



# Islamabad POST

Tuesday, May 07, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

**China prioritizes strategic cooperation with Europe: Xi**

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**PTI's Asad Qaser foresees return to power**

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**Norris ends Max Verstappen's winning streak**

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## Relief for Sunni Council

# SC suspends PHC verdict on reserved seats

Three-member bench suspends Peshawar High Court, Election Commission verdicts

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: To the disappointment of those government functionaries who wanted to amend Article 175 and 178 of the Constitution to fix the tenure of the Chief Justice of Pakistan for three years or increase the retirement age for apex court judges from 65 years to 68 years, the Supreme Court on Monday suspended the orders of the Peshawar High Court and Election Commission of Pakistan. The Peshawar High Court had rejected the Sunni Ittehad Council plea seeking reserved seats. The Election Commission of Pakistan had allocated the reserved seats to other political parties. A total of 78 seats were allocated to difference political parties. The allocation of reserved seats had altered the voting structure in the parliament in favour of the sitting government granting it two-thirds majority. The Supreme Court also ordered that in future these 78 lawmakers shall not take part in any vote counting in the parliament. After this order, the government has lost two-thirds majority, which means the government may not be able to amend the Article 175 and 76 dealing with judge tenure and appointment. In March, a five-member PHC bench, headed by Chief Justice Ibrahim Khan, and comprising Justice Ishaq Ibrahim, Justice Ijaz Anwar, Justice Arshad Ali and Justice Shakeel Ahmad had rejected the SIC's petition against ECP's decision depriving it of reserved seats. The electoral body had ruled that the SIC was not eligible for reserved seats allotted to women and minorities "due to non-curable procedural and legal defects and violations of mandatory provisions of the Constitution". While rejecting the plea of SIC, the ECP accepted applications of the opposing parties and decided that the seats in the National Assembly would not

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## CJP faez Isa blasts 'disappointing' dharna commission report

"What did the commission do? It just wasted time," says CJP Isa during hearing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa on Monday censured a "very disappointing" Faizabad sit-in inquiry commission report, saying that he was "surprised" after reading the document. The CJP made these comments as a three-member bench - headed by himself - resumed the hearing of the federal government's review petition after the inquiry commission, formed to probe the Faizabad sit-in, submitted its report. The bench also comprised Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice Naeem Akhtar Awan. The Faizabad sit-in commission, which was constituted on Supreme Court orders following the case pertaining to the 2017 sit-in at Faizabad led by former Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) chief Khadim Hussain Rizvi, gave a clean chit to the former spymaster and former Punjab Rangers director

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Italy Marilina Armellini pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

## MBS likely to visit Pakistan this month

MBS is expected to sign MoUs to implement \$5 billion dollar investment

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud is likely to visit Pakistan in the current month. Sources said the Saudi crown prince would be accompanied by a delegation. Both countries are working to finalise dates for the visit. Sources further said this would be the first visit of Mohammed bin Salman to Pakistan after 2019. Sources said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would personally oversee the administrative affairs relating to the tour. The prime minister would not undertake any foreign tour till arrival

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## Putin orders tactical nuclear weapon drills

Russia says the US and its allies are pushing the world to the brink of confrontation between nuclear powers

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russia said on Monday it would practice the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons as part of a military exercise, after what Moscow said were threats from France, Britain and the United States. Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, Russia has repeatedly warned of rising nuclear risks - warnings which the US says it has to take seriously, though US officials say they have seen no change in Russia's

Continued on Page 06

## Italian envoy meets Shehbaz Pakistan highly values its ties with Italy: PM

Expressing satisfaction over the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Italy bilateral relations, the prime minister urged the two sides to enhance cooperation in the fields of education, trade and investment, legal migration, as well as cultural exchanges

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that Pakistan deeply valued its multifaceted relations with Italy spanning over many decades, which had always been marked by goodwill and trust. The prime minister expressed the views during a meeting with Ambassador of Italy Marilina Armellini who paid a courtesy call on him at the Prime Minister's House, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister said that the two sides also shared similar views on a number of important regional and global issues. Expressing

Continued on Page 06

## Iran hails Pak determination to complete project

Iran's diplomat says international pressure is causing delays

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Iran has hailed Pakistan's political determination to complete the gas pipeline project between the two countries, which has been facing

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Shah urges govt to address wheat crisis

Shah stresses importance of purchasing wheat directly from farmers

DNA

SUKKUR: Pakistan Peoples Party central leader Syed Khursheed Shah has urged the governments of Sindh and Punjab to address the wheat crisis. Speaking to media in Sukkur, Shah stressed the importance of purchasing wheat directly from farmers and ensuring they receive fair compensation. He also urged the government to support farmers who have been adversely affected. Regarding the Faizabad Dharna Commission, Shah abstained from commenting until the Supreme Court issues its verdict.

### IHC to start contempt proceeding on campaign against J. Babar

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has decided to take contempt of court action on the social media campaign against Justice Babar Sattar. Sources say that Justice Babar Sattar has written a letter to Chief Justice Amir Farooq on the social media campaign, it has been decided to convert the letter into a contempt of court case. According to the sources it is likely that the bench will be formed today. Last month, the IHC said that a "malicious campaign" was underway against Justice Babar Sattar on social media, which involved the unauthorised disclosure of confidential information and documents belonging to the judge.

## PTI tells US envoy

### 'Won't tolerate interference in internal affairs'

US Ambassador Donald Blome requested for meeting through Foreign Office, says Omar Ayub after meeting



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan on Monday said that his party told the US ambassador to Pakistan that they would not tolerate foreign interference in the country's internal affairs. The statement came after a four-member PTI delegation headed by Omar and comprising party chairman Gohar Ali Khan, AsadQaiser and Raouf Hasan met US envoy Donald Blome in the federal capital. The US ambassador, through the Foreign Office, requested for the meeting, the PTI leader said, adding that political officer was also present during the meeting.

Continued on Page 06

### £190m NCA scandal

## IHC confirms hearing bail pleas on May 8

Sentence, acquittal to be treated separately as per scenario: IHC

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) Aamer Farooq has confirmed to the defence lawyer that he would fix the hearing of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi's bail pleas in the £190m NCA scandal case a day after tomorrow (May 8).

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## World Portuguese Language Day festivities to be held in Pakistan

UNESCO Proclaims May 5th as World Day of Portuguese Language and Lusophone Cultures

ISLAMABAD: In 2009, fifteen years ago, the date of 5th of May was officially established by the CPLP - the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries - as the World Day of the Portuguese Language. Ten years later, in 2019, the 40th session of UNESCO General Conference decided to proclaim this day as the World Day of the Portuguese Language and Lusophone Cultures. Speakers of Portuguese are called "Lusophones" (lusófonos). A neo-Latin language, the Portuguese is one of the most globally diffused languages in modern world. It is native to more than 260 million people in 9 countries covering 4 continents (Portugal in Europe; Brazil in America; East Timor in Asia; Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, S.Tomé and Príncipe, and Equatorial Guinea, in Africa) making it the most spoken language in the Southern hemisphere. Each of the nine countries which form CPLP contributes to the development of the language, each one with its own accent, with its own local expressions, with its own culture. Portuguese language is our common language, our common heritage but there remains an enormous space for the development of each Cultures own particularities. Fernando Pessoa, in Portugal; Guimarães Rosa, in Brazil; Mia Couto, in Mozambique; Pepetela, in Angola; Ruy-Cinatti, in East Timor; Germano Almeida, in Cape

Verde; Alda do Espírito Santo, in S.Tomé e Príncipe; AbdulaiSilá, in Guinea-Bissau represent a few author's names that illustrate how masterly and innovatively the Portuguese Language can be dealt. Presently, Portuguese is among the most used languages in international communication, due to its global geographical extension, including, besides the CPLP space, strong historical or diaspora-driven presence in India's Goa, Damão and Diu, China's Macau, Spain's Galiza, in African states as Senegal, Namibia or South Africa, in Latin American countries as Venezuela or Uruguay, in Oceania, as Australia, or in the North America, as the USA and Canada. On the context of the celebration in Pakistan of the 2024 World Day of the Portuguese Language and Lusophone Cultures, the Embassies of Brazil and Portugal prepared a program of events and activities both in Lahore and Islamabad, in partnership with several Pakistani Universities, Aga Khan Culture Service and Alhambra Art Centre. As special guest, Guiomar de Grammont, renowned Brazilian author, dramaturgist, curator and professor, born and resident in the UNESCO classified World Heritage city of OuroPreto, in the State of Minas Gerais, is coming to Pakistan.

Continued on Page 06

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# Child protection training of merged districts' completed

DNA

PESHAWAR: In a significant step towards ensuring the protection and welfare of children in the Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a 10-day training on Child Protection Case Management, at a Foundational Level was successfully conducted from 25th April to 6th May 2024 at a local hotel here. The training was organized as a mandatory course for all the staff of nine newly established Child Protection Units (CPUs) in Merged Districts with the support from UNICEF. Considering the severity of child protection issues and its long-term impacts on children's wellbeing and development, the Directorate of Social Welfare Merged Districts has prioritized addressing child protection issues in communities, including issues of children on the move and Afghan Refugees. To fulfill this mission, the department has established nine Child Protection Units (CPUs) in all the Merged Districts including the Sub-division Peshawar, and Sub-division Lakki. These CPUs are staffed with Child Protection Officer, Psychologist and Social Workers. This 10-day training program, aimed to equip the professionals of Child Protection Units with essential skills and knowledge necessary for the proper assessment of child protection concerns of children reported to the CPU and ensuring them comprehensive case management and referral services including legal protection through judicial system. Sohail Ahmad, Child Protection Specialist from UNICEF, highlighted the objectives and significance of this mandatory foundational course to the staff of CPUs. He elaborated that UNICEF provided technical support to the KP Child Protection and Welfare Commis-

sion and SWD - MDs for developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for ensuring highly quality case management services to children at risk or survivors of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and harmful practices. These SOPs are developed by international social work expert and are fully aligned with the international standards. Sohail Ahmad also underscored the critical importance of sustaining these District Child Protection Units and advocated to the SWD - MDs and Ministry of Social Welfare for ensuring sufficient and consistent financial allocations to these CPUs. He emphasized on the decentralization of child protection service to communities at their door steps and highlighted the urgency of mobilizing local communities and adolescent girls and boys for form Community Based Child Protection Committees as soon as possible. He said UNICEF is committed to support SWD - MDs for the training and supervision of these CB CPCs and building trust between communities and the child protection system for prevention and response to child protection issues. Dr. Wisam Hazeem, Programme Manager from UNICEF also addressed the forum at the closing ceremony and extended his appreciation to the government of KP and SWD - MDs for their leadership to establish and sustain the District Child Protection Units in the MDs. He emphasized that children and communities in these Merged Districts have long survived hardships and instances of violence and abuse. He also advocated that with the political stability and the new democratic government set up for next five years is promising and will ensure the continuity of investments made in the child protection policies and systems for the last few years. In closing remarks, Muhammad Farooq - Additional Sec-

retary, Social Welfare Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, expressed his appreciation for the dedication and commitment of all participants to the cause of Child Protection in Merged Districts, including addressing the unique needs of children on the move and Afghan Refugees. He encouraged them to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during this 10-day training course in their respective roles, thereby safeguarding the rights of all children, and to actively engage with parents and communities in their efforts. Muhammad Farooq also stressed on the importance of collective action in addressing the complex challenges of child abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect. He urged all relevant line departments to closely collaborate with the CPUs in MDs and emphasized the significance of building strong partnerships with parents and communities to create a protective environment for children. He also highlighted that the Deputy Commissioners should ensure proper and consistent support to the functioning of these Child Protection Units and ensure the regular meetings of the District Child Protection Committees for efficiently addressing all child protection matters at the district level and engaging the provincial government for necessary support as and when required. This training program represents a significant stride, first of its kind, towards protecting the rights and well-being of all children in Merged Districts and reaffirms the Governments' and UNICEF's commitment to ensuring a safer environment for every child. In the closing ceremony, Director Social Welfare Muhammad Tariq, Deputy Director Obaid Ur Rahman along with other staff from the Merged Districts attended the certificate distribution ceremony.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, Information & Broadcasting Minister, Attaullah Tarar, and Minister for Petroleum, Musadik Masood Malik, addressing the media regarding the Saudi Arabia-Pakistan Investment Forum 2024.—DNA

## Teachers criticize on digital teaching strategy

ISLAMABAD: A significant number of teachers responsible for educating children up to grade-5 have raised concerns over a newly imposed teaching strategy mandated by inexperienced instructors of the National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education (NIETE). The NIETE has recently started a training program to train elementary school teachers of the ICT educational institutions. The teachers, who possess decades of extensive experience and expertise in the field of education, express frustration over being compelled to adopt methodologies they deem ineffective and detrimental to the educational development of young learners. The main point of concern lies in the implementation of a teaching approach advocated by the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), which emphasizes digital solutions facilitated through the NIETE portal. However, teachers argue that this shift towards digital platforms, online materials, and mobile-based instruction fails to meet the needs of young students and is merely a wasteful expenditure of public funds. The burden of managing a large number of students alongside the technical requirements of the new method proved overwhelming for both teachers and students. Technical issues further compounded the challenges, with teachers' cell phones struggling to cope with the demands of large files and materials. \_APP

## 2nd Int'l conference on modern trends in physics

BAHAWALPUR: The second international conference on modern trends in the field of physics has started at the Institute of Physics, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. British Council Pakistan and Queen Mary University of London UK are participating in this international conference in collaboration with the delegates from the universities of UK and Pakistan. Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar, Vice Chancellor of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur inaugurated the conference. He said that eminent experts in the field of physics will discuss the teaching and research in this field and the latest scientific trends during the two-day conference which will benefit our teachers and students. Prof. Dr. Saeed Ahmad Buzdar, Dean Faculty of Physical and Mathematical Science and

Director of the Institute of Physics said that the Department of Physics, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur was established in 1977 and was given the status of Institute of Physics in the year 2020. Currently, BS, MPhil, and PhD degrees are being given in 11 departments in the Institute of Physics. He expressed special thanks to British Council Pakistan, and Queen Mary University London for their special support in organizing the conference. Pakistan UK Education Gateway British Council Pakistan representative Warda Dar said that faculty exchange with the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, provision of scholarships.—APP

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## Govt. committed to ending red tape

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik, said on Monday that the government led by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is committed to ending red tape and facilitating the business community for sustainable economic growth. Addressing a press conference alongside Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar Tarar, Dr. Malik said, "Prime Minister has issued instructions to eliminate red-tapism and reduce regulations to provide a conducive environment and level playing field for all investors." He said that Saudi Arabian companies have established separate desks, and Pakistani companies are engaged in negotiations to enhance their business at the international level. The minister expressed optimism that several companies would finalize business and investment deals during the business-to-business (B2B) sessions, fostering greater economic cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

highlighted the presence of over 100 Pakistani companies at the investment conference, negotiating cooperation with Saudi companies across various sectors including agriculture, mining, human resources, energy, chemicals, maritime, IT, religious tourism, telecom, aviation, construction, water, and power generation.—APP

## WCCI organizes evening with Bushra Ansari

MULTAN: Celebrated artist, comedian, singer and playwright, Bushra Ansari's witty sentences, cracking jokes and cute remarks forced the audience to burst into laughter on Sunday night in an event held in connection with Mother's Day. Clad in green embroidered attire, the artist shared the cherished memories she had with Multan in "An Evening with Bushra Ansari" organized by Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (WCCI) at a local complex. Extempore discourse which is one of the skills she is blessed with as female comedian, compelled audience to big thunderous round of applause and again during

the show. She sang Fiaz Ahmed Faiz two ghazals including "Mujhey sey pheli se mobhabut meray meh-boob na maang and 'Ranjish hi sahi dil tuk doukhany k leye aa' besides Noor Jehan all times hit "Ja ja aj tun main teri, toun mera sajna vey" and a mimicry of Musarrat Nazir "Mera loung gawacha Nigha, nigha maar dain ain vey mera loung gawacha". Bushra Ansari scintillating performance as her known character "Saima Chaudhary" with her daughter Dolly telepathically was amazing. She informed that she has very much sweets memories with the city of saints as her maternal grandparents used to reside in Multan adding

that she can never forget Multani mangoes. Earlier, in her welcome address president WCCI, Mahnaz Amir Sheikh, said that she was proud of her mother Farrukh Mukhtar who was a source of inspiration for her and a power behind her achievements in life. She stated that WCCI always helped for capacity building entrepreneurs adding that it was need of the hour to make women economically empowered. Among others, renowned industrialists, Faisal Mukhtar Main Amir Naseem, Mian Kashif, Fadia Kashif, Farah Faisal, Rahat Multanikar, Fatima Fazal, Sadia Ali, Mahmood Javed Bhatti, and a good number of families attended.—APP

## Dawood Hercules Corporation and Engro approve restructuring plan

DNA

KARACHI: The Boards of Dawood Hercules Corporation Limited (DH Corp) and Engro Corporation Limited (Engro Corp) have, in principle, approved a proposal to restructure the shareholding between the two companies, aiming to enhance investment opportunities of the enterprise. The restructuring proposal is subject to final Board and shareholder approvals.

The proposed restructuring would enhance investment opportunities by harmonizing the investment efforts of both companies. DH Corp is a capital allocation firm that has experience in deploying funds to a broad range of sectors and assets, while Engro Corp has a successful track record of developing and managing large-scale industrial projects in 5 business verticals. Both companies have clear investment strategies and have delivered

healthy returns to shareholders; however, a testing external environment necessitates a wider and more agile investing approach at a time when large-scale investments are challenging to make. The proposed restructuring aims to enable such an approach. Following a two-step process, it would result in DH Corp being rebranded as Engro Holdings Limited, and Engro Corp becoming a wholly owned subsidiary of Engro Holdings. As a part of this

process, Engro Corp's minority shareholders would become shareholders of Engro Holdings in a ratio that preserves their economic ownership of Engro Corp. This exercise would synergise investment efforts at the Engro Holdings level, enabling capital from Engro's businesses to be efficiently deployed to a wider set of opportunities, which is advantageous to shareholders of both companies. Engro Holdings' [DH Corp's] current shareholders would benefit from frictionless capital movement between the two entities and Engro Corp's current shareholders would benefit from a wider investment mandate, as well from as Engro Holdings' investment expertise.

## Efforts urged to uplift underprivileged class

DNA

LAHORE: A delegation of the British High Commission, British Council and UNICEF led by Clara Strandhoj, head of the British High Commission Lahore, visited the Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal office here on Monday. The delegation held a meeting with Punjab Minister for Social Welfare Sohail Shaukat Butt and explored potential collaboration in several social welfare projects. The meeting was attended by Secretary of Social Welfare Iqbal Hussain, Director General of Social Welfare Aamna Munir, Ali Naqvi from FCDO, Deputy Head of the British High Commission Saeed

Ul Hassan, Tanya Durani from UNFPA, Yasmin Zaidi and Arshad Mahmood from Aawaz II, and Zahida Manzoor and Azlan Butt from UNICEF. During the session, the secretary of social welfare provided an orientation on potential collaboration in several social welfare projects with partners. Social Welfare Minister Sohail Shaukat Butt expressed gratitude to Clara Strandhoj and the delegation, emphasizing the importance of uplifting underprivileged classes through mutual cooperation with the British High Commission and other stakeholders. He stressed the need for strict implementation of legislation concerning gender-based violence, assistance to victims, and pre-

vention of child marriage. Highlighting the role of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, he emphasized the importance of timely enforcement of laws, especially through programmes aimed at assisting vulnerable women and children. Plans were discussed for improving conditions in shelters, orphanages, and other institutions, with a focus on better exit strategies for those leaving such facilities. The minister also outlined initiatives to integrate transgender individuals into society through training programmes in various fields and ensuring complete protection against gender-based violence for women of all religions.

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# Prime Minister loan scheme distributes Rs 83.6 billion

"State of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Pakistan" report serves as a roadmap for policymakers, development agencies, and stakeholders to design targeted interventions that support youth entrepreneurship and contribute to economic development in Pakistan

RAWALPINDI: Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth's Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashood has underscored the success of the Prime Minister's (PM) Youth Business Loan Scheme under which Rs 83.6 billion has been disbursed to young entrepreneurs, including 16,000 female entrepreneurs, since its relaunch by Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on January 24, 2023. While inaugurating the launching report of the "State of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Pakistan" at a local hotel on Monday, he said that the scheme has provided loans to 140,000

youths, including those engaged in agriculture, micro-finance, and interest-free ventures enabling them to turn their innovative ideas into thriving businesses. In his keynote, the Chairman PMYP commended the collaborative efforts behind the report and emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to supporting youth entrepreneurship in Pakistan. He also highlighted the transformative initiatives undertaken by the Prime Minister's Youth Programme to promote entrepreneurship across Pakistan. "The Prime Minister's Youth Programme remains

committed to empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs, and we call upon our development partners and the private sector to join us in implementing the recommendations outlined in the report." Additionally, Rana Mashood emphasized the impact of the National Innovation Award, which provides financial support, mentorship, and incubation resources to help young entrepreneurs realize their full potential and foster a culture of innovation and creativity in Pakistan. "I am delighted to witness the launch of the 'State of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Paki-

stan' report, which provides invaluable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing young entrepreneurs in our country," he added. The Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with UNDP Pakistan and the Islamic Development Bank, launched the highly anticipated report titled "State of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Pakistan." This groundbreaking report provides valuable insights into the current landscape of youth entrepreneurship in Pakistan and offers strategic recommendations to foster a dynamic and inclusive ecosystem for young entrepreneurs. The launch event

brought together government officials, development partners, representatives from the private sector, and aspiring young entrepreneurs to discuss strategies for enhancing the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Pakistan and driving sustainable economic growth. "State of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Pakistan" report serves as a roadmap for policymakers, development agencies, and stakeholders to design targeted interventions that support youth entrepreneurship and contribute to economic development in Pakistan.—DNA

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



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- WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
- CAA.....9281092



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



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## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# ICRC rep, Chairman PRCS discuss mutual cooperation

During the meeting, Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari provided a comprehensive overview of the various PRCS programs supported by ICRC, highlighting the Red Crescent's crucial role in providing assistance during natural disasters and emergencies

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The esteemed Mr. Yoann Davison, Operations Coordinator of ICRC Asia Pacific Region, engaged in a significant courtesy meeting with Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari at the PRCS National Headquarters on Monday. The primary objective of the meeting was to strengthen cooperation between PRCS and ICRC on various humanitarian programs and initiatives. Accompanying Mr. Davison were Mr. Nicolas Lambert, Head of ICRC Delegation in Pakistan and Mr. Wasif Jan, ICRC Movement Coordinator in Pakistan. During the meeting, Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari provided a comprehensive overview of the various PRCS programs supported by ICRC, highlighting the Red Crescent's crucial role in providing assistance during natural disasters and emergencies. Chairman Laghari shared insights into the 2022 monsoon flood response and the ongoing recovery efforts in affected areas, while also outlining



PRCS's plans aimed at strengthening its humanitarian outreach. Chairman Laghari emphasized the importance of enhancing collaboration between PRCS and ICRC to advance ICRC-supported programs such as National Society Development, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Restor-

ing Family Links, First Aid, Media and Communication, as well as Risk Awareness and Safer Behavior initiatives. Mr. Yoann Davison commended the exemplary services provided by the Red Crescent, acknowledging Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari's leadership in driving humanitarian initiatives forward. He reiterated ICRC's commitment to continued collaboration with PRCS, expressing readiness to further enhance programs for the benefit of humanity. Mr. Nicolas Lambert said "Our partnership with the PRCS is a cornerstone of our mission in Pakistan. Together, we're stronger in our commitment to serve communities, providing vital aid and support in times of need." In recognition of the longstanding partnership, Chairman Laghari presented a memento to Mr. Yoann Davison, Operations Coordinator of ICRC Asia Pacific Region, along with a souvenir symbolizing the spirit of humanitarian collaboration. Mr. Yoann Davison concluded his visit by touring the PRCS library and leaving his impressions in the visitor's book.

## ACs pay surprise visits to ICT's hospitals

ISLAMABAD: All the Assistant Commissioners (ACs) of the Federal Capital have inspected hospitals and dispensaries across the city following orders from Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa. According to the Spokesman of Chief Commissioner Office, Nouman Nazim, the aim was to assess the state of healthcare services and ensure proper functioning in various medical facilities. During their visits, the ACs checked the availability of doctors and the overall level of care provided to patients. They also took stock of medicine and vaccine supplies to ensure hospitals had adequate resources to meet patient needs. Emergency wards and other critical areas were thoroughly examined for safety and operational efficiency. The security setup at these facilities was also checked. The ACs evaluated the performance of security personnel to ensure the safety of patients and medical staff. Nouman Nazim said these inspections were part of ongoing efforts to maintain a high standard of healthcare services in Islamabad and to address any issues that might affect patient care or safety. —APP

# Climate-induced challenges mount for Islamabad people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's idealized life is increasingly undermined by the looming specter of climate-induced health crises, necessitating concrete actions to protect the health and vitality of its residents. Seasonal allergies, such as pollen, monsoon and skin, intensify with erratic weather patterns, while poor air quality, fueled by carbon emissions aggravates respiratory ailments. "It's not the pollen allergy alone but the capital's idealized life is increasingly undermined by the looming specter of climate-induced health crises, necessitating urgent action to protect the health and vitality of its residents," Professor Dr. Nasir Ali, a cardiologist at PIMS hospital said. Renowned climate change expert Dr. Naseer Memon underscoring the myriad impacts of climate change on human health said, "Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it's a present reality affecting the health and well-being of our communities," He also noted its affects on productivity, particularly for outdoor workers during extreme weather events. Economic losses, compounded by temperature variations, can augment mental stress and

potentially incite violent behaviors. Pakistan's minimal contribution to environmental pollution, Dr. Memon emphasizes the necessity for a dual approach of mitigation and adaptation to combat climate change. While federal and provincial governments have formulated policies to address its impacts, there's a critical need for sector-specific plans to integrate climate change considerations into actionable strategies. Preserving green spaces and eliminating non-native flora in Islamabad are crucial steps to mitigate environmental risks and safeguard public health, asserts Dr. Memon. A climate researcher Bushra Iqbal, highlighting the adverse impact of water pollution on public health, said changes in temperature and precipitation patterns increase vector-borne diseases such as dengue fever and malaria, expanding the geographical range of disease vectors like mosquitoes. "Islamabad is no exception to all these challenges," she remarked. Bushra also noted that the contaminated water sources can serve as breeding grounds for pathogens, leading to widespread illness and even fatalities. Therefore, she stresses for the capital's civic body's urgent attention

for ensuring clean drinking water for its residents. A health expert Dr. Iram, noted the health risks associated with heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke, affecting vulnerable demographics like the elderly and children. Moreover, fluctuations in temperature contribute to gastroenteritis during peak summer months. Air pollution, primarily driven by vehicle emissions and industrial activities, further adds to health hazards, leading to respiratory issues such as asthma and bronchitis. The Islamabad Traffic Police must take decisive action against owners of smoke-emitting vehicles to ensure clean air for its dwellers," she suggested. Another reputed medical practitioner Dr. Azhar Khawar highlights the prevalence of skin allergies amidst changing weather patterns, urging proactive measures to mitigate health risks. Dr. Azhar also reported an increased number of patients in recent years in Islamabad due to climate change factor. An Agricultural Scientist at Pakistan Agricultural Research Council underscores the repercussions of climate change on agricultural productivity, emphasizing its implications for food security and malnutrition, particularly in vulnerable

communities. The effects of climate change extend beyond physical health, taking a toll on mental well-being as well. A Psychiatrist Saima Khan, who practices in Ghauri Town, echoing the concerns of health experts, draws attention to the psychological toll of environmental degradation and climate change. "The uncertainty of the future weighs heavily on the minds of Islamabad's residents," she expresses concern. Loss of livelihoods, and the constant threat of extreme weather events contribute to anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders and it shouldn't be ignored, she observes. Renowned journalist and media trainer, Lubna Jerar, emphasizes the importance of educating individuals and curbing factors contributing to environmental pollution. She also advocates for policy interventions and sustainable development practices to mitigate the impacts of climate change. "We must invest in green infrastructure, promote renewable energy, and adopt eco-friendly transportation solutions to reduce our carbon footprint." "By taking bold action now, we can protect the health of current and future generations."

# Tobacco Tax by 37% to save lives

ISLAMABAD: An increase of 37% in Federal Excise Duty (FED) on tobacco products has been proposed by the Social Policy Development Centre (SPDC) to reinforce the gains already achieved and to advance further in enhancing public health outcomes and revenue collection. "Pakistan can save as many as 265,000 lives, generate an additional revenue of Rs 37.7 billion and push 757,000 people to quit smoking through increasing the FED by 37 percent," said the SPDC policy paper name "Recovering Healthcare Costs and Saving Lives" that aligns recommendation of World Health Organization (WHO) and Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK). The SPDC proposal comes when the government prepares to outline its budgetary agenda, in a bid to prioritize public health and economic prosperity through targeted tobacco tax reforms. Pakistan has two-tiered system of FED on cigarettes. The country made significant strides and increased the FED on cigarettes in 2022-23 with substantial increase in FED. The current FED share in retail prices is 48 percent and 68 percent respectively for low and high tiers. The SPDC has warned of negative effect on both the revenue and public health efforts if the rates (FED) were not increased and trend was not maintained. Therefore, it advocated to further adjust the FED in line with international standards, to take the tax share of retail prices towards 70 percent. The proposal seeks to take the FED share to 54 percent or Rs 154 and 72.1 percent or Rs 452 for economy and premium brands, respectively. The proposal was backed by the gains of previous tax adjustments, which have demonstrated tangible reductions in smoking rates and significant financial gains for the government. According to details, revenue collection from July 2023 to January 2024 has reached Rs 122 billion and figure expected to surpass Rs 200 billion by year-end.—DNA

## AIOU to hold Int'l moot on Ijtihad Bil-Maqasid

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is hosting a three-day international conference on "Ijtihad Bil-Maqasid" from May 22 to May 24. This conference is being organized by the Department of Islamic Thought, History, and Culture, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, AIOU. Several international and national religious scholars and academicians will present papers on the importance, scope, and objectives of Ijtihad during the conference. Dean of the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi, said that such conferences are urgently needed to promote unity, end extremism, and foster brotherhood among Islamic countries. Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, stressed organising an international conference on this topic and we planned this conference in May which will also be a part of the ongoing Golden Jubilee celebrations of AIOU.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence & Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif, presenting a souvenir to HE. Mr. Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France.—DNA



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## Briefs

Crackdown  
against  
illegal  
currency  
exchanges

ISLAMABAD: A nationwide crackdown against elements involved in hundi and illegal currency exchange continues. According to the spokesperson of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), during the last 4 months, 267 raids were conducted against the elements involved in the illegal exchange of hawala and hundi and illegal currency exchange businesses. 269 cases were registered and 327 accused were arrested while an Investigation of 36 inquiries were also completed. During the last 4 months, Peshawar zone registered 107 cases and arrested 116 accused, Kohat zone registered 21 cases and arrested 21 accused, Lahore zone registered 25 cases and arrested 36 accused, Gujranwala zone registered 39 cases and arrested 52 accused, Faisalabad zone registered 19 cases and arrested 29 accused, Multan zone registered 16 cases and arrested 18 accused, Islamabad zone registered 6 cases and arrested 7 accused, Karachi zone registered 16 cases while arrested 27 accused, Hyderabad zone registered 7 cases and arrested 10 accused, Balochistan zone registered 13 cases and arrested 11 accused in the hawala hundi business. The arrested accused were involved in currency exchange without a license. During the last 4 months, a total of more than 62 crore 38 lac rupees worth of domestic and foreign currency was exported. 28,9036 US dollars, and other foreign currency worth more than 171.2 million rupees were included in the currency exported. —APP

Calls for  
efforts to  
make  
polio-free

ISLAMABAD: The coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Center for Polio Eradication, Dr Shahzad Baig Monday, called for collective efforts of society to eradicate polio from the country and requested parents to give their children two drops of polio vaccine and make Pakistan polio-free. Talking to PTV news channel, he said that the eradication of polio from the country is a national cause, for which people from all segments of society including media, religious scholars, teachers, family relatives and influencers should join hands and work together. He also said that all religious and political parties, people from the showbiz, different segments of society and the common people should come forward to eradicate this menace from our country once and for all.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Visitors enjoying various delicacies during diplomatic bazaar at Islamabad Serena Hotel. —DNA

# Tourism promotion govt top priority: Aleem

Federal Minister of Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said that Gilgit-Baltistan is our home, Motorway will be built from Mansehra to Gilgit Baltistan and all issues including police deployment on motorway and the problems of highways requiring repair will also be solved on a priority basis

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Communications, Privatization & Investment Board Abdul Aleem Khan has said that tourism will be promoted through means of communications and road infrastructure in Gilgit, Skardu and Northern areas, therefore, special attention will be given to the Karakoram Highway and the connected roads and motorways. He added that this step would support tourists as a large number of people can

have fun in these areas and the economic condition of the people residing here can improve, as well. He expressed these views during his visit to Gilgit on Sunday. Abdul Aleem Khan has a meeting with the Gilgit Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan where members of the provincial cabinet, DG FWO and federal officers were also present. Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan welcomed Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and discussed various projects including the dilapidated condition of Karakoram Highway, Jaglot, Skardu Road and tunnels. He welcomed the

arrival of the Federal Minister to Gilgit-Baltistan and called this visit a blessing for the northern region of Pakistan. Federal Minister of Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said that Gilgit-Baltistan is our home, Motorway will be built from Mansehra to Gilgit Baltistan and all issues including police deployment on the motorway and the problems of highways requiring repair will also be solved on a priority basis. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan also held a high-level meeting with the authorities of Frontier Works Organization and National Highway Author-

ity regarding Gilgit and adjacent roads where he was given a detailed briefing on the current situation. Federal Minister of Communications directed that no effort should be spared in the construction of roads and improvement of travel facilities. He said that he will continue to visit the northern regions in the future to ensure the completion of quality and speedy construction work in the area. Director General FWO Major General Abdul Sami, Federal Secretary Communications Ali Sher Mehsud and senior officials of NHA were also present on this occasion

## Int'l workshop on 'Drug Design and Development' from May 20-22

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH—the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation will hold an International Workshop on "Drug Design and Development: The Arts and Science" from May 20-22. COMSTECH Distinguished Scholar, Dr. M. Hafizur Rahman, PhD (Japan) will be the Course Instructor of the workshop to be held at the COMSTECH Secretariat, an official of COMSTECH informed. Dr. Hafizur Rahman is Professor and Chairman, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Dhaka International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh and Ex-Fellow, BIRDEM, MEXT Fellow, Japan. —APP

## Business community delighted to have Saudi investors in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that a high-level delegation of investors led by the Deputy Minister of Investment of Saudi Arabia has arrived for negotiations regarding investment in Pakistan which is a positive development. The 50-member delegation from more than 30 companies has arrived on the instructions of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He said it would explore agriculture, mining, human resources, energy, chemicals and maritime opportunities. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the visit of the Saudi delegation will promote trade relations

and investment and Pakistani companies can connect with the companies of the friendly country. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that leading companies from both countries will seek investment opportunities, which are expected to increase investment, exports and employment. He said that agreements and memorandums of understanding will also be signed in this context. After Shahbaz Sharif became the prime minister, Saudi Arabia's relations with China and other countries are improving and their focus is on increasing trade and investment. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has visited Saudi Arabia twice, while the Saudi Foreign Minister has also visited Pakistan, and now Pakistan is looking forward to the visit of the Saudi Crown Prince. Mian Zahid Hussain said it is sad that the wheat scandal has come to light when there

is a possibility of massive investment from Saudi Arabia. This is sending a negative message to the whole world. The economic system of the country is poor and dominated by the mafia. For this reason, the country is always under some scandal that exploits the people, increases poverty, and gives investors a negative message. It is commonly perceived that nothing is done on merit, but there is a collusion everywhere. In such circumstances, foreign investment in the country's agricultural sector will become problematic. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that on the one hand, Saudi investors will be evaluating the Pakistani market. On the other hand, farmers will be running a nationwide movement because every time, the mafia succeeds in defeating the farmers. He said that the central and provincial governments should try to solve this issue of farmers as soon as possible.

## Randhawa directs to make Islamabad Model Jail operational

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Chief Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa Monday directed to make Islamabad Model Jail fully operational within 100-day. While chairing a meeting on development and construction work of Islamabad Model Jail, he said that more delay in the construction work will not be tolerated. Muhammad Ali said the construction work of the jail should be completed into three shifts. During the briefing, he was informed that 73 percent of the administrative block, 98 percent of the boundary wall, and 42 percent of the male barracks have already been completed. The meeting was attended by Inspector General of Islamabad Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi and officials from the Public Works Department. Muhammad Ali said that a site inspection is scheduled on May 8 (Wednesday) to evaluate the ongoing construction work at Islamabad Model Jail.—APP

# Poverty in the world

MOMNA MANSOOR, SAMAHA SAIF

Introduction: People are experiencing poverty when they are deprived of basic human needs such as food, clothing, shelter, safe drinking water, healthcare and sanitation, and minimal educational opportunities. Worldwide statistics show that people born into poverty are likely to remain poor especially when the economic system of the country works against them with no access to healthy food, decent housing, and proper sanitation facilities. This is called the cycle of poverty. Therefore, the concept of poverty, whether absolute or relative, isn't simple. It doesn't only involve economics but it is also a social and political problem in nature. Is poverty increasing or decreasing? Over 12.5 million Pakistanis fell below the poverty line in the past one year and now nearly 40% of the country's population is struggling to get its basic needs met, the World Bank has said as it urged the cash-strapped country to take urgent steps to achieve financial Poverty in Pakistan rose from 34.2% to 39.4% in just one year, with 12.5 million more people falling below the poverty line of the \$3.65 per day income level. About 95 million Pakistanis now live in poverty. Pakistan also has the lowest per capita income in South Asia and highest out-of-school kids in the world. The bank said Pakistan's average real per capita growth rate was just 1.7% between 2000 and 2020 — less than half the average per capita growth rate (4%) for South Asian countries. "While Pakistan's per capita income was among the highest

in South Asia during the 1980s, it is now among the lowest in the region. Poverty in economists' s point of view Major policy shifts required' Tobias Haque, the World Bank's lead country economist for Pakistan, said the nation is facing serious economic and human development crises, and is at a point where major policy shifts are required. "Pakistan's economic model is no longer reducing poverty, and the living standards have fallen behind peer countries." This may be Pakistan's moment for significant policy shift," said Najy Benhassine, the country director for Pakistan at the World Bank. The World Bank suggest that Pakistan should immediately increase the tax-to-GDP ratio by 5% and cut expenditures by about 2.7% of GDP — measures aimed at putting the unsustainable economy back on a prudent fiscal path. The Washington-based lender's note on improving revenue-to-GDP ratio by 5% includes withdrawal of tax exemptions and increasing the burden of taxes on the real estate and the heavily subsidized agriculture sectors. Pakistan has the capacity to collect taxes equal to 22% of the GDP, but its current ratio is only 10.2%, said the World Bank. It said that another PKR 70 billion can be saved by devolving the Higher Education Commission to the provinces, and PKR 217 billion savings can be ensured through cost sharing of BISP (Benazir Income Support Programme) with the provinces. Pakistan's inflation soared to 27.4% in August after the cash-strapped country received \$1.2 billion from the International Monetary Fund in July, a part of the \$3 billion bailout programme to support the

government's efforts to stabilise the country's ailing economy. Pakistan's economy has been in a free-fall mode for the last many years, bringing untold pressure on the poor masses in the form of unchecked inflation. Is poverty an economic or a social problem? The United Nations has stated that the problem of poverty is an ethical, social, economic and political imperative of mankind. It has suggested that governments across the globe address its root cause and provide solutions to ensure the people have access to productive resources such as credit, education, and a healthy standard of life. A social perspective throws light on the problem of poverty in all its dimensions. This approach offers a different perspective on poverty eradication. It advocates the empowerment of people living in poverty and their full participation in all aspects of political, social, and economic life while also designing and implementing policies that affect the most vulnerable groups of society. An integrated strategy towards poverty eradication requires implementing policies geared to a more equitable distribution of wealth, income, and social protection coverage. This social perspective should contribute to the debate on the effectiveness and limitations of current poverty reduction strategies. From a socio-economic perspective, to understand poverty we require a thorough evaluation of the impact of economic and social policies on the poor and vulnerable groups of society. A Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) serves as a tool to as-

sess both economic and social impact reforms on the different social and income groups in society. Solutions to the problem of poverty The UN aims to eradicate poverty by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals and has already set in place a number of economic policies to tackle this problem. Over the past decade, there has been marked progress in reducing poverty. The year 2015 recorded about 10.1% of the world's population living below the absolute poverty index and this number fell to 9.3% in 2017 according to United Nations Statistical Division. Although the proportion of people who live on \$1.90 has dropped by 52 million, the rate at which poverty has dropped has slowed down. Between 1990 and 2015, the rate at which poverty dropped was one percentage point annually, whereas it was half a percentage point between 2015 and 2017. Policies to reduce poverty in developing economies To reduce poverty in developing economies, the focus may be on different policies. Education: greater spending on education and training can enable a higher-skilled workforce. Foreign aid: aid from developed countries can be used to invest in better health care and education. However, some argue aid can encourage dependency. Diversification of economy away from agriculture to manufacturing: this enables greater economic development but may be difficult to do without the right skills and infrastructure. —The writer is Institute of Business & Management (IBM), University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore.

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## Generating and spreading fear

For over 200 days, we here in the Arab World have been wondering how the so-called civilized world, along with its intellectual system and human rights laws, would allow such a genocide to take place against helpless women, children, and innocent civilians in Gaza and Palestine, without trying the impossible to stop this disgraceful insult against every human life everywhere. Every day, the Zionists would perpetrate dozens of massacres against hundreds of Palestinians and would kill journalists, medical doctors, nurses, and patients, burying them in a mass grave inside the hospital. And yet the US continues to flood the Zionists with armaments, money, and moral support, enabling the worst genocide and ethnic cleansing that has brought dishonor upon our world and us who live in these times. All of us here in the Middle East were feeling absolutely helpless, depressed, and utterly betrayed by the Western World, as it not only betrayed us, but also Western values which the West claimed to develop and promote in the interest of humanity. For seven, long, difficult months, we questioned everything the West had said about itself, most notably its propaganda regarding the free press, the rights of women, the rights of children, and human rights in decent and safe lives. All of this was happening to us as if we lived on an extremely remote island until the students of Columbia University broke this cycle with their brave forthcoming acts to challenge the conspiratory world's silence and announce their extremely important call to stop genocide and ethnic cleansing in Gaza, an act that triggered a worldwide movement by university students, professors, and employees in support of life in Gaza, and against the daily and continued massacres there. Your movement has restored our faith in human conscience, but your suffering and the way you have been treated proved to us, beyond any doubt, that Western systems leave a lot to be desired. The deep alliance that has surfaced between Zionists everywhere and Western governments has shown the horrifying moral deterioration of Western governments. Just as they spread fear and horror about Covid-19, they also started to fabricate myths about attacks on Jews, although Jewish students and professors were at the forefront of these noble movements, this did not prevent misleading media from accusing the student movement as antisemitic. Instead of trusting that the movement proved that the issue was not between Muslims and Jews, but one of occupation, racism, and the worst violation of human rights witnessed in modern times, the authorities went on distorting facts and misleading people. You proved that you do not belong to the hypocrisy of the State, whose current discourse and actions are in total contradiction with its own narrative. Western systems are trying to spread fear: Jews fearing Muslims, Muslims fearing Jews, Christians fearing Muslims, Westerners against Easterners, in order to serve the interests of Zionist dark forces who do not see people with similar hearts and minds, but only see what may divide their ranks and make them weaker: inactive and incapable of undermining the interests of these dark forces.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily  
 Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti  
 Deputy Editor: Abid Raza  
 Member APNS / ABC Certified  
 Vol: 05 Issue: 163  
 Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com  
 Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960  
 Off 11: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



## Time, Space, and the Will

Journalist Antony Lowenstein wrote a book called "The Palestine Laboratory", which details how the Zionist entity uses Palestine as a testing ground for their weapons which they sell to other merchants of death worldwide. In this article, I want to flip this laboratory analogy on its head, by showing how Palestine is where 21st-century guerrilla warfare is being developed strategically and tactically. First, there will be a survey of a few 20th-century guerrilla warfare tacticians such as Mao and Vo Nguyen Giap, who laid the ground for the Palestinian fedayeen of the 1960s and 1970s. Then, a piece of writing from the martyr Basel al Araj titled Live Like a Porcupine, Fight Like a Flea will be analyzed alongside the actions of resistance factions against the Zionist garrison state. In reference to the advances of the Vietnamese People's Army against the French and American imperialists, General Vo Nguyen Giap argued that "in the face of an enemy as powerful as he is cruel, victory is possible only by uniting the whole people within the bosom of a firm and wide national front based on the worker-peasant alliance". While General Giap is undoubtedly a master tactician of the previous generation, the rank and file of the people's army showed how correct his analyses are in practice. The question of land remains the decisive factor in planning and executing guerrilla warfare. Those who have a connection to the land, and who know its every intimate corner will always have the advantage, even in the face of imperialist terror. The Vietnamese People's Army—under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh and General Giap—used the terrain to set traps for imperialist troops, but also to be able to mesh with the masses of workers and peasants. The types of traps used included false floors with snake pits underneath, nets to corral foreign troops into ambushes, spike traps that injured imperialist troops and sent them to the injured reserve. The point was never to confront the enemy face-to-face and inflict massive casualties, but to wear them out, spread them thin, and expose their barbarity. This also included nationwide programs of patriotic education and organization towards national unity and independence. General Giap continues: "Guerrilla war is the war of the broad masses...is the enemy strong? One avoids him. Is he weak? One attacks him...there is no fixed line of demarcation, the front being wherever the enemy is found". The tunnels of the resistance allow for the advancement of the 'flea war', whereby Hamas, PIJ, or PFLP commandos can attack over a large surface area while remaining in small units. This has done immense damage materially and psychologically to the Zionist enemy, especially since October 7th. This is evidenced by Gaza being littered with Merkavas and Zionist APCs which are no longer in use. In regards to General Giap's insistence on the importance of "war booty", time and evidence have shown that Operation Al Aqsa Flood was so successful in part because there were many Hamas units disguised as Zionist troops and using Zionist armaments which caused confusion among Zionist ranks.

## The essence of leadership: Insights from Sun Tzu and Confucius

Imran Ghaznavi



As we navigate the complexities of leadership, their timeless wisdom offers profound insights. Sun Tzu, the ancient Chinese military strategist, opined, "Leadership comes in many shapes and forms." This astute observation underscores the diverse manifestations of leadership, transcending conventional paradigms. Indeed, leaders emerge from various backgrounds

Leadership, an elusive concept woven into the fabric of societies across epochs, remains a topic of perennial fascination. Echoes of its essence reverberate through the annals of history, articulated by luminaries such as Sun Tzu and Confucius. As we navigate the complexities of leadership, their timeless wisdom offers profound insights. Sun Tzu, the ancient Chinese military strategist, opined, "Leadership comes in many shapes and forms." This astute observation underscores the diverse manifestations of leadership, transcending conventional paradigms. Indeed, leaders emerge from various backgrounds, their ascent often shaped by a confluence of innate predispositions and nurtured competencies. Contrary to the belief that leaders are solely born, Confucius advocated for the developmental aspect of leadership. He posited that through cultivation and deliberate practice, individuals can hone their leadership acumen. Whether inherent or cultivated, the paramount importance of leadership in steering nations and societies through turbulent waters cannot be overstated. Central to effective leadership is the cultivation of a compelling vision, a cause that transcends the mundane and ignites the collective imagination. Sun Tzu's emphasis on strategic planning resonates here, highlighting the imperative of a well-thought-out plan. Great leaders imbue their endeavors with purpose, rallying disparate energies towards a shared destination. The formation of cohesive teams,

aligned with the leader's vision, emerges as a cornerstone of effective leadership. Confucius extolled the virtues of wisdom and empathy, qualities indispensable in fostering harmonious relationships within teams. A leader's ability to nurture a culture of collaboration and mutual respect lays the groundwork for organizational success. Wisdom, as articulated by Sun Tzu, is a quintessential trait of leadership. It encompasses not only sagacity but also adaptability in the face of adversity. True leaders exhibit the discernment to navigate complex challenges, often adopting unconventional strategies to achieve their objectives. The concept of leadership extends beyond the realms of authority and power; it embodies a profound sense of responsibility towards the welfare of individuals and the broader community. Confucius espoused the notion of benevolent leadership, characterized by compassion and a commitment to the greater good. Leaders who prioritize the well-being and sustainability of every member of society exemplify this ethos. In examining contemporary leadership paradigms, the case of President Asif Ali Zardari offers intriguing insights. Despite polarizing opinions, Zardari's leadership style underscores the importance of inclusivity and conflict resolution. His penchant for adopting diverse perspectives and forging consensus amidst discord exemplifies the essence of effective leadership. Zardari's approach serves as a beacon

for aspiring leaders, emphasizing the imperative of transcending partisan divides for the collective advancement of society. His emphasis on progression, coupled with a pragmatic approach underscores the transformative potential of visionary leadership. In the context of Pakistan, the quest for empathic leaders committed to national progress resonates deeply. Sun Tzu's admonition to lead with impact, while eliminating conflicts to benefit the nation, finds relevance in the socio-political landscape. The imperative of nurturing leaders who prioritize harmony and collaboration, while upholding the principles of justice and equity, remains paramount. In conclusion, the wisdom of Sun Tzu and Confucius offers invaluable insights into the multifaceted nature of leadership. From the cultivation of vision and wisdom to the nurturing of inclusive teams, their teachings continue to inform contemporary discourse on effective leadership. As nations strive for progress and prosperity, the essence of leadership, as elucidated by these ancient sages, remains an enduring beacon guiding humanity's quest for a better tomorrow. The author is a senior regulatory professional who writes about, leadership, communications, reputation management, climate change, regulatory regime. He can be reached at ig-haznavi@gmail.com

## OIC Summit: Dar calls for immediate ceasefire in Gaza

Waheed Hussain



Hospitals, schools, refugees' camps, markets, residential compounds, Masques, international human rights and assistant organizations' offices, UN human rights, food and medical agencies and other aid organizations workers including the food and medicine tracks-vehicles have been bombarded by the Israeli forces, violating all international laws and norms. The "crushed the humanity" policy and approach of the Israel did not spare even the media persons

Gaza is bleeding. Palestinians are being butchered by the Israeli forces. The children, women, aged, and non-combatant civilians are being executed on the daily basis since October 2023. Thirty-five thousand unarmed Palestinians are being martyred by the Benjamin Netanyahu's death-squad terrorists in Gaza. Hospitals, schools, refugees' camps, markets, residential compounds, Masques, international human rights and assistant organizations' offices, UN human rights, food and medical agencies and other aid organizations workers including the food and medicine tracks-vehicles have been bombarded by the Israeli forces, violating all international laws and norms. The "crushed the humanity" policy and approach of the Israel did not spare even the media persons. Dozens of reporters, camerapersons, correspondents of various local and international media houses have also been brutally targeted to stop the free flow of information about the unprecedented human rights violation by illegitimate so-called Israeli government operation in Gaza. We cannot forget the mass graves being discovered in Gaza. The conscience of the so-called civilized world is sleeping. Rather the west is part of the war crimes being committed by the Zionist regime. In the light of present Gaza dismal situation Islamic Summit Conference of Member States of Organization of Islamic Cooperation was held between May 2 to 5 in Banjul, Gambia. In the first two days the foreign ministers and delegates from the member states finalized the agenda for the summit meeting which was held on 4th and 5th of the current month. Theme of the conference was "enhancing unity and solidarity through dialogue for sustainable development." Pakistan was represented by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar. Addressing the summit conference, the DPM and FM expressed Pakistan's serious concern over Israeli on-going brutal military onslaught against the Palestinians in Gaza and West Bank. Ishaq Dar urged the OIC members to put sincere efforts together for an immediate unconditional ceasefire of besieged Palestinians. The Deputy Prime Minister expressed Pakistan's support for the Palestine's admission as a full member of the United Nations, resumption of the peace process for realization of two-state solution and establishment of a viable, contiguous and sovereign state of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders,

with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. He pointed out the Indian atrocities in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, particularly, after the illegal act of August 5, 2019, where the laws related to the special status of the Kashmir were altered by the Modi fascist regime. The DPM & FM urged the OIC to implement its Action Plan on Jammu and Kashmir. He demanded that India must put to an end all kinds of human rights violations in the valley, release Hurriyat leaders and reverse its illegal demographic and other one-sided laws. The deputy prime minister appreciated the OIC support for the Kashmir and asked the OIC leaders to use their influence in resolution of the conflict according to the UNSC resolutions. It has been observed over the years that the western world has been promoting the Islamophobia in their respective countries. As a result, the Muslims were being attacked and marginalized in the western world. The Muslim women wearing scarf were followed and treated inhumanly in public places specially in the educational institutions and offices. Muhammad Ishaq Dar strongly condemned the rising trends of Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims in various parts of the world. The DPM and FM asked the participants to formulate a joint strategy to work with the international social media platforms to harmonize their application of content regulation policies for blasphemous, anti-Islamic and Islamophobia content. This issue is deep rooted. The west defends the idea of the social media content under the freedom of expression and freedom of media. However, there is no concept of absolute freedom in any community, society and country. So, the minister rightly demanded that the content of the various media platforms must be regulated through proper laws. It was really positive and well-thought approach by the DPM when he raised the issue of Indian hatred against Pakistan. He condemned the increase in anti-Pakistan rhetoric and Islamophobic narratives by India's political leaders during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections which could threaten the peace in South Asia. The DPM & FM also raised the issue of cross border terrorism which in fact is a big challenge to peace and security of Pakistan. No doubt Afghanistan interim government has totally failed to control the terrorist groups including the notorious TTP. The Afghan Taliban promised with the world in Doha that it would not allow its land to be used by the terrorists against any other country. Fact

of the matter is that Afghan government has a soft approach towards the TTP and other groups operating from Afghanistan which create a security problem for Pakistan. The OIC as a platform and the Muslim countries must use their influence on the Afghan Taliban interim regime to cooperate with Pakistan on this serious issue between the two neighbors. He also spoke about the economic cooperation among the Muslim countries. He urged the OIC to work collectively to address the existential threat of climate change, as Pakistan has been the worst victim of it in the recent past. Billions of dollars were lost due to floods in the country. The environmentalist and scientists are of the opinion that those industrialized countries which are using the fossil fuels are more actually responsible for the various kinds of pollutions effecting the climate. So, the rich countries must help the poor and developing nations to counter this challenge. On the sidelines of the OIC conference the DPM and FM held series of bilateral meetings with the leaders and senior diplomats of various nations. During his meeting with the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, he highlighted the importance of strategic and economic relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Muhammad Ishaq Dar also held meaningful interaction with foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Qatar, Gambia, Yemen, Niger, Secretary General OIC, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China Zheng Jianbang, and President of Gambia. Pakistan has been very active on the OIC since its inception in 1967. The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar represented Pakistan point of view on regional and international issues in well manner. As for as OIC is concerned it needs to work hard to become a real voice for the Muslim World. The success of the forum requires that Muslim nations in the Middle East should resolve their differences as early as possible. They should be one voice against Israel in the Middle East, UN and other international forums. Muslim countries must invest in the research and development in various fields specially in the science and technology and information technology. They should establish world best educational institutions. OIC members must enhance trade and commerce relations furthering improving the economies of the poor states. This is the only way we can make this forum more vibrant and effective.

## Briefs

## A bad day for those...

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remain vacant and be allocated by a proportional representation process of political parties on the basis of seats won by political parties. In response, the SIC moved the SC court last month urging the apex court to allot the party the 67 women and 11 minority seats in the National and provincial assemblies and set aside the PHC ruling. The SIC's plea contends that reserved seats for women and minorities are given to the parties in the national and provincial assemblies on the basis of proportional representation and no party can be given more reserved seats than its representation.

## CJP faez Isa blasts...

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general Major General (ret'd) Azhar Naveed Hayat. The commission was led by Dr Akhtar Ali Shah, a former officer of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, and included senior PAS official Khushhal Khan and former inspector general Tahir Alam. The probe body was tasked with identifying the perpetrators who facilitated the sit-in. However, it simply suggested taking legal action against the individuals in light of the federal government and Punjab's findings. As the hearing began, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan read the inquiry commission's report. "What did the commission do? It just wasted time. The commission is just making speeches," said CJP Isa during the hearing.

## Iran hails Pakistan...

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delays. Iran's Consul General to Pakistan Hassan Nourian on Monday said that Tehran and Islamabad "are looking at ways to complete the project but international pressure is causing delays". The comments came during a "Meet the Press" session at the Karachi Press Club, where the Iranian official interacted with journalists. He said that the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline "project holds great importance". "We see political determination from Pakistan to complete the project," he added. The two countries signed the agreement to construct the pipeline from Iran's South Fars gas field to Pakistan's Balochistan and Sindh provinces in 2010, but work on Pakistan's portion has been held up due to fears of US sanctions.

## 'Won't tolerate...'

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It is pertinent to mention here that PTI founder Imran Khan had earlier blamed Washington for overthrowing his government in April 2022. Khan was ousted from power after losing a no-confidence vote that the PTI founder alleged engineered by the US by colluding with the then opposition parties. The cipher controversy first emerged on March 27, 2022, when Khan - less than a month before his ouster in April 2022 - while addressing a public rally waved a letter before the crowd, claiming that it was a cipher from a foreign nation that had conspired with his political rivals to topple the PTI government.

## IHC confirms hearing...

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A two-member bench of the IHC - comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hasan Aurangzeb - heard the appeals against the conviction of both PTI politicians in the cipher case on Monday. The former prime minister and the former foreign minister had been sentenced in the said case on January 30 earlier this year. At the outset of the hearing, defence lawyer Latif Khosa told the IHC chief justice that the hearing of bail petitions in the NCA scandal case was still pending. To this, CJ Farooq remarked that he would fix the hearing on May 8 as the previous cause list of the regular was suspended owing to his unwellness.

## Babar spells reasons for snubbing Haris and Jamal

In response to a question, Babar Azam said that their full focus is on upcoming World Cup, and they will give a 100% performance at the mega event

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LAHORE: Pakistan cricket team captain Babar Azam has revealed the reasons for the exclusion of Mohammad Haris and Aamer Jamal from the national squad for the upcoming T20I series against Ireland and England. Addressing a news conference at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Monday ahead of team's departure to Ireland, Babar Azam said that Haris wasn't included due to the abundance of options in the top-order. "I do agree Mohammad Haris didn't get proper opportunity the way he should have after the 2022 T20 World Cup. However, he did get opportunity in PSL but he didn't perform as per expectations. I am not saying he is a bad player. Everyone goes through a rough patch," Babar said. "Furthermore, he plays in the top-order and we already have a lot of players for top-order including me, Rizwan, Saim Ayub and Fakhar Zaman," he added. Regarding Aamer Jamal, Babar emphasized the distinction between Test and T20 cricket, acknowledging Jamal's Test performance but suggesting that he needs more matches to refine his skills for the T20 format. "Aamer Jamal performed in Test cricket and Test performance cannot be compared with T20s. He is a fine all-rounder.



He needs more time and more matches under his belt which will get him further polished for T20 cricket," Babar said. In response to a question, Babar Azam said that their full focus is on the upcoming World Cup, and they will give a 100% performance at the mega event. Babar said

that the team's entire focus was on the World Cup, adding in the past they were also determined to bring the trophy home. "We will focus on the fitness of the players during the tour. Haris Rauf is rejoining the team after a rest, hopefully he will perform well," he said further. Babar Azam said

Haris Rauf's fitness had improved rapidly. The team captain said PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi encouraged them to produce good results, adding that there was no focus on individual issues to win the World Cup. "The World Cup is on the horizon, there is no time for routine policy," he declared. Babar Azam said that Hasan Ali had been selected in the team as a backup, adding this choice had been made in consultation with all seven people on the selection committee. Hasan Ali had been kept in the team only on the basis of his experience, Babar said, adding that the best team would be selected to play all the matches taking place before the World Cup. "Fast bowlers and spinners will be included according to the conditions," he asserted. It is worth mentioning here that the Pakistan men's cricket team is currently participating in a three-day training session here ahead of their three-match T20I series against Ireland. The team is scheduled to depart for Dublin on 7 May, where they will play three T20Is at Clontarf on 10, 12, and 14 May 2024. All three matches will start at 3 PM local time. The three-match away series, followed by four T20Is in England, will serve as a stepping stone for the Green Shirts to boost their preparations for this year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and the United States of America (USA).

## Norris makes history after Miami Grand Prix win

He came close to a win in Russia in 2021, when he put the McLaren on pole and led most of the race confidently before mistakenly choosing to stay out on dry-weather slicks when it rained late on

DNA

MIAMI: Lando Norris had not even taken his helmet off after securing his maiden Formula 1 victory at the Miami Grand Prix before the great and good of the sport began taking turns to congratulate him. Max Verstappen, the man who Norris has become the first to beat in a straight fight this year, was the first. He was quickly followed by third-place man Charles Leclerc, two-time champion Fernando Alonso, Mercedes' George Russell and more. By the end of the afternoon, the list was long. This was a popular victory for a popular driver but also one that everyone recognised had been too long in coming, and was well deserved. Heading into the Miami weekend, he held the all-time record for podium finishes without a win. In-



evitably, then, there were those who were beginning to utter doubts as to whether Norris would ever stand on the top step. But only people who didn't properly recognise Norris' qualities doubted him. "I wasn't worried," Norris said, "and I knew my time was coming." Norris is the son of a millionaire stock market trader. But his talent has been obvious from a very early age, and the closer he got to F1 through his junior

career, the more it became obvious he was marked out for great things. Aged 18, early in 2018, Norris was team-mate to Alonso at the Daytona 24 Hours sports car race. It was hardly the point of their appearance, but Norris set himself a private target of leaving the event with a faster lap time than Alonso - and did it. At the time, Norris was McLaren's F1 reserve driver and Alonso was racing for them. Later that year, af-

ter McLaren had said they would promote Norris from reserve driver to their race team for the 2019 season, the Briton generated a few laughs in a wet practice session at the US Grand Prix in Austin by playing the boy and taking Alonso a cuppa while everyone waited for the track to dry. But it did not take long once he was into a full-time F1 seat for Norris to shed the image of an apprentice. He went toe-to-toe with Carlos Sainz in their two seasons together and gave nothing away. He came close to a win in Russia in 2021, when he put the McLaren on pole and led most of the race confidently before mistakenly choosing to stay out on dry-weather slicks when it rained late on. Sainz left for Ferrari at the end of 2020 and was replaced by Daniel Ricciardo, then a seven-time race winner for Red Bull.

## Mohammad Amir's departure for Ireland delayed

Amir was banned from international cricket for five years by ICC along with Mohammad Asif and Salman Butt, in a spot-fixing case in 2010

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir's departure for Ireland has been delayed due to visa issues, according to the team management. The Pakistan team is set to leave for Ireland tomorrow but Amir won't accompany them. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is hopeful that Amir's visa will be issued soon. Amir will leave for Ireland from the first available flight after his visa process is completed. Amir was banned from international cricket for five years by the International Cricket Council (ICC) along with Mohammad Asif and Salman Butt, in a spot-fixing case in 2010. Amir also served half of a six-month custodial sentence in young offenders institutes in Feltham and Dorset. After marking his return in 2016, the 31-year-old helped Pakistan win the ICC Champions Trophy 2017 where Men in Green bamboozled the arch-rivals India in the final by 180 runs. Amir is remembered for his breath-taking spell in the final where he dismantled India's top order by removing Rohit Sharma, ShikharDhawan and the chase-master Virat Kohli. However, the left-arm bowler announced his international retirement at the age of 28 in December 2020, saying he could no longer play under the management and that he was being "tortured mentally". But Amir took back retirement before the recent series against New Zealand and was included in the national squad. Pakistan team will play three T20Is in Ireland, followed by four in England. After the England series, Pakistan will leave for the United States to feature in the T20 World Cup.

## Nadal to make Rome return against qualifier

ROME: Rafael Nadal was drawn on Monday with a qualifier in the first round of the Italian Open as the 22-time Grand Slam winner continues his comeback from injury on clay in Rome. Should Nadal get through to the second round in the Italian capital, where he has won the title a record 10 times, he could face world number nine Hubert Hurkacz. Also on Nadal's side of the draw are last year's winner, world number four Daniil Medvedev, and the beaten finalist Holger Rune. The 37-year-old last won in Rome in 2021 and dropped out last year with injury ahead of the tournament. Since making his comeback in April after three months on the sidelines, Nadal, who sits at 305 in the men's ATP tour rankings after hardly playing in 2023, has been knocked out in the second round in Barcelona and reached the last 16 in Madrid. This season is expected to be Nadal's last, even though he has not decided exactly when he will be hanging up his racket. Numerous physical issues have hampered him over the past two years and he has said that he will only compete at Roland Garros later this month if he feels competitive. - Agencies

WEB DESK

TOKYO: Japan's Naoya Inoue climbed off the canvas to stop Luis Nery in six rounds to retain his undisputed super-bantamweight championship in Japan. The first knockdown of his career only lit a fire in the undefeated Inoue as he outclassed Nery in front of 55,000 fans at the Tokyo Dome. After exchanging left-hook knockdowns in the opening two rounds, Inoue turned on the style to break down Mexico's Nery and end the challenge to his reign via a brutal right hand. It was a brilliantly entertaining performance from Inoue, who extended his unbeaten record to 27-0 and staked his claim as the best fighter in the world in any weight division. Inoue expertly managed to fit all four world title belts around his 5ft 5in frame as he delivered a rousing post-fight interview to his adoring fans. "How did you like the big surprise in the first round? I was not happy I got knocked down," Inoue said. "That happening gave me good mo-

## Inoue thrills 55,000 as fightback denies Nery

tivation. I am so thankful to get the fight against Nery." Inoue has become such a star in his home country that he was able to headline the first boxing event at the Tokyo Dome since James 'Buster' Douglas produced one of the biggest upsets in sports history against Mike Tyson in 1990. 'The Monster', as Inoue is nicknamed, sold out the historic venue and reportedly earned £5.2m before a punch was even thrown. Inoue's rock star profile was further emphasised by his entrance, as legendary Japanese musician Tomoyasu Hotei welcomed him to the ring. Hotei played his song 'Battle Without Honor or Humanity', made famous worldwide when it was used in Quentin Tarantino's Kill Bill movies. Inoue entered stony-faced and flanked by a massive firework dis-

play, not unlike how heavyweights Anthony Joshua or Tyson Fury might walk to the ring when they fight at Wembley Stadium. But after a lavish entrance just after 21:00 local time, there was a wretched start for Inoue as he was knocked down by a beautiful left hook from 29-year-old Nery in the opening round. Fighting from a southpaw stance, Nery caught Inoue flush, but the defending champion recovered well to survive the round. It was the first time Inoue, a man with 23 knockouts in 26 fights, had hit the deck. Inoue went on the offensive in the second round and moving backwards landed a lightning quick counter left hook to drop Nery. The Mexican was quickly back to his feet, but having touched the canvas he began to be more cautious in his approach.

## Pakistan's T20 World Cup 2024 kit revealed

The Green Shirts will begin their World Cup campaign on June 6 in the United States

AFZAL JAVED

LAHORE: The Pakistan cricket team's official kit for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024 on Monday was revealed in an unveiling ceremony by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board Mohsin Naqvi was the chief guest of the kit unveiling ceremony held at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore. Captain of the national cricket team Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi, and Chief Operating Officer Salman Naseer were prominent in the ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, Syed Mohsin Naqvi said the national team is leaving for the World Cup tonight. Mohsin Naqvi reiterated an enticing prize incentive of \$100,000 for each player in the squad if they emerge victorious in the upcoming T20I World Cup in June. "The hard work of players earns PCB money, Mohsin Naqvi said, adding the cricketers have the first right to all the board's resources. He expressed hope that by Allah's grace, the team will bring the 2024 trophy as they brought in 2009. Pakistan's white-ball captain Babar Azam along with senior players like Shaheen Shah Afridi, Mohammad Rizwan and others posed with the new jersey named "Ma-

trix Jersey". The PCB posted a video on its X handle, formerly Twitter, where Saim Ayub, Naseem Shah, Babar and others can be seen doing drills and at the end, all of them were wearing the new jersey that the Green Shirts will don in the upcoming ICC event. Pakistan are in Group A of the World Cup with India, Ireland, Canada and co-hosts United States. Meanwhile, the Pakistan team will leave for

Ireland tomorrow ahead of their T20I series against the home side. Pakistan team will play three T20Is in Ireland, followed by four in England. After the England series, Pakistan will leave for the United States to feature in the T20 World Cup. The 18-player squad, which was announced for Ireland and England T20Is, will be reduced to 15 players for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup



2024 after the first T20I against England on May 22. The initial deadline for squad submission was May 1 but the teams can make changes till 25th of the same month. After that, any changes will require approval from the event's technical committee. It is worth mentioning that 20 qualifying teams are divided into four groups of five, from which the top two teams of every group will make their way to the Super 8 round. In that stage, qualifying teams will once again be divided into two groups of four, from which the top two teams will make their way to the semi-final and then the winners will play the final on June 29.

**Groups for T20 World Cup 2024**  
**Group A:** India, Pakistan, Ireland, Canada, United States  
**Group B:** England, Australia, Namibia, Scotland, Oman  
**Group C:** New Zealand, West Indies, Afghanistan, Uganda, Papua New Guinea  
**Group D:** South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Netherlands, Nepal  
**Schedule of Pakistan's T20 World Cup matches**  
**June 6:** Pakistan vs USA, Dallas  
**June 9:** Pakistan vs India, New York  
**June 11:** Pakistan vs Canada, New York  
**June 16:** Pakistan vs Ireland, Lauderhill

## World Portuguese Language Day festivities to be held in Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01  
It was through the varied seas of this world, starting at the very beginning of 15th century, that the Portuguese Language navigated from its western-European birthplace to varied new locations in all the world's 5 continents. The sea takes as the sea brings, and language is a shared construct. Many Portuguese words were incorporated in a significant number of other languages and dialects around the world, including Urdu. Many shared terms as "chave", "mesa" and "camisa" demonstrate that relationship. Conversely, many words from those languages and dialects enriched the Portuguese language, for Urdu, words like "Shal" and "Oxalá".

*Joint letter of the Ambassadors Olytho Vieira, from Brazil, and Frederico Silva, from Portugal. - DNA*

## Pakistan highly...

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satisfaction over the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Italy bilateral relations, the prime minister urged the two sides to enhance cooperation in the fields of education, trade and investment, legal migration, as well as cultural exchanges. Thanking the Italian leadership for the congratulatory message that he received on his re-election, the prime minister conveyed his sincere commitment to work closely with Italy to further cement bilateral ties in the days ahead. Emphasizing the importance of high-level exchanges, the prime minister extended a cordial invitation to Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni to undertake an official visit to Pakistan. He conveyed his appreciation for Prime Minister Meloni's policies at home and abroad that had made Italy an important member of the EU. He thanked Italy for hosting a large population of Pakistani diaspora who were acting as a bridge between both countries while also contributing to their economic growth.

## Putin orders tactical...

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nuclear posture. Russia says the US and its European allies are pushing the world to the brink of confrontation between nuclear powers by supporting Ukraine with tens of billions of dollars of weapons, some of which are being used against Russian territory. Russia's defence ministry said it would hold military drills, including practicing the preparation and deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons. President Vladimir Putin ordered the exercises, the ministry added. "During the exercise, a set of measures will be carried out to practice the issues of preparation and use of non-strategic nuclear weapons," the ministry said. It added that missile forces in the Southern Military District, aviation and the navy will take part. The exercise aims to ensure Russia's territorial integrity and sovereignty "in response to provocative statements and threats by certain Western officials against the Russian Federation", it said. Russia and the US are by far the world's biggest nuclear powers, holding more than 10,600 of the world's 12,100 nuclear warheads. China has the third-largest nuclear arsenal, followed by France and Britain.

## MBS likely to visit Pakistan this month

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of the Saudi crown prince, they added. The Saudi crown prince is expected to sign memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to implement the \$5 billion investment during his Pakistan visit which is likely next week. According to sources, final date will be decided this week.

## Briefs

## Ukraine's soldiers mark Easter on the front line

RÉGION DE DONETSK: In a small house near the front line, the location a closely guarded secret, around 40 Ukrainian soldiers gathered for a copious breakfast to celebrate the Orthodox Easter. Gathered in a canteen, where the windows were blacked out with tarpaulins, the men of the 24th motorised brigade lined up in front of the chaplain. Under the harsh light of the lightbulb, the faces appeared tired after more than two years of harrowing warfare. Singing, prayers, blessing; the service lasted nearly an hour before the soldiers sat down to a breakfast of chicken, mashed potato, cakes and sodas. "In the context of the day-to-day military work, this is a spiritual relief, a spiritual uplifting," said one soldier, 49-year-old Igor Kotsko. "It also gives you a lot of strength. To keep your morale up, to keep fighting the enemy," he added. Rostyslav Osushan, the 39-year-old military chaplain, shared the soldiers' meal, seated beside them. "In war, life and death are so close," he said. "And yet you have to see and feel the inner strength, which you can only get from the spirit." The men were celebrating Easter at a time when Russian forces have been making front-line gains because of the lack of weapons and ammunition on the Ukrainian side. —Agencies

## Panama's president-elect Mulino, from the farm to the hot seat

PANAMA CITY: Jose Raul Mulino left his farm and horses behind with his sights set on becoming Panama's vice president under his former boss, ex-head of state Ricardo Martinelli. Then, in March, Martinelli was disqualified from contesting the presidency — a month after he lost his final legal bid to avoid prison time for money laundering and took asylum at the Nicaraguan embassy. Mulino, 64, stepped into his shoes and rode his mentor's popularity to the finish line — winning elections Sunday with more than a third of votes cast in the single-round, first-past-the-post national election. His mere participation, however, was touch and go. Mulino's candidacy was challenged in court on the basis that he had not participated in a primary vote or picked a running mate, as required by law. The Central American country's Supreme Court finally approved his run just two days before election day — swayed, it said, by the right of Panamanians "to elect and be elected." Under Martinelli — who was president from 2009 to 2014 — Mulino had served as justice minister and public security minister. —APP

## Govt committed to address problems of farmers

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal Monday assured that government was taking all possible steps to protect the rights of farmers on priority and formulating fruitful policies for the welfare of farmers which will improve crops to enhance productivity. Talking to a private news channel, he said that all necessary steps regarding the purchase of wheat and said that there should not be any delay in the procurement of wheat so the farmers can get reward for their hard work. The authorities concerned strictly directed by PM to complete the procurement of wheat from farmers, he said, adding, the wheat procurement target was also increased from 1.4 million tonnes to 1.8m tonnes. A strict inquiry committee was constituted to probe a wheat import scandal which will submit its report to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he said, adding, after getting details we will take further decisions. —APP

## ADB chief reaffirms support to Pakistan

The ADB Annual Meeting brings together senior leadership from the member countries to discuss the emerging issues of global concern including food security, climate change and dealing with external shocks. The central theme of the 57th meeting is "Bridge to the Future"

DNA

TBILISI: Mr. Masatsugu Asakawa, President, Asian Development Bank (ADB), in his meeting with the Pakistan delegation led by Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, reaffirmed ADB's continued support to Pakistan. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 57th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors. President ADB reposed his trust in Pakistan's reform agenda and appreciated the required tough stabilization measures taken by the Government to bring about macroeconomic stability in the country. President ADB assured Pakistan of its continued support in the areas of Public Private Partnership, climate and disaster resilience enhancement, Domestic Resource Mobilization, promoting Women Inclusive Finance and Energy Sector reforms. The ADB Annual Meeting brings together senior leadership from the member countries to discuss the emerging issues of global concern including food security, climate change and dealing with external shocks. The central theme of the 57th meeting is "Bridge to the Future". While appreciating ADB's long-standing and generous support to Pakistan, Minister Ahad Cheema briefed the President on a series of reforms introduced by the Government. The key reforms include enhancing tax revenues, improving financial sustainability of energy



TBILISI: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema meets with President of Asian Development Bank on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the Board of Governor. —DNA

sector, reduction in untargeted subsidies and scaling up social protection. Minister Ahad Cheema appreciated ADB's ongoing institutional and capital reforms, successful completion of the Capital Adequacy Framework review and unlocking of \$ 100 billion in additional financing over next 10 years to support developing member countries. He urged ADB to deploy the additional resources towards high impact interventions including climate actions

on the most vulnerable countries. Minister Ahad Cheema on behalf of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, extended invitation to President ADB to visit Pakistan which he accepted. Earlier, speaking during the business session of the ADB's Board of Governors, Minister Ahad Cheema highlighted Government of Pakistan's firm commitment to wide-ranging program to unlock Pakistan's economic growth potential. As a result of

the reforms, "the economy is now on the consolidation path with improvements in inflation and some recovery of economic growth", stated the Minister. He underscored the need for ADB's stronger support in the areas of climate change, domestic resource mobilization, human capital development and food security. Minister Ahad Cheema also held meetings with the senior leadership of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

and European Investment Bank to discuss their ongoing development portfolios in Pakistan and priority areas for future support. He also held meetings with bilateral development partners including the United Kingdom, Germany and USA to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in key priority areas of the Government of Pakistan including end to end digitalization of taxation system, energy infrastructure and climate change.

## Polish party blames EU 'manipulation' for losing power

WARSAW: Manipulation and unfair treatment by the EU were key reasons for the Law and Justice (PiS) party's ouster from power after eight years in late 2023, according to a senior official of the Polish opposition party. "There was unfair information against our government, especially in the Polish but also the international media," Arkadiusz Mularczyk, Poland's former secretary of state for Europe, told Anadolu. He said the European establishment supported the then-Polish opposition, referring to Prime Minister Donald Tusk's Civic Platform (PO) party and the coalition that won the October 2023 elections. Tusk, who was the president of the European Council from 2014 to 2019, has been premier since last December. The PiS' electoral defeat came after persistent with the EU over alleged rule of law abuses and democratic backsliding, including judicial interference. The bloc withheld funds for the EU member state, some of which are now being released to the Tusk's pro-EU government. "The EU used a lot of political and diplomatic instruments, and a lot of manipulation, against the Polish government," said Mularczyk. He accused Tusk of having used "a lot of forces against public media and the prosecutor's office" since taking power. "There was no reaction from the EU. EU leaders said everything in Poland is fine, that there is no rule of law problem under Tusk, and finally they announced that funds would be open to the Tusk government," said Mularczyk. He rejected the EU's allegations against the former PiS government as "untrue and unfair," stressing that it was "a political instrument" used against the party. There were "a lot of double standards" and the EU was "instrumentalizing its power," Mularczyk said. Mularczyk said there are "major differences" between the policies pursued by his party and the Tusk government. "After five months, we see major differences between our foreign and security policy and that of the Tusk government. We see Poland's cooperation with NATO and the US. Without US cooperation, it would be very difficult to protect the eastern flank of NATO. We initiated a lot of military and security investments with the US and NATO," he said. He said there are still major countries in the EU who "don't spend too much on security," citing Germany, "which doesn't spend 2% of its GDP," and the Netherlands as examples. "Some countries talk about security but do nothing. Some are responsible partners, like the US and UK. So, our cooperation should be based on an alliance with the US and UK," said Mularczyk. "Tusk would like to organize our security policy in relation to Germany. He wants to be engaged in the Sky Shield project. This is a virtual project. We see this mainly as a shield for the German economy rather than a real model for European security." —DNA

## Bodies of murdered Australian, US surfers identified in Mexico

TIJUANA: Relatives on Sunday identified the bodies of two Australians and an American shot dead in a suspected robbery in Mexico, authorities said, marking a tragic end to the search for the missing surfers. The corpses were found with bullet wounds to their heads, according to officials in crime-hit Baja California state, suggesting an execution-style triple homicide. The news confirmed the worst fears of the families and friends of Australian brothers Calum and Jake Robinson, and their American friend Jack Carter Rhoad, who were

on a surf trip to Mexico's Pacific coast. The trio were believed to have been murdered during an attempt to steal their pick-up truck, state prosecutor Maria Elena Andrade said at a press conference. The vehicle — which had been burned — was found nearby. The state prosecutor's office later confirmed that the bodies had been formally identified as those of the missing surfers. "The victims' relatives were able to identify them without the need for genetic tests," a statement said. Australian Treasurer Jim Chalmers described the news as "horrendous" and

said the "whole country's heart goes out to all of their loved ones. "It has been an absolutely horrendous, absolutely horrific ordeal and our thoughts are with all of them," he said. Mexico's foreign minister Alicia Barcena expressed her condolences in a statement, saying that her office "maintained a constant and direct dialogue with the Australian Ambassador to Mexico, Rachel Elizabeth Moseley, and her team, to support the efforts of the diplomatic mission." Three suspects, two men and one woman, have been detained on suspicion of involvement in the case, according to

Mexican prosecutors. One of those arrested has a history of violence, drug dealing and robbery, officials said. Investigators said earlier that the bodies were recovered from a cliff-top shaft in an "advanced state of decomposition." Another corpse found at the site had been there longer and was unconnected to the others, officials said. AFP journalists saw authorities use a pulley system to extract the mud-covered bodies from the shaft on Friday near the town of Santo Thomas, about 30 miles (45 kilometers) southeast of Ensenada. —DNA

## Housing crunch a factor in Greek EU vote

It currently stands at just 67 percent of the European average, according to a Eurostat study published in March. Only Bulgaria does worse

ATHENS: In the run-up to the European parliament elections in June, many Greeks are focussed on what for them is the big issue: finding a home. Soaring rents, record-breaking numbers of tourists and a surge in foreign investment in property all mean that getting affordable housing here is an uphill task. And thousands of people face the same challenge. Kyriaki Tsouti and Dionyssis Giakoumelos are among those caught in the housing labyrinth. Tsouti, 32, is unemployed. Her partner, Giakoumelos, also 32, clears 750 euros (\$804) each month. They want to start a family, but 60 percent of their income goes towards housing expenses. And even in the semi-rural town of Koropi east of Athens, an 80-square-metre (860-square-foot) flat costs more than 500 euros a month, Tsouti told AFP. "It's a considerable increase for our tight budget," she said. It is a problem for increasing numbers of people in this country of 10.4 million. Incomes slashed during the 2009-2018 debt crisis, have still not recovered. In terms of household income, Greece ranks in 21st place among the 27 EU member states even after an increase in the minimum wage to 830 euros, according to EU data agency Eurostat. According to a Bank of Greece report in November, Greeks spent 34.2 percent of household income on housing in 2022 compared to an EU average of 19.9 percent. "With 1,000 euros per month and a rent of 550 euros excluding charges, what is left to live on?" said Nikolettta Diga a 36-year-old civil servant. She was one of those who joined a recent demonstration in Athens calling for affordable rents. "I was forced to scramble to find a room-mate," she said. Between 2009 and 2022 salaries fell by 32 percent, according to figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Greece has the lowest wages among developed economies, says the OECD. That — and the cuts to pensions during the debt crisis — dealt a major blow to the purchasing power of Greeks. It currently stands at just 67 percent of the European average, according to a Eurostat study published in March. Only Bulgaria does worse. —Agencies

## Breaking Free from difficult partnerships

AMINA AG



In today's age of rapid technological advancement and globalization, the sophistication of relationships and love often take a backseat amidst the hustle and bustle of life. With the rise of dating and marriage apps, the dating landscape has undergone a significant transformation, turning the search for love into a mere swipe game. Many individuals find themselves caught up in this whirlwind, engrossed in the process of swiping through

potential matches rather than investing in meaningful connections. Even for those who seek genuine companionship, decoding the true intentions of others remains a tough challenge. While we hold onto the hope for future technological innovations that may one day unveil the true feelings of potential partners, we are left with no choice but to rely on our instincts and understanding of the essence of love in the meantime. In this context, the importance of love awareness cannot be overstated—it becomes as essential to our well-being as the very air we breathe. Navigating relationships can feel like a delicate dance, where we're often drawn to people who challenge us and stir our emotions deeply. But amidst this attraction lies a tricky trap: loving difficult individuals. It's a familiar pattern, where we strive to please someone who seems indifferent to our efforts. Who decided this was normal? Love shouldn't

feel like a burden. If it weighs heavily on your heart, it's time to take a step back and reassess. The idea that enduring hardships makes love stronger might sound romantic, but it's not true. This notion is often glorified in media and literature. True love should bring tears of joy, contentment, and fulfillment. It should be filled with compassion, selflessness, and understanding. Real love doesn't cause pain; it uplifts and nurtures. If your journey is marked by tears of sadness, manipulation, or neglect, it's a clear sign—that you're experiencing isn't love. Too often, we find ourselves entangled with people who constantly demand proof of our love while giving little in return. This toxic dynamic eats away at our well-being, turning life into a battlefield of one-sided efforts. It's time to recognize our own worth. Love shouldn't demand more than we can give, nor should it chip away at our core. We deserve partners who meet us halfway, reciprocating our care

and devotion. Recognizing when love has turned sour is crucial. Signs of deception, abuse, or emotional neglect should never be justified as acts of love. We owe it to ourselves to set boundaries, keeping out those who don't value our hearts. Admitting we have chosen the wrong person is scary, but it's the first step toward freeing ourselves. In our quest for love, we must distinguish between the real and the fake. Some souls resonate with love's true essence—those who respond with kindness, cherishing our presence without conditions. These are the ones worth embracing, where love feels effortless and genuine. However, leaving should be the last option. Communication is key in healthy relationships, bridging misunderstandings and illuminating our darkest corners. If something bothers us about our partner, we must speak up openly and honestly. Through dialogue and understanding, we navigate the complexities of love, building bonds

based on trust and respect. Understanding your partner plays an important role in relationships, what your partner is anticipating and what makes them happy, sad, or angry. Try to accommodate it following healthy boundaries. Whenever you feel overwhelmed and it's only you who is suffering, STOP and take a break. Sit, think, evaluate, and ask yourself if the other person is worth it or not. If you think it's worth it, reevaluate your relationship, talk to your partner, communicate your true feelings, speak your heart, set your roadmap, and follow it. Do not forget to re-evaluate it at any point in time wherever you think it is not going well. Re-think everything, trust yourself, and take your move. Egoism can be the downfall of love and every other relationship in life. It's important to recognize when ego becomes toxic and when it's healthy. Healthy egoism should be welcomed in a relationship. We should learn to compromise and sometimes surrender for

the sake of loving our partner, but without losing ourselves in the process. Remember, healthy egoism is the essence of a loving life. As Ehsan Segal said in his Poem; If I kill my ego I kill myself If I don't I kill my love The dilemma Between love and the ego Force me to lie So that I don't lose the love And the ego Breaking free from the cycle of loving difficult people requires courage and self-awareness. We must prioritize our own happiness, refusing to settle for anything less than mutual love. Though the path may be uncertain, it leads to liberation—a place where love flows freely, without struggle or resentment. Let's commit to breaking free from toxic love, embracing the simplicity of loving those who uplift us. Let's value ourselves enough to walk away from those who fail to see our worth. In the vastness of humanity, there are souls waiting for us—those who will love us effortlessly and unconditionally.

## Israel army says 'encourages' eastern Rafah residents to leave

JERUSALEM: The Israeli army Monday called on Gazans living in eastern Rafah to head to an "expanded humanitarian area" in the Palestinian territory, ahead of an expected military operation in the southern Gaza city. "IDF (military) encourages the residents of eastern Rafah to advance towards expanded humanitarian area," the military said in a statement. The prospect of an invasion in Rafah has triggered alarm from aid groups and world leaders. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday said Israel had yet to present "a credible plan to genuinely protect the civilians who are in harm's way", and without such a plan Washington "can't support a major military operation going into Rafah." Soon after the war in Gaza began on October 7, Israel told Palestinians living in the north of Gaza to move to "safe zones" in the territory's south — including Rafah. But Rafah has been repeatedly bombed from the air and Palestinians regularly say that no area of Gaza is safe. "The IDF has expanded the humanitarian area in Al-Mawasi to accommodate the increased levels of aid flowing into Gaza," the military statement said, referring to a coastal area near Rafah. "This morning ... we began a limited scope operation to temporarily evacuate residents in the eastern part of Rafah," a military spokesman told journalists in an online briefing. "This is a limited scope operation." In its statement, the military added that messages "to temporarily move to the humanitarian area will be conveyed through posters." —Agencies

## Private investment fuels race for nuclear fusion power in US

NEW YORK, May 6 (AFP/APP): Spurred on by major technological advances and huge private investment, the United States' nuclear fusion sector could be producing electricity within ten years, industry players say. The process, that powers the Sun, sees two atomic nuclei combine — and release massive amounts of energy. But private companies on Earth are also hoping decades of research might finally culminate in fusion power plants being connected to the grid in the 2030s. The buzz comes amid an influx of cash: in two years, the private sector has more than doubled its investments, reaching a total of \$5.9 billion at the end of 2023, compared with just \$271 million from the public sector. Part of the hype is derived from what experts see as an impending tipping point, where theoretical science will soon become a reality. "It's not just about doing science, it's actually about delivering products," said Dennis Whyte, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Around two-thirds of start-ups from various countries, surveyed by the Fusion Industry Association (FIA), see the first fusion power plant connected to the power grid by 2035 at the latest. —APP

**Briefs**

**Azam Swati gets extension in interim bail**

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Special Judge Central Islamabad has extended interim bail until May 15 of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Azam Swati in the controversial tweets case. Special Judge Central Hamayun Dilawar heard the case against Azam Swati on Monday. During the proceedings, the judge ordered maintaining order in court and to avoid crowding in the courtroom. Ali Bukhari reiterated that the lawyers present in court did not belong to the International Legal Foundation (ILF) but were instead junior associates. The court directed that only the lawyers responsible for presenting arguments in the case should be actively involved and others should remain seated. Bukhari presented his arguments, asserting that Azam Swati's bail was granted on merit. However, Prosecutor Rizwan Abbasi claimed that Swati had misused the relaxation granted by the court and labelled him a scoundrel after being granted bail. Abbasi requested time from the court to further investigate the matter from his client. Consequently, the Special Judge Central granted extension in interim bail until May 15. Addressing the media outside Judicial Complex, Swati expressed his lack of awareness regarding any PTI deal. He said he was involved in the ongoing judicial cases against him. The PTI leader advocated for the rule of law and justice as essential guarantees for state institutions.

**IAEA chief arrives in Iran for high-level talks**

TEHRAN: Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Mariano Grossi has arrived in Iran to attend an international nuclear conference and hold high-level talks with senior nuclear and political officials. Grossi was welcomed by Behrouz Kamalvandi, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOD), upon his arrival in the capital Tehran on Monday. Grossi is scheduled to meet with the Iranian officials and the AEOD chief, Mohammad Eslami, during his visit to Tehran and also to participate in the International Conference on Nuclear Sciences and Technologies (ICNST), which is underway in the central province of Isfahan. Speaking on the sidelines of the ICNST's opening ceremony, Eslami said the international conference was warmly received despite pressures from hegemonic powers to prevent the realization of Iran's peaceful nuclear program. "Well-experienced figures have participated in this summit despite acts of obstructionism, and good articles have been presented. Our goal is that these articles and achievements showcase the level of Iran's science and technology to the world," Eslami said. — Agencies



GAMBIA: Official Group Photograph of Heads of State and Heads of Delegation for the OIC Islamic Summit held in Banjul, The Gambia. — DNA

**New genocide as Israel orders Rafah evacuation**

Hamis warns Israel that any ground operation in Rafah would have serious consequences for the regime as the Palestinian resistance movement is fully prepared to defend its people in the southern Gaza city

NEWS DESK

RAFAH: The Israeli army appears set to launch its long-threatened assault on Rafah as it instructs Palestinians to leave parts of the city in southern Gaza. Israeli forces called on Monday for people in Rafah, into which huge numbers of displaced Palestinians were previously pushed, to evacuate to "an expanded humanitarian area". The move came as Israel and Hamas blamed one another for a breakdown in truce negotiations. The Israeli military said in social media posts that it "encourages" residents in eastern Rafah to move to an area in al-Mawasi refugee camp, located by the Mediterranean west of Khan Younis. The army said calls to "temporarily" relocate would be "conveyed through flyers, SMS messages, phone calls and media broadcasts in Arabic". "[Israeli forces] will continue pursuing Hamas everywhere in Gaza until all the hostages that they are holding in captivity are back home," it said. In a post on X, Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee specified the appeal was to all people in the ash-Shokha area in the neighbourhoods of as-Salam, Janina, TabetZiraa and al-Byouk. An Israeli military spokesperson told journalists about 100,000 people were being evacuated. The Palestinian group said in a statement on Monday that "any military operation in Rafah will not be a walk in the park for the fascist occupation army." "Our valiant resistance, led by al-Qassam Brigades, is fully prepared to defend our people," Hamas said referring to its armed wing.

**Israeli attack will exacerbate the famine: UNRWA**

NEW YORK: The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, has warned that any Israeli military attack on the city of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip would worsen the unbearable tragedy of the people in Gaza and exacerbate the famine among the population. Lazzarini added on Monday that the looming threat of further displacement could push the Palestinian public to the brink of collapse, exposing hundreds of thousands of people to additional danger. He affirmed that an Israeli attack on Rafah would mean an increase in suffering and civilian deaths, with devastating consequences for 1.4 million people. He pointed out that life in Rafah is fraught with risks and that living conditions are deteriorating and could worsen. UNRWA called for the protection of civilians, stating that what is needed is an immediate ceasefire, not new forced displacement. The agency emphasized that it will remain with its partners in Rafah to provide vital assistance for as long as possible. — Agencies

The Palestinian movement also called on the international community to take urgent action to stop the regime's planned offensive on Rafah, home to about 1.4 million displaced Palestinians, who have taken refuge in the border town and its surroundings after they fled their hometowns elsewhere in the territory to escape the regime's onslaught and now face another move. Hamas warned that any incursion into Rafah threatens the lives of hundreds of thousands of defenseless civilians, including children, women and the elderly. "The actions taken by the terrorist occupation army in preparation for an attack on the densely populated city of Rafah ... have resulted in massacres of innocent civilians." Despite urgent warnings of a humanitarian disaster from his country's allies, including the United States, Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu has insisted for weeks that an assault on Rafah must happen. Israel says the city is a refuge for Hamas command and fighters who must be exterminated as part of Netanyahu's pledge to deliver "total victory" over the Palestinian group. However, NGOs on the ground warn that there is no refuge for the huge numbers of people in Rafah. Displaced people were previously pushed into the city by Israeli attacks on other areas of Gaza, and the city's population is estimated to have swollen to around 1.4 million. Where those people might find safety from a military offensive is unclear. The UN Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) warned in a social media post that an Israeli offensive would inflict more suffering and death on a Palestinian population that the health authorities say has killed more than 34,000 since

October. The evacuation order followed a night of intense Israeli bombardment that killed 22 people, including eight children, in the city. Reporting from Rafah-ahrab news channel, noted that the order came "in the aftermath of the Hamas attack on the Karem Abu Salem crossing, known in Hebrew as Kerem Shalom, and an intense Israeli response, in which they carried out 11 air raids, targeting areas in the eastern parts of Rafah city. "It's important to point out that so far all the evacuation zones designated by the Israeli military have not been safe for the displaced families. In fact, these areas have been constantly under attack, whether in western Khan Younis or here in Rafah, where 1.5 million people are sheltering," he said. Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said in a statement that a military operation in Rafah is required due to Hamas's refusals of mediated proposals for a Gaza truce under which it would free some captives. A Hamas official said the group's negotiating delegation was headed to Doha for "consultations" after the latest round of talks in Cairo failed to produce an agreement. CIA director Bill Burns is expected in Qatar on Monday for "emergency" talks on mediation efforts with Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, a source told the AFP news agency. Hamas negotiators have maintained their stance that any agreement must include a permanent end to the war inside the enclave, Palestinian officials said. Israel has refused a full ceasefire, offering instead a pause in fighting to allow a prisoner swap.

**French envoy lauds Pak role in regional stability**

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France, Nicolas Galey called on Minister for Defence and Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif and appreciated Pakistan's role in regional stability here on Monday. On the occasion, the Defence Minister highlighted that Pakistan attaches great importance to its bilateral relations with France, a news release said. He emphasized enhanced collaboration between the Armed Forces of the two countries. The Defence Minister expressed that Pak-France bilateral relations are based on principles of mutual respect. He stated that Pakistan was committed to stability and peace in the region. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to address global challenges of terrorism and extremism. The visiting dignitary ensured to play his role for further improvement in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.

**SARVP of WB meets finance minister**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: South Asia Regional Vice President (SARVP) of the World Bank, Mr. Martin Raiser called on the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at Finance Division, today. The meeting was also attended by Country Director of the World Bank (WB) Mr. Najib Benhassine and senior officers from Finance and Economic Affairs Divisions. The Finance Minister briefed Mr. Raiser on the macro-economic situation of the country and efforts of the Government for stabilization of the economy. The Finance Minister outlined Govt's priority reform areas including increasing the tax to GDP ratio, reducing the costs in energy sector, SOE reforms, privatization and human capital development. Mr. Martin Raiser acknowledged Pakistan's commitment to economic reforms and reiterated the World Bank's readiness to extend technical assistance and financial support to facilitate the country in achieving its developmental objectives.

**Pak 'high priority' opportunity for us: Saudi minister**

Pakistan-Saudi investment moot begins in Islamabad; Fin Min expresses commitment to facilitate private sector

FAISAL SEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Two-day Pakistan-Saudi Arabia investment conference kicked off on Monday with a positive note from the head of the Saudi delegation who said they considered "Pakistan a high priority economic, investment and business opportunity". A 50-member high-level Saudi trade delegation led by the Deputy Investment Minister of Saudi Arabia, Ibrahim Almubarak, is in Islamabad to explore various avenues of trade and investment. The conference has been organised in light of decisions taken during meetings between

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman to promote bilateral trade and investment, besides fostering a new era of growth and prosperity for the people of both countries. Addressing the event, Ibrahim Almubarak said that Saudi companies consider Pakistan "very suitable for investment" and underscored that the delegation's visit will provide opportunities to expand trade relations between the two countries. "Our visit to Pakistan is a continuation of the previous visit [...] Saudi government and companies are giving preference to Pakistan for investment," the dignitary said. Highlighting that a large number of Pakistanis are contributing to the development of the Kingdom, the dignitary said that Saudi investors are interested in investing in various sectors in Pakistan. Earlier, speaking at the opening session of the moot, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb expressed the government's commitment to fully facilitate the private sector to take the country towards export-led growth. He said the government is focusing on bringing foreign direct investment to uplift various sectors. Stressing that the government's job is to provide the policy framework, the finance czar noted that the private sector should lead from the front with the ministers and bureaucrats taking the back seat. Giving an overview of the country's economic situation, the finance minister said it is on a positive trajectory. The agriculture GDP is growing at 5% on the back of bumper crops including that of sugarcane, rice, and wheat.

**China prioritizes strategic coop with Europe: Xi**

Macron urges coordination with China on Ukraine and 'major crises' at Paris summit

FOREIGN DESK

PARIS: China regards Europe as an important dimension in its major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and an important partner on its path toward Chinese modernization, Chinese President Xi Jinping said here Monday. Xi made the remarks at a China-France-EU trilateral meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at Elysee Palace. Expressing his delight in meeting with Macron and von der Leyen again, Xi noted that France is the first stop of his overseas visit this year, and that the trilateral meeting amplifies the Europe-wide significance of this visit. China always approaches its relations with the European Union (EU) from a strategic and long-term perspective, Xi said. It is hoped that China-France and China-EU relations would reinforce each other and thrive together, he added.

As the world enters a new period of turbulence and transformation, China and the EU, as two major forces in the world, should continue to see each other as partners, stay committed to dialogue and cooperation, deepen strategic communication, enhance strategic mutual trust, build strategic consensus, carry out strategic coordination, work for steady and sound growth of China-EU ties, and continue making new contributions to world peace and development, Xi said. Xi's first visit to Europe since 2019 will also see him hold talks in Serbia and Hungary. Xi has said he wants to find peace in Ukraine even if analysts do not expect major changes in Chinese policy. But his choice of France as the sole major European power on his itinerary indicates the importance the leader of the one-party Communist state of more than 1.4 billion people accords to Macron as an EU powerbroker over two years into Russia's invasion.

