Gujrat.—APP

World no-Tobacco day observed

ISLAMABAD: Expert on World no-Tobacco day stressed the joint efforts of society, raise taxes and awareness drives of social media platforms to control the ever-increasing trend of smoking among youngsters as studies show that around 38 million young people aged 13-15 using tobacco globally. Talking to PTV news channel, Consultant & Expert, Anti Drugs Narcotics Campaign Syed Zulfiqar Hussain explained that tobacco day is an effort to control the consumption of Tobacco around the world, adding, aims to inform the public about the health implications that are associated with the use of tobacco including lung cancer, heart disease, respiratory illness, and many more. He said that Over 22 million people (20% of adults) in Pakistan smoke tobacco, 32% of men and 6% of women smoke. However, smokeless forms of tobacco, such as paan, gutka and naswar, are also popular. More than 1 in four young people (aged 13-15) are exposed to second-hand smoke in their homes. This year, the theme is "Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry Interference", underscores the critical need to prevent future generations from falling prey to the harmful impact of tobacco use, he added. Consultant Pulmonologist Aneel Kumar mentioned that Pakistan's youth is a particular targeted group when it comes to the use of tobacco, which is why their involvement in raising awareness is need of hour, adding, Pakistan is among a few countries where tobacco production and consumption is increasing enormously, there is an urgent need for health promotion and anti-tobacco education for combating the epidemic of smoking, he added.—APP

UNIDO and JICA operationalize the upgraded meat testing lab

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) held an event, marking the upgradation and op-

erationalization of a meat testing laboratory in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority (KPF&HFA). The initiative is funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as a

part of the Project for Agro-Food and Agro-Industry Development Assistance (PAFAID). The upgraded laboratory is now equipped with cutting-edge technologies, including Real-time PCR and BAX Systems, which provide rapid and accurate re-

sults. These tests include rapid detection of Salmonella, yeast, and mold, as well as enumeration and identification of these contaminants. It can also now isolate Salmonella, E. coli, and coliforms, detect Pseudomonas species in water or food samples, and can also identify Listeria monocytogenes. The capacity of technical staff has also been enhanced through training in advanced sampling strategies and test culturing techniques. These improvements will enable the laboratory to more effectively detect food-borne pathogens, thereby ensuring the safety of meat products in the province. Speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony, the Director General KPF&HFA, Mr. Muhammad Wasif Saeed, termed it the first meat testing laboratory in KP province with the latest technologies having a wide range of meat testing capacity. Secretary Food KP, Mr. Zari-ul-Mani, praised UNIDO and JICA's efforts under the PAFAID project for enhancing the capacity of the food testing lab. He emphasized the significant public health benefits resulting from the establishment of the meat testing lab.



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Era of freewheeling finance

As emerging and developing economies navigate a turbulent world of intense geopolitical rivalry and worsening climate warming, the question of a new development model is top of the growth agenda. The current narrative is how these economies choose between an insecure rich West and the rising Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) grouping of countries seeking an alternative order. The Global South is not convinced by the Biden administration's story of democracy vs autocracy, and of the need to support a rules-based order. They see instead a global retreat in democratically led countries and a West preaching a selective "do as I say, not as I do". The free-market order is in serious retreat amid a hail of tariffs and sanctions, with industrial policy and state intervention rising by the day. The issue is less about capitalism vs socialism, because some capitalist countries are turning fascist, whereas climate change policies cut across ideologies. All countries face two serious imbalances – social injustices in the widening income and wealth gap, as well as planetary injustice as natural capital is being plundered amid pollution, biodiversity loss and the ruthless extraction of minerals. Attending the Global Islamic Economy and Finance Forum in Kuala Lumpur this week, it struck me that the theme illustrated a policy dilemma over whether to promote the real economy over finance or the other way round. Finance has led the real economy in global growth since the 1980s, when financial liberalisation became synonymous with the neoliberal order. Allowing open capital accounts, promoting free financial markets and competition seemed to lead to efficient capital flows that help economic development. But the 1997 Asian financial crisis and 2008 global financial turmoil revealed that the free-market order also promoted concentration, financial frailty, market instability and social inequality. The Covid-19 pandemic and economic lockdowns were "medicated" at the economic level with greater monetary creation and loose fiscal policy but, since 2008, global growth has slowed because financialisation increased debt at the expense of real-sector productivity, inviting short-term speculation over long-term investments and structural, but painful, reforms. Reaching for easy ways out ended up with "small yards and high fences" – effectively protectionism and containment instead of multilateral cooperation. The dilemma of finance vs the real sector is reflected in a country's balance sheet, where national assets (real) are essentially funded by liability (monetary or financial structure). Finance does matter, because if the real sector is fully funded by debt, especially foreign debt, and the country has no foreign exchange for repayments, a crisis ensues, like in the Latin American economies in the 1980s and East Asian economies in the 1990s. In other words, a country with a stronger real economy story, funded by the right type of risk capital, will outperform competitors with a weak real-economy development model, funded by fragile debt. The Islamic economy and finance story is illustrative of this dilemma. Roughly a fifth of mankind are followers of Islam, but Islamic countries make up about 9 per cent of global GDP, with Islamic financial assets about 1.5 per cent of the world total. Clearly, there is a considerable way to go in developing Islamic economies.



Gaza and the fate of Western civilization

BLACKENED smoke in the background, the raging inferno ripped through tents long after "Israel" had bombed another designated "safe" zone for evacuated civilians from north of Gaza. A charred body, of a boy or a girl, pulled from the wreckage, still burning. It's the "bigger shoah," the bigger Holocaust, Matan Vilnai, "Israel's" deputy defense minister had promised Gaza in 2008. In the same scene, three children helped their mother place their tattered floor mattresses on a cart. The middle-aged woman's face was grooved like newly tilled rows of arid soil. The scrawny donkey hobbled in the sand, struggling to pull the cart. He appeared as hungry and thirsty as the gaunt children trying to climb on top of the mattresses. The donkey seemed confused as the woman ordered him to move toward the central of Gaza. The poor animal was directed to the same location from which he had moved the family days earlier. Donkeys in Gaza have a better memory of the place than many Western leaders. The load this time was lighter, perhaps due to the loss of a husband or child. The same family was on the move from one "safe" place to another Israeli-designated "safe" area. Like all the people of Gaza, families were ordered to move from the north and to evacuate the south to the middle of Gaza, even as the Israeli army bombs Al-Mawasi, Nuseirat, and al-Bureij in the center of the Strip. The donkey is not the product of the "values" of Western civilization. He does not make a 2000-pound bomb and drop it over the most densely populated area on planet Earth, such as Jabalia camp, nor does he possess the mental capacity to exploit artificial intelligence for a more efficient mass assassination factory. Most importantly, the donkey does not understand the ingrained white Western racism toward non-white cultures. American officials typically waste no time condemning the killing of an Israeli, but are over cautious when addressing the murder of the "less than equal human beings" at the hand of "Israel". In response to a question about the Israeli Shoah (catastrophe) in Rafah, the US State Department spokesperson Mathew Miller justified the burning of children by telling the reporters that "Israel has a right to go after the Hamas ... as appears to have been Israel's aim here." "Israel" has investigated previous murders, such as the killing of WCK aid workers, claiming that the killing was not intentional. Israeli army Chief of General Staff Herzli Halevi declared it a "grave mistake." Similarly, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu described the latest massacre in Rafah with similar lexicon, calling it a "tragic mishap." In explaining the large number of killed journalists, circa 140, an Israeli army spokesperson stated that they "never . . . deliberately target journalists." Regarding the murder and injury of more than 100,000 Palestinian civilians, "Israel" claims they were unintended casualties because it "takes all operationally feasible measures to mitigate harm to civilians." It is a clear case of cognitive dissonance when Western powers provide food aid to alleviate the Israeli-made famine, while supplying the means for "Israel" to perpetuate a starvation regime, and the bombs to burn (less than hungry) children alive.

Formation commander's meeting: A PR perspective

Qamar Bashir



The major part of the press release was consumed over branding social media activists as digital terrorists and conspirators who in connivance of "foreign cohorts" were carrying out "digital terrorism" against the state "institutions" to induce discord among the armed forces and the people of Pakistan by peddling blatant lies, "fake news", and "propaganda". On the public relations point of view, using harsh terms like "digital terrorists," "conspirators," and "digital terrorism" to describe...

THE recent fiery press conference by the DG-ISPR, while not directly naming the PTI but making its targets clear, stated that forgiveness would not be granted until sought by the accused party. In addition his press conference covered a wide array of topics including law and order, the economy, finance, border management, elections, post-election scenarios, judiciary, and foreign affairs, leaving little for the civilian government to comment on or defend. Following this comprehensive press conference, the 83rd Formation Commanders Conference on May 30, 2024, as per the ISPR's press release, addressed critical national security issues. These included discussions on social media, bringing perpetrators of the May 9 incident to justice, supporting the government in economic and investment matters, focusing on the socio-economic development of Balochistan, and addressing the treatment of minorities and Muslims in India. The major part of the press release was consumed over branding social media activists as digital terrorists and conspirators who in connivance of "foreign cohorts" were carrying out "digital terrorism" against the state "institutions" to induce discord among the armed forces and the people of Pakistan by peddling blatant lies, "fake news", and "propaganda". On the public relations point of view, using harsh terms like "digital terrorists," "conspirators," and "digital terrorism" to describe social media activists indicates a very strong and confrontational stance by the state. This approach appears to be aimed at intimidating and deterring activists, potentially justifying punitive measures against them. However, it risks escalating conflict, polarizing society, undermining the activists' credibility, and deflecting attention from the core issues they raise. Such language can create a chilling effect on free speech and damage the country's international image. While addressing genuine threats is crucial, a more balanced approach that combats misinformation while respecting free speech would likely be more effective and less divisive. The forum declared the alleged planners, perpetrators, abettors, and facilitators of 9th May outrightly as culprits who needed to be brought to justice for the "collective good" of the country, and that without "swift

and transparent dispensation of justice "establishing the rule of law", "stability in Pakistan" would ever remain "hostage to the machinations" of such elements. On the public relations point of view, the use of strong language and the apparent pressure on the judiciary to act swiftly against these individuals could be seen as impinging on the independence of the judiciary. The judiciary's independence is fundamental to ensuring fair and impartial justice. Any perception of undue influence or pressure from the military could undermine public trust in the judicial system and its ability to administer justice without bias. For a robust democracy, it is essential that the judiciary remains free from external pressures and operates based on the rule of law and principles of justice. On the Public Relations point of view, the forum's resolution to support the government's initiatives in areas such as sustainable economic growth, curbing illegal activities, and safeguarding the national database raises questions about the appropriate role of the armed forces in civilian matters. Generally, the primary focus of the armed forces should be on national defense and security. While collaboration between military and civilian authorities can be beneficial, particularly in areas like border security and countering smuggling, the involvement of military leadership in civilian issues such as economic growth, electricity theft, and repatriation of illegal foreigners might blur the lines between military and civilian governance as in democratic societies, civilian matters are typically managed by elected representatives and civilian institutions to ensure that governance remains accountable to the public. The forum also underlined the need for socio-economic development in Balochistan to counter externally propagated narratives of exclusion, exploited by foreign-sponsored proxies to lead Balochistan's youth away from peace and progress. Addressing the socio-economic development of Balochistan is a critical issue that requires a coordinated effort between the military and civilian government. While it is essential for the civilian government to take the lead in implementing policies and programs for development, the military can play a supportive role, especially in providing security and infrastructure support in conflict-af-

ected areas a part of a broader strategy that includes input from the civilian government, local communities, and other stakeholders to ensure long-term sustainability and effectiveness. On the Public Relations point of view the comments made by the formation commander of the Pakistan Armed Forces on issues primarily falling within the domain of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs raise questions about the appropriate role of the military in public diplomacy. While it is understandable for the armed forces to express solidarity with certain causes, such as the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination or concern over human rights violations, these statements could be perceived as crossing into the realm of foreign policy, which is traditionally the purview of the diplomatic corps. Publicly commenting on these sensitive international issues may risk complicating diplomatic efforts or sending mixed signals about Pakistan's official foreign policy stance. It is generally more appropriate for such matters to be addressed through official diplomatic channels to ensure coherence and consistency in Pakistan's foreign policy messaging. The Pakistan Army, known for its discipline, effectiveness, and operational readiness, is a significant asset to the nation. However, recent events have raised concerns about its image in social and traditional media, as well as among certain sections of society. This trend is worrisome for the country as a whole. The responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the armed forces' positive image, as well as addressing any negative perceptions, primarily lies with the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) wing. It is crucial for ISPR to exercise caution and use measured language in its communications to avoid any unintended consequences. In sensitive matters like foreign affairs or regional conflicts, ISPR should use public relations strategies to clearly distinguish between civilian and military roles. The international community recognizes the civilian government as the official representative of the country, and therefore, such matters may be deferred to government.

– Former Press Secretary to the President
Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC

Beyond the legacy of Sadatism

Matteo Gladio

In 2024, the United States will be approaching its presidential elections, and it is quite staggering to note the poor qualities of the two main political leaders offered to the American people at the ballot box

IT would normally be advisable to argue that deriving a political analysis from the individual personalities of political leaders can be a distractive tool, a strategy often adopted to avoid discussing the structural conditions that define the material and ideological conditions of a country. For instance, it has long been a strategy of the Western political and intellectual apparatus to reduce the entire political history of countries of the global South to the whims and desires of a single man. For more than forty years, if we were to take the case of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Western media did everything they could do to pin all the political contradictions of the country into the figure of Mu'ammarr Qaddafi. Calling him out as "a cancer or the mad dog of the Middle East," was a rhetorical strategy aiming to present Libya as ruled by an authoritarian and power-hungry leader brutally repressing his people. By turning politics into a treatise about human Arab monsters, the objective of the strategy was to avoid discussing the progressive policies adopted by Libya since its 1969 al-Fateh revolution or to ignore the decades-long imperialist assault on the country via international sanctions, funding of opposition groups, and direct bombings. One could say that the strategy was so effective that, when 2011 came, NATO had its ground paved already to carpet bomb Libya under the pretext of "democracy". Qaddafi is just one example in a long list of NATO-led bombings, including Syria, Yugoslavia, Iraq, and so on. However, when a closer look at the nature of political leaders is accompanied by a structural and historical reading tracing their emergence, it can also become a useful

tool to diagnose the political vitality of a country and its society. It is my contention that a juxtaposed reading of the nature of current political leaders in Western society vis-vis those leading the current fight against the Zionist entity reveals a political and cultural resurgence of the Arab and Muslim world; one that has, in fact, set the Palestinian homeland toward its path of liberation thanks to strategic vision of these unique leaders. There is no doubt that the legacy of Sadatism, which is the legacy of surrender, capitulation, and treason that Arab rulers pursued since Camp David, is being questioned. In 2024, the United States will be approaching its presidential elections, and it is quite staggering to note the poor qualities of the two main political leaders offered to the American people at the ballot box. On the one hand, there is the current US President, Joe Biden, an adult male who appears to have serious difficulties remaining focused during press conferences, and he is often seen blabbering or confused in front of the cameras. In February 2024, former US counsel, Robert Hur, produced a report of 388 pages assessing Biden as a "well-meaning, elderly man with a poor memory." The number of videos circulating across social media often showing Joe Biden wandering around are too many. Yet, as much as one risks being imprisoned in the West by stating that "Israel" is committing genocide in Gaza, the American courts refuse to believe that Biden is anything but senile. On the other hand, we can find what American liberals consider as the incarnation of evil; that is, Donald Trump. However, if Trump were to incarnate something, it would be precisely American "values". He managed to enrich himself through various illegal activities for many years and then became a celebrity-like figure thanks to a TV series called "The Apprentice"; in other words, a good communicator with the practical abilities and ethical values required to trick society for personal gains. If Western masses were lucid enough to question the limits of capitalism, they would refer to him as a trickster or a clown, at best. Yet, here we are talking about the presidential candidate for the Republican Party. These are not inherent American characteristics. We only need to look no further than one of the most contentious areas of the world, Ukraine, to realize the depravity of Western political classes and their so-called strategists. Once a comedian, touring around to entertain people with jokes, he has now been turned into the "absolute freedom-fighter", Volodomyr Zelensky. How is it possible that a man who spent the most formative years of his life learning how to communicate jokes to public audiences is now leading a country into a war against Russia? Similarly, how come Western civilization, and especially the US, has only been able to pro-

duce such political figures in the last decade? How can a society that claims to uphold the values of democracy and freedom so highly offer its people the choice between a "senile person" and a "clownish thug"? The answer lies in the cultural and political decline of the West. When asked why he had embraced Marxism, Ernesto Che Guevara replied that it had not been a personal choice. He had only embraced the spirit of History. For the Cuban revolutionaries, the fight against Yankee imperialism required them to embrace Marxist ideology and praxis. Similarly, we should not wonder how and why the Western political arena is dominated by dubious figures and unethical politicians and leaders who eagerly support the genocide of Palestinians, showering the Zionists with all kinds of weapons and ammunition. These men incarnate the spirit of History and, in particular, they are symptomatic of this impetuous tide of fascism in which Western society is drowning. One of the most striking features of this tide has been the complete rehabilitation of Nazism in Ukraine as a form of popular resistance against "dictatorial" Russia. As a result, the European ruling classes, from Giorgia Meloni in Italy to Emmanuel Macron in France, compete to show who is the most benevolent slave and vassal for the mighty US, ready to sacrifice their people and countries at all costs. At the political and electoral level, there is hardly any progressive party left in the West, which is why the student protests struggle to turn into concrete political demands. The spectrum of political forces sits along the center-right (liberals), right, and far-right. The Left in Europe has been so infiltrated materially by the ideological weight of the US through actual military operations, i.e. Operation Gladio, to such an extent that the European ruling classes have become completely subordinate to the American project. At the intellectual level, one needs to look no further than the response given by the majority of so-called progressive intellectuals of the West (Naomi Klein, Judith Butler, Slavoj Zizek) to the military operation of the Palestinian Resistance. They all rushed to condemn violence or directly support the colonizers' right to "defend itself", meaning: genocide. They came out discussing what should be the right amount or kind of violence, somehow feeling entitled to teach the Palestinian Resistance how to organize a movement of national liberation. Once again, these are humans incarnating their historical time, they are functionaries of American imperialism whose career was made on the plight of the masses of the Global South. They enjoy their imperialist privileges while theorizing what progressive forces in the South of the world should do or not. They constantly call for some abstract forms of "internationalism from below," distancing themselves from any actually-existing

political project that has emerged to rise from the yoke of imperialist war, i.e. the Islamic Republic of Iran, the People's Republic of China, Cuba, and so on. They have become faithful administrators of the American project. After all, they benefit from them. Yet, since 2006, the Arab and Muslim world has risen, the Zionist entity has been compromised and, in this process, real leaders have shown us the way. When Al-Aqsa Flood was unleashed on the Zionist usurpers, the revolutionary masses of the world, especially Arab and Muslim ones, were forced to reckon with the nature of these leaders guiding the struggle. All attentive observers, in fact, realized the symbolic significance of the date chosen to unleash this operation, October 7. On October 6, 1981, the Egyptian masses rose and assassinated Anwar Sadat, a man who incarnated the capitulation and surrender of the Arab regimes to the whims of the imperialists and their Zionist proxies. October 7 fractures this legacy, becoming a moment of resurgence of Arab and Muslim political leadership. It is a blow to the legacy of Sadatism and treason that for too long has been showered on the masses of the region. Among the masterminds of this epic operation, in Gaza, we find the humans and leaders who incarnate the true revolutionary spirit of history. The CheGuevaras of our time are Abu Obeida, Yahya al-Sinwar, and Mohammed Deif. Al-Sinwar is a man who is constantly framed as the incarnation of evil in the Western press, yet he spent almost two decades in Zionist prisons, learning how to speak the language of the enemy while understanding perfectly the latter's arrogant and superior mentality. He knew that the Zionists looked at Palestinians as "stupid animals", he understood how keen the Arab regimes were to sell Palestine to the Zionists, and he gave utmost respect to the martyrs and heroes of Gaza. On this basis, he acted. Under his leadership, an army was built in Gaza, treason stopped being an acceptable political option, and a carefully crafted operation was launched that compromised "Israel", just as Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah had done in 2006. Al-Sinwar, like Deif, Abu Obeida, and many others, is not a superhero, the latter are only the products of American cultural industry, Hollywood. These are the leaders of our time, those who understood the decline of the West, and patiently and fearlessly dedicated their lives to the struggle against the Zionist usurpers. They assessed that the most favorable circumstances appeared, and they decided to strike a blow to the imperialist proxy. These are humans who are paving the necessary conditions for the revolutionary masses of the world, especially the Arab and Muslim ones, to regain control of their History. It does not matter what the Arabs of America tell us, whether armed resistance is to be supported or not, the revolution has already found its leaders, it is only time for us to support them.

Briefs

Full court formed to hear SIC plea on reserved seats issue

FROM PAGE 01
The PHC had turned down SIC's plea on reserved seats. In April, SIC chief Sahibzada Hamid Raza as well as the speaker of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly had filed appeals in the apex court against the judgment of the PHC, praying to allot the party 67 women and 11 minority seats in the assemblies, besides praying for setting aside the high court's verdict. Following the February 8 general elections, the Election Commission of Pakistan had decided not to allocate reserved seats for women and minorities to the SIC as they had not submitted their list of candidates for those seats. The decision was also upheld by the PHC.

'No leniency for those involved...'

FROM PAGE 01
Speaking informally to the media in the Parliament House in Islamabad, he said that the Secretary of Interior and Foreign Office officials have travelled to Kabul to brief Afghan authorities about those involved in the attack. "We have identified the culprits responsible for the attacks on Chinese engineers. The Secretary of Interior and Foreign Office officials are in Kabul to ensure Afghan authorities are fully briefed about those involved," he said. Dar said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will be visiting China from June 4 to 8. "Good news is expected from this visit, especially regarding issues related to CPEC and its security. I have already discussed these matters during my recent visit to China, and they will also be addressed during prime minister's visit."

Asif advises Imran to keep his...

FROM PAGE 01
Geo News in the wake of the controversial social media post shared on Khan's official X — formerly Twitter — account. A post on X was attributed to the former premier said: "Every Pakistani should study the Hamood ur Rahman Commission Report and get to know who was the true traitor, General Yahya Khan or Sheikh Mujibur Rahman." Asif said the former prime minister, who remains incarcerated at the Adiala jail since August 2023, is trying again to create a situation like that on May 9. The minister, commenting on the video in question, said attempts are being made to retract the tweet related to the former Bangladeshi president.

PM Shehbaz to embark on five-day...

FROM PAGE 01
The premier's visit is a manifestation of the iron-clad Pakistan-China friendship characterised by frequent high-level exchanges and dialogue. The two sides will undertake discussions to further strengthen the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, upgrade China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, advance trade and investment, enhance cooperation in security and defence, energy, space, science and technology, and education, and promote cultural cooperation and people-to-people contacts, thus setting the future trajectory of Pakistan-China friendship. Earlier today, PM Shehbaz also chaired a meeting to review the preparations for his upcoming visit to China, wherein he directed the formulation of comprehensive plans to hold result-oriented business-to-business meetings between the two countries. He instructed the relevant authorities to devise strategies for attracting Chinese industries to set up their units in Pakistan, assuring his government's all-out facilitation to the industrialists and investors.

Pakistan's stunning comeback salvages draw against Malaysia

Abdul Rehman opened Pakistan's account in the third quarter to keep his side's hopes alive in the game

SPORTS DESK

GНИЕZNO: Pakistan made a stunning comeback to draw their opening match of the FIH Nations Cup against Malaysia in Gniezno, Poland. The match ended in a 4-4 draw despite the fact that Malaysia had a 3-0 lead in the first quarter. Fitri Saari, Abu Kamal and Faizal Saari scored within the first 11 minutes of the match after taking advantage of some poor defending by Pakistan. However, Abdul Rehman opened Pakistan's account in the third quarter to keep his side's hopes alive in the game. But Fitri Saari scored another through a penalty stroke to once again extend Malaysia's lead to three goals. Despite the odds stacked against them, Pakistan team didn't lose hope and kept on attacking the Malaysian goal. Sufyan Khan finally scored Pakistan's second goal in the 43rd minute with Hannan Shahid



adding another nine minutes later. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr Mahmood scored the equaliser in the dying seconds of the match after Pakistan were awarded a

penalty stroke. Pakistan team recently impressed during the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Malaysia but lost in the final to Japan on penalty shootout. Pakistan hockey was at an all-time low when they failed to qualify for the Olympics, where they won three gold medals, for the third consecutive time earlier this year. Additionally, the Green Shirts also failed to qualify for the World Cup, where they bagged gold four times in the past, last year. However, the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup proved to be a breath of fresh air for hockey fans after Pakistan qualified for the final of the event for the first time in 13 years. The Nations Cup is important because the winning team will have the opportunity to play in the FIH Hockey Pro League for the 2024-25 season. Austria, Canada, France, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan and South Africa will join hosts Poland in competing at the men's Nations' Cup. The teams have been split into two Pools of 5 and 4 teams. Pakistan are in Pool B with Canada, France and Malaysia. Pakistan's next match is against Canada on June 2.

Babar Azam criticizes middle-order in England series loss

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam admits to team's poor performance in England, hopeful about WC

LONDON: Pakistan's cricket captain, Babar Azam, has lamented the team's dismal performance against England in the recently concluded four-match T20 series, acknowledging they should have played well ahead of the World Cup in the US. Speaking in the post-match presentation ceremony in London, Babar expressed his thoughts on the importance of playing modern cricket, and the road ahead for Pakistan. He acknowledged the disappointment of losing the series to England, emphasizing that winning would have boosted the team's morale heading into the World Cup and said players learnt from losses also. "It was necessary to win the series and go to the World Cup with high morale," he said. He noted that the World Cup is a completely different game and expressed confidence in achieving better results. He said they were well aware of the conditions in West Indies, but not in the US, adding that all the players knew about their roles and would have to take responsibility in the World Cup. Reflecting on the series, Babar highlighted several areas where the team fell short, saying they made mistakes in the middle order, but since the World Cup is near, they will try to correct those shortcomings. He also pointed out that the batsmen failed

to take responsibility in the middle overs, leading to a loss of wickets. "Undoubtedly, the batsmen did not take responsibility in the middle overs and lost wickets," he stated, adding that the team could not score well due to the fall of wickets one after another, which put the team under pressure. He also mentioned that the bowlers did not perform up to expectations, conceding too many runs. "The bowlers also did not bowl well and scored more runs," he added. Also Read: England triumphs over Pakistan, clinches T20 series victory Babar emphasized that the team also played modern-day cricket, similar to other top teams. He mentioned that all players, especially the seniors, need to take responsibility. "All the players are seniors; they will have to take responsibility," he asserted, adding that when changes took place, it took time. He stressed the importance of increasing the strike rate and adopting modern cricket strategies to resume the journey of victories. The captain acknowledged that changes in the team take time to yield results. "When changes happen, it takes time," he said. He expressed confidence in the selection process, stating that every player was chosen on merit, including Azam Khan, and emphasized the collaborative effort of the selection

committee, coach, and captain in the decision-making process. "Every player is selected on merit," he said, urging support for whoever is selected. Babar also commented on individual players, mentioning that they are well aware of the capabilities of players like Azam Khan and Fakhar Zaman. He admitted to mistakes made in the middle order during the series and expressed determination to correct these errors before the World Cup. "We have made mistakes in the middle order of this series," he acknowledged. He also noted that a good partnership between Usman and Ifikhar could have changed the outcome of the match, and the pressure from back-to-back wickets affected the team. Looking ahead, Babar is confident in the team's potential for the World Cup. He reiterated the importance of playing modern cricket and ensuring that all players know their roles and take responsibility. "All the players know their role and have to take responsibility in the World Cup," he said. Despite the recent setbacks, Babar remains optimistic about the future. He highlighted the collaborative effort needed to succeed and called for credit to be given to England for their performance. "Credit should also be given to England for playing good cricket," he concluded.

Clarke names 'favourites' for T20 WC 2024

SYDNEY: Former Australia captain Michael Clarke named India as the favourites for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024 which will be played in the United States and West Indies from June 1. Clarke, who led the Aussies to their record fifth 50-over World Cup in 2015, believed that India are the favourites for the upcoming tournament because they have played a lot of cricket and are well prepared. "I mentioned it earlier, I think if you look at the favourites for this World Cup, it's got to be India just because of the amount of cricket they've played. Their preparation is outstanding. The conditions are different in the Caribbean and America compared to India, but there are a lot of similarities, so their players should be used to that," Clarke told ESPN Cricinfo. The World Cup-winning captain then added that India have taken four spinners to the T20 World Cup, which is nothing more than a risk in the Caribbean. "The other thing as well, I think India's taken a risk with the squad they've picked, heavily relying on spin. It's very different to Australia, but in conditions that I've experienced in the Caribbean, I think spin bowling and how you play spin is going to be a huge part of your success. So, you know, India is the biggest threat for me in regards to who's going to win this World Cup," he added. In the recently held Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 final between Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad, not a single player who was part of India's World Cup squad was in either team except Rinku Singh, but he is the reserves. Clarke stated that this could be a blessing for India as all of their players got to train together from the very first day which will be key in the mega event. "When you talk about preparation, it's interesting because there were three Australians in the IPL final and not one of the 15-member India squad in the final, but it could end up being a bit of a blessing in disguise. They've got the whole team together in New York early," he concluded.

China stands ready to work with Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01
The growth of bilateral relations. In addition to Beijing, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will visit Guangdong and Shaanxi. China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners and ironclad friends. Our friendship has stood the test of time and remained rock-solid and—to use a Chinese expression—"steady as Mount Tai." Under the guidance of the leaders of the two countries, China and Pakistan have in recent years had close high-level exchanges, steady advanced practical cooperation, conducted fruitful and high-quality cooperation on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and maintained sound communication and coordination in international and regional affairs. China stands ready to work with Pakistan through this visit to make greater progress in our all-weather strategic cooperative partnership and take new steps in the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

Azerbi FM praises Pakistan's...

FROM PAGE 01
In a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, the visiting dignitary briefed him on the discussions with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. He also conveyed warm greetings of Azerbaijan's leadership to the prime minister and assured him of his country's strong desire to further solidify its ties with Pakistan. During his meeting with Dar, Bayramov discussed the multidimensional bilateral and regional agenda encompassing bilateral and international matters. The two sides resolved to enhance cooperation in multiple sectors including trade, investment, energy and connectivity to exploit the huge potential of the friendly relationship between the two countries. Moreover, they also agreed to enhance parliamentary exchanges, strengthen cultural cooperation and promote people-to-people exchanges including students, academia and businessmen.

Big cut in petrol prices announced

FROM PAGE 01
massive relief in the upcoming budget. The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has turned down the federal government's plea for wrapping up Ahmed Farhad's recovery case until the Kashmiri poet's in-person appearance in the hearing. IHC's Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani heard a petition filed by the missing poet Farhad's wife, Urooj Zainab, who was being represented by human rights lawyers Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali, whereas, Additional Attorney General Munawwar Iqbal attended the hearing to represent the federation. At the outset of the hearing, Iqbal apprised the court that Farhad was on physical remand by June 2 and he was allowed to meet his family. He then prayed to the IHC for wrapping up the illegal confinement case.

Two terrorist leaders killed in Peshawar

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stated that the deceased terrorists were involved in several acts of terrorism against security forces and the killing of innocent civilians. The local population appreciated the security forces' operation. The ISPR further highlighted that Pakistan's security forces are committed to eradicating terrorism from the country.

Contempt plea against Vawda on...

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issued show-cause notices to Senator Faisal Vawda and MQM-Pakistan lawmaker Mustafa Kamal over their recent blistering criticism of high court judges.

Islamabad, Rangers march into Basketball Semifinals

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad and Punjab Rangers have confirmed their berth in the semifinals of the ongoing All Pakistan Muhammad Majid and Abdul Nasir Memorial Basketball Tournament here at Siddique Memon Sports Complex Karachi organized under the umbrella of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF). On the fourth day of the pool round matches, Islamabad boys continued their journey of another consecutive victory in the tournament pool round matches by defeating Sindh Yellow by 52-14 points to qualify for the semifinal round. Ali Kazmi was the top player for Islamabad, who scored 19 points while Momin Javed scored 15 points. For Sindh Yellow Daniyal Khan scored 08 points for the losing team. Top team Wapda also continued their outstanding performance to move ahead in top-four stage along with PAF, Rangers and Islamabad, as they thrashed Punjab Rangers in the last pool round match by 82-71 points. Kaleemullah and Muhammad Israr scored 22 and 17 points respectively. Sindh Whites outclassed Balochistan in the third match on day four by 87-46 points. Pakistan Wapda will face Islamabad in the first semifinal which will be held on Saturday (Today) while Pakistan Air Force will fight against Punjab rangers in the second semi final of the memorial tournament.

Khawaja Junaid appointed focal person for sports

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Office is pleased to announce the appointment of Khawaja Muhammad Junaid as the Focal Person (Sports) for the Prime Minister's Youth Programme on an honorary basis. All relevant stakeholders are requested to extend their full cooperation to Junaid in the discharge of his responsibilities. Meanwhile, Khawaja Junaid Academy was launched at Viqar-un-Nisa Girls College in Pindi. Khawaja Junaid mentioned that the academy's purpose is to identify and nurture young players to represent Pakistan nationally and internationally. He said the long-term vision for the academy included hosting tournaments, establishing exchange programmes with international hockey academies, and producing players who can represent Pakistan at the global level. "We have provided experienced coaching staff for the academy, while Allied Bank will be providing financial support for the coaching purposes," he added. Faisal Ghauri in his remarks said Allied Bank was proud to support Khawaja Junaid Academy as it would help promote women sports in the country. "We believe in empowering our women. The launch of this hockey academy is a commendable initiative. I hope it will promote women's empowerment and sports development. We are proud to support such fantastic endeavors as we believe this will help nurture talent and create future champions. Principal Viqar-Un-Nisa College said that her institution was known for its strong emphasis on female education and empowerment. "I'm grateful to Khawaja Junaid for choosing this ideal institution for the academy. The college's support for the academy will always be there," she said. At the end, some 40 students of the Viqar-Un-Nisa College were given away hockey sticks, while souvenirs were presented to respected guests. — DNA



Coco Gauff holds firm to reach FO fourth round

Gauff is bidding for a second major singles title after triumphing at last year's US Open

PARIS : Gauff had a double break lead in the second set and served for the match at 5-2 up before 30th seed Yastremska rescued a break. American Gauff had to then save a further two break points in her next service game before pushing through to secure victory. Gauff is bidding for a second major singles title after triumphing at last year's US Open. "It's important to expect great things from yourself but I'm 20 and I'm hoping to be playing for another 10 years or so," Gauff said. "Going into the Australian Open I was more nervous in the first couple of rounds, but now it's one match at a time." Gauff will face Elisabetta Cocciaretto next after the Italian, ranked 51st in the world, beat Russian 17th seed Liudmila Samsonova 7-6 (7-4) 6-2 to reach the fourth round of a major for the first time. Gauff is a natural clay-court player, having won the French Open juniors title in 2018. She made a strong start against Yastremska, getting an early break against a player who can be dangerous but struggled for consistency throughout. Gauff took the first set quickly and went an immediate break up the second before Yastremska, serving with more zip, hit back.

Despite an improved performance from her opponent, Gauff went a double break up but struggled with both her attempts at serving for the match. Three of her four double faults came as she attempted to serve out victory, but she was able to take advantage of a fading Yastremska to close out the win in 94 minutes. Gauff could face a stern test against Cocciaretto, who has beaten two seeded players in her three matches in Paris. She

came out on top in a tough three-setter in the first round against 13th seed Beatriz Haddad Maia and put in another impressive performance against Samsonova. At 23, she is the youngest Italian woman to reach the last 16 at Roland Garros since Francesca Schiavone in 2001. "I think I played unbelievably well in my first games, and after that I was over-thinking," Cocciaretto said. "I said to myself: play with the heart and not with the brain. It's unbelievable for me right now." Meanwhile, Novak Djokovic reached the French Open last 32 for the 19th successive year as Roland Garros organizers banned alcohol from the stands in an effort to counter

disruption from rowdy fans. Defending champion Djokovic cracked 43 winners past Spain's 63rd-ranked Roberto Carballes Baena to canter to a 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 win. The three-time champion, seeking a record 25th Grand Slam title, goes on to face 30th seed Lorenzo Musetti. Djokovic has defeated Musetti four times in five meetings. However the Italian gave the Serb a major scare at the French Open in 2021 when he won the first two sets of their last 16 clash before retiring injured in the decider. "It was a difficult match against Roberto. He hit a lot of very good and precise shots," said Djokovic. "The last game of the first set I played really well and started to play at a higher level. At the end of the match I was then playing very well." Also easing through to the third round on another rain-hit day in the French capital were women's title contenders Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina. The behaviour of fans at the tournament, which was brought into focus by Belgium's David Goffin's claim that he had chewing gum spat at him, prompted a series of measures to clamp down on loutish behaviour. "Alcohol has been allowed in the stadiums until now but that's over," tournament director Amelie Mauresmo told reporters. — Agencies



Briefs

ANF recovers
331 kg
drugs in five
operations

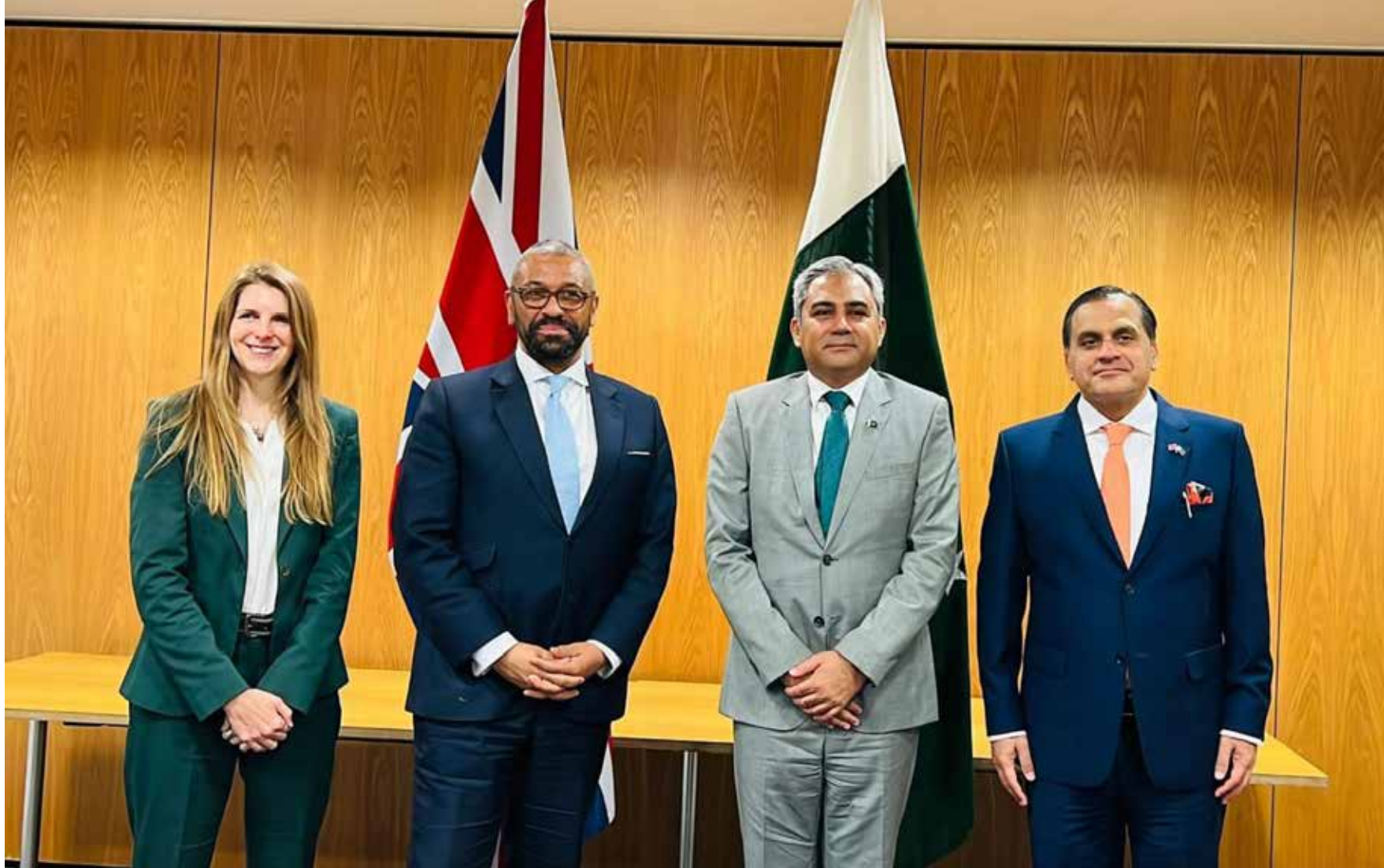
RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 331 kg drugs and arrested nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that 1.9 kg ice was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Islamabad Airport. 282 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of five accused rounded up near Jamshoro Toll Plaza Hyderabad. In the third operation, 30 kg hashish was recovered from Jeewani Gwadar area. 12 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested in Kalma Chowk Chiniot. In the fifth operation, 6 kg heroin was recovered from two suspects netted on M-1 Islamabad. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

Leading solar
provider
commit to
dig deep PV
market in
Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A Leading solar provider has committed to dig deep PV market in Pakistan. A total of 6,656 solar systems will be distributed in each district of Sindh province," the Director of Sindh Solar Energy has confirmed. Ali Majid, Pakistan General Manager of leading solar solutions provider LONGi, believes that it is undoubtedly good news for Pakistan's photovoltaic industry, specifically, for Chinese PV companies that have been deeply involved in the local market. The systems will include solar panels, charge controllers, and batteries. Currently, Sindh generates 400 megawatts of electricity from solar energy. This project is expected to significantly increase solar power generation in the province. "Nestled in a region blessed with ample sunlight, Pakistan boasts approximately 2.9 million MW of solar power potential," Ali told in an interview with Gwadar Pro. "And while the initial cost of solar technology has been a deterrent, the decreasing global cost is making it more economically viable for Pakistan." "Our government has been focusing on the development of large-scale centralized PV projects, including solar parks and utility-scale solar installations," the GM added, "these distributed household PV systems will help to work in synergy with centralized large-scale PV networks, increasing the country's overall renewable energy capacity and helping to diversify the energy mix." Photovoltaic power generation, as the best choice to solve Pakistan's power shortage and optimize its energy structure to a great extent based on fossil fuels, while saving foreign exchange required for energy imports, has vast potential for future development. For now, the solar energy market in Pakistan is experiencing rapid growth, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 49.68% expected from 2023 to 2028. Government initiatives are aiming to increase the share of solar energy in the country's energy mix, with a goal of obtaining 30% of the country's power from renewable sources by 2030. In recent years, the Pakistani government has successively formulated a number of related policies, thus the country's photovoltaic industry has shown good development potential. According to Pakistan's long-term power plan - the Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP), the cumulative installed capacity of photovoltaics will reach 12%, or 13.2GW, by 2030, and the government will continue to provide maximum support for renewable energy projects. The global photovoltaic industry is developing in full swing. China-Pakistan cooperation in related industries can make due contributions to the global response to climate change," Majid emphasized, "By providing high-quality solar panels and promoting sustainable energy solutions, LONGi is aiding the country in achieving its renewable energy goals."—APP

Pakistan, UK Signs LOI to
combat illegal migration

Mohsin Naqvi said that UK, Pakistan long-term partners with unprecedented government and people Contacts



London : Federal Minister of Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a group photo with Home Secretary of UK James Cleverly.

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi and Home Secretary of UK, James Cleverly on Friday witnessed signing of Letter of Intent (LOI) between the Governments of United Kingdom and Pakistan at Home Office, London. High Commissioner, Dr. Mohammad Faisal signed the LOI on behalf of Government of Pakistan. According to the Press Release, the LOI is aimed at collaboration between Pakistan and the UK to work together on law enforcement cooperation and criminal justice issues. It specifically addresses the issues to tackle illegal migra-

tion and organised immigration crime and to exploring future opportunities that benefit both countries. It will also facilitate liaison between UK and Pakistan law enforcement agencies, in support of joint efforts to tackle transnational crime, including narcotics control, investigations of serious criminality and organised immigration crime. Under the implementation mechanism, cooperation will be overseen by a joint Steering Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and comprising of representatives of Interior Ministry, National Police Bureau, British High Commission (supported by the Home Office), the programme team and other

relevant agencies. This agreement will help establish cooperation in the ability to share international criminal conviction data and analytics to prepare pre-emptive plans for crime prevention. Improving joint collaboration to tackle illicit finance threats, detecting criminality at air and sea borders, improving ability to facilitate extradition requests from the UK to Pakistan and Pakistan to the UK are also part of the LOI. The LOI will also help in creating awareness and understanding of the mutual legal assistance process in both countries. An important part of the LOI is capacity building that encompasses exchange of information and knowledge;

exchange of experts; field trips; training of staff; joint projects; conferences, workshops and provision of specific equipment. Progress on achievements under the LOI would be undertaken through yearly review. Earlier, during the one-on-one meeting Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi and Home Secretary of UK, Mr. James Cleverly discussed measures to further strengthen Pakistan - UK bilateral relations and collaborations to resolve issues jointly. Minister Interior, Mohsin Naqvi said that UK is a long-term partner of Pakistan and that Government to Government and people to people contacts between Pakistan and UK were at unprecedented lev-

els. UK's Home Secretary said that UK highly valued relations with Pakistan and appreciated Pakistan's support and cooperation in evacuating British citizens from Afghanistan. James Cleverly said that contribution of Pakistani Diaspora in UK is extremely significant in the areas of cultural, social and economic domains. He lauded Mohsin Naqvi's dedication to public service during his stint as Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab. Pakistani High Commissioner in UK Dr. Muhammad Faisal, British High Commissioner in Pakistan Ms. Jane Marriot and high ranking officials of UK Home department were also present on this occasion.

Sudan at
'imminent
risk
of famine',
UN warns

KHARTOUM : The people of Sudan are at "imminent risk of famine," United Nations agencies said, more than a year into a war between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Around 18 million people are already acutely hungry, including 3.6 million children who are acutely malnourished, according to a joint statement by UN chiefs including Volker Turk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Time is running out for millions of people in Sudan who are at imminent risk of famine, displaced from their lands, living under bombardments, and cut off from humanitarian assistance," Friday's statement added. Fighting broke out in the capital Khartoum in April 2023 and quickly spread across the country, reigniting ethnic bloodshed in the western Darfur region and forcing millions to flee in the world's largest displacement crisis. "Without an immediate and major step change, we will face a nightmare scenario: A famine will take hold in large parts of the country," read the statement also signed by UN aid chief Martin Griffiths. The war broke out as long-simmering tensions over integrating the RSF with the army came to a head. The UN special adviser on the prevention of genocide said last week there was a risk of genocide in parts of Darfur.—APP

Webb
telescope
finds most
distant galaxy

WASHINGTON : The James Webb Space Telescope has discovered what appears to be a new record-holder for the most distant known galaxy, a remarkably bright star system that existed just 290 million years after the Big Bang, NASA said Thursday. Since coming online in 2022, the Webb telescope has ushered in a new era of scientific breakthroughs, peering farther than ever before into the universe's distant reaches - which also means it is looking back in time. And the latest finding has "profound implications" for our understanding of the so-called Cosmic Dawn, researchers said. An international team of astronomers first spotted the galaxy called JADES-GS-z14-0 in early 2023, but they needed further observations to be sure it really was a record-breaker rather than a "confounding oddball," they said in a joint statement. "The source was surprisingly bright, which we wouldn't expect for such a distant galaxy, and it was very close to another galaxy such that the two appeared to be part of one larger object," said Stefano Carniani from Scuola Normale Superiore in Italy and Kevin Hainline from the University of Arizona. By the time light from the most distant galaxies reaches Earth, it has been stretched by the expansion of the universe and shifted to the infrared region of the light spectrum, which Webb is equipped to detect with unprecedented clarity.—DNA

African tech
start-ups
cater to
continent's
needs

MARRAKESH : African startups, addressing overlooked needs, are putting the spotlight on a burgeoning tech scene, despite challenges like inequality and limited digitalisation. At the GITEX Africa fair in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh this week, innovations in remittances and healthcare that cater to the continent's demands underscored the thriving sector. One of those at the show, Jean-Charles Mendy, launched an app with his business partner three years ago, giving people working abroad better control over the money they send to their families back home. "The market for sending money by Africans in the diaspora is huge," the 40-year-old Senegalese entrepreneur told AFP on the sidelines of the gathering that drew about 1,500 startups, companies and banks.—APP

NATO Chief dismisses
Russian warnings on arms

WEB DESK

PRAGUE : NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg on Friday dismissed warnings by Russian President Vladimir Putin that allowing Kyiv to use Western weapons for strikes inside Russian territory might lead to an escalation. Speaking on the sidelines of a NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Prague, Stoltenberg said the alliance had heard such warnings many times before. "This is nothing new. It has... been the case for a long time that every time NATO allies are providing support to Ukraine, President Putin is trying to threaten us to not do that," he told reporters. "And an escalation - well, Russia has escalated by invading another country." Putin on Tuesday warned NATO members against allowing Ukraine to fire their weapons into

Russia and raised anew a risk of nuclear war after several allies lifted restrictions imposed on the use of weapons donated to Kyiv. In a marked policy shift, U.S. President Joe Biden has also authorized Kyiv the limited use of U.S.-supplied weapons inside Russia, four officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Thursday. Biden's decision applies only to targets inside Russia near the border with the Kharkiv region, where an offensive launched by Moscow on May 10 has overrun some villages, they explained. The U.S. is by far the largest arms donor to Kyiv. Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, is 19 miles (30 km) from the border with Russia. KHARKIV OFFENSIVE United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speak with the media prior to a meeting of NATO foreign

ministers at the Czernin Palace, in Prague, Czech Republic. Russian jetfighters flying inside Russia out of reach of Ukrainian air defences have been supporting the offensive by loosing highly precise glide bombs at Ukrainian defence lines and into Kharkiv, opens new tab, where they have caused numerous civilian casualties. Stoltenberg said Ukraine had the right to strike legitimate military targets inside Russia, especially since the borderline and the frontline near Kharkiv were more or less the same, and it was not reasonable to assume Kyiv should not hit back. "Ukraine has the right for self-defence, we have the right to help Ukraine uphold the right for self-defence, and that does not make NATO allies a party to the conflict," he added. "That was the case back in February 2022, that was the case last year, that re-

mains the case." In Berlin on Friday, a German government spokesman said Ukraine could use weapons supplied by Berlin to defend itself against attacks launched from just inside Russia against the Kharkiv border region, in accordance with international law. In Prague, Dutch Foreign Minister Hanke Bruins Slot stressed Ukraine's right to self-defence without imposing geographical borders on the use of weapons. But other allies such as Italy refer to his as Italy refer to his foreign minister arguing that his country was banned by the constitution from allowing Kyiv to use donated weapons outside Ukraine. Lithuania's Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis called on these allies to change their stance since "the time is coming when it will be determined whether we as an alliance are serious.

At least 24 dead in
eastern India as
temperatures soar

NEW DELHI : At least 24 people died of suspected heatstroke in India's eastern states of Bihar and Odisha on Thursday, and the heatwave in the region is expected to continue until Saturday, authorities said. India has been experiencing a blisteringly hot summer and a part of capital Delhi recorded the country's highest ever temperature at 52.9 degrees Celsius (127.22°F) this week, though that may be revised with the weather department checking the sensors of the weather station that registered the reading. While temperatures in northwestern and central India are expected to fall in the coming days, the prevailing heatwave over east India is likely to continue for two days, said the India Meteorological Department (IMD), which declares a heatwave when the temperature is 4.5 C to 6.4 C higher than normal. A total of 14 people died in Bihar on Thursday, officials said, including 10 people involved in organising the seven-phase national elections that are currently underway. Parts of Bihar are voting in the final round of polling on Saturday. The deaths of 10 people were also reported in the government hospital in Odisha's Rourkela region on the same day, authorities told Reuters, prompting the Odisha government to advise against outdoor activities between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. when temperatures peak. Three people died of suspected heatstroke in Jharkhand state, neighbouring Bihar, local media reported. In Delhi, where high temperatures have been causing birds and wild monkeys to faint or fall sick, the city zoo is relying on pools and sprinklers to bring relief to its 1,200 occupants. "We have shifted to a summer management diet, which includes a more liquid diet as well as all the seasonal fruits and vegetables which contain more water," Sanjeet Kumar, director of the zoo, told news agency ANI.—APP

Egypt warns military response
over Israel's seizure

FOREIGN DESK

CARIO: Egypt has warned it's ready to respond militarily after Israeli troops seized a sensitive corridor of land along its border with the Gaza Strip. According to the Wall Street Journal, ties between Tel Aviv and Cairo are now fraying, with Egypt having told Israel it will not hesitate to respond militarily if it feels its security has been threatened. It came after the Israeli military said the regime's forces had taken "operational" control over the 14 km-long corridor along Gaza's border with Egypt. "The Philadelphi Corridor served as an oxygen line for Hamas, which it regularly used to smuggle weapons into the area of the Gaza Strip," Daniel Hagari, Israel's chief military spokesperson, claimed, using the Israeli

military's code name for the 14 buffer zone. An Israeli military official has clarified that there were Israeli "boots on the ground" along parts of the corridor. Israel has claimed there are at least 20 tunnels in the Philadelphi corridor, but Egypt has denied the existence of the tunnel network linking Egypt's Sinai and the Gaza Strip. "Israel is using these allegations to justify continuing the operation on the Palestinian city of Rafah and prolonging the war for political purposes," a high-level Egyptian source said, according to state-linked Al-Qahera News. Earlier this year, Egypt said that an Israeli military presence there would violate the 1979 peace treaty between the two regimes. The seizure of the corridor came as part of the Israeli onslaught on Gaza's southern city of Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's

UN warns aid 'not getting
to people' in Gaza

WASHINGTON : The UN humanitarian office and World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday warned aid is "not getting to people" in Gaza, and as a result "children are starving." "They are certainly not getting the amount that they desperately need to prevent a famine," Jens Laerke, the spokesperson for the UN humanitarian office, said at a UN briefing in Geneva. To Anadolu's question on the seizure of the Philadelphi Corridor by Israel, Laerke said: "More military action is not normally helpful for humanitarian action." He added that it is "difficult to predict" how it would affect the humanitarian operations as a whole, considering the "very dynamic" situation on the ground with armed forces moving around to different areas. "We want military action to cease altogether. We want to have a humanitarian pause," he urged and added: "That is the only way we can actually do our jobs properly." The Israeli army on Wednesday announced that it took control of the Philadelphi Corridor along the Gaza-Egypt border. Philadelphi Corridor is a 14-kilometer-long narrow strip of land that serves as a buffer zone on the Egypt-Gaza border and is guaranteed by the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty of 1979.—APP

2.3 million population had sought shelter from Israeli strikes elsewhere in the besieged Palestinian territory before the ground invasion of the city. The invasion continues unabated despite an order from the UN's top court for Israel to "immediately halt" its military aggression against the southern city. The assault has forced more than one million Palestinians to "flee" the city, according to the United Nations. Displaced Palestinians gather near a makeshift camp in the area of Tel al-Sultan in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, on May 30, 2024. (Photo by AFP) In early May, Israel captured the Gaza side of the vital Rafah border crossing, a lifeline to the outside world for Palestinians in Gaza, and it has been closed since then. Just days ago, an Egyptian soldier was killed in an exchange of fire with the Israeli forces near the crossing.—Agencies

Briefs

Yemen targets US aircraft carrier Eisenhower

SANA'A: Yemen's military spokesman says the country's armed forces have targeted US aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Red Sea in response to deadly overnight attacks by America on the Arab country. "The missile force and the naval force of the Yemeni Armed Forces carried out a joint military operation targeting the American aircraft carrier 'Eisenhower' in the Red Sea," said Yahya Saree in a televised statement. "The operation was carried out with a number of winged and ballistic missiles, the hit was accurate and direct, thanks to Allah," he added. Saree said this was a response to aerial strikes by the US and UK on several targets across the Arab country, which he said targeted civilians in a "blatant violation of all international laws and a full-fledged war crime."

The American and British warplanes attacked the Yemeni capital Sana'a as well as the governorates of Hodeidah and Taiz. Yemeni officials say the attacks on Hodeidah targeted the Radio building and the Coast Guard facility and several commercial ships, killing at least 16 people and injuring 41 others. - Agencies

Larijani submits bid to run for president

TEHRAN: Veteran Iranian politician Ali Larijani has registered to run in an early presidential election to replace the late President Ebrahim Raisi. Larijani, 66, a former Parliament speaker and currently a member of the Expediency Council, headed to the election headquarters at the Iranian Interior Ministry in Tehran on Friday to officially put his name down for the race. He told journalists that one of his "priorities" if elected would be to "resolve the issue of (US) sanctions" in a bid to improve the country's economy. "In my government, every competent and capable person with any political taste will be employed," he added. "The country's diplomacy should focus on the progress of Iran... The strategy of Iran as an important regional power is that the entire region should be safe and powerful."

Often described as a moderate and a reformist, Larijani served as the speaker of the Iranian Parliament from 2008 to 2020. He was the secretary-general of the Supreme National Security Council between 2005 and 2007 and the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) from 1994 to 2004. - Agencies

Heat kills at least 15 in India

NEW DELHI: Several people have died due to heat-related ailments over the past 24 hours as temperatures continue to soar in northern and central India. Ten fatalities were recorded at the government hospital in Odisha's Rourkela region on Thursday, authorities told Reuters news agency. Heat-stroke related deaths have also been reported from the states of Bihar, Rajasthan and Jharkhand and the national capital, Delhi. The searing heat comes as India is holding its general election, the results of which will be declared on 4 June. Mahendra Kumar, district magistrate of Bhojpur district in Bihar told the Times of India newspaper that three election officers and a policeman had died in the city on Thursday due to heat stroke. "It was the hottest day, and despite having medical facilities at all centres, they collapsed. One home guard [volunteer policeman] became unconscious where he was staying," Mr Kumar said, adding that the man died in the hospital while being treated by doctors. - Agencies

WHO Pak thanks Japan for support in flood relief efforts

Ambassador Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro appreciated WHO Pakistan's work and support to the government of Pakistan, noting that "The government of Japan is committed to "Leave No One's Health Behind" towards achieving the Universal health Coverage



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: WHO Pakistan capped off a successful project with a ceremony thanking Japan for their vital support. Held at the WHO Islamabad Office, the event celebrated the "Rebuilding Together" initiative that revitalized healthcare infrastructure in flood-stricken areas. Japan's Ambassador

to Pakistan, H.E. Ambassador Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro, and other dignitaries joined to celebrate the successful completion of the Project. The devastating monsoon rains that struck Pakistan between mid-July and mid-August 2022 resulted in unprecedented flooding, impacting millions of lives across Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh provinces. Over 600,000 people were displaced, 1.9 million houses damaged,

and extensive agricultural losses incurred. The healthcare infrastructure was severely affected, with over 2,000 health facilities damaged. The financial assistance from the government and the people of Japan enabled WHO to timely respond to communicable disease outbreaks and enhance access to essential healthcare through revitalization of damaged healthcare facilities. In a collaborative effort to strengthen

healthcare delivery in Pakistan, WHO has renovated 462 healthcare facilities and provided them with essential equipment and supplies of which 240 have been rehabilitated through Japan's assistance. These facilities are now managed by the government health authorities, ensuring continued service provision. To empower local healthcare professionals for long-term sustainability, WHO has also invested in capacity building of service providers in various aspects of healthcare delivery including disease surveillance and outbreak response. Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Pakistan, in his welcome remarks, acknowledged the remarkable support by the government and people of Japan stating "We are extremely grateful for the invaluable support from the Government and people of Japan. Their generous contribution has been instrumental in restoring access to essential healthcare for vulnerable communities affected by the floods. This collaborative effort exemplifies the importance of international partnerships in building resilient healthcare systems." His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro appreciated WHO Pakistan's work and support to the government of Pakistan, noting that "The government of Japan is committed to "Leave No One's Health Behind" towards achieving the Universal health Coverage. Global Health is central to Japan's Development Cooperation, and we consider it to be the fundamental pillar of sustainable development." WHO Pakistan remains committed to working alongside the Pakistani government and other stakeholders to further strengthen the country's healthcare infrastructure.

IHC rejects wrapping up poet case

COURT REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has turned down the federal government's plea for wrapping up Ahmed Farhad's recovery case until the Kashmiri poet's in-person appearance in the hearing. IHC's Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani heard a petition filed by the missing poet Farhad's wife, Urooj Zainab, who was being represented by human rights lawyers Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali, whereas, Additional Attorney General Munawwar Iqbal attended the hearing to represent the federation. At the outset of the hearing, Iqbal apprised the court that Farhad was on physical remand by June 2 and he was allowed to meet his family. He then prayed to the IHC for wrapping up the illegal confinement case. Farhad's lawyer Mazari argued that they sought action against those responsible behind the "enforced disappearance", not only the Kashmiri poet's return. She added that Farhad's family went to DhirKot Police Station in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) but he was nowhere to be found. After inquiring about his whereabouts, the family was told that Farhad was transferred to Muzaffarabad under different sections of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA).

France bans Israel firms from upcoming defence fair

PARIS: France authorities have banned Israeli defence firms from exhibiting at a trade show next month near Paris, organisers said on Friday. "By decision of the government authorities, there will be no stand for the Israeli defence industry at the Eurosatory 2024 fair," organisers Coges Events said. Neither Coges nor the defence ministry provided an explanation. Seventy-four Israeli firms had been set to be represented at the event from June 17 to 21 at fairgrounds close to Paris' main international airport, with Coges previously saying around 10 of them were to exhibit weapons. Contacted by AFP, the Israeli embassy said it did not wish to comment. The incident comes days after the Israeli bombing of a camp for the displaced in the Gaza Strip sparked international outrage and protests in France. - Agencies

Moscow angry as Ukraine gains access to Western arms

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russia has accused Nato and the US of "provoking a new level of tension" after the US and Germany became the latest allies to let Ukraine's military to use Western-supplied weapons to strike targets inside Russia. A Berlin spokesman said Germany was convinced Ukraine had the right to defend itself from Russia, especially from cross-border attacks on its second largest city Kharkiv. US officials said American-supplied weapons could be used to counter Russian fire near the Kharkiv region, either where Russian forces were "hitting them or preparing to hit them". Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said the decision would help protect civilians living in villages close to the Russian border. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Nato countries, especially the US and several European countries, had "entered a new round of escalating tension and they are doing this deliberately", in remarks quoted by the Tass news agency.

Orbán pushes back on EU and NATO proposals

BUDAPEST: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Friday pushed back against some NATO proposals that would allow Ukraine to use Western weapons to strike targets within Russia, saying that such plans have Europe "inching closer to destruction." The nationalist leader has long opposed Western countries supplying Ukraine with military aid, and threatened to derail European Union financial support to Kyiv and the passing of sanctions against Moscow. He has also maintained close ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin despite his full-scale invasion of Ukraine, while ramping up energy deals with Moscow at a time when most EU countries have sought to limit the use of Russian fossil fuel. - Agencies

Ready for 'agreement' if Israel ends war: Hamas

FOREIGN DESK

DOHA: The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas says it has told mediators that it is ready for a "complete agreement" only if Israel stops the war, rejecting further talks amid the ongoing war. "Today, we informed the mediators of our clear position that if the occupation stops its war and aggression against our people in Gaza, our readiness (is) to reach a complete agreement that includes a comprehensive exchange deal," Hamas said in a statement. Israeli public broadcaster Kan reported on Tuesday that Tel Aviv had handed over a written Israeli proposal to key mediators, Qatar and Egypt, to resume negotiations for the exchange of captives with Hamas and a ceasefire in Gaza. The last round of indirect negotiations between Hamas and Israel, hosted by Egypt earlier this month, stalled due to the regime's invasion of the southern city of Rafah. Hamas stressed that it will not take part in further talks as long as the genocidal war continues. "Hamas and the Palestinian factions will not accept to be part of this policy by continuing negotiations in light of the aggression, siege, starvation and genocide of our people," the statement read. The group noted that it has showed "flexibility and positivity in response to the efforts of the mediators throughout all previous indirect negotiating rounds." However, Hamas said, Israel used the talks "as a cover for the continuation of aggression and massacres against the Palestinian people", referring to the ground invasion of Rafah and the seizure of the vital crossing with Egypt as evidence.



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador Donald Blome calls on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. - DNA

Pakistan demands India stop suppressing political activists

The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's resolve to continue extending political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiris for the just and peaceful settlement of the dispute as per the UN Security Council resolutions

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday reiterated its call for India to stop its ongoing campaign to suppress political activists and intimidate the Kashmiri public in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. "The headquarters of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in Srinagar also remains sealed. India must stop its ongoing campaign to suppress political activists and intimidate the Kashmiri public. The people of Jammu and Kashmir should be able to freely exercise their right to self-determination as enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said at the weekly press briefing here. Highlighting the unabated Indian campaign to crush dissent in IIOJK and the confiscation of properties, the spox told the media that earlier this week, the properties, including lands and a shop of two more Kashmiri youth, were sealed in Shopian district. The Indian authorities have so far seized hundreds of properties across the occupied territory to punish Kashmiri activists, she added. The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's

resolve to continue extending political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiris for the just and peaceful settlement of the dispute as per the UN Security Council resolutions. About Azeri Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov's visit to Pakistan, Baloch said that during his visit from May 29-30, Minister Bayramov met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Acting President Yousuf Raza Gilani, besides holding in-depth talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. She said that the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen bilateral strategic relations and broaden the scope of cooperation in all areas of mutual interests and agreed to enhance parliamentary exchanges, strengthen cultural cooperation and promote people-to-people exchanges. The spox mentioned a symposium held by the Foreign Ministry in connection with Vesak Day that brought together foreign delegates, including at the ministerial level, prominent Buddhist monks and scholars on Buddhism and interfaith understanding. Besides showcasing Pakistan's rich cultural heritage, she said that the event explored the dimensions of Gandhara Heritage that emerged over 3,000 years ago in the Northwest Pakistan, the importance of building bridges and understanding between different communities.

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