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'Arrogant' West risking global conflict: Putin

Detailed News On Page-07

Apology offer to Imran still stands: Kh. Asif

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Haaland on EPL player of season shortlist

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Law to take its course

PM reveals, May 9 was 'mutiny' against COAS

Cabinet inquiry committee report finds "PTI's direct involvement" in May 9 riots that saw military installations being vandalised

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: As the country marks the first anniversary of the May 9 riots, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday termed the incident as a "mutiny" against Pakistan Army and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir. Chairing a special cabinet meeting in Islamabad in relation to last year's May 9 riots, PM Shehbaz said that the incident was not only an attempted insurrection against the state but also a mutiny against the armed forces and Army chief Gen Munir. "This revolt was snuffed out," the prime minister said in the high-level huddle also attended by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leaders Sherry Rehman and Naveed Qamar and other allied parties of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). His remarks refer to the riots that broke out after the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in a graft case and saw hundreds of protesters vandalising military installations across the country. During the protests, the miscreants targeted the civil and military installations including - corps commander house in Lahore and the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. Commenting on the reasons behind the incident, the PM said that the attacks might not have happened if the PTI-led "puppet government" was not ousted in a constitutional manner. The attacks might not have happened if the PDM government hadn't taken notice of various corruption scandals - such as the \$190 million case and others, and if the chief election commissioner (CEC) hadn't taken notice of the foreign funding issue, he said.

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PM calls for strengthening Pak-Qatar coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that Pakistan was keen to transform its excellent ties with Qatar into a mutually beneficial robust economic partnership. The prime minister, in a meeting with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi, who called on him here, stressed that the two countries should continue to work together to strengthen bilateral cooperation in all spheres of mutual interest, especially in trade and investment. Highlighting the important role of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), he said that Pakistan would like to see Qatar expand its investment portfolio in Pakistan in priority sectors. To this end, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would be able to ensure swift coordination, he assured. Welcoming the Qatari dignitary and

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ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H.E. Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Gwadar: 7 barber shop staffers killed

Deceased employees belonged to Punjab's Khanewal district

STAFF REPORT

GWADAR: At least seven people were shot dead on Thursday while they were sleeping in their residential quarters in Balochistan's port city. According to Gwadar Police Station Station House Officer (SHO) Mohsin Ali, unidentified gunmen opened fire on a residential quarter near the Gwadar Fish Harbour in the Surbandar area, leaving seven dead and one injured. The police official said that the dead and injured individuals used to work in a

Continued on Page 06

Tarar: All eyes on PM's upcoming visit to China

Tarar appeals judiciary for taking May 9 cases to logical conclusion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Thursday that eyes of the whole world were focused on the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China. During a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, the two leaders discussed Pakistan-China relations, China Pakistan Economic Corridor, government initiatives to revive Pakistan's economy and other important issues. During the discussion regarding Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's upcoming visit to China, the minister said that besides the ongoing projects under CPEC, new projects and investment in CPEC will also be discussed. "The relations between Pakistan and China are based on friendship, trust and mutual respect," he said adding the relationship

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Imran empowers Alvi to talk with 'real power'

PTI workers and supporters held rallies in solidarity with the party's incarcerated founder in various cities to mark a year since the arrest of Imran



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has assigned an "important

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Briefs

Nation stands with Imran Khan, claims Arif Alvi

Says PTI founder is most popular leader in the world

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Former president Dr Arif Alvi says that the PTI founder is the most popular leader in the world. Alvi said in a press conference that the people from the army who were involved in May 9 were punished. He said that PTI also said that those involved should be punished. Arif Alvi said that former army chief Qamar Bajwa had said that the army would not take part in politics. He said that everyone knows how the army interfered in the election which damaged the image of the army.

Rana offers new proposal of national dialogue

He reiterated that no guilty person would be spared

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs, Rana Sanullah Khan Thursday offered new proposal of national dialogue with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to end current crises and stressed opposition to play a responsible role for the country development. Talking to a private news channel, he said that all the political parties were respectable for us and Pakistan could not afford any political tension, adding, all political parties have to play their key role to end political instability so that the country can move towards economic improvement.

Rejects US report on religious freedom Pak asks Kabul to act against terrorist groups

OIC resolutions on Kashmir collective voice of Islamic world, reinforcement of Pakistan's position: FO spox

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday said that the resolutions and pronouncements of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) were the collective voice of the Islamic world which reinforced Pakistan's call for settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, welcomed the reaffirmation by the OIC of its strong and unequivocal position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute during the 15th Islamic Summit of the OIC held in Banjul, recently. She said, "the Summit's Final Communiqué and the 'Banjul Declaration' reaffirmed unwavering support and solidarity with the Kashmiri people, called on India to revoke all unilateral and illegal actions taken since 5 August 2019 in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and respect the rights and freedoms of the people of Jammu and Kashmir." Besides, she said the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir

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Britain reiterates support to Pakistan's socio-economic development

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Britain has reiterated the commitment to support Pakistan in its socio-economic development endeavors. This was expressed by British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriot during a meeting with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in Islamabad today. Chief Economist and Director for Economics and Evaluation Directorate in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Professor Adnan Qadir Khan accompanied was also accompanying the High Commissioner. The Finance Minister extended a warm welcome to both guests.

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SBP reserves rise over \$9bn on IMF inflow

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Foreign reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) have increased to \$9.12 billion after the disbursement of the last tranche of \$1.1 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the short-term deal. The SBP issued a statement on Thursday on the current position of the country's liquid foreign reserves post-IMF inflow, confirming the central bank's reserves stood at \$9.12 billion in the week ending May 3. Meanwhile, the net foreign reserves held by commercial banks

Continued on Page 06

No deal with architects of dark chapter in history, vows COAS

Gen Munir says inimical forces have unleashed digital terrorism, are trying to create rift between army, people

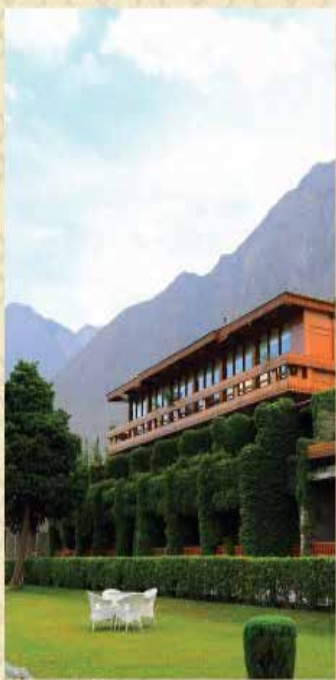
ABID RAZA

LAHORE: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Lahore Garrison, today. COAS laid floral wreath at Martyrs' Monument and paid solemn tribute to the Shuhada who sacrificed their lives for the motherland. COAS was given detailed briefing on operational preparedness of the formation. While addressing the Garrison officers and soldiers at Corps Headquarters, COAS lauded the troops for their services to nation and appreciated their professionalism. COAS underscored that inimical forces and their abettors have unleashed

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PASTC urges KP Health Deptt to prioritize tobacco control

PESHAWAR: In a united front against the tobacco epidemic, Blue Veins, a local non-governmental organization together with the Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco and Nicotine Control (PASTNC), urged the provincial Health Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to integrate comprehensive tobacco control measures into the forthcoming provincial health policy. A press release on Thursday stated that in Pakistan, tobacco use is a cause of death of estimated 160,100 persons every year. Almost 23.9 million adults currently use tobacco in any form in the country. The civil society organizations emphasized the urgency of adopting the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), an evidence-based treaty that has shown significant efficacy in reducing tobacco use and, consequently, non-communicable diseases (NCDs). "Incorporating tobacco control into the health policy is not just a regulatory act—it's a commitment to the well-being of all our citizens," stated Qamar Naseem, Program Manager of Blue Veins. "Effective implementation of both demand- and supply-side interventions can significantly reduce tobacco consumption, paving the way for a healthier future for our province." He said. Zahood Ahmad, the representative from the Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco and Nicotine Control, echoed this sentiment, "The inclusion of robust tobacco control measures in the Provincial Health Policy will reflect the Provincial Government's dedication to safeguarding public health.—APP

Collective measures to be taken to keep Mardan clean

MARDAN: To keep Mardan clean, everyone has to play a role, the city lacks a plan to dispose of the waste from the washrooms, and this waste is joining the sewage water affecting the health of masses. These views were expressed by resource person Dr. Israr Ahmed during a workshop held in connection with the cleanliness drives of the Mardan district. Executive Director IRSP Shah Nasir, Members of the WASH networks, and social organizations in Mardan in collaboration with Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA) Pakistan under the auspices of IRSP, a non-governmental organization were also present. The workshop was organized for social workers, women, municipal representatives, minorities and students. The speakers said that better relations between the government, international donors, and local NGOs are needed for participatory monitoring of the WASH sector in Mardan. Dr. Israr Ahmed on this occasion said that there was a need for better coordination, where the government has provided basic facilities, the experts added during the workshop. There is a greater need for participatory monitoring, social workers, women, municipal representatives, minorities and students must participate in it, he added.—APP

May 9 incidents probe to reach logical conclusion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif Thursday said the accountability of the perpetrators of May 9th mayhem would reach to its logical conclusion as it was a matter of sanctity of the martyrs' and 240 million Pakistanis' pride in their Armed Forces. Addressing the news conference flanked by Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, the Defence Minister termed the attacks on military installations as tantamount to country enmity. Khawaja Asif said the Armed Forces and civil law enforcement agencies are fighting the war for the country's survival and rendering sacrifices every day during the ongoing war on terror. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) deliberately damaged e prestige of the state institution under its inimal motive, he alleged. The Defence Minister accused the PTI for making the Army Chief's appointment controversial whereas the appointment was the only prerogative of the Prime Minister. "I have been four times part of the process as the defence minister which



was never influenced by any entity as it was the then PML-N government's vision to appoint the most decorated soldier as the Army Chief," he said. He said the PTI former chairman orchestrated a new narrative of "absolutely not, and no to slavery", but his party leaders were meeting with the US Ambassador and hiring lobbyists to beseech them for relief. The Minister also lambasted the PTI members of

the Parliament for obstructing proceedings of the House under their political motives to benefit their detained party founder. He accused the PTI for hatching out the conspiracy against the state institutions in the past years and termed it as a planned activity and not an abrupt or new move. "The PTI is a political force in the Parliament and they claim that forced statements were made by deflected PTI leaders whereas the latter

categorically stated Imran Khan was not listening to them. Media, commentators and analysts are also claiming that forcefully party loyalties were shifted by the PTI leaders. All of them may retract from their statements if they are right," he said. The PTI, he said has done nothing for the betterment of the country despite ten years rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PTI). January 6, Capitol Hill attack perpetrators and rioters were charged

with penalties under special legislation, whereas the facilitators and the leaders were also taken to task in the United States of America," he added. While deriding the PTI slogan of "Khan Nahi to Pakistan Nahi" (No Pakistan Without Khan), Khawaja Asif said Pakistan was not hinging upon the personality of an individual but was created after millions of people's sacrifices. Quaid-e-Azam late led the migration of people from Jammu till UP for a separate Islamic state to be run under the law of Allah and His Prophet (PBUH). Khan Nahi to Pakistani Nahi sloganers mind that Pakistan would remain till the day of judgment as it was founded after the sacrifices of the martyrs of 1947 independence movement, the 1965 War and the War on terror martyrs. It is the part of faith of every Pakistani that Pakistan means "There is no God but one," he added. He queried that on whose behest the state institutions were targeted and for what reasons which should be revealed before the nation. Responding to media queries, he said the political parties would have to hold dialogue with each other whereas the state institution has decided to stay away from politics then it should not be dragged by any party into the process.

Murtaza Abbasi condemns May 9 attacks

ABBOTTABAD: Secretary General of Pakistan Muslim League-N and former Federal Minister Murtaza Javed Abbasi expressed deep concern over the events that unfolded on May 9 and termed it the darkest day in Pakistan's history. He expressed these views in a social media statement. Murtaza Javed Abbasi highlighted an "unholy attempt" by a militant group to sow discord between the Pakistani Army and the public, citing attacks on military installations, including the revered Jinnah House. Moreover, Abbasi lamented the desecration of the statue of Captain Colonel Sher Khan, a revered martyr and national hero. He emphasized that May 9 was orchestrated as part of a nefarious scheme, with undeniable evidence against the perpetrators. He vehemently denounced those who misled the youth and incited violence against the state, asserting that they deserved no mercy. Acknowledging the valor of the martyrs, Abbasi saluted their courage, bravery, and valor, even recognized by the enemy. He condemned the perpetrators who resorted to violence against fellow citizens, declaring them unworthy of being called Pakistanis.—APP

Students protest in Karachi against Israeli genocide in Gaza

Student-led demonstration saw participation from several universities including Bahria, KU, NED, and FAST

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Amidst the global wave of protests, students from various universities in Karachi gathered outside Karachi University's (KU) main gate on Thursday to demonstrate their solidarity with Palestine against Israel's actions in Gaza. The student-led rally, comprising both male and female students, congregated at the Silver Jubilee gate of KU before marching towards NED University. A student organiser, who chose to remain anonymous, highlighted the peaceful nature of the "#StudentsforPalestine" rally initiated across sixteen universities in Karachi, stating, "This is the message of Karachi's youth." The demonstration resonated with pro-Palestinian sentiments

as students carried banners and placards depicting the plight of Gaza. Addressing concerns about obtaining permission for the rally within their universities, a student organiser explained, "It's a sensitive issue, so faculty approval is challenging." Leadership from various universities clarified that the protests were organised at a student level, hence formal permission from faculty or university administrations was not sought. Artworks portraying Israeli atrocities adorned the rally, with many students donning the symbolic black-and-white keffiyeh headscarf in solidarity with Gaza. Madiha Siddiqui, a psychology student at Bahria University Karachi Campus (BUKC), expressed her empathy for the Pales-

tinians, stating, "I want to play my part in voicing our frustration with international peace efforts." Echoing similar sentiments, a KU student stressed the need for student voices to be heard in global protests. "It's high time we, as students, also channel our voice," she remarked. Expressing satisfaction at the increasing mobilisation of universities, a female student emphasised the solidarity of Karachi's students with the suffering of Palestinians. Muhammad Haseebullah, a software engineering student at BUKC, underscored the awareness among Karachi's students about the plight of Palestinians. "Karachi's students want to convey to their Palestinian Muslim brothers that they are well aware of their sufferings and

pains," he stated. Eman Shakeel, another student, stressed the importance of taking action against ongoing brutalities. "It's the least we can do to awaken the Muslim ummah," she remarked. Voicing his frustration with Israeli actions, a student expressed his desire for Muslim countries to intervene. "I am here because I want the Muslim ummah to take a stand for our brothers and sisters," he protested. A week prior, over two hundred professors from Karachi University, including several deans and senior academics, along with the president of the KU Teachers Society, penned a letter expressing solidarity with ongoing protests in US campuses against Gaza atrocities.

Chairman PRCS delivers recommendations

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Pakistan Red Crescent Society Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari participated in the inaugural session of the preparatory meeting for the 34th International Conference convened by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Geneva. He presented recommendations on behalf of Pakistan Red Crescent for the upcoming international conference, highlighting the organization's commitment to implementing actions in accordance with global humanitarian laws, the Geneva Conventions, climate change adaptation, and disaster preparedness. During his visit, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari also had a meeting with the newly elected President of IFRC, Ms. Kate Forbes. Both leaders discussed the arrangements for the 34th International Conference, focusing on the recommendations put forth by Pakistan Red Crescent Society. President Forbes praised Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari's leadership in alleviating the suffering of vulnerable people in Pakistan through the Red Crescent Society and expressed a commitment to enhancing cooperation for advancing humanitarian services in innovative ways in the future. Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari extended congratulations to the President IFRC on the successful completion of her first 100 days in office. Ms. Forbes acknowledged that in her initial days, her priorities encompassed national society development, climate change, youth engagement, equitable resource allocation, governance and leadership, accountability and transparency. Furthermore, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari briefed on the initiatives related to environmental conservation and sustainability, including measures to address climate change and the promotion of Solarization and greenhouse initiative. Emphasis was also laid on the active involvement of youth in various activities. He extended an invitation to the President IFRC to visit Pakistan, which she graciously accepted. Both leaders exchanged souvenirs symbolizing the spirit of humanitarian collaboration. Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari concluded his visit leaving his impressions in the visitor's book.—DNA

US embassy officials meets PTI leader

ISLAMABAD: Christopher J. Brown, Deputy Political Counselor of the American Embassy, held meeting with Senator Shibli Faraz, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, at Parliament House, on Thursday. They also exchanged views on Pakistan-US relations, economic and political situation and matters of bilateral significance. Senator Shibli Faraz emphasized that economic and political stability are interlinked highlighting the need for collaborative efforts to enhance bilateral cooperation. He said that there is need to promote a conducive environment for constructive discourse and progress. Acknowledging the challenges facing the nation, Leader of the opposition in the Senate, Shibli Faraz called for engaging with all stakeholders. "Dialogue with all stakeholders is the only solution," he asserted, stressing the significance of inclusive decision-making processes. Echoing the sentiment of continuity and stability, Senator Faraz underscored the importance of consistent policies to ensure sustainable development.—APP

Ethiopian embassy holds business forums

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) in Islamic Republic of Pakistan in collaboration with Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) conducted two Ethio-Pakistan Business Forums to mobilize the businesspersons, traders and investors for the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia scheduled

for May 26th to May 31st, 2024. H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDR Ethiopia in Pakistan, presided over those business forums along with the respective Presidents of both the trade bodies on Wednesday. H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula urged the business community of Karachi to take part in the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia which presented an extraordinary opportunity to connect not only with Ethi-

opia but the entire Africa. According to the Ambassador, the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation will provide an opportunity to participate in the International Manufacturing Trade Fair where manufacturers from the entire world including Africa will participate. H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula also shared other details about the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia which included business forums, meetings with ministers concerned and high officials, visits to the industrial

parks and top notch tourist sites, and on top of that cultural nights in Addis Ababa. The Ambassador briefed the business community about the comparative advantage offered by the FDR Ethiopia in terms of cheap, clean and sustainable energy, industrial parks, incentives and one-window operations for the investors. On the other side business community of Karachi assured the Ambassador of their participation in the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia.

Dar, Swiss ambassador discuss bilateral relations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar received the Ambassador of Switzerland, Georg Steiner, today for a courtesy call.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Dar said that Pakistan attaches high importance to its ties with Switzerland and the two sides have the potential to expand cooperation in trade and investment, climate, tourism and migration. He appreciated Swiss companies doing business in Pakistan and invited more Swiss companies to invest in Pakistan, particularly in the renewable energy and IT sectors. Referring to the MoU on Disaster Management signed between the two countries last year, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister hoped that it would foster greater cooperation between the two sides, enabling them to utilize technology and expertise to address natural calamities in the future. Regional dynamics and multilateral

issues were also discussed. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister also appreciated Switzerland's role in the multilateral arena as

well as the country's contributions to humanitarian and peace-building efforts. Pakistan and Switzerland have close relations marked by regular inter-

actions. The Swiss Foreign Minister visited Pakistan last July and Bilateral Political Consultations were held in January this year.





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National Days and Armed Forces Days

May

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

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Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police...9266044
Motorway Police.9270601-20
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RGH.....9290301-7
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Shifa International 4603666



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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ISSI hosts “Next-Generation strategic cohort 2024’ moot

Chairman Board of Governors ISSI, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, delivered concluding remarks. Certificates were distributed among participants as a token of appreciation for their active participation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a one-day workshop, titled “Next-Generation Strategic Cohort 2024” as part of the series of events aimed at engaging young academics and scholars in the policy discourse relating to foreign policy and strategic issues in South Asia. The workshop was attended by more than 28 young researchers and experts from various think-tanks and Universities from different parts of Pakistan. In his opening remarks, Director India Study Centre Dr. Khurram Abbas welcomed the participants and introduced the theme, objectives and pattern of the event. The workshop was divided into two working sessions. In his remarks on the occasion, Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood lauded the young scholars for their enthusiastic participation in the event. He highlighted that the ISSI’s new vision prioritised youth engagement and that the Institute was now proactively drawing the next generation experts into the process with new ideas and fresh perspectives. He stressed the im-



portance of developing a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the intricate issues at hand, making more informed and insightful evaluations, and suggesting more innovative approaches to addressing the longstanding challenges and realizing the emerging opportunities. The first session consisted of three lectures, viz. ‘India-Pakistan Bilateral relations: Prospects

and Challenges for Normalization’; ‘Understanding Indian Strategic Culture and Political Thought Process’; and ‘Emerging Technologies and Comprehensive National Security’. In the second session, the young scholars were divided into six groups with each group tasked to debate various issues – ranging from security and foreign policy to trade and non-traditional threats in South Asia

– and propose a way forward. The ‘Mentors’ for the young scholars in this session included Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman Kashmir Institute of International Relations; Ambassador Riffat Masood, former Ambassador of Pakistan to Iran; Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director Centre for Strategic Perspectives (ISSI); and Dr. Shaheen Akhtar, Professor Department of IR, National Defence University (NDU).

The Mentors lauded the efforts of young academics and researchers and emphasized the importance of in-depth and rigorous thinking on issues of national security and foreign relations. Chairman Board of Governors ISSI, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, delivered concluding remarks. Certificates were distributed among participants as a token of appreciation for their active participation.

A third term for Modi to have serious implications, say experts

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Participants of a roundtable discussion were of the view that a third term for Prime Minister Modi will have serious implications for religious minorities in India. The discussion was held at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). President IRS Ambassador Jauhar Saleem referred to some recent incendiary statements of leaders of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to highlight the anti-Muslim stance of the party. He maintained that while it is easier for a hard-liner political party to resolve outstanding issues with other countries, the BJP seems reluctant to normalize relations with Pakistan. Former foreign secretary of Pakistan Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry stated that India was showing growing tendency towards fascism under the BJP. He added that

instead of wanting to leave a legacy of peace in the region, Prime Minister Modi was aiming at regional domination. Dr Serena Hussain, Associate Professor of sociology at the Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations, Coventry, UK, said that BJP’s policies were leading to worrisome extremist trends among Indian diaspora communities as well. Professor Emeritus of Commonwealth in the School of Advance Studies at the University of London Professor James Manor maintained that the polarizing rhetoric of the BJP during its election campaign was a sign of weakness and cautioned against taking a BJP victory in the election for granted. Pakistan’s former envoy to China Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi related the rising religious fundamentalism in India to a global wave affecting America and Europe. Dr Hamid Iqbal, Faculty Member at the Department of Interna-

tional Relations at the National Defence University, shed light on the ideological discourse of Hindutva which was polarizing the Indian society while Modi’s economic policies were adversely impacting the middle class. Former Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Ms Farzana Yaqoob argued that India was obsessed with Pakistan and its obsession could lead, once again, to use anti-Pakistan sentiment as an election campaign slogan, like it had done in the past. Political Assistant to the Chief Minister of Punjab on Human Rights Ms Urooj Raza Sayyami highlighted the measures introduced by the Modi government to control and manipulate the print and electronic media. Prominent current affairs commentator, Dr Hassan Bokhari, argued that BJP was focusing on divisive rhetoric because it resonates with the Hindu electorate.

Faisal Irfan’s ‘Hoshay’ a glimpse into Pothohari culture

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Celebrating the rich tapestry of Pothohari culture, journalist and poet Faisal Irfan unveils his third literary gem, “Hoshay.” Published under the esteemed banner of Pothohar Rahtal Usar Publications Rawalpindi, this 240-page book offers a captivating exploration of the region’s wedding rituals, from the vibrant hues of Mehndi and Mayon to the grandeur of Gharoli and Barat ceremonies. Within its pages, “Hoshay” breathes life into the timeless melodies of Pothohari folk songs and sthanis, echoing across generations and resonating with the essence of tradition. Faisal Irfan’s previous works, “Pothohari Akhanrh Tay Muhawaray” and “Parjihat Mahahari Anni,” have already garnered acclaim, cementing his status as a revered chronicler of Pothohari heritage. As anticipation builds for his upcoming book, “Chahotay Laray,” accolades pour in from academic, literary, and journalistic circles across Pothohar.—APP

CDA chief discusses critical operational matters

ISLAMABAD: In accordance with the directives of Minister of Interior, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, chaired a pivotal meeting to address critical operational matters. During the meeting, Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa issued clear instructions to all concerned departments. Directions were issued to promptly collect auction payments within the specified due date. Failure to comply will result in the immediate cancellation of the allotment. Similarly, another directive was issued to ensure the timely deposit of lease extensions to maintain property leases; non-compliance will lead to the cancellation of certain leases. Additionally, the department responsible for managing open spaces has been tasked with addressing issues with IESCO and pursuing long-pending payments from them. Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized the importance of these directives in maintaining the integrity and efficiency of CDA’s operations. He commended the dedication of all Board members and underscored the critical importance of their affirmative compliance. Furthermore, Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa highlighted the need for creating new revenue streams for the CDA and instructed the board to explore alternate measures to mitigate risks and foster growth. Members are urged to take immediate and affirmative action to ensure compliance with Minister of Interior directives, to make Authority more financially stable.—DNA

Federal Minister for Interior meets Chinese Ambassador



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior meets Chinese Ambassador Strict implementation of new SOPs is being ensured for the security of Chinese citizens across Pakistan; Mohsin Naqvi.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong on Thursday called on Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to discuss arrangements for Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif’s upcoming visit to China. Mohsin Naqvi welcomed the Chinese Ambassador into the ministry while the Chinese ambassador congratulated him on assuming the portfolio of the Ministry of Interior. In the meeting, discussions were held regarding the preparations for the visit of the Prime Minister

of Pakistan to China and the security of Chinese citizens across Pakistan. The meeting also discussed the progress of the Bisham incident. Naqvi said that the Bisham incident was an attack on Pakistan-China friendship and the elements involved in the incident would be brought to a terrible end in any case. He told the Ambassador that new standard operating procedure (SOPs) have been made for the security of Chinese citizens across Pakistan and strict implementation of SOPs is being ensured. He told the ambassador that he visited the Chinese Consulate in

Lahore and Karachi and met the Consul Generals. The Chinese Consul Generals expressed their satisfaction with the security measures taken by the Pakistani security, said the minister said. “Pakistan will not allow any conspiracy to sabotage China’s friendship to succeed” said Naqvi adding that the brotherly relationship between Pakistan and China spans decades and the enemy cannot crack these strong ties. Federal Secretary Interior Khurram Agha, high officials of the Chinese embassy and relevant officers were also present on the occasion.

‘Pak Investment moot in Jeddah will start a new era’

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Founder Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas met Federal Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal in his office. Chairman Khurshid Barlas briefed about the arrangements for the Pakistan Investment Conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on May 11, 2024. A large number of different business community related to tourism, minerals, medical, civil aviation industry, construction material, private developer, education and other sectors will participate in the conference. Invitations have been sent to more than 2500 delegates who will be part of this conference.

The efforts of the Consul General of Pakistan Khalid Majeed posted in Saudi Arabia in organizing the Pakistan Investment Conference are commendable. He has a very positive attitude towards the Pakistani economy and is playing an active role in strengthening Pakistan-Saudi relations. Discussion Federal Minister Jam Kamal said that more than 30 investors from Saudi companies visited Pakistan under the leadership of Saudi Arabia’s Deputy Investment Minister Ibrahim Al Mubarak. The bilateral relations and economic partnership between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are getting stronger and stronger and the visit has marked the beginning of a new era in the relations between the two brotherly countries. Cooperation from Saudi Arabia at the governmental and private levels will be increased, said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has appointed me as the focal person on matters with Saudi Arabia so that investment matters cannot be stopped under any circumstances. Khurshid Barlas said during the conversation that the Pakistan Investment Conference is a link in this chain. Having this conference in bilateral relations will be beneficial for Pakistan. Our business community will benefit greatly from the partnership with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan’s economy will be strengthened. Finally, Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas also presented the shield to Federal Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal.



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Briefs

9 May, a somber day in Pakistan's history

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui on Thursday expressed sorrow over the events of May 9, describing it as a somber day in Pakistan's history. Talking to PTV News, he lamented over the unfortunate events of May 9 and called it a "Black Day". He condemned attacks on sensitive installations of state, asserting that such actions undermine the sacrifices of martyrs and disregard the plight of their families. "May 9 was not a day for political maneuvers," Siddiqui emphasized, urging for the perpetrators behind the events to be held accountable.—APP

Pakistani Fishing Industry attractive to Chinese Investors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI), Moazzam Ghurki, stated that the Pakistani fishing industry is immensely attractive to Chinese investors. China has a huge consumer market for aquatic products and is one of the largest buyers in Pakistan. According to Gwadar Pro, the main aquatic categories of Pakistan's exports to China include ribbon fish, croakers, sole fish, cuttlefish, etc. Pakistan's seafood exports to China reached \$ 247.3 million, marking a 13 percent increase for the January-December period in 2023 year-on-year. It can be increased to \$ 600 or 700 million," he elaborated while chairing a meeting held here. In his comments, PCJCCI Senior



Vice President Fang Yulong said that the Pakistani fishing industry is hugely attractive to Chinese investors, and the Pakistani fishing community welcomes Chinese investors as they can get jobs and good prices from foreign investors. "In order to improve its exports, we are ready to transfer our technological advancements to Pakistan. China, by collaborating with the Pakistani government, can ask its quality experts of aquatic products to visit Pakistan's fishery and give their suggestions to the Pakistani government regarding cold chain food safety," he added. The joint chamber's Vice President Hamza Khalid was of the view that China is willing to encourage Pakistani exporters who want to establish flake ice factories and processing units adopting modern technology.

Syrian delegation engages with NUST

ISLAMABAD: A seven-member delegation from Syria paid a visit to the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) to explore avenues of co-operation for boosting bilateral academic ties. The delegation was headed by Dr. Rami Waheed Al-Dhulli, Deputy Minister of Education and Educational Affairs. The Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan, Dr. Ramez Alraee also accompanied the delegation to the university. The visit sets the stage for ushering in a new era of bilateral academic and research cooperation between both the countries. The Syrian delegation called on Rector NUST Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari and Pro-Rector Academics, Dr. Osman Hasan, and deliberated on the opportunities for academic and research collaboration between NUST and higher education institutions in Syria. They expressed admiration for NUST's meritorious academic accomplishments and comprehensive knowledge ecosystem.—APP

Jordan envoy opens "dances with colours" art exhibition

Sherzada Khalid Iqbal's journey into the world of art was as remarkable as his creations. Despite his professional background as a Chartered Accountant, Iqbal's life took a transformative turn following a brain hemorrhage in 1997

FAISAL SHEIKH/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) proudly presents the highly anticipated art exhibition, "Dances with Colours," which featured the abstract expressionist paintings of the respected artist Sherzada Khalid Iqbal. The exhibition was inaugurated by Dr. Maen Khreasat, the esteemed Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Muhammad Ayoub Jamali, Director General PNCA. Sherzada Khalid Iqbal's journey into the world of art was as remarkable as his creations. Despite his professional background as a Chartered Accountant, Iqbal's life took a transformative turn following a brain hemorrhage in 1997. This pivotal event unlocked a portal in his mind, igniting an insatiable desire to paint. With colours streaming through his consciousness, Iqbal embarked on a creative exploration, delving into the intricate relationships between materials, aesthetics, and perceptions. "We are delighted by the overwhelming response to Dances with Colours, art exhibition," said M. Ayoub Jamali, Director General PNCA. He highlighted the PNCA's commitment to promoting cultural diversity and artistic expression, stating, "PNCA is honored to showcase the exceptional talent of Sherzada Khalid Iqbal and to provide a platform for artists to share their unique perspectives with the world." Khalid's works were bold, bright, and expressed explosive movement. Layers of liquid enamel formed a shifting surface that appeared to be in a constant state of flux, juxtaposed in complex patterns. Eschewing traditional tools, Khalid employed his hands to create original works of art based purely on his streams of consciousness. Refusing external influences, he adamantly isolated himself from established techniques, maintaining the purity of his work. Constantly evolving, Khalid experimented with various mediums, including metal, glass, wood, board, and canvas.



His paintings invited viewers to interpret and engage with them, as they took on a life of their own, developing and evolving until they were complete. "Sherzada Khalid Iqbal's art

work transcends boundaries and speaks to the universal language of the human experience," remarked Ambassador Dr. Khreasat, "Through exhibitions like 'Dances with Colors,' we strive

to foster an environment where creativity thrives and where art serves as a bridge connecting people across borders and cultures." The exhibition will be open for viewing from 8th-14th May, 2024,

timings 10 am to 6 pm daily, with the exception of Saturdays when the gallery will be closed. Art enthusiasts and connoisseurs were cordially invited to witness the unveiling of Sherzada Khalid

Iqbal's masterpieces and immerse themselves in the transcendent world of "Dances with Colours." The exhibition celebrated the power of abstract expressionism and the boundless creativity of Sherzada Khalid Iqbal.

Cotton mafia is ruining textile sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Thursday said that Pakistan's most important industrial and export sector of textiles should be saved from the clutches of the influential cotton mafia. He said that during the last cotton harvest, the powerful mafia bought large quantities of raw cotton from ginners, after which it reduced its market supply. Following the shortage, the prices started rising, and the textile mill owners only learned about it when they had missed the boat, he added. In a statement issued here today, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that the millers had to buy raw cotton at a much higher price than the actual price, which increased their busi-

ness costs. He added that the surge in business costs also affected their production and exports, leading to the closure of many factories. The textile mill owners had to pay more than usual, which benefited the mafia, but the farmer got nothing, he observed. Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that cotton production in Pakistan is continuously declining, and the area under cotton cultivation in Sindh and Punjab is decreasing. However, since the country's sugar production already exceeds its needs and the government must provide significant subsidies to export excess sugar, the uncontrolled cultivation of sugarcane must stop. He said that the Punjab government's decision not to buy wheat this time is correct. The Punjab government has 22 lakh, 70 thousand tonnes of wheat, so why should it buy more?

The Punjab government also has to return the loan of 355 billion rupees taken last year to buy wheat. Moreover, 125 billion rupees in interest is also given every year on the purchase of wheat, while it takes more than one billion rupees to store and handle it. He said that buying wheat would not benefit the farmers but the hoarders therefore the provincial government should not change its decision under pressure. Dr. Mughal said that, with almost 23% of the country's GDP coming from agriculture, it is one of the most important sources of income. The country had terrible floods in 2022, which hurt wheat production and led to a wheat shortage in early 2023. Pakistan needs about 30 million tonnes of wheat annually, but only 26.2 million tonnes were produced in 2022.

WASA accelerates preparations for Monsoon

RAWALPINDI: Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) Rawalpindi on the directives of Secretary Housing and Urban Development on Thursday has accelerated preparations for Monsoon. According to a WASA spokesman the Secretary had directed the third party to review monsoon preparations and drainage machinery. Superintending Engineer, Public Health Engineering Department Gujranwala Division, Qaiser Rashid visited WASA Rawalpindi along with the team. The third party team reviewed WASA's heavy machinery and declared the machines and arrangements used for the drainage satisfactory. SE Public Health Engineering Department also reviewed the cleaning of sewage lines with modern winching machines on Asghar Mall Road.—APP

PIDE's two-day conference on 'economy of Azad Jammu, Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: The first day of the significant conference on "The Economy of Azad Jammu and Kashmir: Unlocking the Potential" successfully concluded at the Main Auditorium, King Abdullah Campus, Azad Jammu and Kashmir University (AJKU). The joint event of PIDE and AJKU featured a series of discussions aimed at enhancing the socioeconomic conditions of the region through strategic development. Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), emphasized the critical role of ideas in driving national progress. He noted that the responsibility for development does not solely rest with universities but with the collective efforts of society as a whole. Dr. Haque expressed concern over the lack of active intellectual engagement in Pakistani universities, highlighting the scarcity of seminars and conferences. He emphasized the value of every idea and question, stating that there is no such thing as a bad idea or question. Dr. Haque underscored the importance of self-reliance and hard work for achieving prosperity. He described the generation of ideas as a collective project and emphasized the importance of developing local solutions using local ideas. Dr. Haque urged universities to actively involve students in research and to provide them with their own research agendas. He questioned the traditional focus on mineral resources for development, advocating instead for a greater emphasis on ideas and research. Lastly, he posed a thought-provoking question about the ultimate goal of development, suggesting that it should be centered around wellbeing and highlighting the pivotal role of students as valuable assets in this endeavor. Dr. Shujaat Farooq, Dean of PIDE, emphasized the critical importance of debate and innovative thinking in shaping nations' futures during a recent conference.—DNA

IRSA releases 164,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 164,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 197,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1467.95 feet and was 53.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 42,400 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1168.45 feet, which was 118.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 65,000 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 66,600, 58,000, 45,900 and 11,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 62,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 18,100 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Maryam's excellent performance puts an end to Imran Khan's craze

Chief Minister's focus on performance yielding results beyond expectations; Punjab people's satisfaction increases manifold

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of former Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, has emerged as a prominent figure in Pakistani politics. Her tenure as Chief Minister has been

marked by a relentless focus on performance and a commitment to solving the pressing issues faced by the people of Punjab. Maryam Nawaz's leadership style can be characterized by a strong emphasis on performance and results. Upon assuming office as Chief Minister, she swiftly shifted her attention towards addressing the long-standing challenges faced by the people of Punjab. One of her notable achievements has been the establishment of a cleanliness campaign aimed at improving the overall sanitation and hygiene standards in the province. This initiative reflects her proactive approach to governance and her commitment to enhancing the quality of life for citizens. Maryam Nawaz has been instrumental in breaking the cycle of politi-

cal vendettas that often plague Pakistani politics. She has prioritized governance over personal animosities, focusing on delivering tangible benefits to the people rather than engaging in political score-settling. This shift in approach has garnered her widespread support and trust among the populace, leading to a steady increase in the people's confidence in her leadership abilities. Under Maryam Nawaz's leadership, Punjab has witnessed a series of impactful initiatives that have had a positive impact on the lives of its residents. One of the standout programs introduced by her is the Air Ambulance Service, which has revolutionized emergency medical services in the province. This initiative has been particularly beneficial for residents of remote areas

who previously faced challenges in accessing timely healthcare facilities. Maryam Nawaz has placed a strong emphasis on women's empowerment through various programs. The provision of scooters to women for commuting to offices and educational institutions has been a game-changer, enabling greater mobility and independence for women across Punjab. Her administration's efforts to deliver medicines to patients at their doorsteps have been widely praised for improving healthcare accessibility, especially for vulnerable populations. In addition to these initiatives, Maryam Nawaz has also focused on infrastructure development, including the establishment of field hospitals in remote areas. These facilities have been crucial in providing health-

care services to underserved communities, showcasing her administration's commitment to inclusive development. Maryam Nawaz's tenure as Chief Minister has not only yielded significant developmental outcomes but has also had a positive impact on the political landscape of Pakistan. The performance-driven approach adopted by her has enhanced the reputation of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) among the populace, positioning the party as a credible force for governance and progress. Despite political differences with the ruling party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Maryam Nawaz's administration has displayed a spirit of cooperation and empathy by providing relief goods and field hospitals to the people of KP affected by natural disasters. This gesture

underscores her commitment to serving all citizens irrespective of political affiliations, further solidifying her image as a leader focused on welfare and inclusivity. Maryam Nawaz as Chief Minister of Punjab has been characterized by a strong focus on performance, welfare, and inclusivity. Her leadership style, marked by proactive governance and a commitment to addressing the needs of the people, has resulted in tangible improvements in healthcare, women's empowerment, infrastructure, and overall governance in Punjab. Her ability to bridge political divides and prioritize the welfare of all citizens has contributed to the positive perception of the PML-N and has established her as a leader capable of navigating complex challenges and delivering meaningful change.

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Further strangulation of Gaza

RECREATING a scene from the occupation, Israeli tanks entered Rafah Crossing, reaching the Egyptian gate and hoisting the Israeli flag within it. Israel seemingly aimed to project a victorious image by occupying a civilian facility that serves as a lifeline for over 2.3 million people in the Gaza Strip. From a vulnerable border area, Israeli tanks advanced to occupy Rafah Crossing, the sole gateway for Gaza to the outside world, shutting it down and rendering it non-operational. The area has been turned into a virtual prison, divided into at least two sections where residents live in tents amidst rubble, enduring constant shelling. With the occupation of Rafah Crossing, the isolation of the Gaza Strip from the outside world is complete, depriving patients and the wounded of access to medical treatment and preventing the flow of humanitarian aid trucks. This exacerbates the already deteriorating humanitarian situation due to the ongoing conflict over the past seven months. Israeli military vehicles staged a demonstration early Tuesday morning at Rafah Crossing, located southeast of Rafah City near the border with Egypt, following Israeli warnings to residents of eastern neighborhoods to evacuate their homes, indicating an imminent ground military operation. The Crossings and Borders Authority reported that Israel has closed the crossing for the second consecutive day on Wednesday, with Israeli vehicles on the Palestinian side of the crossing. Meanwhile, the entry of aid trucks remains blocked for the fourth consecutive day, whether through Rafah Crossing or Kerem Shalom Crossing. Local and international organizations view the occupation of Rafah Crossing and the closure of Kerem Shalom Crossing, both located south of Rafah City, as exacerbating the humanitarian and health crises that have plagued the small coastal enclave since the outbreak of the Israeli war following the October 7th attack last year. Official estimates suggest that 11,000 war casualties and 10,000 cancer patients are in desperate need of travel for life-saving treatment abroad, after Israeli forces deliberately destroyed hospitals, including the only Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital specializing in cancer treatment. The head of the GMO in Gaza, Ismail al-Thawabta, said that the occupation's decision to stop aid and close the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings comes in the context of "continuing the war of genocide." He added that "this would exacerbate the humanitarian situation in a twofold and catastrophic manner." According to al-Thawabta, the situation in eastern Rafah indicates a real humanitarian catastrophe, not only for this city alone but also extending to all the governorates of the Gaza Strip, which have been experiencing a tragic state of systematic starvation and shortages in supplies and aid for the past 7 consecutive months. Then comes the occupation's decision to stop aid and close the crossings, which worsens the humanitarian situation in a catastrophic manner. Karim al-Falahi confirmed that the occupation has effectively taken control of Rafah Crossing from the Palestinian side and violated the 1979 agreement and the 2005 protocol by deploying military units in the area.



US influence over unrest in Georgia

THE current protests in Tbilisi remarkably resemble those throughout 2019 in Hong Kong. Admittedly, the Georgian protesters have been much more peaceful than our vandals, arsonists and those who assaulted innocents in the guise of protests. The Hong Kong protests were triggered by an extradition bill, which critics and opposition politicians claimed could mean sending Hongkongers to jail in mainland China. Georgian demonstrators are angry at the likely passage of the "Foreign Agents Bill" in the legislature. Officially known as the draft Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, it would require all organisations receiving more than 20 per cent of funding from abroad to register as agents of foreign influence, with fines for those who fail to comply. Sounds reasonable to me! Protesters and the opposition, which denounce the bill as an excuse for state censorship, are supported by Washington, which has criticised the bill for rolling back press freedom. Ironically, the bill is actually modelled on the US' decades-old Foreign Agents Registration Act. Just like Hong Kong in 2019, many Georgian groups that oppose the bill have received funding and training from the US Congress-funded National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and other support from various agencies under the US Agency for Global Media (AGM), a US government department. Such NED-funded Georgian groups include: the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, with funding for changing elite narratives in Georgia; American-Georgian Initiative for Liberal Education, with funding for promoting youth and democratic values; Centre of Independent Journalists, for promoting civic engagement at the local level; Democracy Research Institute, for supporting security sector reform; Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, for developing Georgian independent media; Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, for engaging key actors in democracy; Independent Journalists' House, for citizen and youth engagement in Adjara; International Republican Institute, for Georgia youth leadership, education, application and delivery programme; International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, for protecting the integrity of Georgian elections; Journalism Resource Centre, for regional broadcasting for better local governance; KakhetisKhma (Voice of Kakheti) Media House, for independent reporting for local communities; National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), for strengthening political party networks and messaging at the municipal level; NEOGEN, for promoting human rights education; NGO Open Borders, for Armenian-language news and information; Public Movement Multinational Georgia, for democratic education for ethnic minorities; Shame Movement, for engaging regional youth activists; Soviet Past Research Laboratory, for engaging young scholars in democracy research; Union of Journalists Voice of People, for promoting civic engagement and inter-ethnic tolerance; United Nations Association of Georgia, for supporting independent Georgian media.

Army to give clean chit to PTI if..

Qamar Bashir



Defending the army's involvement in commercial, large-scale manufacturing, banks, mills, real estate business, construction, and transportation, he argued that this phenomenon is not unique to Pakistan. He stated that in many other countries, the army pursues such endeavors to provide benefits to the families of Shuhudas, retired army personnel, and their families. He clarified that not even a single penny of the exchequer was used in raising these institutions, though he couldn't elaborate on how these highly capital-intensive projects were funded due to time constraints

MAJOR General Ahmed Sharif of the ISPR delivered a fiery press conference primarily centered around the 9th May incident, attributing blame to the judiciary for its failure to administer exemplary punishment to the masterminds, planners, abettors, and facilitators. He suggested that PTI could receive a clean chit if it sought forgiveness, condemned the 9th May inferno, vowed not to repeat such an episode, and committed to playing a sincere role in the country's development and progress. He emphasized that the perpetrators of violence and destruction at Jinnah House were so evidently guilty that further evidence was unnecessary for their conviction. However, despite this, they have not received exemplary punishment. In contrast, the army, which operates under an automatic, transparent, and stringent accountability system, has already subjected all those found complicit or failing in their duties during the 9th May episode to rigorous scrutiny. He specifically cited the case of Major General Bilal, Corp Commander Mangla, and former ISI chief General Faiz, who were subjected to strict disciplinary measures by the army due to their alleged involvement, which contravened army discipline and conduct. While criticizing the demand for formation of judicial commission on 9th May inferno, he said that commissions are formed to inquire into those incidents where there was an ambiguity and lack of clarity, whereas in this case the planners, instigators, perpetrators are all known, and there was no need for any inquiry. But if at all the inquiry commission had to be constituted then there should be commissions to hold inquiries against the Dharna of 2014, attack on the parliament, attack on PTV headquarter and to the Prime Minister's House for unearthing the reasons, motives and conspiracy against the then sitting government. The ISPR chief vehemently asserted that while the army respects all political parties and engages with them for the nation's progress and prosperity within the bounds of the law and constitution, it will not engage with those who have desecrated the resting places of the Shuhadas, incited young minds against the state and the

army, attacked army installations, threatened the army, instigated supporters to attack army vehicles, or propagated campaigns to defame the army and drive a wedge between the people and the armed forces. However, he did not specify the constitutional or legal provisions perhaps due to paucity of time which empowered the army to liaise with political parties. While addressing the pervasive anti-state and anti-army sentiments on social media, he suggested that by slowing down the internet and suspending platforms like Twitter (now replaced by X), the pace and toxicity of propaganda have been significantly reduced. He indicated that not only existing laws and regulations would be rigorously enforced to bring offenders to justice, but also new legislation would be introduced by parliament to prosecute those engaging in malicious and toxic propaganda against the state, the army, the judiciary, and those undermining friendly relations with foreign countries. He refrained from commenting on the letters addressed by the six judges to the Supreme Judicial Council, complaining about blatant and overbearing interference by intelligence agencies, stating that the matter is sub judice. However, he added that any complaint had to be supported with incontrovertible facts and evidence; otherwise, such allegations should be regarded as part of a campaign against the army and its institutions. He claimed that PTI is considered the most popular party, while data, evidence, and surveys show that only 7.5% of the total population voted for PTI in the Feb-8 elections. Credible surveys reflected that 74% of the people of Pakistan consider the army as the top most credible and trusted institution of the country. He emphasized that the Feb-8 elections do not prove that those who voted for PTI endorsed or seconded the May-9 incident. Moreover, those who didn't vote for PTI did so against PTI's venomous and toxic politics. He dismissed allegations against the army's involvement in alleged rigging in the Feb-2024 elections as part of a propaganda smear campaign against the army. He demanded evidence from those blaming the army for rigging and

urged them to produce it before relevant institutions for adjudication or justice. He stressed that during the election, the army's role was confined to providing a secure enabling environment for fair, transparent, and peaceful conduct, which was performed professionally, leading to peaceful elections nationwide. Defending the army's involvement in commercial, large-scale manufacturing, banks, mills, real estate business, construction, and transportation, he argued that this phenomenon is not unique to Pakistan. He stated that in many other countries, the army pursues such endeavors to provide benefits to the families of Shuhudas, retired army personnel, and their families. He clarified that not even a single penny of the exchequer was used in raising these institutions, though he couldn't elaborate on how these highly capital-intensive projects were funded due to time constraints. The timing of the press conference was significant, given ongoing judicial proceedings. The Supreme Court is hearing the Faizabad Dharna case and has rejected the Dharna Commission's report. Another Supreme Court bench has suspended the Election Commission and Peshawar High Court's decision, which deprived PTI of special seats for women and minorities, impacting the coalition government's votes in parliament and its ability to make constitutional amendments. This ruling has also given hope to PTI for regaining their status as a political party elections symbol and securing the release of their leader. The entire judiciary is rising against interference by intelligence agencies and the executive in cases with significant political implications. This press conference also posed a significant question: What happens if, following due judicial process, the Supreme Court clears the former chairman of PTI and its leaders, who have been imprisoned for a year, allowing PTI to resume functioning as a regular political party? How does this affect the army's demand that PTI must seek forgiveness to be spared?
— Former Press Secretary to the President
Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC

Ukrainians are opting out of compulsory military service

Dmitri Kovalevich

"The 60-day rule [for self-reporting to the military recruitment office] and other clauses of the adopted draft law are making hundreds of thousands or even millions of Ukrainians into lawbreakers. In fact, it places them outside Ukraine's legal framework entirely," the Ukrainian daily Strana wrote on April 11. The widely-read, online news outlet writes that intensified conscription will mean a huge increase in corruption among police officers, border guards, and the military, implying bribery of those officials in order to avoid service

ON April 16, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a new law approved earlier by the national legislature aiming to intensify military conscription in the country. According to the new law, all Ukrainian men of military age who are not yet registered for military service must present themselves to a military enlistment center within 60 days, with or without formal notification to appear. And if they are already registered for military service, they must update their information within 60 days. The law comes fully into force in July 2024. The law considers notice of registration as being duly served by virtue of the law's adoption. Those who do not show up within 60 days are subject to arrest. Even Ukrainian men abroad are subject to the law. Men between the ages of 18 and 60 are required to register for military service and must carry proof of registration with them at all times. They must present proof to police or conscription officers when demanded. Only those who are registered can apply for a passport. Effectively, a Ukrainian passport now comes in the form of proof of military registration. Earlier in April, a new law lowered the age of obligatory military service from 27 to 25. All female Ukrainian citizens with a military or medical specialty are also required to register. According to the lawmakers and the military, the amended conscription law will force out of the shadows those who have been avoiding military registration by hiding or living at a different address than the one registered with the military. Police and conscription officers are empowered to detain anyone lacking proof of military registration. "The 60-day rule [for self-reporting to the military recruitment office] and other clauses of the adopted draft law are making hundreds of thousands or even millions of Ukrainians into lawbreakers. In fact, it places them outside Ukraine's legal framework entirely," the Ukrainian daily Strana wrote on April 11. The widely-read, online news outlet writes that intensified conscription will mean a huge increase in corruption among police officers, border guards, and the military, implying bribery of those officials in order to avoid service. Strana continued, "The new law aims to boost military conscription, but its success is doubtful. A key problem is the reluctance of a very large part of society to go to war (which we [Strana] explained in our report last October)." Strana says that unwilling recruits are unlikely to be persuaded to change

their minds by the fines provided in the amended law. Reuters news agency explained in an April 23 dispatch, "The initial patriotic flood of volunteers who flocked to the army following the invasion of February 2022 has dried up. The government has acknowledged its conscription drive has run into difficulties, with thousands of people evading the draft and some fleeing abroad rather than risk the trenches." In reality, a huge and expanded repressive apparatus, working like clockwork, will be needed to fully implement the new law. One of the most scandalous features of the new law is its exclusion of a proposed provision for the demobilization of active-duty personnel once they have served 36 months of service. This is a demand of military personnel and their relatives, pleading that people who have already been living in the trenches for two years or more are tired and worn out. But a majority of deputies in the Ukrainian legislature ('Verkhovna Rada') insist there must be no demobilization until the end of hostilities. Yevgeniya Kravchuk, a deputy from the ruling Servant of the People party, has warned that automatic demobilization after three years of service could cause a reduction in Western aid. Strana reports on April 12 that according to a poll in February 2024 by Kyiv-based research agency 'Info Sapiens' for media outlet Texty.org, only 35 percent of the 400 men surveyed said they were prepared to serve if called up. Ukrainian experts say that the adoption of the new law is a signal to the West that Kiev is ready to Dmytro Solomchuk, a member of the parliamentary committee for agrarian policy, says that farmers are abandoning intensive cultivation technologies. "Agricultural producers are buying less fuel, chemicals, and fertilizers because this is unprofitable in today's conditions. Many are switching to traditional methods by which, predictably, there will be lower yields but production costs are also lower. The yields per hectare will be lower for all crops," he says, admitting that depending on the weather, the yields using older, traditional, growing methods will decrease by 30%. As well, shortages of fertilizers are obliging Ukrainian farmers not to grow many crops. Most crops require nitrogen fertilizers, which are mainly produced by synthesizing natural gas. The gas used to be purchased cheaply from Russia, but no longer. Ukraine has voluntarily cut all its economic ties with Russia. Denys Marchuk, deputy

head of the Ukrainian Agrarian Council, also speaks about the acute shortage of personnel due to military conscription, saying, "The lack of human resources is one of the main problems of this year's sowing campaign." A report in TSN.ua cites Deputy Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine TarasVysotsky saying that the minimum number of workers needed in the agricultural industry is 500,000. He stresses that there is a particular shortage of mechanics and tractor drivers. Their required training and skill levels are much higher than in the past. What's more, such workers are prioritized for recruitment to the Armed Forces of Ukraine because they make better drivers or repair technicians of tanks and armored personnel carriers. Some enterprises try to attract male students and young women to work on agricultural machinery, but most, if not all, have neither the experience nor the training for this. Expensive, modern imported machinery quickly breaks down when operated by lesser-trained operators, and trained workers to make necessary repairs are also in short supply. Many qualified training instructors have been conscripted into the army. Ukraine also has little or no machine-building capacity remaining because Soviet-era industrial enterprises were sold and plundered many years ago. Before 2022, the main supplier of less expensive machinery was Belarus, which did not follow Ukraine's example of selling or scrapping its industrial, machine-building capacities. Ukrainian farmers do not have the funds to purchase expensive, imported machinery from Western countries. The Ukrainian Institute of Agrarian Economics recently noted that there is a sharp decline in imports of agricultural machinery. The import shortages are especially critical for tractors, combine harvesters, and sowing equipment. As a consequence, many agricultural enterprises and individual farmers refuse to buy or use expensive imported machinery, turning instead to traditional (often manual) methods of work, leading, in turn, to lower yields and massive degradation of the very foundations of the Ukrainian economy. With shortages of qualified specialists and workers in all fields, including in machine building and repair, and with shortfalls in the production of fertilizers, Ukraine is slowly reverting to the type of agriculture that existed here in the 19th century, before the Soviet industrialization and collectivization of the 1920s and 1930s.

Briefs

PM reveals, May 9 was...

FROM PAGE 01
He also stressed that the riots were triggered to derail the Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) government's efforts to address the damage done to bilateral relations with friendly relations. Furthermore, lamenting the delay in legal proceedings against alleged perpetrators, Shehbaz said: "It is worth wondering why the people accused of being involved in the riots haven't been brought to justice and sentenced as per the law and the Constitution even after one year."

PM calls for strengthening

FROM PAGE 01
his delegation, the prime minister said that Pakistan greatly valued its historic, cordial and fraternal relationship with Qatar and both countries had always supported each other through thick and thin. Prime Minister Shehbaz conveyed his warm wishes and greetings for the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrehan bin Jassim Al Thani.

No deal with architects...

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digital terrorism and are trying hard to create division between Armed Forces and people of Pakistan through peddling lies, fake news and propaganda. However, the designs of all these forces will be defeated with the support of the nation. COAS asserted that every soldier and officer of Pakistan Army puts his duties and responsibilities first, regardless of any other affiliations or preferences and continue to render extreme sacrifices on daily basis.

Tarar: All eyes on PM's

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between the two countries has taken the form of a comprehensive strategic partnership. The CPEC was an important cooperation project between the two countries and China was Pakistan's largest trading partner. "Thanks to CPEC, the access of Chinese products to the markets of Pakistan and Pakistani products to China has increased", he remarked. Tarar said that China's cooperation in the completion of several major projects in Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project was enviable.

Imran empowers...

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responsibility" to former president Dr Arif Alvi, who had been making efforts to bridge the gap between the establishment and former ruling party, revealed the party's Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan on Thursday. The development came a day after the PTI founding chairman turned down the military's demand to apologise for the May 9 events and distanced his party from the violent protests that broke out in the country last year soon after his arrest.

Pak asks Kabul to...

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was the only OIC contact group that met on the sidelines of the Islamic Summit, reflecting OIC's strong solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and their right to self-determination. "Pakistan also welcomes the report of the OIC Secretary General's Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir on his visit to Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The report highlights India's continuing violations of international law in IIOJK," the spokesperson said and reiterated Pakistan's continued political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri people. Apprising the media of the diplomatic engagements, she mentioned the ongoing visit of Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov to Pakistan.

Djokovic targets peak form in Paris after patchy start

The 37-year-old, who has split with long-time coach Goran Ivanisevic, is currently working with former doubles world number one Nenad Zimonjic and said he was happy with his progress

PARIS: Novak Djokovic said he is building up to hit top form for his French Open title defence, after the world number one skipped last month's Madrid Masters and arrived early in Rome to continue his preparations for the year's second Grand Slam. The Serb last competed at the Monte Carlo Masters in April where he lost to Casper Ruud in the semi-finals, and the record 24-times Grand Slam champion is still seeking his first trophy of the season.

The 37-year-old, who has split with long-time coach Goran Ivanisevic, is currently working with former doubles world number one Nenad Zimonjic and said he was happy with his progress ahead of Roland Garros starting on May 26. "I had plenty of time to also rest and train. I had a good training block. I arrived (in Rome) two days ago to get a hit on the centre court, obviously stay four-five days training before my first match with top players," Djokovic told reporters. "Obviously it's different when you train

Nadal happy to be playing 3rd straight event

WEB DESK

PARIS: Rafael Nadal said he is encouraged by his steady progress after returning from injury last month, as the 14-times French Open champion continues his preparation for Roland Garros at this week's Rome Masters. Nadal, who has said he expects to retire after this season, spent most of last year nursing a hip issue that required surgery, before a muscle tear in Brisbane stalled his comeback in January. The 37-year-old returned

to the tour during the clay swing for tournaments in Barcelona and Madrid, and is fit enough to play his third event in a row in Rome. "That didn't happen since a super long time ago," he told reporters on Wednesday. "That's good news. I need to keep going. I need to keep exploring how I'll be able to manage to play every day. But yeah, I'm happy the way that I feel today." The 22-times Grand Slam champion said he experienced tough moments in his last two tournaments, and in his first training session in Rome ahead of Thursday's opener against Zizou Bergs. "But in general, the line's going up, without a doubt," he added. "Happy to be today where I am, because one month ago for me it was almost impossible to think that I'll be able to play in Barcelona, then in Madrid and now being here in Rome.

with them, playing practice sets, seeing where your game is at and working your way towards the fine form for the first official match. "I think I'm on a good route to peak at Roland Garros in Paris. Hopefully here in Rome I can play better than I did in Monte Carlo." Djokovic also parted ways with fitness coach Marco Panichi and said he had rehired Gebhard Gritsch as he targets success in the Grand Slams and the Paris Olympics.

"We know each other really well. That's why I feel we're synchronised from the very beginning in terms of what we want to do, how we want to approach the programme of training on and off the court. With Nadal as well," Djokovic added. "I'm pleased with the way the last 10-14 days went in terms of training, in terms of preparation and looking ahead to this tournament, but particularly Roland Garros, Wimbledon and the Olympic Games." - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: A vendor is preparing colorful ice Gola for students outside a government school during hot weather in the Federal Capital. - Online

Jokic joins NBA greats with 3rd MVP award

LONDON: Denver Nuggets centre Nikola Jokic has joined some of the NBA's all-time greats by winning the league's Most Valuable Player award for the third time. The Serb, who was previously named MVP in 2021 and 2022 and was runner-up last year, is just the ninth man to win the award three or more times. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was named MVP a record six times, Michael Jordan and Bill Russell are five-time winners, while Wilt Chamberlain and LeBron James have claimed the award on four occasions. Jokic joins Larry Bird, Magic Johnson and Moses Malone as three-time winners. "It's a special moment I'm probably going to remember my whole life," Jokic, 29, said. "It's - I like to say - a legacy for after [your] career." Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander was second in the voting and Dallas Mavericks guard Luka Dončić third. Jokic has averaged 26.4 points, 12.4 rebounds and nine assists this season and has completed 25 triple-doubles. He became just the second player to finish with more than 2,000 points, 900 rebounds and 700 assists in a regular season as the defending NBA champion finished second in the Western Conference. However, the Nuggets are 2-0 down against the Minnesota Timberwolves in their best-of-seven conference semi-final. In the Eastern Conference semi-finals on Wednesday, Jalen Brunson overcame injury to spark the New York Knicks' comeback win against the Indiana Pacers. Brunson went off with a right foot injury in the first half with his side leading 24-17 and in his absence the Knicks fell 73-63 behind. - Agencies

Mitigating Risks In Oil And Gas Industry

FROM BACK PAGE
and lethal accidents in everyday life. Due to this reason, the probability of accidents and explosions has experienced an evident shift in recent times. As highlighted earlier, the root cause of such incidents is generally deduced to be improper handling, poor maintenance, and non-implementation of SOPs among the general public. With a responsible attitude and adequate counselling of general population, the rate of such accidents can be minimized to near zero.

- Mr. G.M. Shaheen (Executive Director, Technical) OGRA and Miss. Sadaq Iqbal (Intern)

SBP reserves rise over...

FROM PAGE 01
stood at \$5.3 billion, bringing the country's total forex reserves to \$14.45 billion - a nearly two-year high which was last recorded above \$9 billion in mid-July 2022. The SBP reserves increased by \$1.114 billion to \$9.1203 billion "mainly due to receipt of \$1.1 billion from the global lender as final tranche" under the loan programme, the statement added. Although, the central bank had received SDR 828 million (around \$1.1 billion) from the global lender last month, the SBP made it clear that the amount would be reflected in the foreign exchange reserves for week ending on May 3.

Britain reiterates...

FROM PAGE 01
The Minister highlighted the government's efforts to stabilize the economy, including achievements such as increased forex reserves, stable currency, decreasing inflation, and a flourishing stock market. Additionally, he outlined key reforms, including privatization, SOE restructuring, FBR digitization, export-driven growth initiatives, and energy sector reforms. Acknowledging the support extended by the UK government, he emphasized that KPI based project would lead to effective implementation, with a view to making support more impactful.

Gwadar: 7 barber...

FROM PAGE 01
barber shop in the area and belonged to district Khanewal in Punjab. The SHO told media that the dead bodies and the injured individual have all been shifted to the Gwadar Hospital. At least five among the seven labourers murdered in Gwadar belonged to Mian Channu, the Tehsil's assistant commissioner told a private news channel. Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti condemned the killing of the barber shop workers in Gwadar extending his sympathies towards the families of the victims. CM Bugti also sought a report on the matter, maintaining that "all kinds of force will be used to arrest the terrorists and their facilitators". Balochistan Home Minister Mir Zia Ullah Langau has ordered an investigation into the killing of the seven deceased, terming it "open terrorism". The minister said the killing of workers is a cowardly move, terrorists will be dealt with strictly.

PSG set to honor Mbappe with farewell ceremony

PARIS: French club Paris Saint Germain (PSG) is set to organize a farewell ceremony for star striker Kylian Mbappe on Sunday to honour his services for the club, reported by French newspaper L'Equipe. Mbappe, who joined PSG as an 18-year-old in 2017, is set to leave the club and is likely to join Spanish club Real Madrid, who qualified for the UEFA Champions League final yesterday after edging past German club Bayern Munich. Mbappe had hoped to sign off by leading PSG to Champions League glory for the first time in their history, and they were the favourites to see off Borussia Dortmund at the Parc des Princes in the semi-final second leg. But they failed to overturn a one-goal first-leg deficit, with Mats Hummels scoring the only goal on the night to give Dortmund a 2-0 aggregate victory. Mbappe was one of four PSG players to hit the woodwork in the second half, and coach Luis Enrique complained his side - who had 31 attempts on goal - had been "unlucky".

"I don't really like to talk about bad luck," Mbappe said after the match. "When you are good, you don't hit the post, you score. I tried to help my team as best as I could but I didn't do enough. "When I say we needed to be more clinical, I am the one who has to be scoring. But this is life, we need to pick ourselves up." "When things are good, I take all the limelight and when they are not, you have to take the shadow." During his seven-year stay, he emerged as PSG's all-time top goalscorer with 255 goals in 306 games. He has won six Ligue 1 titles and three Coupes de France, including a domestic quadruple in the 2019-20 season with the French club. He also led them to their first-ever UEFA Champions League final in 2020. - Agencies



Real Madrid achieve unique feat

The record 14-time European champions advanced 4-3 on aggregate

WEB DESK

MADRID: Real Madrid registered a superb 2-1 semi-final comeback win against Bayern Munich on Wednesday to qualify for the final against Borussia Dortmund. The record 14-time European champions advanced 4-3 on aggregate after the first leg ended in a 2-2 draw. Bayern had taken a 3-2 lead on aggregate after Alphonso Davies' second-half goal at the Santiago Bernabeu but substitute Joselu struck two late goals to push Real into their sixth Champions League final since the 2013-14 season. According to Opta, Real Madrid also achieved a unique feat as they have now won four matches despite conceding the first goal in the UEFA Champions League this season, which is the most by a side in a single campaign since Los Blancos in 2016-17 (5) when they went on to lift the trophy. Meanwhile, manager Carlo Ancelotti said that Real Madrid's success in the Champions League is "something magical".

Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Pakistan captain wants govt to 'support hockey like cricket'

"This is a monumental occasion for Pakistan as the last time the team entered the final was in 2011. I am very proud of my team for their hard work and sportsmanship

SPORTS DESK

Ipoh: Pakistan hockey team's captain Aamir Butt has urged the government to support hockey like cricket in the country. Butt shared these remarks after Pakistan qualified for the final of the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2024 on Wednesday in Ipoh, Malaysia. "Pakistan Hockey Federation is not financially strong and television channels don't show hockey matches. Players don't have jobs but they are still playing for the green flag because they love Pakistan. I urge the Pakistan government to support hockey like cricket," Butt told a private news channel on Thursday. "This is a monumental occasion for Pakistan as the last time the team entered the final was in 2011. I am very proud of my team for their hard work and sportsmanship. "I am thankful to be Pakistan's captain and to have had the opportunity to be coached by Roelant Oltmans." Pakistan are unbeaten in the event, so

far, and are at the top of the table with 10 points after four games. Pakistan defeated Canada 5-4 on Wednesday to register their third win in the tournament. Canada had taken a 2-0 lead within the first 17 mins to put Pakistan on the back-foot. However, the green shirts made a great comeback to win the match 5-4. Abu Bakr Mahmood scored the first two goals for Pakistan to bring his side back in the game. Arshad Liaqat, Rana Waheed Ashraf and Ghazanfar Ali also notched up one goal each for Pakistan. Sean Davis scored a brace for Canada, meanwhile Harbir Sindhu and Avjot Buttar scored one each. Pakistan's final pool match is against New Zealand tomorrow, May 10, at the same venue. On the other hand, Japan defeated Malaysia by 2-1 to confirm their place in the final. The final between Pakistan and Japan will be played on Saturday, May 11.

Erling Haaland on EPL player of season shortlist

Former Manchester United striker Cristiano Ronaldo is the only player to win the award in consecutive seasons, in 2006-07 and 2007-08. This month England forward Foden was named footballer of the year by Football Writers' Association

MANCHESTER: Manchester City striker Erling Haaland could be named Premier League player of the season for a second consecutive year. The 23-year-old Norway international has been nominated for the award alongside City team-mate Phil Foden. Arsenal midfielders Martin Odegaard and Declan Rice, Chelsea forward Cole Palmer, Newcastle striker Alexander Isak, Aston Villa forward Ollie Watkins and Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk complete the shortlist. The winner, decided by a public vote and a Premier League panel, will be announced on 18 May. City boss Pep Guardiola, a four-time winner of the manager of the season award, has again been shortlisted, alongside Arsenal's Mikel Arteta, Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp, Villa's Unai Emery and Bournemouth's Andoni Iraola. Last year Haaland became the first player to win the player of the season award and the young player award after scoring 36 goals in 35 league games. He has scored 25 this season as City chase a record fourth consecutive title. Former Manchester United striker Cristiano Ronaldo is the only player to win the award in consecutive seasons, in 2006-07 and 2007-08. This month England forward Foden was named footballer of the year by the Football Writers' Association. He has scored 16 league goals and provided eight assists this season. A City player has won the award

in each of the past four seasons, with Haaland's success coming after Kevin de Bruyne in 2019-20 and 2021-22 and Ruben Dias in 2020-21. Odegaard and Rice have played pivotal roles in Arsenal's pursuit of a first title in 20 years.



Norway international Odegaard has eight goals and eight assists, while England's Rice has nine goals and seven assists in his first season since joining from West Ham. Palmer, who joined Chelsea from City in September, has scored 21 goals and provided nine assists, while Sweden international Isak has 20 goals and one assist. England's Watkins has enjoyed a prolific season with 19 goals and 12 assists, while Netherlands international Van Dijk, who won the award in 2018-19, led Liverpool to the Carabao Cup this season. Haaland, Foden, Palmer and Isak have also been named on the Premier League young player of the season shortlist alongside Arsenal forward Bukayo Saka and defender William Saliba, Manchester United midfielder Kobbie Mainoo and Tottenham defender Destiny Udogie. Premier League player of the season nominees Erling Haaland (Man City) Phil Foden (Man City) Declan Rice (Arsenal) Martin Odegaard (Arsenal) Alexander Isak (Newcastle) Ollie Watkins (Aston Villa) Cole Palmer (Chelsea) Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool) - Agencies

Court Notice

In the Court of Medum Nabila Zaheer Civil Judge Gujrat
Title: Syed Abid Ali. Versus Syed Afzaal Subtain etc.

Notice to: 2-Amir Afzaal S/o. Afzaal Subtain cast Syed R/o. Jamalpur Syedan Tehsil & District Gujrat.
Suit for Permanent Injection
Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 16-05-2024, otherwise case will be decided ex parte.

Briefs

Brazil flooding death toll surpasses 100

PORTO ALEGRE: The death toll from devastating floods that have ravaged southern Brazil for days surpassed 100 on Wednesday, authorities said, as the search for dozens of missing people was interrupted by fresh storms. Some 400 municipalities have been affected by the worst natural calamity ever to hit the state of Rio Grande do Sul, with hundreds of people injured and more than 160,000 forced from their homes. Many have no access to drinking water or electricity - or even the means to call for help, with telephone and internet services down in many places. On Tuesday, state governor Eduardo Leite had warned the human toll was likely to rise as "the emergency is continuing to develop" in the state capital of Porto Alegre and other cities and towns. Some 15,000 soldiers, firefighters, police and volunteers were at work across the state, many in boats and jet skis, to rescue those trapped and transport aid. But in Porto Alegre the rains returned on Wednesday, halting evacuation efforts. The mayor's office urged rescue boats to suspend their activities, citing the risk of electric shocks from lightning and strong winds of over 80 kilometers (50 miles) per hour. Authorities urged people not to return to affected areas due to possible landslide and health hazards. "Contaminated water can transmit diseases," civil defense spokeswoman Sabrina Ribas warned on Wednesday. Many people have been loath to leave their homes for the safety of shelters amid reports of abandoned properties being looted. The National Confederation of Municipalities said about 61,000 homes - down from an earlier estimate of 100,000 - had been damaged or destroyed by unprecedented rains and floods in the state, with losses estimated at about 6.3 billion reais (some \$1.2 billion.) Damage to schools, hospitals and municipal buildings amounted to about \$69 million. Porto Alegre is home to about 1.4 million people and the larger metropolitan area has more than double that number.—Agencies

Australia unveils plan to keep burning gas beyond 2050

SYDNEY: Australia unveiled plans Thursday to keep burning natural gas beyond 2050, saying its reliance on the fossil fuel would not derail a pledge to reach net zero emissions in the next 30 years. Resources minister Madeleine King said gas "will remain an important source of energy" in Australia, outraging environmental groups which branded the Future Gas Strategy a "climate disaster". "Gas is needed through to 2050 and beyond," King said, arguing it would bolster the economy and stabilise the country's electricity grid as renewables were ramped up. Australia has pledged to reach net zero emissions by 2050, and has recently touted plans to overhaul its economy with massive investments in clean energy production. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese defended the gas strategy, saying it would not imperil Australia's climate commitments. "It is consistent with the long position that we have held, my government is committed to a net-zero future," he said. "Gas power generation is something that firms renewables." But environmental groups rubbish the strategy. Jennifer Rayner, advocacy head for the Australian non-profit Climate Council, said the government needed to choose between gas or renewable energy. "It can't do both," she said. "More gas is a bad bet, against a safe climate future and a thriving clean economy." Australian Conservation Foundation spokesman Gavan McFadzean said the government's gas plan was a "climate disaster" that needed to be abandoned. "Gas is a highly polluting fossil fuel, the burning of which is supercharging bushfires, heatwaves, coral bleaching and flooding in Australia and around the world," he said.—APP

President for broadening cooperation with Uzbekistan

The president, talking to Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said that Pakistan attached utmost importance to its ties with Uzbekistan, which were centuries old and based on shared religion, culture and history



ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Mr Bakhtiyor Saidov, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr:—DNA

DNA
ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday called for further broadening bilateral cooperation with Uzbekistan in trade, economy, culture and tourism. The president, talking to Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said that Pakistan attached utmost importance to its ties with Uzbekistan, which were centuries old and based on shared religion, culture and history. Welcoming the foreign minister, the president said that both coun-

tries had great potential to increase bilateral trade and economic ties for the mutual benefit of the two sides. He highlighted that Pakistan was committed to regional connectivity, and the Central Asian countries needed to take advantage of its geographic location. He also suggested barter trade and using local currency to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, besides opening banks in the two countries to facilitate and improve business and commercial relations. He underlined the need for further promoting people-to-people and tourism linkages to

bring the two countries further closer. Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov called for developing a road-map to further deepen bilateral ties and accelerate the partnership for the mutual benefit of two countries. He also urged the need for an action plan to boost bilateral trade and economic cooperation and expressed the hope that the transport corridor between the two countries would further improve bilateral ties. The visiting foreign minister also conveyed the warm regards of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev for President Asif Ali Zardari.

Canada regularization of undocumented migrants in jeopardy

In response, the government toughened its tone, announcing that Canada for the first time in its history would reduce the number of temporary foreign workers, as well as foreign students

MONTREAL: Canada offered hope for thousands of undocumented migrants with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promising a major regularization program. But in just a few months, political winds changed, leaving dreams of residency in jeopardy. "I had a lot of hope but now I don't know what to think. It's very hard," Nina, a Colombian migrant to the country, told AFP. The 50-year-old landed in Canada with her young daughter in 2008. "Here, I found peace. I was fleeing the violence of my country and family violence," she said. But then, in 2015, she was asked to leave Canada. "I wanted to kill myself. I don't know how I will cope with all this. My daughter has become Canadian, my life is here," she said, struggling to keep her emotions in check. The government's latest statements have created confusion among undocumented migrants and the associations that support them, after years of regularization talks with officials. There are between 100,000 and one million undocumented migrants in Canada, like Nina, according to different estimates. Immigration Minister Marc Miller continues to promise in the coming months an "ambitious" program for people who have been in the country "sometimes for years with children who grew up here." But, he told AFP, it "won't be for everyone." Canada is no longer "exempt from the toxic rhetoric on immigration that is affecting all Western countries," he lamented. According to the last census in 2021, 23 percent of the population was foreign-born. Polls, however, have shown a discernible shift in public opinion on immigration. After years of broad support for Canada's open immigration policy, Abacus Data found that 67 percent of recent respondents considered immigration levels in Canada to be either too high or much too high. Meanwhile only 24 percent believed that the current level of immigration contributes positively to the country. "It would be going too far to say that there's been an anti-immigrant turn in Canada," says Andrew McDougall, a political scientist at the University of Toronto. "I think what has started to happen is there's been more questions raised about how immigration is being done." At the start of 2024, Canada's population surpassed 41 million thanks to strong immigration encouraged in order to help ease a labor crunch. But support waned as the record number of arrivals compounded a housing crisis and strained health care and other social services. In response, the government toughened its tone, announcing that Canada for the first time in its history would reduce the number of temporary foreign workers, as well as foreign students.—APP

Moscow won't allow 'anyone' to threaten Russia

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russia President Vladimir Putin says Moscow will not allow "anyone" to pose threats against the Russian Federation, warning about a possible global clash. Putin, who was sworn in on Tuesday for a record-breaking fifth term as Russia's president and began another six-year-long tenure, made the remarks on Thursday on the occasion of the capitulation of Nazi Germany and the end of World War II in Europe in 1945. Russia will do everything to prevent a global clash. But at the same time we will not allow anyone to threaten us. Our strategic forces are always in a state of combat readiness," stressed the 71-year-old Russian leader in a

speech at the Victory Day parade on Moscow's Red Square, marking the anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. "Revanchism, the mockery of history and the striving to justify current followers of Nazism are part of the Western elites' general policy of instigating ever new regional conflicts, interethnic and inter-religious strife and containing sovereign, independent centers of world development," Putin added. His remarks came as on his orders, the Russian military launched its "special military operation" in neighboring Ukraine in February 2022 to "de-Nazify" and "de-militarize" the ex-Soviet republic seeking NATO membership. Since the onset of the ongoing war, the West, and most notably the United States, supported Ukraine with cash and heavy weaponry while imposing unprecedented sanctions on Russian officials and entities. "Russia is now going through a difficult, milestone period, the fate of the Motherland, its future depends on each of us," Putin further said. The Soviet Union, of which Russia was the largest part, lost some 27 million people in World War II, including many millions in Ukraine, which was also part of the Soviet Union but eventually pushed Nazi forces back to the capital Berlin, where defeated Adolf Hitler took his own life and the red Soviet Victory Banner was hoisted over the Reichstag in late April 1945. Putin also accused the West of trying to incite global conflicts and interethnic hostility and restraining sovereign development centers. "In the West, they would like to forget the lessons of the Second World War. But we remember that the fate of mankind was decided in the grand battles near Moscow and Leningrad, Rzhev, Stalingrad, Kursk and Kharkiv, near Minsk, Smolensk and Kyiv, in heavy, bloody battles from Murmansk to the Caucasus and Crimea," the Russian president added at the parade, which also featured Russia's Yars intercontinental strategic missile. After calling for a minute of silence to honor the fallen, Putin ended with the words: "For Russia! For victory! Hurray!", providing the cue for thousands of troops to answer with three loud cheers. The Kremlin has repeatedly warned the endless flow of advanced arms to Ukraine will only prolong the war.

Modi skips polls in IIOJK as critics dispute integration claims

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is criss-crossing the country in a marathon election campaign but, for the first time since 1996, his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is not contesting in Indian-occupied Kashmir (IoK), where a 35-year freedom movement against New Delhi's rule has killed tens of thousands of people. Instead, the main contenders for the three seats in the Muslim-majority region are powerful local parties, the National Conference and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). They will contest against each other but both say they are opposed to the Hindu nationalist BJP and will align with the Congress party-led opposition alliance. Analysts and opposition parties say the BJP decided to skip contesting the election because the outcome is likely to contradict Modi's narrative of a peaceful, more integrated IoK since he removed the region's semi-autonomous status in 2019 and brought it under New Delhi's control. The BJP, along with allies, is contesting in every other part of India and is tipped to win a majority of parliament's 543 seats on the back of its Hindu-first image. "Why are they absent from the election?" asked Omar Abdullah, a leader of the National Conference and a former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir state. "Clearly there is a gap between what the BJP claims to have done and the reality on the ground," he said, speaking in his home in IoK's main city, Srinagar. Modi says his 2019 decision brought normalcy to IoK after decades of bloodshed and that he will bring investments and jobs soon. Home Minister Amit Shah backs up the government's position by claiming that youths now hold laptops in their hands instead of "stones that they used to throw at security forces in the past". As part of the move, the Jammu and Kashmir state was split into two federally ruled areas - the Muslim-dominated Kashmir valley with the Hindu-dominated Jammu plains, and mountainous, Buddhist-dominated Ladakh. The government slapped a harsh lockdown on IoK at the time and Abdullah and almost all other local leaders were held in custody for months. Ravinder Raina, the chief of the IoK unit of the BJP, said the party's decision to skip the election was part of a broader strategy, although he declined to give specifics. "The BJP will not fight, but support a candidate who will work for peace, happiness, brotherhood and democracy" in each of the three seats, he said. The BJP has not yet announced which of the many small parties in the fray it will support.—Agencies

Moscow children celebrate 'victory'

MOSCOW: Outside Moscow's patriotic Victory Museum, 11-year-old Savely beamed with excitement: "I've seen real machine guns!" Standing with his younger brother and mother, Arina, under a grey Moscow sky, the child was well versed in weaponry. "I'm really interested in all this. I know about old German weapons, Soviet weapons," he said. The family visited the museum ahead of the Victory Day holiday, which Russia has always marked with pomp but which has become even more patriotic during the dragging Ukraine offensive. The museum is dedicated to the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, a conflict that claimed around 30 million Soviet lives. The Great Patriotic War - as it is known in Russia - is a source of immense pride in the country and an essential pillar of a fervent military patriotism advanced by President Vladimir Putin during his quarter-century in power. The Kremlin has marshalled this historical narrative to justify its offensive on Ukraine, casting its military campaign as an existential struggle against "neo-Nazis". With its troops fighting in Ukraine, that message has become an increasingly important part of how Russia's young children are raised. Outside the museum, Savely was holding a wooden rifle almost as tall as him. He had requested it as a gift for his birthday a day earlier. Like many Muscovites, the family were visiting ahead of May 9 Victory Day celebrations, a national holiday when Russia marks its military victory with an imposing parade of tanks, weapons, missiles and soldiers on Moscow's Red Square.—Agencies

Ahsan Iqbal holds meetings with Chinese financial institutions

DNA

BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal arrived in Beijing on May 8 as part of the high-level interactions between China and Pakistan and held important bilateral talks between officials and financial institution leaders to accelerate the CPEC 2nd phase. The Federal Minister was accompanied by Ambassador Syed Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Foreign Affairs. After his arrival, the Federal Minister held several key meetings, including at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation (SINOSURE), and China Development Bank (CDB). SAPM Amb. Tariq Fatemi and Khalil Hashmi, Ambassador of Pakistan to China were also present at the meetings. According to Gwadar Pro, in his meeting, with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, the Federal Minister held wide-ranging discussions, aimed at even further solidifying the 'All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership'.

Safe use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)

Fire accidents and hazards derived by LPG cylinders have been frequently endured by the industries and general population. Several cases of fire accidents and explosions due to gas leakage have been prominently reported over the last few years nationwide and worldwide. In addition to gas leak explosions, improper placement of cylinders can also give rise to deleterious consequences

NIMRA YOUSAF & SADAQ IQBAL



THE paucity of natural gas has predominated the use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as a preferred fuel for Pakistan. People wrongly believe that LPG exhibits similar behavior to natural gas; however, most domestic consumers are unaware of the consequences it may pertain.

LPG possessing heavier-than-air qualities, unlike natural gas, can be severely lethal when mishandled. In the circumstance of a leakage, it settles and flows like unsewn water. A tossed-down live cigarette, matchstick, or an electrical fitting near the ground could create a flash which may entail precarious outcomes such as a huge fire or explosion; it is known as a Boiling-Liquid-Expanding-Vapor Explosion (BLEVE). Fire accidents and hazards derived by LPG cylinders have been frequently endured by the industries and general population. Several cases of fire accidents and explosions due to gas leakage have been prominently reported over the last few years nationwide and worldwide. In addition to gas leak explosions, improper placement of cylinders can also give rise to deleterious consequences.

Like the explosion at YUMTO building in Bahria Town, Islamabad implicating five casualties, and the explosion in Sargodha resulting in seven dead including 13 injuries were the consequences of inadequate maintenance/ improper positioning of LPG cylinders. If the general population adopts the correct instructions to handle and store LPG cylinders, incidents like these can be prevented. This discourse encompasses safe practices associated with safe use of LPG and by adhering simple measure/ steps, the probability of such incidents can be reduced to near zero. It is imperative to ensure that the LPG cylinders are being bought from an authorized distributor keeping in mind that the company seal and safety cap are intact. For municipal use of LPG, establishment following simple measures can prevent the unfore-

seen: i. Adequate ventilation by keeping doors and windows open in homes is advised near the LPG burners & heater or any equipment using LPG as a fuel etc. ii. Flammable items must never be near the cylinder/ LPG burners, iii. LPG cylinder, when in use, should never be left unattended. iv. Clothing that may carry static charge should be avoided as it may engender fire. v. When the cylinder is not in use, the knob must be properly closed. vi. LPG cylinder must always be placed in an upright position and must never be stored in a confined space i.e., basements. In case of fire due to LPG leakage, it is of prime importance that the emergency is dealt calmly without panic. Since, fire triangle is dependent on oxygen, heat and fuel as illustrated in the figure below, one of the three components must be removed immediately to control

the fire. Following recommendations should be adapted in case of an emergency: Eliminate all sources of supply of LPG by closing all the burner knobs and regulators. LPG is heavier than air and it settles on the ground thus increase ventilation by opening doors and windows. Extinguish all flames, light, and sources of fire. Put the safety cap on the cylinder. Do not operate electrical switches and appliances in the room and isolate main electrical supply from outside. Raising general awareness in regards to the safe use of LPG can eliminate the prevailing ignorance among the general public thus, minimizing and preventing minor & major accidents. It is necessary to understand that prevention is better than cure. —The writers are the internees in OGRA



Awareness is key to curtail LPG incidents – LPG vapour cloud explosion

SALLAR NAVEED

THE liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) has become a vital component of our daily lives; due to depleting resources of natural gas and gas load-shedding, LPG has become product of choice in Pakistan and LPG with its high demand and utility has brought together potential dangers concealed within its utility for consumers, which without awareness cannot be halted. LPG is a mixture of two gases i.e., Propane (C3H8) and Butane (C4H10). It is highly flammable and burnable in a mixture with air over a broad range of concentrations. The lower flammable limit (LFL) for propane is about 2.1% in air, while the upper flammable limit (UFL) is approximately 9.5%. For butane, the LFL is around 1.5%, and the UFL is about 8.4%. Understanding the concepts of confined and unconfined vapor explosions in LPG is crucial for ensuring safety and to save precious human lives. Confined vapor cloud explosions (CVCE) occur when LPG vapor (occurred due to leakage of LPG) is contained within a closed space or vessel. These explosions are often more destructive and have a higher potential for causing fatalities and property damage. The key factors contributing to confined vapor explosions include

- A confined space can lead to the accumulation of a high concentration of LPG vapor. This can occur in storage tanks, pipelines, or closed buildings
- An ignition source such as a spark, flame, or static charge / electrical equipment can trigger an explosion when it comes into contact with the concentrated LPG vapor
- As LPG vapor ignites, it rapidly expands and increases pressure within the confined space. This pressure can result in structural damage and the release of more flammable vapor.

Unconfined vapor cloud explosions (UVCE) occur in open areas

where LPG vapor has dispersed into the atmosphere. While these explosions are generally less destructive than confined ones, they can still be hazardous. Unconfined vapor explosions are characterized by the following factors:

- LPG vapor, when released into the open air, can mix with oxygen to form an explosive mixture if the concentration is within the flammable range
- An ignition source, such as a spark or open flame, is needed to ignite the vapor-air mixture and cause an explosion.

Throughout history, numerous incidents have underscored the critical importance of preventing confined vapor cloud explosions involving Cleveland, Ohio, 1944, Feyzin France, 1966 & Mexico City, 1984. The Cleveland East Ohio Gas Explosion, one of the earliest recorded LPG explosions, claimed lives and property, serving as a grim reminder of the hazards of mishandling LPG. The Feyzin disaster in France involved a massive explosion at an LPG storage facility, leading to stricter safety regulations in the LPG industry. The Mexico City disaster stands as one of the most infamous confined vapor cloud explosions in history, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

To safeguard against the devastating consequences of confined vapor cloud explosions involving LPG, stringent safety measures and preparedness are of paramount importance

- Leak Detection
- Proper Ventilation
- Explosion Proof Equipment
- Emergency Response Plan
- Training & Education.

LPG has become a vital component of our daily lives; however, we must not lose sight of the potential dangers concealed within its utility. Historical incidents have repeatedly demonstrated the catastrophic consequences of confined vapor cloud explosions involving LPG. Safety should always be the guiding principle in our use of LPG, ensuring that its many advantages do not come at the cost of human lives and the environment.

– The writer is the Deputy Executive Director – Enforcement, OGRA

Organizational reputation in the era of fake news and manipulation

IQBAL HASSAN

REGULATORS in the developing countries are under increasing pressure from stakeholders to be more responsive and aligned with their requirements, needs and interests. Sometimes they are being criticized by the government for sticking close to the policy-guidelines and every so often they are being critiqued by the public, investors, and companies and other stakeholders for trying to formulate balance. At the same time, market forces and the objective of a publicly-traded corporations demand greater shareholders return-on-investment. In today's digital age, where information spreads rapidly and effortlessly, organizations face unprecedented challenges in managing their reputation. The rise of fake news and manipulation is a bigger challenge and it is posing serious threats to the reputation of the organization. In this environment, safeguarding and nurturing organizational reputation demands a strategic and proactive approach. As it is said that "a lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is still putting on its shoes."

In that scenario, most people will agree with the view that developing, building, and maintaining a good reputation is important in society, whether it be a for-profit or not for profit but reputation is often difficult to define since the perception of what is and is not reputable is in the eyes of beholder. Reputation is an important constituent for an organization's success consisting of familiarity and beliefs about what to expect from the organization in times to come. There are several definitions of reputation, most suitable to me is that the reputation is the way in which stakeholders determine whether an organization is worthy of trust or not as trust is most basic element of social contact. Pakistan being a financially struggling country must attract foreign investment to meet its budgetary needs. For which in year 2023, Federal Cabinet has approved the Pakistan Investment Policy (PIP) with anticipation to attract \$20-25 billion investment over the next few years. The policy was developed in consultation with World Bank, International Finance Corporation, and provincial and federal institutions. The policy is based on four main pillars: reducing the cost of doing business, streamlining business processes, facilitating ease of doing business through creation of industrial clusters and special economic zones, and promoting greater convergence between trade, industrial and monetary policies. The Federal Government has also established the Special Investment Facilitation (SIFC), a facility to act as a 'single window' to facilitate investors, establish cooperation among all government departments, and to fast-track project development.

Contrary to this some self-proclaimed associations manipulate mainstream media and social media to malign organizations for their personal gains without realizing the fact that they are not only damaging the organization's reputation nation-wide but also affecting foreign investors by shattering their trust to invest in Pakistan. The value of the organization has been put at the forefront, especially in a digital society where the ability to provide a positive or negative view of an organization is only a click away. More vulnerable to societal influences and settings, the reputation of public sector organization is influenced not only by the service type but also by the reputation of the sector. Reputation can be safeguarded by maintaining transparency, stakeholders' engagement, and collaborative approach. By adopting proactive strategies organizations can navigate the challenges effectively which are imperative for their long-term success and sustainability. Nevertheless, organizations' reputations are measured through pillars, which are meritorious decisions, transparency, ease of doing business, easy access to stakeholders, and maintain equilibrium to gain trust. Reputation is the most important intangible asset entrusted by stakeholders on regulators, which can help frame and manage expectations, needs and interests of stakeholders. The most important way an organization builds reputation is through its actions and every individual working in organization must understand the reputation objectives and have the willingness and the ability to act in support of these objectives.

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Mitigating Risks In Oil And Gas Industry

G.M SHAHEEN

SAFETY is a top priority and should never be overlooked. Safety should never be taken lightly and is a topic of conversation in every forum. The question that always arises is how robust are the safety measures in the Oil and Gas industry? In this regard, many analysts have conducted research on overcoming unsafe practices in the Oil and Gas sector. The reference of some researchers specifically related to safe operation in the Oil and Gas sector is discussed. A study by Tokarski revealed that over 30% of major accidents experienced in the Oil and Gas industry are triggered by inadequate maintenance. DeWolf opines that piping failures and chemical releases due to poor maintenance are predominant causal factors of 38% of accidents in the Netherlands Petroleum industry. Storage tank accidents on the Norwegian Shelf have been the main cause of over 242 accidents, with poor maintenance and operation being at the core of the problem.

According to the Katsakiorri study, poor asset integrity is the main cause of recurrence in offshore accidents, with poor operational discipline and staff training also being at the root of the problem. The authors of the study, Knegetring et al., argue that although accidents can be unpredictable and stochastic, the causes of most accidents are similar. Singh et al. suggest that a possible reason for this is the failure to properly learn and benchmark from previous accidents however, Skalle et al. are of the view that integrating human causal factors with technical factors could help in ascertaining the root causes of accidents.

As evident above, most of the researchers have mainly concluded that poor maintenance, asset integrity, and lack of training of staff results in unforeseen incidents. The general public in our region is unaware of the risks associated with unsafe handling of fuel. The unfortunate incidents in LPG sector and while handling of Natural gas that have occurred in the recent past in Pakistan are also attributed to these factors. LPG accidents are mainly due to the use of sub-standard cylinders, asset integrity, poor maintenance & unawareness to use/ handle LPG. Similarly Natural gas consumers are also unaware of associated risks and do not follow safety precautions such as closing safety knobs and valves etc. It is inferred that the low rate of adaptability of safe practice in the general public is continuously giving rise to fatal

Continued on Page 06

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