



# Islamabad POST

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**COAS Asim meets civil, military leadership in Germany visit**

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**Novak Djokovic secures victory on birthday**

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## In meeting with PM Shehbaz UAE president announces \$10bn investment in Pak

Premier's Abu Dhabi visit bears fruit as Shehbaz Sharif says "begging bowl broken"

DNA

DUBAI: In a major development, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced allocating \$10 billion for more investments in Pakistan, the Prime Minister's Office said Thursday, as the cash-strapped South Asian nation seeks foreign influx of cash amid financial straits. The move came during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's meeting with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the Gulf state, where the premier is on a day-long visit. The decision has been taken "to strengthen the Pakistani economy, support it, and enhance cooperation between the two countries", UAE's WAM news agency reported. Pakistan is seeking investment from brotherly nations to boost its economy as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government explores avenues to boost reserves and reduce high inflation. Saudi Arabia, as per federal ministers, has also pledged to expedite \$5 billion in investment, while the kingdom's foreign minister said last month that Riyadh would be "moving ahead significantly" to invest in projects in Pakistan. Earlier today in his maiden visit as elected prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif also told an event that Pakistan is seeking collaboration with friendly nations as "gone are the days" when officials will visit brotherly countries with begging bowls. "Gone are the days that I will go to our brotherly countries with begging bowl. I have broken that bowl," the premier said. The country's total foreign exchange reserves stand at a comfortable position of \$14.5 billion, as of May 17, while the State Bank of Pakistan-held reserves are at 9.15 billion after a meagre increase. Pakistan also last month completed a short-term \$3 billion programme, which helped stave off sovereign default, but the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz

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## Business friendly policies ensuring private sector's development: PM

DNA

DUBAI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said the government's business friendly policies and its support to the foreign investors were yielding positive results in promoting the private sector's development and attracting foreign investment. He said the government was taking steps on priority to increase foreign direct investment in Pakistan. The prime minister was talking to Director General of Abu Dhabi Fund for Development Mohammed Saif Al Suwaidi, who called on him. In the meeting, the two leaders discussed ways to promote cooperation between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The prime minister, who was on a daylong visit to the UAE, highlighted the reforms and actions taken by the government to ensure economic stability in Pakistan. He said the two countries enjoyed brotherly relations that spanned over decades, and thanked the UAE leadership, particularly Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, for their support during challenging times.

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ABU DHABI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of UAE H.H. Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan meet in Abu Dhabi. - DNA

## PM to visit China in first week of June

During the visit he will meet the top Chinese leadership including President Xi Jinping

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to travel to China in the first week of June as part of his government's efforts to seek greater cooperation from Beijing to pull the country out of economic troubles. This will be Shehbaz's first visit to Beijing since he returned to the Prime Minister's Office after the February 8 elections. Official sources said that the prime minister will kick off his three day trip to China from June 4. During the visit he will meet the top Chinese leadership including President Xi Jinping.

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## Govt blocks over 11,000 SIMs so far

"FBR is committed to promote tax compliance and tax culture," says spokesperson

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to promote tax compliance and tax culture, more than 11,000 mobile phone SIMs of non-filers have been blocked so far across the country, confirmed a spokesperson of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Thursday. In a statement, the spokesperson of the tax collection body said: "11,252 SIMs have been blocked as of May 22 under Income Tax General Order." "The FBR is committed to promoting tax compliance and tax culture."

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## Session on May 25 KP govt furious as CM not invited to SIFC meeting

"Fake Form 47 govt" exhibited bias towards province, pushing country into provincialism, says KP govt's spokesperson

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Blaming the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led federal government for making "biased moves", the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government expressed displeasure for not getting an invitation for the upcoming apex committee's session of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif summoned the SIFC's session at 11:45am on May 25 (Saturday), however, it emerged that KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur was not invited to the forthcoming meeting. Chief ministers of other provinces - Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan - have been invited to the SIFC session, however, CM Gandapur was not given a formal invitation to attend it.

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## PTI stands firm against political persecution: Omar

Political interference by an institution hurting nation, says Ayub

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PTI) leader Omar Ayub has said the opposition stands firm against political persecution. "If Hammad Azhar and Mian Aslam Iqbal are arrested,

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## Briefs

### JAC team calls on JI emir

Ji urges govt to withdraw Punjab Defamation Bill

DNA

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has vehemently rejected 'The Punjab Defamation Bill 2024' passed by the Punjab Assembly earlier this week. Speaking to media in Mansoor on Thursday, the JI emir said the government wanted to forcibly control the people. Earlier, a delegation of Joint Action Committee (JAC) called on him to express the reservations of media fraternity over the defamation bill. The meeting was attended by CPNE President Irshad Arif, Lahore Press Club President Arshad Ansari, Dunya Media Group Managing Director Naveed Kashif, former CPNE president Kazim Khan, senior journalist Ayaz Khan and others.

### Pakistan hockey team leaves for Holland

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Hockey team has finally got visas of the Netherlands and Poland therefore the team will leave for the Netherlands Friday morning. The team shall play friendly and warm up matches in the Netherlands. The team is also likely to play against the Dutch national team. The team head coach Roelant Oltmans is already in the Netherlands. From the Netherlands the team shall depart for Poland where it will take part in the Nationals Cup. The Pakistan team has to win the Nations Cup in order to improve its ranking and qualify for future mega events.

## Bill against dual citizenship of govt officials lands in NA

JUI-F MNA Noor Alam Khan submits amendment bill to NA Secretariat

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A lawmaker has submitted a bill in the National Assembly (NA) against dual citizenship of government officers, claiming that they escape accountability after fleeing to foreign nations post-retirement. The amendment bill was submitted by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) lawmaker Noor Alam Khan to the NA Secretariat on Thursday. It stated that an individual holding dual nationality or foreign citizenship should not be given right to be appointed as a civil servant. A document obtained by Geo News showed that MNA Noor sought changes in the Civil Servants Act, 1973's Section 5, calling it "Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2024". "Provided that a civil servant holding dual nationality or citizenship of any foreign country shall not be entitled for appointment," it read. Elaborating on reasons behind seeking the modification, he stated: "Government servants must have their stakes in

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## Iddat case Verdict on May 29

PTI founder, wife challenged the conviction in un-Islamic nikah case in an Islamabad court

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Thursday reserved its verdict on the pleas filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the un-Islamic nikah case. Judge Shahrukh Arjumand, who heard the case, reserved the verdict before leaving the courtroom for his chamber. The judge will pronounce the court's decision on May 29. The verdict was reserved after the court heard arguments of lawyers from both sides. Salman Akram

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## President Raeisi laid to rest at Imam Reza shrine

Millions of people in Iran's Khorasan Razavi Province have gathered to bid farewell to President Ebrahim Raeisi and two of his companions who embraced martyrdom in a tragic helicopter crash

NEWS DESK

MASHHAD: Iran's late President Ebrahim Raisi was laid to rest in his hometown of Mashhad that hosts the holy shrine of the eighth Shia imam, Imam Reza (AS). The body of Raisi arrived in Mashhad on Thursday morning, with huge crowds of people gathering for his funeral procession that reached Imam Reza's holy shrine where the late president was laid to rest. According to Mohammad-Reza Ghalandar, the mayor of Mashhad, an estimated three million people have taken part in the mourning ceremony, including those from other Iranian cities as well as neighboring countries of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Türkiye. Millions of people in Iran's Khorasan Razavi Province have gathered to bid farewell to President Ebrahim Raisi and two of his companions who embraced martyrdom in a tragic helicopter crash in the country's northwestern province of East Azarbaijan. Weeping mourners in black attire warmly welcomed the coffins of Raisi and his associates after they arrived at the Hashemi Nejad International Airport in

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## Iran's 'Martyr' FM laid to rest

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has been buried south of Tehran following days of funeral processions which were attended by millions of mourners in several cities. Amir-Abdollahian lost his life in a helicopter crash in northwest Iran on Sunday along with seven other passengers and crew including President Ebrahim Raisi. Tens of thousands of mourners gathered in the town of Shah-Rey in Tehran province on Thursday for a funeral ceremony, which ended in his burial in the shrine of Shah Abdolazim. Acting Foreign Minister

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## Traffic police in action against two stroke rickshaws

PESHAWAR: The city traffic police have started a crackdown against two-stroke rickshaws in the district and impounded around 500 such three-wheelers to ease the traffic chaos and disorder. According to traffic police, these rickshaws were not being allowed renewal of permit and registration for the last many years adding that most of these rickshaws were plying on roads without valid and proper documents. Besides, the traffic police said these two-stroke rickshaws were also a main source of noise and air pollution and created traffic problems in the city. Most of the drivers of these rickshaws apply lubricants in their fuel tanks that result in smoke emissions and have a bad impact on the city's environment. Adding his comments, the SP Traffic Peshawar said a seven-point agenda was signed between the rickshaw union and traffic police in 2022 to gradually shift from two-stroke rickshaws to four-stroke that are less hazardous to the environment. However, with the passage of time rather than a decrease in such rickshaws, its number was further increased causing problems in streamlining the traffic flow and discipline. The traffic police said around 500 two-stroke rickshaws having no proper documents have been impounded and the campaign would continue till achieving the desired goal.—APP

## PEB Intermediate exam starts

PESHAWAR: The examination of intermediate started under Peshawar Education Board (PEB) on Thursday and would continue till July 05. According to PEB, as many as 125,466 students including 43,675 female students would appear in the exams. A total 63,402 students would appear in intermediate examination part-I and 62,064 in part-II, in Peshawar. The PEB set up a total 401 examination halls. The administrative officers of District Administration Peshawar visited examination centers here and discussed arrangements with the teachers on duty in the examination halls. They encouraged teachers and invigilators to discourage cheating practices and take strict action.—APP

## KP IGP suspends SHO

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur on Thursday ordered the suspension of SHO Gulbahar Shakirullah Afridi for misbehaving with senior journalist Saiful Islam Safi and putting him behind bars despite proving his identity. The IGP issued the instruction of suspension of the SHO in a meeting with President Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik here at the Central Police Office. The latter conveyed the resentment of the journalist community over the unfortunate incident.—APP

## ICCI-AIR University ink MoU to promote industry-academia linkage

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor AIR University Air Marshal Abdul Moaheed Khan HI(M) has said that Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry is playing a significant role in the promotion of Academia-Industry linkages which is the dire need of the hour for the economic stability of the country. Talking to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry who called on him while leading an ICCI delegation here on Thursday he said that promotion of entrepreneurship among the youth will definitely yield fruits for the advancement of businesses in the country and thereafter meeting the much needed requirement of Foreign Direct In-

# US, Sindh Govt launch \$9 mn initiative to combat Tuberculosis

Ambassador Blome emphasized the strong partnership between the U.S. and the Sindh government stating, "Tuberculosis is not just a disease affecting millions in Pakistan; it's an illness that disrupts lives, livelihoods, and communities"

DNA

KARACHI: U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome, and Sindh Minister for Health and Population Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho launched a collaborative initiative aimed at addressing tuberculosis (TB), a significant health challenge in Pakistan. This joint effort between the United States and Pakistan signifies a crucial step forward in combating this disease. Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the newly launched program, named the Tuberculosis Local Organization Network (TB-LON), is an investment of \$9 million over five years. Its primary goal is to provide expert guidance and resources for Pakistan to effectively tackle TB. Through direct engagement with affected communities and individuals, the program will tailor solutions to meet specific needs. TB-LON will treat more TB cases in Sindh and significantly reduce the number of people affected by the disease. Ambassador Blome emphasized the strong partnership between the U.S. and the Sindh government stating, "Tuberculosis is not just a disease affecting millions in Pakistan; it's an illness that disrupts lives, livelihoods, and communities. Pakistan ranks fifth among countries with the highest rate of TB, but I am proud to say, we are changing that with this groundbreaking \$9 million initiative that will provide expert guidance and resources to help eradicate TB, exemplifying



our constant commitment to the resilient people of Sindh." Dr. Pechuho expressed appreciation for the ongoing support from the U.S. government and reaffirmed the Sindh government's commitment to enhancing

healthcare services. "We are confident that our joint efforts in addressing critical health challenges will bring a positive change in the lives of people of Sindh," she added, emphasizing the importance of joint efforts in

addressing critical health challenges. Despite being preventable and treatable, TB remains the world's leading infectious disease killer, sickening 10.6 million people and taking 1.3 million lives annually and Pakistan ranks

fifth amongst high TB burden countries. USAID leads the U.S. government's global TB efforts, working with partners around the world including Pakistan, on the shared goals of reaching every person with TB, curing

those in need of treatment, and preventing the spread of new infections. USAID prioritizes local community involvement, recognizing its critical role in ensuring sustainable and effective outcomes.

## Plantation of canopy trees vital to control temperature, air pollution

PESHAWAR: Assembled under a Shisham tree for collective meal after crushing of wheat, Kamal Ali along with his brothers and fellow farmers were seen sewing wheat sacks by using shades of canopy trees to avoid scorching heat. Repeatedly asking his brothers and co-labourers to hurry up to sew all 100 bags and shift it to godown at home before sunset at village Mohib Banda Nowshera, Kamal told APP that trees plantations was the hobby of his late father Hamyun Khan and today his love for trees is greatly help protect them from the sizzling heat. Followed the footprints of his father, the motivated farmer had planted 500 Shisham saplings on my farm lands keeping in view of its enormous benefits especially averting of

heat in Pakistan. Pakistan is a unique country in South Asia blessed with numerous varieties of indigenous tall canopy trees including Shisham extremely beneficial to increase chances of rains besides mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, global warming and air pollution. An abode to world tallest shady trees mostly found in Hamalya, Karakoram to Hindokush mountains ranges, Pakistan's coastal areas of Karachi and Gwadar, alpine pasture Malakand, Hazara, Muree, AJK and GB beside arid zones of DI Khan, DG Khan, Cholistan, Bahawalpur and Tharparker, are acting as purifiers of environment by significantly enhancing chances of rain, producing oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide,

controlling temperature and air pollution in the country. The national tree of Pakistan, Deodar and other famous species including Kail, Spruce and Walnut are being found in relatively cold climate areas of Swat, Chitral, Kohistan, Dir, Gilgit Baltistan and AJK whereas Punjab and KP are the epicenters of native Shisham, Siris, Pipal, Bakin, Amaltas, Willow, Poplar, Mulberry, Phulai, Alstona, Kachnar, Bottle Brush, Gul e Nashtar and Jaman. Kikar, Neem, Beera at Sindh and mangroves at coastal areas of Karachi, Thatta and Balochistan and endangered juniper trees at Ziarat near Quetta are easiest sources to counterbalance growing effects of climate change and air pollution besides bolstering chances of rains in Pakistan.

"Pakistan is bestowed with more than 200 native trees and nine different forest ecological systems hardly found in any other country of world," Muhammad Tehmasip, former Project Director, PTI Government's Billion Trees Afforestation Project (BTAP) told APP. He said, "one healthy shady tree provides oxygen to two to four persons and 1075 plants on one hectare land absorb six to eight tons carbon dioxide on daily basis." "Trees are a main source of absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen for people and bolstering chances of rains," he said. Due to increase in global warming, he said, change had been witnessed in normal patterns of rains in recent years across the globe including Pakistan.—APP

## Tank's Rescue 1122 launches awareness drive

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, :The district Tank's emergency service-Rescue 1122 has launched an awareness campaign to educate people about precautionary measures against heatstroke and the adverse effects of extreme heat. According to the spokesman, the awareness drive has been launched in line with Director General Rescue 1122 Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Khan and Director Operations South Imran Yusufzai under the supervision of District Emergency

Officer Engineer Waqas Alam, across the district. In this regard, the spokesman added various measures are being taken to educate the public through this campaign. Pamphlets and brochures are being distributed, a door-to-door campaign and community-based efforts are underway. Similarly, he said that social media platforms were also being utilized to safeguard lives of people by spreading awareness about the heatstroke. He said that Rescue 1122 ambulances are equipped

with ORS, cold water, and other essential medicines to provide immediate assistance in case of such emergencies. Moreover, the public has been advised to drink plenty of water, stay in shaded and cool places, wear loose and light clothing, and avoid unnecessary exposure to the sun. It has also asked people if it was necessary to go outside then cover their head with a wet cloth. Rescue 1122 urges the public to call 1122 for free emergency assistance in case of any emergency.

## Technology- a catalyst for sustainable development

LAHORE: The integration of technology across various sectors serves as a catalyst for sustainable development, economic growth, and social transformation. Kyrgyzstan's Honorary Consul Meher Kashif Younis expressed these views while talking to reporters here on Thursday. He added that technology for development was crucial for Pakistan striving to accelerate its progress and enhance quality of life. In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, technology serves as a crucial driver of growth, fostering business transformation and creating development opportunities. Its positive impacts include productivity enhancement, market expansion and GDP growth, he explained. Meher Kashif said that one of Pakistan's greatest assets is young and dynamic population, constituting almost 64 per cent of the total population, asserting that one of the primary areas where technology can make a significant impact is education. "With a substantial portion of the population residing in rural areas with limited access to quality education, e-learning platforms and digital classrooms can bridge the gap. These technological parks can provide students with access to a wealth of resources and skilled educators, irrespective of their geographic location," he remarked. The Kyrgyz Honorary Consul cited that in agriculture, technology can revolutionize farming practices through precision agriculture, drone surveillance, and smart irrigation systems. These advancements can increase crop yields, optimize resource use, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Given that a significant portion of Pakistan's population relies on agriculture for their livelihood, these improvements can have a profound economic and social impact. He was of the view that adopting the new technology for development was not just an option but a necessity for Pakistan. "By leveraging technological advancements, we can foster inclusive growth in all sectors especially in healthcare, improve public services, and enhance overall national development in every sphere of life." Meher Kashif Younis said fostering a robust tech-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem could stimulate job creation and innovation. Supporting startups and tech enterprises through favorable policies, incubation centers, and access to funding can position Pakistan as a hub for technological innovation in the region.—DNA

## Peshawar Zoo, WWF Pakistan collaborate

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of International Biodiversity Day 2024, Peshawar Zoo joined hands with WWF Pakistan and Pakistan youth biodiversity network to host a thought-provoking event aimed at promoting awareness and understanding of biodiversity conservation. The event which took place at Peshawar Zoo on Thursday, brought together a diverse panel of experts, professionals and practitioners in the field of biodiversity and wildlife. The highlight of the event was a panel discussion featuring esteemed experts, academicians and wildlife managers who shared their deep insights on, biodiversity and its importance for the ecosystem. The discussion delved into the theme of biodiversity day 2024 i.e. "Be part of the plan", its significance in maintaining ecological balance, and the urgent need for conservation efforts in the face of environmental challenges. Following the panel discussion, a lively question-and-answer session provided attendees with the opportunity to engage with the experts and further explore the complexities of biodiversity conservation. The interactive session fostered a dynamic exchange of ideas and knowledge, enhancing the understanding of the importance of preserving biodiversity for future generations. Notably, the event also welcomed students from the Pakistan Forest Institute and the University of Peshawar, providing them.—APP

## PAKISTAN RAILWAYS INVITATION TO E-BID

Divisional Superintendent, Pakistan Railways Peshawar invites electronic bid for the work of "UP-GRADATION / RAISING OF PASSENGER PLATFORM AT CHABB RAILWAY STATION ON KUNDIAN - ATTOCK CITY SECTION." on Single stage single envelope procedure based on percentage rates of Pakistan Railways Composite Schedule of Rates-2016 (PRCSR-2016) (Peshawar Division) for Civil work and prescribed schedule/through rate from those contractors/Firms who are registered with Pakistan Engineering Council having upto date renewal of their registration for the financial year, 2023-24 in the specialized code, registered with Income Tax department & appearing on the Active Taxpayer List (ATL) of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR); Name of firm / agency on CDR is mandatory.

- Approximate cost of work is Rs.6.395 Million, Earnest money Rs.320000/- and completion period Four (04) months.
- Tender documents can be obtained from <http://eprocure.gov.pk> Bidders must submit price bid through E-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (E-PADS). Price Bid must be accompanied by a scanned copy of Bid Security in the form of CDR / Pay order, in the name of Divisional Accounts Officer, Pakistan Railways Peshawar amounting to Rs.0.320 Million. Whereas, bld security in original shall be submitted in the office of Divisional Superintendent, Pakistan Railways Peshawar (Works Accounts Branch) along with other necessary documents as stated in bidding documents. Tender must be uploaded on E-PADS at 12:00 or before, on 25 June, 2024.
- Only bids through EPAD will entertained and no other bid will be accepted except EPAD. Price bid will be opened on same date in the chamber of Divisional Accounts Officer, Pakistan Railways, Peshawar at 12:30 hours in the presence of the representatives of the firms who want to be witness.

Note: This bidding notice is also available on Pakistan Railways web site [www.pakrail.com](http://www.pakrail.com) and PPRA web site ([www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)).

"ریلوے لائن کو صرف ریلوے کراسنگ سے احتیاط سے پار کریں"

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PID/PI 153 /2024

(Sana Ullah) for , Divisional Superintendent  
P.R Peshawar (Ph: No.091-9210695)





## Briefs

CAT upholds  
CCP penalty  
on M/s  
Irshad  
Trading

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) decided to uphold PKR 5 million penalty imposed by CCP on M/s Irshad Trading Corporation for deceptive marketing practices. The penalty was imposed by CCP on Irshad Trading for fraudulently using its competitor, Polycan Pakistan (Pvt.) Limited's trademark, violating Section 10 of the Competition Act, 2010. Polycan lodged a formal complaint with the CCP, alleging that Irshad Trading Co. was unlawfully using its registered trademark and brand name to manufacture, market, and sell water storage tanks, and was also misrepresenting itself as a joint venture of Polycan. The CCP's enquiry committee established the violation of Section 10 by Irshad Trading. During the proceedings, Polycan confirmed that Irshad Trading had been its authorized distributor until September 2018, after which the distribution agreement was terminated. Despite the agreement's termination, Irshad Trading continued to manufacture, market, and sell products with Polycan's logo until February 2019. Irshad Trading stopped the practice after the CCP's show cause notice, but the unauthorized use had already harmed Polycan's business interests.

Elites pose  
the greatest  
threat to  
national  
integrity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Thursday that the biggest threat to the country's integrity is not terrorism or climate change but ruthless elites. The elites have been looting the country's resources with both hands for decades and transferring capital out of the country, he said. He added that the elites responsible for the destruction of the economy pose the greatest obstacle to its recovery. In a statement issued here, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that the economy would have fully recovered due to the pressure put on the people in the shape of utility prices and inflation. However, the limping economy still needs to recover due to the theft of a significant amount of public capital. Therefore, the situation is only slowly improving, resulting in frustration. He observed that the masses would continue to suffer due to the elite's unabated corruption, and the people's anger would continue to increase. Murtaza Mughal asserted that party workers had transformed nearly every department in the country into a recruitment center. Now, the politicians were bringing important departments under their control that were previously safe from their loot. He said that a complete ban on new recruitment is part of the solution to political interference in government departments. The federation should stop giving unnecessary funds to provinces that receive more than they need. It is an open secret that many provinces receive funds and later waste them. He said that the process of decorating the offices and houses of top officials and purchasing new vehicles should be stopped. Free housing, free electricity and gas, telephone, overseas treatment, foreign visits, and an army of staff should not be given to anyone. Infrastructure projects should be initiated through a public-private partnership. A voluntary pension scheme should be introduced, and national and provincial assembly members should not receive funds for development schemes that end up in the pockets of the corrupt. He noted that politicians who do not receive development funds will resort to other means to enrich themselves instead of using politics.

Confronting Terrorism:  
strategies for Pak in 2024

Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain, a former envoy to Afghanistan, underscored the need for bilateral and regional diplomatic engagement with neighbouring countries to mitigate terrorist threats. He proposed a three-pronged strategy: direct action against terrorists, addressing root causes, and diplomatic engagement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled "Confronting Terrorism: Strategies for Pakistan in 2024" on Thursday, 23 May 2024. The event focused on examining the multifaceted challenges posed by terrorism to Pakistan's national security and exploring effective strategies to combat this menace. In his introductory remarks Air Commodore Khalid Iqbal (Retd), Director at CASS Lahore, identified three streams of terrorism confronting Pakistan: anti-China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) disruptive assaults, sporadic activities of separatist terrorists, and ethno-sectarian clashes. The keynote speaker, Dr Syed Kaleem Imam, former Federal Secretary and former Inspector General of Police, spoke about mapping Pakistan's terrorism landscape and its impact on national security and development. He examined the origin, motivation, and impact of terrorism in the country, highlighting how it stems from both internal and external factors, including political, ideological, and religious motivations. Dr Muhammad Feyyaz, an academic on counterterrorism, spoke about the need for countering terrorism through combative measures.



He stated that terrorism is an enduring phenomenon, which requires a nuanced understanding through the identification of three interconnected factors: a rigid strategic mindset, a mismatch between the discourse surrounding terrorism and counterterrorism, and a lack of adequate attention to social sciences in analysing political violence. Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain, a former envoy to Afghanistan, under-

scored the need for bilateral and regional diplomatic engagement with neighbouring countries to mitigate terrorist threats. He proposed a three-pronged strategy: direct action against terrorists, addressing root causes, and diplomatic engagement. In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS Lahore, stated that terrorism continues to impede Pakistan's progress despite

decades of efforts to counter it. He noted that the recent surge in terrorist attacks has affected both civilians and security personnel, besides fuelling sectarian strife. He said that external threats from hostile neighbouring states complicate the situation. The President stressed the need for a comprehensive strategy focused on national unity and proactive engagement with allies, alongside diplomatic

efforts to prevent regional territories from becoming sanctuaries for terrorists. The seminar highlighted the need for national harmony, unwavering resolve and ironclad political will for the across-the-board implementation of the rule of law to choke the terrorists financially and logistically. It was urged that flawless border management be ensured and informal monetary transactions be stopped.

CDA anti-encroachment  
drive lauded

ISLAMABAD: Shahid Rasheed Butt, the former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), stated on Thursday that the business community supports the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) anti-encroachment drive. He added that this drive will help clean up encroachments in markets and residential areas, relieving the people living in Islamabad. In a statement issued here today, Shahid Rasheed Butt said that anti-encroachment operations are being conducted across the city on the instructions of the Chairman, CDA so that the city could be kept free from illegal constructions and encroachments. The district administration and Islamabad police must fully support the Enforcement Directorate in these operations while commoners should extend full cooperation, he said. This operation must be conducted throughout the city, demolishing several encroachments and illegal constructions and retrieving government land worth billions of rupees. He said that removing fruit and vegetables stalls and clearing both sides of the roads are necessary to clear traffic flow of disruption. The business leader demanded that all footpaths be cleared during the drive, and illegal fences installed outside the houses should be removed, and the belongings of habitual offenders must be confiscated to teach them a lesson. He underlined that the encroachment mafia has taken over government land worth billions of rupees, which the CDA must recover. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that CDA has also targeted businesses that have been using generators to maintain their electricity supply. This is a questionable move, as businesses cannot depend on the government's electricity supply, which is unreliable at best. The CDA has asked all such businesses to remove the generators without realizing that these electricity generators are not hindering traffic or pedestrians.—APP

WAPDA discusses financing  
opportunities with ADB

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Alternate Executive Directors visited WAPDA House the other day and discussed financing opportunities in WAPDA projects. The meeting was attended by Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd), Member (Finance), GM (Projects) South and Pds of various WAPDA projects, said a press release issued on Thursday. GM (C&M) Water, GM Finance (Water/Power), Advisor (Hydro Resource Management) WAPDA and Advisor (Hydro Planning) WAPDA were also present in the meeting. The delegation was briefed that Pakistan possesses about 70,000 MW identified potential of hydropower generation. WAPDA owns

and operates 22 hydel power stations with cumulative generation capacity of 9459 MW, which will be more than double with phased completion of its ongoing projects from 2025 to 2028-29, adding about 10,000 MW clean, green and economically most affordable electricity. WAPDA plans to improve the ratio of low-cost hydel electricity in the National Grid from existing 29 percent to 40 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050. The delegation was also informed about the progress on ADB-funded WAPDA projects namely Naulong Dam Multi-purpose Project, Kurram Tangi Dam Stage-II and Patan Hydropower Project. WAPDA's development portfolio consisting of under-construction

and ready-for-construction projects including Mohmand Dam, Diامر Basha Dam and Keyal Khwar were also presented to the ADB delegation for consideration of financial assistance. The Member (Finance), apprised the delegation about salient features of WAPDA's financial strategy. He said WAPDA enjoys technical and financial credibility amongst the international financial institutions including the World Bank. The Chairman, in his welcome remarks, termed ADB a valuable partner, said that WAPDA has immensely benefitted from the Bank's support. Besides triggering socio-economic development of the people, WAPDA projects also contribute to the strategic goals.—APP

CBW cracks  
down on  
unhygienic  
food

WAH CANTT: The Cantonment Board Wah (CBW) on Thursday sealed three unhygienic food outlets and imposed hefty fines on others during surprise inspections across the garrison city. According to Official Sources, the CBW's Food Inspection Cell, in its relentless pursuit of public health and safety conducted thorough checks on various eateries, uncovering severe violations of hygiene and regulatory standards. One tea hotel and food outlet faced immediate closure due to its appalling unhygienic conditions. A chicken shop was also sealed for operating without the necessary licenses, vaccination records and medical certificates.—APP

NDMA issues heatwave  
to continue for several  
districts

It is also recommended to remain indoors during peak sunlight hours to prevent heat-related illnesses such as heatstroke and dehydration

ISLAMABAD: Representative of National Disaster Management Authority Syed Muhammad Tayyab Shah Thursday said that NDMA has issued guidelines concerning the imminent heatwave expected to strike various districts of Southern Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan where conditions are likely to prevail during the current week. He said that the effects of climate change are evident in the increasing frequency and intensity of the heatwaves which have hit Pakistan in recent years. The NDMA has also directed the concerned officials to take weather awareness measures to ensure the safety of tourists and travelers. The farmers are advised to carry out agricultural activities keeping in mind the weather, adding, while the tourists should plan their trip keeping in mind the weather conditions of the hilly areas. Replying a question, he said in view of heat wave and its hazardous impacts on health, people are advised to take precautions and avoid unnecessary exposure to direct sunlight. In light of the predicted heatwave and its potential hazardous impacts, the NDMA has advised the public to take necessary precautions. People are urged to avoid unnecessary exposure to direct sunlight, stay hydrated, and wear lightweight, light-colored clothing to minimize the effects of the heat. It is also recommended to remain indoors during peak sunlight hours to prevent heat-related illnesses such as heatstroke and dehydration.—DNA

Another  
92 meters  
disconnected

ISLAMABAD: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has disconnected another 92 connections, during its ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, and imposed Rs 2 million fine. According to a spokesman of the SNGPL, in Lahore and Sheikhpura, the regional teams disconnected 45 connections on illegal use of gas and imposed fine of Rs 960000 against gas pilferers. In Multan and Bahawalpur, 12 connections were disconnected on illegal use while in Faisalabad and Gujrat, 3 connections were disconnected. In Peshawar the company disconnected 32 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal use of gas and amount of Rs 0.5 million have been booked against gas theft cases.—APP

Randhawa  
directs to  
resolve traffic  
jam issue

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Thursday directed the Member Engineering to develop a plan for addressing the traffic congestion at PTCL Chowk. During his visit to PTCL Chowk on Jinnah Avenue, Muhammad Ali emphasized the need for immediate short-term and long-term plans to resolve the traffic issues at this intersection. "A plan for a permanent solution should be prepared and submitted for approval to the relevant forum as soon as possible," he stated. He further instructed that work on the plan should commence immediately after its approval. The Chairman highlighted that new public interest projects will be initiated alongside the completion of ongoing projects in the federal capital. He underscored the urgency of the situation, noting that citizens are facing significant distress due to traffic jams at PTCL Chowk, and stressed that work on the project should begin on a priority basis.—APP

Death  
anniversary of  
sarinda player

ISLAMABAD: The 44th death anniversary of renowned sarinda player and folk singer, Munir Sarhadi, is being observed today. He was born in 1931 in Peshawar. Munir Sarhadi was conferred the Pride of Performance award in 1978 by the Government of Pakistan in recognition of his services to the field of music. He passed away on this day in 1980 in Peshawar.—APP



High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan Ms. Leslie Scanlon called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar today.—DNA

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## Briefs

## UAE president announces \$10bn...

FROM PAGE 01 has stressed the need for a fresh, longer-term programme. Pakistan narrowly averted default last summer, and its \$350 billion economy has stabilised after the completion of the last IMF programme, with inflation coming down to around 17% in April from a record high 38% last May. It is still dealing with a high fiscal shortfall and while it has controlled its external account deficit through import control mechanisms, it has come at the expense of stagnating growth, which is expected to be around 2% this year compared to negative growth last year. Pakistan is seeking at least \$6 billion and request additional financing from the Washington-based lender under the Resilience and Sustainability Trust.

## President Raesi laid to rest at...

FROM PAGE 01 the provincial capital of Mashhad on Thursday afternoon. The mourners held portraits of the martyred president and paid tribute to him and his companions as the coffins were inching their way through the tearful-eyed crowd on a trailer. The late Iranian chief executive will be laid to rest in the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, in the center of Mashhad. The body of President Raesi has arrived in Mashhad, where he will be laid to rest in the mausoleum of Imam Reza, the eighth Shia Imam.

## Iran's 'Martyr' FM laid to rest

FROM PAGE 01 Ali Bagheri Kani, who attended the ceremony, described Amir-Abdollahian as a martyr who had "guaranteed the revolutionary nature of the foreign ministry". Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani, who also attended the ceremony, assured that "there will be no disruption in Iran's rapid movement in the field of foreign policy and international relations". "The loss of Amir-Abdollahian is certainly a loss for Iran's diplomatic system, but the Islamic Republic of Iran is a system based on institutions and basic approaches in the field of relations and foreign policy arising from the thoughts and ideals of the Imam [Khomeini], the principled approach of the Eminent Leader [Ayatollah Khomeini] and the basic principles in the Constitution."

## Bill against dual...

FROM PAGE 01 the country in which they hold positions of authority, privilege and trust." He added that his proposed amendments would "ensure the loyalty of government servants in the light of Article 5 of the Constitution". The development comes after MNA Noor sought a constitutional amendment to impose a complete ban on the appointment of judges in the higher judiciary who are dual nationals. On Tuesday, the lawmaker also submitted a Constitutional (Amendment) Bill, 2024, to NA Secretariat which has sought modifications in the Constitution's Articles 177, 193, and 208, shutting all legal routes to the appointments of those judges, who have foreign nationalities.

## Verdict on May 29

FROM PAGE 01 Raja is Khan's lawyer in the case, while Bushra Bibi's counsel Usman Gul and prosecutor Adnan Ali were present in court when the verdict was reserved. The assistant counsel for the complainant said Rizwan Abbasi, the lawyer of Khawar Maneka - Bushra Bibi's former husband - has to give arguments, as the record is not with him. Addressing Bushra Bibi's lawyer, the sessions judge told him to give the final arguments. The judge also asked for Abbasi to present his arguments in the court today via video link.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling men scarf outside Laal Masjid in the Federal Capital. - Online

## Djokovic secures victory on birthday to advance at Geneva

The 24-time Grand Slam champion, is participating in the ATP 250 tournament in Switzerland for the first time

## SPORTS DESK

GENEVA: Novak Djokovic clinched a victory on his 37th birthday as he defeated Germany's Yannick Hanfmann in a rain-interrupted match to advance into the quarter-finals of the Geneva Open. Djokovic, a 24-time Grand Slam champion, is participating in the ATP 250 tournament in Switzerland for the first time as part of his preparations for the French Open and secured a 6-3 6-3 win. This places him as only the third player - following Jimmy Connors and Roger Federer - to reach 1,100 wins on the ATP Tour. Following the match, the crowd sang 'Happy Birthday' to Djokovic and he was also presented with a chocolate birthday cake by tournament officials.

"My birthday wouldn't have been the same if I had not won the match," said Djokovic. "I'm very grateful for all the people that came out to support me and thank you for the birthday song, that was very special for



me." The top-ranked player in the world has not yet made it to a final in 2024 and will next encounter either Canada's Denis

Shapovalov or Dutch sixth seed Tallon Griekspoor. In the first round, Hanfmann secured a 7-5 6-2 victory against Britain's Andy Mur-

ray, who was competing in his first ATP Tour-level match since sustaining ankle ligament damage at the Miami Open in March. However, the 32-year-old German, ranked 85th in the world, had his serve broken by Djokovic in the sixth game and then failed to convert two break-point opportunities soon after. With Djokovic serving for the set at 5-3, Hanfmann missed four break points before the match was paused at deuce in the ninth game, marking the beginning of a rain delay lasting more than an hour.

When play resumed, Djokovic swiftly secured the set, although Hanfmann subsequently broke his serve at the beginning of the second set, taking a 3-0 lead. He had an opportunity to secure a double break but failed to capitalise on it, as Djokovic managed to level the match in the following game, assisted by a superbly executed sliced drop shot that Hanfmann couldn't retrieve. Djokovic, bolstered by two superb cross-court winners in the ninth game, went on to win six consecutive games to clinch the victory.

## Atalanta shatter record books after Europa League triumph

Ademola Lookman's brilliant hat-trick helped Atalanta bag a second major trophy

## WEB DESK

LONDON: Atalanta shattered record books after their 30 victory over Bayer Leverkusen in the final of the Europa League on Wednesday. Ademola Look-

man's brilliant hat-trick helped Atalanta bag a second major trophy in their 117-year history in the final in Dublin. According to Opta, at 66 years and 117 days, GianPiero Gasperini is the oldest coach to win his debut major European final, and the second Italian coach



to win the UEFA Europa League after Maurizio Sarri in 2019. Atalanta also won their first major European trophy, becoming the first Italian team to win the UEFA Cup/Europa League since Parma in 1999. Meanwhile, Lookman is only the second player to score a hat-trick in the final of a major European competition for an Italian side, after Pierino Prati in Milan against Ajax in the 1969 European Cup. Gasperini was over the moon after 25 "cursed" years as his side became the first Italian club to win the competition since Parma in 1999, when it was known as the UEFA Cup. "Hugely proud for all of Italy, because it was a cursed trophy, even if it was only Inter and Roma who made the final over the last 25 years and lost," Gasperini told reporters. "Having won it with Atalanta is perhaps one of those footballing fairytales that very rarely happen and it does show there's still room for meritocracy in football. "There's still room for ideas, and it doesn't only come down to numbers and the super league (clubs)." Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso was happy for his side's European record unbeaten run but will try to use the pain of Wednesday's Europa League final defeat to motivate them for another final in three days time.

## Indian-origin Trishan Patel joins Pakistan's football side

Patel joined team's camp in Islamabad as they are preparing for final two games of World Cup Qualifiers

## NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Trishan Patel, a British football coach of Indian origin, has officially joined the Pakistan football team as an assistant coach and performance analyst. Patel joined the team's camp in Islamabad as they are preparing for their final two games of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers against Saudi Arabia and Tajikistan. Patel, who previously worked with the team remotely, brings a wealth of experience from his diverse coaching background. He has worked with various organizations, clubs, and schools across England, including prominent clubs such as Liverpool and Luton Town. The Pakistan Football Federation announced Patel's arrival through their social media channels, featuring Patel in the national team's kit. Patel began his football coaching career in 2006 as a scouting coach. In 2009, he joined Premier League side Luton Town as a Community Coach, where he remained until 2015. A holder of the UEFA A license, Patel joined Biggleswade United in 2019 as an assistant manager. Additionally, he has worked as an international academy coach with Liverpool and has also been involved with Berkhamsted.

## KP govt furious as CM not invited...

FROM PAGE 01

The upcoming session will be attended by the top officials, including deputy prime minister-cum-foreign minister Senator Ishaq Dar, ministers for information, finance, defence, planning and development, commerce, law and justice, water resources, and provincial chief secretaries. Reacting to the development, KP government's spokesperson Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif censured the federal government, saying that the "Form 47 government of Shehbaz Sharif" exhibited bias towards the province. "Fake 'Form 47' government is pushing the country towards provincialism. We would not accept any decision regarding the fate of our province possessing natural resources in the absence of the chief minister. The KP government strongly condemns this biased step," he added. Adviser to KP CM on Finance Muzammil Aslam slammed the Centre's decision for not inviting CM Gandapur to the SIFC apex committee's session bearing "malice" and an "in-sult of the public mandate".

## PTI stands firm against political...

FROM PAGE 01

we will take up the matter in the National Assembly," he said while addressing the media outside Adiala Jail after meeting PTI founder Imran Khan. Flanked by other leaders, he said: "We will have a peaceful protest all over Pakistan." He added: "If any kind of statement is taken from Mian Aslam Iqbal under pressure, we will not accept it. He urged Hamad Azhar and Mian Aslam Iqbal to lead the party after completing their cases. He continued: "A number of our women are in jails. Yasmeeen Rashid's condition worsened and she was shifted to the hospital." Bushra Bibi is being subjected to political persecution though she has nothing to do with politics. "Bushra Bibi is not a weakness of the PTI founder. We have visited Chaman and Pishin in Balochistan

## PM to visit China in first week...

FROM PAGE 01

Ahead of the visit, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal already travelled to Beijing. Dar co-chaired the strategic dialogue with his Chinese counterpart where both countries agreed to deepen their cooperation and vowed not to let incidents such as the one targeting Chinese engineers disrupt their ties. At least five Chinese engineers were killed when a suicide bomber blew himself up near Besham targeting the Chinese convoy. This was the latest attack targeting Chinese nationals and raised concerns in China about the safety and security of their citizens working in Pakistan.

## Govt blocks over 11,000 SIMs so far

FROM PAGE 01

The FBR, a day earlier, announced that more than 9,000 SIMs of the non-filers had been blocked all over the country as per the directives of the tax collection body. The spokesperson had said the FBR informed the telecommunication companies about the decision to block SIMs in order to curb tax evasion to improve revenue generation amid dire economic indicators in a meeting held earlier this week. "The decision has been made by parliament, therefore, the government's decision should be implemented in any case," he had added.

## Business friendly...

FROM PAGE 01

He expressed the confidence that the bilateral trade relations would further strengthen with increase in cooperation between the companies of the two countries. During the meeting, the prime minister also extended invitation to the delegation of Abu Dhabi Fund for Development to visit Pakistan.

## Consumer and operational safety at PoL outlets a must

Chairman OGRA and Authority members highlighted the significance of the subject matter, emphasizing the need for collective efforts to ensure safety at retail outlets. They vowed to continue raising awareness among the general public to minimize incidents and ensure a safe and secure environment for consumers

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) organized a seminar on consumer and operational safety at retail outlets on May 23, 2024, emphasizing the importance of safety measures to minimize incidents and near misses at petrol pumps. The event, held at OGRA's Auditorium, was graced by the presence of the senior government officials along with DG Oil and DG Explosives. The seminar aimed to raise awareness about

the potential safety hazards at retail outlets and the need for adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Industry experts shared valuable insights on the risks associated with inadequate safety measures and the consequences of neglecting consumer safety. The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA), along with its Chairman, also graced the occasion with their presence. Participants included experts from PSO, Shell, Total, SGS, and Haseen Habib, who gave detailed presenta-



tions. A panel of experts from the Oil Companies Advisory Council (OCAC), Oil Marketing Association Pakistan (OMAP), Attock Petroleum Limited (APL), and Gas & Oil Pakistan Limited also contributed to the discussions. The Chairman Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority and Authority members highlighted the significance of the subject matter, emphasizing the need for collective efforts to ensure safety at retail outlets. They vowed to continue raising awareness among the general public to minimize incidents and ensure a safe

and secure environment for consumers. Industry stakeholders commended Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority for organizing the seminar, acknowledging the importance of addressing safety hazards in the oil industry. The event was hailed as a crucial step towards safeguarding the industry and protecting consumers from potential risks. The seminar concluded with a resolve to prioritize consumer and operational safety, ensuring a safer and more secure environment for all stakeholders.

## Briefs

## Pakistan to export nurses staff to Malaysia

ISLAMABAD: The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), an attached department of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development would export around 100 female nursing staff to a health firm in Malaysia. An official told APP here on Thursday, that the demand of female nursing staff in Malaysia was increasing with the passage of time due to the high qualified and expert staff of health already working in the different hospitals of Malaysia. He said that OEC already had announced that application from job seekers to apply for Malaysia and prescribed qualifications and experience.

He informed that 100 nurses were required for ICU with the diploma in nursing or Bachelor of science in nursing 16 or post RN from recognized institution. The candidate should have registration from the Nursing Council, and a Minimum of 03 years related working experience in the hospital setting. He said specialized post-basic training in OT/ICU & Pediatric would be preferred, and age not more than 45 years. The Basic Monthly Salary would be 3,000 to 4,500 RM.—DNA

## Uninterrupted electricity in ICT Schools demanded

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has requested the Power Division (Ministry of Energy) to ensure the provision of uninterrupted electricity in the government schools of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) in order to save the students especially till Grade-5th from the scorching heat wave. According to the details, in this regard Secretary, the Ministry of Federal Education has written a letter to the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), drawing the attention of relevant authorities towards power outage during school hours in ICT. "Thousands of students at present are studying in more than 400 schools/colleges of Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) under this Ministry are suffering inversely due to extreme hot summer under the scorching temperature of 40 degree Celsius." "Moreover, unprecedented power outage in the country as well in ICT during school hours add further misery to the students of schools/colleges" the letter said. "As numerous cases are reported during school hours in the number.—APP

## An eye-witness account of Raisi helicopter crash

Shortly after, we were able to see beneath us and there were no clouds anymore and we had reached the area of the copper mine. We realised however that our pilot is making an U-turn suddenly so I asked him why? He said that one of our helicopters is missing. We estimate that they made an emergency landing, because we also have no radio contact with it anymore

## DNA

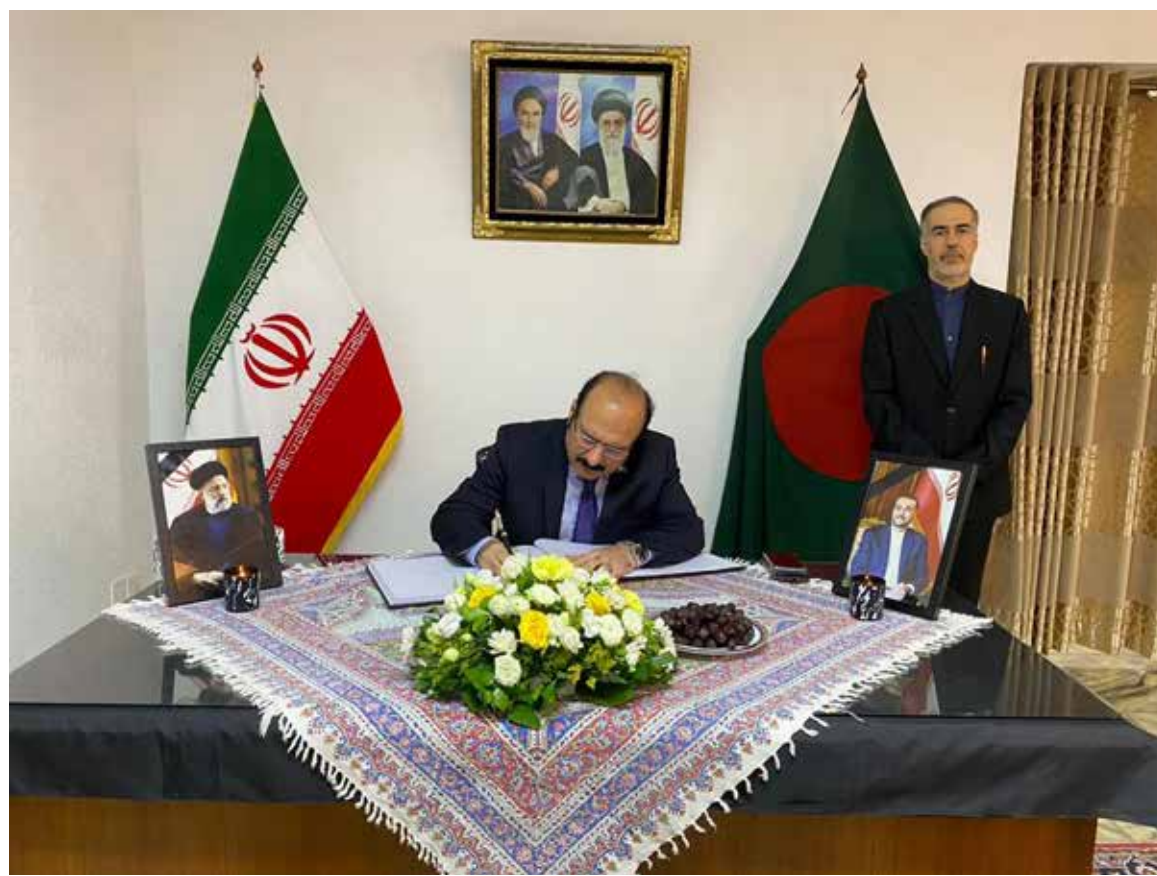
TEHRAN: The Chief of Staff of Iran has given an eye witness account of the crash. The chief of staff was present in the 3rd helicopter. He said, "After our noon prayers, we departed towards the direction of Tabriz. The weather was clear, there was no weather condition to be worried about. After half an hour being in the air, prior to reaching the Sungun copper mine, there was a small patch of clouds; interviewer asks: "So there was no fog?" He replied, not at all. There was fog on the ground, but not in up the air where we were advancing with the helicopters. However in one small compacted area, there was a

small patch of clouds above a cliff. In terms of height, this cloud was on the same height as our flight's height. It was there when the now-martyred helicopter pilot, who was also the commander of the fleet, that told the rest of the pilots to ascend above the clouds. We were the 3rd pilot, behind the president's helicopter. We came above the clouds, we advanced for approximately 30 seconds. Our pilot suddenly realised that the main helicopter carrying the president is missing. Interviewer asks: "You didn't see the helicopter anymore after ascending?" He replied, yes exactly, after ascending above the clouds, we didn't see the main helicopter. The ascension itself didn't feel difficult or hard. Sometimes, when we use the plane we

feel turbulence but we didn't feel anything at all inside the helicopter this time, when ascending. And after we ascended there were no other clouds. Interviewer asks: "So beyond this, there were no weather forecasts mentioning any disturbances in the weather to make it unsafe?" He replied, no there wasn't any. Shortly after, we were able to see beneath us and there were no clouds anymore and we had reached the area of the copper mine. We realised however that our pilot is making an U-turn suddenly so I asked him why? He said that one of our helicopters is missing. We estimate that they made an emergency landing, because we also have no radio contact with it anymore. So I asked him when was the last

time contact was made? The pilot answered: "A minute and 30 seconds ago, when the pilot told us to ascend above the clouds." Our pilot circled around the area a couple of times, but the area with the cloud patch was also invisible to us and it was too risky to enter that area. We failed several times to make any radio contact. We were forced to make a landing after 30 seconds at the Sungun copper mine to investigate. During the flight, we had continuous cell phone calls with the passengers, including the bodyguard, Mr. Abdollahian, the governor of East-Azerbaijan and the Friday imam of Tabriz. However we tried calling all of them without luck. After some tries, calling the cellphone of

the captain accompanying the president, someone picked the phone. It was Ayatollah Hashem, the Friday imam of Tabriz. He told us that I'm not feeling well. He didn't tell us anything special. I asked him what exactly has happened? He told us that he didn't know what has happened, when asked on his whereabouts, he said that he didn't know. He only described what he could see, described to us what he saw, e.g. surrounded by trees. I asked him about the condition of the others, the Ayatollah replied that he's alone and couldn't see anyone else and he's alone. The copper mine had good facilities such as ambulances and the necessary vehicles. We formed a team to go and see



DHAKA: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan signing condolence book at the Iranian Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Iranian Ambassador is standing next.—DNA

## Russian assets plan for aiding Ukraine to dominate G7 meet

STRESA: G7 finance ministers gather in Italy on Thursday for a three-day meeting dominated by plans to use Russian assets to help Ukraine, as well as new sanctions on Moscow and the commercial threat posed by China. The ministers and central bankers from the Group of Seven world powers are meeting in Stresa, on the shores of northern Italy's Lake Maggiore, to prepare for the larger summit of G7 heads of state next month in Puglia. Top of the agenda is a plan to finance crucial aid to Ukraine using the interest generated by the 300 billion euros (\$325 billion) of Russian central bank assets frozen by the G7 and Europe. The United States has proposed granting Ukraine, which has been fighting a Russian invasion for more than two years, up to \$50 billion in loans secured by this interest. "It's vital and urgent that we collectively find a way forward to unlock the value of Russian sovereign assets immobilised in our jurisdictions for the benefit of Ukraine," US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said this week. The details of the US plan have not yet been finalised, including who would issue the debt — the US alone or G7 countries as a whole. But it will serve as a basis for G7 discussions, according to a Treasury source in Italy, which as G7 president this year is hosting the Stresa talks. The US proposal is an "interesting way forward" but "any decision must have a solid legal basis", the source said. Time is of the essence, as the slow speed of European material reaching Kyiv and the near-halt in US aid for months during wrangling in Washington have strained Ukraine's capabilities just as Russia has regained the initiative on the ground.—DNA

## Armed bandits kill around 20 in Niger

NIAMEY, NIGER: Armed bandits killed around 20 people in a village in Niger's restive Tillaberi region earlier this week, public radio reported on Wednesday. The news came a day after the defence ministry said suspected Militants had killed seven soldiers in the region plagued for years by rebels linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group. "The Tillaberi region... was plunged into mourning following an attack perpetrated by armed bandits on Monday May 20, 2024" on the village of Djambala, La Voix du Sahel radio station said. The attack "unfortunately caused the loss of around 20 people", it added. Niger's military strongman Abdourahmane Tiani has asked his youth minister and government spokesman Abdramane Amadou to "express the compassion of the Nigerien people and present condolences to the victims' families", the radio station said. Tillaberi is in the vast and unstable "three borders" region between Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, where insurgents have carried out attacks for years despite the massive deployment of anti-militant forces. On Tuesday, the defence ministry said its forces killed "several dozen terrorists" after an attack on a military position in Tillaberi on Monday that left seven soldiers dead.—APP

## Nikki Haley pledges her vote to Trump

WASHINGTON: Former presidential hopeful Nikki Haley said Wednesday she will vote for Donald Trump in the US election, but said her one-time bitter rival would have to work to win over her moderate support base as he faces President Joe Biden in November. The former South Carolina governor, 52, abandoned her White House ambitions in March after suffering several heavy defeats in primary contests — and had not previously indicated whether she would support the man who referred to her repeatedly as "birdbrain." Despite having made withering criticism of the scandal-plagued ex-president, Haley said at an event for the Washington-based Hudson Institute, a conservative think tank, that she was urging Trump to make nice with her support base. "Trump would be smart to reach out to the millions of people who voted for me and continue to support me and not assume that they're just going to be with him. And I genuinely hope he does that," she said. More than two months after ending her White House campaign, Haley has continued to scoop a significant chunk of votes in presidential primary contests — underlining a persistent refusal among a sizable bloc of Republicans to get behind Trump. "I put my priorities on a president who's going to have the backs of our allies and hold our enemies to account, who would secure the border — no more excuses — a president who would support capitalism and freedom, a president who understands we need less debt, not more debt," she said. "Trump hasn't been perfect on these policies. I've made that clear, many, many times. But Biden has been a catastrophe. So I will be voting for Trump." Trump and Haley traded at times vicious barbs during the state-by-state nominating contests, when the former UN ambassador warned that nominating her one-time boss would spell general election defeat for Republicans. She said a majority of voters were opposed to a rematch between "chaos" candidate Trump and Biden, two men aged 77 and 81 respectively who she said were past their prime. "He's getting meaner and more offensive by the day," Haley said ahead of a defeat in her home state of South Carolina in February. "He's completely distracted, and everything is about him. He's so obsessed with his demons in the past that he can't focus on the future Americans deserve," she told supporters. Haley criticized Trump's comments attacking NATO nations and referred repeatedly to the many court appearances he has been making as he faces multiple criminal indictments and lawsuits. "It's not normal to spend \$50 million dollars in campaign contributions on personal court cases," Haley said. "It's not normal to threaten people who back your opponent, and it's not normal to call on Russia to invade NATO countries." Trump returned the compliment by categorically ruling her out of contention to be his running mate. Trump has failed to make inroads with Haley's moderate backers, and will see her public show of support as a huge boon ahead of the Republican nominating convention in July. The tenacity of the Haley vote long after she quit the race for the Republican presidential nomination prompted US media to refer to her ongoing presence on the primary stage as a "zombie campaign." The primaries laid bare Trump's key shortcoming — his lack of appeal among the moderates, independents and voters with college degrees he will need to prevail against Biden. Meanwhile the Biden campaign had been reaching across the aisle, hoping to attract Haley voters. It released a TV spot in April targeting suburban battlegrounds with the message: "If you voted for Nikki Haley, Donald Trump doesn't want your vote."—DNA

## Will CM Punjab be able to implement merit and rules in the forest dept ?

The Chief Minister Punjab should take personal interest in the matter and order an immediate inquiry so that the delinquent persons should be taken to task

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



The forest department in Punjab has long been plagued by political pressure, leading to the inappropriate posting and transfers of forest officers. Influential officers often use their Political connections to secure postings in their preferred areas, where they remain for extended periods regardless of their performance or the needs of the department. This phenomenon is particularly evident in cities like Lahore and Rawalpindi, where officers such as Chief Conservator Rawalpindi Sheikh Saqib and Conservator Rawalpindi Abid Gondal have held positions for decades. One of the key issues highlighted in the case of Punjab's forest management is the lack of adherence to tenure rules. According to regulations,

forest officers should be transferred from one area to another every three years to prevent the development of vested interests. Chief Conservators play a pivotal role in shaping forest management policies and practices. In Punjab, individuals like Sheikh Saqib and Abid Gondal exert significant influence over decision-making processes. Therefore, it is illegal for both of them and other forest officers like them to be posted in favored areas for more than three years. Their long tenures in favored areas not only perpetuate inefficiencies but also undermine the merit-based system of promotions and transfers. The consequences of political interference in forest management extend beyond administrative inefficiencies. The misallocation of resources and the neglect of certain regions can have profound environmental implications, including deforestation, habitat loss, and biodiversity decline. Addressing the systemic issues within Punjab's forest management requires comprehensive reforms that prioritize meritoc-

racy, transparency, and environmental sustainability. Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz has a critical role to play in initiating these reforms and resisting political pressure in the appointment and transfer of forest officers. A full shuffling of officers based on merit rather than political considerations is essential to revitalizing the department and safeguarding Punjab's forest resources. To prevent the undue influence of political actors, transfers and postings within the forest department should be conducted strictly on merit. Objective criteria, such as performance evaluations, expertise, and the needs of different regions, should guide decision-making processes. Regular rotations of officers between regions should be enforced to prevent the development of vested interests and to promote cross-regional learning and collaboration. Enhancing environmental governance mechanisms is crucial for ensuring accountability and transparency in forest management. Public participation in decision-making processes, including consultations with local communi-

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Mohamed Karmoune  
Pak-Africa ties poised for a quantum leap

## ANF recovers 24 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover over 24 kg drugs and arrested four suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 28 grams weed was recovered from a parcel sent from England to a courier office in Rawalpindi. 12 kg opium was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near Swat Motorway Toll Plaza Nowshera. In the third operation, 12 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested near GT Road, Attock. In two separate operations in Quetta, 126 intoxicated tablets were recovered from two suspects. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

## PM extends warm wishes to Buddhists

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday extended warm wishes to the Buddhists across the world celebrating Vesak festival being observed today. Vesak, the Day of the Full Moon in the month of May, is the most sacred day to millions of Buddhists around the world. Besides being the birthday of Buddha two and a half millennia ago, it also marks Buddha's attainment as well as his death.—APP

## IRSA releases 272,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 272,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 302,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbella Dam was 1468.31 feet and was 70.31 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 112,000 cusecs and 100,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1178.55 feet, which was 128.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 63,000 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively.—APP

## PIA offers 20 percent discount

BEIJING: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has offered 20 percent discount for Pakistani students traveling from China to Pakistan. The national flag carrier has also increased baggage allowance up to 60 kilograms, an official of the airline told APP here on Thursday. At present, PIA is operating one weekly flight on Islamabad-Beijing-Islamabad route on every Sunday. The students who are planning to go to Pakistan for summer holidays or want to travel to homeland after completion of their educational degrees could take benefit from the discount. Talking to APP, Ali Imran, a Pakistani researcher, said that a large number of Pakistani students are currently studying in different cities in China. The discount offered by PIA would greatly facilitate them as they could enjoy both discount in fare and increase in the baggage allowance.—APP

## Briefs

### Sunak, Starmer hit campaign trail

LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his rival, Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, kicked off their election campaigns on Thursday, each arguing that only they can snap the country out of its economic and political malaise. Sunak, whose Conservative Party has trailed Labour by around 20 percentage points in opinion polls since he became PM in October 2022, shocked and angered many in his party when he gambled on a July 4 election, calling it months earlier than expected. He argued on Thursday that the economy was turning a corner and he had a plan to tackle illegal immigration. But with prices in the shops up 21 per cent in the last three years and the national health service buckling under record waiting times, it may be hard to persuade voters that Britain is on the right track. Sunak also admitted the first flights sending illegal migrants to Rwanda, a flagship policy, would not take off before the election. Legal challenges are already lined up. The former investment banker announced his decision in the pouring rain in Downing Street on Wednesday, having to shout over protesters blaring the song "Things Can Only Get Better" — an anthem associated with Labour's crushing 1997 election victory under Tony Blair that ended the last long period of Conservative rule. — Agencies

### BHC disposes of treason petition against Imran

DNA

QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court (BHC) on Thursday disposed of a petition seeking high treason proceedings against PTI founder Imran Khan. BHC's two-member bench comprising Chief Justice Hashim Khan Kakar and Justice ShaukatRakhshani announced the ruling on the petition filed by Advocate Amanullah, alleging the former prime minister of dissolving the National Assembly unconstitutionally. The petitioner had pleaded the court to start proceedings against Khan under Article 6 of the Constitution. During the hearing, the PTI founder's lawyer raised objections over the jurisdiction of the high court, arguing that the case did not fall under the BHC jurisdiction. The high court later declared the petition non-maintainable after accepting the arguments presented by defence lawyer over jurisdiction matter.

### Aleema Khan to continue 'fight for justice'

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: Aleema Khan, the sister of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, has said her fight for justice will go on. Talking to the media at the high court, she said she came to hear good news but the prosecutor started reading the 'entire booklet, he prepared to delay the decision'. "We came to hear good news. We went to the courtroom but to no avail. The government lawyer started reading the entire booklet," she said. She mentioned the judge's question to the prosecutor, saying: "Today, Justice Amir Farooq asked a very beautiful question whether there was a fair trial." She added: "The prosecutor prepared a book for Justice Amir Farooq's reply. I think we have heard 10 per cent of the book today. Justice Amir Farooq should have asked this question on the first day." However, she said she would keep on waiting for justice. She called Rauf Hasan attack a murder attempt and cited the PTI founder as saying 'enough is enough.' She called upon authorities to bring to book the attackers.

# Israel occupation forces launch deadly Gaza strikes

## Top UN court to rule today on South Africa Gaza ceasefire bid

NEWS DESK

GAZA: Israel launched devastating air strikes on Gaza early Thursday while also saying it is ready to resume stalled talks on a truce and hostage release deal with Hamas to pause the war raging since October 7. The Gaza Strip's civil defense agency said two pre-dawn air strikes had killed 26 people, including 15 children, in Gaza City alone. Agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said one strike hit a family house, killing 16 people, in the Al-Daraj area, and another killed 10 people inside a mosque compound. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military. Fierce street battles also raged in Gaza's Jabalia and Rafah where the armed wings of Hamas and its ally Islamic Jihad said they had fired mortar barrages at Israeli troops. International pressure for a ceasefire has mounted on Israel and its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as three European countries said Wednesday they would recognize a Palestinian state. The week started with the International Criminal Court's prosecutor seeking arrest warrants on war crimes charges against Netanyahu and his defense minister as well as three Hamas leaders. Israel has angrily rejected those moves, voicing "disgust" over the ICC request and labelling any recognition of Palestinian statehood a "reward for terrorism." But domestic pressure has also

## Resistance front officials convene in Tehran

TEHRAN: The representatives of the region's anti-Israeli resistance groups held a meeting in Tehran, attended by senior commanders of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). A number of officials representing the resistance groups assembled in Tehran on the sidelines of a formal ceremony held to pay tribute to late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage, who died in a helicopter crash on May 19. The high-profile gathering of resistance groups was participated by IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami and Commander of the IRGC Quds Force Brigadier General Esmail Qaani. Tasnim has obtained information about the topics discussed in the meeting, which revolved around the latest political, social and military developments in Gaza, the Al-Aqsa Storm operation against the Israeli regime, and the role of the resistance front in the region. The attendees at the meeting emphasized the need for the continuation of the fight and struggle until the Palestinian resistance's complete and ultimate victory in the Gaza Strip with the participation of all resistance groups and fronts across the region. A host of foreign heads of state and authorities traveled to Iran on Wednesday to pay tribute to President Raisi and his entourage. A helicopter carrying President Raisi and seven others crashed in northwestern mountainous forests of Iran on May 19. The tragedy killed President Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, Friday prayers leader of Tabriz Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Ake-Hashem, Governor of East Azarbaijan Malek Rahmati, the commander of the president's security team, two pilots and a flight crew. — Agencies

risen as supporters of hostages trapped in Gaza again rallied outside Netanyahu's office, passionately demanding a deal to bring them home. A newly released video showed five female Israeli soldiers, tied up and some with bloodied faces, in the hands of Palestinian militants during the attack

entered day 230 on Thursday, aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound and target different areas and massacre more civilians, especially in northern Gaza. 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, amid ongoing attacks in Rafah and Jabalia. According to media sources, Diaa al-Din ash-Sharfa, deputy chief of the national security forces in Gaza, was martyred in an Israeli aerial attack in al-Saraya area in Gaza City. Four other officers, who were with him, also suffered injuries. Three civilians were injured, one seriously, when the Israeli army bombed displaced families in the Ghazi ash-Shawa School in Beit Hanoun, north of Gaza. Israeli gunboats also opened machinegun fire at fishermen off the shores of al-Qarara area, northwest of Khan Yunis, injuring two of them. 10 civilians were martyred, including a mother and five children, and many others were injured when the Israeli army bombed a mosque and a religious school sheltering families in al-Daraj neighborhood in Gaza City. 16 other civilians were massacred, including 10 children, when a five-story house was reduced to rubble in an Israeli airstrike in al-Daraj neighborhood in Gaza City. A warplane also bombed an apartment near the Yarmouk soccer arena in Gaza City, killing and injuring a number of people.

## Naqvi directs Nadra to make national registration policy

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi while presiding over a review meeting regarding National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) on Thursday directed to make National Registration Policy. The minister in a meeting said that authenticity of identity card and citizenship is of utmost importance, therefore, a comprehensive policy should be evolved in this regard. He also directed to develop consensus of all provinces on this policy because union council has the status of foundation and access of NADRA to Union Councils is necessary in this connection. He said that the policy will make citizen's registration transparent and foolproof. The new policy will also prevent illegal registration of citizenship, due to which the issue of releasing identity cards and passports to foreigners came to light, the minister said. The plan to increase NADRA centers in six major cities was also reviewed at a meeting. Apart from Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi, Multan had been decided to be included in this plan. The plan should be finalized and implemented in the next few days, so that people could avoid unnecessary rush and hassle, said the Interior Minister. NADRA counters should also be started in service centers for the convenience of the people, he directed.

## Skardu-bound flight narrowly escapes accident

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A private airline bound from Islamabad to Skardu narrowly escaped an accident immediately after take-off from Islamabad airport. The flight captain told the Air Traffic Controller (ATC) that after the take off the aircraft's landing gear was not getting closed. The plane made two circles in the air and landed safely at the Islamabad International Airport. After the incident, the private airline's flight PA-251 was cancelled. Skardu International Airport is strategically located in the heart of Gilgit-Baltistan.

## COAS Asim meets civil, military leadership in Germany visit



### Army chief, German leadership discuss matters of mutual interest during meetings

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir has held meetings with civil-military leadership while paying a visit to Germany, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Thursday. During the visit, he was received at the Federal Ministry of Defence by General Carsten Breuer, chief of defence, where he was presented with the guard of honour by the contingent of German Armed Forces. The army chief also met Chief of the German Army Lieutenant General Alfons Mais, and visited the Army Combat Training Centre, Gardelegen, along with his German counterpart. He was briefed on

various facets of the centre and the training being imparted to the German Army and contingents of other armies. He also witnessed a demonstration of urban warfare and visited different training facilities. COAS Munir also met German Chancellor's Foreign Policy and Security Adviser Jens Plötner, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Tobias Linder, and State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence Nils Hilmer. During the meetings with the civilian and military leadership, matters of mutual interest came under discussion. The German leadership acknowledged the Pakistan Army's role in the fight against terrorism and in maintaining peace and stability in the region. COAS Munir will also be visiting the German Armed Forces Command & Staff College, Hamburg, where he will address the students attending the course from various countries to dilate upon Pakistan's Regional and International Security Perspective and contributions of Pakistan Armed Forces in the United Nations (UN) missions.

## Beijing launches military drills encircling Chinese Taipei

### The drills are the first substantive response from China to swearing-in of Taiwan President Lai Ching-te on Monday, after he won the election in January

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: Beijing has launched a two-day military drill in the waters and airspace around the self-governing island of Chinese Taipei, as "punishment" for what it called the "separatist acts" of holding an election and inaugurating a new president. The Chinese state-run Xinhua news agency reported that the Eastern Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) started the drills on Thursday early morning in the Taiwan Strait, the north, south and east of the self-ruled island, as well as areas around the islands of Kinmen, Matsu, Wuqiu and Dongyin. The drills are the first substantive response from China to swearing-in of Taiwan President Lai Ching-te on Monday, after he won the election in January. Both Lai and his predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen, are from the pro-sovereignty Democratic Progressive party (DPP), which Beijing considers to be separatists. In Lai's first address to the public after taking his oath, he said that "the Republic of China, Taiwan, is a sovereign and independent nation with sovereignty resting in the people" and stressed that his government would make no concessions on its democracy and freedoms. Dozens of fighter jets armed with live missiles were part of the mock strikes, code-named Joint Sword-2024A that targeted high-value military assets, such as ships and warplanes, Chinese military Eastern Theater Command spokesperson

Naval Colonel Li Xi told CCTV. Li called the drills a "strong punishment" for "separatist acts," adding that the exercises are "a stern warning against the interference and provocation by external forces," Xinhua reported. China's military said its drills focus on joint sea-air combat-readiness patrols, precision strikes on key targets, and integrated operations inside and outside the island to test the "joint real combat capabilities" of its forces. On the other hand, the Ministry of Defense in the self-ruled island has condemned China's military exercises around the self-ruled island, adding that Taipei has dispatched naval, air, and ground forces to "defend the [island's] sovereignty." The ministry said it had placed its military on "high alert" in response to China's drills, which it described as "irrational provocations and actions that disrupt regional peace and stability." Moreover, China's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) issued a statement on Wednesday, firmly stating its stance against any form of "Taiwan independence" separatist activities" and vowed to take action against the DPP authorities for collaborating with external forces in their pursuit of independence. China has stepped up military activities around the island ever since Tsai Ing-wen was elected for her first term as president in 2016. It has often taken more aggressive measures during meetings between Taiwanese officials and US politicians, a crucial ally of Taiwan, and initiated an unprecedented set of military exercises after a visit by former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in August 2022.

## Petitions filed in HCs against Pemra's move

### Petition says notification violates public's right of access to information, journalists' freedom of speech

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Three separate petitions have been filed in Sindh, Lahore, and Islamabad high courts against Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's (Pemra) notification prohibiting TV channels from news of court proceedings. In a notification issued on May 21, the media watchdog directed all satellite news channel licensees that no content, including commentary, opinions, or suggestions about the potential fate of such sub-judice matter which tends to prejudice the determination by a court shall be aired. "Further, TV Channels are directed to refrain from airing tickers/headlines with regard to court proceedings till the final order," it added. All satellite TV channel licensees were also directed to ensure strict compliance to the Pemra laws in line with the judgment of the Supreme Court "in Suo Moto Case No. 28 of 2018 (reported as 2019 PLD SC 1) in letter and spirit". The media watchdog also warned of legal action in case of any violation. The petition filed by the court reporters' association in IHC said that through the notification, Pemra has imposed a blanket ban on the live reporting of statements in open court by the various actors of the justice system: judges, lawyers, parties, and witnesses. "By imposing a blackout on court proceedings without even consulting the judiciary, Pemra is effectively committing an assault on the independence of the judiciary, in addition to violating the public's right of access to information, journalists' freedom of speech and litigants' right to a fair trial." Last but not least, the notifications, which sound a death knell for the profession of courtroom journalism, have jeopardised the right to livelihood of the members of the petitioners' organisations and amount to a violation of their rights under Article 18 of the Constitution, read the petition.

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