



# Islamabad POST

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Detailed News On Page-08

**Maryam for enhancing US investment**

Detailed News On Page-06

**Fuellkrug earns impressive Dortmund win**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Azerbaijani envoy calls on Shehbaz

# PM emphasizes strong bilateral ties with Azerbaijan

The Prime Minister stressed the need for both sides to work together to enhance trade and investment, energy cooperation, defence, connectivity, education and cultural exchanges, and people to people contact

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Welcoming the Azeri Ambassador, the Prime Minister has emphasized that Pakistan attached great importance to Azerbaijan and the two countries enjoyed excellent brotherly relations. He conveyed his greetings for President IlhamAliyev and fondly recalled their telephone conversation on EidulFitr. He also recalled his interactions with the leadership of Azerbaijan during his visit to Baku in June 2023 and reiterated his invitation to President Aliyev to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience. The Prime Minister congratulated Azerbaijan on being selected as the host city for the COP 29 Summit meeting that will be held in November 2024 and said he looked forward to receiving the Minister of Ecology of Azerbaijan next week, who will be carrying the formal invitation letter of the Azeri President for the COP 29 meeting. The Prime Minister stressed the need for both sides to work together to enhance trade and investment, energy cooperation, defence, connectivity, education and cultural exchanges, and people to people contact. To enhance bilateral cooperation, the Prime Minister said that he intends to send a high level Ministerial delegation to Baku. Pakistan was however, also prepared to convene the Pakistan-Azerbaijan Joint Commission meeting at an early date where both sides could discuss matters related to cooperation in various fields. The Ambassador briefed the Prime Minister on the current state of bilateral relations, highlighting the recent inauguration of flights between Baku and Karachi, in addition to the flights already operating between Baku and Islamabad

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**Animosity between Iran-US  
Pakistan won't provide bases to any foreign govt: FO**

Indian campaign of attacking, seizing Kashmiris' properties destined to fail: FO spox

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will not provide its bases to any foreign government, the Foreign Office categorically stated on Thursday, as the animosity between Iran and the United States over the Israel-Palestine war in the Middle East deepens. Pakistan on Thursday reiterated that the ongoing Indian campaign of attacking and seizing the properties of the Kashmiris in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) was destined to fail, just like its colonial strategies and harsh statements. "Pakistan strongly condemns India's continued campaign of attacking and seizing the properties of Kashmiris in Indian Illegally

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

**UAE rains Pak suspends flights to UAE**

The current spell of UAE rains expected to be less severe

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Thursday suspended flight operations for Dubai and Sharjah as heavy rains lashed the United Arab Emirates (UAE), yet again. In a statement, the national flag carrier said the flight operations for Dubai and Sharjah were badly affected due to inclement weather. "Flight operations of all airlines including PIA will remain suspended till further orders," the statement added. The UAE authorities have issued an orange alert amid "unstable" weather conditions. Over the past few days, the Gulf nation has been preparing for

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## Demands CEC resignation

# PTI calls for judicial probe into polls' rigging'

PTI issues 300-page white paper on alleged rigging in polls. "We won the 180 seats in the [February 8] elections," says Gohar

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has issued a white paper on alleged rigging in the February 8 general elections, demanding the formation of the judicial commission to probe the "snatching of the 180 seats". "We won the 180 seats in the [February 8] elections. Our seats were given to other parties through Form 47," said PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar while addressing a press conference alongside other party leaders in Islamabad on Thursday. The PTI chief said they had filed a petition in the Supreme Court against the alleged rigging. "But the plea has not been fixed for hearing as yet," he lamented. "We are issuing a 300-page white paper to bring it to the notice of the people as to

Continued on Page 06

## 'Seriousness needed from PTI for dialogue'

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PML-N Punjab President Rana Sanaullah on Thursday stressed the need for "seriousness" from the PTI on holding a political dialogue, highlighting its conflicting statements. Speaking on a private news channel programme, Sanaullah, who was recently appointed as the adviser to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on political affairs, said the solution to

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## Briefs

**Asif Zardari resigns as PPPP chairman**

Faryal Talpur is likely to become new chairman

NAZIR SYAL

KARACHI: President Asif Zardari has resigned from the chairmanship of PPPP. Sources say Asif Zardari has informed the Election Commission of Pakistan about his resignation from the party presidency of the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians. Sources further revealed that after Asif Zardari's resignation from the party presidency, there is consideration being given to appointing Asif Zardari's sister and provincial assembly member Faryal Talpur as the new president of the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians.

**Omar reappointed ECP secretary**

The development comes after Asif Hussain resigned due to health issues

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday reappointed Omar Hamid Khan as its secretary for the period of two years. The electoral watchdog has issued a notification in this regard. "In exercise of powers conferred under Rules 8 & 11 of Election Commission (Officers and Servants) Rules, 1989, and all enabling re-employ Mr. Omar Hamid Khan, a retired BS-22 officer of the Secretariat Group as Secretary, Election Commission (BS-22) with immediate effect for a period of two years in the public interest..." read the notification.

## 'Recent transfers made on merit' Ministers defend PM reforms in FBR

Azam informed that presently tax cases of over Rs2,700 billion were pending in courts

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice AzamNaziTarar said on Thursday that since only making claims was not enough, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had taken it upon himself to introduce reforms in the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). Addressing a press conference in Islamabad with Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting AtaullahTarar sitting alongside him, he said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had asked the government to eliminate tax evasion and electricity theft from the country. "The Fund has also asked the government to bring more and more people into the tax net," the minister said, adding, "It has also urged the government to cut down its expenditures." He further said that the load of electricity bills on the people could be reduced by preventing line losses and incidents of power theft. Azam informed that presently tax cases of over Rs2,700 billion were pending in courts.

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Gandapur comes down hard on centre over KP dues

KP CM threatens to march towards Islamabad if dues not cleared

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Blasting the PML-N-led federal government, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's outspoken Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Thursday threatened to march towards Islamabad if the "Centre does not clear" his province's dues soon. Addressing an event in KP, the firebrand PTI leader said: "They [centre] are making a mistake by denying the rights of the province." The provincial chief executive added that when he would take to the street, all the people of the province

Continued on Page 06

**Judge abductors killed in Tank operation**

Judge Shakirullah Marwat was kidnapped from the Garah Mohabaat Adda area of Dera Ismail Khan district last week

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed three terrorists in the Tank district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in a joint intelligence-based operation, ISPR said on Thursday. The dead - identified as Azmat, Karamat and Rehan - were involved in numerous terrorist activities, including the recent abduction of the district and sessions judge

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## COAS says we are well aware of our constitutional limits

Constitution clearly defines limits of freedom of speech, Those who "flout" them, cannot point fingers at others, Gen Asim says

DNA



RISALPUR: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir Thursday said the military is well aware of its constitutional limits and also expects others to uphold the Constitution. "Article 19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan clearly defines the limits of freedom of speech and expression of opinion," the army chief said while addressing the Pakistan Air Force's passing out parade at the Asghar Khan Academy in Risalpur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. General Asim, who was the chief guest at the passing out parade, maintained that those who flout the clear restrictions

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Kalash Chilam Josh festival to kick off from May 13

PESHAWAR: The five-day famous Chilam Josh, a religious festival of Kalash Valley, would begin on May 13 in district Chitral, wherein male and female populations of both Rambor and Berar valleys would participate. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority had issued necessary instructions to the relevant officials for the provision of facilities for domestic and foreign tourists who would attend the festival. "The tourism department has decided to organize the festival in a grand manner this year," said the spokesman of the department. "On the first day, Kalashis renovate their houses and other places while on May 14, Kalashi women celebrate the ritual of serving milk," he added. "On May 15, traditional dances are arranged to welcome the newborns babies," he said. Similarly, the cultural dances and other traditional rituals were performed on May 16 while the Joshi festival fair would culminate in the Barrier Valley on May 17, the last day of the festival. The Chilam Josh festival attracts global attention every year, and local and foreign tourists flock here to witness the colors of this festival. For the facilitation of the tourists, the provincial Tourism Authority had decided to open camping pods in Kalash Valley besides deploying Tourism Police for security duty during the festival days.—APP

SSC exams begin amid strict security across Sukkur division

SUKKUR: The Secondary School Certificate (SSC Part I & II) examinations, under the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Sukkur started here on Thursday, in which 98,951 students of 9th and 10th classes are participating. According to the board management, all arrangements have been made for conducting the annual examinations in three districts including Sukkur while 190 examination centres were established in the region. According to the Chairman BISE, Sukkur Rafique Ahmed Palh, 42 vigilance teams have been formed for the monitoring of the annual examinations. Meanwhile, the DIG Sukkur Region Abdul Hameed Khoso has issued special instructions to all SSPs to take strict security measures out and inside the examination centres declared sensitive by the board in all the districts of the region for conducting the examinations peacefully.—APP

Court Notice

اعلانت جناح عمران اکرم صاحب سول جج راولپنڈی دعوی استعرازیات وراثت نامہ اسیر خرم بیہ رقم ہایدیو ملک ساکن مکان 882/40 جلی نمبر 4 محلہ ماہرہ کابل راولپنڈی کیٹ بنام عوام الناس اشتہار بنام عوام الناس برکادہ مقدمہ نمبر 10000/2024 کی جس میں عام طریقہ سے نمٹنے سے لہذا عوام الناس کو پڑ رہے اختیارات اشتہار پڑا مطلع کیا جا تا کہ کسی کو کوئی ضرر 08.05.2024 کو اعتراض ہو تو وہ سوموار 08.05.2024 کو اصالت دکان یا پڑ رہے عوام الناس کے پاس بصورت دیگر یا طریق کار دکانی عمل میں لائی جائے گی اور کوئی مزید تاخیر قبول نہ ہوگا۔ منجھو عدالت ہمدردیات

Portuguese ambassador opens exhibition 'Blurring Boundaries'

"Blurring Boundaries" is a strong, purposeful art exhibition curated by Nageen Hyat, Founder Director, Nomad Gallery as a tribute to the establishment of the art and cultural space

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan Frederico Silva inaugurated arts and paintings exhibition titled 'Blurring Boundaries' held at the Lok Virsa. The exhibition was arranged by Nomad Art Gallery. A large number of arts lovers and members of the diplomatic corps witnessed the pieces of art displayed at the exhibition. Ambassador of Portugal in his speech said 'Pakistan provides to us a rich and diverse historical, sociological and cultural landscape'. He added, Pakistan appeared to be like a big and quite lively lake into which so many different rivers brought and continue to bring distinct but interacting waters, persons, faiths and views and cultures. Ambassador said, Under the expert guidance of the curator Nageen Hyat from Nomad Gallery, 40 years of very good services, who has put together a vibrant ensemble of artistic voices, speaking through paintings but also through the blessed hands of artisan crafters.

"Blurring Boundaries" is a strong, purposeful art exhibition curated by Nageen Hyat, Founder Director, Nomad Gallery as a tribute to the establishment of the art and cultural space. The purpose of an art exhibition is ultimately unique to each exhibition, driven by the concept of the curator, by the select artists creations and the context of the space. Senior artist, Samina A. Akhtar works in a distinct method reflecting the Moghul period era in a contemporary style; using mix - medium, acrylics & oils. Her work consists of strong compositions of women in the Moghul court, highlighted by gold & silver leaves, variegated leaf with stylized poetry in the form of calligraphy to emphasize traditional writing skills. Her artworks are inspiring and popular in collections locally and internationally. As a female artist, Sumera Jawad has always been fascinated with the role of the female form in the ancient civilizations. In 'Blurring Boundaries' her work is rooted in contemporary narratives reflecting interplay between male and female dynamics. This



view may be ensconced in our way of seeing (or not seeing) holistic context. She is an accomplished artist and currently heads the Fine Arts Department of the Punjab University. Having studied Fine Art at the Karachi School of Arts in Karachi and

in Sweden, attended residency (Emma Ricklunds Foundation, Sweden) and being a member of The Swedish Artists National Organization (KRO-Konstnärernas Riksorganisation) Ubaid Syed is an established name in the art world residing in Sweden while

occasionally traveling to Pakistan. Nadir A. Jamali, senior artist and teacher, contributes to 'Blurring Boundaries', a symbolic Thar boy seen wandering and looking at the universe above him. The Thar boy, for Nadir Ali Jamali, is a symbol of struggle

and courage in life, where he allows this character to roam on paper and canvas. Nadir used subdued washes to form a sense of dunes, that merge and move like waves around the character. Hassnain Awais artworks in 'Blurring Boundaries' ventures

into archives consisting of records that have been selected for permanent or long-term preservation on grounds of their enduring cultural, historical, or evidentiary value. Such records are normally unpublished and almost always unique.

CTFK highlights need for tobacco control strategies

They reaffirmed their commitment to advancing tobacco control initiatives within the legislative framework, emphasizing the importance of political will and public support in driving meaningful change

ISLAMABAD : Key stakeholders including parliamentarians were brought together at the launch of a pioneering project aimed at empowering concerned mothers and advocating for increased taxation on tobacco products. Hosted by the Aurat Foundation in collaboration with CTFK, this event brought together parliamentarians and policy makers, to address the urgent need for action against the detrimental effects of tobacco on families and communities across Pakistan. Esteemed members of the National Assembly, including distinguished figures such as Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Huma Chughtai, Sehar Kamran, Dr. Mahreen Razaq Bhutto, Dr. Shaista Khan, Shahida Akhtar Ali and Naeema Kishwar Khan, highlighted the urgent requirement for a holistic approach to combat the pervasive issue of tobacco addiction in Pakistan. The presence of distinguished parliamentarians underscored the cross-party commitment to addressing the tobacco epidemic in Pakistan. Their participation highlighted the importance of women's leadership in public health advocacy. It signalled a unified effort to enact evidence-based policies and legislation to protect the health of all citizens. Addressing the event, Dr. Maheen Malik, Regional Director for South Asia, (CTFK), brought to the forefront the dire consequences of tobacco usage. Emphasizing the severe health risks linked with tobacco consumption, Dr Maheen stresses the immediate necessity for robust tobacco control strategies. Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Head, (CTFK), drew attention to the pervasive influence of the tobacco industry, likening it to a formidable mafia that prioritizes profits over public health. Their remarks underscore the critical importance of collective action to combat the harmful impact of tobacco and hold the industry accountable for its actions. A group of concerned mothers hailing across the country also participated and narrated the ordeal of their children addicted to smoking and use of other tobacco products. In endorsing the Aurat Foundation's proposal to increase tobacco taxation, all prestigious parliamentarians and other key stakeholders echoed the AF's call for evidence-based policies to reduce tobacco consumption and improve public health outcomes. They reaffirmed their commitment to advancing tobacco control initiatives within the legislative framework, emphasizing the importance of political will and public support in driving meaningful change.—DNA

PFA disposes of 1320 adulterated milk

MUZAFFARGARH: Punjab Food Authority disposed of about 1320 liters of adulterated milk after holding a picket at the main highway, official spokesman said. The food safety team checked over 45 vehicles carrying milk during the blockade in which a mixing of undesired ingredients was unearthed. Overall Rs. 15,000 was fined to owners of the milk vehicles. DG PFA, Asim Javed said the traces of water and chemicals besides a shortage of essential fats were discovered in the milk while checking through the lacto machine. He said the entire liquid was disposed of on the spot. He vowed that nobody would be allowed to play with the lives of commoners. He said milk is essential need for the living being but some nefarious elements are out and least cared about the health of the people. He termed the adulterators the criminals of society. He appealed masses to cooperate with PFA's members to deter the movement of adulteration mafia found in their surroundings.—APP

High-level Pakistan Prosecution Forum convened in Lahore

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab Public Prosecution Department convened the 17th meeting of the Pakistan Prosecution Forum (PPF) from 2 - 3 May, 2024, in Lahore. This high-level meeting, funded by the U.S. Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and facilitated by

the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), is a crucial step toward promoting legislative and policy reforms in Pakistan's criminal justice system. Senior officials from prosecution and criminal justice stakeholders from Punjab and other provinces across Pakistan deliberated to advance critical rule of law reforms by sharing of experiences and discussing

solutions for the common challenges they face. The forum was graced by the Honorable Justice (R) Khalil Ur Rehman Ramday, as the Chief Guest, who in her inaugural speech applauded this established platform, stating, "I am honored to preside over the Pakistan Prosecution Forum, which plays a crucial role in shaping our nation's legal landscape.

Great opportunities to promote Pakistan, Algeria trade: Atif

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce Atif Ikram Sheikh met with the Ambassador of Algeria Dr. Brahim Romani at the Federation office. On this occasion, Atif Ikram Sheikh said that there are good opportunities to promote mutual trade between Pakistan and Algeria in various fields. The Ministry of Commerce's initiative on the 'look Africa Policy' was an important step towards deeper engagement with African countries. The best way to improve bilateral trade is to promote direct links between the private sectors of the two countries. In June, the Pakistan-Algeria Economic Forum will be led by

the Federation of Pakistan Federation President Atif Ikram said that the establishment of a joint business council will help increase economic cooperation in trade, development projects, technology exchange. Pakistan has an untapped export potential of USD 5 billion

in Algeria which includes surgical instruments, textiles, vegetables and fruits, pharmaceutical products, copper, footwear, cutlery, aluminum, furniture, and mechanical equipment. Investors from both countries should explore joint ventures and investment

opportunities in business sectors. Trade and investment opportunities can be explored through frequent delegation exchanges. Algerian Ambassador Dr. Brahim Romani said on this occasion that we are organizing the first Pakistan-Algeria Economic

Forum in which we invite the business community of Pakistan to participate. Better relations and trade cooperation will be opened by opening new avenues of cooperation under the Africa Policy. It is a good opportunity for Pakistan's business community to participate in the Economic Forum and explore new opportunities to promote business with Algeria. The Chambers of Commerce of both countries should involve themselves to create more value for the local business community. The MOU between the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry opens new avenues of cooperation will play an important role.



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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### May

- May 03/Poland National Day
- May 06/Bulgaria Armed Forces Day
- May 06/UAE Armed Forces Day
- May 07/Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day
- May 08/Czech Republic National Day
- May 09/European Union National Day
- May 17/Norway Constitution Day
- May 21/Hungary Armed Forces Day
- May 22/Yemen Republic
- Re-unification Day(National Day)
- May 24/Eritrea National Day
- May 25/Lebanon Liberation and Resistance Day
- May 25/Argentina National Day
- May 25/Jordan Independence Day
- May 28 /Azerbaijan Republic Day
- May 28/Ethiopia National Day
- May 31/Brunei Armed Forces Day

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Emergency Ambulance.1122  
& Rescue Services.4451122  
Motorway Police.....9266044  
Motorway Police.9270601-20  
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596  
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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WASA Rawalpindi.5555489  
CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

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DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



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CDA.....9208301-04  
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RDA.....5555864  
TMA.....5770886  
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Students exhibit skills during Arts & Paintings competition

Students of The Educators G -10 branch excel in their works by especially expressing solidarity with the innocent Palestine people through paintings

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has kicked off its week-long celebrations of Red Cross Red Crescent with a vibrant Art & Painting Competition held at the Citizen's Club in F-9 Park on Thursday. In collaboration with the Capital Development Administration, PRCS organized this event to engage school-children from government and private schools across Islamabad, fostering creativity and promoting the humanitarian spirit among the youth. Under the theme "Keeping Humanity Alive," participants highlighted their artistic talents through sketches and paintings using various mediums such as color pencils, crayons, and watercolors. The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of students, teachers, PRCS staff, Movement Partners, and volunteers, creating a lively atmosphere dedicated to the humanitarian cause. In his message on this occasion, Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, expressed profound appreciation for the dedication and compassion exhibited by all involved in advancing the humanitarian mission in Pakistan. He underscored the importance of this year's theme, emphasizing PRCS's resolute commitment to upholding the principles of humanity, particularly during challenging times. Chairman Laghari noted that PRCS volunteers and staff have tirelessly operated on the frontlines, risking their safety to alleviate suffering and save lives. He highlighted their selfless commitment as a testament to the universal spirit of humanity. "Together, we can sustain the essence of humanity, fostering a world where compassion transcends boundaries and where every individual is esteemed and protected," remarked Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari. Mr. Peter (Piwi) Ophoff, Head



of IFRC Delegation in Pakistan, commended the overwhelming turnout of children and underscored the importance of nur-

ture compassion and service towards the most vulnerable members of society. The event concluded with the distribution

of shields and gift packs among the winners of the Art and Painting Competition, symbolizing recognition for their crea-

tivity and dedication to humanitarianism. As PRCS continues its Red Cross Red Crescent Week celebrations until May

8th, the organization remains steadfast in its commitment to serving humanity and building a better world for all.

## 2nd trade show in Ethiopia from May 26

Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula said the Government of FDR Ethiopia had opened up its economy by introducing massive reforms in its five major sectors

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, co-pressed an Ethio-Pakistan business forum at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) along with its President H.E. Mr. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari. A large number of business persons from multiple sectors attended the business forum which was aimed at mobilizing the business community of Islamabad to take part in the 2nd Business and Trade

Delegation to Ethiopia co-ordinated by the Embassy of FDR Ethiopia, Islamabad from May 26th to May 31st, 2024. Addressing the forum, H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula said the Government of FDR Ethiopia had opened up its economy by introducing massive reforms in its five major sectors that included agriculture and agro-processing, manufacturing, mining, tourism and ICT. He shared the complete plan for the 2nd business and trade delegation with the business community of Islamabad that involved business forums, visits to the industrial and ICT Parks, meetings with key government officials, exploration of newly built

tourist destinations and on top of that cultural nights in Addis Ababa. H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker informed the participants of the forum that the 6th Addis Chamber International Manufacturing and Technology Trade Fair would also take place from May 23rd to May 27th, 2024 in Addis Ababa that included an Ethio-Pakistan Business Forum. "By joining the 2nd business and trade delegation to Ethiopia, the delegates will also get an opportunity to participate in the International Manufacturing Trade Fair where manufacturers from all of Africa and world will be present," he added. He said those who could not participate in the previous trade delegation

to Ethiopia last year should not miss the 2nd Business and Trade delegation which would open a new chapter in the bilateral relations of Ethiopia and Pakistan, and provide ample business, trade and investment opportunities in the land of origins. The Ambassador said the people of Ethiopia were eagerly looking forward to welcome the business community from their brotherly country, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. On the other side, President ICCI H.E. Mr. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari recalled his experiences of the last year business and trade delegation to Ethiopia, particularly lauding the hospitality of the Government.

## Global action for cultural heritage protection urged

ISLAMABAD :Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah has said that legislative bodies have critical role in safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage. "Legislatures enact robust legal frameworks that not only preserve cultural heritage but also address critical aspects such as conservation methodologies, adequate funding mechanisms, and stringent penalties for any acts of damage or destruction," he made these remarks in his address at the Sixth World Forum On Intercultural Dialogue in Baku, Azerbaijan, centered on the theme "The Role and Best Practices of the Legislature in the Protection of Cultural Heritage", said a news release received here on Thursday. Opening his speech with heartfelt accolades to the organizers and the government of Azerbaijan for organizing successful event, he emphasized the profound significance of fostering mutual understanding among diverse cultures as a cornerstone in preserving our collective cultural heritage. The Speaker while highlighting the intrinsic value of cultural heritage, noted that the myriad threats faced by cultural heritage in today's interconnected world require urgent need for proactive and concerted measures to ensure its protection and longevity. Ghulam Mustafa emphasized the imperative of fostering collaborative partnerships with stakeholders from governmental agencies, cultural institutions, local communities, and international organizations. "This collaborative ethos is fundamental in developing comprehensive strategies that holistically address the multifaceted challenges facing cultural heritage preservation" he added.—DNA

## Abacus consulting delegation calls on Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD: Delegation of Abacus Consulting, led by its Sr. Executive Director Naveed Hussain Thursday called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja and discussed digital transformation. Abacus is an international professional services firm delivering world-class technology, outsourcing, and consulting solutions. The discussions centered on a shared vision of propelling Pakistan's digital transformation and explored key areas of collaboration that include digital transformation to leverage technology to enhance government services and empower citizens, according to a news release. Other members of the delegation included Sikander Jamshed, Head of International Business, and Muhammad Qasim Syed, Head of International Strategy & Growth, Abacus Consulting.—APP

## Indonesian envoy commends Red Crescent's services

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Counsellor of the Indonesian Embassy, Mr. Rahmat Hindiyarta Kosuma, visited the headquarters of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) where he met with Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari. The meeting aimed at fostering cooperation, particularly in the humanitarian sector, and to exchange perspectives on a range of topics concerning the welfare of humanity. During the visit, Secretary General of the PRCS, Muhammad Abaidullah Khan, provided Mr. Rahmat Hindiyarta Kosuma with a detailed overview of PRCS programs and ongoing humanitarian endeavors. The Indonesian Counsellor was briefed on the Red Crescent's services during natural disasters and emergencies, including insights into the 2022 monsoon flood response and the ongoing recovery efforts in affected areas. Mr. Rahmat Hindiyarta Kosuma commended the Red Crescent's services, recognizing Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari's

leadership in advancing humanitarian initiatives. In discussions with media representatives alongside Secretary General Muhammad Abaidullah Khan, the Indonesian Counsellor reiterated



Indonesia's commitment to continued collaboration with the PRCS in the humanitarian sector. He expressed readiness to further strengthen the existing bond between the two countries. Secretary General Muhammad Abaidullah Khan expressed gratitude for Indonesia's support, particularly in organizing blood donation camps at the embassy. He proposed establishing collaboration with the Indonesia Red Cross Society to bolster the PRCS through financial and technical assistance, enhancing its capacity to address humanitarian challenges more effectively. He further highlighted the positive trajectory of PRCS relations with diplomatic missions, asserting that collaboration with the Indonesian Embassy reflects a commendable synergy. Mr. Rahmat Hindiyarta Kosuma concluded his visit by touring the library and leaving his impressions in the visitor's book. The visit underscores the commitment of both institutions to bolster cooperation in humanitarian endeavors and signifies a significant step towards strengthening bilateral relations.

## Police arrest bike lifter with five motorcycles

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested a bike lifter and recovered five stolen motorcycles from his possession, said a Police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Saddar Baroni Police Station managed to net a two bike lifter namely Asif and recovered five stolen motorcycles, and other items from his possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Saddar, Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar said that the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.



## Briefs

Railways  
earn Rs 66  
bn in nine  
months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has achieved an unprecedented earning of Rs 66 billion in the first nine months of the current financial year 2023-24, despite facing a financial crisis due to floods in the monsoon season. "The department is expecting to generate revenues up to Rs 80 billion by the end of this financial year through the consistent efforts and hard work of the Railway workers," official sources in the Ministry told APP. They said that during the first nine months of the last financial year (2022-23), the department earned around Rs 39 billion, a historic increase in revenue during the same period of the current financial year (2023-24). According to the data, they said that out of the revenue of Rs 66 billion, revenue was derived from passenger and freight trains while other sectors of the department also contributed to the total revenue. At present, they said that Pakistan Railways is operating around 96 passenger trains, up from the previous year when 86 trains were running. Similarly, during the previous year, on average it operated 3.75 freight trains while the number reached seven freight trains this year. The sources said the department emphasized that the issue of delay in payment of salaries to employees has now been resolved and things will be more streamlined, once work on the Mainline-I (ML-I) project kicks off. To a question, they said that Pakistan Railways has beefed up precautionary measures to reduce passenger train accidents and only six minor accidents with no causality took place on the entire railway network in the country during the last three months. The drastic decrease in accidents has been witnessed due to the efforts being undertaken to reduce trespassing at unmanned level crossings and unauthorized locations, they added. —APP

First virtual  
women  
police station  
inaugurated  
in Punjab

ISLAMABAD: A new virtual women's police station was inaugurated in Punjab, aiming to assist women without them needing to physically visit a police station. According to a private news channel, the in-charge of the Virtual Women Police station, Aqsa Fayaz, said, "Women can report problems anonymously, and trained IT graduates are there to assist." It's connected to the Punjab Safe Cities Authority and offers various ways for women to seek help, including through a dedicated hotline, a safety app, and a video call feature. Moreover, emergency panic buttons had been installed across Lahore for immediate help. Complaint mechanisms were also in place, allowing anonymous reporting. —APP

Aging population: Asia  
unprepared for challenges

While longer lifespans reflect the region's development success, comprehensive policy reforms are urgently needed to support the welfare of older people, according to Aging Well in Asia: Asian Development Policy Report, released today by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at its 57th Annual Meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia

ISLAMABAD: Developing Asia and the Pacific are unprepared to secure the well-being of its rapidly aging population as the growing share of older people in the region faces challenges from low pension coverage to health problems, social isolation, and limited access to essential services. While longer lifespans reflect the region's development success, comprehensive policy reforms are urgently needed to support the welfare of older people, according to Aging Well in Asia: Asian Development Policy Report, released today by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at its 57th Annual Meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia. The number of people aged 60 and older in

developing Asia and the Pacific is set to nearly double by 2050 to 1.2 billion—or about a quarter of the total population—significantly increasing the need for pension and welfare programs as well as health care services. At the same time, economies have an opportunity to reap a "silver dividend" in the form of additional productivity from older people, which could boost gross domestic product in the region by 0.9% on average. "Asia and the Pacific's rapid development is a success story, but it's also fueling a huge demographic shift, and the pressure is rising," said ADB Chief Economist Albert Park. "Governments need to prepare now if they're going

to be able to help hundreds of millions of people in the region age well. Policies should support lifetime investment in health, education, skills, and financial preparedness for retirement. Family and social ties are also important to foster healthy and productive populations of older people and maximize their contribution to society," Park added. According to the report, 40% of people over age 60 in Asia and the Pacific lack access to any form of pension—with women disproportionately affected, as they are more likely to do unpaid domestic work. As a result, many older people in the region have no choice but to work well beyond retirement age to

survive. Among those still working at age 65 or older, 94% work in the informal sector, which typically doesn't provide basic labor protections or pension benefits. Physical and mental health challenges also increase with age. Around 60% of older people in Asia and the Pacific do not attend or receive regular health checks, while 31% report depressive symptoms owing to illness, social isolation, and economic insecurity. Older women in the region are also more likely than older men to suffer from ill health, from depression to diabetes and hypertension. The report recommends a wide range of policy measures to support healthy and economi-

cally secure aging. Among these are government-assisted health insurance and pension plans, improved health infrastructure, and free annual check-ups and lifestyle evaluations. Policymakers should aim for universal health care coverage, while basic labor protections should be extended to older informal workers, the report suggested. By making mandatory retirement ages more flexible, helping older people stay healthy, and providing them with suitable work opportunities as well as lifelong learning and skills development, economies in the region can help older people stay productive longer. —Agencies

21  
lawbreakers  
netted

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders, and other lawbreakers here on Thursday arrested 21 accused besides recovering over 1.5 kg charras, 30 liters liquor, four 30-bore pistols, two 12-bore rifles, ammunition and other items from their possession.

A police spokesperson said that Pirwadhai police held Tasleem with 730 grams of charras while Cantt police rounded up Sher Zaman for having 450 grams of charras. Rawat police netted an accused namely Mehboob and seized 360 grams of charras. City, Sadiqabad, Taxila, and Saddar Wah police arrested Ibrar, Nazakat, Hamad, Saqib, Shahid, and Hassan and recovered 30 liters of liquor from their possession. Similarly, R.A.Bazar, Civil Lines, Taxila, Mandra, and Rawat police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction. —APP



ISLAMABAD: The National Educational Expo 2024, organized by Resilient Women Network (RWN). Mr. Ispahanyar Bhandara MNA, spoke on the occasion and emphasised to facilitate networking and foster public-private partnerships nationwide.—DNA

Govt accelerating its  
transformation target: Minister

To reap the benefits of technology, we are identifying the challenges and exploring new opportunities, she added

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Thursday said that the government is trying to realize the opportunities presented by digital technologies in creating new jobs, expanding to new markets, driving innovation, and developing new economic sec-

tors. Talking to a Private news channel, she said that the present government is accelerating its transformation targets to the digital economy by focusing on empowering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and tech startups. The government is committed to digital trans-

formation and steps are underway in this regard, she added. She stressed that a digital future will only be key to redefining societies, enabling growth and development, enhancing education and industry, and building new capacity for accelerating the economy. "Digital technologies have

great potential for achieving the political, economic, and social empowerment of young women and men", she added. "Digitalization has become the priority of the economic sectors, she said, adding, our special focus is to empower SMEs and technology startups as well as stronger cyber security". —APP

7-day teachers  
training workshop

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, under the dynamic leadership of Secretary Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmad Wani, continuing its unwavering commitment to enhancing the quality of education in Pakistan, organized a seven-day teacher training program in Islamabad. National Rahmatul-Hil-Aalameen Wa Khatamul-Nabiyyin Authority (NRKNA) organised the workshop, yesterday,

which was also attended by more than 200 teachers from government schools in Islamabad. The workshop is an important effort of NRKNA to highlight modern topics to promote holistic education among students. However, sessions on entrepreneurship were also conducted by experts from the Rupani Foundation. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education, is conducted by

experienced professionals at LearnOBots and aimed at equipping teachers with innovative tools and strategies. Mr. Mahmood Ahmed, Chairman CEF informed the participants about the character education model introduced in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Meanwhile, Director NRKNA, Mr. Sohail Bin Aziz informed us about the historic initiative of character education which is going to be launched soon.—APP

Chinese association gifted  
400 a books to PEAK school

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Chinese Education Association in Pakistan, with the support of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, presented 400 Chinese language

learning books to PEAK School in Rawalpindi. The initiative aims to promote cultural exchange between peoples of the two countries, Gwadar Pro reported. The ceremony took place at PEAK School, a member school of the association.

Over 200 faculty and students attended the ceremony joined by representatives from the association. The 400 Chinese learning books encompass a wide range of topics, including language textbooks and cultural reference materials.

These resources will enrich the school's curriculum and provide students with valuable learning materials. Mr. Idress, Principal of PEAK School, expressed his appreciation to the Chinese Embassy and the association, highlighting the positive impact this event would have on the language skills and cultural awareness of the students. He acknowledged the growing demand for Chinese language education in Pakistan and expressed his commitment to further promoting language learning opportunities. On behalf of the association, Vice President Xu Kun expressed her hope that the new books will open an avenue for students to understand Chinese culture and promote friendly exchanges between the two peoples. She also encouraged the students to seize opportunities to further their studies in China and contribute to their country's development.

HEC announces Moroccan  
scholarships for students

Those applicants who do not have the valid HAT/USAT test score, please visit the Education Testing Council website for more information

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Moroccan Agency of International Cooperation (AMCI) has announced scholarships for Pakistani/AJK students through Higher Education Commission (HEC) to study Undergraduate, Master's and PhD at Moroccan Public Institutions of Higher Education. The official sources said, "All applicants are required to provide the valid HAT or USAT test score. Those applicants who do not have the valid HAT/USAT test score, please visit the Education Testing Council website for more information." "However, nomination criteria is based on HAT test score for Masters/PhD programs and USAT test score for Bachelors. HEC reserves the right to change or modify the nomination criteria," the sources added. According to the details, a minimum of 12 years of education (FSC/A-level) Degree required for undergraduate program, with maximum age of 23 years. While, a minimum

of 16 years of education in relevant fields of study for Master's program.

However, a minimum of 18 years of education in the relevant field of study for admission in PhD program in respective Moroccan University. Applicants must fulfill other requirements set by the relevant university in Morocco. "The Moroccan Government shall only consider applications in following programs for Undergraduate, Master, and PhD, i.e. Medical Studies, Paramedical Science, Commercial and Management Science, Engineering and Technological Science, Agronomic and Veterinary Science and Architecture," the sources said. The sources further informed, "French being the primary language in the majority of training establishments in Morocco, in particular in the scientific technical and economic sectors, the candidate who will be admitted to the said institution, will have to continue refresher courses in the French language in appropriate center for this purpose during the academic year 2024/2025 (Alliance Francaise, Center Culture Francals, etc.) in the country of origin." At the end of the linguistic upgrading programme, the students retained in the "university training" quota, admitted to the end of linguistic training tests, will be oriented, according to the scientific quality of their files and according to the order merit, towards training courses. The "Arabic Language and Literature" and "Islamic Studies" courses are taught in Arabic. Candidates for these courses must be proficient in this language. The option "Legal Science" is taught by choice (Arabic or French). The students were asked to apply online at: <https://scholarship.hec.gov.pk>. After registering and filling your profile, please select "Moroccan Government Scholarship Program". After submission of the application, get its printed copy to be signed by applicant. The deadline to submit the online application on HEC portal is May 10, 2024.

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## Violence: A tool imposed by colonialism

Violence is generally considered to be a means towards an end. Only a mindless nihilist would look at violence and say that here is an activity that is, or should be, an end in itself, not even the US authoritarian regime. The unfolding events in the Palestinian homeland are forcing us to carefully analyze the problem of violence and its uses, both by revolutionaries and others. In the case of Palestine, numerous Western commentators and pretentious intellectuals rushed to discuss the launch of the Al-Aqsa Flood military operation on Oct 7, 2023, providing their own moral judgments over the Palestinians' justified use of violence against the Israeli settler entity. It is therefore important to revisit our discussion around the use of violence, as this can lead the revolutionary masses of the world—those who are following closely the events that unfold in the region of West Asia, to a better understanding of how violence should be used, and when it should be applied. While it comes without saying that armed struggle is an enshrined right for people living under occupation, Western petty-bourgeois intellectuals—and its humanitarian moguls—are only used to consume Palestinians as suffering animals. As such, they cannot stand the possibility that Palestinians, and their regional allies, can organize and launch a planned military operation against their violent usurpers and subjugators. Colonialism drives the colonized people into revolt, because in daily life, the colonizer's project opposes the oppressed people's desires; and the colonized organize themselves under the influence of numerous causes of different aspects: social, religious, national. Then, they elaborate their revolutionary ideas in order to liberate themselves. In doing so, the colonized people respond to the orchestrated violence. However, this endeavor faces a formidable challenge: the colonizers not only strive to preserve their own existence, meaning their self-preservation, but they also grapple with the necessity of redefining self-preservation as new values, truths, and morality. Their actions are inherently transformative, aiming to overturn bourgeois colonial ideologies and consign them to the dustbin of history. The call for freedom and the actions taken to achieve it embody the struggle for decolonization, wherein the colonized reclaim their humanity, agency, right to self-determination, and the liberation of their land. These actions symbolize a quest for selfhood and freedom that transcends the physical, conceptual, and psychological barriers of violence imposed upon them. In launching their counter-violence against the colonizers and settlers, the colonized demonstrate a level of careful planning and discipline that defines the objectives of their revolutionary endeavor. Unlike the colonizers, who often target children, women, and indiscriminately destroy infrastructure, hospitals, educational institutions, and residential areas with utmost savagery, the colonized focus their attacks on military and army units. Furthermore, they treat prisoners from the colonizer community with a humanity that often surprises even the settlers themselves.



## The unbreakable spirit of Khan Yunis

When one wanders through the city of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, it creeps into their imagination that they are strolling through a city of ghosts. The immense destruction caused by the Israeli war machine is barely imaginable to the mind. Khan Yunis endured a brutal Israeli aggression for five months, resulting in destruction comparable to what German cities experienced during World War II. The city's face has been changed, turning it into a pile of rubble. The Israeli occupation forces believed that their destruction of the city would change the consciousness of its people and turn them against the resistance. However, that did not happen. The residents returned to the city, proud of their resistance and steadfastness against the occupation. According to the International Rescue Committee, Khan Yunis, the second-largest city in the Gaza Strip, which was home to over 200,000 people before the Israeli aggression, has now become a ghost town. Following a visit by an assessment mission to the area on April 25th, the organization issued a press statement stating that every building seen by the mission members was either severely damaged or reduced to rubble. The statement also noted that some people have returned to protect what remained of their belongings. The scenes of total destruction were also observed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) during separate visits to the city of Gaza. A temporary assessment conducted by the World Bank indicated that over 60% of residential buildings and nearly 80% of commercial facilities in the Gaza Strip have been damaged or destroyed between October 2023 and January 2024. The majority of the damage, around 80%, is concentrated in Gaza City, North Gaza, and Khan Yunis governorates. No area in the city of Khan Yunis was spared from destruction. All neighborhoods were subjected to bombardment and destruction, which eradicated many aspects of life in the city. Khan Yunis Refugee Camp, known as "the camp" by the people of Gaza, is one of the most densely populated areas in the city and suffered the most significant destruction. Reports indicate that the Israeli forces nearly completely destroyed the refugee camp, with the most concentrated damage in the areas of Al-Shafi'i Mosque and Al-Dahra. Block J in the camp also experienced immense destruction that words fail to describe adequately, and even cameras may struggle to capture the full extent of the devastation. Nasser Hospital, the second-largest hospital in the Gaza Strip in terms of size and capabilities, was the scene of atrocious Israeli crimes on two occasions. The occupation forces destroyed some hospital facilities and arrested hundreds of displaced people and medical staff. Mass graves were also discovered, revealing the extent of the human tragedy. Amal Neighborhood, described by the occupation as a stronghold of the Qasam Brigades, was targeted for deliberate destruction. Israeli war machines relentlessly bombarded and nearly completely destroyed the neighborhood, including its prominent landmarks such as streets, parks, and shops.

## The Twenty-first century 'Fox'

Shujaat Hamza



Ironically, the US government became more critical of Israel and its stance slowly began to change as civilian casualties rose and opposition grew. Nonetheless, on March 29, 2024, the Biden administration once again authorized the transfer of billions of dollars worth of bombs and fighter jets to Israel. The U.S. has also repeatedly vetoed multiple UNSC votes on ending the six-month war. In December, the administration approved the sale of nearly 14,000 tank ammunition...

It has been over six months since Israel launched its gruesome offensive in Palestine which has led to tens of thousands of casualties, including innocent children. According to latest figures, more than 14,500 children and 8,400 women have been killed in this ongoing Israeli slaughter. For a perspective, the overall Israeli death toll hasn't reached 2000 yet. These horrific atrocities, however, don't seem to bother the champions of humanity, led by the U.S. The same western bloc which has been actively arming and aiding the Ukrainians to defend their homeland against 'foreign aggressors and occupiers' have unsurprisingly been standing on the wrong side; arming and aiding the occupiers themselves! The U.S. has always been shielding crimes of Israel, and is still blindfolded to Israel's apartheid against Palestinians. Ironically, the US government became more critical of Israel and its stance slowly began to change as civilian casualties rose and opposition grew. Nonetheless, on March 29, 2024, the Biden administration once again authorized the transfer of billions of dollars worth of bombs and fighter jets to Israel. The U.S. has also repeatedly vetoed multiple UNSC votes on ending the six-month war. In December, the administration approved the sale of nearly 14,000 tank ammunition cartridges and equipment to Israel, worth \$106.5 million, and the sale of 155mm artillery shells and related equipment worth \$147.5 million. The White House bypassed congressional approval for both sales by invoking emergency authority. Among the weapons sold were precision-guided munitions, small-diameter bombs, bunker-buster rockets and other lethal aid. The State Department has also authorized the transfer of 25 F-35A fighter jets and engines, U.S. media reported citing U.S. officials. U.K. and Germany have also been supporting Israeli actions in Gaza. Though the tone of their support has changed gradually with the mounting pressure, still there is no chance that the atrocities and crimes would be accounted for. The U.S. State Department has already said there is no need to launch any formal domestic investigation into whether Israel has committed war crimes, even though the weapons it uses are supplied by the US. Israeli officials may be worried about the winds changing with the International Criminal Court (ICC) reportedly planning to charge top Israeli military and political figures with war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza. Israeli media reports indicate that arrest warrants could be issued as soon as this week and that Israel has asked the US to pressure the court to not issue them. Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has already decried the possible arrest warrants as 'scandal on a historic scale'. Aside from politics and foreign policies, a wave of anti-genocide protests have begun in numerous US universities and states. Renewed protests have swept across college campuses in opposition to Israel's war in Gaza. Students call for university leaders to divest from Israel and for government officials to call for a ceasefire. Israel has got away with killing and oppressing Palestinians for decades, it naturally believes that its ongoing repression will also go

sans accountability. However, this time, the situation is becoming way too complicated for the Zionist regime itself. Furthermore, Israel's increasingly radicalized and anti-democratic trajectory will ultimately lose it the international friends it has always relied upon for financial and military support. Through America and Europe condoning and facilitating its actions, Israel became the over-demanding spoilt child of the West. If the West really is still a friend, it is morally obliged to draw Israel back from the brink of self-destruction. The Zionist regime everyday engages in grave and continuous human rights violations. The failure of Islamic and Arab world in securing a favourable ceasefire, let alone in the best interests of Gaza, is regretful. The moves by various Arab and African states to normalize ties with Israel have emboldened the Zionist regime to carry out even more cruelties upon the defenceless Gazans. If one is to take any counter measure against this kind of senseless aggression, it doesn't necessarily have to be a counter strike. The Arabs, led by Saudi Arabia had ceased oil shipments from the Middle East to the United States and other Western countries in October 1973 in retaliation for support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War. This oil embargo had created a huge impact on international economy and petroleum prices, thus pressurizing United States and its allies over the war. Its about time the sane world must adapt certain measures to halt this senseless slaughter of Palestinian children.

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## Finally, Pakistan will Orbit the Moon

Qamar Bashir



The Indian space research and development programs have been inspired and led by visionary leaders such as Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, known as the father of the Indian space program, who established the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), later evolving into the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Prof. Satish Dhawan, as ISRO chairman from 1972 to 1984, advanced India's space capabilities with the successful launch of the SLV-3 and Rohini satellites

Pakistan's ICUBE-Q satellite is set to be transported by China's Chang'e 6 spacecraft, scheduled to depart from Hainan, China, on Friday, May 3rd, 2024, at 1250 PST of China's time. The ICUBE-Q CubeSat is part of the payload of Chang'e 6 and will orbit the moon to detect traces of ice on its surface from orbit. Developed by the Institute of Space Technology (IST) in Pakistan, this miniaturized satellite, known as a CubeSat, is equipped with two optical cameras designed to capture detailed images of the lunar surface. If successful, the data collected by this miniature satellite will provide valuable insights into the moon's topography, geological features, and potential resource deposits. Though a good beginning, Pakistan's space program is currently minuscule compared to that of its neighbor, India, in several aspects. India has achieved milestones such as landing on the moon with Chandrayaan-3, reaching Mars with Mangalyaan, launching a record number of satellites, and developing reliable launch vehicles, mission to study the sun's corona, accomplishments that Pakistan has not yet matched. Perhaps it was India's extraordinary ability, teamwork, cohesive leadership, and vision in pursuing its space program that may have prompted SUPARCO to show signs of life. But Pakistan's institutional capacity is still too low and fragile, and its human resources are often unimaginative and regimented. This lack of capacity hinders meaningful progress without relying on foreign assistance. The Indian space research and development programs have been inspired and led by visionary leaders such as Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, known as the father of the Indian space program, who established the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), later evolving into the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Prof. Satish Dhawan, as ISRO chairman from 1972 to 1984, advanced India's space capabilities with the successful launch of the SLV-3 and Rohini satellites. Prof. U.R. Rao, ISRO chairman from 1984 to 1994, oversaw the development of the INSAT and PSLV programs. Dr.

K. Kasturirangan, chairman from 1994 to 2003, led the launch of the IRS and GSAT satellite series. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, renowned for his missile program contributions, also played a significant role in India's space program, contributing to the SLV-3 and PSLV programs. These leaders, among others, have guided India's space exploration, propelling ISRO into a global space leader. Pakistan's space research and development program has been influenced by several visionary leaders. Abdus Salam, although not directly involved, advocated for scientific advancement in the country, laying the groundwork for future endeavors. Dr. Riazuddin, a prominent physicist, contributed to Pakistan's nuclear and space programs, aiding in the establishment of SUPARCO. Dr. Abdus Salam Khan, as SUPARCO chairman from 1996 to 2001, oversaw the launch of Pakistan's first indigenously developed satellite, Badr-A. Dr. Arshad Ali Hakeem, SUPARCO chairman from 2001 to 2006, facilitated the launch of satellites for communication and remote sensing. These leaders have collectively shaped Pakistan's space program, contributing to its progress and achievements in space exploration. Since 2010 Pakistan's Space Research program has been headed by army generals. In 2010 Major General Ahmed Bilal was appointed as SUPARCO head, he was succeeded by Major General Qaiser Hees Khurran in 2016, followed by Major General Amer Nadeen in 2018 and who however succeed by Mr. Muhammad Yusuf Khan in 2023, first civilian after 14 years. Though Pakistan had an early start in the 1960s, launching a sounding rocket before India, but could not sustain its momentum thanks to our legendary callous attitude towards matters of national building, our lack of a long-term vision, mission, or clear milestones for tangible achievements, our hardened habit of achieving flashy innovations or accomplishments, only to later desecrate, humiliate, and insult those behind such achievements. This behavior stems from our internal and external institutional incompetencies, which distort our earlier gains and lead us back

into a state of inertia and status quo. We then slip back into a deep sleep, only to be awakened by the wake-up calls from other countries, especially India. Three years later than Pakistan, in 1963, India launched its first rocket which became a laughing stock being transported by a bullock cart. Since there was no looking back. Soon due to their continuous, persistent and uninterrupted commitment for Space exploration, India became a major global player in space exploration and research. While preparing to take astronauts into orbit in 2025, besides landing on the moon with Chandrayaan-3, reaching Mars by Mangalyaan mission, launching a record-breaking 104 satellites in a single mission, and developing its own reliable launch vehicles like the PSLV, and sending a spacecraft called Aditya-L1 to orbit sun and study sun's corona, chromosphere, photosphere, and solar wind aim to gather data on solar activity, which can impact Earth's climate and communication systems. Whereas, Pakistan's space program, overseen by the Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), has achieved nothing compared to India's space program. It hasn't yet developed its own launch vehicles, and uses other nations' help for securing launch of its satellites and space probes. In conclusion, Pakistan's space program can achieve great success only if we start honoring our scientific pioneers, establishing a clear vision and mission, and ensuring adequate resource allocation. Building state-of-the-art research facilities, cultivating a skilled workforce, and appointing competent, qualified, relevant and inspiring leaders are essential steps. Political will and support is crucial for prioritizing the program and securing necessary funding. International collaborations can also enhance Pakistan's capabilities. By adopting a strategic approach and investing in space research, Pakistan can become a key player in the global space arena, bringing pride and prosperity to the nation.

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



## Briefs

## PM Shehbaz emphasizes strong bilateral...

FROM PAGE 01  
as well as Baku and Lahore. He informed that the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan is also expected to visit Pakistan later this month. He also briefed the Prime Minister on the various institutional mechanisms and their upcoming meetings later this year. While admiring the beauty of the city of Baku, the Prime Minister said that he wanted to replicate the beautification of Baku in Islamabad and suggested that both cities could explore enhanced cooperation through sister city agreement among them. In the end, the Prime Minister once again said that Pakistan wanted to enhance its fraternal relations with Azerbaijan and also looked forward to the visit of President IlhamAliyev to Islamabad soon.

## Pakistan won't provide...

FROM PAGE 01  
Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The reality is that the harsh statements and colonial strategies have been unsuccessful in quelling the determination of Kashmiris for freedom, and these measures are destined to face similar outcomes in the future," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said at her weekly press briefing here. She reiterated Pakistan's determination to continue to extending political, diplomatic, and moral support to Kashmiris for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions.

## COAS says, we are...

FROM PAGE 01  
imposed on freedom of expression in the Constitution cannot point fingers at others. At the ceremony, the army chief lauded PAF's professionalism, stating that the force has always lived up to the expectations of the nation. Addressing the cadets, he maintained that a country is at the mercy of any aggressor without a strong air force. He added that the PAF patrolled the airspace in all kinds of difficulties with unparalleled bravery and professionalism, and February 2019 is a great example for all of us.

## PTI calls for judicial...

FROM PAGE 01  
how their mandate was stolen," Barrister Gohar said. The PTI-backed independent candidates won the most National Assembly seats in the February 8 elections followed by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). However, the PML-N with the support of the other parties including the PPP formed a coalition government in the Centre and later became the single largest party in the lower house of the parliament following the allocation of the reserved seats. The Imran Khan-founded party's lost the right to the reserved seats as its members contested elections as independent candidates.

## 'Seriousness needed...'

FROM PAGE 01  
current political and economic crises was that all political parties "sit together". When asked if the PML-N had plans to form a committee for talks with other political parties, specifically the PTI, Sanaulah replied: "Absolutely, we as a political party and as a [political] worker, think that right now, the solution to the political situation faced by the country is that dialogue is held." Recalling ex-premier Nawaz Sharif's homecoming speech in October, he said the PML-N supremo had given a similar message back then that the solution to the political crises was that "everyone — meaning all political parties and also all institutions — sit together and steer the country out of this quagmire".

## Maryam for ensuring secure atmosphere for US investment

Maryam tells Blome American businessmen to be provided safe environment for investment in Punjab

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif during a meeting with US Ambassador Donald Blome, has said that American investors and businessmen would be provided safe environment for investment in Punjab. The US ambassador to Pakistan, who called on Maryam on Thursday, congratulated her on being elected as the first woman chief minister of Punjab. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest came under discussion. Blome appreciated Maryam Nawaz for her special interest in public welfare projects, and said that the US wanted to work more with the Punjab government for poverty alleviation and eco-



conomic development. On this occasion, the chief minister said that the economic relations between the US and Pakistan spanned decades, adding that American businessmen and investors would be provided safe environment for investment in Punjab, particularly in the fields of agriculture, industry and IT. Maryam said that there was potential for investment in Punjab, adding that only a stable government could bring Pakistan out of the economic crisis. She also mentioned that the government's economic policies were reducing inflation. CM Maryam told the US ambassador that a comprehensive strategy had been formulated to provide quality education, health facilities and cheap bread to the people in Punjab.

## Fuellkrug earns impressive Dortmund 1-0 win over PSG

DORTMUND: Borussia Dortmund's Niclas Fuellkrug fired in a first-half goal to seal a 1-0 victory over visitors Paris St Germain in a compelling Champions League semi-final first leg on Wednesday. Nico Schlotterbeck floated a pass into Fuellkrug's path and the Germany forward controlled the ball with a perfect first touch before drilling a low shot past keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma in the 36th minute. PSG, fresh from being crowned Ligue 1 champions and desperate to win their first ever Champions League trophy, found it hard going against a disciplined German defence, especially in the first half with forward Kylian Mbappe largely neutralised. With the return leg in Paris next Tuesday, the winners of the tie will face either Bayern Munich or Real Madrid, who drew 2-2 in their first leg in Germany, in the final at Wembley on June 1. "It was a well-deserved win, a good team

performance," said Dortmund coach Edin Terzic. "We could have scored more goals, but so could they." "That's why the result is OK from my point of view. We ran a lot, but that's necessary in a game like this."

"You have to earn your way to Wembley. All we need now is a draw in the second leg, but we also want to win next week." The win also confirmed Germany will

get a fifth qualifying spot for next season's Champions League, with Dortmund being the main beneficiaries at the moment, sitting in fifth place in the Bundesliga with three games left to play. Dortmund went close just before halftime with Marcel Sabitzer but his shot was blocked by Donnarumma. The French side improved after the break and went agonisingly close to an equaliser in the 52nd minute with Mbappe curling a shot onto the far post and then Achraf Hakimi also hitting the woodwork on the rebound. Four minutes later Fabian Ruiz saw his stooping header sail wide after being left completely unmarked in the box before Dortmund keeper Gregor Kobel kept out Ousmane Dembele's close range effort in the 71st. Dortmund, winners in 1997 and looking to reach their first final since 2013, soaked up the pressure as PSG's Vitinha narrowly missed the target 10 minutes later. — Agencies



## PM talent hunt Table Tennis League

The six day event is being organised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Punjab A defeated Punjab B 3-0 to reach the final contest

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister National Talent Hunt Table Tennis League enters into the finals stage as Punjab A, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa A men's teams have reached the finals at the Rodham Hall, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad. The six day event is being organised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Punjab A defeated Punjab B 3-0 to reach the final contest. In the men's team event semi-final match, Punjab A's Atta-ul-Mannan defeated Sohrah Azam by 11-3, 11-2, 11-7, Paras Azam defeated Zain Pervez 12-10, 11-2, 11-9, Osama Nawaz defeated Shahryar 11-6, 11-8, 11-9. In the other semi-final, KP A defeated KP B to qualify for the final. In the women's team event category, Punjab B defeated KP A in straight games. Saba Syed defeated Huriya Hameem 11-8, 11-7, 11-9; Ramsha Niaz defeated Aishba Hameem 11-8, 11-5, 11-7 while Shamaila Javed defeated Hiba Iqbal 11-6, 11-9, 11-8. In the second semi-final match, Punjab A defeated KP B 3-0 respectively. The both finals of Prime Minister National Talent Hunt Table Tennis League will be played on Friday (today).

## FIH Hockey Nations Cup from May 31

The FIH Hockey Nations Cups would be contested between 9 teams in the men's competition and 8 teams in the women's competition

ISLAMABAD: With just less than a month away from the second edition of the FIH Hockey Nations Cup, the men's tournament would be played in Gniezno, Poland from May 31 to June 9 while the action runs from June 3 to 9 in the women's competition to be played at Terrassa, Spain. Pakistan, Austria, Canada, France, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand and South Africa would join hosts Poland in competing at the men's tournament, said a press release. Canada, Chile, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea and New Zealand would join hosts Spain in competing for the top spot in the women's tournament. As in the previous edition, the prize for finishing at the top of the standings in the competition is not just the gold medal, but also the opportunity to be promoted to play in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024-25. The FIH Hockey Nations Cups would be contested between 9 teams in the men's competition and 8 teams in the women's competition. The teams have been split into two Pools of 5 and 4 teams in the men's competition and two equal pools of 4 teams each in the women's competition. Each team will face the other teams in their Pool once in the group stage. At the end of the group stage, the top two teams from each pool would make it to the semi-finals, with the remaining teams playing in the classification matches. The winning teams from the FIH Hockey Nations Cup, would have the opportunity to play in the FIH Hockey Pro League for the 2024-25 season, where they will replace the teams that finish in the last position in the 2023-24 season of the FIH Hockey Pro League. — Agencies

## AKF Pakistan starts sending relief goods from Jordan to Gaza

Vice President of Service Muhammad Abdul Shuko and Arshad Malik met with Pakistani Ambassador to Jordan Major General (R) Muhammad Ajamal Iqbal

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan (AKF) has started the delivery of relief goods to Gaza in order to speed up relief activities for Gaza victims. In this regard, Central Vice President of Al-Khidmat Muhammad Abdul Shako and National Director of Al-Khidmat Foundation Air Marshal (R) Arshad Malik

met the Pakistani Ambassador Major General (R) Muhammad Ajamal Iqbal posted there during their visit to Jordan. The Pakistani ambassador in Jordan welcomed the officials of Al-Khidmat and assured them of all kinds of cooperation and acted as a bridge in contacts with the Jordanian charity organization Hashemite Foundation. Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan has dispatched the first truck containing food grains to the victims of Gaza through Kerem Sha-

lom border crossing from Jordan. Earlier, Vice President Al Khidmat Foundation Pakistan Muhammad Abdul Shakor signed a memorandum of understanding with the officials of the Jordanian charity organization Hashemite Foundation and visited the organization's warehouse. During the visit to Jordan, the officials of Al-Khidmat met Air Chief Jordanian Brigadier General Mohammad Hayat and discussed the relief activities.



## Pak announces squad for England, Ireland T20Is

The team is scheduled to depart for Dublin on 7 May following a three-day training camp in Lahore from 4-6 May

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced its 18-player squad for the upcoming T20I series against Ireland (10-14 May) and England (22-30 May). The squad will be reduced to 15 players for next month's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 after the first T20I at Leeds on 22 May to meet the ICC's 24 May deadline. The men's national selection committee has recalled fast bowler Haris Rauf, along with all-rounders Hasan Ali and Salman Ali Agha, in the 18-player squad. The two cricketers who did not make the cut from the original 17-player

er squad that faced New Zealand are wrist spinner Usama Mir and fast bowler Zaman Khan.

**Pakistan squad for Ireland and England is:**  
Babar Azam (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Usman Khan. Haris Rauf and wicketkeeper/batter Azam Khan were sidelined for the New Zealand T20Is due to injuries, while middle-order batter Muhammad Irfan Khan and wicketkeeper/batter

## Schedule of matches:

10 May – v Ireland, 1st T20I, Dublin  
12 May – v Ireland, 2nd T20, Dublin  
14 May – v Ireland, 3rd T20I, Dublin  
22 May – v England, 1st T20I, Leeds  
25 May – v England, 2nd T20I, Birmingham  
28 May – v England 3rd T20I, Cardiff  
30 May – v England, 4th T20I, The Oval

Mohammad Rizwan were rested from the two T20Is in Lahore due to niggles. The four cricketers underwent fitness assessments at the National Cricket Academy on Tuesday afternoon, showing significant improvement. This progress has provided confidence and encouragement to the PCB Medical Panel and the team management regarding their potential avail-

ity during the seven T20Is. Salman Ali Agha has established himself as a versatile cricketer, proficient in aggressive middle-order batting and off-spin bowling. His inclusion bolsters Pakistan's spin department alongside Abrar Ahmed, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim and Shadab Khan. Hasan Ali's selection is attributed to his extensive experience, having

featured in 50 T20Is and excelling in bilateral series and ICC Events. His impressive performance in the HBL Pakistan Super League 2024, where he claimed 14 wickets, further underlined his credentials. Currently representing Warwickshire in the English County Championship, Hasan adds depth to Pakistan's bowling arsenal. After announcing the squad for the series, Wahab Riaz said that Hasan Ali will be the backup for Haris Rauf in the coming matches. "Hasan Ali was already in our plans for T20 World Cup 2024. He was playing county cricket as he was under contract. He is a backup of Haris Rauf and we

have told that to Hasan Ali. If Haris gets fit before England series than he will be our first choice. If we feel Haris Rauf is not match fit then Hasan Ali will replace him," Wahab said. Meanwhile, Abdul Razaq said that Usama was excluded because they didn't want similar type of bowlers in the squad. "We already have Shadab and we don't want to have similar type of bowlers. That is why we have selected Abrar Ahmed over Usama Mir. So now we have Shadab and a mystery spinner in Abrar," Razaq said. The team is scheduled to depart for Dublin on 7 May following a three-day training camp in Lahore from 4-6 May.

## Ministers defend PM reforms...

FROM PAGE 01

"Courts must decide these cases as soon as possible," he emphasized. He said that the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) role in the revival of the country's economy was quite significant. "The Board's legal matters are not hidden from anybody." Referring to recent transfers made in the department, the minister claimed these were on merit. "In this regard, the prime minister gave a 'free hand' to the FBR." He went on to say that it was up to the concerned departments to put an end to tax evasion. Speaking on the occasion, Ataullah Tarar said never in his life had he seen a successful official tour like that paid by the prime minister to Saudi Arabia recently. "PM Shehbaz held 12 meetings during his two-day stay in the brotherly country," he said, adding, "The prime minister twice met with the Saudi Crown Prince during the ongoing month." Similarly, he said, Saudi foreign minister, along with a delegation, had come to Pakistan before EidulFitr this year. Ata informed that a delegation of Saudi businessmen would land in Pakistan in a few days from now and would review the prospects for investment in the country.

## Gandapur comes down hard on...

FROM PAGE 01

would be behind him. "Clear the dues of my province as soon as possible, otherwise no body will even thank you," he told the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government in Islamabad. "I will ask the federal government not to take me easy," Gandapur was of the view that KP should be given its due rights, as per the province shares its resources with the entire country. The CM also said that he would take the rights of his province from the federal government at all costs. "We will not let you sit in peace until our right is not given." The chief minister urged the federal government to redress the grievances of his province. He vowed to legislate for good governance and prevent corruption in KP. He vowed to strengthen institutions to avoid injustices. He also vowed to bring underprivileged districts at par with developed districts. Moving on to cases against former prime minister Imran Khan, Gandapur said: "Injustice has been done to the PTI founder."

## Pak suspends flights to...

FROM PAGE 01

the latest wave of unstable weather, which is forecast to peak today, May 2, until tomorrow, May 3, according to Emarati newspaper. Safety advisories have been issued across sectors. Schools are on distance learning, while companies are urged to let employees work from home. Parks and beaches have been closed. Airports and airlines are bracing for the impact, too. The current spell of UAE rains are expected to be less severe than the unprecedented downpour that hit the country earlier this month, the public is urged to take precautions. Meanwhile, flights operated by UAE carriers — Emirates, Etihad Airways, flydubai, and Air Arabia — were impacted by the adverse weather conditions, resulting in delays, cancellations, and diversions, according to UAE media.

## Judge abductors...

FROM PAGE 01

of South Waziristan, the military media wing said. Judge Shakirullah Marwat was kidnapped from the Garah MohabaatAdda area of Dera Ismail Khan district last week. While the gunmen left the judge's driver unarmed, they set the judge's official vehicle ablaze before fleeing with Marwat. A video of judge Shakirullah Marwat showed him appealing to the government and judiciary to accept the demands of his abductors. "Taliban brought me here. It is a jungle and a war is going on." In the minute-long message, the sessions judge said his release was only possible if the militants' demands were accepted.



## Briefs

OECD lifts  
2024 growth  
forecasts,  
driven by US

PARIS: The OECD on Thursday raised its forecast for global growth in 2024, boosted by a dynamic recovery in the United States as the eurozone lags behind. The Paris-based organisation said it now sees this year's global growth at 3.1 percent, up from its previous projection of 2.9 percent in February. "Cautious optimism has begun to take hold in the global economy, despite modest growth and the persistent shadow of geopolitical risks," the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development said in its latest quarterly report. But the report noted that "this recovery is unfolding differently across regions" and that "the mixed macroeconomic landscape is expected to persist, with inflation and interest rates declining at differing paces, and differing needs for fiscal consolidation." The US economy is now expected to expand 2.6 percent in 2024, up from the 2.1 percent previously expected, and faster than last year's 2.5 percent. Chinese growth remains even stronger, with the OECD raising its projection to 4.9 percent in 2024 compared to the 4.7 percent previously expected, thanks notably to an expansionary budgetary policy. However, the OECD sees timid growth of just 0.7 percent in the eurozone, though that is up from the 0.6 percent previously expected. It anticipates a slight recovery to 1.5 percent in 2025, compared to the 1.3 percent expected in February, thanks to a recovery in domestic demand.—APP

Israeli settler  
gang attacks  
Jordanian aid  
convoy

## NEWS DESK

JEDDAH: A gang of Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank attacked two humanitarian aid convoys on Wednesday traveling from Jordan to Gaza, the Jordanian government said. Israel earlier reopened the sole crossing on the northern edge of the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, allowing aid trucks to pass through the Erez checkpoint following US demands to do more to address the growing humanitarian crisis. One convoy of 31 trucks was on its way to the Erez crossing into north Gaza and the other, with 48 trucks, was headed for the Kerem Shalom crossing into southern Gaza. They were carrying food, flour and other aid. "Two Jordanian aid convoys carrying food, flour and other humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip were attacked by settlers," the ministry said, without giving details of what happened. Both convoys managed to continue on their journey and reach their destination in war-devastated Gaza, the ministry added in a statement. Such a route to the Gaza Strip would have taken them through the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Israel.

Pakistan, Belarus unite through  
music concert, says Amb. Sajjad

DNA

MINSK: The Embassy of Pakistan in Minsk, in collaboration with the Republican Gymnasium-College under the Belarusian State Academy of Music held a mesmerizing concert titled "Music without borders: Belarus and Pakistan". The event took place at the Gymnasium on April 25, 2024. The event was attended by over 250 guests including faculty members, students and media representatives. The concert featured performances by talented students of the Gymnasium, who played musical tunes of both Belarus and Pakistan through.

The legendary Pakistani musicians, Ashraf Sharif Khan (Sitar player) and Shahbaz Hussain (Tabla player) presented traditional Pakistani music mesmerizing the audience.

The audience was also treated to a fusion of traditional Belarusian and Pakistani melodies, highlighting the harmonious blend of two diverse cultures, magically transcending the borders and uniting the hearts. The Ambassador of Pakistan appreciated the Director of the Republican Gymnasium-College for organising the beautiful event in the most befitting manner. He also applauded the musicians, performers and attendees who made the concert a resounding success. The Director of the College expressed her gratitude for the Embassy for its initiative and for bringing the Pakistani musicians offering an opportunity to create fusion music. The two sides agreed to continue future collaborations for promotion of cultural ties further strengthening the bonds of friendship between Belarus and Pakistan.

Rally in Georgia against  
'foreign influence' bill

TBILISI: Tens of thousands of people rallied Wednesday in Georgia against a controversial "foreign influence" bill, after parliament advanced the measure that Brussels has warned would harm Tbilisi's long-standing European aspirations. The Black Sea Caucasus nation has been gripped by mass anti-government protests since April 9, after the ruling Georgian Dream party reintroduced plans to pass a law, which critics say resembles repressive Russian legislation used to silence dissent. The bill cleared its second reading in parliament on Wednesday with a vote of 83 to 23, a day after police violently broke up a demonstration against it, firing tear gas, water cannon and rubber bullets, and beating and arresting scores of people.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen condemned the violence and urged Georgia to stay on the path to Europe. "I am following the situation in Georgia with great concern and condemn the violence on the streets of Tbilisi," von der Leyen wrote on X, formerly Twitter. "The Georgian people want a European future for their country. Georgia is at a crossroads. It should stay the course on the road to Europe." Waving Georgian and European Union flags, tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered on Wednesday evening outside parliament, according to an

AFP reporter on the scene. Georgia's national anthem and EU's Ode to Joy were performed at the rally. A mass anti-government rally was also held in Georgia's second-largest city of Batumi, independent TV station, Formula, reported. The turmoil comes months before Georgia holds parliamentary elections in October, seen as a key test of democracy in the EU-aspiring former Soviet republic. The ruling Georgian Dream party has defended the bill, saying it serves to boost transparency of NGO's foreign funding. It aims to sign the measure into law by mid-May. The bill must pass a third reading and be signed by the president to become law. President Salome Zurbishvili - who is at loggerheads with the ruling party - is expected to veto the measure, but the party has enough votes for an override. If adopted, the law would require that any independent NGO and media organisation receiving more than 20 percent of its funding from abroad to register as an "organisation pursuing the interests of a foreign power." Last year, mass street protests forced Georgian Dream to drop plans for similar measures. Georgia has sought for years to deepen relations with the West, but Georgian Dream has been accused of attempting to steer the former Soviet republic closer to Russia.—APP

olutions "at least twice in the last three years" with Western funding. A mass anti-government rally was also held in Georgia's second-largest city of Batumi, independent TV station, Formula, reported. The turmoil comes months before Georgia holds parliamentary elections in October, seen as a key test of democracy in the EU-aspiring former Soviet republic. The ruling Georgian Dream party has defended the bill, saying it serves to boost transparency of NGO's foreign funding. It aims to sign the measure into law by mid-May. The bill must pass a third reading and be signed by the president to become law. President Salome Zurbishvili - who is at loggerheads with the ruling party - is expected to veto the measure, but the party has enough votes for an override. If adopted, the law would require that any independent NGO and media organisation receiving more than 20 percent of its funding from abroad to register as an "organisation pursuing the interests of a foreign power." Last year, mass street protests forced Georgian Dream to drop plans for similar measures. Georgia has sought for years to deepen relations with the West, but Georgian Dream has been accused of attempting to steer the former Soviet republic closer to Russia.—APP

Azzam steps  
down as CEO  
of Mobilink  
Bank

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ghazanfar Azzam has decided to step down as the President and CEO of Mobilink Bank after 12 years of service. Under his leadership, Mobilink Bank has experienced remarkable growth and solidified its position as a leader in the Microfinance sector. He helped the Bank undergo rapid digital transformation to strengthen its financial stability, business resilience, and future readiness. The Board of Directors (BoD) has appointed Mobilink Bank's current Chief Operating Officer (COO), Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, as the Interim CEO, effective April 29, 2024. This appointment is subject to approval from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Board has commenced the search for the upcoming CEO who will continue to drive the Bank's mission forward and ensure long-term success. Chairman BoD, Mobilink Bank and CEO Jaz, Aamir Ibrahim stated, "We thank Ghazanfar for his valuable service over the years and wish him luck. We are committed to a seamless transition and to maintaining the high standards of service and integrity that our customers have come to expect from Mobilink Bank."—APP

Morocco's farming  
revolution

MARCOUCH: In the heart of sun-soaked Morocco, scientists are cultivating a future where tough crops defy a relentless drought, now in its sixth year. Look at these beautiful ears of wheat," said Wuletaw Tadesse Degu, the head of wheat breeding at the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA). "The difference in quality between our field and others is striking," he said, pointing towards a lush expanse in Marchouch, south of Rabat, that stood in stark contrast with the barren lands elsewhere. By 2040, Morocco is poised to face "extremely high" water stress, a dire prediction from the World Resources Institute, a non-profit research organisation. Figures from the North African country's central bank paint a grim picture. Cultivated areas across the kingdom are expected to shrink to 2.5 million hectares in 2024 compared with 3.7 million last year, with cereal yields more than halving to 25 million quintals (2.5 million tonnes) over the same period. "It has become essential to use resilient seeds and to employ them as quickly as possible," said Tadesse, whose centre recently inaugurated a plant gene bank. Tadesse's mission is to develop genotypes that not only withstand drought and heat but also yield abundantly. Last year, while the nation struggled, Marchouch achieved a yield of four tonnes per hectare with just 200 millimetres of rainfall. Controlled irrigation and strategic sowing techniques are behind this agricultural revolution. Looking to maximise production, farmers are experimenting with planting times and judicious irrigation. Even a scant 10 millimetres of water, carefully applied, transformed barren soil into thriving fields. Barley, too, has seen a resurgence, with yields jumping from 1.5 to two tonnes per hectare last year, thanks to climate-smart genotypes, said Miguel Sanchez Garcia, a barley specialist at ICARDA. The centre, which operates in 17 countries in Africa and Asia, says it has developed 30 "elite lines" of grain. Most of them are produced in Morocco by breeding genotypes of wild wheat with different ancestors, said ICARDA genetics researcher Ahmed Amri.—DNA

Pakistan calls for sweeping  
reform of financial system

Ambassador Akram said that developing countries were unable to make requisite resources for health and education available because of high indebtedness

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan Wednesday called for sweeping reform of the international financial system to allow for low-income countries vulnerable to climate impacts to receive adequate help from richer nations. "The highest priority for us must be to promote more rapid and equitable development, by seeking urgent support for the developing countries and the reform of the partial and unequal international financial, trade and technology regime to respond to the needs of developing countries," Ambassador Munir Akram told the Ninth Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development. The Expert Mechanism provides the Geneva-based Human Rights Council with thematic expertise on the right to development in searching for, identifying and sharing best practices with Member States and promotes the implementation of



the right to development worldwide. "We believe that while states have the primary responsibility to promote human rights, the UN system and International Financial Institutions have a collective responsibility to align the international economic and development policies in ways that helps in the realization of the right to development," the Pakistani envoy said. In this context,

he underscored the importance of balanced promotion of all human rights, while stressing the need for a conducive environment to realize the fundamental right to development. Ambassador Akram said that developing countries were unable to make requisite resources for health and education available because of high indebtedness. Concentration of unsustainable debts in developing countries represented a systematic failure that needed to be addressed. He underscored the importance of promoting all human rights comprehensively and in a balanced manner, noting the organic linkages between the right to development and other human rights. Without a conducive environment created by the fundamental right to development, it was not possible to promote other rights effectively. "We cannot put more obligations of human rights on States without giving them the necessary

resources to create necessary conditions for meeting those obligations." While referring to the pressing global challenges, the Pakistani envoy focused on the adverse impact of the unequal global economic system, conflicts, and climate change, which have reversed development gains, plunging millions back into extreme poverty and hindering progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "Over a hundred million people have descended back into the ranks of the extreme poverty, who now number over 850 million people, with 350 million facing hunger and destitution. Sixty states are in debt crisis and only 12 percent of the Sustainable Development Goals are on track to be achieved by 2030." Calling for operationalizing the right to development, Ambassador Akram proposed the adoption of a legally binding instrument.



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**Briefs**

**CEC Raja's appointment challenged in LHC**

COURT REPORTER

LAHORE: Chief Election Commissioner Sikkandar Sultan Raja's appointment to the key constitutional post has been challenged in the Lahore High Court (LHC). Lahore High Court Chief Justice Malik Shehzad Ahmed Khan heard the petition filed by Advocate Talib Hussain. The petitioner alleged that Raja was appointed CEC without any advertisement of the post. He said he was given the post on political grounds and the appointment of a retired officer to the post was tantamount to abuse of the constitutional position. He requested the court to declare the chief election commissioner's appointment illegal. However, the public prosecutor came up with the counter arguments, seeking dismissal of the application as not maintainable. He said such an application should be filed in the Islamabad High Court (IHC). The court adjourned the hearing of the case till May 6 for further proceedings.

**British official meets Bradford Pakistanis**

BRADFORD: As part of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)'s efforts to connect with diaspora communities, officials visited Bradford to meet with British-Pakistanis. They were led by Head of Pakistan Department, Richard Lindsay, who used the visit to connect with some of the 140,000 people of Pakistani heritage in the city. The FCDO delegation met with various organisations, including Women Zone, Empowering Minds and QED Foundation. They also met with some of the women from the BBC's Bradford Aunties documentary which addresses the loss of skills, culture, and language across the generational gap. Head of Pakistan Richard Lindsay said: "Those of Pakistani heritage in Bradford make a significant contribution to both the UK and Pakistan, including through Zakat, leadership and cultural contributions. It has been a productive day, celebrating the best of the UK-Pakistan relationship, while also being able to have frank, constructive conversations on some of the challenges ahead." Discussions centred around human rights, security, and the need for immediate economic reform. The visit took place following the launch of the first UK-Pakistan Advisory Council, which Lindsay chaired, on Monday 29 April. The advisory council brings together representatives of the British-Pakistani from across the UK, with expertise across a range of sectors from education and business to women's empowerment and climate change, to offer advice on how the UK can advance its partnership with Pakistan. - Agencies

**PHC issues notice to KP CM, speaker**

DNA

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice SM Attiq Shah and Justice Waqar Ahmed on Thursday issued notice to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Assembly speaker in a contempt petition. The court issued a notice to the Chief Minister and the Speaker to submit their replies within a week in a contempt petition filed against them for not administering oaths to newly elected members of the provincial assembly on reserved seats. The counsel of the petitioner said that a detailed judgment of the court had already been issued but neither the KP CM sent a request for an assembly session nor did the speaker administer oaths to them despite the passage of 14 days.

**CELEBRATING AUSTRALIA DAY IN SPRING**

**Australia remains a steadfast supporter of Pakistan: Neil**

"Australia and Pakistan are both relatively young nations but old civilisations. We share a federal system of governance, together with a rich cultural diversity, delicate ecosystems, and unique biodiversity," Mr. Hawkins remarked

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australia's High Commissioner in Pakistan Neil Hawkins celebrated Australia Day in Spring with a vibrant reception, to mark the enduring ties between Australia and Pakistan. In his address, High Commissioner Hawkins emphasised the historical ties of over 160 years and the shared ambition to capitalise on the dynamism in the two countries. "Australia and Pakistan are both relatively young nations but old civilisations. We share a federal system of governance, together with a rich cultural diversity, delicate ecosystems, and unique biodiversity," Mr. Hawkins remarked. Australia remains a steadfast supporter of a Pakistan that is democratic, inclusive, prosperous and stable, consistent with its Constitution. Highlighting the importance of gender equality, the High Commissioner affirmed: "We're particularly excited to be working with our Pakistani colleagues to support their efforts to empower women and girls and unleash their full potential." Mr. Hawkins elaborated: "This year we celebrate 40 years of cooperation between the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and Pakistan. Drawing on Australia's own experiences, we have been helping develop the agricultural sector and implement sustainable water management practices, crucial for both nations given the impacts of climate change. We also celebrate 40 years of cooperation between our police agencies." Looking ahead Mr Hawkins concluded, "I'm confident that the more than 100,000 Australian-Paki-



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Australian High Commissioner in Pakistan Neil Hawkins and his wife cutting the cake on Australia Day in Spring during a vibrant reception, to mark the enduring ties between Australia and Pakistan at Australian High Commission in Federal Capital. - DNA

stanis and many thousands of Pakistani Australian alumni will bring our countries closer together. Not to mention the growing Australian involvement in the development of Pakistan's mining sector and building Pakistan's emerging dairy industry." The celebration witnessed the participation of many friends of Australia, including politicians, officials, diplomats, media, businesses, development partners and colleagues.

**Wheat procurement Hafiz Naeem gives govt four-day ultimatum**

The JI chief stressed that silence would only encourage such entities to further exploit the nation. He underscored the need for action against those hoarding essential commodities, rather than targeting farmers

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz NaeemurRehman on Thursday gave a four-day ultimatum to both the Punjab and federal governments to start wheat procurement in the country. Addressing a press conference, the JI emir said if the government does not start the wheat procurement, then the Jamaat would organise a sit-in outside the chief minister's office. The JI chief stressed that silence would only encourage such entities to further exploit the nation. He underscored the need for action against those hoarding essential commodities, rather than targeting

farmers. Additionally, he criticised the concentration of power within certain families across provinces, highlighting the need for fair governance. He directed the party formations to develop links with the protesting farmers. Hafiz Naeem said that the Prime Minister is saying that he will buy wheat, while the Chief Minister of Punjab has announced that this will not happen. We want to make it clear to the government that it will have to purchase, the government should make it possible to purchase wheat at fixed rates, we demand a support price of wheat of 5 thousand rupees. Hafiz Naeemur Rahman said that the nation should be told that when the non-availability of dollars was happening all over the country, who were the people who decided to import wheat worth one billion dollars. The mafia earned 1,000 per 40 kg by importing, 85 billion dollars was defrauded on the national treasury, the ship reached Pakistan within eight days of the announcement of wheat import, although the process usually takes a month. Those who were involved in the decision of 22nd October 2023 are in government positions today, they should resign or be suspended during the investigation, the Chief Justice should ensure a transparent inquiry, its proceedings should be public. Hafiz Naeem said that Punjab government's announcement of giving online subsidy to farmers is a joke. He asked how many percent of small farmers are on the online system? The situation is that the government cannot even tolerate the protests of the farmers. The protest was tortured by the police, the farmer leaders are still under arrest. He said that all sectors including industry, trade are already destroyed and now agriculture is also being destroyed. 60% are small farmers in the country, 4% landlords occupy large areas, land reforms are the biggest problem of the country.

**US police use 'violence' against anti-Israel protests**

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The police in the United States have used tear gas, fired rubber bullets and made more arrests as anti-Israel protests are gaining momentum on campuses across the country in solidarity with Palestinians in the war-torn Gaza Strip. More and more universities across the US have joined protest rallies against the months-long genocidal war waged by the Israeli regime against the inhabitants of the besieged Palestinian territory. Under heavy police presence, anti-Israel protesters chanted and waved Palestinian flags at New York's Fordham University on Wednesday while riot police massed by the hundreds on the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles, where violent clashes were reported. At the UCLA encampment, pro-Palestine protesters waved Palestinian flags and pointed strobe lights in the direction of law enforcement forces. A day earlier, at least ten protesters at an anti-Israel rally were arrested at the University of South Florida campus after the police fired tear gas and rubber bullets against demonstrators, who had arrived at the Tampa campus early in the day with items like wooden shields, umbrellas and tents. Pro-Palestine chants have been reverberating through multiple universities across the US and as police disperse rallies, more crowded ones are formed elsewhere. Protests are sweeping college campuses nationwide after police at the Columbia University - the epicenter of student protests - attempted to clear a pro-Palestine encampment, resulting in the arrest of hundreds of students.

**PTA Raids Illegal SIM Seller**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Office Lahore, in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Circle, conducted a successful raid against franchisee of a mobile phone company in Khairpur Tame Wali, Distt Bahawalpur against Illegal SIM Issuance. The franchisee was found to be involved in the illegal issuance of SIMs that were also found to be used in grey trafficking and fraudulent activities. During the raid, 470 suspicious active SIM cards, nine BVS devices, one BISP device, a laptop containing approximately 4000 fingerprints that were being used to activate the SIMs illegally, were seized. Additionally, one individual was apprehended by the FIA team, against whom FIR has been registered.

**Macron reaffirms possibility of sending troops to Ukraine**

NEWS DESK

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron reaffirmed he did not rule out sending troops to Ukraine, saying the issue would "legitimately" arise if Russia broke through Ukrainian front lines and Kyiv made such a request, in an interview with the Economist published Thursday. British weekly newspaper said Macron gave the interview after delivering a keynote speech last week where he declared that Europe is "mortal" and could "die" partly due to the threat posed by Russian aggression after its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. "I'm not ruling anything out, because we are facing someone who is not ruling anything out," said Macron when asked if he stood by comments ear-

lier this year not excluding the sending of Western troops that sent shockwaves around Europe. Some analysts believe that Russia could be on the verge of launching a major new offensive in Ukraine. Macron said "if Russia decided to go further, we will in any case all have to ask ourselves this question" of sending troops, describing his refusal to rule out such a move as a "strategic wake-up call for my counterparts". He described Russia as "a power of regional destabilisation" and "a threat to Europeans' security". "I have a clear strategic objective: Russia cannot win in Ukraine," Macron said. "If Russia wins in Ukraine, there will be no security in Europe. Who can pretend that Russia will stop there? What security will there be for the other neighbouring countries, Moldova, Romania, Poland, Lithuania and the others?" he asked.

**Security of Chinese nationals top priority: Mohsin Naqvi**

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi meets Chinese Consul General in Karachi



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi met Chinese Consul General Yang Yongdong in Karachi on May 2. Federal Minister Mohsin Naqvi was welcomed by the Chinese Consul General on his arrival at the Chinese Consulate. Matters of mutual interest and security of Chinese nationals were discussed during the meeting. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi briefed about the steps taken for the safety of Chinese nationals in Pakistan, especially in Karachi. Speaking on the occasion,

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that the security of Chinese citizens is top priority of the government. SOPs are being strictly implemented for the movement of Chinese nationals. It is our duty to ensure foolproof security of Chinese citizens. He said that enemy Pakistan is trying to destroy the friendship between the two countries. Every such conspiracy of the enemy will be foiled. No conspiracy to harm Pak-China friendship can succeed. The Chinese Consul General expressed satisfaction with the security plans. Federal Interior Secretary Khurram Agha and officials of the Chinese Consulate were also present on the occasion.

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