



Islamabad POST

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President for further strengthening of Pak, Jordan bilateral ties

Detailed News On Page-08

Pak, Italy unite in anti-drug trafficking efforts

Detailed News On Page-07

Pak in USA with 'good preparations'

Detailed News On Page-06



Lauds Chinese model of development

PM guarantees facilitation to Chinese investment

PM Shehbaz invites Huawei to invest in Pakistan's safe city, taxation sectors

DNA / NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, assuring all-out facilitation to Chinese investors, and security of Chinese individuals, projects and investments in Pakistan, emphasised that mutually rewarding business-to-business co-operation was key to a bright future for the two people. The prime minister, addressing the Pakistan-China Business Forum during his five-day China visit, highlighted bilateral trade and investment potential, especially in key sectors including transfer of Chinese technology, industry and partnership in IT, agriculture, mining, steel, textiles and renewable energy. The premier repeatedly lauded the Chinese model of development and economic transformation and vowed to replicate the same in Pakistan. "I will go back to Pakistan with this resolve, come what may, we will follow this model of great economic transformation in Pakistan," he told the gathering of hundreds of business leaders from both countries. "This model is enough to copy and simulate if we are sincere to our purpose and people. By God, I can tell you this is difficult but not impossible." As the Business Forum also marked the B2B matchmaking, he urged the Pakistani businessmen to sit with their Chinese counterparts and find out ways to move Chinese textile industries to Pakistan and make collaborations in steel and other industries. "Today is the opportunity, time and moment to capture. Sit down with Chinese friends to have serious discussions. I want to ensure you not as prime minister but as Chief Executive of Pakistan that I will give you the fullest support so that businessmen of Pakistan and China get benefits jointly," he remarked. He told the forum that Pakistan had mineral deposits of around \$10 trillion while the country's exports stood at \$30 billion. The minerals deposits offer huge potential to dig out and convert them into finished and semi-finished goods for exports.

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ADB approves financing to boost PPPs in Pakistan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$250 million policy-based loan to help the Pakistan drive sustainable investments in infrastructure and services through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). "ADB's Promoting Sustainable Public-Private Partnerships Program supports implementation of government policies to create an enabling environment for fiscally affordable PPPs and promote inclusive economic growth," according to press release received here. "This program is part of our comprehensive and integrated package of public sector management support that balances the country's fiscal consolidation and growth objectives," said ADB Director General for Central and West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov. "The program will help the Government of Pakistan create an environment that is conducive to strategic, fiscally affordable PPPs that will bring the country closer to its development goals," Zhukov said. ADB's program supports reforms that will increase the absorptive capacity of PPP infrastructure investments by creating a more robust and integrated legal and institutional framework for

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BEIJING: Vice Foreign Minister of People's Republic of China Sun Weidong receives Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at Beijing Capital International Airport. - DNA

President Zardari congratulates Sheinbaum

Says, looking forward to further strengthening ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari Wednesday congratulated Claudia Sheinbaum on her historic election as the first woman President of Mexico. "I am proud to share that Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was the first woman Prime Minister of the Muslim World, who struggled for democracy and women empowerment," the president wrote on his official X timeline. He said that he was looking forward to further strengthening the bilateral ties under her leadership. The president also expressed his best wishes for her success and the prosperity of Mexico.

Modi set to take oath for 3rd time

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to be sworn-in for a record-equalling third term on June 8, after key allies pledged their continued support a day after a humbling election verdict that saw his party lose its majority in parliament. Modi, a populist who has dominated Indian politics since coming to power in 2014, will for the first time need the support of regional allies whose loyalties have wavered over the years, which could complicate the government's reform agenda. On Wednesday, Modi's Hindu-nationalist

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Sindh joins KP chorus Focus on welfare, not Imran's cases, Bilawal to Sindh govt

Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari hopes PM Shehbaz Sharif will fulfil his promises regarding release of funds to PPP govt in Sindh

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Highlighting the difficult financial situation, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has said that the funding for projects in Sindh from the federal government is "uncertain". "[The] projects that should receive funds from the federal government is uncertain," he said while addressing the PPP's Sindh chapter parliamentary party on Wednesday. The statement from Bilawal, whose party is an ally of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government at the Centre, came amid Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's tirade against the Centre over the matter of arrears. The PPP chief said he would make all-out efforts to ensure the release of

Continued on Page 06

Gandapur stands firm against federal govt's claims

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: In a recent press conference held in Peshawar, the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, addressed the ongoing political dynamics with the federal government. He emphatically stated that the provincial government would not permit the federal authorities to assume the role of a political martyr. Mr. Gandapur expressed concerns regarding the federal government's performance, highlighting the inability to

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Sarim Burni arrested in Karachi

FIA and a foreign Intel agency arrested the 'social worker'

DNA

KARACHI: FIA has arrested Sarim Burni from Karachi Airport. Sarim Burni was arrested by anti-human trafficking cell of the FIA wing. A foreign security agency also took part in the operation. Sarim is accused of human trafficking and other crimes of serious nature, FIA sources said. Sarim is a Pakistani entrepreneur and Chairman who runs his non-profitable organization 'Sarim Burney Welfare-Trust'.

Pakistan lose to France in Nations Cup hockey

Pakistan qualifies for semi-final

DNA

WARSAW: Pakistan lost to France by 6-5 in the National Cup hockey tournament. Pakistan was down in the first two quarters however in the 3rd and 4th quarter they staged a comeback. At one time the score was 5-5 equal but then France took lead when it scored a goal on penalty corner. Pakistan played poorly in the first two quarters and conceded unnecessary penalty corners. The forward line performed poor also thus putting extra burden on the defence line. Star players Rana Waheed and Shahid unfortunately could not perform well. The Pakistan goalkeeper Abdullah put up a dismal performance as usual. He conceded straight goals. During the entire game he remained absent thus providing the French attackers with ample chances of goal scoring.

Kamal, Vawda suo motu

SC refuses to accept MQM-P leader apology

Apex court issues notices to all TV channels; gives Vawda one week's court to submit response

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court Wednesday rejected MuttahidaQaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Deputy Convener Mustafa Kamal's plea seeking an instant acceptance of his apology in a contempt suo motu case. The development came as a three-member CJF-led bench comprising Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan heard the contempt of court case against Kamal and independent Senator Faisal Vawda. Both politicians had done hard-hitting press conferences against the judiciary in Islamabad in May, with Vawda saying that no allegations could be levelled without evidence and Kamal sought to establish ethical standards for the judges as justice could "only be bought". Their statements had come after six Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges wrote a letter to Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) members, pointing out the intelligence agency's meddling in judicial affairs. The politicians also pointed out the dual citizenship of an IHC judge. Shortly after their tirade,

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FIA bared from taking action against PTI leaders

IHC directs Barrister Gohar and Raouf Hasan to appear before FIA and record statements

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has stopped the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from harassing or taking adverse action against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and the party's Central Information Secretary Raouf Hasan in the controversial tweet case. The IHC directed both the PTI leaders to appear before the probe agency and ordered the FIA not to "harass or take disciplinary action"

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Denial of livestream contradicts CJP's own guidelines: J. Minallah

In a dissenting note on the live streaming of the NAB amendments case, Justice Minallah says once the proceedings in a particular case have been live-streamed, then they cannot be ordered to be discontinued

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Justice Minallah further wrote in his dissenting note that the role of the top court in perpetuating brazen violations of fundamental rights through the use of arbitrary and draconian powers by the NAB and its complicity, despite being a guardian of guaranteed rights, is a blemish difficult to wash away. He further added that slain prime minister Benazir Bhutto and her husband, President Asif Ali Zardari, had been acquitted by the Supreme Court because it was declared that their trial was not fair on account of the bias of the judges on the Ehtesab Branch. "The powers of the bureau were subsequently used to prosecute, humiliate and violate the dignity of other former prime ministers, Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Yousaf Raza Gillani etc," he wrote, adding, "It is ironic that at present, the respondent has fallen victim after his removal from the office of prime minister." "The perception that the establishment and complicit courts are

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No ban on court reporting, IHC assures journalists

"The problem is only with running sensational tickers," says IHC Justice Aamer Farooq

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Wednesday assured journalists that there was no ban on court reporting but "irresponsible" court reporting. The court's remarks came during the hearing of

Continued on Page 06



Invigorating Corporate Retreats

Coming Soon

HUNZA SERENA HOTEL

President for building “technology highways” in Pakistan

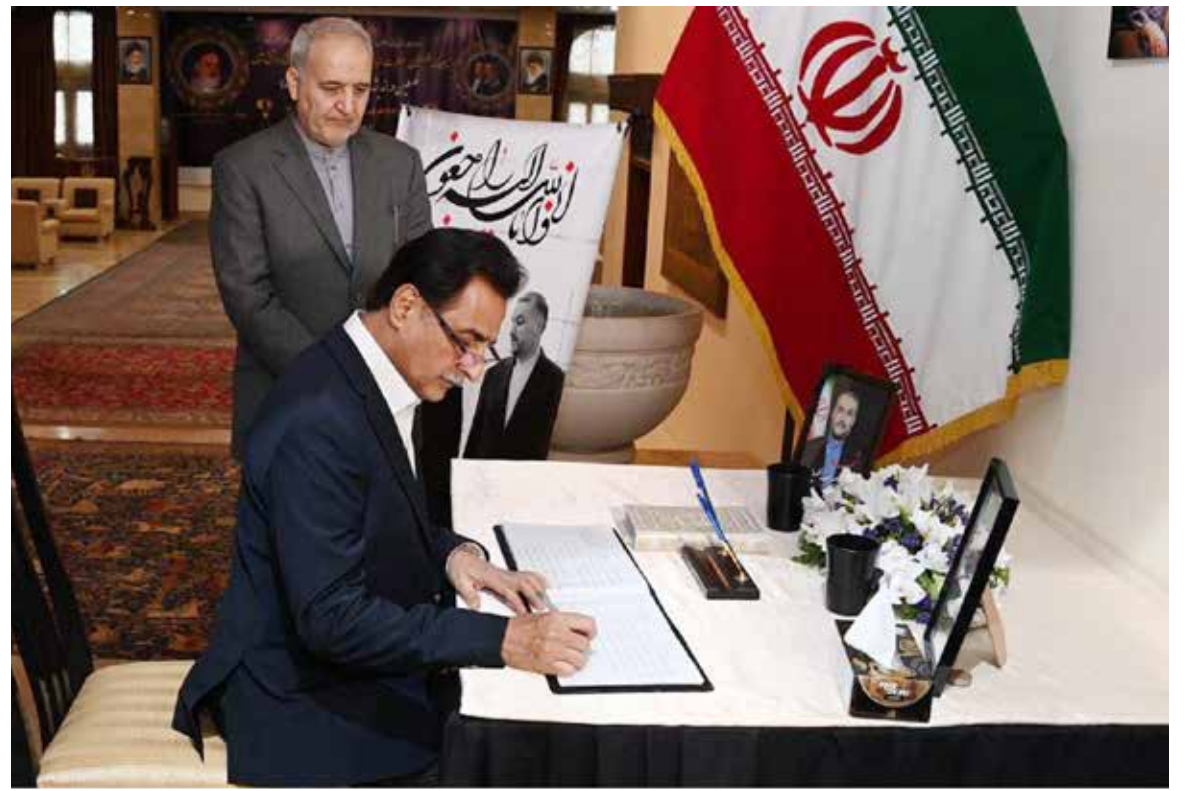
The Vice Chancellor of QAU briefed the President about the role of QAU in providing quality education, its educational programmes, and other administrative affairs of the University

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasised the need for building “technology highways” in the country by enhancing students’ access to IT infrastructure, strengthening educational programmes, and equipping them with modern skills to help them fully benefit from the knowledge economy. He said that providing laptops to students would increase their access to education, bridge the digital divide, and equip them with technology skills to help them compete in the national and international job markets. The President expressed these views while talking to Professor Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, Vice Chancellor of Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The Vice Chancellor of QAU

briefed the President about the role of QAU in providing quality education, its educational programmes, and other administrative affairs of the University. Talking to the Vice Chancellor, the President said that Pakistan was blessed with abundant human resources, which needed to be converted into a strength by imparting the latest education and skills to them. He highlighted that Pakistan needed to train and educate its human resources, which could be exported to foreign countries facing a shortage of trained professionals to help Pakistan earn foreign exchange. The President stated that universities were pivotal in producing skilled professionals, who could fulfill local and international market needs. He remarked that Pakistan needed to focus on producing more professionals such as doctors, engineers, nurses, and teachers.

During the meeting, the Vice Chancellor informed that QAU was one of the top-ranking universities in Pakistan and was at 315th position in global rankings. He apprised that the QAU was focusing on research that could have a positive impact on society, adding that digitalization was the top priority of the University. The President urged the need to further improve the quality of education, besides focusing on the character-building of students. He said that top position holders of QAU should be given Presidential Awards with cash to encourage students in their studies. The President appreciated the role of QAU in Pakistan’s academic sector and assured the Vice Chancellor of his support in getting the financial issues of the University addressed by taking it up at the appropriate forum.



ISLAMABAD : Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq inscribing his remarks in condolence book at the Iranian Embassy.—DNA

NA Speaker condole President Ebrahim Raisi’s demise

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Wednesday visited the Iranian Embassy here to convey his deepest condolences on the sad demise of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdullahian, and other high-ranking officials in the helicopter crash on May 19, 2024. Speaking to Iranian Envoy Reza Amiri Moghaddam, the Speaker, on behalf of the parliament and himself, extended heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the government of Iran, the families of the President, the Foreign Minister, and all others who lost their lives in the incident, as well as to the people of the brotherly nation of Iran over the martyrdom of Iranian leadership in the incident. He remarked that the incident was extremely shocking and heart-wrenching. Recalling his meeting with the late President Raisi during his recent visit to Pakistan, the Speaker mentioned their fruitful discussions aimed at strengthening bilateral and parliamentary cooperation. He noted that the late President Ebrahim Raisi was a great scholar, visionary leader, and a statesman. The late President was a strong proponent of the Pak-Iran partnership for regional development. Speaker Sadiq assured that the government, parliament, and people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with their Iranian brethren in this time of grief and pledged full support and cooperation from Pakistan to overcome this loss. Ambassador of Iran Reza Amiri Moghaddam expressed gratitude to the Speaker for his condolence message and visit to the embassy to offer condolence over the national tragedy. He appreciated the Speaker’s sentiments for Iran and assured his complete assistance and cooperation in further solidifying the brotherly relations between the two countries. The Speaker also inscribed his condolence message in the visitor’s book at the Iranian embassy.

Seminar on KP budget 2024-2025 discusses challenges

PESHAWAR : The National Think Tank & Good Governance Forum organized a seminar on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Budget 2024-2025, at Peshawar Press Club, focusing on opportunities, challenges, and solutions. The event brought together a diverse group of participants from various walks of life. The seminar was chaired by Dr. Syed Akhtar Ali Shah, former Home Secretary and IGP, who outlined the objectives of the Think Tank by mentioning that it would be platform to generate debate on important national and international issues, suggesting a way forward. The key note speakers included Mr. Shaukat Yousafzai, former Minister; Mr. Himayatullah Khan, Ex Advisor to KP Government; Mr. Ayub Shah, Senior Vice President PPP & Former MPA; Mr. Arshad Aziz Malik, President Peshawar Press Club; and Syed Baadshah Bukhari, Ex Sec-

retary Finance KP. The seminar began with a recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by Mr. Khizer Ali Shah as the moderator. Dr. Syed Akhtar Ali Shah delivered a speech on the bird’s eye view of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa budget and its implications. Syed Baadshah Bukhari presented a detailed analysis of the current budget, highlighting key points such as the dependence on Federal Government payouts and previous trends, which raised concerns about the province’s financial situation. He emphasized that the lower own source receipts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and high dependence on the Federal government are significant challenges. The emerging salary and pension pressure would also be a real challenge. Due to the previous track record of the Federal Government, the budget may face a huge deficit. Mr. Himayatullah Khan discussed the positive attributes of the budget, focusing

on projects such as the Chashma Bank Right Canal, which would help cultivate over 300,000 acres of land. He also highlighted road linkages among major cities as a good initiative for increasing economic activities. He emphasized that the KP government must look at its energy agreements with the Federal government and directly auction electricity produced. Mr. Shaukat Yousafzai praised the present Chief Minister for bravely asking for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s share from the Federal Government, stating that it was a challenging job get shares due to hurdles created by the elite within the Federal Government. He welcomed suggestions from the National Think Tank and assured that the present government would adopt a participatory approach for successful implementation and be a single voice for asking for shares from the Federal Government.—APP

Pakistan’s tobacco taxation drive gains momentum

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD : As the death toll from tobacco-related illnesses continues to mount, a clarion call resonates through the halls of power, urging Pakistan’s government to take bold action and implement robust tobacco taxation policies. The stark reality is that tobacco-related illnesses cause a health burden of Rs 615 billion annually, nearly 1.4% of the country’s GDP, and claims over 160,000 lives each year – a staggering cost in both human life and economic resources, said a press release issued here. Amidst the clamor, Mehboob ul Haq, CEO of the Human Development Foundation (HDF), emerges as a staunch advocate for change, emphasizing the

critical role of increased tobacco taxes in safeguarding public health and fortifying revenue streams. Increasing tobacco taxes is a win-win strategy,” says Mehboob ul Haq. “It not only discourages tobacco consumption, thus alleviating the burden of tobacco-related diseases on our healthcare system, but also generates substantial revenue for the government.” His words resonate with a chorus of health experts who champion taxation as a potent tool in the fight against tobacco use. This approach is demonstrably successful. Between July 2023 and January 2024, cigarette tax collections skyrocketed to PKR 122 billion, with full-year projections exceeding PKR 200 billion. These findings

highlight the success of the excise tax reforms as an effective strategy for improving public health and economic growth. Mehboob ul Haq underscores the need for foresight in economic planning. He implores the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to seize the opportunity presented by enhanced tobacco taxation, integrating it into their strategies for economic growth. “This revenue stream holds immense potential,” he asserts, “and aligns with Pakistan’s broader aspirations for prosperity while championing public health and well-being.” However, the battle against tobacco’s grip on society faces another front. Malik Imran Ahmed, a leading voice in tobacco control, draws

attention to the insidious tactics of the tobacco industry. “The need for proactive measures cannot be overstated,” he warns. “Efforts to introduce cheaper cigarette options persist, undermining our progress in curbing tobacco use.” Loose cigarette sales and non-compliance with pricing regulations continue unabated, posing formidable challenges that demand comprehensive regulatory interventions. In the face of these challenges, Imran advocates for swift and decisive action. Only through proactive measures and steadfast commitment can Pakistan hope to overcome the scourge of tobacco use, securing a healthier and more prosperous future for all its citizens.

Electric buses reach Islamabad, starts service routes

ISLAMABAD : Electric buses have started reaching Islamabad from Tuesday. According to the details, 30 out of 160 electric buses have reached Pakistan. Out of which 8 buses from Karachi have reached Islamabad, Jinnah Convention Center, charging point while 22 buses will reach Islamabad by Wednesday. Initially these 30 buses will ply on two routes. First route will start from NUST, Orange Line Depot, G-11 to PIMS Hospital. This route will end at PIMS after passing through G-11 Markaz, G-10 Markaz, G-9 Markaz and G-8 Markaz. The first route will consist of 13 stops and a bus will reach the stop after every ten minutes. The second route will start from PIMS and will be concluded at Bari Imam. This route will pass through from G-7, G-6, Melody, Appara, Ataturk Road, Serena Hotel, Foreign Office, Radio Pakistan, Diplomatic Enclave to Bari Imam.—APP

Rain brings relief to city after heat wave

ISLAMABAD : After weeks of relentless heat waves and rise in temperatures witnessed by the federal capital, like other parts of the country, isolated rain of moderate intensity lashed the parts of the city bringing relief to the heat-stricken people. A number of people flocked outside to enjoy the cool showers, with children splashing in the puddles and adults walking in the rain to welcome the respite after the sweltering heat. The city experienced weeks-long hot weather conditions that restricted many within homes to prevent from the side effects of having outdoor exposure during the sweltering summer heat as per advised by the weather and health experts. The isolated rain of light to moderate intensity accompanied by wind started in the capital city during afternoon on Wednesday and continued with gaps compelling citizens to come out and enjoy the pleasant weather after many days. “The long-awaited rain has provided relief as the past few weeks have been unbearable due to the heat wave conditions. We can finally sleep comfortably at night”, Zahid Shah, a resident of G-8 sector said. “We are going to visit some recreational spot to enjoy the cool weather as children were fed up of staying at home for so many days during their vacations amid the heat wave”, he said while talking to APP on Wednesday. The weather forecast has revealed that the cooler temperatures will persist this week, giving the city a much-needed break from the extreme heat. “It looks like the city has embraced normalcy after so many hot days reviving its natural beauty and spreading a sense of communal joy”, Asifa Batool, a young girl enjoying rainy weather with her friends said. She said, “Since the start of summer vacations, we were restricted to our homes following the advice of parents to prevent from the scorching heat. Even we didn’t participate in the summer camps owing to the hot weather”. “But now, it looks that we can move outside and spent some joyful days as earlier we were just sitting at homes, using gadgets, watching TV, playing indoor games. Now we can have physical activities outside which we were missing”, she said. Earlier, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast dust-thunderstorm rain in upper parts of the country from June 04-07 following which heatwave conditions will subside and citizens will get relief from the sweltering hot weather conditions. Under the influence of this weather system, rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected in Gilgit-Baltistan including Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar), Kashmir (Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber and Mirpur till June 08 with occasional gaps. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, dust-storm/thunderstorm with rain is expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Malakand, Kohat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Peshawar, Mardan and Kurram till June 08 with occasional gaps.—DNA

KP location not hindering economic revival

Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan to adopt positive and constructive steps aimed at convincing the federal government to address and settle these issues without any further delay

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Former senior civil bureaucrat and part of immediate care taker provincial government Himayat Ullah Khan has threatened arising of a critical situation, if rulers and leaders of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had failed in utilization of own natural, mineral and water resources. According to him all these issues are of political nature and could easily be settled through political means. In this respect, he suggested Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan to adopt positive and constructive steps aimed at convincing the federal government to address and settle these issues without any further delay. National Think Tank- a consultative body established and works under the dynamic leadership of former Secretary Home and Tribal Affairs and Retired Additional Inspector General Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has arranged Seminar on Budget for

2024-2025. Besides Himayat Ullah Khan and Barrister Syed Akhtar Ali Shah, ex-Secretary Finance Saeed Shah Bokhari, PTI leader Shaukat Yousafzai, Pakistan People’s Party leader Syed Ayub Shah and Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik addressed the event. First ever of its kind in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the speakers have highlighted shortfalls of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa economy and failure of its ruling junta and political squads. Himayat Ullah Khan in his presentation, besides highlighting the dark side of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa economy has also pointed out the bright side, which is not far but could be caught easily by mature and experienced politicians. “Merely increasing the size of the bureaucracy is fought with dangerous consequences as the previous two governments added almost 2.5 lac personnel to the public sector, thereby, increasing government expenditure to an unsustainable

level,” he remarked adding, “the only way to generate productive employment is by reviving economic activity primarily through private sector investment.” But the major obstacle in attracting private sector investment is a location; disadvantage of 16-20 per cent faced by the province and revival of the provincial economy is impossible without offsetting this single factor.” Himayat Khan has diverted attentions towards blessing up of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Natural gas and Cheap hydro electric power which if used strategically and judiciously, can effectively activate economic activity, thereby generating employment and revenue for the provincial government.” In this respect, he pointed out that supply of cheap electricity to the industrial sector on the model of Pehur Hydro Power project launched in 2020, is a successful initiative which needs to be replicated by PEDO. Secondly, 100 MMCFD surplus natural gas

produced by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and committed by the Federal Government in 2014 for generation of power, once provided to the industrial sector, can successfully offset the “locational disadvantage.” These two initiatives have definitely the potentials to attract substantial private sector investment in the province. Time and again apprising late Khan Abdul Wali Khan for his contribution in 1973 constitution and getting a lot for the smaller provinces especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Articles 251-261 and 172, Himayat Khan recalled that the 1973 Constitution has adequate special provisions which need to be taken up with the federal government for augmenting provincial government revenues and revival of province’s economy for the benefit of the people. He recalled that after Khan Abdul Wali Khan, late caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan had adopted a positive and constructive stance on the issues of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

AIOU to hold KP convocation on June 9

ISLAMABAD :The convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (IKP Chapter) will be held on June 9, 2024, in Peshawar. According to the AIOU, Governor KPK, Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi will be the chief guest. Many distinguished guests, including heads of educational institutes, teachers, renowned journalists and eminent social

personalities will attend the convocation. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and Governor KP, Faisal Karim Kundi will confer degrees and gold medals to students who graduated from semester Autumn 2004 to Spring 2022. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has said that 2024 marks the golden jubilee year of AIOU.

To celebrate this milestone, the university has planned a grand celebration, which includes holding convocation ceremonies to honour its graduates. Convocation of Islamabad chapter was held on January 31 and Lahore chapter was held on April 28, 2024. This convocation is exclusively for registered students from KP province.—APP



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

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



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	84994949
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Emergency

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& Rescue Services.....	4451122
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RGH.....	9290301-7
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PIMS.....	9261170-79
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Islamabad Metropolitan

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Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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On World Environment Day

PM urges countrymen to join global movement

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that despite facing challenges such as land degradation, desertification, and water scarcity, Pakistan remained steadfast in its resolve and efforts to address these issues through innovative solutions and collaborative partnerships

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As the international community observes World Environment Day on Wednesday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif urged the countrymen to join the global movement to restore their land, build drought resilience and combat desertification. The World Environment Day is celebrated annually on June 5 to highlight the environmental challenges of our time. World Environment Day 2024 focuses on land restoration, stopping desertification and building drought resilience. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the global host of this year's edition. Urging the people to be part of the Gen-

eration Restoration program to ensure a better future for all, the prime minister, who is on a five-day visit to China, in his message to the nation, said that the people and Government of Pakistan joined the global community in recognizing their shared responsibility to protect their planet and fight climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. He said the theme of this year's World Environment Day - 'land restoration, desertification, and drought resilience,' - reminded the world of the humongous challenge that confronting it in terms of the billions of hectares of land that was being degraded, affecting almost half of the world's population and threatening half of global GDP.

Rural communities, smallholding farmers and the extremely poor are hit the hardest, he added. "Pakistan stands firm in its resolve to combat environmental challenges and stands committed to contributing to global efforts towards sustainability. Initiatives such as the Green Pakistan Programme, Living Indus Initiative, and National Adaptation Plan, underscore our commitment to reforestation and ecosystem restoration, tackling issues of deforestation and biodiversity loss head-on," the prime minister remarked. He recalled that Pakistan's climate diplomacy efforts during COP27, particularly in establishing a Loss and Damage Fund were recognized widely and viewed positively by international

experts. He said on the domestic front, Pakistan is actively working on developing sustainable long-term low-carbon development strategies with assistance from GIZ, Pathways 2050 platform, UNDP, and the World Bank. Additionally, robust afforestation programs are being implemented. Initiatives like the Recharge Pakistan, GLOF, and Sustainable Land Management Program (SLMP) demonstrate Pakistan's dedication to promoting sustainable agriculture practices and combating land degradation, he added. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that despite facing challenges such as land degradation, desertification, and water scarcity, Pakistan remained steadfast in its resolve and efforts to address these issues

through innovative solutions and collaborative partnerships. The prime minister also took to his X timeline urging the people to join hands to safeguard and preserve our environment, not only for the well-being of people but also for the survival of our planet. "Though we cannot turn back time, we can certainly make a significant impact on the health and sustainability of our environment by taking proactive steps towards endeavors to nurture and cultivate forests, revive and replenish dwindling water sources, and rehabilitate and revitalize exhausted soils," he wrote. He called for embracing the responsibility and working towards a better and sustainable future for our planet.

US, China, UK remain top destinations for Pak exports

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the first ten months of the current financial year 2023-24, followed by China and the United Kingdom (UK). Total exports to the US during July-April 2023-24 were recorded at US \$ 4,497.658 million against the exports of US \$ 4,993.310 million during July-April 2022-23, showing a decline of 9.92 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$2,341.089 million against the exports of US \$1,700.303 million last year, showing an increase of 37.68 percent. UK was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$1,683.655 million during the months under review against the exports of US \$1,645.754 million, SBP data revealed. Among other countries, Pakistani exports to UAE stood at US \$1,637.779 million against US \$1,207.041 million last year, showing an increase of 35.68 percent while the exports to Germany were recorded at US \$1,235.348 million against US \$1,366.321 million last year, data said. During July-April, the exports to Holland were recorded at \$1,143.879 million against \$1,210.378 million whereas the exports to Italy stood at \$918.011 million against \$951.240 million. Pakistan's exports to Spain were recorded at \$1,199.450 million against the exports of US \$1,156.110 million while the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at \$433.567 million against \$435.954 million last year.--APP



Governor KPK Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice senator Azam Nazeer Tarar today.--DNA

WAPDA initiates legal proceedings against housing societies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has initiated legal proceedings against those cooperative housing societies that have been using WAPDA's name unlawfully. According to a statement issued on Wednesday, WAPDA has been approaching all legal forums including Registrar Cooperative Housing Societies and FIA to curb this practice. The statement says that WAPDA, a statutory body corporate established under WAPDA Act 1958, publicly renounces its association, nexus, and direct or indirect affiliation with any cooperative housing society, except WAPDA Town Cooperative Housing Society (Phase I and II),

situated in Lahore, which is authorised to use the name of WAPDA. As such, the unlawful and illegal use of a registered name i.e. WAPDA, for other housing societies or projects, by any other entity or person, amounts to a gross misrepresentation. Therefore, WAPDA cannot be held responsible for liabilities, if any, that may be raised by the public, pursuant to investment in such rogue, illegal, and unlawful housing societies, the statement further says. The housing societies, using WAPDA's name unlawfully and illegally include WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society, Islamabad, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society (Phase I and II),

ciety, Gujranwala, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society Ltd, Faisalabad, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society Ltd, Sargodha, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society Ltd, Sheikhupura, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society Ltd, Kasur, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society Ltd, Peshawar, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society Ltd, Quetta, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society, Karachi, WAPDA Workers and Officers Cooperative Housing Society, Hyderabad, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society, KIP, Karachi, WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society, (Southern Zone), WAPDA City Faisalabad and WAPDA City Gujranwala.

Pakistani pilgrims commend govt Hajj plans

ISLAMABAD: Pilgrims arriving from various regions of Pakistan to fulfil their religious obligation of Hajj have expressed high praise for the extensive arrangements made by the government to ensure their maximum facilitation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Upon reaching Saudi Arabia, these pilgrims have voiced their appreciation for the meticulous planning and execution of services that cater to their needs, highlighting the significant improvements and efforts made by the authorities to enhance their pilgrimage experience. During a visit to a building housing Pakistani pilgrims, this scribe interacted with several intending pilgrims who acknowledged the government's facilitation efforts from the very start of the process and the launch of the online Pak Hajj Mobile App. They appreciated the streamlined submission of Hajj applications, comprehensive Hajj training programs, and well-coordinated departures for Madinah and Jeddah. The pilgrims also noted the efficient re-

ception at Saudi airports, smooth transportation to residential buildings and the provision of quality, hygienic meals three times a day. Additionally, they highlighted the non-stop bus service from their hotels to Haram Sharif, the top-quality medical facilities, and the thorough guidance provided by Moavineen. These services significantly enhanced their pilgrimage experience, making it more comfortable and spiritually fulfilling. While the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, some pilgrims offered constructive suggestions for further improvement in future Hajj arrangements. They suggested hiring accommodations closer to Haram Sharif to ease access, ensuring the bus shuttle service covers all residential buildings to better facilitate elderly pilgrims. Talha Ahmed, an overseas Pakistani who came under the short-Hajj scheme with his father, expressed complete satisfaction with the arrangements while sitting in a dining hall of the residential building. Both

father and son remarked on the seamless arrangements for residence and food, adding, "We feel like we are at home and can fully focus on our prayers and communion with Allah Almighty." Sultan Ahmed and Waqas-ud-Din, who arrived with a group of a dozen friends from Wah Cantonment area of Pakistan, were on their fourth pilgrimage. They were particularly impressed, stating, "We have never seen such smooth arrangements before." Nusrat Tanveer, accompanying her US-based family members from Chakwal, praised the order and discipline maintained by the Pakistan Hajj Mission. She noted that the mission was closely monitoring the overall Hajj operation using modern technologies and online surveillance. However, she suggested that the bus-shuttle service between clusters of Hujjaj's residential buildings and Haram Sharif could be further improved by routing each bus from each building to better accommodate elderly people and those using wheelchairs.--APP

Country Director CAIE calls on education minister

ISLAMABAD: Country Director of Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE) Ms. Uzma Yousaf called on Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Wednesday. During the meeting, Dr. Khalid said that CAIE is playing a positive role in imparting quality education to the youth of Pakistan. He stressed that CAIE needs to expand the horizon of their role in Pakistan, a press release said. He especially emphasised its role in creating enhance assessment capabilities of the local education boards. He said that transparency in assessment and enhanced engagement is the need of the hour. He appreciated the fact that now local schools can also conduct CAIE exams. He was told that almost 25 big local schools are already conducting CAIE exams themselves. Dr. Khalid was briefed that a National Seminar on Assessment Reforms will be conducted in coordination with CAIE to lay down a road map aimed at increasing the assessment capabilities of local boards. Ms. Uzma invited the federal minister to visit Cambridge UK in order to fast track learning of local institutions from the global knowledge base of Cambridge UK. Dr. Khalid was also told that the role of CAIE will be enhanced in DARE and ASPIRE project as well.--APP

Government of Pakistan

PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

No.SW/A-8/2023-2024/837 Dated: 04/06/2024

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Sealed tenders are invited from the Firms registered with PEC under relevant Category "C-6" or above on percentage rates basis who possess valid renewal with PEC upto 30-06-2024 and having valid Electrical License Islamabad/Rawalpindi. Tender documents can be purchased from the Office of the undersigned during office hours till **20.06.2024** with written request on letter accompanied with attested copy of CNIC, income tax Registration Certificate as active Taxpayer (filer). Tender will be issued to the proprietor of the firm / company or their legally authorized representative having registered power of attorney (duly) attested. The tenders in sealed cover should be dropped in the tender box kept in the office of undersigned on **21.06.2024 upto 02:00 P.M.** The respective tenders will be opened on the same day at **02:30 P.M.** in the presence of contractors or their authorized representative having registered power of attorney. Other terms & conditions can be seen in office of the undersigned during office hours on any working day.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- No tender will be sold/issued on the date of opening of tenders and in case of public holidays the receipt and opening of tenders will be the next working day.
- No tender will be issued/received through post telegraph or E-Mail.
- According to PPRA Rules-25, Bid Security @3% of estimated cost in the shape of a bank instrument from the Firm/Company's own account any Scheduled Bank of Pakistan in the name of the Executive Engineer Store & Workshop Division Pak PWD Islamabad. No tender will be entertained without bid security (in sealed envelope) @3% of bid price and all mentioned documents for eligibility of a firm must be submitted with the bid otherwise bid will be treated non-responsive.
- Tender can be purchased on the prescribed cost (Non refundable) in Cash mentioned against the below noted work from the office of the undersigned during office hours upto **20-06-2024** before the date of opening of tender.
- The bidder must have completed atleast 01 project similar nature.
- Tender notice is also available at PPRA website (www.ppra.org.pk).
- Under Rule 33(1) of Public Procurement Rules, 2004 the Department reserves the right to reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of bid or proposal.

S.No	Name of work	NIT Amount	Earnest Mony	Period of completion	Cost of tender	Financial limit of contractor
1	IMPROVEMENT AND SPECIAL REPAIR OF E/M INSTALLATION IN SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN BUILDING AT ISLAMABAD(SUB HEAD;CHILLER NO. I- II).	13,628,260	3% of bid	30 DAYS	5000	(C-6) or Above ME-01
2	IMPROVEMENT OF E/M INSTALLATION IN PPMI MAIN BUILDING AT H-8 ISLAMABAD(SUB HEAD.SMD SCREEN FOR AUDITORIUM & TRAINING HALL)	9,742,700	3% of bid	30 DAYS	5000	(C-6) or Above EE-04, EE09
3	OPERATION AND PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR HVAC PLANT,WINDOW TYPE,SPLIT TYPE AC UNITS INSTALLED IN SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN BUILDING AT ISLAMABAD.(FOR ONE YEAR).	5,234,000	3% of bid	ONE YEAR	2000	(C-6) or Above ME-01

Executive Engineer
Store & Workshop Division
Pak PWD Islamabad

Briefs

AIB, Pakistan discuss strategic partnership

ISLAMABAD: Vice President and Corporate Secretary of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) Ludger Schuknecht on Wednesday met with the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema and discussed strategic partnership and future development plans. The Secretary and Special Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs were also present attended the meeting. The minister expressed gratitude for the valuable support and assistance provided to the people of Pakistan. He commended AIIB's crucial role in delivering assistance to Pakistan, especially during the 2022 floods, and briefed him on the country's improving economic outlook. The Vice President of AIIB expressed his gratitude to the Minister for the strong partnership and collaboration on development issues such as poverty reduction, climate change, financing instruments, and the advancement of SDGs. He agreed to enhance cooperation between the Government of Pakistan and AIIB in the aforementioned areas. The minister appreciated AIIB's favorable consideration of new project proposals from Pakistan in the infrastructure sector and expressed hope for continued collaboration in funding and implementing vital projects. The minister also lauded AIIB's policy initiatives for new financing efforts related to the Bank's Climate Action Plan, assuring that Pakistan will support such initiatives, given its status as one of the most climate-vulnerable countries.—APP

Telenor reaffirms commitment to greener future

ISLAMABAD: As the global community unites to celebrate 'World Environment Day', Telenor Pakistan has reaffirmed its commitment to a greener and more sustainable future through reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable practices to ensure a healthier and more resilient planet for the future generations. This year's theme, 'Land Restoration,' deeply resonates with Telenor Pakistan's mission to minimize environmental impact and champion sustainable practices. As part of its environment protection strategy, Telenor Pakistan is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 said a news release. This ambitious commitment will be achieved through the deployment of advanced technologies and substantial investments in renewable energy. For Telenor Pakistan, sustainability is not just a goal, but a fundamental value embedded in the company's operations. By adhering to rigorous environmental standards and prioritizing sustainable practices, the company aims to minimize resource consumption and ensure responsible use of natural resources.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Ludger Schuknecht, Vice President and Corporate Secretary of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), calls on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema.—DNA

Global efforts recovering Ozone hole to maximum extent

Unfortunately, human activities have led to the depletion of the ozone layer, resulting in the formation of the ozone hole. This depletion posed severe risks. However, it is encouraging that under the umbrella of United Nations Vienna Convention

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Wednesday said that the global efforts for recovering Ozone hole were being enhanced to maximum extent whereas the ministry was focusing on critical aspect of protection of ozone layer. "Unfortunately, human activities have led to the depletion of the ozone layer, resulting in the formation of the ozone hole. This depletion posed severe risks. However, it is encouraging that under the umbrella of United Nations Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol, global efforts were able to recover the ozone hole to a maximum extent," the PM's aide said. She was addressing National Ozone unit of ministry of climate change on occasion of training program for customs &

enforcement officers on Montreal Protocol & HCFC control, a news release said. While highlighting the importance of ozone layer she said the ozone layer was vital for life on Earth, adding "And we know that it shields us from the sun's harmful radiation, preventing severe health issues such as skin cancer and cataracts and protecting ecosystems and wildlife." While apprising the implementation status on UN conventions by Pakistan, she stated, Pakistan had played its role as an important party to these UN agreements. Pakistan ratified the Montreal Protocol in 1992, marking our commitment to phasing out ozone-depleting substances (ODS). Since then, Pakistan has made significant progress in this area. To steer this process, Government of Pakistan established a dedicated National Ozone Unit (NOU) in 1996. This Unit through its collaborative efforts with Paki-

stan Customs, the Refrigeration and air conditioning industry, the Ministry of Commerce, technicians and engineers, importers, and traders has successfully completed ten phases of the Montreal Protocol. She further added, Pakistan phased out the first generation of Ozone Depleting Substances by 2009, and achieved a 50% reduction in HCFC by January 2020, adding "We are successfully moving towards the 67.5% reduction target by 2025. Our achievements include converting numerous industries to ozone-friendly technologies. We are on track to meet future targets, demonstrating our collective resolve." Highlighting the role of customs officers she said, Customs officers played a crucial role in the management of ozone-depleting substances by ensuring the strict enforcement of regulations and preventing illegal imports. Their vigilance and expertise are essential in implementing meas-

ures to protect and regenerate the ozone layer, safeguarding both the environment and public health. This training is crucial as the role of customs and enforcement officers is essential in monitoring and preventing the illegal trade of ODS. Their efforts ensure, our borders and markets remain free from substances that harm the ozone layer. Overall, through training more than 2,500 technicians and over 300 customs officers, the NOU has significantly enhanced our national capacity to handle and regulate ODS effectively. Reiterating her commitment she stated, "Our journey did not end here, adding "We remain resolute in our commitment to environmental protection. We are now preparing for the upcoming HFC phase-down under the Kigali Amendment." Highlighting the climate actions of the ministry she said, the Ministry's National Ozone Unit, in

collaboration with Hima-Verday and Clasp, developed the Pakistan Cooling Action Plan to reduce carbon emissions associated with cooling products. She highlighted that holding this training in connection with World Environment Day 2024 was a testament to our resolve for environmental protection in the true and practical sense, adding It was a joint effort, reflecting our dedication to the principles of the Montreal Protocol. She concluded with emphasize that she would like to reiterate the resolve of the incumbent government, guided by the Prime Minister's unwavering commitment to climate action, adding "Our collective efforts in protecting the ozone layer reflect our dedication to environmental protection and sustainable development. Let us continue to work together, inspired by the theme of World Environment Day 2024, to safeguard our planet for future generations."

IESCO completed 100% maintenance of 481 feeders

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has completed 100 per cent maintenance of 481 feeders under the annual maintenance programme for fiscal year 2023-24. Sharing details, Chief Engineer Operation Director Muhammad Aslam Khan told APP here Wednesday that out of a total of 481 feeders, maintenance work of 158 feeders in Islamabad circle has been completed till March 9, 50 in Rawalpindi City, 52 in Rawalpindi Cantt, 48 in Attock and 93 in Chakwal circles. Similarly, 90 per cent maintenance work of 369 feeders including 86 of Islamabad, 76 of Rawalpindi City, 99 of Rawalpindi Cantt, and 108 of Attock circles has also been completed during the said period, he said. Moreover, he said that 80 per cent work on the remaining 34 feeders has also been completed. Out of a total selected 812 feeders, 244 feeders were selected from Islamabad Circle, 311 from Rawalpindi City and Rawalpindi Cantt Circles, 160 from Attock, 93 from Chakwal, and 4 from Jehlum circles, he said. The Operation Director said the company had earmarked Rs 415.298 million budget for the annual maintenance programme. Out of the total budget, Rs 297.483 million was specified for material while Rs 117.815 million was for casual labor, he said.—APP

Power division clarifies news

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Power Division on Wednesday strongly contradicted a news item aired on certain private tv channels about winding up of net-metering policy. "There is no truth in the news aired on various television channels regarding abolishing net metering policy," said a statement issued by the Power Division here. The ministry clarified that no directives were received from the Prime Minister regarding any change in the net-metering policy. The channels should take response from the ministry before airing such misleading news, it added.—APP

Business community demands relief in budget

ISLAMABAD: The business community has demanded relief and facilities for the promotion of industry in the upcoming budget 2024-25 by broadening the tax net. Talking to the APP on Wednesday, President, of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri said that consultation with the business community has been finalized and its budget proposals have been sent to the relevant ministry. He said that the business community has called upon the government to incorporate them in the Federal Budget 2024-25 as their implementation would address the key issues of trade and industry, facilitate better growth of business activities, improve tax revenue of government and help in revival of the economy. The ICCI president said

that the chamber, like every year, had forwarded its proposals for the Budget 2024-25 to the Finance Ministry and the government would hopefully accept them. He urged the government to consult with the business community and establish joint committees at the district level to widen the tax net, besides applying with the law of punishment and penalty against the tax evaders. The National Tax Number (NTN) should be made mandatory for opening a bank account, besides the sale and purchase of property and vehicles, he stressed. Meanwhile, Chairman FCCPCI Capital Office, Karim Aziz told APP that the chamber suggested the government tax reform for broadening the tax base to revive the businesses in the country. He said that the chamber has also urged

the government to consult with all stakeholders for the upcoming federal budget. He said that FCCPCI has finalized its budget proposals, which have been sent to the relevant ministries and called upon the government to incorporate them in the federal budget 2024-25. He said that their implementation would address the key issues of trade and industry and facilitate better growth of business activities, improve tax revenue of the government and help in the revival of the economy. He stressed the need for reforming and simplifying the taxation system in consultation with the real stakeholders. He urged the government to focus on ease of doing business in the upcoming budget, which would help attract the much-needed investment to trigger economic growth in the country.—APP

CDA embarks on ambitious solar power project to reduce electricity bills

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has taken a significant step towards sustainability and cost-efficiency by announcing a comprehensive solar power project for its buildings, street lights, tube wells, and water pumps. According to Member Engineering Khalid Hafeez, the project, expected to save the agency a substantial Rs. 250 million monthly, has been approved by the CDA Board, which has also given the go-ahead for a feasibility study to ensure the project's success, a private news channel reported.—APP

ANF recovers over 64 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations across the country managed to recover over 64 kg drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He said, 918 grams heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Sharjah at Faisalabad Airport. 44 grams of weed was recovered from a parcel sent from the UK at a courier office in Rawalpindi. In the third operation, 60 kg hashish was recovered from Panni Gwadar. In the fourth operation, 3.6 kg hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up in Ahmedabad Attock. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

China's approach to medicinal plant conservation to benefit Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan can learn from China's holistic approach to medicinal plant conservation, which combines traditional knowledge, sustainable practices, and collaborative research. By combining indigenous wisdom with scientific advancement, both countries can contribute to global efforts to protect these valuable resources. "China's achievements in large-scale landscape forest restoration provide valuable insights to global plant conservation efforts. According to Gwadar Pro, key factors contributing to this success include the government's strong commitment, the ecological redline approach, community engagement, innovative reforestation techniques, long-term monitoring, and international collaboration," said Ajaz Ahmed, a Pakistani Forester and an expert in ecosystem restoration and biodiversity. He said that collecting the seeds of rare upland mountain plants is crucial for their regeneration and survival. The primary task in protecting biodiversity is to safeguard these precious seeds. This



task requires patience and hard work, but the rewards are immeasurable. Ahmed also mentioned the urgent need for actions to address the issue of glacier retreat in the Hindukush region of Chitral, Pakistan. Plants, animals, and downstream communities rely on these ecosystems for survival. Now is the time to prioritize measures to mitigate glacier retreat in order to protect this important ecosystem. He said, "The conservation of medicinal plants is crucial for maintaining biodiversity,

promoting sustainable use, and preserving traditional knowledge. Both Pakistan and China have rich herbal traditions, and there are valuable lessons Pakistan can learn from Chinese practices." Indigenous communities in Pakistan play a vital role in conserving medicinal plants. Their strategies, often rooted in rituals, beliefs, and taboos, unintentionally contribute to plant conservation. Similarly, Chinese traditional medicine (TCM) has a long history of using medicinal plants. Learning from China's indig-

enous knowledge can help Pakistan enhance its conservation efforts, he underlined. Collecting medicinal plants, especially in rural areas, can provide additional income for collectors, especially women. Sustainable harvesting or cultivation practices can help alleviate poverty while ensuring the protection of these plants. China's experience in sustainable harvesting and cultivation can guide Pakistan in balancing economic benefits with conservation goals. Joint research on genetic stability, material basis, effectiveness, and safety of medicinal plants can yield valuable insights. Comparing seeds from space (e.g., Pakistan's medicinal seeds sent to space) with their counterparts on Earth can lead to the discovery of new medicinal materials. Pakistan boasts a diverse range of ecological zones, from the subtropical Indus Delta to high mountains like K2 at 8,611 meters. This diversity provides suitable living conditions for over 3,000 medicinal plant species, accounting for around 50% of the total flowering plants found in the country.

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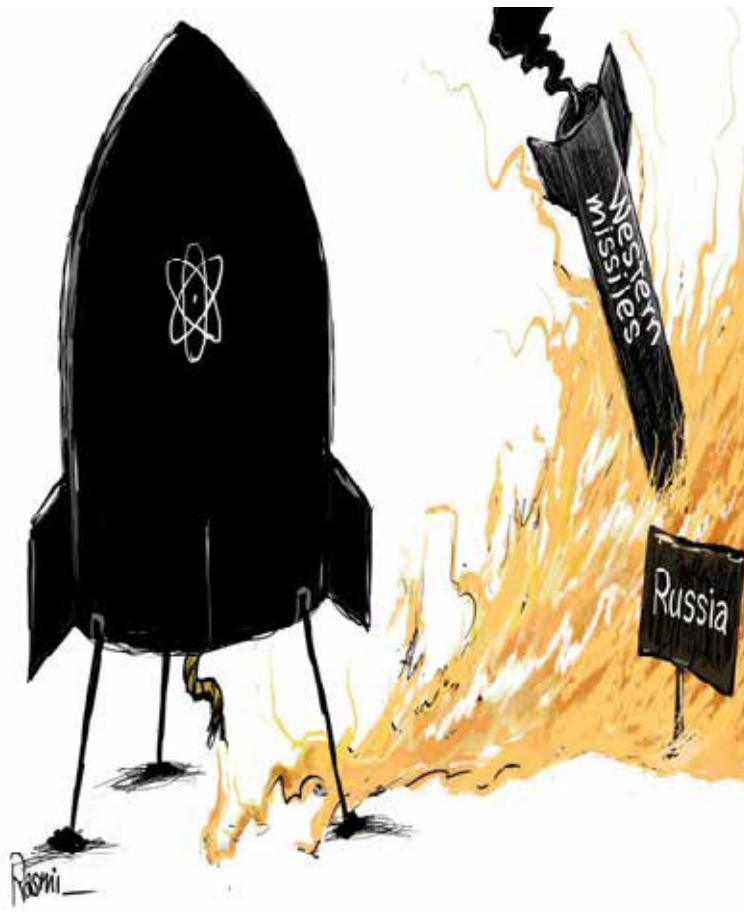
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Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

China's economic strategy

HERE is now a consensus discourse that China is not doing what is needed to fix its economy. Instead of stimulating domestic demand – as Western economies but especially the American economy usually do in times like these – it is resorting to the old trick of trying to export its way out of its economic troubles. But that won't do any more. Western leaders and experts say it won't work. Then they declare they won't let the Chinese do it anyway to prevent them from hurting others. Beijing's version is a bit different, and it's not exactly what Western critics claim it is doing. It may yet fail, but likely not for the reasons the critics have cited. Under the label "overproduction", the Western criticism is really launching a new trade war as part of its full-spectrum containment of China and its alleged threats. It's typical, when you start a war, whether military or trade, you blame the other guy for making you do it. So you have the latest attack from US Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel. In an interview with Bloomberg, he claims China is exporting its domestic economic problems to the rest of the world, and that the US is strengthening its resolve to help its allies to counter China from dumping its cheap goods on them. By rest of the world, he seems to mean the United States and the European Union. Most people think the world is a lot bigger. The real "rest of the world" don't necessarily feel the way Emanuel does. Samaila Zubair, chief executive of the Africa Finance Corporation, said last month that China should look to Africa to diversify its supply chains and counter overcapacity claims against the West. He said that China as a world leader in renewable energy should move more of the green industry's supply chain to the continent. "What we want China to do ... is to look at Africa as a way of diversifying the supply chain because Africa has minerals and metals to support this," he said. "Africa also has renewable energy sources, so the processing of these materials should have been in Africa." In recent years, China has already been shifting most exports to the Global South, away from developed markets, and relocating production to developing economies, including in Africa, state-run CGTN news reported. Emanuel's view, of course, echoes criticism by other US officials such as Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, according to whom China can't export its way out of trouble through overproduction and the dumping of heavily subsidised products overseas. Another version of the same criticism has been voiced by well-known columnist and Nobel economics laureate Paul Krugman. He told Bloomberg that Beijing has been "bizarrely unwilling" to use more government spending to support consumer demand instead of ramping up production. Beijing doesn't see it that way. For the Chinese, they are only responding to Western hostilities, and not just in trade and economics. Given the readiness of Washington and increasingly Brussels to deny the Chinese access to select technologies, markets and financial channels, China must develop its own domestic hi-tech capabilities and establish reliable global supply chains for its products and services. This is especially important for the prioritised green industry, which has, under state guidance, achieved global dominance in solar cells and panels, electric cars and lithium-ion batteries. Western complaints about these fields are just sour grapes because their own industries have lagged far behind for lack of investment.



Planned ceasefire or hidden defeat

US President Joe Biden's speech on Friday, May 31, which sought to place a cover for the Israeli occupation entity's failure to weaken the Gaza Resistance, comes in the shadow of an escalating Resistance front. On the same day, the 33rd Arab National Congress in Beirut, hosting Resistance figures from Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq occurred, in addition to Sayed Nasrallah's speech, in which he threatened with Resistance fighters crossing the northern border. President Assad met with the Iranian Leader Ayatollah Khamenei a day prior, and Yemen has been under relentless bombing from the American and British warplanes. The direction of Biden's speech and the developments mentioned indicate America may have reason to believe the Resistance axis may be escalating. Biden's unplanned speech, with the announced delivery on the same day, can be characterised as seeking to put a smile on a bad face. It seemed to be directed towards the settler population more than the Zionist leadership, aiming to convince them that the Israeli occupation entity's security would be intact if they accept the ceasefire proposal. Biden claimed the Gaza Resistance is "no longer capable of carrying out another October 7th" as it has been weakened; this is whilst occupation soldiers are being ambushed daily and even US intelligence admits most of the Gaza Resistance's fighting capacity and tunnels remain intact. In fact, the occupation forces recently withdrew from Jabalia, after three weeks of having achieved nothing except the mass killing of civilians. This is despite claiming at the beginning of the year that they had destroyed the Resistance infrastructure in the area, while the Resistance continues to fire missiles from within. This is a desperate attempt from Biden to grant the Israeli occupation entity an excuse to end the war, as he spoke of the failures in achieving any victory against the Gaza Resistance through the continuation of the war. He emphasised how the continuation of the war is increasing the Israeli occupation entity's isolation in the world, demonstrating the power of the international uprising and mass protests in weakening the American and Western position. Biden put forward a ceasefire proposal he claimed was on Israeli terms. This proposal was viewed "positively" by the Gaza Resistance and considered by an Israeli official in the right-wing cabinet as a victory for the Resistance, according to Israeli media. In reality, the proposal is no different from what the Gaza Resistance previously accepted, with Biden urging the Israeli occupation entity "to stand with this agreement, regardless of pressure." He stated that there were those in the entity's government coalition who would call for this war to continue indefinitely, making it clear "they want to occupy Gaza and keep fighting for years, the hostages are not a priority for them." This statement, in addition to the ceasefire proposal stipulating the return of Palestinians to their areas of Gaza, implies the Israeli occupation entity's plan to depopulate Gaza is rejected and the American two-state solution will advance.

Election amendment ordinance 2024: Protecting the vested interests

Qamar Bashir



This Ordinance also reflects the perceived conflicts of interest among its key stakeholders. Allegedly, those involved in drafting and approving the ordinance, including the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Cabinet, the Prime Minister, and the Acting President, may also be the beneficiaries of the rigged elections. This presents a clear conflict of interest, as these individuals and entities may be directly implicated in election irregularities. Allegedly, they are the ones who stand to gain from the ordinance...

THE elections in Pakistan held on 8th February 2024 were conducted in a tightly controlled environment and were marred by allegations of rigging, malpractices, and altering of election results through manipulation of Form 47, which is crucial for declaring candidates' outcomes. The Election Amendment Act 2023 provides a remedy for aggrieved parties to seek redress from election tribunals constituted under Section 140 of the Election Act 2023. However, when the Lahore High Court provided judges to head the tribunals, the Election Commission initially employed delaying tactics and later introduced the Election Amendment Ordinance 2024. This ordinance empowered the Election Commission to appoint retired judges as presiding officers of the election tribunals, raising significant concerns. The original Election Amendment Act 2023 stipulated that election tribunals should include sitting judges appointed in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court. This process ensured judicial oversight and impartiality in handling election disputes. By bypassing this consultation, the Election Commission's appointment of retired judges may compromise the tribunals' impartiality and undermine public confidence in the election dispute resolution process. This could result in decisions that are biased towards the status quo, thereby legitimizing fraudulent election practices and denying justice to aggrieved parties. The mover of this ordinance most likely could be the election commission itself which may also be a defendant in election rigging allegations. By controlling the appointment of presiding officers to the election tribunals, the Election Commission can exert undue influence over the tribunal's outcomes. This undermines the fairness of the adjudication process and erodes public confidence in the electoral system. This Ordinance also reflects the perceived conflicts of interest among its key stakeholders. Allegedly, those involved in drafting and approving the ordinance, including the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Cabinet, the Prime Minister, and the

Acting President, may also be the beneficiaries of the rigged elections. This presents a clear conflict of interest, as these individuals and entities may be directly implicated in election irregularities. Allegedly, they are the ones who stand to gain from the ordinance, which compromises the integrity of the electoral process and the principle of natural justice. For instance, candidates from the PTI, who claim their mandate was stolen, may file complaints against these very Public servants. The ordinance appears to shield these stakeholders from scrutiny by empowering the Election Commission to appoint retired judges to election tribunals without judicial consultation, potentially influencing the tribunal's decisions in their favor. This Ordinance also seemed to have violated the principle of natural justice, which demands impartiality and fairness in legal proceedings. The conflict of interest inherent in the involvement of those accused of benefiting from electoral fraud in the drafting and approval of the ordinance contravenes fundamental legal principles. Natural justice requires that no one should be a judge in their own cause (nemo iudex in causa sua) and that everyone should have the right to a fair hearing (audi alteram partem). In a hypothetical scenario, if impartial presiding officers were appointed to the Election Tribunals, they would deliver verdicts without any fear or favor. This could potentially result in many complaints being decided in favor of appellants or complainants, thereby fundamentally altering the composition of the National Assembly, as well as the Provincial Assemblies of Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan. This scenario would necessitate the formation of new governments, effectively dismantling the current power structures and representing a significant blow to those accused of masterminding the election manipulations. This led to visualization of another hypothetical scenario, if PTI were to form the government alone or in coalition with other parties at the center and in Punjab, it could lead to significant political shifts. In such a scenario, cases against PTI's founder, leadership, and workers might be quashed. The narrative surrounding the events

of May 9 could shift to the opposite direction, effectively resetting the political chessboard with most power pieces in PTI's control. The prospect of such a shift would undoubtedly lead to renewed political and economic instability. The current ruling coalition, facing the risk of losing power, might employ various tactics to maintain control, including further manipulation or delaying tactics. The opposition, empowered by favorable tribunal decisions, would push for immediate changes, creating a volatile political environment. Such an outcome would be highly unacceptable to the entrenched power structures, as it would signify a dramatic loss of influence and control. Consequently, the stakes for controlling the decisions of the election tribunals become even higher, making it imperative for those in power to ensure that tribunal outcomes are favorable to them. However, the argument's strength relies heavily on the assumption that independent tribunals would universally rule in favor of the complainants. While this is plausible given the allegations, it's not guaranteed. Additionally, the consequences of such rulings, while significant, are speculative and contingent on many variables, including the reactions of various political actors and the public. The ordinance has already been challenged in the Lahore High Court on the grounds that appointing retired judges of the High Court and District Courts undermines the independence of the judiciary and attempts to control tribunal outcomes in favor of candidates who benefited from manipulated election results. By compromising the integrity of election tribunals, the ordinance potentially deprives candidates and voters of the opportunity to seek genuine redress for electoral grievances. This situation calls for serious judicial review and possible legislative action to restore the original provisions of the Election Amendment Act 2023, thereby upholding the principles of judicial independence and democratic governance. – Former Press Secretary to the President Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

How the trans-caspian middle corridor can help revive Asia-Europe trade

Marat Karabayev

The Middle Corridor can contribute to reversing this trend, while also lowering costs and offering a more sustainable trade route, as land-based transit like rail is more carbon-efficient than air or maritime freight. To realise the potential of the Middle Corridor and address the bottlenecks along the route, work is being done by Kazakhstan to improve infrastructure and terminal capacities, increase rolling stock, remove administrative barriers and create favourable conditions for carriers

GLOBAL trade is facing several challenges. Last year, global trade volumes initially rebounded but the overall trend showed a slowdown compared to the robust growth of 2022. The trade in goods in particular was down sharply last year by nearly US\$2 trillion. These headwinds are a result of geopolitical tensions, including conflicts and supply chain disruptions. Trade between Asia and Europe has not been immune to this, as reflected in the slower growth last year. As global trade is vital for economic development, all countries need to take steps to restore its growth. Kazakhstan can play a key role here. As the largest country in Central Asia, situated between Asia and Europe, it serves as an important transit hub for trade between the two continents. Kazakhstan accounts for an estimated over 80 per cent of all land transit traffic from China to Europe, offering faster and more efficient alternatives to traditional maritime routes. In 2022, over 23 million tonnes of goods were transported via rail between Kazakhstan and China, a figure that has since increased by 22 per cent. This shows the importance of overland routes through Central Asia for China's trade with Europe. For many years, Kazakhstan has been pivotal to China's Belt and Road Initiative, which was first announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in Kazakhstan and which marked its 10th anniversary last year. Over the past 10 years, this mammoth project has been instrumental to enhancing trade and investment flows through improved infrastructure. However, new geopolitical realities call for additional transit routes to boost trade between Asia and Europe. The Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, also known as the Middle Corridor, is crucial in this regard. The Middle Corridor connects Southeast Asia and China with Europe, traversing Kazakhstan, the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey before reaching European Union countries. Last year, cargo transport along this route exceeded 2.7 million

tonnes, growing by 86 per cent. This figure is expected to grow further to reach 4.2 million tonnes this year. Although the Middle Corridor has been developing over the past decade, progress has accelerated in the last three years due to geopolitical changes and navigation issues through the Suez Canal, a key shipping route. According to the UN, the number of container ships transiting the Suez Canal dropped by 67 per cent last year. In the first two months of this year, trade volumes along the route have fallen further by 43 per cent year on year. Between January 2022 and December 2023, EU imports from China decreased by 19 per cent. In April this year, exports to the EU dropped by 3.57 per cent year on year. The UN Conference on Trade and Development further indicates that maritime shipping costs from Shanghai to European countries have roughly tripled in recent months. The Middle Corridor can contribute to reversing this trend, while also lowering costs and offering a more sustainable trade route, as land-based transit like rail is more carbon-efficient than air or maritime freight. To realise the potential of the Middle Corridor and address the bottlenecks along the route, work is being done by Kazakhstan to improve infrastructure and terminal capacities, expand port capacities, increase rolling stock, remove administrative barriers and create favourable conditions for carriers. These efforts will increase the route's capacity to 10 million tonnes per year by 2025. Additionally, a major project being implemented is the construction of the second track of the Dostyk-Moiynty Railway in Kazakhstan. Slated for completion by late 2025, this initiative aims to enhance transit traffic between China and Europe, with an anticipated economic impact of US\$8.8 billion over the next 20 years. However, to ensure the Middle Corridor achieves its objectives, we need the support and involvement of other countries. To date, Austria,

Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Hungary have expressed interest in joining the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route association. The EU recently announced a €10 billion (US\$10.85 billion) investment to bolster the Middle Corridor. The EU plans to invest as much as €18.5 billion more to ensure that roads, railways, and the Kazakh seaports of Aktau and Kuryk can provide smart, safe, and fast transport services from China to Europe. Furthermore, a road map for development to 2027 has been agreed with Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey to eliminate bottlenecks along the Middle Corridor. Nevertheless, more needs to be done. According to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a significant capital injection of between US\$19-21 billion is required to overcome the Middle Corridor's logistical and infrastructural bottlenecks. This includes developing high-capacity freight terminals, modernising railway systems and implementing advanced tracking and monitoring technologies. Asian and Western technologies and expertise can significantly contribute to this development. Transport is the backbone of the modern economy, crucial for the exchange of goods, capital and services across regional borders. It is therefore essential to develop new transit routes. These sustainable routes can also support efforts to combat climate change and provide long-term solutions to expanding populations and demand. As a bridge between the East and the West, Kazakhstan will continue to play its part in facilitating regional and global trade. We hope our state partners across Asia and Europe will join us in supporting our transport networks and projects, including the Middle Corridor, which will facilitate economic growth throughout Eurasia, both in the short and long term. It is essential not to miss this opportunity. – Marat Karabayev is Kazakhstan's minister of transport

Briefs

PM Shehbaz guarantees facilitation..

FROM PAGE 01

He assured the Chinese side that his government had already started structural changes in Pakistan to control corruption. PM Shehbaz drew a comparison between the \$500 billion GDP of the 13-million city of Shenzhen and the \$380 billion GDP of Pakistan with a 250 million population and called the Chinese city's swift transformation a "miracle of this century" and the "eighth wonder of the world" necessitating for others to learn the lesson from. He appreciated Chinese President Xi Jinping's dynamic and visionary leadership which elevated his country to become the second-largest economy and military power within a short span of time and steered 700 million people out of poverty, despite pressures and challenges.

ADB approves...

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public investment management and public financial management for PPPs. According to press release issued here, the program supports implementation of an integrated PPP policy. The reforms will facilitate efficient infrastructure planning and promote sustainable development practices in infrastructure projects, such as climate risk screening and gender considerations in project feasibility assessments and PPP contracts. "Mobilizing private finance through PPPs can help to bridge the financing gap in public sector infrastructure projects—which is vital," said ADB Economist Sana Masood, adding the program would help ensure PPPs in Pakistan were structured correctly and implemented effectively in order to deliver more efficiency, innovation, and value for money.

Denial of livestream...

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responsible for such grave abuses of human rights and humiliation of the representatives of the people does not appear to be unfounded." When the deposed prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was arrested and sent to the gal-lows by the Supreme Court, he was not an ordinary prisoner or convict, Justice Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was made to profoundly suffer on account of the grave abuse of the powers vested in the bureau."

No ban on court...

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petitions challenging Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's (Pema) restrictions on airing of court proceedings on news channels. During the hearing of pleas filed by Press Association and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq said: "There is no ban on court reporting. The media can report the court proceedings." The chief justice, however, maintained that the ban is, in fact, on "irresponsible reporting". "The problem is only with running sensational tickers," said Justice Farooq. During the hearing of the petition, Pema filed its reply in the court.

Gandapur stands...

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finalize the budget, which he views as a critical issue. He reiterated the provincial government's stance against any reduction in the province's projects and drew attention to the significant increase in electricity tariffs, questioning the allocation of the revenue generated from this hike. Furthermore, Mr. Gandapur commented on the status of the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, asserting his disassociation from any individuals involved in corrupt practices.

T20 WC : Pakistan in USA with 'good preparations', Babar Azam

Skipper wants senior players to take responsibility in forthcoming matches to avoid the previous mistakes

SPORTS DESK

DALLAS: As Pakistan are set to begin their World Cup 2024 campaign from Thursday, skipper captain Babar Azam expressed confidence in the team's preparation for the upcoming matches. "We have come to the USA with good preparations," said Babar while speaking to media persons in Dallas, emphasising the team's strategic approach and readiness to adapt to different conditions. "The batters have been training indoors, and the bowlers have trained in the field," he noted, ensuring a balanced approach to preparation. "Some of our players have played here before and are familiar with the conditions. Shadab Khan, Imad Wasim and Haris Rauf have all played here previously," Babar stated. The skipper also noted that they are not expecting high-scoring matches here. "Seniors need to step up, take responsibility" As the first match of Pakistan and the USA of the T20 World Cup will take place on June 9, the right-handed batter wants the senior players to take responsibility in the forthcoming matches to avoid the previous mistakes. "I have confidence in our fast

Imad ruled out of first T20 WC match against USA

DALLAS: In a major setback to the Green Shirts, all-rounder Imad Wasim will miss out the first match of the T20 World Cup against the United States of America (USA) on June 6 (tomorrow). Confirming Imad's unavailability in the first T20, skipper Babar Azam said: "Imad Wasim is suffering from a side strain, which means he won't be able to play in our opening match." The 35-year-old is recently suffering from a side injury, however, he might be playing in the other World Cup matches, depending on his injury. Babar was also hopeful about the all-rounder's participation in rest of the matches of the T20 World Cup. "Although Imad won't play the first game, we hope that he will be available for the rest of the matches," he added. Meanwhile, Imad's absence might impact the team's performance in their match against the USA on Thursday. Pakistan will be facing India in their second match on Sunday (June 9) and will be playing against Canada on Tuesday (June 11). – Agencies

bowling; our fast bowlers have been performing well here. We will try to avoid past mistakes," the talented skipper stated. "Our World Cup starts the day after tomorrow, and now all senior players need to step up and take responsibility. My sole target is to win the World Cup; individual achievements come later. My focus is on what the team needs from me, not on personal records," he emphasised.

Batting position not fixed: Moreover, Babar mentioned the changes in the batting line because of the "poor performance" by Saim Ayub. He said that Shadab might replace Saim in the upcoming match. "No one's batting position is fixed; it can change according to the situation," Babar continued. "Unfortunately, Saim Ayub couldn't perform as expected. He is a game-changer but hasn't had the opportunities he needed. We plan

what's best for the team," he emphasised. "Shadab has performed in various conditions, which is why we trust him. As a captain, I have faith in all my players, especially Shadab. He is valuable in all three aspects of the game, and I hope the conditions here suit him," Babar added. "There are ups and downs with cricketers, and we will support them. Supporting players benefits the team overall. It's a team game; if one player has a bad day, others cover for him," Babar explained. "America has its home conditions, and they are familiar with the grounds here. I trust my team to play good cricket," he affirmed. Babar hopeful of winning World Cup Babar hopes that they can win the T20 World Cup by playing good cricket. As the T20 World Cup is hosted in the USA for the first time so the captain and the team shouldn't be focusing on what is missing. "We will try to perform well in the World Cup and achieve success," Babar continued. "We are not concerned about the distance from the hotel or the facilities; that's the board's responsibility. We have played in such conditions before. The only pressure now is regarding the tickets, especially for one particular match," he mentioned.

Rohit reveals his biggest fear ahead of WC matches

NEW DELHI: India skipper Rohit Sharma said he has been dealing with the pressure of ending the team's ICC trophy jinx ahead of their T20 World Cup 2024 opening match against Ireland on June 5, Wednesday. India's last ICC event win came back in 2013 when they defeated England to win the Champions Trophy. Since then, India has reached the final 5 times in all three formats of the game with the latest being a heartbreaking loss to Australia in the ODI World Cup 2023. Rohit has said that he will be looking to play his game and help the rest of the side gel together as a team. The India skipper, while speaking at the pre-match press conference, said he will not be looking at the larger picture. "I have thought a lot about all this," Rohit said. "Now I'm just going to play my game and help the team in whatever way I can and get everyone together to

play as a team. That is what I'm going to be focusing on. Not looking at the larger picture. I don't think those kinds of thoughts will help so much. Staying in the present and doing what is required at that particular time which is important, and I'll be focusing on that." The Indian skipper said that for him, he doesn't want to look too far ahead and take it one game at a time. Rohit said that he and the team wouldn't want to think a lot ahead and put themselves under pressure. "I'm sure everyone in the team have their own way of dealing with tournaments like World Cup. And I'm sure they'll take the right calls as well. But for me, I think it's important not to look too far ahead. Just think about what we need to do tomorrow. Play the game well and then take it from there. We won't think too much and put ourselves under pressure," said Rohit. Meanwhile, India captain Rohit Sharma said on

Tuesday that he had unsuccessfully tried to convince Rahul Dravid to stay on as head coach, hailing him as "a big role model." Dravid said ahead of India's opening match at the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 against Ireland in New York on Wednesday that the tournament would be his last act as the head coach. Dravid's contract runs out at the end of the month and he will not reapply for the job, after almost three years in charge. "I've enjoyed every bit of it, working with him," Rohit, who has played under and with Dravid for India, told reporters on the eve of the Ireland game. He added: "I tried convincing him to stay, but obviously there are a lot of things that he needs to look after as well. "I've personally enjoyed my time with him. I'm sure the rest of the guys will say the same. It's been great working with him." India have failed to win a global trophy under Dravid but Rohit was

nevertheless full of praise for the 51-year-old former national skipper. "Such a big role model for all of us," Rohit Sharma said. "Growing up we watched him play and we know what he's achieved personally as a player and what he's done for the team over the years." He added: "He's shown a lot of great determination throughout his career, and that's something that when he came here as a coach, I wanted to learn from him. It's been very fruitful." Rahul Dravid took over the team from Ravi Shastri after the 2021 T20 World Cup. This year's edition in the United States and West Indies is his last chance to end India's search for major international silverware that stretches back to 2013. Dravid oversaw runs to finals of both the World Test Championship and their home 50-over World Cup last year, but they came up short against Australia each time. – Agencies



Sydney Thunder all set to launch tape-ball tournament

SYDNEY: Big Bash League (BBL) franchise Sydney Thunder has announced launching a tape-ball league in June, which will also provision a free South Asian-themed cultural festival. The six-week tournament, titled "The Sydney Thunder Tape Ball League", will commence on August 26 and will be played at Blacktown International Sports Park. The event will be operated by the Cricket NSW competitions team with cash prizes up for grabs for the finalists. The teams and individuals who wish to participate in the tournament can get to register themselves at the cultural festival which will be held on June 29 at Cricket Central in Sydney Olympic Park. The festival, aimed at setting up 24 hours of entertainment for cricket fans with the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in the Caribbean on June 30, will feature casual tape ball games, food stalls and other activities for the attendees who will also enjoy a stint by comedian and MC Nazeem Hussain Furthermore, Sydney Thunder stars Tanveer Sangha and Phoebe Litchfield, as well as Pakistani-born former Australian international and Thunder representative Fawad Ahmed will also be present there. Most notably, no fee will be charged to those attending the festival nor there are any restrictions as the event is open to all. Expressing his views Sydney Thunder General Manager Trent Copeland said that the club welcomes everyone, especially the people of Western Sydney and the city's South Asian communities to event. – Agencies

KBBA President lauds memorial tournament after two decades

By the grace of Almighty, the tournament was organized with excellent and high-quality arrangements. I am pleased to say that we all made efforts to contribute to the success of this memorial tournament, said Mr. Yaqoob

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: President of the Karachi Basketball Association (KBBA) Mr. Muhammad Yaqoob expressed his gratitude and excitement over the successful organization of the Muhammad Majid and Abdul Nasir Memorial Tournament, held in Karachi after a gap of twenty years. He emphasized that this tournament will significantly contribute to the development of basketball in the region. "By the grace of Almighty, the tournament was organized with excellent and high-quality arrangements. I am pleased to say that we all made efforts to contribute to the success of this memorial tournament," said Mr. Yaqoob. He extended his appreciation to the Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF), participating teams, technical officials, local associations, basketball enthusiasts, sponsors, and especially the media for their tremendous cooperation and excellent reporting, which kept the public informed about the results. Mr. Yaqoob assured that the next phase, involving the scrutiny of Karachi clubs and impartial elections, will be completed soon with the support of the Pakistan Basketball Federation. "We will strive to organize the event even better next time," he concluded.

Italy held to goalless draw in Euro warm-up

Hoffenheim midfielder Kabak fell awkwardly in an innocuous looking challenge with Mateo Retegui and writhed in agony on the sidelines until he was carried away to warm applause from the home crowd

BOLOGNA: Italy were held to a goalless draw by Turkey on Tuesday as the Azzurri gear up for their European Championship title defence later this month. Luciano Spalletti's side were frustrated by Turkey in a low-key friendly in Bologna which featured little in the way of goalmouth action. Italy play one more friendly against Bosnia and Herzegovina in Empoli on Sunday before travelling to Germany for Euro 2024. They begin their campaign on June 15 against Albania in Group B, where they have also been drawn with Spain and Croatia. "We weren't amazing but the team pushed forward and tried to attack. However it was the classic match you

writhed in agony on the sidelines until he was carried away to warm applause from the home crowd. "It's sad when something like this happens at this stage of the season when there are dreams at stake," Turkey boss Vincenzo Montella told reporters. "We hope it's nothing serious even if it doesn't look very good." In stoppage time Baris Yilmaz sent a free header over the bar before Bryan Cristante thumped the post from Roma teammate Lorenzo Pellegrini's corner with the last action of the half. Italy lived up after the break following the introduction of Andrea Cambiaso and Mattia Zaccagni, and just before the hour Retegui miscued a bicycle kick from Pellegrini's inviting corner. Although Italy were the better team a lack of inspiration in the final third made Tuesday's tournament warm-up an unsatisfying one for the 25,000 fans at the Stadio Renato Dall'Ara. Turkey, managed by former Italy striker Montella, play Poland in Warsaw on Monday in their final pre-Euro friendly. They take on Georgia in their first Group F match in Dortmund on June 18 before facing Portugal and Czech Republic. – Agencies

SA football team arrive in Pakistan for FIFA WC

This is the first time Saudi Arabia's football team have arrived in Pakistan

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia's football team arrived in Islamabad on Wednesday, the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) confirmed, a day before the two sides meet each other for a round two clash of the FIFA World Cup qualifiers. Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki received the team at the Islamabad airport. Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) officials, the secretary of Pakistan's Inter-Provincial Coordination ministry and Rana Mashhood, chairman of the PM's Youth Program, were also present on the occasion. "Saudi Arabian football team reached Islamabad from Riyadh by chartered flight," the PSB said. "Saudi Arabian football team is visiting Pakistan for the first time." The visiting team was shifted from the airport to the hotel where they are staying under tight security, the board said. The match between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia

is scheduled to take place on June 6 at the Jinnah Football Stadium in Islamabad. It takes place months after Saudi Arabia thumped Pakistan 4-0 in the first leg of the qualifying matches when the Group G sides



faced off at Al Ahsa city in November 2023. Pakistan suffered another setback in round one of the qualifiers when they lost 6-1 to Tajikistan in Islamabad days after losing to Saudi Arabia. The green shirts will face Tajikistan on June 11 in Dushanbe in what will be their final round 2 away fixture. Pakistan are in Group G of the World Cup qualifiers with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Tajikistan. In the second round of the qualifiers, a total of 36 football squads have been split into nine groups with four teams each. The winners and runners-up from each group would go through to the third round. Pakistan are already eliminated after four consecutive losses and a 19-goal differential. **Pakistan squad:** Goalkeepers: Yousuf Butt (D), Saqib Hanif and Hassan Ali **Defenders:** Abdullah Iqbal (D), Mohammad Fazal (D), Haseeb Khan, Rao Omer Hayat, Mamoona Moosa, Mohammod Saddam, Waqar Ihtisham, Moin Ahmed and Abdul Rehman. **Midfielders:** Rahis Nabi (D), Otis Khan (D), Ali Uzair, Umair Ali, Toqeer ul Hassan, Alamgir Ghazi and Ali Zafar **Forwards:** Imran Kayani (D), McKeel Abdulah, Fareedullah, Adeel Younas and Shayak Dost.

T20
ICC
MEN'S T20
WORLD CUP
WEST INDIES & USA 2024

Tuesday June 06

Papua New Guinea vs Uganda
Providence, Guyana (4.30am)

Australia vs Oman
Bridgetown, Barbados (5.30am)

USA vs Pakistan
Grand Prairie, Texas (8.30pm)

SC refuses to accept MQM-P...

FROM PAGE 01

the SC on Thurs-day swung into action against the leaders and took suo motu notice. Following a hearing on May 17, the court issued show-cause notices to the lawmakers. In their responses, Kamal sought an unconditional apology and said he held "all the judges, in particular, the judges of the superior courts of Pakistan in the highest respect and esteem". Meanwhile, Senator Vawda refused to issue an unconditional apology to the Supreme Court and sought an end to the matter, saying that several others had issued remarks similar to his. During the hearing today, Kamal's lawyer Barrister Farogh Naseem requested the court to accept his client's one-page unconditional apology.

FIA bared from taking action...

FROM PAGE 01

against them. The leaders of the Imran Khan-founded party have also been directed to record their statements before the FIA. The written order was issued by IHC Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, following the petitions against the FIA's call-up notices. Subsequently, the high court served a notice to the federal agency and sought a response by June 25. Earlier today, PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan excused himself from appearing before the FIA, informing the federal agency that he could not appear before the body as he was "busy". Last week, the FIA's anti-cybercrime team started an investigation into a post on X, formerly Twitter, which was attributed to the former PM Imran.

Focus on welfare...

FROM PAGE 01

funds from the coalition government at the Centre — led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). "We will try our best and I know that all such issues will be resolved before the budget," he said hoping that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would fulfil his promises. In the same presser, the PPP chief said that the entire country was extremely disappointed over the "politics of hatred" prevailing in Islamabad. "The people of the country are very disappointed over polarised, hyper-partisan and politics of hatred prevailing in Islamabad," he added.

Modi set to take oath...

FROM PAGE 01

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) agreed with coalition allies to form a government. "We all unanimously choose respected National Democratic Alliance (NDA) leader Narendra Modi as our leader," the BJP-issued alliance statement read. "The NDA government under the leadership of Modi is committed to serving the poor, women, youth, farmers and exploited, deprived and oppressed citizens of India." Earlier in the day, two allies in his NDA coalition, the Telugu Desam Party, a key regional player in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, and the Janata Dal (United) which rules the northern state of Bihar, had pledged their support. "We are with the NDA, I will be attending the meeting in Delhi today," Chandrababu Naidu, the leader of the TDP, told reporters, referring to a meeting of the BJP-led alliance scheduled to take place later in the day.

Briefs

Body recovery effort 'called off' at PNG landslide site

PORT MORESBY: Hundreds of villagers feared buried in Papua New Guinea landslide will not be recovered, the military told AFP Wednesday, describing the disaster zone as "too dangerous" to operate in. "All efforts to recover bodies have been called off because of the danger" of further landslides, Major Joe Aku said. "Recovery is non-negotiable at this stage." Aku — one of the leading military officers overseeing the site — declared the highland area a "no-go zone" that will be cordoned off to the community and authorities until further notice. "It is too dangerous to be on-site at this stage. This is the worst and biggest landslide I have seen," he said. Papua New Guinea is one of the world's most disaster-prone regions and landslides are extremely common in its highlands. Initial Papua New Guinea government estimates said as many as 2,000 people may have been buried in the May 24 slide, although Aku said this number could be closer to 650. —APP

New study finds Earth warming at record rate

LONDON: The rate Earth is warming hit an all-time high in 2023 with 92 percent of last year's surprising record-shattering heat caused by humans, top scientists calculated. The group of 57 scientists from around the world used United Nations-approved methods to examine what's behind last year's deadly burst of heat. They said even with a faster warming rate they don't see evidence of significant acceleration in human-caused climate change beyond increased fossil fuel burning. Last year's record temperatures were so unusual that scientists have been debating what's behind the big jump and whether climate change is accelerating or if other factors are in play. "If you look at this world accelerating or going through a big tipping point, things aren't doing that," study lead author Piers Forster, a Leeds University climate scientist, said. "Things are increasing in temperature and getting worse in sort of exactly the way we predicted." It's pretty much explained by the buildup of carbon dioxide from rising fossil fuel use, he and a co-author said. Last year the rate of warming hit 0.26 degrees Celsius (0.47 degrees Fahrenheit) per decade — up from 0.25 degrees Celsius (0.45 degrees Fahrenheit) the year before. That's not a significant difference, though it does make this year's rate the highest ever, Forster said. Still, outside scientists said this report highlights an ever more alarming situation. "Choosing to act on climate has become a political talking point but this report should be a reminder to people that in fact it is fundamentally a choice to save human lives," said University of Wisconsin climate scientist Andrea Dutton, who wasn't part of the international study team. —DNA

Death toll at 5 in German floods

LONDON: The death toll from floods in Germany rose to five as heavy rainfall that wreaked havoc across the south over the weekend shows signs of slowing, according to weather authorities. Police said the latest victim is a 57-year-old woman whose body was recovered after she had driven a car onto a closed road in Bavaria and drowned. Rivers and streams overflowed their banks in many areas of the German states of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria. Weather authorities said the situation in the country is set to ease as no heavy rain in the forecast, German public broadcaster DW reported. The effort continues to find a missing firefighter whose vessel overturned during a flooding rescue operation, said DW. During his visit to the flood-hit area in southern Germany, Chancellor Olaf Scholz pledged to help the affected region. —APP

Pak, Italy unite in anti-drug trafficking efforts

Mohsin Naqvi also raised the issue of 146 Pakistani prisoners in Italy and requested the repatriation of 42 Pakistani prisoners

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi and Federal Minister of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Wednesday met Italian Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi in Rome.

Senior officials of the Italian Ministry of Interior warmly welcomed the federal ministers on their arrival, said the press release issued from Rome. Both sides discussed joint measures to stop illegal immigration, human trafficking and co-operation regarding anti-narcotics and border security.

Both sides agreed on an integrated and effective action plan against illegal immigrants and human trafficking. Moreover, collective measures will be taken in the areas of anti-narcotics and border security. In order to prevent drug and human trafficking, Italy will support Pakistan to make its borders more secure. An Italian team will soon visit Pakistan in this regard. Mohsin Naqvi also raised the issue of 146 Pakistani prisoners in Italy and requested the repatriation of 42 Pakistani prisoners. He invited his Italian counterpart to visit Pakistan. He said that strong cooperation will



help prevent human trafficking, anti-narcotics and border security. He emphasised that measures have been taken at all levels to curb the illegal entry of Pakistanis to Italy and drug trafficking. He added that zero tolerance policy

has been adopted against human trafficking and drug mafia. On the occasion, Chaudhry Salik Hussain said that Italy can greatly benefit from Pakistan's skilled workforce. He said that the pending skilled manpower agreement should be

finalised on priority to discourage illegal immigrants. The Italian interior minister appreciated the steps taken by Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for the prevention of human trafficking and drug trafficking. He also as-

ured full cooperation in the fields of anti-narcotics, border security and human trafficking. Ambassador of Pakistan to Italy Ali Javed and senior officials of the Italian Ministry of Interior were also present on the occasion.

Pope urges global action on poor nations' debt

The global Jubilee 2000 campaign resulted in \$130 billion of debt cancellation for poor countries between 2000 and 2015

PARIS: The world must do more to reduce the debt burden faced by low-income countries to avoid them entering a cycle of poverty and despair, Pope Francis said on Wednesday. Global debt levels hit a record high of \$313 trillion in 2023, with developing economies scaling a fresh peak for the ratio of debt to their gross domestic product, according to a study released earlier this year. Addressing a Vatican conference on the debt emergency in the global south, Pope Francis said the problem was causing "misery and distress" for millions of people around the world. "In order to try to break

the debt-financing cycle, it is necessary to create a multinational mechanism ... that takes into account the global nature of the problem and its economic, financial and social implications," he said. In 2020, the world's 20 largest economies agreed on a "Common Framework" to smooth the process of debt restructuring and help get poor countries back on their feet, but progress has been slow. It has taken Zambia almost four years to drag itself out of default, leaving some hard lessons for richer nations about how their much-vaunted debt relief plan performed. At present there is no overarching in-

ternational law governing international bankruptcies. "The absence of such a mechanism favours the mentality of 'every person for himself or herself', where the weakest always lose," said the pope, who comes from Argentina, a country that has defaulted on its debt three times this century. "No government can morally require that its people suffer deprivations incompatible with human dignity," he added. The Roman Catholic Church is due to hold a Holy Year, or Jubilee, in 2025 — one of the most important times in the Church calendar — and the pope has already called on wealthy states to mark

the event by offering debt relief for poor nations. Attending the Vatican conference, Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz said the COVID pandemic and war in Ukraine had given a major shock to the global economy, pushing the world to the "verge" of new sovereign debt crisis. "We need a Jubilee debt restructuring and a re-ordering of our global economic architecture to make sure that it doesn't happen again," he said. The global Jubilee 2000 campaign resulted in \$130 billion of debt cancellation for poor countries between 2000 and 2015. —DNA

Over 1 mln Gazans 'expected to face death and starvation'

GENEVA: Over 1 million people, almost half of the Gaza population, are "expected to face death and starvation by mid-July," the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) said on Wednesday. According to report: famine looms in Gaza while the risk of starvation persists in Sudan, Haiti, Mali, and South Sudan, the FAO pointed out the dangers that the Israeli-Palestinian crisis has brought. "The ongoing conflict in Palestine is expected to further aggravate already catastrophic levels of acute hunger, with starvation and death already taking place, alongside the unprecedented death toll, widespread destruction and displacement of nearly the total population of the Gaza Strip—the report warns," the FAO said. "In mid-March 2024, famine was projected to occur by the end of May in the two northern governorates of the Gaza Strip, unless hostilities ended, full access was granted to humanitarian agencies, and essential services were restored," it noted. The agency warned: "Over one million people—half the population of Gaza—are expected to face death and starvation (IPC Phase 5) by mid-July." The report also cautions about the wider regional consequences of the crisis, which could worsen the existing food security challenges in Lebanon and Syria. Israel has continued its brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct. 7 Hamas attack despite a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire. More than 36,500 Palestinians have since been killed in Gaza, the vast majority being women and children, and nearly 83,000 others injured, according to local health authorities. —APP

SA Cabinet minister arrested over bribery allegations

JOHANNESBURG: A South African Cabinet minister who is a senior member of the African National Congress was arrested and appeared in court on Wednesday over allegations of bribery, just as his party was meeting for talks to work out a way forward for the country after an election deadlock. Sports, Arts and Culture Minister Zizi Kodwa faces charges of taking bribes of around \$90,000, according to police. He appeared in a courtroom in Johannesburg alongside another suspect in the case. Kodwa said he intended to plead not guilty to the charges. Kodwa, 54, is a member of the ANC's internal National Working Committee, which met Tuesday as the party discusses how it might form a government after losing its 30-year majority in an election last week. The ANC has not given any indication of which other party or parties it might strike an agreement with to co-govern and talks are ongoing. Kodwa was implicated in taking bribes from a businessman at a judicial inquiry in 2021 that looked into allegations of widespread government corruption involving ANC officials and others. The allegations relate to the time when Kodwa was the national spokesperson for the ANC and later the deputy minister of state security. Police allege that Kodwa used some of the bribes to buy a "luxury" SUV vehicle. Government corruption was seen as one of the issues that prompted a majority of South Africans to turn away from the ANC in the election. —Agencies

French military trainers in Ukraine legitimate targets: Lavrov

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Any French military instructors sent to Ukraine would be a "legitimate target" for Russian armed forces, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov said after Ukrainian officials revealed they were seeking training assistance for their troops from France. Lavrov made the remarks at a joint news conference on Tuesday with the Republic of the Congo's Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean Claude Gakosso. "As for the French instructors, I think they are already on the Ukrainian territory," Lavrov said. "Regardless of their status, military officials or mercenaries represent a legitimate target for our armed forces."

Ukraine's top commander said last week he had signed paperwork that would soon allow French military instructors to access Ukrainian training centres. Afterwards, French President Emmanuel Macron said he would not comment on "rumours or decisions that could be made" and that he would elaborate on France's support during events later this week to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day where he will be joined by leaders including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Macron's office on Tuesday said it would not comment on Lavrov's remarks. There is no evidence that French instructors are in Ukraine. Lavrov has visited Africa several times in the past few years as Russia seeks to shore up support amid

Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Several African countries in recent years have expressed growing frustration with their traditional Western partners like France and the United States and some have turned to Russia for help in fighting Islamic insurgencies. Lavrov on Tuesday also dismissed the Ukraine peace conference due to take place later this month in Switzerland. Russia, which insists any discussions need to start with on-the-ground "realities", has not been invited. It currently occupies about 18 percent of Ukrainian territory. "This conference in Switzerland has no meaning," Lavrov said. "The only meaning it can have is to try to preserve this anti-Russian bloc which

is in the process of crumbling." Switzerland has said that more than 80 delegations have confirmed their attendance. China, which has deepened its relationship with Moscow, said last week it would not attend. The Republic of the Congo was the second stop on Lavrov's tour. He visited Guinea on Monday and met the country's foreign minister. Late on Tuesday, he landed at the airport of the Burkina Faso capital Ouagadougou, the country's authorities said in a statement on social media. Lavrov was scheduled to meet on Wednesday with Captain Ibrahim Traore, the country's leader who took power following a 2022 military coup. He was expected in Chad on Wednesday afternoon, the country's authorities said in a statement.

EU sees basic rights under threat in Europe

GENEVA: The Vienna-based EU Fundamental Rights Agency sees fundamental rights in Europe threatened by poverty, racism and "challenges related to migration." In its annual report 2024 released on Wednesday, the agency said the rise in anti-Muslim discrimination following the escalation in the Middle East conflict was less reported than the rise in anti-Semitism. According to the agency, anti-Muslim racism is "no less worrying." "National media and non-governmental organizations in several countries reported attacks on mosques and Muslim cemeteries, as well as on individuals and organizations," the agency wrote in its report. "Non-governmental organizations reported a 43-fold increase in anti-Muslim comments on YouTube worldwide after 7 October 2023," it added, referring to the start of Israel's war on Gaza. The report also expressed concern about the rise in energy and living costs which have driven "one in five people in the EU into poverty." —APP

Japan enacts law to halt falling birth rate

TOKYO: The Japanese parliament Wednesday endorsed a new law to halt the falling birth rate as the country posted a record lowest total fertility rate last year. Under the new law, the government will expand child allowances and parental leave. The enactment of the new law comes as Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government "views the period leading up to 2030 as the last chance to reverse the trend, with late marriages and financial worries often cited as reasons for the declining birth rate," the Tokyo-based Kyodo News reported. It also comes as the latest government statistics revealed that Japan's total fertility rate had dropped last year to the lowest since 1947, when the records began. The fertility rate, which shows the expected number of children a woman is expected to have, fell to 1.20. It also marked the eighth consecutive year that Japan, home to around 125 million people, has witnessed a continuous fall in fertility. —APP

US House sanctions ICC over Netanyahu warrant

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: United States lawmakers have passed legislation that aims to sanction the International Criminal Court (ICC) due to the efforts by its prosecutor to seek arrest warrants for top Israeli officials for alleged war crimes in Gaza. The Republican-controlled House of Representatives voted 247-155 in favour of the Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act on Tuesday. The bill would bar US entry and restrict any US-based property transactions for ICC officials involved with the request by prosecutor Karim Khan for arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

Governor KPK emphasizes political stability for prosperity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Governor KPK Faisal Karim Kundi has said that political stability is urgent necessity for the economic prosperity and development of the country and that only way forward is a 'charter of prosperity' by taking out of the box decision for the wellbeing of the masses. He said this while addressing an award distribution ceremony held in honour of the business community leaders in recognition of their outstanding achievements in promotion of businesses especially in KPK and Islamabad held at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday evening. Highlighting the contribution of business community in the development of country Governor KPK said that the government has to facilitate business community and the agriculturists by providing cheaper electricity to both the sectors for overcoming the existing economic crisis. He asserted that by exploiting the tourism potential

of KPK and Gilgit Baltistan, we can earn sufficient foreign exchange and for the purpose we have to encourage and facilitate

Zafar Bakhtawari President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that in every society the business community



of the business community. He added that the doors of the Governor House are opened for the business community especially for the ICCI to jointly formulate an action plan to attract foreign tourists by developing tourism sites of the province. He also assured his fully cooperation for the development of an Industrial State at any of the connecting point of the two provinces. Addressing the ceremony Ahsan

is considered as the backbone of the economy and Pakistan's business community is also playing an important role in the development of its economy and creating employments for its youth. He termed the political stability as basic necessity for the economic stability by asserting Government's business friendly policies and across Pakistan level playing field to achieve the much needed goal. He said that Islamabad

Chamber of Commerce and Industry is also working tirelessly for the attainment of this objective by playing the role of a bridge between the government and the business community for ease of doing business. He added that business community fully favors the widening of tax net and opposes the tax evasion but seeks basic facilities for its businesses. By mentioning the ICCI initiatives for the promotion of country's tourism and exports he sought the assistance of Governor KPK for the provision of a suitable piece of land for an industrial estate for the cause. Commending the vibrant role being played by Faisal Karim Kundi as Governor KPK, Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that the business community of Islamabad considers Mr. Kundi as its Governor also and that it is confident that the relevant quarters will be acquainted about its problems for their quick resolution. He said that certain powers are hell bent to keep Pakistan's economy in Intensive Care



Unit by remote control but we, through our collaborative efforts have to put it on road to progress and prosperity. He also promoted the idea of taking diplomats of friendly countries to Governor House Peshawar for showcasing the tourism potential of Swat and adjacent areas. Senior Vice President ICCI Faad Waheed demanded that business community should be given representation in all the relevant departments throughout Pakistan to help resolve its problems and getting a smooth sail for the betterment of

the country. Vice President ICCI Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar said that if the business community is given due facilities, it can turn the tide for country's progress. Executive member Amir Hamza highlighted the successes of the ICCI under the leadership of its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari. On this occasion 42 business leaders of Islamabad and KPK were graced with prestigious awards. A large number of people belonging to business community attended the ceremony.

Briefs

'Instalments to be allowed only once a year'

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Neptra) has amended the Consumer Service Manual, 2021, and imposed restrictions on power firms to allow multiple instalments of electricity bills. The consumers have lost another relief option to pay their electricity bills in multiple instalments following the new regulations approved by Neptra. The power regulatory authority modified the set of regulations creating room for power users to clear their dues with ease. The notification stated that the instalment of power bills would only be allowed once a year, whereas, the markup would not be imposed on the payment of the first instalment within the due date. The consumers will have to pay a 14% markup on other instalments, whereas, the request for an extension in the due date shall be made before the due date, it further stated. The power distribution companies (Discos) have been directed to generate computerised bills upon allowing instalments and extensions on the due date. In August last year, the interim government deliberated on a proposal to allow power consumers to pay their dues in instalments as a measure to provide relief to the inflation-battered public. The caretaker government had pondered over the proposal to allow consumers with bills of up to 400 units to pay off their electricity bills in instalments spanning over six months.

Lahore ATC remands Qureshi for 5 days

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: A Lahore anti-terrorism court (ATC) approved a five-day physical remand of incarcerated PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi in eight cases related to the violence that erupted in the country after party founder Imran Khan's arrest on May 9 last year. ATC Judge Khalid Arshad approved the physical remand while hearing the May 9 cases registered in different police stations of Lahore. The court also allowed the investigation team to interrogate Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Adiala Jail until June 10. Qureshi's virtual appearance from Adiala Jail was conducted via WhatsApp call. The development came days after Islamabad High Court (IHC) acquitted PTI founder Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the cipher case. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb announced the short verdict after accepting the appeals of the former premier and diplomat against their convictions in the case. The duo were not expected to be released from prison due to Imran's sentence in the Iddat case while Qureshi was arrested in recent May 9 cases.

President for strengthening of Pakistan, Jordan relations

The Jordanian envoy invited the president to a conference being held in Jordan on human relief activities in Gaza on June 11

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday said that Pakistan and Jordan enjoyed close cordial relations and stressed upon further strengthening of these bilateral ties between the two countries. The president expressed these views during a meeting with Ambassador of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Pakistan Dr Maen Khreast who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. The Jordanian envoy invited the president to a conference being held in Jordan on human relief activities in Gaza on June 11. The president assured him of Pakistan's participation in the scheduled conference. The ambassador apprised the president that Jordan had signed MoU with Akhuwat Foundation for provision of relief assistance in Palestine. The president lauded Jordan for its efforts to provide relief in Palestine. The ambassador also conveyed a felicitation message from the Jordanian King to the President Zardari on assuming his office.



No more space at Al-Aqsa Hospital

GAZA: The Ministry of Health in Gaza announced that the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, which is located in Deir el-Balah Governorate, in central Gaza Strip, is the only hospital providing health services to more than one million people. The Ministry explained in a statement on Tuesday that the hospital's clinical capacity cannot bear to receive more martyrs and injuries in light of the ongoing Israeli aggression against civilians because of severe shortage of supplies and personnel. It called on WHO and all international organizations to "investigate the dangerous health situation at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital." The ministry also urged "the international community and all international and UN organizations to immediately and urgently deploy field hospitals and medical teams to save the health situation in the Gaza Strip and to control the situations of dozens of thousands of wounded and injured people who are at risk of death." The Israeli occupation army has been waging, since October 7 last year, a genocidal war against the Gaza Strip, with the US and European support, leading to the martyrdom of 36,550 people, and the injury of 82,959 others, in addition to the displacement of about 1.7 million residents of the Strip, according to UN data. - Agencies

Israel expands Gaza offensive as mediators' ceasefire bid continues

Hamis warns Israel against any 'foolish act' during provocative 'flag march' in al-Aqsa

NEWS DESK

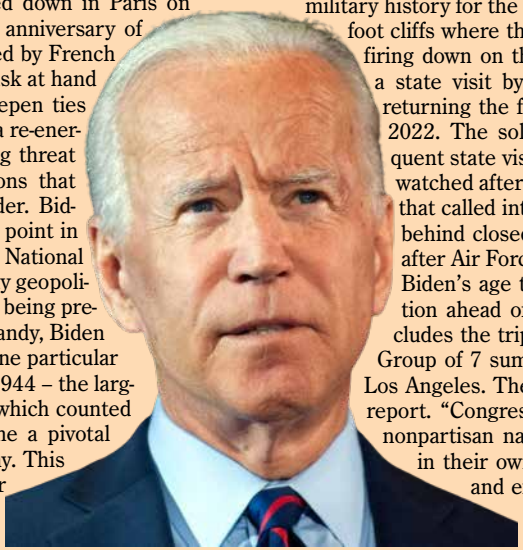
GAZA: Dozens of Palestinians have been killed in heavy Israeli bombardment of the central Gaza Strip, as US, Qatari, and Egyptian mediators plan to resume talks on a proposed ceasefire and captive release deal. Urban combat and shelling rocked Gaza's southern city of Rafah near the Egyptian border, as fighting also flared again in central areas, where the Israeli army said "troops have started targeted operational activity in the areas of Bureij and eastern Deir el-Balah, both above and below ground". A medical source told Al Jazeera on Wednesday that at least 75 people were killed by Israeli attacks on central Gaza over the past day. Sources also told Al Jazeera that the morgues in the central city of Deir el-Balah were full while the local Al-Aqsa Hospital was working at three times its capacity. In a statement, the Israeli army said it struck "terror targets" in the area, killing "several" members of the Palestinian group Hamas. Almost eight months into Israel's war on Gaza, global outrage has spiralled over the soaring death toll - exceeding 36,500 - and the destruction in the besieged and bombed territory, where United Nations data suggests more than half of all buildings are destroyed or damaged. On May 31, US President Joe Biden outlined what he called a three-phase Israeli plan, proposing to halt the fighting for six weeks while Israeli captives held in Gaza are exchanged for Palestinian prisoners and aid is stepped up in the first phase. Regional and international powers have backed the proposal, although sticking points remain - Hamas insists on a permanent ceasefire and full Israeli withdrawal, demands Israel has rejected. Biden has urged Hamas to accept the deal and deployed CIA chief

Bill Burns to mediator Qatar for a renewed push after months of back-and-forth negotiations. A source with knowledge of the talks told the AFP news agency that Burns would "continue working with mediators on reaching an agreement between Hamas and Israel on a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of hostages". Brett McGurk, Biden's top Middle East adviser, was also headed to Qatar, according to news site Axios, which quoted sources as talking of a "full-court press ... to get a breakthrough". Egypt's state-linked Al-Qahera News said an "Egyptian security delegation will meet with its Qatari and US counterparts in Doha on Wednesday to discuss the mechanism of restoring the truce talks". Qatar said on Tuesday it had yet to see statements from either side "that give us a lot of confidence", but added that it was "working with both sides on proposals on the table". Biden earlier told Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani that "Hamas is now the only obstacle to a complete ceasefire", and "confirmed Israel's readiness to move forward" with the terms he set out last week. A senior Hamas official in Beirut on Tuesday accused Israel of seeking "endless" truce negotiations and repeated the group's position rejecting any deal that excludes a permanent ceasefire. Sultan Barakat, a professor of public policy at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, said the situation remains "very confusing" days after the US president's proposal. "Biden has announced something that some Israelis say that he should not have announced, some say he announced it without our approval and there's an opinion that maybe he's announced it with Gantz's approval as opposed to Netanyahu and Gallant, the other two members of the war cabinet," Barakat told Al Jazeera. "That shows that there may be a split within Israel as to which direction they can take," he added. Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 7 have killed at least 36,586 people and wounded 83,074, with thousands more missing under the rubble and presumed dead, according to health authorities. Israel launched its assault on Gaza after a Hamas-led attack in southern Israel killed about 1,140 people.

Biden aims to deepen transatlantic ties with trip to France

WEB DESK

PARIS: US President Joe Biden touched down in Paris on Wednesday for a trip marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day and engaging in a state visit hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron. But the task at hand will be far loftier, as Biden seeks to deepen ties with transatlantic allies as Europe faces a re-emerged Russia inside Ukraine, the looming threat of China and the risk posed by elections that could upset the current geopolitical order. Biden "really believes we're at an inflection point in history," John Kirby, spokesman for the National Security Council, said. "It's tied to the way geopolitics are changing, the way challenges are being presented to us around the world." In Normandy, Biden and other Western leaders will recount one particular challenge facing allied forces on June 6, 1944 - the largest military invasion by sea in history - which counted more than 10,000 casualties and became a pivotal moment in the war against Nazi Germany. This year's anniversary is likely the last major commemoration in which D-Day veterans, now nearing 100 years old, are on



hand to bear witness. From Pointe-du-Hoc, which separates Omaha and Utah beaches where American troops landed, Biden will deliver a speech on the power of democracy on Friday, leaning on the visceral imagery from that day to talk about the men who gave their lives in pursuit of democracy. "Making it clear what you stand for and what you stand against matters today," Kirby said, acknowledging the importance of Europe bolstering American leadership. Biden "recognizes that, for as powerful as we are and as much good as we can do, we need help." The president arrived in France Wednesday morning and will head to Normandy on Thursday to partake in the ceremonies marking the D-Day anniversary. After the speech from Pointe-du-Hoc on Friday - a place famous in American military history for the heroic climb of Army Rangers up its 100-foot cliffs where they were able to neutralize German guns firing down on the beach - Biden is set to be feted with a state visit by French President Emmanuel Macron, returning the favor Biden offered the French leader in 2022. The solemn visit to Normandy and the subsequent state visit are now likely to be even more closely watched after the Wall Street Journal published a story that called into question the president's mental acuity behind closed doors. The story, which published just after Air Force One took off for France, again brought Biden's age to the forefront of the political conversation ahead of a grueling few weeks of travel that includes the trip to France, a return to Washington, the Group of 7 summit in Italy and a June 15 fundraiser in Los Angeles. The White House has slammed the Journal report. "Congressional Republicans, foreign leaders and nonpartisan national-security experts have made clear in their own words that President Biden is a savvy and effective leader who has a deep record of legislative accomplishment," said White House spokesman Andrew Bates.

Tehran, Moscow and Beijing call to revive Iran nuclear deal

TEHRAN: Iran, Russia and China have called on the West to end "the endless cycle of escalation" and restore the nuclear deal that was agreed with Tehran in 2015. The three nations issued a joint statement to coincide with a meeting of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, currently underway in the Austrian capital, Vienna. Tehran, Moscow and Beijing continue to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreed with Iran in 2015, even though "the US illegally and unilaterally withdrew from this agreement and imposed unilateral and illegal sanctions and applied the policy of maximum pressure against Iran," read a statement shared by Iranian news agency Tasnim on Wednesday. The JCPOA, which was signed by Iran, China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK, and the US administration of President Barack Obama, envisaged Tehran scaling down its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of international restrictions. However, in 2018, then-US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew Washington from the landmark agreement, calling it "the worst deal ever." The move prompted Iran to renege on some of its commitments under the JCPOA and return to enriching uranium. In recent years, Iran, Russia and China have taken part in nine meetings in Vienna aimed at reviving the agreement. However, France, Germany, the UK, and the US have chosen a different path, "ignoring the common goal of resuming JCPOA implementation because of their own political considerations," the statement claimed. Revising the JCPOA would be a "win-win" for all sides, Iran, Russia, and China argued. Among other things, it would answer most of the questions the international community has regarding "Iran's peaceful nuclear program" and would provide the IAEA with more extensive tools to monitor and verify Tehran's activities in the field, they stated. - Agencies

Sanam Javed rearrested after release on bail

DNA

SARGODHA: Leader of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Sanam Javed has been rearrested outside Sargodha Jail, here on Wednesday. As per the details, Punjab Police said that Sanam Javed was apprehended upon her release from Sargodha Jail. Police further revealed that Sanam Javed is wanted by the Gujranwala Cantonment Police in connection with a May 9 case. Another PTI leader Alia Hamza is also wanted by the Gujranwala Police in the same case and is due to be released from Sargodha Jail today. The Gujranwala Police are present outside Sargodha Jail to arrest Alia Hamza as well. Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists Sanam Javed and Aliya Hamza have been granted bail in May 9 vandalism cases. The court took up the bail pleas of Sanam Javed and Aliya Hamza in three separate cases related to May 9 violence and approved bail. An interim bail was also granted in fourth case filed at the Musa Khel police station in Sargodha.

SBP may cut policy rates

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is expected to lower its main interest rate by 1% (or 100 basis points) next week, a survey showed on Wednesday. This decision, if taken, will signify the first signs of a dovish shift in the ongoing hawkish monetary policy stance that kept the rate at a record high of 22% for seven consecutive meetings of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) - since July 2023. The SBP is scheduled to meet on Monday, only a week after the release of the country's lowest inflation rate in 30 months, which was 11.8% in May. The state bank will meet to decide the interest rate before the announcement of the annual budget for the fiscal year 2024-25. This inflation rate was lower than most market and official expectations. The country has been beset by inflation above 20% since May 2022.

Experts appreciate preservation of Sikh holy sites in Pakistan

Speakers Call for More Educational Initiatives to Foster Peace

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Participants of a symposium highlighted the contributions of the Sikh diaspora communities in promoting global peace, harmony, and prosperity as well as the role of the Government of Pakistan in preservation and maintenance of Sikh holy sites in the country. The symposium titled "Sikhism: Contributions to global peace & prosperity and role in the Far East," was organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). It gathered experts on the subject from the Far East Region. Speaking on the occasion, the Federal Minister for Law and Justice Mr. Azam Nazeer Tarar highlighted the significance of Pakistan as the birthplace of Sikhism, the respect that the government and the people of Pakistan accorded to Sikh sacred sites, and the warm reception they extended to Sikh pilgrims since the creation of Pakistan. He lauded the contributions of Sikh diaspora communities to various sectors of economies of their home countries. The participants of the symposium highlighted that the spirit of Sikhism was deeply embedded in the values of peace, equality, selfless service, and empowerment

of communities to take collective action for promoting peace-loving, service-oriented, and inclusive societies. The participants highlighted that the Sikh diaspora communities always contributed towards promoting global peace and harmony as well as the rich cultural and spiritual traditions of Sikh religion. The speakers particularly emphasized the Sikh religious principle of "Seva" (selfless service) as a motivating factor in promotion of harmony among the Sikh diaspora communities and a culture of service to humanity. The speakers talked about various aspects of the Sikh tradition of selfless service such as feeding the hungry through the free communal kitchens known as Langars. They shared that Langars served free food to anyone in need irrespective of his or her background. The participating delegates from Malaysia, and Australia shared specific instances of service from their countries in which the Sikh diaspora communities were actively involved. The speakers also shared information about the activities either directly organized or participated in by leaders of the Sikh diaspora communities for the promotion of interfaith harmony. They mentioned several interfaith conferences and events they had participated in or organized in their countries. They further shared that the Sikh communities were also active in the education sector through establishment of schools and provision of scholarships.

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11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165

