



Islamabad POST

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President for promoting trade ties with Bosnia

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After SC order

ECP suspends lawmakers elected on reserved seats

SC last week had suspended PHC's verdict on reserved seat while accepting the SIC's plea against high court's ruling

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: After the Supreme Court order on Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) petition regarding reserved seats, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Monday suspended 77 lawmakers elected on seats denied to the party. The issue of reserved seats had been a point of contention between the SIC, which primarily comprises Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed independent candidates, and the ruling parties notably Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), and others. Dozens of members of the PPP, PML-N, MQM-P, JUI-F and others had taken oath on reserved seats in different assemblies across the country following the PHC's verdict. The ruling PML-N is the biggest loser as 44 of its members have been suspended while 15 lawmakers from PPP, 13 from Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) and one each from MQM-P, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, and Awami National Party, Pakistan Muslim League and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians. Following the top court's order, the ECP today withdrew the notification of 22 returned candidates who were allotted seats in the National Assembly. Out of the 22, 11 of them are female lawmakers given seats in the NA from Punjab, 8 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 3 minority seats in the lower house. On the other hand, in KP Assembly 21 lawmakers on reserved seats for women and 4 for minorities have been de-notified. In the Punjab Assembly, 24 women lawmakers and 3 non-Muslim legislators have been de-notified. While in the Sindh Assembly, the commission de-notified 2 female MPs and a minority member. All the lawmakers that have been de-notified belong to the PML-N, PPP, MQM-P,

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AJK govt accepts 'all demands of AAC'

PM Shehbaz approves Rs23 billion grant on urgent basis to provide relief to people in AJK

DNA

ISLAMABAD: After wheel-jam strike and violent protests against hike in electricity price and taxes entered fourth day, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq has announced that the state government accepted all demands of the Awami Action Committee (AAC). "No one can reject two fundamental demands regarding cheap roti [bread] and electricity," PM Anwar said while addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Monday, adding that PM Shehbaz Sharif assured of his all-out support to address issues of the AJK people. He clarified that neither the government had intentions to disrupt peaceful struggle of the AJK people nor would it try to impact any such struggle in future. He said that the government exhibited tolerance and patience despite violations of the law and added that more than 100 policemen were wounded in violent clashes with the protesters, whereas, not a

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding wheat stocks. – DNA

Pak-US to enhance anti terror coop

Pakistan-US recognize that partnership will advance security in the region

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Additional Foreign Secretary for the UN and OIC, Ambassador Syed Haider Shah, and US Department of State Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Ambassador Elizabeth Richard, co-chaired Pakistan-U.S. Counterterrorism Dialogue on 10 May 2024 in Washington DC. The Counterterrorism Dialogue underscores the cooperation between Pakistan and the United States in addressing the most pressing challenges to regional and global security, including Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and ISIS-Khorasan. Discussions centered on the counterterrorism landscape in the region, with a focus on areas of

Continued on Page 06

Aurangzeb assures IMF of reform continuity

The Finance Minister thanked them for the successful completion of SBA

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The IMF mission led by Mr. Nathan Porter, IMF Mission Chief called on the Finance Minister on 13th May, 2024 at the Finance Ministry to kickstart the discussions on further engagement with the Fund. The meeting was attended by Governor-State Bank of Pakistan, Chairman-Federal Board of Revenue, and senior officers of the Finance Ministry. The Finance Minister welcomed the IMF

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'Govt pursuing progress agenda'

No parallel to Pak-Saudia ties, says PM Shehbaz

We are partners in progress and prosperity, not only in the two countries but also in the region," he remarked

ANSAR M BHATTI/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday, reiterating government's sharp focus on economic advancement, said it was pursuing its agenda of growth through massive reforms and structural changes. "My government is totally committed to bringing huge reforms and huge structural changes. We are inching towards that direction, as, otherwise, it will be a futile exercise and will not produce proportionate results. We are absolutely focused on the agenda of reforms," he said in an interview with Saudi state-owned television channel. The prime minister informed the interviewer that Pakistan was faced with huge challenges at the

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan wants SCO states' collaboration

Reaffirms Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the SCO Charter

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar has urged collaboration between the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states to harness the region's potential for sustained progress and prosperity. Dar made this

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Kashmir poised to oppose Modi

Boycotts called by resistance groups left few Kashmiris willing to participate in past elections

AGENCIES

SRI NAGAR: India's six-week election resumed Monday including in Kashmir, where voters appeared eager to express discontent with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cancellation of their disputed territory's semi-autonomy and the security crackdown that followed. Modi remains popular across much of India and his Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is widely expected to win the poll when it concludes early next month. But his government's decision in 2019 to bring Kashmir under its direct rule - and the subsequent clampdown - have been deeply resented among the region's residents,

who voted Monday for the first time since the move. "I voted for changing the current government. It must happen for our children to have a good future," civil servant Habibullah Parray told media. "Everywhere you go in Kashmir today you find people from outside in charge. Everyone wants that to change." Boycotts called by rebel groups left few Kashmiris willing to participate in past elections, with just over 14 percent of eligible voters in Srinagar casting a ballot during the last national poll in 2019. By the time polls closed on Monday, nearly 36 percent of eligible voters in the constituency had cast a ballot, well below India's average turnout but

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Acknowledges Marwat's sacrifices Imran expresses intent to correspond with army chief

There is a law of the jungle in the country, and the king of the jungle is running everything, says PTI founder

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Imran Khan, the former prime minister and founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), currently detained in Adiala Jail, has expressed his intention to correspond with army chief General Asim Munir regarding the prevailing situation in the country. The revelation from the deposed prime minister caught many off guard, given his recent refusal to yield to military pressures. He stood firm against calls to apologise for the May 9 events and distanced his party from last year's violent protests that erupted nationwide following his arrest. Khan's defiance follows the recent press conference by the Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), where he urged those involved in the May 9 protests to seek forgiveness and abandon the politics of "anarchy" before engaging in dialogue. The military spokesperson categorically dismissed the prospect of dialogue with individuals who targeted military installations and disrespected the nation's martyrs.

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Ayub Khan's body should be exhumed, hanged: Asif

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: During a heated session in the National Assembly, Defense Minister Khawaja Asif demanded the post-humous application of Article 6 against former dictator Ayub Khan, and Ayub's body should be exhumed and hanged for violating the Constitution. The National Assembly session resumed after the brief break for Maghrib prayers. Opposition members shouted slogans during Khawaja Asif's speech. Khawaja Asif said he support the imposition of Article 6 on those who violate the Constitution and that former dictator, Ayub Khan should be taken out of his grave and should be hanged. "PTI Cabinet decided to impose Article 6 against me," Defense Minister Asif

Continued on Page 06

COAS lauds brave families of Shuhada for high spirits, sacrifices

He also lauded brave families of martyrs for their high spirits and sacrifices rendered by them

DNA



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir conferred military awards on Army personnel for their acts of gallantry during operations and meritorious services rendered to the nation. The investiture ceremony was held at General Headquarters (GHQ) Rawalpindi. A large number of senior army officers and families of awardees attended the ceremony. Officers and soldiers were awarded medals including Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-i-Basalat. Medals of martyred troops were received by their family members. Paying rich tribute to martyrs and Ghazis, COAS said that there is nothing more noble than laying one's life for defence of motherland and "the sacrifices of our martyrs strengthen our resolve to fight with utmost dedication and spirit of sacrifice". He also lauded brave families of martyrs for their high spirits and sacrifices rendered by them. Gen Asim Munir said that "Shuhada and Ghazis are our national heroes and the nation owes its independence and security to the sacrifices of its valiant warriors". "Our Shuhada are, indeed, the beacons of hope and resilience for the nation," COAS said.

Briefs

PM resigns as PML-N president

Nawaz set to take charge on May 28

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday stepped down as Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president, saying the time has come for his elder brother and former premier Nawaz Sharif "to resume his rightful place" as the party chief. PML-N Information Secretary Mariyum Aurangzeb confirmed the development and shared the resignation of Shehbaz on her official X handle. In the resignation letter addressed to the PML-N secretary general, PM Shehbaz said cited the tumultuous events of 2017, which resulted in the "unjust" disqualification of Nawaz from PM Office and the presidency of the party, the premier said he was entrusted with the responsibility of assuming the presidency of the party.

Punjab CM warns courts against 'meddling'

DNA

LAHORE: Reacting to the Lahore High Court's ruling barring the Punjab government from distributing bikes among students, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday requested the court not to interfere in the executive's affairs. Addressing a ceremony at the Government Polytechnic College for Girls, the chief executive said: "People are watching if you interfere in the executive's affairs." Her remarks came after the LHC last week barred the provincial government from distributing electric and petrol-run motorcycles among students and suggested that electric buses should be promoted instead.

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Jam Kamal affirms commitment to trade facilitation

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Federal Commerce Minister, Jam Kamal Khan, reiterating the government's commitment to policy of facilitating trade and industry and export diversification on Monday, said that measures were being devised to promote local as well as export-oriented industries. The commerce minister, while addressing a media briefing here at the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), said that the incumbent government was determined to bring institutional and structural reforms, resolve issues about energy and tariffs, enhance regional connectivity, and diversify exports for ensuring sustainable growth and stabilizing the economy. Jam Kamal said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has conducted several meetings with relevant ministries and stakeholders to deliberate upon a range of issues so that a comprehensive strategy could be framed to do away with all the challenges being faced by the business and industry in Pakistan. Meanwhile, different high-level committees were also formed to look into matters like energy pricing, governance reforms, promoting coordination among all relevant ministries and stakeholders and coherence in policies and initiatives in detail and recommend solutions to the confronting challenges, he stated and informed that special committee on energy pricing mechanism was instructed by the PM to submit its recommendations after due consulta-

tion with business community within ten days. Highlighting the initiatives for promoting export diversification the minister said that positive results have been achieved from the Food and Agriculture exhibition, TDAP's 'Pakistan Trade Portal', and other such steps, and the export volume of food and agriculture sectors has surged exponentially. The total export of the food and agriculture sectors is expected to cross \$7 billion in the current financial year on the back of a manifold increase in the export of rice, maize, sesame seed, and other agricultural products, Jam Kamal said adding that by providing facilities to farmers and focusing on value addition of agriculture products we could further enhance the exports. In the past, only one sector had remained in focus but now we are taking all the sectors along, he said and added that the textile sector, which constitutes the major portion of the country's exports, was under stress and we are considering different options for the development of the sector. The commerce minister while shedding light on the recent visit of the Saudi business and investors' delegation said that the visit facilitated broad-based business-to-business engagements and there were several agreements and memorandum of understanding in the process. On the other side government level negotiations with Saudi Arabia were also underway and we are optimistic about the positive results, he said adding that a high-level official delegation of Saudi Arabia was expected in the coming days and significant

progress was anticipated in agriculture, renewable energy, petroleum, mining and information technology sectors. Pointing out some other major developments at the international level he said that agreement with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries was in advanced stages while Pakistan was all set to participate in the International Trade Exhibition in Japan in 2025. The minister said that the Tariff Board was vigorously working on its agenda aimed at promotion of export-oriented industries and safeguarding local manufacturing. Under-scoring the role of domestic industry in employment generation, the minister said that the government wanted to take such measures which promote local industry. He also urged the domestic manufacturers to focus on increasing their exports besides productivity enhancement so that the country's exports could be increased. The minister while responding to a query on the wheat import issue said that the incumbent government had not taken any decision in the regard while the caretaker government had allowed the private sector to import wheat contrary to the previous practice of allowing only the state-owned entities to import for meeting our strategic needs. Investigation in the regard was underway to ascertain the facts and its findings will be shared with the public, he said adding that the government was committed to taking care of the interests of the farming community and ECC has not only decided to purchase wheat from the growers but procurement targets were enhanced as well.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

Every govt prioritised loans, aid over investment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, as well as former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Monday that every government in Pakistan has prioritized loans and aid over investment. He said that the entire nation is suffering because policymakers have the wrong priorities, and now the country cannot survive without begging. Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader stated that every government has always relied on tall claims instead of practical work. He said that most of the world's countries consider Pakistan a beggar, while creditors are also tightening their terms due to negative perception. However, the current government is prioritizing investment during a period of significant economic damage. The majority of the business community still thinks that improvements are still possible, which calls for actions in the right direction.—APP

FIA foils trafficking of Afghan woman, five children

PESHAWAR: The Immigration circle of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Monday foiled a bid to send abroad an Afghan woman and five children on fake Afghan passports and travel documents. According to the FIA spokesman, the woman and children between 10 to 18 years of age were offloaded from a plane on suspicion of fake travel documents. The woman and children were handed over to Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Peshawar for further investigation. During the initial interrogation it was found that they entered Pakistan by crossing the border illegally as there was no travel record in the system regarding their arrival in Pakistan and also got the Afghan passports from an agent.—APP

Police rescue abducted child at border crossing

KOHAT: The police here on Monday rescued a 7-year-old boy who was abducted from the KDA Posh area, a few days ago. According to Police, the police team led by SHO KDA Ulfat Hussain, traced the abducted child at Torkham border and recovered him safely. The child namely Muhammad Afaq was kidnapped on May 5 from KDA Sector 8 and a case was registered against the alleged kidnapper, Afghan migrant Niaz Muhammad, who resides in Jangal Khel. The police intensified efforts to apprehend the kidnapper and bring him to justice.—APP

WAPDA chief for Mohammad Dam project's completion as per schedule

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd) visited Mohmand Dam Project to review construction progress on different key sites. He had a detailed visit of the inlets and outlets of the three diversion tunnels, the power house and the spillway, said a press release. The GM/PD Mohmand Dam Project, accompanied by the consultants and the contractors, briefed the Chairman about the ongoing activities and timelines for completion of

critical tasks at these sites. Subsequent to the site visit, the Chairman also presided over a meeting at the project office. Emphasising upon the significance of Mohmand Dam to cope increasing needs of water and energy in the country, the Chairman directed the contractors to implement the execution plan, in letter and spirit, for completion of the project according to the timelines. Additional resources be deployed to squeeze completion time, he further said. Earlier, the Chairman was briefed about the progress on diversion works, recovery

plan, progress on quarry development and spillway concreting. It is important to note that WAPDA is constructing Mohmand Dam Project across River Swat in Mohmand District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is the 5th highest concrete-face-rock-fill dam in the world. The project is scheduled for completion in 2026-27. With a gross water storage capacity of 1.29 MAF, Mohmand Dam will irrigate 18,233 acres of new land in Mohmand and Charsadda, besides supplementing irrigation supplies to 160,000 acres of existing land.—APP

Gold rates dip by Rs 1,200 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,200 and was sold at Rs 242,300 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 243,500 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 943 to Rs 207,733 from Rs 208,762 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 190,422 from Rs 191,365, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,650 and Rs 2,271.94 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$10 to \$2,349 from \$2,359, the Association.—APP

Tourists throng Kaghan-Naran after road's reopening

ISLAMABAD: Foreign and domestic tourists are thronging to Naran after the reopening of the road to enjoy their trips at recreational spots of the scenic valley. Talking to APP, a Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) official said the Kaghan Development Authority (KDA) has reopened the Kaghan Highway for all kinds of commuters after seven months of closure. He said the tourists embarked on their travel towards Naran to observe the scenic beauty through Naran road which was fully operational for tourists to visit their destinations. He said Naran is a source of attraction for tourists due to its clad mountains and beauty. It may be mentioned that the Naran road was suspended for all kinds of traffic owing to snowfall and glacier melting.—APP

Saudia Group announces Hajj Season 2024 Plan

KARACHI: Saudia Group announces its operational plan for Hajj Season 2024, aimed at facilitating the transportation of pilgrims from around the world, streamlining all procedures and providing top-notch services at various service locations. Over 1.2 million seats have been allocated through optimal investment in its fleet of more than 150 aircraft, distinguished by operational efficiency and quality services. This initiative is in line with the directives of Saudi leadership, supported by collaboration with various entities involved in serving Hajj pilgrims. The operational period for the national flag carrier during Hajj Season 2024, encompassing both inbound and outbound stages, spans 74 days starting from May 9th. Saudia Group has proactively formed specialized teams distributed among performance monitoring, terminal operations—APP

Transporters agrees to follow load axle policy

SARGODHA: Deputy Commissioner Sargodha Capt (retd) Aurangzeb Haider Khan presided over a meeting of stone crushers owners and transporters at his office on Monday. According to a handout issued here on Monday, it was mutually agreed upon in the meeting that henceforth, no vehicle would be loaded with more than eight hundred units of crusher, nor would a receipt (bill of loading) for more than eight hundred units be issued. In case of violation, the administration would take strict action. It was also decided

in the meeting that an open voucher for crush would not be acceptable under any circumstances, and if either party violates this agreement in the future, an FIR will be registered against them, and no union official from either side would support the lawbreaker. Both parties also pledged that they would not throw excess gravel on the sides of the roads in the future, and would not interfere with any action taken by the relevant department against violators. The Deputy Commissioner stated that the axle load law

will be implemented in all cases. These roads were for you, and their protection was also the joint responsibility of the stone crushers and transporters, he added. The meeting was attended by ADCR Mohsin Salahuddin, DSP Traffic Yousuf Cheema, AC Sargodha Amina Ehsan Tarar, Secretary DRTA Malik Tahir, Ex Highways, DO Enterprise, AD Environment, as well as owners of stone crushers at pull111 SB, transporters, suppliers, and other union representatives.—APP

1530 liter adulterated milk wasted

MUZAFFARGARH: Punjab Food Authority disposed of about 1530 liter adulterated milk after holding picket at eternal and external routes of the district, official spokesman said. The food safety team checked as many as 20 vehicles carrying milk out of which seven stuffed with 1530 liter milk were proved having a good number of mixing by the lacto machine, it was said. Owners of the vehicles on the move for supplying the adulterated milk at different points were imposed heavy fines as per the law. DG PFA, Asim Javed said the traces of water and chemicals besides shortage of essential fats were discovered in the milk. The entire stuff 'being taken away in the name of milk' was disposed of nearside of the road, he said and vowed that nobody would be allowed to play with lives of consumers. He said milk is essential product to survive the living being but some nefarious elements are out and least cared about health of the people. He termed the adulterates were criminals roaming free in society. He appealed the masses to cooperate with Punjab Food Authority to dispel activities of the adulteration mafia in their surrounding.—APP

1st Auto Show held at IUB

BAHAWALPUR: The first Auto Show of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) in collaboration with Faculty of Management Sciences and Zee Click organized at Baghdad ul-Jadeed Campus. More than 200 cars, jeeps, and motorbikes participated in the Auto Show and more than 5000 participants attended the mega event. Prof. Dr. Jawad Iqbal Dean Faculty of Management Sciences and Commerce was the chief guest of the closing ceremony. He congratulated the organizers for organizing a successful Auto Show. He said that Auto Show played a significant role in the promotion of the South Punjab auto industry which attracted young people who are fond of motor shows. He said that under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar, teaching and research activities as well as co-curricular activities are being promoted in the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. Speaking on the occasion Director Press Media and Public Relations Dr. Shahzad Ahmed said that attracting students towards healthy activities and organizing a big activity at the Auto Show is an encouraging move for all of us. This Auto Show has also emerged as a very popular event on social media. At the end of the ceremony, Prof. Dr. Jawad Iqbal distributed shields to the vehicle owners and organizers participating in the Auto Show.—APP

Saylani Trust to arrange mass slaughter of sacrificial animals

The organization is providing free meal at two locations of Peshawar two times on daily basis to hundreds of needy people

PESHAWAR: Saylani Welfare Trust, a charity organization helping needy people in different parts of the country, has announced arranging of mass slaughter of sacrificial animals in Peshawar on the upcoming religious festival of Eid-ul-Azha. "The organization will provide facility to faithful in getting their religious obligation of slaughtering sacrificial animal performed at a suitable price," informs Aqleem Orakzai, Representative of Saylani Trust in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Saylani will provide share of an ox or cow at price of Rs. 19000 while the goat will be provided at a price of Rs. 26,000 per one, Aqleem told APP. He said in case if any person wants to donate his share of meat of cow for poor strata, he has to pay Rs. 16000 per share. The price of Rs. 19000 per share is for those animals whose meat will be taken by the owners after the slaughter. While the animals slaughtered for distribution of meat among poor communities are priced around Rs. 3000 less per share. Aqleem said the slaughter will be held for three days of Eid at a spacious land near Old bus stand on main G.T road Peshawar. Apart from helping indigent communities in Pakistan, Saylani is also extending help to Muslim brethren of Gaza and Maymar who are now living in Bangladesh, Aqleem shared. In Ramzan, Saylani Welfare Trust provided two times meals to fasting Muslims in Peshawar and on 27th day of the month, a large Dastarkhwan spreading over an area of around one kilometer was arranged to provide free iftari to around 3000 faithful. The organization is providing free meal at two locations of Peshawar two times on daily basis to hundreds of needy people.—DNA

Aga Khan University hosts second landmark event

DNA
Following the resounding success of its inaugural event in 2021, the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) Quality Assurance Agency in collaboration with the Aga Khan University's Network of Quality, Teaching and Learning, organized a pivotal three-day workshop aimed at improving the quality of higher education in Pakistan. Mr. Nasir Shah, Director General, Quality Assurance Agency, HEC, and other distinguished leaders, scholars, and stakeholders from a variety of public and private universities in Sindh and Balochistan met at Aga Khan University's campus in Karachi from May 6 to 8, 2024. They engaged in substantive discussions and deliberations aimed

at enhancing educational standards in Pakistan's higher education system. Dr. Sulaiman Shahabuddin, AKU President, Professor Tashmin Khamis, Vice Provost, Quality, Teaching and Learning and Mr. Faisal Notta, Director Quality Enhancement Cell also spoke about the importance of rebuilding educational structures to better equip students for their success. President AKU Dr. Sulaiman Shahabuddin congratulated them on the crucial work that they were doing to advance quality enhancement, which is one of the most important issues in higher education today. When talking about this, he commented on how important quality was to AKU: "Our founder and Chancellor, His Highness the Aga Khan, has always placed the utmost stress on quality. And

I'm proud to say that we've achieved numerous quality benchmarks, on both the hospital and academic side including two UNESCO-supported Zairi awards for our teaching and research". The three-day consultative workshop on Pakistan Standards and Guidelines (PSG-2023) with Directors of Quality Enhancements aims to promote a culture of quality at an institutional and programme levels, as well as share best practices and impact through case studies such as the Aga Khan University, which has shown continuous improvement of programmes. Professor Tashmin Khamis emphasized the importance of establishing Teaching and Learning Support Units at universities to support faculty development and provide a strong student learning.—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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Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



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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

Pakistan home to world class innovators: Jane

Pakistani climate projects asked to apply for specialist support

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The UK Climate Finance Accelerator Pakistan (CFA) is inviting applications from low-carbon projects helping to combat climate change. Funded by the UK Government, the CFA provides one-on-one specialist support including on financial, gender equality and social inclusion issues. The aim is to strengthen proposals, making them more attractive to investors to secure funding. CFA Pakistan is looking for projects that are in at least the pre-feasibility stage and require a minimum of \$4 million USD investment. Proposals must be submitted by 31 May 2024 by completing an online application on the CFA Pakistan website. Support for projects includes improving financial models, advice on pitching to investors, and how to embed gender equal-



ity and social inclusion (GESI) within their business. British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said: "Pakistan is home to world class innovators finding creative solutions to tackle climate change. But we know that access to finance and compliance with regulation can be a barrier to getting projects off the ground. The UK Climate Finance Accelerator empowers low-carbon innovators through specialised expertise that is crucial for their long-term business success." The Climate Finance Accelerator (CFA) is a £12 million technical assistance programme funded by the UK Government's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The UK government has announced up to £40 million to extend the CFA programme from late 2024 until 2029. This will support up to 800 low carbon projects

in up to 16 countries across Asia, Latin America, and Africa. CFA Pakistan has successfully completed two cohorts, providing support to: Daewoo, hoping to add 200 electric busses and 15,000 e-rickshaws into their fleet; National Foods, aiming for a sustainable greenhouse tomato farming locally to save import costs; Shams Power, who have ambition to implement 150MW of solar energy plants at multiple sites across Pakistan; and PACT Capital, wanting to increase forest cover on 10,000 hectares of land. CFA has helped fifteen low-carbon projects that were aiming to raise at least \$75 million. The global technical assistance programme is implemented in ten countries, including: Colombia, Egypt, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, South Africa, Türkiye, Uganda, and Vietnam.

Pakistan Army inaugurates girls' school

ISLAMABAD: In a significant milestone, the Pakistan Army has inaugurated a girls' school and a dispensary in Darra Musa, near Peshawar, as part of its efforts to promote education and healthcare in the region. The school, which is a testament to the success of the Pakistan Army's "Ilm Tolo Da Para" initiative, aims to provide quality education to girls in the area. PTV reported. In addition to the school, the Pakistan Army has also launched several skill development programs aimed at empowering youth and women in the area. These programs have already benefited a large number of individuals, who have acquired new skills and are now contributing to the local economy. The newly inaugurated dispensary will provide basic health facilities to the people of the area, who previously had to travel long distances for medical care. The dispensary is equipped with modern medical equipment and staffed by trained medical professionals. Residents of the area have expressed their gratitude to the Pakistan Army for the inauguration of the girls' school and dispensary, which are expected to have a positive impact on the lives of the local population. "This is a historic moment for our community," said a local resident. "We are grateful to the Pakistan Army for providing our girls with access to quality education and our people with basic health facilities. This will go a long way in improving our lives and empowering our youth." —APP

Admn working to open Kaghan Highway

ISLAMABAD: The Kaghan Highway closed for the second consecutive day due to landsliding at the Ghanol spot, creating troubles for tourists waiting for opening of roads for hours. The non-clearance of the road has caused difficulties for local residents as well, who are facing challenges in their daily commute, private news channels reported. According to Kaghan civil administration, teams were working to clear the heavy boulders from the road. The closure came after heavy rocks fell onto the Kaghan highway amidst heavy downpour on Saturday and Sunday night. —APP

New Delhi intensifies the demographic push in J&K

DNA

ISLAMABAD: During a talk organized by the Institute of Regional Studies, Dr. Serena Hussain, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University, UK, mentioned that India, mindful of international pressure regarding the referendum, has accelerated efforts to alter the demography of Jammu and Kashmir. She argued that in the future, perhaps in 10 or 20 years, New Delhi might consider a referendum that could potentially be in India's favor. 'Jammu and Kashmir had a diverse society comprising various castes and ethnic groups, and the BJP was ful-

ly cognizant of this fact, and exploiting these divisions for their own benefit', she emphasized. She believed that the abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A had heightened feelings of alienation among the residents. She also mentioned that by March 2021, all 890 central laws of India had been extended to J&K, with at least 205 of J&K's state laws had been revoked and an additional 129 laws undergoing modifications through various directives from the Indian government, she informed the participants. She continued by stating that within a year since the revocation, over 185,000 domicile certificates had been issued to non-state subjects. "This meant that

permanent residents would no longer be exclusively Kashmiri Muslims; Hindus and West Pakistani refugees would also be included, she added. Ms. Serena argued that prior to the repeal of Article 370, non-residents were prohibited from obtaining permanent residency, owning property, holding government positions, or exercising political influence. She also pointed out that demographic shifts had occurred not only in Jammu and Kashmir but also in other states across India, she emphasized. Ms. Serena observed that the implementation of the abrogation of Article 370 had even changed the views of BJP supporters as they were not consulted. She

mentioned that the people of Jammu and Kashmir felt humiliated by the sudden Indian action of abrogating Articles 370 and 35A. Referring to her discussions with Valley residents, she mentioned that at first, they believed that affluent individuals from Mumbai or Delhi would relocate to Kashmir. However, they later realized that it was not the wealthy but rather the impoverished from Bangalore or Bihar, lacking land or shelter, would be moving in. This influx would lead to a decrease in the Muslim population, she explained. While concluding the discussion, she mentioned that despite anomalies in J&K, the majority of the people were united in seeking self-determination

Green start-up offers kitchen gardening

ISLAMABAD: A green start-up by a university student offered a kitchen gardening idea by installing hydroponic farming technology in homes where there is no or very little space for the growing of essential vegetables. "Through installation of hydroponic technology and with little guidance people can do kitchen gardening and can get higher yields than traditional soil-based growing systems," explains Marfaa Naseem, leader of the team that proposed green start-up of hydroponic farming at homes for kitchen gardening. The start-up was granted to university students under the Green Urban Development Program (GUD), a two-year initiative by the Institute of Urbanism (IoU) & School of Leadership Foundation (SoLF), with the support of the US Embassy. The Green Urban Development Programme has been launched to foster a collaborative environment aimed at reshaping the urban landscape for a greener and more sustainable future. Talking to APP, Marfaa Naseem said that through the utilization of a new procedure of farming (hydroponic) people who have no space for cultivation in their homes, can grow vegetables of their choice by utilization of very little space. "Hydroponics is a type of soil-less gardening that can be done either indoors or outdoors. It's a great option for people with little or no gardening space, or who want to grow herbs and vegetables," Marfaa told APP. Hydroponic gardening, she continued, is space-efficient and takes less water than gardening in soil. Growing in water also means no weeds. With artificial lighting, you can grow hydroponically all year long, she added. About the installation expenditure, she said presently its minimum cost is around Rs. 25 to 30 thousand through which people can grow 32 different plants in their homes and even offices. Marfaa added that she is also working on preparing a smaller model of hydroponic farming with a reduction in price so that people can easily get it installed in their homes and gain benefits from this modern and sustainable way of farming. Hydroponic can also be utilized for large-scale farming and in some parts of the country people have opted for growing different vegetables by setting up big farms, she informed. —APP

DG Pak-EPA stresses effective behavioral changes

Special drives were being launched against pressure horns and a large number of pressure horns were removed from the vehicles, she added

ISLAMABAD: Director General, Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA), Farzana Altaf Shah Monday stressed for effective behavioral changes, education and collective efforts to fight environmental hazards as present government was introducing wisely strategies to protect the country's environment with the support of masses. "There is a dire need for mass awareness regarding environmental issues including littering in public places, fireworks awareness campaigns which are needed to tackle the issue to generate the desired results to control pollution in country", she said while talking to PTV news channel. She said we were taking concrete actions to improve plastic collection systems, anti-dumping penalties, an incentive-driven approach to encourage consumers to change their plastic consumption habits. The DG also lamented the public behaviour for using fireworks on any important events that fireworks should not be used as it creates air pollution and noise hazards that harm the health of the entire public— She also urged the media and civil society to help strengthen the 'Say no plastic bags' campaign, adding, We needed to use alternative bags made of cloths and other non-plastic material. Replying to a question, she appealed that the businesses, shopping malls, restaurants, and bakery owners to participate in the campaign, thereby promoting public health and reducing environmental pollution. She also advised against the use of plastic bags and containers for food and beverages at home to safeguard personal health. The director general also said that government was taking emergency steps to control high traffic density, lack of traffic management and use of pressure horns which would address the issue of noise pollution. Special drives were being launched against pressure horns and a large number of pressure horns were removed from the vehicles, she added.—DNA

Pakistan, Turkiye vow to strengthen relations

Plans for the establishment of a branch of a Turkish bank in Pakistan were also discussed

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Today, the

tion to new heights.

The Minister for Economic Affairs warmly welcomed the Ambassador and highlighted

apprised the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in Pakistan, aimed at attracting

of enhancing collaboration through Government-to-Government (G2G) and Business-to-Business (B2B) arrangements. The Ambassador thanked the Minister and acknowledged the brotherly relations between both nations.

He reiterated the significance and conveyed Turkiye's eagerness to explore avenues for expanding bilateral trade through the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) and the Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) and fostering cooperation in energy, banking, commerce, railroads, and tourism. Notably, plans for the next session of the HLSCC, expected to convene soon, were discussed, with a focus on increasing the volume of trade to US\$ 5 billion. Additionally, plans for the establishment of a branch of a Turkish bank in Pakistan were also discussed in order to further solidifying economic ties between the two nations.



Ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye, Mr. Mehmet Pacaci, paid a courtesy call on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Mr. Ahmad Khan Cheema. The meeting was centered on reinforcing the longstanding brotherly relations between Turkey and Pakistan, with a focus on elevating economic coopera-

the deep-rooted ties between Turkiye and Pakistan, which are founded on shared faith, history, and cultural affinity. Minister Cheema commended the signing of the Trade in Goods Agreement/Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) on 12 August 2022 was hailed as a significant step forward. The Minister

investments from friendly countries, and highlighted the potential for Turkish investment in Pakistan especially in Agricultural Machinery & Equipment and Large Scale Corporate Farming. He further highlighted the untapped potential in bilateral trade and investment and stressed the importance



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Briefs

ANF seizes 287 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 287 kg drugs and arrested 16 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

Students to be taught about climate change

ISLAMABAD: PM's coordinator on climate change & environmental coordination Romina Khurshid Alam said that during upcoming summer camps, students would be taught about climate change to educate them on this sensitive subject.

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Business community is real face of capital city

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority Mohammad Ali Randhawa has said that the business community is the real face of the capital city which has been playing an important role in its development, therefore it would be taken on board in the decision making.



President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry by welcoming the Chairman of CDA for a visit to ICCI which he accepted by saying that he will make it possible at the earliest possible time to have a comprehensive acquaintance of the community's problems.

markets from his own pocket. He extended an invitation to the Chairman CDA for a visit to ICCI which he accepted by saying that he will make it possible at the earliest possible time to have a comprehensive acquaintance of the community's problems.

for enhancing the timings of the 'One Window' from 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. by saying that it will certainly go a long way in facilitating the visitors.

Eng. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, former President Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan Ajmal Baloch, Mian Shaukat Masood, Zahid Qureshi, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Naem Akhtar Awan, Nasir Mahmood, Imtiaz Abbasi, Akhtar Abbasi, Ch. Irfan Gujar, Khalid Chaudhry and others also extended greetings to the CDA Chairman.

Mobilizing Pak youth to confront environmental challenges

QURAT UL AIN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is grappling with the daunting reality of climate change, a challenge that echoes across its diverse landscapes. Yet, amidst this adversity its vibrant youth offers a dynamic solution to take center stage in the battle against environmental degradation.

believe that engaging youth in climate action is not just essential for Pakistan's future but also imperative for addressing the global climate crisis. According to Muhammad Saleem, a Media Spokesperson at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, the government recognizes the importance of nurturing youth leadership in climate action.

Muhammad Saleem emphasized. Ali Jabir Malik, a climate researcher, speaker and journalist, emphasizes the urgent need for proactive youth-centric policies. He fears that without such policies, Pakistan's youth bulge could become both an asset and a risk in the fight against climate change.

Mazhar, another young social activist, highlights the plethora of opportunities available for youth engagement in environmental action. She mentions initiatives like urban forests, organic farming, and climate advocacy campaigns as examples of positive disruptions that transcend age and socioeconomic barriers.

Flour prices decreasing Cross the country

ISLAMABAD: The flour prices across the country, including the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have witnessed a notable decline in recent weeks, offering relief to consumers. According to official documents of Ministry of Food Security and Research, the cost of a 20 kg bag of flour has dropped significantly in various cities.

Similarly, in Rawalpindi, the cost has reduced from an average of Rs 2,960 to a minimum of Rs 2,053. A citizen namely Maaz Ullah Khan resident of G-9 Islamabad while talking APP on Monday said that the prices of flour and other related commodities were significantly decreased in the city and the residents took a sigh of relief as earlier the prices of essential food items were increased during last few months.

month. Lahore residents are now paying around Rs 1,900 compared to the previous price of Rs 2,800, while in Sargodha district has also seen a decrease, with the average price now standing at Rs 2,000. However, Karachi remained an exception to this trend, as flour continues to be relatively expensive. Despite the overall decrease in prices, Karachiites are still shelling out around Rs 2,300 for a 20 kg bag. Other cities like Hyderabad and Sukkur have witnessed more favorable price adjustments.

reductions in flour prices come as a welcome relief for many households, particularly amid economic challenges. The statistics revealed that with the cost of this essential commodity becoming more manageable, families can better stretch their budgets and cope with the rising cost of living. Overall, the downward trend in flour prices reflecting positive developments in the market, offering hope for improved affordability and accessibility of essential food items for the populace. As consumers continue to benefit from these reductions, it remains to be seen how this trend will impact the broader economy.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Maj Sabih presenting a souvenir to the Spanish Ambassador on the occasion of his Visit to Historic Murree Brewery Company.—DNA

CPFTA-II under review to enhance Pak exports to China

ISLAMABAD : The China Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA) Phase II, set to conclude this year in 2024, has now moved into the review stage, in a bid to make the trade arrangement more continuous, with amendments designed to make it more conducive and favorable for Pakistan. The goal is to help broaden Pakistan's export footprints in China through additional tariff concessions and expanded product coverage.

AIOU gears up preparations of AAOU annual conference

The Vice-Chancellor has given instructions to make the necessary arrangements to make this conference historic and memorable

ISLAMABAD: The 37th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) will be held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) from October 15 to 17. According to the AIOU, more than 100 international dignitaries, including vice-chancellors, rectors, professors, and researchers from open universities in Asian countries will participate in the conference, as well as around 250 national academicians and researchers, will present research papers.

OEC to send nurses staff to KSA

ISLAMABAD: Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) an attached department of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOP&HRD) would send the nurses staff to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. An official source told APP here on Monday, he said that Saudi Arabia required nurses staff on urgent basis and in this regard OEC has advertised the qualifications and experience of required nurses staff for abroad. Only qualified females would be entertained for final selection who have a Bachelor of Science in Nursing BScN (4-years) or (Post RN), minimum two years of experience in the relevant field, only females, not more than 45. Nurses Staff were required in various fields including Cardiac Care Nurse, Emergency Nurse, Medical Care Nurse, Obstetrics Nurse, Pediatrics Nurse, Critical Care Nurse.—APP

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Defeating Zionism, a global responsibility

ACCUSING the Zionists of today of being the new Nazi is neither unfair nor propagandist. Hitler's insane creed made frequent reference to the need to establish for Nazi Germany its 'Lebensraum' or 'living space' in Eastern Europe and Russia. The inhabitants of these lands were to be either annihilated or reduced to slavery in the service of the 'new order'. The language of contemporary Zionism and its insistence on the need to create 'Eretz Israel' on Arab and Muslim land is not so very dissimilar and neither are the tactics pursued to attain this end. Zionism is intent on denying the fact that the Palestinians exist. Everyone remembers Golda Meir's remark about there being 'no such thing as Palestinians.' Just as Arabs can draw comparisons between the horrors of Nazi-occupied Europe and the events today, Zionists love to capitalize on the Jewish diaspora's experience of persecution in order to lend some spurious justification to their crimes. It is not just that Auschwitz is to be avenged on a people who never heard of that place until after WWII. It is also that, according to the logic of men like Begin, Sharon, Gallant, Lieberman, and Netanyahu, another 'holocaust' is to be 'prevented' by persecuting the Arabs in general, and the Palestinians in particular. One might ask how it's possible that the Zionists humiliate one hundred and fifty million Muslims and Arabs, occupy Palestine, expel its people, usurp Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian territory, invade Lebanon, and kill tens of thousands of people. How can the Zionists ignore all international community resolutions, which condemn their crimes and reiterate the rights of the Palestinians to return to their homeland? How is it that the Zionists can compel Arab rulers to bow before them, one after another, instead of the opposite occurring? And so, the question then becomes: why is America staunchly supporting the Zionists? The American military, political, and economic support to the Zionists in occupied Palestine is given because they form the forward base for US imperialism in the region. Zionism is central to the execution of American plans of domination; that is, to achieve their aims of controlling destinies and resources, including oil of the Arab region while terrorizing and clobbering its people. American imperialist policies of hegemony and control over the world always relied on the formation and setting up of puppet and clown regimes, such as those in racist South Africa, Jordan, and—of course—the Zionists in Palestine. Therefore, the agreement of American Israeli strategic cooperation reveals the true nature of American policy, which considers the Zionists an existential ally or even one of the American states. This is especially so today since the Americans have discovered that their power in the world is declining and their military is being kicked out of Africa and targeted by the Axis of Resistance. What is important to understand for the revolutionary masses of the world, especially Arab and Muslim ones that are under direct Zionist attack, is that the end of such a regime in Palestine cannot be achieved under any circumstances by peaceful means—whether they be exchange visits, statements, encampments, speeches, conferences, or American envoys.



How the mighty fall

AT the last general election, less than five years ago, they scored a landslide, securing 73% of their nation's seats in the Westminster parliament. They've governed that nation since 2007 and were most recently reelected as by far their own parliament's largest party in October 2021. Today, things are very different for the Scottish Nationalists. The leader who took them to their most recent victories resigned with great dignity, very shortly before she would almost certainly have had to resign in disgrace. Nicola Sturgeon quit on 28 March 2023. A week later, her husband – her party's former chief executive – was arrested and their home was searched by the police. She was herself arrested and questioned two months later. Last month, her husband was formally charged with the embezzlement of funds from the SNP. Ms. Sturgeon's own last years in power had also been dogged by allegations that senior members of her party had been involved in a conspiracy to remove her predecessor from public life and get him sent to prison – allegations made shortly before he moved across to lead a rival political party. Her successor proved possibly even less successful. One of his rivals defected to that other nationalist party. He courted controversy with a range of bravely unpopular policy choices. And, last month, he ended his coalition with the Green Party, who had been about to vote on leaving their alliance with the SNP, whom they accused of betraying environmental policy commitments. This resulted in Scotland's First Minister, Humza Yousaf, facing the threat of a vote of no confidence in the Scottish parliament at the end of last month, a vote he would only have been able to survive by getting that defector back on board, in a humiliating capitulation to the demands of one of his party's more notorious renegades. That was something which, when it came to it, his political pride wouldn't allow him to do. Two weeks ago, he quit, clearly in a bid to maintain some shreds of dignity, and to jump before he was pushed – before, that is, he was unceremoniously tossed out onto the street like a Glaswegian merrymaker's half-eaten kebab late on a rainy Saturday night. The best his party could find to replace him was a former deputy leader who had previously resisted calls to step up to its top job, an old trooper who was eventually willing to come out of semi-retirement in the hour of the SNP's greatest need. A few days before those elections, a Conservative MP had defected to Labour. Being a medical doctor, he'd suggested that he couldn't remain in a party that had done so much damage to the country's health service, and in doing so was able to rebrand himself as one of the more decent rodents leaping from the sinking ship. Already 20 points behind Labour in the polls, this month's local election results showed that the Conservatives were, as leading psephologist John Curtice supposed, in "deep trouble". Those results must, in the words of the BBC's political editor, have given the Tories "the heebie-jeebies". In short, they'd have given the blues the blues. "We're doomed", declared the Sunday Express, as the front page of that right-wing tabloid denounced Rishi Sunak as a "lame duck PM". Labour gained nearly 200 council seats and the Conservatives lost nearly 500. Securing fewer than half the total number of seats won by Labour, the Tories were pushed into third place by the Liberal Democrats.

MBS, IMF and political instability..

Qamar Bashir



Maulana Fazal Rehman, feeling disillusioned and betrayed by what he perceived as a promise unfulfilled, expressed his disappointment with the performance of JUI in the February 8 elections at both the central and provincial levels. Alleging interference from the "establishment" in politics, he lambasted their constant meddling and announced his party's intention to launch a protest movement against the alleged rigging in those elections. True to his word, he initiated this movement with a rally in Karachi, adopting an assertive and defiant stance regardless of potential consequences

THE euphoria surrounding the first anniversary of May 9 came at a significant cost to the government. It resulted in the cancellation of the scheduled visit of Mohammad Bin Salman, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which could have bolstered the government's image and standing. Additionally, it elicited a demand from the IMF for political stability, deemed a prerequisite for financial and economic stability. This has delivered a serious blow to the already challenged government. Drawing from my experience working in diplomatic missions abroad, first in Malaysia for four years and later in France for another four-year term, I understand that governments take into account political feedback obtained from their ambassadors overseas. Similarly, the IMF formulates its policies based on input from their local representatives. The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia and the IMF focal person in Pakistan received numerous signals indicating a new wave of political instability and volatility, particularly following a highly charged and angry press conference by the Director General of ISPR. The PTI leadership's total defiance in response to his demand for PTI to seek forgiveness in front of the nation, or face a refusal of dialogue, intensified the situation. This demand was seen as a direct reference to PTI and its leadership, portraying them as disruptive anarchists. However, the press conference failed to gain the intended media reaction. Its content was forcefully refuted and rebutted by PTI, led by Dr. Arif Alvi, who had now assumed a central role and, in a way, had been declared the ambassador-at-large for PTI, tasked with clearing the path to achieve its political objectives. The resulting anti-establishment charged environment contributed to the success of countrywide rallies organized by PTI. While these rallies remained peaceful, they added to the perception of political instability. Maulana Fazal Rehman, feeling disillusioned and betrayed by what he perceived as a promise unfulfilled, expressed his disappointment with the performance of JUI in the February 8 elections at both the central and provincial levels. Alleging interference from the "establishment" in politics, he lambasted their constant meddling and announced his party's intention to launch a protest movement against the alleged rigging in those elections. True to his word, he initiated this movement with a rally in Karachi, adopting an assertive

and defiant stance regardless of potential consequences. His direct accusations against the army, accusing them of manipulating the February 8 elections in favor of PPP and PML(N), controlling administrations across the country through apex committees, and influencing formation and dissolution of the governments, only served to exacerbate the already tense environment of political instability. The wheat crisis has escalated, with disillusioned farmers taking to the streets and burning their crops in protest against the Federal and Punjab Governments. They accuse authorities of reneging on promises to purchase wheat at Rs. 3900 per maund, citing a lack of funds despite lavish spending on initiatives such as distributing laptops, electric bicycles, setting up mobile clinics, and running expensive advertisements. Adding to the unrest, the Punjab government mishandled a lawyers' agitation, resulting in the arrest of over 50 lawyers. In response, legal organizations across Pakistan launched a nationwide strike, condemning the actions of the Punjab police and abstaining from court appearances while holding protest meetings, marches, and rallies. Meanwhile, Azad Kashmir faced its own turmoil as protests against electricity price hikes, high flour prices, and taxes entered their third day, resulting in clashes that left at least one police official dead in Mirpur and over 90 others injured across the region. The violence also caused damage to multiple vehicles, including a magistrate's car on the Poonch-Kotli road. Markets, trade centers, offices, schools, and restaurants remained closed, while mobile phone and internet services were suspended in various parts of Azad Kashmir, including Bhimber, Bagh, Mirpur, and Muzaffarabad. The feedback provided by the KSA ambassador to his government back home was substantial enough for MBS to delay his promised visit until the situation calmed down. Similarly, the information from the local point person to the IMF headquarters provided ample justification for demanding the resolution of political issues before proceeding with the IMF's next three-year program. Both the IMF and KSA were likely troubled by the allegations from PTI, election watchdog organizations, analysts in traditional media, and social media activists that the incumbent governments in the center and Punjab are illegitimate, lacking a mandate from the people and allegedly

imposed by the establishment through artificial and brutal manipulation of election results on Form 47, contradicting the outcomes reported on Form 45 where they had purportedly lost. Similar claims were made by JUI, Jamaat-e-Islami, and other political parties that faced defeat in the elections. All affected parties expressed their determination to persist until the alleged electoral malpractice was rectified and the actual winners were reinstated. Should this occur, the incumbent government would be compelled to resign in total indignation. Furthermore, the sitting government faced another damaging allegation: that since establishment is the sole factor which brought these governments in power, consequently, these governments were perceived and expected to remain under the control of the establishment, with decision-making authority stripped away from them. Out of the two, the remarks from the IMF are more detrimental as entering into the next three-year IMF plan would unlock bilateral, multilateral, and financial institutional aid, funds, and loans to Pakistan, crucial for the country's financial stability. Failure to do so could jeopardize even the rerolling of deposits by KSA, Abu Dhabi, and China, placing immense pressure on the government's ability to manage its balance of payments and potentially pushing it back to a position where it was faced with the looming threat of default during the previous coalition government of Shahbaz Sharif. We all must understand that political stability is indispensable for consistent policy implementation, investor confidence, reform continuity, credibility, and social cohesion. It ensures that economic policies are executed reliably, fostering trust among domestic and foreign investors vital for economic growth and stability and continuity of structural reforms outlined in IMF programs, preventing disruptions that could derail progress and to achieve sustainable economic development. Without question, rather than confronting the IMF, all stakeholders in Pakistan must set aside their petty differences and inflated egos. They should engage in purposeful and sincere dialogues, aiming for sustained political stability in the country.

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

Why Western hype about Hong Kong losing

Ronny Tong

The CSIS report does not specifically touch on Hong Kong's independent international identity under the designation of China. The truth is that we continue to present a distinct voice as an international centre of finance and commerce on the world stage. The section on Hong Kong's economy in the CSIS report misses the point. All economies have had their ups and downs caused by a range of factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, high interest rates, the global economic climate and geopolitical conflict

AREPUTABLE Washington-based think tank, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), recently issued a report titled, "The Erosion of Hong Kong's Autonomy since 2020: Implications for the United States". The report says its findings are based on interviews conducted in Hong Kong with a "wide range of stakeholders", including both former and current government officials, lawmakers and community leaders. It reaches the same conclusion as other such studies and reports issued by US and UK think tanks in recent years: the Chinese government has "significantly eroded Hong Kong's 'high degree of autonomy'". While it contains less over-the-top political rhetoric than the others, it nevertheless exhibits the same lack of appreciation of the issues at heart, which makes it a truly disappointing read. To start with, one is barking up the wrong tree if one seeks to examine Hong Kong's level of autonomy by looking at what happened in 2019 and the subsequent enactments of the national security law and Article 23 legislation. One only needs to read the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law to understand that under "one country, two systems", a "high degree of autonomy" does not mean absolute or complete autonomy, nor does it relate to matters of national security, defence or international relations. Measuring Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy without understanding its limits is tantamount to commenting on the US constitution, without reference to the amendments, particularly the first amendment. If, for the sake of argument, the rights of Hongkongers had been somewhat restricted by the national security laws, such limitations would

be in line with both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Basic Law. Thus, one cannot call it an erosion. If there has never been a right to violate national security, it follows that there can never be an erosion of such a right. Under the Basic Law, our high degree of autonomy is premised on certain essential pillars: Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong, judicial independence and the maintenance of our international identity under the umbrella of China. With regard to the first pillar, no one can possibly suggest all our chief executives have not been Hong Kong people. They were all elected under the law. It is true that these elections were not held by universal suffrage, but they never have been, and neither did such elections exist during the British occupation. The Joint Declaration made no mention of political reform. In fact it is the Basic Law, enacted by the central government, which promised universal suffrage to the people of Hong Kong. Back in 2014, the central government even proposed a political reform package aimed at electing the chief executive by universal suffrage, but it was voted down by the pan-democratic camp in the Legislative Council. That was extremely shortsighted and unfortunate. Without pointing fingers, I would like to stress that this was a case of reform failure, not an erosion of rights. One can only hope that with the issue of national security resolved once and for all, and as Hong Kong's stability and harmony is restored, we can move forward again on political reform. As for judicial independence, the only thing to say is that it is alive and kicking. The CSIS report could not cite a single example to support its conclusion that this important pillar has been eroded aside from

bringing up our judicial independence through a national security lens. It is important to note that both the national security law enacted by the National People's Congress and Article 23 legislation passed by the Legislative Council emphasise that the rule of law applies to national security offences. Foreign judges continue to sit on our courts and English continues to be used in court proceedings. Our trials are open, evidence is presented openly and judgments are published for all to see. The CSIS report does not specifically touch on Hong Kong's independent international identity under the designation of China. The truth is that we continue to present a distinct voice as an international centre of finance and commerce on the world stage. The section on Hong Kong's economy in the CSIS report misses the point. All economies have had their ups and downs caused by a range of factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, high interest rates, the global economic climate and geopolitical conflict. Being a part of China and subject to foreign sanctions also affects Hong Kong's economy. It is superficial to just look at trade figures without examining Hong Kong's independent identity in various international institutions and forums. The latter has not changed and continues to shine and move forward. The report has at least one partially redeeming feature – its proposal that the US should adopt a "strategic engagement" approach by "solidifying practical interactions between state and non-state actors in the United States and Hong Kong". However, even this proposal is marred by the qualification that such interactions should be backed by "punitive measures". This, sadly, is a contradiction, as if coercion based on political bias is a fair and reasonable premise for any engagement.

Briefs

ECP suspends lawmakers elected on...

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JUI-F, Awami National Party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Parliamentarians (PTI-P), Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) and Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP). Supreme Court order last week, the apex court suspended the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) verdict on reserved seats while accepting the SIC's plea against the high court's ruling. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had rejected the party's plea depriving it of reserved seats. "[We are accepting the [SIC's] pleas [against the PHC verdict], Justice Mansoor Ali Shah stated, and asked under what law [reserved] seats were allocated to other parties. A three-member bench headed by Justice Shah and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Athar Minallah heard the SIC's plea filed through Advocate Faisal Siddiqui last month.

AJK govt accepts...

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"single marcher was injured". Accepting all demands placed by the AAC, the AJK government issued a notification regarding subsidies for power and food commodities. He hoped that peace would be restored in the region after implementation of the much-anticipated notifications. Terming the subsidies as a Pakistani government's "special connection" with the region, Anwar said that the top political and military leadership proved its concrete relationship and respect for the AJK people. He announced that Islamabad will provide Rs23 billion funds to the AJK government.

Imran expresses...

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Addressing the media with in Adiala Jail on Monday, Imran Khan expressed his intent to correspond with the army chief regarding the country's state. He asserted, "A government must be formed in accordance with the public mandate, without which the country cannot function." Khan highlighted the dire economic situation, citing a staggering Rs13.3 trillion in tax collection contrasted with Rs9.3 trillion paid in loan interest. He queried, "How can a nation of 240 million people sustain under such conditions?" Predicting further increases in electricity and gas prices ahead of the budget, Khan warned of impending turmoil for the salaried class. Expressing concern over ongoing protests in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) against inflated power bills, Khan lamented what he perceived as the demise of democracy in the country.

Ayub Khan's body...

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reminded SIC Umar Ayub. "Article 6 should start with fake field marshal and Article 6 should be added to the constitution at the time of no-confidence," Khawaja Asif. Khawaja Asif said Sher Afzal Marwat was kicked out from PTI for meeting with the NA speaker and with the defence minister. Opposition leader Umar Ayub's speech emphasized the importance of upholding democratic principles. Umar Ayub called for an independent judicial commission to investigate the 2024 Elections and May 9 events. The session, interrupted by slogans and passionate exchanges.

Aurangzeb assures...

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team and thanked them for the successful completion of the Standby Arrangement (SBA). The Finance Minister apprised the IMF team of the improvement in the macro-economic indicators over the course of the SBA and underscored the government's commitment to continue with and expand upon the reform agenda.

Pak-Ireland set to organize women's cricket series

PCB Chairman assures excellent security for champions trophy 2025, thanks cricket Ireland for tour arrangements

DNA

DUBLIN: Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi had an important meeting with Chairman Cricket Ireland Brian Mac Neice in Dublin. The Chairman Cricket Ireland warmly welcomed the PCB chairman and thanked him for visiting Ireland. Chairman Cricket Ireland presented the PCB chairman with a souvenir shirt and cap of the Irish team. The meeting discussed the series between the women's cricket teams and agreed to organize a series soon. Chairman Cricket Ireland said that the Irish team would visit Pakistan next year in August-September for test



series and would also review the possibility of a women's team tour to Pakistan soon. He said that hosting the Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan was a welcome decision and that Pakistan had always provided excellent security for international tournaments. The PCB chairman thanked the Irish chairman for the excellent arrangements made for the Pakistan team's tour of Ireland and assured that foolproof arrangements would be made for all teams participating in the Champions Trophy 2025. He said that the Pakistan team received a lot of support and love during their tour of Ireland. Chief Executive Officer Warren Deutrom and other high officials of Cricket Ireland were also present on the occasion.

Ramiz Raja raises concerns about Pakistan's bowling

The Babar Azam-led unit won the second Ireland T20I but there were major concerns about bowling



DNA

LAHORE: Former cricketer Ramiz Raja raised concerns about Pakistan's bowling lineup after the second T20I against Ireland which they won comfortably but the bowlers' performance was, once again, something to worry

about. Babar Azam won the toss in the second T20I and opted to bowl first. On a rain-affected pitch, Pakistani bowlers were once again taken to the cleaners as they conceded 193 runs with their primary pacers - Shaheen Afridi and Mohammad Amir - conceding over 40 runs each in four overs. Talking about the issue, Raja,

who served as the Chairman PCB, believed that if the situation of Pakistani bowlers continues the same, then things will get difficult in the future, especially when the T20 World Cup 2024 is on the horizon.

"Pakistan's top bowlers giving away so many runs against Ireland, then it will become hard for the team in future. Pakistan's forte, and success are based on the bowlers, especially pacers, they have been struggling since last year's World Cup in India. Two balls are good and then three deliveries are bad, this makes the situation tough," Raja said. He then stated that if Ireland had taken catches of Mohammad Rizwan and Fakhar Zaman, then it would've become difficult for Pakistan to chase the target as they had already lost two early wickets.

"If they [Ireland] had taken the catches of Rizwan and Zaman it would have become difficult for Pakistan to chase the target," he added. "I don't think Saim Ayub gives you security, he shows flashes of brilliance. If you don't score 50 off 30 balls then breaking Rizwan and Babar's opening duo doesn't make any sense."

It must be noted that Pakistan chased down the 194-run target in the 17th over with Azam Khan and Rizwan taking the team over the line. The series is level at 1-1 and the decider will be played on May 14, Tuesday, at the Clontarf Cricket Club, Dublin.

Rohit Sharma eyes retirement from T20I cricket: Report

The Indian great is likely to retire from T20I cricket after the World Cup

New Delhi: The upcoming T20 World Cup 2024 could be Rohit Sharma's last appearance in T20I cricket as the Indian great is likely to call time on his shorter format career in international cricket, reported Indian media on Monday. Sharma, who replaced Virat Kohli as India's skipper across formats in 2021, led the Blues in the T20 World Cup 2022 as well as the 2023 World Cup and the World Test Championship 2021-23. According to the report by Dainik Jagran, Sharma's decision to retire from T20Is is directly linked with Hardik Pandya's inclusion in India's World Cup squad. The report states that the all-rounder wasn't selected for the mega event due to his performances, but because the Indian board sees him as the future captain. After Pandya was appointed as Mumbai Indians' (MI) captain ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024, things didn't go smoothly in MI's dressing room as his relationship with Sharma isn't the best. Sharma had led MI for 10 consecutive years before being replaced by Pandya. The decision wasn't welcomed by fans as the all-rounder was booed on multiple occasions in the tournament. The report stated that while the foreign players have no problems with Pandya's captaincy, the local players in MI's squad continue to look at Rohit. India earlier announced their squad for the mega event where the likes of KL Rahul, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Ishan Kishan and others couldn't make it to the 18-member contention while Shubman Gill and Rinku Singh were named in the travelling reserves. Remember, India is in Group A with arch-rivals Pakistan and the two sides will take on one another in one of the most anticipated matches of the World Cup on June 9 at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, New York. India's T20 World Cup 2024 squad Rohit Sharma (captain), Hardik Pandya (vice-captain), Yashraj Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammad Siraj. Reserves: Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed and Avesh Khan. - Agencies

No parallel to Pak-Saudia...

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macroeconomic level like GDP growth ratio, huge loans, energy shortage, weak power transmission system, line losses and expensive power generation. Other challenges include revenue generation, corruption, less utilisation of technology, and lack of monitoring and supervision, he added. The prime minister spoke high of the Saudi leadership and their cooperation with Pakistan, saying that the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations went back to centuries and there was no parallel to this relationship on the globe. "We are brothers. We understand each other and share each other's grief and happiness. We are partners in progress and prosperity, not only in the two countries but also in the region," he remarked while explaining to a question as to why every Pakistani leader opted to pay the first foreign visit to the Kingdom after assuming office. Referring to recent high-level interactions between the two countries, he mentioned his two meetings with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the Kingdom, the visit of Saudi foreign minister and a huge Saudi business delegation to Pakistan recently.

Pakistan wants SCO..

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emphasis in a meeting with the SCO Secretary-General Ambassador Zhang Ming in Beijing, where the foreign minister arrived on Monday. He is on a four-day visit to China to co-chair the Fifth Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi which would cover the full spectrum of Pakistan-China relations. FM Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the SCO Charter and the Organisation's fundamental ideals as enunciated in the "Shanghai Spirit". He expressed Pakistan's strong commitment to advancing SCO's security and development cooperation agenda. The discussion also touched on Pakistan's initiatives and contributions in its ongoing chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government.

Pak-US to enhance anti terror...

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mutual interest. Pakistani and U.S. senior officials emphasized the importance of expanded counterterrorism collaboration and capacity building, including exchanges of technical expertise and best practices, investigative and prosecutorial assistance, provision of border security infrastructure and training, including the United States training of more than 300 police and front-line responders since the last Pakistan-U.S. Counterterrorism Dialogue in March 2023, and strengthening multilateral engagement such as in the UN and the Global Counterterrorism Forum. Pakistan and the United States recognize that a partnership to counter ISIS-Khorasan, TTP, and other terrorist organizations will advance security in the region and serve as a model of bilateral and regional cooperation to address transnational terrorism threats.

Kashmir poised to...

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the highest figure in the constituency in nearly three decades. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947. Both claim it in full and have fought two wars over control of the Himalayan region. Rebel groups opposed to Indian rule have waged an insurgency since 1989 on the side of the frontier controlled by New Delhi, demanding either independence or a merger with Pakistan. India accuses Pakistan of backing the insurgents, a charge that Islamabad denies. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of soldiers, rebels and civilians in the decades since, including a spate of firefights between suspected rebels and security forces in the past month.

Telecom experts gather in Islamabad for workshop

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: A one-day International Training Course on "Evolution of Radio Access Networks: Disaggregation, Open RAN and 6G" was held under PTA-GSMA Centre of Excellence program in Islamabad today. The training covered technical concepts like OpenRAN, disaggregated networks, innovative connectivity solutions, fostering interoperability and hardware flexibility. The event was attended by regulatory experts from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Iran in addition to representatives from USF, FAB, PEMRA, SUPARCO and PTA. Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokhar, Member Compliance and Enforcement PTA welcomed all the participants and highlighted the significance of knowledge sharing for professional development. The Honourable Secretary-General of Asia Pacific Telecommunity Mr. Masanori Kondo addressed the audience and appreciated this collaboration between PTA and GSMA, and assured APT's continued support for sub-regional cooperation. At the closing ceremony of the workshop, Chairman PTA, Maj. General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman appreciated GSMA's collaboration program and the relevance of the training with PTA's progressive approach towards telecom modernization.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging water melons to attract customers alongside a road in the Federal Capital. - Online

'Arsenal win ugly to take title race to the wire'

if Tottenham can somehow do north London rivals Arsenal a favour against Pep Guardiola's reigning champions on Tuesday then that first Premier League title in 20 years will come within touching distance

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Arsenal have rarely been accused of winning ugly but it was a charge they will joyfully accept after a 1-0 victory at Manchester United befitting that unflattering description - and then some. Mikel Arteta's side were scrappy and well below their fluent best against a desperately poor United but this was three points that meant the world to them. This eyesore of a game was settled by Leandro Trossard's 20th-minute sloop at the near post after Casemiro fell asleep - not literally of course - in unforgivable fashion to play Kai Havertz

aside. Casemiro, a sad and fading shadow of the great player who bestrode Real Madrid's midfield through their Champions League glories, simply strolled out. Havertz initially looked well offside until a glance revealed the dawdling veteran playing him on, leaving Trossard the grateful beneficiary. Manchester City still hold the cards, with the destiny of the title in their own hands. But if Tottenham can somehow do north London rivals Arsenal a favour against Pep Guardiola's reigning champions on Tuesday then that first Premier League title in 20 years will come within touching distance. City have only won once in six visits to the Tottenham

Hotspur Stadium. These are the sort of statistics Arsenal will be poring over as they search every avenue for hope. If Arsenal are indeed looking for fate to play a hand, this was a day when even the gods were on the Gunners' side after Manchester was hit by a huge late storm that left the playing surface waterlogged - and surely unplayable - 30 minutes after the final whistle. The end came just in time - no-one was raining on this Arsenal parade. The closing phase of a tense encounter



lacking in quality was played out under leaden skies amid stifling humidity - thunder and lightning flashing around Old Trafford while rain battered down on a roof that has been known to spring a few leaks in the past. It did not matter a jot to Arsenal's players, fans or management when referee Paul Tierney sounded the final whistle after six minutes of added time. Arteta's trademark black sweater and trousers were drenched by the deluge, but the manager was past caring. Arsenal's

ugly win came on an ugly day but it has set the stage perfectly for the final day of the season. They have asked Manchester City the question. It is one they have answered successfully so often in the past but all Arsenal could do was put it in front of them and, in this context, it was mission accomplished. It all came on a ground where they have suffered in the past, with only two wins in their past 17 visits, and even when not at their best Arsenal were still able to expose the chasm that currently exists between themselves and United, a club that naturally regards itself as rivals. The Gunners looked set for a stroll after Trossard's strike but they could not quite see United off with a second goal, their threat only resurfacing late on as United keeper Andre Onana was finally forced into action. Arsenal were nervy and unconvincing but they have now won 15 of their past 17 games in the face of the usual sustained Manchester City assault at this stage of the season, banishing the label of "chokers" that was attached to them when they slipped up late last season. If there is one result they may live to regret it might be the home loss to Aston Villa on 14 April but now is not the time to dwell on that setback, with everything still to fight for.

Briefs

PNCA starts registration in music, arts classes

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has started registration in music and arts classes to be arranged under the supervision of professional musicians and artists. An official of PNCA told here Sunday that the music and art classes were being arranged to provide an opportunity to the art and music lovers of all ages to discover their hidden talent and creativity with the help of expert instructors. The aspiring learners will get a new skill, nurture their passion and become a part of PNCA's vibrant arts community, the official said. The music and art classes will be arranged in different categories including Guitar, Keyboard, Singing, Harmonium, Violin, Drawing and Painting, Calligraphy and Acting. The music and art classes have been designed for the learners of all ages including for beginners as well professionals. The experienced instructors will guide the learners through every step of the way. As per the schedule, the Acting and Guitar classes will be held on Tuesday and Thursday while the classes of Violin and Drawing and Painting will be held on Wednesday and Thursday. The classes of Singing/Harmonium and Calligraphy will be held on Monday and Friday. The registration fee for the courses will be Rs. 2000/- while the monthly fee for any class will be Rs. 5000/- per head. The timings of the classes are from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm. The details of the courses can be obtained through the Cell numbers: 0333-7848443 (Music Class) and 0332-8230501 (Art Class).—APP

PM felicitates Khalid Maqbool

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on his election as Chairman of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P). The prime minister, in a statement, said that while serving as the MQM-P convener, Khalid Maqbool had inculcated a new spirit in the party which supported the government in its tough decisions made in the national interests. He expressed the hope that under Siddiqui's leadership, the MQM-P would truly represent the people and play a more active role for the resolution of their issues.—APP

Khosha stresses importance of public-private partnership

ISLAMABAD: Additional Finance Secretary Baluchistan Shujaat Ali Khosha Monday stressed the need for a strong public-private partnership to ensure sustainable economic growth and for bringing the country's traders into the tax network to run country's financial matters smoothly. Talking to PTV news channel, he said that Public-Private Partnerships is considered as an important tool to further advance the implementation of the SDGs and to increase private sector GDP share and participation in the economy, adding, we have to change the mindset as the country can no longer run on the old patterns. He said that the promotion of foreign investment is government's first priority to turn the challenges into opportunities, adding, the private sector is currently the priority of the current government which can help the country navigate through current economic challenges. He said that short medium and long-term strategies are being worked on for macroeconomic stability to bring foreign direct investment in the country, plan to provide more facilities to the business community and investors in Pakistan, he mentioned. Replying to a question, he said that in the present circumstances of the economy we need to privatized that institutions which are not earning, adding, the aim of privatization is often to increase efficiency, competition, and innovation in the economy by subjecting previously state-controlled entities to market forces.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding Azad Jammu & Kashmir matters.—DNA

UN teams provide aid after flash floods in Afghanistan

“The United Nations and its partners in Afghanistan are coordinating with the de facto authorities to swiftly assess needs and provide emergency assistance,”

NATIONS: United Nations humanitarian teams scrambled to get lifesaving aid to communities devastated by deadly flash floods in northeastern Afghanistan over the weekend, the UN reported Sunday. Flash floods in the area have reportedly killed at least 300 people, including 51 children, with many more injured, with these figures expected to increase as additional reports come in, according to UN agencies. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his condolences to the families of the victims. “The United Nations and its partners in Afghanistan are coordinating with the de facto authorities to swiftly assess needs and provide

emergency assistance,” said his spokesperson in a statement, extending wishes for a swift recovery to those injured and condolences to the families of the victims. Most of the casualties were reported in Baghlan province, where heavy rains destroyed an estimated 3,000 houses, flooded farmland, washed away livestock, closed schools and damaged health centres. Takhar and Badakhshan provinces were also impacted with initial reports of at least 300 houses damaged, according to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). “UNICEF and our partners are on the ground and are making every effort to bring quick relief to the affected families and

communities,” Dr. Tajudeen Oyewale, UNICEF Representative in Afghanistan, said Sunday, expressing condolences to the families mourning the loss of loved ones. A UNICEF-supported mobile health and nutrition team has also been dispatched and teams are on the ground to help conduct additional assessments. “The heavy rains and subsequent floods have disrupted lives and pose a significant risk to children in the affected provinces,” Dr. Oyewale said. “As families cope with the loss, maintaining access to safe water, health and protection services is paramount. As always, UNICEF stands with the children and people of Afghanistan

during this difficult time.” Working with partners, UN agencies are already distributing aid. UNICEF has dispatched 450 family kits, 500 hygiene kits, 476 blankets for adults and babies and 100 clothing kits alongside support provided by other UN agencies and partners. Meanwhile, the UN migration organisation (IOM) has been distributing aid packages that include temporary shelters, essential non-food items, solar modules, clothing and tools for repairs to their damaged shelters. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is currently distributing energy biscuits to survivors of the floods, according to the agency's post on social media on

Sunday. WFP also said this flood is one of the many events in recent weeks caused by unusually heavy rains. UN relief chief Martin Griffiths said “this extreme weather event underscores the need for climate-resilient humanitarian efforts.” Meanwhile, the UN relief agency, OCHA, is working with partners and national authorities to provide shelter, food and healthcare, he said in a post on X on Sunday. Afghanistan is among the 10 most vulnerable countries to climate change and has been experiencing a rise in extreme weather conditions, notably floods, drought and sand and dust storms, resulting in the loss of lives and livelihoods and significant damage to infrastructure.

Lithuanian president, PM set for election runoff on May 26

VILNIUS: Lithuania's president and prime minister will face off in the second round of the Baltic state's presidential vote on May 26 after the incumbent failed to win an overall majority in the first round on Sunday. With almost all the ballots counted in the Baltic state which was once part of the Soviet Union, President Gitanas Nausėda was ahead with 46 percent of the vote while Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte had 16 percent. The election has been dominated by fears over neighbouring Russia and all the main candidates in the vote agreed the NATO and EU member should boost defence spending to counter the perceived threat. Nausėda, a 59-year-old former banker, said he was confident of victory in the second round and would require “no strategy” to campaign against Simonyte. His rival is a 49-year-old fiscal conservative with liberal views on social issues. She notably supports same-sex partnerships, which still stir controversy in the predominantly Catholic country. Opinion polls in the run-up to the vote gave Nausėda a comfortable lead over the other seven candidates, including Simonyte and prominent lawyer Ignas Vegele. Pensioner Aldona Majauskiene, 82, told AFP she had voted for Nausėda because “he is the best in every category”. Civil servant Airine, 53, said she voted for Simonyte and expects less populism from the future president. “I am not voting for faces, I am voting for those who really can help boost our security and quality of living,” she said. Turnout was more than 59 percent – the highest result since the 1997 presidential election. Simonyte is running for president for a second time after losing to Nausėda in a run-off in 2019. “Simonyte is supported by conservative party voters and liberal people, while Nausėda is a candidate of the left in terms of economic and social policy,” Vilnius University analyst Ramunas Vilpisauskas told AFP.—APP

Putin removes defence minister Shoigu

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday moved to replace defence minister Sergei Shoigu in a major shake-up to Russia's military leadership more than two years into its Ukraine offensive. Putin proposed economist Andrey Belousov as Shoigu's replacement, according to a list of the ministerial nominations published by the Federation Council, Russia's upper house of parliament. The move comes at a key time in the conflict with Russian troops advancing in eastern Ukraine and having just launched a major new ground operation against the northeastern Kharkiv region. Despite a string of military setbacks in the first year of the campaign – including the failure to capture the Ukrainian capital Kyiv and retreats from the Kharkiv and southern Kherson regions – Putin had stood by Shoigu until now. That included when Wagner paramilitary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin launched a bloody insurrection last year calling for Shoigu's removal. Explaining the timing of the decision, the Kremlin on Sunday said it needed the defence ministry to stay “innovative”. “The defence ministry must be absolutely open to innovation, to the introduction of all advanced ideas, to the creation of conditions for economic competitiveness,” state media quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying in a briefing on the appointments. The battlefield is won by whoever is more open to innovation,” Peskov said. “That is likely why the president has settled on the candidacy of Andrey Belousov,” he added. Belousov, who has no military background, has been one of Putin's most influential economic advisers over the last decade. UK defence minister Grant Shapps said the Ukraine conflict had left more than 355,000 Russian soldier casualties under Shoigu's watch as well as “mass civilian suffering”. “Russia needs a Defence Minister who would undo that disastrous legacy” and end the conflict, “but all they'll get is another of Putin's puppets,” he wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Shoigu, 68, was appointed Russian defence minister in 2012 and has had a decades-long political career of unmatched longevity in post-Soviet Russia. His presence at the centre of power in Moscow predates that of Putin himself. Prior to Russia launching its full-scale military campaign on Ukraine in February 2022, he was seen as one of Putin's most trusted lieutenants. The pair were regularly photographed on macho nature retreats in the Siberian wilderness, hunting and fishing together. In one famous snap from 2017 shared by the Kremlin, they are sitting bare-chested under the sun on a beach by a lake. On Sunday, Putin simultaneously issued decrees naming Shoigu as the new secretary of the Security Council, replacing his longstanding ally Nikolai Patrushev. The Kremlin also said Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of the General Staff, would stay in post overseeing daily military operations in Ukraine. Along with Shoigu, Gerasimov had been targeted by a hardcore group of influential pro-offensive military bloggers for Moscow's perceived military failures. Prigozhin, who marched on Moscow calling for the pair's removal, died in an unexplained plane crash weeks after his aborted mutiny. Putin is constitutionally required to name a new set of government ministers – or reappoint existing ones – following his victory in a March election devoid of opposition. Lawmakers in Russia's rubber-stamp parliament need to approve the president's nominations, which they are set to do over the coming days. The future of Patrushev, an arch-hawk who is sometimes seen as a possible successor to Putin, was unclear. There was no immediate high-level reaction to the shake-up in Ukraine.—DNA

At 101, a US WWII veteran - and pacifist - is honored by France

NEW YORK: In his 101 years on Earth, Jack Hausman has seen a lot: eight decades ago he endured the battlefields of World War II before returning home and taking over the family business, all the while remaining a lifelong pacifist. But when he was honored recently in his small New York home with France's Legion of Honor for his wartime service, a flood of memories left him sobbing. His voice breaking with emotion and tears streaming down his cheeks, Hausman, surrounded by friends and family members in his home of 80 years, expressed the pain he felt “for those who are no longer here today.” As the 80th anniversary of the Allies' D-Day landing in Normandy approaches on June 6 – and that of Nazi Germany's surrender the following May 8 – French embassy officials

in the United States have been doing their best to honor the dwindling number of surviving American veterans who fought in the European theater. The men Hausman wanted to honor on a radiant afternoon in late April, as he himself was honored by the acting French consul in New York, were the 250 members of his regiment of US army engineers and sappers who fought alongside legendary General George Patton in Algeria, Italy, southern France, Central Europe and the Rhineland from 1943 to 1945. “You've made me an important guy,” the Brooklyn-born Hausman said, his voice slightly quaking – but with a mischievous gleam in his eye that brought laughter to his two daughters, both in their 70s, as well as his grandchildren, great-grandchildren and friends.

“I felt that I was accepting this for 250 men,” he told acting French consul Damien Laban. “They did all the hard work. I was included. But believe me, they worked hard. And I... wouldn't accept the award without them.” was fully deserving, replied Laban, because of his “role in liberating France and Europe during World War II.” The youngest veterans are 96 or 97 years old, many in shaky health, and the ceremonies honoring them inevitably unleash powerful memories and emotions. “We feel it is our duty to thank the heroes who helped liberate our nation during World War II while we still can,” said Laban. “We owe them our freedom, democracy and way of life.” Some veterans have been invited to the D-Day commemoration in Normandy on June 6, but Hausman has no plans to go. He

said he has had no desire to return to Europe since the end of the war. Despite joining the army at age 20 to help build roads and bridges and remove mines, Hausman said he had always been a pacifist. “We want the world to be peaceful,” he said softly. When I went to the army, I didn't know how to shoot,” he told AFP. “I wasn't mad at the Germans. I was a youngster... So I shot above their heads in the army, scared the hell out of them. They gave up. And then we captured them.” He added: “They were starving. I gave them part of my rations. And it was my pleasure to try to help people out.” But while he saw a lot of death in Europe, “Thank God, thank God, I learned how to stay alive,” he said, visibly happy as he sat in his wheelchair. Returning from the war in 1945, Hausman

took up again with his high-school sweetheart. They were married for 76 years. Taking over the family business – and helping build it into one of the largest makers of corrugated cardboard boxes on the East Coast – Hausman finally retired in 2020 at the ripe old age of 98. His daughters Sandy Gottfried and Linda Margolis shared photos of their father, looking elegant in his army uniform in 1943. “We're so proud,” Margolis said. “It was long overdue,” added Gottfried, after a French-speaking daughter-in-law sang a cappella the anthems of both countries. Asked about the war in Ukraine and whether he thought the Americans should intervene, Hausman shrugged: “Nobody wins. Remember, when you shoot, one gets killed and another one gets killed – on both sides.—Agencies

Famous film actor Alauddin remembered

ISLAMABAD: Famous film actor Alauddin was remembered on his death anniversary on Monday. He was born on February 2, 1920, in Rawalpindi, Alauddin ruled the Pakistan film industry for many decades due to his versatile acting. First, he tried his luck in the Indian film industry as a singer and did some minor roles as an actor. After partition, he joined the Pakistani film industry courtesy of producer and director A R Kardar and he became one of the pioneer figures of the Pakistani film industry. Till 1980, he performed in hundreds of movies as a hero, villain, and character actor. His accent and style were emulated by several actors but he was unmatched among them all. Indian film Mela starring Dilip Kumar and Nargis released in 1948 proved a breakthrough vehicle for him.. In ‘Patay Khan’ he was at his peak as an actor. Zarqa, ‘Teas Mar Khan’, ‘Chacha Khamkhar’, ‘Kartar Singh, Koal’ ‘Dulla Bhatti’, ‘Peengan’, ‘Mirza Sahiban’, ‘Sultana Daku’, ‘Mera Naam Hai Mohabbat’ are among his most celebrated movies. Overall he acted in nearly 300 Urdu and Punjabi films.—APP

Action taken against illegal gas filling in Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR: A team of the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has taken stern action against the elements involved in illegal gas filling in Bahawalpur. A team of OGRA headed by their Director, Muhammad Iqbal conducted a raid at several outlets where LPG gas was being filled in domestic gas cylinders illegally. The team has confiscated equipment used in LPG gas filling. The team has sealed off four illegal gas filling stations. Speaking on the occasion, Iqbal said that OGRA had launched a campaign against the illegal filling of LPG. He said safety measures were not adopted in gas filling at illegal gas stations.—APP

X wins court reprieve in battle over extreme Australian content

Sydney: A bid by Australia's online watchdog to impose a global ban on dozens of violent X posts stumbled on Monday, when a top judge ruled in favour of the social media firm. Court Justice Geoffrey Kennett refused to extend a temporary order to take down posts showing the stabbing of a Sydney priest in April, pending further legal action. “The orders of the court will be that the application to extend the interlocutory injunction... is refused,” Kennett said, without giving the reasons for his decision. Australia's eSafety Commissioner wants the Elon Musk-owned company to take down 65 video and audio clips in Australia and worldwide. The site, formerly known as Twitter, has agreed to geoblock the posts, theoretically preventing them from being seen by users in Australia. But the eSafety Commission has said that does not go far enough. It has called for X to remove the posts globally, saying they are still easily viewed in Australia through the use of virtual private networks that mask a user's location. X had refused to comply with requests to take them down worldwide. Monday's ruling is not a total victory for X, as it had already been ignoring the worldwide take-down order and further legal action is expected. It is unclear whether the judge rejected the extension of the order on procedural or substantive grounds. But it does signify a reprieve, and could mean the firm avoids some fines. The case is being seen as an important test of the social media platform's legal responsibilities and of the use of geoblocking. Almost a quarter of Australians use virtual private networks, according to the eSafety Commission. Musk has previously told X users to use virtual private networks to bypass alleged “censorship” of the site in Brazil.—Agencies

Briefs

New wheat scandal revealed in Sindh

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A report by an inspection team formed by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah revealed that Rs 3.22 billion worth of wheat 'disappeared' after floods in 2022. According to the details, a 205-page report has been leaked which revealed that following the terrible floods of 2022, the officials of the Sindh Food Department mixed 379,000 sacks of substandard wheat with dirt. This resulted in an astounding loss of almost Rs3.22 billion to the public treasury. The report held concerned officials responsible for the negligence that led to Rs 3.22 billion worth of wheat damage. The inquiry committee examined wheat storage facilities in 14 districts across Sindh province. As per the report, a total of Rs93 million was lost in Jamshoro, Rs569.3 million in Dadu, Rs48.1 million in Ghotki, Rs16.2 million in Sukkur, Rs16.44 million in KhairpurMirs, Rs131.4 million in Jacobabad, Rs15 million in Larkana, Rs386.3 million in Qamber-Shahdadkot, Rs19.8 million in NaushahroFeroze, Rs9.1 million in Sanghar, Rs9.8 million in Benazirabad, and an astounding Rs1,075.4 million was lost in Malir. The report also highlighted the terrible state of wheat storage facilities, which were being covered with insufficient tarpaulins and filled with filth and inferior wheat. As per the report, one of the main concerns was the Sindh Food Department's lack of efficient monitoring methods.

Senior diplomat Dr. Diyar Khan dies



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Foreign Service fraternity is today mourning Dr. Diyar Khan. A distinguished diplomat, Dr. Khan served the nation for over 28 years. He was Pakistan's Ambassador to Argentina and Consul General in Guangzhou, China. He also served at Pakistan's Missions in Beijing, Kabul, Sana'a, Rome and the United Nations, New York. His professionalism, impeccable integrity and dedication to public service were truly admirable. He will be dearly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time. Rest in Peace, Dr. Diyar Khan.

President for promoting trade ties with Bosnia & Herzegovina

The Ambassador expressed his gratitude to the Government and people of Pakistan for their support to Bosnia & Herzegovina during the war in the 1990s



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari

has underlined the need to promote business and trade ties with Bosnia and Herzegovina by opening banks, trading in local currencies, and promoting barter trade between the two countries. The President expressed these views while talking to the Ambassador of Bosnia & Herzegovina (B&H), Mr. Emin Cohodarevic,

who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Welcoming the Ambassador, the President said that Pakistan's ties with Bosnia & Herzegovina were based on historic and friendly relations spanning over almost three decades. He added that both countries should continue bilateral engagements and interactions to further explore the avenues of cooperation in the areas of mutual interest. The Ambassador said that his country wanted to deepen ties with Pakistan in the fields of economy, security, and culture. He highlighted that there was a vast scope for economic cooperation for Pakistani businesses in different industries in Bosnia & Herzegovina, including food, tourism, and textile. The Ambassador expressed his gratitude to the Government and people of Pakistan for their support to Bosnia & Herzegovina during the war in the 1990s. He also solicited Pakistan's support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's draft resolution on Srebrenica in the United Nations General Assembly. The President said that Pakistan would favourably examine Bosnia's request, adding that Pakistan stood in solidarity with the victims of the 1995 tragedy in Srebrenica. The Ambassador also extended the invitation to the President to visit Bosnia & Herzegovina to strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries.

May 9 was staged to target Imran

Omar Ayub calls for return of security agencies to constitutional bounds

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a fiery address on Monday, Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub quoted articles of the Constitution and called for security agencies to return to the bounds mandated to them. Criticising last week's press conference by the director general (DG) of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Ayub said: "Security agencies cannot indulge in politics as per the Constitution," adding that they were "tools of the state, not the state itself." Quoting Article 7 of the Constitution, he said its definition did not include security institutions within its ambit in explaining the state. "The state is the federal government, the national and provincial assemblies [...] and bodies who can collect taxes," Ayub clarified. "These agencies serve the state, they cannot be the state." Citing Article 203 — the oath of an officer — he called the DG ISPR's press conference "interference in the political realm", which he said was only for elected officials and political parties. "Security institutions cannot indulge in politics as per this Constitution. This press conference should not have happened."

India gets control of Iranian port Chabahar for 10 years

"It will clear the pathway for bigger investments to be made in the port," Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar told reporters in Mumbai on Monday

DNA

NEW DELHI: India signed a 10-year contract with Iran on Monday to develop and operate the Iranian port of Chabahar, the Narendra Modi-led government said, strengthening relations with a strategic Middle Eastern nation. India has been developing the port in Chabahar on Iran's south-eastern coast along the Gulf of Oman as a way to transport goods to Iran, Afghanistan and central Asian countries, bypassing the ports of Karachi and Gwadar. US sanctions on Iran, however, slowed the port's development. "Chabahar Port's significance transcends its role as a mere conduit between India and Iran; it serves as a vital trade artery connecting India with Afghanistan and Central Asian Countries," India's Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said in Tehran, after the signing of the agreement. "This linkage has unlocked new avenues for trade and fortified supply chain resilience across the region."

"Iran and India are seeking to develop Chabahar port as much as possible, taking into account the interests of the two countries for joint access to regional markets," the Indian minister said. This "long-term contract symbolises the enduring trust and effective partnership between India and Iran," he added. The long-term deal was signed between Indian Ports Global Limited (IPGL) and the Port & Maritime Organisation of Iran, authorities in both countries said. Under the agreement, IPGL will invest about \$120 million while there will be an additional \$250m in financing, bringing the contract's value to \$370m, said Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash. "Chabahar ... can act as a focal point in the transit development of the region," Bazrpash said at the signing ceremony. "We are pleased with this agreement, and we have full trust in India," he added. IPGL first took over operations of the port at the end of 2018 and has since handled container traffic of more than 90,000 TEUs and bulk and general cargo of more than 8.4m tonnes, an Indian government official said. A total of 2.5m tonnes of wheat and 2,000 tonnes of pulses have been shipped from India to Afghanistan through Chabahar Port, the official added. "It will clear the pathway for bigger investments to be made in the port," Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar told reporters in Mumbai on Monday.

Intra-party polls: ECP questions 'status'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The submission of documents related to intra-party elections by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has seemingly not satisfied the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) as the top electoral authority raised several queries over the current "status" of the former ruling party after losing "its organisational structure on lapsing of 5 years." A two-page questionnaire was sent to the Imran-founded party by the election watchdog after the former submitted documents related to its intra-party elections in a bid to address objections. The ECP questioned the current "status" of the PTI as a political party besides questioning why not to start the delisting process of the former ruling party's registration and imposing a fine for not holding timely intra-party elections. The commission's first question read that the "PTI did not hold intra-party elections within 5 years, in the departure of Section 208(1). Hence, it lost its organisational structure on lapsing of 5 years. What is the status of PTI now in this perspective, as a political party?" It also questioned the legality of the party's chief organiser and federal election commissioner appointed by its General Body, while the PTI's constitution defines appointments on the former position via its National Council on recommendations of the Chief Executive Committee (CEC). According to the ECP, a political party would be registered in accordance with the old law under the Election Act if it submits certificates within a week after intra-party polls, besides complete records of elected office-bearers, poll data and results. Moreover, it also requires to submit relevant documents in 60 days under the Election Act.

NCA scandal: AC adjourns hearing

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court on Monday adjourned the hearing of the £190 million scandal case against the PTI founder and his wife, Bushra Bibi, until May 15. Judge Nasir Javed Rana heard the case at Adiala Jail. PTI founder and Bushra Bibi, alongside NAB Prosecutor General Sardar Muzaffar Abbasi and his team were present. Lawyers representing the PTI founder and Bushra Bibi, including Zaheer Abbas Chaudhry, Intizar Panjutha, and Shoab Shaheen, were also in attendance. Requests for medical examinations of the PTI founder and Bushra Bibi, as well as a meeting with Saeeda Warsi, were filed by respondent lawyers. This was approved by the court.

'Investigation into attacks on journalists unsatisfactory'

Apex court gives 30-day deadline to federal police, orders appointing 'competent' officers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) deemed the investigation into the torture and kidnapping case of journalists Asad Toor, Absar Alam, and Matiullah Jan "unsatisfactory" on Monday, and ordered the appointment of competent investigative officers to handle the cases. During the hearing of the case against harassment of journalists, a three-member bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa expressed anger over the lack of progress in the investigation concerning journalist Matiullah Jan's 'abduction' case. The apex court ordered publishing the sketches of the journalist's attackers in newspapers and advertising a reward amount for the suspects' arrest. The SC granted Islamabad police 30 days. The case was adjourned till June, with the date of hearing to be fixed later. The court also ordered to send the complete CCTV footage of the kidnappers in the Matiullah Jan case to Punjab forensic lab. The court began the hearing by calling the senior

superintendent of police (SSP) to the rostrum. "There is a recording of the incident, why were the kidnappers still not found?" the CJP inquired. The SSP denied there was any CCTV footage of the incident. This angered the CJP, who then questioned whether the SSP was "recruited into the police force to lie". CJP Isa said the "officer was insulting the police uniform". The court affirmed the existence of a recording in response to the SSP's assertion of its absence and inquired about written evidence. The SSP replied in the affirmative regarding the availability of written evidence. The CJP inquired how long had the SSP been in the police force. "13 years," the police officer responded. Irked by the SSP's responses, CJP Isa then instructed the additional attorney general (AAG) to "suspend him immediately". The AAG apologized on behalf of the SSP. However, the CJP asked, "Why pardon [such officers], why not take action against them? Take action!" He further expressed his discontent, stating, "I am not at all satisfied with them. They are making a joke." "Just because we don't say anything doesn't mean you can throw stones at us."

PM extends invitation to Korean President for visit

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. Park Ki Jun, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan, called

on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House today. The Korean Ambassador congratulated the Prime Minister on behalf of the Korean leadership upon his re-election. The Prime Minister thanked the Ko-



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Park Ki Jun called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. — DNA

rean leadership for the warm message of greetings that he received and expressed the desire to work closely to further strengthen bilateral ties. The Prime Minister said that Pakistan and Korea enjoy good relations, particularly in trade and investment. He said both countries had cooperated since the early 1960s for economic development and conveyed admiration for Korea's remarkable transformation into a modern technologically advanced economy. He added that Pakistan was keen to learn from Korea's experience of industrialization and SME sector growth as well as in the field of IT including artificial intelligence. The Prime Minister also offered to enhance export of skilled manpower from Pakistan to meet Korea's human resource needs. To promote mutually beneficial trade, he proposed the exchange of business delegations between Seoul and Islamabad. In this regard, the Prime Minister said that he would instruct relevant Cabinet Ministers to coordinate with the Korean side to discuss existing investments by Korean companies as well as to explore new opportunities. The Prime Minister also extended an invitation to President Yoon Suk Yeol to undertake an official visit to Pakistan. The Korean Ambassador thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and conveyed the desire of the Korean government to enhance its bilateral cooperation with Pakistan in a number of areas of mutual interest, particularly trade, investment, IT, culture, tourism and people to people exchanges.