



Islamabad POST

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Russia-China ties not a threat to any country says Putin

Detailed News On Page-08

All assets are legal, says Mohsin Naqvi

Detailed News On Page-08



Murray through to next round on injury return

Detailed News On Page-06



Addresses AJK cabinet meeting

PM Shehbaz stresses permanent solution to people's issues

He instructed the relevant authorities to immediately complete the construction of bridge of Mangla Phase-2 project

BUREAU REPORT / DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday calling the progress of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir linked with each other, assured that his government, in collaboration with the AJK leadership, would ensure the implementation of mutual understanding and seek a permanent solution to the issues facing the Kashmiri people. He, addressing the members of the AJK cabinet during day-long visit here, instructed the formation of a committee to discuss issues like water charge, Neelum Jhelum and others for the benefit of the AJK people. Referring to the recent movement run by the AJK people for their rights, Prime Minister Shehbaz said the people raised their voices for their genuine demands but amidst that some miscreants tried to create riots and cause killings. He condoled the killing of a police official and some citizens during the movement and announced that his government would support their respective grieved families under the Shuhada Package. He told the participants that Rs 23 billion approved by his government had been released to the AJK government and assured that, after the completion of IMF team's visit, the federal minister and secretary for power would consult with the AJK authorities to seek a permanent solution to the issues and prevent the recurrence of such incidents. The prime minister asked his AJK counterpart Chaudhary Anwaar ul Haq to constitute a committee on his side for necessary consultation with the relevant Pakistani ministries and urged him to take personal ownership of the matter as he would do so in Pakistan. He instructed the relevant authorities to immediately complete the construction of bridge of Mangla Phase-2 project. Regarding Neelum Jhelum, he said federal Secretary Water and Minister for

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Chinese Fin Min reaffirms support for Pakistan

Deputy PM Ishaq Dar underscores Islamabad's reform agenda focusing on governance and revenue to attract FDI

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: Chinese Finance Minister Lan Fo'an Thursday met Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and reaffirmed his country's continued support for Pakistan's efforts to bring about financial stability. Appreciating bilateral financial and banking cooperation as the manifestation of the "All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership", the Chinese minister took note of the positive trajectory of Pakistan's economy. As per the Foreign Office (FO), the high-level meeting saw the two sides discussing ideas to further enhance financial cooperation, especially in view of growing business-to-business (B2B) linkages between the two countries. Meanwhile, Deputy PM Dar underscored Islamabad's reform agenda with its focus on governance, revenue, and ease of doing business to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and stressed the

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WORLD DAY OF PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE



ISLAMABAD: At initiative of the Embassy of Brazil and of the Embassy of Portugal, together with the support of Instituto Guimaraes Rosa and Instituto Camoes, Prof. Guiomar de Grammont; accompanied by Olyntho Vieira, Ambassador of Brazil, and Frederico Silva, The Ambassador of Portugal participated in cultural events. To cap off the program, the Ambassadors of Portugal and Brazil graciously hosted a reception at the esteemed residence of the Brazilian Ambassador. In a harmonious gathering, both ambassadors underscored the profound importance of the event, affirming their commitment to perpetuate these festivities with even greater splendor in the days ahead. - DNA

3 heat waves likely to hit Pakistan

First spell of heatwave may last for two to three days

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has predicted that Pakistan may experience three heatwaves in various cities during the next 25 days. According to the NDMA, the risk of the first heatwave is expected in Umargot, Tharparkar, Tando Allahyar, Matiari and Sanghar in Sindh, while south Punjab's Bahawalpur and Rahimyar Khan cities will also be affected. The NDMA said the first spell of heatwave may last for two to three days between

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IHC orders recovery of missing poet

Persons behind forced disappearances should be awarded death penalty, remarks IHC

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) judge Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani on Thursday called for the introduction of a law that would impose the death penalty on those responsible for enforced disappearances, Express News reported. Justice Kayani made the remarks during a hearing of a petition filed by poet Ahmed Farhad

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SC probes viral photo of Imran Khan

Imran Khan appears before SC via video link

The hearing of the case was not live streamed. Supreme Court directs to ensure PTI's founder appearance via video link on next hearing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD/RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan Thursday appeared before the Supreme Court via video link in the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) amendments case. A five-member SC larger bench - headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi - heard the case on the intra-court appeals filed by the federal and provincial governments

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SC 'takes suo moto notice' of Vawda's press talk

Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa-led bench will hear the matter today (Friday)

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has taken suo motu notice of

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Cheema 'apologises' to Zartaj Gul

PTI lawmakers demand NA speaker suspend Cheema's membership

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PML-Q lawmaker Tariq Bashir Cheema tendered apology to PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) MNA Zartaj Gul and she accepted it following an altercation between the two leaders in the National Assembly. The development came after NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq's intervention into the matter as he resolved the issue in a dignified manner. Leader of the Opposition Omar Ayub Khan thanked the speaker for his role in the matter. Confirming the report, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan along with Gul - during an interaction with journalists - said: "Tariq Bashir Cheema has tendered an apology to Zartaj Gul."

Dialogue only way to stop terrorism

Says health and education systems in province have been ruined

DNA

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti says the health and education systems in the province have been ruined. Talking to media on Thursday, the chief minister said, "The state is ready for negotiations to address the issues of the Balochistan." "People are being killed after being taken off buses. What kind of Balochi traditions are these? Neither do these traditions permit it nor does our Islam. The dialogue is the only way to stop this terrorism. The youth should be included in the development of Balochistan."

Vows to control inflation

Pakistan to be fully changed if "Nawaz's term" is completed

"There is no wheat crisis", Maryam said and added that she had shut the door to corruption in wheat procurement

BUREAU REPORT

PHOOLNAGAR: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Thursday termed the current PML-N governments in Islamabad and Punjab as the fourth term of elder Sharif - the former three-time prime minister who could never complete the tenure due to political interference - as she promised to serve the masses as a mission started by her father. The journey to development was halted, every time Nawaz ousted from his office through a conspiracy, Maryam told a gathering in in Phoolnagar - a rural town in Kasur district - where she inaugurated a rural health centre (RHC). "The interests of 130 million people of Punjab is supreme to me," the chief minister remarked and said

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Pesco agrees to reduce loadshedding in KP after ultimatum

KP CM invites federal energy minister to discuss electricity-related issues

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's ultimatum to the federal government has led to a breakthrough in reducing electricity loadshedding in KP. Following a meeting with PESCO officials, a new schedule has been agreed upon,

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Arab League calls for UN peacekeepers in Palestine

Saudi Crown Prince: Kingdom Supports Establishment of Internationally Recognized Palestinian State

NEWS DESK

MANAMA: The King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, called for an international conference for peace in the Middle East at the opening of the Arab League Summit in Manama. The king, and the summit's host, reaffirmed his country's support for the full recognition of a Palestinian state and the acceptance of its membership in the United Nations. He stressed that the establishment of a Palestinian state will reflect positively on the region. Last week, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly backed a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member and called on the UN Security Council to reconsider the request. The vote by the 193-member General Assembly was a global survey of support for the Palestinian bid to become a full UN member - a move that would effectively recognize a Palestinian state - after the US vetoed it in the UN Security Council last month. "What the Palestinians are facing requires a unified international stance," the King of Bahrain said. In its final communique, the Arab League called for a United Nations peacekeeping force in the Palestinian territories.

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Humanitarian crisis in Gaza enters critical stage

AGENCIES

GAZA: In a press conference in commemoration of the 76th anniversary of the Nakba on Wednesday, the Government Media Office (GMO) in Gaza launched a warning call that the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip had entered a critical stage due to the Israeli ongoing genocidal war waged against Palestinian civilians under the supervision of the US administration and their allies. Speaking at the conference, the Director of the GMO, Ismail Al-Thawabta, said, "while commemorating the 76th anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba in which our people were subjected to the most horrific forced displacement in history in

Continued on Page 06

Health Minister takes important initiative

PESHAWAR: The Health Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Qasim Ali Shah has taken important initiative to prevent Leishmania epidemic wherein he handed over the first batch of injections for the treatment of Leishmania to the DHOs of Mohmand, and Khyber district. It is necessary to take timely measures to prevent the epidemic, Syed Qasim Ali Shah told media men during distribution of injections to prevent Leishmania in both Mohmand and Khyber Districts. Glucantime injections have been provided with the support of MSF, Syed Qasim Ali Shah said, adding, Glucantime injections have been sold through UNICEF for the treatment of Leishmania. The next batch of injections will arrive in two weeks, Syed Qasim Ali Shah informed. He said, Glucantime injections will be delivered to other districts of the province including southern districts in two weeks. Syed Qasim Ali Shah said that if the usual measures are not taken in time, certainly will face an epidemic like situation. He said they would conduct joint campaign against Leishmania with Livestock Department.—APP

UC's to get loader rickshaws

LAHORE: The Punjab government has decided to provide loader rickshaws to union councils for the 'Suthra Punjab program'. The decision was taken during a video link meeting of divisional commissioners, and deputy commissioners held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman at Civil Secretariat here on Thursday. The meeting reviewed the implementation of reduction in the price of Roti, 'Suthra Punjab program' and measures to improve governance. The secretary industries, additional IG Special Branch and officers concerned attended the meeting while the secretary local government, all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link. The Chief Secretary said that 'Suthra Punjab program' was among the priorities of the government, and the program aimed to provide facilities in rural areas on the pattern of cities. He directed that all available resources be utilized to make the 'Suthra Punjab program' a success. The Chief Secretary said that as per the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab, the performance of the administrative officers would be reviewed on a daily basis and the districts would be ranked in order of performance. He highlighted that stray dogs were becoming a threat to human lives. He asked the deputy commissioners to devise a strategy for preventing the incidents of dog bites and ensure availability of anti-rabies vaccine in all hospitals.—APP

'Load management in areas with high line losses'

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Chief Executive Officer Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) Akhtar Hameed Khan on Thursday presided over a meeting on load-shedding and reviewed various steps to overcome load management in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Speaking on the occasion the PESCO chief said that load management was done only in areas where line losses were high, adding that no load management was done in areas with no losses. He said there was no load management on more than 500 feeders with no line losses and PESCO teams regularly conducted operations across the province to reduce losses. The PESCO chief directed the teams to accelerate operations to reduce losses and reduce load management. He also directed not to carry out any additional or unannounced load management across the province.

Traders will be inducted in reconciliation committees

Ali Nasir Rizvi by describing the ICCI as a very prestigious forum which is meant to resolve the issues of business community by playing the role of a bridge between entrepreneurs and the government went on to say that all the required confidence building measures will be initiated to restore the trust of the community by practically implementing the pledges he has made

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, Inspector General of Police Islamabad has said that provision of peaceful and conducive environment for healthy activities and resolution of issues of business community on preferential basis is among the top most priorities of Islamabad Police and in this regard every potential step will be taken in consultation with the business community and other stakeholders to turn Islamabad a crime free city. He said that a full-fledged war, with complete strength, aggressive policing will be waged against the criminals to eliminate the atmosphere of fear and despair and restore peace and tranquility to ease business doing. IGP Islamabad said this while addressing an inspiring ceremony held in his honour at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday evening. Ali Nasir Rizvi by describing the ICCI as a very prestigious forum which is meant to resolve the issues of business community by playing the role of a bridge between entrepreneurs and the government went on to say that all the required confidence building measures will be initiated to restore the trust of the community by practically implementing the pledges he has made. He said that all the Reconciliation Committees will be re-



tivated and Presidents of Market Committees will be awarded their membership to resolve their problems amicably, efficiently and on fast track basis to create a business friendly atmosphere for their and country's prosperity. He added that functioning of all the Police stations will be streamlined within sixty days by setting right all the necessary processes and responses and the citizens themselves will see a visible change in the working of the capital police. In his welcome address President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhta-

wari while narrating in detail the problems the community is confronting termed maintenance of law and order as prerequisite for the businesses by assuring that ICCI will incorporate all out support to Police for making the capital a drug free abode. Ahsan Zafar by presenting some significant suggestions for the resolution of the problems relating to police said that the business community is pinning high hopes with the new IGP because it has found him an energetic officer and hopefully he will adopt all the measures to enhance its confidence in police.

Former President ICCI Zafar Bakhtawari said that it is imperative for the youth to start accepting successful businessmen and efficient police officers as their role models for the progress and prosperity of the country and IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi enjoys all the required qualities to become a role model. Former President ICCI Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi in his address assured the IGP that he will find the business community along with him for all the positives. Chairman ICCI Police Committee Saif ur Rehman described the IGP as a

visionary figure, determined to deliver for the community. President All Pakistan Anjum Taran Ajmal Baloch, Group leader Blue Area Yousuf Rajoot in their addresses highlighted the problems like shortage of staff in police stations, non-use of modern gadgets and some of the causes of the problems. In his concluding remarks President ICCI Azhar ul Islam Zafar reaffirmed business community's all out support to Police in achieving the aforementioned objectives. Among others, Member National Assembly Farrah Naz Akbar, President TWA G-9 Raja Javaid Iqbal, President Blue area Raja Hassan Akhtar, President F-6 markaz Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President G-10-4 Ch. Zafar Iqbal Gujjar, President D-12 M. Noman, President F-10 markaz Ahmed Khan, President E-11 Iftikar Abbasi, President Bara Kohu Raja Zahid Daniyal, President G-7 Altaf Hussain Shah, President Melody market Azhar Iqbal, President E-10 markaz Ikhtlaq Abbasi, President I-8 Raja Fayaz Gul, General Secretary IEAA Ch. Zahid Rafique, Haji Naem, Zahid Qureshi, Tahir Qureshi, former President Mian Shaikat Masud, Rizwana Chheena, Ch. Nasir, Khalid Ch., Zulkarnain Abbasi, Ch. Mohammad Ali, Babar Ch. Ch. Waseem, Tehmas Butt, Zia Ch and others were also present.

RPO takes notice of journalist killing

MULTAN:RPO DG Khan Sajjad Hussain Khan, taking notice of the heinous killing of a senior journalist, sought a report from the local DPO. According to the police spokesperson, the RPO called for the immediate arrest of the killers of journalist Meher Ashfaq Sial, who was shot dead by unknown assailants yesterday. He directed the local police to collect all kinds of forensic evidence to complete the inquiry. The RPO said they had all-out sympathy with the bereaved family in the moment of grief and suffering. He said the criminals didn't deserve any concession and vowed the family of the slain journalist would be given justice. Meanwhile meeting of the traders' association was held with the central president Syed Amir Hassan in the chair. While condemning the brutal murder of the local daily newspaper, Mehar Ashfaq Sial, traders demanded the authority to arrest the accused at the earliest. Syed Amir Hassan appealed to the police to play a pivotal role in controlling crimes across the district. The meeting was attended by civil society leader Malik Khair Muhammad Budh, traders named Javed Akhtar, Aamir Saleem Sheikh, Syed Shahid Ahmed, and others. Earlier on Wednesday, senior journalist of the Urdu daily Mehar Ashfaq Sial was murdered by firing near a thermal bypass when he had just left his home.—APP

'Unacceptable, even if it's a flower': Mahira Khan

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistani heartthrob Mahira Khan, known for her on-screen presence and grace has reacted strongly to an object being thrown at her during an event in Quetta termed the incident as "unacceptable". "No one should think it's okay to throw something on stage, even if it's a flower wrapped in a paper plane. It sets the wrong precedent. It is unacceptable," Mahira wrote in a post on her Instagram account. The incident actress is referring to happened when she was attending Pakistan Literature Festival (PLF) in Quetta and an object was thrown at her, which although didn't hit her but left her startled and seemingly disappointed. "This is wrong," Mahira said as her conversation with the host was interrupted by an object thrown by an unidentified individual from the crowd. However, despite admitting that she sometimes "gets scared" for her own safety as well as that of others for the possibility of being trapped in a "mob-like" situation, Mahira opposed the prospect of not holding events in Quetta. "Here was a crowd of 10,000 or more who were showing their love and excitement the

way they know best [...] whoever the miscreant was [he/she] was just one out of 10,000," the actress said stressing that the decision to not hold events is simply "not the solution". "We need more events such as these in more cities of Pakistan. The more you are exposed the more you are aware and educated. Normalise it and see what happens," the Bol actress said. Pondering what could've been different, Mahira said: "Maybe I should've gotten up and left, maybe the crowd could've been screened". However, it seems that The Legend of Maula Jatt star had a rather good time during her stay in Quetta

and was unfazed by the unfortunate incident as she hinted at plans for returning to the city. "I met the most amazing people [...] shared stories, laughed and made plans for my next visit [...] I love you Quetta. Thank you for the insane amount of love," Mahira wrote. "There shall and will be a next time... and on every end, we will be better. InshAllah," she concluded. The incident, although unfortunate, is not rare when renowned artists and public figures attend such large gatherings as several other celebrities around the world have faced such deplorable acts by one or two members of the audience which then taints the image of the crowd as a whole.

Naqvi reveals 'wife owns properties not only in Dubai but also in UK'

LAHORE: Dafter property leaks under the "Dubai Unlocked" project sent shockwaves across the country, Interior Minister Senator Mohsin Naqvi revealed on Thursday that all of his properties — which he and his wife owned for over a decade according to him — were "declared" with relevant authorities as there was nothing new in the leaked property records. Naqvi — who is holding multiple portfolios in the incumbent government, Minister for Narcotics Control, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman and a senator — revealed that his wife has owned properties not only in Dubai but also in the United Kingdom (UK) for over a decade. He gave a detailed response to the Dubai leaks in a press conference in Lahore today after the leaked property records named several prominent personalities in Pakistan, including government officials, politicians, military generals and other individuals. He criticised that it was right of the national media to report major developments but a wrong impression should not be created that someone owned properties via illegal means or did not declare it before the relevant authorities. The OCCRP's Dubai Unlocked project revealed data of thousands of Pakistanis, including more than a dozen retired military officials and their families, as well as bankers, bureaucrats and others, who own properties in upscale Dubai areas. The former caretaker Punjab chief minister clarified that he was not even a public officeholder 10 to 12 years ago but he owned many properties. He added that records of the properties he owned could easily be found through his particulars submitted to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Commenting over the Dubai leaks, Naqvi, who is also known as a media mogul as he owns a media group in Pakistan, claimed that all of his properties were on record and "declared" but an impression was created that he owned them via unknown sources of income. He added that he reserves the right to decide on making investments in the country or abroad. Slamming the makers of the Dubai leaks, the security czar said that he has a private life but they were declaring his lifetime earnings illegal. He said if someone "owns illegitimate properties then they are most welcome to create an issue". He further said that the report sans data of "thousands of other people who owned properties there [in Dubai]." It seems that report targeted specific personalities, he added. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence & Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, presenting a souvenir to H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, Ambassador of Iraqin.—DNA

FIA Peshawar Zone carry out 10 raid operations

FIA is tightening the cordon against the elements involved in electricity theft and the raiding teams are conducting joint operations with the concerned authorities with all resources being used to arrest the accused involved in the illegal use of electricity, the FIA Spokesman said

DNA

PESHAWAR: The FIA Peshawar Zone Anti-Corruption Circle conducted 10 different raid operations wherein electricity was being stolen by illegal direct connection, meter tampering, and irregular connections were also removed on the spot. According to the FIA spokesman, the raids were carried out by Anti-Corruption Circle

Peshawar, and the raiding operations were conducted in the areas of Landi Arbab sub-division Peshawar wherein electricity was being stolen by illegal direct connection, meter tampering, and irregular connections at the mentioned places. In the course of action, PESCO officials disconnected the illegal connections on the spot, and cable and other equipment used for illegal electricity supply

were also seized, FIA spokesman said. The national exchequer was losing millions of rupees due to electricity theft, FIA spokesman said. Dues of Rs. 3,13,000 were recovered from 10 consumers and 90 electricity connections were inspected in the area of Lower Pistakhara Peshawar due to over-billing, the spokesman of the FIA said. Over-billing of 15775 units was reported on 09 connections during inspection

and special raiding teams have been formed by FIA in all circles, the FIA spokesman said. FIA is tightening the cordon against the elements involved in electricity theft and the raiding teams are conducting joint operations with the concerned authorities with all resources being used to arrest the accused involved in the illegal use of electricity, the FIA Spokesman said.

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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

Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



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PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
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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



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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Ethiopia, Pakistan agree to collaborate in education sector

The meeting that took place at the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad mainly discussed the modalities to advance mutual cooperation in education sector to exchange knowledge, skills and expertise

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Thursday agreed to collaborate in diverse sectors of education including science and technology, agriculture, health and ICT. This was agreed upon during a meeting between H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of FDR Ethiopia to Pakistan, and H.E. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The meeting that took place at the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad mainly discussed the modalities to advance mutual cooperation in education sector to exchange knowledge, skills and expertise. H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker said the Government of FDR Ethiopia was keen to strengthen the already flourishing bilateral ties between the two nations through education diplomacy. "Collaboration in education sector can be instrumental for establishing long-lasting and sustainable relations between



the two countries," he said while recalling the eagerness of the Ethiopian medical experts, who studied from Pakistani universities, to visit Pakistan for helping those who were affected by flash

floods in 2022. He said a delegation from a top class university in Ethiopia had visited Pakistan in 2023 that shown there is a strong appetite in Ethiopia for establishing institution-to-institution

collaboration between the two countries. The Ambassador briefed the HEC Chairman on a plantation campaign led by the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad in collaboration with the Ministry

of Climate Change, universities, civil society and business community across Pakistan under the Green Legacy Initiative of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, for fostering fraternity between the two great nations. On the other side, the Chairman of HEC briefed the Ambassador on advancement and digitalization in education sector that included establishment of digital libraries and smart class rooms giving access to education to the millions of students in Pakistan and abroad. He assured the Ambassador of all-out support for strengthening cooperation and collaboration in education sector between Ethiopia and Pakistan. The HEC chairman also extended invitation to the Ambassador to visit the HEC Headquarters and also requested for facilitating delegations exchange between the two countries for furthering collaboration in education sector. "Let us help each other in education sector for building strong nations together for global prosperity," he remarked. He informed the Ambassador about opening of Global Engagement Department at HEC which would have a desk for Africa with special focus on Ethiopia.

AIOU extends admissions deadline for continue students

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has extended enrollment deadline of Spring Semester 2024 for continuing students of Associate degree in Arts (BA General), Associate degree in Commerce (B.Com), Associate degree in Education, BS (ODL) programs, B.Ed programs, BBA, postgraduate diplomas programs till May 30, 2024. A significant number of students who were unable to pay their admission fees for various reasons requested the university authorities for an extension in the enrolment deadline, said a press release on Thursday. In response to the requests, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood approved the extension, emphasizing that AIOU is implementing all necessary measures to support the students. The purpose of allowing students to submit their fees after the deadline is to prevent their semester from being wasted.—APP

No duty exemptions for erstwhile FATA, PATA regions

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb Thursday informed the National Assembly that there is no new legislation under consideration to extend tax and duty exemptions for the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) regions. In response to a calling attention notice regarding the proposal to withdraw tax and duty exemptions for these regions, the minister explained that these exemptions had been in place for six years and are now set to expire on June 30 of this year. The minister said that the business community, during interactions on the budget, has been advocating for a level playing field for all industries. He said that the business community is consistently requesting the removal of provincial tax treatment and concessions, seeking equitable conditions for industries across the country. Meanwhile various papers were laid before the house. These included the Report of the 1st biannual Monitoring on the Implementation of 7th NFC Award, the Mid Year Budget Review Report for the Financial Year 2023-24.—APP

Three-day SATRC meeting on PRS concludes successfully

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC) Working Group on Policy, Regulation, and Services (PRS) concluded today after three days of intensive discussions and deliberations, shedding light on pivotal aspects of the ICT regulatory landscape in South Asia. Through 10 insightful sessions, participants exchanged ideas and shared best practices, fostering a collaborative environ-

ment aimed at driving progress in the sector. Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokhar, Chair of the SATRC Working group on PRS and Member (Compliance & Enforcement), PTA, commended SATRC as a model of regulatory collaboration. He stressed upon the importance of fostering sub-regional collaboration among SATRC member countries to achieve shared goals, emphasizing the meticulous execution of identified work items and the production of comprehensive reports to guide future ac-

tions. Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman Chairman PTA, expressed his heartfelt appreciation to all the delegates and respective administrations for their unwavering dedication and collaborative efforts in advancing the objectives of the inaugural meeting of the SATRC Working Group on Policy, Regulation, and Services (PRS). The SATRC Workshop on PRS, hosted by PTA, brought together delegates from the nine SATRC member countries, along with representatives from national and international organ-

izations. ICT policy and regulatory officers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Maldives and Sri Lanka attended in-person whereas delegates from India and Nepal joined virtually. Government bodies and local industry representatives from cellular mobile companies, local loop operators and vendors also joined the meeting. The event served as a valuable platform for constructive dialogue and the exchange of ideas, paving the way for progress in the telecom/ICT sector across the region.

Textile exports reach \$13.68b in 9 months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned \$ 13,683.251 million from exports of textile products during the first ten months of the current financial year (2023-24), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported here on Thursday. The exports of the textile products however, witnessed a slight decline of 0.19 percent during July-April (2023-24) when compared to the exports of \$ 13,709.246 million during July-April (2022-23). The textile commodities that witnessed positive trade growth included raw cotton, the exports of which grew by 319.91 percent, from \$13.357 million last year to \$15.944 million this year. Likewise, the exports of cotton yarn increased by 32.83 percent, from \$ 636.832 million last year to \$845.923 million this year and bed wear by 1.82 percent, from \$ 2,249.778 million to \$ 2,290.796 million. The export of towels also surged by 4.81 percent from \$824.879 million to \$864.547 million whereas the export of made-up articles up by 0.67 percent to \$589.026 million from \$585.102 million. The textile commodities that witnessed negative growth include cotton cloth, exports of which declined by 7.53 percent, from \$ 1,684.724 million to \$ 1,557.909 million; cotton carded or combed by 15.93 percent, from \$0.996 million to \$0.837 million; yarn other than cotton yarn by 20.76 percent, from \$36.302 million to \$28.766 million, and knitwear by 3.92 percent, from \$3,712.066 million to \$3,566.624 million. Likewise, the exports of tents, canvas and tarpaulin decreased by 16.52 percent, from \$116.959 million to \$97.632 million, ready-made garments by 0.57 percent, from \$ 2,904.693 million to \$ 2,888.177 million. The exports of art, silk and synthetic textiles also decreased by 12.08 percent declining from \$342.917 million to \$301.496 million, whereas the exports of all other textile materials also went down by 0.87 percent, from \$600.642 million to \$595.432 million. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the textile exports increased by 0.37 percent going up from \$ 1,232.803 million in April 2023 to \$ 1,237.316 million in April 2024. On a month-on-month basis, the textile exports, however, decreased by 4.84 percent when compared to the exports of \$1,300.288 million in March 2024.—APP

Mobile banking on hit list of cyber scammers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky has released its annual Financial Threats Report for 2023, offering a detailed analysis of the evolving financial cyberthreat landscape. The report reveals significant increases in mobile banking malware and cryptocurrency-related phishing, signaling growing threats to digital financial assets. The previous 12 months has witnessed a substantial rise in the number of users encountering mobile banking Trojans, with attacks on Android users surging by 32% - con-

trary to 2022. While the number of users affected by financial PC malware saw an 11% decline in 2023, Ramnit and Zbot were identified as the predominant malware families, targeting more than 50% of affected users. Consumers continued to be the primary target, comprising 61.2% of all attacks. In 2023, online fraudsters continued to lure users to phishing and scam pages that mimicked the websites of popular brands and financial organizations. The attackers employed social engineering techniques to trick victims into sharing their financial data or making a payment on a fake

page. Overall, among the three major financial phishing categories, online store users (41.65%) were targeted the most, followed by banks with 38.47% and payment systems at 19.88%. The most frequently impersonated e-commerce site was Amazon, which was mimicked in more than one third (34%) of all online store phishing attempts. Apple came in second with 18.66% of fraudulent pages, followed by Netflix, with 14.71%. Financial phishing remained a significant threat, accounting for 27.32% of all phishing attacks on corporate users and 30.68% on home users.

Police carry out search operation

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Division Police here on Thursday carried out search operation in 'Dhoke Syedan' and adjoining areas in the jurisdiction of Race Course Police Station. According to a police spokesman, the search operation was conducted to maintain law and order and flush out suspects following the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani. He informed, senior police officers and police personnel including women police took part in the search operation. Police checked as many as 51 houses, 18 shops, 23 tenants and 85 individuals during the search operation. The spokesman said that police were fully prepared to shield the lives and property of the public and combing and search operations were being done to flush out the suspects and hardcore criminals. He said that police were more vigilant to keep an eye on suspects and maintain law and order in Rawalpindi.—APP

PM wants ICT free from single use plastic bag: Romina

ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Thursday said the prime minister wants Islamabad Capital Territory free from single use plastic bags under the single use plastic (prohibition) regulations 2023. She stated that plastic pollution was the biggest

threat for our generations to come. She remarked this in a meeting with Ivonne Julitta Bollon, Senior Vice President of Metro AG (Global), a news release said. Ivonne Julitta Bollon apprised the PM's coordinator that Metro has completely banned the single use plastic or polythene bags respecting the prohibition regulations,

during their sale and purchase operations. The PM's Coordinator said that on the direction of the prime minister, letters for strict implementation and execution on plastic bans had been sent to all the provinces. Both sides also discussed to hold an expo of the products made up of recycling techniques.—APP



Experts call for advancing light based technologies

ISLAMABAD: Experts on Thursday stressed the need to recognize the significance of light and light-based technologies in transforming society and daily life. On the occasion of International Day of Light, observed globally on May 16, they highlighted the importance of light in advancing medicine, communications, science, and sustainable development. Dr. Kashif Sabeeh, a physicist, at Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad emphasized that "Light and Life are Inseparable" It is crucial for life, and its significance is often overlooked. He noted that the study of light has led to numerous breakthroughs in various fields, transforming our understanding of the universe. Dr. Inayatullah Khan, an optics expert, stated that light-based technologies have revolutionized various fields, including medicine, communications, and sustainable development. Khan emphasized the importance of continued research and innovation in these areas. The International Day of Light promotes scientific cooperation and collaboration to harness the potential of science for peace and sustainable development, said Dr. Ghaffar Ali, a scientist at Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences. "It is a celebration of human ingenuity and the power of science to transform lives," Ali remarked. The International Day of Light is celebrated globally, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to acknowledge the significance of light in their lives.—DNA

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Briefs

20 drug peddlers, bootleggers netted

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Thursday arrested 20 accused besides recovering over 2.5 kg charras, 93 liters and 25 bottles liquor, a 9mm pistol, four 30 bore pistols, ammunition and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Race Course police held a drug peddler for having 1400 grams charras. Civil Lines police recovered 520 grams charras from Rohail and two other accused namely Muhammad Furqan and Sarfraz were sent behind the bars on recovery of 10 liters liquor. Naseerabad police netted Iqbal alias Bala with 400 grams charras and Frabeem for carrying 10 liters liquor. Rawat police apprehended Numan for possessing 260 grams charras. Bani, Gujjar Khan, Kahuta, Saddar Wah, City and New Town police arrested Faisal, Ibrar, Zeeshan, Bilal, Aqib, Sardar Ali and Mohsin and recovered 25 liquor bottles, 73 liters liquor.—APP

E-stamp papers on cards

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad capital administration is set to launch e-stamp papers, a digital solution aimed at streamlining property and legal transactions. Deputy Commissioner, Irfan Nawaz Memon, talking to a private news channel said the Islamabad administration and Punjab Bank representatives discussed the implementation of e-stamping, which promises to enhance security, transparency, and efficiency. He said E-stamp papers will utilize barcode technology, making them tamper-proof and easily verifiable. This innovation, he said was expected to minimize fraud, reduce paperwork, and simplify administrative processes for both the government and the public. The administration, Memon noted has planned to provide comprehensive training and awareness campaigns to ensure a smooth transition to the new system.—APP

Naran reopens for tourists

ISLAMABAD: The district administration Thursday has given the green signal for locals and visitors to travel to Naran, a popular tourist destination, after months of inaccessibility due to snow and rubble. Deputy Commissioner Adnan Khan Bhattani told a private news channel that efforts are underway to clear the Mansehra-Naran-Jalkhad (MNJ) road, which had been blocked since November. He said the goal is to restore MNJ road for transportation between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan within a week. Bhattani noted that heavy landslides in the Ghanool area have been cleared, and machines are working to clear the road to Saiful Muluk Lake, with tourists expected to have access in the coming days. The administration, he stated has also assured foolproof security measures, including operational police posts from Kaghan to Babusar Top, to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors.—APP

IRSA refutes news item

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday refuted a news item published in daily 'Koshish' Hyderabad and clarified that it based on misinformation. "The contents especially, describing Member IRSA Sindh to have consented the opening of Flood Canal and did not oppose the water supply to Punjab through TP Link Canal are concocted and groundless," said a statement issued here. IRSA denies such irresponsible reporting and put forward decisions taken unanimously in its meeting held on May 13, it further said. The decisions included, the water level at Tarbela dam shall be maintained at 1470 feet until June 30 while closely monitoring the water situation, instead of July 20, after which IRSA will be free to fill the dam as per the criteria. However, WAPDA shall make efforts to fill the dam upto 1475 feet in next 10 days.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Dance performance during SUFI & FOLK NIGHT under the auspices of a Welfare Trust in collaboration with LOK VIRSA at Shakkar Parian in the Federal Capital.—ONLINE

NUST, Punjab University win debating championship

A total of 24 teams – 12 Urdu and English each – took part in the national and final round of the Championship organised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan at the Commission Secretariat in Islamabad

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: University of the Punjab (PU), Lahore and National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad have respectively won the national rounds of Urdu and English debate contests of the Pakistan Universities Debating Championship 2023-24. Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed was chief guest in the prize distribution ceremony. Acting Executive Director HEC Mr. Awais Ahmad, vice chancellors, faculty members and students were present on the occasion. A total of 24 teams – 12 Urdu and English each – took part in the national and final round of the Championship organised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan at the Commission Secretariat in Islamabad. This round was preceded by regional rounds

held earlier in five regions of the country, including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and ICT/AJK/Gilgit-Baltistan. The Championship winners were awarded cash prizes worth Rs. 200,000 for the first position holders, Rs. 150,000 and Rs. 100,000 for second and third positions, respectively. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed congratulated the contestants and asserted that winning and losing is part of the game. He emphasised the significance of accepting the viewpoint of opponents in a dignified manner. He affirmed that Pakistan is a blessed country having a plethora of natural resources and talented youth. He termed the youth the future of Pakistan and pinned hopes on them about uplifting the socio-economic situation of the country and steering it country out of challenging circumstances. Dr. Mukhtar un-

derlined the important role of parents and teachers in education as well as character-building of youth. "Every individual must play his or her part in the development of this blessed country," he stressed. He said Pakistan is the real identity of this nation. "Unless people forge unity and become a nation in a real sense, no country can take the path of progress and prosperity," he concluded. In the Urdu debate, University of Balochistan, Quetta, secured the second position, followed by Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS), Jamshoro. University of Balochistan, Quetta, clinched the second position in English contest too, while the third position was obtained by the Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET), Jamshoro. The chief judges of Urdu and English debate contests, Dr. Wasima Shehzad, Dean De-

partment of English at Air University, and Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Director General, Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar, also addressed the students. They appreciated the sagacity demonstrated in the selection of topics for the championship that pertained to the pressing issues of the nation. They agreed that the research, argumentations, eloquence, and fluency shown in the words showcased by the debaters was phenomenal. They said it was a matter of pride for them to have witnessed harmony and tolerance during the contests. In his opening remarks earlier, Adviser (Academics) HEC, Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan said that this competition is a platform provided to the university students to exchange ideas and build different perspectives about various issues and topics. He informed

the audience that HEC started this competition back in 2002 as a speech competition among university students, however, it was turned into a debating activity almost a few years ago. The Adviser emphasised that co-curricular and extracurricular activities at educational institutions have a major role in the development of well-rounded personalities who play a vital role in the socio-economic development of a country. He said these activities encourage dialogues which are pivotal to promote tolerance, non-violence, and peaceful co-existence. The contestants, he noted, forge their conviction and prowess to convince judges and to enlighten the audience with their arguments. He said that these activities not only unleash the potential of students but also help them become good professionals and human beings.

Transporters asked to reduce fares

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema has directed transporters to bring down fares by 5 per cent on all routes in Rawalpindi after the latest reduction in petroleum products. Chairing a meeting of the transporters and bus stand owners, the DC reviewed the reduction of the fares after drop of petroleum products and the cleanliness of the bus stands. The list of the fares should be displayed at prominent places at all bus stands, he directed. A special squad should be formed to check the fares daily to implement the reduction in fares, he said adding, the banners should be displayed at bus stands and Suzuki stops to provide awareness to the public regarding the reduction in the fares. A complaint cell should also be established in the office of the Secretary Regional Transport Authority (RTA) to register complaints regarding fares, he directed. DC instructed that a special attention should be paid to the cleanliness at the bus stands. Hasan Waqar Cheema said that on the directives of the Punjab government, certificates would be issued to the management of the bus stands for good cleanliness arrangements at the bus stands. Secretary RTA Rashid Mahmood on the occasion said that the citizens could register their complaints on number, 051-9270011.—APP

Traffic volunteer students visits Safe City

ISLAMABAD: The student volunteers of Iqra University on Thursday visited the Safe City Islamabad and SSP Operations office under the "Friend of Police Program" and met with the senior police officers. A public relations officer said that in response to the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the SSP Operations Division and SSP Safe City welcomed the student delegation of Traffic Police volunteer at Safe City and Operation division and briefed them about operational police work, a public relations officer said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr Faisal Karim Kundi, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr:—DNA

'Corrupt IPPs' are hindering economic development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Thursday that economic development will remain a pipedream in the presence of Independent Power Producers (IPPs). He added that the controversial agreements made with IPPs make it impossible to make electricity affordable or provide relief to the people. According to Dr. Hanif Mughal, paying these power plants in US dollars and capacity payments has not only helped them earn billions of dollars but has also severely

damaged the economy. All major political parties are complicit in this crime, and all governments provide full protection because their ministers are IPP owners. He said that whenever the looting of IPPs is proven and a decision is made regarding recovery, they are given safe passage by invisible hands. The highly controversial deals not only ensured incredible profits for crooked businesses but also ruthlessly looted the country's resources and deceived the public about the ownership of IPPs. The owners of many IPPs are not foreign investors but important leaders of Pakistan's major political parties. They have imposed such a burden on the whole nation because of their illegitimate profit, which has destroyed the economy and earned billions of dollars in the process. The political elite that benefited from this scam often protested against this corruption to deceive the masses. Secret contracts were signed with IPPs for commissions and kickbacks, and long-term contracts were preferred over short-term deals to enrich themselves, leaving Pakistan deeply entrenched. IPPs are the primary cause of unjustified electricity costs. Inflated invoices from IPPs have burdened

consumers, and it is crucial to address the issue to overcome the electricity crisis effectively. Now, after national defence and debt repayment, payments to the IPPs are the top expenditure, while circular debt credit is increasing rapidly, proving that the IPP experiment has turned into a nightmare of inflated and seemingly insurmountable bills for the masses. These agreements allow the elites to have billions while the masses bear the brunt of this corruption. He observed that no one would have dared to strike such deals if the country had a working accountability system.

No further delay in completion of blue area parking plaza

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa Thursday said that no further delay will be tolerated in completing Blue Area Parking Plaza project and its deadline not to be further extended. During a visit to the Blue Area Parking Plaza, the CDA chief directed to complete the development work as soon as possible that will address the parking problems being faced by the residents and business community.—DNA

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Politics of outer space

WILL the moon or space be a victim of a nuclear attack before Earth? This is a question that is being asked following Russia's veto last month of a UN resolution aimed at preventing a nuclear arms race in outer space. Sponsored by the US and Japan, the resolution called for nations to refrain from developing or deploying nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in space, which are already prohibited under a 1967 treaty. US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield questioned Russia's motives, stating that, if it was abiding by the rules, it should support the resolution. Last week, the US expressed concern over a Russian satellite named Cosmos 2543, which has been an ongoing worry over the past few years. Russia claims that the satellite is for testing electronics, yet its unusual orbit and elevated radiation levels have raised suspicions. US officials worry that Cosmos 2543 could be part of Russia's efforts to create a nuclear weapon for space, potentially targeting satellites and disrupting communication, navigation and surveillance systems. As of now, this capability remains undeployed and there is no immediate threat. However, the situation warrants continued monitoring and analysis to fully understand Russia's intentions and capabilities in terms of space weaponry. Increasing Western fear is the fact that, in August 2022, only six months after a catastrophic start for Moscow in the Ukraine war, Russia conducted an antisatellite test. This involved launching a missile that successfully destroyed one of its satellites. It was significant because it was Russia's first official intercept using its current antisatellite system, known as Nudol. Notably, the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 prohibits nuclear weapons tests "or any other nuclear explosion" in the atmosphere, outer space and underwater. Other agreements followed and, over the decades, the US and Russia signed various arms control agreements to manage their rivalry and limit the risk of nuclear war. This led to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987, which allowed for the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe. Although the Limited Test Ban Treaty did not have much effect, it aimed to end the contamination of the environment with radioactive substances and was a significant step in arms control during the Cold War. And so, this raises the question of why many of these agreements are no longer in effect. Moreover, why is this all happening in space now? Why is there tension rising in outer space as much as on Earth? There are several answers. First, during the Cold War, space superiority symbolized the superiority of each side ideologically and technologically. Today, satellites and space are key components of the defense and security of nations. Secondly, the development of commercial activities in space with dual-use capabilities has changed the dynamic and important interests that space represents in the economy. Imagine the destruction of global navigation satellite system satellites such as GPS – the economic loss would be in the trillions. Moreover, it could disrupt utility sites, leading to catastrophic events. A last determining factor is the moon and what it represents for the future of the space economy. The renewed interest in lunar exploration and clear plans for settlements have sparked intense competition between countries and organizations.

Palestine's case for full UN membership

IT FIND it rather difficult to make it clear to my children why we are not eligible, for from one point of view it isn't quite clear to me," wrote an anonymous individual in "The Jew and the Club" published in The Atlantic, October 1924. Such quotations must surely make certain ethnic and religious groups reflect, notably those languishing in minority status for decades, if not centuries. There was a time when the homes for rent in London had notices in their windows saying caustically, "No coloreds" or "No West Indians". Oxbridge bursaries and scholarships, in all their variety, reveal a tapestry of personal prejudice and lively bigotry. In terms of recreational clubs, the east coast, moneyed establishment in the United States prided itself on keeping Jews out of their membership circles, notably in such mind-destroying facilities as golf and country clubs. The wall was impervious, idiotic, resistant. The United Nations is yet another, albeit larger, club, and it functions on similar principles. Do you have the right credentials to matter, moan and partake in the body's constituent parts? Do you satisfy the seemingly elementary criteria proposed in the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States? These are: a permanent population, a defined territory, an identifiable government and a capacity to enter into relations with other states. Meeting that threshold, the assumption of recognized statehood and UN membership, should be a matter of minor controversy. What is not mentioned in the UN Charter is the political dimension that boils beneath the text: states who are refused admission, let alone recognition, on grounds either petty or substantial. All clubs, it follows, are institutions oiled by the tenacity of small minds and rarely troubled by actual principles. For Palestinians, the still incomplete road to recognition, let alone UN membership, has been particularly potholed. In November 1988, the Palestine National Council, the legislative wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization, declared the existence of the State of Palestine. In 2011, an application was made for admission to the United Nations. The application has been challenged all the way. Israel, having taken Palestinian land, guards the door to UN admission with zeal, and is confident, for the most part, that a viable Palestinian state will never come into being. On 10 May, the UN General Assembly resolved by 143 votes in favor, nine against, including the drearily predictable US and Israel, and with 25 abstentions, to sanitize the Palestinian application to become a member of the club. The significantly diluted resolution throbbed with enormous condescension, more a nod and a wink than anything significant. The summary from the UN does little to dispel this assumption, suggesting an "upgrade" to "the rights of the State of Palestine within the world body, but not the right to vote or put forward its candidature to such organs as the Security Council or the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)." The General Assembly merely found Palestine to be a suitable candidate for full membership, and recommended that the Security Council should "reconsider the matter favorably".



Dubai Leaks: Will everyone get away?

Qamar Bashir



The parliament and the executive often collaborate to introduce Tax amnesty schemes. They declare previously undisclosed assets or income, often attributing them to gifts received from friends, relatives, or loyal party supporters. Through paying nominal taxes, which are often a fraction of the true value of their assets, they effectively launder their illegal wealth freely, use or invest it without fear of legal repercussions

THE politicians, parliamentarians, and members of both civil and military bureaucracy create a formidable force to shield one another from the fallout of leaks like Wikileaks, the Panama Papers, or revelations concerning Dubai properties. This network safeguards those in positions of power through compliant Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and rubber nose accountability bodies to minimize or completely neutralize the adverse effects of such leaks. Notwithstanding the fact that serious concerns about the origins of these funds and potential illicit practices such as corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion not only undermine the integrity of financial systems but also deprive the government of essential revenue needed for public services and infrastructure.

Drawing from my experience of working as Deputy Commissioner Income Tax for more than ten years (1994-2005) I can tell with certainty that the entire accountability framework, including the FBR, would already have started rectifying the gaps in the income tax and wealth tax records of prominent Pakistani figures including three children of President Asif Ali Zardari, Hussain Nawaz Sharif, the spouse of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Sharjeel Memon, Senator Faisal Vawda, Farah Gogi, Sher Afzal Marwat, several members of the Sindh and Balochistan assemblies, the late Gen Pervez Musharraf, former Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, over a dozen retired generals, as well as a police chief, an ambassador, and a scientist. I can also assert with certainty that tax authorities across Pakistan will be diligently examining the records of individuals beyond politicians and civil and military bureaucracies to determine if the properties leaked were declared, undeclared, or undervalued. Taxpayers and their lawyers have likely already been summoned to negotiate the cost of rectifying their records, a process that benefits themselves, their legal representatives, and the tax officials, ensuring that not a single penny goes to the government exchequer. For those individuals whose wealth statements are available in the public domain and who either failed to declare the mentioned properties or undervalued them, they and their income tax lawyers are likely scrambling to initiate damage control measures. The properties worth \$11 billion in Dubai starkly contrasts with the economic realities facing the nation. With

foreign exchange reserves far below this figure and a significant portion of the population living below the poverty line, this vast wealth disparity underscores systemic challenges in income distribution, governance, and economic development. In a country where over 40% of the populace struggles amidst inflation rates exceeding 35%, the concentration of such immense wealth abroad not only widens the gap between the rich and the poor but also exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities, hindering efforts to uplift marginalized communities and foster inclusive growth. The \$11 billion worth of leaked properties is merely the tip of the iceberg. Countless other properties have been discreetly acquired and stashed away in various countries worldwide, potentially totaling billions upon billions of dollars. This rampant acquisition of assets abroad significantly contributes to the impoverishment of our nation. It's a stark representation of the systemic corruption and greed that plagues our society, draining resources that should be invested in uplifting our people and developing our nation. As a senior civil servant who retired as the Press Secretary to the President in BS 21, I can attest to the fact that throughout their entire service, whether civilian or military, any bureaucrat can only afford a modest house and a middle-class car with their legal income. Similarly, my experience as Director General of the Minister's Office for four Federal Ministers confirms that politicians can barely sustain their household expenses with their legitimate earnings, let alone accumulate significant assets. Any wealth beyond these modest means is likely obtained through illicit means or illegal sources of income as civil and public servants are prohibited from engaging in business activities during their service. How they launder black money through an intricate web of financial transactions is intriguing. The illicit funds are injected into the financial system through depositing cash into third-party bank accounts, acquiring high-value assets, or establishing shell companies. These funds undergo a series of transactions to obscure their origins, including transfers between accounts, investments across different markets, and international wire transfers through multiple jurisdictions. Subsequently, laundered funds are reintroduced into the economy disguised as legitimate assets, often through the sale of initially purchased high-value

assets at deflated prices followed by reinvestment in legitimate businesses or the acquisition of real estate and other valuable assets. Moreover, politicians and civil servants frequently exploit their positions of authority and leverage legislative influence to create loopholes or favorable conditions for concealing illicit wealth. They may also utilize personal connections and influence to access offshore banking systems or establish intricate corporate structures, further complicating the tracing of asset ownership.

The parliament and the executive often collaborate to introduce Tax amnesty schemes. They declare previously undisclosed assets or income, often attributing them to gifts received from friends, relatives, or loyal party supporters. Through paying nominal taxes, which are often a fraction of the true value of their assets, they effectively launder their illegal wealth freely, use or invest it without fear of legal repercussions. Let us create a hypothetical scenario that individuals implicated in illegal asset acquisition were US citizens. They could have faced various legal ramifications under U.S. law. This includes potential charges for money laundering, stemming from transactions involving proceeds of corruption or bribery. This would have led to hefty fines and lengthy imprisonment upon conviction on two accounts, failing to report income or assets gained through illicit means, subjecting them to IRS prosecution and civil penalties and violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) carrying fines and imprisonment and forfeiture to seize properties and assets acquired illegally.

Let us create another hypothetical scenario in which the politicians, bureaucrats, civil and military implicated in the Dubai leaks were US citizens and had acquired assets as gifts from friends, supporters or well wishers. They could face charges of bribery targeting both the giver and recipient for exchanging something of value for official favors. They could face honest services fraud charges for compromising their public duties. Failure to disclose the gift or avoid decisions benefiting the giver could lead to conflict of interest violations requiring to forfeit the gift, facing civil penalties and reputational damage with added consequences of legal risks, potentially tarnishing careers and undermining public trust. But we all know with certainty that in Pakistan everyone will get away.

The new 'Jim Crow' in the US

Alex Lo

Violation of human rights? Genocide? Censorship? Challenge to the rules-based international order? Forced labour? Arbitrary detention and torture of political prisoners? If you delete "China" and "Chinese" in the text, the CECC could just have been talking about the United States and its closest ally, Israel. It would be far more accurate. It will take too much column space to work through all the above allegations, so I will just focus on forced labour. It's that old chestnut, "the Chinese Communist Party and government's use of forced labour to suppress ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region", according to the CECC report

ANOTHER year, another propaganda report from the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). It's getting to be the same allegations, year after year, with scant evidence and much exaggeration. In a statement releasing the report, it declares: "The annual report reflects the view ... that the failure of the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to fulfil its obligations under international treaties, along with its systematic violation of human rights, pose a challenge to the rules-based international order and to the safety and security of US citizens and residents." These challenges require robust efforts by the US and its allies to address genocide; stanch the import of forced labour-made goods; circumvent censorship of the free flow of news and information; stop malign influence operations targeting US citizens and their families; and shine a light on the arbitrary detention and torture of political prisoners in China and Hong Kong." Violation of human rights? Genocide? Censorship? Challenge to the rules-based international order? Forced labour? Arbitrary detention and torture of political prisoners? If you delete "China" and "Chinese" in the text, the CECC could just have been talking about the United States and its closest ally, Israel. It would be far more accurate. It will take too much column space to work through all the above allegations, so I will just focus on forced labour. It's that old chestnut, "the Chinese Communist Party and government's use of forced labour to suppress ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region", according to the CECC report. "Reports of state-sponsored forced labour implicate supply chains of industries and products including automobile manufacturing, red dates, and cotton and the garment industry," it says. It's not clear from the report which segments of Chinese automobile manufacturing it is referring to. Most likely, it is about a production plant that is jointly run by Volkswagen (VW) and Shanghai-based SAIC Motor in Urumqi. About 50 Uygur employees have been found to work there. It's possible that they are all slave labourers. More likely though, most are given more responsible jobs with higher pay than the average Uygur workforce across the region. A US House of Representatives' select committee on competition with China has urged VW "to cease operations in Xinjiang, where it maintains a factory with a joint venture backed by the Chinese government". Suppose they did shut down the plant and those 50 Uygurs lost their decent jobs, should they thank the Americans for their concern and compassion? Meanwhile, it's tainted Xinjiang cotton all over again! However, about 80 per cent of cotton production in Xinjiang has been mechanised. The manufacturing pro-

cess in garment factories has been automated through 5G and artificial intelligence. Cotton spinning was fully automated even before the American sanctions. Adrian Zenz, the German researcher who first claimed genocide with spurious evidence, when asked about mechanised harvesting in Xinjiang, resorted to claiming that quality cotton, which could command a premium price, still needed to be hand-picked. That high-end segment of the market accounts for 5 to 10 per cent of total cotton production in Xinjiang. Assuming every single Uygur harvester working in that segment has been a slave labourer, there still would not have been too many of them, and only for a short time given the seasonal nature of the harvesting. But if they need to do their job with extra care and skill, you might think they would be treated somewhat differently than unskilled slaves. Ironically, at present, a group of current and former prisoners, all of them black, are suing the state of Alabama, by arguing that its system of prison labour amounts to a "modern-day form of slavery" with near-zero pay. The lawsuit covers the state governor, the attorney general, as well as multiple cities and companies including Hyundai supplier Ju-Young and franchisees of KFC, McDonald's, and Wendy's that have allegedly benefited from using forced prison labour. Alabama may be more extreme, but it is not alone. According to a 2022 study by the American Civil Liberties Union and the University of Chicago, about 800,000 incarcerated workers across the US perform roughly US\$10 billion worth of work a year, more than US\$2 billion of it for clients outside the prison system. According to the lawsuit, as reported by The New York Times in December: "the system effectively resurrects Alabama's notorious practice of 'convict leasing', in which black labourers, from 1875 until 1928, were forced to work for private companies, who in turn paid substantial fees to state and county governments. "Since 2018, about 575 companies and more than 100 public agencies in Alabama have used incarcerated people as landscapers, janitors, drivers, metal fabricators and fast-food workers, the lawsuit states, reaping an annual benefit of US\$450 million." Are you kidding? How can this be in "the world's greatest democracy"? Slavery may have been abolished in the US but prison labour under near-slavery conditions is allowed under the US Constitution. Seriously. The 13th Amendment has outlawed slavery and "involuntary servitude", "except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction". Americans are usually proud of the 13th Amendment, the outcome of a civil war that their ancestors spilled blood over. Many of

them, it seems, are unaware of the "exception" clause in the amendment. Of course, practically all other Western societies managed to abolish slavery civilly without resorting to the kind of extreme violence that characterises a civil war. Perhaps civil agreement is more commendable and a sign of rationality and civilisation rather than the savagery of civil war. In any case, "Jim Crow" refers to a system, like apartheid, that legally and informally repressed, punished and discriminated against blacks after the civil war.

One of its most potent symbols, the chain gangs, still exist in some US prisons, including ones for female inmates. Blacks make up 13 per cent of the US population but 38 per cent of the people in jails and prisons. America, of course, locks up more of its citizens than any other country, whether democratic or authoritarian.

In a groundbreaking book, legal scholar Michelle Alexander calls such practices part of "the new Jim Crow", under which discrimination can be camouflaged in employment, housing, banking, borrowing – such as getting a mortgage – education, social welfare, voting, and the legal system. Punitive and legally sanctioned violence include police brutality and presumption of guilt among judges, juries and prosecutors. Prison slave labour is just one particularly nasty outcome out of many from the new Jim Crow. There are websites that sell goods and products made by prisoners including furniture that costs thousands of US dollars. Many end up working for some of America's biggest corporate names or their contractors. According to a January report by the Associated Press, "prisoners in the US are part of a hidden workforce linked to hundreds of popular food brands". Companies named in the AP report include: McDonald's, Walmart and Cargill, and the companies that produce Frosted Flakes cereal, Ball Park hot dogs, Gold Medal flour, Coca-Cola and Riceland rice. American companies have real incentives to use prison labour. The AP report says: "In addition to tapping a cheap, reliable workforce, companies sometimes get tax credits and other financial incentives. Incarcerated workers also typically aren't covered by the most basic protections, including workers' compensation and federal safety standards. "In many cases, they cannot file official complaints about poor working conditions. These prisoners often work in industries with severe labour shortages, doing some of the country's dirtiest and most dangerous jobs." And here's the great irony of Washington's defence of human and labour rights against other countries, such as China. "Some [prison] goods are exported, including to countries that have had products blocked from entering the US for using forced or prison labour," the AP report says. Maybe the US should sanction itself, or China should sanction it.

Briefs

PM Shehbaz stresses permanent...

FROM PAGE 01
Kashmir Affairs Amir Muqam would discuss the matter with the Kashmiri leadership to formulate short, medium and long-term solutions. The prime minister appreciated President Asif Ali Zardari, Kashmir Affairs Minister Amir Muqam, AJK PM, Speaker of AJK Legislative Assembly, AJK Chief Secretary and IG Police for their constructive role and effective consultation to find an immediate solution to the people's demands.

Chinese Fin Min...

FROM PAGE 01
prioritisation of Chinese investments by the government in various fields including agriculture, IT, mines and minerals and renewable energy. A day earlier, FM Dar — who reached Beijing on May 13 to co-chair the 5th Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue — met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi wherein the latter voiced Beijing's readiness to promote an "upgraded version" of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). During the meeting, the duo agreed to sustain the growing momentum of bilateral relations in all areas of cooperation and to further deepen the iron-clad friendship.

Arab League calls for...

FROM PAGE 01
The "Manama Declaration" issued by the 22-member bloc called for "international protection and peace-keeping forces of the United Nations in the occupied Palestinian territories" until a two-state solution is implemented. During his opening remarks at the summit, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman called for the establishment of an internationally recognized Palestinian state. The prince was among the Arab delegates who arrived in Manama on Thursday for the Arab League Summit.

Humanitarian crisis...

FROM PAGE 01
1948 in a terrible legal crime against humanity, the Nakba is being renewed once again by the same Israeli criminal gangs through the ongoing genocidal war on Gaza, leading to a new catastrophe against humanity, morals, and values." "After the passage of 76 years since the Palestinian Nakba, our Palestinian people are still suffering from killing and genocide as we are marking the 22nd day of the Israeli genocidal war waged on civilians in the Strip with the support of the US administration, Britain, Germany, France, and other countries allied with the Israeli occupation. We charge them all fully responsible for this crime," Al-Thawabta added.

Imran Khan appears...

FROM PAGE 01
against the NAB amendments struck down by the apex court. The hearing of the case was not live streamed. Earlier today, on the orders of the Supreme Court, arrangements were completed at the Adiala Jail for the appearance of PTI founder, Geo News reported citing jail sources. The sources said the Adiala jail administration had apprised the PTI founder about his appearance through video link. The staff of the top court and jail authorities did a trial run of the video link before Khan's appearance, they added.

SC 'takes suo moto...

FROM PAGE 01
independent Senator Faisal Vawda's hard-hitting press conference against Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges. Vawda on Wednesday blasted the IHC judges over their letter alleging meddling by spy agencies in judicial affairs, saying that targeting of institutions should stop.

PM orders policy on financial Security, jobs for sportsmen

The prime minister lauded the outstanding performance of the national hockey team, terming it a step to revive the glory of national sport



OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed formulation of a policy to employ athletes through departments to ensure their financial security and promote sports in the country. He tasked Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood to personally oversee the policy and ensure its implementation within one week. The prime minister was addressing an event held to celebrate the achievement of Pakistan hockey team that recently won silver medal in the final of 30th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2024 in Malaysia. PM Sharif said jobs for athletes would free them from the struggles of earning livelihood, thus helping them to focus on their sports. He lauded the outstanding performance of the national

hockey team, terming it a step to revive the glory of national sport. He said the hockey team had won the hearts of the entire nation, adding that winning or losing was part of the game. "The way you came up with a challenging and competing spirit in the final shows a high potential of several victories in future," he told the hockey team as Pakistan made it to the final of Azlan Shah Cup after 13 years. PM Sharif said the government was taking steps to promote sports in the country with a special focus on hockey. The renewed interest in hockey throughout Pakistan signalled a promising trend for future, he added. "The days are not far when the glory of hockey will be revived in Pakistan and we will have more legends like Islahuddin, Samiullah and Shahbaz," he said. He appreciated the hard work of team, coaches and officials of sports board.

He announced to soon invite the relevant officials from sports board to discuss ways for the revival of hockey in the country. The prime minister gave away cheques to the players of hockey team as a token of appreciation. Captain of national hockey team AmmadShakil Butt expressed his passion to keep up the spirit of his team and bring more laurels to the country. Hockey legends including 'Flying horse' Samiullah, Olympian Islahuddin and Shahbaz Ahmed on the occasion lauded the keen interest of PM Shehbaz Sharif for the promotion of national sport in the country. After concluding his speech, PM Shehbaz tongue-in-cheek said he once had been afflicted 'injury' by Shafaat so when he saw him in the event he thought he was in trouble. The stand-up comedian is famous for mimicking politicians and his videos performing mimicry have gone viral on social me-

dia. The PM invited the celebrated comic on stage to crack some joke or perform a mimicry set. Following which, Shafaat took the stage, but said it was difficult for him to mimic the premier live as he stood before him. The prime minister, however, said there was no problem and that the comedian could repeat the joke he had earlier made on him. Shafaat mesmerised the audience by his talent, as he not only matched Shehbaz's voice but also imitated the same gestures as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader does. In the PM's voice, the comedian told Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood that if the hockey players were not appointed in various public departments in a week then he would hold a meeting with Rana on another topic, as he would never speak to him again on sports at least. Upon which, the hall burst out laughing.

Lawyers support demand to raise minimum age of marriage of girls

DNA

RAWALPINDI: In an awareness-raising session organized by PODA in the hall of the District Bar Association Rawalpindi, participants unanimously supported the legal amendment to raise the minimum age of marriage for girls in Punjab to 18 years. The session took place in the Sardar Ishaq Khan Hall of the district bar on Thursday. PODA is implementing a three-year project titled "Reduce Early Marriages to Enhance Gender Equality" in 41 districts of the Punjab province, funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Islamabad. The project focuses on advocating for legal amendments while lobbying with legislators and government departments such as health, education and population welfare departments, lady

health workers, nikahkhanwan, nikah registrars, and conducting awareness-raising activities. These activities engage government departments, community leaders, lawyers, media organizations, individuals, girls, mothers, teachers, doctors, and religious communities to ensure the dissemination of reproductive health-related information and improve services in local communities. Member Provincial Assembly, Nargis Faiz Malik, graced the occasion and assured her full support for the legal demand to raise the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years. She pledged to share the session's outcome with the assembly. PODA legal advisor, Khawaja Zahid Nasim Advocate, also emphasized the need to enhance and strengthen the roles of nikahkhanwan and nikah registrars to end child marriages.

Hifza Bukhari, former finance secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association, said in her keynote address that the current environment is favorable for the government to lead the amendment to protect the rights of young girls by raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years. This would enable them to pursue education and careers and participate equally in the development and progress of the country as Pakistani citizens. The participants of the session also recommended making CNIC mandatory for marriage and adopting standard practices for online marriage-related registration to reduce the incidence of child marriage in the country. PODA awarded shields of honor to Nargis Faiz Malik and the District Bar Association, Rawalpindi, which was received by a group of young lawyers.



Pakistan to be fully changed if...

FROM PAGE 01
Nawaz had been insisting on working for masses' welfare. She asked the gathering not allow halting the process yet again and said Pakistan and Punjab would be completed changed if the current government completed the five-year term, as she described herself and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as elder Sharif's soldier. "Your tomatoes, onions and potatoes are my responsibility" unlike a person who remained in government, said the chief minister unlike a person who remained in government — an obvious reference to the PTI founding chairman who had famously stated during his stint in government that monitoring tomato and onion prices wasn't his responsibility as a prime minister.

Pesco agrees to reduce...

FROM PAGE 01
reducing loadshedding from 22 hours to 18 hours and 18 hours to 14 hours. The Chief Minister had given a deadline to the federal government to address the issue, warning that he would take over the grid station if the problem persisted. However, after Pesco's assurances, the matter has been resolved, and a new schedule will be implemented soon. After the agreement, Ali Amin Gandapur emphasized that the provincial government is willing to work with the federal government to resolve electricity-related issues but stressed that immediate relief for the people of KP is essential.

Murray through to next round on injury return

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Andy Murray progressed to the second round of an ATP Challenger event in Bordeaux after opponent Kyrian Jacquet retired at the start of the second set. Murray was leading 7-5 2-0 when Frenchman Jacquet, the world number 219, decided he could not continue. The Briton was making his comeback from ruptured ankle ligaments suffered at the Miami Open in March. "I thought I did quite well," said Murray after the win. "Coming back from injury, I guess it's not easy. My ankle feels really good. It was quite a big injury, but the recovery was much better than what me and my team expected. I worked really, really hard on the rehab. I trained it every day from when I got back from Miami to try to come back as quickly as possible. I'm happy with how it's all going. Let's see, hopefully I can keep going." Despite the disappointment of an early finish, the crowd in Bordeaux treated Murray to a rendition of 'Happy Birthday' at the end of the match on his 37th birthday. He will play Gregoire Barrere in the next round after the Frenchman beat Spain's Albert Ramos-Vinolas 7-6 6-2. Murray opted not to have surgery on the ankle injury to reduce recovery time with hopes of playing at the French Open, Wimbledon and the Paris Olympics this summer.

Pakistan's T20 World Cup 2024 squad update

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is in a tight spot as it looks to finalise its 15-member squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024, Geo News reported citing sources on Thursday. The PCB will announce the squad after first match of the T20I series against England on May 22 as the International Cricket Council (ICC) has set deadline of May 25 for announcing a 15-member World Cup squad. It should be noted that Haris Rauf, Usman Khan and Salman Ali Agha did not get a chance to play in Ireland. While, Hasan Ali, who was added to the team as Rauf's backup, played one match during the Ireland series. The sources said Rauf would have to prove his 100 percent fitness in the coming days ahead of the World Cup. Whereas, Usman, Salman, Hasan are expected to be incorporated in the squad as travelling reserves. Pakistan are in Group A of the World Cup alongside arch-rivals India, Ireland, Canada and the USA. The national side will play their first T20 World Cup match on June 6 against the USA in Dallas. While, the most anticipated clash of titans between Pakistan and India will take place on June 9 (Sunday) in New York.

3 heat waves likely to...

FROM PAGE 01
May 15 and 30, as the mercury in those cities might touch 40 °C and the heat could be felt even more. According to the NDMA, the second heatwave is expected to last for four to five days in late May or early June wherein the temperature might rise up to 45 °C. The third heatwave is expected during the first 10 days of June, this heatwave will affect Tharparkar, Umkhot, Sanghar, Badin and Khairpur, it added. Punjab's Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on May 8 has warned of an increased temperature resulting in a heatwave in the province. As per the PDMA, the mercury was expected to soar by three to five °C from May 8 to 10.

IHC orders recovery...

FROM PAGE 01
Shah's wife, who went missing two days ago. Lawyers Iman Mazari and Hadi Ali Chatha represented the petitioner. SSP Operations Jameel Zafar was also present on the occasion. During the hearing, the government lawyer stated that a special investigation team has been formed and efforts are ongoing for Shah's recovery. SSP Zafar said that he met Shah's wife, saying that the poet was apparently taken from outside his home, but the vehicle's number plates were unreadable due to darkness. He said that efforts to trace the vehicles are ongoing with the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA).

Briefs

Visiting Ghanaian diplomat urges South-South cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The head of Ghana's Foreign Service Training Institute, Ambassador Akua Sekyiwah Ahenkora, emphasized the importance of South-South cooperation on emerging transnational challenges like climate change and cyber security. She was speaking at a roundtable discussion organized at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS).

Ambassador Ahenkora maintained that since transnational challenges transcended boundaries, it was imperative for all states to join hands especially the developing countries which were suffering the most because of them. She shared that it was her first trip to Pakistan and added that it helped her address a lot of misperceptions about the country and left a great impression on her. Based on her own experience in Pakistan, she called for greater people-to-people interactions between Pakistan and Ghana. Ambassador Ahenkora shared that there was a vibrant Pakistani community in Ghana, which was playing an important role in the Ghanaian economy as well as cementing Pakistan-Ghana relations. She called for greater efforts for further strengthening the ties between the two countries, especially in the area of bilateral trade relations. She urged Pakistani authorities and businessmen to host Pakistani product fairs in Ghana to boost Pakistani exports. She also shared that a total of 34 Ghanaian diplomats had studied in Pakistan's Foreign Service Academy. Speaking on the occasion, President IRS Ambassador Jauhar Saleem highlighted the growing importance of Africa on the world stage and underlined that Pakistan was keen to build on its ties with all African nations, including the Republic of Ghana.—DNA

Zong supports women-led small businesses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, a flagship brand of China Mobile Pakistan (CMPak) support small businesses led by women who lacked resources for promoting their ventures. These businesses have the potential to grow and are driven by the strong determination of their owners to establish something of their own, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday. According to the report, Zong 4G has collaborated with five women-led small businesses namely Northy Natural, Bellizzi by Farah, MamaMia Meals, QnE.pk, and Scented Stories Candles, which, despite their substantial growth potential, were unable to expand due to a lack of marketing resources. As part of this initiative, Dr. Urooj, a renowned influencer in Pakistan, introduced a five-episode series on Instagram. In these episodes, she reviewed the products and services offered by each business, shared their inspiring backstories, and encouraged people to choose their products. Urooj, who has a significant following on Instagram and earns through brand promotions, played a crucial role in promoting these small businesses. Thanks to Zong 4G's initiative and the support of a well-known social media personality, these businesses gained significant exposure to a wide audience, boosting their sales and promoting their growth. Zong 4G was among the first organizations in Pakistan to adopt this approach under their 'Inclusive Growth' sustainability pillar, which focuses largely on marginalized communities, working diligently for their social and economic advancement through dedicated efforts and volunteer support. In their most recent project, Zong supported small businesses led by women who lacked resources for promoting their ventures.

10 Pakistani firms take part in SIAL Canada int'l food show

SIAL Canada 2024 is the largest food exhibition which is the only event of its kind in Canada, bringing together more than over 800 national and international exhibitors from 44 countries

DNA

OTTAWA: As the three-day SIAL Canada 2024 exhibition opened in Montreal, 10 Pakistani firms with over 20 participants are participating in the leading international food show showcasing the country's rice, fruit, pink salt and food industry. SIAL Canada 2024 is the largest food exhibition which is the only event of its kind in Canada, bringing together more than over 800 national and international exhibitors from 44 countries. It also features the presence of more than 21,000 professional visitors from Canada, the United States and 60 other countries. Pakistan's High Commissioner to Canada Zaheer A. Janjua inaugurated the Pakistan pavilion at the exhibition which is garnering strong interest and may lead to increased bilateral trade between the two countries. "SIAL Canada is the only national trade show to offer a complete range of food products under one roof", Zaheer A. Janjua added.



Mad Max' tears through Cannes with frenetic 'Furiosa'

CANNES, FRANCE: "Furiosa", the latest frenetically paced "Mad Max" action movie, zoomed into pole position among this year's blockbusters with a raucous world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival on Wednesday. The fifth instalment of the wildly popular post-apocalyptic saga received a special screening outside of the main Palme d'Or competition at the world's most famous movie festival. "Thanks so much for having us," said a visibly moved director, George Miller, as his film drew a lengthy standing ovation inside the packed Palais des Festivals. Furiosa is the name of the heroine first played by Charlize Theron in the franchise's previous entry, 2015's Oscar-winning "Mad Max: Fury Road." In this prequel, she is now portrayed by Anya Taylor-Joy, of hit Netflix series "The Queen's Gambit". She is opposite "Thor" star Chris Hemsworth in a villainous role. As with all the "Mad Max" films, road battles and visceral stunts play a vital role, with a plethora of retro-futuristic vehicles meeting out death and destruction at high speed in the desert. The movie - released globally next week - was inspired by the question "How can we tell a story on the run?" explained Miller. Stunts are "pure cinema for me," he told journalists before the world premiere. "I like to say that you should hear films with your eyes, and you should see them with your ears," he said. "When you're seeing the rhythm of choreographed action, you feel a beat to it." The warrior's younger years are revealed in "Furiosa". She is kidnapped as a child, and forced to plot her escape from the harem of a neo-Medieval despot. Alyla Browne ("Three Thousand Years of Longing") portrays a child version of the heroine, before Taylor-Joy takes over as a fearsome young adult warrior who is as adept behind the wheel as she is deadly with a rifle. Hemsworth dons heavy prosthetics for his role as a barbarian clan leader, in a film that is part revenge movie, part dystopian sci-fi, complete with themes of ecological collapse - and feminism. The premiere at the glitzy festival on France's Côte d'Azur takes place as the country is in the midst of a belated #MeToo reckoning, including accusations against its biggest star, Gerard Depardieu. Miller explained that "Furiosa", like "Fury Road" before, ended up becoming "almost a feminist piece" by chance. A story featuring a male hero freeing enslaved wives from a harem would have been "a different story than a female warrior", he said. "It wasn't, 'oh, let's make a feminist action film,' it was always driven by story." Yet Miller has a track record in writing increasingly formidable female characters. In the first "Mad Max" film, Joanne Samuel's role - the wife of Mel Gibson's hero - was mainly that of the victim. By "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome", the third film, from 1985, Tina Turner played a ruthless clan leader governing a town. A mantle of fearsome female road warrior falls now to Taylor-Joy - now 28, who has admitted that, in real life, she still does not have a driver's licence. Nonetheless, she was encouraged by Miller to do as many of her own stunts as possible. She trained for a year before production began on the set, where she was joined by a stunt double. "I know how to do a handbrake turn, but I don't know how to... drive on the highway," she joked, in the film's production notes.

New Dutch coalition govt wants 'strictest' asylum policy

THE HAGUE: The newly agreed Dutch coalition government on Thursday proposed what it called the "strictest ever" asylum policy, including an opt-out from European Union rules, and vowed to examine moving its Israel embassy to Jerusalem. The 26-page coalition agreement emerged early Thursday after six months of grueling talks between four parties following the stunning election victory of far-right leader Geert Wilders. "Anyone who reads the report can see that a lot of things are going to change in the Netherlands," Wilders told reporters as the agreement was officially presented. He said it was a "historic" day that his far-right PVV Freedom Party was now in government - "at the centre of power." "We are writing history today... the sun is going to shine again in the Netherlands," said Wilders. The agreement said that "concrete steps will be taken towards the strictest ever entry rules for asylum and the most comprehensive ever package to control migration." The parties said they would file a request to the European Commission for an opt-out on European asylum policy "as soon as possible." People without a valid residence permit will be deported "by force if necessary," said the report, which is titled "hope, courage and pride." On foreign policy, the parties commit to keeping the Netherlands as a "constructive partner" in the European Union and support Ukraine "politically, militarily, financially, and morally." More controversially, the agreement calls to examine the idea of moving the Dutch embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is claimed by both Israelis and Palestinians, but most governments avoid putting embassies there in order to not prejudice the outcome of negotiations for a lasting peace.—DNA

Slovak PM fights for his life after assassination attempt

BANSKA BYSTRICA, SLOVAKIA: Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico fought for his life in hospital Wednesday after being shot multiple times in what the government called a "political assault". Surgeons spent hours battling to save the 59-year-old populist leader after the attack, which has been condemned around the world. Deputy Prime Minister Tomas Taraba told the BBC he believed the leader's hospital procedure had gone well. "I guess in the end he will survive," Taraba said. "He's not in a life-threatening situation at this moment." Earlier, Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok told reporters at a hospital in the central city of Banska Bystrica that the prime minister was "in critical condition and his life is in danger". Footage of events just after the shooting showed security agents grabbing a wounded Fico from the ground and hustling him into a black car that speeds away. Other police handcuffed a man on the pavement nearby. Police detained a suspect at the site of the attack in Handlova, President Zuzana Caputova told reporters. "I am shocked, we are all shocked by the terrible and heinous attack," she added. Defence minister Robert Kalinak, who also serves as Fico's deputy, would not give information on the suspect but said: "What has happened is a political assault. It's absolutely clear, and we have to react on that." Fico was shot multiple times, according to a post on his official Facebook page. Today, after the government meeting in Handlova, there was an assassination attempt" on Fico, the government said. Public RTVS television showed a stretcher taken out of a helicopter by medics and wheeled into the hospital in Banska Bystrica surrounded by security guards. A cover was over the stretcher. Fico, whose Smer-SD party won the general election last September, is a four-time prime minister and political veteran accused of swaying his country's foreign policy in favour of the Kremlin. Media reported that the suspected gunman was a 71-year-old writer, but police have not named any suspects. "I have absolutely no idea what father was thinking, what he was planning, why it happened," the alleged suspect's son told Slovak news site aktualita.sk. Analyst Grigorij Meseznikov told AFP "there has been no (previous) attack on any minister or prime minister in Slovakia." "I only remember the case of former minister of economy Jan Ducky who was shot dead in 1999," he added. "But he had not been politically active anymore when he was killed." Slovak president-elect and Fico ally Peter Pellegrini said he learned of the shooting "with horror". "An assassination attempt on one of the highest constitutional officials is an unprecedented threat to Slovak democracy," he added on X, formerly Twitter. EU chief Ursula von der Leyen denounced the "vile attack" while NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said he was "shocked and appalled". US President Joe Biden said he and the first lady "are praying for a swift recovery, and our thoughts are with his family and the people of Slovakia." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky condemned the "appalling" shooting while Russian President Vladimir Putin called the shooting a "heinous crime". "I know Robert Fico to be a courageous and strong-spirited man. I very much hope that these qualities will help him to withstand this difficult situation," Putin said. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemned the "shocking" attack on his Slovak counterpart Robert Fico. Strongly condemn shocking attack on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico our thoughts and prayers (are) with him and his family. Wish him a quick recovery and good health," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline.—Agencies

'Ready to rumble' - Biden, Trump agree to two election debates

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and Donald Trump agreed Wednesday to hold election debates in June and September, with the rivals trading barbs about their first on-stage meetings in nearly four years. The sudden agreement, ending months of uncertainty over whether the debates would happen at all, came after Biden, 81, challenged his scandal-tinged Republican rival to "make my day." Trump, 77, quickly responded that he was "ready to rumble" - and within hours CNN announced it would host the first debate in Atlanta on June 27 and ABC said it would stage the second on September 10. With former president Trump leading polls in battleground states, Biden appeared to be trying to seize the initiative by proposing both the dates and an audience-free format for the debates. It represents a calculated political risk against a supreme political showman, with



Biden hoping to use the debates to overcome concerns about his age and remind voters of Trump's chaotic time in the White House. When asked by an AFP reporter if he was looking forward to the debates, Biden replied: "I am." Earlier, he said

in New York, which features a mid-week break, adding: "I hear you're free on Wednesdays." Trump's swift acceptance reflected the fact that Trump - who avoided any debates with his Republican rivals - has been itching to get his message out after weeks stuck in court. "Let's get ready to Rumble!!!" he wrote on his Truth Social app, describing Biden as the "WORST debater I have ever faced." "I would strongly recommend more than two debates and, for excitement purposes, a very large venue, although Biden is supposedly afraid of crowds." CNN confirmed there would be no audience for its June debate. Both candidates shunned the traditional bipartisan commission that has run debates since 1988, and which had proposed three debates in September to October. The first debate will be unusually early in the year, before the Republican convention in July where Trump is set to be for-

mally anointed as the party's candidate. Trump later said he'd accepted a third invitation from right-wing Fox News, and his campaign called for adding debates in July and August. Biden's campaign poured cold water on that, with campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon saying the president had "made his terms clear for two one-on-one debates." The last debates between the two men in 2020 were tension-filled affairs, with Biden at one point snapping "will you shut up, man?" as Trump repeatedly talked over him. It was later revealed that Trump had also tested positive for Covid shortly before that debate, without informing organizers. This time, Biden's campaign said it would bypass the debate commission because of its "failure" to meet the needs of voters. The Biden campaign rejected the commission's proposals for debate with a "raucous or disruptive" audience.—Agencies

Healthy lifestyle add years to life: Study

ISLAMABAD: European experts have shown that individuals with genetic disorders can avoid additional medical problems and extend their lifespan by adopting a healthy lifestyle. According to the study published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ), researchers examined the lives, health, and genetic disorders of 350,000 Europeans over 13 years. The findings revealed that even individuals with genetic diseases can lead healthier and longer lives by maintaining a better lifestyle. Experts concluded that by adopting a healthy lifestyle, genetic disorders can be managed more effectively, potentially extending life expectancy by up to six years. Key lifestyle changes include getting sufficient sleep, regular exercise, eating healthy foods, and avoiding smoking and alcohol. The experts collected data from records and analyzed the participants' lifestyles, health changes, and the development of illnesses. The study divided the participants into three different groups to evaluate the impact of lifestyle choices on their health. The research highlighted that a healthy lifestyle tailors their diet, exercise, and daily routines to their specific needs to extend their lives.—APP

ANF seizes 32 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 32 kg drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters here on Thursday. He informed that 320 grams Ice was recovered from a parcel booked for Italy at a courier office in Rawalpindi. Twelve kilogram hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up in Hayatabad Peshawar while 9.6 kg hashish was recovered from a drug smuggler netted near Lakeview Park Islamabad. Nine kilogram heroin was recovered from an accused held near Wagah in Lahore. And 1.2 kg hashish and 270 grams opium were recovered from a smuggler near Babu Sabu Interchange Lahore. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

Process to finalize standing committees to complete soon

ISLAMABAD: A leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, informed the National Assembly on Thursday that the process of forming Standing Committees has been completed. Speaking in the National Assembly, he explained that there was a slight delay in the process due to the decision to suspend the membership of members of reserved seats. He said that the Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, had set a deadline for the completion of the standing committee process by Friday. He added that all details of the standing committees would be submitted to Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq by the following day.—APP

Police bust bike, car lifter gang; arrest two

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police have busted a bike and car lifter gang and arrested its two members, said a police spokesman. He informed that Cantt police netted two accused namely Umair Ali and Amanullah, allegedly involved in several bike and car lifting cases. Police also recovered a stolen Mehran Car, three motorcycles and other items from their possession. Superintendent of Police, Potohar appreciated the police team and directed to accelerate ongoing operation against bike and car lifters.

Briefs

President Zardari felicitates Kundi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday felicitated Faisal Karim Kundi on assuming charge as the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor. The president directed the KP governor to work in the public interest. Faisal Karim Kundi, an old loyalist of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), recently took oath as the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor. The oath-taking ceremony was held at Governor House in Peshawar. Peshawar High Court Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim administered the oath to Faisal Karim Kundi at a ceremony attended by the KP officials and a number of PPP workers. Kundi is considered very close to party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and currently holds the position of PPP's central information secretary. He is also a member of the central executive committee of the party. He became an MNA in the general elections of 2008 and the youngest deputy speaker of National Assembly.

PML-N leaders 'unhappy' with Tarar

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ata Tarar likely to be replaced as Pakistan Muslim-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders 'unhappy' with his performance in the cabinet, a private News channel reported on Thursday, citing sources. Sources said few PML-N leaders and 'circles' are not happy with Ata Tarar's performance as minister for information and broadcasting and demanding his removal. They further said Senator Talal Chaudhry and Hanif Abbasi are the front-line candidates for the post of information and broadcasting minister, while the matter has been forwarded to PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif. Elder Sharif will consult PM Shehbaz Sharif on the matter, the sources said. Ata Tarar was elected to the National Assembly of Pakistan as a candidate of PML-N from Constituency NA-127 Lahore-XI in 2024 Pakistan general election. He received 98,210 votes and defeated PTI-backed independent candidate Malik Zaheer Abbas who received 82,230 votes and also Bilawal Bhutto Zardari who received 15,005 votes. On 11 March, he was inducted into the federal cabinet of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and was appointed as Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

Memon takes swipe at PTI founder

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said on Thursday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder launched a campaign a campaign to harm the country. Addressing an event in Karachi, Memon stated: "Israel talks about the violation of human rights in Pakistan. Israel, which is involved in the genocide of the Palestinians, is supporting the PTI founder. Israel has funded the PTI founder for the elections." "The PTI founder was made victorious through the worst rigging in the 2018 general elections. The PTV, parliament, and police officials were attacked," he said. "The entire country was closed due to a 126-day protest," Memon said. Memon took a dig at the PTI founder, saying, "The PTI founder had always embraced the politics of anarchy." Speaking about the law and order situation in Sindh, Memon said: "The Sindh government is serious about the law and order situation in the province. Everybody is on one page in terms of maintaining peace in Sindh."

China's development model offers opportunities for Pak

Ambassador Zaidong explained that to promote an in-depth integration of China's new development of 5Cs with 5Es (5 Corridors: growth corridor, livelihood-enhancing corridor, innovation corridor, green corridor and open corridor)

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: China is ready to work with Pakistan to implement the important consensus reached by leaders of the two countries, said Chinese Ambassador H.E. Jiang Zaidong at a well-attended symposium on Transformation of China's Economy to High Quality Development Model organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). Noting that "the keenness on Pakistan's side to greatly enhance the ongoing commercial cooperation was welcoming as it would inject new impetus into China-Pakistan cooperation as China enters a new development phase, he added. Dispelling the impression of an overcapacity problem being faced by China, Amb. Zaidong said that 'China does not have a problem of 'overcapacity' as China was exporting to the whole world and had a matching production capacity. Ambassador Zaidong explained that to promote an in-depth integration of China's new development of 5Cs with 5Es (5 Corridors: growth corridor, livelihood-enhancing corridor, innovation corridor, green corridor and open corridor) Pakistan and China needed yet closer cooperation both at the governmental as well as the societal level. While China's new energy product exports were already benefiting the world and mak-



ing important contributions to addressing climate change issues and promoting green transformation, with the new developmental plans China aspired to transform and upgrade traditional industries, cultivate and strengthen emerging industries, and lay out the construction of future-oriented industries.

Earlier, in his welcoming remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, said that Pakistan-China relations were cornerstone of Pakistan foreign relations and were characterized by cordiality and multifaceted partnerships. He emphasized that 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was a testament to the enduring

friendship, providing immense opportunities for collaboration and development', and Pakistan deeply values this historic bond between our two nations.

Chairing the session, former Foreign Minister, Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani, said that China's economic progress was the outcome of rapid industrialization, urbanization, and export-oriented policies, added that in the past decade and a half, China alone had been the main driver of world economic growth, accounting for 35% of global nominal GDP growth. 'China's economic momentum initiatives like 'Made in China 2025', and Global Development Initiatives present

wondrous opportunities for economic expansion domestically and internationally, and countries such as Pakistan could greatly benefit from it.

Professor Zhou Rong, Senior Fellow at Renmin University of China, emphasized that Pakistan could learn from China's development approach, and focus on implementation and for that, he suggested working on joint ventures and entrepreneurship initiatives. He urged Pakistan to embrace the Chinese language to further deepen cultural ties between the two countries.

Former envoy of Pakistan to China, Ambassador Moinul Haq said that in line with the evolving technological landscape, skill training for Pakistani youth was extremely important to gauge the demands of the partnership effectively. He also emphasized the need for Pakistan to establish smart linkages to drive innovation in research and development.

Dr. Ahmed Ijaz Malik, faculty member at Quaid-i-Azam University, emphasized upon fostering a two-way partnership to fully realize benefits. He noted that 'China's strategic alliances and its potential to facilitate reverse tech development, offered Pakistan a collaborative opportunity. He suggested that university students in Pakistan be engaged by providing them training and internships in China so that they could later be utilized as skilled workers.

Greece rescues 42 migrants off Crete

ATHENS: Greece rescued 42 migrants off the island of Crete and was looking for three believed to be missing after their boat sent a distress signal while at sea, the Greek coast guard said on Thursday. A coast guard official said the migrants were rescued by commercial vessels and a Greek navy helicopter some 27 nautical miles southwest of Crete. It was not clear what happened to their boat, the official told Reuters on condition of anonymity, adding that a search and rescue operation for the missing was under way. The island of Crete and its tiny neighbor Gavdos, Europe's southernmost tip, have seen a surge in arrivals of migrants looking to cross to Europe from Libya in recent months. The Greek government has pledged money and staff to help the ill-equipped islands handle the situation. Greece has been a favored gateway to the European Union for migrants and refugees from the Middle East, Africa and Asia since 2015 when nearly 1 million people landed on its islands, causing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Thousands of others have died at sea. Until recently, migrants had preferred islands further east near Turkey over Crete and Gavdos. - Agencies

All assets are legal, says Naqvi

DNA

LAHORE: Reacting to the recent Dubai Leaks scandal, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed his discontent, stating that it is unfair to portray his lifetime earnings as illegal. During a media talk in Lahore, the interior minister asserted that his wife had a property in Dubai since 2017 which was sold later in 2023, revealed that his wife's property in London. The Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi emphasized the need to investigate the individuals named in the Dubai leaks if any illegal money has been used in acquiring properties abroad. Mohsin Naqvi reiterated that if he acquired properties with legitimate funds and per the law, there should be no reason for media scrutiny. He emphasized that all his financial activities, including property purchases, have been transparently reflected in his election returns.

Russia-China ties not a threat to anyone: Putin

The partnership between Moscow and Beijing is a stabilizing force in the world, the president has said

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: The close ties between Russia and China should not be viewed as a threat against any other country, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said as he arrived in Beijing on Thursday. The Russian leader made his comments during a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The trip is Putin's first foreign visit since he was sworn in for a fifth presidential term earlier this month. "It is absolutely crucial that Russian-Chinese relations are not ad hoc contacts and are not aimed against anyone," Putin said. "Our cooperation in world affairs is one of the main stabilizing factors on the international stage. Together, we defend the principles of fairness and the democratic world order based on the multipolar realities and international law." Putin's visit comes amid tensions between NATO on one side and Russia and China on the other, with Western governments accusing Moscow and Beijing of aggression and coercion. Russia and China are facing increasing pressure from the West over the conflict in Ukraine and Beijing's activities in the Indo Pacific. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg recently described China as "the main country that is enabling Russia to conduct its war of aggression."

China has refused to blame Russia for the Ukraine crisis and has instead argued that the continuing expansion of NATO and Washington's "Cold-War mentality" are the root causes of the escalation. Beijing has repeatedly rejected Western pressure to join the sanctions against Russia, calling them unilateral and illegitimate. "Fueling the flames while shifting blame to others, this is just hypocritical and highly irresponsible," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said last month. In a statement on Thursday, the ministry further stressed that good relations with Moscow are "conducive to peace, stability and prosperity of the region and the world at large." Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping has hailed ties with Moscow as a "model of relations between large powers," as he met with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in Beijing on Thursday. The Russian leader also talked up ties between the two countries, emphasizing that they are not a threat to other nations.

Putin arrived in Beijing on Thursday for a state visit - the first since he was sworn in for a fifth term as president earlier this month. The Russian delegation also includes a number of ministers, with negotiations expected on a range of joint projects. During the meeting, Xi said relations between modern-day China and Russia, which span nearly 75 years, have been "tempered in difficult conditions [and] stood the test of a fickle international situation."

Pakistan, UK resolve to enhance coordination on arms control

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United Kingdom have expressed their commitment to further enhance coordination on multilateral fora on matters relating to arms control, disarmament & non-proliferation. The commitment was expressed during the 6th Round of Pakistan-UK Dialogue on Arms Control & Non-Proliferation held here on Wednesday (May 15), a press release issued by the Foreign Office said on Thursday. Additional Foreign Secretary (Arms Control & Disarmament), Ambassador

Mohammad Kamran Akhtar, and Director, Defence and International Security at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom, Ambassador Stephen Lillie, led their respective delegations. A broad spectrum of topics relating to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation came under discussion during the dialogue. Both sides also shared their perspectives on issues concerning global and regional security, new and emerging technologies, including the military use of artificial intelligence and the peaceful applications of nuclear technology. The discussions encompassed matters pertaining to the agenda of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). While reiterating the need to ensure continuity in the conduct of the dialogue, the two sides agreed to hold the 7th round of Consultations next year in London on a mutually agreed date. The dialogue is a regular feature of Pakistan-UK bilateral interactions and provides an opportunity to both countries to take stock of global arms control and disarmament landscape and to exchange views on regional and global security situation.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq receiving ambassador of Russia, Albert Khorev. - DNA

SHC rules in favour of PTI rally

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The East district deputy commissioner will convene a meeting within 48 hours to finalize plans for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) rally in the next 10 days, said the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Thursday adding that representatives of PTI should be present in the meeting. The court, in its written order, declared that prohibiting the rally is a violation of the petitioner's fundamental rights. Specifically, the court held that this restriction violates Articles 16 and 17 of the Constitution. The administration's refusal to permit the rally goes against the decisions of the Supreme Court too, the SHC said. The court issued a written order over the PTI petition to allow it to hold a rally at Bagh-e-Jinnah Ground. The city administration is not allowing the party to stage a public gathering, forcing it to take the matter to the court. In the written order, the court directed the DC East to convene a meeting within 48 hours of receiving the order to discuss the rally. All stakeholders, including the applicant, PTI, must be included in the meeting. The court expects all matters to be resolved within a week without any discrimination. SHC emphasized that there should be no delays or unjustified obstacles. If there is any threat in Bagh-e-Jinnah, a rally can be held at an alternative location through consensus. A report on implementing the court orders should be submitted within ten days, the order stated. On May 13, DC East had submitted a sealed report, which has been thoroughly reviewed. The report failed to provide solid justification for disallowing the rally. Notably, a meeting was held on May 2 at a short distance from Bagh-e-Jinnah.

General Practice

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