



# Islamabad POST

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**President Sisi calls to ensure Gazans not 'forcibly displaced'**

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**Manmohan Singh exposes Modi regime**

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**Sabalenka claims straight-set win at FO**

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## Azeri FM meets PM Shehbaz

# Pak, Azerbaijan pledge to further cement relations

The Prime Minister felicitated Foreign Minister Bayramov on Baku's selection as the host city for COP29 to be held in November 2024

**Azeri Foreign Minister meets acting President**

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan have reiterated their commitment to further improve bilateral cooperation in the areas of economy, trade, energy, connectivity, and people-to-people contacts. This was discussed during a meeting between the Acting President, Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, and the visiting Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Mr Jeyhun Bayramov, who along with his delegation, called on the Acting President, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Welcoming the Foreign Minister, the Acting President said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan enjoyed deep-rooted historical relations, based on shared culture and religion. He added that Multan-Sarai in Baku was a testament to the centuries-old relations between the two brotherly countries. He suggested that Baku and Multan should be

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ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House today. The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction on the positive trajectory of relations between both countries and stressed the need to further strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, investment, energy and security domains. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation

**ANOTHER PICTURE ON PAGE 2**

that both sides had always extended their full support to each other on issues of core interest, and reaffirmed that they would continue to do so at every international forum. The Prime Minister felicitated Foreign Minister Bayramov on Baku's selection as the host city for COP29 to be held in November 2024 and said that Pakistan would work closely with Azerbaijan to ensure the successful outcome of this important event. While fondly recalling his productive and fruitful interactions with President Aliyev during his visit to Baku in June 2023 the Prime Minister reiterated his most warm and cordial invitation to

Continued on Page 06

**Pak-Azerbaijan resolve to enhance co-op**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Thursday resolved to enhance cooperation in multiple sectors including trade, investment, energy and connectivity to exploit the huge potential of the friendly relationship between the two countries. The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov met here and discussed the multidimensional bilateral and regional agenda encompassing bilateral and international matters. Addressing a joint press stakeout, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar told the media that both countries would further enhance cooperation in trade, investment connectivity, energy and defence sectors. He said the two countries were taking

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

## Slovenia recognises Palestine

The parliament of the European Union member country must also approve the government's decision

NEWS DESK

LJUBLJANA: The Slovenian government on Thursday approved a decision to recognise an independent Palestinian state, Prime Minister Robert Golob said, following in the steps of Spain, Ireland and Norway. "Today the government has decided to recognise Palestine as an independent and sovereign state," he said at a news conference in Ljubljana. The parliament of the European Union member country must also approve the government's decision in coming days.

Continued on Page 06

## NAB amendment case SC rejects KP's plea seeking live streaming of hearing

PM Shehbaz's 'black sheep' remarks draw Supreme Court judges' ire; Justice Athar asks AG to tell prime minister that there is no black sheep in this court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court Thursday rejected the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's request for live broadcast of the hearing of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) amendment case. The apex court dismissed the request filed by KP advocate general by 4-1 as Justice Athar Minalah dissented with the majority judgement. The development came as the SC heard the intra-court appeals filed by the federal and provincial governments against the NAB amendments struck down by the apex court. The case was heard by a five-member SC larger bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Minalah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi. During the previous hearing on May 16, which wasn't

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## FIA CCW to probe Imran's controversial X post

PTI founder is in jail, but his account is being used to upload "propaganda videos", say sources

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Cyber Crime Wing (CCW) has decided to initiate action against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan due to his controversial social media post on X. A post on X, formerly Twitter, was attributed to the former prime minister, which read: "Every Pakistani should

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## Iran registers presidential candidates

Raisi's sudden death has triggered a race among hardliners to influence the selection of Iran's next leader

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iran started on Thursday registration of candidates for an early election next month following the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi told state TV. Once seen as a possible successor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's ageing ultimate decision-maker, Raisi's sudden death has triggered a race among hardliners to influence the selection of Iran's next leader. After the five-day registration period,

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## PAKSAT MM1 Pakistan launches 2nd satellite into space

Satellite will help usher Pakistan into the digital era by helping to provide internet to remote areas

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's advanced communication satellite, PAKSAT MM1, has been launched into space in collaboration with China, making it Islamabad's second

satellite to be sent into orbit. The satellite, launched from China's Xichang Satellite Launch Center (XSLC), will help usher Pakistan into the digital era by helping to provide internet to remote areas, the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) said. The satellite - which will take around four days to reach space - is expected to contribute to the establishment of a sophisticated communication network and help meet the growing demands of the telecom sector and its advanced capabilities will address

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## Briefs

### Govt mulls new LG law

It is proposed to have 600 union councils in Lahore

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Punjab government is considering to amend the Local Government Act, which aims to fully separate urban and rural areas. According to Punjab Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafiq, the draft Act proposes establishing a metropolitan corporation in each divisional headquarters. Local government constituencies will be formed according to the new census, and union councils will be set up in areas with populations under 20,000. In Lahore, it is proposed to have 600 union councils. Additionally, metropolitan corporations will be created for populations exceeding 700,000. The draft Municipal Act 2024 suggests forming a town committee for population between 15,000 and 50,000, and a municipal committee for population between 50,000 and 200,000.

### ECP delists PTI intra-party election case

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has delisted the PTI intra-party election case due to the non-availability of bench. The ECP in a notice released Thursday stated that next date of hearing will be announced later. It may be mentioned here that PTI leaders Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Raouf Hassan, who had acted as party's chief federal election commissioner, were put on notice for today's [Thursday] hearing. The ECP had raised seven objections on the PTI intra-party elections on March 3.

## "My only regret is trusting General Bajwa," says Imran

When asked who he blames for his imprisonment, Imran said: "I am certain that this ordeal was orchestrated by General Bajwa. I hold no one else responsible"

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: PTI founder Imran Khan said that his only regret from his time in power was trusting former army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa, whom he held responsible for "creating lies and false narratives", allegedly to secure a second extension as the military head. The former premier, who is currently incarcerated at Adiala Jail in a string of cases against him, blasted Pakistan's political and military leaders - with a special focus on his friend-turned-foe Gen Bajwa - in an interview with journalist Mehdi Hasan for an international media platform that was published on Wednesday. The interview was conducted through a letter Mehdi sent with questions for Imran, and the journalist was not allowed to ask follow-up questions. When asked who he blames for his imprisonment, Imran said:

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## Kundi meets PM Shehbaz

Says he advised PM to spare funds for Chashma Right Bank Canal project

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday and discussed the country's overall political situation, particularly the matters related to the province. The governor appreciated the premier for his government's pro-business and investment policies which

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## Pakistan Army takes strong view of digital terrorism

The forum expressed serious concerns over continued cross-border violations from Afghanistan and terrorism being orchestrated using Afghan soil, noting that Pakistan's adversaries were using Afghanistan to target Security Forces and innocent civilians inside Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), presided over the 83rd Formation Commanders Conference at GHQ, attended by Corps Commanders, Principal Staff Officers, and all Formation Commanders of Pakistan Army. The forum offered Fatiha and paid tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhadas, including officers and men of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies, and citizens of Pakistan who laid their lives for the country's safety, security, and sovereignty. The forum was briefed on the dynamics of the geo-strategic environment, emerging challenges to national security, and the Army's strategy to counter multi-domain threats. The participants were also briefed on technological innovations to modernize the Army and optimize logistic support to field formations, in line with fast-evolving operational environment. The forum expressed serious concerns over continued cross-border violations from Afghanistan and terrorism being orchestrated using Afghan soil, noting that Pakistan's adversaries were using Afghanistan to target Security Forces and innocent civilians inside Pakistan. The forum acknowledged

the priceless sacrifices of the people of Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) in the war against terrorism and underscored the importance of uplifting the NMDs to decisively defeat terrorism. The forum also underlined the need for socio-economic development in Balochistan to counter externally propagated narratives of exclusion, exploited by foreign-sponsored proxies to lead Balochistan's youth away from peace and progress.

Reviewing the prevailing situation on the Eastern Border and the latest round of extra-judicial murders in IIOJK, the forum expressed complete solidarity with the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for the inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in UNSC Resolutions. The forum showed concern over the treatment of minorities, especially Muslims, in India and noted the growing fascism being perpetrated to achieve vested political ends.

The forum also expressed complete solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemned serious human rights violations and war crimes being perpetrated in Gaza, supporting the International Court of Justice decision to stop Rafah Operation and all other operations within the Gaza Strip. The forum underscored that politically motivated and vested digital terrorism, unleashed by conspirators duly abetted by their foreign cohorts, against State institutions is clearly meant to try to induce despondency in the Pakistani nation, to sow discord among national institutions, especially the Armed Forces, and the people of Pakistan by peddling blatant lies, fake news, and propaganda. However, the nation is fully cognisant of their ugly and ulterior motives and surely the designs of these nefarious forces will be comprehensively defeated, InshaAllah. The forum noted that planners, perpetrators, abettors, and facilitators of 9th May need to be brought to justice for the collective good of the country, and that without swift and transparent dispensation of justice to the culprits and establishing the rule of law, stability in the country will ever remain hostage to the machinations of such elements.



RAWALPINDI: Army Chief presides over corps commanders conference, in Rawalpindi. - DNA

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# Sherry urges immediate climate action at Pak moot

Sherry Rehman said that Climate is one conversation that must connect from local to global because climate knows no barriers when it changes

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday emphasized the need for immediate and genuine action to address climate change. She was speaking as the chief guest at the "Road to Climate Resilient Pakistan: Reducing Our Carbon Footprint" conference, hosted by Islamic Relief Pakistan and the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), Sherry Rehman said, "Climate is one conversation that must connect from local to global because climate knows no barriers when it changes. It can impact people and communities anywhere in the world. We have just seen a cyclone hit Bangladesh, and floods in Brazil and Afghanistan. Pakistan, too, is in the middle of a debilitating, scorching heatwave. She cited that Mohenjo Daro was recorded as the planet's hottest place with 53 degrees centigrade, reminding the world that such temperatures don't support human life. Speaking about Pakistan's transition to renewable energy, Sherry remarked, "Pakistan's transition from fossil fuels is quite doable. We have a large amount of solar capacity and a huge amount of wind capacity, particularly all the way through the Sindh coastal areas. Part of the problem is our ageing grid, which cannot take on a great deal of renewables anymore because there's no space and also the incentive structures that are

in place for solarization." Senator Rehman also highlighted Pakistan's vulnerability to climate impacts, stating, "Pakistan is home to the largest number of glaciers outside the North Pole, with approximately 7,000 glaciers, and they are melting rapidly. When glacial lake outburst floods occur, the first to be affected are the small and medium hydro plants, which are vital for the community. "While we mitigate risk by educating communities on how to relocate during such outbursts, the infrastructure, including hydro plants, bridges, and roads, often sustains severe damage. This necessitates continuous efforts in reinvention, rehabilitation, rebuilding, and restoration, which are challenging to maintain". "Resilience is not a one-size-fits-all definition or challenge. Like adaptation, it needs to reflect the particular needs of the local community and the terrain it is addressing. There is a convergence between developing resilience and reducing your carbon footprint, but make no mistake—if Pakistan reduces its carbon footprint to zero, there will still be scorching global warming. "The fossil fuel industry worldwide is well on its trajectory to 2.5 to 3 degrees centigrade. Our mitigation commitment is to reduce our fiscal dependence on imported dirty fuel, leveraging our resources to reduce local pollution and make our contribution to the global commitment to carbon footprint reduction. It's very impor-

tant for countries, companies, communities, and individuals to start looking at their carbon footprint," she asserted. Senator Rehman emphasized the financial challenges associated with climate action, stating, "Adaptation costs four times more than normal development spending, and as the World Bank's assessment indicates, Pakistan needs \$348 billion by 2030, with \$196 billion dedicated to mitigation. These figures underline the immense financial challenge of adaptation and mitigation." Regarding public and private financing, she noted, "While there is often a call to unlock private financing as a solution, it's essential to acknowledge that private financing alone may not suffice. Private financing typically seeks profits, and in disaster situations, investing in disaster zones may not always align with profit motives. Therefore, relying solely on private financing overlooks the need for robust public funding mechanisms. It's imperative to ensure that public funds are accessible and efficiently utilized, especially in vulnerable countries like Pakistan. Additionally, there should be a concerted effort to streamline the process of accessing climate financing, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and ensuring that funds reach communities in a timely manner." "This is not a victim conversation. Seeking an entitlement is never a victim conversation, either from your own government, your community, or the global north," she concluded.



ISLAMABAD : The Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Mr Jeyhun Bayramov, along with his delegation, called on the Acting President, Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

## ARI calls for enhanced quit-smoking services nationwide

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Alternative Research Initiative (ARI) and its partners on Thursday have called upon the federal and provincial governments to ensure effective and accessible cessation services for adult smokers in districts, tehsils and union councils across Pakistan. "Adult smokers who have been unable to quit smoking need a helping hand. Helping them in quitting is critical to end combustible smoking in Pakistan," said Arshad Ali Syed, project director of ARI, in a statement on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day (WNTD). He added that the national quit line should not only be publicized extensively but its services need drastic improvement. However, he emphasized the role of provincial governments in providing cessation services at the district level. After the 18th amendment, health is a provincial subject, he said. "Provincial governments should reach adult smoker in districts, tehsils, and union councils, especially those who have been unable to quit despite multiple attempts." The benefits of quitting smoking are immediate and lifelong. The day a smoker gives up this habit, the body starts clearing itself of all those nasty toxins and the repair process begins. According to WHO, within 20 minutes of cessation, heart rate and blood pressure drop, and after 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal.

## Ashrafi calls for structured fatwa to curb extremism

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has emphasized the urgent need for fostering dialogue across various societal factions. Speaking at a national seminar on 'Countering Violent Extremism', organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) here Thursday, he highlighted the ongoing challenges of violent extremism in Pakistan and said that this call for dialogue would reduce misunderstandings and create an environment of mutual respect among different groups, promoting

a more harmonious and resilient community. Ashrafi further highlighted the importance of implementing Paigham-e-Pakistan, a comprehensive doctrine designed to bridge gaps between different schools of thought and unify religious scholars and leaders in a joint effort to combat extremism across the nation. "This collaborative strategy is seen as vital for ensuring long-term peace and stability not only in the country but also in the region," he added. Addressing the misuse of religious decrees, Ashrafi called for the establishment of a mechanism for issuing Fatwas on matters of public importance. Citing the exam-

ples of Dar-ul-Ifita institutions in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, he emphasized the need for a government-level oversight to ensure that religious decrees are issued responsibly and effectively. He said Dar-ul-Ifita Saudi Arabia and Dar-ul-Ifita Egypt were renowned for their systematic approach to issuing Fatwas as these institutions employ qualified scholars who deliberate on religious matters in a methodical manner, providing well-considered and balanced religious opinions. He suggested that Pakistan could benefit from adopting a similar model, which would help mitigate the risks associated with arbitrary.

## Polio campaign set for June in Mirpurkhas

DNA

MIRPURKHAS : Additional Deputy Commissioner Mirpurkhas Ghulam Dastgir Sheikh emphasized on Thursday that the urgent need to eradicate polio, citing the permanent disabilities it causes in children. Chairing a preparatory meeting for the upcoming anti-polio campaign scheduled for June 3-7, 2024, at the District Health Office, Sheikh stressed the importance of enhancing the performance of polio teams and improving the micro-plan to ensure no child is left unvaccinated. District Health Officer Dr Jiramdas and District Focal Person for the Polio Program Dr Narayandas revealed comprehensive preparations for the campaign. Covering 13 districts across Sindh, the campaign aims to vaccinate 348,465 children under five in Mirpurkhas. The effort will involve 1,017 mobile teams, 97 fixed teams, 231 area in-charges, and 62 UC-MOs at transit points. Assistant Commissioners HI Colonel Akhtar Ali, Abdul Ghaffar Lakhari, Shehryar Habib, Stunt Commissioner Shujaabab Dr Mazhar Ali, and other relevant officials participated in the meeting, committing to a strategic and weather-responsive deployment of polio teams.

## Pakistan-China diplomatic ties mark 73rd anniversary at ISSI

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD : The China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a commemorative event titled: "73 Years of Pakistan-China Diplomatic Relationship: A Partnership of Peace and Development." The panelists included eminent speakers from academia, research and business community. The Embassy of People's Republic of China was represented by the Deputy Head of Mission, H.E. Shi Yuanqiang. Prominent personalities from diplomatic corps, academia, think-tanks and civil society attended. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, emphasized the importance of China-Pakistan relations, founded on mutual respect, strategic

trust, and close cooperation. He stressed that from the very outset, this relationship developed as a special and unique example in interstate relations and has served the best interests of the two countries. Both nations have consistently supported each other on issues of core interest, with Pakistan backing 'One China' principle and China's principled stance on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. He also added that the Pakistan-China relationship has contributed enormously to the advancement of Pakistan's national development goals and economic transformation. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has primarily focused on Pakistan's infrastructure, energy sector, Gwadar Port, and industrialization. The second phase of CPEC will focus on growth corridor, livelihood enhancing corridor,

innovation corridor, green corridor, and open corridor. The Prime Minister's forthcoming visit would help take this process forward. Lastly, he emphasized that it is time to craft a long term vision of Pakistan-China relations, and agree on where they wish to see this vital relationship 25 years from now. In this enterprise, he stressed, it was important to engage the youth in both countries as well. Earlier, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China Pakistan Study Centre ISSI, highlighted the history of Pakistan-China relations, noting Pakistan's steadfast support for the 'One China' principle and China's support for Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He emphasized the importance of China's investment in Pakistan's energy, infrastructure.

## Microsoft, HEC collaborate to empower future tech leaders

Jaye Richards said that we believe that technology can be a powerful bridge between academia and industry

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD : Microsoft Pakistan brought together leading figures from academia and industry for a dynamic event "Bridging the Academia-Industry Gap" on Thursday, May 30th, 2024. Held at the Auditorium, HEC Headquarters - Islamabad, the event focused on fostering collaboration and equipping graduates with the skills needed to thrive in the modern workplace. The event commenced with

a welcome address by Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, Executive Director of the Higher Education Commission followed by a Keynote by Microsoft's Director Education Industry, Central Europe Middle East & Africa Jaye Richards Hill. Highlighting the importance of this collaboration, Jaye Richards Hill stated, "At Microsoft, we believe that technology can be a powerful bridge between academia and industry. By equipping students with the latest tools and technologies, and fostering collaboration with industry leaders, we can

prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow." Mr. Jibran Jamshad addressed the audience on latest AI offerings by Microsoft. Mr. Jibran Jamshad highlighted a recent survey from the World Talent Initiative, which paints a picture of a rapidly changing workplace driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI). The survey revealed a significant increase in AI adoption, with a staggering 75% of knowledge workers now using AI tools in their daily tasks. Interestingly, nearly half (46%) reported adopting these tools within the last six months,

highlighting a rapid acceleration in AI integration. Despite initial fears of job losses due to AI, the survey also identified a talent shortage in cybersecurity, engineering, and design. Companies are now prioritizing AI skills when hiring, and employees are actively upskilling themselves through platforms like LinkedIn Learning to stay competitive. LinkedIn has introduced a new AI skilling framework for organizations, offering over 50 free learning courses to help professionals at all levels enhance their AI expertise.

## Belgium Ambassador calls on PRCS Chairman

PRCS Chairman appreciated Ambassador Delogne's contributions during his tenure in Pakistan, acknowledging his role in strengthening Pakistan-Belgium ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: His Excellency Charles Delogne, the Belgium Ambassador to Pakistan, visited the National Headquarters of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) on Thursday. PRCS representatives warmly welcomed him upon arrival. In his meeting with PRCS Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, the two leaders discussed the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Belgium, focusing on humanitarian cooperation and exploring potential joint initiatives to support vulnerable communities in Pakistan. Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari emphasized PRCS's extensive humanitarian services across the country, particularly highlighting the assistance provided to millions affected by the 2022 monsoon



floods. He detailed the various facilities and support mechanisms PRCS has implemented, including ongoing recovery efforts for flood-affected families such as shelter, livelihood support, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene),

cash assistance and others. Ambassador Charles Delogne expressed his pleasure at visiting PRCS, extending his best wishes and commending the organization's efforts under Chairman Laghari's leadership. He praised

PRCS's initiatives during natural disasters and crises, reiterating Belgium's commitment to supporting humanitarian causes. Chairman Laghari appreciated Ambassador Delogne's contributions during his tenure in Pakistan, acknowledging his role in strengthening Pakistan-Belgium relations and fostering mutual cooperation on the global stage. Following their meeting, Ambassador Delogne spoke to the media, lauding PRCS's humanitarian services and efforts to bolster diplomatic relations. He emphasized the universal importance of humanitarian work and praised PRCS's historically significant contributions. Ambassador Delogne also toured the PRCS library and inscribed his remarks in the guest book. As a token of appreciation, Chairman Laghari presented him with his book, "Dastan-e-Azam."

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### May

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

### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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



### Enquiry

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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

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



RAWALPINDI: Olympian Khawaja Junaid, head of Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy along with Principal Viqar-un-Nisa Girls College Rawalpindi, distributing hockey kit among the girls' hockey players of the college. Editor Daily Islamabad POST/DNA News Agency Ansar M Bhatti, Mrs. Tassarwar Ejaz from Fatima Jinnah University are also present on the occasion. More coverage on page 6 =DNA

## PBS holds 2nd awareness workshop for agri census

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has organized the second awareness building workshop for the 7th Agricultural Census 2024, which will utilize an Integrated Digital Count approach for evidence based planning and policy formulation to develop the agriculture and livestock sectors in the country. The initial awareness building workshop took place on May 27 at the Sindh University of Agriculture Tandojam, Hyderabad, where as the second workshop of this series was conducted in University of Agriculture, Peshawar, said a press release. The PBS has commenced a nationwide series of awareness building workshops aimed at engaging agricultural scientists, academia, researchers, agriculture business entrepreneurs,

policy planners and the general public on the upcoming Agricultural Census of Pakistan. The event was attended by Muhammad Javed Marwat, Secretary Agriculture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Vice Chancellor of the University Professor Dr Jehan Bakht, the representative of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Peshawar, Farrukh Toirov also attended the workshop. Vice Chancellor of the University Professor Dr Jehan Bakht highlighted the importance of provision of accurate data in shaping country's agricultural policies and programs and emphasized that the agricultural census is a crucial initiative for provision of comprehensive understanding of our agricultural sectors strengths, weakness and potentials.. He said that it will enable to identify the areas for improvement, optimization of resources and drive innovation and assured full support of his organization for the successful execution of the 7th Agriculture Census. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal Member (Support Services/Resource Management) and focal person for the 7th Agricultural census, apprised the participants about the activities carried out by PBS including the largest exercise of South Asia, 7th Population & Housing Census, The first ever Digital Census and other Surveys for provision of data for evidence based policy planning. He highlighted the importance of the agricultural sector towards the economy of Pakistan and its contribution towards GDP. He

informed that agriculture sector contributes 24% to GDP and 38 percent of the Pakistan Labour force is linked to agriculture, therefore it is imperative that updated accurate and reliable data is available for policy planning. He also explained regarding the digital components of the 7th Agricultural Census its extensive operational network, which includes field offices and 157 district offices nationwide. He elaborated in detail regarding the importance of data collection regarding different crops, livestock, and agricultural machinery for informed decision making. He added that the census field operations will initiate in August 2024 with the enumeration of large agricultural holdings, followed

by subsequent phases in September and October, ensuring comprehensive coverage of all regions across the country. The use of IT tools and techniques like tablets, laptops, internet devices and various modules applications to conduct the 7th Agricultural Census. He added that robust training program has been devised, beginning with Census Master Trainers receiving training in Islamabad, who will then impart district-level training sessions. Muhammad Javed Marwat, Secretary Agriculture, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa commended the efforts of PBS and stakeholders in advancing this national endeavour and stressed the importance of timely statistics in the agricultural sector for informed policy formulation and strategic investment.—APP

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## COMSTECH co-organizes training workshop

### FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH, Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD), Center for Innovative Drug Development and Therapeutic Trials for Africa (CDT) Africa, and Addis Ababa University (AAU), Ethiopia jointly organized 3-day training workshop on Leishmaniasis at Addis Ababa University which concluded on Thursday. COMSTECH, NTD, CDT, AAU training workshop on Leishmaniasis was inaugurated by H.E. Ambassador of Pakistan in Ethiopia. Representatives of COMSTECH, NTD, CDT and AAU ad-

ressed the participants during the inaugural ceremony. COMSTECH supported five resource persons from Uganda, UK and Pakistan to participate and training sessions in this training workshop. It also used this opportunity to highlight and engage with OIC member states in the Africa to serve the core mission of COMSTECH for inter-Islamic cooperation in science and technology. Leishmaniasis affects millions of people in over 90 countries, primarily in tropical and subtropical regions. Leishmaniasis predominantly affects the poorest communities, exacerbating the cycle

of poverty and disease. Treating Leishmaniasis is costly, often requires prolonged and expensive treatments, which can be a significant financial burden in low-income regions. Infected individuals may suffer from prolonged illness, leading to loss of productivity and economic instability for families and communities. Research in the development of drugs for Leishmaniasis is important due to its significant impact on public health, the socioeconomic burden, and the scientific challenges it presents. Advancing this research can lead to better treatments, improved quality of life for affected individuals, and a greater un-

derstanding of parasitic diseases, ultimately contributing to global health security and equity. This workshop was one of many activities, which COMSTECH has initiated to build capacity of member states in S&T. Trainings like this pave the way for the technology transfer and human capacity building. This was the 3rd training on the important topic of neglected tropical diseases, first two trainings were conducted in Kenya in 2022 and 2023. Researchers and practitioners from Ethiopia participated in this training in-person whereas participants from OIC member states joined the training online.

## CNDS prioritize automation, digitization in institution

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CNDS) is continuously undergoing a process of institutional reforms in which automation and digitization are the main priorities. The CNDS reforms programme was approved by the Cabinet for structural changes in the prime institute in economic significance to provide better delivery service and equipped with modern tools for shifting from manual to innovative Information Technology (IT) services, the senior official of CNDS told APP here on Thursday. He said that CNDS had the plan to unveil the reforms programme on World Saving Day, which is a future game plan for enhancing the institution's capacity. Replying to a question, he said the Central Directorate of National Savings (CNDS) had 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, he said. The CNDS 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.—DNA

## Aleem holds meeting with businessmen of Tajikistan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Privatisation, Board of Investment and Communication Abdul Aleem Khan held a meeting on Thursday with prominent business figures from Tajikistan to discuss prospects for enhancing bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two countries. Over ten major business groups from the textile, pharmaceutical, construction, IT, banking, and airline sectors attended the meeting. The investors expressed keen interest in constructing a goods terminal for import and export near the Pakistan-Tajikistan border, said a press release. The minister assured all possible support and patronage for business-to-business activities, stating that all economic sectors are open to businessmen from Central Asia. He emphasized that Pakistan's private sector is ready to engage in trade with other countries. He added that the government would incentivise foreign investors to invest in free economic zones and other areas to promote industrial development in the country. Abdul Aleem Khan expressed hope that the bilateral business volume between Pakistan and Tajikistan would further increase with the frequent exchange of trade and business delegations, as well as enhanced people-to-people and government-to-government contacts. The business groups from Tajikistan expressed their keen interest in investing in various sectors of Pakistan's economy, besides promoting trade and investment cooperation between the two countries.—APP

## Four drug peddlers netted with 13 kg charas

RAWALPINDI: Saddar Wah Police in an action against suspected drug peddlers on Thursday arrested four accused besides recovering 13 kg charas and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Saddar Wah police held an accused namely Zahoore Ahmed and recovered 5420 grams charas while another accused, Faisal was sent behind bars for possessing 5260 grams charas. Two other accused, Abid Hussain and Shaheer Ahmed were arrested on recovery of 2400 grams charas. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers, he added.—APP

## Convenient vehicle registration at Trail 3

ISLAMABAD: Excise department is providing civic facilities to residents of the Federal Capital to get their vehicle registration as well as access to various essential services at Trail 3 on Thursday under the ICT doorstep initiative. According to the Spokesman of ICT, the excise staff would be stationed at the parking lot from 3.00 to 5.00 p.m. Citizens hailing from nearby areas can get civic facilities through a dedicated van, he said. The spokesman said that whether you need a fuel permit for domestic or commercial use, or looking to register your motor vehicle seamlessly, the on-ground service would ensure a swift and straightforward process. This initiative aimed at to streamline processes and provide ease to the public regarding vehicle registration, transfer, and token tax procedures, he added. In addition to the vehicle registration, transfer, and token tax services, the Facilitation Center Doorstep ICT Vehicle would also be offering the following services.—APP

## A conscious contemplation of social media

### TANVEER HUSSAIN



This century is the century of information and technology. Social media is an important means of communication that is playing a vital role in getting people to know each other and bringing them closer

to each other. In civilized societies basic role of social media is to provide education, information and entertainment to its users. In simple words it offers a greater convenience and connectivity. In short, the importance of social media in today's modern era cannot be denied. Although there are many advantages of social media but its disadvantages are far greater. Unfortunately there is no adequate legislation in Pakistan for the right to freedom of expression and to control misinformation. If there is any law, it is nowhere to be seen on the ground. Due to lack of proper monitoring, social media has become an unrestrained camel. There are some restrictions on pub-

lishing news on TV and newspapers. News is broadcasted under certain rules. But social media is exempt from all restrictions. Post whatever you want. Make someone a traitor to the country or accuse someone of disrespect for any religion. In Pakistan, many political and religious parties have used the social media platform as a weapon to promote hatred and violence. There is no better forum for disinformation and accusations than social media. Any news about any person or group goes viral within few hours. Regardless of whether the news is true or not, the victimized person or group becomes the target of hatred for millions of people. In the last eight to ten years,

the political mercury of the country has gone up a lot because of the negative use of social media. The hatred among the people has increased so much that they are not ready to tolerate each other even outside the country. Be it a cricket match or any other national festival, people shout slogans against each other instead of expressing national unity. His scenes can be viewed from London to America. Even in the holy places of Masjid al-Haram and Masjid Nabawi, these people do not stop fighting. Many religious parties have also misused social media for their own interests. Violence was promoted through the hate campaign which resulted in the loss of many pre-

vious lives. Now a days there is a race to make money without hard work, talent and ability. A large number of youths are engaged in making and sharing pointless videos with mobile cameras. There is nor they have any thought of wasting their precious time neither any consideration of moral values. There is a need to make appropriate legislation to determine the limits and restrictions of social media. At the same time, the youth should be trained to use any platform positively. No one will benefit from promoting hatred. If this hatred is not controlled, then this hatred will increase in future. We should all think seriously about what kind of society we will bequeath to our future generations.



## Briefs

## Police carry out search operations in different areas

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police here on Thursday carried out search operations in the jurisdiction of Race Course, Wah Cantt, Gujar Khan, Saddar Baroni, Mandra and Dharmial police stations. According to a police spokesman, the search operations were conducted in order to maintain law and order and flush out suspects following the directions of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani. He informed, senior police officers and police personnel including women police took part in the search operations. Police checked 101 houses, 72 shops, 04 hotels, 08 tenants and 247 individuals during the search operations. The spokesman said that police were fully prepared to shield the lives and property of the public and combing and search operations were being done to flush out the suspects and hardcore criminals. —APP

## Minister attends Int'l conference

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Maritime Affairs Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh attended 3rd International Conference 2024, Innovation & Disruption: Business success through AI as Chief Guest at IBA School of Business Studies (SBS) at Karachi, (30 May-2023) National and International dignitaries attended the session and addressed the session which includes Dr. Nora Colton Director University College London, Dr. Geoffrey Wood DAN Western University Canada, Dr. Adam Zaremba Associate Professor Montpellier Business School France, Dr. Tariq Rafi Chairman HEC Sindh and others. While addressing the audience the Federal Minister Maritime Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh said AI is the way forward to facilitate students in order to access high-quality educational resources, regardless of economic status or geographic area.—APP

## International Day of Potato being observed

ISLAMABAD: International Day of Potato is being observed on Thursday. The Day was established by the General Assembly in December 2023 to promote awareness of the many cultural, economic, nutritional and environmental benefits of potatoes. Potatoes provide accessible and nutritious food and improved livelihoods in rural and other areas where natural resources, especially arable land and water are limited and inputs expensive.—APP

## CCP ensures free, fair Competition: Chairman

Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu went on to say that Competition Commission of Pakistan and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry's collaboration will greatly contribute in alleviating the concerns and complaints regarding unfair practices by certain business entities therein promotion of healthy business environment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Competition Commission of Pakistan plays vital role in ensuring free and fair competition in all spheres of commercial and economic activities and prevent market abuse to promote good governance, ensure corrective behavior and sustainable compliance through advocacy measures and trainings for the corporate sector.

This has been stated by Chairman, Competition Commission of Pakistan Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu during a briefing at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He said that engagement with industry and chambers is an integral part of its advocacy outreach, therefore it has been engaging with chambers, academia and professional bodies for the purpose and this session at ICCI is also the part of the same engagements.

Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu went on to say that Competition Commission of Pakistan and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry's collaboration will greatly contribute in alleviating the concerns and complaints regarding unfair practices by certain business entities therein promotion of healthy business environment. Highlighting the performance of the CCP he stated that heavy penalties are imposed on violators of CCP laws and that a number of cases are also pending in the apex court for final decisions. President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakht-



awari in his welcome address underlined the need for provision of level playing field to all the business entities and strict actions against the cartels not only for the ease of business doing but for the benefit of the consumers. He said that CCP's role in fostering a competitive business environment in economic growth of the country and protecting businesses and consumers from anti-competitive acts and behaviors is of paramount importance and that ICCI will extend all out support to CCP for the cause. He also underlined the need for promotion of startups and entre-

preneurships for the economic well-being of the country by saying that ICCI is looking forward to work with CCP in promoting good corporate governance and competition law compliance. Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari termed the healthy competition as an important essence for the advancement of the businesses. He asserted that there should be no liking and disliking and all the stakeholders should be provided similar facilities and fascinations for the initiatives. He also stated that privatization, deregulation and fair competition in energy sector is not only

the backbone of Pakistan's economy rather imperative for the integrity of the country. Shahzad Hussain, Director General Advocacy in his in-depth presentation enlightened the participants about the working of the CCP by saying that it closely keeps watch on abuse of dominant positions, exploitative behaviors, discrimination in price, unreasonable price hike, cartelization and such other unhealthy practices to ensure the free and fair business atmosphere in the country. Salman Amin, Member, Advocacy & Exemptions, expressed the hope that the awareness session will prove

useful for the attendees. Senior Vice President ICCI Faad Waheed in his vote of thanks said that CCP enjoys the powers of suo moto action, thereby it is imperative that it should initiate actions by itself in the matters of importance and urgency to curb corrupt practices. Mian Ramzan, Convener Tax Committee ICCI conducted the ceremony in excellent manners. Those present on the occasion were Yousuf Rajput, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Malik Shabbir, Ch. Maqsood Tabish, Ashfaq Chhattah, Malik Naveed, Shaikh Hameed, Ch. Babar, Sajid Iqbal, Khalid Ch. Malik Mohsin, Ch. Irfan, Imtiaz Abbasi Zia Ch and others.

## Senator Irfan Siddiqui denounces Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD: PML-N Parliamentary Party Leader in Senate, Senator Irfan Siddiqui Thursday strongly criticized the portrayal of the country's current situation by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder (PTI) Imran Khan as akin to the 1971 East Pakistan crisis. Siddiqui expressed concern over the controversial message posted from Imran Khan's verified official X account, which he said, gave a misleading impression that Pakistan was heading towards another Fall of Dhaka. "Such claims are alarming, unacceptable, and deplorable," he said in a statement. Siddiqui said Imran Khan's post was not merely a tweet, but a "meticulously scripted short film with a clear anti-army agenda". The film employs images from Bangladeshi and Indian media, which are usually used to malign the Pakistan Army, thereby revealing its malicious intent, he added. He emphasized that the tweet echoed a "hostile mentality" against military personnel. "Those who are making hollow and empty arguments to justify the pictorial tweet must tell the people how they will cover the press talk of PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub with the help of a written statement outside Adiala Jail along with former President Arif Alvi, who just after meeting with Imran Khan in jail reiterated the same thoughts as conveyed in Khan's contentious tweet", Siddiqui said. He said the PTI founder's likening himself to the most popular politician Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, making accusations against the current military leadership and drumbeating a new Dhaka fall was "highly condemnable".—APP

## No enemy can even think of an adventure against Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Thursday that those who started Pakistan's nuclear program and those who completed it despite all the obstacles are our heroes and benefactors of the nation. He said that the whole nation is indebted to all those who contributed to making Pakistan's defense impregnable through the nuclear program. He added that the nuclear program was a priceless gift to the nation, making national defense invincible and making the nation proud. Dr. Hanif Mughal said this while addressing the party workers on the occasion of Yum-i-Takbeer, the day when Pakistan's defense became impregnable after nuclear tests in the hills of Chagai, Balochistan, in 1998. He said that in the presence of a nuclear program, the enemy can neither consider us inferior nor dare any ad-

venture. He added that the whole world tried to stop Pakistan from conducting nuclear tests. Still, the political and military leaders rejected all the pressure. They carried out explosions, which resulted in sleepless nights for the enemies of Pakistan. The nuclear blasts resulted in a balance of power in South Asia. The explosions gave Pakistan the honor of becoming the 7th atomic power in the world and the first nuclear power in the Muslim world. Hanif Mughal said that through this move, Pakistan equaled the nuclear explosions carried out by India on May 11 and 13, 1998, which resulted in threatening statements against Pakistan by Indian politicians. After threats by Indian politicians, the people of Pakistan became anxious; they were wondering how will Pakistan reply to this aggression as it has become an issue of integrity for Pakistan. At that time, the people were anxious to know how and when we would give a response to India. When the reply

was given through nuclear tests, the people erupted in joy. The celebration started in the streets, sweets were distributed, and it was celebrated all over the Islamic world. As expected, Pakistan faced problems related to the implications of the nuclear explosions. It faced economic sanctions but overcame these problems in a few years. Yum-i-Takbeer reminds us how the entire Pakistani nation united on that day to make the country's defense invincible. The nation decided not to yield to external pressure and would not compromise the country's integrity and defense. It was the day we renewed the pledge that we will always remain ready to thwart the nefarious designs of external and internal enemies who want to endanger the country. Let's pledge on this day that by following the principles of unity, faith, and discipline, we will foil all the nefarious designs of not only the external enemies but also the local elements who are out to create chaos and anarchy.

## ICT admin actions against professional beggars

ISLAMABAD: The Assistant Commissioners (ACs) and Magistrates accompanied by Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration teams have launched operations across the city to address the issue of alms-seeking and arrested 17 professional beggars. According to the Spokesman of ICT administration, a significant sweep was carried out by the Assistant Commissioner of Pothohar, resulting in the arrest of 17 individuals involved in begging activities. The arrested persons were included seven women, seven children, and three men, apprehended from Centaurus, Faisal Masjid, and nearby locations. Those detained have been handed over to the police, while the minors among them have been placed under the care of the Edhi Center. This operation was part of an ongoing daily effort supervised by Assistant Commissioners to tackle the persistent problem of professional begging in Islamabad, the spokesman added.—APP

## ICAP hosts conference on 'driving economic change 2024'

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a conference on Thursday emphasized the critical importance of adopting sustainable economic practices to effectively combat climate change and ensure a greener future for economic development and social prosperity in the country. The conference titled "Driving Economic Change: Working Today for a Greener Tomorrow," was organized by the Economic Advisory Committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP), said a press release. Addressing the conference Mohammad Zubair, Former Governor of Sindh emphasized the urgent need for collaborative efforts to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable practices in the country. He highlighted the roles of the government, private sector and civil society in driving positive change toward a greener future. Waleed Iqbal, Former Member of the Senate, Pakistan, also emphasized the critical importance of adopting sustainable economic practices to effectively combat climate change and ensure a greener future. He highlighted the necessity of aligning economic development with environmental conservation and emphasized the roles of innovation and collaboration in driving meaningful change. Renowned economist and public policy adviser, Dr. Khaqan Hassan Najeeb, in his presentation, focused on the critical intersection of economic policies and environmental sustainability. He emphasized the need for Pakistan to adopt greener practices for a sustainable future. Farrukh Rehman, President of ICAP, highlighted the imperative of driving economic change with a conscientious approach. He stressed the need of sustainable and ethical expansion, aligned with the organization's long-term vision, is paramount for enduring success. He underscored the critical need for innovation in financial management, urging CFOs to explore new technologies, strategies, and business models to drive growth while ensuring environmental sustainability and social responsibility. Zeeshan Ijaz, Vice President of ICAP, discussed the crucial intersection of economic growth and environmental sustainability and urged the need for chartered accountants and financial professionals to lead in rethinking traditional economic models and adopting innovative practices that foster green growth.—DNA

## Empowering critical thinking through educational reforms

Ms SABAHAT ALI

In today's rapidly evolving world, the ability to think critically is more crucial than ever. Educational reform plays a pivotal role in nurturing this essential skill among students. By integrating technology into the learning process, educators can create dynamic environments that foster critical thinking skills in students, preparing them to navigate complex challenges in the digital age. Understanding Critical Thinking: Critical thinking goes beyond rote memorization; it involves analyzing information, evaluating arguments, and synthesizing knowledge to form reasoned judgments. It equips individuals with the capacity to question assumptions, consider multiple perspectives, and make informed decisions. In essence, critical thinkers are adept at problem-solving, creativity, and effective communication. Educational Reform: Educational reform initiatives

aim to revitalize traditional teaching methods by prioritizing student-centered approaches that cultivate critical thinking. This involves shifting from passive learning to active engagement, where students take ownership of their learning journey. Reform efforts often emphasize inquiry-based learning, collaborative activities, and real-world applications to stimulate critical thinking skills. Key Strategies for Fostering Critical Thinking: Inquiry-Based Learning: Encouraging students to ask questions, investigate problems, and seek solutions fosters curiosity and analytical thinking. By posing open-ended questions and guiding students through the process of inquiry, educators empower them to think critically and develop a deeper understanding of concepts. Problem-Solving Activities: Integrating problem-solving activities into the curriculum challenges students to apply their knowledge in practical contexts. Whether through case studies, simulations, or hands-on projects, these activities encourage students to think creatively, consider

alternative solutions, and evaluate outcomes critically. Open-Ended Discussions: Facilitating meaningful discussions encourages students to articulate their thoughts, listen to diverse perspectives, and engage in constructive dialogue. By challenging assumptions and exploring complex issues, students refine their critical thinking skills and learn to approach problems from multiple angles. Evaluation of Evidence: Teaching students to assess the credibility and relevance of sources equips them with essential research skills. In an era of abundant information, the ability to discern reliable sources from misinformation is paramount. By analyzing evidence critically, students develop a critical eye and become discerning consumers of information. The Role of Technology Integration: Technology integration enhances educational reform efforts by providing tools and resources that support critical thinking across various disciplines. Here are some ways technology can facilitate the development of critical thinking skills:

Access to Information: The internet grants students access to a wealth of information, enabling them to explore diverse perspectives, conduct research, and verify sources. Educators can teach students how to navigate online resources effectively and evaluate the credibility of information. Digital Collaboration: Online platforms and tools facilitate collaboration and communication among students, allowing them to exchange ideas, provide feedback, and collaborate on projects. By working collaboratively, students learn to respect diverse viewpoints, negotiate differences, and think critically about their own assumptions. Simulation and Modeling: Interactive simulations and virtual laboratories provide opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning and explore complex concepts in a controlled environment. By manipulating variables, observing outcomes, and reflecting on their experiences, students develop problem-solving skills

and scientific reasoning abilities. Multimedia Presentations: Creating multimedia presentations requires students to synthesize information, organize their thoughts, and communicate effectively. By incorporating multimedia elements such as images, videos, and graphics, students can convey their ideas in compelling ways and engage their audience critically. Educational reform initiatives that integrate technology have the potential to revolutionize teaching and learning, empowering students with the critical thinking skills they need to thrive in the digital age. By fostering inquiry, problem-solving, collaboration, and digital literacy, educators can prepare students to navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world with confidence and competence. As we continue to adapt to the evolving landscape of education, prioritizing critical thinking remains essential for shaping informed, responsible, and engaged global citizens.

**WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED**

MOST EXPERIENCED MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS OF MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS IN PAKISTAN

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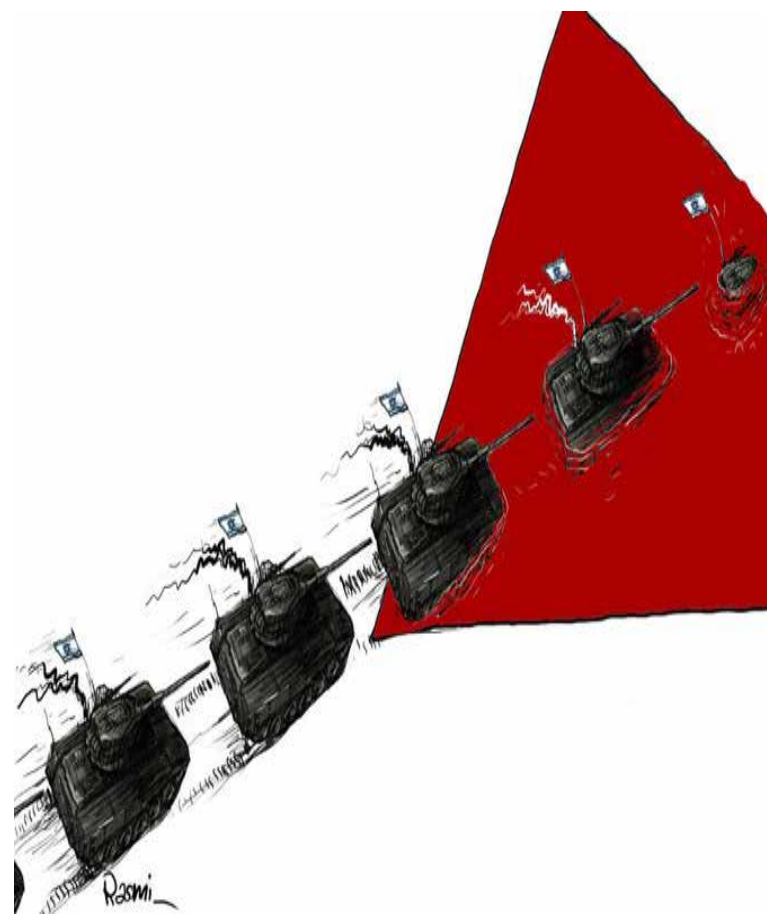
**Ashraf**



## China-Arab cooperation

THE cooperation between China and Arab countries has always been a model in China's foreign relations, and this model relationship is entering a new historical starting point. The 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum will be held on May 30. President Xi Jinping will attend the opening ceremony together with four Arab heads of state, namely, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Tunisia's President Kais Saied, and the United Arab Emirates' President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who are paying state visits to China, and President Xi will deliver a keynote speech. The presence of these five heads of state at the opening ceremony of the ministerial conference is unprecedented. As Vice Foreign Minister Deng Li stated at a briefing for Chinese and foreign media, this fully reflects the common wish of China and Arab states to unite and cooperate and to continuously promote the China-Arab relationship to new levels. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. The forum, which has thrived over the past 20 years, owes its significance and vitality to the tangible achievements it has made. China has steadily remained the largest trading partner of Arab countries for many years. Under the framework of jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the two sides have implemented over 200 cooperation projects, benefiting nearly 2 billion people from both sides. The China-Arab States Cooperation Forum has established 19 important mechanisms, including ministerial conferences and strategic political dialogues, and has issued 85 important outcome documents.

This meeting is also the first ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum held after the first China-Arab States Summit in 2022. It serves as a review of the achievements of China-Arab cooperation over the past 20 years and a look forward to the next 20 years, outlining the blueprint for future China-Arab cooperation. According to Chinese sources, the meeting plans to further consolidate consensus between China and Arab states through a series of outcome documents, plan cooperation for the next stage, and issue a joint statement on the Palestine issue. International attention has already been focused on the venue, and the time of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum is about to begin. To be honest, China develops friendly relations with countries of all sizes in the world based on the principles of mutual respect, equality, and mutual benefit. China does not engage in group politics, diplomatic battles, or have any interest in filling any "vacuum," let alone believing that there is a "vacuum" in the Middle East. China-Arab cooperation is simply cooperation between China and Arab countries, driven by inherent logic and mutual needs for both sides to come together and get closer. Bloomberg believes that Arab countries welcome the establishment of a broader cooperation relationship between China and the Arab world, which exemplifies a reluctance among many emerging-market nations to get caught up in a Cold War between the US and China. They'd prefer to keep the doors open, and the money flowing, with both sides. This statement is only half correct. Arab countries view the cooperation between China and the Arab world with a focus on the present, but also look beyond the present. Through deepening cooperation with China, Arab countries further see that China, unlike the West, does not achieve development through war, colonization, or forming alliances, but through peaceful development.



## Severe crisis of transportation in Gaza

NEARLY eight months after the Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, donkey-drawn carts have become the most common means of transportation at a high cost. Among the many crises facing Palestinians in Gaza, the transportation crisis stands out as a reflection of the fuel shortage, destruction of roads, and the risks of vehicle targeting. On the first day of the genocidal war, Israeli forces closed Gaza's crossings and blocked fuel entry. Later, they allowed minimal amounts of fuel to enter at infrequent intervals through the United Nations for humanitarian purposes, such as partially operating hospital generators, ambulances, and water wells. Due to this policy, most vehicles have turned into immobile metal hulks, although some were briefly revived using available cooking oil. A PIC reporter pointed out that Gazans are deprived of their right to travel by car due to the Israeli fuel blockade. Consequently, most residents rely on walking, animal-drawn carts, and bicycles for transportation. Ahmed Abu Al-Atta, who works at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah, has to walk long distances daily to get to work due to the lack of transportation. He explained to the PIC that he walks from Deir Al-Balah refugee camp to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital every day, back and forth. Bilal Al-Osta, a 42-year-old displaced from Gaza City to the central governorate, complains about the high cost of transportation via animal-drawn carts. He pays 5 shekels to travel from the Nuseirat camp (central Gaza) to Deir Al-Balah (also central Gaza), nearly double what he used to pay for taxi rides. Despite this, he cannot do without the "cart," as it has become the main mode of transport in the Strip. He adds, "We use animals as a means of transport to meet our daily needs. Everything is scarce in Gaza due to the ongoing Israeli siege."

Al-Osta pointed out that the fuel shortage at filling stations has caused a paralysis in transportation, forcing thousands of taxis to stop operating and be replaced by carts. He emphasized the importance of these carts, noting their role in evacuating the injured and the dead from areas targeted by the Israeli occupation, especially in Gaza City and the northern regions. With their increased use, the prices of donkeys in Gaza have risen, making them a source of income for many families. The carts are used to transport people during displacement and to move from displacement areas to hospitals or aid distribution points. Meanwhile, Palestinian Minister of Transportation Tarek Zaarab revealed that Gaza's transportation sector has suffered losses exceeding 3 billion dollars due to the Israeli war. He said that "committees of the Ministry of Transportation estimate that the Israeli forces destroyed about 55,000 vehicles in Gaza, which is about 60% of the licensed vehicles in the Strip." He added that the losses in Gaza's transportation sector "exceeded 3 billion dollars, including infrastructure and citizens' vehicles." He further noted that "the occupation destroyed about 945 km of roads in Gaza, which is 65% of the road network, with a cost exceeding 2 billion dollars."

# The Israeli regime is in legal trouble, but what does this actually mean?

Robert Inlakesh

It is also apparent that this genocidal apartheid regime, run by war criminals, cannot possibly conclude any kind of deal to resolve the situation by allowing a so-called "Two-State solution". There are no major political parties that could plausibly come to power after Netanyahu's coalition that would accept the idea of creating a Palestinian State, nor is there any effort going on to create a viable roadmap to a peaceful solution. For any objective observer the reality today couldn't be any more obvious: "Israel" is an entity that is based upon total Jewish supremacy and will not allow a reality in which Palestinians can have human rights. If the Palestinian people, who are roughly equal to the size of the Jewish Israeli population in the entirety of historic Palestine, or what the Zionists would call "Greater Israel"...

WITHIN the space of one week, the Israeli regime was hit with two major legal blows, first from the International Criminal Court (ICC) and then from the International Court of Justice (ICJ). While these measures may not actually translate to any tangible changes on the ground for now, the chronic effects may prove irreversible. Prior to the launch of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood by the armed wing of Hamas, the al-Qassam Brigades, the political predicament of the Palestinian cause was that it remained on life support. Although the majority of United Nations member states would annually vote on the so-called Two-State solution model on bringing about a resolution to the conflict, there were no real efforts to translate this unanimous consensus into a reality on the ground. It was interpreted throughout most of the world, including in the United States and the Zionist entity, that the Palestinian question was effectively stuck and was not even worthy of attention. Therefore, the US government pursued normalization deals with the Arab regimes and believed that Israeli efforts to Judaize the holy sites in occupied al-Quds and the Naqab, as well as to annex areas in the West Bank, were not going to impede their mission to reach a prized Saudi-Israeli deal. Meanwhile, the situation on the ground for Palestinians grew even more dire. While in the past there were certain political limits as to how far internationally renowned Human Rights groups could go in their criticisms of Israeli policy and practices against the Palestinians, this somewhat eased as there was not even talk of any developments in favor of Palestinians politically. Therefore, we saw the likes of Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International, and the top Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem, release reports justifying why they identified "Israel" as an apartheid regime. It is telling that these human rights reports, which in the cases of HRW and Amnesty were voluminous and provided copious sources, were able to essentially affirm what Palestinian human rights groups had been saying for decades. What was most significant about these reports, however, is that they did not stop at condemning Israeli conduct in the West Bank, Gaza, and the eastern part of al-Quds, but chose to shine a light on the entirety of occupied Palestine. Despite the condemnations by Israeli leaders, who predictably labeled the reports "antisemitic", it became clear that these were not deemed as consequential to the point of triggering any form of change in policy. Yet, this is where it all started to go terribly wrong for the Zionist entity. In this post-October 7 setting, we are now living in a world where the Palestinian cause is not only internationally relevant, it is the most popular issue of its time. The entire world is fixated on the Palestinian struggle and the ongoing atrocities in Gaza, and millions of people are consistently taking any action they can to support the Palestinian cause for national liberation. This is all happening without there even being a unified Palestinian leadership. It is in this context that the International Court of Justice (ICJ), ruled in favor of South Africa's submission accusing the Israelis of violating the Genocide Convention. The ICJ

voted unanimously to impose provisional measures on the Zionist regime to prevent genocide in Gaza. This may not have actually stopped the war in Gaza, but the effects of the Israeli regime being plausibly accused of committing genocide in the top legal authority on earth will remain now forever. The reason why the accusation of genocide against the self-proclaimed "Jewish State" is so damning, is because the entire Israeli invention narrative surrounds the idea that the reason why they have a right to exist as a state is because they were themselves subjected to a genocide. So, if "Israel" is seen to be a regime that conducts genocide, it cannot on the other hand use the excuse they need to exist because of genocide.

On Friday, the ICJ accepted the South African submission requesting further provisional measures be adopted by the court, asserting that "Israel must immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah Governorate, which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part." What it also did was specifically deem it necessary to "reaffirm" that the Israelis must abide by the initial provisional measures ordered by the court. If the Zionist entity directly chooses to violate the ICJ's orders, which are considered binding by the United Nations, it could trigger further action against it and work against its favor in the ongoing genocide case. In addition to this, the decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC)'s chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, to finally request arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Defence Minister Yoav Gallant now also piles on even more pressure. The way this now looks for the Zionist entity is as follows; they are a genocidal, apartheid regime that is committing crimes against humanity and are run by wanted war criminals. This is the case, as more and more nations around the world continue to recognize Palestine as a state and cut ties with the Israeli regime. It is also apparent that this genocidal apartheid regime, run by war criminals, cannot possibly conclude any kind of deal to resolve the situation by allowing a so-called "Two-State solution". There are no major political parties that could plausibly come to power after Netanyahu's coalition that would accept the idea of creating a Palestinian State, nor is there any effort going on to create a viable roadmap to a peaceful solution. For any objective observer the reality today couldn't be any more obvious: "Israel" is an entity that is based upon total Jewish supremacy and will not allow a reality in which Palestinians can have human rights. If the Palestinian people, who are roughly equal to the size of the Jewish Israeli population in the entirety of historic Palestine, or what the Zionists would call "Greater Israel", then the only way to maintain the Zionist regime in which only Jews are granted the right to self-determination, is either in maintaining an indefinite system of apartheid or choosing to conduct a mass campaign of ethnic cleansing or genocide. It is inevitable that when people are subjected to apartheid rule, they will revolt and resist. Both the Israeli regime and its Western backers wanted this to be a status quo, to maintain

apartheid and periodically allow the Zionists to mass murder the Palestinians in order to "put them in their place." Until October 7, the US-Israeli agenda was succeeding, although the Resistance in Gaza would go to war with the Zionists every few years, these armed flare-ups never inflicted a big enough wound on the Israelis to change the equation. This is why the Zionist entity would refer to its wars with Gaza as "mowing the lawn", they believed it to be necessary and sadistically saw it as a calculated approach.

When the Palestinian Resistance finally broke down the gates of their concentration camp on October 7, all previous understandings were torn to shreds. The Zionist army, its intelligence agencies and weapons technology were dismantled and disgraced. Operation Al-Aqsa Flood shook them to their core, as neither the Israelis nor their American allies ever believed that such a defeat could be inflicted upon them. It is at this moment that they both decided that genocide would be the new goal and that apartheid could not work within the Gaza Strip. This is why the Zionists have no idea what to do in the besieged coastal territory, they evidently believed that after eight months they would have at least weakened the resistance in Gaza, but they even failed to do this and their deliberate annihilation of civilians and their homes has not led to victory.

Politically the Zionist entity is trapped, it understands there are limits imposed on what is possible for them to do in the Gaza Strip, such as the mass ethnic cleansing of the population into the Egyptian Sinai, so they are without a clue as to how they must proceed. While the Zionist regime's leadership tries to buy time and look for a way to achieve a victory, in order to at least save their political careers, they set the stage for future Israeli internal strife. All as the Lebanese Resistance lay waste to their military sites and settlements in the North, displacing over a hundred thousand settlers and debunking the idea that the Israeli military has the capacity to take on Hezbollah. The Israeli economy is being devastated, the Yemeni blockade in the Red Sea is incredibly effective and even the Iraqi Resistance are able to lob missiles and drones towards them at will, with no real response. On the battlefield in the Gaza Strip, their ill-trained occupation soldiers fight without discipline, returning to their families in body bags and with life-changing injuries, losing motivation by the day, due to fighting an endless battle with no goals. The Zionist entity is now in real legal trouble, faces a legitimacy crisis, and only promises one thing to both the world and its own settler population, a future of war and battle for ethnic supremacy. Most of the world's population is looking on in utter horror at what they see occurring in Gaza, they are sick to their stomachs at what the Western regimes are backing and seek an immediate end to this disgusting racist regime's never-ending civilian massacre. Although the ICJ and ICC decisions may seem meaningless in the short term, as did the flood of human rights groups labeling the Zionist Entity an apartheid regime, these are nails that will in due time be nailed into the Israeli coffin. The Israelis have sealed their fate, their apartheid regime is coming to an end, whether this is to occur quickly through a war of liberation or through a longer drawn out process.

## Is China readjusting Belt and Road vision?

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a colossal global infrastructure development strategy spearheaded by China, aiming to enhance connectivity and cooperation between Asia, Europe and Africa. Launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, BRI encompasses a network...

THE Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) proposed by China in 2013 is a comprehensive development strategy aimed at enhancing connectivity and cooperation across the Eurasian continent and beyond. This ambitious initiative encompasses both the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, focusing on infrastructure development, trade, investment and cultural exchange. The BRI seeks to revive ancient trade routes and foster economic integration among participating countries through the construction of roads, railways, ports and energy infrastructure. It spans over 100 countries, involving diverse regions from Asia to Europe, Africa and even Latin America, with China providing financing and technical expertise. While hailed by some as a transformative force for global development and connectivity, the BRI has faced criticism and scrutiny, including concerns over debt sustainability, environmental impact and geopolitical implications. Despite these challenges, the BRI continues to shape regional and global economic dynamics, reflecting China's growing influence on the world stage.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a colossal global infrastructure development strategy spearheaded by China, aiming to enhance connectivity and cooperation between Asia, Europe and Africa. Launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, BRI encompasses a network of roads, railways, ports, pipelines and digital infrastructure spanning over 100 countries, aiming to revive ancient trade routes and foster economic integration. China's ambitions behind BRI are multifold. Primarily, it seeks to address domestic economic challenges by exporting excess industrial capacity, creating new markets for Chinese goods and services and facilitating the internationalization of the Chinese currency the yuan. Additionally, BRI enables China to assert its geopolitical influence, particularly in regions where it has strategic

interests, by forging stronger diplomatic ties, securing access to key resources and markets and enhancing its soft power through cultural and educational exchanges. However, BRI has drawn criticism for its opaque financing mechanisms, environmental concerns, debt sustainability issues and accusations of fostering dependency among participating countries. Despite these challenges, China remains steadfast in its commitment to BRI, viewing it as a centerpiece of its foreign policy and a vehicle for shaping the global order in the 21st century. Corruption presents a significant challenge to the success and integrity of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This expansive project, aimed at fostering economic development and connectivity across Asia, Africa, and Europe, is susceptible to corruption due to its vast scale, complex infrastructure projects and involvement of multiple stakeholders. Corruption within the BRI manifests in various forms, including bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and kickbacks, among others. Such illicit practices undermine the transparency and fairness of project procurement processes, leading to inflated costs, substandard infrastructure and delays in implementation. Moreover, corruption erodes public trust in the initiative, discourages foreign investment and hampers sustainable development efforts in partner countries. Addressing corruption within the BRI requires robust governance mechanisms, enhanced transparency, accountability measures, and effective enforcement of anti-corruption laws. Without decisive action to combat corruption, the BRI risks failing to achieve its objectives of promoting regional cooperation and economic growth, ultimately hindering the prospects of shared prosperity among participating nations.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has experienced shifts in its trajectory, leading to discussions about the scale and focus of its ambitions. While the BRI was initially conceived as a vast infrastructure development pro-

ject spanning continents, recent trends indicate a more nuanced approach. China seems to be recalibrating its BRI strategy, focusing more on quality over quantity and addressing concerns about debt sustainability and environmental impact. This shift reflects both internal factors, such as economic restructuring and domestic priorities and external pressures, including criticism from recipient countries and geopolitical challenges. While some argue that China's BRI ambitions are shrinking, it may be more accurate to describe them as evolving, with a greater emphasis on sustainability, efficiency, and cooperation with international partners. This recalibration suggests a maturing of China's global engagement strategy rather than a retreat from its ambitious vision.

China's scaling back of its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) holds significant consequences, both domestically and internationally. Domestically, this shift reflects recalibration in China's economic strategy, prioritizing sustainability and risk management. By reducing the scale of BRI projects, China aims to mitigate financial risks associated with debt-trap diplomacy and address concerns over environmental degradation. However, this downsizing may also lead to a slowdown in economic growth as BRI projects have been instrumental in driving infrastructure development and fostering trade opportunities. Internationally, the contraction of China's BRI ambitions could reshape global geopolitics and economic dynamics. Countries heavily reliant on Chinese investment may face economic challenges while those wary of Beijing's influence may see this as an opportunity to diversify their partnerships. Moreover, the recalibration of the BRI may alter perceptions of China's global leadership ambitions, potentially prompting other major powers to fill the void left by China's retreat. Overall, the consequences of China's shrinking BRI ambitions are multifaceted, with implications spanning economic, geopolitical and environmental domains.



## Briefs

## Pakistan Army takes strong view...

FROM PAGE 01  
The forum resolved to continue to fully support the government's initiatives in various domains for sustainable economic growth and curbing illegal activities, including smuggling, hoarding, electricity theft, implementation of One Document Regime, dignified repatriation of illegal foreigners, and safeguarding of the national database, etc.

## Pakistan, Azerbaijan pledge to...

FROM PAGE 01  
The Azeri President to undertake an official visit to Pakistan later this year. The Azeri Foreign Minister thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and briefed him on the discussions held between the two Foreign Ministers earlier today. He also conveyed warm greetings of the Azeri leadership to the Prime Minister and assured him of Azerbaijan's strong desire to further solidify its ties with Pakistan.

## Azeri Foreign Minister...

FROM PAGE 01  
declared "sister cities" to bring the two nations further closer. The President highlighted that both countries had great scope for improving trade and business relations. He expressed satisfaction over the existing level of cooperation between the two brotherly countries, saying that both countries had commonalities of views at various international fora.

## Pakistan-Azerbaijan resolve...

FROM PAGE 01  
measures to increase bilateral investment, especially in the energy sector. The joint working group on energy would be critical in promoting cooperation in this sector, he added. He said both countries also desired to promote parliamentary and cultural exchanges to promote business-to-business and academic linkages, besides boosting cooperation in renewable energy.

## FIA CCW to probe Imran's...

FROM PAGE 01  
study the Hamood ur Rahman Commission Report and get to know who was the true traitor, General Yahya Khan or Sheikh Mujibur Rahman." However, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar told a local media outlet later that the post had nothing to do with Imran as he did not see the text of the posts that were uploaded to his account. "Imran Khan has nothing to do with this [post] because he did not see its content or other things. [The PTI founder] does not approve each and every video or context."

## "My only regret is trusting..."

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"I am certain that this ordeal was orchestrated by General Bajwa. I hold no one else responsible. "He meticulously planned and executed this scheme, presenting himself as a deceitful figure, creating lies and false narratives to cause national and international chaos - all to secure his extension.

## Slovenia recognises...

FROM PAGE 01  
The move is part of a wider effort by countries to coordinate pressure on Israel to end the conflict in Gaza. Golob also called for the immediate cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and the release of all hostages. "This is the message of peace," he said.

## Khawaja Junaid academy launched at Viqar-un-Nisa Girls College Pindi

MNA and PML N senior leader Hanif Abbasi performed the launching ceremony along with MNA Danyal Ch and Principal of the College Zahida Parveen. Olympian Khawaja Junaid distributed hockey kits among the players; Allied Bank sponsored the event First-ever hockey academy in an educational institution inaugurated

DNA/APP

RAWALPINDI: Women hockey is set to get a major boost in Pakistan as the country's first-ever hockey academy in an educational institution was inaugurated at Viqar-Un-Nisa Post Graduate College for Women Rawalpindi on Thursday. Member National Assembly (MNA) Hanif Abbasi, who was the chief guest, inaugurated the academy. Besides others MNA Danyal Chaudhry, Olympian Khawaja Junaid, Political Secretary British High Commission Cormic Dreehan, Group Head Allied Bank Faisal Ghauri, Principal Viqar-Un-Nisa College Zahida Parveen attended the inauguration ceremony. "The ultramodern astroturf turf, which presently costs around Rs 35 million, was imported during the PML-N government's last tenure, but unfortunately this asset was not utilized till to date. "I must appreciate Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy and Allied Bank for joining hands to make this facility functional for our female athletes. "The college has around 6,000 students and I hope it will provide some shining stars for the national women hockey team," he said. Danyal Chaudhry on the occasion expressed the hope that the initiative would have great impact on the students as well as the broader community. "It is heartening to see Khawaja Junaid Academy is nurturing the talent from the grassroots level, ensuring that young girls receive comprehensive training in both the technical and strategic aspects of hockey. "I'm sure the success of this academy will pave the way for similar initiatives in other parts of the country", he added. Speaking on the occasion, Khawaja Junaid said that the academy was aimed at identifying and nurturing budding players to represent Pakistan at the national and international levels. He said the long-term vision for the academy included hosting tournaments, establishing exchange programmes with international hockey academies, and producing players who can represent Pakistan at the global level. "We have provided experienced coaching staff for the academy, while Allied Bank will be providing financial support for the coaching purposes", he added. Faisal Ghauri in his remarks said Allied Bank was proud to support Khawaja Junaid Academy as it would help promote women sports in the country. "We believe in empowering our women. The launch of this hockey academy is a commendable initiative. I hope it will promote women's empowerment and sports development. We are proud to support such fantastic endeavors as we believe this will help nurture talent and create future champions. Principal Viqar-Un-Nisa College said that her institution was known for its strong emphasis on female education and empowerment. "I'm grateful to Khawaja Junaid for choosing this ideal institution for the academy. The college's support for the academy will always be there", she said. At the end, some 40 students of the Viqar-Un-Nisa College were given away hockey sticks, while souvenirs were presented to respected guests.



## Gary sheds light on Pakistan's T20 World Cup 2024 chances

However, success will require collective effort, meticulous planning and unwavering support for one another." An underwhelming display in the 50-overs World Cup in India last year, where the team failed to qualify for the tournament's knockout stages

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan head coach Gary Kirsten opened up on Thursday about the Men in Green's T20 World Cup 2024 chances. The event begins on June 1 in the United States and West Indies with 20 teams competing for the title. Pakistan are looking to win their first T20 World Cup title since their only victory in 2009 after a radical overhaul in the past few months. "These are indeed thrilling times for Pakistan cricket, with a new administration and players who are driven to deliver solid results," said Kirsten, who led India to 50-overs World Cup success in 2011. "The upcoming T20 World Cup presents a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase our skills and uphold Pakistan's legacy as a formidable force in cricket.

"However, success will require collective effort, meticulous planning and unwavering support for one

another." An underwhelming display in the 50-overs World Cup in India last year, where the team failed to qualify for the tournament's knockout stages after losing five of their nine games, led to Babar Azam stepping down as captain in all formats. Pacer Shaheen Afridi was put in charge of the T20 squad but Pakistan were thrashed 4-1 in New Zealand in January, prompting Babar to take the reins again in white-ball cricket, and he led the team to a nervy 2-2 home draw against the same opponents. "As a captain, I have always valued Shaheen's input and I will keep consulting him for important decisions going forward. We must take advantage of his strategic understanding of the game," Babar said. "Our joint aim is to make this team the best in the world." After a sobering defeat by Ireland, Pakistan clinched a 2-1 series victory in Dublin before losing the second game of their rain-hit four-match series against T20 champions England where new coach Kirsten took charge for the first time. Kirsten was another of the notable changes to the Pakistan setup that included the appointments of Simon Helmot and David Reid as fielding coach and mental performance coach, ahead of the June 1-29 World Cup in the West Indies and United States. Pakistan belatedly named their 15-member squad for the tournament and included pacer Haris Rauf, who has recovered from a shoulder injury that had kept him out since February. Abrar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Saim Ayub and Usman Khan were all picked to play their maiden T20 World Cup in an otherwise experienced squad. Pakistan are in Group A of the World Cup and begin their campaign against the United States on June 6. They will then take on arch-rivals India in one of the event's highly-anticipated matches three days later.

## PAF, Wapda advance to Semi Final in basketball tournament

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and Wapda continue their winning journey by beating their opponents and reaches into the semi-final round of on-going All-Pakistan Muhammad Majid and Abdul Nasir Memorial Basketball Tournament here at Siddique Memon Sports Complex Karachi organized under the umbrella of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF). On the third day of the six-day event, Pakistan Air Force had shown some aggressive game against Police to win the third consecutive victory by 75-40 points. Mehtab Akram scored 18 points and Mohammad Akhtar scored 14 points for the PAF side. In the second match, Balochistan faced another defeat against Sindh Greens by 43 points to 85 points. Taimour Zaheer and Rana Athar of Sindh Greens scored 15, 15 points respectively. In the third match, Punjab Rangers defeated Sindh Whites by 81 points to 56 points. Muhammad Mudassar scored 26 points and Fakhra Karam scored 16 points played a vital role for Rangers victory. In the fourth match, Wapda also won their third consecutive victory against Sindh Greens thanks through their attacking game to win the match by 91-50 points. The last round of pool matches will be played on Friday (Today) while the semi-final round will be held on June 1st.

## Naqvi reacts to Pak vice-captaincy dilemma

ISLAMABAD : The chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Mohsin Naqvi, reacted to the ongoing dilemma of vice-captaincy for the Pakistan cricket team during a media talk on Thursday. Names like Shaheen Afridi, Mohammad Rizwan and Shadab Khan have emerged in the past few days but the PCB is yet to finalise a name. However, Naqvi believed that the need for a deputy is not too great as Babar Azam alone is "more than sufficient" to lead the team. Naqvi was asked about appointing a vice-captain to assist Azam during a dinner held in honour of the team and he responded: "In my opinion, Babar Azam alone is more than sufficient. This team has the best combination and is highly capable." "This is the time to support the team. I urge everyone to stop criticising the team for the next few weeks. This team will win the T20 World Cup for you," Naqvi emphasised during his address and subsequent media interaction. The PCB chief then

## Sabalenka claims commanding straight-set win

PARIS: Aryna Sabalenka underlined her French Open title credentials by completing another commanding straight-set win to reach the third round at Roland Garros. The world number two took just 62 minutes to dismiss Japan's Moyuka Uchijima 6-2 6-2 under the roof on Court Philippe Chatrier. That win followed an opening victory over Erika Andreeva, in which she lost just three games. Sabalenka will now meet former quarter-finalist Paula Badosa, who ended British number one Katie Boulter's tournament, after the Spaniard came back from a set down to beat Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva 4-6 6-1 7-5. Her potential semi-final opponent, fourth seed Elena Rybakina, recovered from 4-2 behind in the second set to also clinch a straight-set win on Thursday. Kazakh Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion, defeated Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands 6-3 6-4 on Court Suzanne Lenglen. Sabalenka, who reached the last four at Roland Garros in 2023, has made at least the semi-finals at each of her past six Grand Slams. The 26-year-old Belarusian combined trademark power with measured drop shots as she produced 27 winners in recording an efficient win over her 83rd-ranked opponent. Having begun the year by successfully defending her Australian Open title, Sabalenka prepared for the French Open by reaching the final in the clay at both the Madrid Open and the Italian Open. On both occasions Sabalenka lost out to world number one Iga Swiatek, who had to save a match point as she overcame Naomi Osaka in a three-set thriller on Wednesday. With rain once again interrupting the French Open schedule, reigning Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova's match against American Katie Volynets was postponed with the Czech a set down but in control of the second at 6-0 1-4. - Agencies

## SC rejects KP's plea...

FROM PAGE 02  
broadcast live, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) incarcerated founder Imran Khan appeared before the court via video link after the former prime minister expressed his wish to present his own arguments in the case. However, the ex-PM's appearance, his first in the apex court since his arrest last year from Zaman Park in Toshakhana reference, didn't go without controversy as the SC administration announced launching an investigation after his image, while appearing before the court, was leaked on social media.

## Kundi meets PM...

FROM PAGE 01  
would lead to an enhanced investment in the country. Talking to media following the meeting, Governor Kundi said that he discussed with the premier the issue of loadshedding of electricity and gas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Pakistan launches...

FROM PAGE 01  
the increasing demand for high-speed internet and seamless connectivity. The agency, in a statement, had said: "This high-power multi-mission satellite will provide communication services in C, Ku, Ka Bands and SBAS services in L Band." Based on advanced communication technologies, PakSat-MM1 will play a pivotal role in the socio-economic uplift of country, Suparco said.

## Iran registers presidential..

FROM PAGE 01  
the Guardian Council, which oversees elections and legislation, will vet the candidates running for the presidency. "The vetting process will be seven days and then qualified candidates will have almost two weeks for the election campaign," Vahidi told state TV.

praised the "immense talent" of the team players. He also urged everyone to stop criticising the team and support them as he is confident they will win the title. "The Pakistani team comprises excellent players with immense talent. I request everyone to cease the criticism. Post-mortem begins after losing just one match, which is not right. The boys are eagerly waiting for the nation's support. I am confident this very team will win the World Cup," Naqvi added. "I have encouraged the players to focus on their game without the pressure of winning or losing. Give your best effort. Winning and losing are in Allah's hands. I see this team going very far in the World Cup," he further added. He also confirmed his plans to attend the final contingent on time as being interior minister of the country despite his tight schedule. "If I get the time, I will go to watch the Pakistan-India match," he concluded.

## Pakistan's T20 World Cup 2024 squad

Babar Azam (c), Saim Ayub, Mohammad Rizwan, Azam Khan, Shadab Khan, Fakhra Zaman, Usman Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Abrar Ahmed, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf.

## Pakistan's T20 World Cup 2024 schedule and timings (PST)

June 6: Pakistan vs USA, Dallas, 8:30pm

June 9: Pakistan vs India, New York, 7:30pm

June 11: Pakistan vs Canada, New York, 7:30pm

June 16: Pakistan vs Ireland, Lauderhill, 7:30pm



## Briefs

## Successful raids against illegal SIM issuance

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Office, Peshawar, in close collaboration with Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Wing, conducted successful raids against a franchisee of a mobile phone company and a gang involved in illegal SIM activations in Mingora, Barikot and Bathkela. The franchisee and a gang were found to be involved in the illegal issuance of SIMs that were also found to be used in grey trafficking and fraudulent activities. During the raids, 33 BVS devices, 6 laptops, 10 mobiles and 600 SIMs were seized as evidence. Ten persons were apprehended on the premises by FIA, which is currently investigating the matter further. PTA had filed complaints with FIA earlier based on information regarding illegal issuance of SIMs by the sales channel. The raids signify the Authority's dedication to eradicate the illegal issuance of SIMs.—APP

## IMF program could suffer from low investment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Thursday that it is sad that the investment ratio in the country has come to the lowest level in fifty years. He said the lack of investment could affect the availability of a new IMF program, which would be unfortunate. He added that some irresponsible politicians are bent on pushing the country into crisis, which will also cost them their supporters. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that economic stability has come to the country due to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's efforts. However, political stability has not come, which has caused investors to be worried and not ready to invest in Pakistan. The Prime Minister is trying hard to attract investment in the country, and Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have assured him of fifteen billion dollars of investment. However, the prices of electricity and gas, the highest policy rate, and political instability are hampering the PM's plans. At the same time, some politicians are not ready to play a serious and positive role and are fanning instability. Mian Zahid Hussain said that according to the latest data, the ratio of investment in Pakistan has reached the lowest level in the last fifty years. During the current financial year, it remained at 13.1 percent of the GDP, which is less than the target of 15.1. Apart from this, there has been a significant decrease in the ratio of public and private sector investment to GDP. This rate has come to the lowest level in 25 years. The business leader said a year has passed since establishing the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). However, the expected investment has not come into the country, nor has there been any significant progress in privatization. If electricity, gas, and failed government companies are immediately privatized, the country could save eight billion dollars annually. He observed that this will bring prosperity to the country and achieve political stability, which will also make internal and external investment possible. He said economic development will also be possible if policymakers become serious about reforms, which will relieve the government and the people and increase the satisfaction level of international institutions. Mian Zahid Hussain said establishing SIFC with top civilian and military leaders in control was the need of the hour. The main objectives of SIFC were identifying investment opportunities, providing a favorable environment for investors, removing obstacles, and promoting investment from foreign and domestic sources.—APP

## Sisi calls to ensure Gazans not 'forcibly displaced'

Egyptian President Sisi said that there was "no pathway to peace and stability in the region" without a "comprehensive approach to the Palestinian cause"

NEWS DESK

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Thursday urged the international community to ensure Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are not displaced from their war-ravaged territory. "I... call on the international community to immediately provide for

## UN warns of growing Gaza rubbish impact

WASHINGTON: Growing piles of rubbish in Gaza mean that families are fleeing to areas that do not have "acceptable living conditions," according to the UN. "Everywhere you look there is a pile of trash," the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) posted on its X account alongside pictures of rubbish in Deir al-Balah by the Mediterranean coast. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said overnight that around 1 million refugees from the city of Rafah were living in miserable sanitary conditions. The war, which has been going on for almost eight months, has massively worsened the living conditions of the approximately 2.2 million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip. According to aid organizations, around 1.7 million people have had to leave their homes. Even prior to the war there were only two central waste disposal sites in Gaza to deal with around 1,700 tons of waste per day. The UN has warned of serious health effects of the waste crisis on the people in the Gaza Strip. There is also a threat of contamination of agricultural soils and groundwater. Rising temperatures in the region could further exacerbate the situation. The Gaza war was triggered by the unprecedented massacre of more than 1,200 people by militants from the Palestinian Islamist Hamas group and other militants in Israel on October 7. According to the health authorities controlled by Hamas in Gaza, more than 36,100 Palestinians have so far been killed in the war.—DNA

long-term humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip and to end the Israeli siege," Sisi told a forum of Arab leaders and Chinese officials in Beijing. He also urged the international community to "stop any attempt at forcing Palestinians to forcibly flee their land". China is this week hosting Sisi and several other Arab leaders for a forum at which discussions on the war in Gaza were expected. Sisi's comments come after the Israeli army said Wednesday it had gained "operational control" over the strategic Philadelphia corridor along the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. The corridor had served as a buffer zone between Gaza and Egypt, and Israeli troops patrolled it until 2005, when they were withdrawn as part of a broader disengagement from the Gaza Strip. Its seizure comes weeks after Israeli forces took control of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt on May 7 as their ground assault on the far-southern Gaza city began. Sisi on Thursday said there was "no pathway to peace and stability in the region" without a "comprehensive approach to the Palestinian cause". He called for a "serious and immediate commitment to the two-state solution and a recognition of the Palestinians' legitimate right to an independent state". The Gaza war was sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,189 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures. Militants also took 252 hostages, 121 of whom remain in Gaza, including 37 the army says are dead. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 36,171 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

## Doctor: Death in Israeli prisons easier than torture

GAZA: A Palestinian doctor, Mustafa Jawad Siyam, who was detained in an Israeli prison, stated that he was subjected to physical and psychological torture during the Israeli army's occupation of Gaza's Shifa Hospital in March. The Palestinian doctor spoke to Anadolu about the 54 days of torture he endured in an Israeli prison, saying: "Death in Israeli prisons was easier than torture." Looking weak and fatigued, Siyam said he did not expect to be put on the list of detainees and face unfounded accusations. In early April, the Israeli army launched intense attacks on Shifa Hospital for two weeks. Following the attacks, Israeli soldiers withdrew from the hospital, detaining Palestinians, including doctors, and leaving behind widespread destruction, numerous casualties, and mass graves. Psychological and physical torture During detention, Siyam recounted he faced not only food and water shortages, sleep deprivation, and extremely poor detention conditions, but also psychological and physical torture. Since his release on May 10, Siyam has been undergoing intensive treatment at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah due to the severe torture he endured during his detention. Stating that he was detained by Israeli soldiers while working at the hospital, Siyam said everyone, including the elderly, was detained alongside him. He said: "We were subjected to investigation and physical and psychological torture.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, called on Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

## Senegal's Faye visits military-ruled Mali, Burkina

DAKAR: Senegal's new President Bassirou Diomaye Faye on Thursday began his first visit to Mali and Burkina Faso to strengthen ties with these two states which have quit regional bloc ECOWAS in January, the trio announced they were quitting The Economic Community of West African States, which they said was under French influence, to create their own regional grouping — the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). Faye landed in the Malian capital on Thursday and headed to the presidential palace where he is due to hold talks with junta head Colonel Assimi Goita, a Malian presidential source said. "These visits are part of a drive to strengthen the historic ties of good neighbourliness, fraternal friendship, solidarity and multifaceted cooperation," the Senegalese presidency said in a statement. Faye has made several trips across West Africa since being sworn in as the continent's youngest elected president in early April. Thursday's trip marks his tenth visit to an African state since assuming the presidency. The choice of destinations within the continent "speaks volumes about the importance of strengthening pan-Africanism and reinvigorating sub-regional integration in his diplomatic priorities," a Senegalese government statement said.—APP

## Gunmen murder Rohingya teacher, student in BD

COX BAZAR: Gunmen in Bangladesh have killed a teacher and a student in a Rohingya refugee camp for refusing to return to Myanmar to fight, their parents said Thursday. Hundreds of Rohingya boys and young men have been seized from refugee camps in Bangladesh, where they had sought safety after Myanmar's military drove about 750,000 members of the persecuted Muslim minority out of the country in 2017. Now Rohingya militants working with the Myanmar junta are recruiting the refugees, according to camp residents, UN reports and analysts. The militants say their fellow Rohingyas need to ally with Myanmar's army — the same forces who drove them into exile — to face a common enemy in another Myanmar rebel force, the Arakan Army (AA). Police said the two men, student Nur Absar, 21, and teacher Nur Faisal, 21, were killed by "unknown assailants" in Kutupalong camp in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district. "One died on the spot, another died in hospital," said Arefin Jewel, a police spokesman in Kutupalong. "We are investigating whether it is a case of forced recruitment.—APP

## UN Chief calls for global AI coordination

GENEVA: Global coordination is a must to not only build "safe and inclusive" artificial intelligence (AI) but also to make it accessible for all, the UN secretary-general said on Thursday. In a video message to the opening day of the AI for Good Global Summit in Geneva, Antonio Guterres said that AI is changing the world and lives and it can "turbocharge" sustainable development goals (SDGs). "AI could be a game-changer for the SDGs. But transforming its potential into reality requires AI that reduces bias, misinformation and security threats — instead of aggravating them," he stressed. It also requires assisting developing countries in harnessing AI for themselves, he said, adding that this would include connecting the unconnected, building capacity in computing power, data, and governance, and creating incentives for AI developers and deployers to share the benefits locally. "We need global coordination to build safe and inclusive AI that is accessible to all," he said. Guterres recalled recommendations of his advisory board on artificial intelligence, which include an international scientific panel on AI that will conduct independent risk and opportunity assessments, a "structured" dialogue connecting governance initiatives and harmonizing standards across borders and sectors, and the "big effort" on capacity building with funding to meet the scale of the challenge. Noting that the Summit of the Future in late September will see agreement on a global digital compact — an opportunity to lay the foundations of global AI governance, he said: "I count on you to help build momentum around these ambitious solutions." "Together, we can harness AI to help achieve the sustainable development goals and leave no one behind," he concluded. One-third of humanity remains completely offline Doreen Bogdan-Martin, secretary-general of the summit organizer International Telecommunication Union (ITU), addressed the gaps to bring all countries.—DNA

## China could arrange Russia-Ukraine peace conference

Russian FM Lavrov further criticized the US for supporting Ukraine, accusing Washington of being complicit in Kiev's actions

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says China could arrange a Russia-Ukraine peace conference, as Switzerland plans to host a high-level conference in mid-June at the request of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Lavrov said in an interview with RIA news agency on Thursday that China could arrange the Russia-Ukraine peace conference, as part of Beijing's initiatives to resolve the Ukrainian crisis. "We share (China's) position that the root causes of the conflict need to be addressed in the first place and legal interests of all parties need to be protected, with subsequent agreements based on the principle of equal and indivisible security," Lav-

rov said. "Let me underscore again, this entails respecting realities on the ground, which reflect the will of people living there," he added. Moscow insists on talks with a precondition that Kiev and the Western countries recognize its territorial gains in Ukraine. However, Kiev has firmly declined such propositions. Lavrov further criticized the United States for supporting Ukraine, accusing Washington of being complicit in Kiev's actions. This comes as Kiev is preparing for talks hosted by Switzerland next month purportedly aimed at unifying international opinion on how to end the war. Zelensky, who has proposed the summit, has said Putin should not attend the talks. Ukraine and Switzerland are pushing for the partic-

ipation of Russian allies, such as China, but Moscow has dismissed the talks as lacking credibility without its presence. The presidents of Russia and China have agreed to deepen their 'strategic partnership', scolding the US for posing threats against their countries. In his remarks, Lavrov also accused the US policy in West Asia, saying it is "fanning the flames of conflict" in the region. In mid-May, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping agreed to further deepen their "strategic partnership," rebuking the US for posing threats to their countries. China, a major market for the Russian military, and Russia have significantly strengthened their economic cooperation and diplomatic ties in recent years, with their strate-

gic partnership growing even closer following the Ukraine conflict. The US and its Western allies have been providing huge military and financial support to Kiev since the start of Russia's "special military operation" in eastern Ukraine in February 2022. Recently, Putin has warned that NATO members in Europe are playing with fire by proposing to allow Ukraine to use Western weapons to strike deep inside Russia. Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov said on Monday that Ukraine will receive US-made F-16 fighter jets "very soon" but some half of its desperately needed foreign military aid is arriving late. The country has for months been repeatedly asking the West to provide it with more military hardware, long-range missiles and advanced warplanes.

## HC highlights Malaysia-Pakistan ties

Amb. Dato' Azhar highlighted the robust Malaysia-Pakistan bilateral relations, focusing on trade and economic cooperation, tourism, and the vital people-to-people connections that bind the two nations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: His Excellency Amb. Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan delivered a lecture at Quaid-e-Azam University, one of the premier universities in Pakistan. Upon arrival, Amb. Dato' Azhar and his delegation were warmly received by Professor Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, lecturers, and staff. During the insightful session, Amb. Dato' Azhar highlighted the robust Malaysia-Pakistan bilateral relations, focusing on trade and economic cooperation, tourism, and the vital people-to-people connections that bind the two nations. He elaborated on how these elements have strengthened the strategic partnership, fostering mutual growth and understanding. The session was attended by academicians, staff, and about 120 students from the international relations discipline. The presentation also



covered various aspects, focusing on Malaysia's foreign policies, emphasising its role within ASEAN, and Malaysia's commitment to regional stability and development, among others. Additionally, Amb. Dato' Azhar highlighted the

Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCPP), which plays a crucial role in capacity building and development cooperation between Malaysia and Pakistan. A significant portion of the lecture was dedicated to promoting edu-

cational opportunities in Malaysia for Pakistani students. Amb. Dato' Azhar stressed that Malaysia offers a conducive environment for students, with state-of-the-art facilities and globally recognised education standards, all within

a Muslim-friendly setting. He proudly noted that, as of 2024, nearly 5,000 Pakistani students are pursuing their studies in various higher education institutions across Malaysia. His Excellency's lecture not only provided valuable insights into the dynamic relations between Malaysia and Pakistan but also inspired students to consider Malaysia as a destination for higher education. The event concluded with a lively Question-and-Answer session, where students had the opportunity to engage directly with the High Commissioner, with questions on Palestine-Israel war, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Jammu & Kashmir and neutrality between superpowers were posed by the students, further enriching their understanding of the topics discussed. Following the lecture, attendees had an opportunity to indulge in the rich flavours of Malaysian cuisine as they were served with Nasi Lemak & Ayam Goreng (coconut rice and fried chicken), a popular Malaysian delicacy, symbolising the culture exchange.

## Floating walkways a lifeline for Brazilians after floods

MARQUES DE SOUZA: To get to his doctor's appointment, Paulo Roberto Heinicke limps across a floating walkway — the only access to a neighboring town after floods in southern Brazil washed away multiple bridges one month ago. "Everything is more difficult now, but we must keep going," said the 54-year-old father-of-three, his calf bandaged after a recent operation. Brazil's army has temporarily installed five pontoon bridges in the Taquari Valley, an agricultural region that is one of the worst affected by historic floods that have left nearly 170 dead and dozens missing. The narrow walkways balancing on canoe-shaped floats are typically used by the military in times of conflict after the bombing of bridges. At least six bridges were washed away by floodwaters in the region, preventing residents from crossing between towns by car to go to work, school, or a medical appointment.—APP



## Briefs

### Khamenei hosts Syria's Assad in Tehran

TEHRAN: Syrian President Bashar Assad met Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a close ally, in Tehran on Thursday to offer condolences for the death of President Ebrahim Raisi, Iran's Student News Network (SNN) reported. Raisi died when his helicopter crashed on May 19 near the Azerbaijan border. Khamenei and Assad met last in 2022 in Tehran, during which both sides called for stronger relations. On Thursday, Assad and Khamenei said ties were strong, according to a statement by the Syrian presidency. Assad was able to turn the tide of Syria's civil war, which erupted from mass pro-democracy demonstrations in 2011, with crucial help from Iran's proxy militias and Russia's military intervention in 2015.

Israel, whose existence is not recognized by the Islamic Republic, has mounted frequent attacks on what it has described as Iranian targets in Syria, where Tehran-backed forces including Lebanon's Hezbollah militia have deployed over the past decade to support Assad in Syria's war. - Agencies

### Yemen to step up anti-Israeli ops

SANAA: Ansarullah leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi says Yemeni forces will continue their military operations and escalate them "in quality and quantity" in support of Palestinians in Israel's war on Gaza. Yemeni forces have been targeting ships bound for Israeli ports and others linked to the occupying regime in the Red Sea region since November. They later expanded the scope of their operations to the Indian Ocean and said they would also target any ships heading towards Israeli ports in the Mediterranean Sea. In a televised address on Thursday, al-Houthi said 129 ships have been targeted since the start of the operations "which is a large number". "There is no decline in the level of our operations, but a reduction in the movement of American and British ships to Occupied Palestine," he said, dismissing some claims that Yemen has tamped down its attacks. This week, Yemeni forces have carried out 12 operations in the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, Houthi said. "The operation continues in the framework of the fourth phase and will increase in terms of quantity and quality." - Agencies

### Court acquits Imran Khan in two cases

**COURT REPORTER**  
ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court of Islamabad on Thursday acquitted Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in two cases related to the May 9 riots. The petition challenging the two cases lodged at Shehzad Town police station against the PTI founder was approved by Judicial Magistrate Umar Shabbir. "Because of insufficient evidence presented by the prosecution, the PTI founder has been acquitted," the district and sessions court said in its verdict. Earlier, Khan was acquitted in two cases pertaining to May 9 vandalism on May 15. His acquittal orders were issued by Judicial Magistrate Sahib Bilal, who approved the former prime minister's plea challenging the cases. Both those cases against Khan were filed in Khanna Police Station in Islamabad. His acquittal plea was approved by court because of insufficient evidence in the cases against him. The cases were registered against the PTI founder for long march and violation of Article 144. Khan, who remains behind the bars in Adiala jail, and several others including some PTI leaders are facing various allegations in the cases related to the violence following his arrest on May 9.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

### PTI rejects FIR against legal team

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PTI Spokesperson strongly rejected registration of false, concocted and baseless case against members its legal team including Naem Haider Panjutha, Ali Ajaz Butter, Usman Riaz Gill, and Mirza Asim Baig along others. PTI spokesperson also vehemently condemned the inclusion of sections related to terrorism in the false case against the legal team members. He demanded that the court should take immediate action against the perpetrators of this heinous conspiracy and bring the culprits to justice. PTI Spokesperson miscreants, who registered this absurd Iddat case against PTI Founding Chairman Imran Khan and his wife, were making mockery of the law through the state machinery. He stated that the vile plan of those flooding the court with filth through a shameless, unethical, and characterless puppet was foiled the other day. PTI Spokesperson pointed out that at the behest of the criminal government, its goons were deployed around the court to incite trouble, and failing in that, they resorted to file this disgraceful and nonsensical case against PTI legal team members.

### Manmohan Singh exposes Modi regime

NEW DELHI: Former prime minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh, 91, appealed to Punjab voters before voting Saturday in the final phase of the 2024 Lok Sabha election - to make the most of a "final chance to ensure our democracy and Constitution are protected from repeated assaults by a despotic regime". In a three-page open letter, the veteran Congress leader lamented the "unimaginable turmoil" in the Indian economy over the past decade - the two terms of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP. He said the Modi government left no stone unturned in castigating Punjab. Dr Singh - who was Finance Minister when Indian economy was liberalised in 1991. "The imposition of the demonetisation disaster, a flawed GST (goods and service tax), and the painful mismanagement during the COVID pandemic has resulted in a miserable situation, where an expectation of subpar six to seven percent GDP growth has become the new normal. - Agencies

## China's Xi calls for Middle East peace conference

He called on Arab states to deepen cooperation in areas such as trade, clean energy, space exploration and health care

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping called for an international peace conference focused on the Israel-Hamas war and promised more humanitarian aid as he opened a summit with leaders of Arab states Thursday in Beijing. "As war is raging causing tremendous suffering, justice can't be absent and the two-state solution can't be shaken," Xi said in a speech opening the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. He called on Arab states to deepen cooperation in areas such as trade, clean energy, space exploration and health care. The summit attended by heads of state from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Tunisia among others was set to focus on China's expanding trade ties and on security concerns related to the Israel-Hamas war. Beijing and the Arab states back the Palestinians in the conflict, where Israel is facing growing international condemnation after the strike in the southern Gaza city of Rafah in which at least 45 were killed over the weekend. The overall Palestinian death toll in the war exceeds 36,000, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Beijing has long backed the Palestinians and denounced Israel over its settlements in the occupied territories. It has not criticized the initial Hamas attack on Oct. 7 - which killed about 1,200 people - while the United States and others have called it an act of terrorism. However, China does have growing economic ties with Israel. "China's priorities in the region are primarily economic," said Maria Papageorgiou, a lecturer in politics and international relations at University of Exeter. "It wants to continue the momentum established in recent years with Gulf states and expand its investments, particularly in trade, technology (5G networks), and other cyber initiatives." Additionally, China wants to present itself as an alternative to the West and a more credible partner to the region, one that doesn't interfere in the nations' domestic affairs nor exert pressure, Papageorgiou said. Present at the forum is Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, who met Xi on Wednesday. The two leaders signed a series of cooperation agreements in areas such as infrastructure, technology and food imports meant to further their countries' ties. China has invested billions of dollars in Egyptian state projects, including a Suez Canal economic zone and a new administrative capital east of Cairo. Investments between Egypt and China amounted to around \$14 billion in 2023, compared to \$16.6 billion in 2022, according to Egypt's statistics agency. Also at the forum are Tunisia's President Kais Saied, Emirati President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Bahrain King Hamad. The China-Arab States Cooperation Forum was established in 2004 as a formal dialogue mechanism between China and Arab states. China is Tunisia's fourth-largest trading partner after Germany, Italy and France. Beijing has financed hospitals and sports complexes in Tunisia, and its companies have been contracted to build strategic infrastructure such as bridges and deep-water Mediterranean ports.

### Rafah battles intensify as Israel takes over border strip

Slovenia government recognises Palestinian state, but needs parliamentary approval

FOREIGN DESK

RAFAH:Rafah residents have reported intense artillery shelling and gunfire in Gaza's far-southern city after Israel said it had seized a strategic corridor on the Palestinian territory's border with Egypt. The Israeli military launched its incursion into Rafah in early May despite international objections over the fate of Palestinian civilians sheltering there. A strike over the weekend that started a fire and killed dozens in a displacement camp drew a wave of new condemnation, including a social media campaign with the slogan "All eyes on Rafah" that has been shared by tens of millions of users. Israel said on Wednesday its forces had taken over the 14-kilometre (8.5-mile) Philadelphia corridor on the Gaza-Egypt border, which it suspects was used for weapons smuggling. Military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari announced Is-

rael had taken "operational control" of the narrow border area, where he said troops had "discovered around 20 tunnels". Egypt, a longtime mediator in the conflict that has become increasingly vocal in its criticism of the Israeli operation, has rejected claims of smuggling tunnels running beneath the buffer zone. "Israel is using these allegations to justify continuing the operation on the Palestinian city of Rafah and prolonging the war for political purposes," a high-level Egyptian source was quoted as saying by state-linked Al-Qahera News. Egyptian officials have said a potential Israeli takeover of Philadelphia could violate the two countries' landmark 1979 peace deal, though there has been no official comment from Cairo since the military's announcement. An AFP correspondent reported artillery and gunfire in the Gaza City neighbourhood of Zeitoun, in the territory's north, where witnesses saw thick plumes of smoke rising over Jabalia refugee camp and Beit Lahiya. A steady stream of civilians have fled Rafah, transporting their belongings on their shoulders, in cars or on donkey-drawn carts. Before the Rafah offensive began, UN said up to 1.4 million people were sheltering there.

### Hong Kong convicts 14 activists of subversion

Ms Chan is now the chairperson of the League of Social Democrats, one of the very few pro-democracy political groups that still exist in Hong Kong

WEB DESK

HONG KONG: Hong Kong has found 14 pro-democracy activists guilty of subversion in the largest use yet of a China-imposed National Security Law. They included former lawmakers Leung Kwok-hung and Helena Wong, journalist-turned-campaigner Gwyneth Ho, and ordinary Hong Kongers who joined the mass protests of 2019 such as nurse Winnie Yu. They were among the 47 activists charged with trying to "overthrow" the government by organising an unofficial primary in 2020 to pick candidates who can run for office. They would have "[created] a constitutional crisis for Hong Kong" if they had indeed been elected to the legislature, the court ruled on Thursday. Rights groups and several Western countries have con-

demned the verdict, repeating concerns that the prosecutions were "politically motivated". "The conviction... marks a further deterioration of fundamental freedoms and democratic participation in Hong Kong," said EU foreign affairs spokeswoman, Nabila Massrali. Outside the court house, Vanessa Chan, the wife of Leung Kwok-hung, was arrested along with three other activists for trying to stage a protest, according to police sources. Ms Chan is now the chairperson of the League of Social Democrats, one of the very few pro-democracy political groups that still exist in Hong Kong. An official said they had been engaged in "disorderly conduct". Australia had "expressed our strong objections to the Hong Kong authorities on the continuing broad application of national security legislation to arrest and pressure pro-democracy figures, opposition groups, media, trade unions and civil society," Foreign Minister Penny Wong said. One of the convicted campaigners Gordon Ng is an Australian citizen. On Thursday, three High Court judges Andrew Chan, Alex Lee, and Johnny Chan agreed with the prosecutors' argument that had the pro-democracy candidates been elected they would have tried to "veto or refuse to pass any budgets" introduced by the Hong Kong government. This and other actions, the court said, would have led to "serious interfering in, disrupting or undermining the performance of duties and functions in accordance with the law by the (Hong Kong) government".

## NATO debating whether to let Ukraine strike inside Russia

KIEV: Member states of the US-led NATO may decide to let Ukraine strike inside Russia with Western-donated arms, as Kiev is begging for long-range missiles from its Western allies. NATO foreign ministers on Thursday gathered in the Czech capital of Prague primarily to hammer out a package of support for the ex-Soviet republic at the military alliance's summit in the United States in July. However, the two-day Prague meeting is haunted by the tough question of whether to remove restrictions stopping Kiev from using Western weapons, notably long-range missiles, to strike inside Russia, as calls are growing to allow Ukraine to hit Russia to hamper Moscow's advances. Kiev has been begging its Western backers - the US in particular - to gain permission to use the longer-range weaponry it has been supplied by Washington and its allies to strike targets inside Russia. The Western alliance, however, has so far been reluctant to grant such permission out of fear of retaliation from Moscow, anticipating that such escalations could drag NATO member states closer to direct conflict with the Russian Federation. The US and Germany have so far opposed striking over the border, but NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg has time and again said that it was time for members to reconsider those limits, arguing that such restrictions hamper Ukraine's ability to purportedly defend itself. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has hinted that the

restrictions strategy could change. On Tuesday, French President Emmanuel Macron also said Ukraine should be allowed to "neutralize" bases in Russia used to launch strikes. Russian President Vladimir Putin has already strongly warned against such a move by NATO, stressing that there would be "serious consequences" if Western countries give approval to Ukraine. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has repeatedly asked the West, particularly the US, for long-range missiles and advanced fighter jets to challenge Russia's air superiority and compensate for failures on the ground. "They can fire any weapons from their territory at ours. This is the biggest advantage that Russia has. We can't do anything to their systems, which are located on the territory of Russia, with Western weapons," he said earlier this month. Since late last year, Russia has been making gradual advances and has seen larger gains along the northeastern border in an operation that began on May 10 in the Kharkiv region. Suffering from manpower shortages, Kiev has just passed a mobilization law to boost the forces' morale, according to a rare acknowledgment from Zelensky, as Ukrainian fighters are increasingly exhausted and angry at the lack of rotation. Russia has repeatedly warned that the conflict in Ukraine could be prolonged due to the support of Western countries, on top of them the US, for Kiev. - Agencies

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