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## May 9 anniversary: No deal with architects of dark chapter in history, vows Army Chief on May 9 anniversary

*Gen Munir says inimical forces have unleashed digital terrorism, are trying to create rift between army, people*

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir Thursday visited Lahore Garrison, laid a wreath at the Martyrs' Monument, and paid solemn tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the motherland.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the COAS was given a detailed briefing on operational preparedness of the formation.

Addressing the officers and soldiers at the Corps Headquarters, the

COAS lauded the troops for their services to the nation and appreciated their professionalism.

The Army Chief underscored that inimical forces and their abettors had unleashed digital terrorism and were trying hard to create division between the Armed Forces and the people of Pakistan through peddling lies, fake news and propaganda. "However, the designs of all these forces will be defeated with the support of the nation," he added.

The COAS asserted

that every soldier and officer of the Pakistan Army "puts his duties and responsibilities first, regardless of any other affiliations or preferences and continues to render extreme sacrifices on daily basis".

He said that May 9 would undoubtedly remain a black day in the history of Pakistan when deliberately indoctrinated and insidiously guided miscreants attacked the symbols of the state and national unity, disgracefully desecrating the Shuhada (martyrs) monuments.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar H.E. Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulafai calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Pakistan keen to transform Qatar ties into a robust economic partnership: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that Pakistan was keen to transform its excellent ties with Qatar into a mutually beneficial robust economic partnership.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulafai, who called on him here, stressed that the two countries should continue to work together to strengthen bilateral cooperation in all spheres of mutual interest, especially in trade and investment. Highlighting the important role of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), he said that Pakistan would like to see Qatar expand its investment portfolio in Pa-

kistan in priority sectors. To this end, the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would be able to ensure swift coordination, he assured.

Welcoming the Qatari dignitary and delegation, the prime minister said that Pakistan greatly valued its historic, cordial and fraternal relationship with Qatar and both countries had always supported each other through thick and thin.

Prime Minister Shehbaz conveyed his warm wishes and greetings for the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulreham bin Jassim Al Thani.

## Pre-Hajj flight operation of PIA to start from Quetta on May 11

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The pre-Hajj flight operation of National flag carrier airlines, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is scheduled to start from Quetta on May 11.

The PIA sources informed that two pre-Hajj flights would proceed for Saudi Arabia via Karachi carrying some 300 intending pilgrims on first day of the flight operation.

The first pre-Hajj flight would leave Quetta for Madina Munawwara via Karachi at 03:30 PM on May 11.

The PIA sources further informed that at least 25 flights would go to Saudi Arabia carrying around 3,750 intending pilgrims from Quetta.

They are included the pilgrims going to perform Hajj under government and private scheme.

## Three MPAs elect take oath in Balochistan Assembly

Independent Report  
QUETTA: Three members of provincial assembly-elect, Engineer Zamarak Khan Achakzai, Mir Jahanzaib Mengal and Muhammad Zarin Magi took oath of the membership of assembly here on Thursday.

The Speaker, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai administered oath to the newly elected members of assembly.

## Pak Navy hands over 8 Iranian fishermen to diplomatic authorities

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Pakistan Navy on Thursday handed over eight Iranian fishermen to Iranian diplomatic authorities on humanitarian grounds.

According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the Iranian fishermen were rescued by the Pakistan Navy during a successful operation in the open sea.

A ship of the Pakistan Navy responded in time to an emergency call from a fire-stricken boat at sea.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif addressing a press conference along with Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar, in the Federal Capital.

## May 9 mayhem perpetrators accountability to reach logical conclusion: Kh Asif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif Thursday said the accountability of the perpetrators of May 9th mayhem would reach to its logical conclusion as it was a matter of sanctity of the martyrs' and 240 million Pakistanis' pride in their Armed Forces.

Addressing the news conference flanked by Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar, the Defence Minister termed the attacks on military installations as tantamount to country enmity.

Khawaja Asif said the Armed Forces and civil law enforcement agencies are fighting the war for the country's sur-

vival and rendering sacrifices every day during the ongoing war on terror.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) deliberately damaged the prestige of the state institution under its inimical motive, he alleged. The Defence Minister accused the PTI for making the Army Chief's appointment controversial whereas the appointment was the only prerogative of the Prime Minister.

"I have been four times part of the process as the defence minister which was never influenced by any entity as it was the then PML-N government's vision to appoint the most decorated soldier as the Army Chief," he said.



Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir during his visit to Jinnah House, Lahore Garrison.

## Resolution about dualization of Chaman-Karachi highway adopted: BA adopts condemnation against May 9 incidents; demands action against planners, facilitators

Provincial Assembly expresses complete confidence and solidarity with armed forces besides fully supporting them; demands of federal government to award exemplary punishment to those involved in May 9, 2023 incidents

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly unanimously adopted the joint condemnation resolution against the May 9, 2023 incidents demanding prompt action against the planners and facilitators involved in these incidents.

The session of assembly was held with the Speaker Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai in the chair.

The joint resolution also demanded exemplary punishment to those involved in the incidents.

Besides the provincial assembly also adopted the resolution regarding dualization of Chaman-Karachi national highway and against the killing of senior journalist of Khuzdar

Press Club, Muhammad Siddiq Mengal in its session.

The session of assembly was held with the Speaker Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai in the chair.

The condemnation resolution against the May 9 incidents was tabled by the Provincial Minister, Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani while the resolution about dualization of Chaman-Karachi highway was presented by the Opposition member of assembly, Mir Zabid Ali Reki.

Similarly, the resolution against killing of Khuzdar journalist was

Continued on page 2

## Toppling democracy, installing dictatorship, causing social unrest, among core objectives of May 9 attacks: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, calling May 9 incidents a revolt against the State and its institutions, said the real objective of the onslaught was to topple democracy, bury the Constitution, and bring dictatorship in the country besides undermining the national unity to cause social unrest.

The prime minister, chairing a special meeting of the federal cabinet at the Parliament House, said May 9 was a black day in Pakistan's history when the rioters attacked the defense institutions and the monuments of martyrs and Ghazis.

The sinister plan of May 9 was not just a con-

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti talking during Balochistan Assembly session.

## Seven labourers shot dead in Gwadar shooting

QUETTA (Online): As many as 7 labourers have been gunned in an attack by armed persons on residential quarter in Gwadar.

All the victims hailed from Punjab. According to police the armed persons attacked a residential quarter in the area of Sarband near fish harbour Jetti and gunned down 7 persons sleeping therein. One person is reported to have been injured in the attack.

All the victims and injured person are stated to be hailing from district Khanewal Punjab. They all worked in barbar shop. The incident took place at 3 p.m. overnight.

The security forces have surrounded the area and started operation to search the unknown attackers. The victims have been identified as Sajid, Asad Ansar, Shan, Makrab, Adnan and Haseeb. One

Arslan has been injured in the incident. President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif, interior ministry Mohsin Naqvi, governors, Chief minister Balochistan and leadership of other political and religious parties have condemned Gwadar incident saying killing of innocent laborers is an open terrorism. We will chase terrorists and their facilitators. State writ will be maintained at every cost.

Balochistan Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Longove on Thursday strongly condemned the killing of innocent laborers in Sarband area of Gwadar. He sought the report of the incident from the concerned authorities saying that terrorists would be dealt strictly in order to maintain durable peace in the area and killing innocent workers was a cowardly act.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Ambassador of China H.E. Jiang Zaidong.

## Writ of State to be maintained by all means: Assassination of innocent labourers in Gwadar open terrorism, asserts CM

Independent Report  
QUETTA: While strongly condemning the incident of killing of seven labourers in Gwadar district, the Chief Minister

added. Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti expressed condolence and sympathy with the bereaved families of those killed in Gwadar area on Thursday.

He said that the families of martyrs would not be left in isolation and as such every possible assistance would be offered to them.

Meanwhile, while speaking on the incident at provincial assembly, the Chief Minister said that innocent Pakistanis were brutally murdered in Gwadar. He said that the terrorists don't deserve mercy at all.

He also pledged to maintain writ of the State by all means. Besides, the revenge of

## President for broadening economic, cultural cooperation with Uzbekistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday called for further broadening bilateral cooperation with Uzbekistan in trade, economy, culture and tourism.

The president, talking to Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said that Pakistan attached utmost importance to its ties with Uzbekistan, which were centuries old and based on shared religion, culture and history.

Welcoming the foreign minister, the president said that both countries had great potential to increase bilateral trade and economic ties for the mutual benefit of the two sides. He highlighted that Pakistan was committed to regional connectivity, and the Central Asian countries needed to take advantage of its geographic location.

He also suggested barter trade and using local currency to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, besides opening banks in the two countries to facilitate and improve business and commercial relations.

He underlined the need for further promoting people-to-people and tourism linkages to bring the two countries further closer. Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov called for developing a road-map to further deepen bilateral ties and accelerate the partnership for the mutual benefit of two countries.

He also urged the need for an action plan to boost bilateral trade and economic cooperation and expressed the hope that the transport corridor between the two countries would further improve bilateral ties.

## US lauds Pakistan's counter-terrorism, peace efforts

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan and United States have reiterated the need for enhancing training interactions between CENTCOM and Pakistan Army.

The resolve was expressed during a meeting between Commander of the US CENTCOM General Michael Erik Kurilla and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi today.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), matters of shared interests, particularly cooperation in regional security matters came under discussion during the meeting.

Both sides discussed avenues of joint training. The visiting dignitary acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's successes in fight against terrorism and Pakistan's continued efforts for bringing peace and stability in the region.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Finance Mir Shoaib Noshervani talking to Members of Joint Action Committee University of Balochistan outside of Balochistan Assembly.

OIC resolutions on Kashmir collective voice of Islamic world, reinforcement of Pakistan's position: FO spox

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday said that the resolutions and pronouncements of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) were the collective voice of the Islamic world which reinforced Pakistan's call for settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

She said, "the Summit's Final Communiqué and the 'Banjul Declaration' reaffirmed unwavering support and solidarity with the Kashmiri people, called on India to revoke all unilateral and illegal actions taken since 5 August 2019 in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and respect the rights and freedoms of the people of Jammu and Kashmir."

Besides, she said the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir was the only OIC contact group that met on the sidelines of the Islamic Summit, reflecting OIC's strong solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and their right to self-determination.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a special meeting of the Federal Cabinet.



QUETTA: Activists of Peoples Party (PPP) are holding protest demonstration against May 9 riots, at Quetta press club.

Saudia Airlines unveils comprehensive Hajj plan for 1.2 million pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudia Airlines, the Saudi Arabia's national carrier, has unveiled its operational plan for the upcoming Hajj season in 1445 AH.

The plan prioritizes the smooth transportation of over 1.2 million pilgrims by air, offering them exceptional service throughout their journey.

Bilawal condemns heinous murder of seven labourers in Gwadar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has vehemently condemned the heinous murders of seven labourers in Gwadar at the hands of terrorists.

In a statement released by the Media Cell Bilawal House, he declared the merciless slaughter of innocent labourers in Gwadar as a blatant act of terrorism.

Pakistan, Qatar review ties with focus on energy, mining cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Qatar on Thursday reviewed bilateral trade and investment relations with a particular focus on cooperation in energy, mining and aviation sectors.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister admired Qatar's active role as a mediator with regard to the Palestine-Israel conflict and emphasized that peace in the region could only be ensured through the establishment of a viable, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with Al Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

SC prevents federal, provincial from making personal publicity in connection with govt projects

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has prevented federal and provincial governments from making personal publicity in connection with government projects.

All provinces are united on this matter, what work was being done in early era is being done in this era too. Why credit is taken by cutting ribbon on projects. Eventually when Pakistan will be run on right direction. The tax money which is collected from people should not be spent on personal publicity because Pakistan is a democratic country.

He remarked the cases are not being fixed since the last 20 years. When they are fixed then excuses are made. Don't use the word of strike here. No one is making pretext. We will start imposing fine so much that you will remember them.

Rana Sanaullah offers new proposal of national dialogue with PTI to end crises

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs, Rana Sanaullah Khan Thursday offered new proposal of national dialogue with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to end current crises and stressed opposition to play a responsible role for the country development.

political parties have to play their key role to end political instability so that the country can move towards economic improvement.

Rehana Dar throws debate challenge to Khawaja Asif

SIALKOT (INP): Rehana Imitiaz Dar, mother of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Usman Dar, has issued an open challenge to Federal Minister Khawaja Asif for a televised debate, aiming to reveal the alleged discrepancies in his NA-71 electoral victory.

During a press conference following her temporary detention by police, Rehana dismissed the recognition of Asif as a MNA, vowing to continue her protest against the narrative set forth on May 9, which she believes was orchestrated by the establishment.



SWITZERLAND: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari present souvenir to President International Federation of Red Crescent (IFRC) Kate Forbes during 34th International Conference on Human Rights which held in Geneva.

Toppling democracy, installing

Continued from Page 1 undermine, at that time, PDM government's efforts to stabilise the economy, impede normalisation of strained ties with friendly countries, and cover up the foreign funding, Toshakhana, and 190 million pound corruption scams, and ensure the appointments on key posts without merit.

He said even today, the anti-Pakistan propaganda was being carried out from abroad, and letters were written by some elements to destabilise the national economy.

He also affirmed the Pakistani nation's solid commitment to the total eradication of terrorism.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and others offering Fateha on the sad demise of Malyal Khan Mandokhail nephew of Balochistan Governor Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail. Speaker Balochistan Assembly Abdul Khaliq Achakzai is also present.

BA adopts condemnation resolution

Continued from Page 1 sides fully supporting them. It demanded of the federal government to award exemplary punishment to the planners and facilitators of May 9, 2023 incidents.

Speaking on the occasion resolution, Chief Minister said that the May 9 incidents were an organized conspiracy against the country.

Pakistan, China fully

Continued from back page The minister said that one of the key and future goals for us is to take Pakistan from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy as fast as possible. And in this industrialization, we want to focus on exports and how to have export-led growth in Pakistan.

So, China will also help us not only with relocation, but we are also seeking technical assistance that Chinese expertise in terms of developing its own exports and special economic zones that know how we would like to benefit from. There will be more cooperation at the level of experts to help Pakistan develop its exports and special economic zones.

business-to-business cooperation as well as more private sector enterprise level cooperation between the two countries.

As far as the key areas are concerned, he said that the quick wins are in the agriculture sector. There is great demand for Pakistani agricultural products and meat in China.

It has a great opportunity for Pakistani businesses to provide their services in China to companies because our cost is very low. Recently, Huawei has shifted its global support unit to Pakistan which employs almost 3000 Pakistani engineers.



QUETTA: WAPDA Girls school students visiting Mehrgarh Museum.

## 190 million pounds NAB reference: IHC adjourns hearing of bail plea of Imran

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has adjourned till May 13 hearing of bail plea of former Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan in 190 million pounds reference.

Justice Aamer Farooq has remarked what happened in Lahore a day before is regrettable. But we cannot endorse demonstrations as court.

He gave these remarks while presiding over 2-member bench during the hearing of the case on Thursday.

Sardar Latif Khosa counsel for Imran Khan, NAB prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz and investigation officer appeared in the court.

At the inception of hearing NAB prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz requested

the court to adjourn the hearing.

NAB prosecutor said lawyers are on strike due to sorrowful incident of Lahore. I have come from Lahore. This is high profile case. This has to run on media. This will be source of humiliation for me.

CJ IHC Aamer Farooq remarked what happened in Lahore a day before is very sorrowful. But we cannot endorse the demonstrations as court.

Later the court rejected NAB prosecutor plea for adjourning the hearing.

Amjad Pervaiz said you please fix any date as per will of counsel for PTI founder. You please hear the case on daily base. But it is my request not to hear the case today.

CJ IHC Aamer Farooq said we understand lawyers

community but work has to continue. We cannot adjourn the hearing due to strike.

Prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz argued office of East Recovery unit was made in Prime Minister (PM) Secretariat. East Recovery Unit (ERU) submitted report to PM directly. ERU wrote letter directly to National Crime Agency (NCA) regarding money laundering cases of Malik Riaz.

CJ IHC Aamer Farooq remarked the constitution of ERU has been seen in Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa case.

NAB prosecutor told Malik Riaz purchased one hyde park property from Hassan Nawaz in UK.

Sardar Latif Khosa said tell us about Hassan Nawaz he is son of whom



Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi inaugurating ICTP Margalla Patrol Unit in Islamabad

## Interior Minister inaugurates Margalla Trails Patrol Unit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday formally inaugurated the Margalla Trails Patrol Unit, a new security system started in just seven days.

Inspector General of Police (IG) Islamabad, Ali Nasir Rizvi gave a briefing about the Margalla Patrol Unit and introduced the patrolling unit to the minister.

The Minister inspected the motorcycle and cavalry unit and also met the police officers of the Margalla Trails Patrol Unit

and advised them to perform their duties diligently.

A force of 60 police officers will patrol the Margalla trails, the unit has been formed to protect people on Margalla trails, the minister was briefed.

This unit consists of foot petrol, motorcycle petrol and Horseman consists of gasoline and the purpose of setting up the Margalla Trails Unit is to provide a safe environment to the citizens visiting the trails.

The Foot Patrol consists of 10 police officers who will patrol the trails on

foot in full protective kit, the motorcycle unit consists of 06 motorcycles and 16 officers, while Horsemen will patrol the trails on eight horses.

The minister said that if a citizen loses his way or there is an emergency, these officers will reach for immediate help. He directed the officials to take immediate steps to solve the problem of mobile signal in the Margalla Trails area.

He also directed the concerned officials to review the location for the installation of the mobile towers.

## DPM Dar invites Swiss firms to invest in Pakistan's renewable energy, IT sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday, appreciating the Swiss companies doing business in Pakistan, invited more firms from the country to invest in Pakistan, particularly in the renewable energy and IT sectors.

The deputy prime minister, talking to Ambassador of Switzerland Georg Steiner, who called on him here, said that Pakistan attached high importance to its ties with Switzerland, according to a Foreign Office press release.

He said that the two sides had the potential to expand cooperation in trade and investment, climate, tourism and migration.

Referring to the Memorandum of Understanding on Disaster Man-

agement signed between the two countries last year, the deputy prime minister hoped that it would foster greater cooperation between the two sides, enabling them to utilize technology and expertise to address natural calamities in the future.

Regional dynamics and multilateral issues were also discussed in the meeting.

Ishaq Dar also appreciated Switzerland's role in the multilateral arena as well as the country's contributions to humanitarian and peace-building efforts.

Pakistan and Switzerland have close relations marked by regular interactions. The Swiss Foreign Minister visited Pakistan last July and Bilateral Political Consultations were held in January this year.



Ambassador of Switzerland, Georg Steiner called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Ministry of Foreign Affairs Islamabad

## IGP Islamabad orders officials to maintain peace in capital

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired an important meeting on public safety at Safe City Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the meeting was attended by DIG Headquarters, AIG Operations, SSP Operations, SSP Law and Order, SSP Traffic, and senior police officers.

The meeting assessed the security situation and public safety in Islamabad. Officers briefed IGP Islamabad on the security measures taken in the context of public safety.

IG Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said that, no illegal activities will be ignored, and Islamabad Police are vigilant at all times to deal with any such activities.

He further said that, all possible measures will be taken to ensure the protection of citizens' lives and property and to maintain public order. The protection of citizens' lives and property is our top priority.

Citizens are urged to cooperate with Islamabad Police and report any suspicious activities to emergency helpline Pucar-15 or through the ICT 15 app. Islamabad Police will leave no stone unturned in making the federal capital a safe place.

## FDE takes steps to reduce air pollution in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant move to promote environmental sustainability and reduce air pollution, the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), hosting the highest fleet of Transport, has issued a letter to all schools and colleges in the federal capital, directing them to ensure vehicular fitness and reduce the use of pressure horns in buses.

This initiative follows a meeting between the Director General of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Director General of the FDE, where the importance of reducing air pollution and promoting environmentally friendly practices in Islamabad was discussed.

The letter available with APP directs schools and colleges to take immediate action to ensure that all vehicles used for transportation are properly maintained and meet environmental standards. Additionally, the use of pressure horns in buses will be strictly prohibited.

This initiative aims to reduce air pollution, create a healthier environment for students, and promote sustainable practices in educational institutions.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors keenly viewing Paper Artworks - Light Sculptures 'In Praise of Shadows' works by Aline Dagleish at Khaas Art Gallery.

## CDA chairman directs timely collection of auction payments

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa Thursday issued directive to ensure that all auction payments were collected within the specified due date.

Chairman Randhawa cautioned that individuals failing to comply with these orders will face immediate cancellation of their allotments.

Under the direction of Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Chairman Randhawa presided over a pivotal meeting aimed at addressing critical operational matters.

During the meeting, Chairman CDA emphasized the timely deposit of lease extensions to maintain property leases. Non-compliance in this regard will result in the cancellation of certain leases, said a news release. The authority responsible for managing open spaces has been tasked with resolving issues with the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) and pursuing long-pending payments from them.

The Chairman acknowledged the dedication of all Board members and stressed the critical importance of their affirmative compliance.



ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Shibli Faraz in a meeting with Deputy Political Counselor of US Embassy Christopher J. Brown at Parliament House

## May 9 heart-wrenching incident, darkest day in human history: Qaiser

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh, termed the tragic incident of May 9 the darkest day in the country's history and promised that the victims of this heartbreaking incident will never be forgotten.

"The sacrifices of martyrs in this tragedy will always be remembered," he said while talking to the PTV news channel.

"The government will not rest until those responsible for the vile acts on May 9 are apprehended and brought to justice soon," he added.

"The dark days will remain an unforgettable period in our history," he said.

"Despite political differences, the integrity of the nation remains crucial, and those responsible for the May 9 disaster must be held accountable," he added.

While showing his serious concern over the current political state of affairs, he suggested a 'grand national dialogue' for all political parties to ease the situation.

He said that the violent incidents of May 9 were not only an attack on the Pakistan Army but on the entire population.

He asked the culprits involved in the incident to say sorry, adding that May 9 was an attempt to create hatred between the people and the army.

"We salute our armed forces and our martyrs for their sacrifices for the security of Pakistan," he said.

## May 9 riots a conspiracy against country: Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan and States & Frontier Regions, Engr Amir Muqam, on Thursday denounced the tragic and heart-wrenching events of May 9, terming them as a conspiracy against the country. In a statement regarding the May 9 incident, the federal minister expressed regret that miscreants attacked Jinnah House and military installations on the 9th of May, disgrac-

## MPs vowed to tackle rapid population growth for national development

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers on Thursday said curbing Pakistan's runaway



population growth rate demands a united political front. "We need to transcend political differences for greater national cause and all political parties should sign a charter of population" they said while addressing the inaugural meeting of Parliamentary Forum on Population held after General Election 2024, organized by the Population Council with the support of United Nations Population Fund. MNA Syed Naveed Qamar, Dr Farooq Sattar, Senator Sherry Rehman, former Senator, Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Dr. Zeba Sathar, country Director of the Population Council addressed the session. The speakers emphasized on increased investment and stronger legislation on fam-

## AIOU holds first session of 68th BASR meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): The first session of 68th meeting of the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR) was held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) the other day.

Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, presided over the meeting.

Directorate BASR, Prof Dr. Syed Amir Shah presented a detailed report on the implementation of the decisions made during the previous meeting and the agenda for the current session.

All four Deans, prominent scholars, subject specialists, supervisors, heads of departments attended the meeting.

The 56 PhD synopses were on the agenda but due to time constraints, agenda was split into three sessions.

## 9 May, a somber day in Pakistan's history: Irfan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui on Thursday expressed sorrow over the events of May 9, describing it as a somber day in Pakistan's history.

Talking to PTV News, he lamented over the unfortunate events of May 9 and called it a "Black Day".

He condemned attacks on sensitive installations of state, asserting that such actions undermine the sacrifices of martyrs and disregard the plight of their families. "May 9 was not a day for political maneuvers," Siddiqui emphasized, urging for the perpetrators behind the events to be held accountable.

## Five POs, TOs involved heinous and property crime held

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have arrested five absconders and target offenders involved in heinous crime and property crimes during the last 24 hour, a public relations officer said.

According to details, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the special tasks were assigned to all senior police officials to ensure the arrest of absconders and target offenders involved in heinous and property crime.

During the crackdown, the Islamabad Police teams have arrested five absconders and target offenders involved in property crimes during the last 24 hours.

DIG Operations said that the Islamabad Police is taking all possible steps to eradicate the crime from the city and those involved in property crimes and illegal activities will be dealt with iron hands.

## Law ministry to take firm action to combat smuggling

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday chaired a pivotal meeting aimed at bolstering legal reforms to combat smuggling-related offenses effectively. The meeting, attended by key figures including Attorney General of Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan and representatives from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), addressed significant delays and shortcomings within the prosecution system concerning anti-smuggling cases.

In response to the identified challenges, several proactive measures were proposed. These include amendments to the Anti-Smuggling Act, the expansion of specialized



ISLAMABAD: Bangladeshi media delegation led by Iktidar Ahmed visiting Lok Virsa.

## ICT educational institutions mark day of solidarity with armed forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the eve of May 9, educational institutions across capital city came together in a unified display of solidarity and reverence for the armed forces, commemorating the anniversary of a tumultuous day marred by violence and unrest.

Last year on the same day, the nation was rocked by violent protests and riots, particularly in the garison town, where charged mobs wrought havoc on both private and public properties, including military installations.

However, this year, the educational institutions orchestrated events and activities aimed at fostering unity and paying tribute to military martyrs under the directive of the govern-



ISLAMABAD: MNA PPP Asrab Alamgir, along with Vice President social media for Gulf and Middle East of PPP Syed Matloob Shah addressing a press conference, at NPC.

## IHC issues written decision of shifting Bushra to Adiala jail

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued written decision of shifting Bushra Bibi wife of PTI founder from Banigala sub jail to Adiala jail. Justice Hassan Aurangzeb has issued 15-page written order.

IHC has said in its written decision according to petitioner she wants to be kept in jail to avert isolation. The court's decisions are there that solitary confinement is not only punishment but it is torture.

It has been further said in written decision the imprisonment of Bushra Bibi has been made more stern by keeping her in solitary confinement. The children of Bushra Bibi cannot come and go out of home easily due to declaration of home a sub jail.

## Syrian delegation engages with NUST to boost bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): A seven-member delegation from Syria paid a visit to the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) to explore avenues of cooperation for boosting bilateral academic ties.

The delegation was headed by Dr. Rami Waheed Al-Dhulli, Deputy Minister of Education and Educational Affairs.

The Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan, Dr. Ramez Alraee also accompanied the delegation to the university.

The visit sets the stage for ushering in a new era of bilateral academic and research cooperation between both the countries.

The Syrian delegation called on Rector NUST Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari and Pro-Rector Academics, Dr Osman Hasan, and deliberated on the opportunities for academic and research collaboration between NUST and higher education institutions in Syria.

They expressed admiration for NUST's meritorious academic accomplishments and comprehensive knowledge ecosystem that cultivates innovation, empowers diverse perspectives, and drives societal progress.

Friday May 10, 2024

May 9 fallout

A year since the events of May 9, 2023, very little appears to have changed, at least from the political perspective.

In fact, there seems to be even more bad blood between the PTI and the security establishment; both sides appear unwilling to reconsider the combative stance they have taken towards each other.

In a press conference on Tuesday, the military's spokesperson made it clear there would be no moving forward without a sincere apology from the PTI and a public disavowal of "the politics of anarchy and hate". In response, the PTI denounced the statement as a "pack of lies" that was "full of contradictions".

It cannot be denied that the violence directed at military symbols and installations in several parts of the country on this day last year, was a direct consequence of the narrative built by the PTI following its ouster.

The party had spent months framing the possibility of its chief's arrest as a 'red line', all the while blaming and shaming the security establishment for its ouster from government in April 2022. This combustible mix, triggered by the controversial arrest of Imran Khan by Rangers personnel from the premises of the Islamabad High Court, exploded in the form of unprecedented, widespread violence by PTI supporters.

The PTI should acknowledge that it acted in an extremely irresponsible manner by leading its supporters towards such an unacceptable reaction. Thousands were targeted in reprisals by the state, and the events of the day accelerated the expansion of unelected forces' influence in the state's legislative and administrative apparatus.

However, the state, too, is not without blame. Rather than acting with restraint and demonstrating that it was only interested in getting justice for the wrong that it had been caused, it responded with extreme measures that seemed to have been taken from the playbooks of past dictatorships.

For example, in seeking 'justice' for PTI supporters' defacement of various installations, the homes of countless civilian suspects were raided and vandalised and their residents allegedly harassed by personnel representing the state. Even women prisoners, who otherwise enjoy special protections and concessions under Pakistan's legal system, were repeatedly denied their right to bail and kept incarcerated without trial in scores of dubious cases.

The PTI-military stand-off has been the root cause of Pakistan's political instability. Since neither side seems interested in a resolution, perhaps the government should step in. It can offer its best resources to prosecute the May 9 cases in civilian courts, thereby ensuring a transparent judicial process. Done fairly, this will prevent the two sides from engaging directly with each other, which only seems to be perpetuating the tensions between them. It is important that this chapter be closed satisfactorily so that the nation can move forward.

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

The federal government has just initiated an important but overly cautious process of streamlining its institutional landscape dealing with climate change. The primary motivation is to strengthen the ability to unlock climate finances. But would establishing the Climate Change Authority, re-constituting the Climate Change Council, or updating the Rules of Business to eliminate redundancies from the climate ministry's mandate alone help turn around the nation's climate vulnerabilities or access international finance?

It is indeed important to delineate the roles and responsibilities of multiple players and strengthen co-ordination between national and provincial stakeholders. These changes, however, need to be guided by a clear roadmap of Pakistan's climate journey. Can the process be aligned with domestic economic reforms, inclusion, and climate rights? Concurrently, can it help enhance our eligibility to avail climate finance options, which include concessional lending, trade,

and investments? How can the financial flows, even if small, be accessed and made predictable to support Pakistan's drive for resilience, rehabilitation and reconstruction after climate disasters?

Global climate initiatives announced at each Conference of the Parties, particularly since the Paris Agreement in 2015, have provided ample opportunities to interested parties to engage with the presidency of each COP to take advantage of possible opportunities. Britain, Egypt and the UAE, the presidencies of the last three COPs in Glasgow, Sharm el-Sheikh and Dubai, each announced about a dozen initiatives, inviting interested parties to join in. Several of them were backed by ambitious financial mechanisms.

These initiatives, pledges, and side deals are typically voluntary initiatives. They are not always managed or controlled by the secretariat of the climate change convention, and hence not necessarily part of the mandate of climate ministries. Probably half of these initiatives suited Pakistan's development needs in such sectors

as energy, agriculture, health, water, industrial production, urban planning, trade, and foreign direct investment. The ministries and departments mandated to deal with these issues are rarely, if at all, present at COPs or aware of the opportunities.

The climate summit in Dubai, for example, made 11 pledges backed by overall commitments amounting to \$85 billion. These included doubling finances for adaptation, tripling renewables, doubling energy efficiency, halting deforestation, announcing frameworks for global climate resilience, developing programmes for a just transition, and an agreement to operationalise the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF). Except for the last one, Pakistan did not show much appetite for any of the initiatives, even if Sultan Jabbar al-Jaber, the UAE COP chair, visited Pakistan prior to the COP to check Pakistan's pulse for various initiatives and to win support for them.

The initiatives announced in the UAE have set the menu for global climate action that will inform at least the next two climate

summits: in Baku this November, and Belém, Brazil, in December 2025. The COP in Azerbaijan will prioritise mitigation, regional peace, and water issues. The likely focus in Brazil will be social development, climate justice, and protecting forests and local communities. The agendas of the two COPs are evidently very closely aligned with Pakistan's development needs. These initiatives are typically linked with the country's economic development, structural reforms under discussion with the IMF and multilateral development banks, and the transformation needed to meet SDG targets. A roadmap adopted now can help avoid the annual pangs of guilt.

The agenda for Baku will review the implementation of COP28 targets, particularly to advance the Paris Agreement goals. It will strive to finalise the first enhanced transparency framework, establish a new collective quantified goal on finance, scale up targets for climate finance, and finalise the LDF. Baku will also host a series of high-level political convenings to assess barriers to NDC de-

velopment, regional 'green corridors' for grid-scale storage, and the role of trade in accelerating climate and sustainable development actions.

It would be unrealistic, indeed unfair, to expect the climate ministry to engage with and independently assess these processes, let alone lead the country to access finances from such initiatives. The global climate agenda clearly calls for reforms that go beyond amending the Climate Change Act of 2017 or integrating it with the Environmental Protection Act, 1997, in order to remove inconsistencies. We also need to develop institutional mechanisms and ways to link global climate negotiations with the priorities set for domestic economic development, rather than tepid responses every year. This calls for integrating climate considerations in various ministries and departments.

The foregoing can serve as the basis for a four-track climate policy.

First, Pakistan's climate policies must be guided by scientific data and scientific research. The Global Change Impact

Study Centre, Zoological Survey, and Pakistan Environment Protection Agency are housed at the climate ministry. They can be mandated to specifically develop baselines and set standards for climate emissions, biodiversity, and environment. Together with the Bureau of Statistics, they can develop Pakistan's natural resource income accounting, because the income generated from natural resources and ecosystems must be measured. We need to assess the economic value of natural resources and the impact of economic activities on the environment. Second, Pakistan's climate priorities must be co-created with the provinces. We must avoid the risk of a competitive relationship with sub-national entities. Any differences, as well as the agenda of the Climate Council, must be cleared by the Council of Common Interests. The Climate Council must be a professional organisation and should not take over the functions of the CCI. The climate ministry should build upon its rich experience of dealing with the provinces on environmental and climate issues.

Dubai, Baku and Belém

Shifting sands

Dr Khurram Abbas

There is no globally agreed definition of the term 'smaller states' in international affairs.

While it generally refers to those states that have a small geographical size and economy and relatively less population, there are some smaller states such as the UAE and Qatar with significant economic muscle, playing their active role in regional geopolitical affairs.

In South Asia, the term smaller states largely refers to Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Recent data suggests that these countries collective a nominal GDP of \$120 billion in 2020-21.

As of 2021, the total population of these four smaller South Asian countries is 53.3 million, which is equivalent to 3.8 per cent of India's total population, or less than the population of India's Madhya Pradesh. The total geographical size of Bhutan,

the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka is roughly 251,818 square kilometres, which is smaller than the Indian state of Rajasthan.

However, despite their small size and economy and an insignificant number of populations, these states are located at a significant and strategic location. Due to their proximity to India, these states play a significant role in New Delhi's strategic calculus.

While Sri Lanka and the Maldives are significant for India's maritime security, Bhutan and Nepal play the role of buffer states between China and India by providing strategic depth to India's northern states.

For decades, New Delhi considered these smaller South Asian states as its strategic backyard and consistently tried to keep these states under its influence through political, economic and military means. India's three-pronged strategy to control these states in-

clude installation and support of favourable regimes; conditional economic assistance; and use of coercive measures in case of loosening its control on these states.

There is a long history of Indian interference in these states. For instance, India militarily intervened in the Maldives in 1988 under the code name 'Operation Cactus' on the pretext of averting a coup attempt against the Maldivian government.

In 2003, it steered a counter-insurgency operation in Bhutan against the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). In Sri Lanka, on the pretext of peacekeeping and mediation, New Delhi sent troops in the 1980s and 1990s. Nepal has also been a target of Indian coercive tactics such as trade blockades, conditional aid and several other diplomatic pressures to keep Kathmandu under Indian influence.

By applying these tactics as well as due to its size, population and

economy, India remained a dominant actor for smaller South Asian states for decades.

However, China has now emerged as one of the significant players to challenge Indian influence in South Asian geopolitics. Beijing's rise as a global economic power and its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has provided a rare opportunity to smaller South Asian states to restore their sovereignty that has been persistently challenged by New Delhi.

Unlike New Delhi, Beijing has adopted an entirely different approach towards smaller South Asian states. China does not interfere in the domestic political affairs of these countries. Instead, it supports them with unconditional economic assistance and infrastructure development projects. With this positive approach, Beijing has cultivated significant goodwill in these states.

This additional

choice in the form of China has emboldened these states. Recent trends demonstrate that these smaller South Asian states are now defiant against India's assertive approach and rejecting its dominance and interference in their domestic affairs. The Maldives government has expelled Indian military officials and also called India a 'bully'. The Maldives has also signed important defence pacts with China to further distance itself from the Indian security umbrella.

Bhutan is also opening up with China. For past several decades, it refrained from entering into any formal diplomatic relationship with China due to Indian influence. However, recently Bhutan's Foreign Minister Tandi Dorji visited China and held boundary talks which have marked a significant shift in Bhutan's foreign policy.

Nepal is also signalling a more balanced foreign policy ap-

proach by increasing its frequency of high-profile visits to China. There are also reports that Nepal might sign the BRI to further attract Chinese investment in the country.

These developments have been agitating New Delhi. This is why, in its supplementary budget of 2023-24, India has increased economic assistance to 'defiant' smaller states in order to persuade them in India's favour. New Delhi has started unprecedented media and diplomatic campaigns against China's BRI dubbing it as a 'debt trap' for smaller South Asian countries.

However, it seems that Beijing's goodwill, stronger financial stature, principle of non-interference in domestic affairs and lack of coercive measures are more attractive for smaller South Asian states than New Delhi's conditional economic assistance, bullying nature, use of coercive measures to influence policies and persistent interference in domestic affairs.

Unwelcome returns

F.S. Aijazuddin

With the prescience that philosophers share with out-of-office politicians, a hundred years ago, a leading Indian scholar analysed the combustible demography of India. In 1923, Dr Radhakrishnan wrote in his two-volume survey of Indian Philosophy: "India even today is mainly Hindu." Describing the Epic Period, which spanned roughly 600 BC to 200 AD, he wrote: "The fortunes of the Hindus [however] became more and more linked with those of the non-Hindus." Amongst these, he included Buddhists, Jains, Saivites and Vaishnavites — the sons of India's soil. Muslims, of course, had yet to come.

It is a lengthy tome to read, and even more difficult to digest. I chewed on it as a student in the 1960s, but gave up before reaching the end of the second volume. I returned to it recently to seek answers to the Hindu-Muslim experiments at religious coexistence since the arrival of Muslims in the subcontinent, and especially since PM Narendra Modi's determination to expel them.

India's traditional hospitality is proverbial, but it does not extend to religious strangers. Over the centuries, Buddhists have quit India for gentler climes. Today, Budd-h-ism has over 520 million followers, of whom only 8m are left in India (Lord Buddha's birthplace) to follow in his footsteps.

Almost contemporary to Buddhism is Jainism, also founded in India and perfected by the 24th tirthankara, Lord Mahavira (circa 600 BC). Equally pacifist and non-confrontational, unlike Buddhism, Jainism has survived in India. There are between 4m to 5m still living there. A growing number are to be found today in Canada, Europe, and the US, where

the practice of pious self-abnegation would appear to be at odds with crass materialism.

In PM Modi's eyes, the problem in India is not a majority of Hindus, but a fertile surfeit of 200m Muslims (now 15 per cent of its population). Modi's predicament is not a question of putting a genie back into the bottle. His conundrum is how to remove the green genie from the saffron bottle.

Under PM Nehru, Muslims in India rarely felt that they had to choose between their country and their religion. Under his daughter, PM Indira Gandhi, a test of sorts for Indian Muslims came in 1971, when, after her victory in East Pakistan, she is said to have commented: "A thousand years of subjugation have been avenged."

Incidentally, all of the rulers of the Mug-hal dynasty (whom PM Modi regards with anathema) — except for its founder Babar and his son Humayun — from Akbar to Bahadur Shah Zafar, were born in India. They saw themselves as Indians by birth. Today, they are tarnished as Muslim foreigners.

During the recent elections in Bangladesh, which brought Sheikh Hasina Wajed back to power, India did not figure as a material issue. Neither in Pakistan, where Nawaz Sharif's earlier bonhomie with PM Modi did not affect the return of his PML-N to power.

In India, though, PM Modi's recent speeches during his election campaign could have been dismissed as hustings hype, were it not for their implications for Muslims within India, and for Pakistan and, by extension, other neighbouring countries.

On home ground in Gujarat, Mr Modi addressed four different rallies where he accused the Congress party as

harbouring a "dangerous mentality", its manifesto being in the "language of the Muslim League". In 2017, he had accused former-PM Manmohan Singh of "holding a secret meeting with Pak-istani diplomats to conspire against him".

Now his theme is that Pakistan's political leaders "are praying for a Congress victory. Pakistan is now eager to make the prince of the Congress the prime minister of India". To an audience in Junagadh, he added: "If Sar-d-ar Patel was not pre-sent [in 1948], Junagadh would have gone to Pak-istan. The Cong-ress will create a dangerous situation for the country if it comes to power. They may give away the Kutch desert claiming no one lives there."

On June 4, everyone in the subcontinent will know who will rule India for the next five years. Mr Modi knows it will be him. The Sharifs in Pakistan hope so too. They should anticipate, however, that Mr Modi as an emboldened three-time prime minister may taunt Pakistan by testing the fragile frontier between occupied Kashmir (India's new 'union state') and Pakistan's founding counterpart Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

He may also decide to withdraw from the Indus Waters Treaty, which covers the rivers flowing from the upper riparian, to leave Pakistan frothing at the mouth, knowing that an enfeebled World Bank would prefer not to arbitrate.

Over the next five years, PM Modi could pressurise Indian Muslims to crowd Pakistan's eastern borders in Punjab and Sindh as refugees. It happened in 1971, when up to 10m refugees from East Pakistan crossed into India. PM Modi may be tempted to return the compliment.

Grapes of wrath

Rashid Amjad

How I would like to live in the dream world of the neoliberal economist, in which markets are left to determine the exchange rate, where prices of wheat are left to market forces, where consumers are indifferent to eating imported or domestically produced wheat, and inputs like fertilisers are freely available at market prices, free of the monopolies and hoarding that artificially raise prices.

The thoughts of a small farmer? But the harsh world that confronts us in the Punjab countryside today is very different. For the poor small farmers, who form the vast majority of the province's nearly 5.5 million rural households with holdings of 12 acres or less, or for small tenant farmers, it is becoming clearer by the day that the government has no intention of purchasing wheat at the announced support price of Rs3,900 per 40 kilograms.

For the poor farmer, hope is all but lost as inclement weather brings rain and thunderstorms, and his wife curses him for not having sold his harvest (which now lies in the open) at Rs2,700 — the going market price, which is even less than the current world price. But at this rate, he would make a big loss, he pleads. Yet no one is there to listen.

Unbeknownst to the farmer, who was basking in the hope that his bumper crop would finally yield good returns and a livable income, plans were afoot to undercut the price announced by the government before the harvest. Knowing full well that a bumper crop was expected, the interim government still allowed the

import of nearly 3m tonnes of wheat, costing the country over a billion dollars in precious foreign exchange at world prices that were one-third lower than the announced price. Rather than face the problem, the new government that took office in late February decided to ignore it. The ECC produced a half-baked plan in which the Punjab government deliberately played no part.

In contrast to the simple, idealistic world of the neoliberal, there is a large body of literature tracing the history of how wheat prices should be determined by the government. The resulting system had serious mismanagement and corruption flaws as well as an unaffordable government subsidy. But on one point it was very clear: the farmer cannot be left to the mercy of the market and middlemen, who will fleece him in the process. If we let wheat prices be dictated by global market prices, as postulated by neoliberals, such a policy would need to be carefully thought through, especially keeping in mind the wide price fluctuations, in the context of both food security and protecting small farmers from steep price declines.

This is the crux of the matter. Last year, the world price of wheat, given the market-determined exchange rate, was higher than that announced by the government. In the Ishaq Dar years, at a highly overvalued exchange rate, the world wheat price was lower. So, before we postulate that domestic wheat prices should follow world prices, we must establish if the exchange rate at which this is determined reflects its real price.

Indeed, ever since the 1950s, the Pakistani farmer has paid a huge

tribute to finance growth of the economy, especially industry, because agricultural prices have been kept low through overvalued exchange rates and high protection to industry to foster its growth, which changed the terms of trade against agriculture and in favour of an inefficient, uncompetitive industrial sector. And we want to continue this practice?

Now, having acted thoughtlessly to allow prices to be determined by market forces and allowing large imports at world prices, what options does the government have to overcome the current wheat crisis?

First and foremost, to provide some relief to far-mer-s who are still holding on to their harvested wheat, the government should start procuring, on a war footing, at least 3.5m tonnes of wheat at Rs3,900 — the price to which it has committed — and quickly rent space to store the crop. Second, the State Bank must urgently come up with a plan for financial support from commercial banks to advance loans to small farmers at lower-than-market interest rates, so that they can purchase the necessary inputs to prepare and plant their next crop. Third and most importantly, the government must set in motion a well-thought-out plan for ensuring a better and more efficient system of wheat procurement. Such a plan should ensure food security and a fair return to farmers, while gradually reducing the role of and cost to the government in fixing minimum support prices, replacing this with a role it can afford to maintain. For now, let the government make amends for its procrastination and bring some relief to anxious farmers.

## Maryam denies negotiations with May 9 miscreants

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said miscreants turned Jinnah House into ashes on May 9, 2023.

CM Maryam participated in the ceremony in honour of the families of the martyrs held at Jinnah House. She also presented them bouquets.

The CM said that the state was attacked on May 9 which was the darkest day in the history of the country.

Also read: Arif Alvi calls for transparent inquiry into May 9 events

She denied negotiations with those who attacked the memorial of martyrs. They rather deserved severe punishment, she held.

Maryam Nawaz said that everyone saw the arsonists. She said that these people were trained

by terrorists for this attack. She said that she met the families of the martyrs. She said that tears came to her eyes after meeting the heirs of the martyrs.

The chief minister further said that she wanted to ask the judiciary why people who committed treason are not getting punishment. Why are such people getting bails?

“The nation will neither forget nor forgive May 9,” said Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif in her message on the day.

She added, “May 09 is a dark chapter of our national history. The authoritarians, in their lust for power, did what even the enemy could not do.”

She highlighted, “It is very crucial to bring the anti-Pakistan plotters to justice, because their power lust has crossed the red line of

honor and dignity of the nation.”

She said, “The conspiracy and the perpetrators who weakened the national institution have been exposed.” She added, “Those who violate dignity of the country and the nation for the sake of politics cannot be forgiven. All characters burning in the fire of hatred are about to meet their end.”

She said, “Pakistan is everything for us. The nation has come to know every character behind May 9, and has fully recognised their hideous faces.”

She added, “Those who desecrate martyrs do not even know about their exalted status.”

She vowed to never let May 9 happen again. The perpetrators of May 09 will be seen in the dustbin of history.”



LAHORE: A delegation of European Union led by its Ambassador Dr Riina Kionka meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Senator Perviz Rasheed and Senior Provincial Minister Maryam Aurangzaib are also present.

## New era of development to begin in Mansehra in next 5 years: Advisor

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism and Culture, Zahir Chanzeb, met with KP CM’s Adviser Finance Muzmil Aslam at his office here on Thursday and discussed with him matters relating to the implementation of ongoing and new development projects in his constituency, Mansehra PK-38.

In order to reflect some essential projects in the annual development program (ADP) of Mansehra, certain recommendations and suggestions were also put forth for inclusion in various sectors including education, health, education and tourism as well as to ensure its timely completion.

Zahir Chanzeb on

this occasion said that despite being an excellent tourist and serene area, Mansehra remained backward, while it has been intentionally and continuously kept neglected in the past regimes.

Both the ministers agreed that the financial challenges facing the province would be tackled soon while a new era of development would usher in Mansehra at par with the other neglected areas of the province in the next five years.

Zahid Chanzeb clarified that by developing the tourism industry in a vast tourist region like Mansehra, the economic conditions of the people here will improve considerably besides the income of the province enhance tremendously.

## May-9 culprits deserve severe punishment: Hamza

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Vice President Hamza Shehbaz has said those involved in May-9 incidents deserve exemplary punishment.

In his message issued here on Thursday, he said last year on May 9, a futile attempt was made to destabilise the country by creating hatred among the state institutions and people. He said that it was

extremely distressing that memorials of martyrs were desecrated while public and private properties were damaged. Hamza Shehbaz said the elements, which wanted to pollute country’s politics with lies, propaganda and hatred, would never succeed in their nefarious designs. He said that May 9 would be remembered as a black day in the country’s history.



LAHORE: Lawyers protesting in favour of their demands at Lahore High Court.

## IG Punjab provides house to family of another martyr

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has provided a house of their choice to the family of another martyred officer family. As per details, the family members of martyred sub-inspector Ziaullah Khan of Narowal had been given a house in Lahore as per their choice. The family of the martyr had requested to provide a flat in a private society (Askri 11) in Lahore equipped with all

the facilities. DPO Narowal sent the request of the said flat to the Central Police Office on behalf of the family of the martyr. The committee under the chairmanship of Additional IG Welfare Riaz Nazir Gara approved the provision of houses on the request, upon which IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar issued orders for the implementation. Sub-Inspector Ziaullah Khan Shaheed’s family includes his wife and daughter.

## Fire at Lahore airport disrupts flight operations

LAHORE (APP): A fire erupted at the immigration counters of the Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore on Thursday, completely destroying the equipment and systems, and disrupting the flight operations.

According to official sources here on Thursday 1,160 flour mills across the province have been checked as per the direction of the Punjab Food Minister.

The fire was later brought under control, while airport officials said it would take some time for the smoke to clear. Passengers were not allowed to enter until the premises were clear. Due to the fire, there was a huge rush of people in the parking area.

According to the preliminary investigation, the fire was caused by short-circuiting and it spread rapidly to a large portion of the airport. It caused a stampede at a small level, while the entire airport was evacuated, the authorities said. The incident occurred at approximately 5:45am, disrupting flight operations and causing a sudden rush of passengers.

The Airport Security Force (ASF) personnel were the first to respond to the incident, endeavouring to contain the flames, while firefighters from the Civil Aviation Authority also raced to the scene. Despite their efforts, the blaze destroyed the immigration system, forcing suspension of flight operations.

## 10 dead, 1,362 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 10 people were killed and 1,362 others injured in 1,322 road accidents across Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 566 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 796 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed that 783 drivers, 54 underage drivers, 151 pedestrians, and 438 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. The statistics showed that 283 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 286 people, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Faisalabad with 93 accidents and 94 victims, and at third Gujranwala with 85 accidents and 82 victims.

According to the data, 1,200 motorbikes, 75 auto-rickshaws, 135 motorcars, 20 vans, seven passenger buses, 35 truck and 102 other types of vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in the road accidents.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah addressing the Peace Conference organized by Information Department Sindh.

## Using politics as cover to harm national institutions not acceptable: GB CM

GILGIT (APP): Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan on Wednesday said that using politics as a cover to harm national institutions, spread chaos, and promote hatred in the country was not acceptable. The GB chief minister, in a statement in connection with the 9th May 2023 tragic incidents, said, “A year has passed since the darkest day when some miscreants, under the guise of politics, spread hate and

violence, attacking national institutions, defence installations, and memorials.

He said every person had the right to do politics and to vote, but using politics as a cover to harm national institutions, spread chaos, and promote hatred was never acceptable. Strongly condemning the tragic incidents of May 9, he called for strict action against the miscreants.

On that day, he said,

an attempt was made to create a rift between the army and the people and politics was used as a cover for violence.

“I hope that our nation and young generation will reject this hybrid warfare and have faith in their national institutions, moving forward with positive thinking, while avoiding hate, discrimination, and violence in the name of politics,” the GB CM concluded.

## Bilal Yasin says; Food dept making efforts to ensure availability of inexpensive, quality flour

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin has said that the department is making all out efforts to ensure availability of inexpensive and quality flour across the province.

According to official sources here on Thursday 1,160 flour mills across the province have been checked as per the direction of the Punjab Food Minister.

On presence of substandard wheat, heavy fine was imposed on 20 flour mills, show cause notices have been issued to 20 flour mills besides

suspending licenses of 2 flour mills.

Bilal Yasin said that flour mills should quit corrupt practices otherwise cases would be registered against the owners of those mills which would prepare substandard flour.

He directed the Food department staff to stay fully mobilized and keep an eye on quality of flour prepared in flour mills.

Price of 20 Kg flour has reduced upto Rs 1000 to Rs 1200 during one month which Bilal Yasin termed as a big relief for a common man.

## Man killed in gun attack outside JC

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A man was shot dead over alleged rivalry outside the Judicial Complex, Dera Ismail Khan on Thursday.

According to the police, the incident took place within the limits of the Cantt police station and it seemed to be the result of a personal enmity.

The victim named Shaukat, a resident of Korai area who came for a court hearing, was attacked by Muhammad Yaqub son of Ibrahim, resident of the same area.

The police arrested the attacker and recovered the gun used in the attack from him.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi talking to media persons during his visit to burnt Radio Pakistan Peshawar building.

## Elements involved in May-9 events be punished: Ashrafi

LAHORE (APP): Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi has said that the elements involved in the events of May 9 should be punished.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore Cantt area on Thursday, he said politics could be sacrificed for the state. He said political stability was necessary for foreign investment in Pakistan.

Ashrafi said the Pakistan Ulama Council would continue its efforts to establish tolerance and peace in the country, the solution to all problems of Pakistan was possible through reconciliation. “The enemy wants to create a gap between the army and people, but it will never succeed,” he said and added that no citizen

of Pakistan could support the incident that happened on May 9 a year ago.

The PUC chairman said if someone attacked the country’s defence facilities for the love of a leader, the state was more important than politics. He said that there should also be an investigation as to who is spreading unrest in the country. It is a fact that the attacks on May 9 were pre-planned including those on the GHQ, Jinnah House Lahore, Mianwali and Peshawar. Who planned it, should be investigated. Tahir Ashrafi said that all political and religious leadership should move forward to maintain law and order situation in Pakistan. While the leadership of Tehreek-e-Insaf should shun the politics.

## DG Rangers commends martyrs for sustaining peace

KARACHI (APP): Director General of Pakistan Rangers Sindh Major General Azhar Waqas emphasized the enduring peace in Sindh, especially in Karachi, attributing it to the unwavering sacrifices made by the martyrs of Pakistan Rangers Sindh.

He conveyed this sentiment during a meeting with the families of the fallen Rangers officials and personnel in Karachi, according to a news release on Thursday. In a solemn tribute, the DG Rangers Sindh honored the profound sacrifices made by the martyrs and extended solidarity to their bereaved families. The meeting provided an opportunity for the DG Rangers Sindh.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan presiding over meeting regarding the constriction of Daral Tangeer Express Way at CM Secretariat.

## HEC chairman identifies AJK’s economic potential

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Chairman of Higher Education Commission (HEC), Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Thursday underscored the critical importance of collaborative endeavors to unleash the untapped potential of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), steering it towards a trajectory of prosperity and progress.

He was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of a groundbreaking conference on the economy of the state, hosted by the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UJK) in collaboration with the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE).

The two-day conference at the scenic King Abdullah Campus of UJK aims to chart a course towards sustainable economic growth and social development in the region.

In his address as chief guest, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed lauded UJK and PIDE’s initiative in organizing the conference and underscored the pivotal role of education institutions in driving economic progress.

He highlighted the region’s abundant natural and human resources, stressing the imperative of harnessing these assets for the benefit of the local populace.

Addressing the gathering of academicians, researchers, scholars, and students, Prof. Dr. Ahmed urged a reflection on historical lessons and emphasized the need for a collective endeavor to steer the region towards a brighter future.

Drawing parallels with the economic trajectory of nations like Iran, he underscored the imperative of perseverance and unity in the pursuit of national development.



KARACHI: Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Southern Command Air Vice Marshal Khalid Mehmoode paid a farewell call on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori.

## KP govt to give relief to masses in budget: Minister

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Minister for Public Health Engineering Malik Pakhtun Yar Khan said on Thursday that the provincial government would give considerable relief to the masses in the upcoming budget.

Speaking to the media here after inaugurating a filtration plant in a new fruit and vegetable market, he said that several important announcements would be made in the provincial assembly session related to economic relief for the people.

He said that their protest against the decision of the Election Commission on reserved seats would continue until justice was served, adding that a new constitutional

crisis was looming over the country and taking it to a more serious situation.

Earlier, the Provincial Minister inaugurated a filtration plant installed at a cost of Rs 05 million.

Malik Iqbal Jadoon Khan, Haji Malik Muhammadullah Wazir, Additional Deputy Commissioner Hamid Iqbal, IM Yousaf Khan, and Fruit Vegetable Market President Mian Rehman Shah were also present on this occasion.

The provincial minister expressed anger over blocked drain lines in the market, poor sanitation and sewerage systems, and other issues.

He directed the relevant officials to resolve all the problems until May 20.

## PML-N Ulema wing stresses punishment to May-9 culprits

FAISALABAD (APP): PML-N Ulema-Mashaikh Wing Punjab General Secretary Sahibzada Hafiz Muhammad Amjad has said that those responsible for the May-9 tragedy must be punished.

Addressing a press conference, along with Coordinator Muhammad Amir Makki, Sahibzada Umar Farooq and others here on Thursday, he said the nation was always standing with armed forces as well as security institutions.

He said that the Ulema-Mashaikh Wing condemned the May 9 tragedy and expressed complete solidarity with the armed forces. He said that Pakistan had been targeted by the anti-state elements for the last many years and they always failed in their nefarious designs. The ulema said the defence of the country was in strong hands and no one could cast an evil eye on it. “We pay salute to the sacrifices of the Pakistan Army,” he said.



LAHORE: Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman.

## Comprehensive strategy evolved to provide speedy service: DG NADRA

FAISALABAD (APP): National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) has evolved a comprehensive strategy to provide speedy service to its clients in addition to redressing their issues on top priority basis.

This was stated by Director General (DG) NADRA Sargodha Region Zulfiqar Ahmad while talking to APP at a ‘khuli kutchery’ [open court] at NADRA Office Batala Colony, here on Thursday.

He said that Chairman NADRA had directed for

resolving public issues, including those of the transgender community and minority people, in obtaining Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) and other documents from NADRA offices.

He said that on special direction of Chairman NADRA the open courts were started in every region so that NADRA officers could listen to public problems directly and issue on-spot directions for redress of the same.

# Britain reiterates support to Pak socio-economic development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Britain has reiterated the commitment to support Pakistan in its socio-economic development endeavors.

This was expressed by British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriot during a meeting with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in Islamabad today. Chief Economist and Director for Economics and Evaluation Directorate in the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Professor Adnan Qadir Khan accompanied by also accompanying the High Commissioner.

The Finance Minister extended a warm welcome to both guests. The Minister highlighted the government's efforts to stabilize the economy, including achievements such as increased forex reserves, stable currency, decreasing inflation, and a flourishing stock market.

Additionally, he outlined key reforms, including privatization, SOE restructuring, FBR digitization, export-driven growth initiatives, and energy sector reforms. Acknowledging the support extended by the UK government, he emphasized that KPI based project would lead to effective implementation, with a view to making support more impactful.



BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiative Prof. Ahsan Iqbal in a group photograph after meeting with representatives of China Development Bank (CDB).

Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb was called on by FCDO Chief Economist Prof. Adnan Qadir Khan & British High Commissioner Ms. Jane Marriot.

## Joint efforts imperative to address agriculture sector issues: Minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Agriculture Minister Syed Muhammad Ashiq Hussain Shah said on Thursday that academia, industry, and research institutes should make joint efforts to address the agricultural issues and ensure food security for an ever-increasing population.

He was chairing a meeting regarding agricultural challenges at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) while Secretary Agriculture Punjab Iftikhar Ali Sahoo, UAF Vice Chancellor UAF Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan, DG Agriculture (Research) Punjab Dr. Sajid-ur-Rehman, Director General Agriculture (Extension) Punjab Chaudhery Abdul Hameed, former DG Extension Dr. Anjum Ali, Director Agricultural Information Naveed Asmat Kahloon, Pro-Vice Chancellor UAF Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan, Deans Dr. Qamar Bilal, Dr. Anjum Munir, Dr. Babar Shahbaz, Dr. Muhammad Shahid Mehmood,

Principal Officer Public Relations and Publications Dr. Muhammad Jalal Arif, Director CAB Dr. Bushra Sadia, Director Planning and Development Irfan Abbas, Director ORIC Dr. Jafar Jaskani, Director Graduate Studies Dr. Khalid Bashir, Principal Community College Dr. Anjum Zia, Dean Confucius Institute Dr. Zaheer Ahmad Zaheer, Dr. Muhammad Zaheer, Dr. Naveed, Dr. Muhammad Tayyib and others were also present on the occasion.

## Well Togh-2 in Kohat OGDCL announces commencement of oil, gas production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), the operator of the Togh and Togh Bala Development and Production Lease (D&PL), on Thursday announced the commencement of production from the Togh-02 well from Lumshwal-I Formation. The well is situated in the Kohat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a news release. The Togh-02 well is currently contributing 70 barrels of condensate and

8.0 Million Standard Cubic Feet per day (MMSCFD) gas, into SNGPL's network. The OGDCL remains steadfast on its core objective of adding to shareholder value through growth oriented business strategy. Production from the well is projected to provide crucial annual foreign exchange savings in excess of \$38 million per annum, reinforcing import substitution and strengthening Pakistan's economy.

## Rupee sheds 10 paise against US dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday shed 10 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.20 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.10. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, stood at Rs 277.00 and Rs 279.80 respectively. The price of the Euro remained constant at Rs 298.62, according to latest economic data of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen shed 1 paise and was traded at Rs 1.78 against Rs 1.79.

## SBP injects Rs 393.75b into market

KARACHI (APP): State Bank of Pakistan, Thursday, injected Rs 393.75 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase Open Market Operation (OMO). According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on May 9, 2024 for a tenor of one day. The central bank received 6 quotes amounting to Rs 410.25 billion offered at the rate of return ranging between 22.12 - 22.06%. Off them 4 quotes, amounting to Rs 393.750 billion at the return rate of 22.07% p.a., were accepted.

## NEPRA concludes hearing into KE petition for fuel cost variation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Thursday concluded a public hearing into K-Electric petition for fuel cost variation for the period July 2023 to January 2024. In the petition, the KE has sought Rs 18.86 per unit interim increase in the tariff. The KE sought the interim increase due to the absence of a multi-tariff. Member NEPRA Rafique Ahmad Sheikh observed that there were some changes in the regime of the Central Power

Purchasing Agency (CPA). The Authority sought a written reply from KE into an interim increase in tariff. During the hearing, the consumer told the authority that the matrix examination was being conducted in Karachi and in next few days intermediate examination would be started. The KE was carrying out power load-shedding during the exam despite their request, he said. CEO K-Electric Monis Alvi told that the Sindh government had provided a list of examination centres.



QUETTA: Chairman Pakistan Flour Mills Association Sayed Nasir Agha addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club.

## Technological advancements essential for driving country's development: Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Thursday said that the promotion of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is the top priority of the government.

The Ministry of IT and Telecom is focusing on the provision of better connectivity services across the country, Shaza Fatima said this while talking to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Zong Mr. Huo Junli who called on

the minister at her office. Matters regarding digitalisation, connectivity, spectrum auction and 5G rollout were discussed in the meeting. She said that issues relating to Telecommunication will be resolved on an urgent basis. Quality digital services can be provided by using the latest technology, adding that the better use of technology is pivotal for the uplift of the country. She noted that a strong digital ecosystem is the base of digitalisation.



ISLAMABAD: Farmers busy in threshing wheat crop in their field at Gorla.

## LESCO detects 78,238 power pilferers in 230 days

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 78,238 connections from where consumers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts: Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara in 230 days of grand anti-power theft campaign.

A LESCO spokesman told the media here Thursday that the company also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 73,094 cases were registered in respective police stations, while 30,513 accused have been arrested. The LESCO has so far charged a total of 92,865,446 detection units worth Rs 3,432,416,363 to all the power pilferers. Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations. The LESCO chief vowed that the

operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice. The spokesman added, the LESCO found 399 customers stealing electricity through various means and 155 cases have been registered against the accused, while 23 accused were arrested during the last 24 hours.

## CDNS accomplish Rs 1400 billion targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 1400 billion in fresh bonds and achieved 82 percent of the annual target in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to May 5<sup>th</sup>. The National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1742 billion for the year 2023-24, in which it is encouraging that 82 percent of the target has been achieved, and it is hoped that National Savings will surpass its annual target this FY 2023-24, the senior official of CDNS told APP on Thursday. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22.

The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said. Given the current market trend in the country the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. The official added that the directorate had set a target of Rs 75 billion for the new financial year 2023-24 for Islamic finance bonds. Replying to a question, he said the CDNS aimed to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector.

## Minister chairs meeting with EDCF, Country Programme mission

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Ahad Khan Cheema, chaired the kickoff meeting of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) Country Programme Mission, led by Bonhyun Koo, Director of Asia Team, from the Export-Import Bank of Korea (EXIM Bank), said a press release issued here Thursday.

The meeting included members of the EDCF Project Management Consultant (PMC), Secretary EAD and senior officials from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and other key stakeholders. The federal minister warmly welcomed the delegation and expressed gratitude for the continued

support provided by the EXIM Bank and the Government of the Republic of Korea. He noted that seven ongoing projects, totaling US\$ 522 million, were currently being implemented across key sectors, including road infrastructure, information technology and health. He also commended the EXIM Bank for signing the Framework Arrangement (2022-26) and expressed the hope for full utilization of the US\$ 1,000 million committed under this agreement. Furthermore, it was noted that 10 pipeline projects have already been shared with the EDCF, and their prompt implementation is anticipated.

The minister further apprised the mission that as part of planning for Mid-term Pipeline Projects, the Ministry has identified new projects in priority sectors such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT), climate change, construction, and transport. In his concluding remarks, Ahad Khan Cheema reiterated the Government of Pakistan's commitment to strengthening cooperation with the EDCF and expressed confidence that with improved efficiency in project preparation and implementation, both countries can maximize their collaborative potential.

## PSX gains 56 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) Thursday gained 56.24 points, a slight positive change of 0.08 percent, closing at 72,658.05 points against 72,601.82 points the previous trading day.

## Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves surge to \$14.5 bn

KARACHI (INP): In a significant boost to Pakistan's financial stability, the nation's foreign exchange reserves soared to \$14.5 billion after receiving a substantial tranche from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

According to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on May 3, the domestic foreign exchange reserves witnessed a substantial rise, standing at \$14.45 billion. Notably, the reserves of the SBP experienced a commendable surge, jumping by \$1.1 billion to reach \$9.12 billion. Similarly, the foreign exchange reserves held by commercial banks also saw a significant upswing, recording an increase of \$2.86 billion to reach \$5.33 billion.

A total of 674,981,699 shares valuing Rs 24.053 billion were traded during the day as compared to 970,325,029 shares valuing Rs 23.514 billion the last day. Some 376 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 218 of them recorded gains and 126 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 32 remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 175,149,131 shares at Rs 1.51 per share, Pak Electron with 40,246,675 shares at Rs 27.55 per share and K-Electric Limited with 31,255,935 shares at Rs 4.69 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed an increase of Rs 194.80 per share price closing at Rs 19,189.98, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Industries Limited.

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standby arrangement, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) confirmed. The SBP said it received Special Drawing Rights (SDR) 828 million — equivalent to \$1.1 billion in value — "following the successful completion of the second review by the Executive Board of IMF under Stand-By Arrangement (SBA)". The central bank said that the disbursement will be reflected in SBP reserves for the week ending on May 3, 2024. A day earlier, IMF's Executive Board completed the second review under the Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) for Pakistan, allowing for bringing total disbursements under the arrangement to about \$3 billion. "The completion of the second and final review reflects the authorities' strong policy efforts under the SBA, which have supported the stabilization of the economy and the return of modest growth."



The delegation from M/s Fruit Juice Council called on the Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain at Islamabad.

## KP on way to open gateway for carbon credit trade as technical feasibility of stock near completion

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is heading towards opening gateway for national and international investors to channel finance towards carbon credit trade as the technical feasibility of carbon stocks in the province is near completion. The Forest Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in cooperation of Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED Pakistan) are working over preparation of a baseline survey of carbon stock of KP to attract carbon offset buyers and to create a gateway for national and

international investors," informed Mazhar Iqbal, Focal Person Reducing Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) plus Initiative. After completion of the baseline survey and other formalities, the province will be able to present its carbon stock to international carbon crediting programmes including Gold Standard and VERRA's Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) programme, Mazhar Iqbal told APP. Mazhar informed that 45 percent of country's forest cover is in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, containing 51 percent of carbon

stocks. Avoiding one hectre deforestation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa means emission reduction of 367 tonnes of carbon dioxide, he added. Through natural forests and recent plantation on 2,048-hectare area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa made under Billion Tree Tsunami Project, a potential of annual carbon Sequestration i.e 11.20 million tonnes is added in 194.31 million tonnes, which includes 67.60 million tonnes in Hazara division, 73.25 million tonnes in Malakand Division, 3.87 million.

# Putin warns of global clash as Russia marks victory in World War Two

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin accused the West on Thursday of risking a global conflict and said no one would be allowed to threaten the world's biggest nuclear power as Russia marked the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. As Russian troops advance against Ukraine's Western-backed forces, Putin accused "arrogant" Western elites of forgetting the decisive role played by the Soviet Union in defeating Nazi Germany, and of stoking conflicts across the world.

"We know what the exorbitance of such ambitions leads to. Russia will do everything to prevent a global clash," Putin said on Red Square after Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu reviewed troops lined up in a rare May blizzard.

"But at the same time, we will not allow anyone to threaten us. Our strategic forces are always in a state of combat readiness."

Putin, who sent his army into Ukraine in 2022, casts the war as part of a struggle with the West, which he says humiliated Russia after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 by encroaching on what he considers Moscow's sphere of influence.

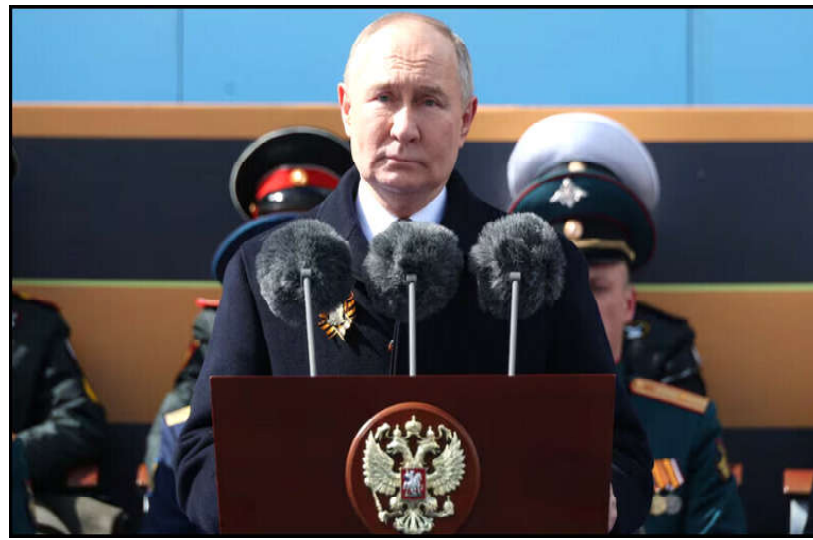
Ukraine and the West say Putin is engaged in an imperial-style land grab.

They have vowed to defeat Russia, which currently controls about 18 percent of Ukraine, including Crimea, and parts of four regions in eastern Ukraine.

Russia says the lands, once part of the Russian empire, are now again part of Russia.

The Soviet Union lost 27 million people in World War II, including many millions in Ukraine, but eventually pushed Nazi forces back to Berlin, where Hitler committed suicide and the red Soviet Victory Banner was raised over the Reichstag in 1945.

"In the West, they would like to forget the lessons of the second World War," Putin said, adding that Russia honoured all the allies involved in the defeat of Nazi Germany. He mentioned the Chinese people's fight against Japanese militarism. "But we remember that the fate of mankind was decided in the grand battles near Moscow and Leningrad, Rzhev, Stalingrad, Kursk and Kharkiv, near Minsk, Smolensk and Kyiv, in heavy, bloody battles from Murmansk to the Caucasus and Crimea."



Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers a speech during a military parade on Victory Day, which marks the 79th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two, in Red Square in Moscow, Russia.

## Biden says US won't supply weapons for Israel to attack Rafah, in warning to ally

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden said that he would not supply offensive weapons that Israel could use to launch an all-out assault on Rafah — the last major Hamas stronghold in Gaza — over concern for the well-being of the more than 1 million civilians sheltering there.

Biden, in an interview with CNN on Wednesday, said that the U.S. was still committed to Israel's defense and would supply Iron Dome rocket interceptors and other defensive arms but that if Israel goes into Rafah, "we're not going to supply the weapons and artillery shells used."

Biden acknowledged that "civilians have been killed in Gaza" by the type of heavy bombs that the U.S. has been supplying—his first validation of what administration critics have been loudly protesting, even if he still stopped short of taking responsibility.

## Lebanon security source says five killed in Israeli strikes on south

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: A Lebanese security source said five people including two Hezbollah fighters were killed Wednesday in Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon, with a Palestinian armed group reporting three fatalities among its ranks.

Israel and Hezbollah, a Hamas ally, have stepped up cross-border exchanges that have been ongoing following the Palestinian group's October 7 attack on southern Israel that sparked the war in Gaza.

## War upends Ukraine's economy in a shift that may be permanent

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Within days of Russian forces invading Ukraine in early 2022, architect Oleh Drozdov made up his mind: he would move his home and business from the besieged eastern city of Kharkiv more than 1,000 km to the west, far from the fighting. Now, with the war in its third year, his practice may finally be returning to growth, as businesses like his adapt to the conflict and search out opportunities alongside the formidable challenges.

"The storm is over. There are many holes in our boat but we are moving forward," Drozdov said from his offices in a historic building in the centre of Lviv, a city of some 700,000 people close to the Polish border. On the city's outskirts, cranes dot the skyline and industrial parks and other projects are being built. In some ways Drozdov & Partners is well placed to adapt to the shock of war. It is small and footloose, and, in a country where millions of people and thousands of companies are displaced, demand for buildings and renovations is high.

## Plane skids off runway in Senegal, injuring 11

**Monitoring Desk**  
DAKAR: A plane with 78 passengers skidded off a runway before takeoff at Senegal's main airport while injuring 11 people and bringing the facility to a halt.

The Blaise Diagne airport said an investigation was underway to determine the cause of the accident, which occurred at around 0100 GMT as the Transair-owned Boeing 737-300 chartered by Air Senegal was preparing to fly to Mali.

## Seventh mass grave found at Gaza as Israel strikes Rafah

**Monitoring Desk**  
GAZA STRIP: Medical teams found a third mass grave inside Al-Shifa hospital and a seventh mass grave across Gaza hospitals, with the recovery of 49 bodies from the premises, as Israel bombed Rafah on Wednesday amid the ongoing negotiations in Cairo and Doha for ceasefire and prisoner swap. Israel has defied international objections and sent tanks into Rafah, which is crowded with Palestinian civilians sheltering near the Egyptian border, seizing on Tuesday a crossing that is the main conduit for aid into the besieged territory.

The White House condemned the interruption to humanitarian deliveries, with a senior US official later revealing Washington had paused a shipment of bombs last week after Israel failed to address concerns over its long-threatened Rafah operation.

However, the Israeli military claimed on Wednesday it was reopening a major aid crossing into Gaza, Kerem Shalom, as well as the Erez crossing. But the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said the Kerem Shalom crossing remained closed.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the third mass grave, as footage from Al-Shifa hospital showed at least a dozen bodies wrapped in black plastic body bags. Standing in front of the ruins of the hospital, Mutassem Salah, head of the emergency department at Al-Shifa, said several of the bodies had decomposed.

## US sends warship through Taiwan Strait ahead of presidential inauguration

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: A US warship sailed through the narrow Taiwan Strait on Wednesday, less than two weeks before Taiwan's new president takes office, prompting an angry denunciation from Beijing.

The US Navy's 7th Fleet said the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Halsey conducted a "routine Taiwan Strait transit" on Wednesday "through waters where high-seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law".

China's military described the sailing as "public hype", adding it had sent naval and aerial forces to monitor and warn the US ship throughout its voyage and "deal with it in accordance with the law and regulations".

"Troops in the theatre are always on high alert and will resolutely defend national sovereignty and security as well as regional peace and stability," the Eastern Theatre Command of the People's Liberation Army said in a statement.

## South Gaza hospitals have only three days' fuel left: WHO

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: Hospitals in the southern Gaza Strip have only three days of fuel left due to closed border crossings, the head of the World Health Organization said on Wednesday.

Despite international objections, Israel sent tanks into the overcrowded southern city of Rafah on Tuesday and seized the nearby crossing into Egypt that is the main conduit for aid into the besieged Palestinian territory.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said fuel that the UN health agency had expected to be allowed in on Wednesday had been blocked.

The Israeli authorities control the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

"The closure of the (Rafah) border crossing continues to prevent the UN from bringing fuel. Without fuel all humanitarian operations will stop. Border closures are also impeding delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza," Tedros said on X, formerly Twitter.

"Hospitals in the south of Gaza only have three days of fuel left, which means services may soon come to a halt."

Rik Peepkorn, the WHO representative in the Palestinian territories, told a press conference that fuel was critical to aid operations.

It is mainly used to power the generators that provide hospitals with the electricity they need to operate, but is also used so humanitarians can move around, and to keep bakeries running.

"What we all need, we humanitarians, is fuel, fuel, fuel," Peepkorn said.

"Without fuel, all humanitarian operations, including hospital operations—they come to a halt."

Israel bombed Rafah on Wednesday as talks resumed in Cairo aimed at agreeing the terms of a truce in the seven-month war.

## UN sets sights on clinching 'biopiracy' accord at conference

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: After talks which spanned over a period of over 20 years, the United Nations is adamant on finalising an international agreement, in order to combat so-called 'biopiracy' later this month. Their solution is to enhance transparency with regards to the patenting of 'traditional knowledge' surrounding genetic resources. The World Intellectual Property Organisation (a UN agency that deals with IP and innovation) is hopeful of ensuring that such knowledge will be protected from exploitation.

WIPO is comprised of 193 member states and will begin negotiations for an agreement from the 13 to 24 of May, at the agency's headquarters in Geneva. Below is a summation of the issues at stake, relevant fault lines and an explanation as to why exactly countries have waited till now, to move towards an agreement. Biopiracy is the use of genetic resources, and associated traditional knowledge, without any agreement on the part of those who hold them, and without the holders receiving any tangible benefit. Genetic resources are contained in a variety of organisms, such as medicinal plants, agricultural crops and animal breeds.

These resources are increasingly being utilised in everything ranging from cosmetics to seeds, medicines, biotechnology and food supplements. Given it is not obligatory to publish the origin of innovation, numerous developing countries are concerned that patents are being granted that either circumvent the rights of indigenous people or are issued for already existing inventions. Such cases often end up in prolonged legal battles. "This is referred to colloquially as 'biopiracy'" according to Wend Wendland, the director of WIPO's traditional knowledge division. While natural genetic resources themselves cannot be directly protected as intellectual property (as they are not creations of the human mind), inventions developed using them can be, most often through a patent, says WIPO.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European Parliament President Roberta Metsola attend a joint press conference, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

## Iran to change nuclear doctrine if existence threatened, adviser to supreme leader says

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iran will change its nuclear doctrine if Israel threatens its existence, an adviser to Iran's supreme leader said, the latest comment by an Iranian official which raises questions about what Tehran says is its peaceful nuclear programme.

Tehran has always said it had no plans to obtain nuclear weapons. Western governments suspect it wants nuclear technology to build a bomb; its nuclear programme has been at the centre of a long-running dispute that has led to sanctions.

In April, amidst a tense standoff with Israel — which is widely believed to have nuclear weapons — a senior Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander also said Israeli threats could prompt Iran to change its nuclear doctrine.

"We have no decision to build a nuclear bomb but should Iran's existence be threatened, there will be no choice but to change our military doctrine," Kamal Kharrazi, adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was reported as saying by Iran's Student News Network on Thursday. In 2022, the same adviser said Iran was technically capable of making a nuclear bomb but had not yet decided whether to build one.

Khamenei, who has the final say in Iran's nuclear programme, banned the development of nuclear weapons in a religious edict in the early 2000s. He reiterated that in 2019, saying that building and stockpiling nuclear bombs was "wrong and using it is haram", or religiously forbidden.

## EU staff members protest Israel's bombing on Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS: More than 100 staff members of European Union institutions gathered in Brussels on Wednesday in a protest against Israel's war in Gaza.

Protesters laid three rolled-up white sheets with red stains on them on the square outside the European Commission's head office in the Belgian capital. On the three "bodies" the words International Law, EU Treaties and Genocide Convention were written, in a protest of the way Israel has responded to the Gazans.

"We're coming together in a peaceful assembly, to stand up for those rights, principles and values that the European institutions are build on," EU Commission staff member Manus Carlisle said. "The reasons why we work here and love to work here."

## Pro-Palestinian campus protests spread to UK universities

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: The grass outside SOAS University of London has been dotted with a handful of tents since the start of this week, with Palestinian flags and slogans calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. There are similar sites at universities across Britain, and so far the protests have been peaceful and left alone by the police, unlike in the United States, France and other countries.

Students, many of whom were masked, sat in a circle on a blue tarpaulin to take part in what they called a "teach-in" while others took stock of groceries and supplies piled up inside the shelters. At SOAS, former student Yara, 23, estimated that more than 20 students were taking part—with about a dozen other encampments at universities elsewhere in the UK.



Climate activist Greta Thunberg takes part in the Stop Israel demonstration against Israel's participation in the 68th edition of the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) in Malmo, Sweden.

## British government tries to avert the type of unrest seen on American campuses

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Thursday called for an end to antisemitism on campus as he met with university leaders in an effort to prevent the type of unrest seen on American campuses in recent weeks. Sunak summoned the vice chancellors of Britain's top universities to his Downing Street offices after the government said "antisemitic abuse" was disrupting learning amid a growing number of pro-Palestinian protests.

Ahead of the meeting, Sunak warned of "students and academic staff being targeted, threatened, and assaulted simply for being Jewish." "We will always protect freedom of speech and the right to protest," Sunak wrote in the Times of London. "But just as importantly, universities have a profound duty to remain bastions of tolerance, where such debate takes place with respect for others — and where every student feels safe and at home, whatever their faith or background." Pro-Palestinian protesters have built encampments at about a dozen U.K. universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, over the past two weeks as some students and academics call on the institutions to cut ties with Israel over the conflict.

## Hope fades for 44 trapped in collapsed South Africa building

**Monitoring Desk**  
JOHANNESBURG: Relatives of 44 construction workers trapped under a collapsed building in the South African city of George faced a fourth day of anguished waiting on Thursday as heavy machinery worked at the site in a race against time to find any survivors.

Of 81 people who were on site when the five-story building collapsed on Monday, eight have been confirmed dead and 29 alive, 16 of them in a critical condition, according to the latest figures from George municipality.

## Air India Express flights disrupted for second day after cabin crew call in sick

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Tata Group's budget carrier Air India Express said it had cancelled around a quarter of its flights on Thursday and was taking "appropriate action" against cabin crew as services were disrupted for a second day after staff reported sick this week. At least 175 flights have been cancelled in the past two days and several others delayed after more than 100 cabin crew took sudden sick leave on Tuesday night.

## World's record-breaking temperature streak extends through April

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS: The world witnessed the hottest April on record, adding to an 11-month streak in which every month set a (fresh) temperature record, the European Union's climate change monitoring service stated on Wednesday.

Every single month since June of 2023, has ranked as the planet's hottest on record, as compared to the corresponding month in previous years, the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said in its monthly bulletin.

Including the month of April, the world's mean temperature was the highest on record for a period of 12-months (1.61 degrees Celsius above the average), in the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period.

Some of the extremes which include months of record breaking sea surface temperatures, have led scientists to investigate whether human activity has now triggered a tipping point in the climate system.



NEW YORK: Police arrest Olga Fedorova, a journalist, during the clearing of a pro-Palestine encampment at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

## Pakistan, China fully committed to move forward CPEC Phase-2: Ahsan Iqbal

BEIJING (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal said on Thursday that Pakistan and China are fully committed to moving forward with the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the new government through its engagements with the Chinese leadership at senior level is trying to crystallize and define its parameters.

This is our first engagement after the election in Pakistan with Chinese leadership at the senior level. Through this engagement, we are trying to crystallize and define the parameters of CPEC on which the Chinese side has indicated its willingness to move forward. And Pakistan is also very committed to moving forward, he said in his interaction with Chinese media at the Pakistan Embassy, in Beijing during his three-day visit to China. Prof Ahsan Iqbal said that during his meetings, both sides have discussed some high-priority and low-hanging projects which can be immediately started to give a jumpstart to the second phase of CPEC and broaden the cooperation from phase one to phase two.

He said that agriculture, industrial cooperation, and the transfer of technology are very important for us. We want to expand our cooperation to bring new technology into the agriculture sector to enhance the productivity of Pakistan's agriculture sector. Second, we intend to enhance industrial cooperation. Particularly, there is a strong case for relocation of Chinese industries to Pakistan, where labor costs in China have increased and Pakistan offers a very attractive environment for relocation to the SEZs that we are setting up. And that will also help us to move from agricultural economy to industrial economy, he added.

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BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiative Prof. Ahsan Iqbal addressing during NDRC Seminar "Road and Belt".

## GoB strongly condemns labourers' assassination in Gwadar; seek report from high ups

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has strongly condemned the incident of killing of seven labourers in Surbandar area of Gwadar district on Thursday morning.

The Government of Balochistan has sought report of the incident from concerned high ups.

The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove and Spokesman, Government of Balochistan termed the incident as an open terrorism.

The Provincial Minister said that the incident of killing of innocent labourers is a cowardly act and we would deal with the terrorists strictly.

He said that the incident is being reviewed from all aspects. The terrorists involved in the incident would be taken to task, adding he pledged.

The spokesman of provincial government told about the incident and said that it was occurred in Surbandar area of Gwadar. He said that the administrative officers have reached the spot of incident.

He said that the government is in contact with the district administration. The bereaved families of the martyr labourers are also being contacted, he added.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar holds meeting with Minister of the state of Qatar, Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulafati at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## FO says: OIC resolutions on Kashmir collective voice of Islamic world

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan on Thursday said that the resolutions and pronouncements of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation were the collective voice of the Islamic world which reinforced Pakistan's call for settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, welcomed the reaffirmation by the OIC of its strong and unequivocal position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute during the 15th Islamic Summit of the OIC held in Banjul, recently.

"The Summit's Final Communiqué and the 'Banjul Declaration' reaffirmed unwavering support and solidarity with the Kashmiri people, called on India to revoke all unilateral and illegal actions taken since 5 August 2019 in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and respect the rights and freedoms of the people of Jammu and Kashmir." Besides, she said the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir was the only OIC contact group that met on the sidelines of the Islamic Summit, reflecting OIC's strong solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and their right to self-determination.

"Pakistan also welcomes the report of the OIC Secretary General's Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir on his visit to Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The report highlights India's continuing violations of international law in IIOJK."



QUETTA: Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) Chief Officer, Muhammad Ali addresses during awareness seminar on Solid Waste Management Urban Flooding held in Quetta.

## Google doubles down support for AI in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Google has announced its commitment to supporting Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Pakistan by providing 45,000 scholarships for Google Career Certificates in 2024.

Additionally, Google has introduced two new programs to empower freelancers and women in the country.

Pakistan is home to the third-largest freelancing economy in the world and it is critical to ensure that the country's freelance talent remains competitive, especially in today's rapidly evolving digital environment.

This year, Google, in partnership with the Pakistan Freelancers Association (PAFLA), has developed a program.

## Rally held to express solidarity with Pakistan Army in Barkhan

QUETTA (APP): On special directive of Provincial Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran on Thursday a grand rally organized in Barkhan city under the leadership of Sardarzada Abdul Qasim Shah Khetran to show solidarity with Pakistan Army.

The rally was taken out from Barkhan Club and accumulated at Mandi Chowk after marching different routes of Barkhan Bazar. A large number of people took part in the rally and chanted slogans against May 9th incident and they demanded to punish those people involved in the May 9th tragedy.

Children, old people and youths held up placards to express solidarity with Pakistan Army, the echoes of slogans of Pakistan Zindabad, Pakistan Army Paidabad heard everywhere.

In the ceremony the emotional speeches of the students they renewed the love for Pakistan and Pakistan Army in the hearts of the people.

## Humaira Baloch vows to serve people of Lasbela district

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The newly appointed Deputy Commissioner Lasbela, Ms. Humaira Baloch has vowed to serve the people of Lasbela district.

While speaking to this scribe on Thursday after assuming the office of Deputy Commissioner, Ms. Humaira Baloch said that Lasbela is a peaceful district and it is a matter of pleasure for him that he has been designated to serve people of the district.

She also said that it would be her utmost desire to serve the people of Lasbela and play her role for its development and prosperity.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti presides over the meeting regarding Endowment Welfare Funds.

## Benazir Bhutto Scholarship approved in principle under Balochistan Education Endowment Fund, says Chief Minister

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the Benazir Bhutto Scholarship has been approved in principle under the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund (BEEF).

The Chief Minister said that the students desirous of doing scientific research from Balochistan would be able to do the Ph.Ds from top 20 universities of the world.

He directed to make more investment in the successful projects besides reviewing structure of the Balochistan Investment Committee.

The Chief Minister was chairing a meeting on the Endowment Welfare Fund here on Thursday.

The Provincial Ministers, Chief Secretary and other concerned high ups participated in the meeting.

During the briefing, it was informed that 25 different endowment funds of Rs. 108 billion have been established in the province. The income of around Rs. 8 billion is generated through investment on these funds, it was added.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister directed to allocate more resources for welfare of minorities, women and under privileged segments of the society.

He pointed out that there are no issues of child labour in rural areas as compared to the urban ones.

Referring the out of school children in Balochistan, the Chief Minister directed to provide facilities to the out of school children to have access to the educational institutions.

He observed that majority of children are out of schools due to lack of facilities of transportation in the province.

He on the occasion directed to provide two to four buses to each union council of rural areas for transportation of the students in schools.

He also directed to ensure correct use of Endowment Fund for welfare of the fishermen in the province. In addition to this, he also directed to present comprehensive recommendations and policies for ensuring correct use and increase in the endowment fund.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif interacting with the families of Martyrs at an event commemorating the unfortunate riots of 9 May 2023.

## Pakistan to 'seek' rollover of \$12bln loan from friendly countries

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan to 'seek' rollover of \$12 billion loan from friendly countries to meet external financing for the FY2024-25.

As per details, Pakistan will be needing Rs23 billion in external financing for the upcoming FY2024-25 and in this context, Islamabad has reportedly decided to seek rollover of \$12 billion loan from friendly countries including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and China.

The details shared by sources within the finance ministry said rollover for \$5 billion Saudi Arabia's loan, \$4 bln Chinese loan and \$3 billion United Arab Emirates loan will be sought to meet the next year's external financing needs.

The new financing from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other monetary institutions is also included in budget allocation.

Earlier on May 2, it emerged that the Pakistan government has decided to 'finalise' budget targets for FY2024-25 before the arrival of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission to Islamabad.

The IMF team is scheduled to arrive in Pakistan on May 15 for the talks on the fresh loan programme, being sought by the South Asian nation to address financial needs.



QUETTA: DGNADRA Regional Head Office Quetta Muhammad Kashi Iqbal listening issues of public at open court (Khuli Khechhari) organized on special directive of PM at New Zarhoon Road.

## Reko Diq Mining Company installs Reverse Osmosis plant in Chaghi

QUETTA (APP): The Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC) continues to strengthen its social development project portfolio by establishing a Reverse Osmosis (RO) plant in Mashki Chah village, district Chagai, ensuring it plays a positive role in adding value to the lives of its local stakeholders.

This RO plant at village Mashki Chah has a capacity of 5,000 gallons per day (gpd) and will operate on solarized renewable energy, providing much-needed potable water to the residents of Mashki Chah and beyond. At present the village uses about 1500 gpd of water, so this enhanced capacity is envisaged to facilitate not just this village but surrounding areas as well.

RDMC teams worked tirelessly to ensure that the system installed by the company, 'So Safe' has state-of-the-art equipment designed to provide years of trouble-free service to meet local needs and requirements. This RO plant is fully automatic, ensuring that no water is lost if the tank is full and provides safe and clean water meeting established standards. The UV sterilizer operates using low-pressure mercury vapor to produce the UV energy needed to eliminate microorganisms present in the water. It effectively destroys viruses, bacteria, fungi, algae, and protozoa by disrupting their DNA structure, inhibiting reproduction, and rendering them harmless.

For the residents of Mashki Chah this is the first RDMC social development project by RDMC in their village.

Amongst the three functioning primary schools set up in district Chagai, one is at Mashki Chah. RDMC seeks to create sustainable social development projects that serve the local communities. So far it has built a strong network of projects, partnering with credible organizations such as the Indus Hospital for its medical facilities and The Hunar Foundation for its vocational training center to build skills and generate income-earning capacity amongst local youth. These efforts showcase how the new Reko Diq agreement ensures that benefits from the project start accruing to the people of Chagai well in advance of the commercial operations starting.

At the inauguration of the RO plant at Mashki Chah, Country Manager.

## Genuine apprehensions of MPAs to be removed: Govt redetermining priorities of Provincial PSDP on guidelines of High Court: Sarfraz Bugti

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has announced that the provincial government is redetermining the priority of Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) keeping in view of the guidelines of Balochistan High Court, and in this regard, the genuine apprehensions of the members of assembly would be removed.

The Chief Minister was responding to the point of order raised by the Opposition MPA, Mir Asadullah Baloch and other members about the development schemes of PSDP, during the assembly session on Thursday.

The Speaker Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai was in the chair.

The Chief Minister maintained that the PSDP is being made as a public requirement.

He regretfully pointed out that the PSDP was distributed unfairly in the past.

He said that making positive criticism is the right of opposition and it is our duty to correct the mistakes.

He said that he is ready to remove the genuine grievances while following the traditions of Balochistan.



RAWALPINDI: Commander of the USCENCOM General Michael Erik Kurilla called on Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir at the General Headquarters.

## High level investigations ordered, CM: Resolution adopted against killing of Siddiq Mengal

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The resolution was adopted against the killing of journalist of Khuzdar, Muhammad Siddiq Mengal in Balochistan Assembly here on Thursday.

The resolution was tabled by the Leader of Opposition in provincial assembly, Mir Younas Aziz Zehri in the session held with Speaker Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai in the chair.

Speaking on the resolution, Chief Minister said that we fully endorse the resolution against Khuzdar incident.

He said that he has directed to conduct high level investigations into the killing of Siddiq Mengal.

He assured that the culprits involved in the Khuzdar incident would be apprehended soon, which is our responsibility too.

## Chairman Senate sees off first flight intended pilgrims

MULTAN (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani Thursday saw off the intended pilgrims travelling by first Haj flight of Air Sial at Multan International Airport.

He garlanded the pilgrims and asked them to maintain discipline in the Holy land as ambassador of the country. As many as 150 pilgrims flew by PF 762 for Madina at 1350 hrs today from the MIAP.

Addressing the ceremony Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani said that he was very delighted to see the blessed pilgrims off as only those who are permitted from the Holy Land. He informed it was a welcome gesture by Air Sial to operate Haj flights from Multan recalling that he extended help for construction of Sialkot airport as former prime minister. Chairman Senate asked them to pray for the martyrs of Palestine and oppressed of Gaza and added they should also pray for all those Shuhada including Law enforcer and civilians who lost their lives for the country. He reminded that PPP had curbed the terrorism from the country in its 2008-13 tenure and regretted that it was rearing its head once again.



MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani seen off the intended pilgrims during the first Haj flight operations from Multan International Airport.

## Road infrastructure in Subhatpur on modern lines top priority: Saleem Khosa

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Communications and Works (C&W) Mir Saleem Ahmad Khosa on Thursday said that developing road infrastructure in Subhatpur district on modern lines was one of my top priorities.

He said that the construction of Subhatpur, Dera Allah-Yar Bypass would make it easier for people of the area to reach their destination.

He expressed these views while chairing a high-level meeting regarding the progress of ongoing road infrastructure projects in Subhatpur district.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Secretary Communications and Works Kamber Dashti, Chief Engineer Design Dr. Sajjad Baloch, Technical Advisor Mukhtiar Kakar and Chief Engineer Roads of Sibi Zone, senior officials of the Department of C&W.

## May 9 very sad, unbearable incident in country's history: Kakar

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development Bakht Muhammad Kakar on Thursday said that the May 9 incident was a very sad and unbearable incident in the history of the country. In a statement regarding the May 9 incident issued here, he said that the May 9 was a dark day in the history of Pakistan and it had never happened in the history of the country that anti-national elements damaged public, private, historical and military properties. Those miscreants who brought the country into disrepute should be severely punished, he said.

The Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development Bakht Muhammad Kakar said that on May 9, the manner in which they tried to damage the peace and order of the country saying that it was never found in the history of the country was a big conspiracy against the country.