



Islamabad POST

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Spain bans ships carrying weapons for Israel from docking

Detailed News On Page-08

Asad Qaiser grills Punjab government

Detailed News On Page-08

Xavi set to be sacked by Barcelona

Detailed News On Page-06

Contempt of court

SC issues show-cause notices to Vawda, Kamal

Both the leaders have been asked by the top court to appear before the bench at the next hearing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday issued show-cause notices to independent Senator Faisal Vawda and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan's (MQM-P) leader Mustafa Kamal over their press conferences against Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges. Both the leaders have been asked by the top court to appear before the bench at the next hearing. A three-member bench, led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi-Faez Isa and comprising Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan, conducted the hearing. The notices were issued when the top court conducted the hearing on the suomotu notice taken against Vawda's press conference in which he blasted the IHC judges over their letter alleging meddling by spy agencies in judicial affairs and Justice Babar Sattar's citizenship. "Stop targeting the institutions, enough is enough. If there is any interference by institutions, then provide evidence and we will stand together [against it]," the former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader had said during the presser. A day after Vawda's presser, Kamal also addressed a presser wherein he demanded the implementation of dual citizenship law in all the institutions. "IHC says there is no restriction in the Constitution a dual citizen cannot become a judge," said Kamal, pointing out that "a member of the assembly having dual nationality is sent to home". Vawda's news conference came after he had filed a request in the IHC registrar calling for disclosure of the correspondence between then-IHC chief justice Athar Minallah and IHC's Justice Babar Sattar about the latter's green card. The senator's letter referred to the social media campaign against Justice Sattar accusing him of holding a US nationality and having a business interest in a private school in the country. In response to the smear campaign,

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NCA scandal Court fails to testify witnesses

Later, Imran Khan and his lawyers apprise the judge for taking back "lack of confidence" remarks

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: An accountability court has failed to record testimonies of witnesses after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's spouse Bushra Bibi expressed a lack of confidence in the judge during the hearing of £190m NCA scandal case. At the beginning of the hearing, Bushra Bibi came to the rostrum and expressed a lack of faith in the accountability court's judge. As the accountability court began the hearing, the former first lady entered the courtroom in aggressive mode and sat separately from the ex-prime minister, his sisters and her daughters. Later, she came to the rostrum and told the judge that she was neither having faith in the judges who were hearing previous cases nor she had confidence in this court. She complained about not being informed about a hearing scheduled for May 15 at

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman MCC Tongsin Resources Wang Jicheng calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Restricting livestream on Khan's appearance unjustified

Urges CJJ to protect judges from state coercion

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) dubbed the restriction on the livestream of the court proceedings in the NAB law amendments case, which PTI Founding Chairman Imran Khan attended via video link, as unjustified, discriminatory, and an attempt to deprive people of their fundamental constitutional right to access authentic information. PTI Spokesperson stated that the Chief Justice of Pakistan's decision of not allowing live telecast of the court proceedings against the set

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Govt not stopped from blocking SIMs of non-filers

The govt has decided to block SIMs of non-filers in a bid to bring people into the tax net

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Aamer Farooq of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday said that he didn't stop the authorities from blocking the SIMs of non-filers and the order only barred the government from taking any action against the telecom operators. Media on Tuesday reported that the

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Threatens to march CM Gandapur gives centre 15 days to fix electricity issues

He claimed the annual development program will include realistic plans for public welfare instead of mere paperwork and all of ongoing development projects will be completed in the first priority

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has given 15 days to the Centre for clearance of the province's Rs50 billion dues otherwise KP will take over the control of Wapda. Ali Amin Gandapur while chairing meetings related to the preparation of the next fiscal year's development program, ironically recalled Azad Kashmir protests and asked what would be the condition of the centre if the if the KP governments brought the people to the streets. Earlier, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government finalized the draft of the annual development program for the financial year 2024-25 after four years of continuous negotiations. During these meetings, all the ongoing and future development projects were reviewed and discussed in detail.

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Maryam attends Elite Force passing-out parade in uniform

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, addressing a passing-out parade ceremony of the Punjab Elite Force, stated on Friday that this force was the sapling planted by Nawaz and



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Briefs

'Our narrative should not be linked with PTI'

Fazlur Rehman says JUI-F and PTI are two different political parties

DNA

BHAKKAR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Friday said the JUI-F and PTI were two different political parties and had their own narrative, Dunya News reported. Speaking to reporters in Bhakkar, Maulana Fazl said "our narrative should not be linked with that of PTI". He was of the view that responsibility to conduct the elections solely lied with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and there was no role of governments in it.

Ali to move IHC against Adiala admin
Lawmaker says they weren't allowed to meet the PTI founder on previous appearance either

ADIL SHAHEEN

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Muhammad Khan has said he will move the Islamabad High Court (IHC) against the Adiala jail administration after he was not allowed to meet PTI founder Imran Khan. "I am going to the high court against the jail administration."

Holiday Notice

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

Unrest in eastern Afghanistan

Taliban supreme leader makes rare visit to Kabul

Hibatullah Akhundzada gave a speech in front of the 34 provincial governors

NEWS DESK

KABUL: The shadowy supreme leader of the Taliban authorities made a rare visit to Afghanistan's capital, a government website said Friday, leaving his reclusive compound in Kandahar to meet with the country's senior officials. It comes after a string of small-scale clashes between farmers and Taliban anti-narcotic units tasked with destroying poppy fields, and flash floods that have killed hundreds. Hibatullah Akhundzada gave a speech in front of the 34 provincial governors on Thursday at the Interior Ministry, the Taliban website Al Emarah said. The leader emphasized "unity and harmony," according to a summary of the speech posted to the website on Friday. "Obedience was highlighted as a divine obligation," it said, adding that the implementation of Islamic Sharia law and principles "should take precedence over personal interests." The appointment of officials on the basis of "favoritism or personal relationships" was also to be avoided.

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USIP warns of terrorist threats from Afghanistan

USIP report highlights Afghan taliban's support for terrorist groups

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has issued a warning that Afghan territory is being used by terrorist groups to target Pakistan. The report highlights the growing regional threat posed by these organizations, which operate with apparent support from the Afghan Taliban. According to the USIP, despite repeated warnings, the Afghan Taliban has not cut ties with terrorist groups like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which conducts attacks on Pakistani soil.

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Pak-China agree on more investment in CPEC: FO

Unending sufferings of Kashmiri families with over 22,000 women widowed, 107000 children orphaned: FO Spox

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday said that with over 22,000 women widowed and 107,000 children orphaned, the sufferings of the families in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) remained unended due to the unabated occupation and oppression of the Indian forces. Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, expressed solidarity with the Kashmiri families that remained divided and continued to suffer due to Indian oppression for the last several decades. "The estimates of widowed women and orphaned children exceed 22,000 and 107,000 respectively. Thousands of half-widows are awaiting the return of their husbands who have presumably been killed by Indian forces. The plight of the families of the victims of enforced disappearance is equally lamentable," the spokesperson remarked, referring to the annual International Day of Families observed on May 15. Calling the ruthless Indian oppression the root cause of the suffering of Kashmiri families, the spokesperson urged India to allow Kashmiris to practice their right to

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Out on bail, Kejriwal poses fresh challenge for Narendra Modi

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Firebrand Indian politician Arvind Kejriwal has hit the ground running since his surprise release from detention amidst a contentious general election, energising the opposition as it challenges Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Supreme Court gave 55-year-old Kejriwal, also the chief minister of the national capital territory of Delhi, bail in a graft case on May 10 and he wasted no time in getting on the campaign trail. "I have only one request from you, we all have to come together to save the country from dictatorship. I am fighting this dictatorship with

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BISP establishes 18 camp sites in city

SARGODHA: Benazir Income Support Program set up 18 site camps in the district aimed to make tranche payments much easier for 165,183 beneficiaries. While talking to APP here on Friday, spokesperson Mazhar Awan said that BISP quarterly tranche for the month of May has been released and payments process has also been started from today. He said that under the support program, the registered beneficiaries would get Rs 10,500 each in the district. Mazhar Awan further told that 22,540 beneficiaries in Kotmomin, 13,450 in Sahiwal, 72,335 in Sargodha, 16,714 in Shahpur, 17,034 in Silanwali, 14,495 in Bhulwal and 8,612 beneficiaries in Bhera would get the payment. He concluded that registered women can get payments through camp sites after receiving SMS from 8171.—APP

Around Rs 109 bln recovered from electricity defaulters

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory (NEPRA) on Friday was informed that a sum of around Rs 109 billion has been recovered from electricity defaulters since September 2023 during the ongoing anti-power theft and recovery drive. The outstanding dues against running and dead defaulters stood at around Rs 1.3 trillion, an official of the Power Division told the Authority during a hearing into XWDISCO Quarterly Adjustments on Account of Variation in Power Purchase Price for FY 2023-24. The provinces have been requested to assist the distribution companies in their recovery and anti-power theft drive, he added. The hearing was presided over by Chairman NEPRA Waqar Ahmad while member Balochistan Mithal Niaz Rana and member Sindh Rafique Ahmad Shaikh were also present on the occasion. The DISCOs in their petition to the power regulator have sought Rs 51.86 billion under quarterly adjustment to be recovered from the consumers. The regulator was told that power demand has witnessed a significant decrease in various sectors during the 3rd quarter of the current fiscal year 2023-24.—APP

Chairman PRCS visits Qatar Red Crescent headquarters

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari visited the Qatar Red Crescent Society headquarters in Doha on Thursday. He was warmly received by Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) Secretary General, Faisal Mohamed Al-Emadi, and the head of programs, Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari held talks with the top officials of QRCS. The meeting shed light on bilateral humanitarian relations and the current humanitarian picture across the region. Speaking on this occasion, the Chairman highlighted the steadfast support from brotherly Qatar through both good and challenging times. He praised the Qatar Red Crescent Society's relentless dedication, which has been crucial in their collaborative efforts to address major crises in Pakistan. He specifically mentioned the consistent and invaluable assistance provided by QRCS during the 2022 monsoon floods, which significantly helped affected communities nationwide. With the support of Red Cross and Red Crescent partners, PRCS reached millions of flood-affected people and is now engaged



in extensive recovery efforts for these communities. QRCS Secretary General, Faisal Mohamed Al-Emadi, remarked on the long-standing, time-tested relationship between Pakistan and Qatar. He emphasized the historical depth of PRCS and QRCS collaboration over the decades. Al-Emadi commended the exemplary services rendered by the PRCS and expressed apprecia-

tion for Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari's leadership in advancing humanitarian initiatives. He also affirmed the commitment to extend all possible cooperation from QRCS. Chairman Laghari expressed his desire for the Qatar Red Crescent to reopen its delegation office in Pakistan, as it had in the past. He also extended an invitation to the President of QRCS

to visit Pakistan and the PRCS National Headquarters. The PRCS and QRCS signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to advance cooperation in disaster management, youth engagement, health and care, climate change, and other humanitarian efforts. The two sides also signed an agreement regarding the 2024 sacrifice (Qurbani) project. This MoU aims to strengthen their col-

laboration in delivering efficient humanitarian services to vulnerable communities. The MoU was signed by the Secretary General QRCS Faisal Mohamed Al-Emadi, and the Secretary-General PRCS Muhammad Abaidullah Khan, in the presence of the Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari. Chairman Laghari and Secretary General Khan also toured QRCS's Disaster Management and Information Center, where Mr. Al-Emadi provided an overview of QRCS global projects and programs. Key QRCS officials, including Head of Relief and Disaster Management Subhi Fahid Ejeh, Director of Relief & International Development Sector Dr. Mohammed Salah Ibrahim, and Head of Planning & Studies Aiham Ismael Sukhni, attended the meeting. Mr. Al-Emadi briefed the PRCS delegation on QRCS's capacity-building initiatives, training personnel for deployment in various countries to support other National Societies in disaster management, WASH services, health care and rescue. The visit concluded with an exchange of commemorative shields and souvenirs between PRCS and QRCS. On this occasion, Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari also shared his impressions in the visitor book at the QRCS headquarters.

'Problems of merged areas' police being solved on priority

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan said on Friday that providing all the prevailing privileges to the police of the merged districts had been his first priority since day one. He said that all the available resources were being utilized to make the police force of the merged district professional and for the welfare of the personnel. He expressed these views while meeting a representative delegation of the police of the merged districts at the Central Police Office here. Additional Inspector General Headquarters Awal Khan, Capital City Police Officer Peshawar Syed Ashfaq Anwar, and AIG Amalgamated Districts Dr. Qureshi Khan were also present on the occasion.

The members of the delegation reported their problems to the IGP and requested to depute the constables in the specialized units, i.e., CTD, FRP, Special Branch, and Elite Force, established in the merged districts, who want to join these units voluntarily.

They also demanded the release of salaries to those officials who were transferred to these units but could not join duties due to unavoidable reasons. Similarly, the delegation also presented their issues of promotion and early disposal of the absorption cases. The IGP issued on-the-spot orders to regional police officers, district police officers, and other relevant officers related to promotion, transfers, and the release of salaries. It is to be mentioned here that a summary to recruit the children of the Levies and Khasadars officials who embraced martyrdom prior to the merger with the Central Police Office and those who had less than ten years of service and were not eligible for pension as per the prevailing law in KP police was sent to the government for approval, and it was expected to be implemented soon.—APP

SRSP, TBHF to rehabilitate 1500 households

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) in collaboration with The Big Heart Foundation (TBHF) under a 10-month project "Support to Flood-affected Communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan" would rehabilitate community-based infrastructure schemes in district Swat for the benefit of 1,500 households, 11,250 flood-2022 affected individuals. Under the USD 150,000 project the poor and underprivileged affected communities of floods 2022 in Pakistan would be rehabilitated de-

pending on damages assessment, said a press release issued here Friday adding that the type of infrastructure schemes would include drinking water, link roads, suspension bridges, protection structures, sanitation, and irrigation channels. The project would also increase economic resilience of community to climate change while the local community members would be rigorously involved in the implementation of the project through SRSP's social mobilisation strategy and community-driven

approach. The project was conceived to support communities and areas affected by the floods 2022. However, its implementation coincides with the current situation where heavy rainfall was causing problems. The implementation of the project was therefore timely and relevant, it added. The 10-month project from January - October 2024 would be a remarkable venture to restore and enhance the living standards of the flood-affected people in district Swat. They were also present on the occasion.—APP

Operation against illegal housing schemes

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak here on Friday directed the authorities concerned to intensify operations against illegal housing societies and take indiscriminate action against the rules violators. Chairing a meeting regarding illegal housing schemes, Engineer Aamir Khattak said that the officers of the RDA and Food Department to give briefings on daily performance. Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Additional Commissioner Coordination, Director General, Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) and other officers concerned participated in the meeting. RDA neither favors nor targets anyone and just keep in mind the principle of merit, the Commissioner said adding, that illegal housing societies not only sell plots to innocent people but also lead to environmental destruction. During the briefing, the officers informed the Commissioner that there are 635 housing schemes in Rawalpindi while 104 housing schemes are approved and 96 are under process. Action against the rules violators was being taken in accordance with the law, the Commissioner was informed. The food department should improve its checking to provide quality food items to the public, the Commissioner directed and instructed that cleanliness and hygiene rules should be followed at food and drink places.—APP

Media bodies reject Punjab Defamation Bill 2024

DNA

KARACHI: The Joint Action Committee (JAC) expresses serious concern over the proposed Punjab Defamation Bill 2024 in its current form and the proposed Federal Government "Digital Media Authority". The media bodies are not strengthening the defamation laws or regulating digital media after strengthening defamation laws, but the bill appears draconian in its current form and threatens the fundamental right to freedom of expression. The JAC emphasizes the need for a detailed and purposeful consultation with all stakeholders to address the weaknesses of the proposed bill. The

JAC believes that any legislation in this regard must strike a delicate balance between protecting individual rights and upholding the principles of freedom of expression. Therefore, the Joint Action Committee demands that the Punjab government and the Federal Government hold extensive discussions with media organizations, and other stakeholders to thoroughly examine the implications of the proposed legislation on freedom of expression and postpone the passing of the bill in the assembly until then. The JAC remains committed to engaging constructively with the government to ensure that the defamation legislation and code for Digital media if enacted is fair, just, and in line with democratic principles.

CM takes notice of theft from a temple

KARACHI: The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has taken notice of a theft of an idol and other goods from Rama Pir temple in Tando Adam. He directed IGP Sindh to recover the stolen goods from the temple and report to him. The CM Shah said, 'I have given clear instructions that no unfair treatment against minorities will be tolerated.' He had asked the IGP Sindh also about progress in the recovery of a child Muhammad Hussain Arayen, who was kidnapped three days ago from Puno Aqil. The Chief Minister directed the IGP for the details of the hostage recovery in the last three days. Shah instructed the IGP to increase patrolling in areas with increasing crime including Karachi. The details of the operation against dacoits in Kacha should be sent to the CM Secretariat, the Chief Minister Sindh directed the IGP Sindh.—APP

PHC seeks reply from federal govt

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Arshad Ali and Justice Waqar Ahmed on Friday sought a response from the federal government within seven days over the inclusion of the name of Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Saleem Swati.—APP

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender is Invited from Govt Registered Contractor for all type of stores/ works/services for upgrd of firing ranges on acct of Special Annual Training Grant FY 2024/2025 in office of HQ 11 Corps Peshawar.

Terms and Conditions

1. Detail of items can be collected from unit one day before the tender date.
2. Rate of items once offered will be valid for six month with effect from the date of first supply.
3. No tender be entertained after due date and time.
4. Sales tax, Income tax and other taxes shall be deducted according to government rules.
5. Tender duration from 18 May 2024 to 31 May 2024.
6. Seal tender will be submitted upto 20 Jun 2024 before 0930 hrs.
7. This tender is valid till 30 Jun 2024

Headquarter 11 Corps Peshawar Cantonment PID NO. 145/2024



PEASHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Faisal Karim Kundi talking with PPP MNA Asma Arbab Alamgir, Vice president PPP Gulf and Middle East Syed Matloob Husain Shah during a meeting at Governor house in the Provincial Capital.—DNA

Munir Akram briefs NDU's delegation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Munir Akram, Thursday briefed a delegation of the National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad, about international and regional issues on United Nations' agenda and Pakistan's role at the world body. The delegation, comprising 12 members, is led by NDU's Chief Instructor Major General Naem Akhtar. It is currently in the United States attending a National Security and War Course (23-24). Ambassador Akram told the delegation that Pakistan plays an active role in all organs of the United Nations, especially highlighting the issue of vital interest to the country. Pakistan, he told the delega-

tion, was a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, the UN's power centre, for the 2025-26 term. If elected, he said, it would provide Pakistan an opportunity to contribute to the effort to promote international and regional peace and stability. The Pakistan Mission, Ambassador Akram said, was making all possible efforts to secure implementation of the Security Council resolutions on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and drawing the international community's attention to the human rights abuses in the Indian occupied territory. Pakistan was also making a vital contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations in hot spots around the world, he said. Ambassador Akram explained that Pakistan's position on the various regional

and global issues was in alignment with the principles and objectives of the UN Charter. Despite imperfections and failings, the UN was still a useful multilateral forum where developing countries also had a voice. Talking about challenges facing Pakistan, he termed terrorism as a leading threat to the national security, stressing the enormous sacrifices Pakistan had made in combating terrorism. Ambassador Akram also briefed the delegates about September's Summit of the Future and the likely conclusion of the Pact for the Future aimed at reshaping the world order, saying Pakistan was actively involved in the negotiating process in consultation with a group of like-minded countries. At the same time, Ambassador Akram said that the

external environment was undergoing profound changes as new configurations in the international order driven by technology, geostrategic conflicts, competition between the major powers and climate change were emerging to reshape the global order. "As the world transition from the unipolar world order to what I call 'bipolar plus' order, the countries are bound to adapt to the changing external environment," he said. The world needed to be able to calibrate befitting policy responses. A question-answer session followed the ambassador's presentation in which the participants raised the challenges of peacekeeping; the ongoing Gaza conflict in the Middle East; paralysis of the UN Security Council and Sino-US competition.

NATIONAL BANK OF PAKISTAN

Procurement of Network Attached Storage (NAS).

INVITATION FOR BIDS

1. National Bank of Pakistan, one of the largest commercial banks operating in Pakistan, invites bids through E-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System (EPADS) from suppliers / firms registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments and who are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue and having registered office, for Procurement of Network Attached Storage (NAS).
2. Bidding documents, containing detailed terms and conditions, can be downloaded from <https://eprocure.gov.pk> free of cost. Bids should be submitted electronically ONLY through EPADS. Manual submission of bids is NOT allowed. For registration and training on EPADS or in case of any technical difficulty in using EPADS, prospective bidders may contact PPR, 1st Floor, FBC building sector G-5/2, Islamabad. Contact number 051-111-137-237.
3. The bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents, must be submitted on EPADS by June 10th, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. Bids will be opened on the same day at 03:30 p.m. through EPADS.

Note:

1. All interested bidders must register themselves at EPADS at: <https://eprocure.gov.pk/#/supplier/registration>. No physical bid shall be entertained.
2. Original Bid Security instrument MUST BE submitted to the undersigned office before the online submission deadline of the bid.

(Divisional Head) Procurement Division,
Logistics, Communications & Marketing Group,
National Bank of Pakistan
3rd Floor, Head Office Building, Karachi
021-99220331, 021-38902647

NBP National Bank of Pakistan
نیشنل بینک آف پاکستان

PID K 3243/23

قوم کا اپنا
بینک

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 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
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

2nd France Alumni Day being held this month

For this 2nd edition, the French Embassy, Pakistan-French Business Alliance, Campus France Pakistan and France Alumni Pakistan will host all Pakistanis who got a part of their Education and professional training in France

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The 2nd France Alumni Day, the world day of international graduates from the French Higher Education will be held in May 2024 in France and all over the world. The «France Alumni Day» program includes many different projects - besides the prestigious event at the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs in Paris, with the participation of alumni, on May 15, 2024 at the Quai d'Orsay, they will take place in France and will be coordinated by aca-

demie institutions and alumni networks, as well as actions organized by French embassies, consulates and Campus France spaces internationally - meetings, competitions, seminars. In Pakistan, large French companies like L'Oréal, Schneider Electric, Total Energies, Alstom are actively looking for talents ready to pursue global careers and are offering the opportunities of career growth through international mobility. Values and skills like evolving in a multicultural environment, resilience and challenge-oriented mindset are at the heart of the education

project provided in France and are the key asset of our alumni network, which represents a reservoir of talent to be put in contact with promising careers offered by the private sector. For this 2nd edition, the French Embassy, Pakistan-French Business Alliance, Campus France Pakistan and France Alumni Pakistan will host all Pakistanis who got a part of their Education and professional training in France on the occasion of three networking events for meeting each other and discussing with Embassy representatives, companies & key people in the

following cities: Karachi on Monday 20th May Lahore on Wednesday 22th May Islamabad on Friday 24th May The events in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore will open with a welcome speech given by respectively Mr. Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Mr. Alexis Chahtahtinsky, Consul General of France in Karachi and Mr. Habib Anwar, Honorary Consul of France in Lahore. Panel discussion with Alumni and companies will be moderated by the Higher Education and Scientific Attaché of the French Embassy in Pakistan. The Head of Economic

Department of the French Embassy will also attend and bring his expertise during the panel. Those events will be an opportunity to promote the career of Alumni and to show the role that their academic education in France played in these career choices. Launched on the initiative of the former Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mrs Catherine Colonna, France Alumni Day is organized worldwide by Campus France, which coordinates and develops the network France Alumni since its creation in 2014.



ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins in a group photo with students of NAMAL. The high commissioner wished them best of luck— DNA

Japan important development partner of Pakistan, says Tarar

During a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Wada Mitsuhiko here, he said Pakistan and Japan enjoyed a long-standing relationship of friendship and cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Friday that Japan was an important development partner of Pakistan and Tokyo's support in difficult times has always been valuable for the people of Pakistan. During a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Wada Mitsuhiko here, he said Pakistan and Japan enjoyed a long-standing relationship of friendship and cooperation. In the meeting, bilateral diplomatic relations, cooperation in media sectors, fake news, economic initiatives of the government, and other important issues of mutual interest were discussed. The two countries agreed to further expand the

scope of cooperation in various sectors. The minister appreciated Japan International Cooperation Agency for its support for the development of Pakistan. Appraising the ambassador of Japan about the government's economic initiatives, the minister said the present regime was determined to bring the country's economy back on track under the vision of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "The government has taken several steps to improve the business environment and promote investment, including reforms in the FBR to increase the tax net," he added. Steps were also being taken to provide business facilities to the private sector, the minister remarked. Attaullah Tarar said after the current government assumed power, the economic development of Pakistan accelerated and international financial journals were also predicting further improvement in the economic progress of the country. In the meeting, issues regarding the prevention of fake news and the promotion of relations between the two countries in the fields of media were also discussed. "The whole world is facing a big challenge of fake news and there is a need to work together to overcome these challenges". The ambassador said Japan was seeking stronger ties with Pakistan. He opined that the government's measures to facilitate the business community will make Pakistan a more attractive destination for Japanese investors.

TDCP makes best arrangement for Murree tourists

ISLAMABAD: The Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) has made comprehensive and best arrangements for the tourists in Murree to facilitate them with dignity. Talking to APP here on Friday, a TDCP official said the practical steps are being taken by the organization for further promotion of tourism in Murree. Foreign and domestic tourists are thronging to Murree due to its scenic beauty and clad mountains to enjoy their trip, he added. He said that the TDCP has already launched an effective cleanliness campaign at different tourist spots in the Murree hilly areas not only to attract them but also to provide a neat and clean ambience. He said the sanitary workers are involved in collecting plastic waste and littering discarded items aimed to ensure a plastic-free environment, especially in green spaces because plastic bottles, wrappers, and shopping bags are rampantly littered at the tourist destination.—APP

First Pakistan moot in Saudi Arabia held

The aim of the Pakistan Investment Conference is to promote Pakistan-Saudi investment, said Fahad Ghamdi, COO, Jeddah Vision for Expo and Conferences

ISLAMABAD: Jeddah Vision for Expo and Conferences organized on May 11, 2024 Pakistan Investment Conference and Smart Expo had a grand opening at Jeddah Hilton Hotel Saudi Arabia. Organized Investment Conference and Smart Expo for the first time in Saudi Arabia with the support of Pakistan Association of Exhibitions. Fahad Ghamdi took personal interest and personally supervised all the administrative matters which made the conference a success. It was inaugurated by Khalid Majid, Consul General of Pakistan posted in Saudi Arabia. His Excellency Saleh Shatterji of Saudi Arabia also participated in the opening ceremony as a special guest. The conference was attended by a large number of Saudi business community related to tourism, minerals, medical, civil aviation industry, construction material, private developer, and other sectors. More than one and a half thousand delegates participated in the Smart Expo, in which the businessmen from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia appreciated the Smart Expo.

Addressing the event, Consul General of Pakistan Khalid Majid said that organizing the seminar will strengthen the government's efforts to build a prosperous Pakistan. To promote investment among the Arabs. In order to take the economic and trade relations to new heights, it is necessary to organize a conference and an expo between them.

ID Cards to be issued, renewed at UC level

Secretary Interior, Khurum Ali Agha, and senior NADRA officials were also present on the occasion

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi on Friday visited the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) headquarters and chaired an important meeting during which various proposals were discussed to make NADRA more people-friendly. Several significant decisions were made to facilitate the public, including the provision of identity card issuance and renewal facilities at the union council level across Pakistan. Additionally, biometric machines will be installed at union council levels nationwide. Mohsin Naqvi directed that a plan be devised within a few days to finalise the issuance and renewal of identity cards at the union council level. He also sought a plan to make the Identity Card system foolproof, better, and efficient. He emphasised the need for a plan that would facilitate visitors to NADRA centres and ensure prompt service without delay. Considering the long queues of citizens, the minister also sought a plan to increase NADRA centres in six major cities, including Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi within seven days. He also ordered effective action against the fake identity card mafia. Later, the minister visited the NADRA operational room, where he was briefed on the digital monitoring system of NADRA centres across Pakistan. He appreciated the efforts of Chairman NADRA, Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Afsar, and his team. Secretary Interior, Khurum Ali Agha, and senior NADRA officials were also present on the occasion.—APP

Mining a top priority under CPEC Phase-2, says Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal said Friday that mining sector was the priority area of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase-2. During a meeting with a MRDL Saindak, a Chinese mining company working in Chaghi Balochistan, he commended the company's decades long efforts to promote mining sector in the resource rich area of Balochistan. In response to the company's request to seek inclusion of their latest project in CPEC, the minister directed them to prepare their proposal, according to press release issued by the Planning Ministry. It was discussed during the meeting that if their energy needs are met by establishing a national power grid, the operational cost of all mining projects in the province will be reduced. It is pertinent to mention here that the Saindak Copper-Gold Project in Balochistan is operated by MCCT Resources Development Company Pvt Ltd (MRDL). MCCT has submitted a proposal of establishing a mineral industrial park in Pakistan which consists of copper/lead/zinc refining and deep processing, giving more value addition to the mineral products. With the development of more mining projects, establishing such an industrial park will become feasible. The mineral industrial park will also attract investors to invest in metal refineries and processing plant which produces wires, rods, plate and other products. Meanwhile, power supply, water supply, transportation and other industries can also develop to facilitate the industrial park, the statement added.— APP

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IRSA releases 238,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 238,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 223,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1469.18 feet and was 71.18 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 62,700 cusecs and 90,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1175.05 feet, which was 125.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 61,600 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 130,500, 111,900, 44,300 and 13,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 69,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 15,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

ANF recovers 133 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 133 kg drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that 65 kg hashish was recovered from Pishi Gwadar while 36 kg hashish and 2.2 kg opium were recovered from Khushab and two accused were arrested. 18 kg hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up near GT Road, Attock. In another raid, 12 kg hashish was recovered from a drug smuggler arrested near Sabi Road Quetta. 15 grams Ice was recovered from NADRA Chowk Torkham area. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

Briefs

British Pakistani entrepreneur launches Trade Gate

ISLAMABAD: UAE-based British Pakistani entrepreneur Shakeel Ahmad Meer has launched Trade Gate in Pakistan and other countries to stimulate local economic growth, generate job opportunities, and achieve self-sufficiency. Conceived by Chairman Shakeel Ahmed Meer of the Meer Group, Trade Gate is being launched in sixty cities and districts across Pakistan and multiple international locations including Dubai, the USA, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. Its objective is to empower talent, businesses, and investors, offering training and assistance to aspiring entrepreneurs in effectively managing their ventures. In an interview, Shakeel Ahmed Meer stated that the Trade Gate platform is designed to link potential investors, educated youth, and job seekers in managing diverse projects under the supervision of Meer Group experts. Its primary goal is to revitalize local economic growth, create job opportunities, and advance global sustainable development, ultimately achieving self-sufficiency in the country. Shakeel said the initiative, launched as part of the Vision Pakistan project, aims to generate a minimum of one million dollars per city within six to seven months of operation. Its overarching objective is to establish a sixty-billion-dollar economy within five years.—APP

IT Minister unveil new BPO facility

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, inaugurated a new branch of BPO facility in Islamabad to boost the region's ICT sector and create 1000 more job opportunities. The inauguration ceremony marked the opening of Mars Capital, a branch of Mars BPO, one of Pakistan's top 17 ICT companies. During her visit, Honorable Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja was briefed about the services and opportunities offered by Mars BPO. She supported the BPO industry, recognizing its potential to generate employment and contribute to economic growth. "I am delighted to inaugurate Mars Capital, the latest addition to Mars BPO's network. The expansion of Mars BPO reflects the dynamism and growth potential of Pakistan's BPO industry. I commend Mars BPO for its commitment to creating new opportunities and contributing to the country's economic development.—APP

Pakistan-UAE enjoy deep rooted relations

On this occasion, ICCI executive members Rizwan Cheena and Ch. Maqsood Tabish alongwith Khalid Ch. Malik Nadeem Akhtar, Naima Ansari were also present.

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates enjoy unwavering relations based on shared foundations of history, religion and culture which have been strengthening in the best interest of the people of both the countries with the passage of time. This has been stated by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry while talking to Deputy Head of the Mission UAE Embassy Mohammad Sultan AlKaitoob, who held a meeting with him at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Industry. On this occasion, both the sides discussed possibilities of joint economic cooperation, ways to consolidate bilateral relations and examined available investment opportunities in the industry, trade, tourism and education sectors. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari while mentioning the generous relief assistance to flood victims and initiation of various development projects by UAE leadership informed the honourable guest that Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry mulls an International Tourism Summit in Northern Areas in the first week of July-2024 to showcase the rich tourism potential of the area, which hopefully will be attended by more than twenty Ambassadors of friendly countries and that it would be a matter of great pride for ICCI if the UAE Ambassador or his representative



also join the same. On his part, DHM, UAE Embassy stressed the importance of the meeting which provided a platform to discuss opportunities for co-operation and partnership between the two brotherly states by emphasizing that the business communities of Pakistan and the UAE have to explore

new vistas of cooperation for the benefit of the people of both the sides by increasing trade volumes in the days to come. The visiting guest went on to say that he found the people of Pakistan as very caring and hardworking adding that exchange of specific information about the areas of investment will be an extra mile

in fostering this connectivity. ICCI Group leader Khalid Iqbal Malik said that there exists sufficient potential for fostering the prevailing social, cultural and economic ties that bind the two countries. Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari also shed light on the historic cordial relation-

ship between the two countries by terming the ICCI Business Opportunities Conference held in UAE as very successful and result oriented. On this occasion, ICCI executive members Rizwan Cheena and Ch. Maqsood Tabish alongwith Khalid Ch. Malik Nadeem Akhtar, Naima Ansari were also present.

Long-standing demands of industries will be fulfilled

He said factories have been set up in different country cities, including Islamabad. Still, they are acting as illegal sale points for illegal goods produced in former FATA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr Shahid Rasheed Butt, on Friday, welcomed the decision of the Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb to bring erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) into the tax net. The move will increase revenue, reduce distortions in the tax system, and ensure equitable conditions for industries across the country, which is a long-standing demand by the troubled industrial sector of the settled areas. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that many people have established industrial units producing iron, ghee, cooking oil, textiles,

plastic, and other items in erstwhile FATA and PATA. They have been given tax exemptions so the local population can get cheaper goods. However, many industrialists produce more than the local demand and smuggle their production to Afghanistan and into the settled areas of Pakistan.

This practice ensures good profit to the FATA and PATA industrialists but creates problems for the industries in the settled areas, as they cannot reduce their business costs to match those of the industries established in tribal areas. The business leader said that unnecessary tax concessions on political grounds had not helped the local population or the government but crooked industrialists to make billions. Industries in FATA and PATA also enjoy tax relaxations when importing

raw materials. Still, many sell their imported material in Karachi, which causes the government to lose billions of rupees in revenue. He demanded that this practice be stopped immediately. Shahid Rashid Butt said that ever since the industries in erstwhile FATA and PATA were given tax concessions, the industries in other areas have been demanding equal treatment. Now, the finance minister is taking a bold step in the right direction, which has been needed for a long time. Ensuring a level playing field for the industrial sector will solve a big problem. He noted that most of the industries established in the former tribal areas have become a powerful mafia against which action has become necessary. He said factories have been set up in different country cities, including Islamabad.

Minister Salik meets Adillah company officials

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Friday visited the office of Adillah company/Maktab Asnaad Al-Mutakamil on invitation of its CEO to discuss Hajj related matters particularly departure of 'advanced caravans' of Pakistani pilgrims today from Madinah to Makkah. Adillah, a service provider company, is responsible for dealing with all hajj related/pilgrim welfare affairs including passport collection, departure of Hajjaj from Madinah to Makkah, visit to Riazu Janah, accommodation and transport facilities. During the visit, the minister held a meeting with CEO of Adillah Company Esam Danyati and discussed the ongoing Hajj operation in detail. The Adillah CEO appreciated the Pakistan Hajj Mission administration for making comprehensive arrangements to facilitate pilgrims, hoping "This year's pilgrimage will be one of the best experiences, better-management wise.—APP

RCCI 16th APCPC joint declaration, demands consultation before budget

RAWALPINDI: The two-day 16th All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference under the auspices of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) issued a joint statement in a press conference here on Thursday. The joint declaration states that if the Chambers and the business community are not consulted before presenting the budget, the Chambers will reject it. It expressed hope that the government will involve the Chambers in the consultation process in the fiscal budget 2024-25. The term of presidents of chambers should be one year instead of two years. FBR should set targets to increase tax net instead of tax, 22% interest rate is a major obstacle to economic growth and industrialization, it should be reduced to single digit in a phased manner. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq, while addressing the press conference said that Businessmen and taxpayers should be respected, all income regardless of source should be taxable under the uniform framework. There is a need to increase trade and better relations with neighboring countries, and regional trade should be promoted. The joint declaration also demanded enabling one window operation to remove barriers to the business community. It also urged all political parties to sign the Charter of Economy. Green energy should be promoted as an alternative energy to reduce business costs. The chamber presidents and representatives of the four provinces of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan participated in the conference. The conference discussed the annual budget, depreciation of the rupee, increase in production cost, high prices of petroleum products, electricity and gas, promoting solar installation, federal and provincial taxes.—DNA

Transworld petition against CCP disposed of

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has allowed the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) to proceed with its enquiry against M/s Transworld Associates (Private) Limited for alleged abuse of dominant position. The CCP initiated the enquiry and sent letters to M/s Transworld regarding its suspected abuse of dominant position, potentially violating Section 3 of the Competition Act, 2010. M/s Transworld had challenged the CCP's letters in court and obtained a stay order, halting the CCP from concluding its enquiry. During the court proceedings, the CCP informed the court that it had internally concluded that the complaint against Transworld raised suspicions of breaching Section 3 of the Act, warranting an enquiry. The Court recognized the CCP's stance and allowed it to continue with the enquiry. However, it directed the CCP to communicate with Transworld by issuing a rectification letter, outlining the gist of the reasons for initiating the enquiry as held by the Honourable Supreme Court in the Dalda Foods Case. In Dalda Foods Judgment, the Supreme Court of Pakistan upheld the CCP's statutory powers regarding the gathering of information and conducting of enquiries.—APP

Sanaulah urges political parties to play constructive role

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaulah Friday asked Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman that he must come to the 'negotiation table' if he believed in democracy and the supremacy of the law. Talking to a private news channel, he said that any attempt to create chaos and anarchy through agitation would be resisted, adding that the government would neither permit anyone to cross the limits of democratic freedom nor allow misuse of democratic rights to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere of the country. He urged all political parties, including the JUI-F party, to play a constructive role for democracy in parliament. He again invited opposition parties to hold "unconditional talks" with the government, saying, "Negotiations are the best part of the democratic process, and complex problems are resolved when two sides hear each other.—APP

Role of schools in promoting online safety for children

MUHAMMAD FAROOQ

In this digital era where the internet is filled with endless possibilities and opportunities for children and youngsters, there are new challenges exposing our children and putting their safety and well-being at great risk. The matter of worries is that parents and educators who are directly associated with children and considered decision makers for their children, are not well aware of these risks, hence not adopting related preventive measures, which have put millions of children in danger. In Pakistan, there are 0.3 million schools. Most of the schools, especially Government schools are already facing challenges in imparting quality education and are not well equipped in imparting digital literacy program; hence, students studying in government schools are potentially more exposed to online dangers, even more than physical dangers, due to not having proper digital literacy programs. Schools, where students typically spend a significant portion of their time, can play a pivotal role in fostering a safer online environment for children. By implementing the following additional measures, they can empower students to navigate the digital world with confidence and awareness: Schools, besides concentrating on subjective knowledge, skills, and

attitudes also need to include comprehensive digital literacy curriculum covering age-appropriate guidelines for students on topics such as types of online risks, tips for responsible online behavior, ethics of using digital space, knowledge about local laws to avoid legal consequences, content reporting mechanisms w.r.t removal of unlawful content and initiating legal action is essential to be made part of online safety curriculum. Almost every school has connected its computer lab to the internet, and students also access the internet via their cell phones. It is imperative to set clear guidelines and rules for use of internet at school's lab as well as us of mobile internet within in school boundaries. This would help developing good online habits that demonstrate good ethical behavior/attitude among students and avoiding indulging students into cybercrime like bullying and harassing other students, accessing inappropriate/unlawful content, posting/forwarding fake/disinformation without verification and unethical communication. Schools can play a pivotal role in sensitizing parents and caregivers about prevailing online hazards by communicating them about their child's abnormal attitude/online behaviors like declining in class performance, lack of interest in studies and other physical activities, loneliness, showing ag-

gression in attitude etc. Schools can also play a significant role in improving parents' digital literacy and online safety skills by offering online safety material, organizing seminars, workshops, and informational sessions for parents'/caregivers' guidance. Facilitating open communication and bridging the gap between students and parents which is crucial in preventing children from connecting with online groomers/predators. There are many technical tools/solutions which provide a layer of protection against online risks by filtering unlawful content and are considered an essential component for promoting online safe environment. Schools should utilize technical tools equipped with essential features such as blocking unwanted websites, limiting screen time, and sharing students' browsing history with parents. This not only ensures the safety of students during school hours but also assists in identifying those who may be engaging in risky online behavior. Usually, child who is victim of online danger may demonstrate significant change in his behavior, mood, physical well-being, academic performance, lack of interest in physical games, avoiding friends etc. In such situation child needs timely and proper counselling so as to bring him back to a normal life and avoid taking severe step leading to committing suicide. In cas-

es where students exhibit abnormal behavior or attitude, schools should communicate with parents and arrange proper counseling for the victimized child. This support helps the child cope with the emotional impact, take appropriate actions, return to normalcy, and prevent drastic measures such as contemplating suicide. The digital landscape is continuously evolving hence schools must keep themselves updated with the latest online risks & technologies to mitigate these risks. PTA realizing the importance in matter has taken all necessary measures to enhance awareness, particularly among children, parents, and caregivers. In pursuit of this goal, the PTA signed MoUs with UNICEF Pakistan and TikTok last year, focusing on collaborative efforts in child online protection. Under this partnership, the PTA has recently released online safety guidelines for students and parents, which are readily accessible for download on the PTA website. Furthermore, PTA acknowledges online safety as a global issue and believes that collaboration between countries can effectively address this concern. To this end, numerous collaborations with international partners are in progress. Once finalized, these partnerships will facilitate reaching out to a maximum number of students and their parents, helping to mitigate online risks.

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Financial Armageddon

THE United States has struck another blow at free trade. This week, US President Joe Biden announced wide-ranging tariff increases, including to 100 per cent for Chinese electric vehicles, 50 per cent for semiconductors and solar cells, and 25 per cent for certain batteries, gloves, and steel and aluminium products. This comes after US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen decried China's "overcapacity" during her visit to the country last month. It feels like any state that dares to challenge Western dominance in any field can expect to face a barrage of weaponised tariffs and other containment measures. In April, the US passed a law forcing Chinese parent company ByteDance to divest itself of TikTok or face a ban on the app. The world waits for China's next move in this tit-for-tat rivalry. In a year of US electioneering excesses, if either side loses its cool, we could be on our way to a nuclear war. There are signs that the great powers are preparing for an unbound war, in which competition means a no-holds-barred retaliation against any move seen as an existential threat. Despite the demonising of non-Western leaders, their behaviour is far more rational than the sabre-rattling rhetoric of their Western counterparts. A sober reading of the conflicts in the Middle East shows that it is the West that is being emotional, whereas the Middle Eastern countries excluding Israel are being rational and strategically patient despite the atrocities in Gaza. Britain was able to finance its Napoleonic wars because it could raise long-term bonds, but by fighting two world wars to exhaustion and debt, it forfeited the sterling's reserve currency status to the US dollar. Thus in Russia, where defence expenditure is rising, President Vladimir Putin has just appointed an economist as his new defence minister. US defence spending, which is higher than the combined spending of the next nine biggest military spenders, is also looking problematic. The US not only accounts for 40 per cent of the world's military expenditure but also 40 per cent of global bond markets and 40 per cent of the world's market capitalisation. In the financial year so far, the country has spent more on debt interest than on defence and health insurance; the US is funding its military spending with debt. So what would it mean for global financial markets if the dominant global power was to fight – and lose – a war? In present-day warfare, even before reaching the nuclear stage, the expectation is that each side will seek to cut the other's undersea cables, which carry the bulk of internet traffic, and attempt to blind the other by destroying space communications satellites. With the internet down, the world can say goodbye to digital currencies and financial transactions as we know it. Cloud computing is unlikely to survive in this extreme scenario. The only asset with no counterparty risk is physical gold, provided you have it within your national borders. All other financial assets that thrive in digital markets may disappear because the underlying infrastructure will be gone. Those who play with fire by curbing real trade and spreading financial sanctions do not seem to understand that along that way lies mutually assured destruction. It would be too much to hope that the silly season will end once the US presidential election concludes in November. Former president Donald Trump has promised to increase tariffs on Chinese cars to 200 per cent if he is elected.

Syrian refugees ...



Israeli settler violence

IN the latest example of moral bankruptcy, Zionist settlers set fire to the UNRWA headquarters in Al Quds in the occupied West Bank. The bigoted arsonists threw flammable materials on parts of the outer square of the premises which is located in the predominantly Palestinian neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. This is the third time the UNRWA headquarters was attacked and prompted the agency's Commissioner General, Philippe Lazzarini to shut down the facility until the occupation forces guarantee their security. These settler attacks, however, reveal another dimension to "Israel's" ongoing genocide, which is alarming, abhorrent, and warrants greater coverage. The dimension deals with Israeli settlers given a free hand by this far-right, racist, fascist and totalitarian government of Benjamin Netanyahu who is leveraging them to weaponize starvation for Palestinian elimination. Since October 7, the occupation regime has allowed settler violence against Palestinians and their sympathizers, with impunity. Settlers who were already notorious for ruthlessness and the illegal killings of a besieged population are now visibly more pronounced in their murderous tendencies and proclivities. Such tendencies were previously witnessed during the 2021 flare-up of Palestinians against the occupation which was the product of Arab residents in the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah protesting against the impending decision of the Zionist regime's Supreme Court on the planned eviction of six Arab families. The anticipated, impending, eviction was despite the apex court of "Israel" lacking jurisdiction on occupied territory. The Sheikh Jarrah agitation followed the visit of one of the staunchest advocates of Israeli settler expansion, current Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben Gvir. In 2022, Ben Gvir pulled out a gun against the protesting Palestinian residents and called for the radical reoccupation of Gaza and the West Bank by urging migration of Jewish settlers on Palestinian land. Since October 7, Gvir incited fatal attacks by approving 100,000-gun licenses to settlers which resulted in the fatal shooting of a Palestinian citizen in the West Bank in March 2024. Settlers though, are being allowed to attack aid convoys and decimate relief efforts with occupation police forces becoming silent bystanders watching as aid is looted in broad daylight. Arrests have only taken place after significant coverage of the heinous crime in international media and by the HRW. The police too, have been given blanket approval from the Netanyahu government to not stop settlers and their nefarious designs which is eerily similar to how the state government of Gujarat under current Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi allowed Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and other Hindutva groups to kill, maim, burn and uproot the local Muslim population during the state wide 2002 riots in which more than a thousand Muslims died. To date, many scholars consider the 2002 riots in India to be state-sponsored genocide. Even prior to October 7, Israeli settlers benefitted from government subsidies and reduced rates of land occupation in settlements such as Ariel and Beitar Illit. They have also engaged in a controversial 'price tag' policy which involves attacking Palestinian Arabs, Christians and left-wing Jews to 'exact a price' in compensation for justified actions against their settlement enterprise. Settler youths indoctrinated by far-right-wing Zionists such as Dov Lior are also seen quoting Talmudic texts out of context with bizarre justifications to kill Arabs and Muslims in the name of Judaism.

Gulf states as mediators in the India-Pakistan conflict

Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The intensifying rivalry between China and the United States in the Middle East and South Asia has significantly heightened regional insecurities while simultaneously presenting unforeseen opportunities for reconciliation. As China seeks to challenge American dominance in the Middle East, India, too, endeavors to expand its influence to counterbalance China's growing presence in the region. India's collaboration with Iran, exemplified by its investment in the Chabahar seaport, has emerged as a direct challenge to China's investment in Gwadar via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

IN recent years, Pakistan has made concerted efforts to strengthen its ties with Iran although hindered by American sanctions on Iran and concerns regarding cross-border militancy. The prospect of being drawn into Saudi-Iranian proxy conflicts has further complicated Pakistan's diplomatic stance, notably demonstrated by its 2015 parliamentary decision against joining the Saudi-led coalition aimed at combating the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen and reinstating Yemen's internationally recognized government. This neutrality in Yemen's conflict was a difficult choice for Pakistan, given its historically strong relationship with Saudi Arabia which has provided crucial diplomatic and financial support, particularly during times of international isolation following Pakistan's nuclearization in response to India's tests in 1998. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan's efforts to foster alliances with Muslim-majority countries such as Qatar, Turkey and Malaysia have strained Pakistan's ties with traditional Gulf allies, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These tensions have inadvertently allowed India to enhance its trade and security relations with the Gulf States. While India's engagement with the Gulf historically revolved around energy imports and labor exports, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought to deepen bilateral ties, both economically and strategically, with countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iran. Pakistan, recognizing the shifting dynamics, has attempted to mitigate strains with its traditional Gulf partners. For instance, former Army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif assumed leadership of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition, comprising 42 nations, in 2017. However, Prime Minister Khan's decision to forgo participation in the alternative Muslim Summit in Malaysia in 2019, seen as a challenge to Saudi leadership, failed to fully assuage tensions. Meanwhile, India's growing clout in the region

was underscored by the UAE's decision to confer its highest civil honor on Prime Minister Modi, even amidst controversy over India's Citizenship Amendment Act, which discriminates against Muslim refugees. Despite Pakistan's pleas, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have refrained from openly opposing India's actions, including the revocation of Kashmir's special status in 2019. However, the fluidity of bilateral relations in the region suggests that these dynamics are subject to change. The interplay between major Middle Eastern powers and South Asian states, particularly India and Pakistan, is increasingly influenced by broader strategic considerations amidst the emerging great power competition between China and the United States. As such, the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East and South Asia remains in flux, with implications for regional stability and global power dynamics.

The intensifying rivalry between China and the United States in the Middle East and South Asia has significantly heightened regional insecurities while simultaneously presenting unforeseen opportunities for reconciliation. As China seeks to challenge American dominance in the Middle East, India, too, endeavors to expand its influence to counterbalance China's growing presence in the region. India's collaboration with Iran, exemplified by its investment in the Chabahar seaport, has emerged as a direct challenge to China's investment in Gwadar via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Conversely, China's substantial investment plans in Iran signal its ambition to deepen ties in the region, further solidifying its status as Iran's largest trade partner and facilitating Iran's integration into influential regional blocs. Despite Pakistan's aspirations to mediate between Iran and Saudi Arabia, China achieved a significant breakthrough by brokering the restoration of diplomatic ties between the two Middle Eastern rivals. Amid escalating regional tensions triggered by conflicts such

as the Gaza war, Saudi Arabia and the UAE demonstrate a willingness to de-escalate tensions with Iran rather than exploit them for strategic advantage. Recent efforts to repair ties between Iran and Pakistan, following tensions sparked by missile exchanges, reflect a renewed commitment to enhancing bilateral relations and fostering security cooperation. While the US appears open to increased Saudi and UAE investments in Pakistan, it is concerned about Islamabad's growing reliance on Beijing. With the US bolstering military cooperation with India to counter China, its neutrality in potential Indo-Pakistani crises is increasingly questioned. Consequently, the US may encourage regional actors with influence over both India and Pakistan to establish crisis management mechanisms to prevent cross-border escalation. Secret talks facilitated by the UAE between Indian and Pakistani intelligence officials, along with Saudi statements advocating dialogue on the Kashmir dispute, suggest a regional push for conflict resolution. While Indian media views such statements as endorsing its stance against third-party involvement in Kashmir, Pakistan interprets them as a show of solidarity against India's reluctance to engage in Kashmir talks. Despite diplomatic overtures, challenges persist, including India's upcoming elections and the delicate security situation in Kashmir. Despite the potential benefits of reconciliation for India and Pakistan, the current political climate may not favor immediate rapprochement. India's domestic politics and security concerns, coupled with ongoing tensions in Kashmir, present obstacles to meaningful dialogue. However, incremental confidence-building measures and continued international encouragement, particularly from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the US, could pave the way for constructive engagement between India and Pakistan, reducing Pakistan's dependence on China and fostering regional stability and cooperation of the Middle East and South Asia.

“Russia embraces China: US watches closely”

Qamar Bashir



This visit was also a show of strength and resilience against US sanctions imposed on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine and on China for flooding the US market with cost-effective industrial products, especially solar panels, new electric vehicles, lithium batteries, semiconductors, and clean energy products, alongside charges of industrial espionage

CHINESE President Xi welcomed Russian President Vladimir Putin with great fanfare to deepen their "strategic partnership" based on national interests. He expressed his resolve to pursue a "no limits" partnership, unimpaired by US threats communicated by Joe Biden during their summit meeting in California. These threats were later reiterated by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and US Secretary of State Tony Blinken. They warned China that there would be "significant consequences" if Chinese companies supported Russia's war against Ukraine. They also demanded that China refrain from deepening its bilateral defense and defense production ties with Russia. While setting aside the US warning, President Putin marks his first visit to a foreign country since he was sworn in for a six-year term, sending a clear message to the world about his priorities and the depth of his personal relationship with Xi. Putin declared the visit to be of an unprecedentedly high level for the strategic partnership between the two countries undeterred by attempts made by the US and EU to create a wedge between them. This visit was also a signal that they are ready to face the US position, which casts China as its biggest competitor and has labeled the Russia-China bilateral relations as the defining factor in an existential contest between democracies and autocracies. While defining the aims of his visit, the Russian President touched the raw nerves of the USA and Europe when he stated that both countries would establish closer cooperation in various fields, including industry and high technology, space and peaceful nuclear energy, artificial intelligence, renewable energy sources, quantum computing, synthetic biology, espionage, hard military power, energy, trade, and innovative sectors. This visit was also a show of strength and resilience against US sanctions imposed on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine and on China for flooding the US market with cost-effective industrial products, especially solar panels, new electric vehicles, lithium batteries, semiconductors, and clean energy products, alongside charges of industrial espionage. In pre-visit media briefings, both countries expressed their desire to further boost

their record \$240 billion (\$\$323.7 billion) trade from last year, marking a 26 percent increase from the previous year. This trade spans various goods, ranging from cars and industrial machinery to smartphones, and includes billions of dollars' worth of Russian energy exports. Interestingly, following the Ukraine war, relations between the two countries have strengthened, as have Beijing's geopolitical ambitions. The upsurge in trade received a significant boost when European suppliers ceased the supply of technologically advanced industrial goods critical to maintaining Russian industries at full capacity due to sanctions. China stepped in to successfully fill the gap with high-quality and cost-effective substitutes, which alleviated many of Russia's woes. Simultaneously, this shift also compensated for Chinese losses in the US market. This newfound opportunity propelled Chinese exports to Russia to a new level, particularly in key critical technologies. These exports directly or indirectly helped Russia remain strong in industrial and defense sectors despite the depletion of its resources due to the protracted Russia-Ukraine war. However, China's defiance did not go unnoticed, and its invitation to the Russian President incurred consequences. US President Joe Biden unveiled steep tariff hikes on Chinese green technologies this week, impacting imports such as electric vehicles, chips, and solar cells. This move added stress to US-China ties and affected Chinese exports to the US, amounting to \$18 billion. The recent tariff increase is in addition to the levies already imposed on Chinese EVs, prompting automakers to avoid the US market. The new increase raises the tariff level from 25 percent to 100 percent, thereby impacting the sales and profitability of some Chinese companies. Under US pressure, the EU is expected to adopt a similarly strong posture in its own China tariff review, which is forthcoming. The European Union launched an inquiry into Chinese electric car subsidies last year, fearing a threat to Europe's auto industry. This could result in a tariff hike from the current 10 percent. While reacting to the US tariff hike, China warned the US that it would "take resolute measures" to defend its interests, beginning with announcing export con-

trols on two rare metals essential for the manufacture of semiconductors. This visit is also significant because, out of the many proposed solutions, plans, and suggestions put forward by various countries and geopolitical experts to end the Russian-Ukraine crisis, the most acceptable to Russia was the solution proposed by President Xi Jinping. He presented this proposal during his meeting with German Chancellor Scholz in Beijing on April 16, suggesting that all parties involved in the Ukraine crisis should abide by four principles: not seeking personal gain, not adding fuel to the fire, not further intensifying conflicts, and not undermining the stability of global industrial and supply chains. While declaring President Xi's proposal the most reasonable, Putin asserted that Russia has never refused negotiations for a political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis and is open to dialogue on the issue. However, in the same breath, he criticized the West for attempting to "punish," isolate, and weaken Russia, and for providing funds and weapons to Ukraine. The remarkable political maturity demonstrated by Chinese leadership in achieving its political objectives without engaging in a cold war with the US or the West is noteworthy. The outstanding diplomatic maneuvering and positioning of China's Foreign Minister have successfully navigated through traps, snarls, and obstacles set by the US and its allies. The success of its Belt and Road Initiative, which breached \$1.053 trillion in 2023, spanning 149 countries, showcases China's diplomatic prowess. Furthermore, China's innovation capabilities have surpassed those of the US and Europe in many fields. Its economy stands as the largest trading partner of 120 countries, conducting business with nations regardless of their political affiliations. China's growing role as an economic enabler extends to a wide range of countries, including those antagonistic to the US-led West, such as Russia, Belarus, Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela. China has developed top-notch expertise across various sectors and spheres, positioning itself to potentially rival the US as a broker of peace in conflict-ridden regions. This could start with its role in resolving the Russia-Ukraine crisis and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Briefs

SC issues show-cause notices...

FROM PAGE 01
The IHC's public relations officer in the statement had said: "Justice Babar Sattar has never had any nationality other than that of Pakistan. He studied law at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar and pursued graduate education at Harvard Law School. He worked as a lawyer with a law firm in New York and while living and working in the US, was issued the Permanent Resident Card (also called green card) after being regarded as a person of extraordinary ability. He left his job in the US in 2005 and returned to Pakistan and has lived and worked in Pakistan since then."

Court fails to testify...

FROM PAGE 01
Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail. The judge remarked that the May 15 hearing was deferred. Bushra Bibi went on to say that she was not a prisoner in the NCA scandal case but she was jailed due to "injustice". After Bushra's remarks, Imran came to the rostrum and asked his spouse to go with him to the family corner. However, she chose not to meet even her daughters who were sitting next to Imran's sisters. She met her daughters when a separate room was given to them.

Pak-China agree on...

FROM PAGE 01
self-determination as guaranteed by the UN Security Council's resolutions. Highlighting the diplomatic engagements that took place during the last week, the spokesperson started with the visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar to China to co-chair the Fifth Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, where he also met with Chinese vice premier, and ministers for IDPC and finance and others.

Out on bail, Kejriwal...

FROM PAGE 01
all my might," he told a jubilant crowd soon after walking out of Delhi's Tihar jail, clearly referring to Modi. Kejriwal is part of the INDIA alliance led by the Congress party and one of its biggest crowd-pullers. Analysts say while his campaigning will give fresh impetus to the opposition, they are unsure if that will translate into any significant victories against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is tipped to return to power. Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is in power in the Delhi region and in the northern state of Punjab, which together account for just 20 seats in parliament, out of the 543 being contested.

Taliban supreme...

FROM PAGE 01
Akhundzada, of whom only one photo has been publicly circulated, rarely appears in public, ruling by decree from a secretive compound in the southern city of Kandahar. His cabinet, however, sits in the capital Kabul, from where they implement his decisions. The purpose of the visit was likely about "enforcing internal discipline and unity," a Western diplomat told AFP, adding that it could be motivated by the unrest in Badakhshan in eastern Afghanistan.

USIP warns of terrorist...

FROM PAGE 01
The report indicates that the Taliban provides these groups with financial support, arms, weapons, and secret hideouts. The USIP recommends several measures to combat this threat, including increased military and intelligence operations and enhanced counter-terrorism cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

COAS commends Pak hockey team for fine performance

Says the team has brought immense pride to the nation

AFZAL JAVED

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir received the Pakistan hockey team at the General Headquarters (GHQ) Rawalpindi on Friday. The meeting was also attended by Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) President Tariq Hussain and other PHF officials, the Inter-Services Public Relations said in a statement. During the interaction, the COAS commended the team for their outstanding performance, stating, "The hockey team has brought immense pride to the nation, and we are committed to providing them with comprehensive support to ensure their continued success." He extended his best wishes to the players for their future endeavours. The PHF president expressed gratitude to the COAS for meeting and interacting with the team. Pakistan reached the final of the Azlan Shah Cup 2024 for the first time in 13 years. The team won silver medal in the tournament as Japan bagged gold medal by winning the final match. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz



Sharif expressed his optimism about the revival of hockey in the country at a ceremony held to honour the Pakistan hockey team for their outstanding performance in Azlan Shah tournament. He commended the team for its remarkable display on the field, emphasising that their achievement had made the nation proud. The ceremony was attended by prominent figures including Federal Information Minister Atta Tarar, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, and former hockey players Shahbaz Senior, Samiullah, and Olympian Islahuddin. PM Shehbaz Sharif greeted the players of the hockey team and honoured them for their excellent performance. A few days earlier, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz invited the national hockey team to the Chief Minister's office and gave them a cheque of Rs30 million for winning a silver medal. The chief minister congratulated the players and appreciated their performance in Malaysia. The CM said, "Hockey is not only our national sport but also a national pride." She added that hockey players would be supported and patronised at every level.

Italian Open 2024

Swiatek, Sabalenka set up blockbuster final in Rome

SPORTS DESK

ROME: World No.1 Iga Swiatek and Aryna Sabalenka are set to clash in the blockbuster final of the Italian Open 2024 women's singles on Saturday, May 18. It was only earlier this month that the top seeds played in the final of the Madrid Open at Manolo Santana. In the first semi-final of the day in Rome on Thursday, Swiatek took down young Coco Gauff in straight sets, winning the match 6-4, 6-3. Swiatek earned 4 breaks of serve to get the better of Gauff and extended her lead against the American star to 10-1. Later in the day, Sabalenka defeated USA's Danielle Collins, who will be retiring at the end of the season. The Belarusian won the match 7-5, 6-2. Sabalenka looked a tad nervous in the first set, but she kept marching once she found her rhythm. She broke

Collins' serve 4 times and stamped her authority on the match. Aryna Sabalenka on facing Iga Swiatek in Rome final. "Does this rivalry give you extra motivation?" Aryna: "Definitely. I really like our tough battles. It's always close matches. I really enjoy playing against her. It's always high level tennis. Hopefully we bring our best." pic.twitter.com/W1yB2rWYjG - The Tennis Letter (@TheTennisLetter) May 16, 2024

have shared a healthy rivalry since they first met in the 2021 WTA Finals. Sabalenka won the match 2-6, 6-2, 7-5. But since then, Swiatek has dominated and is leading her opponent 7-3. In finals, the Pole is leading 3-1 against the World No.2. Sabalenka had a great chance of beating Swiatek as she had 3 championship points in the final in Madrid. However, after loads of twists and turns, Sabalenka lost the match 5-7, 6-4, 6-7 (7-9). Swiatek and



Shaheen aims to win T20 World Cup

LAHORE: Pakistan's fast bowler Shaheen Afridi has expressed his determination to win the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup 2024, after falling short in the last two editions. Afridi was part of Pakistan's squad that reached the semi-final and final of the 2021 and 2022 World Cups respectively. The 24-year-old pacer during a recent appearance on PCB Podcast, also opened up about the team dynamics and denied any disharmony or rift within the team. "Sometimes, small disagreements happen in every family, even among brothers. But there's nothing like that in our team," Afridi said. He also emphasized that the Pakistan team is at a crucial juncture with the mega-event approaching, and the players are focused on giving their best for the team. "Our aim is to play with unity, and this is not the time for arguments or disputes; it's the time for everyone to be on the same page," he added. Talking about his own form and fitness, the star pacer shared that he is fit and committed to lifting the coveted trophy for Pakistan. "Mood is also good and fitness is also good. I am ready and hopeful that we will win the T20 World Cup," Shaheen Afridi remarked. He also opened up about his conversation with newly appointed white-ball head coach Gary Kirsten, who is set to join the team in England on May 19. - DNA

WEB DESK

BANGKOK: Brazil was declared host of the 2027 Women's World Cup after winning a vote at the annual FIFA Congress on Friday, beating the joint bid of Belgium, Netherlands and Germany to become the first South American country picked to stage the tournament. Brazil won with 119 votes versus 78 for the joint European entry, boosted by a technical evaluation from world governing body FIFA that gave a high score for its commercial plan and stadiums purpose-built for the 2014 Men's World Cup. "We knew we would be celebrating a victory for South American women's soccer and for women," said Ednaldo Rodrigues, president of the Brazilian Football Confederation. "You can be sure, with no vanity, we will accomplish the best World Cup for women." The Congress in Bangkok heard a call by FIFA for all members to implement mandatory sanctions to tackle racist abuse. There was also a Pales-

Brazil picked to host 2027 Women's World Cup

stinian proposal to suspend the Israel Football Association (IFA), accusing it of multiple violations of FIFA statutes, including over the war in Gaza and inclusion in Israel's leagues of teams located in Palestinian territory. Since an Oct. 7 cross-border raid by Hamas-led gunmen that Israel says killed more than 1,200 people, the offensive in Gaza has left more than 35,000 Palestinians dead, according to Gaza health officials. FIFA President Gianni Infantino said an urgent legal assessment of the Palestinian allegations would be undertaken and the FIFA Council would convene an extraordinary Congress in late July to address the issue. He said he was extremely shocked by both the Oct. 7 attack and the devastation in Gaza, adding: "I pray for all those people who suffer unimaginably." The president of the Palestinian

Football Association (PFA), Jibril Rajoub, had accused the IFA of racism and discrimination, in a proposal that alleged complicity in its failure to condemn the operations in Gaza. The IFA rejected that. "FIFA cannot afford to remain indifferent to these violations or the ongoing genocide in Palestine," Rajoub told the Congress. "I ask you to stand on the right side of history... If not now, when?" Israeli counterpart Shino Moshe Zures said the proposal had nothing to do with football and the IFA had broken no rules. "Once again, we are facing a cynical political and hostile attempt by the PFA to harm Israel," he said. "I am holding myself back ... in the hope things can be better for the game for those who play in Israel, the Palestinian authority, or those who play all over the world."

Pakistan clinch C. Asian volleyball c'ship title

The home side won the game with a scoreline of 3-1

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan have defeated Turkmenistan in the final of the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) Nation's Volleyball League at the Liaquat Gymnasium in Islamabad today. Pakistan claimed a 3-1 win with set scores of 25-21, 25-19, 20-25, and 25-14. The home side showcased strong offensive and defensive strategies, securing early leads in the first two sets. Turkmenistan made a comeback in the third set, taking it 25-20. However, Pakistan regained control in the fourth set, decisively winning 25-14 to clinch the match. Earlier, Kyrgyzstan won the third place game by beating Sri Lanka 3-1. Kyrgyzstan had kept dominance in the first two sets, claiming by 25-20 and 25-17. But, the



Ambassador of Azerbaijan and Russia are watching the final.



Lankans made a comeback and claimed the third set by 20-25. Kyrgyzstan eventually had the fourth set by a margin of 25-23. It must be noted Pakistan remained unbeaten throughout the competition, beating every team in the competition. Pakistan overcame Iran with a 3-1 victory to register their consecutive fifth win on May 16. The set scores were 25-18, 23-25, 25-16, and 25-20, showcasing Pakistan's strong performance. They made a place in the final on May 15 after beating Kyrgyzstan 3-0 in their fourth match. They defeated Afghanistan in their opening match on May 11 by 3-0. Their second win in the tournament came against Sri Lanka as the team defeated their opponents 3-0 on May 12, Sunday. Their third match was against Turkmenistan, which they won 3-1 on May 13.

CM Gandapur gives centre 15 days to...

FROM PAGE 01

And CM Gandapur gave key decisions regarding the welfare of the people of the province. After finalizing the draft, CM Gandapur said that the new annual development program will be based on wider public interest rather than any political expediency. He said the development program will include feasible projects which will be completed within the stipulated time frame. He claimed the annual development program will include realistic plans for public welfare instead of mere paperwork and all of ongoing development projects will be completed in the first priority. KP CM said focus of the govt will be on improving the delivery of public services in remote areas including the newly merged districts. He said special attention will be given to green energy initiatives to tackle the current energy crisis. The Chief Minister said steps will be taken to shift all government offices and educational institutions to solar energy.

Maryam attends Elite Force..

FROM PAGE 01

Shehbaz Sharif. Maryam graced the ceremony at the Elite Force Training Centre in Bedian as the chief guest, donned in an elite force police uniform. The chief minister inspected the parade which was also attended by members of her cabinet and the Punjab inspector general. Later, the chief minister addressed the ceremony where she expressed her delight on being at the parade. She congratulated the successful police cadets, saying she was encouraged to see their passing-out parade as the chief minister. Addressing the cadets, Maryam said, "I am one of you. I have come to the [passing-out parade] ceremony wearing your uniform. This is not a uniform, but an emblem of national service very few people are honoured to have." Maryam, on the occasion, announced cash prizes for the top performers. The chief minister, addressing the girl cadets, stated that their parents trusted them and dedicated them [their daughters] to the national service.

Restricting livestream on Khan's...

FROM PAGE 01

practice spoke volume of his discriminatory and prejudiced behavior and sought answer from him as to why the tradition of livestream was changed in a very discriminatory manner on the appearance of Imran Khan. He said that the issue of NAB amendment was not about Imran Khan personal interests but about the protection of resources of 24 crore Pakistanis, strengthening the state's system against corruption, and safeguarding the overall national interests, adding that after the Panama and Pandora leaks, the latest Dubai leaks also proved that Imran Khan was the only national leader in this country with transparent financial record, whose life, death, wealth and property all were in Pakistan.

Govt not stopped from blocking...

FROM PAGE 01

IHC had issued a stay order on a petition filed by a mobile operator challenging the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) move. The development came days after the FBR and telecom operators agreed on blocking SIMs of non-filers as part of the government's bid to curb tax evasion to improve revenue generation amid dire economic indicators. After lengthy deliberations among the stakeholders, the FBR announced earlier this month that telecom companies have agreed to commence the manual blocking process of SIMs in small batches until their systems are fully equipped to automate it. The tax collection body had said that the first batch comprising 5,000 non-filers had been communicated to the telecom operators and that more batches would be sent to telcos on a daily basis.

Briefs

Australian
envoy meets
law minister
Tarar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner Mr. Neil Hawkins called on Minister for Law And Justice And Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar. During the meeting, a broad range of issues including bilateral relationships, upholding human rights, and strengthening the rule of law came under discussion. The honorable Minister shared that the Ministry of Human Rights has requested Provincial Governments to strengthen Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women by financial and human resource allocation in order to improve Pakistan's standing on gender parity index. He further added that the Ministry of Human Rights is also striving for structural reforms to protect rights of minorities. The honorable Minister also emphasized the adoption of an inclusive approach for mainstreaming of the vulnerable segments of the society particularly transgender community of Pakistan. In the end Both sides agreed to continue support for promotion of tolerance, religious freedom and respect.—APP

Minister calls
for boosting
imports at
Gwadar port

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, presided over a pivotal meeting aimed at boosting import activities at Gwadar Port, emphasizing the government's commitment to economic growth and regional development in Balochistan. Federal Secretary Maritime Affairs, Representatives from Ministry of Finance, Industries & Production, Fisheries Department, Ministry of Commerce attended the meeting. Federal Minister stressed the strategic importance of Gwadar Port as a key player of Pakistan's economic prosperity and emphasized the need for concerted efforts to enhance import operations. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to this cause, citing directives from the Prime Minister to take decisive measures to enhance the import of government goods through Gwadar Port. Furthermore, the Federal Minister emphasized the significance of previous decisions made by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and the directives of the Prime Minister in 2008 and 2022, respectively.

OGDCL
announces
production
plan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has announced a significant production enhancement at Nashpa Well-10, located in the Karak District of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as part of its production enhancement campaign. Through a production enhancement strategy, OGDCL has implemented rigless intervention techniques in various formations, resulting in a significant increase in hydrocarbon production. With the successful optimization, the cumulative production from the well now stands at an impressive 1870 BPD of oil and 7.02 MMSCFD of gas. The extracted gas is being efficiently injected into the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNG-PL) network. Prior to the production enhancement, the well had been producing 1700 BPD of oil and 2.45 MMSCFD of gas. The Nashpa-10 production is projected to save \$30.67 million annually in foreign exchange as import substitution for the country.



MUZZAFFARABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.—DNA

UN chief reaffirms call to
Israel to halt Rafah assault

Food and fuel stocks will run out in a matter of days," WFP warned in a social media post on X. "Since 6 May, we have not been able to access and receive aid from the Kerem Shalom crossing. The situation is becoming unsustainable"

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reiterated his warning Thursday against Israel's planned full-scale assault on Rafah, just as aid teams issued increasingly urgent appeals for a safe passage throughout Gaza, to replenish dangerously low stocks of lifesaving supplies. In a related development, the UN's top court opened its hearing on a new request from South Africa to issue more constraints on Israeli military action in the besieged enclave. In a call for the "immediate and unconditional release of all hostages" still held in Gaza, the Secretary-General told Arab League leaders at a Summit in Manama, Bahrain, that nothing justified the "collective punishment" of Palestinians. "Any assault on Rafah is unacceptable; it would inflict another surge of pain and misery when we need a surge in life-saving aid," he added. Flanked by Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, the UN chief also renewed his strong backing for the UN agency. It "remains the backbone of our

operations in Gaza and a lifeline for Palestine refugees across the region. It needs full support and funding," he stressed, as the UN World Food Programme (WFP) issued a new warning about looming famine in Gaza. "Food and fuel stocks will run out in a matter of days," WFP warned in a social media post on X. "Since 6 May, we have not been able to access and receive aid from the Kerem Shalom crossing. The situation is becoming unsustainable." The UN agency highlighted the very real threat that any further escalation of hostilities in Gaza could bring aid operations "to a complete standstill" and lead to a humanitarian catastrophe. Although WFP has provided special nutritional foods to pregnant and breastfeeding women along with children under five across Gaza, the UN agency said that as of May 11 distributions were suspended in Rafah "and are only ongoing in Khan Younis and Deir El Balah in a limited capacity". In northern Gaza, WFP also warned that rates of acute malnutrition among under two-year-olds "doubled from

15 per cent in January to 30 per cent in March". Humanitarians warn that acute malnutrition is the most deadly form of malnutrition, leaving affected children between three to 12 times more likely to die than a well-nourished child. The dire assessment comes as the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) reported late Wednesday that 600,000 people — one quarter of Gaza's population — have now been forcibly displaced from Rafah in the last week, amid ongoing Israeli military activity and evacuation orders. Another 100,000 people have been uprooted from the north to comply with evacuation orders by the Israeli military, while heavy gun battles have reportedly raged. According to the UN aid coordination office, OCHA, "285 square kilometres, or approximately 78 per cent of the Gaza Strip" are now subject to evacuation orders by the Israeli military. In its latest update, OCHA reported continuing bombardment "from the air, land and sea...across much of the Gaza Strip, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement, and de-

struction of houses and other civilian infrastructure", according to information received at the UN Headquarters in New York. The UN office also confirmed reports of ground incursions and heavy fighting in Jabalia in northern Gaza, as well as in Deir al Balah in central Gaza and eastern Rafah in the south. "As of 15 May, Rafah crossing remains closed. Kerem Shalom crossing is operational, but the prevailing security and logistical conditions are hampering humanitarian aid deliveries at scale," OCHA noted. Echoing those concerns, the WFP insisted that "multiple entry points" for aid were required "to reverse six months of near starvation conditions and avert a famine, steady flows of food supplies, every day and every week...The threat of famine in Gaza never loomed larger." In an effort to halt the military operation in and around the enclave's southern-most city, South Africa filed a new request to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which it was hearing on Thursday. "Urgent provisional measures are required to ensure the survival of Palestinians in

Gaza," the South Africa application said, in its latest claim filed on May 10. "The situation brought about by the Israeli assault on Rafah, and the extreme risk it poses to humanitarian supplies and basic services into Gaza, to the survival of the Palestinian medical system, and to the very survival of Palestinians in Gaza as a group, is not only an escalation of the prevailing situation, but gives rise to new facts that are causing irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people in Gaza." Rafah is "the last refuge" for Gazans, the South Africa petition continued, adding that the city is also the "last viable centre" for shelter and basic services including medical care. The Israeli military's seizure of Rafah crossing and the brief closure and ongoing access problems to nearby Kerem Shalom crossing have blocked the main entry points for lifesaving humanitarian aid to Gaza, South Africa also insisted. "The remaining population and medical facilities are at extreme risk, given the recent evidence of evacuation zones being treated as extermination zones, the mass destruction...—Agencies

Russia says
intercepted
over 100
drones
overnight

MOSCOW: Russia intercepted more than 100 Ukrainian drones overnight in the south of the country and over-annexed Crimea and the Black Sea, Moscow's defence ministry said on Friday. Fifty-one drones were destroyed over Crimea, 44 over the Krasnodar region, six over the Belgorod region, six over the Black Sea and one over the Kursk region, the defence ministry said in a statement. The offensive was one of the largest overnight drone attacks by Ukraine and comes as Russian forces advance along the front line, making their biggest territorial gains in 18 months. Russia's latest offensive has further stretched Ukraine's outgunned and outmanned forces. Moscow seized 278 square kilometres (107 square miles) of Ukrainian territory between May 9 and 15, according to AFP calculations based on data from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) — the largest territorial gain in a single operation since mid-December 2022.—APP

Three
footballers
arrested in
betting probe

SYDNEY: Three footballers in Australia's top-tier A-League were arrested Friday in a betting probe, accused of taking "corrupt" payments from an organised crime figure to manipulate games. Police said a senior player organised for his team-mates to give away penalties and collect yellow cards during matches in late 2023. The player was "acting under the instruction and direction of an organised crime figure currently offshore in South America", NSW assistant police commissioner Michael Fitzgerald told reporters. The player, who was not named by police, paid his team-mates up to US\$6,000 for yellow cards. "We will allege that those players intentionally gave out yellow cards in the receipt, and for the purpose of, a corrupt payment," Fitzgerald said. "All sports fans understand even one penalty can change the way the game flows and also the way the momentum of that game can be carried out," he added. Punters in both Australia and overseas are able to bet on markets such as the number of yellow cards dished out during a game. Police had linked four yellow cards to the alleged payments, which they said "could in fact change the way the result of that game went". Detectives are hoping to interview a fourth player. Working with the help of Britain's Gambling Commission, detectives on Friday arrested a 33-year-old man who they expected to charge with "conduct that corrupts a betting outcome". They also arrested a 32-year-old man and a 27-year-old, who are facing the same charge.—APP

Panel
discussion
on science
diplomacy
held

DNA

BRUSSELS: The Embassy of Pakistan, Brussels, in collaboration with international NGO PATH EU, and EUTOPIA University Consortium, hosted a panel discussion and networking session on "Bridging Silos to Increase Manufacturing Capacity through Science Diplomacy" in line with the ongoing European Public Health Week. In her opening remarks, Ambassador Anna Baloch highlighted the crucial role of science diplomacy in bridging gaps and fostering international partnerships. Emphasizing the shared objectives of Pakistan and the EU in improving health outcomes and driving economic development through enhanced local manufacturing capabilities, the ambassador called for an impactful technology transfers as a pathway to health equity. The panelists for the event included Dr. Rolando Tomasini (Director of Partnership Development, PATH Belgium), Eric Piaget (Science Diplomacy Coordinator for the EUTOPIA University Alliance). — APP

Biden makes new
outreach to Black
voters as support slips

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden is trying to shore up his support among vital Black voters with a series of events starting Thursday, including a visit to the former university of civil rights icon Martin Luther King, Jr. The veteran Democrat relied on African American voters to help him beat Donald Trump in 2020, but some polls show those same voters are increasingly deserting him ahead of November's rematch with the Republican. On Thursday, the 81-year-old Biden marked the 70th anniversary of a famous US Supreme Court ruling that overturned racial segregation in schools by meeting with key figures and relatives of plaintiffs in the case in the Oval Office. That group included Cheryl Brown Henderson, a daughter of Oliver Brown, a plaintiff in the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case that proved a milestone for the US civil rights movement. Biden "recognized that back in the '40s and '50s... the folks that you see here were taking a risk when they signed up to be part of this case," Henderson said after the meeting. On Friday, Biden visits the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington to give remarks to celebrate the anniversary of the Brown decision. Later that day, Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris — the first Black, South Asian and female vice president in US history — will meet leaders from nine historically Black sororities and fraternities. Biden is honoring "the legacy of those who paved the way for progress and hard-fought rights for Black Americans," said White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. "He will also highlight his vision for how we must continue to build on these freedoms," added Jean-Pierre, who is the first Black person to serve in the role. Then on Sunday, Biden will address graduating students at the historically Black Morehouse College in Atlanta.—APP

IEA warns of key energy
mineral shortage risk

PARIS: The sharp drop in prices for minerals critical to the green energy transition is masking a looming shortage due to inadequate investment, the International Energy Agency said Friday. In its inaugural review of the market for such critical materials, the IEA noted prices for minerals key for electric vehicles, wind turbines and solar panels fell back to pre-pandemic levels as supplies caught up with and surpassed demand. While the price drops are good news for consumers, the Paris-based agency which advises advanced economies on energy policy expressed concern it will deter investment needed to meet demand, which is set to soar as many nations try to phase out sales of new internal combustion engine cars in the next decade. It calculated that announced projects will be able to meet only 70 percent of copper and 50 percent of lithium requirements in 2035, in a scenario in which countries worldwide meet their national climate goals. Both metals are key for manufacturing electric vehicles. "Secure and sustainable access to critical minerals is essential for smooth and affordable clean energy transitions," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said in a statement. "The world's appetite for technologies such as solar panels, electric cars and batteries is growing fast — but we cannot satisfy it without reliable and expanding supplies of critical minerals," he added. The IEA forecasts the combined market size of key energy transition minerals is set to more than double to \$770 billion by 2040 as countries target net zero emissions by mid-century. It found only limited progress has been made in diversifying supplies, a key issue given the recent experience with the pandemic snarling supply chains and geopolitical tensions creating risks to access. The report analysed supply and geopolitical risks, as well as barriers to responding to supply disruptions, and exposure to environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks. The IEA said it found a "mixed picture" regarding ESG risks. While progress has been made in terms of involving local communities and using renewable energy, it flagged a different picture for reducing waste, emissions and water consumption. But representatives of local communities warned the rush for critical minerals was already inflicting "serious costs" on indigenous people and their traditional lands, said Galina Angarova of the Buryat ethnic group from Siberia. "If we continue down the current path, we risk building the destruction of nature, biodiversity, and human rights" into the economy-wide shift away from fossil fuels, she told reporters. "We are on the cusp of the next industrial revolution... and we have to do this right," said Angarova, who leads a coalition fighting for indigenous rights in the green transition. Adam Anthony, from financial transparency group Publish What You Pay, said companies were rushing to Africa to dig up critical minerals but there was little to show for that on the ground. Tanzania, for example, was extracting manganese and graphite, but producing none of the higher-value green tech items like electric cars or batteries that need these minerals, he added. "When we talk about critical minerals, it is also very important to ask — who are they critical for?" said Anthony. We don't receive any value from the extraction at the moment.—Agencies

Pakistan calls on In'l community
to take action against Islamophobia

DNA

VIENNA: Ambassador Aftab Ahmad Khokher urged the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) to effectively address the issue of Islamophobia and religious intolerance. In a Joint Statement delivered today on behalf of 35 countries during the ongoing 33rd Session of CCPCJ, he called on the Commission to place the issue high on its agenda. The Joint Statement condemned the abhorrent acts of targeting the Holy Quran and destruction and desecration of mosques and other holy sites in some parts of the world despite clear call by relevant UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions, the UN Secretary General as well as other relevant Special Procedures and mandate holders. It welcomed the adoption of UNGA

Resolution 76/254 that designated 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia

as well as the UNGA resolution 78/264 titled "Measures to Combat Islamophobia" which calls

upon the Member States to take legislative and policy measures to combat religious intolerance, and

violence against Muslims. The Joint Statement also requested the UN Secretary General to expedite the appointment of a Special Envoy to combat Islamophobia, pursuant to UNGA resolution 78/264. In addition, the Joint Statement also urged Member States to examine their national laws, policies, law enforcement frameworks and criminal justice systems with a view to identifying gaps in this regard. It also called on the global social media platforms to harmonise their content policy applications, including offensive and anti-Islamic content. The Joint Statement is part of Pakistan's active engagement during the Session to highlight the urgency to address the challenge posed by Islamophobia. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) is one of its functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).



Briefs

Justice Muneeb to take oath as acting CJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice QaziFaez Isa will visit Azerbaijan today (May 18) to attend the ECO Chief Justices Conference. During his visit till May 25, Justice Muneeb Akhtar will serve as the acting chief justice. Justice Muneeb Akhtar will take the oath as the acting chief justice today. The oath-taking ceremony will be held in the Supreme Court Judges Block at 10:30am.

Justice YahyaAfridi will administer the oath to Justice Muneeb Akhtar. Before leaving for his foreign visit, Chief Justice QaziFaez Isa has returned the protocol.

Ali Pervaiz sworn in as MoS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Member of the National Assembly Ali Pervaiz took the oath of the office of Minister of State here on Friday. President Asif Ali Zardari administered the oath to Ali Pervaiz in a ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, parliamentarians, and notables from different walks of life. Ali Pervaiz was elected as MNA from NA-119 constituency of Lahore on the ticket of the Pakistan Muslim League-N in the recently held by-election.

Ishaq Dar's appointment as DPM challenged

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: After the Lahore High Court dismissed a petition against appointment of Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar as deputy prime minister on Thursday, a citizen moved the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday. Fahad Shabbir through Advocate Nadeem Sarwar submitted that the appointment was a violation of Article 4 of the Constitution. He said the federal government violated the constitution by appointing Dar as deputy prime minister. The petitioner prayed that the notification of Dar's appointment be declared null and void and he be barred from work till the final decision of the case. Principal secretary to the prime minister, Cabinet Division secretary and Ishaq Dar have been made parties in the petition.

CJCS appreciates role of Navy

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Sahir-Shamshad Mirza, addressed the participants of 53rd PN Staff Course at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore today. According to ISPR, the CJCS highlighted the efforts of the Pakistan Armed Forces in amicably confronting multifaceted traditional and non-traditional security challenges. The CJCS appreciated the role of Pakistan Navy as a combat-ready force; that has always lived up to the expectations of nation to safeguard maritime interests of Pakistan. He underscored that Pakistan Navy has a proud history of valour and sacrifices for the motherland.

Iran arrests 3 Europeans at "Satanist" gathering

TEHRAN: Iranian security forces have arrested more than 260 people, including three European nationals, at a "Satanist" gathering west of the capital Tehran, the semi-official new agency Tasnim reported on Friday. - Agencies

Fighting rages in Rafah as Israel steps up invasion

The Ministry announced in its daily update that the toll of the aggression has risen to 35,303 martyrs and 79,261 injuries since October 7 last year

NEWS DESK

GAZA: Fighting between the Palestinian resistance forces and Israeli troops have raged in Gaza after Tel Aviv vowed to intensify its ground invasion in Rafah. Witnesses on Friday reported fierce battles overnight in and around the Jabalia refugee camp in the north of the war-ravaged Gaza Strip. Israeli helicopters carried out heavy strikes around Jabalia, while artillery units shelled homes near Kamal Adwan Hospital in the camp. According to Gaza's Civil Defense agency, the bodies of six people were retrieved and several wounded people were evacuated after an air strike targeted a house in Jabalia. Rescue teams were trying to recover people from under the rubble of the Shaaban family home on al-Faluja Street in the camp, it said. Israeli tanks also surrounded the entrance of Beit Hanoon town, where some families from Jabalia have fled to take refuge. The Israeli military vowed to "intensify" its ground invasion in Rafah despite international concerns for the hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians in the southern city.

Israeli minister of military affairs Yoav Gallant on Thursday said "additional forces will enter" the Rafah area on the border with Egypt and "this activity will intensify." Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the onslaught on Rafah was a "critical" part of the regime's plans. Witnesses said Israeli warships launched strikes on Rafah, where more than 1.4 million Palestinian civilians have been sheltering. Hamas's armed wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, said in

Spain will Wednesday announce date to recognize Palestine

Spain bans ships carrying weapons for Israel from docking at its ports

FOREIGN DESK

MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Friday he will on Wednesday announce the date on which Madrid will recognize a Palestinian state along with other nations. "We are in the process of coordinating with other countries," he said during an interview with private Spanish television station La Sexta when asked if this step would be taken on Tuesday as announced by EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. Sanchez said in March that Spain and Ireland, along with Slovenia and Malta had agreed to take the first steps toward recognition of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, seeing a two-state solution as essential for lasting peace. Borrell told Spanish public radio last week that Spain, Ireland and Slovenia planned to symbolically recognize a Palestinian state on May 21, saying he had been given this date by Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares. Ireland's Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said Tuesday that Dublin was certain to recognize Palestinian statehood by the end of the month but the "specific date is still fluid." So far, 137 of the 193 UN member states have recognized a Palestinian state, according to figures provided by the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority. Despite the growing number of EU countries in favor of such a move, neither France nor Germany support the idea. Western powers have long argued such recognition should only happen as part of a negotiated peace with Israel. Meanwhile, Spanish Foreign Minister, Jose Manuel Albares, announced on Friday that his country will not allow ships carrying weapons to Israel to dock in its ports, after Spain denied a ship to dock at Cartagena port southeast Spain.

a statement that it "targeted enemy forces stationed inside the Rafah border crossing... with mortar shells". Hamas says the Israeli regime's bombing of the Gaza Strip, which is enduring a genocidal Israeli war, has killed 70 percent of the Zionist captives, who have been held by the Palestinian resistance movement since an October operation. Khaileh al-Hayya, deputy chief of Hamas' Political Bureau, announced the information in an interview with Lebanon's al-Manar television network on Thursday. "The Zionist enemy wants to recover the remaining captives by force, killing them by bombing," he said. Around 250 people were taken captive on October 7 last year during Al-Aqsa Storm, a retaliatory operation by Gaza's resistance groups. At least 35,272 Palestinians have died in an Israeli war of genocide that began following the operation. As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 224 on Friday, aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound and target different areas and massacre more civilians, especially in Rafah. Reporters for the Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to bomb homes in different areas of Gaza during the past 24 hours. The Israeli forces continued their ground incursions and attacks in Rafah, Jabalia, and other areas of the northern Gaza Strip. Artillery shells were intensively fired at the Al-Faluja area, west of Jabalia Camp, and the vicinity of Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia, north of the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, Israeli warplanes launched bloody airstrikes on the Al-Qasab neighborhood in the Jabalia refugee camp, north of the Gaza Strip.

LHC CH orders to submit report on appointment of judges

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Government's Cabinet committee failed to convince Chief Justice Lahore High Court Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan during the hearing of the case regarding the appointment of judges in anti-terrorism courts of the province. While categorically rejecting the Cabinet committee's demand of providing a list of the judges, LHC Chief Justice directed the committee, which was assigned the task to approve the names of the judges, to submit compliance report on May 20, 2024. Punjab Law Minister Sohaib Ahmed, Senior Minister Mairiyum Aurangzeb and Mian Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman personally appeared in the court and requested the Chief Justice to hear case in the chamber which was refused by the court. On the occasion Advocate General Punjab Khalid Ishaq told Chief Justice that meaningful negotiations was a legal procedure and a panel of three judges is sent by the Chief Justice Lahore High Court to the government for the appointment of special court judges. On this the Chief Justice asked the AGP where is written in the law that the Chief Justice will send a panel for the judges.

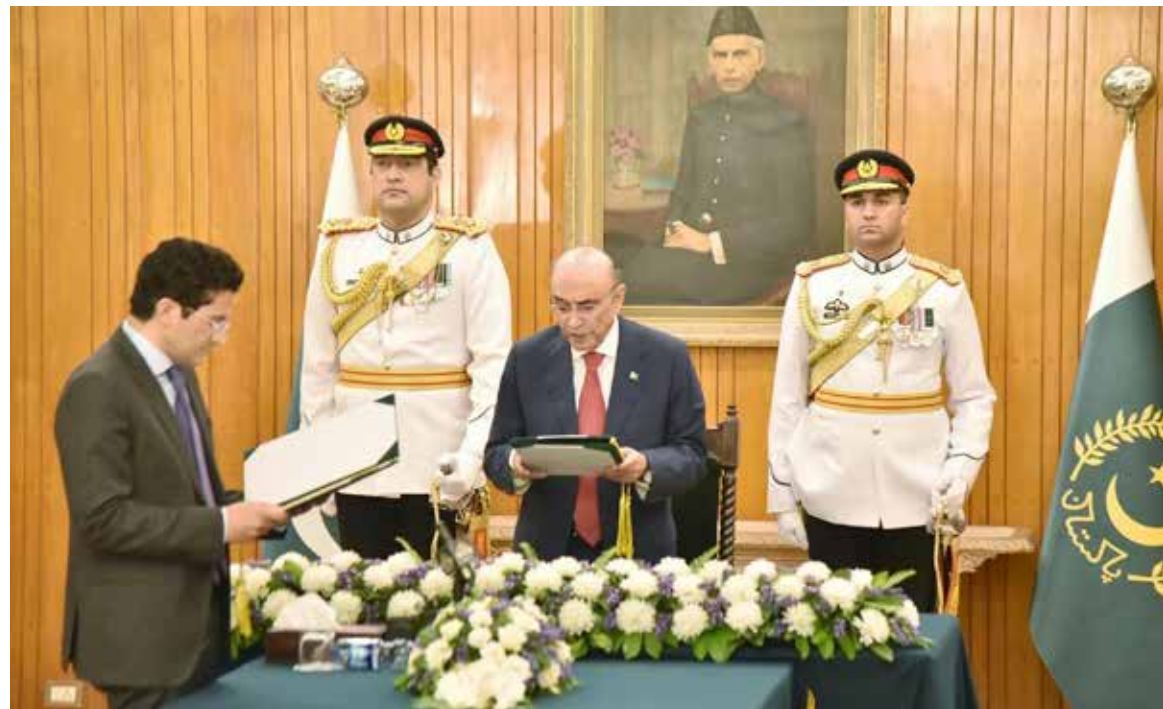
PTI leaders grill Punjab government

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former National Assembly speaker and senior PTI leader Asad Qaiser said that the Punjab government should resolve the issues of farmers instead of making Tik-Tok videos. The opposition on Friday staged protest demonstration outside the Parliament House to show solidarity with the farmers. Barrister Gohar, Sahibzada Hamid Raza and other leaders from the opposition benches participated in the protest. Addressing the press conference, PTI leaders said that the farmers were arrested in Faisalabad when they met them. "The farmers in Punjab don't have amount for the next crop and the government isn't procuring their wheat," Sahibzada Hamid Raza said.

Afghans and Tajiks mix in rare border bazaar

KALAIKHUMB: For Afghans living under Taliban rule, a Saturday market is a rare chance to cross the border into neighbouring Tajikistan and pick up food and household goods. The popular bazaar in the small town of Kalai-Khumb - about six hours' drive east from the Tajik capital Dushanbe - has reopened after being shut down after the Taliban retook control of Afghanistan in 2021. Tajikistan, which shares a winding 1,350-kilometre (840 mile) border with Afghanistan, designates the Taliban a terrorist organisation. But that didn't stop white-bearded Afghan Subhanuddin Haji Qasheem crossing to stock up on essentials last month. "Here we can buy clothes, sweets and tea - even construction materials," said Haji Qasheem, who is in his 60s. "We're really happy the market has reopened." From wool rugs and saffron to washing powder and chickens, the market in a deep mountain gorge along the Pyandzh River sells almost everything. The river's turbulent brown waters mark the border between the two countries. In Tajikistan's eastern Gorno-Badakhshan region, Kalai-Khumb is surrounded by the peaks of the Pamir mountain range, soaring to over 4,000 metres (13,000 feet). The Tajik flag - a red, white and green tricolour decorated with a crown and stars - was flying on the river's northern bank. Across a rusty bridge on the southern side fluttered a white Taliban flag with the Islamic profession of faith written in black. Such points of cross-border trade are rare. There are fewer than 10 along the border selling vital goods and supporting the local economy in these isolated and impoverished areas. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari administering the oath of office to Mr. Ali Pervaiz as the Minister of State, during an oath-taking ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Russia not seeking Kharkiv capture, claims Putin

Russia launched its offensive in the region last week, and fierce street fighting has been reported for the past several days in the key town of Vovchansk near the Russian border

BEIJING: Russia is currently not seeking to capture Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv, President Vladimir Putin has claimed. "There are no such plans today," he said at the end of his visit to China. But he stressed that Russian forces were advancing in the north-eastern Kharkiv region to create a "security zone" for Russia's border region. Mr Putin has spoken before of such a zone, but his public comments have not always reflected his aims in Ukraine. Ukraine says the front line has stabilised, admitting that

Russia has occupied a number of border villages. Russia launched its offensive in the region last week, and fierce street fighting has been reported for the past several days in the key town of Vovchansk near the Russian border. On Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russian troops had only managed to advance to the first of Ukraine's three defensive lines in the region. Similar comments were made by Ukraine's top commander Oleksandr Syrskyi, who said the "enemy has extended the active combat zone to nearly 70km (43 miles)" in the region. Overnight, Kharkiv - which had a pre-war population of nearly 1.4 million - again came under Russian drone attack and shelling, local officials said. The technological and industrial hub lies about 30km from the Russian border. Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour is now in its third year, and there are currently no signs that the war - the bloodiest conflict in Europe since World War Two - could end any time soon. Winding up his state visit to China in the north-eastern city of Harbin on Friday, Mr Putin said that seizing Kharkiv was not part of Russia's current offensive in the region. The Kremlin leader's public statements have often failed to reflect his actions in Ukraine. Notoriously, he denied Russia was on the cusp of a full-scale invasion before it took place in February 2022. However, few analysts believe Russia has the military capacity to capture Kharkiv. - Agencies

KP Governor, Turkish envoy discuss bilateral cooperation



The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor said that Turkey was a brotherly Islamic country and people of both countries have a strong and deep rooted relationship based on love and friendship

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi and Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci on Friday met in Islamabad where they exchanged views on further strengthening of mutual and bilateral relations between both the brotherly Islamic countries especially for benefits of people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Ambassador of Turkiya congratulated Faisal Karim Kundi on assuming the charge of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor and expressed best wishes to him. During the meeting, Pak-Turk's people welfare projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, strengthening of bilateral business and trade's relationships also came under discussion. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor said that Turkey was a brotherly Islamic country and people of both countries have a strong and deep rooted relationship based on love and friendship. He said government and people of Turkiya had always extended support to Pakistan in all difficult situations including natural calamities and underscored the need of more bilateral cooperation and peoples' love and affection between the two countries.

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