



# Islamabad POST

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**Blinken headed for Middle East to push Gaza ceasefire plan**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Iga Swiatek reinforces No.1 spot**

Detailed News On Page-06



## National Economic Council meeting held PM for utilizing resources for economic revival

The Prime Minister directed the National Economic Council to constitute a committee to equip the Council with requirements of the modern era

MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the government will ensure best utilization of available resources for economic revival, welfare of the masses and development of the country. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting of the National Economic Council in Islamabad. The Prime Minister said the Federation will ensure consultations with the provinces and other stakeholders in all key decisions with collective approach and consensus to be taken for economic revival in the country. He said National Economic Council is the biggest forum to take decisions on national economy and economic revival. The Prime Minister directed the National Economic Council to constitute a committee to equip the Council with requirements of the modern era.

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

The Committee in consultation with all the provinces and stakeholders will prepare its recommendations to make the Council more functional. The Prime Minister said that agriculture is the backbone of country's economy and consultation with the provinces is very much important for the development of agriculture sector. He directed to ensure incorporation of the proposals of the provinces regarding agriculture and other sectors in the development plan. The Council was informed about the annual development plan and performance of the government departments in the outgoing fiscal year, and about the proposed development plan for the next financial year. The meeting was told that the growth rate target for the next year has been increased. The Council approved the economic growth targets, the macroeconomic framework and publication of the

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## Pakistan all set to present budget on June 12

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The federal government cleared the air on the presentation of the budget as the fiscal year 2024-25 will be tabled in Parliament on June 12 (Wednesday), a state-run news agency reported. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb will present the budget which has been formulated while 'considering' the existing challenges being faced by the economy at domestic and international fronts. "The budget will be aimed at mitigating the people's sufferings, transforming the agriculture sector, promoting information technology (IT), and boosting exports," the government sources said. The government also claimed that in addition to fiscal management, revenue mobilisation, measures for economic stabilization and growth, reduction in non-development expenditures, job creation and people-friendly policies for the socioeconomic prosperity of the country would feature in the budget. The preparations for the announcement of the federal budget for fiscal year 2024-25 continued in full swing in accordance with the prescribed timelines.

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## NATIONAL DAY OF PORTUGAL



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Federal Minister for Housing, Minister Qaisar Ahmed Sheikh, Director General ISPR Lt. General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry and Ambassador of Portugal Frederico Silva cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Portugal. - DNA

## Modi, Sharif brothers exchange messages



Modi clearly links normalisation of relationship with Pakistan committing to ending alleged cross border terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Three-time former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday exchanged messages on the X, formerly twitter, rekindling hopes for a potential thaw in the relationship. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif first congratulated Modi over taking oath as the Prime Minister of India but the statement from his elder brother and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was more explicit and telling. The elder Sharif took to the social media platform and congratulated Prime Minister Modi over his election for the record third time. "My warm felicitations to Modi ji on assuming office for the third time," Sharif said in a message shared on his official X handle on Monday. "Your party's success in recent elections reflects the confidence of the people in your leadership." He added, "Let us replace hate with hope and seize the opportunity to shape the destiny of the two billion people of South Asia." His statement immediately triggered a debate on

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## Omar Ayub's bail plea rejected

## Imran Khan to write SC to initiate talks with political parties

Judges in NAB amendments case advised Imran to engage in dialogue

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: PTI founder Imran Khan decided to write a letter to the Supreme Court of Pakistan to initiate talks with other political parties. Sources said Imran Khan stated that the purpose of the letter was to address the economic difficulties and political instability the country faces. He expressed his willingness to engage with any serious party that wants to resolve these issues. Also read: Country is under 'undeclared martial law', Imran Khan tells SC The letter will outline his readiness to discuss solutions with parties capable of addressing economic and political problems. He also demanded the return of the electoral mandate, and fair trials in political cases, including the judicial inquiry in May 9 cases. The key points of the

Continued on Page 06

## In letter to PM Amin Gandapur expresses concern over exclusion of KP projects

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur (third left) calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (right) meets in Islamabad on March 13, 2024. APP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to review

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## Briefs

### Sh. Rashid demands amnesty for May 9

Former interior minister says all innocents must be granted amnesty

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Monday demanded that army chief Gen Asim Munir announce amnesty for all those languishing in jails in connection with the May 9 riots. "People have suffered tremendously in May 9-related cases. All innocents must be granted amnesty," the chief of the Awami Muslim League said while speaking to the media on the District Courts premises. Rashid reiterated his appeal to Gen Munir and ISI Director General Nadeem Anjum to grant amnesty to the innocent people, noting that the authority held by the ruling coalition was quite insignificant.

## 'Didn't see any firewall' Attempts to disrupt Pak-China ties will be foiled, says Tarar

Sees 'clean chit' being given to Imran Khan despite clear proof

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Monday said the enemies could not digest the development in Pakistan, as he promised to foil the efforts made by political rivals and external forces. He also noted that some forces wanted to disrupt Pakistan-China relations and were working on the nefarious agenda of creating a situation where there could not be any peace in the country. The minister promised to extend complete security to the Chinese nationals living and working in Pakistan while routing out the menace of terrorism forever. Referring to his recent visit to China as member of a delegation accompanying Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he said an agreement had been reached on upgradation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). However, Tarar stressed that political stability was a prerequisite for economic stability, as he criticised those aiming at creating uncertainty in Pakistan. Tarar told a press conference that no political leader could be bigger than

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## SBP cuts key rate by 150bps to 20.5%

The central bank last changed rates in an emergency meeting in late June last year

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) cut its key interest rate by 150 basis points on Monday in a widely expected move, marking its first rate reduction in nearly four years in its effort to boost growth amid a sharp decline in retail inflation. The decision to cut the key rate to 20.5% comes two days ahead of budget and a week after data showed inflation slowed to a 30-month low of 11.8% in May. However the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) foresees a risk of inflation to rise significantly in July 2024 from current levels, before trending down gradually during FY25.

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## PM attends Namaz-e-Janaza of Shaheed Captain Faraz Ilyas

The prime minister also met with the parents of shaheed captain and expressed condolences



RAI KALAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif participates in the burial of Shaheed Captain Muhammad Faraz Ilyas who was martyred in Lakki Marwat. - DNA

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday attended Namaz-e-Janaza of Shaheed Captain Faraz Ilyas in Kasur who was martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) attack in District Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The funeral prayer was attended by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, IG Police Punjab and a number of senior military officers, civil authorities and residents. The prime minister also met with the parents of shaheed captain and expressed condolences. He announced to transform the native village of martyred officer as model village and renamed it as Faraz Ilyas Shaheed. He told the parents that the sacrifice of their son would not go in vain and prayed for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude. Under the Quranic teachings, a shaheed had an elevated place in Jannah, he said, adding that a large number of Jawans of armed forces had laid down their lives for the motherland. The prime minister said that the nation was proud of its brave sons and the coward terrorists could not succeed in shaking their strong resolve. Separately, on X account, the prime minister said that he was deeply saddened by the martyrdom of Pak Army personnel

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## PPP stands with journalists: Murtaza

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Syed Hassan Murtaza says the PPP is standing firmly with the journalists' community over the Punjab Defamation Bill which has now become the law. The Punjab government issued the gazette notification of Punjab Defamation Law 2024 on Monday. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, Hassan Murtaza said that the PPP didn't vote for Maryam Nawaz in the election of chief minister to pass such a draconian legislation.

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JUNE

June 02/Italy  
National/Independence Day

June 04/Finland  
Armed Forces Day

June 06/Sweden  
National Day

June 10/Portugal  
Portugal Day (National Day)

June 10/Jordan  
Arab Revolution & Army Day

June 11/United Kingdom  
Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth

June 12/Philippines  
Independence Day

June 12/Russian Federation  
Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation (National Day)

June 13/Zambia  
Armed Forces day

June 17/Iceland  
National Day

June 18/Seychells  
National Day

June 25/Croatia  
National Day

June 25/Mozambique  
National Day

June 26/Azerbaijan  
Army Day

## Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



## Emergency

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



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WASA Rawalpindi.5555489  
CAA.....9281092



## Hospitals

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



## Departments

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

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# ICCI-NUTECH agree to join hands for training

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National University of Technology (NUTECH) and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry have decided to initiate collaborative efforts for the industrial based skilled training programmes, need based scholarship programmes, creation of business incubation centre, promotion of hospitality sector and faculty-industrial research programmes. This understanding has been reached during a visit of ICCI delegation to the NUTECH under the leadership of its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari wherein it was also decided that ICCI will participate in the upcoming NUTECH Job Fair to advance the core objective of industrial development.

On the occasion, Rector NUTECH Lt.Gen © Moazzam Ejaz while highlighting the achievements of the University said that the University has been ranked among the 100 best Institutions of the world, which is the result of the tireless efforts of its faculty and the expertise of the students in the relevant fields.

He apprised the participants about NUTECH's slogan 'a university of Industry' by saying that we are fully determined to achieve this goal with our head, heart and hand by working together. He further said that convergence of academia-industry signifies a step forward to give boost to Pakistan's innovative landscape to herald a promising future with boundless possibilities. President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that NUTECH is the first Uni-



versity engaged in industrial based research which is indeed a great service to the country. He said that Pakistan is blessed with abundant resources and excellent weather but remained unable to expand its export canvass because of lagging behind in value addition to its agricultural and industrial products and the NUTECH can support both the sectors by teaching how to minimize cost of doing business and increasing capacity utilization.

He also apprised the Rector about ICCI's endeavors to establish an industrial estate in the outskirts of the capital to boost local industry through hydel power generation and sought Army Chief, General Asim Munir's help to get a nod for the smooth sail. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, added that skill development in the Air Hostesses and Nursing sectors can also prove useful for foreign exchange earnings. Secretary General United Busi-

ness Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that a MoU between ICCI and the NUTECH for collaborative endeavors for the development of corporate sector which is actually the locomotive force in running the country would go a long way and for the purpose ICCI is ready to allocate a reasonable space to the University for the research work. Senior Vice President Faad Waheed underlined the significance of Artificial Intelligence

based research for ease of doing business by curtailing the cost of doing business. Coordinator ICCI sub Committee on HEC Adnan Mukhtar appreciated the Rector's offer that ICCI can use the hitch labs of the University for the development of the industry. Executive member Rizwan Chheena and ICCI member Sajid Iqbal also shared their insights for the academia-industrial linkage.

## KP Governor meets Rana Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday met with Federal Minister for Industries, Production, National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain to discuss issues of mutual interest. They discussed matters relating to agricultural and industrial development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a news release. The minister assured the KP Governor that the federal government will resolve all the pending issues of his province on a priority basis and also help to solve issues related to the economy and law and order. Faisal Karim Kundi said that despite abundant resources, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is lagging in the race for national development. Public problems should be solved by performing better in agricultural.—APP

## Pakistan sees 62.3% surge in IT exports

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has witnessed a remarkable 62.3% increase in IT exports in April this year compared to the same period last year, according to a recent report by the BBC. The surge in IT exports is attributed to the policy reforms and business-friendly policies introduced by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), PTV reported. The stability of the local currency and the decision to allow freelancers to deposit foreign earnings into local bank accounts have been key factors in this growth, the report read.—APP

## Education Ministry launches foundation learning policy

On the 8th of May, 2024, the honourable Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif declared an education emergency. As a matter of urgency, the government will now address the out-of-school-children crisis - 26.2 million children are currently out of school

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training (MoFEPT) on Monday launched the first ever Federal Foundational Learning Policy 2024, aims to ensure that all children in federal schools will acquire foundational learning skills by 2030. The event was led by the Federal Secretary Mr. Mohyuddin Wani, and attended by key development partners, university vice-chancellors, parliamentarians and partner organisations working on education in Pakistan. The event was hosted by acclaimed author and social activist, Ms. Feryal Ali Gauhar. On the 8th of May, 2024, the honourable Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif declared an education emergency. As a matter of urgency, the government will now address the out-of-school-children crisis - 26.2 million children are currently out of school. It will also address the learning crisis; in Pakistan, 4 out of 5 children cannot read with comprehension by the age of 10. Also, according to the recently launched Annual Status of Education Report 2023, only 13% of grade 3 children can do simple division. This means that children lack foundational skills. It means that they need to learn more complex concepts, and they are also less likely to become productive citizens. This policy is a crucial step in the government's response to tackle the learning crisis. The Federal Foundational Learning Policy 2024 aims to ensure that by "2030, all children enrolled in schools under the federal territories will acquire foundational learning skills". The policy will apply to all government schools, private schools, non-formal education centres, and madaris in Islamabad Capital Territory, Gilgit Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The departments responsible for policy implementation are the Federal Directorate of Education, School Education Department, Gilgit Baltistan and the Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Alongside these, a range of other departments will support the implementation of this policy, including the MoFEPT's Pakistan Foundational Learning Hub, set up to drive improvements in early grade literacy and numeracy nationwide. This policy is part of a national movement to improve basic reading and numeracy skills for Pakistan's children. Across the country, each province is in the process of developing their own foundational learning policies. Alongside this, there is growing support from civil society, academia, and international organisations to tackle this issue. At the launch on Monday, Mr. Salman Naveed Khan, CEO, Pak Alliance for Maths and Science, gave an overview of the eight pillars of the Federal Foundational Learning Policy 2024. Meanwhile, Mr Sam Wilson, Project Director, Pakistan Foundational Learning Hub, said "it is easy to make a policy, but the real task is to implement it". Ms. Rifat Jabeen, Director Academics, Federal Directorate of Education, talked about the success of the Reading Hour programme implemented in Islamabad Capital Territory, and commended the ongoing efforts of the MoFEPT to improve reading and create a reading culture in schools. Ms. Inga Afanasieva, Senior Economist at the World Bank, highlighted the low learning levels amongst children in ICT, and the low content knowledge of teachers who sometimes scored lower than their students on assessments. Ms. Saima Anwer, Senior Education Advisor at FCDO, stressed on the need to improve the quality of learning in schools in order to increase retention and tackle the out of school children crisis.—APP

## Measles under control in Punjab: Minister

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Khwaja Imran Nazir said on Monday that the measles situation in the province was under control, with a significantly lower number of confirmed cases and fatalities compared to other provinces. Speaking to a private news channel, he stated that while measles cases in Punjab were fewer than in other provinces, the vaccination campaign was intensified to protect children from infectious diseases. Khwaja Imran said out of over 10,000 suspected cases reported, 2,700 were confirmed, representing a 25% ratio, whereas only 28 deaths were confirmed with the disease, as per the National Institute of Health. The minister emphasized that every child's life was precious and that the government was taking measures to ensure their safety. He clarified that a 2-3% death rate was natural in every disease, and the measles ratio was even lower. The Punjab government is utilizing digital monitoring and clustering to combat the disease, with Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz focusing her attention on the issue. The minister said clustering analysis had identified Bahawalpur, Jhang, and Chaniot as the most affected areas, while the rest of the districts had routine patients.—APP

## Stable, predictable tax regime urged

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and the Policy Research Institute of Market Economy (PRIME) have collaborated to form a Tax Reforms Commission, comprising several eminent thinkers. Currently, tax is a crucial issue in the media, and our lenders prioritize revenue collection over growth and employment. The commission highlights several flaws in the existing tax system. It is neither citizen-friendly, transparent, stable, nor predictable. Faced with increasing budgetary difficulties, reliance on ad hoc measures has grown, leading to arbitrary with-

holding income taxes, turnover taxes, taxes on deemed incomes, and arbitrary revisions of tax rates. Approximately 68% of revenue is collected through excessive use of withholding and minimum tax regimes. The fragmented system, with numerous exemptions and rates, creates complexity and confusion for taxpayers. Problems include a broken refund system, high compliance costs, and a predatory Tax Authority. The budget period is marked by extreme uncertainty and speculation due to this approach to taxation. This arbitrary approach has resulted in numerous court cases and reversals of initiatives. More taxes are not the solution to deep structural fiscal policy issues where expenditure

control is not possible. According to the press release issued by PIDE, these statements were made during a press conference at the National Press Club in Islamabad, where Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of PIDE, Dr. Ali Salman, Founder of PRIME, and Dr. Mahmood Khalid, Senior Research Economist at PIDE, addressed the audience. They further stated that our approach emphasizes developing a predictable tax policy to build trust between citizens and the government. Key recommendations include simplification and harmonization of the tax system to facilitate taxpayers and ease tax payments, which is more effective than arbitrary measures imposed annually.

## U.S. and Pakistan shape the future of higher education

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Andrew J. Schofer today inaugurated the three-day International Summit on Higher Education alongside the Chairman of the Higher

Education Commission, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, and professors from the University of Utah. The USAID-funded summit brings together over 180 Pakistani and American university leaders and faculty to collaborate, exchange knowledge, and build partnerships to

improve the quality of higher education and student employability. The summit is part of USAID's \$19 million Higher Education System Strengthening Activity that supports 16 Pakistani public universities to improve higher education management, market-rel-

evant instruction, and student support services. In his opening remarks, Chargé d'affaires Schofer emphasized the crucial role of higher education institutions in driving Pakistan's economic development. "Higher education institutions have an essential role to play in Pakistan's development. When universities deliver equitable education, provide youth with employment-ready skills, and lead in applied research and innovation, both individuals and society prosper," he stated. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, appreciated this robust partnership between the University of Utah and Pakistani universities to exchange ideas and share innovations across borders.



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## Briefs

Pakistan  
Travel &  
Tourism  
Symposium  
kicks off  
at PNCA

ISLAMABAD: The two-day Pakistan Travel and Tourism Symposium jointly organized by Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and World Bank Pakistan started here on Monday at Pakistan National Council of Arts. The symposium themed "Building the National Economy through Tourism" where more than 20 foreign delegates and more than 400 national and international tourism professionals, industry experts, and decision-makers have participated and shared their ideas for development of a future road map for the sustainable growth of tourism industry of Pakistan. On this occasion, a tourism expo was also organized to showcase Pakistan's rich tourism potential and create G2G, B2B and G2B linkages among the industry stakeholders. This Symposium is designed to explore and enhance critical facets of the tourism sector, with a focus on green investments, improving connectivity, responsible tourism, and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. The event aims to foster a transformative dialogue among stakeholders to address pivotal challenges, forge synergies, and capitalize on opportunities in the evolving tourism landscape. The opening ceremony of the symposium was attended by the as Chief Guest, Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Minister for Culture, Tourism, Antiquities & Archives Sindh Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah and Additional Secretary Cabinet Division Hamad Shamami. Addressing the participants, Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan said that Pakistan, a land of rich history, diverse culture, and breathtaking natural beauty, offered countless opportunities for travelers, explorers, and adventure-seekers alike. "From the majestic Karakoram Mountains to the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, our country is a treasure trove of experiences waiting to be discovered," Rana said. He added that incumbent government was committed to develop tourism sector across the country and also working on different projects in all the provinces to ensure the sustainable and eco-friendly growth of this sector for the socio-economic development and employment generation for the people of Pakistan.—APP

23rd  
"Chinese  
Bridge" Final  
wraps up

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Karachi Division final of the 23rd Chinese Bridge-Chinese Proficiency Competition for international university students concluded, with Chinese Consul General Yang Yundong underscoring the pivotal role of the competition in promoting mutual learning and cultural understanding between China and the world. The competition, organized by the Chinese Consulate General in Karachi and hosted by the Confucius Institute at the University of Karachi, was held in a hybrid format combining both online and offline elements. Through the "self-introduction" segment, 6 contestants shared their unique bond and enduring passion for the Chinese language. In the "keynote speech" segment, the participants expressed their insights and perspectives on the theme, showcasing their understanding of cultural diversity and global interconnectedness. The "talent demonstration" segment witnessed contestants showcasing diverse talents and a profound love for Chinese culture. Performances range from Chinese songs and paper-cutting art to classical dance and guitar sing-alongs, all reflecting their dedication to learning and appreciating Chinese culture.

## Moot on sustaining solutions for financial integrity held

The conference aimed to foster collaboration among banks, financial institutions, criminal justice institutions, regulatory authorities, policymakers, international donor partners to address emerging money laundering threats and share international best practices

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in collaboration with the Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU), organized a conference on 10th June in Karachi titled 'Navigating the Future of AML: Sustaining Solutions for Financial Integrity.' The event brought together key stakeholders to discuss the critical aspects of maintaining compliance and strengthening frameworks following Pakistan's removal from the FATF's increased monitoring which is commonly referred to as grey list. The conference aimed to foster collaboration among banks, financial institutions, criminal justice institutions, regulatory authorities, policymakers, international donor partners to address emerging money laundering threats and share international best practices. Ms. Shamshad Akhtar graced the event as the Chief Guest and congratulated FMU and UNODC for organizing the successful event. In her remarks, she emphasized that "as a new round of Mutual Evaluation (ME) will commence by Asia Pacific Group (APG) for its members, Pakistan would have to demonstrate further improvements in our systems and processes, therefore we must remain committed to combating money laundering through continuous dedication and innovative approaches". In her opening remarks, the Director General of FMU, Ms. Lubna Farooq Malik, highlighted the collective efforts that led to Pakistan's successful removal from the FATF grey list and emphasized



the importance of sustaining these efforts. "This conference serves as a convergence platform for key AML stakeholders to harness a shared vision for a secure financial future," she stated. The UNODC Country Representative, Mr. Jeremy Milson underscored the transformative role of the UNODC, both strategically at the national level and operationally on the ground, with capacity-building of relevant stakeholders through innovative

solutions under sustainable AML reforms in Pakistan. "Our goal is to catalyze a robust AML regime and ensure financial integrity. Today's discussions are crucial for sustaining these measures and in addressing new emerging threats," he said. The conference featured sessions on various topics, including trade-based financing, crypto currency as ways to launder illicit funds across borders, while identifying areas where synergies between the

State Bank of Pakistan, Financial Monitoring Unit, financial institutions, and law enforcement agencies could be formed to sustain AML measures over the long-term. UNODC is committed to promoting national coordination and regional and international cooperation on issues concerning money laundering and terrorism financing. Experts from UNODC's Global Programme against Money Laundering (GPML), Proceeds of Crime

and the Financing of Terrorism. GPML presented insights on international trends and best practices while identifying areas in which UNODC supports Member States. The event aimed to enhance awareness of AML frameworks among stakeholders, improve understanding of post-FATF challenges, and foster a sustainable and collaborative approach to chart a mutual way forward in mitigating money laundering risks in Pakistan.

## ANF seizes over 262 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country seized over 262 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 1.2 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of a female passenger going to Bahrain at Islamabad Airport. 1 kg heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Dubai at Karachi Airport while 63.6 kg hashish and 72 kg opium were recovered from two suspects rounded up near Ravi Toll Plaza Lahore. 38.4 kg opium and 33.6 kg hashish were recovered from an accused arrested near Kala Shah Kaku Toll Plaza Sheikhupura. 52.8 kg hashish was recovered from an accused netted near Shahrah Faisal Karachi. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

## Dangue larvae reports 250 locations in ICT last week

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon chaired a meeting regarding dengue measures in the federal capital, in which officials reported finding dengue larvae at 250 locations across the city last week. The DC emphasized that controlling the spread of dengue required active participation from residents, said the ICT Administration's Spokesman. The meeting focused on reviewing ongoing initiatives and campaigns aimed at eradicating the larvae. During the meeting, the officials briefed the DC that not a single case of dengue was reported in the city last week. The deputy commissioner stressed the importance of community involvement in keeping homes and surroundings clean to prevent the breeding of dengue-carrying mosquitoes. The health department also urged all citizens to play their part in this public health effort. The district administration was taking various measures, but they highlighted that these steps would only be effective with the support and cooperation of the public, the spokesman added.—APP

## Al-Shifa doctors save an Afghan infant's life

## DNA

RAWALPINDI: Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital's medical team has successfully operated on a rare and complicated eye tumour in 7-month-old Hadia Sadat from Kabul, Afghanistan. Following Hadia's refusal by hospitals in Kabul, Lahore, and Peshawar due to her severe condition, Al-Shifa Trust's medical professionals took on the responsibility of treating her. The treatment presented a significant challenge due to the eye tumour, which weighed 400 grams and measured 10 by 16 inches. Despite the high risks, an expert team of ophthalmic surgeons and paediatric anaesthetists, including Dr. Murtaza, Dr. Zahra, Dr.

Huda, Col. Dr. Mansoor-ul-Haq, and Dr. Ali Raza, performed the complex surgery with success. "The complexity and risk associated with this surgery required unparalleled expertise and a high level of dedication," said Maj Gen (R) Rehmat Khan, President of Al-Shifa Trust. He continued by saying, "I am extremely pleased with our medical team, whose commitment and expertise have been instrumental in saving Hadia's life." According to Maj Gen (R), Rehmat Khan Hadia is making headway in her recovery at the Al-Shifa Trust. She will make a full recovery and go through rehabilitation in order to acquire a prosthetic eye to restore her appearance for aesthetic purposes. He stated that Al-Shifa Trust provides

specialised ophthalmic consultations to approximately 7,000 patients and conducts over 1,500 reconstructive and tumour surgeries annually, making it the leading hospital in Pakistan. The Ophthalmic Department takes pride in being one of the best treatment centres for birth defects of the eye, trauma reconstruction, cosmetic eye and facial rehabilitation, and all types of cancers and tumours of the eye, he explained. Individuals who have lost an eye as a result of an injury or sickness may want to consider getting a prosthetic eye in order to improve their looks. It is not uncommon for people to refer to it as a "glass eye," which is a shell that covers the structures in the eye socket rather than a genuine eye.

## CDNS realize Rs 1.6 trillion targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs1.6 trillion in fresh bonds and 85 percent of the annual target in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to May 31. The National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1.742 trillion for the year 2023-24, it is encouraging that 85 percent of the target has been achieved, and it is hoped that National Savings will surpass its annual target this FY 2023-24, the senior official of CDNS told APP on Monday. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country, he said. Given the current market trend in the country the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added.—APP

## Govt all set to present people-friendly budget

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs Amir Muqam Monday assured that the government would provide a people-friendly and development-oriented budget for 2024-25 that would provide relief to the disadvantaged and successfully implement its policies to serve the masses. Talking to a private news channel, he said the scope of public welfare projects would be extended under public-private partnership and unnecessary expenditures further reduced. He said besides big cities, balanced development of villages is also being ensured so that all facilities should be available to the youth and farmers living in rural areas. He said the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif has better days ahead where the common man will get full benefit from the prudent policies of the present government. The minister also assured that the government would control inflation and the common man would get relief on priority. Replying to a question, he said the next financial year would be the year of economic progress for Pakistan, adding economic conditions were difficult and the government was adopting a policy of utilizing available resources in the best possible manner.—APP

## Pak earns \$667m by exporting transport services

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$667.946 million by providing different transport services in various countries during the first nine months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. This shows a nominal decline of 2.20 percent as compared to \$682.950 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding months of the fiscal year (2022-23), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the months under review, the exports of sea transport services witnessed a decrease of 4.74 percent, going down from \$194.770 million last year to \$185.546 million during the months under review. Among the sea transport services, the exports of freight services dipped by 47.63 percent from \$99.160 million last year to \$51.930 million whereas the exports of other sea transport services, however, increased by 39.75 percent from \$95.610 million to \$133.616 million current year, the PBS data revealed. The exports of air transport decreased by 3.19 percent going down from \$473.280 million last year to \$458.190 million during July-March 2023-24. Among the air transport services, the exports of passenger services decreased by 5.95 percent, from \$315.590 million to \$296.800 million, whereas the exports of freight services surged by 6.06 percent, from \$18.800 million to \$19.940 million, in addition, the export of other air transport services witnessed an increase of 1.84 percent from \$138.890 million to \$141.450 million. Meanwhile, the exports of road transport services during the months under review witnessed a growth of 94.99 percent going up from \$9.980 million to \$19.460 million during this year, it added.—APP

## TEVTA to transform six training institutes

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Technical Education and Vocation Training Authority Brig. Muhammad Sajid Khokhar Monday said TEVTA had planned to upgrade its over six training Institutes with modern infrastructure, skilled oriented International training centers to ensure a brighter future for the country's skilled workforce to meet global market demands. Talking to PTV news channel, he said that various countries including Korea, Japan and Gulf countries were being shortlist for this program, adding, the persons would be sent to these courses would also be able to learn their languages as well. The chairman also said

the initiative would promote overseas employment in the country and help Pakistan boost its manpower supply, adding, we had joined hands with our international partners for achieving the goal of making the youth of the country as skilled for better employability prospects and the conversion of institutes would bear good results. Courses of hospitality, construction and Nursing would be preferred training courses for people getting training under this program, he added. Sajid Khokhar said that several important steps were taken as per the vision 2024 which would provide market-oriented education to students, industry-academ-

ia linkages were also being focused and in that regard independent sector councils were being set up. He said around 386 institutions were working under TEVTA, adding, to increase the enrollment we had planned to introduced evening classes in all our institutes He added that we were successfully providing vocational training to 90,000 students per year, adding, hopefully the overall budget of TEVTA would further enhanced as talks were being held with the government. Technical Education and Vocational Authority (TEVTA) has also signed an agreement with leading industries to provide jobs to trained youth every year, add-

ing, every batch of students would be trained as per demand of a certain industry and we would bear the cost of equipment and training where the certified youth would get jobs in the industries. TEVTA has also set up technical training centers in 23 madaris (seminaries), he said, adding, we were also introducing summer skills camp which was valuable initiative by the government. The chairman said Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority was extending its five to six various vocational training courses for prisoners, adding, the prisoners were being trained in several demand driven vocational training including home.—APP

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## The view on France's Olympic summer

Emmanuel Macron had hoped that this would be a summer of sporting celebration for France, dominated by the first Paris Olympics for a century. Instead, events on track and field are now set to be eclipsed by political turmoil, following Mr Macron's decision to call a snap parliamentary election following his humiliating defeat at the hands of the radical right in this weekend's European polls. In the lead-up to the Olympics - now less than 50 days away - Mr Macron had already been desperately searching for the feelgood factor. Having previously lamented the modest size of the national medal haul at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, he used a recent television interview to demand a top-five finish for France this summer on home soil.

Just "healthy pressure", according to the president. But the rhetoric was a sign that it is Mr Macron who is feeling the tension most. All host countries hope that an Olympics can inspire a national sense of unity and pride, while generating admiring applause from the world at large. But as the momentum of his second term drains away, amid unprecedented levels of support for Marine Le Pen and the radical right, Mr Macron is in dire need of a national moment to match the unexpected euphoria of London 2012. So far, the portents are mixed. Tickets are sold out, but evidence of wider enthusiasm is limited. There was a needless row over plans - now abandoned - to remove traditional bookseller stalls from the banks of the Seine for the Games' duration. Parisians have loudly complained about the prospect of numerous no-go areas for traffic, in what is likely to be a chronically overcrowded city. Reassurances from ministers that the 10bn event will more than pay for itself have been treated with scepticism. More insidiously - if predictably - Ms Le Pen and her allies on the far right have attacked plans to use the event to celebrate France's modern, multicultural identity on the world stage. Dwarfing all these issues is the question of security, amid fears of a resurgent terrorist threat, and fallout from the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. Last week, a Chechen teenager was arrested in what the interior ministry claimed was "the first foiled terror attack" in relation to the Games. Intelligence officials suspect that Russia was responsible for a recent stunt in which five coffins draped in the tricolour were placed in front of the Eiffel Tower, bearing the message "French soldiers of Ukraine." As the countdown to the opening ceremony begins in earnest, organisers have pointed to a lukewarm build-up to London 2012, before what turned out to be one of the most successful Games of recent times. There is also the encouraging precedent of the last French summer Olympics, a hundred years ago. Then, too, Parisians complained bitterly about the upheaval resulting from staging such an event. And then, too, in a society beset by economic crises following the first world war, the political horizon was darkening as extreme forces grew in influence. The Games were nevertheless judged a roaring success, setting new standards of competition and international sporting friendship. As he seeks to salvage a second term which looks in danger of ending ignominiously, Mr Macron urgently needs a revival of the spirit of 1924. Right now it seems unlikely.

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## India will not be a willing pawn of US

Given it is the US administration's consistent policy to push India to act as a "counterbalance" to China in the region, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's win in India's general election, which guarantees him a record third straight term, offers a good chance for Washington and its allies to strengthen their anti-China alliance in the strategic "Indo-Pacific" region.

The deepening defense relationship between the US and India was at the top of US President Joe Biden's agenda when he congratulated Modi on the election results. In a call, the two leaders emphasized "deepening the US-India comprehensive and global strategic partnership" and "advancing their shared vision of a free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific region", the White House said. US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan is also due to visit New Delhi soon "to engage the new government on shared US-India priorities". Indeed, having formed the Quad security dialogue that also includes Japan and Australia, the US and India have in recent years bolstered their defense and security partnership through information sharing and technology transfer, with the two countries regularly participating in joint military exercises obviously messaging China. The 2020 China-India standoff along their disputed border seems to have pushed India-US military collaboration to a new high, with the two sides agreeing in 2023 to jointly develop and produce defense equipment to "strengthen the shared security" of the two countries. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said at the Shangri-La defense conference, held recently in Singapore, that "the relationship that we enjoy with India right now is as good or better than our relationship has ever been". Despite this, it would be unrealistic and even naive to think that India will play the role of a willing pawn in the US-orchestrated geopolitical game against China. The country has always been cautious about not being drawn into any direct confrontation with China. Just days prior to voting starting in the general election, Modi, in an interview, emphasized the importance of India's relations with China. He said the two countries should urgently address the "prolonged situation" on their border. "I hope and believe that through positive and constructive bilateral engagement at the diplomatic and military levels, we will be able to restore and sustain peace and tranquility at our borders." A sound and stable China-India relationship serves the common interests of both sides and is conducive to peace and development of the region and the world at large. So long as the two countries proceed from their fundamental interests and those of their people, and bear in mind the overall situation, they will be able to maintain the development of their relations on a healthy and stable track. The US is daydreaming if it wants to use the differences that exist between the two countries to pit India against China.



## Recognizing Palestine Marks New Era in Diplomacy

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The actions by Ireland, Spain and Norway might reflect growing frustration in Europe over stalled peace efforts and the Israeli government's perceived stubbornness. Yet, without a unified European approach, these individual recognitions may not significantly change the situation. The ongoing violence in Rafah emphasizes

Ireland, Spain and Norway recently decided to recognize Palestinian statehood. This move could potentially help revive the idea of a two-state solution which is a long-supported international goal that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strongly opposes. Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez clarified that this decision should not be seen as an action against Israel. Despite Netanyahu labeling it a "reward for terrorism" Sanchez views it as a step towards peace. Other European countries might follow suit adding to the over 140 nations that already recognize Palestinian statehood. However, the situation remains complex and tense. Rafah, a city in the Gaza Strip is under the heavy attack despite international calls for restraint. This includes appeals from the International Court of Justice, the United States and the European Union. This makes it challenging to see these diplomatic recognitions as anything more than symbolic gestures, highlighting internal divisions within Europe and its struggle to apply coordinated pressure on Israel. The actions by Ireland, Spain and Norway might reflect growing frustration in Europe over stalled peace efforts and the Israeli government's perceived stubbornness. Yet, without a unified European approach, these individual recognitions may not significantly change the situation. The ongoing violence in Rafah emphasizes the gap between diplomatic actions and on the ground realities. Even though more countries recognizing Palestinian statehood could be a symbolic win for Palestinians, it is uncertain if this will lead

to real progress towards peace especially with strong opposition from key players like Israel and the United States. For these recognitions to be effective, Europe needs to present a unified and strong front which is difficult given current geopolitical dynamics. The decision by Ireland, Spain and Norway was expected due to their national debates and growing public support for action supporting Palestine. Politically, this is notable because other European countries, such as Malta, Slovenia and Belgium have hesitated to take similar steps. Belgium has been vocal about Palestinian rights during its presidency of the Council of the European Union however national elections and other factors have made it cautious. National election cycles and the upcoming election of a new European Parliament have influenced how European governments handle the sensitive Middle East issue, depending on their domestic politics and the views of their ruling parties. The decisions by Ireland, Spain and Norway's involvement (though not an EU member) are significant for breaking the EU's diplomatic unity rather than for their legal impact. Most of the few EU members that recognized Palestinian statehood did so in 1988 before joining the EU and were mainly former Warsaw Pact countries. Before the recent declarations only Sweden had departed from the EU's general stance on Palestine, doing so in 2014. The current Swedish government's different stance compared to the previous one shows how volatile this issue can be. There is still no consistent, unified approach among all 27 EU mem-

ber states that goes beyond national political cycles and short-term agendas. Even though there has been some agreement within the EU since the conflict started, reaching a comprehensive EU-wide consensus is still far off. It would be too cynical to dismiss the entire EU diplomatic effort after the October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorist attack as futile. The EU High Representative Josep Borrell has worked hard to coordinate a common European position during critical moments of the conflict, sometimes with success. The Spanish and Belgian EU presidencies have tried to convince Israel that resuming peace talks is a key to defeating Hamas politically not just militarily. Despite Israel's ongoing military campaign which has killed tens of thousands, EU leaders like Germany and France have become more critical of Israeli policy. French President Emmanuel Macron even said in February that recognizing Palestinian statehood is no longer a taboo for Paris. However, the EU has not yet united around measures that would apply real pressure especially in trade and economic relations. The EU is the largest provider of aid to Palestinians and Israel's biggest trade partner. Recently, sanctions were seriously discussed for the first time at an EU foreign ministers' meeting but no agreement was reached. It's important for the EU to stay involved in resolving the conflict by engaging with Arab countries, but its effectiveness is limited by internal differences and political cycles. With pro-Israel Hungary taking over the EU Council presidency in July, achieving a common and meaningful EU position will remain a challenge.

## Far right confounds expectations in election whirlwind

Baria Alamuddin

The hard right also outperformed expectations in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. The quasi-fascist Alternative for Germany managed an unexpectedly strong showing, despite an outcry over a TV interview, in which a party official doubted whether genocidal Nazi SS officers were criminals, and investigations into funds received from the Kremlin. Far-right nationalists are already integral parts of coalition governments in seven EU member states and are dominant components of regimes in Hungary, Italy and Austria

Will Europe ever be the same again? President Emmanuel Macron has called snap legislative elections in France after a crushing defeat for his party and other moderates in the European Parliament elections that concluded on Sunday. Far-right parties, including Marine Le Pen's National Rally, were runaway winners, taking about 40 percent of the vote. The hard right also outperformed expectations in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. The quasi-fascist Alternative for Germany managed an unexpectedly strong showing, despite an outcry over a TV interview, in which a party official doubted whether genocidal Nazi SS officers were criminals, and investigations into funds received from the Kremlin. Far-right nationalists are already integral parts of coalition governments in seven EU member states and are dominant components of regimes in Hungary, Italy and Austria. With right-wing nationalists coming out on top in the weekend's Belgian general election, liberal Prime Minister Alexander De Croo was forced to resign. Six months after an election in the Netherlands, the far-right Party for Freedom last month finally succeeded in cobbling together a coalition described as the most right-wing in modern history. Bucking this trend, the fascists and xenophobes of the authoritarian right were at least temporarily cut down to size in elections in Poland, Portugal and Spain. Right-wing populists' destabilizing impact on Western politics is defined by anti-immigrant hater mongering and fanciful attention-grabbing policies - such as seeking to reduce net immigration to zero, with damaging consequences on economies dependent on cheap foreign labor and on revenue from foreign tourists, students and investors. Racist culture war narratives have poisonous consequences for social cohesion across multicultural, diverse societies, recalling the polarization and violent extremist tendencies of 1930s Europe before the Second World War. The planet has never been in greater need of far-sighted leaders willing to do what is necessary to address fundamental global issues. In a symptom of the brutal toxicity of populist politics, Denmark's prime minister was attacked last week and the Slovak prime minister survived an

attempt on his life. Conspiracy-mongering, disinformation and fake news pumped into election ecosystems, mostly from China, Russia and Iran, exacerbate democratic volatility and unpredictability. But has the world reached peak populism elsewhere? In a unique year for elections, with more than 4 billion people - over half the world's population - going to the polls in more than 40 countries, political trends have never appeared more erratic or fragmented. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gambled heavily on provocative religion-baiting themes, seeking to mobilize the majority Hindu electorate, but his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party ended up with a dramatically smaller share of the vote. Ordinary Indians cared far more about living standards, competent governance and public services than they did about rabble-rousing Islamophobic diatribes. A chastened Modi remains in power, but without an overall majority, far less the "supermajority" he had boasted of, and he will need to substantially moderate his agenda to retain coalition partners. A buoyant opposition described the outcome as a mandate to "save democracy." Authoritarian strongmen have been struggling elsewhere, too. In Turkey, significant opposition wins in local elections were a stinging rebuke to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In Iran, there was a dire turnout for legislative elections in March and May, sinking to just over 20 percent in Tehran, and there is little public enthusiasm for this month's vote to replace the late President Ebrahim Raisi. Efforts to muzzle the media, reduce civil freedoms, hamstringing the judiciary and criminalize political opponents only mobilize people against autocratic elites. In Mexico, leftist candidate Claudia Sheinbaum won a landslide presidential election victory and in South Africa the corruption-mired African National Congress lost its electoral majority after 30 years of dominance throughout the post-apartheid era. As recently as 2019, a jingoistic pro-Brexit narrative was a surefire vote winner in Britain. But public opinion has sharply reversed, leaving the opposition Labour Party all but guaranteed a majority

after next month's parliamentary election. The Conservative Party has been outplayed by its own populist-right, culture-baiting, anti-migrant rhetoric. Labour now occupies the center ground, while the xenophobic Reform UK squeezes the Conservatives out of existence from the right flank. However, the year's most titanic battle between democratic values and unabashed demagogic populism will occur in November. Donald Trump's self-serving, divisive record and his criminal convictions should have made his candidacy inconceivable, but because of Joe Biden's age, unpopularity and missteps over Gaza, many observers regard a second Trump presidency - with all its accompanying traumas and risks - as highly likely. Election results in recent months have been driven less by a public lurch toward the left or right and more by universal dissatisfaction with the status quo. In the US, most voters express scant enthusiasm for either candidate. The common denominator for voters - whether in Britain, India, South Africa, Iran or Turkey - is anger over falling living standards and the failure of ruling elites to make a meaningful difference to people's lives. As the Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan conflicts drag on, the planet has never been in greater need of far-sighted leaders willing to do what is necessary to address fundamental global issues of injustice, instability, inequality and environmental degradation. Demagogues such as Le Pen, Trump and Viktor Orban have no answers to these challenges, despite ruthlessly exploiting the blind anger expressed by people who feel left behind by their political systems. Electoral victories often come relatively easily for shameless populists, with deceitful, divisive political programs that mobilize supporters against immigrants, minorities and other disfavored demographics. These are dangerous and unpredictable times, driven by volatile public sentiments, and protest votes about the dire state of party politics risk making the situation infinitely worse. Only citizens awakening to the populists' morally bankrupt, racist lies can pave the way for leaders who are genuinely committed to making the difficult decisions that are necessary to change the world for the better.

- Sourced by Arab news.

## Briefs

## PM for utilizing resources...

FROM PAGE 01  
Annual plan for 2024-25. The Council was also given a detailed briefing on the thirteenth Five-year Development Plan. It was also briefed about the national goals for the recovery of the economy and the development of the country and the measures to achieve them. The Council accorded approval to the thirteenth Five-year Development Plan in principle. The Council was told that CPEC, international investment projects and other ongoing projects that are near completion, will be given priority in the upcoming development budget. Apart from this, Sustainable Development Goals will be included in the development budget and backward areas will also be prioritized in the development budget. A report on the performance of Central Development Working Party and Executive Committee of National Economic Council from April last year to May this year was also presented in the Council meeting. Earlier at the outset, the National Economic Council offered prayers for the martyrs of Lakki Marwat terrorist attack and granting fortitude to the bereaved families.

## Pakistan all set to present...

FROM PAGE 01  
The budget is being prepared in close coordination among all the departments and ministries involved in the budget-related events, including the presentation of the budget in the Parliament and launching of the Economic Survey. It is pertinent to mention here that the budget is being presented when Pakistan is deliberating with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a package of up to \$8 billion. Meanwhile, 'The Economic Survey of Pakistan'— a pre-budget document presenting the state of the country's economy— will be presented on Tuesday, a day before the budget presentation. The survey would highlight the overall performance of economy during the outgoing fiscal year, providing a realistic feedback and basis for future planning.

## PM attends Namaz-e-Janaza of...

FROM PAGE 01  
including a captain in a targeted attack in District Lakki Marwat. The sacrifices of our brave soldiers and citizens is a debt on us that we must repay by relentlessly eliminating terrorism from our nation. Heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, he further posted. The late captain was laid to rest with complete military honours. The prime minister offered Fataha at his grave and placed a flower wreath. He also prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul. Shaheed Captain Faraz Ilyas, 26-year-old, belonged to village Rai Kalan, Kasur who laid down his life valiantly while performing his duties in Lakki Marwat.

## Attempts to disrupt Pak-China...

FROM PAGE 01  
Pakistan with reference to PTI founding chairman Imran Khan, as he questioned the "clean chit" being given through court proceedings. He said a so-called leader had humiliated Pakistan around the globe, but the things were changing, as Pakistan was a historic juncture leading to development and prosperity. "All the prisons in Pakistan should be emptied if a clean chit is awarded in 190 million pound mega corruption case, he remarked and also cited the cipher case about which clear evidence is available. He also defended the Punjab Defamation Act which came into effect on Monday, arguing that the legislation was for everyone. Tarar wondered if the local TV channels and others could submit apology before courts in other countries, then why the same could not happen in Pakistan.

## PCB chief hints at 'major surgery' within team

PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi says the defeat against India was "disappointing in every sense"

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

NEW YORK: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi hinted at changes in the national team after a shocking defeat in the T20 World Cup match against India, saying a "major surgery" is needed. "It seemed that a minor surgery would work but after this bad performance, I'm now sure that a major surgery is required. The nation will soon see a major overhaul," said Naqvi while speaking to journalists after the Pak-Ind match on Sunday. The Green Shirts lost to the Men in Blue by six runs despite an impressive performance by the bowlers who restricted the opponents to 119 after winning the toss. Speaking about the team's performance, Naqvi said that "the defeat against India was disappointing in every sense and that he knows what is going on in the team and what are the reasons for losing". The chairman further said that their biggest challenge is to improve the team's performance as it is currently at the lowest level. Speaking about the upcoming events, Naqvi said that they have to prepare a team for the Champions Trophy 2025. "The time has come to give a chance to the outside talent," he asserted. "We have to make the Pakistani cricket team one of the



best in the world. The nation does not expect such a disappointing performance from the cricket team," said Naqvi. Irresponsible batting: Pakistan's irresponsible batting line-up threw away a golden opportunity to put the country's campaign back on track, by failing to cross the line against India. The reckless batting line-up fell miserably in pursuit of a meager 120 runs target and was restricted to 113 for 7 at the end to hand over an unlikely six-run win to arch-rivals. The defeat has now left Pakistan with very few options as they are now waiting for the outcome of other matches before knowing well whether they would be in a position to qualify for the next stage. Babar Azam won the toss and elected to bowl first on a two-paced pitch where Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf picked up three wickets each while Rishabh Pant was India's biggest contributor with a quick knock of 42 as they were dismissed for 119. In response, Mohammad Rizwan laid the platform for the chase with a patient knock of 31 but Pakistan lost wickets at regular intervals while India's fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah made crucial dismissals to finish with figures of 3-14. The result keeps India perfect in Group A with two wins from their opening two matches while Pakistan have zero points from two defeats following their upset by the hosts, the United States, in their first game.

## We are still in the World Cup: Gary Kirsten

Gary Kirsten blames 'not so great' decision making on 'disappointing' India loss

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Head Coach Gary Kirsten has said that Pakistan's defeat against India in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup fixture from a position of ascendancy was a disappointing loss as they could not get across the line from the position they had got into. Speaking during the post-match press conference after losing to India at the Nassau cricket stadium, he said it was disappointing that Pakistan were placed at 72-2 with 6-7 overs remaining but we faltered as we lost wickets at regular intervals and fell agonizingly short by 6 runs. Pakistan sent the Indian team packing for 119 runs in 19 overs and needed 120 runs to record their first win against the arch rivals at the World Cup 2024 but Pakistan lost the advantage and could only score 113-7 in the 20 overs. Responding to the reasons behind Pakistan's shocking defeat, the head coach held both the batsmen and the bowlers responsible for the defeat. Pakistan (0) are yet to play against Ireland and Canada and victories by big margins may ensure their presence as the 'poor decision making at important phases of the game in the Pakistan innings cost us the match, he said to a question, adding that Rizwan played a very good knock. He said with 80 runs in the pocket and run a ball not required, the middle or

der wilted and we lost the script. With two defeats from two matches, Kirsten was of the view Pakistan team was yet to play two matches and was not out of the tournament. With the talk centered on Nassau cricket stadium pitch as a dangerous one, Kirsten disagreed with the idea of a small total put up by India, adding that taking the character of the surface into consideration we knew it was good total, adding that "I think it was not dangerous, the odd one rose while it generally kept low and the fairly slow outfield made run scoring difficult. I would have said 140 was a good total on the pitch but the India did not put up the total and in difficult to score for both sides "it is sometimes fun to have games like this and not having time like not always about getting 230 and 240 runs games but sometimes you can have an entertaining game on a 120 chase". On responsibility for the loss, Gary Kirsten said "everyone is responsible for the poor performance against India, we accept the loss as the team has not done well and take the heat," adding that we will do whatever we can to rectify this defeat. I have been here for twelve days, it is a new journey me understanding the players who can win games for Pakistan. On Babar's captaincy, Kirsten said Babar captained really well today, adding that he marshalled his bowlers very well, spread them across very well

## Swiatek reinforces No.1 spot in WTA rankings

PARIS: French Open champion Iga Swiatek cemented her place at the top of the women's game with her victory at Roland Garros, reinforcing her position as world No.1 when the WTA released its new rankings on Monday. The 23-year-old Pole beat Jasmine Paolini in a one-sided final on Saturday to claim a fourth French Open title which now puts her 3,707 points ahead of Coco Gauff, the woman she beat in the semi-finals in Paris. Apart from a few weeks in autumn 2023 when Aryna Sabalenka took over, Swiatek has been at the top of the rankings since April 2022, a total of 107 weeks. Swiatek crushes Paolini to win third French Open title in row. Gauff's performance, which improved in her quarter-final in 2023, enabled her to leapfrog the Kazakh Aryna Sabalenka who slips to third. Paolini's run to her first Grand Slam final was good enough to lift her eight places to a career-high seventh while 17-year-old Mira Andreveva, who fell to the Italian in the semis, jumped 15 places from 38 to 23. Brazilian Beatriz Haddad Maia, who reached the semi-finals last year, went down six places to No.20 after going out in the first round this time. WTA rankings: Iga Swiatek (POL) 11695 pts, 2. Coco Gauff (USA) 7988 (+1), 3. Aryna Sabalenka (BLR) 7788 (-1), 4. Elena Rybakina (KAZ) 5973, 5. Jessica Pegula (USA) 4625, 6. Marketa Vondrousova (CZE) 4503, 7. Jasmine Paolini (ITA) 4068 (+8), 8. Zheng Qinwen (CHN) 4005, 9. Maria Sakkari (GRE) 3980 (-2), 10. Ons Jabeur (TUN) 3748 (-1), 11. Danielle Collins (USA) 3532 (-1), 12. Madison Keys (USA) 3343, 13. Jelena Ostapenko (LAT) 3318 (-2), 14. Daria Kasatkina (RUS) 3088 (-1), 15. Liudmila Samsonova (RUS) 2640 (+2), 16. Ekaterina Alexandrova (RUS) 2360 (-2), 17. Marta Kostyuk (UKR) 2240 (+3), 18. Navarro (USA) 2238 (+6), 19. Victoria Azarenka (BLR) 2234 (+2), 20. Beatriz Haddad Maia (BRA) 2213 (-6). - DNA



## Monthly salaries of Pakistan cricket team players revealed

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has disclosed the monthly salary details of the national cricket team players. According to media reports, category A players are entitled to a monthly salary of Rs4.5 million, while category B players receive Rs3 million per month. The recent contracts issued by PCB witnessed a significant increase in salaries across all categories. Category A players saw a remarkable 202% increase, while category B players experienced a substantial 144% rise. Category C and D players also enjoyed notable increases of 135% and 127%, respectively. The categorization of players is based on their performance, with new contracts being announced by PCB in September last year. Babar Azam, Shaheen Afridi, and Muhammad Rizwan were placed in category A, each receiving a monthly salary of Rs4.5 million. Category B includes players like Shadab Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, and Naseem Shah, who earn up to Rs3 million per month. For players in categories C and D, the monthly salary ranges from Rs750,000 to Rs1.5 million. Imad Wasim represents category C, while Iftikhar Ahmed, Hasan Ali, and Saim Ayub are listed under category D. It's worth noting that in addition to the monthly salary, players also receive fixed match fees and match awards across the three formats. These additional incentives contribute to the overall earnings of national team players. - DNA

## NBA Finals: Boston Celtics beat Dallas 105-98 for 2-0 lead

WASHINGTON: The Boston Celtics, fueled by 26 points from Jrue Holiday, thwarted a desperate Dallas rally in the final minutes to beat the Mavericks 105-98 and take a 2-0 lead in the NBA Finals. Early struggles from three-point range bedeviled the Celtics on Sunday, but their all-around effort on both ends of the floor saw them notch a second straight win at home. They head to Dallas for Game 3 on Wednesday with a commanding lead. Jaylen Brown scored 21 points and Jayson Tatum added 18 points, nine rebounds and 12 assists. Holiday credited Tatum for keeping the Celtics' offence firing despite a rough shooting night that saw Tatum make just six of 22 shots with just one 3-pointer. "I would say a lot of it was JT," Holiday said. "They were double-teaming him and he was making the right play. The way that he played tonight, the way that he led us, getting into the paint, making plays, finding me wide open - it was all about him," Holiday added. Hurting Mavericks star Luka Doncic - now nursing a chest contusion in addition to the right knee sprain and sore left ankle that have troubled him throughout the playoffs - delivered a triple-double of 32 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists. PJ Washington scored 17 points and eight-time All-Star Kyrie Irving had 16 - connecting on seven of 18 shots and missing all three of his three-point attempts. Doncic said turnovers and missed free throws were also key. He had eight of the Mavericks' 15 turnovers and Dallas made just 16 of their 24 free throws. The Celtics made 19 of their 20 from the foul line. US politics, Canada's multiculturalism, South America's geopolitical rise—we bring you the stories that matter. "At the end of the day we've got to make some shots," Doncic said. "I think my turnovers and my missed free throws cost us the game, so I've got to do way better in those two categories. "But at the end of the day, we've got to make shots to win the game." The pressure will be on back in Dallas, with Boston unbeaten on the road this postseason. "At the end of the day it's basketball, away or home," Doncic said. "We've just got to play better basketball to win." The Mavericks, trailing by 14 with less than four minutes remaining, made a final push and sliced the deficit to five with 1:15 to play, Doncic driving for a layup and converting the free throw when he was fouled. Boston's Derrick White came up with a monster block on Washington and Brown made a layup as the Celtics closed it out. Dallas, who absorbed a roundhouse punch from the Celtics in the first quarter of game one and could never recover, came out with energy and determination on the defensive end. - Agencies

## Scotland cruise to 7-wicket win over Oman at WC

Munsey, McMullen climb into Oman bowling to win in Antigua with 41 balls to spare

SPORTS DESK

BARBUDA: Scotland boosted their chances of qualifying for the second round of the T20 Cricket World Cup on Sunday after thrashing Oman by seven wickets in Antigua to move to the top of Group B. Brandon McMullen's unbeaten 61 off just 31 balls steered Scotland to victory with nearly seven overs to spare as the Scots finished on 153-3 off 13.1 overs to reel in Oman's total of 150-7. "Very chuffed to get the win for the team," said McMullen, who clinched the win with a four - one of nine boundaries in his swashbuckling batting display that also included two sixes. "The priority was to win and get the points but at drinks we said we should get this done." McMullen and Scotland face Australia in their final group game but are brimming with confidence after an impressive start to the tournament. "We are confident going into the Australia game, always trying to raise the bar. That's the plan going forward," McMullen said. Scotland's run chase had got off to a

smooth start, with George Munsey making 41 before being caught by Shakeel Ahmed off Mehran Khan, and Michael Jones adding 16. McMullen then took charge of the game, finishing alongside Matthew Cross, who was 15 not out from an eight-ball knock that included two monstrous sixes. Oman captain Aqib Ilyas meanwhile lamented his team's failure to build a more competitive total, and missed chances in



the Scotland innings, after winning the toss and opting to bat at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound. "175 could have been a good score, but we had too many dot balls on a flat track," Aqib said. "In the batting we have to improve. 150 was par but we dropped too many chances. "Catches, if you take them, puts pressure on the other team. This is cricket, sometimes you are at the top, sometimes you are down." Aqib's decision to bat first appeared to have paid off with opener Pratik Athavale hitting 54 off 40 balls to get the innings going, with Naseem Khushi adding 10 and Aqib Ilyas 16. But Zeeshan Maqsood fell cheaply for three runs before Khalid Kail was run out 10 runs later to leave the Omanis wobbling at 71-4 after 8.5 overs. Ayaan Khan steadied the ship with an unbeaten 41 off 39 deliveries with support from Mehran Khan, who added 13. Safyaan Sharif was the only Scottish bowler with multiple wickets, but the seamer's brace came for an expensive 40 runs. Brad Wheel bowled an economical spell of 1-19 off four overs while spinner Mark Watt's four overs went for 25 runs with one wicket.

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP WEST INDIES & USA 2024  
Tuesday June 11  
Pakistan vs Canada  
Long Island,  
New York (7.30pm)

## SBP cuts key rate by 150bps to 20.5%

FROM PAGE 01  
The MPC in its statement noted that while the significant decline in inflation since February was broadly in line with expectations, the May outturn was better than anticipated earlier. The Committee assessed that underlying inflationary pressures are also subsiding amidst a tight monetary policy stance, supported by fiscal consolidation. At the same time, the MPC viewed some upside risks to the near-term inflation outlook associated with the upcoming budgetary measures and uncertainty regarding future energy price adjustments. Notwithstanding these risks and today's decision, the Committee noted that the cumulative impact of the earlier monetary tightening is expected to keep inflationary pressures in check. As per a survey conducted by Tipline Research, 43% of participants expected the policy rate to decline by 100bps.

## Imran Khan to write SC to initiate...

FROM PAGE 01  
letter have been dictated by the PTI founder. This move came after judges in the NAB amendments case advised Imran Khan to engage in dialogue with other political parties. A special anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Sargodha Monday dismissed PTI Secretary-General Omar Ayub's bail petition over non-appearance as police personnel stopped him from presenting himself before the judge, his lawyer said, prompting a strong protest from the party. Ayub had arrived earlier today at the court premises to appear before the court; however, he could not ensure his attendance due to the law enforcers, his lawyer told reporters, which led to his bail plea's dismissal in the May 9 and 10 riots case.

## Amin Gandapur expresses...

FROM PAGE 01  
the federal government's decision to cut 91 ongoing projects of the province from the federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSPD) 2024-25. "The decision is undoubtedly contrary to previous decisions reached in the SIFC [Special Investment Facilitation Council] Apex Committee meeting on 3/1/2024," he said in a June 5 letter to the premier. He raised the matter related to decisions taken in the Annual Plan Coordination Committee meeting on May 31. The committee excluded 91 projects "with an estimated throw forward of Rs1,327,529.93 million" from the draft PSPD 2024-25.

## Modi, Sharif brothers exchange...

FROM PAGE 01  
the social media platform with his supporters calling him a statesman while others criticised him for ignoring the current ground realities. Within hours of Nawaz's tweet, Modi responded both to the Prime Minister Shehbaz and PML-President. Interestingly, responding to Shehbaz's tweet, Modi kept his response brief. He thanked him for good wishes. However, Modi was more forthcoming in responding to elder Sharif, with whom he enjoyed a good relationship during his first term as Indian prime minister. "Appreciate your @NawazSharif message. The people of India have always stood for peace and security and progressive ideas.

## Briefs

## India's heatwave longest ever, worse to come

NEW DELHI: India's heatwave is the longest ever to hit the country, the government's top weather expert said Monday as he warned people will face increasingly oppressive temperatures. Parts of northern India have been gripped by a heatwave since mid-May, with temperatures soaring over 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit). "This has been the longest spell because it has been experienced for about 24 days in different parts of the country," the head of India's Meteorological Department (IMD), Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, said in an interview with the Indian Express daily. The mercury is expected to fall as the annual monsoon rains move north this month, but Mohapatra cautioned worse will follow. "Heatwaves will be more frequent, durable and intense, if precautionary or preventive measures are not taken," he said. India is the world's third-biggest emitter of greenhouse gases but has committed to achieve a net zero emissions economy by 2070 — two decades after most of the industrialized West. For now, it is overwhelmingly reliant on coal for power generation. "Human activities, increasing population, industrialization and transport mechanisms are leading to increased concentration of carbon monoxide, methane and chlorocarbons," Mohapatra said. "We are endangering not only ourselves, but also our future generations." Scientific research shows climate change is causing heatwaves to become longer, more frequent and more intense. The latest heatwave has seen temperatures in New Delhi match the capital's previous record high: 49.2C (120.5F) clocked in 2022. As people sought relief from the scorching temperatures, the electricity grid groaned under a record peak power demand of 8,302 megawatts. —APP

## Turkiye imposes \$14.8M fine on Google

ANKARA: The Turkish Competition Board announced on Monday that it had imposed a fine of 482 million liras (\$14.8 million) on Google for failing to fulfill its obligations on hotel search. Temporary fines on Google in local search services investigation have been suspended as of May 21, the Turkish Competition Board noted. "Google was fined a total of 482 million liras (\$14.8 million) for the period it did not implement the precautionary measures suggested for hotel search," it said. Last month, the competition authority announced that starting from April 15, Google would be subject to an administrative fine of 0.05% of its 2023 revenues for each day until it fulfills its obligations in accordance with the decision on local search services in terms of hotel inquiries. —APP

## Flooding and landslides kill 3 in Vietnam's north

HANOI: Flooding and landslides in northern Vietnam have killed three people, state media said Monday, after days of heavy rain that partially submerged thousands of homes. Images on state media showed water gushing down the steep roads of mountainous Ha Giang province, a popular spot for motorcycle tours, with vehicles overturned and abandoned in the floodwater. Residents in Ha Giang city stood on rooftops waiting for rescue. It has been raining heavily and continuously in the province since Saturday. Thousands of homes have been partially submerged and many roads damaged, state media said. High water on the Lo river had triggered "floods and landslides," according to a statement on the website of the provincial authorities. Access to three communes bordering China had been cut off due to landslides, the statement said. —Agencies

## Italian Meloni's party sweeps European elections

Premier Giorgia Meloni's party secures a major victory with 28.8% of the votes, positioning Italy's right-wing coalition for robust governance and significant influence at the European level

## NEWS DESK

ROME: European elections consolidated Premier Giorgia Meloni's grip on power in Italy, handing her party victory and boosting her standing in the country and abroad. With nearly 99% of votes counted, Meloni's Brothers of Italy won 28.8% of the vote, compared with 6.4% in the last European elections in 2019 and 26% in the 2022 national elections. "I am proud that Italy will present itself to the G7, to Europe with the strongest government of all," said Meloni on Monday, commenting on the results. Her coalition partners center-right Forza Italia and the nationalist party League obtained 9.7% and 9.1%, respectively, a result in line with the national ballot that handed the right-wing coalition power roughly two years ago. Compared with the overall showing at the national elections, the ruling coalition saw its support rise to 47%, compared with nearly

## Slovak PM loses election after assassination attempt

BRATISLAVA: Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico suffered a surprise defeat in EU elections to the opposition liberals on Sunday, weeks after he was gravely wounded in an assassination attempt, his party said. Fico's left-wing nationalist Smer-SD party expressed "congratulations to the winner of the election, Progressive Slovakia" and its new European parliament members, on its Facebook page. Fico, 59, is an opponent of military aid to Ukraine in its fight against the Russian invasion. The latest opinion polls had indicated that he was favourite to top the vote, in what was seen as a sign that the assassination bid had driven up support for his party. Progressive Slovakia (PS) won 27.81 percent of the votes in Sunday's election, meaning six seats in the European Parliament, according to results widely reported in Slovak media ahead of their official publication. Smer-SD won 24.76 percent, yielding it five seats in the 720-member EU assembly. Far-right party Republika came third with 12.53 percent and two seats, the results showed. Fico was shot four times at close range on May 15 as he greeted supporters after a government meeting. The alleged gunman, identified by Slovak media as 71-year-old poet Juraj Cintula, has been charged with premeditated attempted murder and remanded in custody. In a video released on Wednesday, Fico blamed his opponents for fostering the "hatred" that led to the attack. Political analyst Daniel Kerekes suggested the attack had mobilised PS supporters to vote just as much as Smer-SD ones. "It is not only Smer-SD that has taken advantage of the attack. The opposition parties, particularly PS, whose voters are worried about the situation in Slovakia, have also made significant progress," he told AFP. PS chairman Michal Simecka, a former vice-president of the European Parliament, said voters had sent "a very important message to this government: slow down, because you cannot do whatever you want." Turnout was higher than during previous EU elections in the country at just under 35 percent. —APP

43% in 2022. "I am proud that the majority governing this nation has been able to grow together. This is an extremely important thing for me and for us. The message from Italians is: 'Go ahead'... and

if possible with greater determination," Meloni said. The largest opposition group, the center-left Democratic Party, came in second with 24%, a result its leaders hailed as positive, since the party gained five percentage points in comparison with the 2022 national elections. The Five Star Movement, headed by former Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, dropped to 10%, its worst result since the party entered Italian politics in 2009. Meloni's strong results came in stark contrast with the showings of ruling parties in France and Germany, further boosting her standing at the European level. Brothers of Italy's European lawmakers may become decisive in granting outgoing European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen a second mandate, influencing the direction of the policies pursued in a second term. These elections recorded the lowest turnout in Italy at a European ballot, with the participation of only 49.7% of those having the right to vote.

## Iran: US, Britain behind Nuseirat massacre

## WEB DESK

TEHRAN: The spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry says the United States and Britain are complicit in a recent "terrible and inhumane" crime perpetrated by the Israeli military in the al-Nuseirat camp in the central part of the Gaza Strip. Speaking at his weekly press briefing on Monday, Nasser Kan'ani once again censured the Israeli regime's carnage at the al-Nuseirat camp, which killed 274 Palestinian civilians and wounded 698 others. "The international community must fulfill its legal responsibility to end the crimes [committed by Israel] and take serious action in order to stop the Zionist regime's crime machine," he said. He added that the Israeli regime has faced a "strategic defeat" since it started its war in Gaza some eight months ago. Israeli forces carried out dozens of air strikes in and around the Deir el-Balah and Nuseirat refugee camps on Saturday before they retrieved four Israeli captives.

They launched the raid in broad daylight, claiming to strike at military infrastructure in the camp as part of a "rescue operation" but witnesses and journalists on the ground say Israel bombed residential buildings, leading to higher casualties. There are more than 100 captives still being held in the besieged Palestinian territory. In response to a question about some changes in Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war cabinet, Kan'ani said, "The replacement of a number of murderers and criminals with other murderers and criminals will not change the nature of this regime's behavior." The Iranian spokesperson once again called on the international community to fulfill its responsibility and put an end to the regime's war crimes against the people of Palestine. Tel Aviv unleashed the genocidal war against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip on October 7 last year, killing at least 37,124 Palestinians and injuring 84,712 others. Most of the casualties have been women and children, and more

than 1.7 million Palestinian people in the besieged Gaza Strip — where water, food, medicine, power and fuel are blocked by the Israeli regime — have been internally displaced during this time. "High turnout in Iran's presidential election response to West" Asked whether the West's mounting pressure on Iran aims to affect people's participation in the June 28 presidential election, Kan'ani said Iranians will respond to Western states through their high turnout in the polls. Iran's Interior Ministry on Sunday released the final list of six candidates for the 14th presidential election, who were vetted and approved by the Constitutional Council, a 12-member election supervisory body. It includes current Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani, former health minister Massoud Pezeshkian, former justice minister Mostafa Pourmohammadi and current Head of the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs

Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi. The snap vote will elect a new president to replace Ebrahim Raeisi, who died in a tragic helicopter crash in northwestern Iran on May 19 along with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and six of their companions. Iran warns against Israel's adventurous action in Lebanon Kan'ani also said, "Iran's policy is to support regional peace and stability. It is now a global acknowledgment that the Israel regime is the source of insecurity in the region. After eight months of devastating war on Gaza, the world is now convinced that it is the regime that creates insecurity in the region." He asserted that, "The Lebanese army, government, and nation have the right to respond to any Israeli aggressive action, and that the resistance guarantees stability and security in Lebanon. The Zionists should know that the resistance system in the region will not stand idly by in the face of any adventurous action against Lebanon and its sovereignty."

## Last Darfur hospital closes after paramilitary attack

KHARTOUM: The medical aid group Doctors Without, also known as MSF, says the last operating hospital in a key state capital of Sudan's Western region of Darfur has been shut after an attack by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). "On Saturday, MSF and the ministry of health suspended all activities in South Hospital, El-Fasher, North Darfur, after RSF soldiers stormed the facility, opened fire and looted it, including stealing an MSF ambulance," said the NGO in a statement posted late Sunday on X. According to MSF, "intensified fighting" around the hospital earlier this week had triggered its evacuation, and "there were only 10 patients and a reduced medical team" there by the time of the attack. "Most patients and the remaining medical team... were able to flee the RSF shooting," MSF said. It noted that "due to the chaos, our team was unable to verify if there were any killed or wounded" in the latest attack. The RSF has been fighting the army, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, for control of the North African country since April 15 last year in a war that has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced nearly eight million. Michel-Olivier Lacharite, head of emergencies at MSF, said it was "outrageous that the RSF opened fire inside the hospital." "Warring parties must halt attacks on medical care," he said, adding, "Hospitals are closing. Remaining facilities can't handle mass casualties." Fierce fighting reignited in El-Fasher, the last state capital not under RSF control in the western region of Darfur and a key humanitarian hub for a region on the brink of famine, on May 10 in what UN chief Antonio Guterres has called "an alarming new chapter" in the conflict. Since then, "at least 192 people have been killed and more than 1,230 wounded" in the city, according to a conservative estimate by the MSF. The United Nations, and Sudanese and international organizations and institutions denounce the recent attack on a village in Sudan's Gezira state that claimed the lives of more than 100 civilians, calling for an immediate investigation. Sudan on edge of 'world's largest humanitarian crisis' Menahilwe, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned that Sudan may soon become the "world's largest humanitarian crisis." —APP

## S.Korea's Yoon visits Central Asia for energy talks

SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol embarked on a trip to Central Asia on Monday to hold talks on strengthening diplomatic ties and cooperating in areas such as energy and minerals, Yoon's office said. Yoon will visit Turkmenistan with the first lady for a state visit before heading to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan where he will sign agreements and attend business forums, according to his office. In Kazakhstan, Yoon will discuss with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev measures to expand supply chain cooperation for critical minerals such as lithium as well as uranium. The government plans to host a summit with leaders of five Central Asian countries next year in South Korea, Yoon's office said. His trip to Central Asia is the latest global push by Seoul to broaden diplomatic ties and partnerships to ensure access to markets and to secure energy supplies and other resources. South Korea to blast loudspeaker broadcasts after North's trash balloons South Korea hosted its first summit with the leaders of 48 African nations this month, during which it vowed to increase development aid for Africa to \$10 billion over the next six years as it looks to tap the continent's mineral resources and potential as an export market. —APP

## Indonesia ramps up fight against TB

JAKARTA: Indonesia plans to run clinical trials of several vaccines to fight surging cases of tuberculosis (TB) this year, with concerns the disease might affect economic growth, ministers said on Monday. The Southeast Asian country has seen TB cases spike during the past few years, with the health ministry estimating there were over 1 million cases in 2023, compared to around 820,000 in 2020. In 2022, deaths from TB in Indonesia reached around 134,000, the second highest in the world after India. Three-quarters of the patients were in the productive age group and 45 percent of all patients did not work, raising concerns that the spread of the disease is hurting economic activity, human development minister Muhadjir Effendy told a government meeting with provincial leaders. The minister did not provide an estimate of the impact on growth. Health minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said Indonesia plans to conduct a trial of TB vaccine developed by global pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline in July, involving 2,500 people. The vaccine development is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation A clinical trial for a vaccine made by China's CanSino Biologics is also expected this year, Budi said. "We hope to be one of the first countries to do tuberculosis vaccination," Budi told the same meeting. "We're also in the stage to conduct a clinical trial for an mRNA vaccine that is being developed by BioNTech, that had founded COVID vaccine for Pfizer," Budi said. In the same meeting, home affairs minister Tito Karnavian ordered provincial leaders to set up task forces to detect TB infections. Indonesia aims to lower its mortality rate from TB by 80 percent to only six deaths per 100,000 lives by 2030, Budi said. —APP

## GCC, Türkiye extend joint action plan until 2029

ANKARA: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has said an agreement was reached with Türkiye to extend their joint action plan for cooperation until 2029. The announcement was made by the secretary-general of the organisation, Jassem Mohamed Al Budaïwi, during the sixth ministerial meeting for strategic dialogue between the GCC countries and Türkiye in the Qatari capital Doha with the participation of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Sunday, according to the official Qatari news agency. The meeting "provides opportunities for consultation between the two sides on international and regional issues of common interest, working together to enhance the security and stability of the region," Al Budaïwi said. He also noted that the meeting allowed "deepening the bridges of cooperation between the GCC and the Republic of Türkiye and expanding their scope. It culminated in agreeing to extend the joint action plan between the two sides to the year 2029." The joint action plan was first approved during the third ministerial meeting between the two sides in 2010, covering 2011 and 2012, and has since been developed and extended to strengthen cooperation in various fields. —APP



ISLAMABAD: The Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi called on the Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain. —APP

## Macron calls snap elections to stop far-right

France will go to the polls to vote for a new National Assembly on June 30, with a second round on July 7

## FOREIGN DESK

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron has taken the biggest gamble of his political career by calling early legislative elections to combat the surge of the far right, with the outcome decisive for his political legacy. France will go to the polls to vote for a new National Assembly on June 30, with a second round on July 7, Macron said in an address to the nation. His stunning announcement came after EU election projections showed the far-right National Rally (RN) had scored more than double the votes of his centrist alliance in the French vote. "The extreme gamble," wrote daily Liberation in the front-page headline of its Monday edition. In his address to the nation, Macron noted that in total far-right parties in

France had won almost 40 percent of the vote. "It is a situation to which I cannot resign myself... I cannot act as if nothing had happened," Macron added. The presidential camp now just has three weeks to make up ground on the RN in a short but intense burst of campaigning before France hosts the Paris Olympics in July and August. With turnout in the European elections projected in France at just over 52 percent, Macron's allies will be hoping to attract voters who stayed at home to block the far right. In a best-case scenario for Macron, his centrist alliance would recover the absolute majority it lost in 2022 legislative elections and give new impetus to the remaining three years of his presidential mandate. The nightmare outcome for him would be the RN

winning a majority. That would likely see its leader Jordan Bardella, a protégé of three-time presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, become prime minister in an uncomfortable "cohabitation". A middle scenario, analysts say, would be an anti-extremism coalition between Macron's centrists and the traditional right-wing Republicans or even left-wing Socialists. Celine Braç, director general of the Odoxa polling agency, described Macron's announcement as a "poker move" at a time when there is a "strong desire on the part of the French to punish the president". "It's something extremely risky," she told AFP. "In all likelihood, the National Rally, in the wake of the European elections, could have a majority in the National Assembly and why not an absolute majority." Luc Rouban, political scientist at Sciences Po in Paris, said Macron wanted

to "trap" the RN with his sudden election announcement, arguing the party would find trouble mustering quality candidates to challenge for the 577 seats in the National Assembly. "I think Macron's idea is to play on something with the right," he added. Speaking to AFP, ruling Renaissance party chief and Foreign Minister Stéphane Sejourne gave an indication of how the campaign could play out. He said the party would not challenge outgoing MPs from the traditional left and right for their seats if they were prepared to "invest in a clear project" around the presidential majority. Leaders of left-wing parties called on their camp to unite to face the RN challenge. While the balance of power "has evolved", Socialist party leader Olivier Faure called for "a gathering which allows us to have a project, which allows us to be heard by the French", and Communist

Party leader Fabien Roussel said the left should "work together on a pact for France". Across the political spectrum, Eric Zemmour, of the far-right Reconquête, called for "the broadest union of the right". Marion Marechal, who headed the party's list in the EU elections, said she was "ready to meet in the coming days" with Le Pen, who is her aunt, Bardella and Republicans leader Eric Ciotti. Mujtaba Rahman, managing director for Europe at Eurasia Group, said Macron had taken "a major gamble". This is really him trying to seize the initiative," he told AFP. "There is a serious risk of cohabitation", he added, referring to a situation in which a president and prime minister from opposing political parties have to find a way to run the country together. "The most likely outcome is more fragmentation, more deadlock and chaos. A complete paralysis."

## NZ PM says China Premier Li Qiang to visit this week

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said on Monday that China's Premier Li Qiang would visit the country later this week, in the first trip to the nation in seven years by a Chinese premier. Luxon said in a statement he looked forward to warmly welcoming Premier Li in New Zealand and that the visit would be a valuable opportunity for exchanges on areas of cooperation between the two countries. China's premier hails 'new beginning' with US-allied South Korea, Japan. —APP

## Briefs

### Russia reports battlefield gains

KYIV: Russia on Monday claimed the capture of another village in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, the latest in a string of gains ahead of a major Ukraine summit in Switzerland. Dozens of world leaders and top diplomats are to convene for a meeting at the weekend that President Volodymyr Zelensky hopes will rally global support behind Kyiv as it struggles more than two years into Russia's invasion. Zelensky has ruled out direct talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and is keen to win over more non-Western countries, including those who maintain close ties with Moscow. After almost a year of stalemate, Ukraine has been forced to abandon dozens of frontline settlements this spring, with Russian troops holding a significant advantage in manpower and resources. Russia's defence ministry said Monday its forces "continued to advance into the depths of the enemy's defence and liberated the settlement of Staromaiorske," located southwest of the Russian-held city of Donetsk. The loss of the village is a symbolic blow to Kyiv, as one of the few Ukraine managed to recapture last year in a largely lacklustre counter-offensive. Staromaiorske is located on the southern front of the Donetsk region, one of the four regions Moscow claimed to have annexed in 2022 and where some of the fiercest fighting is now taking place. Putin told an economic forum last week that Russia has seized 47 Ukrainian towns and villages so far this year. —Agencies

### Court reserves judgement on long march vandalism case

ISLAMABAD: The District and Session Court of Islamabad has reserved its verdict in the Long March vandalism on the acquittal plea of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's founder, Sheikh Rashid Ahmad, Asad Umar and Ali Muhammad Nawaz. Judicial Magistrate, Malik Imran on Monday heard the acquittal plea of accused mentioned in the long march vandalism case. During the course of hearing, the prosecutor completed its arguments. Judicial Magistrate, Malik Imran will pronounce the verdict on June 13. It may be mentioned that a case registered against the PTI founder and others under the vandalism section at I-9 police station. —APP

### CPEC cooperation to focus on industry, agriculture

DNA  
BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal emphasized that in the next phase, the focus of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) cooperation, will be on industry, agriculture and information technology. In an interview with the Global Times in Beijing, Ahsan Iqbal, who accompanied Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on his five day China visit, emphasized that the focus of cooperation under CPEC, a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative will be on industry, agriculture and information technology in the second phase. Ahsan Iqbal cited the recent successful launch of a Pakistani satellite into space using a Chinese rocket as an example, saying, people used to say that the relationship between Pakistan and China was higher than the Himalayas. "Now we are also cooperating in space technology. Our cooperation has reached space, even higher than the sky," he added.

# A night of drama in Europe as EU parliament moves to right

The EU election predictions suggest the public sentiment hasn't changed much since then. The headlines: Green-Left parties secured the most seats, while the Freedom Party made the greatest gains

## NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: While much of the European election reaction has focused on French President Emmanuel Macron's bombshell snap election announcement after the far-right National Rally won there, parties in other countries across the EU have been considering their gains and losses. Although far-right and nationalist parties have made gains, the centre-right also performed well, holding its position as the largest grouping and managing to gain seats. Centre-right parties came out top in Germany, Greece, Poland and Spain, and made significant advances in Hungary. Here are some key takeaways from our correspondents around Europe. It has been a sorry sight for Germany's three-party coalition government, but unlike Emmanuel Macron, Chancellor Olaf Scholz says he will not call for an election. The alliance between the Social Democrats, Greens and liberals was already tricky, but Russia's invasion of Ukraine meant breaking economic and energy ties with Russia and renouncing former pacifist feelings. This alienated some core supporters, created party rifts, and overall rattled voters. A huge surge in migration has also put strain on the resources of local councils.

While the government has managed to boost military spending and pivot away from cheaper Russian energy, it means money is tight. Step in the populist far-right and far-left, who promise a quick return to peace and prosperity: "Just negotiate with Putin, and buy Russian gas again," says the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). AfD came second with 15.9% and Scholz's social democratic SPD came third with 13.9%. Coming up top was the conservative CDU party with an impressive 30% of the vote. "We want to end the war so just stop sending arms to Ukraine and stop migrants coming," says the new populist far-left party BSW led by ex-communist firebrand Sahra Wagenknecht. Most German voters and politicians believe dealing with Moscow and migration is not that straightforward, and a majority in Germany support Ukraine. But in times of insecurity and uncertainty, simple messages are seductive. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has cemented her grip on Italian politics. She used the European elections to boost her own popularity by putting her name at the top of her party's ballot, and it proved a successful gamble: with 29%, she has increased the vote gained by her party in the 2022 general election. But there is

another success story in Italy. The opposition centre-left Democratic Party (PD) performed better than hoped, with 24% of the vote - its highest result since 2014. The result will boost the PD and lend credibility to its leader, Elly Schlein, who has seemingly managed to find her footing after just over a year at the helm of the country's biggest opposition party. Smaller parties in the governing coalition will have some thinking to do. Forza Italia - the party founded by late media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi - won slightly more votes than the once-mighty and now floundering League party, headed by Matteo Salvini. Even the League's founder, Umberto Bossi, declared he would vote for Forza Italia to signal his discontent at the direction the League has taken. Two centrist parties - one led by former PM Matteo Renzi - failed to hit the threshold required to send MEPs to the European Parliament. But despite these internal goings-on, Italy has, rather unusually, emerged from the European elections as a pretty stable country - much more so, in any case, than some of its neighbours. Last November, anti-immigration Freedom Party (PVV) leader - and long-time Marine Le Pen ally - Geert Wilders won a shock victory in the Netherlands' national election.

The EU election predictions suggest the public sentiment hasn't changed much since then. The headlines: Green-Left parties secured the most seats, while the Freedom Party made the greatest gains. The nuances: Centre-right parties had a strong showing, Dutch and EU political veteran Frans Timmermans said: "This shows that a majority in the Netherlands wants to strengthen Europe and certainly not destroy it." While Geert Wilders - who until recently promised a referendum on Brexit (i.e. Netherlands' exit from the EU) - posted five red love heart emojis on X. "Still the biggest winner with five more seats." Interestingly, the biggest celebrations I witnessed in the parliament bar last night were being held by two relative newcomers, at opposite ends of the political spectrum. Pro-EU Volt (from none to two MEPs) cheered and toasted beneath an archway of blue and yellow balloons. While outside the revolving doors, the unmistakable Farmer Citizen Movement leader Caroline van der Plas was taking in some fresh air alongside the party's new MEP Jessika van Leeuwen. Both were initially predicted to gain two MEPs, although the latest prediction suggests BBB will win just one. In Hungary, Viktor Orban's Fidesz party won both the European and municipal elections.

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ISLAMABAD: Chief Ministers of all four provinces in a group photo with the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif after meeting of the National Economic Council. — DNA

## Government gives 'conditional permission' to export sugar

Sugar exports would be dependent on price stability and stock availability in future, says federal minister

### MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government granted "conditional" permission to export 150,000 metric tonnes of sugar following a decision taken by the Sugar Advisory Board (SAB) on Monday, according to an official statement. The development came during the Sab meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain in Islamabad earlier today. The meeting was also attended by the federal secretary for industries and production, as well as other stakeholders including Pakistan Sugar Mills Associations (PSMA), Kissan Ittehad and federal and provincial representatives. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss and review the sugar stock availability, current market prices,

sugarcane rates, present global market sugar prices, and industry production cost. The Board has conditionally allowed exporting 150,000 metric tons of sugar. It was agreed to maintain sufficient local stocks to ensure the smooth supply of the commodity in local markets at a sustainable price. In this regard, an agreement was reached between the government and the PSMA to ensure smooth supply and stable prices of sugar in the local market. The federal minister said that ex-mills sugar price would not be increased under any circumstances while all the pending payments to farmers will be cleared on a priority basis by PSMA. Tanveer added that the SAB will again review the sugar prices and market stability in a fortnight. He said that in future, the export of sugar will depend on price stability and stock availability in the country.

## Blinken headed for Middle East to push Gaza ceasefire plan

Israel continues to batter Gaza as the US presses for a UNSC vote to help push the ceasefire plan

AMMAN: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is due to arrive in the Middle East to push the latest proposal for a ceasefire in Israel's war in Gaza. The top United States diplomat is expected to visit Egypt and Israel on Monday as he launches his eighth tour of the region in as many months, before continuing to Jordan and Qatar. He will seek support for the latest draft of the ceasefire deal presented by President Joe Biden 10 days ago, which the US also hopes to put to a vote at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). However, with neither Israel nor Hamas having fully endorsed the plan, fighting continues, with air raids hitting across the Gaza Strip overnight on Sunday and Monday morning. In Cairo, Blinken will meet Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi before visiting Israel for a meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. As well as pressing the ceasefire proposal, the US official is set to discuss the reopening of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt, a vital point for aid shipments into Gaza that Israel seized amid its ground invasion of the south of the enclave last month. Biden outlined on May 31 a three-phase proposal to achieve a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip that he said was presented by Israel. However, neither Israel nor Hamas has fully endorsed the plan, with negotiations ongoing. A senior Hamas official, Sami Abu Zuhri, urged the US on Monday to press Israel to end the war. "We call upon the US administration to put pressure on the occupation to stop the war on Gaza and the Hamas movement is ready to deal positively with any initiative that secures an end to the war," he said. — Agencies

## Hamas urges US to pressure Israel to end war

CAIRO: A senior Hamas official urged the United States on Monday to pressure Israel to end the war in Gaza, ahead of the planned visit on Monday by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to the region to push forward ceasefire efforts. Blinken is set to visit Egypt and Israel on Monday. He also aims to ensure the war does not expand into Lebanon. "We call upon the US administration to put pressure on the occupation to stop the war on Gaza and the Hamas movement is ready to deal positively with any initiative that secures an end to the war," senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri said. In his eighth visit to the region since Hamas militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, triggering the bloodiest episode in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Blinken is also set to travel to Jordan and Qatar this week. He is set to meet with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in Cairo before traveling to Israel later on Monday, where he will meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, according to a State Department schedule. — Agencies

## Al-Baghdadi radicalized by US torture: Wife

LONDON: The late Daesh leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi may have been subjected to "sexual torture" while in US custody in 2004, his widow has said. Umm Hudaifa, who is in an Iraqi jail being investigated for her ties to Daesh, told the BBC that her husband had been "religious but not extremist," and "conservative but open minded." Under Al-Baghdadi, Daesh committed genocide against the Yazidi people, in addition to hostage-taking, enslavement, and massacres of Muslim civilians in areas under its control. Umm Hudaifa said his personality shifted after a year-long detention in Camp Bucca after he formed a militia to fight US and allied occupation forces in Iraq, during which time he told her that he was subjected to something "you cannot understand." She said he "became short-tempered and given to outbursts of anger" upon his release, and he developed "psychological problems," which she believes were the consequences of "sexual torture." Al-Baghdadi, believed to have been born in the Iraqi city of Samarra in 1971, declared a global caliphate in 2014 from a mosque in Mosul after Daesh captured the city. His claim was almost universally rejected by Muslims worldwide, and he was killed by US forces in Syria in October 2019. Umm Hudaifa is being investigated for her role in the sexual enslavement of predominantly Yazidi women kidnapped by Daesh fighters, which she denies. She has described the actions of Daesh as "inhuman," and said she confronted Al-Baghdadi about the deaths of "innocent people" on his watch. Hamid Yazidi and his niece Soad are bringing a civil case against Umm Hudaifa. Yazidi's two wives and 26 children were allegedly taken by Daesh. — Agencies

## Govt to unveil economic survey today

### ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The federal government will unveil the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2023-24, which is a pre-budget document containing the details of major socio-economic achievements during the outgoing fiscal year at 5pm today (June 11). Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb will present the pre-budget document in the National Assembly, according to a statement issued by the finance ministry. The survey comes ahead of the federal budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, which is slated to be presented on June 12 (Wednesday). The coalition government led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is expected to lay out ambitious fiscal targets in the Budget 2024-25 that will help strengthen its case for a new bailout deal with IMF, officials and analysts said. Conceding severe financial constraints and cutting down on the development funding under the IMF programme, APCC has recommended Rs1.221 billion for development programme at the federal level for the financial year 2024-25.

## IHC Iddat case petitions for hearing

### COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) fixed the petitions of PTI founder Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi for hearing in illegal marriage case tomorrow. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb of IHC will conduct the hearing. The registrar office has earlier raised objections on both the petitions. Bushra Bibi has pleaded in her petition that high court should take a notice over a pending case with the session court regarding the suspension of her conviction in illegal marriage case. The PTI founder pleaded in his petition that high court should intervene and direct the District and Sessions Judge Shahrulh Arjumand to announce the reserved verdict in the case. Bushra Bibi filed the petition through her lawyers, Barrister Salman Safdar and Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry. Meanwhile, Advocate Salman Akram Raja moved the petition on behalf of Imran Khan. It is pertinent to note that a civil court sentenced the PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi seven years imprisonment on Feb 3 in illegal marriage case.



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