



Islamabad POST

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French ambassador Galey inaugurates Francophone Film Mela in Islamabad

Detailed News On Page-08

JI announces countrywide strike on 26

Detailed News On Page-08



Raphinha stars as Barcelona beat Celta

Detailed News On Page-06



'No case since Feb 10'

PM kicks off anti-polio drive, vows eradication

"I urge all parents to fully cooperate with field teams to ensure every child is vaccinated," says premier

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday formally launched a seven-day nationwide anti-polio campaign by administering polio drops to children. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the campaign, PM Shehbaz said that the government, along with health authorities, was making tireless efforts to eliminate the virus once and for all. "Today marks the beginning of another nationwide polio campaign. With Allah's grace, we are vaccinating children not only here, but across the country including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir," he added. He praised the efforts of the Ministry of Health, including Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal, Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, the Secretary, Coordinator, and frontline health workers for their dedication. "I urge all parents to fully cooperate with field teams to ensure every child is vaccinated," he added. Acknowledging challenges in some security-sensitive areas, he said that robust measures have been taken to ensure the safety of teams and smooth implementation of the drive. "We must mobilise communities in every neighborhood and street to support this national cause," he emphasised. The premier also extended heartfelt thanks to international partners such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), Bill Gates, and other stakeholders for their continued support. "With your cooperation and our collective resolve, I am confident we will achieve permanent relief from this dangerous disease," he said. PM Shehbaz was informed earlier this week that as a result of the dedicated nationwide anti-polio campaigns, not a single case of polio had been reported in the country since February 10. Chairing the review meeting on polio eradication, the PM commended the efforts of relevant government institutions, international organisations, and partners to make Pakistan polio-free.

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Economy moving in right direction, says Atta Tarar

He was addressing a ceremony in connection with Easter in his constituency

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said that the economy is on the right direction. He was addressing a ceremony in connection with Easter on Sunday in his Lahore constituency. Addressing the ceremony, Atta Tarar said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Gen Asim Munir played the key role in improving the economy. "I am the representative of 70,000 Christian voters and I always raised their issues in the National Assembly," Tarar said, while congratulating them on Easter. The minister also extended warm greetings to the Christian community on behalf of PML-N leadership. Tarar praised the historic role of the Christian community in the creation of Pakistan, highlighting their contributions in producing some of the world's finest fighter pilots. "I pray this bouquet of unity and harmony continues to bloom and flourish," he said. Highlighting the recent economic progress, Tarar said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has restored the economy, and

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Dar thanks Muttaqi for hospitality

Ishaq Dar extended an invitation to Acting Afghan Foreign Minister to visit Pakistan

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar @Mishaq-Dar50 today spoke with Acting Afghan Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi. DPM/FM thanked him for the warm welcome and sumptuous hospitality extended to him and accompanying delegation during his yesterday's visit to Kabul. Both leaders expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the discussions held during the visit and agreed to expeditiously implement the decisions taken for the mutual benefit of the people of the two countries. DPM/FM extended an invitation to Acting Afghan Foreign Minister to visit Pakistan, which he happily accepted. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday held a telephone call with the Foreign Minister of Oman Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Al Busaidi. They reviewed the existing bilateral ties and expressed satisfaction on the upward trajectory.

CJP to lead delegation at SCO Judicial moot

Chief Justice Yahya Afridi will hold bilateral discussions with the Chief Justice of Iran

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: A five-day twentieth Conference of Chief Justices of the Supreme Courts of SCO Member States will begin in Hangzhou, China from Tuesday. Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi will head a distinguished delegation to represent Pakistan in the event. Supreme Court's Spokesperson said in a statement, that during this significant event, an important Memorandum of Understanding is expected to be signed between the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Supreme People's Court of China. This MoU aims to significantly enhance bilateral judicial co-op by establishing institutional linkages, facilitating capacity-building initiatives, and promoting knowledge exchange in critical areas. On the sidelines of the SCO Conference, CJ Yahya Afridi will hold bilateral discussions with the Chief Justice of Iran.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif administers polio vaccines to children at the inaugural ceremony of the National polio eradication campaign in Islamabad on 17 April 2025. - DNA

Contentious canal projects

Govt ready to hold talks with Sindh, says Sana

Rana Sanaullah, Sharjeel Memon talk about resolving long-standing issue concerning canal projects

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: In a positive development, the federal government has offered to sit down with the Sindh authorities to resolve the latter's concerns over the contentious and disputed canal projects through dialogue. The development comes during a telephonic conversation between Adviser to Prime Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaullah and Sindh's Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, where both leaders agreed to address the matter through negotiations. They talked about resolving the long-standing issue concerning the distribution and management of

water resources through canals. Sanaullah, in a statement, said that Premier Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif have instructed him to alleviate Sindh's concerns regarding the canal issue. He expressed the federal government's willingness for equitable distribution of resources, including water, among all provinces. "We believe in the fair distribution of resources, including water, among all units." On the other hand, Memon said that the Sindh government has consistently presented its stance on the canal issue at every available forum. He also highlighted the strong reservations of

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PIA launches inaugural flight from Lahore to Baku

To mark the occasion, a special inauguration ceremony was held at the Int'l Departure Lounge of Allama Iqbal Int'l Airport, Lahore

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Sunday launched an inaugural flight from Lahore to Azerbaijan's capital of Baku under flight number PK159, a statement issued by the airline said. The flight marked the commencement of a new route, signifying a "milestone in the national carrier's strategy to ex-

pand its international network and enhance connectivity between Pakistan and Central Asia", according to the statement. "This initiative also reflects the growing diplomatic and economic ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, aiming to boost tourism, trade, and people-to-people linkages," it said. It added that to mark the occasion, a special inauguration ceremony was held at

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Briefs

President urges citizens to follow teachings of Iqbal

"Today we pay tribute to his political and intellectual contributions," he added

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari urged Pakistanis to follow the teachings and thoughts of Allama Muhammad Iqbal to make Pakistan a country delivering social and economic justice to all its citizens. In a message on the occasion of the death anniversary of Allama Iqbal on April 21, he said, "Today we are observing the death anniversary of Poet of the East and Thinker of Pakistan Allama Muhammad Iqbal." "Today we pay tribute to his political and intellectual contributions," he added. He said, "The thoughts, philosophy, and poetry of Allama Iqbal are a beacon of light for us, and we need to follow the message of Iqbal in our individual capacity and national life."

Swati denies deal with establishment

Swati questions if engaging in talks is a sin

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader and former federal minister Azam Swati on Saturday dismissed speculation about a political deal, involving party founder Imran Khan and the establishment. He said those making such claims had "lost their minds". However, he maintained that talks would be held once former president Dr Arif Alvi visits. Speaking to the media outside a court in Rawalpindi, Swati said: "I have got permission from Khan Sahib [PTI founder] for the rule of democracy and the Constitution."

PTI corruption probe

KP Assembly speaker Swati 'gets clean chit'

PTI inquiry finds no evidence of corruption by Speaker Babar Saleem Swati

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly, Babar Saleem Swati, has been cleared of all corruption and abuse of power allegations in an internal party inquiry, according to a report obtained by Geo News. The investigation report by Qazi Anwar, a member of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Internal Accountability Committee, found no evidence to support the accusations levied against the speaker. The seven-page report, now submitted to PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, states that the allegations made by PTI leader Azam Swati, ranging from financial irregularities to illegal appointments, could not be substantiated. The inquiry found that Speaker Swati had no involvement in the Rs30 million payment for the renovation of the Speaker's House. His participation in a conference held in Australia was deemed necessary and in line with his official responsibilities. While Class IV staff were recruited without advertisements,

Continued on Page 06

Attacks on foreign food chains were 'planned'

"A violent group is carrying out attacks on developing Punjab," says Azma Bokhari

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari on Sunday said that recent attacks on international fast-food chains across the country were carried out under an organised plan. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, the provincial information minister strongly condemned the attacks and said that people's properties were being damaged. "There are 25,000 Pakistanis employed in these food chains.

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Pakistan has become my second home, says Ambassador Jemal

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR M BHATTI

Ambassador of Ethiopia Jemal Beker Abdula gave an exclusive interview to Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline and Diplomatic News Agency (DNA). The first part of the interview was published on April 11, 2025. Here is the second and final part of the interview.

1: What initiatives are in place to foster cultural ties and increase people-to-people connections between the two nations?

Fostering robust cultural ties and people-to-people connections is a cornerstone of Ethiopia's diplomatic efforts in Pakistan. Recognizing the shared historical connections and common values that bind the two nations, the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad is actively engaged in a multifaceted approach to promote cultural exchange and understanding. Participation in prominent cultural

events and conferences across Pakistan has been a key strategy. The embassy's involvement in the vibrant Karachi Cultural Festival in December 2024 is the manifestation of our commitment to this end. This three-day extravaganza, which drew over 25,000 visitors, provided an ideal stage to showcase the beauty and diversity of Ethiopian culture and heritage. The Embassy captivated attendees with mesmerizing traditional music and dance performances, enticing food stalls offering authentic Ethiopian cuisine, and the immersive Ethiopian coffee ceremony, thoughtfully adapted to suit Pakistani preferences. Beyond large-scale events, the Embassy recognizes the power of food diplomacy. Food acts as a universal language, fostering connections to unite the two distant nations. To this end, the Embassy regularly hosts food festivals and coffee ceremonies, extending warm invitations to Pakistanis from all walks of life to savor the rich and flavorful culinary traditions of Ethiopia. These events offer a unique opportunity to experience the essence of Ethiopian hospitality and cultural heritage. In 2024, the Embassy further enriched the cultural landscape by bringing the acclaimed Ethiopian musical troupe, Biftu Oromia, to Pakistan. Their captivat-



ing performances in Karachi and Islamabad enthralled audiences, introducing them to the diverse musical traditions and vibrant dances from various regions of Ethiopia, including Amhara, Oromo, Somali, Afar, Tigray, and the culturally rich southern regions. These performances not only showcased the artistic talents of Ethiopian musicians and dancers but also provided a window into the



soul of Ethiopia's diverse communities. In addition to these in-person engagements, the Embassy leverages the power of media and digital platforms to amplify its message and reach a broader audience. Through proactive engagement with Pakistani media outlets and a dynamic social media presence, the Embassy shares compelling stories, captivating visuals, and insightful information about

Ethiopian culture, history, and traditions. This digital diplomacy fosters curiosity, appreciation, and a deeper understanding of Ethiopia among the Pakistani people. These multifaceted efforts, driven by a genuine desire to connect with the people of Pakistan, are effectively building bridges of understanding and friendship.

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Kundi slams KP govt over non-payment of salaries in varsities

Meanwhile, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, those associated with the crucial sector of education responsible for shaping the nation's future are facing severe mental distress and are deprived of their fundamental rights, such as salaries and pensions

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Sunday expressed deep anger and concern over the non-payment of salaries and pensions to teaching and administrative staff in several universities in the province. In a statement, the Governor said that faculty members and pensioners of numerous universities, including the University of Peshawar, have not received their salaries and pensions. He pointed out that many university employees have also been deprived of the additional salary and pension ben-

efits announced by the government. Even during Eid, no relief was provided to them. Governor Kundi criticized the provincial government, saying that while the Chief Minister claims that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the richest province, the reality paints a different picture, with universities facing severe budget deficits. He further alleged that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government spends millions of rupees on its favored election campaigns in Lahore, yet despite these massive expenditures, they continue to suffer defeats there. Mean-

while, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, those associated with the crucial sector of education responsible for shaping the nation's future are facing severe mental distress and are deprived of their fundamental rights, such as salaries and pensions. He reiterated that his consistent stance has been that the provincial government's focus is not on the welfare of the people but solely on corruption. The deteriorating performance of institutions in the province, he said, serves as clear evidence of this claim.—DNA

Time ripe to fully utilize KP's hydel power potential

PESHAWAR: As temperature soars across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), frequent power outages have left residents sparking frustration on social media and community platforms mostly in peripheries of Peshawar and Mardan divisions. Despite vast potential of hydel power in KP, the load shedding and low voltage in Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan and Charsadda districts was affecting daily life. "I fear that edibles in my fridge may rot if there is long load shedding," said Riaz Khan, a consumer of Pabbi feeder in Nowshera district while talking to APP. "This long intervals load shedding also affects students' studies currently appearing in matriculation examination in KP, businesses and other activities of life." Although the government is consistently endeavoring to bridge the supply and demand gap during summer, people in many areas still face load shedding. These areas also include where the recovery is very low and as per policy the load shedding duration is more than normal areas. Many have already installed solar panels and those not affording have to suffer pangs of load shedding. PESCO officials told APP that KP was receiving about 1873MW electricity from the national grid while its demand remained about 3220 MW, facing a shortfall of 1347MW being fulfilled through load management in KP. Under aggregate technical and commercial losses (ATCL) formula, the official said the areas with high ATCL losses such as Bannu, rural areas of Peshawar including Warak Road, Chagarmathi and Regi and DI Khan district were facing long hours load shedding. "There is no load shedding at Hayatabad and Gulbahar Peshawar due to high recovery ratio and lack of Kunda culture," he said. "The key factor behind long hours load shedding are power thefts through direct hooks, outdated power distribution system and non-construction of large dams."—DNA

Steps urged to protect Murree forests from timber mafia

ISLAMABAD:The Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) has called for urgent cohesive measures to protect the Murree forests from the devastating impacts of the timber mafia and recurring wildfires. Chairing board of directors meeting here Sunday PFC CEO Mian Kashif Ashfaq emphasized that the forests in Murree are a critical natural asset, not only for their ecological value but also for their role in mitigating climate change and supporting the local economy, said a news release. The unchecked activities of the timber mafia, coupled with inadequate enforcement of forestry laws, have led to widespread deforestation in the region, he added. Additionally, recurring wildfires—often attributed to human negligence—pose a severe threat to biodiversity and the livelihoods of communities reliant on these forests. The PFC highlighted the importance of preserving Murree's forests, which are vital for maintaining a balanced ecosystem, preventing soil erosion, and ensuring sustainable water resources. The council urged the government to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, enforce stricter penalties for illegal logging, and invest in modern firefighting equipment to combat wildfires effectively. He also called for community involvement in conservation efforts and the implementation of public awareness campaigns to promote sustainable forest management. — APP

People to get much-needed relief: Abrar

RAWALPINDI: Member of the National Assembly Malik Abrar Ahmed has said that the prime minister's Rs 250 million special grant for development work in his constituency NA-55 was the much-needed relief to the residents. The uplift schemes approved by the Rawalpindi and Chakdala cantonment boards under the grant would further improve the basic infrastructure in the city, he said while talking to APP on Sunday. Malik Abrar, who is also PML-N's Divisional President, said keeping its track record, the present Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government had again taken practical development initiative for the people of his constituency. Under the initiative, essential projects including water supply, sewerage systems, roads construction, and installation of streetlights would be launched in the Rawalpindi and Chakdala cantonments, which would re-

solve the long-standing issues of the people. Malik Abrar said under the grant, Rs 23.5 million would be utilized for the construction of a one-million-gallon underground water tank at Shah Baloot Park, Saddar. Similarly, he said, Rs. 3.5 million would be spent on laying a new water pipeline from Sher Khan Road to R A Bazaar Bridge; and Rs 4.3 million for installing a 160mm diameter water pipeline from the underground tank in Shalley Valley to Awan Street. Likewise, Rs 84 million had been allocated for laying a 200mm diameter sewerage pipeline from Jhangi Syedan to Bhatta Chowk via Chistiabad Road and installation of pump machinery; Rs. 8.9 million for a 200mm diameter water supply line from Bokra underground tank to Islamabad Valley through main road; and Rs 3.8 million for a 200mm diameter pipeline from the Cheering Cross underground tank to

Lane No 6 through Peshawar Road, he added. Moreover, he said, Rs. 10 million had been earmarked for upgrading machinery of underground tanks and tube-wells; Rs 7 million for installing three new water filtration plants at Ghousia Ada and near Flour Mill Peshawar Road Wards No 4 & 10; and Rs. 15 million for new streetlights in Wards 1 to 10 of the Rawalpindi Cantonment. About Rs 30 million would be utilized for the reconstruction of a road from the graveyard to the Chakri Petrol Pump, he added. In the Chakdala Cantonment Board, he said, various uplift schemes would be implemented in Wards 7, 8, and 9, including Rs. 10 million for new streetlights; Rs. 28 million for laying of water supply lines in main and link streets, and upgrading pumping machinery at tube-wells; and Rs. 22 million for constructing PCC streets and laying new sewerage pipelines.—APP

Mushaal for global action against apartheid in Kashmir, Palestine

RAWALPINDI :Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organisation, on Sunday called upon churches, faith-based organizations, and civil society worldwide to break their silence and mobilize against the brutal apartheid being carried out by the fascist Hindutva regime in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and the Zionist regime in Palestine. She emphasized that the international community's inaction was not neutrality but complicity in the face of systematic oppression, as true peace was not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice. Mushaal, who is the wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Mohammad Yasin Malik, was speaking here at the Christ Church where she joined the Christian community in a solemn Easter prayer. She highlighted the crucial role that the Christian community had historically played in promoting peace, compassion, and justice across the world. She lauded the teachings of Jesus Christ – love, mercy, sacrifice, and the defence of the oppressed – as principles that transcend religion and serve as a guiding light for all of humanity. "Easter reminds us of the power of sacrifice, of unwavering faith, and the promise of justice," she said. "But while the world commemorates this sacred day, we must not turn a blind eye to the untold suffering of the people of IIOJK and Palestine." Mushaal condemned the continued occupation and brutal oppression of the Kashmiri people, who for decades have lived under a regime of apartheid, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, media blackouts, and systematic human rights violations. She cited the example of her husband, a symbol of peaceful resistance, who, she said, continued to languish in solitary confinement on fabricated and concocted charges under inhumane conditions for years, without fair trial or justice, while India flouted the international law with impunity. She stated that both Palestinians and Kashmiris communities were being denied their fundamental right to self-determination. Mushaal said, "Today, as Christians across the world remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the triumph of hope over despair, I urge them to extend their moral and spiritual solidarity with the people of Kashmir and Palestine because their struggle is not just political – it is a humanitarian crisis, a moral challenge to the conscience of the world. —DNA

Climate change and its impacts on Pakistan



TANVEER HUSSAIN

CLIMATE change or global warming is becoming a source of problems worldwide. Unfortunately, Pakistan is among the countries that are being severely affected directly by climate change and global warming. Although our contribution to the emission of greenhouse gases is negligible, we are paying the highest price for the development of major industrialized nations. Climate change is such a critical issue that, let alone finding a solution, we as a nation are not even fully aware of the damage it's causing. Nature has provided a protective layer called the ozone layer around the Earth, which acts as a shield

essential for human survival. This ozone layer exists at an altitude of 10 to 50 kilometers above the Earth's surface. It filters out the harmful ultraviolet rays coming from the sun, thereby protecting life. Due to uncontrolled population growth, air pollution, and industrial development, there has been a massive increase in the emission of greenhouse gases, which has disrupted the Earth's environment. These gases are highly damaging to the ozone layer. It is a bitter truth that material progress has made life easier, but the heavy price of that progress must be paid by the inhabitants of the Earth. The excessive emission of harmful gases has begun to create holes in the ozone layer, allowing some ultraviolet rays to penetrate the Earth. These rays are not only increasing the Earth's temperature but also causing cancer, eye diseases, and weakening of the immune system. Ultraviolet rays are also destroying phytoplankton, which are responsible for oxygen production, indirectly threatening the lives of humans and animals. One consequence of the rising global temperature is the rapid melting of glaciers in our northern regions.

As a result, the natural storage of water is decreasing rapidly, and on the other hand, floods are occurring in the country, which are harming not only human lives but also crops. Due to the destruction of crops, farmers are losing their sources of income, which ultimately affects the national economy. Right now, the glaciers are melting due to high temperatures, but the next phase will be even more dangerous. The upper layer of the glacier is made of soft snow, which will melt quickly and disappear. Beneath it is ice as hard as iron, which does not melt easily. When water stops flowing from the glaciers, rivers will begin to dry up. There will be a noticeable decline in river water, and underground water levels will also drop to dangerously low levels. Due to the water shortage, fertile lands will start turning barren, posing significant threats to human life. On one hand, provinces will fight over water, and on the other hand, water disputes with India will increase, escalating the risk of a dangerous conflict between two nuclear powers. These are the threats of global warming that Pakistan is facing. To deal with these dangers, a strategy

based on national commitment is needed. Policies should be created with the help of experts to reduce or eliminate these threats. Public awareness must be raised to prevent the wastage of resources. In addition, a large-scale tree plantation campaign should be launched across the country. Instead of coal and petrol, electricity should be generated from wind and solar energy. Electronics responsible for emitting greenhouse gases should be identified and discarded. Factories and vehicles that cause pollution should be closely monitored. Electric vehicles should be encouraged. The performance of railways and buses should be improved to reduce the number of cars on the roads. To prevent water pollution, plastic bags should be banned, and proper filtration systems should be installed for water entering rivers. Furthermore, global organizations and major countries should be approached for assistance. If we want to provide a safe environment for future generations, we must start taking precautionary measures from today. As rapidly as the threat of global warming is approaching us, we must find solutions at an even faster pace.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda Ambassador Olivier Jean Patrick Nduhungirehe arrived in Islamabad on an official visit. At the airport he was received by DG Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rwandan High Commissioner in Pakistan and other senior officials from MFA Pakistan.—DNA

APHC slams Hindutva agenda projection in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD :The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has strongly denounced the projection of Hindutva agenda by the India's ruling BJP-RSS regime in the name of reviving so-called pre-Islamic Hindu civilization in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir . APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas in a statement issued in Srinagar termed the settling of non-locals in Kashmir and the selling of Kashmiri properties to outsiders as an attempt to to eradicate the Muslim majority character of the occupied Territory Minhas warned that New Delhi cannot undermine Kashmiris' genuine struggle for self-determination by mean tactics. He urged the international community to force India to maintain Kashmiris' identity and implement UN resolutions for final settlement of the Kashmir dispute. The APHC spokesman while demanding immediate release of thousands of Kashmir including Hurriyat leadership languishing in different jails said that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory and placing restrictions on their freedom to speech is against the international law. He said that the people of Kashmir had been engaged in a peaceful struggle to secure their birthright to self-determination for the past seventy-eight years. APHC condemned the attachment of properties of local people saying communal elements have wicked plans to divide the Kashmir valley on communal lines after abrogation of article 370 and 35A. —APP

Kiyani assures Sindh to get full share of water

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Railways Bilal Azhar Kiyani Sunday assured the people of Sindh that not a single drop of their rightful share of water will be compromised. Speaking to the media in Dina, he emphasized that the government will hold political, technical and policy-level discussions with coalition partner Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on the matter of canals. Kiyani said that under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government is committed to providing relief to the public. He said the reduc-

tion in electricity prices as a major step towards curbing inflation and supporting the masses. He highlighted the role of the 2022, Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government in stabilizing the economy and expressed confidence that cooperation with the PPP will further enhance public service efforts. Referring to Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar's assurance in the National Assembly, Kiyani reiterated that decisions regarding canal management will be made in consultation with the PPP. He reaffirmed PML-N's dedication to safeguarding farmers' interests, saying that the party would never allow any harm to

come to farmers across the country, including those in Sindh. "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif are working on historic initiatives to boost the agriculture sector," he added. Kiyani also mentioned that 1,000 Pakistani youth have been sent to China for training in modern agricultural techniques. "These individuals will return as master trainers and are expected to play a vital role in leading an agricultural revolution in the country. Initiatives such as the Kisan Card, Agri-Malls, and other facilities mark the beginning of a new era for farmers," he added.—APP

Challenging ethnocentrism in Pak through inclusive cultural pride

ISLAMABAD:From the mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan to the shores of Sindh, Pakistan's diversity is its power. Its many cultures are not rivals; they're reflections of a shared journey. Yet rising ethnocentrism threatens to rewrite this story. The solution isn't choosing culture over country or vice versa. It's choosing both, together. Coined by William Graham Sumner in 1906, the term "ethnocentrism" refers to the belief in the inherent superiority of one's own culture. Over time, this worldview has shaped societies across the globe, sometimes subtly, other times catastrophically. While ethnocentrism is not unique to Pakistan, the recent intensification of ethnic pride and prejudice poses a seri-

ous threat to national cohesion. Pakistan, since its inception, has been home to numerous ethnicities: Punjabis, Sindhis, Baloch, Pashtuns, Muhajirs, Kashmiris, Saraikis, and the people of Gilgit-Baltistan. This rich fabric is our strength. However, instead of harmonizing, many communities have retreated into cultural silos. The green passport and national identity card, both devoid of ethnic labels, symbolize a united nation. Yet on the ground, many citizens identify more with their ethnicity than with the country itself. The consequences are apparent: rising intolerance, entrenched stereotypes, and a "my culture vs. yours" mentality. Cultural differences, which should be celebrated as assets, have increasingly

become lines of division. Ethnocentrism is no longer a passive sentiment. It now actively disrupts social cohesion and national development. Dr. Tahir Malik, a professor of Culture and Society at National University of Modern Languages (NUML), talking to APP, highlighted this disparity. "The government must provide equal opportunities for all cultures, especially in spaces where minorities often feel dominated," he noted. "Inclusion and representation are essential in erasing cultural hierarchies. We need national policies that educate citizens about each other's histories, heroes, and contributions." His point underlines a crucial step: fostering empathy through education and policy.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

APRIL

April 04/Senegal National Day

April 07/W. H. O. World Health Day

April 12/Somalia Armed Forces Day

April 15/DPR Korea The Day of the Sun

April 16/Denmark National Day

April 17/Iran Army Day

April 17/Syria Independence Day

April 18/Zimbabwe Independence Day

April 24/Holy See Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate

April 25/DPR Korea Armed Forces Day


April 26/Tanzania National Day

April 27/Sierra Leone Independence Day


April 27/South Africa Freedom Day

April 30/Sweden Birthday of His Majesty

April 30/Netherlands Birthday of Queen



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122


& Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114


PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi..5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Canth Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4


RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-29

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

MDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Residents appeal for urgent action

Stray dogs pose serious threat in Sector G-11/1

“It’s no longer just a nuisance—it’s a public health emergency,” said a local community representative. “Someone must be held accountable before a serious tragedy occurs.”

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The residents of Sector G-11/1, particularly those living along Street 22, are facing a growing menace of stray dogs that has turned daily life into a nightmare. With no concrete action from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) or Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), locals are now demanding immediate government intervention to ensure public safety. Dozens of stray dogs have taken over

the streets in this residential neighborhood, leaving families fearful of stepping out of their homes. Children can no longer play outside, women hesitate to go for walks or to nearby markets, and the elderly are essentially confined indoors. “We are living like prisoners in our own homes,” said a visibly frustrated resident. “Every time we open our gates, we risk being chased or attacked by aggressive dogs. We’ve had multiple incidents of near misses, especially involving school-going kids.” Previously, the CDA dealt

with the stray dog population through mass culling. However, in response to pressure and protests from animal rights organizations, this practice was discontinued. While the move was welcomed by activists, the authorities failed to present any viable alternative plan to manage the growing population of stray dogs. “There is a need for a balanced approach,” said another resident. “We respect animal rights, but what about human rights? Why should our safety be compromised?” The problem isn’t confined to

G-11/1 alone. Reports of stray dog bites and growing packs roaming freely have been surfacing from multiple sectors across Islamabad. From I-10 to F-6 and beyond, the issue appears to be spreading unchecked. Locals complain that both the CDA and MCI simply shirk responsibility, often blaming each other or citing lack of resources. The result is a dangerous status quo that puts the public at risk every single day. The residents are now appealing directly to the federal and local governments to step in and develop a

humane but effective solution. Suggestions include: Establishment of dedicated dog shelters away from residential areas, Public awareness campaigns promoting safe cohabitation, A 24/7 emergency helpline for reporting aggressive or rabid dogs. With reports of mad dogs attacking pedestrians already circulating, the matter has become urgent. “It’s no longer just a nuisance—it’s a public health emergency,” said a local community representative. “Someone must be held accountable before a serious .y occurs.”

NCA nurtures future artists by instilling strong foundation in critical thinking

TAYYAB ZARIF

ISLAMABAD: In-charge of the Islamabad Campus at the National College of Arts (NCA), Zeeshan Younas emphasized the critical role of skill development for future artists during the foundation year, highlighting it as the cornerstone of a student’s artistic and academic journey. In an exclusive interview with APP, he said, “The first year of the program is focused on skill development, cultivating creativity, discipline, and a strong technical foundation that supports future specializations in the arts.” Discussing the role of technology in art, he stated that although technology plays an important role in every sphere of life and brings many advancements to the field of art, but, it cannot replace the foundational values of hands-on practice in art work. He added, “The experience, practice, and innovation gained through accurately sketching lines, and creating sculptures by hand, lay the foundation for stronger artistic expression and a deeper understanding of art and structure.” At the NCA Islamabad campus, students simultaneously develop basic skills in Architecture, Fine Art, Visual Communication Design (VCD), and Textile Design (TD) during their foundation year. After completing this year, students are transferred to the Rawalpindi campus to join their respective departments (Fine Arts, Design, or Architecture). The purpose of the foundation year is to enhance students’ fundamental understanding of each field within art and architecture. NCA is deeply committed to nurturing the artistic skills of its students through a hands-on, practice-oriented curriculum designed to meet the evolving demands of the creative industry—giving them a competitive edge.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Diplomats taking interest in various paintings during an exhibition in Islamabad.—DNA

AIOU hosts 6th convention on role of AI in libraries

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) hosted the 6th National Convention on the theme “The Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Libraries” which was attended by experts from the fields of library science, information technology, and education and research. The chief guest of the scholarly event was Professor Dr. Ramzan, Vice Chancellor of Emerson University, Multan. The purpose of the convention was to discuss the effective integration of modern technology, particularly artificial intelligence in libraries, its role in research and education, and the future strategic roadmap in this regard. In their addresses, the speakers emphasized that AI is not only revolutionizing educational and research activities but also transforming libraries into

more efficient, user-friendly, and dynamic institutions. They stated that to align the field of library science with modern developments, it is essential to gradually adopt AI technologies. The experts highlighted that for the effective use of AI, it is necessary to ensure professional training for library staff, intelligent resource utilization, and the implementation of a comprehensive monitoring system. Speakers included Adnan Adil from London South Bank University (UK), Dr. Asim Qayyum from Charles Sturt University (Australia), and Professor Dr. Pervez Ahmed, Chairman of the Department of Library Science at Allama Iqbal Open University. They shared their research experiences and findings based on international trends with the participants. The international convention was organized by the Department of Library and Information

Sciences and the Directorate of Student Advisory and Counseling Services at Allama Iqbal Open University, in collaboration with the Pakistan Library Club (Islamabad Chapter). The event was marked by the enthusiastic participation of information professionals, library science faculty, IT experts, students, researchers, and stakeholders from across the country, making it a significant academic milestone. A special panel discussion titled “AI in Libraries: Shaping the Future of Research and Knowledge Access” was also held, during which field experts shared their insights. In conclusion, the speakers expressed their gratitude to Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, and the administrative team for the successful organization of the convention.—DNA


ISSI-PAIDAR celebrate Zimbabwe's National Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Pakistan Africa Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR), organized an event to commemorate Zimbabwe's National Day. The proceedings—which began with the national anthems of Pakistan and Zimbabwe—were moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. Speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; H.E. TMJ Abu-Basutu, (RTD) Air Marshal, Ambassador of Zimbabwe to Pakistan; Mr. Murad Baseer, Ambassador of Pakistan to Zimbabwe; and Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, BoG, ISSI. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, President PAIDAR, while the Keynote Speaker was Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan, Additional Secretary (Africa), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan (MOFA).

ISLAMABAD:OPF Board of Governors member Muhammad Kamran Khan & Overseas Executive member Shaheen Khalid Butt Sunday commended the government's Overseas Convention, a resounding success with over 1,200 Pakistanis in attendance, for promoting the country's soft power globally. In an exclusive interview with PTV news channel, Muhammad Kamran Khan, Member of the OPF Board of Governors, warmly praised the Overseas Convention, terming it a resounding success. He expressed his heartfelt appreciation for the government's efforts in organizing the event, which drew over 1,200 Pakistanis from around the globe. This convention has not only showcased the country's soft power but also provided a platform for overseas Pakistanis to connect with their roots, Khan added. The enthusiasm and participation of overseas Pakistanis in the convention are a testament to their love for their homeland,' Khan said, expressing optimism about the event's long-term benefits for Pakistan's global reputation." Notably, Khan mentioned that this was the first time such a convention had been held on this scale, making its success all the more remarkable. Shaheen Khalid Butt, Overseas Executive Member also highlighted the convention's global reach, stating that participants came from Gulf countries to Africa, representing more than 76 countries. 'This convention has not only showcased the country's soft power but also provided a platform for overseas Pakistanis to connect with their roots, Khan added, while Butt emphasized the event's significance in uniting Pakistanis worldwide.' Significantly, they noted that overseas Pakistanis rejected anarchic politics and instead united under the banner of love for Pakistan, demonstrating their commitment to the country's progress and stability. This unity, they emphasized, sends a strong message about the community's dedication to Pakistan's positive global image and development.

Success of Overseas convention acknowledged by OPF members



ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
ISLAMABAD

INVITATION FOR BIDS NOTICE

PROCUREMENT OF CUSTOMIZED MODULAR FURNITURE & FIXTURE ITEMS

Activity Ref. No.	:	38/2024-25	
Procurement Method	:	Single Stage-Two Envelope [1S2E]	
Date & Time for Submission of Bids	:	Date:	15-05-2025 Time: 1030 Hours, PST
Date & Time for Opening of Bids	:	Date:	15-05-2025 Time: 1100 Hours, PST

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad has allocated funds for procurement of various goods & non-consulting services, planned during the financial year 2024/25 and is intending that part of the proceeds of those funds, will be used to cover eligible payments under the contracts resulting from the respective procurement activities.

The University now invites bids through **e-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (e-PADS)** (<https://eprocure.gov.pk>) from eligible original furniture manufacturers having countrywide outlets who are registered at **e-PADS** and with Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments and are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue for supply of **Customized Modular Furniture & Fixture Items** at Main Campus Islamabad & various Regional Centres of the University located across Pakistan on **Delivered Duty Paid (DDP)** and geographical Lots bases as follows:

Lot No.	Location(s)	Lot No.	Location(s)
1 & 2	Main Campus, Islamabad	6	Regional Centre, Sheikhupura
3	Regional Centre, Attock	7	Regional Centre, Gilgit
4	Regional Centre, Sahiwal	8	Regional Centre, Kalat
5	Regional Centre, Sargodha		

The bidding shall be conducted in line with “**Single Stage-Two Envelope**” procedure of the Public Procurement Rules 2004 and any Regulations, Regulatory Guides, Procurement Guidelines or Instructions issued by the Authority (from time to time) and is open to all potential bidders.

Bid(s) must be accompanied by a **Bid Security** of required amount, in an acceptable form as given in the bidding document as well as appearing at **e-PADS**. The scanned copy of Bid Security must be uploaded through **e-PADS** and hardcopy must be submitted physically as instructed below.

Bidding Document containing detailed terms & conditions of the bidding process can be **downloaded** from <https://eprocure.gov.pk> free of cost.

A **Pre-bid Meeting** shall take place on the date, time and place as follows:

Date:	6 th May 2025
Time:	1100 hours (Pakistan Standard Time)
Address:	Committee Room of Sir Syed Hall, Block No. 24, AIOU Main Campus, Sector H-8, Islamabad

The bid(s) prepared in accordance with the instructions mentioned in the procurement activity's **Bidding Document**, must be submitted through **e-PADS** at <https://eprocure.gov.pk> by or before **1030 hours PST** on the closing date for procurement activity mentioned above. Whereas, the **Bid Security** instrument, in original, in sealed envelope(s), duly mentioning the Name & Ref. Number of the procurement activity on the envelope(s), must be delivered at the aforementioned address by or before the bids' submission date & time. The bids at **e-PADS** will be opened at **1100 hours PST** through **e-PADS** on the closing date for procurement activity in the presence of bidders' representatives who shall choose to attend the bids' opening session to be held at **Committee Room of Sir Syed Hall, Block No. 24, AIOU Main Campus, Sector H-8, Islamabad**. Manual submission of bids is not allowed.

This advertisement is available at website of PPRA & AIOU at www.ppra.org.pk and www.aiou.edu.pk/tender-notices, respectively.

AWAIS SALEEM

Director

Directorate of Purchase & Stores

Allama Iqbal Open University, Sector H-8, Islamabad

Phone: 051-9250031, 9250035

Briefs

PM's Digital Youth Hub sees remarkable growth

ISLAMABAD: Over 2 million young people have registered on the Prime Minister's Digital Youth Hub in just 14 days, showcasing the platform's immense popularity and potential.

This remarkable achievement underscored the government's commitment to empowering youth through digital skills and opportunities. According to an official, the Digital Youth Hub, launched recently, aims to bridge the digital divide and equip young individuals with the skills required to thrive in today's digital landscape. With over 2 million registrations, the platform has become a go-to destination for youth seeking opportunities. He said more than 1000 domestic and foreign companies have signed up for the digital youth hub. He added that the platform's rapid growth was a testament to the government's efforts to harness the potential of its young population. The initiative was expected to play a pivotal role in shaping the country's future leaders and driving economic growth. The registrations have poured in from across the country, with young people eager to leverage the platform's resources to enhance their skills and secure better job prospects. As the platform continues to grow, it is expected to have a profound impact on the nation's youth, empowering them to contribute positively to the economy and society, he stated. —APP

Punjab forests get high-tech security

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Murree Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi Sunday announced that Punjab has become the pioneering province in Pakistan to implement thermal imaging technology for round-the-clock satellite monitoring of forests to identify and curb illegal activities. In an interview with a private news channel, Zaheer Abbas Shirazi elaborated details about the project, highlighting the integration of AI technology to enhance detail identification in forest monitoring. He stated that the initiative encompasses the entire Punjab Forest Project, utilizing drones, satellites and geographic information systems to enhance monitoring and management. As part of the initiative, thermal imaging monitoring has been launched in Murree and Rawalpindi's forests, with nighttime surveillance also being conducted to enhance security and enforcement, he mentioned. "This cutting-edge technology will enable the identification of temperature variations and provide real-time insights into activities within designated forest areas through live satellite imagery", he said. "A dedicated team around 700 of AI specialists will oversee the initiative, facilitating efficient monitoring and swift response to any incidents," he mentioned. "Thermal imaging and live satellite feeds will offer real-time insights into forest activities. An AI specialist team will ensure seamless monitoring and rapid response," he highlighted. "Deforestation, wildfires, and illegal hunting will no longer be tolerated. We'll use advanced technology to track down those responsible," he warned. —APP

Govt fully committed to match internal, external threats: Fazal

The event was presided over by Federal Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, and hosted by Chairman of Pakistan Cultural Forum Zafar Bakhtawari and Chairman of Clean and Green Islamabad Movement Ahsan Bakhtawari

SAFIULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry has said that there are efforts, backed by foreign funding, to weaken Pakistan in the same manner as Palestine, Iran, Iraq, and Yemen. However, the government is committed to eliminating internal and external terrorism and ensuring economic development. He emphasized that it is essential to convey Allama Iqbal's message of "khudi" (selfhood) to the youth to shape their character. At present, it is vital that we adopt Iqbal's concept of selfhood and intellectual courage to wisely confront the challenges facing the nation, such as economic crises, educational decline, and the misguidance of youth. He expressed these views while addressing a grand intellectual and cultural event as the chief guest, organized in Islamabad to commemorate the death anniversary of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. The event was jointly organized by the Nazaria-e-Pakistan Foundation, Pakistan Cultural Forum, and Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). The event was presided over by Federal Minister for Culture, Heritage and Tourism Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, and hosted by Chairman



of Pakistan Cultural Forum Zafar Bakhtawari and Chairman of Clean and Green Islamabad Movement Ahsan Bakhtawari. The event was also attended by Head of Foreign Affairs for Jamaat-e-Islami Asif Luqman Qazi, Secretary General of CDA Union Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen, former Chief Commissioner of Islamabad Tariq Pirzada, and others. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that the solutions to today's problems can be found in Iqbal's poetry. He criticized those who

level allegations against institutions for cheap fame, stressing that no country can progress without strong institutions. He added that the government will bring youth into the national mainstream by spreading Iqbal's message. Aurangzeb Khan Khichi said that Quaid-e-Azam and Iqbal are national heroes and their message and philosophy must reach all educational institutions and students. He stated that Pakistan's armed forces are alert and ready to counter any

kind of aggression and terrorism. All internal and external enemies will be given a befitting response. He declared that the government, people, and armed forces stand united like a rock. Anyone who casts an evil eye on Pakistan will have their eyes gouged out. Each verse of Iqbal's poetry is worthy of a book, and we must benefit from his message. The years 2026 and 2027 mark the 150th birth anniversaries of Quaid-e-Azam and Iqbal, and they will be celebrated in a

grand manner. The ministry and its institutions will always be available for such events. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the purpose of today's event is to familiarize the youth with the philosophy and ideology of Iqbal, which, under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam, led to the creation of the great nation of Pakistan. He said we must confront the negative propaganda against Pakistan with a positive mindset. To overcome today's difficulties, we need to reignite the same spirit

among our youth, civil society, and business community that once led to the creation of Pakistan. He praised the efforts of the Prime Minister and the Army Chief in this regard and emphasized the need for the nation to stand with the government and armed forces like an iron wall. He said the country is moving toward progress after overcoming crises. Islamabad must also be developed as the cultural and literary capital of the country. We must carry forward the vision and ideology of Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam to pull the nation out of difficulties. Asif Luqman Qazi stated that culture reflects the lifestyle of a nation. The government must take steps to nurture our culture and introduce it to the younger generation. He said that the core of Iqbal's poetry lies in the Quran and Sunnah. Iqbal is the poet of the Muslim Ummah and a poet of hope. His entire work contributes to the character building of youth and must be included in the academic curriculum. Despite being the majority globally, Muslims are still facing hardship, and the reason lies in the lack of character-building. He stressed that the government and opposition must rise above all differences and support Palestine.

Oman envoy lauds ICCI's expo for bilateral trade growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), in collaboration with Pakistan International Property Exhibition (PIPEX), is set to organize the "Build & Invest Expo 2025" in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, on May 23-24, 2025. The event, dedicated to real estate and allied industries, will be held at the prestigious Grand Hyatt Muscat. A soft launch of the expo was held in Islamabad in an impressive ceremony, which was attended by a large number of business community members from various sectors, particularly real estate and allied industries. The event's chief guest, Ambassador of Oman Fahad Bin Sulaiman Bin Khalaf Alkharusi, lauded ICCI's initiative, highlighting it as a reflection of the deepening partnership between Pakistan and Oman, based

on mutual respect, cultural affinity, and shared economic interests. He emphasized that Oman highly values its bilateral relations with Pakistan, and the upcoming expo offers a timely opportunity to bolster trade, investment, and industrial cooperation. He encouraged the business communities of both nations to participate actively, engage in meaningful dialogue, and build partnerships to promote regional development and prosperity. ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, in his address, expressed gratitude to the Ambassador for his consistent efforts to strengthen ties between the two nations. He reaffirmed ICCI's commitment to economic progress, entrepreneurial empowerment, and international investment facilitation. He formally announced the "Build & Invest Pakistan Expo 2025," in collaboration with PIPEX, Pakistan's

Ministry of Commerce, and the embassies of both Pakistan and Oman. Qureshi elaborated on the expo's key features, which include high-impact B2B (Business-to-Business) and B2I (Business-to-Investor) networking opportunities. The event will attract top developers, financial institutions, and regulatory bodies, aiming to connect with overseas Pakistanis and Gulf-based investors. He further stated that ICCI, as the region's leading chamber with robust national and international linkages, will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting trade, industry, services, youth entrepreneurship, and women's economic empowerment. Notable attendees who praised ICCI's initiative included President of Islamabad Estate Agents Association (IEAA) and Federation of Realtors, Sardar Tahir Mahmood; Chairman New Airport City, Raja Sajjad Hussain; Chairman Fair Group of Companies,

Chaudhry Abdul Rauf, and Director Faisal Town, Chaudhry Zuhair Majeed. Chairman PIPEX, Imran Khattak, also delivered a detailed presentation on the expo's main features. In his vote of thanks, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui expressed confidence that the expo would significantly contribute to Pakistan's economic activity and serve as a meaningful step toward national prosperity. He extended special thanks to ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi for his extraordinary leadership and dedication to the initiative. Other distinguished guests included ICCI Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Executive Members Ms. Fatima Azim, Ms. Shumila Siddiqui, Imran Minhas, Ishaq Sial, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Aftab Gujjar, Irfan Chaudhry, Naveed Satti, Mian Shaukat Masood, Mohsin Khalid Malik, and former ICCI Presidents Khalid Javaid and Zahid Maqbool.

COMSTECH to host 6th OIC steering committee meeting

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH, the Ministerial Standing Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for Scientific and Technological Cooperation is set to host the Sixth Meeting of the OIC Steering Committee for the Implementation of the OIC Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Agenda 2026 from April 22 to 24, 2025, at the COMSTECH Secretariat in Islamabad. Confirmed participants include heads and representatives of 17 OIC institutions from Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Turkiye, Jordan, Uganda, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Pakistan reaffirming their commitment to strengthening STI collaboration across OIC member states. In preparation for the event, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General of OICCOMSTECH, chaired a high-level preparatory meeting at COMSTECH Headquarters, where he issued key directives to ensure the smooth execution of the Steering Committee sessions. Senior COMSTECH officials, program managers, and departmental representatives attended the meeting. The upcoming Steering Committee meeting will focus on reviewing the implementation progress of the OIC STI Agenda 2026, which was initiated following the First OIC Summit on STI in Astana, Kazakhstan, 2017. The agenda aims to foster research collaboration, knowledge sharing, and technology transfer among OIC member states to support sustainable development. The key agenda items also include: reviewing member states' progress on STI Agenda 2026 goals, identifying new joint initiatives and partnerships, discussing future actions leading towards the proposed OIC STI Agenda and presentations from OIC institutions on their progress, challenges, and recommendations under the Abu Dhabi Declaration (2022). Institutions scheduled to present include the OIC General Secretariat, Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDB), ISESCO, IOFS, SESRIC, SMIC, and several others. COMSTECH continues to play a central role in facilitating STI cooperation. —DNA

Margalla Hills - An abode to variety habitat

ISLAMABAD: Just a stone's throw away from the bustling capital city, the Margalla Hills stand as a serene sanctuary, teeming with life. This sprawling stretch of the Himalayan foothills is not just a picturesque backdrop to Islamabad but a thriving ecosystem that shelters diverse flora, fauna, and avian species. Travelling on mesmeric road snaking through this national park and leading to Dam-e-Koh and Pir Soha-wa and beyond into Haripur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has always been a pleasure. Residents of twin cities and other parts of the country throng small rest points established within the Margalla Hills National Park for a respite from busy life and enjoy a short journey instead of long way travelling to destinations in KPK and Northern areas. It is not only a source of learning for students and researchers but also a pleasure spot for tourists especially when monsoon winds blow through its pines and its tops are covered with clouds. The voice of blowing breeze when it passes touching the needles of pine trees is always soothing and memorable. —APP

PMYP striving to promote environmental conservation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) has made significant strides in promoting environmental conservation and eco-friendly behavior in Pakistan. According to official of PMYP, awareness was created among country's youth on environmental conservation through its Green Youth Movement. He said that a total of 137 Green Youth Clubs have

been established in various universities across the country, engaging thousands of students in sustainable development and eco-innovation activities. He said the Green Youth Movement will focus on several key areas, including climate change, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and waste management. He said the PMYP's Green Youth Movement was a collaborative effort with the British Council, Higher Education Commission, and other stakeholders. The

official said the initiative will also provide training and capacity-building programs for young people, as well as opportunities for networking and collaboration with other stakeholders. By empowering young Pakistanis to drive sustainable development, The Green Youth Movement aims to contribute towards achieving these global goals. The initiative has already gained momentum, with hundreds of young people from across the country expressing in-

terest in joining the movement. Green Youth Movement is set to become a major force in promoting sustainable development and green growth in Pakistan, and its impact is expected to be felt for years to come, he stated. He said that by empowering young Pakistanis to take the lead in environmental conservation, the PMYP's Green Youth Movement is poised to make a significant impact on the country's environmental future, he added.

ECONEX concludes with actionable solutions to ECO region's pressing issues

ISLAMABAD: The International Conference on Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI): Catalysts for Regional Connectivity and Sustainable Development in the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Region (ECONEX 2025), organised by the ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF), Pakistan, in partnership with the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Iran has concluded here in Islamabad at the HEC Secretariat on Friday. Kicked off on Thursday, the two-day conference served as a forum to facilitate the exchange of ideas, promoted cooperation, and inspired actionable strategies to shape a prosperous and sustainable future for the ECO region. President ECOSF Prof. Seyed Komal Tayebi said that "The plenary sessions of this conference have not only been

fruitful and insightful, but hearing about the experiences and learnings of our fellows from across the ECO region have also impacted us all on a personal level. Let me say that this conference has definitely pushed us in the right direction but such events in isolation are not enough to trigger change. We must convert such meetings into a series and take them with the same zeal as today if we want lasting results." Conceptualised with a background of ECO Member Countries facing common challenges, such as limited innovation, industrial productivity, gaps in trade policies, and barriers to technology transfer and commercialization, and designed to achieve objectives like strengthening Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) cooperation, promoting policy dialogues, addressing barriers, and expanding partnerships, the conference featured six plenary sessions.

The first session of Day 2, titled, "Fostering Regional Collaboration on Healthcare Innovation and Biotech in the ECO Region," held in partnership with Health Services Academy (HSA), Pakistan, provided a platform for policymakers, healthcare professionals, researchers, and industry leaders to exchange knowledge, explore opportunities, and develop strategies to strengthen healthcare innovation and biotechnology cooperation across the ECO region. The second session of Day 2, titled, "Building a Sustainable and Resilient Energy Future for ECO Member Countries," held in partnership with National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA), allowed policymakers, energy experts, and industry leaders to discuss pathways for accelerating the clean energy transition, enhancing energy security, and addressing policy and infrastruc-

ture challenges in the ECO region. The third session of Day 2, titled, "Groundwater Management in the ECO Region," held in partnership with International Water Management Institute (IWMI) & Islamic Relief explored innovative solutions like Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) and discuss the need for regional cooperation and capacity building to address shared groundwater issues. The panelists included notable personalities, including, Dean of HSA Dr. Tariq Mahmood Ali, Prof Ali Akbar Moosavi-Movahedi, University of Tehran, Iran - Chief Executive Officer of Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan Dr. Obaidullah, Managing Director of NEECA, Programme Manager Energy & Climate, ECOSF Khalil Raza, and Country Representative of International Water Management Institute Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Mr. Asif Sherazi, Country Director - Islamic Relief Pakistan. —DNA

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China's secret trade weapon

THE US' "reciprocal tariffs" resemble an indiscriminate attack, hitting not only industrial nations like China and Japan but also highly agricultural economies like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Laos. On April 4, China took the lead in retaliating by announcing 34 per cent tariffs. On April 10, the US raised tariffs on Chinese imports to 125 per cent, prompting China to match the US rate increase. Trump later clarified that the tariff rate on China was 145 per cent. As the situation evolves, China must consider more effective countermeasures. Relying solely on reciprocal tariff increases on US goods isn't a proactive strategy. The Trump administration's repeated tariff hikes on China look more like emotional venting than rational calculation. China should not merely react but adopt a more strategic approach with a specific aim – requiring bilateral trade be settled in renminbi. This would have the effect of significantly strengthening the renminbi's exchange rate, thereby challenging the dominance of the US dollar. China's strong manufacturing capabilities enable it to competitively produce cost-effective products, supporting a considerable trade volume with the US. US-China trade is worth hundreds of billions of US dollars. The mandatory use of the renminbi to settle bilateral trade will force the US to buy Chinese currency on a large scale, thereby significantly increasing the renminbi's use and demand while pushing up the exchange rate against the US dollar. Given the impact Trump's tariff policy could have on the world economy, international capital would have to reassess the risks of operating in the US. A rapid appreciation in the renminbi would signal to hesitant global investors that China's economic fundamentals are strong, encouraging them to increase their holdings of renminbi assets. This could increase capital inflows to China and outflows from the US. China raises tariffs on US goods to 125% as Xi calls on EU to resist 'unilateral bullying' Moreover, the renminbi's appreciation would raise the cost of US imports, weakening the dollar's relative purchasing power and intensifying inflationary pressures in the US. American businesses and consumers would face additional exchange rate volatility and transaction costs. If China merely matches US tariff rates, American firms could mitigate import costs by adjusting supply chains – shifting to Southeast Asia, India or Mexico, for example. However, weaker US purchasing power due to renminbi purchases would make it difficult to circumvent through supply chain adjustments. Theoretically, renminbi appreciation could hinder exports, but this impact must be dynamically assessed in the context of China's industrial upgrades. Currently, hi-tech products account for about 27 per cent of China's total exports, a higher share than for the US, Japan or Germany. China ranks 11th in the Global Innovation Index, ahead of Japan, France and Canada. China's export growth no longer has to rely on its cost advantage alone. Moreover, a stronger renminbi would enhance the purchasing power of the Chinese general public, stimulating consumer spending, expanding domestic demand and ultimately enhancing the resilience and sustainability of China's economy.

From thriving farmland to rubble

IN the heart of the southern Palestinian region, specifically north of Khan Yunis city, lies the town of al-Qarara—a once-promising agricultural town that had long served as a haven for farmers and a center of peaceful rural life. However, this image has been completely transformed since the outbreak of the latest Israeli war on the Gaza Strip. Al-Qarara has become a scene of devastation and fear, tasting, like many other towns in the Strip, the bitterness of bombardment, displacement, and deprivation. From the early days of the aggression, al-Qarara's homes, schools, and farmlands were not spared from the occupation's fire. Aerial and artillery strikes targeted the town's infrastructure, destroyed vast areas of crops, and forced hundreds of families to flee under bombardment in search of temporary shelter lacking the bare minimum for survival. The Israeli aggression turned the town into a disaster zone, with its infrastructure destroyed, its farmlands bulldozed, and its homes demolished, in a clear attempt to forcibly displace its residents—exploiting its strategic location near the border. Amid this catastrophic humanitarian scene, the people of al-Qarara stand with rare resilience, trying to preserve what remains of their dignity and existence in the face of a tightening siege, electricity and water cuts, and the absence of humanitarian aid. Al-Qarara was known for its vast agricultural lands that once hosted olive and citrus trees, along with grain and legume crops. However, the Israeli occupation army bulldozed 60% of its farmland and completely destroyed 6,000 housing units, while another 4,000 units were partially damaged, according to the Municipality of al-Qarara. The occupation forces also targeted 15 artesian wells that used to supply the town with water, destroyed a major water reservoir, and dozens of private wells that once irrigated the farmlands. Abdullah Al-Farra, one of the affected farmers, told the Palestinian Information Center that his 40-dunum plot of land was completely destroyed and is now unfit for cultivation due to soil bulldozing and tree uprooting—including olive trees over a hundred years old. He added, "We were displaced hoping to return, but we found piles of rubble and broken branches, making the idea of re-summing life here almost impossible." The destruction did not stop at agricultural land—it extended to homes and residential buildings. Tariq Abdel-Ilah, a resident of al-Qarara, explained to the Palestinian Information Center that the occupation forces deliberately targeted the main pillars of his seven-story home, making it structurally unsound and forcing him to leave it permanently. As for Abdel Karim Saleh, he returned to his land during a ceasefire only to find it barren, without trees or shade—despite once owning a water well that used to supply the area. He said sorrowfully, "I couldn't recognize my land after the immense destruction—it's as if it never existed." Saeed Shubeir, who once owned six poultry farms and two egg production farms, lost his entire business due to the bombing and bulldozing. He emphasized that the destruction of poultry, sheep, and honey production farms will force the Gaza Strip to rely on frozen meat imports for years to come, due to the loss of local production infrastructure.

Trump's dangerous redesigning of bureaucracy

Qamar Bashir



This model has allowed companies to thrive, innovate, and achieve remarkable efficiency. However, applying this same model to a country is deeply flawed and potentially catastrophic. A corporation governs hundreds, perhaps thousands, of employees.

A country governs hundreds of millions of diverse citizens with varied needs, rights, and expectations. In a business, the ultimate goal is shareholder value. In a democracy, the ultimate goal is justice, equity, and the common good. When government adopts the logic of a corporation...

PRESIDENT Donald J. Trump's recently issued Executive Order 14171, which has introduced "Schedule F" under the title "Schedule Policy/Career," marks a profound shift in the character of the American federal bureaucracy. Framed as a reform to instill accountability and efficiency in the policy-making segments of the federal workforce, the order gives the executive branch broad authority to reclassify and terminate thousands of civil servants whose roles intersect with policy execution. In doing so, it threatens to undermine the very foundations upon which democratic governance is built—foundations that rest not on personal loyalty to a leader, but on impartial adherence to the Constitution, statutory laws, and public service ethics. The civil service in democratic states exists as a buffer between political power and the machinery of the state. Its independence ensures that government policies, no matter how ambitious or partisan, are implemented within the bounds of legality, fairness, and procedural integrity. Bureaucrats are not elected; they are appointed based on merit, trained to implement policies in accordance with law, and protected from arbitrary dismissal to shield them from political influence. Their loyalty is to the Constitution and the people—not to a temporary officeholder or party. Executive Order 14171 challenges this principle by making continued employment conditional on alignment with the President's political agenda, regardless of whether that agenda aligns with statutory authority or established governance norms.

The most dangerous aspect of this shift is the redefinition of law itself. When bureaucrats are forced to carry out presidential directives even if they contradict existing legal frameworks, the entire concept of a rule-of-law-based state begins to unravel. The law no longer serves as the objective measure of right and wrong. Instead, what is said by the leader becomes the law, while existing statutes and regulations are rendered irrelevant. The distinction between legal and illegal dissolves, replaced by a simplistic binary: whatever pleases those in power is good, and whatever resists them is bad. In such a system, the bureaucracy be-

comes a political tool, not a legal institution, and civil servants become enforcers of authority rather than protectors of legality. This peril is not theoretical. It is a reality I have lived through. During my 35 years of service within Pakistan's bureaucracy, I watched a once-competent and respected civil service devolve into an obedient arm of political and military power. What was once a guardian of law and public service gradually transformed into a structure designed to protect the interests of those in control—first the politicians, and later the generals. The consequences have been devastating. Today, Pakistan faces a collapsed economy, declining industry, food insecurity, foreign investment flight, and a shattered law and order system. Bureaucrats no longer serve the people; they serve power. If the United States replicates this model, it risks setting off a slow-burning institutional collapse that may be difficult to reverse. President Trump, a businessman by profession, appears to be reshaping government in the image of a corporate enterprise. In business, loyalty to leadership, strict hierarchy, and top-down discipline are not just tolerated—they are essential. A CEO expects allegiance. Decisions are centralized. Rules are created and revised as needed to meet the company's goals—primarily profit. Employees can be hired and fired at will. This model has allowed companies to thrive, innovate, and achieve remarkable efficiency. However, applying this same model to a country is deeply flawed and potentially catastrophic. A corporation governs hundreds, perhaps thousands, of employees. A country governs hundreds of millions of diverse citizens with varied needs, rights, and expectations. In a business, the ultimate goal is shareholder value. In a democracy, the ultimate goal is justice, equity, and the common good. When government adopts the logic of a corporation, it begins to treat citizens like stakeholders, laws like internal policies, and dissent like insubordination. But a country is not a boardroom. It is a living, breathing society governed by a social contract enshrined in its Constitution. Here, power is limited, law is supreme, and

leaders are accountable not only to voters but to history. If rules, regulations, and laws can be bent, ignored, or discarded at the whim of a political leader, the result is not efficiency—it is chaos. No nation can function sustainably under the rule of one man's will, no matter how well-intentioned or charismatic he may be. What makes this transformation particularly dangerous is that it will not stop with one administration. If allowed to take root, future presidents—Republican or Democrat—will likely embrace this power, using it to shape a civil service that mirrors their ideology. The federal workforce will become a revolving door of loyalists, dismantling institutional memory, undermining policy continuity, and stifling principled dissent. Over time, the bureaucracy will cease to be a source of stability and become a mechanism for perpetual political conflict. It is important to consider that even if such reforms yield short-term results—faster policy implementation, greater alignment between bureaucracy and elected leadership—the long-term costs may be immense. Accountability without autonomy is a façade. A system that rewards obedience and punishes integrity cannot sustain itself. The moment the civil service ceases to question, to advise, and to challenge, it becomes a tool of tyranny, not a servant of democracy. Governance, unlike business, is not about speed or profit. It is about balance, justice, and stewardship. The hallmark of a successful democracy is not how efficiently the President can implement his agenda, but how faithfully government institutions can protect the rights and liberties of all citizens—even against the President's own ambitions. In this critical moment, the American people, Congress, and judiciary must reaffirm the principle that public service is a sacred trust, not a personal allegiance. Bureaucracy must remain loyal to the law, not the leader. The strength of a republic lies not in the unchecked power of one office, but in the resilience and independence of its institutions. If we lose sight of this distinction—if we allow government to be "run like a business" at the expense of constitutional order—we may gain speed, but we will lose our soul. And that is a price no democracy can afford to pay.

Indian struggle for global power

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The principal advocates for BRICS expansion are China and Russia, who see enlargement as a means to increase their global influence and challenge Western-dominated institutions. India, however, is skeptical of this agenda. Enlarging the group may dilute its influence and introduce new members whose priorities diverge from India's. In particular, India is wary of the inclusion of countries aligned with...

INDIA'S engagement with BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) is grounded in a pragmatic approach toward multilateralism, where participation in international organizations is valued primarily as a means to serve national interests. India does not perceive BRICS as an end in itself, but as a tactical instrument within a broader strategy aimed at securing a leadership position in global governance—particularly through the reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). For India, the ultimate prize in the multilateral sphere is a permanent seat on the UNSC, preferably as a sole representative of South Asia or alongside non-threatening actors such as the African Union. In this vision, India supports multilateralism, but selectively—favoring arrangements that reflect exclusivity and elevate its status in the global hierarchy. Multilateralism, from New Delhi's perspective, is most beneficial when it operates through an "elite club" of influential states, rather than through a broad, indiscriminate coalition of actors with conflicting agendas. In this strategic framework, BRICS serves as one of many diplomatic tools, useful when it complements India's larger foreign policy goals. While the group provides a platform for dialogue among major emerging economies and facilitates cooperation on global issues such as development finance and economic reform, India remains wary of the bloc's potential drift toward becoming a vehicle for Chinese geopolitical ambitions. The India-China relationship, strained by long-standing border disputes and growing strategic rivalry, complicates India's full embrace of BRICS as a unified alliance. Despite temporary signs of détente, such as those observed ahead of the Kazan summit, tensions remain high, and India is

acutely aware that unchecked Chinese dominance within BRICS could compromise its own influence and objectives. To mitigate this risk, India prioritizes preventing BRICS from transforming into a "pro-China club." New Delhi is particularly concerned about China's efforts to steer the organization toward an anti-Western posture, often in coordination with Russia and, increasingly, with Iran. India, by contrast, maintains a more balanced foreign policy that includes strong partnerships with Western powers, including the United States, the European Union, and members of the Indo-Pacific Quad (Australia, Japan, and the U.S.). Thus, India often resists efforts within BRICS to adopt sharp anti-Western rhetoric or positions that may jeopardize its strategic autonomy or damage its relations with the West. In this sense, India's BRICS participation is highly calculated aimed at preserving a delicate balance between East and West. India's global aspirations extend beyond BRICS, with the country positioning itself as a leader of the Global South. This ambition, however, brings it into direct competition with China, which harbors similar goals and often seeks to dominate Global South platforms. India recognizes the challenge posed by China's economic might and diplomatic outreach, and views BRICS as a contested space where influence must be actively negotiated. Additionally, Russia's growing alignment with China—particularly since its invasion of Ukraine and subsequent international isolation—further complicates India's role within BRICS. While India values its historical ties with Russia, it remains cautious about Moscow's tendency to push BRICS into confrontational stances that do not align with Indian interests. The slogan of India's presidency of the G20, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—

meaning "The World Is One Family"—reflects India's desire to project a benevolent leadership model rooted in inclusivity and cooperation. However, implicit in this vision is the assumption that India should guide this global family. The narrative aligns with India's soft power strategy and seeks to contrast its approach with China's more assertive, sometimes coercive, global behavior. This global outlook shapes India's cautious stance toward BRICS expansion. Although India officially welcomed the idea of expanding BRICS membership, its enthusiasm is tempered by strategic concerns. The principal advocates for BRICS expansion are China and Russia, who see enlargement as a means to increase their global influence and challenge Western-dominated institutions. India, however, is skeptical of this agenda. Enlarging the group may dilute its influence and introduce new members whose priorities diverge from India's. In particular, India is wary of the inclusion of countries aligned with China or antagonistic toward India's interests, such as Pakistan. While India may not be able to completely block expansion, it seeks to shape the process in ways that protect its influence and prevent any structural tilt toward China. For example, India does not oppose the symbolic inclusion of a large group of "partner states" without full membership status. These new participants may be allowed to attend meetings or contribute to discussions, but they lack voting rights or the ability to influence core decisions. This approach allows India to maintain the exclusivity and manageability of the group while projecting an image of inclusiveness. It also enables India to maintain its sway within the organization by ensuring that decision-making remains in the hands of a few core members.

Briefs

KP Assembly speaker Swati 'gets clean chit'

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the appointments were made in accordance with the rules and on the recommendation of the Employment Exchange Office. All appointments and promotions, including that of the Special Secretary, were found to be lawful and based on the recommendations of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC). The report also noted that, as speaker, Babar is answerable to the assembly, not to the internal accountability committee. The report further mentions that Babar himself had written to the PTI's party committee, requesting an inquiry to clear his name after allegations surfaced publicly. The committee had asked Azam Swati's claims hold merit. As a result, the case had been forwarded to a third member of the committee. "Whatever decision the third member makes will be acceptable," said Anwar, adding that the final report would be presented to the PTI founder, Imran Khan. However, the investigation has sparked internal dissent within the committee. According to sources, Anwar submitted the report to Raja without taking the other committee members into confidence, a move seen as a breach of the committee's standard operating procedures (SOP), which stipulate that findings must be presented solely to Imran Khan.

Attacks on foreign food chains...

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The person who died in the attacks on the food chain was also a Pakistani," the minister said, adding that the country was suffering from the attacks on the food chain. "Attacks are taking place in Punjab under an organised plan," she added. Bokhari warned that no one would be allowed to create a law and order situation in the country. She further said that 149 suspects involved in attacks on food chains were taken into custody. "A violent group is carrying out attacks on developing Punjab," the minister added.

Govt ready to hold talks with Sindh..

FROM PAGE 01
the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the people of Sindh regarding the disputed canals. "The PPP and the people of Sindh have serious reservations about the controversial canals." The senior provincial minister further said that the PPP demanded fair distribution of water as per the 1991 Water Apportionment Accord for the people of Sindh. However, he also expressed the provincial government's willingness to engage in talks with the federal government. Sanaulah stressed the importance of resolving the issue through discussions. "We should not politicise the water issue. Matters should be resolved by sitting at the table," he said. He also acknowledged the PPP's role as a part of the federation, urging its leaders to act responsibly while holding constitutional positions. Moreover, he said that the federal government respects the PPP leadership and believes the 1991 water accord and the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Act ensure fairness. "With the 1991 agreement between the provinces and the IRSA Act in place, there can be no injustice to anyone." He affirmed that no province's water can be allocated to another and that the country has constitutional mechanisms and laws to prevent such occurrences. "Dialogue and consultation are the solution to every problem," he concluded.

Ali's four-wicket haul gives Peshawar 120-run victory

Chasing a daunting 228-run target, the Sultans' batting unit unfolded on a meagre 107 in 15.5 overs despite Usman Khan's 44-run knock

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Peshawar Zalmi grabbed a dominating victory over Multan Sultans by 120 runs with help of Ali Raza's four-wicket haul and Arif Yaqoob's three wickets in the ninth match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 10 played at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Saturday. Chasing a daunting 228-run target, the Sultans' batting unit unfolded on a meagre 107 in 15.5 overs despite Usman Khan's 44-run knock. The Sultans got off to a shaky start to their innings as they lost their captain Mohammad Rizwan (15) on the first delivery of the fourth over with just 27 runs on the board. Following the early hiccup, Usman joined Shai Hope in the middle and added 36 runs for the second wicket to keep the Sultans in the hunt. The crucial partnership culminated in the seventh over with Shai Hope (20) falling victim to Arif Yaqoob. His dismissal sparked a match-defining collapse, which saw Sultans losing their remaining eight wickets, including that of their mainstay Usman, for just 44 runs and as a result, were bowled out for a meagre 107. Usman remained the top-scorer for Sultans with a 22-ball 44, laced with



four fours and three sixes. Ali Raza was the standout bowler for Zalmi, picking up four wickets for just 21 runs in his four overs. Arif Yaqoob took three wickets, while Mitchell Owen struck twice. Zalmi's decision to bat first appeared to have backfired as the former champions had been reduced to 5/2 in 2.1 overs as both their openers. Saim Ayub and Babar

Azam perished cheaply. Following the early slump, wicketkeeper batter Mohammad Harris joined Kohler-Cadmore in the middle and launched an astounding recovery. The duo dominated Sultans' bowlers to add 79 runs for the third wicket, conceding just 31 deliveries. Harris, who was the core aggressor of the stand, eventually fell victim to Ubaid Shah in the eighth over and

walked back after scoring 45 off 21 deliveries, laced with four fours and three sixes. Kohler-Cadmore was then involved in another crucial partnership for Zalmi when he added 53 runs for the fourth wicket with Hussain Talat until falling victim to Michael Bracewell, who had earlier dismissed opening batter Ayub. The Englishman remained the top-scorer for Zalmi with a 30-ball 52, studded with two fours and five sixes. Zalmi then suffered another massive blow to their batting expedition when Talat was dismissed by Iftikhar Ahmed in the next over. The left-handed batter made a vital contribution with a 29-ball 37, laced with three fours and a six. His dismissal had reduced Zalmi to 143/5 in 14.5 overs but a sensational partnership between Abdul Samad and Mitchell Owen bolstered their total past the 200-run mark. The duo added 73 runs for the sixth wicket until David Willey got rid of Owen in the penultimate over. He scored 34 off 15 deliveries with the help of one four and four sixes. Samad, on the other hand, perished on the third delivery of the final over after scoring 40 off 14 deliveries, studded with four fours and three sixes. For Sultans, Ubaid Shah, Bracewell and Willey picked up two wickets each, while Iftikhar Ahmed chipped in with one scalp.

Secy IPC assures support for youth sports initiatives

IOA delegation meets Secretary IPC to Discuss Youth Sports Development

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Olympic Association (IOA) met with Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), to discuss key initiatives pertaining to the development and promotion of sports activities for youth in the Islamabad region. The Islamabad Olympic Association delegation led by Secretary General IOA Rizwan ul Haq Razi along with Vice President Ouj-e-Zahoor and Deputy Secretary Pervez Habib Butt attended the meeting which focused on enhancing access to sports facilities, strengthening support for local athletes, and ensuring timely availability of venues under the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB).

The Federal Secretary IPC Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani expressed his appreciation for the initiatives taken by the IOA and assured the delegation of his full support. He affirmed that all facilities under PSB would be made readily accessible to the youth of Islamabad without any unnecessary delays, in line with the government's vision for youth engagement and sports development. On behalf of Begum Ishrat Ashraf, President IOA, a commemorative shield was presented to the Honourable Secretary as a gesture of gratitude for his continuous support toward the advancement of sports in the capital. The Islamabad Olympic Association remains committed to working closely with the Ministry of IPC and other stakeholders to promote an inclusive and vibrant sports culture in Islamabad.

Snooker: Reigning champion Wilson loses to Lei Peifan

DNA

SHEFIELD: Debutant Lei Peifan stunned defending champion Kyren Wilson by fighting back from 6-2 down to triumph 10-9 as the 'Crucible curse' struck again in the first round of the World Snooker Championship. Wilson becomes the 20th player to succumb to the so-called curse, with no first-time winner able to retain the world crown since the tournament moved to Sheffield's Crucible Theatre in 1977. "It is really hard to take. I gave it my all and Lei came out extremely positive this evening and potted some incredible balls," Wilson told BBC Sport. "It really hurts to be honest. As a debutant he held himself together incredibly well and I'd like to wish him all the best for the rest of the tournament. "He seems like quite a cool character. He showed no emotion at all." Joe Johnson (1987) and Ken Doherty (1998) came the closest to breaking the 'curse' but fell at the final hurdle. "It's obviously been built up into something it's not, because other players have gone on to win it.

Raphinha leads Barcelona's thrilling 4-3 comeback

BRAZIL: The Brazil forward deserved being singled out for extra praise from Barcelona's coach. He had just led a thrilling 4-3 fightback over Celta Vigo by scoring two late goals including a clutch penalty for an injury-time winner. Barcelona remained on pace for the Spanish league title as they opened up a seven-point gap over Real Madrid before the defending champion host Athletic Bilbao on Sunday. "It was amazing to see at this stage how this team gives everything to never give up," Flick said. – DNA

ICC names 4 Pakistani players in Women's WC

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has named four Pakistani cricketers in its Women's World Cup Qualifier 2025 Team of the Tournament, with skipper Fatima Sana leading the lineup. The prestigious squad includes players from three other countries – West Indies, Bangladesh, and Scotland – alongside Pakistan on the basis of their exceptional performances during the tournament. Pakistan's captain, Sana, played a pivotal role in her team's campaign, contributing both with the bat and the ball. Sana's best performance came in a rain-affected match against Scotland, where she claimed 4/23, helping derail Scotland's innings. Pakistan eventually won that encounter by six wickets. In addition to her bowling, she was instrumental with the bat, scoring an unbeaten 62 against

Thailand in a tense chase, showcasing her leadership and resilience under pressure. Muneeba Ali, Pakistan's reliable opening batter, was another standout performer. Her solid starts were crucial in laying a strong foundation for the team throughout the tournament. Ali's best knock came against Scotland, where she scored 71 runs off nearly a ball per run, anchoring Pakistan's chase of 187 and ensuring a comfortable win. Nashra Sandhu was one of the tournament's most consistent bowlers, claiming 10 wickets at an average of 15.60. Sandhu's control and guile with the ball were key to Pakistan's success, and she took vital wickets in the middle overs to keep opposition teams under pressure. Her performance against West Indies, where she dismissed key players, was particularly significant. – Agencies

Pakistan has become my second home, says Ambassador Jemal

FROM PAGE 06

2: Are there any programs aimed at promoting educational exchange or technical cooperation between universities and institutions in Ethiopia and Pakistan?

Expanding educational and technical cooperation between Ethiopia and Pakistan is a key focus, with initiatives underway to foster knowledge exchange and build lasting institutional partnerships. Both governments are actively working to establish a framework for collaboration between universities in the two countries. This includes plans to create platforms for rectors and vice-chancellors to connect and share knowledge, paving the way for faculty and student exchanges, joint research projects, and the development of collaborative academic programs. A concrete example of this cooperation is the recent agreement signed between Jijiga University in Ethiopia and the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation in Pakistan. This partnership will enable Ethiopian medical doctors to pursue specialized training in Pakistan, strengthening medical expertise in Ethiopia. These educational exchanges have a profound impact that extends beyond the academic realm. They foster deep connections and mutual understanding between individuals and communities. For instance, Ethiopian doctors who trained in Pakistan demonstrated a strong sense of solidarity with the Pakistani people during the devastating floods of 2022, expressing their eagerness to provide medical assistance and support. Such instances highlight the transformative power of educational cooperation in forging lasting bonds of friendship and empathy. By investing in educational exchange and technical collaboration, Ethiopia and Pakistan are not only fostering intellectual growth but also cultivating a future generation of leaders and professionals committed to cooperation and mutual support.

3: What efforts are being made to promote Ethiopia as a tourist destination for Pakistanis, and vice versa?

The first thing we did in this regard is to bring the Ethiopian Airlines to this country. The Ethiopian Airlines now offers direct flights from Karachi to Addis Ababa, making travel faster and more convenient than ever before. The journey takes just four hours! On the other hand, Pakistanis love to explore, so we are highlighting the unique experiences Ethiopia offers. From our vibrant cities to our stunning natural landscapes, there's something for everyone to discover. We are actively participating in tourism expos and events in Pakistan, sharing captivating videos and photos of our transformed tourist destinations. Recently the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dr. Abiy Ahmed initiated, developed and inaugurated 14 world class tourist destinations and renovated 25 existing destinations that can meet the taste and values of Pakistanis. We are also working closely with tour operators in both countries to develop exciting travel packages and itineraries.

Plans are underway for a joint tourism conference in Ethiopia to further boost travel between our nations. The people believe in the power of visual storytelling. So, we are inviting social media influencers from Pakistan to experience Ethiopia firsthand and share their adventures with their followers. Similarly, we are working to welcome Ethiopian influencers to Pakistan to showcase its beauty. We're confident that these efforts will lead to a significant increase in tourism, fostering greater understanding and friendship between our peoples.

4: What message would you like to convey to the government and people of Pakistan about Ethiopia and the potential of the partnership between the two countries?

To the Government and people of Pakistan, I extend a message of goodwill and opportunity from Ethiopia, a land steeped in history and brimming with potential. Our shared heritage resonates deeply. Ethiopia is the land of Hazrat Bilal Habeshi, the revered companion of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and King Najeshi, who offered refuge to the early Muslims asylum seekers during the first Hijra in Islam toward Ethiopia. These historical connections form a strong foundation for our growing relationship.

Ethiopia, with Addis Ababa as its vibrant capital, serves as a crucial



diplomatic hub, housing the headquarters of the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and third diplomatic center in the world. As the second most populous nation in Africa, we are a gateway to a vast market of over 1.4 billion people African continent. Partnering with Ethiopia offers access to this huge continent, brimming with opportunities for trade, investment, and collaboration. We applaud Pakistan's "Look Africa and Engage Africa" policy and are eager to facilitate their increased presence in the continent. Our nations share striking similarities such as similar federal governance structure, strategic geographical locations, influential diasporas, rich cultural traditions, and even culinary delights. These commonalities pave the way for a robust and mutually beneficial partnership. Together, we can address pressing global challenges such as climate change, hunger, poverty, and terrorism. By joining our hands, we can achieve prosperity and sustainable development for both our nations and contribute to a more stable and equitable world.

5: On a personal note, what has been your experience living and working in Pakistan? Any memorable moments or lessons?

My time in Pakistan has been an extraordinary journey, filled with warmth, discovery, and profound appreciation for the Pakistani people and land. From the moment I arrived, I was welcomed with the remarkable hospitality. Everywhere I travelled, whether to the breathtaking landscapes of the north, the historical treasures of Lahore, or the vibrant energy of Karachi, I was welcomed with open arms and genuine affection. The natural beauty of Pakistan is simply stunning. The majestic mountains, lush valleys, and flowing rivers create a magical landscape. The rich history of this land is palpable in the magnificent architecture and cultural heritage, particularly in Lahore and Karachi, cities that boast a unique blend of ancient and modern. And the food! The diverse and flavorful cuisine of Pakistan is a real treat for me.

What has truly touched me is the deep-rooted passion for environmental preservation I've witnessed across the country. The overwhelming response to the Green Legacy Initiative, launched by the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad, was truly inspiring. People from all walks of life, from young children to elders, joined us in planting trees, showing a profound commitment to a greener future of Pakistan. Pakistan has become my second home, and the memories I've created here will forever hold a special place in my heart. The kindness, generosity, and love I've received have been overwhelming. To the people of Pakistan, I express my deepest gratitude. Thank you for welcoming me into your hearts and sharing the beauty of your country with me.

I am looking forward to more exciting collaborations with the people of Pakistan for strengthening our bilateral relations to the new heights!

PM kicks off anti-polio drive, vows eradication

FROM PAGE 01

He emphasised that alongside the campaign, nationwide routine immunisation for protection against other dangerous diseases should also be fully ensured. During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed that a total of 415,000 polio workers will participate in this nationwide campaign. The meeting was further informed that, as per the prime minister's instructions, third-party validation of the campaign will be completed from April 28 to April 30.

Economy moving in right direction...

FROM PAGE 01

the situation is steadily improving. "The international financial institutions are acknowledging the positive direction of Pakistan's economy," he said. He also praised Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for her performance in the province, citing new development projects and record-breaking initiatives.

PIA launches inaugural flight from...

FROM PAGE 01

the International Departure Lounge of Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore. "The event was chaired by the Honorable Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, and was graced by the esteemed presence of the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, HE Khazar Farhadov," it said. According to a 2024 report by Azerbaijan's Trend News Agency, Azerbaijan is considered one of the preferred tourist destinations for Pakistanis. Quoting an official of a Pakistani travel agency, it said about 250,000 citizens visited the transcontinental country in 2023. PIA finally resumed flights to Europe in January after a four-and-a-half-year ban was lifted by EU regulators. A flight of the state-owned airline, plagued by a history of deadly crashes and a pilot licence scandal, took off from Islamabad for Paris, becoming the only carrier to offer a direct route to and from the European Union. Debt-ridden PIA was banned in June 2020 from flying to the European Union, United Kingdom and the United States, a month after one of its Airbus A-320s plunged into Karachi's Model Colony, killing nearly 100 people. The disaster was attributed to human error by the pilots and air traffic control, and was followed by allegations that nearly a third of the licences for its pilots were fake or dubious.

Briefs

Pak can boost food exports with investment, technology: FTO

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman on Sunday said that Pakistan has the potential to significantly increase its food production and tap into international markets through targeted investment, technological advancements, and the adoption of modern agricultural practices. Speaking to a delegation of food producers led by Zia Ur Rehman he said Pakistan has immense potential to become a leading player in the global food export market, given its diverse agricultural landscape and favorable climate for crop cultivation, said a news release. The country is already one of the world's largest producers of wheat, rice, sugarcane, fruits, and vegetables, but the sector remains largely underutilized in terms of exports. He said the development of value-added food products processed or packaged foods including Nimko can further boost export revenues. Expanding cold storage facilities and improving transportation networks can also help reduce post-harvest losses, thus increasing the volume of exportable goods. By tapping into its agricultural strengths, Pakistan has the potential to earn millions of dollars in foreign exchange, supporting economic growth. —APP

Thousands remain in crisis weeks after deadly Myanmar earthquakes

UNITED NATIONS: Thousands of families in Myanmar remain without shelter, water or medical care three weeks after deadly earthquakes struck the country, as frequent aftershocks compound the suffering of communities already battered by conflict and poverty. The earthquakes — which hit central Myanmar on 28 March — killed at least 3,700 people, injured 4,800 more and left 129 still missing. However, humanitarian officials warn the true toll is likely much higher due to underreporting and continued challenges in data collection and verification. More than 140 aftershocks — some as high as magnitude 5.9 — have rocked the region since the initial tremors, exacerbating the psychological toll, particularly on children and displaced families, according to a bulletin issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on Friday. "Frequent strong aftershocks continue to shake central Myanmar almost daily, increasing fear and uncertainty," the Office said, adding that many families still sleep outdoors, exposed to the elements and the risk of disease and venomous insect and snake bites. —APP



LAHORE Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov inaugurating PIA's Flight from LAHORE to BAKU PK159. Additional Secretary Defence Maj. Gen. Amer Ashfaq Kayani, Dy DG PAA Sumair Saeed and PIA's higher Management members were also present on the occasion.

TRNC envoy, RCCI President for boosting bilateral trade ties

RCCI President Mr. Usman Shaukat highlighted the Chamber's initiatives in promoting regional trade and diversification into non-conventional sectors such as pharmaceuticals, marble, gemstones, halal meat, and tourism

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) had the distinct honor of hosting Dilsad Senol, Ambassador of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), during her official visit to the Chamber. During her visit, H.E. Senol held a productive meeting with RCCI President Mr. Us-

man Shaukat. The two leaders engaged in meaningful discussions aimed at strengthening bilateral trade ties and exploring new avenues of economic cooperation between Pakistan and TRNC. In his welcome address, RCCI President Mr. Usman Shaukat highlighted the Chamber's initiatives in promoting regional trade

and diversification into non-conventional sectors such as pharmaceuticals, marble, gemstones, halal meat, and tourism. He emphasized the importance of mutual exchange of trade delegations to explore untapped potential and enhance bilateral collaboration. Ambassador Senol was accompanied by Mr. Yasar Yilancilar,

Deputy Chief of Mission. She expressed TRNC's keen interest in deepening trade relations with Pakistan and identified several promising sectors for cooperation, including agriculture, construction, tourism, education, the dairy sector, and citrus. Highlighting the existing educational ties, Ambassador Senol noted that

over 20 universities operate in TRNC, with more than 3,000 Pakistani students currently enrolled. She also pointed out that shared cultural and religious values between the two nations further strengthen the foundation for fruitful economic engagement. The meeting was also attended by RCCI Senior Vice President Mr.

Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Mr. Fahad Barlas, Former President Mr. Raja Amir Iqbal, and members of the RCCI Executive Committee. RCCI remains steadfast in its mission to foster international cooperation, strengthen global business linkages, and open new doors of opportunity for the Pakistani business community. —DNA

PM's initiatives to harness diasporas' potential: Iftikhar

ISLAMABAD: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday said that the unprecedented incentives announced by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to overseas Pakistanis are poised to attract record investment and restore the confidence of both foreign and local investors. He congratulating premier for holding successful conference of overseas Pakistanis said this epoch making announcement is aimed at mobilizing to drive record investment and rejuvenate economic confidence, said a news release. This visionary initiative seeks to harness the diaspora's potential by offering lucrative opportunities, positioning Pakistan as a high-return destination for global capital. He said central to the package are sweeping tax exemptions, including reduced corporate rates, import of machinery, and income tax waivers for investments in priority sectors like renewable energy, technology, and export-oriented industries. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's proactive policy underscores a transformative vision: leveraging diaspora loyalty into economic resilience. With this historic package, Pakistan strides toward becoming a competitive player in the global market, fostering prosperity through innovation and inclusivity. The nation now watches with optimism as it turns a new page in its economic journey, he added. Iftikhar Ali Malik further said by channeling investments into these fields, the initiative promises job creation, technology transfer, and enhanced export capacity. —DNA

Pakistani students celebrate Basant at Arizona State varsity

TEMPE, ARIZONA : In a vibrant display of culture and tradition, the Pakistan Student Association at Arizona State University's Tempe Campus recently hosted a joyful celebration of Basant, along with a Mehndi ceremony for a fellow Pakistani Fulbright Scholar couple. The lively event brought together Pakistani students and friends, offering a delightful opportunity to reconnect with their cultural heritage and traditions. The festivities helped to ease homesickness among students, creating a welcoming atmosphere reminiscent of celebrations back home. Guests enjoyed a variety of delicious Pakistani dishes, giving everyone a taste of home-cooked meals. Abdullah Baig, President of the Pakistan Student As-

sociation, emphasized the importance of such gatherings, saying, "The goal is to help us stay connected to our culture and also bring us together so we can check in on each other. It's important to celebrate our traditions and support each

other while we're away from our families." The celebration featured bright, colorful decorations, traditional attire, and energetic dances to Pakistani music, creating an atmosphere filled with joy and enthusiasm. Students enthusiastically partici-

pated in the festivities, sharing laughter and making new memories. This memorable event not only strengthened cultural ties among students but also underscored the importance of community support and friendship for those studying far from home. —APP



ADP's EFAP initiative transforming lives in Sindh from devastation to recovery

The ADB's involvement proved catalytic in mobilizing resources & expertise, Sindh offers a model for post-disaster reconstruction that others can learn from

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



In 2022, Pakistan experienced one of the worst climate-induced natural disasters in its history. An exceptionally severe monsoon, intensified by global climate change, resulted in catastrophic flooding that left one-third of the country submerged. Among the most severely impacted regions was the southern province of Sindh, which bore nearly 70% of the total damages. This essay delves into the significance, progress, and broader implications of post-flood infrastructure rehabilitation efforts in Sindh, specifically focusing on the restoration of roads and bridges. With financial and logistical support from

the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Sindh, the region has embarked on a transformative journey—not just to rebuild, but to build back better. This comprehensive analysis explores the multifaceted dimensions of the reconstruction: the extent of the destruction, the initiatives launched, the progress achieved, the hurdles faced, and the long-term economic and social ramifications of infrastructural renewal. Through a focus on climate-resilient designs and community engagement, the Sindh rehabilitation project sets a precedent for disaster recovery in developing countries vulnerable to climate shocks. The 2022 monsoon floods in Pakistan were nothing short of apocalyptic. Fueled by climate change, the rains far exceeded historical averages, leading to an unprecedented inundation that displaced over 33 million people and inflicted more than \$30 billion in damages across the country. Sindh province, home to fertile agricultural lands and a high-density rural population, was disproportionately affected. With floodwaters covering large swaths of farmland, washing away homes, and collapsing infrastructure, Sindh was plunged into

a humanitarian and economic crisis. Crucially, Sindh's transportation infrastructure, a vital artery for economic and social life, was among the hardest hit. Over 2,300 kilometers of roads and numerous bridges were damaged or destroyed. The destruction had a domino effect, it severed access to healthcare, education, markets, and emergency services, leaving communities isolated and vulnerable. Given that Sindh contributes approximately 27% to Pakistan's GDP and supports over 70% of the population through agriculture, the loss of transport connectivity had devastating implications for national food security and economic stability. In rural areas, where poverty is already rampant, the floods exacerbated vulnerability, pushing many further into distress. Recognizing the critical importance of restoring infrastructure, the Government of Sindh, in collaboration with the ADB, initiated a robust, multi-phased recovery plan. Two key projects emerged at the forefront of this effort: the Emergency Flood Assistance Project (EFAP) and the Sindh Flood Emergency Reconstruction Project. The initial phase focused on retroactive financing to

address urgent needs. Between October 2022 and January 2023, early interventions prioritized clearing floodwaters, repairing breaches in canals and drains, and restoring basic mobility. These efforts, while seemingly peripheral, were instrumental in facilitating access to damaged areas and setting the stage for large-scale construction. Subsequent phases transitioned from emergency relief to sustainable reconstruction. With an emphasis on the "build back better" philosophy, these efforts sought not just to restore what was lost, but to build roads and bridges that could withstand future disasters. Designs incorporated elevated roadbeds, reinforced concrete structures, disaster-resilient drainage systems, and environmentally conscious engineering practices. The ADB's total financing package of \$554 million, including a \$475 million loan, \$200 million was earmarked specifically for road reconstruction in Sindh alone. The implementation of these ambitious infrastructure projects necessitated coordination among various stakeholders. Local government officials, engineers, international donors, and

community members all played pivotal roles. Noteworthy figures include EX-PD Ayub Junjo, PD Aziz-ul-Haque Siddiqui, and DPD Syed Ashfaq Ahmed Shah, who have been instrumental in project planning and execution. Executive Engineers such as Syed Sadaqat Shah (Central Shaheed Benazirabad), Abdullah Shaikh (Lower Hyderabad), and Ashfaq Ahmed Shaikh (Upper Larkana) have been leading on-site construction and rehabilitation efforts. Their collective goal, to complete road reconstruction as per international standards, within prescribed timelines. The successful coordination of engineering tasks, labor management, procurement of materials, and alignment with climate resilience goals underlines the complexity and scale of the undertaking. By mid-2023, considerable progress had been made. Over one million residents in flood-affected districts like Dadu and Jamshoro regained mobility, enabling the revival of trade, agriculture, and social life. Markets reopened, schools resumed, and emergency healthcare became accessible once more. Under EFAP, 857 kilometers of economically vital

roads were earmarked for reconstruction. Major roads connecting agricultural hubs to urban markets were prioritized to reestablish supply chains. The completion timelines for many projects were set at 36 months from 2022, ensuring both quality and sustainability. Community-driven cash-for-work programs added an inclusive layer to these projects. Locals were employed in debris clearance, minor repairs, and maintenance tasks. These initiatives provided immediate economic relief while fostering a sense of ownership among residents. Approximately 600 km of roads have been completed under initiatives linked to the EFAP in Sindh by February 2025, with the total target being 857 km. Remaining 257 km are under construction. There are a total of 13 bridges, out of which 7 have been completed and work is underway on 6 bridges. The socio-economic ripple effects of infrastructure restoration are profound. Roads and bridges are more than concrete and steel—they are conduits of opportunity and access. In Sindh's context, improved connectivity directly correlates with economic revital-

ization, social cohesion, and improved quality of life. With transportation restored, agricultural producers in Sindh can again access national and international markets. This rejuvenation of trade has stimulated employment, increased income, and reduced post-harvest losses. Government officials and engineers, despite operating under immense pressure, have earned respect for their dedication. Their efforts have not only delivered concrete results but also restored faith in public institutions. The Sindh rehabilitation effort provides valuable lessons in disaster recovery and infrastructure planning. First, timely international support—both financial and technical—is critical in scaling recovery efforts. The ADB's involvement proved catalytic in mobilizing resources and expertise. By reimagining infrastructure as a tool for social equity, economic recovery, and climate adaptation, Sindh offers a model for post-disaster reconstruction that others can learn from. While the journey is far from over, each kilometer rebuilt is a step towards a stronger, more connected, and climate-resilient future for the people of Sindh.

Briefs

Railway traffic restored in Khairpur

DNA

KHAIRPUR: Railway traffic on a track near Sindh's Khairpur city was restored after activists of some nationalist parties blocked a section of it on Sunday in their ongoing agitation against the much-protested plan to build six new canals on the Indus River. Chief of the Army Staff Gen Asim Munir and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz inaugurated the ambitious Cholistan project to irrigate south Punjab's lands on February 15 amid public uproar and strong reservations in Sindh. The Sindh Assembly also passed a unanimous resolution against the project in March. The past few months have seen nationwide protests from political parties, including the ruling coalition ally PPP, and residents against the proposed project. "The track was blocked at around 11:30am today in Khairpur city area but that blockade has been lifted and normal flow of railway traffic has been restored", Imran, a railway official in Sukkur's chief controller office, told media. The blockade of the railway track was reported in the Sukkur division and not in the Karachi division's limits, which end at Tando Adam in Sanghar district, according to Karachi deputy chief controller Shakeel Memon.

Pope Francis calls for Gaza ceasefire

VATICAN: Pope Francis reiterated his call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza in an Easter Sunday message read aloud by an aide as the pontiff, still recovering from pneumonia, looked on during a brief appearance on the main balcony of St. Peter's Basilica. The 88-year-old pope, limiting his workload on doctors' orders, did not preside over the Vatican's Mass for Easter but appeared at the end of the event for a twice-yearly blessing and message known as the "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and the world). Before a five-week hospital stay for pneumonia, which nearly killed him, Francis had been ramping up criticism of Israel's military campaign in Gaza, calling the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian enclave "very serious and shameful" in January. In the Easter message, the pontiff said the situation in Gaza was "dramatic and deplorable". "I express my closeness to the sufferings [...] of all the Israeli people and the Palestinian people," said the message. "I appeal to the warring parties: call a ceasefire, release the hostages and come to the aid of a starving people that aspires to a future of peace," it said. - Agencies

Russia says Ukraine violated Easter ceasefire

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Russia has accused Ukraine of committing over a thousand violations during the Easter ceasefire declared by Russian President Vladimir Putin. On Sunday, the Russian Defense Ministry stated that Ukrainian forces committed more than a thousand ceasefire violations, causing damage to infrastructure and civilian casualties. "In accordance with the order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armed Forces [President Vladimir Putin], all [Russian military] groupings in the area of the special military operation strictly observed the ceasefire regime... and remained at previously occupied lines and positions," the ministry said. However, Ukrainian forces breached the ceasefire, firing on Russian positions 444 times and launching over 900 drone attacks in border regions, including Bryansk, Kursk, Belgorod, and Crimea, the ministry reported. "The Ukrainian units fired 444 times from cannons and mortars at the positions of our troops [and] carried out 900 strikes with quadcopter drones," it added.

Francophone film mela opens with Romanian film screening

The opening ceremony was marked by a warm welcome from French Ambassador to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey; The Romanian film, which was presented on the opening night, drew a packed audience. o. Chargé d'Affaires of Romania, Eduard Preda, introduced the film to the audience, offering a brief yet insightful overview of its themes, context, and cinematic style



MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Francophone Film Mela, an annual celebration of French-speaking cultures through cinema, opened with much enthusiasm and cultural fervor in Islamabad. This year's event kicked off with the screening of a Romanian film, setting the tone for a week-long journey through diverse Francophone stories and cinematic styles. The opening ceremony was marked

by a warm welcome from French Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Nicolas Galey, who addressed the audience gathered at the venue. In his remarks, Ambassador Galey emphasized the significance of the Francophone Film Mela as a bridge between cultures, fostering mutual understanding and dialogue through the universal language of cinema. "The Francophone Film Mela is more than just a celebration of films," he noted. "It is an opportunity for people in Pakistan to experience the richness and

diversity of the Francophone world — from Europe to Africa and beyond — through powerful stories and artistic expressions." The Romanian film, which was presented on the opening night, drew a packed audience of diplomats, film enthusiasts, and members of the public. Chargé d'Affaires of Romania, Mr. Eduard Preda, introduced the film to the audience, offering a brief yet insightful overview of its themes, context, and cinematic style. "This film offers a window into Romanian society, its values,

struggles, and aspirations," Mr. Preda said. "We are delighted to share this part of our culture with the Pakistani audience and contribute to the broader dialogue that the Francophone Film Mela promotes." The film was screened in its original Romanian language, with subtitles in both Urdu and English, making it accessible to a wide range of viewers and adding to the inclusive spirit of the event. The Francophone Film Mela in Islamabad showcases films from across the Francophone world — including countries like France, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Morocco, and others — highlighting shared histories and unique narratives. Organized with the support of the embassies of Francophone countries and various cultural institutions, the festival serves as an important platform for cultural diplomacy and artistic exchange. Over the coming days, audiences can look forward to screenings of critically acclaimed films, panel discussions with filmmakers and critics, and interactive sessions designed to engage students and young creatives with world cinema. The festival continues to be a testament to the growing cultural ties between Pakistan and the global Francophone community. Ambassador of Morocco and Dean of the African group who also witnessed the movie and his movie is also to be screened in the coming days, termed the event very successful. He was keen to present the Moroccan movie to the diplomats and especially the Pakistani audiences.

Leader of weeks-long Parachinar sit-in arrested

SHAMIM SHAHID

Kurram: An organiser of a weeks-long sit-in being held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Parachinar city located in Kurram district against the prolonged closure of Parachinar-Thall Road was arrested on Sunday, the police said. The Thall-Parachinar Road — the only thoroughfare leading to the city — has been closed since the Nov 21, 2024 attack on a convoy in the Bagan area that left more than 50 dead. Ensuing clashes stemming from decades-old land disputes claimed at least 130 more lives. A ceasefire agreement reached in January suffered setbacks as attacks continued on aid and government convoys. However, tribal leaders again agreed on an eight-month truce on March 29. "The Kurram police have arrested Malik Zartaj in Upper Kurram [tehsil] and Imran Maqbool in Lower Kurram [tehsil]," said a statement from the district police officer's office, confirming the detention of Zartaj, who was among the leaders of the sit-in that began on March 2. However, it did not specify any reason for the arrests or any further details about them, adding that raids were also being carried out to arrest PTI's Khawaja Naheed. A sit-in against the road

closure began on March 2, with elders Zartaj and Musarat Bangash among its participants. Demonstrations to protest the detention were held at various locations in Parachinar. He said: "We have been forced to hold a peace rally over Malik Zartaj's arrest and to [demand] the re-opening of roads. We have been staging a sit-in outside the press club for the past 50 days [but] no step is being taken to establish peace." At the sit-in last month, the protesters had said the demonstration would continue until the road was opened. They also lamented that the weekly convoy of supplies for the people there was insufficient. In the most recent incident, at least three people were killed and several others went missing on Friday when unidentified assailants attacked a group of people travelling from Parachinar to Peshawar in Lower Kurram's Bagan area, triggering protests across the district. The district administration has said all possible measures are being taken to provide relief to the people. Around a month ago, teams from the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) and Pakistan International Airlines also assessed Parachinar airport's operational feasibility for commercial and humanitarian flights. The KP government in February had announced a fresh operation against militants in Kurram in February, arresting at least 30 miscreants and facilitators in Lower Kurram tehsil.

Iran-US indirect talks gain momentum amid after Rome

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: After nearly four hours of indirect talks with the US delegation led by Steve Witkoff, the US special envoy for West Asia, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told reporters that the second round of talks had been "productive" and the overall process is "moving forward." "This was once again a productive session, and I can say that the negotiation process is moving forward," the top Iranian diplomat and head of the Iranian delegation said, pausing briefly among a flurry of reporters eager for insights into the indirect discussions. He noted that "a better understanding" had been reached between the two sides "on a set of principles and objectives," suggesting the talks are now poised to move into a "next phase." According to Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei, the talks were held at the residence of the Omani ambassa-

dor in Rome, with Omani Foreign Minister Badr Al Busaidi present as mediator. The structure mirrored the first round of negotiations that took place in Muscat on April 12. Baqaei highlighted Al Busaidi's active role in relaying "messages" between the Iranian and American delegations during the indirect exchanges, once again emphasizing Oman's key mediating function. At the end of the second round, Araghchi said the groundwork was being laid for more detailed work. Ahead of the next round of a high-level negotiations, set to take place on April 26 in Oman, he announced that "expert-level" meetings would begin Wednesday. These sessions, he said, would give technical teams "more time to delve into details and to work toward designing a framework for an agreement." In a follow-up post on his X, formerly Twitter, Baqaei offered additional details. "The two sides agreed to continue the indirect talks in few days at technical level to be followed by another round at their own level on coming Saturday," he stated. Looking forward to the next round of talks, Araghchi also said the outcomes of the expert-level discussions would be thoroughly reviewed to assess how "close" the two sides are to "reaching an agreement." Reflecting on the tone of the second round, he said the discussions were held "in a constructive atmosphere," adding that the process "is advancing and we are moving forward." On reports of a possible shift to direct negotiations, Iran's foreign minister struck a cautious note.

JI holds Gaza march, announces countrywide strike on April 26

"Regardless of whether you have a gun or political power, if you face Israel, you will be destroyed," he said. "Stand up and fight for the Palestinian cause. Stand up and condemn Israel. Stand up to America"

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Strongly condemning Israel for its ongoing military onslaught in Gaza, the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) on Sunday announced a nationwide strike on April 26, urging to boycott products that financially support Israel. The strike was announced by JI Central Ameer Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, as he delivered a fiery speech to the party's 'Palestine Solidarity March' in Islamabad. The demonstration protested Israeli atrocities in Gaza and took place on the Islamabad Expressway. The Israeli offensive, which began in response to Hamas's unprecedented attack on October 7, 2023, has killed more than 51,000 Palestinians and de-



stroyed much of the housing and hospital infrastructure in the enclave. The death toll is feared to be much higher due to thousands still missing under the rubble. Addressing the demonstrators, the JI chief announced a nationwide strike on April 26. "From Chitral to Karachi ... we will hold a full strike," he said. "We will go from shop to shop and tell them to keep business activities suspended on April 26. We will wage a jihad (holy war) through boycotts, strikes, and social media [campaigns]." He urged JI supporters to avoid using products that financially support Israel. Rehman also urged people to stand up for Palestine and "fight for the Palestinian cause". "Regardless of whether you have a gun or political power, if you face Israel, you will be destroyed," he said. "Stand up and fight for the Palestinian cause. Stand up and condemn Israel. Stand up to America." He asked his supporters to send a message to the US, saying: "We are not your slaves, as the Prophet's [PBUH] servants do not recognise the US or Israel's slavery." The JI chief also demanded that Pakistan formally recognise Hamas and open an office for them. "We demand that a Hamas office be opened in Pakistan and that they be formally recognised," Rehman said. "They are a legitimate power and registered movement, and an army according to the UN Charter. "They are also a democratic force; they won elections in 2006," he said. "America did not accept the results ... they are an enemy of democracy, and now a genocide is taking place in Gaza before their eyes."

Thousands join anti-Trump protests

WASHINGTON: Thousands took to the streets across the US on Saturday to protest over recent actions by President Donald Trump. Known as "50501", for "50 protests, 50 states, 1 movement", the demonstrations were intended to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolutionary War. From outside the White House and Tesla dealerships and at the centres of many cities, protesters expressed a variety of grievances. Many called for the return of KilmarAbrego Garcia, who was mistakenly deported to El Salvador. Political protests are becoming more common in the US - the "Hands Off" demonstrations in early April drew tens of thousands in cities across the country. The most recent polling from Gallup suggests 45% of voters approve of Trump's performance in the first quarter of his term, which is more than the 41% who approved during the same period in his first administration. Still, it is lower than the average first-quarter rating of 60% for all presidents elected between 1952 and 2020. - Agencies

US strikes kill three in Sana'a

SANA'A: Multiple US air attacks have been conducted in Yemen, including strikes on Sana'a, killing at least three, following reports of Yemeni Armed Forces downing the second American MQ-9 Reaper drone in northwestern Sa'ada province in the past 24 hours. Yemen's al-Masirah television channel, citing a statement by the Ministry of Public Health and Population, announced that the US military launched 21 airstrikes on Sana'a as well as its western, eastern, and southern outskirts on Saturday night. Two people were killed and as many wounded when US air raids struck the al-Nahda neighborhood of the al-Thawra district. American fighter jets also targeted the September 21 Park in the same district with five airstrikes. An individual was wounded when air raids hit a cemetery at the Assafi'yah neighborhood in southern Sana'a. In the Bani Matar district of western Sana'a outskirts, the airstrikes killed one person and wounded another one. - Agencies

Pak seeks stronger coop with KSA to combat drugs

Saudi citizens can visit Pakistan without visa: Mohsin Naqvi

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday announced that Saudi citizens can now enter Pakistan without restrictions, as part of measures aimed at strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries. The announcement followed a meeting between Mohsin Naqvi and Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki at the Diplomatic Enclave in Islamabad. The two officials held detailed discussions covering diplomatic relations, travel policies, and law enforcement cooperation. Mohsin Naqvi expressed appreciation for Saudi Arabia's consistent support for Pakistan, particularly acknowledging the kingdom's participation in the recent anti-narcotics conference co-hosted by Pakistan and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). During the meeting, Naqvi shared updates on recent reforms related to passport issuance and national documentation standards. He stated that the new protocols aim to improve document security and prevent misuse. The interior minister also briefed the ambassador on the government's efforts to address street-level crime, including a crackdown on professional begging networks across the country. Naqvi commended Saudi authorities for their cooperation in securing the release of five Pakistani nationals who had been imprisoned in a drug smuggling case later found to be false.



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