



Islamabad POST

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South Korea wants to increase trade ties with Pakistan

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CPEC the crown jewel in China, Pakistan friendship

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Colin Munro retires from int'l cricket

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Azeri minister calls on PM Pak-Azerbaijan vow to enhance ties for climate resilience

The Prime Minister said that Pakistan was one of the most vulnerable countries that had borne the adverse impact of climate change in recent years, including the catastrophic floods of 2022

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of Ecology & Natural Resources of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mukhtar Babayev, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House this afternoon. The Azeri Minister handed over an invitation letter to the Prime Minister from H.E. Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan, to participate in the COP-29 meeting to be held in Baku in November 2024. The Prime Minister thanked the President of Azerbaijan for the warm invitation and congratulated him and the Azeri people on Baku's selection to host COP-29, the most important gathering of world leaders this year to deliberate upon the challenges posed by climate change. The Prime Minister said that Pakistan was one of the most vulnerable countries that had borne the adverse impact of climate change in recent years, including the catastrophic floods of 2022. He stressed on the need for urgent action to enhance climate resilience. In this regard, he assured Azerbaijan of Pakistan's full support and cooperation in ensuring the success of COP-29. While accepting the invitation, the Prime Minister said he looked forward to participating in COP-29 where he would also have the opportunity to have detailed discussion with President Ilham Aliyev on the bilateral relationship, particularly to enhance bilateral trade and investment. The Prime Minister also reiterated his invitation to President Aliyev to undertake an official visit to Pakistan. The Azeri Minister thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and offering Pakistan's support for the successful organization of the COP-29. He said the Azeri side would work closely with Pakistan to set an agenda that suitably reflects the needs of climate vulnerable countries.

President urges global efforts to address climate change

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari Friday underlined the need for global efforts to address the challenge of climate change by adopting environment-friendly technology, promoting afforestation, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. He, talking to the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan/COP 29 President-designate, Mukhtar Babayev, who along with his delegation called on him, highlighted that global warming and climate change were affecting the glacier and causing water scarcity. The president said that tackling these challenges required global support to mitigate their adverse impacts. Azerbaijan is going to host the 29th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 29) in Baku in November 2024 and the minister, in his capacity as the President-designate of COP 29, is here to invite President Zardari to the conference. Welcoming the minister, the president congratulated Azerbaijan on winning the bid to host COP 29 and expressed the hope that

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ISLAMABAD: Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan, Mukhtar Babayev calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

PSX reaches new high, crosses 73,000

A day ago, the stock market had snapped a three-day losing streak

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Bulls continued their stampede at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday as shares gained 427 points to reach a new milestone of 73,000 points amid expectations of inflation falling faster than the expected rate. The KSE-100 index gained 427.45 points, or 0.59 per cent, to stand at 73,085.5 points at the day's close from the previous close of 72,658.05. Mohammed Sohail, chief executive of Topline Securities, mentioned that the 73,000 boundary was crossed due to

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Pakistan lunar satellite sends initial images

The satellite, iCube Qamar has completed three lunar orbits

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's lunar satellite, iCUBE Qamar has sent the initial images from orbit after successfully completing three rounds of the moon. The images were released by Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) on Friday. The satellite, iCube Qamar has completed three lunar orbits after being launched aboard China's Chang'e-6 spacecraft from

Continued on Page 06

Big blow for govt Membership of 27 MPAs suspended in Punjab Assembly

Speaker suspends membership of ruling coalition lawmakers elected on reserved seats

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: In view of a recent ruling by the Supreme Court, Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan took action on Friday by suspending the membership of 27 MPAs of ruling coalition who were elected on reserved seats in the Punjab Assembly. The move follows a decision by a three-member bench of the Supreme Court, which suspended a previous order by the Peshawar High Court (PHC) regarding the allocation of additional reserved seats to various political parties in this week. During the Punjab Assembly session today, Malik Aftab, a member of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), which mainly consists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members, raised objections and read out the Supreme Court's decision regarding the members elected on reserved seats. Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan validated

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NAB prohibited from arresting parliamentarians

Violation will lead to penalties against the officer

MEHTAB PIRAZADA

ISLAMABAD: The government has directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to refrain from arresting any politician or elected assembly member. This decision came following a crucial meeting between the NAB chairman and National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday. During the meeting, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq outlined new Standard Operating

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

India court grants bail to Kejriwal

Delhi CM Kejriwal was arrested in March over corruption allegations

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: India's top court has granted interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, more than a month after he was arrested in a corruption case. The court said that the bail is applicable until 1 June after which he must surrender to authorities again. A former anti-corruption crusader, Mr Kejriwal was arrested in connection with a now-scrapped alcohol sales policy in March. He has denied the charges against him and has called his arrest "illegal". The chief minister moved the SC after the Delhi High Court refused to give him bail last month.

Sardar Saleem sworn in as Punjab governor

Punjab CM and Bilawal are among attendees of swearing-in ceremony

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Sardar Saleem Haider was sworn in as the new governor of Punjab in a ceremony held at the Governor's House on Friday. LHC Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan administered the oath to the newly appointed governor. Earlier, the swearing-in ceremony of Sardar Saleem as Punjab governor, scheduled for May 5, had been postponed till May 7, "due to inevitable reasons".

Holiday Notice

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

'Govt days are numbered'

PTI slams police brutality, vows to fight for justice

Reveals 16 innocent people martyred, hundreds severely injured on May 9

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General and Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan blasted the police for unleashing a reign of terror on peaceful PTI protestors on May 9, vowing that nothing could deter them as they would continue their struggle for supremacy of constitution and rule of law till their last breath. Speaking at a press conference here on Friday, Omar said that fascist and mandate less governments in the center and Punjab were standing on crutches whose days were numbered and soon public mandated government would take the reins in the country.

PTI Central Information Secretary Raouf Hasan, PTI senior leaders Shoaib Shaheen, Naeem Panjutha and others were present on the occasion. He said that PTI took out rallies across the country on May 9 but brutal Punjab police inflicted upon the peaceful protestors and even they lodged FIRs against him, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar,

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After 7-year hiatus Punjab govt relaunches laptop scheme

Provincial government says students of Punjab to be given latest laptops

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Friday approved the resumption of laptop scheme after a seven-year hiatus. The provincial government said the students of Punjab would be given latest laptops again after a gap of seven years. This was decided in the meeting presided by

Continued on Page 06

UNGA votes to grant Palestine full membership

Spain and Ireland to recognize Palestinian state on May 21

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK CITY: The United Nations General Assembly on Friday backed a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member by recognizing it as qualified to join and recommending the UN Security Council "reconsider the matter favorably." The vote by the 193-member General Assembly was a global survey of support for the Palestinian bid to become a full UN member - a move that would effectively recognize a Palestinian state - after the United States vetoed it in the UN Security Council last month. The assembly adopted a resolution on Friday with 143 votes in favor and nine against - including the US and Israel - while 25 countries abstained. It does not give the Palestinians full UN membership, but simply recognizes them as qualified to join. The General Assembly resolution "determines that the State of Palestine ... should therefore be admitted to membership" and it "recommends that the Security Council reconsider the matter favorably." The Palestinian push for full UN membership comes seven months into a war between Israel and Palestinian militants Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and as Israel is expanding settlements in the occupied West Bank, which the UN considers to be illegal. "We want peace, we want freedom,"

Continued on Page 06

Gaza aid could grind to a halt within days: UN

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Dwindling food and fuel stocks could force aid operations to grind to a halt within days in Gaza as vital crossings remain shut, forcing hospitals to close down and leading to more malnutrition, United Nations aid agencies warned on Friday. Humanitarian workers have sounded the alarm this week over the closure of the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings for aid and people as part of Israel's military operation in Rafah, where around 1 million uprooted people have been sheltering. The Israeli military said a limited operation in Rafah was meant to kill fighters and dismantle infrastructure used by Hamas, which governs the besieged Palestinian territory. "For five days, no fuel and virtually no humanitarian aid entered the Gaza Strip, and we are scraping the bottom of the barrel," said the UNICEF Senior Emergency Coordinator in the Gaza Strip, Hamish Young.

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IG FC calls on
Governor KP

DNA

PESHAWAR: Inspector General Frontier Constabulary Moazzam Jah Ansari called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House here on Friday. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Inspector General of Frontier Constabulary Moazzam Jah Ansari held a detailed discussion. In the meeting, there was a detailed discussion regarding the law and order situation in the province including the merged tribal areas. The governor Faisal Karim Kundi appreciated the role of Frontier Constabulary in maintaining peace and order in the province. Faisal Karim Kundi said that development and prosperity are possible only if law and order is maintained in the province. Faisal Karim Kundi appreciates the sacrifices of security forces, FC, police for maintaining peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are standing with all relevant institutions including the security forces to end terrorism, Faisal Karim Kundi said.

Collective efforts vital to eradicate drugs addiction

DNA

PESHAWAR: Naimat Ullah (54), an employee of Wapda was living a blissful life unless he became a victim of lung cancer apparently caused by an excessive use of narcotics since his teenage. "We were busy in breakfast when suddenly my 'papa jan' started omitting with bleeding and was rushed to government hospital Pabbi where he was declared a suspect of lung cancer and referred him to Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar for further diagnosis," said Saddam Khan, son of the narcotics victim while talking to APP. "After preliminary radiology and CT scan tests, it was confirmed by the doctors that lung cancer has badly affected both lungs of my father and declared him untreatable. Later, my papa left us forever within four months after diagnosis of lung cancer," said Saddam while tears rolled down his cheeks. "The excessive use of hashish deprived us of a loving father who has a great desire to see me and my elder brother as doctor and electrical engineer," he said, although he could not materialize his dream but his brother fulfilled his wish and became an electrical engineer who is currently serving Wapda," he said. "My father started hashish in deep shock after losing his younger brother in road accident and continued it in deep anxiety and frustration that was later proved fatal," he said, adding normally he used three hashish cigarettes and later increases to five cigarettes 'just a few months before his death. Professor Dr Ziaullah Khan, Incharge Medical Ward, Lady Reading Hospital said that all those patients whose bloods were polluted by life-threatening drugs including heroin or hashish were prone to lung and throat cancers.

Ambassador Jemal invites Sindh Governor to Ethiopia

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Jemal Bekir Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, has extended an invitation to Sindh Governor H.E. Kamran Khan Tessori for the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia, scheduled for May 26th to May 31st, 2024.

The Ambassador extended the invitation during a meeting with the Governor of Sindh at the Governor's House, Karachi. Matters of mutual interests including bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation between the two countries also came under the discussion.

H.E. Ambassador Jemal Bekir briefed the Governor of Sindh about the activities planned for the 2nd business and trade delegation to Ethiopia including international manufacturing trade fair, business forums, visits to industrial parks and newly developed tourist sites and cultural nights in Addis Ababa.

He informed the Governor of Sindh about the overwhelming response being received by the 2nd trade delegation from the business community of Pakistan. The Ambassador also shared the experiences of the last year trade delegation of Pakistani businesspersons to Ethiopia that played a crucial role in connect-



ing the business community of both countries. On the other side, the Governor of Sindh said he looked forward to visit Ethiopia which enjoyed brotherly and friendly relations with Pakistan. He lauded the economic progress and development achieved by Ethiopia under the leadership of its visionary leader H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed,

Prime Minister of Ethiopia. The Governor of Sindh briefed the Ambassador about his Free IT Courses Initiative under which thousands of students were being imparted trainings and skills on Artificial Intelligence, Web 3.0 and Metaverse. Later on, H.E. Ambassador Jemal Bekir Abdula addressed a large gathering of the students at the IT Facili-

ty and appreciated the initiative taken by the Governor of Sindh for empowering the youth with modern skills. The Ambassador said Pakistan had talented youth that made more than 60 per cent of its total population. Equipping them with modern skills was crucial to spur economic growth and development in Pakistan, he added. He said the modern technol-

ogies would help them connect with the global market which would eventually enable them to contribute to strong nation building. The Ambassador said the Government of Ethiopia is ready to work with the Government of Pakistan for expertise, skills and knowledge sharing for ensuring equitable development across the globe.

Collective efforts vital to eradicate drugs addiction

DNA

PESHAWAR: Naimat Ullah (54), an employee of Wapda was living a blissful life unless he became a victim of lung cancer apparently caused by an excessive use of narcotics since his teenage. "We were busy in breakfast when suddenly my 'papa jan' started omitting with bleeding and was rushed to government hospital Pabbi where he was declared a suspect of lung cancer and referred him to Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar for further diagnosis," said Saddam Khan, son of the narcotics victim while talking to APP. "After preliminary radiology and CT scan tests, it was confirmed by the doctors that lung cancer has badly affected both lungs of my father and declared him untreatable. Later, my papa left us forever within four months after diagnosis of

lung cancer," said Saddam while tears rolled down his cheeks. "The excessive use of hashish deprived us of a loving father who has a great desire to see me and my elder brother as doctor and electrical engineer," he said, although he could not materialize his dream but his brother fulfilled his wish and became an electrical engineer who is currently serving Wapda," he said. "My father started hashish in deep shock after losing his younger brother in road accident and continued it in deep anxiety and frustration that was later proved fatal," he said, adding normally he used three hashish cigarettes and later increases to five cigarettes 'just a few months before his death. Professor Dr Ziaullah Khan, Incharge Medical Ward, Lady Reading Hospital said that all those patients whose bloods were polluted by life-threatening drugs including heroin or hashish were prone to lung

and throat cancers. Lung cancer is a leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Pakistan, accounting for approximately 10% of all cancer cases, Dr Ziaullah said incidence of such cancer is particularly high among smokers men, with a rate of 11.2 per 100,000 populations as compared to 2.7 per 100,000 population among women. "The excessive use of tobaccos including cigarettes and narcotics contrabands increase risks for lung cancers and it was seen that most of rehabilitated victims restart it unless properly looked after by their families," he maintained. "The drug patients often complain about stomach pain, diarrhoea, cholera, sleeplessness, weakness and starting water from eyes and ears besides depression, anxiety, panic attacks", Dr Zia said. "Even educated women and men associated with different professions take drugs through injections while many use tab-

lets and once developed pains in the kidney consult doctors. Such patients were prone to lose kidneys besides becoming victims of HIV AIDs, TB and Hepatitis C. Most of ice abusers were youth and students of colleges and universities and two to one month are required for rehabilitation of ice addicts after admission," he added. The treatment of drug addicts was expensive and around Rs50,000 to Rs 200,000 per patient was being spent to recover, he said. "Globally, there are great concerns about polio and HIV AIDs but no serious efforts took place to eradicate the menace of drug addiction and its illicit trafficking affecting about 35 million people worldwide every year," he said. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) report revealed that about 271 million people aged 15-64 used drugs in 2017.

FIA conducted major operations against fake drugs

DNA

PESHAWAR: FIA Peshawar have conducted major operations during the last two days against fake and prohibited drugs which are available in the local markets for sale, a FIA spokesman said here Friday. Giving details about the major operations in different areas, the spokesman said that FIA Peshawar Zone officials have conducted nine raids in different areas across Peshawar and checked different drug stores including Bangash Pharmacy Peshawar, Corner Pharmacy Peshawar, Al-Kazmi Medical Store Abbottabad, various pharmacies and medical stores located in Namak Mandi. The raid was also conducted in the Taj Syringe Manufacturing Factory located in Gadoon Amazai Industrial Area, Swabi wherein the raid was carried out on the information of FIA Islamabad zone. The said factory

was found involved in violation of Drape Act and manufacturing banned syringes, FIA spokesman said. A huge number of prohibited syringes were being manufactured in the factory, the spokesman of the FIA confirmed. The manufacturing of said syringe was banned, he informed. Drug inspector was also accompanied by the FIA in raid operations, the spokesman said. As a result of operations at other medical stores and pharmacies, a large quantity of prohibited drugs were also recovered. The exported drugs include banned drugs like Vega, Cargo, Tagnar, Supratex, Arimidex, Move Cream, Mytica, Magnet, and Toric Injection, FIA spokesman said. Prohibited drugs were seized and samples were sent to drug testing laboratories with inquiries of the cases having been registered. FIR will be registered after receiving the detailed report of the drug testing laboratory.

Man shot dead by unknown assistant

KHANEWAL: A 40-year old man was shot dead by firing on the car at Multan road near Darman Ealla mor, rescuer said. The deceased was identified as Muhammad Ashiq, son of Nasir, resident of 2-M/R. The body was shifted to civil hospital, Jahanian by the rescuers. Police of the concerned jurisdiction was informed which started investigation after registering FIR on report of family members of the deceased person. The preliminary investigation being revealed by the police as the murder was committed on basis of old enmity. The police reported to have extended sphere of investigation to close family members and associates of the deceased for reaching out the real killer.—APP

Four agents held from passport office

FAISALABAD: Four agents were arrested from the passport office and handed over to the Civil Lines police. According to official sources here on Friday, Assistant Director Passport Office Rana Asif Siddique, along with other officials, caught four agents including Muhammad Usman, son of Sarwar, a resident of Khalid Town, Amir Hanif of Gulzar Colony, Muhammad Adeel of Samundri Road, Abdullah of Lathianwala. They were extorting money from people to give favours in passports by showing them officials of the office. The Civil Lines police registered a case and sent them behind bars.—APP

Tharparkar prepares for upcoming monsoon

HYDERABAD: The Deputy Commissioner Tharparkar/Chairman District Disaster Management Committee Abdul Haleem Jagirani chaired the District Disaster Management Committee meeting to finalize arrangements ahead of the possibility of monsoon rains. MNA Dr. Mahesh Malani specially participated in the meeting and remarked that rains were important for Tharparkar district because agriculture of Thar desert depends on rains which bring prosperity, crop growth, provides abundant fodder for livestock, and presents Tharparkar with lush and beautiful landscapes. However, the possibility of excessive rainfall cannot be ruled out, which could disrupt the situation.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Ms Rubina Khalid, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, —DNA

Short-term inflation eases by 1.39 percent

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included gas charges for q1 (570.00%), onions (118.58%), tomatoes (101.24%), garlic (72.38%), chillies powder (71.96%), salt powder (32.59%), energy saver (29.83%), shirting (29.71%)

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 1.39 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on May 09, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 312.56 points as compared to 316.95 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI

for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 22.32 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16=100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, decreased by 0.99 per cent and went down to 303.24 points from last week's 306.26 points. The SPI for consumption groups from Rs. 17,732-22,888, Rs. 22,889-29,517; Rs. 29,518-44,175 and above

Rs. 44,175, decreased by 1.00 percent, 1.35 percent, 1.49 and 1.53 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 12 (23.53%) items increased, 13 (25.49%) items decreased and 26 (50.98%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included onions (19.22%), chicken (18.83%), wheat flour (4.00%), LPG (3.67%), bananas (2.32%), garlic (1.44%), rice basmati broken (0.75%), mustard oil & sugar (0.48%) each, and

firewood (0.23%). The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on week-on-week basis included tomatoes (19.24%), eggs (4.73%), potatoes (4.38%), pulse gram (0.91%), cooking oil 5 litre (0.89%), beef (0.64%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (0.44%) and milk fresh (0.41%). On Year-on-Year basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease included bananas (38.79%), wheat flour (28.21%), chicken (20.27%), cooking oil 5 litre (19.74%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (16.73%),

mustard oil (13.11%), LPG (10.52%), eggs (7.91%) and diesel (2.04%). The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included gas charges for q1 (570.00%), onions (118.58%), tomatoes (101.24%), garlic (72.38%), chillies powder (71.96%), salt powder (32.59%), energy saver (29.83%), shirting (29.71%), gents sandal (25.01%), pulse mash (23.70%), beef (23.30%) and tea prepared (20.08%).—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

May

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

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

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Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

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

Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Korea urged to invest in economic zones: Atif

South Korea wants to increase trade relations with Pakistan: Park Kajeon

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Office Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Karim Aziz Malik meeting with Ambassador of South Korea Park Kajeon at the Federation Office. President FPCCI Atif Ikram said in his message regarding the meeting that Korea has benefited by investing in CPEC projects and special economic zones to increase regional connectivity and free trade agreement for the promotion of trade has proved to be beneficial for both countries. Pakistan, with a population of 240 million, is connected to Afghanistan and Central Asian countries, due to which Pakistan is an important country in terms of investment for the world. Pakistan has important sectors like agriculture, gems and jewellery, mines and minerals, marble and granite, entertainment in which Korean investors can invest. Pakistan-Korea Joint Business Council will be formed soon. Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik said that bilateral trade between the two countries is one



and a half billion dollars, which requires joint efforts to increase. Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Pakistan can also organize Mango Festival in Korea Trade delegations should be formed to increase the communication between the business communities of the two countries.

participate in it. FPCCI along with other Chambers of Commerce of Pakistan can also organize Mango Festival in Korea Trade delegations should be formed to increase the communication between the business communities of the two countries.

Convener Diplomatic Committee FPCCI Ahmad Waheed said that we wish Korean electronics companies, beauty products companies to invest in Pakistan as well. Samsung mobile should be assembled in Pakistan, this mobile has many users in Pa-

kistan. The advantage of this will be that on the one hand its price will be reduced locally and on the other hand people will also get employment. Koreans have taken their economy very high in a few years and we want to benefit from their experience. Pakistan is a safe country in terms of work and investment, there is no problem with payments. Korean companies can invest here riskfree, we will welcome them. South Korean Ambassador Park Kijeon said on this occasion that South Korea is willing to increase trade relations with Pakistan. South Korean investors can also find opportunities for investment and joint ventures in CPEC projects in Pakistan. Korean companies should participate in the Gems and Jewellery Exhibition in September and the proposal to hold a Mango Festival in Korea is also good. Efforts will be made to further improve bilateral trade between Pakistan and South Korea by promoting closer ties with the Federation of Chambers of Pakistan. Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail Hussain, Special Coordinator Afshan Malik, Arif Butt, Amina Malik, Rashid Humayun and others were also present on this occasion.

Atta Tarar for measures to counter misuse of social media

After the present government came to power, he said economic indicators were becoming positive, international journals were also predicting improvement in Pakistan's economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said on Friday that there was a need for measures at the global level to counter the misuse of social media and the spread of fake news. "The Government of Pakistan recognizes the importance of freedom of the press and freedom of expression, and it is determined to protect the rights of journalists", he said while talking to a delegation of Bangladeshi journalists visiting Pakistan who met him here. In the meeting, various important issues were discussed

including freedom of expression and economic initiatives of the government. The minister said that the government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was fully focused on economic stability. After the present government came to power, he said economic indicators were becoming positive, international journals were also predicting improvement in Pakistan's economy. "The government is also taking steps to invest in infrastructure projects in Pakistan," the minister said adding these projects would not only boost the economy but also create employment opportunities. The government, he said had established a

special Investment Facilitation Council to attract foreign investment and facilitate investors. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was determined to provide relief to the people, he maintained. Tarar said that the tax collection system was being improved in Pakistan, and in this context, tax reforms were being introduced in the Federal Bureau of Revenue. He thanked the Bangladeshi journalists who visited Pakistan and took interest in learning about the government's economic initiatives. The delegation of Bangladeshi journalists thanked the Government of Pakistan, the Ministry of Information and Broad-

casting, and journalism institutions for hosting and providing support to them in Pakistan. The members of the delegation said it was very good to visit Pakistan and expressed the hope that such visits would promote relations between the two countries and people-to-people contacts. The delegation of Bangladeshi journalists included Iqtadar Ahmed, Mukram Hussain, Riaz Ahmed, Sheikh Sajid, Muhammad Abdul Wadud, Jaboon Ahmed Sarkar, Qamarul-Zaman and Moin-ul-Haq. Executive Director General External Publicity Wing Ambrin Jan and other senior officers of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting were also present on this occasion.

Dy Chairman Senate attends flower exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate, Syedaal Khan on Friday attended a flower exhibition at FG Public School on Madrasah Road, Quetta. This event was organized by the school's children in collaboration with school administration, which showcased a variety of beautifully arranged flowers, said a news release received here. During his visit, the Deputy Chairman praised Lt. Col. Abdul Mustafa, Regional Director FGEL, Principal Nasir Ali Mughal, and the students for their efforts in managing such an impressive display with limited resources. He noted that the quality of the event reflected the professionalism of the school management and the creativity of the students. The Deputy Chairman Senate visited various stalls at the exhibition and commended the children for their work, highlighting that events like these in educational institutions help foster creativity among students and promote environmental awareness in the younger generation. He emphasized that the creativity and talent demonstrated by the children would guide Pakistan towards development and prosperity. Encouraging the school administration, he suggested for organizing similar events annually to further develop creativity and resourcefulness, skills that are valuable in both personal and professional life. He stressed the importance of nurturing these talents for a brighter future for the children and the country as a whole, expressing hope for continued success and a positive impact on the community. Later, the Deputy Chairman visited the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) headquarters, where he received an extensive briefing from the Chief Executive Officer, Engineer Shafiqat Ali. During the visit, he met with the President of the QESCO Engineer Officer Association, Engineer Mujibur Rahman Marri, along with other members of the Association, including General Secretary Engineer Kaleemullah Jogezeai, Senior Chief Engineers Muhammad Naeem Kakar, Syed Yusuf Shah, Muhammad Hashim Jogezeai, Engineer Samiullah, Salam Mengal, Muhammad Nizam Achakzai and Karam Bakhsh Badini. - APP

PM tasks BOI to bring further EoDB

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday tasked the Board of Investment with the target to bring more ease for attracting investment and pave way for more businesses in the country. The prime minister, who chaired a high-level review meeting on Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) for investment and business activities, said the minimum impediments were a must to attract investment. He told the meeting that during his previous tenure, he had taken priority measures to promote investment and business and that the Special Investment Facilitation Council had also played a supportive role in achieving the goals of economic revival. He said the promotion of foreign investment and business activities in the country manifested the efforts by the government team for which they deserved an applause. The prime minister said that the visits of business delegations from friendly countries and surge in stock market reflected the trust of local and foreign investors in the government policies. He instructed the BOI to formulate a mechanism on the pattern of one window operation in coordination with all the ministries and provincial governments. He also called for the devising a strategy, in collaboration with the business community and provincial governments, to make the new investors and businessmen face minimum hurdles in their ventures. He also instructed for eng

PM condoles over demise of UAE's Sheikh Hazza

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed grief over the demise of Sheikh Hazza bin Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a member of the royal family of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The prime minister offered condolences to the UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and members of the royal family. He prayed to Allah Almighty to bless the departed soul with eternal peace in paradise. According to the UAE media, late Sheikh Hazza bin Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan was the son of Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who had died in 2019. The body of the deceased was laid to rest at the Al Bateen cemetery in Abu Dhabi. -APP



ISLAMABAD: APNS office bearers presenting a bouquet to Sarmad Ali on his election as Member Senate of Pakistan. -DNA

'C' Wealth acknowledgment reflects PMYP initiatives'

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan said that acknowledgment of Commonwealth organization and support in Pakistan's Youth Development Programmes was a reflection of trust in the government initiatives for empowering youth. He said this while addressing a press conference along with Technical Adviser to Commonwealth Sushil Ram Chand and Youth Officer Saima Maheed here on Friday. He said that empowering the youth through financial support was the priority of the government and no compromise would be made on merit to provide equal opportunities to the youth in every field of life.

Rana informed that the Chairmanship of Commonwealth Youth Task Force, Asia Chapter has been awarded to Pakistan for the first time since its formation in 1973, adding recommendations had been forwarded to the honourable delegates of the Commonwealth who are on a visit to Pakistan to set up its regional secretariat in Pakistan to boost the talent and the potential of Pakistani youth. The Chairman PMYP informed that the National Youth Advisory Council comprising 100 members was being formed on the instruction of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a transparent manner that would put forward the recommendations on Youth issues to the government. "The forum will provide an opportunity for the youth of Pakistan to showcase their talents," he added.

Rana Mashhood further said that Pakistan's economy was heading towards the right direction after the formation of the new government in office and foreign countries and donors were showing confidence in Pakistan's economic policies and programs and eager to invest billions of dollars in Pakistan. The Chairman PMYP added that the inflation was decreasing in the country and work on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was being restored which had stalled during the previous government. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said that the consistently excellent performance of the national hockey team and qualifying for the final after 13 years in the Azlan Shah Cup was a testament to the selection on merit. He said that with the timely attention of Prime Minister Muham-

mad Shehbaz Sharif, the issue of hockey team selection had been resolved on merit. Rana said that the promotion and development of sports are among the priorities of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the PM will award prizes to the national hockey team for their best performance in the Azlan Shah Hockey Cup. Speaking on the occasion, Technical Adviser to Commonwealth Sushil Ram Chand appreciated the role of Chairman PMYP Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in fostering a dynamic and inclusive part for the development of Youth with their global partners. Reaffirming the commonwealth support to encourage youth in every arena, he lauded the efforts of the Pakistani government for empowering youth and providing opportunities.



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Briefs

Oil price deregulation is a national security threat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Friday that the removal of the government's control over oil prices should not be taken lightly as it is a serious national security issue. Some elements want to push the country into chaos and for profit, which should not be allowed, he said. The Prime Minister, Army Chief, and Chief Justice should take notice of the situation; otherwise, it can go out of control, he added. Dr. Hanif Mughal said in a statement issued here today that by allowing the deregulation of oil prices, the people will become bankrupt and the economy of Pakistan will be destroyed. This move, backed by some powerful companies and individuals, will sink the country into a quagmire of problems. He said that there is neither infrastructure nor storage capacity in Pakistan for such an adventure. It is said that the deregulation would empower oil marketing companies to determine fuel prices on the basis of market forces. Consumers getting gasoline and diesel from places closer to ports and refineries would get relatively cheaper products. However, in fact, it will be a death warrant for the people and the petroleum industry of Pakistan, he underlined. According to the International Energy Agency, it is mandatory for every member country to stock at least 90 days of oil. The United States, China, and dozens of other countries have stored oil for several years, which can be brought to the market when needed. However, he said, Pakistan barely has the capacity to store 15 to 20 days of oil, due to which this sector remains unstable. Despite government oversight, oil marketing companies often create crises for profit. Deregulation in these circumstances is like playing with fire, as our fragile economy is unable to withstand the shocks resulting from deregulation, he warned.—APP

Chairman Senate Gilani sees off first Hajj flight

Calls upon Pakistani pilgrims to be Ambassadors of Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Addressing the Hajj pilgrims, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani expressed his satisfaction that Hajj operation has finally begun from Multan Airport. This was the first flight which, chairman senate saw off from Multan Airport. His address focused on the significance of the Hajj pilgrimage, the improved travel arrangements, and the importance of representing Pakistan with honor. "It is a great pleasure to be here today to see off the pilgrims embarking on this sacred journey," said Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani. "The journey from Multan to Madinah now takes just four hours, thanks to the opening of Multan Airport. Your journey has become much easier as a result, allowing you to focus on your spiritual experience." He urged the pilgrims to maintain discipline and represent Pakistan with dignity during their stay in Saudi Arabia. "Hajj pilgrims should conduct themselves with respect and order, ensuring they bring pride to our country," he said. Chairman Senate also called upon the pilgrims to pray for the progress and prosperity of the country. "We are faced with the threats of terrorism and valiant soldiers and civilians have martyred while fight-



ing against terrorists. Remember them in your prayers," he stated. He expressed gratitude to the security agencies, including the Airport Security Force and the Federal Investigation Agency, for their diligent work ensuring a safe

environment for travelers. Chairman Senate also highlighted that despite the challenging economic times, the cost of Hajj this year has been lower than last year, making it more accessible for many. He said that 13,000 people from South

Punjab will be undertaking the Hajj pilgrimage this year. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani reminded the pilgrims of their role as ambassadors for Pakistan. "As you embark on this holy journey, remember that you are representing Pakistan. Be our am-

bassadors, and carry the spirit of our nation with you," he said. The event concluded with the Chairman Senate extending his best wishes to the pilgrims for a safe and spiritually fulfilling journey.

AIOU inks MoU with PDC

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Premium Diagnostic Center, Islamabad (PDC) to provide lab facilities to employees at discounted rates. Vice Chancellor, of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood presided over the ceremony. Dr. Nasir said that the welfare and good health of our employees and their families is our priority, healthy person always performs his duties with full zest. The MoU was signed by Registrar, AIOU, Raja Umer Yunis, and Director, Corporate Relations, PDC, Muhammad Rashid. President, of the Academic Staff Association (ASA), Dr. Iqbal, President, of the Employees Welfare Association (EWA), Yasir Mehmood, the Medical Officer, Dr. Hira, and other employees were also present at the ceremony. According to the details of the MoU, PDC will provide facilities for Lab tests at discounted rates to AIOU employees and their families, a 50% discount on medical tests, and a 35% discount on radiology. PDC will also provide free home sample collection service and other health facilities including x-rays and ultrasound at the doorstep. EWA is actively working for the welfare of the AIOU employees by signing different MoUs and collaborations to facilitate employees. President, EWA, Yasir Muhammad said that we will continue our efforts for the welfare of the employees and AIOU.—APP

Capital gears up to embrace plastic free environment

ISLAMABAD: After repeated failed attempts of previous regimes, the present government has once again geared up a campaign to cleanse the federal capital of plastic waste. With consistent population influx to Islamabad Capital Territory, the city continued getting dirtier in recent years making the government reorganize its efforts for a cleaner capital. From North to South, no drain, spring, river plain, or watercourse is found pure from plastics as the irresponsible attitude of the masses as well as city managers gradually adulterated the city. Today almost every water body is contaminated with single-use plastic bags, wrappers of chips, biscuits, water bottles, cold

drinks, and single-use plastic cutlery. Now the situation in the capital is also not much different from other cities where littering has become a permanent threat to the environment. The biome is repeatedly ambushed by formidable tourists throwing their waste carelessly into natural habitats endangering wildlife, birdlife, and other species. Cognizant of the situation, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination through its Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) has re-launched a campaign to ban the one-time use of plastics under its proud slogan of "Say No to Plastics". "The Ministry is spearheading enforcement of Single-Use Plastics (Prohibition) Regulations, 2023 that

bars manufacturing, importing, distribution, sale and use of single-use plastic items," remarked Director General, Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) Farzana Altaf Shah. "This campaign is particularly focusing on controlling plastic litter and promoting responsible consumer behavior." She said under the leadership of Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, it is one of our prime responsibilities to keep capital clean. Meanwhile, Romina Khurshid Alam in her recent meeting with the members of the Collect and Recycle Alliance (CoRe) had also directed to take proactive steps through social media strategies, collection.—DNA

Death anniversary of comedian, writer, poet Athar Shah observed

ISLAMABAD: The fourth death anniversary of renowned comedian, artist, writer, and poet Athar Shah Khan famously known as "Mr. Jaidi" was observed on Friday. He was born on January 1, 1943, in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh. Athar Shah Khan arrived in Lahore in 1947 with his family. Athar Shah started his career as a writer six decades ago from Radio Pakistan and wrote around 700 plays in 20 years. His radio play Rang Hi Rang Jaidi Ke Sang (1973) aired for more than 19 years. Subsequently, his legendary role as 'Jaidi' in Intizar Farmaiey on PTV made him a household name in the country. His other popular works include Hello Hello, Ba Adab Ba Mulahiza Hoshiyar, Haye Jaidi, Burger Family, Jaidi in Trouble, Laakhon Mein Teen, and Problem House. His first film as a writer was Bazi which was released in 1970. The film presented both Muhammad Ali and Naadeem together for the first time. He also wrote the story of the platinum jubilee Punjabi film Manji Kithay Dahwan (1974). He was especially famous for his funny poetry. He participated in a large number of funny Urdu Mushaira. He was famous for his typical styled funny poetry. In 2001, he was given the Pride of Performance award by the government of Pakistan. Athar Shah Khan Jaidi died in Karachi on May 10, 2020, at age 76 after a heart attack.—APP

Naqvi for early construction of Model Jail in Islamabad

Federal Interior Secretary Khurram Agha, Chief Commissioner Islamabad Mohammad Ali Randhawa

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Friday visited the model jail under construction in Sector H of Islamabad and ordered to complete the construction work within six months. During an inspection of under-construction jail, the minister observed that the project of construction of jail in Islamabad has been stalled for 13 year but now it will be completed in 6 months. Naqvi tasked the officials concerned to complete the first phase of the prison construction in 6 months directing Chief Commissioner Islamabad and IG Islamabad Police to regularly review progress on construction activities. Keeping the project on hold for 7 year is clearly incompetence, Mohsin Naqvi observed, adding that the construction work in jail should continue day and night in the timeline. The process of appointment of necessary staff should also be started immediately, he ordered adding that the provision of resources for the completion of the project will be ensured. The minister gave instructions to the concerned authorities regarding the completion of the project under construction. Chief Commissioner Islamabad Mohammad Ali Randhawa briefed the minister about the project. He said that the project to build a jail in Islamabad started in 2011 but even after many years, this project could not be completed. He said that the jail will have a capacity of 2,000 prisoners however the capacity to hold two thousand more prisoners will be increased. Federal Interior Secretary Khurram Agha, Chief Commissioner Islamabad Mohammad Ali Randhawa, IG Police Islamabad Contractors, Consultants and concerned officials were also present on the occasion.—DNA

PHA's 'Jashan-e-Baharan' festival to continue till May 11

RAWALPINDI: Jashan Baharan', a three-day festival organized by Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi would continue till May 11. According to a PHA spokesperson, the Director General (DG) PHA, Ahmed Hasan Raniha inaugurated the festival at Allama Iqbal Park, Shamsabad, Murree Road on Thursday night. Famous 'Qawwals' of the country, entertained the audience at the inaugural function by performing their art in the opening ceremony. A large number of citizens from twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad participated in the opening ceremony. The people were mesmerized by highlighting the fascinating culture and tradition of Punjab in the opening ceremony. All available resources were utilized to provide a healthy entertainment to the citizens, the spokesperson said adding.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Visitors looking art work during Paper Artworks-Light Sculptures exhibition by Aline Dagleish, at Khaas art gallery in the Federal Capital.—ONLINE

Pigeon flying - A serious Hazard to flight operations

IZMI HERLANI



Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority have launched a comprehensive public awareness campaign to address the growing threat of pigeon and kite flying near military and civilian airfields across the country. These activities pose a significant risk to aircraft safety and can result in catastrophic damage to multi-million dollar machines, jeopardizing

national assets and operational capabilities. Bird strikes, including those involving pigeons, are a major concern for the aviation industry worldwide. In Pakistan, these incidents have caused millions of dollars in damages to aircraft and engines. Airports are responsible for implementing bird control measures, such as deploying bird shooters near runways and taking other preventive actions, however, the public's participation is crucial to effectively mitigate this hazard. The awareness campaign emphasizes the importance of responsible waste management and prohibition of pigeon flights close to airfields. Carcasses and offal left in open areas attract large birds like eagles and vultures, which can collide with high-speed aircraft during takeoff and landing. These bird strikes can have devastating consequences, potentially leading to the loss of aircraft, pilots and precious lives. To address this issue, the authorities have taken several measures. Signboards and informative pamphlets have been placed around airports/airfields urging the public to properly dispose off animal remains. Shopkeepers, food outlets and hotel

owners have also been educated about the importance of proper waste management to prevent attracting birds. The campaign also targets the hazards posed by kite and pigeon flying in the vicinity of PAF airfields. These activities can disrupt flight operations and pose a direct threat to aircraft safety. The authorities have directed the local police and district administration to enforce Section 144, which prohibits kite flying and selling, and to restrict pigeon flying near military and civilian airfields. The awareness campaign is being implemented across the country, with dedicated efforts at major airports like Islamabad International Airport, Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore, Jinnah International Airport in Karachi and Gilgit International Airport. At these airports, the management is collaborating with local authorities, community leaders and religious organizations to raise awareness and ensure effective waste management. At Islamabad International Airport, a meeting of the Environmental Control Committee was also held to discuss the bird strike awareness campaign. Banners were

displayed, and the authorities are working with the district administration and police to conduct public outreach. Similar initiatives have been undertaken at other airports, with informative pamphlets distributed, disposal bags provided and awareness sessions conducted with residents. Pakistan Air Force has also been actively involved in the campaign, with officers giving presentations on the threats posed by bird hazards and garbage dumping to national assets. The authorities have emphasized the need for joint efforts between the military, civil aviation and local communities to address this critical issue. The pigeon flying awareness campaign launched by the Pakistan Air Force and the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority is a crucial initiative to safeguard the country's aviation assets and ensure the safety of flight operations. So let us join hands together to support our Shaheens in educating the public, promoting responsible waste management and restricting hazardous activities near airfields, in order to mitigate the risk of bird strikes and protect the nation's valuable air power capabilities.

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Playing defence Mini-Me

An Australian MH-60R Seahawk helicopter was 8,535km from home and flew close to China's northeastern coasts. So a Chinese warplane shot flares to warn it off. Suppose a Chinese military aircraft flew 8,535km to loiter off Australia's northern coastlines, how would you think the Australian military, or for that matter, American military stationed in the vicinity, would respond? So far, the patriotic hand-wringing of the Australian media and political class has been over the top. It would have been amusing if not for its alarming implications for regional security in Asia. It's unclear exactly what the Seahawk was doing in China's neighbourhood. Various excuses have been offered by its government and the military. It was there to enforce United Nations sanctions against North Korea. It was there to help the Australian navy to exercise freedom of navigation in international waters. So, which is it or both? Beijing says the helicopter was there for spying, as its model is designed to track and detect submarine activities. Canberra has denied it, but the Chinese are not being paranoid. Australia's absurdly expensive and take-forever-to-deliver nuclear-powered subs under the Aukus military alliance are designed not so much to defend the country's immediate coastlines but to "forward-project" power in the South China Sea. But forget all that "he says, she says". What ordinary citizens of both countries and non-military types, such as yours truly, may reasonably be concerned about is why Australia considers it justified to conduct military activities within China's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), defined as an area of waters extending up to 200 nautical miles or 370km from the coast. It's generally accepted that countries can exercise freedom of navigation and overflight through each other's EEZs without prior notice. But there is intense disagreement over whether military activities are allowed. It has long been the position of China, and India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam, that they are not. These countries are all signatories to the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), under which the EEZ definition is codified. However, the United States has never signed on to UNCLOS. That doesn't prevent it from interpreting UNCLOS as allowing free military activities in others' EEZs. Interestingly, Washington's "no military restrictions" interpretation of EEZs only seems to apply to other countries. Consider the case of notionally independent Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau. They are in effect American protectorates and are increasingly being exploited as military assets for Aukus. Under the so-called Compact of Free Association, the US has long taken up their territorial defence. More recently, though, the Pentagon claims that the US military will protect and patrol their EEZs as well, meaning it can bar any foreign vessels from entering them, military or not! Does the US apply the same prerogative over its own territorial EEZs? I am not aware that Washington has made any official statement to that effect, as that would contradict the entitlement of its own military to enter other people's EEZs. However, I would bet a lot of money that there are classified legal documents that sanction EEZ defence against foreign intrusions.

Navigating the ethical landscape of AI

In the vibrant city of Techville, a new debate has taken center stage: The ethics of artificial intelligence, particularly in the realm of driverless cars. Picture this: A bustling intersection, a driverless car, and a family of ducks waddling across the road. It's a dilemma straight out of Punch and Judy. Punch, the ever-optimistic puppet, argues: "Driverless cars, my dear Judy, are the future! They'll make our roads safer, reduce traffic jams and maybe even find a parking spot downtown on a Friday night. What's not to love?" Ah, but Judy, ever the skeptic, counters: "But Punch, what happens when the car faces the classic ethical dilemma? Does it swerve to avoid hitting a group of pedestrians, potentially endangering its passenger, or does it stay the course and risk harming the pedestrians?" But behind the whimsy lies a serious conundrum. Should our autonomous vehicles prioritize the safety of their passengers above all else, even if it means squashing innocent ducklings? Or should they take a more democratic approach, where the needs of the many, or in this case the many webbed feet, outweigh the needs of the few? In Techville, opinions vary. "I bought my driverless car to protect me," argues Mr. Pennyworth, an avid collector of vintage gadgets and frequent patron of the city's hipster coffee shops. "If it's not going to prioritize my safety, then what's the point?" But not everyone is on Team Pennyworth. "We can't just trample over the little guys," protests Ms. Haversham, a self-proclaimed environmentalist and founder of the Techville Birdwatchers Society. "If our driverless cars start mowing down wildlife left and right, we might as well go back to riding bicycles." Meanwhile, the city's residents continue to grapple with more practical concerns. "I don't care if my driverless car runs on organic kale smoothies or solar power," declares Ms. Rodriguez, a wellness influencer with a penchant for Instagram-worthy yoga poses. "As long as it gets me to my juice cleanse appointments on time, I'm golden." As the debate rages on, one thing becomes abundantly clear: The future of transportation in Techville is anything but predictable. Will our driverless cars become beacons of ethical virtue, cruising the streets with the grace of a ballerina in a tutu? Or will they succumb to the same moral pitfalls as their human counterparts, engaging in petty road rage and aggressive honking? Enter the philosophical musings of Immanuel Kant, who once said: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." In other words, if you wouldn't want everyone else doing the same thing in the same situation, maybe it's not such a great idea. Apply this to driverless cars and suddenly Punch and Judy are in a full-blown moral quandary. Only time will tell. But one thing is for certain: The ethical implications of artificial intelligence are never far from our minds. So, the next time you find yourself behind the wheel of a self-driving car, just remember to keep your eyes on the road – and your heart in the right place. But fear not, dear citizens of Techville, for amid the chaos and confusion, there is hope. Engineers and ethicists are working tirelessly to program AI with a moral compass, teaching it to navigate the murky waters of right and wrong.



Pakistan has long way to establish stable political system

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The democratic institutions are drastically going to be declined. Harsh politics are not new in a polarized Pakistan, but their combination with economic, humanitarian and security crises have made the country's current problems all the more pressing. The challenges facing this populous, strategically located and nuclear-armed Islamic nation are also spilling over into Pakistan's relations with

Pakistan is facing many problems of rising inflation, food shortages, the threat of sovereign debt, and escalating violence, its political system entered 2023 with high stakes among the political elite, causing government paralysis and confidence. The democratic institutions are drastically going to be declined. Harsh politics are not new in a polarized Pakistan, but their combination with economic, humanitarian and security crises have made the country's current problems all the more pressing. The challenges facing this populous, strategically located and nuclear-armed Islamic nation are also spilling over into Pakistan's relations with countries and neighbors in the region. On 25 July 2018, parliamentary elections took place, which were won by Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Party (PTI, Pakistan Movement for Justice). Even though significant restrictions were imposed during the election campaigning, the elections can be described as democratic, leading to the second peaceful change of government in succession. The new government had promised a number of socio-economic reforms and efforts against corruption. Therefore its record has been mixed, and its fiscal space is limited. The socio-economic situation remained difficult. The latest round of political turmoil began in April 2022 with the overthrow of Imran Khan's government in a parliamentary vote of no confidence that exposed the collapse of the ruling military-civilian condominium and the clever dealings of the various 12 political parties. But rather than leave Khan alone, he has joined a spirited populist campaign that now looks likely to see him returned to office in the next national election. The current political deadlock is particularly over setting the date for those elections, constitutionally mandated for October 12, 2023. Building on the momentum

of his move, Imran Khan and his Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters are trying to hold early elections, while a coalition led by the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) party arrives as late as possible. To stay in power, the government relied on its patronage networks and resorted to politicizing key state institutions such as the judiciary, the accountability office, and the country's electoral commission. In mobilizing his supporters, Khan used inflammatory rhetoric and maneuvered politically in ways that many believe exceeded the limits of democratic competition. Pakistan's powerful military, temporarily on the sidelines but mindful of its institutional interests, arbitrates the bitter rivalry. Pakistan's internal security is threatened by terrorism, extremism and separatist movements. The security situation in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in the former tribal areas and in the Province of Balochistan is constantly tense. Even though the security situation in significant parts of the country has improved, the government has so far not been able to enforce its monopoly on force throughout the country. Since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, terrorism has begun to increase again, especially in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Many international actors are also closely following the political developments in Pakistan. Many countries are concerned about the ability of a troubled and politically paralyzed Pakistan to deal with the growing challenge of militant extremism. Although Khan has toned down some of his anti-American rhetoric, he continues to refer to the current government as "imported" and his often sympathetic views of the Pakistani and Afghan Taliban have worried American and European powers. Many Gulf States, which for years have relied on Pakistan's military to provide security for the

government and value Islamabad's regional diplomatic role, need the security of a politically predictable and stable Pakistan. The same is true of the international financial community which, along with the Saudis, Chinese and others, has invested heavily in Pakistan. The year 2023 probably has many open questions. Among them, can Pakistan's warm political system succeed in curbing election violence? Will the army keep its promise not to interfere in the electoral process? Could the resounding triumph of Khan's conspiratorial populism reshape politics in a way that sets Pakistan on a more authoritarian path? How could a collapsing economy affect the political process, possibly postponing elections? The minor question is that Pakistan has a long way to go to establish a stable and functional political system, let alone build a democratic political culture. Now all eyes are on how military-civilian relations that are being shape up under Asim Munir. Under Bajwa, the military consolidated its control over all sorts of behind-the-scenes politics. Bajwa presided over a close "same page" relationship with Khan. When this conflict occurred, the Muslim League (N) was eager to replace Khan as an ally of the military and head of the civilian government. Bajwa resigned saying that the army would no longer be involved in political affairs. Very few people in Pakistan believe him. With politics dominating the agenda this year and elections approaching, army chief Asim Munir has a chance to show the country whether he will follow in his predecessor's footsteps or chart a new course for Pakistan's civil-military relations. The political parties must also agree that in future the opposition parties will fulfill their duties but will not attempt to overthrow any existing government before the end of their term. All political parties must also express their commitment to maintain continuity in the economic policies of each government.

Diasporic Jews are calling for an end to Zionism worldwide

Hamzah Rifaat

It is also anchored in preconceived notions that Jews living in the United States, Europe, Australia and elsewhere in the world will condone the systematic killing and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. However, an impartial and deeper understanding of the Jewish diaspora suggests the contrary. While it's true that the Jewish diaspora is not a monolithic entity with either a pervasive pro-Palestinian or Pro-Zionism outlook as Herzog

Recently, the President of the Zionist regime, Isaac Herzog callously stated that all diasporic Jews should become 'semi-citizens' of "Israel". His statements exude with ignorance and myopia, given that it entails that diasporic Jews are cannon fodder for the genocidal machinery in Palestine. It is also anchored in preconceived notions that Jews living in the United States, Europe, Australia and elsewhere in the world will condone the systematic killing and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. However, an impartial and deeper understanding of the Jewish diaspora suggests the contrary. While it's true that the Jewish diaspora is not a monolithic entity with either a pervasive pro-Palestinian or Pro-Zionism outlook as Herzog implies, there is evidence to suggest that many groups do not approve of Zionism as a so-called 'end all' for Judaism or the establishment of a Jewish state. Take the assessments of British filmmaker Gillian Mosley as an example, who suggests that Judaism as a religion is more important than militant Zionist ideology for diasporic Jews. She argues that Judaism has been around for 2,500 years as compared to Zionism which has been around for 150 years, which makes the concept of 'Israel', its policies and support for its genocidal machinery, abhorrent in the eyes of diasporic Jews. Hence, conflating Judaism with Zionism as Herzog suggests, is inherently flawed. In the Western world, many diasporic Jews are members of progressive organizations such as the Jewish Voice for Peace in the United States. The JVP is ardently against Zionism and consistently called for an end to the barbaric killing of the occupied, Palestinian population. Similarly, the 'Neturei Karta' or the 'Guardians of the City' group in the United States and "Israel" which consists of Haredi Jews was founded in 1938 and remains active as orthodox Jews opposing Zionism. Haredis advocate for the peaceful razing of the Israeli state and firmly believe that establishing a Jewish state is equivalent to a rebellion

against God. Their fiercely anti-Zionist orientation has found traction in New York City, where they are actively seen holding pro-Palestinian placards and calling for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine since 1948. Yet the presence of Haredis can easily be rebuffed as 'insignificant disruptors' by Netanyahu's sympathizers who would argue that the Neturei Karta is a fringe group that has no relevance in Jewish or Israeli policy making. Yet, such rebuttals cannot explain why Neturei Karta is not in club of one. Groups such as 'Na'amod' for example, also exist as an organization of British Jews opposing Israeli policies of occupation, subjugation, and apartheid in both Gaza and the West Bank. Na'amod too, is not in a club of one. In Germany, a country that has gained notoriety for muzzling out pro-Palestinian narratives under the garb of 'guilt washing' on the Holocaust, the Judische Stimme or the 'Jewish Voice' of Berlin continuously employs anti status-quo narratives, conflicting with the claim promoted by Netanyahu that Judaism is synonymous with Zionism or support for a genocidal regime. Their narrative is very simple- the issue lies in ending Palestine's occupation and attention should not be diverted towards so-called policies that are aimed at dismantling Judaism or the Jewish identity. Members of the Judische Stimme also contend that what took place in "Israel" on October 7th, 2023, was not in a vacuum. In fact, it is the product of continuous oppression of the Palestinian population with years of systematic erosion of their land, proliferation of illegal settlements, and state-sponsored genocide. Groups such as Judische Stimme have also lambasted Western capitals such as Berlin over their complicity in providing support to the Zionist war machinery through arms sales and political support. The Judische Stimme for example, considers Olaf Scholz's unconditional

and apologetic support from Berlin to Netanyahu as criminal, deplorable, and unjustifiable. Their advocacy is anchored in reaching out to the Jewish diasporic communities in Germany to change their outlook toward the Zionist state and the effects of the Holocaust on collective consciousness. The end result is successful mobilization in the form of protests and agitations. Such protests were both visible and palpable across academic institutions and varsities in the United States. The protestors themselves were also not simply Muslim or secular citizens calling for a ceasefire but also consisted of Jews fed up with Zionism, the status quo, and the relentless bombardment of a besieged enclave. One such group consisting of young Jews frustrated with the overwhelmingly hawkish response from American Jewish institutions to Israeli killing of Palestinian citizens is the 'IfNotNow' group which campaigns against ending America's support of the Israeli apartheid system and the latter's deprivation of justice, equality and humanity for the Palestinian people. The IfNotNow group considers itself to be representative of the Jewish future with members hailing from Sephardic, Mizrahi, working class and disabled Jewish communities. Despite such incontrovertible evidence, however, the Zionist regime in "Israel" is desperately trying to conflate Judaism with Zionism through propaganda and narrative building. Such systematic campaigning cannot deny the fact that Judaism is a religion that is steeped in history and has a rich legacy while the other is a militant ideology. By doing so, however, Isaac Herzog and his cohorts are playing by the same bigotry that often conflates the followers of Islam with terrorist organizations. The truth is that diasporic Jews are calling for an end to Zionism worldwide which is a reality that "Israel" and its allies need to accept.

Briefs

President urges global...

FROM PAGE 01
COP 29 would result in setting the New Collective Quantified Goal on Finance that would help developing countries fulfill their climate finance needs. He highlighted that Pakistan had planted mangrove forests over hundreds of thousands of hectares that would help protect the environment, besides earning carbon credits for Pakistan. President Zardari said that Pakistan highly valued its relations with Azerbaijan and wanted to further expand bilateral cooperation in the areas of common interest. He called for promoting more interactions, bilateral exchanges and people-to-people contacts to further cement relations between the two brotherly countries.

UNGA votes to grant...

FROM PAGE 01
Palestinian UN Ambassador Riyad Mansour told the General Assembly before the vote. "A yes vote is a vote for Palestinian existence, it is not against any state. ... It is an investment in peace." "Voting yes is the right thing to do," he said in remarks that drew applause. Under the founding UN Charter, membership is open to "peace-loving states" that accept the obligations in that document and are able and willing to carry them out. "As long as so many of you are 'Jew-hating,' you don't really care that the Palestinians are not 'peace-loving,'" said UN Ambassador Gilad Erdan, who spoke after Mansour. He accused the Assembly of shredding the UN Charter — as he used a small shredder to destroy a copy of the Charter while at the lectern.

Gaza aid could...

FROM PAGE 01
"This is already a huge issue for the population and for all humanitarian actors but in a matter of days, if not corrected, the lack of fuel could grind humanitarian operations to a halt," he told a virtual briefing. More than 100,000 people have fled Rafah in recent days, said Young. Israel's military on Monday called for Gazans to leave eastern Rafah, which triggered widespread international alarm. The UN children's agency UNICEF said more than 100,000 had left, with the UN humanitarian agency OCHA putting the figure at more than 110,000. All eyes have been on Rafah in recent weeks, where the population had swelled to around 1.5 million after hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled fighting in other areas of Gaza.

Membership of 27 MPAs..

FROM PAGE 01
The opposition member's point of order and ordered the suspension of the membership of the nominated members on the reserved seats of the ruling alliance immediately. Members of the Sunni Ittehad Council lauded the speaker's decision by thumping the table. Following the speaker's ruling, 24 women's seats and three minorities' seats became vacant in the Punjab Assembly, resulting in the ruling coalition's membership decreasing to 200. Meanwhile, the Sunni Ittehad Council holds 106 seats, and the PPP has become the third-largest party with 15 seats.

NAB prohibited...

FROM PAGE 01
Procedures (SOPs) to the NAB chairman. According to these SOPs, in case of any inquiry or complaint against a parliamentarian, the NA speaker, or the Senate chairman will be informed about the matter. Sources revealed that under the new SOPs, political leaders and parliamentarians would not be targeted or arrested at the inquiry stage to avoid political victimisation. NAB officers are mandated to refrain from issuing any statements to the media or the public.

Azlan Shah: Pakistan extend unbeaten run with NZ draw

The 1-1 finish ensured Pakistan would march into the final against Japan with an unbeaten streak in the round-robin stage. The final is scheduled for 11 May

SPORTS DESK

IPOH: Pakistan extended their unbeaten run in the ongoing Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2024 as they held New Zealand for a 1-1 stalemate in their last group match here on Friday. Both teams battled hard in the first half but failed to break the deadlock, however, New Zealand's Luke Holmes earned the advantage for his side with a brilliant field goal in the 35th minute. The lead did not last long as Pakistan's Abu Bakr Mahmood scored from a penalty corner to equalize only eight minutes later. The 1-1 finish ensured Pakistan would march into the final against Japan with an unbeaten streak in the round-robin stage. The final is scheduled for 11 May (tomorrow). In their last game, Pakistan continued their dominant run as they defeated Canada 5-4 on 8 May to get closer to the finals of the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup.



Pakistan struggled early on as Canada scored two goals in 17 minutes to take a dominant lead, however, Abu Bakr Mahmood brought Pakistan back into the game with a brace. Arshad Li-

For Canada, Sean Davis scored two, while Harbir Sindhu and Avjot Buttar scored one each. Pakistan crushed South Korea 4-0 to register their second consecutive victory in the ongoing Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, after a flying start to their campaign with a nerve-testing 5-4 victory over Malaysia. Meanwhile, they held Japan for a 1-1 stalemate in their third game and continued their unbeaten run. Pakistan squad for Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Goalkeepers: Abdullah, Muneebur Rehman. Defenders: Usama Bashir, Ehtisham Aslam, Mohammad Abdullah, Sufyan, Abu Bakar (vice-captain), Ammad Butt (captain). Midfielders: Salman Razaq, Arshad Liaquat, Moin Shakeel, Zakria Hayat, Murtaza Yaqoob, Ghazanfar Ali. Forwards: Abdul Rehman (Sr), Abdul Hanan, Rana Waheed, Ejaz Ahmad. Standbys: Akmal Hussain, Aqeel Ahmad, Arbaz, Hammad Anjum, Abdul Rehman (Jr), Abdul Manan, Rومان.

Leverkusen beat Roma to make Europa League final



LONDON: Bayer Leverkusen are through to the Europa League final 4-2 on aggregate after a stoppage-time goal from Josip Stanisic snatched a 2-2 draw at home on Thursday, extending their unbeaten run to a record 49 games. In a rematch of last season's Europa League semi-final, Roma came to Leverkusen 2-0 down after the first leg but levelled the tie-up despite having little possession thanks to penalties in each half from Leandro Paredes. With the tie heading for extra time, Alex Grimaldo curled in a corner which goalie Mile Svilar failed to catch, the ball going into the net after bouncing off Roma defender Gianluca Mancini. Stanisic then kept Leverkusen's stunning record of late goals alive by scoring on the counter in the seventh minute of added time, breaking Ben-

ca's European unbeaten record dating back to 1965. "We had chances to score goals early and didn't — but they will in Dublin," Leverkusen boss Alonso told RTL. "It was a special evening. There were tense moments but it showed the personality and the mentality of the team." "We didn't know ourselves how we were 2-0 behind," Leverkusen midfielder Granit Xhaka said. "To come back against a team like this is unbelievable — our desire is incredible. We're in the final, we're on our way to making our dream a reality and will do everything to bring the trophy back to Leverkusen." Bundesliga champions Leverkusen will meet Atalanta, who beat Marseille 3-0 (4-1 on aggregate), in the Europa League final in Dublin on May 22 with hopes of a remarkable treble

still alive. Alonso again mixed things up tactically and made six changes including surprisingly leaving star attackers Florian Wirtz, Victor Boniface and former Roma striker Patrik Schick on the bench, instead leading the line with Adam Hlozek.

The changes did not impact Leverkusen's rhythm as the hosts exploded onto the pitch, carving Roma up with creative, fluid movement.

Roma by contrast brought the fight and tried to unsettle the Bundesliga champions, picking up four yellow cards inside the opening 30 minutes. Exequiel Palacios was the target for much of Roma's roughhousing but the Argentinian World Cup winner almost had revenge after 29 minutes when his low shot hit the inside of the post and came close to bouncing in off goalkeeper Svilar's back. Svilar produced a spectacular double save to keep out shots from Amine Adli and Hlozek on the 38-minute mark. Roma sent a long ball up the other end and within moments the referee pointed to the spot after Roma's Bayer Leverkusen loanee Sardar Azmoun went down in a tussle with Jonathan Tah. Palacios' Argentinian teammate Paredes sent the ball down the middle and Roma were 1-0 up and back into the tie just before half-time. The second half began like the first, with Leverkusen unable to make their dominance count on the scoreboard — before Roma won another spot-kick, this time via VAR for a handball against Hlozek. — Agencies

Bellingham injury update ahead of UCL final

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

MADRID: Real Madrid are trying to ensure that their star midfielder Jude Bellingham is fit for the final of the UEFA Champions League against Borussia Dortmund next month. According to a report by Spanish daily Relevo, Bellingham has played a lot of matches while being uncomfortable physically. He always wants to help the team and be there but now, with 4 league matches remaining, a plan is being prepared ensure that his recovery is as close to 100% as possible for the UCL final. Bellingham will start some of the remaining games and rest in others, the report added.

Madrid will face Granada tomorrow in La Liga, followed by the clash against Alaves on Tuesday. The Los Blancos will also face Villarreal on May 19 and Real Betis on May 25. Bellingham has had a dream start to life at Real Madrid as he has a total of 32 goals and assists in his debut season in 39 appearances. 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.

BCCI to advertise for new India's head coach

NEW DELHI: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary, Jay Shah, has announced that the Indian board will soon be inviting applications for the position of head coach of the men's team. The current head coach of the Indian team, Rahul Dravid, will see his tenure come to an end after the T20 World Cup, prompting the BCCI to commence the search for a replacement in the coming days. Shah mentioned that Dravid is welcome to re-apply if he so desires. "Rahul Dravid's tenure is till the World Cup, we will be inviting applications soon for the post of head coach and if Dravid wants to re-apply, he can do it. We have decided the criteria. Thereafter we will invite applications for support staff in consultation with the Cricket Advisory Committee. The coach's tenure will be of three years," Shah said during an interaction in Mumbai on Thursday. On the other hand, Shah revealed Indian team will be travelling for the T20 World Cup to the West Indies and the USA next month in two batches. "Those whose IPL teams don't qualify for the play-offs will be leaving on May 24. "The team will be travelling in two batches, the first batch will travel on the 24th of this month while the rest after IPL gets over," Shah added. Meanwhile, Shah hinted to move the World Test Championship (WTC) final out of England. He indicated that the BCCI has spoken to the ICC. It must be noted the third WTC final will also be played in England in June 2025. — Agencies

New Zealand Colin Munro brings curtain down on int'l career

Munro didn't feature in an international match for NZ since 2020

SPORTS DESK

WELLINGTON: Colin Munro brought the curtain down on his international career on Friday after not being included in New Zealand's T20 World Cup 2024 squad. Munro didn't feature in an international match for New Zealand since 2020 but had made himself available for the World Cup in the US and WI. NZ coach Gray Stead confirmed that Munro was part of the discussion when the squad was announced but he didn't get the nod in the end. Munro, 37, will continue playing franchise cricket, something which he has been doing for the last four years on a regular basis. "Playing for the Black Caps has always been the biggest achievement in my playing career," Munro said. "I never felt prouder than donning that jersey, and the fact that I've been able to do that 123 times across all formats is something I will always be incredibly proud of. "Although it has been a while since my last appearance, I never gave up hope that I might be able to return off the back of my franchise T20 form. With the announcement of the Black Caps squad for the T20 World

Cup now is the perfect time to close that chapter officially." Munro represented New Zealand in one Test, 57 ODIs and 65 T20Is. He scored three centuries in T20I cricket, including a 47-ball ton against West Indies in 2018 which was a NZ record at the time. He also smashed a 14-ball half-century against Sri Lanka, which was his fourth fastest in T20I cricket and also a NZ record. New Zealand Cricket chief executive Scott Weenink lauded Munro after the retirement decision was announced. "Colin was one of our first players to embrace the aggressive, 360-degree style batting that is now accepted all around the world as best practice," Weenink said.



Trophy unveiling ceremony of CA Volleyball League

As the Central Asian Volleyball League gets underway, spectators and fans can expect a week of intense competition, thrilling matches, and unforgettable moments, showcasing the best of volleyball talent

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The stage is set for the highly anticipated Engro Central Asian Volleyball Championship, scheduled to take place from May 11th to May 17th, 2024, at the Liqat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad. With six national teams from Central Asian countries, including Iran, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, set to compete, the excitement among volleyball enthusiasts is palpable. Today marks the grand commencement of the Central Asian Volleyball League, heralded by a magnificent press conference and trophy unveiling ceremony, graciously hosted by the prestigious Serena Hotels. This event promises to be an electrifying prelude to a week filled with exhilarating matches and intense competition. The festivities will kick off with the first match of the tournament

at 1:00 PM, featuring a showdown between Turkmenistan and Iran. This will be followed by a thrilling match between Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan. The highlight of the day will be the much-anticipated open-

ing ceremony, scheduled for 5:30 PM, where esteemed guests and dignitaries will come together to celebrate the spirit of sportsmanship and international camaraderie. Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan,

Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Government of Pakistan, will grace the occasion as the chief guest. Following the opening ceremony, the action-packed day will contin-

ue with a riveting match between Pakistan and Afghanistan at 6:30 PM, setting the stage for an exciting start to the tournament. Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Pakistan Sports Board for providing the facilities to host this prestigious tournament in Pakistan. PVF also acknowledges the invaluable support of the Director General of Sports, the Minister of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), and the Secretary of IPC, whose unwavering support has been instrumental in making this event a reality. PVF extends its sincere gratitude to Serena Hotels for hosting the Press Conference and Trophy Unveiling Ceremony. As the Central Asian Volleyball League gets underway, spectators and fans can expect a week of intense competition, thrilling matches, and unforgettable moments, showcasing the best of volleyball talent from across the region.



PTI slams police brutality...

FROM PAGE 01

Shoaib Shaheen and Amir Mughal even though they did not break a flower pot. Omar strongly condemned the police attempt to detain PTI Chairman and use of forces against peaceful protesters who were exercising their constitutional right of peaceful protests, adding that police gardi had been on its peak in Pakistan especially in Punjab, where the department was ruined by IG Punjab Dr. Usman. PTI Secretary General stated that at least 16 unarmed innocent persons were martyred and hundreds severely injured as a result of direct firing of security personnel on May 9 while no security man sustained injuries because PTI protesters were peaceful and unarmed. Opposition Leader in National Assembly stated that they did what they could have done but they could not deter them and the party's peaceful movement for ensuring supremacy of the constitution and establishing rule of law would continue until make Pakistan a truly independent country, where constitution and law reign supreme.

Punjab govt relaunches..

FROM PAGE 01

CM Maryam about higher education sector reforms wherein detailed briefing was also given on promotion of higher education, laptop and transport facility for students. The forum was apprised that over 0.65 million students were studying in private and public universities in Punjab. Among the students studying in universities, the proportion of boys was 44% and the proportion of girls was 56%, the meeting was briefed. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Provincial Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat, Information Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, the chief secretary, secretary higher education and other officials also attended the meeting. On May 26, 2023, then-special assistant to prime minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja had said the government would re-launch the laptop scheme in 2023 under the umbrella of the Prime Minister Youth Programme.

PSX reaches new high...

FROM PAGE 01

"expectations that inflation may fall at a faster than expected rate". "Investors have been buying shares of companies that will benefit from lower interest rates," he added. Yousuf M. Farooq, director of research at Chase Securities, said traders were expecting inflation to clock in at close to 15pc for May and for interest rates to decline over the next (financial) year, which caused some excitement in cyclical. Raza Jafri, chief executive of EFG Hermes Pakistan, also said monetary easing expectations continue to build up, with real interest rates now about +5pc and the external account exhibiting comfort. "Hitherto underperforming leveraged sectors such as cement are seeing buying interest, from both local and foreign investors," he highlighted.

Pakistan lunar...

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Hainan, China on May 03. According to the Pakistan Institute of Space Technology (IST), Pakistan's lunar CubeSat iCUBE-Q was successfully deployed in orbit at 1314 hours on May 08 from Chang'E-6. IST which is a leading high-end university of Pakistan had the distinct honor of launching a Cube Satellite iCUBE-Qamar (iCUBE-Q) in Lunar orbit onboard China's Chang'E-6 Mission. CubeSats are a class of small satellites used by academic institutes for experimental and research purposes in Low Earth Orbits, generally with an altitude of less than one thousand km. However, these satellites are now finding many applications in higher orbits and deep space missions. Moon is in an elliptical orbit at an average distance of around 384 thousand km from the earth which makes it challenging to communicate with and control small satellites.

Briefs

Unified efforts to combat dengue in twin cities

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioners of Islamabad and Rawalpindi on Friday chaired a high-level meeting here at DC Office which was aimed at synchronizing strategies for dengue prevention in the twin cities. According to the Spokesman of ICT Administration, the administrations of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have joined hands, in a bid to curb the spread of dengue fever. The meeting was attended by administrative officers, district health officers, and the CEO of DHA Rawalpindi. Additionally, representatives from CDA, MCI, and relevant departments also participated in the meeting. The primary focus of the discussions was on collaborative action plans, with particular attention to border areas shared by the two districts. Joint operations will be conducted to target these regions, aiming to eliminate dengue larvae and halt the transmission of the disease. The decision to coordinate efforts reflects a proactive approach by the authorities to address the pressing issue of dengue fever. By pooling resources and expertise, Islamabad and Rawalpindi aim to bolster their defenses against the disease, safeguarding the health and well-being of residents across both cities. These unified efforts against dengue are a significant step toward the ongoing battle to protect communities from vector-borne diseases. With coordinated strategies and a shared commitment to public health, Islamabad and Rawalpindi administrations combat the dengue fever threat. —APP

Wafaqi Mohtasib providing prompt relief

ISLAMABAD: The Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) is providing expeditious and free-of-cost relief to citizens on their grievances against the federal government agencies, Senior Adviser Abdul Moiz Bukhari has said. The official expressed these views at a briefing to the interns of Associated Press of Pakistan's youth media training programme during their visit to the Ombudsman Secretariat. Bukhari said Wafaqi Mohtasib was contributing to good governance in public departments through its verdicts ensuring the principles of "fairness, transparency and integrity". In 2023, he said, action was taken on a record 194,099 complaints registered against government departments, out of which 193,028 were addressed. He said the Mohtasib received 49,190 online and 22,321 complaints through mobile application, witnessing a 47 and 21 percent increase compared to 2022, respectively. An action was taken on a record number of 202,367 complaints received from overseas Pakistanis, he added. Besides use of technology, he said, new methods (open cases, Khuli katchehris (open courts), unconventional modes of mediation and visits of inspection teams proved helpful in resolution of complaints. The senior adviser said a review appeal could be lodged by any party against the decision of Wafaqi Mohtasib, which is settled within 60 days. If unsatisfied with decision, an appeal can be made to the President of Pakistan. Later, the Mohtasib official responded to the queries of the APP delegation regarding various services of the institution. —APP

IRSA releases 168,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 168,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 203,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1468.78 feet and was 54.78 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 47,100 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. —APP

CPEC the crown jewel in China, Pakistan friendship

CPEC, which was launched in 2013 and a flagship project under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, has "benefited Pakistan's economy immensely", he said in Beijing

DNA

BEIJING: Calling the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) an exemplar of friendship between the two countries, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal said there has always been "spring" in the relations between Pakistan and China which are always moving on an upward trajectory. CPEC, which was launched in 2013 and a flagship project under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, has "benefited Pakistan's economy immensely", he said in Beijing. Pakistan looks forward to further cooperating with China to seek shared economic growth as CPEC has entered into its second phase, he added. "The garden of friendship between Pakistan and China in every season has blossomed new and colorful flowers of cooperation and understanding between the people of Pakistan and China," the minister said. Iqbal lauded CPEC for transforming the development landscape of, creating jobs for and building connectivity for his country, China Daily reported. "CPEC has helped Pakistan transform its energy and infrastructure sectors



and connect several parts of the country so the fruits of development can be shared across various regions of Pakistan," Iqbal said. "It also helped create over two million jobs and helps Pakistan's workers master new technology and get trained in projects," he added.

Iqbal slammed the so-called debt trap narrative as far from reality and expressed appreciation for China's financial support which he said has been "very attractive financing for Pakistan". Iqbal said China outlined five corridors under CPEC last year, namely growth, livelihood,

openness, inclusivity and innovation, which were well aligned with 5-E's framework, namely Export, Energy, Equity, E-Pakistan and Environment, envisioned by the government of Pakistan. Pakistan needs to take advantage of the new digital revolution to transform

its growth model and is looking forward to green energy projects to cope with threats posed by climate change, he said. Iqbal hoped through discussions with Chinese officials that the two sides would be able to work out the roadmap to implement the second phase of CPEC. Iqbal arrived in Beijing on Wednesday as part of the high-level interactions between China and Pakistan; this was the first high-level visit to China since the new Pakistani government came to power in March. In another development, Iqbal denounced terrorist attacks as "dirty tricks" by those who attempt to foil the progress of CPEC and set obstacles in two countries' friendship. Speaking of the Dasu terrorist attack in March, which killed five Chinese and one Pakistani, he said the incident had been sponsored by such elements across Pakistan's border and they were enemies of friendship between the two countries. "But my message to them is that such incidents cannot stop the progress of CPEC. Pakistan and China will defeat these elements," Iqbal said. "We will do whatever is in our human resources possible to provide extra security for our Chinese brothers and sisters working in Pakistan," he added.

Iceland's 'Mammoth' raises potential for carbon capture

HELLISHEIDI: With Mammoth's 72 industrial fans, Swiss start-up Climeworks intends to suck 36,000 tonnes of CO2 from the air annually to bury underground, vying to prove the technology has a place in the fight against global warming. Mammoth, the largest carbon dioxide capture and storage facility of its kind, launched operations this week situated on a dormant volcano in Iceland. It adds significant capacity to the Climeworks' first project Orca, which also sucks the primary greenhouse gas fuelling climate change from the atmosphere. Just 50 kilometres (31 miles) from an active volcano, the seemingly risky site was chosen for its proximity to the Hellisheidi geothermal energy plant necessary to power the facility's fans and heat chemical filters to extract CO2 with water vapour. CO2 is then separated from the steam and compressed in a hangar where huge pipes crisscross. Finally, the gas is dissolved in water and pumped underground with a "sort of giant SodaStream", said Bergur Sigfusson, chief system development officer for Carbfix which developed the process. A well, drilled under a futuristic-looking dome, injects the water 700 metres (2,300 feet) down into volcanic basalt that makes up 90 percent of Iceland's subsoil where it reacts with the magnesium, calcium and iron in the rock to form crystals - solid reservoirs of CO2. For the world to achieve "carbon neutrality" by 2050, "we should be removing something like six to 16 billion tonnes of CO2 per year from the air", said Jan Wurzbacher, co-founder and co-chief of Climeworks at the inauguration of the first 12 container fans at Mammoth. "I quite strongly believe that a large share of these... need to be covered by technical solutions," he said. "Not we alone, not as a single company. Others should do that as well," he added, setting his start-up of 520 employees the goal of surpassing millions of tonnes by 2030 and approaching a billion by 2050. Three years after opening Orca, Climeworks will increase capacity from 4,000 to 40,000 tonnes of CO2 captured once Mammoth is at full capacity - but that represents just seconds of the world's actual emissions. According to the IPCC, the UN's climate expert body, carbon removal technologies will be necessary to meet the targets of the 2015 Paris Agreement - but major reductions of emissions is the priority. The role of direct air capture with carbon storage (DACCS) remains minor in the various climate models due to its high price and its deployment at a large scale depends on the availability of renewable energy. Climeworks is a pioneer with the two first plants in the world to have surpassed the pilot stage at a cost around \$1,000 per tonne captured. Wurzbacher expects the cost to decline to just \$300 in 2030.

More than 20 new infrastructure projects, developed by various players and combining direct capture and storage, should be operational worldwide by 2030 with a capacity around 10 million of tonnes.

UN says 80,000 displaced from Gaza's Rafah city

"However, the situation remains extremely fluid, and we continue to confront a range of challenges amid active hostilities. We count on cooperation and facilitation to get these crossings operational again since stocks of critical supplies, including fuel, are being depleted by the hour

UNITED NATIONS: Some 80,000 people have left Rafah since Monday amid continuing Israeli bombardment in and around Gaza's southernmost city overnight and into Tuesday, UN humanitarian officials reported. Most of those uprooted by Israeli military evacuation orders in eastern Rafah have already been displaced from other areas of Gaza; they are now leaving with everything they can carry "in vehicles, trucks, (on) motorbikes and donkey carts", according to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA). More than 47,500 people are estimated to have left their shelters in Rafah on Wednesday alone, UNRWA said, with some families approaching the agency's shelters at Tel Sultan as well as Al Mawasi in the west. The World Food Programme's (WFP) Director for Palestine Matthew Hollingworth said in a post on X on Thursday that the agency's main warehouse "is now inaccessible". "No aid has entered from southern crossings in two days", he added. "There is only a single bakery still operational while supplies of food will last only one to three days." In an update, UNRWA noted "an ongoing and significant amount of bombardment" in eastern Rafah early Thursday "and all through the night". The development comes as UN humanitarians repeated warnings about the lack of desperately needed aid reaching highly vulnerable people in Gaza despite reports that the Kerem Shalom crossing near Rafah had reopened. "We are engaging with all involved on the resumption of the entry of goods, including fuel, and so that we can again begin managing incoming supplies," said the UN aid coordination office, OCHA late Wednesday. "However, the situation remains extremely fluid, and we continue to confront a range of challenges amid active hostilities. We count on cooperation and facilitation to get these crossings operational again since stocks of critical supplies, including fuel, are being depleted by the hour."

UK FM David Cameron: life after Brexit

LONDON: His legacy forever defined by Brexit, Britain's former prime minister David Cameron is hurriedly restoring his reputation - and that of UK diplomacy - as a globe-trotting foreign secretary. The 57-year-old has become a high-profile figure on the world stage again, visiting dozens of countries since his unexpected return last November from the political wilderness, which included a lobbying scandal. With polls indicating Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's ruling Conservatives will lose a general election due this year, Cameron knows his time as Britain's top diplomat is likely to be short - so he is making the most of it. "I think for him this is partly about rehabilitation of his image after Brexit and after some of the things that happened when he left office," Simon Fraser, the top civil servant at the Foreign Office during Cameron's premiership, told AFP. "He's a man with a personal mission." Cameron, who

became prime minister in 2010, quit in July 2016 after his European Union referendum gamble spectacularly backfired when Britons voted to leave the bloc. He retreated to a bespoke £25,000 (\$31,000) shepherd's hut in his country garden to pen his memoirs as parliament wrangled over what Brexit would exactly look like. Cameron became embroiled in scandal in 2021 after lobbying the government for finance group Greensill Capital, which later collapsed. He also endured flak for promoting a Chinese investment project, at a time when senior British lawmakers were calling for tougher action against Beijing. "His reputation was being quite seriously tarnished," just at the time Sunak brought him in from the cold, Anand Menon, director of the UK in a Changing Europe think-tank, told AFP. "I'm sure there was a sense of unfinished business when he decided to take the job." His return to frontline

British politics after more than seven years away stunned Westminster, with commentators and opposition lawmakers pointing out his mixed foreign policy record as prime minister. They cited Britain's failure to respond to a 2013 chemical attack blamed on Syrian government forces and his leading role in an international intervention to topple Moamer Kadhafi in 2011, after which Libya plunged into crisis. In a speech Thursday, Cameron said he had been "determined to make every day count" of his six months as foreign secretary so far. By his own tally, he has visited 33 countries across six continents, including Ukraine, Israel, and the United States, where he urged Donald Trump to persuade Republicans to unlock military aid to Kyiv. Cameron became the first British foreign secretary to visit Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and even turned up in the remote British overseas

territory of the Falkland Islands. "He is a man in a hurry," noted Fraser. Allies say he is enjoying using the influence and contacts he made as prime minister, while civil servants credit him with injecting energy and gravitas into the foreign office following less serious predecessors like Boris Johnson and Liz Truss. "He's got the experience of the key issues and he's obviously got a sort of international reach and a network, which gives access as we saw with Trump," said Fraser. Menon said Cameron is "quite a smooth operator, a good talker", which "makes a difference in the world of diplomacy". Sunak is said to have trusted Cameron with the foreign affairs job so he can focus on the domestic agenda and try to turn around double-digit deficits in the opinion polls to the main Labour opposition before the election. Some in Westminster have dubbed Cameron the "prime minister for external affairs".

Insiders note that because he is a member of the unelected House of Lords and untethered from the parliamentary Conservative party he feels he has the freedom to take more risks, like his meeting with Trump. Observers say he has also been more critical of Israel's response to Hamas's deadly attack than other ministers and has appeared to suggest that Britain could recognise a Palestinian state before a peace deal is signed. "If you look at Gaza, I think he gave some nuance and a more distinctive voice to British policy there, which had previously been just a pale shadow of American policy," said Fraser. But with a new foreign secretary likely after the election, it is not yet clear what new legacy Cameron will leave behind. "He's been competent, he's been high profile, he's been meeting the right people, he's been travelling widely, people seem to be listening to what he says." —APP

S. Africa's top court hears Zuma case

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's top court will hear an appeal on Friday to have former president Jacob Zuma declared ineligible in a politically charged legal showdown set to raise tensions before the tightest election in decades. Zuma, 82, is fronting a new opposition party that has become a potential disrupter in the May 29 general election. But electoral authorities have argued the graft-tainted politician should be barred from the race because of a 2021 contempt of court conviction. The Constitutional Court in Johannesburg is called to decide on the matter after a lower court sided with Zuma in April. Legal experts say it might take a few days to reach a verdict. Coming only weeks before what is expected to be the most competitive vote since the advent of democracy in 1994, the case has made some observers nervous. Zuma's jailing in 2021 triggered a wave of unrest, riots, and looting that left more than 350 people dead. There are fears of a repeat. "Zuma's supporters have threatened violence again this year should things not go their way," said Zakhele Ndlovu, a politics lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. —APP

Panama president pledges to deport migrants

PANAMA CITY: Panama will deport US-bound migrants who enter the country through the notoriously dangerous stretch of jungle known as the Darien Gap, president-elect Jose Raul Mulino said Thursday. "In order to do away with the odyssey that is the Darien Gap ... with international aid we will begin a process of repatriation, in full compliance with the human rights of all the people there," Mulino said in a speech to the election body that formally declared him president after last Sunday's polls. The 165-mile (265-kilometer) Darien Gap, which lies on the border with Colombia to the south, has become a key corridor for migrants heading from South America through Central America and Mexico in hopes of reaching the United States and a chance at a better life there. They face dense jungle, treacherous terrain, wild animals and violent criminal gangs that extort, kidnap and abuse them.

Maldives says India has completed troop withdrawal

MALÉ: India withdrew its last remaining soldiers stationed in the Maldives on Friday to meet a deadline set by the archipelago nation's government, an official at the Maldivian foreign ministry told AFP. Pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu won office last year while campaigning on a promise to downgrade ties with India, and has since reoriented the strategically placed archipelago nation towards Beijing. After coming to power, he demanded the withdrawal of at least 88 Indian soldiers who had been stationed in the territory to assist with maritime patrols. The third and final batch of 27 Indian troops left the archipelago on Friday, the official said, declining to be named as they were not authorised to speak to media. They added that there was no public ceremony held to mark the end of the Indian military deployment. Both India and the Maldives struck a conciliatory note on Thursday, ahead of the withdrawal deadline. Maldives Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer met his Indian counterpart during an official visit to New Delhi on Thursday, saying his trip marked a "new initiative of collaboration, symbolising enduring friendship and shared goals". —Agencies

Slain Australian surfers' bodies arrive in US

TIJUANA: The bodies of two Australian surfers murdered in Mexico were taken to the United States on Thursday to be delivered to their relatives for the long journey home. The funeral home transporting the remains of brothers Jake and Callum Robinson, who were aged 30 and 33 respectively, confirmed that they had been transferred from Tijuana to San Diego where their parents were waiting. The body of their 30-year-old American friend Jack Carter Rhoad, who was also murdered, was in the care of another funeral company. The tourists had been camping in a remote beachside area in violence-hit Baja California state when they were killed in what investigators believe was an attempt to steal their pickup truck. Their bodies were found last Friday in a cliff-top shaft with bullet wounds to the head. On Wednesday, a Mexican court ordered the prosecution of the main suspect in the triple murder, Jesus Gerardo "N" - alias "El Kekas." The prosecution has said it is gathering evidence to charge two other suspects, who remain in detention for alleged possession of methamphetamine. Baja California, located just south of California, is popular with US tourists thanks to its inviting beaches. It is also one of Mexico's most violent states because of organized criminal gangs, although tourists are not usually their targets. —APP

Pakistan, GCCs FTA, likely to be finalized

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan has said the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is likely to be finalized in the near future, which will strengthen the economic and trade ties of Pakistan with the potential market of the GCCs. After the free trade agreement to these countries with Pakistan, Pakistan's trade relations with these countries will be increased and our trade volume will also enhance, the minister said this while talking to APP, besides of two-day Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Investment Forum here. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) brings together six Arab countries - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates for integration amongst them. The Minister said that Saudi Arabia is a major trading partner of Pakistan in the GCC countries, which has vast potential for investment and trade in various sectors including petrochemicals. He said that both private and public sectors participated in the Pakistan Saudi Arab Investment Forum and the process of private sector business to business discussions has started. Replying to a question, he said that 13 different sectors from the private sector participated in the forum and similarly Minerals and Mines and Energy sector from the public sector participated in the negotiations. The government's fresh approach of focusing solely on facilitation has successfully bolstered the confidence of investors and businessmen in its commitments, paving the way for a new era of economic growth and cooperation, he said. The minister said, unlike in the past, the incumbent government has limited its role to facilitation and promotion of businesses to build a robust economy, which he said was imperative in shaping foreign policies and fulfilling commitments respectfully. This new approach had already yielded positive results, with Saudi investors expressing confidence in the government's commitments, the minister added. Jam Kamal said the government's efforts have led to an influx of around 100 foreign companies from various sectors, including energy, food, construction, and IT, engaging with Pakistani businesses. The minister praised the business community's crucial role in improving the country's economic affairs and acknowledged the government's commitment to creating a conducive environment for economic growth. Jam Kamal said the government has taken concrete steps, including reforms in taxation, energy, and tariff matters, to facilitate export-oriented companies and ease the process of doing business. The Minister said this new approach marks a significant shift from the past, when Pakistani companies were leaving the country. Now, they are returning and even considering joint ventures. The government's vision is to promote the business sector, leading to economic growth and relations built on business and work, rather than loans, aids, and grants, he said. —dna

Briefs

IMF support team reaches Pakistan

IMF team to discuss upcoming budget 2025 with Finance Ministry officials, say sources

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team on Friday reached Pakistan to hold talks regarding the South Asian nation's request for a longer and larger size of bailout package under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF). According to the sources privy to the matter, a support team of the global lender will discuss the first phase of the next long-term loan programme with the country's financial team. Moreover, the sources said that the advance party has reached Pakistan for talks while the IMF mission will arrive on the night of May 16. The team will receive data from different departments and will also discuss the upcoming budget 2025 with the Ministry of Finance officials. The sources also revealed that the team will stay in Pakistan for more than 10 days. Pakistan sought a next bailout package in the range of \$6 to \$8 billion for the three years period under the EFF with possibility of augmentation through climate financing. The News had reported last month.

UK exits recession with fastest growth

LONDON: Stronger than expected growth at the start of the year saw the UK emerge from recession. The economy grew by 0.6% between January and March, the fastest rate for two years, official figures showed. The UK fell into recession at the end of last year after shrinking for two three-month periods in a row. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the economy had "turned a corner", but Labour said this was no time for a "victory lap". On Thursday, the governor of the Bank of England, media that the UK was seeing a recovery, although it was not a strong one. Interest rates are currently at their highest for 16 years, meaning people are paying more to borrow money for things such as mortgages and loans, but savers have also received better returns. Mortgage rates have been creeping up in recent weeks, after forecasts for when the Bank of England would cut borrowing costs were pushed back. On Thursday, the Bank said that inflation, which measures the rate prices rise at, would fall close to its target level in the next couple of months. - Agencies

Naqvi discusses human trafficking with Italian envoy

FAISAL SEIKH
ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met Ambassador of Italy, Marylina Ermelin, who has recently been appointed in Pakistan. In the meeting, the interior minister told the envoy that mutual cooperation to stop human trafficking should be promoted. Naqvi informed the ambassador that stern action was being taken against human trafficking throughout the country. The Pakistanis leaving illegally for Italy would be jailed as the FIA was fully empowered to penalise illegal skilled manpower, he said. Naqvi greeted the Italian ambassador on her appointment in the country. Both the leaders proposed to reach an agreement to attain the status of sister cities for Italian city, Milan and Islamabad. Federal Interior Secretary Khuram Agha and senior officials of Italian Embassy were also present.

PM Shehbaz for trade policies to facilitate businesses

The meeting was also apprised of the strict monitoring of Afghan Transit Trade, double-digit premium growth of public sector insurance companies, finalising Gem Export Framework



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the authorities concerned to formulate the trade policies with a core objective of facilitating the business sector, calling for urgent measures to enhance the competitiveness of the country's exports. The prime

minister, chairing a meeting on the trade sector, called for steps to promote exports of non-traditional goods and instructed for immediate payment of the certified duty drawback of the exporters. Highlighting the significance of the private sector, he instructed to ensure consultation with them during the policy-making and implement the deletion policy to uplift the auto sector. Prime Minister Shehbaz directed the relevant ministry

TTP should be dealt through coordination with Afghan govt

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Speaking at a well-attended seminar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), former National Security Advisor, Lt. Gen (r) Nasir Khan Janjua, suggested that the way forward to deal with the challenge of cross-border terrorism, especially the TTP, was to proceed through the Afghan government. He also underscored that, 'for a better future, and ensuring a better partnership in the development of the region, we need to look at Afghanistan beyond the TTP factor'. He also emphasized the need to see the cross-border terrorism threat in a larger canvas, adding that "today's challenges are direct outcomes of the conflicting ideologies of different countries and their maneuverings with the insurgent groups." Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Asif Ali Khan Durrani, Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan said that peace in Afghanistan seemed a tall order for now, therefore we have to live with the neighboring country and manage our affairs with Afghanistan accordingly. Ambassador Durrani also noted that 'earlier, it was hoped that with the arrival of the Taliban, the security situation on the Pak-Afghan border would improve but unfortunately the TTP attacks emanating from Afghanistan had increased by 60 percent in the last two years'. Regarding Indian involvement in fomenting terrorism, he stated, 'I have no qualms in saying that Indians are paying the TTP through the Afghan proxies, and it is not something new as Indians have been propping up the TTP since the Karzai government.' He emphasized that the state should not negotiate with non-state actors. Sharing his thoughts on the occasion, Dr Kaleem Imam,

former IGP and counterterrorism expert, said that besides the TTP, several other militant organizations were actively involved in spreading insurgencies such as BLA, and BLF. He suggested that for countering each of these groups different strategies were required as one model could not apply to all, given the complex nature of militant networks and their ideologies. Zahid Hussain, renowned author and journalist said that what was happening after the return of the Taliban was not something surprising as it had been predicted well in time, but we were not prepared for it. He underpinned that 'it is not possible for the TTP to stay in Afghanistan without the support of the Afghan Taliban' and regretted that an incoherent approach had led to the failure of the state in countering the existential threat of terrorism. He also impressed upon the need for clarity in policies towards TTP since 'fighting and negotiation could not go side by side.' Agreeing with Mr Hussain, Gharida Farooqi, a senior journalist and anchor argued that it was impossible to develop a consensus out of 'both confusion and 'clarity', and therefore, "we should come out of the dilemma of good Taliban or the bad Taliban, by developing a clear picture". She added that, "we have to draw certain lines that there could be no talks with the TTP unless they surrender to the sovereignty of Pakistan. Itfikh Khan Firdous of the Khorasan Diary said that there were at least 25 subgroups under the TTP right now and the number of TTP fighters had gone up to 21000 from 18000 in the last two years. He argued that the TTP was actually replicating the insurgency model of the Afghan Taliban of 2004. While it took Afghan Taliban more than 10 years to develop a solid base against the US, the TTP was quick in establishing its political and military structure on the Afghan Taliban model.

Prof. Guiomar to take part in cultural events in Lahore

Ambassadors of Brazil and Portugal to accompany the guest

ISLAMABAD: At initiative of the Embassy of Brazil and of the Embassy of Portugal, together with the support of Instituto Guimaraes Rosa and Instituto Camoes, Prof. Guiomar de Grammont, accompanied by Olyntho Vieira, Ambassador of Brazil, and Frederico Silva, Ambassador of Portugal; will participate in two main cultural sessions in Lahore. On 11th May Saturday 11:00, an interactive talk co-organized with the Aga Khan Cultural Service - Pakistan. Main topics include History and Art, Heritage Preservation, UNESCO classified sites in Pakistan, Portugal and Brazil. Later same day there will be another interactive talk at 16:00 co-organized with the Alhama Arts Council and the Lahore Literary Festival. Main topics will include Portuguese Language around the world, Literatures of Lusophone Countries, Literary Festivals in Pakistan, Portugal and Brazil, literary work of Guiomar de Grammont. Guiomar de Grammont, from Ouro Preto, is a renowned author, poet, dramaturg, historian, and professor. With a PhD in Brazilian Literature from USP, as an author she has been a recipient of the Casa de Las Americas Award and the Pen-Club National Award, amongst others. As a playwright, she has staged seven plays in Brazil, including "Olympia" which toured all over Latin America and Europe. Former executive editor of National Fiction at Record. Prof. Guiomar has curated multiple global book festivals including Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Lisbon, and Paris. - DNA



Cabinet committee approves 24 entities for privatisation

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Privatisation (CCOP), principally and for the time being, on Friday approved 24 State Owned Enterprises for the Privatisation Programme, directing the Privatisation Ministry to deliberate the phasing of each entity in consultation with the respective ministries. The committee, which met here under the chair of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, was presented with a phased Privatisation Programme (2024-29) by the Ministry of Privatisation, based on the recommendations of PC Board, said a press release. The meeting was also attended by other committee members including the finance minister, minister for commerce, minister for privatisation, minister for industries and production, governor State Bank of Pakistan, chairman SECP besides federal secretaries of various ministries and division. The CCOP recommended that priority shall be accorded to privatisation of loss-making entities while the federal footprint shall be limited only to the Strategic and Essential SOEs under the federal government's domain. The CCOP emphasized that even the SOE making profits shall be considered for privatisation. After deliberating on the privatisation policy guidelines, the CCOP considered 84 SOEs in detail in light of SOE Act and Policy. Following the deliberations, the committee recommended that 40 SOEs, categorized as Strategic or Essential, shall be placed by respective ministries before the Cabinet Committee on State Owned Enterprises (CCSOE) for their categorization as Strategic or Essential; Those SOEs which would not be categorized as Strategic or Essential shall be included in the Privatisation Programme, it added.

Ireland defeat Pakistan for the first time in T20Is

DNA

DUBLIN: Ireland stunned Pakistan by five wickets in the first T20I of the three-match series at the Clontarf Cricket Club, Dublin, on Friday. This was the first time Ireland defeated Pakistan in T20Is as both teams only locked horns once in the shorter format before where the Green Shirts emerged victorious. Pakistan scored 182 in 20 overs on 6 wickets. The Irish team chased this target while one ball was still to go.

Taxing cigarettes a way forward for public and economic health

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has a "difficult-to-tax economy" and limited revenue generation options but the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has pointed out that taxing cigarettes and other non-essential items was the way forward. The IMF's advice is based on its February report titled "Tax Policy Diagnostic and Reform Options," which highlights Pakistan's tax system's underperformance in revenue generation, efficiency, equity, fairness, and sustainability. The report underscores the need for structural reforms to tackle deep-seated issues in the tax regime. Pakistan is all set to start negotiations for a long-term loan program with the global lender in upcoming days, health activists and experts have demanded the government to increase tax on cigarettes. "Taxing tobacco is the way forward. It is win-win for public health and for generation of revenue for the government," said Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Head of Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK). Ahmed said that implementation of the IMF recommendations and jacking up the prices of cigarettes in Pakistan would push people to quit smoking and save hundreds of lives every year.

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