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EU envoy stresses women's role in sustainable future

Detailed News On Page-08

Arif Alvi calls for inquiry into May 9

Detailed News On Page-08



Mbappe's farewell dream crushed after PSG's exit

Detailed News On Page-06



Amid investment push Pakistan desires to enhance ties with Uzbekistan

Pak-Uzbekistan to start work on trade corridor with Afghanistan: Uzbek Minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov, currently on a two-day visit to Pakistan, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif today. Congratulating the Prime Minister on his reelection, the Uzbek Foreign Minister also conveyed the invitation of President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev for Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to undertake an official visit to Uzbekistan at his earliest convenience. The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev and said that he was looking forward to meeting him. The two sides discussed enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan in the fields of trade and economy, security and defense, connectivity and people to people contacts. The importance of peace and development in Afghanistan for regional connectivity was also discussed. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif expressed Pakistan's commitment to working with Uzbekistan to speed up and complete all bilateral trade and connectivity projects. He reaffirmed Pakistan's readiness to provide assistance to Uzbekistan to Pakistani Ports. He also emphasized the importance of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project and Pakistan's commitment to its early completion. Meanwhile, Uzbek Deputy Minister for Transport and Aviation, Jasurbek Choriev has said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have decided to start work on the trilateral trade corridor with Afghanistan, which is of great importance in regional economic integration. Including Afghanistan, all three parties are willing to complete this trade corridor and its completion will increase regional trade and boost economic activities in the regional countries, Jasurbek Choriev said this at the

Ahsan reaffirms commitment to CPEC development

DNA

BEIJING: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the high-quality development of CPEC in priority sectors like Information Technology, agriculture modernization, textile, minerals and renewable energy. He was talking to Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Mr. Sun Weidong in Beijing. Discussions also include a review of successful culmination of the first decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the progress achieved in its second decade, especially on the five corridors, namely growth, livelihood, openness, inclusivity and innovation. Both sides also discussed early implementation of ML-1, KKH realignment and other key infrastructure projects in Pakistan. As part of efforts to promote people to people linkages, the two sides agreed to further enhance visa facilitation for each other's citizens, which was also highlighted as central to strengthen Business to Business cooperation. Later, Ahsan Iqbal also met with leadership of Chinese financial institutions, especially President of China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Bakhtiyor Saidov called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

6 terrorists killed in KP operations

Weapons, ammunition & explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: On 8 May 2024, six terrorists were sent to hell by security forces in two separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. An intelligence based operation was conducted in Dera Ismail Khan District on reported presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, five terrorists were successfully neutralized by the security forces and sent to hell. In another fire exchange in

Continued on Page 06

Qatari FM to visit Pak today

Minister of State will call on PM Shehbaz and FM Ishaq Dar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi will visit Pakistan on 9 May 2024, as a special envoy of the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulnahan bin Jassim Al Thani. In Islamabad, the Minister of State will call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and on Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, Muhammad Ishaq Dar. Pakistan and Qatar have longstanding and multifaceted bilateral relations characterized by high-level exchanges and visits.

'Ready to face inquiry' Imran to DG ISPR, 'If you don't want to talk, then don't'

'I should be apologised to, I don't owe apology to anyone', Imran on DG ISPR call

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan has turned down the military's demand to apologise for the May 9 events and distanced his party from the violent protests that broke out in the country last year soon after his arrest. "Why should I tender apology, it should be sought from me," the deposed prime minister said during an informal conversation with journalists in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail on Wednesday where he has been incarcerated since August last year after he was booked in a number of cases ranging from corruption to violating Official Secrets Act. The PTI founder was responding to a question related to Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Tuesday's press conference wherein he demanded "those

Continued on Page 06

Larger benches formed to hear contempt cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday constituted two larger benches to hear contempt of court cases on "malicious campaigns" against Justice Babar Aftab and Justice Akhtar Mohsin Kayani. According to the cause list issued by the court, IHC Chief Justice Anwar Farooq will head the one bench which also comprises Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir. The other larger bench

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

IHC orders transfer of Bushra Bibi to Adiala

IHC declares notification declaring Bani Gala as a sub-jail "null and void"

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) announced on Wednesday ordered the transfer of former prime minister Imran Khan's spouse, Bushra Bibi, from the Bani Gala sub-jail to the Adiala jail. IHC Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb announced the reserved verdict on the petition filed by Bushra Bibi seeking her transfer to the Adiala jail - where her husband is currently incarcerated. On May 2, the high court had reserved the verdict after hearing the arguments.

Nepa approves hike in electricity tariff

Price hike to be charged from discos' consumers

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: NEPRA has jacked up the power tariff by Rs2.83 per unit for the month of March 2024, on account of monthly fuel adjustment, increasing the burden on inflation-hit consumers. An official notification for the price hike stated that the tariff has been jacked up on account of fuel charges adjustment, which will be reflected in the bills issued in May. It stated that the said adjustment of Rs2.83728 kWh will be applicable to all the consumer categories except EVCS and lifeline consumers.

May 9 black day in history

Tarar denounces conspiracy against national defense

He said irrefutable evidence is available against the perpetrators involved in May 9 incidents and the courts should expedite cases against them

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attalullah Tarar has said the nation will neither forget the perpetrators of the 9th May incidents nor allow the repetition of such criminal acts against the country. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad this evening, he said May 9 will be remembered as a black day in the history of Pakistan when a chameleon political gang hatched a conspiracy and attacked Pakistan's integrity, security and development. He said irrefutable evidence is available against the perpetrators involved in May 9 incidents and the courts should expedite cases against them. "The police are showing maximum patience and restraint," he said, adding that the police only used tear gas after lawyers pelted stones at them. "One of our SHO and one constable has been injured," he said. The DIG Operations said there are at least 2,600 personnel for the security of the high court. DIG Operations Painsal has also reached the GPO Chowk for negotiations with the lawyers.

Continued on Page 06

Martial law supporters should apologize first, then May 9th: Achakzai

PTI's loyalty with country doesn't require a certificate: Gohar

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Mahmood Khan Achakzai, head of the Opposition Alliance for Protection of the Constitution of Pakistan and the Pashtun Khwaja Milli-Awami Party, has said that those who imposed martial law should apologize first, then I will also ask the people of May 9 to apologize. Mehmoood Khan

Continued on Page 06

Lahore witnesses unruly scenes as lawyers hold protest demos

Law Minister Tarar talks to Punjab Chief Minister; lawyers staged protest against division of civil courts and terrorism cases against their colleagues

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Police arrested several lawyers as their protest at the GPO Chowk near Lahore High Court intensified on Wednesday. The lawyers are demonstrating against the division of civil courts and terrorism cases against their colleagues. The Lahore High Court Bar Association has denied conducting negotiations with the police. On the other hand, lawyers have kicked out petitioners from the courtroom of Justice Anwar-ul-Haq Nkema. Speaking with Geo News, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations Faisal Kamran said the police will continue to show restraint, but will take action according to the law if there is a violation from the lawyers. "The police are showing maximum patience and restraint," he said, adding that the police only used tear gas after lawyers pelted stones at them. "One of our SHO and one constable has been injured," he said. The DIG Operations said there are at least 2,600 personnel for the security of the high court. DIG Operations Painsal has also reached the GPO Chowk for negotiations with the lawyers.

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Practice and Procedures Act against constitution: Justice Shaheed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Justice Shahid Waheed of the Supreme Court on Wednesday while releasing a dissenting note said the Practice and Procedures Act was against the constitution. In the dissenting note, Justice Waheed wrote, "If permission is granted to take help of Article 191 of the Constitution, it will cause interference in court affairs through promulgation of ordinances." He said judiciary's powers could only be increased through an amendment to the constitution. "By simple legislation, powers of the judiciary cannot be enhanced," he said. He said the judges committee would be able to make its rules according to

Continued on Page 06

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**PAC issues
sanctions in
Russia case**

By Staff

WASHINGTON, May 8 (AP) — The U.S. Treasury Department on Monday announced sanctions against a group of Russian officials and entities, including a prominent Russian politician, in response to the country's invasion of Ukraine. The sanctions target individuals and organizations involved in the Russian government's efforts to circumvent international financial restrictions. The Treasury Department said the sanctions are part of a broader strategy to isolate Russia from the global financial system. The targeted individuals include high-ranking officials from the Russian Ministry of Defense and other government agencies. The Treasury Department also announced sanctions against several Russian banks and financial institutions. The sanctions are expected to have a significant impact on the Russian economy and its ability to conduct international trade.

**Wheat
procurement
tender APWS
launched in KP**

By Staff

ISLAMABAD, May 8 (AP) — The Punjab Agricultural Marketing Board (PAMBS) has launched a tender for the procurement of wheat in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. The tender is part of the government's efforts to ensure a steady supply of wheat for the province's population. The PAMBS said the tender is open to all registered wheat growers in the KP province. The government has allocated a budget of Rs. 100 million for the procurement of wheat in the KP province. The tender is expected to be completed by the end of the month. The government has also announced plans to launch similar tenders in other provinces in the near future.

**U.S. issues
sanctions on
Russia**

WASHINGTON, May 8 (AP) — The U.S. Treasury Department on Monday announced sanctions against a group of Russian officials and entities, including a prominent Russian politician, in response to the country's invasion of Ukraine. The sanctions target individuals and organizations involved in the Russian government's efforts to circumvent international financial restrictions. The Treasury Department said the sanctions are part of a broader strategy to isolate Russia from the global financial system. The targeted individuals include high-ranking officials from the Russian Ministry of Defense and other government agencies. The Treasury Department also announced sanctions against several Russian banks and financial institutions. The sanctions are expected to have a significant impact on the Russian economy and its ability to conduct international trade.

Newspaper industry issues to be addressed amicably: Tarar

Minister was requested that the regional quota be implemented; ads should be released to APNS members only

ISLAMABAD, May 8 (AP) — Federal Minister for Information and Public Relations, Farooq Tarar, on Monday said the newspaper industry issues should be addressed amicably. He was speaking at a meeting of the National Press Council (NPC) in Islamabad. Tarar said the government is committed to ensuring a fair and competitive market for the newspaper industry. He said the government is currently reviewing the issues raised by the newspaper industry and will take appropriate steps to address them. Tarar also said the government is committed to ensuring that the regional quota is implemented. He said the government is currently reviewing the issues raised by the newspaper industry and will take appropriate steps to address them. Tarar also said the government is committed to ensuring that the regional quota is implemented.



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'IMF 1.1 billion dollars tranche good for Pak economy'

ISLAMABAD, May 8 (AP) — The government on Monday said the 1.1 billion dollar tranche from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a significant boost for the Pakistani economy. The government said the tranche will be used to support various economic development projects and to improve the country's infrastructure. The government also said the tranche will help to reduce the country's foreign debt and improve its credit rating. The government said the tranche is a testament to the confidence of the international community in Pakistan's economic prospects. The government also said it will continue to work closely with the IMF to ensure the successful implementation of the tranche. The government said it will continue to work closely with the IMF to ensure the successful implementation of the tranche.

DC Abbottabad takes initiatives to improve healthcare services

ISLAMABAD, May 8 (AP) — The District Council (DC) of Abbottabad is taking various initiatives to improve healthcare services in the district. The DC has launched a number of health camps and awareness programs to reach the people of the district. The DC has also launched a number of health camps and awareness programs to reach the people of the district. The DC has also launched a number of health camps and awareness programs to reach the people of the district. The DC has also launched a number of health camps and awareness programs to reach the people of the district. The DC has also launched a number of health camps and awareness programs to reach the people of the district.

PAL announces Rs. 5.2m awards

ISLAMABAD, May 8 (AP) — The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has announced awards worth Rs. 5.2 million to recognize the exceptional service of its personnel. The awards are being given to a number of PAF personnel who have shown outstanding performance in their respective fields. The awards are being given to a number of PAF personnel who have shown outstanding performance in their respective fields. The awards are being given to a number of PAF personnel who have shown outstanding performance in their respective fields. The awards are being given to a number of PAF personnel who have shown outstanding performance in their respective fields.

Climate resilient Pak gov't top priority

ISLAMABAD, May 8 (AP) — The government has announced that climate resilience will be a top priority for the Pakistani government. The government said it will take various steps to ensure that the country is prepared for the challenges of climate change. The government said it will take various steps to ensure that the country is prepared for the challenges of climate change. The government said it will take various steps to ensure that the country is prepared for the challenges of climate change. The government said it will take various steps to ensure that the country is prepared for the challenges of climate change.

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ہونے دینا اب دوبارہ نہیں
#9MayNeverAgain

وزارت اطلاعات و تعلقات
دہلی اور پاکستان
9 May 2024

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
- Marrriott.....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

- Ethi Ambulance.....315
- PIA Flight Info.....114
- PIA Cargo.....9280979
- Railway Enquiry.....117
- Railway Exchange.....9270831-5
- WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
- CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

- CMH.....5611111
- MH.....5611116
- Cant Hospital.....9270907-11
- DHQ.....5556311-4
- BGIH.....9290301-7
- Holy Family.....9290322-7
- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218306-09
- Shifa International 4603606

Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Indonesian embassy partners with women universities consortium

—DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad launched the first session of its 4th Online Internship Program (OIP) 2024 in collaboration with Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) in Rawalpindi and All-Pakistan Women Universities Consortium (APWUC) on 7 May 2024 with the theme "Women Empowerment". The OIP has been divided into ten online lecture sessions with the participation of top speakers from Indonesia and will continue until June 6, 2024. The OIP 2024 was officially opened virtually by the Director General of Information and 14 "Now, on the way to 75th Anniversary of Indonesia-Pakistan Diplomatic Relations, it is time to fill this excellent relationship with stronger cooperation in relevant areas of mutual interest. For this reason, the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad has set up priorities for Indonesian diplomacy in Pakistan, including the economy and people-to-people contacts. And APWU is one of the right partners for the Embassy," he said. On this occasion, Prof. Dr. Uzaira Rafique, Vice Chancellor of Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) and chairperson of the All-Pakistan Women Universities Consortium (APWUC) in her remarks said that APWUC campuses are a free place for Pakistani female students to actualize their potentials.

"I invite all participants to seriously pay attention to the sessions to improve understanding



on the dynamics of Indonesia and note various elements that are relevant for Pakistan. Hopefully in the future, we can visit Indonesia to see more about Indonesia's progress," she remarked. The first session started with the lecture of Ms. Chusnul Marifah, Ph.D. from the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Indonesia on "Indonesian Poli-

tics : Between Islam and Nationalism." She highlighted the trends of oligarchy, nepotism, and abandoning merit system in political recruitment in Indonesian domestic politics. She also stressed that democracy cannot be taken for granted, but it must be continuously pursued at all times. "Elections with integrity are very important. (To cam-

pan for it) we need the catchy terms, such as halal politics or halal elections". Addressing hundreds of female students from women universities in Pakistan, Ms. Marifah explained in detail on how to achieve certain position through halal ways. The current OIP is more special this time since the Indonesian Embassy is collaborating with the consortium of 18

women universities throughout Pakistan. To further strengthen friendly relations between the young generation of the two countries, the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad also showcased the Indonesian medley dances created by the Indonesian students at the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) along with the dancing performances of FJWU students. The other speakers of OIP include Prof. Dian Masitika, Ph.D. from the Indonesian International Islamic University (IIUI), Ms. Angela Tanoscedjaja, Vice Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, and Fourth Indonesian President's daughters, Mrs. Alissa Wahid and Ms. Yenny Wahid, the activists of democracy, pluralism, and religious moderation.

Algerian envoy visits RCCI, urges to promote bilateral trade ties

—DNA

RAWALPINDI: Dr. Brahim Rouani, Ambassador of Algeria in Pakistan has said that his country has been keen to promote trade and economic ties with Pakistan. The Algerian envoy stated this during a meeting with the Rawalpindi business community at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI).

Pakistan and Algeria have a bilateral trade agreement that was signed in February 2023. The two coun-

tries have seen an annual increase in exports from 1995 to 2022, with Pakistan exporting \$2.27 million in 1995 and \$11.8 million in 2022, and Algeria exporting \$115,000 in 2000 and \$66.6 million in 2022, he added. On the occasion, President RCCI Saqib Rafiq gave a summary and briefed the ambassador on the ongoing activities of the Chamber. He said that there are great opportunities to promote bilateral trade between Pakistan and Algeria in various sectors including energy, pharm-

aceutical and textile etc. Saqib Rafiq while highlighting the 'Look Africa Policy' of Government of Pakistan said that Africa has many opportunities for Pakistan, including its abundant natural resources, attractive investment opportunities, and high percentage of young population. Under the 'Look Africa Plan' Pakistan is seeking to negotiate preferential trade agreements with three African trading blocs, he further added. Both sides discussed and showed strong desire to enhance

Randhawa directs to complete blue area parking plaza

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Randhawa Wednesday directed to complete the construction work of the Blue Area Parking Plaza by the first week of June at any cost. During an inspection of the Blue Area Parking Plaza and other ongoing projects of the federal capital, he assured that there would be no further delay or extension in the completion timeline for the project. On the occasion, the official of the CDA had provided detail briefing of the project and informed that the parking plaza would comprise two basements, a ground floor and five additional floors. He said the first floor of the parking plaza, including the construction of 18 shops, along with a restaurant and cafe on the rooftop. The official said the parking plaza was designed to accommodate up to 1200 cars simultaneously. Randhawa directed to complete the construction work of the ground floor shops within 20 days, with a focus on action/rental basis. Chairman CDA stressed the allotment of shops on the first floor facing Jinnah Avenue should be made on action/rental basis. Randhawa also visited the Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area P4/C-9 expansion project. During the briefing, it was informed that the project involved with addition of two lanes on both sides, covering a total length of 1.8 kilometers.—APP

CTP amends rule 9-3, Punjab Motor Vehicle Rules

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi have amended rule 9-3, Punjab Motor Vehicle Rules, 1969 to facilitate the citizens. Due to the amendment, the process to obtain a driving license would be easier as the time taken from six weeks has been reduced to 15 days, said City Traffic Officer (C TO) Rawalpindi Taimur Khan. He informed that following the orders of Additional Inspector General (IG) Traffic, Mirza Faran Baig, CTP Rawalpindi, the citizens who failed the driving and sign test would be able to retake the test after 15 days at the traffic headquarters race course.—APP

2024 sesame contract farming project comes in action

—DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amid blossoming Pak-China agricultural cooperation, the 1st "2024 Sesame Contract Farming Project" has formally been rolled out by China Machinery Engineering Cooperation (CMEC) group. The project came into force after it was signed between CMEC Group and local farmer "Jojoia Zarai farm Tandilawala" in collaboration with Northwest A & F University China, Ayub Agriculture Research Institute, Faisalabad, Punjab government, Olseeds Research Institute Faisalabad

and Trade Development Authority Pakistan (TDAP) Gwadar Port reported on Wednesday. In a seminar, CMEC Pakistan Vice General Manager Dai Bao said that since China and Pakistan have been forging ahead in agriculture synergic collaborations, the project will be impetus to opening up brand-new chapter of Pak-China agri-based commercialization to optimize sesame export potential. In the backdrop of operationalization of many CMEC-run model sesame farms since 2020 that helped Pakistan spare sesame export to China of \$400 million, it is highly likely that the sesame ex-

port to China will be \$1 billion in the coming time, he added. CMEC Senior Commercial Manager Alan Xi said that with the efforts of CMEC, Pakistan has become the 5th largest country in sesame production in the world. Discussing benefits of Pak-China Sesame Contract Farming, he divulged that it is causing technology transfer with adoption of advanced agricultural practices, improving quality standards of sesame, and increasing income generation for farmers. "CMEC contract farming also makes sure of traceability systems formation, infrastructure development (Irrigation system & pro-

cessing facilities), and skill development and capacity building programs for farmers to strengthen trade & diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, promote sustainable agriculture practices and contribute to poverty reduction and rural development," he added. Besides cultivating sesame seeds, he underlined the need to concentrate on its value-added productions like bakery & confectionary, oil extraction, sesame meal, cosmetics, medicine, fuel, fertilizer, cement, pesticides, etc. Being a part of corporate farming, contract farming in Pakistan has picked up some momentum as an instrument to link farmers with agribusinesses or companies, especially in sectors like cotton, fruits, vegetables, and dairy. This arrangement has been seen as a way to enhance agricultural productivity, improve quality standards, and provide market access to small-holder farmers.



RAWALPINDI: Ispahanyar Bhandara as Chief guest in event hosted by Bishop of Rawalpindi Joseph Arshad in Islamabad Convent School.—DNA

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Briefs

Ministry finalizes plans to welcome pilgrims

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has finalized its arrangements to welcome Pakistan's intending pilgrims in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) as the month-long pre-Hajj flights operation is set to commence on May 9. "By the grace of Allah Almighty, we are optimistic to a great extent that our pre-Hajj arrangements will ensure a smooth Hajj operation," said Ahmed Nadeem Khan, Joint Secretary and Director of Facilitation and Coordination (F&C), in a media briefing at the Main Control Office (MCO). He emphasized that this was an annual large-scale Hajj operation for the ministry, both in Pakistan and KSA, and they were making all-out efforts to make it hassle-free. The ministry has introduced several new initiatives, including discounted long and short packages, complimentary uniform baggage with QR coding, and essential items like head scarf for females and Alkram belts for males. Additionally, a complimentary Hajj SIM card with data and minutes ensures connectivity throughout the journey. The mandatory Hajj App, designed to educate, track, and assist pilgrims in performing Hajj rituals, reflects the ministry's commitment to facilitating a seamless pilgrimage experience. Addressing the Hajj supporting staff, including tour operators, doctors, paramedics, and seasonal staff, Nadeem Khan motivated them to deliver their best in extending maximum facilities to the guests of Allah Almighty arriving at the holy places of Makkah al-Mukarramah and Madinah Al-Munawwarah in KSA.

Fruitful policies of institutions need of hour

ISLAMABAD: PPP parliamentary leader in the Senate Sherry Rehman Wednesday stressed for introducing fruitful policies of institutions which would not only encourage efficiency but also facilitate the employees. Talking to a private news channel, she said that said Pakistan People's Party always believed in the politics of public welfare and prosperity of Pakistan. The resolution of public problems are top priority of President Zartari and stressed the need for working round the clock on public welfare projects, she added. She said that PPP's mission is to solve and address public grievances. Replying to a question about privatization, she said that PPP believes that if the federal government does not want to operate Steel Mills and PIA anymore, the Sindh government will be willing to acquire it, adding, we are confident we can revive it by running it under the same public-private partnership. Bilawal Bhatto Zardari Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman has constituted a three members committee to engage government over privatization issues.—APP

Holywood film on Pak culture to highlight country's soft image

The Hollywood production team thanked the minister for the cooperation and hospitality they received in Pakistan. They said they were inspired by the great cultural heritage and people of Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: F said on Wednesday that the production of Hollywood film on Pakistan's culture will give people around the world an opportunity to know more about the country and highlight its soft and positive image. This he said during a meeting with the members of the Hollywood production team visiting Pakistan to shoot an international film on Pakistani culture. He said the film produced by the Hollywood production team will be an important milestone for the Pakistani film industry. In the meeting, discussions were held regarding the great cultural heritage and

history of the country, including the preparation of a film based on Pakistani culture. The minister also apprised the Hollywood production team about the progress in the film industry in the country. He thanked the Hollywood production team for deciding to produce a film on Pakistani culture. "It is a great honour for our culture and people," he said adding Pakistan was a country with a great cultural heritage. "Our history, literature, music, and art are unique and appreciated worldwide," Attallah Tarar maintained. The minister said he believed that this film would give the world a new opportunity to see the beauty and diversity of Pakistan. While throwing



light on the measures taken by the government for cinema revival, he said it was the only industry in Pakistan that enjoyed tax amnesty. "The government under the leadership of She-

hbaz Sharif restored the film policy in its previous form," he said and added that the film sector had been given the status of an industry so that the youth could get an opportunity to enter this sector. He said a film finance fund had been established at Rs 1 billion in the budget of 2022-23. Moreover, he said medical insurance for artists and tax incentives for the film industry had boosted the film industry and its related sectors. He said in the budget 2022-23, five years of tax exemption was given to filmmakers. Similarly, income tax exemption of five years has been given on the establishment of new cinemas, production houses, and film museums whereas

a tax exemption has been given for ten years on the export of film and drama. He said that the foreign filmmakers were also given concessions on joint film and drama projects with local producers. For this, the condition of shooting 70 percent of the film in Pakistan was applicable to promote business activities including tourism and culture. He said through screen tourism, Pakistan has conveyed its narrative to the world. The minister assured the full support and cooperation to the Hollywood production team from the government and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Hollywood production team thanked the minister for

the cooperation and hospitality they received in Pakistan. They said they were inspired by the great cultural heritage and people of Pakistan. "Pakistan has huge filmmaking potential, we are committed to helping the local industry to grow," they remarked. They thanked the government, the people of Pakistan, and the local film industry for the cooperation provided to them during their stay in Pakistan. They said they were fully enjoying their visit and they were highly impressed by the beautiful locations and heritage of Pakistan. The delegation comprised James MC Milan, Andrew James Fieri, Laina Siska, and the Hollywood team thanked the minister for

PRCS holds blood donation camp at FAST University

The event drew an enthusiastic response, with students and faculty members uniting to support this noble cause. Guided by the directives of Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, Red Crescent staff and volunteers actively participated in blood donation, with a total of 137 individuals contributing

DNA

ISLAMABAD, MAY 7: The Regional Blood Donation Center (RBDC) of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Pakistan organized a Blood Donation Drive at the FAST National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences on Tuesday. Held on the lawns of the FAST University, this initiative was part of the ongoing Red Cross Red Crescent Week celebrations themed "Keeping Humanity Alive." The event drew an enthusiastic response, with students and faculty members uniting to support this noble cause. Guided by the directives of Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, Red Crescent staff and volunteers actively participated in blood donation, with a total of 137 individuals contributing. It

is estimated that this generous act will benefit approximately 411 people through the donation of red blood cells, plasma, and PFPs. An inaugural ceremony took place at the FAST University meeting hall, attended by PRCS Member Managing Body Dr. Iqbal Akhram, Rector FAST University Prof. Dr. Aftab Ahmad Maroof, PRCS Joint Director Operations Ms. Asima Naseem, Head of Turkish Delegation in Pakistan Mr. Ergest LIMKA, along with students, faculty, and volunteers from FAST, PRCS, and TRC. In his message on this occasion, Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, emphasized the significance of saving lives through blood donation and highlighted the crucial role regular blood donations play in assisting patients in need. He underscored the importance of this year's RCRC theme, emphasizing PRCS's resolute commitment to upholding the

principles of humanity, particularly during challenging times. Chairman Laghari urged people, particularly the youth, to actively participate in blood donation to make a difference. He conveyed his appreciation to the management of FAST University, Mr. Ergest LIMKA, Head of Delegation of TRC, extended gratitude to all donors and organizers for their invaluable contribution. Mr. Ergest LIMKA, Head of Delegation of TRC, extended gratitude to all donors and organizers for their invaluable contribution. Mr. Ergest LIMKA, Head of Delegation of TRC, extended gratitude to all donors and organizers for their invaluable contribution. Mr. Ergest LIMKA, Head of Delegation of TRC, extended gratitude to all donors and organizers for their invaluable contribution.

FAST University in organizing this blood donation drive. Their commitment to saving lives through voluntary donation exemplifies the spirit of humanity. Kudos to all donors and organizers for their invaluable contribution. Mr. Ergest LIMKA, Head of Delegation of TRC, extended gratitude to all donors and organizers for their invaluable contribution. Mr. Ergest LIMKA, Head of Delegation of TRC, extended gratitude to all donors and organizers for their invaluable contribution. Mr. Ergest LIMKA, Head of Delegation of TRC, extended gratitude to all donors and organizers for their invaluable contribution.

CPEC becomes most effective all-element cooperation project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has now become the earliest, broadest and most effective all-element cooperation project under the BRI, said Jiang Zaidong, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan. More than 120 countries and 30 international organizations have signed more than 200 BRI cooperation documents, creating more than 3000 BRI cooperation projects, creating nearly 1 trillion US dollars of investment, he said in his message on the occasion of the publication of the 60th episode of BRI Column by one

of Pakistan's largest media group, he noted. Congratulatory and appreciation messages also came from Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, and Consuls General of China in Lahore & Karachi Zhao Shiren and Excellency Yang Yundong, China Economic Net reported on Wednesday. "I am glad to hear that the 60th episode of the Belt and Road Initiative Column will be published, he wrote in his congratulatory message. "The BRI has truly become the largest platform for international cooperation," the

message read. In particular, it was mentioned that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has now become the earliest, broadest and most effective all-element cooperation project under the BRI, and has become a vivid interpretation of the all-weather friendship between China and Pakistan. "Over the past 11 years, CPEC has brought a total of US\$2.4 billion in direct investment, 236000 jobs, 200km of highways, more than 8000 megawatts of electricity and 886km of core transmission network, generating a strong impetus to Pakistan's economic and social development, and bringing real benefits

to the local people," it was stressed by the Ambassador. Zhao Shiren, Consul General of China in Lahore, said in his message, "It is foreseeable that the next phase of the Belt and Road development will be more open, inclusive and collaborative, more focused on digital, innovative and green development to promote the modernization of the world". Excellency Yang Yundong, Consul General of China in Karachi wrote, "over the past 11 years, with efforts from all parties, Belt and Road cooperation has extended from the Eurasian continent to Africa and Latin America.

NDMA chaired UN INSARAG steering group meeting in Geneva

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) chaired UN INSARAG Steering Group Meeting convened on Wednesday in Geneva, Switzerland marking a pivotal moment in addressing governance and disaster preparedness strategies on a global scale. The event was organized by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) which saw the participation from affiliate countries from three regions, a news release said. Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider and current Chair of Asia Pacific Region emphasized the necessity for regional collaboration to tackle the unprecedented challenges posed by climate change-induced disasters. During the session titled "Governance Review Report Presentation & Recommendations," Lt. Gen Inam Haider underscored the importance of introducing policy guidelines to enhance disaster response mechanisms. In his address, the Chairman advocated for a robust training regime and simulation exercise for emergency response teams and urged for the utilization of technology to streamline disaster management efforts. Chairman NDMA also highlighted the need to leverage innovative technologies for disaster risk reduction and response. He appreciated the efforts of INSARAG Secretariat in preparing the comprehensive INSARAG Governance review. Additionally, the session witnessed the launch of the "INSARAG Turkey/Syria After Action Review Report" by Ahmet Dogan, Counselor at the UN Permanent Mission of the Republic of Turkey. The participants discussed enhancing international cooperation for swift disaster response. The INSARAG Steering Group Meeting serves as a crucial platform for fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and charting the way forward in ensuring effective disaster response and recovery efforts globally. Pakistan is regional chair of INSARAG in Asia Pacific Region for the year 2024. The INSARAG Steering Group Meeting discussed detailed recommendations with all stakeholders in subsequent sessions by the INSARAG family. The meeting highlighted the importance of community engagement and empowerment in disaster resilience communities across the globe.—DNA

May 9th incidents are condemnable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Iqbal Shah has strongly condemned the events of May 9 and said that the business community stands in solidarity with the Pakistan Army. We pay tribute to the services of Pakistan forces and the proud spirit of martyrdom of the Pakistan. The efforts of the Special Facilitation Council (SFC) to bring investment to the country are commendable, he expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the business community. President Atif Iqbal said that on May 9 last year, Jinnah House, sensitive installations, government and private properties were vandalized and surrounded by fire, and the country's prestige was damaged at the international level. The economy is badly affected by incidents like May 9, so a plan should be made so that these incidents cannot be repeated in the future. President FPCCI Atif Iqbal said that Pakistan forces are our pride due to which national defence is in strong hands. Therefore, the Pakistan Army is working shoulder to shoulder with the government to improve the economic conditions. All stakeholders should come together on sensitive issues against the national interest so that these incidents can be avoided in the future.



ISLAMABAD: "On Wednesday, Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi visited CDA headquarters accompanied by Secretary Interior Capt. (Ret) Muhammad Khurram Khan. The Chairman of CDA welcomed the Minister and briefed him on the organizational structure, ongoing projects, and future initiatives for the city's uplift."—DNA

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Letter by US politicians to ICC

GANGSTERISM is sometimes used as a metaphor to describe international relations. A group of American senators are making reference to it. A threatening letter to Karim Khan, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was obtained by the news site Zetco. Signed by 12 Republican senators, the letter has to be read to be believed. The exposed case as Israel launched operations in Rafah, the last refuge in southern Gaza for more than a million Palestinians. Diplomatic protocol or official etiquette requires that threats made on record should at least be worded with finesse. Even gangsters are not supposed to directly threaten to burn down your house with your family inside. They usually finesse it: "You have a nice house and family. Shame if anything happened to them." But not these tough guys from the US Congress who seem to have taken to heart the horse's head scene in The Godfather film. They are angry that the ICC is reportedly preparing international arrest warrants for top Israeli leaders including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for alleged war crimes. In addition to threatening sanctions against ICC prosecutors, their staff and families, those Deplorables' Tweeted also cite a US "war on terror" law that could justify literally an invasion of The Hague. "Target Israel and we will target you," they wrote. "If you issue a warrant for the arrest of the Israeli leadership, we will interpret this not only as a threat to Israel's sovereignty but also to the sovereignty of the United States." Go figure. The two countries have been acting practically as one. Many people are starting to think President Joe Biden and his cabinet answer to Netanyahu and not the other way around. The letter continues, "The United States will not tolerate political attacks by the ICC on our allies... If you move forward with the measures... we will... sanction your employers and associates, and bar you and your families from the United States. You have been warned." But the crux of the matter is really the American Service-Members' Protection Act (ASPA), which the letter said "demonstrated... the lengths to which we will go to protect that [US and Israeli] sovereignty." Signed into law by George W. Bush in 2002 at the start of the war on terror, ASPA anticipated the possibility that US personnel or foreigners working for them could face charges of war crime and crimes against humanity. It is derisively known in diplomatic and legal circles as "The Hague Invasion Act" because it authorises the US president "to use all means necessary and appropriate" to bring about the release not only of US citizens but also of allies who are imprisoned or detained by the ICC. So what's next? Deploy Mersal assassins and Delta Force operatives to the ICC headquarters, or try a surgical bomb strike at it? When asked for a comment, Katie Britt, one of the letter's signatories, told Zetco that it was "not a threat - a promise." The White House refused to comment on the letter, but has said previously that it opposes the ICC probe. Zetco is a new media outlet set up by respected broadcaster Mehdi Hasan, who was reportedly forced to resign as a current affairs host on MSNBC following his tough questioning, live on TV, of an Israeli spokesman about the war in Gaza.

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US approach to decouple from China

ON May 3, the US Treasury announced relaxed conditions for tax incentives for consumers purchase electric vehicles (EVs). Previously, EVs using Chinese-produced minerals were set to lose tax incentives starting in 2025. The new adjustment extends this deadline to 2027 for certain minerals like graphite. According to an analysis by Nikkei News, the US government's decision to relax these conditions stems from the difficulty of producing EV batteries without using Chinese-produced graphite. Graphite is a core material in lithium battery anodes, and currently China accounts for 70 percent of its supply worldwide, with a high dependency on Chinese processing and refining capabilities. As the US grapples with the complexities of its containment and decoupling from Chinese manufacturing, it's a strategic move to "palm." Over the past three years, the US government has implemented strict export controls to weaken China's high-tech capability. However, this approach has started negatively impacting the US itself, creating a complex double-edged effect. A report released last month by the New York Federal Reserve Bank (Geopolitical Risk and Decoupling: Evidence from US Export Controls) analysed this issue. According to the research by Matteo Crotignani and others, US export controls led to widespread decoupling between American suppliers and Chinese companies. Affected American suppliers are more likely to terminate existing relationships with Chinese clients and less likely to form new ones. With the decoupling, numerous American suppliers impacted are unable to form new supply chain connections with clients in the US or allied nations within three years of the export controls being enforced. The imposition of export controls has resulted in substantial losses for affected American suppliers, leading to heightened negative loan default risks, with an average market value decline of \$867 million per impacted supplier, summing up to \$130 billion collectively across all suppliers. These suppliers are also encountering reductions in revenue, profitability and workforce. Bank loans to these suppliers have notably dwindled, signaling wider financial limitations. From the perspective of Chinese companies, the report reveals their resilience. Targeted Chinese enterprises have increased their reliance on domestic and non-US suppliers to cope with US export controls. They have established new relationships with alternative suppliers within China and strengthened cooperation with existing non-US suppliers to mitigate the impact of the controls. Moreover, US export controls may unintentionally promote domestic innovation in China as businesses are forced to reduce their dependence on American technology. Washington has implemented decoupling strategies with China, not without anticipating losses on the American side. The approach involves sacrificing short-term economic interests to prompt supply chain shifts and hinder China's rapid advancement in vital high-tech areas, thereby maintaining America's continuous advantage in global technology competition. However, the trouble now is that decoupling not only causes more losses for the US but also rebuilding supply chains is not an easy task, and some may be impossible.

East or West - Who will rule the 5th industrial revolution?

Raza Haider



The USA and Western European countries that benefited from the first four industrial revolutions appear to have an inherent advantage because of their knowledge base, robust economy and experience, which can facilitate higher adoption of new skills, training, and technology. More significantly, these countries are aware of the importance of digital economies and are doing so to gain an advantage in emerging digital value chains. However, accumulation of wealth and experience cannot be only reason to sustain technological and economic sovereignty till time emerging technologies are integrated into their industry

THE world economy saw a 'great divergence' as a result of the first two Industrial Revolutions (IR-1 and IR-2) between 1750 and 1950 AD. During this timeframe, the economic shift occurred from "East to West" as a result of industrial development by Western European nations led by Great Britain. The key to their success was using then-new technologies like steam power, mechanization, automobiles, railways, telegraphs, or electricity at every level of industrialization. This technological trend gave rise to the 3rd Industrial Revolution which was led this time by the United States of America (USA) in the 1960s consisting of new inventions like the computer and internet which not only revolutionized every aspect of life but also expanded the industrial economy's proportion in the total economy. Currently, we are experiencing the 4th Industrial Revolution (IR-4), which is being driven by the USA and dominated by emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, big data, Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing, cyber security and augmented reality. With the impact of these emerging technologies on industry, military, economy, and social life is becoming evident, discussion on the 5th Industrial Revolution, or IR-5, has already started. IR-5 would be centred on the co-working of humans and robots in all fields of life including industries, but the question arises that who will be the leader of this upcoming industrial revolution? The USA and Western European countries that benefited from the first four industrial revolutions appear to have an inherent advantage because of their knowledge base, robust economy and experience, which can facilitate higher adoption of new skills, training, and technology. More significantly, these countries are aware of the importance of digital economies and are doing so to gain an advantage in emerging digital value chains. However, accumulation of wealth and experience cannot be the only reason to sustain technological and economic sovereignty till the time emerging technologies are integrated into their industry. As technology has now become a key factor in determining national power, there are indications that the economic divide between the countries who 'have' technologies and those who 'have not' is increasing. Some countries are falling behind while few countries are emerging

as new leaders especially in East Asia region. East Asia began to embrace technology as a key instrument to boost economic progress in the post-1960 era. This mainly includes China, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea resulting into a growing economic divide known as the 'East Asian miracle' which may mark the start of yet another 'great divergence.' In recent decades, East Asia has transformed into a hub not only for the manufacturing of high-tech products like semi-conductors, chips, smartphones, telecommunication equipment or biotechnologies; but also as a leader in the development of autonomous robots, drones, Electric Vehicles, Next Gen IT, 3D manufacturing machines and artificially intelligent products which is only possible through heavy investments, consistent policies and incentives for investors, skilled human



resource and entrepreneurship. For example, China is primarily focused on becoming a global leader in ten high-tech industries by 2025 including aerospace, high-speed railway, nanomaterials, IT, and electric vehicles emphasizing the incorporation of nascent technologies into manufacturing supply chains aligning them with the requirements of the Next Industrial Revolution. Similarly, in Hong Kong, there are 17 programmes under the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) with funding of USD 32.8 billion to support R&D, facilitate technology absorption, develop new talent, support start-ups, and foster an IT culture in the country. Similar programmes are in progress in other East Asia countries like Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. Considering all these technological developments, it is envisaged that while the US is currently leading the

world in innovation of emerging technologies; East Asian countries, with their highly developed digital economies, R&D investments, technology firms, and innovation systems are emerging as potential leapfroggers. Therefore, it is envisaged that "East Asia will share the leadership of 5th Industrial Revolution with the USA", the region is highly committed to adopting new technologies and creating institutional support for digital breakthroughs in their trade, industry, and society. In the context of Pakistan, adopting emerging technologies is the only viable solution for a proactive strategy aimed at attaining equitable, sustainable, and innovation-driven industrial growth. As a way forward, three suggestions are made. Firstly, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) education ought to be mandated in schools so that the future generation can learn about and be interested in new technologies, as well as have the opportunity to digitize in the future, even in non-technical industries like business, education, healthcare, and agriculture. Secondly, awareness campaigns are needed for decision-makers to encourage technology-driven start-up programmes for the digital economy. Finally, a national industrial policy centered around indigenization and digitalization (like 'Made in China 2025') is needed to enable the industrial sector to play a major role in the country's overall economic advancement. To conclude, while earlier industrial revolutions were led by UK and the USA which significantly contributed to their economic power, it is envisaged that the next industrial revolution would be shared by the USA and East Asian nations, given the scale of R&D and digital breakthroughs in those eastern countries. Pakistan's industrial sector needs to be reorganized and digitalized through a comprehensive 'Industrial Digitalisation Policy' to take full advantage of opportunities through systematic innovations and to develop our human resources to handle future industries.

Raza Haider is currently serving as Director (Emerging Technologies and Aerospace Industry) at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan. He can be contacted at: caas.thinkers@casst.com.

Keywords: Great Divergence, Industrial Revolution, Digital Economies, STEM, Indigenisation.

The Political Divisions in Nebraska's Electoral Future

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The setback for a Donald Trump-backed initiative, Nebraska encountered a stumbling block in its endeavor to adopt a winner-take-all system for presidential elections in November. The proposal, supported by the former president, faced a critical moment on Wednesday as state lawmakers voted down a procedural motion, effectively thwarting its advancement. The Republican-dominated state legislature dealt a decisive blow to the measure, rejecting the procedural motion by a commanding margin of 36 votes to eight. This outcome dashed hopes for proponents of the winner-take-all system, with one GOP state senator lamenting the missed opportunity, labeling it as "the last chance to pass winner-take-all this session." The federal and state political landscape is rife with divisions surrounding electoral reform efforts, highlighting the challenges in altering established election procedures within the American political landscape. Despite the endorsements from former President Trump and Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen, LB 764, a legislative proposal by state Senator Loren Lippincott aiming to allo-

cate all five of Nebraska's Electoral College votes to the top-performing presidential candidate, has languished in the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee for over a year, resulting in renewed efforts to overcome the impasse through procedural maneuvers. The bill's intention to alter the allocation of electoral votes in the state has sparked significant debate and contention, reflecting broader national discussions on Nebraska's electoral system for presidential elections. With its prolonged stagnation in committee, LB 764 underscores the complexities and challenges inherent in enacting electoral legislation, particularly when it involves fundamental changes to the electoral process. The involvement of prominent political figures such as Trump and Governor Pillen highlights the significance and amplifying the stakes involved in the ongoing legislative deadlock. As Nebraska navigates the intricacies of electoral reform, the fate of LB 764 remains uncertain, emblematic of the broader tensions surrounding electoral systems in the United States. GOP state Senator Julie Slama recently brought forth a procedural vote aimed at potentially transitioning Nebraska to a winner-take-all system for presidential elections, mirroring the majority of states. This initiative, proposed minutes before the vote, was presented as a pivotal moment by Slama, who asserted that the vote on the motion to override the chair would effectively signal support for the winner-take-all approach. In her impassioned plea, Slama emphasized the significance of transparency, declaring that consistent with the nation at large were keenly observing despite her efforts, Slama garnered the support of only seven fellow GOP colleagues, falling short of the required number for passage and significantly below the threshold needed to overcome an expected Democratic filibuster, which would demand 33 votes. The outcome

underscores the complexities and divisions within the political landscape, revealing the challenges associated with enacting substantial electoral reforms. Democratic state Senator John Fredrickson responded to Wednesday's vote by addressing Trump and Turning Point USA CEO Charlie Kirk directly, particularly regarding Kirk's suggestion that a potential Republican presidential candidate might lose "by exactly 374th electoral vote in November" due to the state's utilization of the congressional district method. This method involves allocating two electoral votes to the state popular vote winner and one electoral vote to the popular vote winner in each congressional district. Fredrickson's message, posted on X (formerly Twitter), emphasized the accountability of the Nebraska legislature to the state's voters, rather than Kirk or Trump. He declared, "The Nebraska Legislature answers to the voters of Nebraska, not Charlie Kirk or Donald Trump." He underscored the significance of the vote as a means of safeguarding the Electoral College system in Nebraska, framing it as a victory for the populace's influence within the state. After Wednesday's vote, Lippincott expressed determination to pursue his efforts to advance LB 764, acknowledging the challenging outlook for the current year while affirming plans for a renewed push in the following year, characterizing it as the "varisty try." Despite the setback, Lippincott's commitment signals a sustained effort toward achieving his legislative goals. Concurrently, Nebraska state Senator Mike McDonnell's departure from the Democratic caucus to join the GOP was notable. McDonnell cited the Democratic Party's internal response to his anti-abortion stance as a primary factor in his decision. This move underscores the complexities within political parties and highlights the ongoing debates surrounding contentious issues such as abortion within political spheres.

Briefs

Pakistan desires to...

FROM PAGE 01 Tashkent International Investment Forum (TIIF) while talking to APP. The minister said that Pakistan was our foremost priority economic partner as well in the recent future, with which we are working in many spheres at the economic and trade level. He said that the Pakistan-Uzbekistan partnership is of great importance in regional economic and trade integration and Uzbekistan considers Pakistan will have a significant partner in this regard. The Minister said that Uzbekistan is the central country of Central Asia and geo-strategically important country of South Asia located in the neighbourhood of Central Asia.

Ahsan reaffirms...

FROM PAGE 01 Mr. Sheng Hetai and discussed cooperation across various sectors, including early completion of hydel power projects such as Azad Pattan and Kohala. Both sides agreed to realize the common goal of shared progress and prosperity. The Federal Minister also met with President of China Development Bank Mr. Tan Jiong. The two sides also discussed China Development Bank's support for development projects in Pakistan, especially in infrastructure, renewable energy and industrial sectors. The President of the China Development Bank assured the Federal Minister of the bank's constant support to the efforts of the Government of Pakistan to accelerate the pace of the socio-economic development in the country.

Lahore witnesses...

FROM PAGE 01 Lahore High Court Bar Association's Munir Bhatti said the lawyers are demanding the rule of law in the country as well as the delivery of justice and an independent judiciary. "We will see if there will be negotiations," he said, demanding the withdrawal of notices of transfer of cases and seven Anti Terrorism Act (ATA) cases. He also said that the lawyers will not go back to the high courts without holding a session of the general house. The lawyers are seated on the steps of the Orange Line station at the location to avoid tear gas shelling by the police.

Practice and Procedures...

FROM PAGE 01 The Practice and Procedures Act. "The three-member committee of judges cannot rectify the shortcomings in Practice and Procedures Act by making rules. If no member of the Judges Committee is available, who will replace him? According to the Practice and Procedures Act, no other judge can replace a committee member," Justice Waheed wrote. Justice Waheed wrote in the dissent note that what would happen if two members of the committee decided to send the chief justice to provincial registry? He said the chief justice was the administrative head of the Supreme Court, and the consequences of sending him to another province could be serious. "If one member is sick and the other is out of the country, how will the benches be formed in emergency situations?" he asked.

Tarar denounces...

FROM PAGE 01 monuments and targeting state institutions and buildings of national pride including the Jinnah House, Lahore. Attributing Tarar also urged the youth to be aware of the elements, which are hell bent on creating uncertainty and chaos in Pakistan's development and progress. He assured that all possible measures would be taken to avoid desecration of martyrs' monuments. On the occasion, the Minister also played videos of PTI leaders, provoking protesters to assault the military installations and monuments of martyrs.

Azhar Shah: Pak edge closer to final with win over Canada

Pakistan and Japan went hard at each other from the word go but neither of the sides could manage to get the upper hand and played out the first two quarters goalless

SPORTS DESK

IPOL: Pakistan continued their dominant run as they defeated Canada 5-4, inching further closer to the finals of the ongoing Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2024 here on Wednesday. The undefeated Pakistan side is sitting at the top of the points table with 10 points, after four games in the tournament. Pakistan struggled early on as Canada scored two goals in 17 minutes to take a dominant lead, however, Abu Bakr Mahmood brought Pakistan back into the game with a brace. Arshad Liaqat, Rana Waheed Ashraf and Ghazanfar Ali followed suit and set up Pakistan's 5-4 victory. For Canada, Sean Davis scored two, while Harjit Sidhu and Ajay Buttar scored one each. Notably, Pakistan, as well as Japan, will confirm their place in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2024 final if the latter beat Malaysia here today. Pakistan held Japan for a 1-1 stalemate and continued their unbeaten run in the ongoing Sultan Azlan Shah Cup yesterday. Pakistan and Japan went hard at each other



from the word go but neither of the sides could manage to get the upper hand and played out the first two quarters goalless. Japan then got the reward for their precision in the third quarter when Ken Nagayoshi converted a penalty corner in the 33rd

minute. Japan's narrow lead persisted for the conclusion of the third quarter while the fourth quarter was also nearing its end, deflating at the possibility of Pakistan's first defeat in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup. But Rana Waheed Ashraf turned the tide for Pakistan and lifted them to level the thrilling match after a perfectly crafted penalty corner in the last minutes. Earlier this week, Pakistan crushed South Korea 4-0 to register their second consecutive victory in the ongoing Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, after a flying start to their campaign with a nerve-wracking 5-1 victory over Malaysia. Pakistan squad for Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Goalkeepers: Abdallah, Muneer Rehman. Defenders: Usama Bashir, Ehsan Adnan, Mohammad Abdullatif, Saifan, Abu Bakr (vice-captain), Anam Butt (captain). Midfielders: Salman Razzan, Arshad Liaqat, Moiz Shakoor, Zakria Hayat, Murtaza Yaqoob, Ghazanfar Ali, Forwards: Abdul Rehman (Sr), Abdul Haman, Rana Waheed, Ejaz Ahmad, Standbys: Akmal Husein, Anqel Ahmad, Arbaz, Hamad Anjum, Abdul Rehman (Jr), Abdul Manan, Rooman.

Olympic flame arrives in Marseille amid 'unprecedented security'

MARSEILLE: The Olympic torch reached Marseille amid an "unprecedented level of security," 79 days before the opening ceremony of the Paris Games. A three-masted ship brought the torch to the Mediterranean coastal city in southern France from Greece's ancient Olympia, where the flame was lit in 119 BC. The torch will be brought to shore after a six-hour parade, featuring more than 1,000 boats in front of President Emmanuel Macron and an estimated crowd of 150,000 people. Officials said 6,000 law enforcement officers, canine units and elite forces snipers will be in place to ensure the torch is protected in great security conditions, said interior minister Gerald Darmanin. "It's an unprecedented level of security," France raised its security threat level last October after a teacher was killed in a knife attack, while there are concerns that wars in Ukraine and Gaza could increase the threat. The president of the Paris 2024 organising committee Tony Estanguet, said Marseille was the "obvious choice" to host the boat parade given it is France's oldest city and was founded by Greeks.

The Games are coming home," added Estanguet, referring to French aristocrat Pierre de Coubertin, who revived the idea of the Games as practised by the Greeks until the 4th century BC. "It's a huge honour and I think it's an exceptional promotion for the city," said retired and host owner Henri Germain. "It will be watched by hundreds of millions of people, so I am very proud and I hope that everyone will participate in this moment. "It can only be a good thing for the economy and for everything else, for the image of the city. So I'm proud of it." On Thursday, the torch will begin its journey to Paris with former Marseille footballers Jean-Pierre Papi, Didier Drogba and Basile Boli among the torch bearers. More than 10,000 people will take part in the 7,500-mile torch relay, which will also visit French overseas territories, before the flame reaches the capital city and is installed near the Louvre, in the Jardin des Tuileries. The opening ceremony of the Olympics is due to see more than 10,000 athletes sail along a 6km stretch of the River Seine through the centre of Paris on 160 barges. However last month President Macron said the opening ceremony could move if the security risk is too high. - Agencies

Reus looking to move outside Europe following UCL final

AGENCIES BERLIN: Marco Reus is reportedly contemplating a transfer to Major League Soccer (MLS) at the conclusion of the season, as disclosed by former French footballer Samir Nasri on Canal+. Nasri suggested that a potential move to the MLS is being considered, and discussions have already commenced. However, no particular clubs were mentioned. Reus and Dortmund are yet to complete two Bundesliga fixtures against Mainz and Darmstadt, as well as the upcoming Champions League final at Wembley Stadium. On May 3, Dortmund and Manchester United met at the club and Reus had jointly decided not to extend his contract beyond the current season. "I'm incredibly grateful for and proud of this special time at my club Borussia Dortmund. I have spent more than half of my life at this club and enjoyed every day, even though there have of course been difficult moments too. I already know now that I will find it difficult to say goodbye at the end of the season," Reus said. Dortmund progressed to the Champions League final on Tuesday, defeating Paris Saint-Germain 2-0 on aggregate. The Bundesliga club last reached the CL final in 2013, where they were defeated 2-1 by Bayern Munich.

Naqvi in favour of hosting Zalmi games in Peshawar

Peshawar: Peshawar Zalmi owner Javed Afridi has claimed that Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi is in favour of hosting the matches of Pakistan Super League (PSL) season ten matches at Peshawar's Arbab Niaz stadium. Afridi, in his post on X (formerly Twitter), mentioned that the people of Peshawar will see the event before the PSL, too and the people of the city could see international stars next year. "Had a productive call with CM PCB Javed Afridi. He has given green go-ahead to the sports department to release funds for the remaining 20% job at Arbab Niaz Stadium Peshawar," he wrote. "Chairman PCB is in favour of hosting the Peshawar Zalmi games in Peshawar. Get ready for some thrilling moments before PSL. Fans will see international stars at PSL. InshaAllah," Afridi wrote on X." he added. It must be noted Lahore and Rawalpindi are set to host more matches than Karachi during the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 10 next year. According to local media, Karachi has been given five matches in the draft schedule for PSL 2025. Meanwhile, Lahore will get a maximum of 10 matches and Rawalpindi eight. Multan will also get five matches during the event. Karachi has been given fewer matches, compared to this year, due to low turnout in the last season. The PSL Governing Council meeting will be held towards the end of May 2024. During the meeting, the window for the next PSL and changes to playing conditions will be approved. Remember, PCB has proposed 7th April to 20th May as proposed dates for the 10th edition of the PSL. In this case, PSL will clash with Indian Premier League (IPL) during those dates. PCB can not organise PSL 10 in the traditional February-March window since the event will clash with the ICC Champions Trophy which will take place in Pakistan. - DNA

Gobert wins NBA Defensive Player of the Year award

MINNESOTA: Minnesota Timberwolves center Rudy Gobert clinched the Hakeem Olajuwon Trophy for this season's NBA Defensive Player of the Year on Tuesday. Gobert is the third player in NBA history to secure the elusive award on four occasions after Dikembe Mutombo and Ben Wallace. He also won the award in 2022-23, 2018-19 and 2017-18. The 31-year-old is the first player in Timberwolves history to bag the Defensive Player of the Year honors. "Led by Gobert, the Timberwolves had the best defensive rating, allowed the fewest points per game and held opponents to the lowest field goal percentage in the NBA. The top-ranked defense helped Minnesota (56-26) post the second-best record in franchise history and earn the No. 3 playoff seed in the Western Conference," NBA said on its official website. "This season, Gobert averaged 14.0 points on 65.1% shooting, a team-best 12.9 rebounds and a team-high 21.3 blocks per contest. His 21.3 blocks were his most blocks per game since 2020-21 (23.8 bpg). He ranked second in the NBA in rebounding (12.9 rpg), second in field goal percentage (69.1), second in offensive rebounds (3.8 rpg), fourth in defensive rebounds (9.2 rpg), sixth in blocks (21.3 bpg) and fifth in double-doubles (54). "Gobert received 72 first-place votes." "This year, training camp, we came Day 1 and said we wanted to be a top defense in this league," Gobert said on TNT. "Every guy has bought in. Everyone has put in the work every single day, and now we're here with one goal in mind, to try to get this championship." - Agencies

End of an era as Mbappe suffers final PSG failure

"All through his career he's stepped up to the plate, but over the two legs here he was very subdued. "He wasn't decisive, he wasn't clinical"

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe was United's last hope of lifting the Champions League trophy for his final European act as a Paris Saint-Germain player. The reality was different. Instead, Mbappe's final moment in the competition for PSG had him slipping over as he chased a lost cause, a through ball he was never going to reach, in a game which was by that point beyond the Parisians. That slip in the final seconds of injury time came as Borussia Dortmund's 2-0 aggregate victory was safe and sealed following a stout defensive display full of energetic pressing, helped by a sizeable slice of luck. And it was a slip that proved the final nail in one of the most disappointing eras of modern European football - PSG's starstruck but unconvincing hunt for the Champions League. "This was unusual for Kylian Mbappe," former England defender Rio Ferdinand, a

first Champions League winner with United, said. "He's a guy we're accustomed to seeing at the best moments, on the biggest stage, when it's Messi's line. "All through his career he's stepped up to the plate, but over the two legs here he was very subdued. "He wasn't decisive, he wasn't clinical." When Qatar Sports Investment took over PSG in 2011, the biggest prize in Europe became the goal, backed by increasingly extravagant spending. This kicked up a notch in 2017 with the world-record acquisition of Neymar from Barcelona, followed by the signing of Mbappe a year later following his crowning as a World Cup winner with France. Then, in 2021, it seemed the dream was within touching distance as arguably the greatest of all time, Lionel Messi, was signed on a free transfer. Surely, with such a star-studded front three,

as they face Lyon in the Coupe de France, and the last-ever French League Cup. But not the Champions League. Indeed, only three times since 2017 have PSG even gone beyond the group stage, reaching the final in the 16-reaching final in the Covid-hit year of 2020, the semis the season after, and then this current campaign. PSG remain a level below the elite. They have lost all four legs of their two-legged Champions League semis in the Q&I era, against Manchester City in 2020/21 and now Dortmund in 2023/24. This failure will particularly sting, having failed to score against the fifth-placed side in the Bundesliga despite having 44 shots in two games. It is the highest number of shots a team has had without scoring in a two-legged Champions League tie since Olympique Lyonnais began in 2003/04. They hit the post six times in the tie, including four times in the second half in Paris. Warren Zaire-Emery

Martial law supporters should...

FROM PAGE 01 Achakzai while speaking in the seminar "Protection of Constitution of Pakistan: How and Why?" held in Islamabad said that he has started a jihad against unconstitutional measures and now started a jihad without which true freedom is impossible. He said that the problems will not be solved until the institutions stay within their defined limits, now we have to make bold reforms. Mehmood Khan Achakzai said that a press conference was held yesterday and it was said that we know our limits, if so, what is your persons doing in every office of the Deputy Commissioner and Election Commission? All this is unconstitutional and rising against this interference is the duty of the citizen and whether the first had thing happened in the country only on May 9. What punishment was given to those people who imposed martial law in the country? He said that earlier dictators were protected by parliament, those who imposed martial law should apologize first. Mehmood Khan Achakzai warned that on the day there is an attempt to provoke the army to impose martial law, our workers will be on the streets.

Imran to DG ISPR...

FROM PAGE 01 involved in the May 9 violent protests to apologise and shun politics of "anarchy" before holding any dialogue. In the hours-long presser, the chief military spokesperson had also ruled out any dialogue with those who attacked military installations and insulted the nation's martyrs. He had also said that those who accused and perpetrators would have to be punished as per the Constitution and law. The May 9 events refer to violent protests triggered by the arrest of former PM Imran Khan in a corruption case from the premises of Islamabad High Court (IHC) last year. During the protests, alleged PTI supporters damaged public and private properties and also attacked military installations in different parts of the country. In today's interaction with journalists, the PTI founder distanced his party from the violent protests, saying that the party never resorted to violence in its history of 27 years.

Larger benches...

FROM PAGE 01 comprised Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, and Justice Sardar-E-Elahi. The IHC will take up the contempt of court cases on Thursday (May 9). Justice Babar Sattar has written a letter to the IHC Chief Justice regarding the social media campaign against him. Justice Babar Sattar and Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani are among the six IHC judges who have complained of interference in judicial affairs by the country's intelligence apparatus. Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) condemned the "malicious campaign" against Justice Babar Sattar on social media, as part of which confidential information and documents belonging to the judge were leaked online.

6 terrorists killed in KP operations

FROM PAGE 01 North Waziristan District, our troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of an ongoing Terrorist Intelligence Unit (TIU) was sent to hell. Weapons, ammunition & explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as innocent civilians. Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area as the security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

Briefs

Pakistan to continue facilitating Sikh community's visits

WASHINGTON: Pakistan will continue to provide all possible facilities to the Sikh community around the world wanting to visit their religious places in the country. Ambassador Masood Khan said Tuesday. The Pakistani envoy was talking to a delegation of the American-Punjabi Society, which called on him, according to an embassy press release. The Government and the people of Pakistan, Ambassador Masood Khan said, fully understand the religious sentiments of the Sikh community and "our doors are open" to them. The president of the American-Punjabi Society, Gary Sikka, told the Ambassador that his organization consists of one hundred thousand Sikh members, some of whom are also from Pakistan, and that a Society's delegation of 115 people would soon visit Pakistan to visit religious sites in Lahore, Faisalabad, Islamabad and Kartarpur. Referring to their previous visits, the delegation members, especially spoke about their pilgrimage to Kartarpur and said that the hospitality of the Pakistani people was heartwarming. While welcoming the delegation at the embassy, Ambassador Masood Khan said that the Government and people of Pakistan respect the religious sentiments of the Sikh community, adding that the visa policy regarding religious tourism has been simplified with an aim to provide them maximum facilitation. -APP

Turkish airports host record 18M passengers in April

ANKARA: Turkish airports in April welcomed a record 18 million passengers, including transit passengers, Turkey's transport and infrastructure minister said Wednesday. The figure soared 53.7% at an annualized pace, Abdullahi Uraloglu said, citing State Airports Authority General Directorate (DHMI) data. Some 6.3 million passengers took domestic flights in April, a surge of 52.9% from last year. The number of passengers taking international flights jumped 55.1% to 9.7 million in the same period. Turkish airports served 178,614 planes, including one-way flights, last month, a year-on-year rise of 28%, the minister said, adding that the cargo traffic last month reached 372,430 tons. -APP

Experts on 'Thalassemia Day' urges youth to play role

ISLAMABAD: Health experts on World Thalassemia Day appealed to people that every single drop of blood could save precious lives, urging youngsters to take an active part in awareness campaigns through social media forums to protect human life. "Prevention is better than cure. Every member of society must be screened for thalassemia through a simple blood test before marriage," the World Health Organization (WHO) Advisor on Blood Regulation, Availability and Safety Prof Hassan Abbas Zaher talking to PTV news channel said. This year's theme is "Empowering Lives, Empowering Progress: Equitable and Accessible Thalassemia Treatment for All". International Thalassemia Day is a powerful call to raise awareness about this condition and its impact while celebrating the solidarity of the resilient Thalassemia community worldwide, he mentioned. He also highlighted the need for raising public awareness campaigns regarding blood disorders across the country, adding, students asked to regularly donate blood for thalassemia patients. The main reason behind the spread of Thalassemia in Pakistan is lack of awareness and hiding such events may create awareness among people to respond appropriately for prevention and protection from the hereditary disorder, he added. Raising awareness about Thalassemia and its prevention through personal accounts of individuals can prove helpful in reducing the chances of its transmission to the next generation, he further stressed. Another expert of disease Dr Saqib Ansari emphasized that the screening test plays a -APP

Orders establishment of skill development fund

DNA ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to immediately initiate the process of establishing the Pakistan Skill Company and Pakistan Skill Development Fund to unify technical and vocational education country-wide and provide better employment to Pakistani workers abroad. The prime minister, during a high-level meeting to review the matters of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Manpower and National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC), decided to introduce reforms in the said organizations. He instructed to further activate the NAVTC to provide world-class technical and vocational training to the young workforce and also called for ensuring globally renowned and international certifications in all technical fields. The prime minister also emphasized the collaboration between the center and provinces to elevate the quality of Pakistan's technical manpower and human resource development. He called for establishing an integrated system of regulating the manpower equipped with the best world-class, professional technical skills. Besides, in coordination with NADRA, NAVTC and all the provincial institutes, a database of manpower in the country should also be developed, he added. Stressing the need for implementing the technical and vocational training plans, the prime minister also directed to reform the license regime of the companies engaged in the employment of Pakistani skilled and technical workforce abroad. He said the individuals and companies should be identified who are found involved in defrauding the people and inflicting financial losses besides defaming Pakistan internationally. Prime Minister Shehbaz also instructed to ensure transparency and integrity in the posting of community welfare attach-



mentees in the Pakistani missions abroad. He also directed to form a committee mandated to recommend measures for reforms in the vocational and technical training sectors as well as the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Manpower. During the meeting, the prime minister was informed about the steps taken by NAVTC regarding the vocational and technical training of the workforce in Pakistan. He said NAVTC will provide vocational and technical training to 60,000 people this year, while the figure will rise to 1.6 million in the next three years, following the reforms. It was told that the exchange of information about employment opportunities and required skills from foreign countries was being ensured and that data on manpower consumption was also being obtained from the local industry. The meeting was told that NAVTC had made certification of male and female students from internationally renowned institutes mandatory to ensure global standards of vocational and technical training. It was told that as per the prime minister's directives, not only a quota has been allocated for the youth of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir at the federal level but also a separate program was being launched for their special training starting June this year. Federal ministers Ahsan Khan Cheema and Khalid Masood Siddiqui, State Minister Shahn Fatima Khawaja, Chairman of PM Youth Program Rana Masudhool Ahmed Khan, Coordinator to PM Haseeb Khatoon, SIFC National Coordinator Lt. General Sarfaraz Ahmed, Deputy Chairman of Planning Minister Chaudhry Nisar Khan and senior officials attended the meeting.

Malta ex-PM, top officials charged in sweeping corruption probe

VALLETTA: Former Maltese premier Joseph Muscat, the current deputy premier and the central bank chief are among dozens of people and companies charged in a hospital privatization scandal rocking the Mediterranean island nation. Muscat and one of his ex-ministers, Konrad Mizzi, have been charged with accepting bribes, corruption in public office and money laundering, according to documents obtained by AFP late on Tuesday. It is the first time a former premier will face criminal charges in court. Muscat strongly denies the allegations. Deputy Prime Minister Chris Fearne - previously tipped to be Malta's next European Commissioner - and former finance minister Edward Scicluna, governor of the Central Bank of Malta, were also charged with fraud, misappropriation and fraudulent gain. Muscat's former chief of staff Keith Schembri has been charged with money laundering, soliciting bribes and misuse of office to exact an unlawful advantage "through threats or abuse of authority". The charges were filed on Monday after a long-running investigation that has shaken Malta's political establishment. It dates back to the decision by Muscat's Labour government in 2015 to pass management of three public hospitals to a private company, Vitals Global Healthcare. The company had no healthcare experience and after 21 months it sold the concession to another company, Seaward Healthcare. Without having made any of the investments it had promised. -DNA

200 liter adulterated milk wasted

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Food Authority (PFA) claimed to have wasted about 110 kg of pungent adulterated milk, 200 liter adulterated milk, 60 liter adulterated juice along with four kg prohibited ingredients used for multiple food products. The adulterated items were checked at different spots of the district, which was said in a press statement by PFA. The adulterated items were checked at different spots of the district, which was said in a press statement by PFA. The adulterated items were checked at different spots of the district, which was said in a press statement by PFA. -DNA

China's Xi in Serbia for talks to boost economic relations

China has poured billions into Serbia and neighbouring Balkan countries, particularly into mining and manufacturing, and last year Beijing and Belgrade signed a free trade agreement

BELGRADE: Chinese President Xi Jinping will hold talks with his Serbian counterpart in Belgrade on Wednesday, as Beijing seeks to deepen its political and economic ties with friendlier countries in Europe. China has poured billions into Serbia and neighbouring Balkan countries, particularly into mining and manufacturing, and last year Beijing and Belgrade signed a free trade agreement. Xi arrived in the Serbian capital Tuesday night after a state visit to France that saw some less robust exchanges with President Emmanuel Macron on topics including trade and China's continued close ties to Russia despite the Ukraine war. But the other two countries chosen by Xi for his

first trip to Europe since 2019 - with Hungary as the final stop after Serbia - are seen as among the most sympathetic to Moscow in Europe. In Belgrade, the Chinese leader will meet President Aleksandar Vucic for talks on Wednesday, before heading to Budapest, Serbian finance minister Sinisa Mali told state broadcaster RTS that discussions Wednesday would centre on "a great project". "We are aiming to attract a major investment from China in a very promising area," he said Tuesday, adding "I won't reveal our cards at this moment." Streets in the Serbian capital were decked out with Chinese flags for the visit, along with posters and billboards that proclaimed a "warm welcome" to "Chinese friends". Xi's visit to Belgrade will also coincide with the 25th anniversary of the 1999 US bombing of the Chinese embassy there, which killed three people. The embassy was hit during a months-long US-led NATO campaign targeting Serbian security forces who were waging a brutal war against ethnic-Albanian insurgents in Kosovo. The US later apologised, saying that outdated maps had led the pilot to strike the wrong target. On Tuesday, Xi wrote in Serbian social media that NATO "flagrantly bombed the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia", warning that China would "never allow such tragic history to repeat itself". He also hailed

the "fraternal friendship" between China and Serbia, which he said was "forged with the blood of our compatriots". Stefan Vladisavljevic, programme director at the Foundation BPF for a Responsible Society, said that the date of the visit meant it will have "significant symbolic importance". "The focus is also expected to be on promoting existing cooperation between the two countries, and announcing projects that are in implementation together in the future," he added. Serbs questioned in central Belgrade said they welcomed Xi's visit. "I think it's an excellent thing, this visit from the president of one of the most powerful countries in the world," 67-year-old Stojan Vidovic, a retiree, told AFP. -APP

Oil prices down after US stockpile build signals weak demand

ANKARA: Oil prices fell on Wednesday following data indicating an increase in crude inventories in the US, the world's biggest oil consumer. International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$82.64 per barrel at 09:31 a.m. local time (06:31 GMT), a decrease of 0.52% from the closing price of \$83.16 per barrel in the previous trading session. American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at \$77.88 per barrel at the same time, a 0.61% fall from the previous session that closed at \$78.79 per barrel. Oil prices were largely unchanged by the American Petroleum Institute (API) late on Tuesday showing an increase of 509,000 barrels in US crude oil inventories, against the market expectation of a draw of 1.4 million barrels. The rise in commercial crude oil reserves reflected market perceptions of weakening domestic demand to drive prices down. Further price reductions are likely if US Energy Information Administration (EIA) data later on Wednesday shows an inventory drawdown against estimates of a stock rise. Meanwhile, the increase in value of the US dollar against other currencies, which rose by 0.12% to 105.54, curtailed the fall in prices by making oil expensive for other currency-holding traders. However, the escalating geopolitical tensions on the Palestinian side of the Red Sea border crossing due to the Israeli attacks continue to influence oil prices. -Agencies

Rubbish, climate change help boost Portugal's white stork numbers

In addition, milder weather conditions in southern Portugal in winter are now similar to those which the birds find in Africa, Catty said

ALJUSTREL: Above a flowering meadow in southern Portugal, three white stork nestlings click their beaks, adding to the chorus of a thriving stork population that has settled year-round in the country. The long-legged birds have traditionally migrated from Europe in the autumn, heading south to spend winter in sub-Saharan Africa before returning in springtime to breed. But abundant food from landfill sites, coupled with warmer weather due to climate change, has led the vast majority of breeding storks in Portugal to skip this arduous journey and stay put all year. In spring and summer they often nest on chimneys or electricity pylons, which humans have helped make safer for them. White storks were considered an endangered species in Portugal as recently as the turn of the century. Happily, the number of breeding pairs has almost doubled in the last decade, rising from around 12,000 pairs 10 years ago to around 20,000 pairs today, according to scientific estimates. "They look good. Let's hope there's enough food for all three chicks," said Ines Catty, a biologist with the University of Évora's Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources (CIBIO). After checking, weighing and measuring them, she carefully placed the chicks in a cloth bag and used a ladder to hoist them back into their nest on top of an old tree trunk near the town of Aljustrel. For the past six years, CIBIO scientists have been tracking the behaviour of a group of White Storks, thanks to tiny satellite tags attached to their backs. One of the birds, named Alabado, has built a nest on top of a side road in this region of alentejo, an unending landscape of flatness dotted with cork oaks and olive trees. Alabado travels some 2,500 kilometres (1,500 miles) each year to reach Senegal in West Africa, returning to Portugal to breed in spring and summer. But this stork's behaviour is now the exception. Around 80 percent of Portugal's white storks stay permanently in the country, avoiding the dangers associated with migration. Said Catty, juvenile storks still follow the instinct to fly to Africa for winter but "as time goes by they stop migrating", she said. Older, breeding birds tend to stay put. The change in migratory habits is linked in part to climate change and the year-round availability of food in Portugal. They have an abundant year-round supply of food in spring and summer. But this stork's behaviour is very dependent on news from rubbish tips, she explained, adding that white storks were "highly adaptable and have been able to benefit from coexistence with humans". In addition, milder weather conditions in southern Portugal in winter are now similar to those which the birds find in Africa, Catty said. -DNA

ANF arrests couple supplying drugs

ISLAMABAD: The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) arrested an accused, including a woman involved in the supply of drugs in educational institutions. According to spokesperson of ANF, the accused was arrested on suspicion of supplying drugs to a major educational institution in Islamabad on a tip-off. The woman was arrested with drugs from the office of an educational institution. During the search of the arrested suspect's room, hashish, opium and more tokens of ice were found. According to the accused, including a woman involved in the supply of drugs in educational institutions, the accused used to smuggle drugs from Peshawar to the accused. The accused disclosed several drugs to the university students. The arrested accused belongs to Nowshera while she was accused belongs to Muzaffargarh. A case has been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigation has been started. -APP

An Ode to the women of 21st Century

DR HANI ZARIAB ALI



more than what needs the eye. You are infinitely loved. Remember your strength and grace, the depth of your deep ocean heart. You are divine, as you have been from the beginning. In the words of the women's rights activist and former South African President Nelson Mandela: "Freedom cannot be achieved unless women are liberated from all forms of oppression." Through his presidential policies and advocacy as a human rights icon, Mandela campaigned for an end to the oppression of women worldwide. "Human rights mean nothing as long as women are bound by poverty and de-spised," he said in a speech on International Women's Day in 1996. Today marks the celebration of all those women who have strived to change the notion of women's role in modern society, pulling them from the clutches of patriarchy, violence, oppression & from the dearth of education. To the Pakistani women leaders, who are an icon for the emerging Gen-Z, whose hard work and dedication have instilled in modern women an irrevocable passion for new horizons. To name a few of my personal favourites: Pakistan's first female Prime Minister, the late Benazir Bhutto, an epitome of foresight & utmost valour, who singlehandedly led a male dominated political march towards democracy and women's memory. She is held in high regards on National & International forums till date. Ms. Jinnah, the mother of the Nation, a dedicated profession & a great protagonist of civil rights, who played a pivotal role in uniting the women for Pakistan Movement & has inspired the generations through her wisdom & strength, in the historic Pakistani Movement. Dr Nigar Johar, the Military's first female Colonel. She, a dedicated, laid the benchmark for females to pursue their passion in surgery & allied with an unstoppable force. Dr Sania Nasir, whose dedication to the national cause is currently serving as Special Assistant of Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, is described as a passionate leader who has deep understanding of her field of work. As a global health and development leader, Dr. Nishtar is responsible for Ebasas, the education's flagship social protection programme that is improving the lives of millions of Pakistanis and helping empower women. Samina Raziq, the first Pakistani woman to summit Everest and all seven of the world's highest peaks, showed there are no physical barriers for women to achieve heights in both their physical and figurative realms. And lastly, the most precious of all to me, my mother Sahabat Ali, whose one of a kind, & is admired by many in the professional sphere. She herself began her career at the United Nations as a young diplomatic writer and economist. She left her mark as a former chairperson of the International Women's Human Rights Organization of Pakistan. And at present an Advocate at Global Law Firms, an Educationalist by passion, & an absolutely phenomenal mother of 3 daughters. I'm in awe of today's women, who have come a long way to safeguard the rights of those underprivileged females who are still fighting the vicious cycles of modern day carnage at the expense of their rights to education, including a good livelihood. The hallmark of a progressive society is education without gender disparity, where men are the support system, their female counterparts, where a woman feels safe to work & is not seen as a vulnerable entity or a mere ornament of amusement, where violence is not justified, & a punishable crime. A woman is the backbone of a nation, for she is related with, she's a mother, a teacher, a doctor, a scientist, a lawyer, a pilot, an engineer, a politician, she's anything under the sun is her domain. And the age old adage, "behind every successful man, there's a woman" has stood the test of time. Here's to all the women across the globe who have gone above & beyond to secure an honourable place in the modern world & reverse those who laid the foundation for women empowerment first. And to those who continue to break the stigmas & shackles of a repressed nation to a more peaceful & equitable society. The author is a 2024 grad from BMC, Hyber Medical University, Islamabad. Her widespread interests revolve around public health & Interventional medicine.

Briefs

Kim family's master propagandist dies at 94

WEB DESK

Pyongyang: North Korea's former propaganda master Kim Ki Nam has died at the age of 94, said state media. He died due to old age and "multiple organ dysfunction" which he had been receiving treatment since 2022, said KCNA. He had spent decades leading propaganda efforts in the totalitarian state, including building a personality cult around the ruling Kim dynasty. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attended his funeral early on Wednesday and paid tribute to the "veteran revolutionary who had remained boundlessly loyal" to the regime, the report added. South Korea's Yonhap news agency likened him to Nazi Germany's propaganda boss Joseph Goebbels, widely known for his mantra "repeat a lie often enough and it becomes the truth". Kim Ki Nam had no blood relations with the ruling patriarchy despite sharing the family name that is among the most common in North and South Korea. He was appointed deputy director of Pyongyang's Propaganda and Agitation Department in 1986, where he worked closely with Kim Jong Il, the predecessor and father of current leader Kim Jong Un. Kim Ki Nam later rose to lead the department, playing a crucial role in shaping the country's messaging, as he served what has now become the world's longest-reigning family dynasty.

Pakistan, WB agree on new partnership

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the World Bank on Wednesday agreed to collaborate on a new, robust and ambitious Country Partnership Framework (CPF) to carry forward the country's reform and development agenda. The agreement was reached during a meeting between PM Shehbaz Sharif and a delegation led by Regional Vice President of the World Bank for South Asia Martin Raiser. Welcoming Martin Raiser, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded the contribution of the World Bank to the development of Pakistan. The prime minister appreciated the support extended by the Bank for building the climate resilient infrastructure in the wake of 2022 floods in Pakistan. He briefed the delegation on the reform agenda of the government including digitization of the entire tax system, power sector reforms, enhancing per acre yield in the agriculture sector, addressing the issue of child stunting, etc. Appreciating Pakistan's aggressive reforms agenda, Martin Raiser said the World Bank was ready to collaborate with the country in its journey of transformation of the economy aimed at sustainable development.

Pakistan Gender Climate Award 2024 EU envoy stresses women's role in building sustainable future

The EU Amb. Dr. Riina Kionka highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change on women, she said. Women are at the heart of work in building a sustainable world. Investing in female leadership is key for climate solutions



MARNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: To celebrate the contributions of Pakistani women in climate action, the Embassy of France, the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates, the Delegation of the European Union, the French Development Agency (AFD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC) held the ceremony of the 2nd edition of the Gender Climate Award. The objective of the award is to highlight women's commitment, leadership and concrete initiatives in the fight against climate change and its effects in three categories: climate action, green enterprise, and young climate journalism. The proud winners of the Pakistan Gender Climate Award 2024 are: Qandeel Rehman (Climate Action), Ummeed Anif (Green Enterprise), and Khadija Niaz (Young Climate Journalism). The winners received a trophy and a cash award of PKR 1.2 million each to advance their initiative and use the funds to deepen the gender-climate nexus in their area of work. The Pakistan Gender Climate Award ceremony

held at the Serena Hotel was attended by dignitaries from the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, diplomats, civil society, academia, youth and the media. The Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Ms. Romina Khurshid Khan, lauded the initiative and pledged her support in taking the agenda forward to strengthen the gender climate nexus. In her keynote address, she said, "Women are the change and will change the future. They are our champions and we have faith in their capabilities. We are delighted that the Gender Climate Award, which was launched last year by the French Embassy, can bring together other prestigious partners this year and even in the future. This demonstrates global awareness of the impact of climate change, and the need for everyone - men and women, governments, international organizations, and NGOs - to meet this challenge together. By honoring the three winners of this award, we pay tribute to the extraordinary women of Pakistan for their leadership in climate action and their efforts to find innovative and concrete solutions to make their communities more resilient."

The EU Amb. Dr. Riina Kionka highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change on women, she said. "Women are at the heart of work in building a sustainable world. Investing in female leadership is key for climate solutions. We are delighted to honour the inspiring work of women in addressing climate challenges, be it through journalism, entrepreneurship, or advocacy." The Deputy Head of Mission, UAE Embassy, Mr. Muhammad Sultan Al-Khatib commented on the negative impact of climate change on the lives and livelihoods of women. He emphasized the need for action. "The UAE recognizes the indispensable role that gender equality plays in building a sustainable and resilient future. Empowering women and girls not only enhances social cohesion but also accelerates progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to climate action." Mr. Samuel Kéké, the Resident Representative of UNDP congratulated the winners and encouraged them to become role models of inspiration. "We've gotta move past old-fashioned ways of thinking and work together to make real change happen. Today's winners serve as examples for

young women and girls across Pakistan that show that the barriers can be broken down". In her concluding remarks, Senator Sherry Rehman said, "Climate and women are inextricably linked. The impacts of a planet on fire will further erode capital of women. Spotlighting women and empowering them to become leaders is key to resilience. Events such as this should be scaled up and held every year to inspire women". The nation-wide call for applications made in November 2023 for the Gender Climate Award received a robust response. A total of 79 applications were received and evaluated by a five-member committee to select the winners. "We hope this is a trend that we can build on to raise awareness and encourage women to participate more actively in climate action" said Aisha Khan from CSCCC. The three Gender Climate Award winners expressed their delight and gratitude for the recognition and saw it as an opportunity to become beacons of hope. The message from the three winners reiterated their resolve and spoke with one voice to say that nothing is impossible if you take challenges head on and demonstrate grit and perseverance to achieve your objective.

Dr. Arif Alvi calls for transparent inquiry into May 9

LAHORE: Former president Dr Arif Alvi has called for formation of an independent commission to ensure fair investigation into the May 9 riots and hold those involved accountable. This demand came after his meeting with PTI leaders Yasmin Rashid, Umar Sarfaraz Cheema, and Ejaz Chaudhry at an antiriot court of Lahore where they are facing charges related to the May 9 violence. During the meeting, Dr Alvi expressed solidarity with the detained PTI leaders, stating that the public stood behind them for their support for the party. He emphasised the importance of respecting the choices made by the public in elections, alleging that PTI's mandate was stolen in the general elections. Dr Alvi said the PTI founder was the most renowned leader of Pakistan, asserting that his global recognition underscored his significance to the country. He highlighted the need for a transparent trial process, advocating for the formation of an independent commission to investigate the violence and ensure the lion of the main culprits, Yasmin Rashid, a provincial minister and the detained PTI leader, spoke of her resilience in jail, stating that she remained steadfast and determined on her stance despite facing difficult conditions. - DNA

Taliban deny of Afghan involvement in Bisham

According to Islamabad, suicide attack that killed 5 Chinese in Pakistan was planned in Afghanistan

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: The Taliban on Wednesday rejected allegations of Afghan involvement in a recent deadly attack on Chinese workers in neighboring Pakistan. The five Chinese nationals, who were employed on the site of a hydro-power project in Dassa in north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan, were killed alongside their driver in a suicide blast on March 26, Pakistan's military said on Tuesday that the attack was planned in Afghanistan and that the suicide bomber was an Afghan citizen. Maj. Gen. Ahmad Sharif, a spokesperson for Pakistan's army, also told reporters that Islamabad had "solid evidence" of militants using Afghan soil to launch attacks in Pakistan, since the beginning of the year such assaults had killed more than 60 security personnel and that authorities in Kabul were unhelpful in addressing the violence. The Taliban's Ministry of Defense responded on Wednesday that the claims were "irresponsible and far from the reality." "Blaming Afghanistan for security incidents is a failed attempt to divert attention from the truth, and we strongly reject it," Enayatullah Khwarazmi, the ministry's spokesperson, said in a statement. "The killing of Chinese citizens in an area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is under tight security cover of the Pakistani army, shows the weakness of the Pakistani security agencies or cooperation with the attackers." The Dassa attack followed two other major assaults in regions where China has invested more than \$65 billion in infrastructure projects as part of its wider Belt and Road Initiative. On March 25, a naval air base was attacked in Herat in Pakistan's Balochistan province, and on March 26, militants stormed a government compound in nearby Gwadar district, which is home to a Chinese-operated port.

PTI's internal rifts widen Marwat refuses to work with Shibli, Omar Ayub

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Fault lines within the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership have seemingly worsened as its senior leader Sher Afzal Marwat Wednesday announced his decision against working with senior party leaders. "I refuse to work with Shibli Faraz and Omar Ayub [...] they didn't allow me to meet PTI

founder Imran Khan [in prison]," Marwat said while speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. "I was denied meeting the party founder yesterday as well as today," he added. Marwat's remarks come days after the party revoked his nomination for the post of National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman and named Sheikh Waqas Akram for said office.

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Israel pounds Gaza as truce talks resume in Cairo

UNRWA calls for immediate reopening of key crossings in Gaza

NEWS DESK

RAFAH: Palestinian Territories: Israel bombarded the overcrowded Gaza city of Rafah, where it has launched a ground incursion, as talks resumed Wednesday in Cairo aimed at agreeing the terms of a truce in the seven-month war. Despite international objections, Israel sent tanks into Rafah on Tuesday and seized the nearby crossing into Egypt that is the main conduit for aid into the besieged Palestinian territory. The White House condemned the interruption to humanitarian deliveries, with a senior US official later revealing Washington had paused a shipment of bombs last week after Israel failed to address US concerns over its Rafah plans. The Israeli military said hours later it was reopening another major aid crossing into Gaza, Kerem Shalom, as well as the Erez crossing. But the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said the Kerem Shalom crossing - which Israel shut after a rocket attack killed four soldiers on Sunday - remained closed. AFP TV footage showed Palestinians scrambling in the dark to pull survivors, bloodied and caked in dust, out from under the rubble of a Rafah building. Russia said on Wednesday that the war in Gaza was escalating due to Israel's incursions into Rafah and that Moscow so far has no prospect for a peace settlement in Gaza or the wider Middle East. "An additional destabilizing factor, including for the entire region, was the launch of an Israeli military ground operation in Rafah," Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters. "About one and a half million Palestinian civilians are concentrated there. In this regard, we demand strict compliance with the provisions of international humanitarian law." Speaking more broadly about efforts to find a lasting settlement in the Middle East, Zakharova said: "I would like to call it a settlement, but, alas, it is far from a settlement." There are no prospects for resolving the situation in the Gaza Strip. On the contrary, the situation in the conflict zone is escalating daily. "We are living in Rafah in extreme fear and endless anxiety as the occupation army keeps firing artillery shells indiscriminately," said Muhannad Ahmad Qabisa, 29.

Qatar urges world to prevent Rafah 'genocide'

DOHA: Qatar called on the international community on Wednesday to prevent a "genocide" in Rafah following Israel's attacks on the Gaza city's crossing with Egypt and threats of a wider assault. In a statement the Gulf state, which has been mediating between Israel and militant group Hamas, appealed "for urgent international action to prevent the city from being invaded and a crime of genocide being committed." Israel struck targets in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday after seizing the main border crossing with Egypt. Israel has vowed for weeks to launch a ground incursion into Rafah, despite a clamour of international objection. The attacks on the southern city, which is packed with displaced civilians, came as negotiators and mediators met in Cairo to try to hammer out a hostage-release and truce deal in the seven-month war. Qatar, which has hosted Hamas's political office in Doha since 2012, has been engaged - along with Egypt and the United States - in months of behind-the-scenes mediation between Israel and the Palestinian group. Meanwhile, Ismail Haniyeh, the Political Bureau Chairman of Hamas Movement, discussed latest developments in the Gaza Strip and ceasefire negotiations with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the phone on Wednesday. Haniyeh, who reached al-Sudani over the phone, briefed the premier on the latest political and field developments in Gaza in light of the resistance's approval of the ceasefire proposals put forward by mediators that was followed by Israel's occupation of Rafah crossing. The Hamas leader appreciated the Iraqi positions towards Palestine especially vis-à-vis the war of annihilation waged by Israel against the Palestinian people in Gaza. - Agencies