



# Islamabad POST

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**'Outraged' by Israeli strikes on Rafah, says President Macron**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Amir Muqam applauds IOM services**

Detailed News On Page-04

**Gary Kirsten to decide Pakistan vice-captaincy**

Detailed News On Page-06



## After burying the hatchet KP and Centre agree to work together for public

Following meeting with ministers, CM Gandapur says they have found way through which KP people will get relief

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Following months-long tussle and exchange of heated arguments over arrears, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Centre have finally agreed to bury the hatchet and work together for public relief. The development came during a meeting between KP's firebrand Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Islamabad on Monday. Federal Minister for Energy Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari and the federal interior secretary were also among the attendees of the meeting. It is pertinent to mention here that the KP government and the Centre had been at odds over multiple issues, including the prolonged power cuts in the province with CM Gandapur even threatening to take control of the power distribution company, the Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) after decrying the excessive power outages in the province. In addition to this, the KP government and Centre have been engaged in a verbal spat in recent days with the former complaining of dues that are owed to the province by the federal government. In March, CM Gandapur threatened to take the Centre to court over the arrears issue. Addressing a joint presser, following a "meaningful" dialogue, CM Gandapur said: "The federal and provincial institutions will work together. [We] will work together to remove the causes of line losses." Referring to the "consensus" developed between the two sides, the provincial chief executive said that they had found a way through which people would get relief. "Even though KP provides electricity to the entire country," he said, "the province itself is experiencing prolonged power cuts." The chief minister further said that

Continued on Page 06

## 7 desks established under SIFC: Tarar

Says, certain political party will not succeed in its propaganda

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said seven desks have been established under Special Investment Facilitation Council to attract investment from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, China, European Union, the US and Far East. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, he said the investors of friendly countries are expressing their satisfaction over the one window facility being provided by the SIFC. He said the UAE has announced to make ten billion dollars investment in Pakistan while there is also progress of bringing five billion dollar investment from Saudi Arabia. He was confident that these investments will materialize. The Information Minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will also visit China in a few days' time to give impetus to China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. Attaullah Tarar said the country's economy is taking off. He said the Current Account

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi and Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari in a meeting with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur. - DNA

## Russia invites Afghan Taliban to major economic forum

Since Taliban seized power in 2021, Russia has slowly built ties with them,

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russia has invited Afghanistan's Taliban to its biggest annual economic forum as Moscow moves to remove a ban on the Islamist movement, a senior Russian diplomat was quoted as saying on Monday. Since the Taliban seized power in August 2021 as US-led forces withdrew after 20 years of war, Russia has been slowly building ties with the Taliban, though the movement is still officially outlawed in Russia.

Continued on Page 06

## SHC allows reporting court proceedings

Court adjourns the case until June 6

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) has allowed court reporters to resume reporting as usual while halting the implementation of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's (PEMRA) notification until June 6. PEMRA's notification of ban on court proceedings reporting was challenged in the SHC. The court approved the petition for immediate hearing. A two-member bench, headed by SHC chief justice,

Continued on Page 06

## Stopping 'transgression' Raza Rabbani calls for holding grand dialogue

Pakistan is engulfed in multiple crises, one being contradiction within ruling elite, says PPP leader

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Former Senate chairman Mian Raza Rabbani has called for holding a grand intra-institutional dialogue, wherein, the institutions should agree on not to transgress into each others domain. Highlighting that the public exhibition of contradictions among institutes was casting long shadows on already fragile political system, Rabbani said, The way forward is a grand intra-institutional dialogue, wherein, each institution agrees not to transgress into each others domain, respecting the trichotomy of power envisaged in the Constitution. In a press statement, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader said Pakistan was engulfed in multiple crises, one being

Continued on Page 06

## Pakistan in grip of worst individual dictatorship: PTI

System of tyranny won't last for long, as it will soon meet a drastic end: PTI Spokesperson

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said that Pakistan was in the grip of the worst dictatorship of an individual in the aftermath of the regime change operation, as the country

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### NA calls budget session on June 5

Federal budget will be presented on June 8

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly has called its budget session on June 5. According to sources, National Assembly's session will be presided over by Speaker Ayaz Sadiq on June 5 at 5pm at Parliament House. It is pertinent to note that the federal budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 will be presented in the National Assembly on June 8. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb will present the budget. According to sources, the debate on budget will commence on June 10. The budget will be approved in the last week of June after Eidul Adha.

### PML-N wants Nawaz to lead party

PML-N's general council meeting today

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Punjab President Rana Sanullah said that the entire PML-N unanimously wants Nawaz Sharif to lead the party. Addressing a press conference at PML-N Model Town secretariat on Monday, he said that the Central Working Committee (CWC) of the party had accepted the resignation of Shehbaz Sharif as party president. The CWC nominated the election commission as per the party's constitution to elect the new president, he added. "The nomination papers would be accepted tomorrow from 10 am to 12 pm while scrutiny would be completed by 1 pm," he said.

## Pak gas transmission system 'at risk' due to line pack pressure

Local E&P companies slash their gas flows putting gas fields at risk

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's gas transmission and distribution system is at risk due to increasing line pack pressure which has surged to a dangerous level of 5.13 billion cubic feet (bcf) after May 5, The News reported on Monday. The pressure in the gas transmission system remained at a manageable level of 4.570-4.97bcf between May 5 and May 25 but has now soared to critical levels owing to the reduction in the use of Re-Gasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) by the power sector, a senior official told the publication. "Now, the gas system has come again under duress on May 25-26 mainly because of reduction in the use of RLNG by the power sector," the official said, adding that the pipeline could burst any time as the gas transmission system becomes more vulnerable if

the gas pressure surges past 5bcf-mark. The official's remark come as line pack pressure stood at 5.13bcf on Sunday as opposed to Saturday's 5.17bcf. The local Exploration and Production (E&P) companies have reduced gas flows by 176mmcf from 783 to 605mmcf, which is dangerous for the operation of gas fields. The power sector has slashed its RLNG use to 475mmcf as fuel for electricity generation owing to which the line pack pressure has increased to 1.530bcf, putting the gas transmission system under duress. Meanwhile, gas consumption in the fertiliser industry stands at 52 mmcf as compared to Saturday's consumption of 40mmcf with low RLNG consumption (24mmcf) by Fatima Fertiliser due to start up of their plant at 1900 hrs on May 24 after completion of their Annual Turn Around (ATA).

Continued on Page 06

## Security forces neutralise nearly 2 dozen terrorists; COAS attends funeral

Twenty-three terrorists were sent to hell by the security forces in three separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Namaz-e-Janaza of Sepoy Taimoor Shaheed (age 32, resident of district Layyah), Sepoy Nadir Sagheer Shaheed (age 22, resident district Bagh), Sepoy Muhammad Yaseen Shaheed (age 23, resident of district Khushab), Lance Naik Syed Danish Afkar Shaheed (age 30, resident of district Poonch) and Naik Ashfaq Butt Shaheed (age 32, resident of district Kahuta), who embraced Shahadat during an intense exchange of fire with terror-

ists at general area Bagh, Khyber district, was offered in Peshawar Garrison today. General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and a large number of military & civil officials attended the funeral. Later on, COAS visited CMH Peshawar to inquire about the well being of troops injured during the operation. COAS appreciated their high morale and reaffirmed the resolve of the Nation to fight the terrorism with full vigor and spirit. Shuhada will be laid to rest with full military honor at their respective native towns. Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Commander Peshawar Corps. Meanwhile, On 26-27 May 2024, twenty three terrorists were sent to hell by the security forces in three separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. On 26 May, an intelligence based operation was conducted in general area Hassan Khel, Peshawar District, where six terrorists were successfully neutralized by the security forces and multiple hideouts were busted. Captain Hussain Jehangir and Havildar Shafiq Ullah also embraced Shahadat on 26 May, while fighting gallantly. On 27 May, in another operation conducted in Tank District, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists location, as a result of which ten terrorists were sent to hell. The third engagement occurred in general area Bagh, Khyber District, wherein, the security forces sent seven

Continued on Page 06

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# Religious leaders unite against interfaith disharmony

PUC Chairman Ashrafi said that blasphemy allegations spark social unrest in sensitive Pakistan incident

SARGODHA : Religious scholars and leaders from various schools of thought, in the wake of a recent blasphemous incident in Sargodha, on Monday came together under the auspices of Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) to pledge a united front against attempts to incite interfaith disharmony in the country. The incident, which has stirred tensions within the community, is being seen by many as a deliberate effort by certain elements to destabilize Pakistan by exploiting religious sentiments. Key religious figures expressed their firm commitment to countering any attempts to sow discord among different religious communities in Pakistan. They emphasized that unity and mutual understanding were essential to safeguarding national stability and preventing violence. Addressing a press conference accompanied with Ulema and Mashaykh here at Deputy Commissioner Office, PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said the incident in question involved allegations of blasphemy, a highly sensitive and incendiary topic in Pakistan, which had historically led to significant social unrest. However, in this instance, the swift and measured response from local law enforce-

ment agencies played a crucial role in preventing the situation from escalating, he said adding that their prompt action was lauded by religious leaders, who recognized the importance of maintaining peace and order in such volatile situations. Ashrafi stated, "We will not allow anyone to destabilize our country through interfaith disharmony. It is our collective responsibility to promote peace and understanding among all communities." He further highlighted the critical role of religious leaders in guiding their followers towards tolerance and harmony. He reiterated his stance that religion should be a force for unity rather than division and called on all Pakistanis to reject any rhetoric or actions that aimed to pit one religious group against another.

He stressed the importance of education and dialogue in dispelling misunderstandings and building a more cohesive society. Ashrafi also commended the immediate response of law enforcement agencies to the Sargodha incident as their efficient handling of the situation prevented potential violence and ensured that justice would be served through appropriate legal channels

rather than mob action. He said this response was seen as a model for dealing with such incidents in the future, highlighting the importance of a measured and lawful approach. In addition to addressing the immediate incident, the PUC chairman announced plans to hold interfaith dialogues and educational programmes for fostering a deeper understanding and respect among different faiths in the country. He said these initiatives were part of a broader strategy to create a resilient society that could resist attempts to incite hatred and violence. Ashrafi said the unity displayed by the religious leaders in response to the Sargodha incident had sent a powerful message that Pakistan's diverse religious communities could stand together in the face of challenges. By promoting peace and understanding, he said they intended to ensure that the nation remained strong and united against any forces that seek to create division. As the situation continued to be monitored, the collective efforts of religious scholars, law enforcement, and the community at large, he said, remained crucial in maintaining peace and stability. —APP



LAHORE: Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.—DNA

## IGP reviews under construction safe city projects

LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar visited Faisalabad where he reviewed the construction of the Faisalabad Safe City project. RPO Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan, MD Safe City Ahsan Younas gave a briefing about the ongoing work on the Faisalabad Safe City project. IG Punjab expressed satisfaction over the progress of the Faisalabad Safe City project. Dr. Usman Anwar appreciated the RPO Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan for completing the project quickly. IG Punjab said that the Safe City project will prove helpful in crime prevention, traffic management, and public safety.

Later, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar visited Gujranwala, RPO Gujranwala Tayyab Hafeez Cheema, CPO Muhammad Ayaz Saleem, senior officers were present on the spot. IG Punjab arrived Ashraf Marth Shaheed Police Lines, an active squad of police saluted the IG Punjab IG Punjab laid flowers on the memorial of police martyrs and recited Fatiha. IG Punjab also visited the under construction Safe City Project, police lines and CPO office in Gujranwala. IG Punjab reviewed the ongoing construction works in the Safe City project and issued instructions regarding its timely completion.—APP

## Ahsan inaugurates 'clean and safe drinking water' plant

Ahsan Iqbal said that PM had launched the National Nutrition Program at a cost of 8 billion rupees

NAROWAL : Under the community engagement program, Clean and Safe Drinking Water facility was formally inaugurated by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nestlé Pakistan Limited Jason Avancena here in Narowal. Speaking on the occasion, the federal minister said that the modern water filtration plant would provide 24,000 liters of clean water to 10,000 people on a daily basis which was a blessing. "I thank Nestlé Pakistan for providing this facility on be-

half of the people of Narowal", he maintained. He said that there was a severe shortage of clean drinking water in our country due to which Pakistan was suffering from fatal diseases like hepatitis. Iqbal said that Prime Minister had launched the National Nutrition Program at a cost of 8 billion rupees, through which malnutrition will be tackled. "A healthy nation can only be built by focusing on clean drinking water and balanced nutrition", he added. He said that Nestlé for Healthy Kid program should be started at every school so that the children could learn

about a balanced diet and its importance in daily life. CEO Nestlé Pakistan Limited Jason Avancena while addressing the participants, told about the community development projects across Pakistan under the Community Engagement Program on behalf of his company. Later, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal along with Deputy Commissioner Narowal Syed Hassan Raza, CEO Nestlé Pakistan Limited Jason Avancena and CEO Health Narowal Dr. Naveed Haider inaugurated.—APP

## DC reviews dengue surveillance in city

LAHORE : An anti-dengue drive initiated by the district administration is in full swing under which surveillance is being carried out at various points in the provincial capital. Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider on Monday visited Mazon area where she inspected anti-dengue arrangements and instructed the house owners about dengue preventive measures. She checked houses, empty plots and commercial markets of the area and assessed the close monitoring of dengue larva elimination. She observed the attendance and performance of anti-dengue squad deputed on field duty in the area. Similarly, Assistant Commissioner City Rai Baber visited UC-72 Bilal Ganj to inspect anti-dengue arrangements and assessed dengue surveillance and door marking in the area and instructed the area in-charges to complete their task in accordance with the micro plan.—APP

## Gold rates up by Rs 800 per tola

ISLAMABAD : The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 800 and was sold at Rs 240,800 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 240,000 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 686 to Rs 206,447 from Rs 205,761 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs 189,243 from Rs 188,615, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs.2,800 and Rs.2,400.54 respectively.—APP

## SCCI chief urges modernization of gemstone sector

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : President, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq on Monday said the gemstones sector was a prime source for enhancement of country's export and stressed that it was need of the hour to put this important sector on modern lines. The SCCI chief demanded pragmatic steps towards financial assistance of the traders attached with the gemstones sector. Fuad Ishaq was addressing an opening ceremony of a two-day Gemstones and Mineral Show organized by Gemstones Traders Association here.

He assured the chamber will take up issues of gemstones traders with the government and relevant authorities and try to resolve them at the earliest. The event was attended by the SCCI senior vice president Sanaullah Khan, vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool, the Gemstone Traders Association president Haji Murad Tajak, Haji Dost Muhammad, other office bearers, a large number of traders associated with Gemstone Sector. After inaugurating the Gemstones Show, Fuad Ishaq visited various stalls set up during the exhibition wherein traders briefed him about importance and quality of various kinds of gemstones, and their demand internationally and export. Gemstones

traders on the occasion demanded a lasting and amicable solution to all their issues to earn huge foreign exchange through enhancing export of gemstones and stabilizing the economy and promoting the gemstone sector. Fuad Ishaq responding to various demands of the traders assured that the chamber will take up issues of gemstone traders with Civil Aviation Authority, airport, custom and other authorities and would make all out efforts to resolve all problems that have been faced by the traders, amicably. The SCCI president asked the gemstones traders association to submit all issues in writing to the chamber so that these issues could soon be taken up with relevant authorities.

## LCCI congratulates nation on Youm-e-Takbeer

LAHORE :Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt here Monday extended heartfelt congratulations to the entire nation on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer. While celebrating this day, they said that this day holds a significant milestone in the nation's history when Pakistan demonstrated its sovereignty and defense capability to the world. On May 28, 1998, Pakistani nation had proved that they were ready to take every possible step to protect their integrity and freedom. The LCCI office-bearers added that the nation should pledge to work tirelessly for the development and prosperity of the country and play their full role in realizing the dreams of their forefathers. They further stated that behind this great achievement are the relentless efforts of forces and sacrifices of our brave soldiers and efforts of scientists. "Our armed forces have continuously strived to protect and defend the country, while our scientists made nuclear capability possible through their expertise and intelligence." They expressed hope that alongside our robust defense capabilities, the nation's economy will also thrive. "By working together with dedication and focusing on economic development, we can ensure a bright and prosperous future," they said and added that collective efforts and unity are essential to achieve economic stability and growth, paving the way for a stronger and more prosperous Pakistan. They said, "Youm-e-Takbeer is not only a symbol of our defense but also reminds us of the importance of unity, struggle, and sacrifice. We should always remember the sacrifices of our forefathers and follow in their footsteps to contribute to the nation's development and progress." The officials of the Lahore Chamber further said, "On this occasion, we should also convey to our new generation that they too should play their part in serving the country. Our young generation is our future, and we should train and guide them to lay the foundation for a strong and prosperous Pakistan."—DNA

## ISSI hosts young "Azadi Fellows" from IRCRA

ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized the importance of the current historical juncture, noting that this was another defining moment in world politics

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on Monday hosted a delegation of the International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA) as part of their Azadi Fellowship program, which aims to engage University and ma-

drasa graduates to deepen their understanding of regional and global affairs. The event provided a platform for a wide range of exchanges on critical issues with the young delegates drawn from different parts of Pakistan, a news release said. Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his address on the subject

of "Regional Stability in a Global Context," emphasized the importance of the current historical juncture, noting that this was another defining moment in world politics. He reflected on the ongoing debate among intellectuals regarding the perceived 'decline of the West' and the 'rise of the rest', particularly the shift of the

global center of gravity from the West to the East. He also touched upon the concept of the 'Thucydides Trap,' the intensifying competition between the U.S. and China, as well as the impact of long-standing unresolved disputes such as Palestine and Kashmir on regional and global stability. He also highlighted transnational terrorism; the critical food, fuel and financial crises (3Fs); and the existential threat posed by climate change. Additionally, he highlighted the effect of emerging technologies and the risks posed by their militarization. The DG ISSI underscored the intrinsic link between internal strength and external influence and stressed that a stable polity, a robust economy, and nimble diplomacy, were indispensable to respond effectively to the current and future chal-

lenges and to realize the opportunities. Earlier, Director of the China-Pakistan Study Centre, Dr. Talat Shabbir provided an introduction of ISSI and its research work. He elaborated the Institute's rich history, organizational structure, and core mission. He highlighted ISSI's commitment to policy inputs, fostering dialogues, advocating for critical issues, extending outreach, and conducting in-depth analysis on various strategic matters. During the question-and-answer session, the "Azadi Fellows" and other attendees posed insightful questions, leading to a lively and informative discussion. Topics ranged from specific regional conflicts to broader global strategic trends, providing an opportunity for deeper understanding and exchange of ideas.





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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

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

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Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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



## Enquiry

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



## Hospitals

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



## Departments

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

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Film shows to promote ASEAN-Pak cultural ties

Vietnam enrich culture gives a message of peace, love to world: Ambassador of Vietnam

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, Nguyen Tien Phong has said that Vietnam is enriched in culture and literature and its culture and art give the message of peace and love to the rest of the world. The Ambassador said that film, art and literature connect hearts and minds in the world communities and teach humanity and tolerance and also bring people's hearts closer to each other. The Vietnamese envoy said this while addressing the Vietnamese art film screening organized by the Embassy of Vietnam in Islamabad. Ambassadors of different countries, including the, Chairperson ASEAN Committee Islamabad, Ambassador of Philippines, Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, Ambassador of Belgium, Charles DELOGNE, Ambassador of Turkiye Mehmet Paccaci, Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of Japan, High Commissioner of Malaysia Azhar Mazlan, Charge d Affairs of Myanmar and Charge d'Affaires Indonesia in Islamabad, Rahmat Hindiarta and families of diplomats, writers and journalists from different walks of life participated and enjoyed the movie. The Ambassador of Vietnam said that those great literary and academic personalities came to the fore in Vietnam and filmmakers played an important role in revealing the real identity of Vietnam and brought the local culture to the international level. He said that today's event



ISLAMABAD: Guests enjoying traditional Vietnam delicacies on the occasion of Vietnam film screening in connection with the ASEAN Film Festival. The film titled 'Yellow Flowers in the Green Grass', was screened at the Philippines embassy premises. Ambassador of Vietnam Nguyen Tien Phong welcomed the guests. The ambassador briefed the audience about the theme of the film. He said that the ASEAN film shows will contribute towards further promoting cultural linkages between ASEAN countries and Pakistan. —DNA

is part of the vision in which ASEAN countries have been given an opportunity to promote their culture.

The ambassador said that the film "Yellow flowers and green grass" is an art film that highlights the lifestyle of the people of Vietnam and their cultural colors.

He said that Pakistan and Vietnam are also working to promote mutual culture and the Embassy of Vietnam is playing its full role in this regard. It is pertinent to mention that the Vietnamese art Movie "Yellow Flowers on the Green Grass" is a 2015 Vietnamese drama, which was directed

by Victor Vu. It is adapted from the novel of the same name by "Nguyen Nhat Anh". The film stars Thinh Vinh and Trong Khang. The film is about the childhood of the brothers Thieu (Thinh Vinh) and Tuong (Trong Khang) in a poor rural village in central Vietnam in the 1980s. They share and do

everything together. However, when their friend next door, Man (Thanh My), comes to stay with them and a big flood hits their village, there is a big misunderstanding that leads to Tuong's back injury. The film has an open ending with the scene of Thieu and Tuong studying in their house.

# Israel aims for 100 percent Palestinian occupation: Envoy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: If Israel wasn't stopped, its next target would be the complete occupation of West Bank. These were the remarks shared by Palestinian Deputy Ambassador to Islamabad, Dr. Nader Al Turk. He was speaking to a roundtable discussion hosted by Iran Program at Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad. The event started by observing a minute silence on the death of Iranian President, Ebrahim Raisi along with other officials. Dr. Nader lamented the fact that despite Israel's atrocities, it was largely recognized by the international community as a full member state of the United Na-

tions. However, Palestine's right to gain full membership had been vetoed multiple times by the US despite its overwhelming support in UN General Assembly. While highlighting a historical fact, Dr. Nader argued that Israel's brutalities didn't start on October 07 last year, in fact, the process had begun soon after 1948 when 900,000 Palestinians were suddenly displaced from their homelands. Today, that number stood at 7 million globally, he added. Dr. Nader pointed that international system, international law and international community, all had failed in fulfilling their promises regarding the Palestinian statehood. Dr. Munawwar Hussain of Quaid e Azam University drew the comparison be-

tween the Gaza War and Ukraine War. He argued that both these wars highlighted the growing unpopularity of the US as a global leader. Dr. Munawwar claimed that the main source of US acceptance as a global leader was its soft war, nonetheless, in recent years, the US had been increasingly dependent on using kinetic power. Dr. Munawwar further reasoned that the international system had now shifted from globalism to regionalism where China had emerged as a peace maker and the US was labelled as a supporter of an apartheid state. Mr. Faisal Raza of PTV highlighted the dual standards which were apparent in the coverage of Gaza Crisis. He said that the language used to re-

port the Gaza Crisis was biased where Palestinians were dehumanized. There was a deliberate attempt of misinformation and misguidance on the behalf of western media which was being carried out by undermining the journalistic ethics, he pointed out. Mr. Faisal also depicted the sad reality where Israel had been involved in the killing of over 100 journalists but not action against it had been taken so far. Ambassador Jauher Saleem, President Institute of Regional Studies, thanked the speakers and the participants. He admitted that the world's conscious had been awakened after the humanitarian catastrophe of Gaza which was unprecedented.

# KP Govt should assist centre for a IMF deal

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has once again started efforts to spoil the relationship between the IMF and Pakistan, which will not succeed. He said some elements have tried their best to bankrupt Pakistan several times before, but they have failed and will fail again. Mian Zahid Hussain said rulers should take strict action because the country's interests cannot be sacrificed for someone's political wishes. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the government had improved the economic situation with great difficulty, for which the people had to make huge sacrifices. Still, some unscrupulous elements want to frustrate these efforts for cheap fame. He added that conspiracies are being hatched in this regard; therefore, authorities should remain vigilant and cautious. Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur's participation in the SIFC meeting and assurance of cooperation on national issues are welcome. Still, it is inappropriate for the provincial government to present the budget before the federal government. To get the country out of its difficult economic situation, the IMF needs to provide a long-term package. The IMF wants to guarantee the implementation of its policies and ensure that the whole country is on the same page. Implementing the IMF's preconditions fully is necessary to demonstrate goodwill and allow PTI to return to the national mainstream. He stated that further aggravating the situation would not yield any benefits, and added that the provincial government of KPK can secure facilities for PTI leadership by making positive contributions to national affairs. According to Mian Zahid Hussain, 70 to 80 percent of the KP province's expenses are dependent on the funds received from the federation. How can the province estimate its ongoing expenses and development costs before the federation makes its final financial decision? According to Mian Zahid Hussain, these circumstances could jeopardise the staff-level agreement with the IMF, as the government must implement several conditions before concluding the agreement. Because our rulers repeatedly fail to deliver on their promises, lenders also impose preconditions. Now, the IMF is not ready to work with us on formal assurances. It wants the provinces to implement its conditions, and if any province obstructs them, the whole country will have to pay the price. —DNA

# Railways penalize around 93 officials on corruption charges

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has held responsible and penalized as many as 93 officials of the department on corruption charges during the last five years, as a part of its efforts to control malpractices. "Several steps are being taken to control corruption in Pakistan Railways which include introducing ticket vending machines and online reservation of ticket to avoid black marketing," an official in the Ministry told APP. The official said the task teams have been established to keep watch on any irregularities and check the attendance of staff in the organization. He said the ticketless campaigns through Special Ticket Examiners (STEs) groups and officers are being carried out on daily basis in the divisions to check and charge the ticketless passengers with penalty. "The payment of pension is being carried out through online banking system to facilitate the pensioners as well as to eliminate the ghost pensioners," he added. He said the auctions are held through designated committee in transparent manner and deposited amount is being received through CDR duly verified by the concerned Divisional Accounts Officers (DAO). The official said E-Kacheri as well as Khuli Kacheri are held on monthly basis to resolve the grievances of staff, pensioners and the public. He said that vigilance offices have been established over the system to control the corruption and resolve any complaint received from public / Railway staff. "An online booking/reservation application system has been launched by Pakistan Railways known as Railway Automated Book and Travel Assistance (RABTA)," he added. He said this application has eased the booking process and also helped monitor cash inflows. To minimize the chances of corruption, the Human Resources Management & Information System, (HRMIS), Systems Applications & Products (SAP) in Data Processing have been launched to ensure paperless system.—APP

# Chairman PRCS visits Pakistani Embassy in Kuwait

Chairman Laghari spoke about fostering relationships with KRCS and developing strategies to improve humanitarian efforts for those affected by floods in Pakistan.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Kuwait. He was warmly received by His Excellency Malik Muhammad Farooq, the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait, along with the Deputy Head of Mission and senior embassy staff. During his meeting with Ambassador Farooq, Chairman Laghari acknowledged the significant support from Kuwait, which has been crucial for Pakistan's devel-

opment and progress. He highlighted the longstanding humanitarian partnership with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), which has greatly aided the PRCS's efforts over the years. Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari discussed his recent meeting with KRCS at their headquarters and the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between PRCS and KRCS. This agreement aims to enhance humanitarian collaboration to address the needs of vulnerable communities in Pakistan. The focus areas of this collaboration include Disaster Management,

Health, Climate Change, Youth Engagement, Resource Mobilization, Organizational Development, and Migration. He also emphasized PRCS's commitment to strengthening ties with national societies in the Gulf States and seeking meaningful engagements with affluent nations to explore collaborative opportunities that support Pakistan's vulnerable populations. The discussion at the embassy covered the history, mandate, and services of the PRCS, particularly the significant assistance provided to millions in 55 districts during the 2022 monsoon flood.

# Over 70,000 pilgrims using 'Pak Hajj App'

ISLAMABAD: The innovative approach adopted to bring together all the wings and departments of the Pakistan Hajj Mission under the DG Facilitation Cell and Complaint Management System seems to be effectively working in the overall Hajj operation for 2024. The 'Pak Hajj App,' through which online monitoring of all Hajj-related activities is performed, has received an overwhelming response in a short span of time, with over 70,000 active intending Pakistani Hajj pilgrims registered so far. Through this online service, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has received more than 20,000 complaints, which have been resolved and disposed of in an efficient manner. The Pak Hajj App provides all the required information, including personal details of Hujjaj, group information, Mehram details, helper information, additional facilities, Hajj dues, nominee information, bank account details, and training schedules. Commenting on the role of the DG Facilitation Cell and Complaint Management System, its in-charge Muhammad Ahmed Usmani told APP that it was established this year for improved coordination among all wings and departments of the Pakistan Hajj Mission to extend maximum facilities to intending Pakistani pilgrims. "It is greatly helping in the timely redressal of complaints of pilgrims and their proper guidance to minimize any inconvenience to them," he said. The Facilitation Cell, he added, has a three-member National Information Technology Board (NITB) team of software engineers, mandated with removing technical glitches faced at the Hajj portal and improving system efficiency and quality as per requirements. Moreover, Usmani mentioned that a five-member team was available at the call center to deal with the complaints received on the portal, under a robust system of redressing grievances of the pilgrims.—APP

# Electric vehicle infrastructure in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, May 27 (APP): Hashoo Group and Dewan Motors Private Limited have joined forces to significantly expand Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure in Pakistan. According to PTV, this pioneering collaboration aims to install EV chargers across Hashoo Group's vast network of hotels and resorts, paving the way for a sustainable future. The chargers, designed to meet European standards, will ensure seamless compatibility with a diverse range of electric vehicles. This initiative marks a significant step towards reducing Pakistan's carbon footprint, aligning with the country's environmental goals. The Special Investment Facilitation Council has played a crucial role in promoting such initiatives, fostering a conducive environment for innovation and growth. This partnership is a testament to the council's efforts, demonstrating the potential for private sector collaboration to drive positive change.—APP

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## Briefs

**CDNS  
collects Rs  
1.5 trillion  
targets in  
fresh bond**

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has attained a target of Rs1.515 trillion in fresh bonds and achieved 85 percent of the annual target in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to May 26th. The National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1.742 trillion for the year 2023-24, in which it is encouraging that 85 percent of the target has been achieved, and it is hoped that National Savings will surpass its annual target this FY 2023-24, the senior official of CDNS told APP on Monday. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said. Given the current market trend in the country the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. The official added that the directorate had set a target of Rs 75 billion for the new financial year 2023-24 for Islamic finance bonds. Replying to a question; he said the CDNS aimed to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector. Islamic finance has a very important role in the global financial sector at this time and a large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," he added.—APP

**Huge fire  
erupts at  
Govt higher  
school in  
Haripur**

ISLAMABAD: A huge fire was erupted in govt higher school Sirinok in Haripur due to a short circuit on Monday morning where no casualties were being reported so far. According to initial reports, Rescue services 1122 said that a fire erupted in Haripur government Higher School this morning due to a short circuit, private news channels reported. The rescue personnel and fire brigade were being informed about the fire, said rescue officials, adding, they reached the spot upon being informed and extinguished the fire, but the fire had already reduced the building to ashes. Authorities, including the police and Rescue 1122 responded to the emergency, launching an inquiry into the incident. As a precaution, the school remains closed pending a thorough safety assessment and electrical inspections.—APP

**IRSA releases  
332,200  
cusecs water**

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 332,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 367,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1467.97 feet and was 69.97 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 145,400 cusecs and 145,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1183.15 feet, which was 133.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 64,900 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 193,800, 129,500, 98,800 and 42,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 98,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 34,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

**Amir Muqam applauds IOM  
services for Afghan refugees**

Talking to a delegation led by Ms. Mio Sato, Chief of Mission for the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Pakistan, the federal minister commended the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for its services to Afghan citizen card holders

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Engr. Amir Muqam has said that Pakistan continues to bear the world's largest refugee burden, having done so for the past 40 years, and urged the international community to acknowledge

this. Talking to a delegation led by Ms. Mio Sato, Chief of Mission for the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Pakistan, the federal minister commended the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for its services to Afghan citizen card holders and the host community, said a press release here on Monday. Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees Moham-

mad Abbas Khan, Joint Secretary of SAFRON, and other senior officials were also present on the occasion. Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that more support is needed in health, education, and infrastructure building. The federal minister expressed the desire for Afghan refugees to return to their country with dignity, noting that there have been no incidents of forced expulsion

or harassment. He emphasized the need for screening to determine their locations and activities. Engr Amir Muqam stated that Pakistan is aware of the business activities, education, and relationships of Afghan refugees within the country. He highlighted that many Afghans are involved in businesses that are beneficial to both Pakistan and its citizens. The federal minister said that he will travel

to Geneva in June at the invitation of the High Commissioner of UNHCR, and he plans to meet with the DG of IOM. The ministry of SAFRON and IOM have agreed to maintain ongoing communication. Chief of Mission MIO Sato expressed gratitude to the federal minister for meeting despite the holiday and stated her intention to maintain close contact with the ministry.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb was called on by Mr. Abdul Rehman Al Raheem Al Nooriyani, Chairman Etisalat Int'l Pakistan accompanied by Mr. Hatem Bamatraf, CEO & President PTCL/Ufone in Islamabad.,DNA

**Dermatologists advise  
precautions as skin ailments  
on rise due to heatwave**

ISLAMABAD: Dermatologist Monday warned that citizens need adequate steps to avoid skin ailments during this weather as the harsh ultraviolet rays and the increasing humidity can lead to a lot of sweating, which in turn result in skin ailments like skin burns and infections. Talking to PTV news channel, a renowned Skin Specialist Dr. Mubashir Mushtaq Dahan said that skin allergies and heat rashes are most common during the scorching months when the mercury shoots up, adding, sunburn can increase chance of skin cancer. However, citizens should protect their skin from harmful rays all year round, but especially in the extra-sunny days of summer, he added. Dr further explained that the sun and heat can dry out your skin. Dry skin in the summer can occur due to a variety of factors, such as excessive sun exposure, hot show-

ers, and not drinking enough water. The cases of fungal infection are at their peak this summer. The cases are common in all age groups, mostly in the moving population one city to another, he added. Aloe vera and rose water can soothe the skin, so people can apply to skin to bring relief from itching, he advised. Citizens should wear lightweight and breathable fabrics like cotton or linen which allow human skin to breathe and prevent the build-up of moisture. Wearing tight clothes can cause more sweating which creates an ideal environment for growth, increasing the susceptibility of infection, he warned. Insects become more active during the summer, and their stings or bites can cause allergic reactions in susceptible individuals. Bee stings, ant bites, and mosquito bites are common triggers.—APP

**Tractors  
assembling  
increases  
54.72 in 10  
months**

ISLAMABAD: Tractor assembling in the country during first 10 months of current financial year increased by 54.72 percent as compared to the production of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period from July-April, 2023-24 over 39,564 tractors were locally assembled as against the production of 25,571 tractors of the same period of the last year, according to the data released by the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturers Association (PMA). Meanwhile, the local sales of tractors registered about 56.61 percent as it was recorded at 38,282 tractors in the first 10 months of the current financial year as against the sales of 24,44 tractors of the same period of last year, it added. Massey Ferguson remained the top tractor producer of tractors as it produced about 25,748 tractors, whereas it sold 25,138 units as compared to the output of 16,090 tractors and sale of 14,981 units of the same period of last year, the data revealed. Fiat was the other company, which produced about 13,798 tractors in the last 10 months of the current financial year as against the production of 9,481 tractors of the same period of last year.—APP

**Second Zone of CPEC  
a game changer**

ISLAMABAD: PMLN Member Punjab Assembly Salma Butt Monday said that Pakistan was enjoying excellent ties with China and expressed confidence that under the dedicated leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif Pakistan will soon successfully enter into the second phase of CPEC which will prove a game changer for Pakistan's economic. Talking to PTV news channel, she said that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has pledged to raise millions out of poverty and turning country into a progress country, adding, Shehbaz Sharif will take China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) forward with new vigor, vitality and in a rejuvenated manner. She said the PML-N government does not believe in the politics of anarchy and hatred but in the practical measures and not in mere hollow slogans, adding, we have founded the CPEC that is a game changer project to improve the economic condition of the country. She said it is also very significant that a high level Saudi foreign delegation and UAE leadership is visiting Pakistan, adding, these recent visits will not only open new doors of investment in Pakistan but will also inject new momentum in the business activities. The better foreign exchange reserves will improve the credibility of a country in front of the international financial organizations, she added. In addition to CPEC, China has expressed willingness to invest in different projects in our country, she mentioned. She added that Prime minister's foreign policies will give fruitful results and will increase export opportunities as well.—APP

**Pakistan's economic  
downfall started in 1990s**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Monday that India started the journey of development in the early 1990s. In contrast, Pakistan began the journey of economic decline in the same decade. He said India went almost bankrupt in 1991 and borrowed against the entire country's gold to start a serious economic development effort. However, Pakistan, which was much better than India in many respects by then, began a downward journey as politicians were more interested in corruption and hiding stolen funds than economic

development. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here that good laws were made in India to promote industry, agriculture, and services sectors and to lure investments, while in Pakistan, legislation was enacted to protect the stolen funds. Such laws were made in Pakistan to safeguard the corrupt, which shocked the civilized world, he underlined. He said that our politicians made laws prohibiting investigation about the source of the capital coming to Pakistan under various pretexts, including investment. The movement of capital into and out of the country was made very easy, and money changers were given

a free hand, which resulted in a massive flight of capital. Shahid Rashid Butt said that the politicians in Pakistan continued to dig the foundations of the country for their interests. At the same time, the various institutions that have to keep an eye on such important matters also remained surprisingly silent spectators, which encouraged the corrupt elements. He said Black money was also whitened through rampant amnesty schemes promoting and encouraging tax evaders while disheartening honest taxpayers. At that time, the Prime Minister and Ministers of India used vehicles that no taxi driver in Pakistan would like. But their pol-

icies proved fruitful, and now India has the fifth largest economy in the world, the size of which has exceeded four trillion dollars. In contrast, the debt-driven Pakistani economy is barely three hundred billion dollars and shrinking rapidly. Due to continued corruption, Pakistan has become so weak that international institutions and investors dictate it, and despite its desire, it cannot import even gas from Iran, he observed. On the other hand, India has become so important that it buys oil from Russia and Iran and has now taken control of an important port in Iran. Still, the United States cannot even think of imposing sanctions on New Delhi.

**Saudi investors  
ready for investment  
in Pakistan**

ISLAMABAD: The country's leading investor and former president of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan has said that Saudis are ready to invest here, we need to do joint ventures with them. There is no shortage of investors in Pakistan, but local investors need to be given confidence. Sardar Yasir Ilyas said during the reception given in honor of the Council of Economic and Energy Journalists (CEEJ) delegation that many sectors were represented in the Saudi delegation visiting Pakistan, the largest representation from Saudi Arabia. Al-Tamimi Group, my father is the president of Al-Tamimi Group, Saudi investors are very interested in investing in the agro sector, but the cost of production in our country is very high. Regarding food products, there is a wide range of exports to the Saudi retail market. There are opportunities, Saudi Arabia also has a big meat export market, we have to compete with big competitors. former president of ICCI Sardar Yasir Ilyas said that the biggest difficulty for foreign investors is devaluation, the government cannot guarantee the currency's valuation will go up and down, the solution is that the government should give tax exemptions for 4 to 5 years. He said that the foreign investor cannot invest full capital, the government should give such a scheme that local financing is also available for the foreign investor, while the interest rate also needs to be reduced. Yasir said that in Pakistan, in the bank If you can earn 20% by saving money, then why do you need to do business, but this is not a sustainable solution, the Saudis are very active for investment in Pakistan, now we have to follow up on these things, the difference between the current and the previous government is this. They are following up and we are seeing the results. Sardar Yasir further said that our current foreign exchange reserves are insufficient, the debt burden on our country is very high. He also said that SIFC is a one-window operation, land is being offered under SIFC, no group can take land by itself, land will be given under SIFC, land will be acquired in Pakistan. It is the most difficult and dirty thing to do, we should export 100 billion dollars worth of agro products to the world, we need to increase our production, 30% of our mangoes are wasted and we do not have modern cold storage facilities while our fruits The diet is unique worldwide.—DNA

**Famous film actress  
Rani remembered**

ISLAMABAD: The thirty-first death anniversary of renowned film actress Nasira Begum known as Rani was observed on Monday. Born on December 8, 1946 in Lahore, Rani made her screen debut in the film Mehboob in 1962. She remained one of the most successful actresses in Pakistan and acted in both Urdu and Punjabi films. Some of her notable films of Rani including Dewar Bhabhi, Hazar Dastan, Dil Mera Dhar-Kan Teri, Anjumam, Tehzeeb, Umrao Jan Ada, Diya Aur Toofan, and Baharo Phool Barsao. She won a Nigar Award for the film 'Mera Ghar Meri Jannat' in 1968. She also won another Nigar Award for best actress for her role in the film 'Sona Chand' in 1986. Rani died of cancer on this day in 1993 in Lahore.—DNA

**ANF recovers  
45 kg drugs  
in nine  
operations**

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its ongoing operations against drug trafficking conducted nine raids across the country and managed to recover 45 kg drugs besides arresting 10 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 7.7 kg ice was recovered from a Jeddah-bound passenger at Peshawar Airport. In second operation, 13 kg of hashish and 170 grams ice were recovered from the possession of an accused arrested in Multan. 8.4 kg opium was recovered from two suspects netted in Phoolnagar Kasur area while 5.4 kg ice was recovered from two suspects rounded up in two operations in Quetta. 4.8 kg hashish was recovered from an accused in Chashma Road Mianwali. 3.6 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused nabbed near Haji Camp Peshawar. 2 kg hashish was recovered from a suspect held near Burhan Toll Plaza Attock. In ninth operation, 500 grams ice was recovered from an accused arrested near a college in Peshawar. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

**Departments  
to remain  
alert during  
heatwave**

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Technical Director Hamidullah Malik Monday said that heatwave may be severe in districts of the country where all concerned departments have been directed to remain alert to meet any untoward situation and asked citizens to contact PDMA Helpline 1129 in case of any emergency. In an interview with PTV news channel, he stated that media platforms are used to inform the public about the risks associated with heatwaves. In this regard, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) advised all citizens to take precautionary measures to protect themselves from the expected heatwave, he mentioned. He also suggested all private and government organizations for change in duty timings to save people from severe heatwave cases, adding, departments should also dispatch these all emergency numbers in their offices. He advised to drink adequate water in the heat. Individuals with medical conditions were advised to keep their medication in stock.—APP

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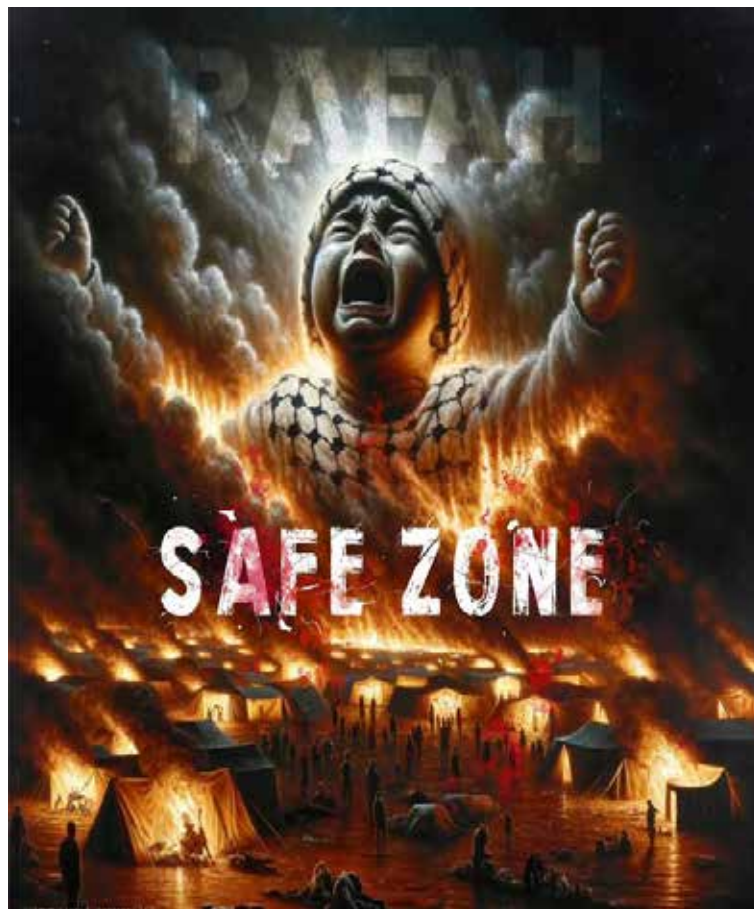
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## Taiwan should stop deluding itself

Say what you like about Taiwan's new leader William Lai Ching-te, but he really did ask for it. Days after his inauguration, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted live drills around the island over several days. It's not the first time mainland China conducted a full encirclement exercise. After former US House speaker Nancy Pelosi's pointless visit to Taiwan in 2022 that was nothing but posturing and provocation, the PLA carried out full encirclement drills. Lai's incendiary inauguration speech likewise provoked a nasty response from the mainland. I am not the only one criticising Lai's speech. Even the Financial Times, which is usually pro-Taipei to a tee, admits it was a bit too provocative. Headlined "China has a point about Taiwan's leader", its respected Greater China correspondent wrote that "Lai's language on sovereignty has already strayed from the path taken by his more cautious predecessor".

If he made such a declaration on his first official day in office, what is he planning to do for the rest of his term? No wonder he said people should not entertain "delusions" about cross-strait peace. It takes quite a bit of recklessness for Lai to make his predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen, look "cautious". He did so by calling the island "a nation" with "sovereignty" at his inauguration. Lai and others have used similar language, but almost always in less formal occasions, and certainly not at Tsai's two inaugurations or in high-profile official diplomatic settings. The PLA drills this time were arguably even more intense and threatening than those in 2022. This is despite it only having targeted five zones around the Taiwanese island as compared to seven. One reason is simply that the zones covered much bigger areas this time. The PLA and mainland state media have helpfully provided maps of the two different sets of drills for easy comparison. This time, all the targeted zones were well within Taiwan's air defence identification zone, a kind of gentlemanly respectful practice that asks foreign aircraft to notify their presence when entering the zone. Two of the zones in the Taiwan Strait crossed the so-called "median line" deeply towards the island. The median line, which the mainland clearly no longer respects, used to be an informal demarcation for the two sides to avoid provoking each other within the strait. One large zone covered the north, northwest and west of Taipei, the island's capital city, as opposed to only the city's north as was the case last time. If there is any consolation for Lai, perhaps it is that none of the zones targeted by the PLA this time intruded into Taiwan's territorial waters while last time, three of them did. Entering someone's territorial waters with your military craft could be seen as an act of war, or at the very least an extreme provocation, so Beijing did show some restraint and arguably didn't want to push Lai so far into a corner that he might be forced to respond. Beijing has called the PLA drills a "punishment" for Taiwanese separatist forces seeking "independence". Whatever you call it, it seems the message is loud and clear. Whether in a limited armed conflict fought only across the strait, or a full-blown regional war involving the US, there is no scenario under which Taiwan would come out on top or escape wholesale devastation.

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## Rafah massacre

At least 50 displaced Palestinians from refugee camps were killed in the Israeli regime's latest massacre in the city of Rafah on Sunday night, taking the overall death toll in the besieged territory to 36,000. The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza late on Sunday reported that the Israeli occupation forces committed a new slaughter in a supposedly safe area where thousands of people were displaced. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society also reported that its crews transported a large number of people killed or injured after the Israeli occupation targeted the refugee camps in Rafah in southern Gaza. The refugee tents that came under the attack are located in the Tal al-Sultan area, west of the city of Rafah, on the extreme south of the Gaza Strip along the border with Egypt. Eyewitnesses who survived the deadly carnage were quoted as saying that most of the victims were women and children, as well as that ambulance crews, were unable to recover all the charred bodies. They further stated that the indiscriminate Israeli bombardment led to the complete destruction and burning of a large number of tents in the Tal al-Sultan refugee camp. The Government Media Office in Gaza said an attack was carried out using seven Israeli 2,000-pound (one-ton) bombs, and that fatalities were expected to rise due to the severity of the aggression. This Israeli attack came just a day after its military forces in Jabalia, Rafah and other areas suffered losses, and a significant number of their soldiers were reported killed, wounded and captured by the Al-Qassam Brigades' fighters, the armed wing of the Hamas resistance movement. Palestinian reactions Reacting to the latest massacre, the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas called it an "egregious affront" to a recent ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which ordered the Israeli regime to immediately halt its offensive against the southern Gaza city. "In light of the horrific Zionist massacre this evening committed by the criminal occupation army against the tents of the displaced, we call on the masses of our people in the West Bank, Jerusalem, the occupied territories and abroad, to rise and march angrily against the ongoing Zionist massacre against our people in the sector," the Gaza-based movement said in a statement. "We hold the US administration and President Biden in particular fully responsible for this massacre," the statement noted, adding that the air strikes were "in complete defiance and disregard for the orders of the ICJ to halt Rafah military operations." The movement called on everyone, especially neighboring Egypt, to pressure the Zionist regime into ending its occupation of the city's Rafah crossing, which serves as the main point of entry for vital supplies into the Gaza Strip and remains blocked. Hamas also urged the international community, the United Nations, and all relevant parties to scramble to support the Palestinian nation in the face of the Israeli massacres in the past eight months. "The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, another resistance group fighting against Israeli forces in Gaza, said the attacks on Rafah show "the depths of the military failure that Israel is trying to compensate in blood." "The continuation of the enemy's crimes in the Gaza Strip is a result of the cover provided by the US administration, the positions of some European governments, and the weak stances of Arab regimes," the movement said in a statement.

## Calls for divine intervention by a President and a Tycoon

**Qamar Bashir**



I found both of them extremely committed to their causes, very wise, good leaders, innovators, and excellent managers and doers. Both of them, with many successes and achievements behind them, in their recent statements, perhaps due to their age, deep experience of worldly affairs, and their closeness to religion and Almighty Allah, called for divine intervention and refused to yield to worldly gains, speaking what they believed was correct, truthful

There are two statements on X, one by Dr. Arif Alvi, former President, and the other from real estate tycoon Malik Riaz. Incidentally, I know both of them very closely. I served Dr. Alvi as his Press Secretary and Media Advisor for ten months, and I had a very close association with Malik Riaz during my time at the newly constructed Bilawal House in Lahore as Director of Media with President Asif Ali Zardari, where we often engaged in healthy conversations. I found both of them extremely committed to their causes, very wise, good leaders, innovators, and excellent managers and doers. Both of them, with many successes and achievements behind them, in their recent statements, perhaps due to their age, deep experience of worldly affairs, and their closeness to religion and Almighty Allah, called for divine intervention and refused to yield to worldly gains, speaking what they believed was correct, truthful, and good for the country and its people. President Alvi, having led all three pillars of the state—the executive, the judiciary, and the parliament—and being the supreme commander of the armed forces, has perhaps realized that the solution to the country's woes does not only lie in mundane and worldly power dynamics but rests with the will, intervention, and blessing of Almighty Allah for those who are on the right path. He suggests that divine anger and retribution will come for those who, allegedly consumed with the toxicity of brute power, have unleashed a reign of terror on the innocent, righteous, and hardworking people of Pakistan. His recent tweets are outrightly rebellious, fearless, and bold. He has warned all those who have assumed the sources of every worldly power in the country that the volcano, which on the surface looks peaceful and harmless, will spew fire, lethal ashes, and molten lava when it bursts, and nothing can stand against its wrath especially those who have a false, usurping, and tyrannical grip on power. The aim of this statement and its warning is addressed to the alleged supra executive and those who are allegedly occupying the parliament, the provincial assemblies, the

senate, and the government after the 2024 elections, not because of their merit but because of the blessing of the supra executive, which allegedly, by a swirl of a magic wand, changed the election results in their favor, thus imposing an illegitimate government in the center and in Punjab. Having said this, the president paused and raised a very pertinent question: if this lava bursts, it would burn anyone in its destructive path. Many innocent and well-intentioned people, whose past, present, and future are tied to this country, may also suffer. But those in power, sensing the danger, would soon flee the country and take refuge in their safe havens, which they have created out of allegedly looted wealth in different parts of the world. However, he adds that Allah would make the world difficult for them. He then takes a turn and gives hope that all loyal Pakistanis, who have their fate tied to this country and will live and die here, will finally defeat them. He warns the mafia not to take this warning lightly and to be aware that we will save Pakistan, build and develop this country, and ensure that our people regain their lost honor and that the country gets its rightful place in the community of nations. He does not rest here but adds that we will build our homeland on the ashes of the ongoing looting under this false, brutal, illegal, and oppressive government. All this will be possible only with the grace of Allah through a very brave, proud son of this soil, the supreme commander of the hearts of the people of Pakistan, who will lead and will die only after reaching the destination. This statement seems full of rhetoric, predictions, and hopes and desires for a better future, though it falls short of any mundane plan or strategy for how these desires would materialize in reality when the PTI is in shambles and its leader has been incarcerated for almost a year with little hope of release. However, since these words are coming from a former president, who has seen the country's inner workings with his own eyes, they should not be brushed aside but taken as a legitimate warning and a sincere effort to put things right to avoid an imminent catastrophe where the ultimate victims would be

common people and the country. The second powerful statement, which places all faith in divine mercy, was made on X by none other than the most powerful, resourceful, and creative real estate tycoon who has created dream housing societies unparalleled in the country and around the world, where millions of people live with dignity and honor. Malik Riaz vowed to stand by his principles under divine guidance, and while remaining apolitical, refused to be used by one party against another. He sustained immense pressure with divine help, remained steadfast, and, in the face of imminent adversity, did not succumb to pressure and refused to be used as a pawn for political motives. He said he has been facing these pressures with grit and tenacity and will continue to do so even today, yielding to pressure "over his dead body." The reference to Mr. Malik Riaz is also allegedly aimed at the all-powerful supra executive, as the current lot of politicians and civil bureaucracy lack the grit or courage to challenge Malik Riaz, who has given decent living conditions of the millions and through his philanthropic work, which benefits thousands of downtrodden people every day. These statements reflect significant concerns and warnings that should not be taken lightly by either the supra executive or civilian government. Both figures emphasize the need for divine intervention, suggesting that the current state of affairs requires moral and spiritual rectification rather than merely political or military solutions. This appeal to divine will resonates deeply in a society where religion plays a central role in everyday life. By invoking divine intervention and standing firm on principles, both Alvi and Riaz position themselves as morally upright leaders, which can sway public opinion and reduce the legitimacy of those perceived as oppressors.

—The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President  
 Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France  
 Former MD, SRBC

## Youm-e-Takbeer: Pakistan's Nuclear Odyssey and Beyond

**Faiza Abid**

The day came to be known as Youm-e-Takbeer, which literally translates to the day when "Allah's name was exalted". The day reaffirmed the Pakistani nation's faith in the omnipotence of Allah Almighty. As dawn breaks on this day, Pakistan stands at the threshold of remembrance and celebration, honouring the sacrifices and achievements of those who fortified the nation's defence and made it unassailable. In the wake of India's provocative nuclear tests, Pakistan's decision to assert its sovereignty and security through nuclear capability was a defining

In Pakistan's illustrious journey, few chapters shine as brightly as the saga of its nuclear programme, a narrative woven with unwavering determination, wisdom, and national pride. Amid the chants of "Allah-o-Akbar", Pakistan conducted its first series of nuclear tests in the Chagai District of Balochistan on 28 May 1998. The day came to be known as Youm-e-Takbeer, which literally translates to the day when "Allah's name was exalted". The day reaffirmed the Pakistani nation's faith in the omnipotence of Allah Almighty. As dawn breaks on this day, Pakistan stands at the threshold of remembrance and celebration, honouring the sacrifices and achievements of those who fortified the nation's defence and made it unassailable. In the wake of India's provocative nuclear tests, Pakistan's decision to assert its sovereignty and security through nuclear capability was a defining moment for the nation. It served as a declaration to the world that Pakistan will not be dictated to, nor will it falter in safeguarding its people and territory. From its humble beginnings in 1971 to the historical milestone of 1998, Pakistan's nuclear programme stands as a testament to the vision and dedication of key figures, who emerged as guiding lights, navigating a complex web of technocratic, political, and military hurdles. One prominent figure among them is Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, renowned as the "father of Pakistan's nuclear programme," standing tall for his pivotal role. His expertise in metallurgy and uranium enrichment technologies played an instrumental role in Pakistan's nuclear advancement. Accompanying Dr Khan in his endeavour were a host of brilliant minds, including Dr Samar Mubarkmand, Dr Ishfaq Ahmen, and Mr Munir Ahmad Khan. Collectively, these distinguished individuals defied formidable challenges, showcasing Pakistan's capacity to achieve technologi-

cal excellence against all odds. The origins of Pakistan's nuclear programme lie in the turbulent geopolitical landscape of South Asia. After India denoted six nuclear devices between 11 and 13 May 1998, the response of the international community was tepid at best, failing to hold India accountable for its actions. Hence, amidst India's assertiveness and perceived threat to its security, Pakistan found itself compelled to react swiftly, marking a pivotal moment in its pursuit of deterrence and defence. Pakistan's nuclear testing ushered in an era of strategic equilibrium in the region, preventing conflicts from escalating into a full-scale war. Thereafter, this delicate balance of power has provided a semblance of stability in an extremely volatile region. Under a robust command and control system, Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence, in line with the dictates of Credible Minimum Deterrence, acts as a bulwark against Indian aggressive designs, including the ominous spectre of the Cold Start Doctrine and more recently their tilt towards first-strike counterforce options. However, Pakistan is committed to responsible nuclear stewardship, as evident from its adherence to global norms and protocols governing nuclear weapons, active engagement in nuclear diplomacy, and regular safety assessments to ensure the safe operation of its nuclear facilities. The dividends of Pakistan's nuclear programme extend far beyond defence. By harnessing the potential of nuclear technology, Pakistan has made significant strides towards attaining the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in crucial spheres, such as energy, healthcare, industry, and agriculture. For example, in pursuit of cost-effective and clean energy, Pakistan's Energy Security Plan 2030 delineates a target of 5 percent or 8800 MWE of nuclear power

generation. However, in the aftermath of the advancement of expertise gained from KANUPP 1 and Chashma 1 and 2, this plan has expanded to a relatively ambitious projection of 42,000 MWE by 2050. KANUPP-2 and KANUPP-3 stand as significant milestones, signifying ongoing strides in nuclear energy development, shaping a future of resilience for Pakistan's energy needs. The signing of Chashma-5, equipped with HPR 1000 technology, also represents a leap forward in nuclear innovation. It also reinforces the enduring partnership between Pakistan and China, as well as shared aspirations for a sustainable future. Therefore, Pakistan aims to harness the transformative potential of nuclear technology to bring unparalleled benefits to its people as well as the global community. Endeavours in this regard range from advancement in production of medical isotopes for treating cancer to exploration of nuclear desalination technologies for mitigating fresh water scarcity. Likewise, ongoing research in next-generation nuclear reactors, such as Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) carry a promise to revolutionise Pakistan's energy production. Today, Pakistan remains a steadfast partner in international collaboration, sharing its expertise and best practices for the greater good of humanity. Yet, amid the triumphs, challenges such as denial of technology loom large, testing Pakistan's resolve. However, fervent nationalism and determination prevails to overcome all challenges. Therefore, as we reflect upon Pakistan's nuclear journey, it is imperative to not only celebrate the past achievements, but also the boundless opportunities that lie ahead. United, the country can march forward with courage and determination, creating a bright future for Pakistan and its people.

—The writer is a researcher at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore. She can be reached at info@casslhr.com

Briefs

KP and Centre agree to work together for public

FROM PAGE 01
he engaged in talks to solve the problems being faced by the province. "We will have to come to the table for the rights and issues of the province."

Security forces neutralise nearly...

FROM PAGE 01
terrorists to hell, while two terrorists were injured. However, during the intense exchange of fire, five brave soldiers; Naik Muhammad Ashfaq Butt (age 32 years; resident of district Kahuta), Lance Naik Syed Danish Afkar (age 30 years; resident of district Poonch), Sepoy Taimoor Malik (age 32 years; resident of district Layyah), Sepoy Nadir Saqeer (age 22 years; resident of district Bagh) and Sepoy Muhammad Yasin (age 23 years; resident of district Khushab), having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat.

Pak gas transmission...

FROM PAGE 01
Furthermore, system gas consumption by Engro Fertilizer was suspended at 2200 hrs on April 22 due to start up of Annual Turn Around of their plant for about 54 days With the current RLNG consumption rate standing at 32 mmcfcd, the data warns extreme high-pressure condition prevails throughout the transmission network due to reduced offtake of RLNG by the power sector.

Pakistan in grip...

FROM PAGE 01
was deprived of its constitution and law. Reacting to the statement of Malik Riaz Hussain, a well-known businessman, PTI Spokesperson said that not only politicians but also judges, journalists, lawyers, traders and businessmen and people from all walks of life were being targeted and harassed and forced to the will and the whims of an individual.

Gary to decide Pakistan vice-captaincy if necessary

Mohammad Rizwan, Shadab Khan and Shaheen Shah were potential candidates for vice-captaincy

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan head coach Gary Kirsten and the team management accompanying him will have all the powers to decide on vice-captaincy if needed. Six out of seven PCB selectors voted against naming a vice-captain for the European tour and T20 World Cup, hence no one was offered the position as is being speculated on the social media.



There was no point in offering vice-captaincy to anyone for the World Cup," a source said. Mohammad Rizwan, Shadab Khan and Shaheen Shah were potential candidates for vice-captaincy. "It was a better option not to offer the position to anyone for the World Cup," a source added.

There were so many contenders creating an unnecessary race for different positions. A good majority of selectors for this very reason voted against appointing a deputy to Babar Azam during the World Cup."

7 desks established under SIFC: Tarar

FROM PAGE 01
Deficit and inflation have declined while IT exports are witnessing surge. He pointed out that the world financial institutions are also acknowledging our economic revival.

SHC allows reporting court...

FROM PAGE 01
heard the case. The petition was filed by Ameen Anwar, Shaukat and others, making PEMRA, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and others respondents. The petition stated that PEMRA issued the notification of court reporting ban on May 21 in contravention of its rules.

Raza Rabbani calls for holding...

FROM PAGE 01
contradiction within ruling elite. The conflict of the ruling elite emanated from within and it had historical roots, he maintained. He alleged that Pakistan's establishment had, in history, been taking support of the judiciary. The extreme polarised political atmosphere has affected this equation within the ruling elite.

Russia invites Afghan...

FROM PAGE 01
Russia's foreign and justice ministries have reported to President Vladimir Putin on the issue of removing the ban, Zamir Kabulov, director of the Second Asia Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry, told state news agency TASS. Some questions remain, Kabulov was quoted as saying, though he said that an invitation to attend the June 5-8 St Petersburg international economic forum had been extended to the Taliban.

Jos Buttler to miss third T20I for family reason

LONDON: England captain Jos Buttler is set to miss the third T20I against Pakistan which is set to be played in Cardiff due to the birth of his third child. Buttler left the English squad after the second T20I where he scored 84 runs and guided his team to a comfortable victory as Pakistan were all-out for 160 runs while chasing the 184-run target.



Charles steers WI to whitewash SA

KINGSTON: Johnson Charles played a scintillating knock to help West Indies thump South Africa in the third T20I and complete the 3-0 whitewash here at Sabina Park on Sunday. While chasing 164, Charles inspired the Caribbean side to a crushing victory with 6.1 overs to spare after losing only two wickets.

Guardiola vows FA Cup revenge

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola promised Manchester City will bounce back next season from their FA Cup final disappointment as the English champions celebrated a fourth consecutive Premier League title with a parade. Defeat to local rivals Manchester United in Saturday's FA Cup final prevented City becoming the first English side to ever complete consecutive league and cup doubles.

All Pakistan Muhammad Majid & Abdul Nasir Memorial Basketball begins today

OUR CORRESPONDENT
ISLAMABAD: Top teams are taking part in the All-Pakistan Muhammad Majid & Abdul Nasir Memorial Basketball Tournament starting from Tuesday (today) under the umbrella of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) at the Siddique Memon Sports Complex Karachi.

Nadal bidding to avoid early French Open exit

PARIS: Rafael Nadal admits he will be facing "one of the toughest opponents possible" when he plays Alexander Zverev in the French Open first round on Monday. This year's event was expected to be the 14-time champion's farewell to Roland Garros, but he has since insisted he could not confirm "100 percent" it would be his last appearance.

Naqvi applauds wheelchair cricket team's Asian C'ship win

PCB chairman presents team with cheque of Rs1.5 million

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's wheelchair cricket team has clinched its second consecutive championship title. The triumphant players, who won the Asian Championship, were specially invited to the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore by Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi to celebrate their remarkable achievement.



Naqvi also offered words of encouragement and expressed his best wishes for the team's continued success. He reaffirmed the PCB's commitment to supporting the wheelchair cricket team, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities needed to excel in future tournaments.

Court Notice

بجاءت جناب نثار احمد صاحب
سولہ ماہ کی عمر پر
نوبت ہوئی اور ایسے نوان مقدمہ سارا باقی
عام خدمت کے لئے ہمتا کر کے صحت کے دلچسپ پوری ہو
مدتی سال مکان نمبر 514/A سڑک نمبر
19 محلہ موہن پورہ راولپنڈی کے مقدمہ نمبر
19 اے میں کی نقل بذریعہ عام طریقہ ممکن نہ ہے
لہذا عدالت کو ہدایت کی جاتی ہے کہ وہ آئندہ
بتقریب مورخہ 28-05-2024 کو بجائے
حاضر عدالت آویں بصورت دیگر حسب ضابطہ
کاروائی عمل میں لائی جائے گی۔
محکم عدالت
دستخط و مہر عدالت

## Briefs

## Indonesia launches app for streamlining Hajj communication

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia launched on Monday a mobile app dedicated to Indonesian Hajj pilgrims as officials seek to streamline communication for better coordination during the pilgrimage season.

The world's biggest Muslim-majority nation will be sending its biggest Hajj contingent - comprising 241,000 pilgrims - to Saudi Arabia this year for the spiritual journey that is one of the five pillars of Islam. After the country's first Hajj flight of the season commenced on May 12, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has now launched a mobile app named Kawal Hajj where pilgrims can file reports and post inquiries among one another and to Indonesian officers about their journey.

"Kawal Hajj is meant to become a communication channel between Hajj pilgrims, officers, their families, members of the public, and other stakeholders. Pilgrims can report, help each other, share information, and convey their appreciation," said Wibowo Prasetyo, the ministry's special staff for media and public communication, during the launching event in Jakarta.

"Through Kawal Hajj, pilgrims now have a trusted channel to report and complain. Information on the organization of Hajj pilgrimage will not run wild on social media either. The trust of the pilgrims and other stakeholders will only increase.--DNA

## Australian scientists discover ancient 'echidnapus'

**SYDNEY:** Scientists have discovered a bizarre creature dubbed the "echidnapus" which they believe roamed Australia in prehistoric times. Fossilised pieces of the animal's jaw bone were found in opal fields in northern New South Wales, alongside evidence of several other ancient and now extinct monotreme species. Officially named *Opalios splendens*, the new species has been nicknamed for its resemblance to the platypus and echidna - which are the only egg-laying mammals in the world today. The team behind the research say it indicates that Australia once had an "age of monotremes" - in which the incredibly rare order of animals were abundant and dominant. "It's like discovering a whole new civilisation," lead author Professor Tim Flannery said. The array of fossils were found about 25 years ago by palaeontologist Elizabeth Smith and her daughter Clytie while they were going through the discards of an opal mine.--Agencies

## Hundreds march in Senegal in support of Palestine

**DAKAR:** Hundreds of people gathered on Malick Sy Avenue and marched to the Monument du Millénaire as part of the protest organized by the African Mediation, Governance and Conflict Resolution Organization and the Palestinian Embassy in Dakar. Türkiye's Ambassador to Senegal Nur Sagman, Palestine's Ambassador Nasser Jadalal and Pakistan's Ambassador Saime Sayed as well as the envoys of Lebanon, Cuba and Libya took part in the demonstration. The ambassadors walked arm in arm, leading the procession and chanting slogans with the demonstrators. Speaking to Anadolu, Jadalal said "there are significant and fundamental changes happening worldwide regarding the Palestinian issue." "I believe that African countries will also strengthen their stance on the Palestinian issue over time," he said. Sagman said "the Palestinian ambassador kept me by his side, and we walked arm in arm." "The Senegalese people always talk about what Türkiye has done for Palestine.--APP

## Labeling ICC prosecutor as 'antisemitic' unacceptable

Int'l community must 'ask for implementation of the decision' of ICJ, says Josep Borrell

## NEWS DESK

**ANKARA:** Labeling the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court prosecutor as "antisemitic" is unacceptable, the European Union's foreign policy chief said Monday. "We have to respect the work of this institution and let the court without intimidation decide what they think about this initiative...." Josep Borrell told reporters at the doorstep of the EU Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels. He also called for respecting the work of the ICC, saying the institution "has been strongly

intimidated and accused of antisemitism." "I think that the accusation of antisemitism against the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court is completely not acceptable," Borrell stressed. ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan on May 20 requested the court to issue arrest warrants for Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, citing reasonable grounds to believe they bear criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Netanyahu claimed that the arrest warrant application was a "new form of antisemitism moving from uni-

versity campuses to the ICC." Regarding the ruling of the International Court of Justice - UN's top court based in the Hague in the Netherlands - Borrell said the international community must "ask for the implementation" of the court's decision. "What we have seen in the immediate hours is that Israel continues the military action that has been asked to stop... This morning, ... more than 30 people have been killed in a refugee camp in an attack. This is really a dilemma," he added. Borrell also added that he would propose, during the meeting in Brussels, "to

relaunch our civilian border system mission" in Rafah. "We have been asked to activate this mission ... and we need to have an agreement with everybody involved. We will not go there without a strong commitment from the Palestinian Authority," Borrell explained. At least 35 people were killed and dozens injured as Israel targeted a camp for displaced people and houses in the southern Gaza city of Rafah on Sunday, said medical sources and officials. The attack occurred near the logistics base of the UN Agency for Palestinian

Refugees (UNRWA) in Tal al-Sultan, said the Gaza Media Office. Israel has killed nearly 36,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip since a cross-border attack by Hamas on Oct. 7 last year. The military campaign has turned much of the enclave of 2.3 million people into ruins, leaving most civilians homeless and at risk of famine. The attack comes despite a ruling by the International Court of Justice that ordered Israel to halt its offensive in Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6.

## 2 dead as cyclone batters BD, India

**PATUAKHALI:** Fierce gales and crashing waves smashed into the low-lying coast of Bangladesh and India on Monday, as an intense cyclone started to weaken as it progressed deeper inland. Two people have been killed since Cyclone Remal made landfall on Sunday night, Kamrul Hasan, secretary of Bangladesh's disaster management ministry. Communications are limited by the storm, with recorded wind speeds hitting 111 kilometres (69 miles) per hour, said Muhammad Abul Kalam Mallik, senior weather forecaster at the state-run Bangladesh Meteorological Department. "The severe cyclone will continue to pound Bangladesh coast until 10:00 am (0400 GMT)," Mallik told AFP. "The cyclone has unleashed heavy rains in many parts of Bangladesh. After more rains, the severe cyclone will weaken and turn into a storm." Cyclones have killed hundreds of thousands of people in Bangladesh in recent decades, but the number of superstorms hitting its densely populated coast has increased sharply, from one a year to as many as three, due to the impact of climate change. An AFP reporter in the affected area said there had been continuous heavy rain with extreme wind since Sunday evening, battering tall buildings, with trees uprooted and the tin roofs of homes torn off and blown away. Around a million people in Bangladesh and neighbouring India took shelter, fleeing inland for concrete storm shelters away from the dangerous waves. Most of Bangladesh's coastal areas are just a metre or two (three to six feet) above sea level and high storm surges can devastate villages. Authorities have raised the danger signal to its highest level. Hasan, from the disaster management ministry, told AFP, said there were no immediate reports of damages, but said "embankments in several places have been breached or submerged, inundating some coastal areas"--APP

## Over 488,000 dengue cases reported in Argentina

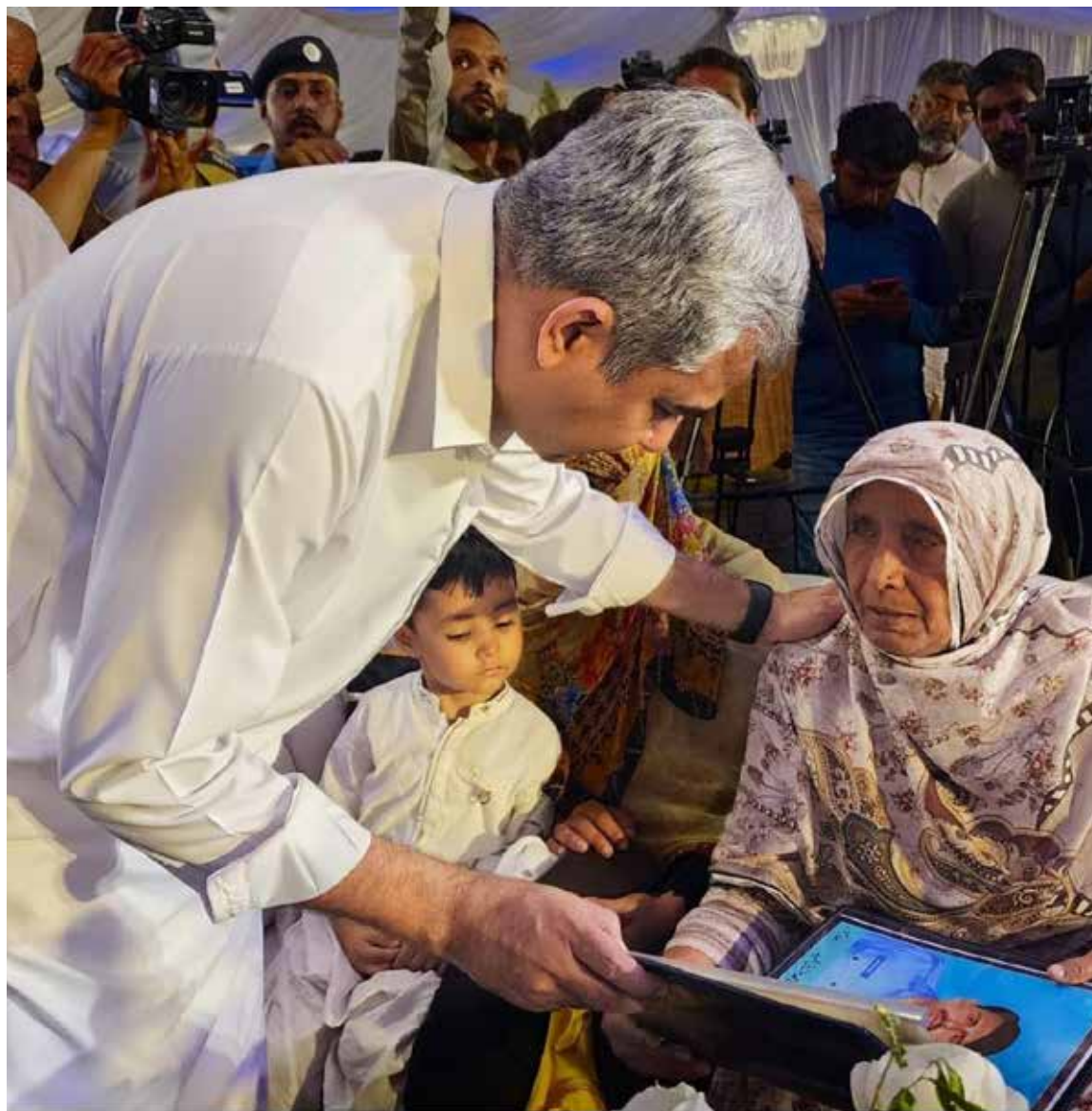
**BUENOS AIRES:** Argentina has detected over 488,000 cases of dengue during the first five months of this year, 3.35 times that of last year, the health ministry said Sunday. In the first 20 weeks of the year, 488,035 cases of dengue were registered, according to the ministry's National Epidemiological Bulletin. The largest number of the cases were reported in the central region, followed by the northwestern and northeastern regions. Dengue is detected in 19 of the 24 districts of the country and has caused a total of 343 deaths this season. The most frequent symptoms of the disease were fever, headache, nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain.--Agencies

## Tokyo shares end higher

**TOKYO:** Tokyo stocks ended higher on Monday, in line with gains across most of Asia, as investors took heart from gains on Wall Street. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index rose 0.66 percent, or 253.91 points, to 38,900.02, while the broader Topix index added 0.87 percent, or 23.82 points, to 2,766.36. Investors were upbeat after gains on Wall Street on Friday, and were shifting focus to the release of the US personal consumption expenditures index - the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation - at the end of this week. But many refrained from making aggressive bets as they sought fresh trading cues with US markets closed on Monday for a holiday. The Tokyo session was "quiet" but investors had a "moderate appetite" for buying and the market extended its gains towards the close, Iwao Cosmos Securities said. The dollar fetched 156.81 yen in Asian trade, against 156.93 yen in New York on Friday. Among major shares, Toyota firming 1.68 percent to 3,450 yen, Hitachi added 1.99 percent to 15,890 yen and Panasonic advanced 0.79 percent to 1,346 yen. Heavily weighted Fast Retailing, which operates the Uniqlo brand, rose 1.29 percent to 40,830 yen.--APP

## WHO Chief urges quick pandemic deal sealing

**GENEVA:** The World Health Organization chief on Monday urged countries to nail down a landmark global agreement on handling of future pandemics after they missed a hard deadline. Scarred by COVID-19 - which killed millions, shredded economies and crippled health systems - nations have spent two years trying to forge binding commitments on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. Negotiators failed to clinch a deal ahead of this week's World Health Assembly - the annual gathering of WHO's 194 member states - the deadline for concluding the talks. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus opened the assembly Monday, saying he was confident that an agreement would be secured. "Of course, we all wish that we had been able to reach a consensus on the agreement in time for this health assembly and crossed the finish line," he said. "But I remain confident that you still will, because where there is a will, there is a way." Tedros said the task before negotiators had been "immense, technically, legally, and politically," and that they had been "operating on a very ambitious time line." "You have demonstrated a clear commitment to reaching an agreement," he said, adding that negotiators had "worked long days and nights," closing meetings as late as 4:00 a.m. He hailed their dedication to push forward despite "a torrent of misinformation that was undermining your negotiations." While missing Friday's deadline, countries have voiced a commitment to keep pushing for an accord. Negotiators are due on Tuesday to present the outcome of the talks to the assembly, which runs until June 1, and the assembly will take stock and decide what to do next. "I know that there remains among you a common will to get this done, so, there must always be a way," Tedros said. "Meaning the solution is in your hands," he stressed. Parallel talks have also taken place on revising the International Health Regulations, which were first adopted in 1969 and constitute the existing international legally binding framework for responding to public health emergencies around the world. The proposed amendments to the IHR, including adding more nuance to a system meant to alert countries to potential health emergencies of global concern, might have a better chance of being adopted during this week's.--DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi presenting allotment letter of home to the mother of a martyr.--DNA

## Spain's art museum to unveil newly verified Caravaggio

**MADRID:** A painting by Italian master Caravaggio, once mistakenly thought to be by an unknown artist and almost auctioned off, will be unveiled Monday at the Prado museum in the Spanish capital. Entitled 'Ecce Homo', the dark canvas depicts a bloodied Jesus wearing a crown of thorns just before his crucifixion. It is one of around only 60 known works by the Renaissance artist. A Madrid auction house had been due to sell the painting in April 2021 with an opening price of 1,500 euros (\$1,627), mistakenly attributing it to an artist belonging to the circle of 17th century Spanish painter Jose de Ribera. But just hours before it was to go under the hammer, the culture ministry blocked the operation on suspicion it was actually by Caravaggio, whose works are worth millions. Mona Lisa's mysterious background decrypted by art-loving geologist The ministry action came after the Prado museum sounded the alarm, saying it had "sufficient documentary and stylistic evidence" to suggest that the work was in fact by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. The museum announced earlier this month that top experts have determined that the painting is "without a doubt, a Caravaggio masterpiece", calling it "one of the greatest discoveries in the history of art". The painting has been restored and will be displayed to the public for the first time since it was confirmed as a Caravaggio at a press conference at the Prado museum on Monday. Experts who worked on its identification and restoration will take part. Spanish media have reported that the new owner is a British national who lives in Spain and who paid 36 million euros (\$39,056,000) for the painting, which may remain on public display after its run at the Prado for several months.--DNA

## Tornadoes sweep central US, kill at least 18

**WASHINGTON:** A flurry of deadly storms and tornadoes that swept through the South and the Great Plains in the US over Memorial Day weekend killed at least 18 people and left hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses without power. According to NBC News, eight storm-induced deaths were reported in the state of Arkansas, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders said during a news conference - seven storm-induced deaths were reported in Cooke County, Texas; two in Oklahoma's Mayes County; and one in Kentucky's Louisville. Over 334,000 customers were left without power Sunday evening in Kentucky, Missouri, Texas, Kansas, Tennessee and Arkansas, the NBC reported based on data from poweroutage.us. Tornado warnings were issued in Texas and Oklahoma states as severe storms with possible tornadoes swept through the southern part of the US, including Texas.--APP

## Kyiv limited in using western arms in Russia

NATO chief said that some allies have lifted restrictions enabling the Ukrainians to better defend themselves," without giving details

## WEB DESK

**SOFIA:** NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said Monday that Western powers should reconsider restrictions on Ukraine using weaponry they supply to strike inside Russia as it is hampering Kyiv's ability to defend itself. "The time has come to consider whether it will be right to lift some of the restrictions which have been imposed because we see now that especially in the Kharkiv region the front line and the border line is more or less the same," Stoltenberg told NATO lawmakers meeting in Bulgaria. "If (Ukraine) cannot attack military targets on Russian territory then it ties one hand of the Ukrainians on their back

and makes it very hard for them to conduct defense." Ukraine has been pressing its Western backers - especially the United States - to allow it to use the longer-range weaponry they supply to hit targets in Russia. Washington, and other allies, have been reluctant to permit Kyiv to strike over the border out of fear that it could drag them closer to direct conflict with Moscow. Stoltenberg said "some allies have lifted restrictions enabling the Ukrainians to better defend themselves," without giving details. "It is clear that Ukraine has the right to defend themselves," the secretary general of the Western alliance said. "Self-defense includes the right to also attack legitimate military targets inside Russia." Ukraine's Zelensky in Ma-

drid to sign Spain security deal Ukraine has been pressing its Western backers - especially the United States - to allow it to use the longer-range weaponry they supply to hit targets in Russia. Washington, and other allies, have been reluctant to permit Kyiv to strike over the border out of fear that it could drag them closer to direct conflict with Moscow. Stoltenberg said "some allies have lifted restrictions enabling the Ukrainians to better defend themselves," without giving details. "It is clear that Ukraine has the right to defend themselves," the secretary general of the Western alliance said. "Self-defence includes the right to also attack legitimate military targets inside Russia."

## Erdogan condemns Israel's Rafah massacre globally

Netanyahu won't be able to save himself from being lamented like Milosevic, Karadzic and Hitler: Erdogan

**ANKARA:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan led Monday a global condemnation of the Israeli massacre of displaced Palestinians at a Rafah "safe zone." He said the massacre of at least 45 people, mostly women and children, once again exposed the true face of "terrorist state" Israel. "Sunday's attack on Rafah, which came after the International Court of Justice's order, has exposed the treacherous and bloody nature of the terror state," he said in a televised address. The Turkish president also lashed out at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying: "The embattled Netanyahu and his murderous network are try-

ing to extend their grip on power by massacring people as they fail to defeat Palestinian resistance." "Netanyahu won't be able to save himself ... like (former Yugoslav strongman Slobodan) Milosevic, (genocide convict Bosnian Serb politician Radovan) Karadzic, and (late German dictator Adolf) Hitler, who he is imitating," he added. Erd. also vowed that Türkiye would do everything in its power to hold those "savages" to account. The Gazab health ministry said the death toll had risen to 45 from the overnight Israeli strikes, which sparked fires that burned displaced people alive in their tents, many of them women and children. Global

outrage French President Emmanuel Macron also voiced outrage Monday over the Israeli strikes on a tent camp in Rafah and demanded an "immediate cease-fire." "These operations must stop. There are no safe areas in Rafah for Palestinian civilians," Macron said on X in English. "I call for full respect for international law and an immediate ceasefire." Israel has kept up attacks on Rafah despite a ruling by the top U.N. court on Friday ordering it to stop, arguing that the court's ruling grants it some scope for military action there. Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said

the ruling must be respected. "International humanitarian law applies for all, also for Israel's conduct of the war," Baerbock said. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees said the situation was horrifying. "Gaza is hell on earth. Images from last night are yet another testament to that," UN-RWA wrote on X. Nearly 36,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive, Gaza's Health Ministry says. Israel launched the operation after the Oct. 7 Hamas incursion killed around 1,200 people and seized more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Israel says it wants to root out Hamas fighters holed

up in Rafah and rescue hostages it says are being held in the area. But it faces an international outcry. "On top of the hunger, on top of the starvation, the refusal to allow aid in sufficient volumes, what we witnessed last night is barbaric," Ireland's Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said. Egypt condemned the Israeli military's "deliberate bombing of the tents of displaced people," state media reported, describing it as a blatant violation of international law. Saudi Arabia also condemned the Israeli attack and Qatar said the Rafah strike could hinder efforts to mediate a cease-fire and hostage exchange.--Agencies

## Briefs

### Iran's acting president addresses new parliament

TEHRAN: Iran's acting President Mohammad Mokhber addressed the country's new parliament Monday in his first public speech since last week's helicopter crash that killed his predecessor and seven others. His speech comes as Iran prepares for a presidential election to replace the late Ebrahim Raisi in just a month, a vote that could see the previously behind-the-scenes bureaucrat potentially run alongside others. Meanwhile, Iran's new hard-line parliament is expected to select its new speaker Tuesday.

In his remarks, Mokhber praised Raisi's time in office, noting that Iran's crude oil production—a key source of hard currency for the country—climbed to more than 3.6 million barrels a day. That comes after Oil Minister Javad Owji said Sunday that Iran was now exporting around 2 million barrels a day, despite Western sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic.

Mokhber also asserted that the country's economy remained stable under Raisi when Iran took military actions in Iraq, Israel and Pakistan in recent months. "Three countries were hit. We hit Israel, people find that figures and indexes are the same in the morning when they wake up, price of hard currency is the same, inflation is the same, liquidity is the same and the market is full of people's needs," Mokhber claimed. — Agencies

### Papua New Guinea fears thousands buried after landslide

LONDON: A deadly landslide which villagers in Papua New Guinea say struck like "an exploding bomb" may have buried more than 2,000 people alive, a government agency fears. The figure—provided by the acting director of the country's National Disaster Centre—is far higher than the 670 the United Nations (UN) suggested over the weekend. Exact casualty figures for the disaster, which tore through the village in the early hours of Friday, have been difficult to establish. Desperate attempts to rescue survivors or remove bodies from the rubble have so far been hindered by rubble 10m (32ft) deep in some places, blocked access and a lack of adequate equipment. But on the ground, hopes are fading for the mountain residents swept up in the disaster in Enga province. "Nobody escaped. We don't know who died because records are buried," a schoolteacher from a neighbouring village, Jacob Sowai, told news agency AFP. Standing in the wreckage of the disaster—which extends for close to a kilometre—Evit Kambu said she felt helpless. — Agencies

### 'Outraged' by Israeli strikes on Rafah: Macron

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron voiced outrage on Monday over Israeli strikes on a tented camp for displaced Palestinians in Rafah that Gaza officials said killed at least 45 people and demanded an "immediate ceasefire."

"These operations must stop. There are no safe areas in Rafah for Palestinian civilians," Macron said on X in English. "I call for full respect for international law and an immediate ceasefire." The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the death toll had risen to 45 from the overnight Israeli strikes, which sparked fires that burned displaced people alive in their tents, many of them women and children. Israel's army said it was investigating the reports of civilians killed in strikes, which have sparked condemnation across Arab world. — Agencies

# Israel's Rafah 'heinous massacre' widely condemned

The Hamas Movement has held US President Joe Biden and his administration fully responsible for the Israeli massacre in Rafah

NEWS DESK

RAFAH: Several countries and global organisations have condemned the Israeli air attack on tents housing displaced people in Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah that killed at least 40 Palestinians, including many children. The Palestinian presidency on Monday accused Israel of deliberately targeting civilians, joining a chorus of worldwide condemnation following the attack. "The perpetration of this heinous massacre by the Israeli occupation forces is a challenge to all international legitimacy resolutions," the Palestinian presidency said in a statement, accusing Israeli forces of "deliberately targeting" the tents of displaced people.

In a statement on X, the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) said the images from Rafah are yet another testament that Gaza is "hell on earth". Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri called the attack a "massacre", holding the United States responsible for aiding Israel with weapons and money.

Israel's top military prosecutor described the attack as "very grave" and said an investigation will be conducted. "The details of the incident are still under an investigation, which we are committed to conducting to the fullest extent," Major-General Yifat

## Closure of Rafah crossing threatens famine: GMO

FOREIGN DESK

GAZA: The head of the Government Media Office (GMO) in the Gaza Strip, Salama Marouf, has warned that the Israeli occupation army's persistence in not allowing aid convoys to enter the Gaza Strip through the border crossings of Rafah and Karam Abu Salem would deepen the humanitarian crisis and tighten the siege on the war-torn coastal enclave. Marouf added, in a statement on Sunday, that the Israeli closure of these crossings would make the people in Gaza City and northern Gaza face another round of severe famine soon and deepen food insecurity in the central and southern areas of the Strip, especially after tens of thousands of citizens were displaced from Rafah as a result of the ongoing Israeli ground operation and military attacks. Marouf pointed out that the relief efforts provided to the people of the Gaza Strip do not meet their minimum needs in the midst of the worsening humanitarian catastrophe resulting from the Israeli war of genocide and starvation. Marouf explained that the humanitarian aid that had entered the Strip through the sea pier since the beginning of its work did not exceed 100 truckload, adding that 214 trucks entered Gaza City and northern Gaza last week from the west of Beit Lahia, including 109 trucks carrying flour for bakeries and citizens and six other trucks carrying medicines.

Tomer Yerushalmi told a news conference, adding that the Israeli army "regrets any harm to non-combatants during the war". Palestinian witnesses and Al Jazeera's fact-checking agency Sanad said the camp sheltering civilians in Rafah's Tal as-Sultan area was deliberately targeted. The Wafa news agency, citing the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), said the dead included women and children, with many "burned alive" inside their tents.

One of the residents who arrived at the Kuwaiti Hospital in Rafah said the "tents were melting and the people's bodies are also melting" after the attack. Here are some reactions from governments and

other officials from around the world: Qatar condemned the Rafah attack as a grave violation of international laws that will aggravate the humanitarian crisis in the besieged Gaza Strip. It said the attack could hinder mediation efforts to reach a ceasefire and hostage exchange deal, according to a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Qatar, alongside the US and Egypt, has been engaged in months of talks aimed at securing a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Egypt condemned the "deliberate bombardment". In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on Israel to "implement the measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concerning an immediate cessation of military operations" in Rafah. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country would do "everything possible" to hold "barbaric" Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu to account over the deadly strikes. "We will do everything possible to hold these barbarians and murderers accountable who have nothing to do with humanity," he said. Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said the bombing of Rafah was "one more day with innocent Palestinian civilians being killed". He said the gravity of the attack "is even larger" because it comes after the ICJ order directing Israel to halt its operation in Rafah and the rest of Gaza.

### Rains forecast from May 28

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Meteorological Department has predicted rain in various parts of the country, starting from May 27, which is expected to bring down the mercury levels and provide a much-needed respite from the severe heat wave. According to the Met Department, rain is expected in upper areas, including Zhob, Barkhan, and Balochistan from May 27 to 29, while Chitral, Dir, Peshawar, and other districts can expect rain from May 28 to June 1. Even cities like Murree, Galyat, and Rawalpindi are likely to receive some showers, bringing down the temperature and providing a welcome break from the heat.

Moreover, the Met Department has also predicted thunderstorms in Karachi, Thatta, Badin, and Hyderabad in May, which will not only bring relief from the heat but also provide some much-needed water for the parched cities. However, the Met Department has warned that the severe heat wave is likely to continue in upper regions from May 28, with temperatures expected to soar 6 to 8 degrees higher in central and southern regions of the country. This could potentially disrupt daily routines and pose a challenge for people, especially the vulnerable segments of society.



LAHORE: Former Federal Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. — DNA

## S. Korea, China, Japan leaders meet amid regional tensions

"Any launch using ballistic missile technology would directly violate UN Security Council resolutions and undermine regional and global peace and stability," Yoon said

SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Chinese Premier Li Qiang called on Monday for greater cooperation between the Asian neighbours as they held a three-way summit for the first time in more than four years. Li said the summit represented a "new beginning" and called on the countries to promote multilateralism and fight trade protectionism. Speaking at a joint news conference after their talks in Seoul, Yoon called for a strong international response to an expected spy satellite launch by North Korea and Kishida demanded Pyongyang halt the plan. Just ahead of the summit, North Korea informed the Japanese Coast Guard of an imminent satellite launch window, confirming a recent South Korean intelligence assessment that Pyongyang would try to put another military reconnaissance satellite into orbit. Although the North was not officially on the programme for the talks, with Tokyo, Seoul and Beijing aiming to find consensus on easier economic ground, the pending launch ensured Pyongyang made it onto the agenda. "Any launch using ballistic missile technology would directly violate UN Security Council resolutions and undermine regional and global peace and stability," Yoon said in his opening remarks, before going into the talks. "I believe that if North Korea launches despite warnings from the international community, the international community should respond decisively," he added. — Agencies

## Court grants bail to former AJK PM

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad granted former prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Tanveer Ilyas bail on Monday in a case pertaining to 'misuse' of a diplomatic passport. The former premier was booked for using his diplomatic passport to travel to Saudi Arabia after leaving office. Judicial Magistrate Abbas Shah heard the case and ordered Ilyas's release against a bond of Rs0.1 million. Ilyas's counsel argued that the maximum punishment under the provisions recorded was three years. He added that the passport was returned, hence his client must be granted bail. During the hearing, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) produced records of the case before the court. Following relief to Ilyas, the FIA prosecutor opposed the court's decision to grant bail.

## SHC slams K-Electric, expresses fury over loadshedding in Karachi

Petitioner says most resident of impacted area are poor, middle-class people who do not even have an AC in their homes

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court Monday expressed displeasure over loadshedding in areas where people live hand to mouth, reprimanding the K-Electric lawyer in the case pertaining to unannounced power cuts in Jamshed Quarters on Jahangir Road. SHC's Justice Salahuddin, who was hearing a petition related to the aforementioned matter, asked the company's counsel to submit an affidavit and told him to write under oath about the extent of load shedding being done in the area. Responding to the court, the K-Electric lawyer said the company objected on the petitioner who fights cases and charges fees for it. The court remarked how much money could this lawyer have earned from fees and that there are some people who do such cases for public interest. The court also questioned about the financial status of the impacted area's residents, responding to which the petitioner said it is mostly comprised of poor, middle-class people who do not even have an air conditioner in their homes. "There is load shedding where people don't even have an AC and where people have nothing to eat," the court remarked.

Meanwhile, addressing the prosecutor, Justice Salahuddin Panhwar said: "European countries give funds for plantations. They pay money to plant trees on thousands of acres here." The judge told the prosecutor that solar panels should be installed using this money for people in such areas. He added that the government won't install solar panels in schools and libraries. Addressing the KE lawyer, the court said: "Your compulsions will no longer work. The petitioners said that K-Electric created such conditions that people are forced to commit suicide." The KE counsel requested that the court order Sindh government to help the company in removing illegal electricity connections. Last week, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Sindh minister for energy and planning development, had assured that the KE has agreed to restore electricity of consumers once they pay their bills. Maximum relief would be provided to the poor consumers consuming less units without discrimination, the minister said. He also urged citizens to pay their dues so that they receive uninterrupted power without any delay. Shah was addressing a meeting of parliamentary leaders and assembly members of all parties in the Sindh Assembly that discussed the increasing load shedding in Karachi, non-payment of KE bills and shutdown due to faulty PMTs in various areas.

## Aurangzeb briefs US ambassador Donald Blome about fiscal reforms

The Federal Minister reiterated the Prime Minister's commitment to privatizing State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), which has sparked interest from local and foreign investors in the case of PIA



FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan H.E. Donald Blome called on Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb

at the Finance Division today. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed Ambassador Blome and underscored the long-term mutual relations between Pakistan and the USA. He informed the Ambassador about successful completion of the Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) and that the Government of Pakistan is engaged with the fund to build up the reforms under the SBA. Senator Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb highlighted the priority reform areas of the Government including increasing the tax-to-GDP ratio through end-to-end digitization, bringing the under-taxed sectors into the tax net, and tax administrative reforms. The Federal Minister reiterated the Prime Minister's commitment to privatizing State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), which has sparked interest from local and foreign investors in the case of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). On the energy sector reforms, he mentioned steps being taken to bring private sector experts to enhance efficiency. He also apprised the Ambassador of the potential investments from investors in the Agriculture, Mining, and IT sectors. Ambassador Mr. Blome appreciated the Pakistani government's efforts and initiatives to improve macroeconomic indicators. He assured the support of the United States in helping Pakistan achieve economic stability and sustainable growth.



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