



**President asks citizens to remain peaceful, says protest must be within law bounds**

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**Pak-Oman cordial ties deeply entrenched, says NA Speaker**

National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Thursday said that Pakistan and Oman enjoyed cordial ties deeply entrenched in shared values of brotherhood and socio-economic interests. Talking to Deputy Chairman State Council of Oman Sheikh Dr. Al-Khattab bin Ghali bin Ali Al-Hinai, he said Pakistani diaspora in Oman was playing a key role for its socio-economic development. (Details on Page 8)

**Addressed**

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf addressing the Closing Plenary Session "Building Inclusive and Equal Societies: Challenges and Opportunities" of International Constitutional Convention to commemorate the Golden Jubilee Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan at Parliament House on Thursday.



Photo: PID

**Constitution a cornerstone of individual & collective freedoms: Pervez Asharf**

**Spokesman Report**  
ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Thursday said the Constitution is a cornerstone of collective and individual freedoms. "The Constitution is the best document which ensures the provision of all freedoms to each citizen irrespective of caste, creed and colour," he said while addressing the closing Plenary Session "Building Inclusive and Equal Societies: Challenges and Opportunities" of International Constitutional Convention to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution of Pakistan here at the Parliament House. Prevez Ashraf paid rich tribute to the struggle of generations of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leadership for the continuity of democracy and supremacy of the Constitution. He said following the principles and struggle of two charismatic leaders - Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto, who had sacrificed their lives for furthering the cause of democracy in Pakistan, would bring the country out of socio-economic challenges. He expressed gratitude to the parliamentary delegations of 14 countries for attending the convention. Convener of the International Constitutional Convention Committee Nafeesa Shah presented the outcome document of the convention and briefly outline its basics. The participating countries resolved to ensure the provision of constitutional rights to all with a collective and consensus-based approach. It was expressed to work together for enhancing and promoting democratic values. It was further reiterated to ensure the supremacy of the constitution, along with fundamental rights to all. Later, Speaker Prevez Ashraf and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari distributed prizes among the winners of declamation contests, which were organised across the country. It may be mentioned that the International Constitutional Convention culminated the month-long golden jubilee celebrations of the Constitution where a Constitution App was also launched, besides releasing of a commemorative coin by the State Bank of Pakistan and the issuance of a Rs 50 Commemorative Stamp. A collection of historic speeches made by prominent parliamentarians on the floor of the house was also displayed.

**Supreme Court rules that Khan's arrest in a corruption case was illegal**

*Khan's arrest by an anti-corruption agency has triggered violent protests across the country*

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has ruled the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan to be illegal and ordered that he be immediately released, two days after his detention on corruption allegations triggered violent protests. After the ruling on Thursday, violence around the country appeared to ease, though clashes between celebrating supporters of Khan and police briefly broke out near the Supreme Court building. The government, however, denounced the ruling and said it was determined to find other legal avenues to arrest the leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. Khan, 70, was arrested in a corruption case by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) during a court appearance on Tuesday, triggering violent

protests across the country and prompting the government to call out the army to help restore order. PTI supporters have clashed with police around the country, and people have attacked military and government sites, trying to storm the military's main headquarters and burning down the residence of a top general in Lahore. More than 2,000 people have been arrested, at least 11 others killed and dozens injured in the clashes. The court instructed that the PTI chief would remain under police protection at the Police Lines compound in Islamabad, where he has been kept since his arrest. Supreme Court Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial asked Khan to appear on Friday at the Islamabad High Court, to reconsider its earlier ruling that the arrest was legal. Khan may also ask the court for protection from future

arrest on the corruption charges. The Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan vowed, "We will arrest him again", perhaps on charges that were announced a day earlier of inciting the wave of violence. Government officials criticised the ruling, with several accusing the chief justice of bias toward Khan. Chief Justice Bandial "now should hoist the flag of Imran Khan's party on the Supreme Court, or he should declare that the court is a suboffice of Imran's party," Azam Tarar, an adviser for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, told reporters. Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif called it a "special reprieve" for the former prime minister, saying the court ignored his supporters' attacks on military and government installations. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party activists and supporters (unseen) of former Pakistan's

Prime Minister Imran Khan clash with police during a protest against the arrest of their leader, in Islamabad. Authorities have arrested at least three other senior leaders of Khan's PTI party as of Thursday, including a former foreign minister in his cabinet during his premiership between 2018 and 2022. Khan was also indicted on Wednesday in another corruption case in which he is accused of illegally selling state gifts during his tenure as the prime minister. More than 100 police cases have been registered against Khan by the government since his removal from power in April 2022 after he lost a confidence vote in parliament. Meanwhile, mobile data services remained suspended and schools and offices were closed in two of Pakistan's four provinces. Social media platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and

Instagram have been blocked. Rights groups have urged Pakistan to show restraint in dealing with the protests and restore the internet. "The Pakistani government should uphold the right to peaceful protest while responding to violence with the minimum force needed," Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement on Thursday. Pakistan's President Arif Alvi, who is also a senior PTI leader, said he was "alarmed, shocked and deeply disturbed" over the situation in the country. "Protest is a constitutional right of every citizen of Pakistan but should always remain within the bounds of the law. The way some miscreants have damaged public property, particularly government and military buildings, is condemnable," the president said in a statement on Thursday.

**Pakistan, Iran leaders likely to meet this month**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Iran's President Ibrahim Raeesi will likely to meet this month. Pakistan's Prime Minister and Iranian President will likely to meet in Balochistan's Pishin, sources said. PM Shehbaz Sharif is expected to visit Balochistan on May 18 for the meeting with neighboring Iran's leader. According to sources, the meeting of the two leaders will likely to be held at the border crossing in Pishin. President Raeesi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will jointly inaugurate 100-mega-



watt power supply from Iran to Pakistan, according to sources. Presently Pakistan importing 200-megawatt electricity from Iran, while there is capacity to enhance the import to 500 megawatts, sources said. Pakistan importing electricity from Iran since year 2002 for supply to Makran division of Balochistan. Iran's president and Pakistan's prime minister could likely to inaugurate the Pak-Iran border market formally.

**Internet Shutdown: Pakistan's point-of-sale transactions fall by 50pc**

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Point-of-sale transactions routed through Pakistan's main digital payment systems fell by around 50% the day after former Prime Minister Imran Khan's arrest ignited countrywide protests and prompted authorities to shut down mobile internet services, data showed on Thursday. The reason for the slump was primarily the mobile broadband suspension, in addition to lower footfall at the limited number of stores opened due to the political turmoil, the two largest payments system operators, ILINK and Habib Bank Limited (HBL), told Reuters. The violent protests that followed Khan's arrest on Tuesday by the country's anti-graft agency have hit commercial activity in Pakistan hard. Mobile data services have remained shut since Tuesday night

on the orders of the interior ministry - the longest such continuous shutdown in a country that often suspends communications as a tool to quell unrest. Many major roads and businesses have also remained shut, mainly in the eastern city of Lahore, Pakistan's second-largest city. Data shared with Reuters by ILINK on POS through its platform showed international payment card transactions were down on Wednesday by 45% in volume, from a daily average of 127,000 during the week of May 1 to 7 to approximately 68,000 on May 10. The daily value of transactions using international payment cards was down 46%, from 606 million rupees (\$2.14 million) to 330 million rupees (\$1.16 million) on May 10. ILINK is Pakistan's major facili-

tator of POS digital payment transactions for international platforms such as Visa and Mastercard. Transactions on Pakistan's only domestic payment scheme, PayPak, were down 52% in volume to 18,000 transactions on Wednesday, and 56% down in value to roughly 62 million rupees (\$218,775). Ali Habib, spokesperson at HBL, Pakistan's largest bank, said that it had seen a decline of 60% in the throughput of the POS machines. "HBL processes over 30% of the entire throughput of the POS machines in Pakistan. This is the largest share in the market," he added. The State Bank of Pakistan did not immediately respond to questions sent by Reuters. Cash transactions still dominate Pakistan's commercial dealings, with much of the market undocu-

mented, but digital payments have been growing fast in the country of 220 million. Many retailers and industrialists across Pakistan had ground to a halt since the protests started on Tuesday. More than 1,600 people have been killed and hundreds injured in riots, including more than 160 policemen. On Tuesday, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) suspended mobile broadband services across the country. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Youtube and Twitter were also down, resulting in demand for virtual private networks surged by 1,329% on Wednesday compared with the average, according to Simon Migliano, Head of Research at Top10VPN. Migliano calculates that the suspension of mobile broadband and social media platforms has cost nearly \$100 million so far.

*Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General-on Pakistan*

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Secretary-General takes note of the ongoing protests that have erupted following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday in Islamabad and calls for all parties to refrain from violence. He stresses the need to respect the right to peaceful assembly. The Secretary-General urges the authorities to respect due process and the rule of law in proceedings brought against former Prime Minister Khan.

**Bilawal urges Parliament, masses to safeguard Constitution**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister and Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Thursday said political parties and masses should all act together to safeguard the constitution in all times either good or bad to ensure freedom of the nation and democracy. He was addressing the closing session of a two-day international convention held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Constitution of 1973 of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Bilawal said the country did not define itself by the challenges being faced by it rather how it faced the challenges. The country and the nation faced abrogation of the Constitution by the dictators and the people of Pakistan resisted every single usurper and dictator. The foreign minister accord-



ed credit for the restoration of democracy and the constitution to the masses. He added that the people of Pakistan had faced all forms of dictatorship and defeated all of them. The foreign minister apprised the convention that his family fought against dictatorship for three generations and never took law in their hands. He added that after losing Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto who was not only the nation's leader but also his mother; he urged his supporters not to take revenge rather uphold democracy.

## Stand alert

RAWALPINDI: Rangers personnel stand alert in morning hours at Marrir Chowk Metro Bus Station in the city.



Photo: Online

## Pak-Oman cordial ties deeply entrenched, says NA Speaker

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Thursday said that Pakistan and Oman enjoyed cordial ties deeply entrenched in shared values of brotherhood and socio-economic interests.

Talking to Deputy Chairman State Council of Oman Sheikh Dr. Al-Khattab bin Ghalib bin Ali Al-Hinai, he said Pakistani diaspora in Oman was playing a key role for its socio-economic development.

He appreciated the Oman people and government for hosting a large number of



Pakistani workers gracefully. The speaker appreciated Oman's participation in golden jubilee celebrations of the Constitution.

The Oman Parliamenta-

ry delegation is in an official visit in Pakistan to attend International constitutional convention organized by National Assembly Secretariat in connection with Golden

Jubilee celebration of Constitution.

Discussing nature of friendly ties between the two sides, the speaker said, "Pakistan attaches high importance to its

fraternal ties with Oman. The bilateral relations are historical, deep-rooted and based on commonalities of faith, culture and traditions."

He also appreciated Oman's role in strengthening peace and stability in the region.

Dr. Al-Khattab appreciated the kind remarks of the speaker and said that Oman considered Pakistan as its brother.

He also stressed on the need to enhance parliamentary contacts via Parliamentary Friendship Group to explore avenues of cooperation in diverse sector particularly climate change.

MNA, Naz Baloch was also present in the meeting.

## New Ethiopian embassy, airlink to provide limitless opportunities to boost bilateral ties: Hina

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar on Thursday said that the new Ethiopian Embassy and the airlink would provide limitless opportunities to boost bilateral ties through enhanced trade and investment as well as people-to-people connections.

After inaugurating the Ethiopian Embassy here along with the Ethiopian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mesganu Arga, the minister of state said this would also provide opportunities to the youth for learning.

She said witnessing the achievement of the following important milestone in the journey of Pak-Ethiopia relations was pleasing.

She said a country's diplomacy must be geared towards opening doors and opportunities for its people, trade, and investment.



Hina Rabbani Khar said the economic and developmental challenges of the two countries were similar but also, there was commonality in the resilience of the two people to achieve these goals.

She said Pakistan has always supported Africa throughout history.

Hina Rabbani Khar said Pakistan wished to engage with Africa meaningfully and partner in its growth and prosperity journey.

Highlighting the significance

of direct flight operations by Ethiopian Airlines to Karachi, she said opening direct flights between the two countries would boost trade and people-to-people contacts.

She expressed the hope that the new Embassy would be instrumental in materializing that potential for the mutual benefit of our countries.

She told the audience that 70 years back, the then Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had inaugurated Pakistan's Embassy in Ethiopia.

She lauded the services of a new Ethiopian ambassador in Islamabad Jemal Beker Abdula, who made a mark in his short eight months.

She said throughout history, Pakistan supported African peace through peacekeepers, as hundreds of them also sacrificed their lives for the cause.

In his remarks, Ethiopian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mesganu Arga said that the opening of the Ethiopian Embassy marked a new history in the diplomatic, political, economic, and social cooperation between the two countries.

He said the commencement of Ethiopian Airlines flight to Karachi would connect Pakistan with the "Land of Origins-Ethiopia" and more than 60 destinations in the continent of Africa and 130 more globally.

The state minister said the opening of the Embassy was a concrete example of the importance the Ethiopian govern-

ment attached to its bilateral relations with Pakistan.

He said Ethiopia considered Pakistan as a strategically important and strong partner in Asia, and the signing of the Political Consultation guided the aspiration of the two governments and peoples to play their appropriate role in international issues like climate change, terrorism, migration, and peace and security.

Similarly, the bilateral trade agreement signed on February 14, 2023 would open a new window of opportunity for investment, trade, and tourism, transforming the trade volume to a high level.

The state minister added that the Science, Technology and Innovation agreement is also expected to enhance productivity in agriculture, manufacturing and ICT sectors by enhancing technological transfer and encouraging the exchange of innovation and experience sharing.

## President asks citizens to remain peaceful, says protest must be within law bounds

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday strongly condemning the damage incurred to public property by miscreants said the protest, though a constitutional right of every citizen, needed to be made within the bounds of law.

He appealed to the citizens of the country to remain peaceful.

"The way some miscreants have damaged public property, particularly government and military buildings, is condemnable," he wrote on Twitter.

The president said the loss of human lives as an aftermath was "heart-wrenching, regrettable, unfortunate and highly condemnable".

Alvi said he was "alarmed, shocked and deeply" disturbed over the current situation in the country arising



out of the arrest and manhandling of the former prime minister Imran Khan.

"We must have a re-think and look for political solutions, rather than coercion and arrests," he said.

The president mentioned that he had conveyed his concerns to the political and military leadership and was hopeful that the situation can improve.

## Fazl expresses serious concerns to PM over Khan's release by SC



### News Desk

ISLAMABAD : In a high-level meeting held on Thursday, Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) president Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif discussed the recent order by the Supreme Court regarding the release of Imran Khan.

According to sources, the two leaders expressed their concerns over the court's decision to declare Imran Khan's arrest as illegal. Maulana Fazlur Rehman reportedly informed the prime minister about his serious

concerns regarding the decision and shared possible protest strategies with him.

The meeting also saw coalition parties of the government consider a unanimous protest against the Supreme Court's decision. Additionally, the PM contacted the heads of other coalition parties to discuss the political situation in the country.

The meeting comes after the Supreme Court ordered the release of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Thursday, declaring the arrest of former prime minister as 'illegal'.

## NSC'S emergency meeting cancelled

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The emergency meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) summoned by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday (tomorrow) has been cancelled.

Sources told that PM Shehbaz Sharif summoned an emergency meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) on Friday to review the security-related matters and the Supreme Court's (SC) decision to declare Imran Khan's arrest 'illegal' and order his immediate release.

Sources added that the federal cabinet meeting will be held tomorrow in which the members will be briefed on the security situations.

Moreover, a legal team will brief the federal cabinet over the Supreme Court's (SC) decision regarding the release of the former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan who had been arrested by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday.

The cabinet members will also review the political situation after Imran Khan's release.

Earlier today, the Supreme Court of Pakistan termed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chief Imran Khan's arrest "illegal" minutes after the PTI chief reached Supreme Court after a three-member bench ordered the authorities to produce him before the court.

## Speakers stress need for proper scrutiny process in appointment, promotion of judges

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at the Breakout session-II of the two-day International Constitutional convention on Thursday stressed the need for proper scrutiny process for appointment and promotion of judges in the courts to ensure transparency in judicial system like rest of the world.

Chairing the Breakout Session-II on "Constitution of and the Courts-Interpreting Constitution, Protecting Rights and Freedoms" Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Marri said chaos was detrimental for development of country. The 1973 constitution clearly defined role of every institutions including the judiciary, she added.

She said in Pakistan Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) was authorized to carry

out investigation against any judge of the superior judiciary.

"We have SJC but there is need for transparency of public scrutiny of the judges," she said.

Recalling his party struggle for democratic process, the minister said that the credit went to Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and its founder Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto passed the constitution unanimously despite ideological and political difference with other parties.

She said that she took oath on the constitution to follow, protect and preserve it in its letter and spirit.

We had witnessed intervention in democratic system several times but continued our struggle for the democratic process, she added.

The minister observed that unfortunately founder of the constitution Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was murdered

through judicial order.

She said leader like Shaheed Benazir Bhutto could not be replaced and vacuum created after her death would not bridge. Benazir Bhutto was an iconic leader and lived in hearts of millions of people, Shazia remarked.

Speaking on the occasion Dr Joseph Kizito Mhagama, Member Parliament United Republic of Tanzania said courts were responsible for interpreting law in his country. There was clear procedure for appointment and promotion of judges, he added.

He said in Tanzania, people enjoyed freedom of speech and assembly but special permission was required for holding procession adding that the courts had no rights to intervene in such matters.

Former Senator Safdar Abbasi said that three attempts were made to abro-

gate the constitution in Pakistan including in 1977 and 1999 where elected governments were removed. Unfortunately, the judiciary validated the acts of dictators under doctrine of necessity, he added.

He said after the landmark 18th amendment, we were forced to pass the 19th amendment.

Only constitution was sovereign and supreme and some kind of settlement was required between judiciary and parliament for resolving various issues including holding free, fair and transparent elections in the country.

Zafarullah Khan said that the 18th constitutional amendment passed by the parliament was scrutinized twice.

Appointment of judges was an important matter and in USA, Senate members used to scrutinize judges, he added.

# Police-citizens liaison must for maintaining law & order, says Ahsan Iqbal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday stressed the need for a close liaison between the police department and citizen committees to ensure maintaining law and order in the society.

Chairing a meeting of the 'Governance Innovation Lab' on police reforms here, he said the Federal Government would make the Islamabad Police a role model for other provinces by equipping the department with modern gadgets and technologies.



He opined that a leadership-training programme should be initiated for police officers so that the public could be served in a better way.

Ahsan Iqbal also directed to provide a public-friendly environment at police stations to serve the people in a way that they could feel free in sharing their problems with the policemen.

The minister said social issues of the public should be settled at police stations with the active participation of local reconciliatory committees.

Among others, the meeting was attended by legal experts, representatives of civil society, law enforcement officers and other stakeholders.

## Attention

ISLAMABAD: Rangers personnel are deployed outside Supreme Court before arriving of former prime minister Imran Khan, for his hearing, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

# SAPM Shaza emphasizes significance of fundamental rights in Constitution

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday emphasized the crucial role of fundamental rights and civil liberties in the Constitution.

The SAPM, who chaired the Breakout Session-1 of the two-day International Constitutional Convention on its concluding day, underscored that the Constitution was a social contract between the people, citizens, and the state, with its foundation rooted in the funda-



mental rights and civil liberties it guaranteed to individuals.

In her address on the topic 'Fundamental Rights and the Constitution: Protection, Implementation, and Challenges', she also stressed that

the existence of fundamental rights was essential for establishing the legitimacy of the social contract embodied in the Constitution, which ultimately governed the state and its principles.

She highlighted the indis-

pensable role of democracy in ensuring the provision of fundamental rights to the people. Only through a democratic system and institutions, which represented the will of the people, the basic human rights of individuals could be safeguarded, she added.

SAPM Shaza concluded her remarks by stressing the vital importance of upholding fundamental rights within the Constitution to maintain a just and equitable society. She expressed the need for continued efforts to protect and implement those rights while acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead.

## In the current situation, the decision of the Supreme Court is commendable: Vohra

Bureau Report.

FAISALABAD: Naseer Yousaf Vohra President Central Cloth Board Ittehad Pakistan said that this decision of supreme court regarding PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest will be written in golden worlds in the history of Pakistan because it might control the dangerous growing situation in the country.

He pointed out that our morale in the world was falling rapidly after seeing the chaotic situation.

He further said that Islam does not allow coercion and tyranny to anyone & Institutions will have to serve the nation within their limits with due honesty and impartiality.

He further said that every citizen has equal rights in this this country.

How can we be a united nation until the institutions work honestly and impartially?

The people and the forces of Pakistan are the defense for each other, but the attempt to bring them face to face is a trick of the enemy elements and this status quo has been broken by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

He further expressed that It is regrettable that the people of the country are protesting in the presence of the government and big institutions.

For the first time in the history of Pakistan, such type of protest has been recorded.

The people have come forward as a leaden wall and they are ready for any sacrifice?

23-Crore people have paid tribute to the Supreme Judiciary because no other institution could have controlled the growing fire.

Whatever was hidden by this PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest has also come out in moments, he further said and added.

## ECP directs scrutiny committee to submit political parties' prohibited funding report within 15 days

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has instructed its Scrutiny Committee to present a report on the banned funding of political parties to the Commission within a period of 15 days.

This was decided in a meeting chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja.

Relevant officers were present to discuss three key agendas.

In addition, the decision was made to hold by-elections for three National Assembly seats, NA-108 Faisalabad, NA-118 Nankana Sahib, and NA-239 Korangi, on May 28.

The meeting also discussed the complaints of Jamaat-e-Islami regarding the Hyderabad Local Government elections.

The Commission has scheduled a hearing on the irregularities in Union Council 119 Hyderabad in the by-elections on May 15, with a report requested from the Provincial Election Commissioner, Returning Officer (RO), District Returning Officer (DRO), and District Police Officer (DPO) within three days.

Notices have also been issued to candidates, ROs, DROs, relevant officials, and district police officers to appear before the Commission on May 15.

## PFUJ condemns attack, harassment of Radio Pakistan, APP Peshawar offices

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has condemned an attack on historic building of Radio Pakistan and office of Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) beating and harassing media persons and staffer of both organisations in Peshawar and demanded immediate arrest of PTI culprits and give them exemplary punishment.

In a joint statement, PFUJ President Afzal Butt and Secretary General Arshad Ansari has called for an immediate inquiry into the serious laps of security to the official media outlets and broadcaster Radio Pakistan and APP. "They damaged not only the newsrooms of both the organizations but also beat and harassed the staffers which are unwanted and unacceptable," they said

They said the Radio Pakistan Peshawar building is a historic building that was constructed in 1935 and due to the emerging law and order situation 'concrete steps' should have been taken for the protection of it and APP offices. "We are deranged and upset over the damages done to the Radio Pakistan and APP offices in Peshawar and urge for the arrest of culprits" the statement said.

## Railways to complete Sibi-Harnai track by next month

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways was putting maximum effort to complete the reconstruction and renovation work on the strategic Sibi-Harnai railway track with the assistance of the National Logistics Cell (NLC) and hopefully, it would be operational by the end of next month.

"The railway track was made dysfunctional after a series of bomb blasts which damaged as many as 22 steel bridges in the highly rugged and inaccessible area," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He said the track was badly damaged in 2006 and so far about 99 per cent of the reconstruction work of the project was completed and the remaining work would be completed soon.

The official said that Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique had also taken a keen interest in the projects and directed the concerned official to complete the project at the earliest.

In March 2016, he said that a contract for rehabilitation and restoration of the Sibi-Harnai railway track along with the up-gradation of railway stations was awarded to the NLC as no other construction firm agreed to undertake the project due to the prevalent security situation and enormity of the task. During the initial survey of the track, the official said it was found that 22 steel bridges of different sizes were destroyed and required replacement.

He said in addition, massive river protection work was to be undertaken to save the infrastructure. The quantum of work, non-availability of road access, and requisite resources made the project a formidable challenge, he added.

## Police arrest Qasim Suri from Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former deputy speaker of National Assembly Qasim Suri has been arrested.

As per details, police has taken the PTI leader Qasim Suri in custody from Gilgit Baltistan house Islamabad.

Islamabad police earlier hinted at more arrests of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders following the violent protests and vandalism after Imran Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

According to Islamabad police spokesperson, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Asad Umar, Fawad Chaudhry, Jamsheed Iqbal Cheema, Musarrat Cheema, Falak Naz Chitrali and Malika Bukhari have been arrested for 'provoking' people for violent protests. All the arrests were made in accordance with the law, the spokesperson added.

Warning the PTI leaders to avoid spreading chaos, the Islamabad police hinted at more arrests in the future.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vice chairman and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi was taken into custody by police in Islamabad. Qureshi's arrest was an addition to the tally as several PTI leaders including former Governor Punjab Omer Sarfraz Cheema, PTI secretary general Asad Umar and PTI Vice President Fawad Chaudhry were already apprehended by police.

## At least 350 'miscreants' arrested in Karachi amid PTI strike call

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Following the protest call of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), at least 350 miscreants has been arrested in Karachi.

In a press conference, the Inspector General (IG) of Sindh, Ghulam Nabi Memon, has issued a stern warning to the violent protestors that strict action will be taken against anyone found guilty of spreading violence and creating chaos in the metropolis.

"Those who are involved in disturbing the peace and security of Karachi will not be spared," Memon said. "We have already registered 20 cases and taken around 350 individuals into custody. With the help of CCTV footage, we will identify those who are guilty and release innocent people."

The IG further said that many people have not been arrested after identification, but the authorities are working tirelessly to arrest the perpetrators.

He said that the recent strike called by the PTI after the former prime minister Imran Khan arrest in Islamabad, the entire city remained open and operated as usual.

# PTI central leaders shifted to Adiala Jail

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) central leaders including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Umar, Fawad Chaudhry and others have been shifted to Adiala Jail.

The PTI leaders who had been arrested under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Section 16 were shifted to Adiala Jail. The leaders included Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Umar, Fawad Chaudhry, Jamsheed Iqbal Cheema, Falak Naz Chitrali, Musarrat Jamsheed Cheema and Maleeka Bokhari.

Earlier, Islamabad police said in a statement that

actions are underway against those who incited people for riots and violent protests after Imran Khan's arrest.

Police said that all arrests were made in accordance with the legal procedures and more arrests are likely to be made.

Earlier in the day, PTI vice chairman and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was taken into custody by police in Islamabad.

As per details, Shah Mahmood Qureshi was arrested from Gilgit Baltistan House in Islamabad, soon after the riots erupted across Pakistan following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

Qureshi's arrest was an

addition to the tally as several PTI leaders including former Governor Punjab Omer Sarfraz Cheema, PTI secretary general Asad Umar and PTI Vice President Fawad Chaudhry were already apprehended by police.

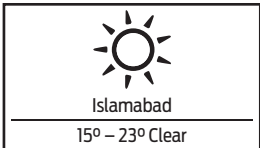
Yesterday, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Rawalpindi sent 52 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers to Adiala Jail on judicial remand in connection with the cases related to violent protests after Imran Khan's arrest.

Rawalpindi police lodged cases against PTI workers over violent protests after Imran Khan's arrest. Police said that overall seven cases were registered at City, Waris Khan and

Morgah, RE Bazaar, Sadiqabad and New Town police stations under the anti-terrorism act and other sections.

Police claimed to arrest 190 PTI activists for staging violent protests. 52 out of 190 PTI workers were produced before the ATC.

The ATC sent the 52 political activists to jail on judicial remand. Former provincial minister Raja Basharat was among 15 nominated persons. Other PTI leaders were also nominated in the cases which include Fayyazul Hassan Chohan, Arif Abbasi, Ijaz Khan, Sheikh Rashid Shafiq, Umar Tanveer Butt, Wasiq Qayyum and Rashid Hafeez.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	3:36 am
Zohr	12:04 pm
Asr	4:58 pm
Maghrib	6:58 pm
Isha	8:33 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Enquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

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MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
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PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
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RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

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E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

**Omar Sarfraz Cheema sent on 14-day judicial remand**

**City Desk**

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court on Thursday sent former Punjab governor and PTI leader Omar Sarfraz Cheema to a 14-day judicial remand after he had been arrested in vandalism case a day ago.

Judge Abhar Gul heard the case and police produced Mr Cheema and 12 others before the court. The court remanded 12 accused on a seven-day judicial remand for investigation.

Earlier, an Anti-Corruption Establishment Punjab team had arrested Mr Cheema. According to anti-corruption officials, Mr Cheema had been arrested from his residence early in the morning.

Mr Cheema had been accused of misusing his powers as governor and giving his sister a share by forging the family registration certificate.

According to the family of the PTI leader, 'unknown' men in plainclothes took Mr Cheema into custody. They did not inform on which charges they took Omar Cheema into custody, the family added.

**COMSTECH and Ibadat Int'l University enter into MoU to strengthen cooperation**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) Ibadat International University, Islamabad signed memorandum of understanding. The Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and the Rector of the Ibadat International University, Prof. Dr. Syed Amir Gilani signed the MoU at COMSTECH Secretariat.

Both institutions have agreed to promote and strengthen cooperation by providing a platform for collaborative activities in the relevant fields of mutual interest.

Under this MoU both institutions will develop and implement joint educational and scientific programs in the field of science, technology and innovation. They will collaborate in organizing national and international events,

such as workshops, conferences, symposia, seminars, exhibitions, training course. The Ibadat international university will join COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence (CCoE) as Associate Member and will register at OIC Technology and Innovation Portal.

Ibadat International University will be able to get benefit from the COMSTECH Distinguished Scholars Programme. COMSTECH will arrange visits of distinguished scholars to Ibadat International University to deliver lectures, short courses, conducting workshops, training courses along with the placement of students, academic and scientific personnel as well.

COMSTECH will help Ibadat University in developing faculty through sabbatical visits, and will provide training and consultation for the establishment of Science Park.

COMSTECH will develop a programme in association with Ibadat International University through which young research-



ers/students from OIC Member Countries particularly from Africa will visit Ibadat International University to conduct research for 6-12 months' duration.

**GB chief minister put under house arrest in Islamabad**

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Khalid Khursheed was put under house arrest in the federal capital on Thursday.

A notification was issued by the office of the Chief Commissioner, Islamabad. The GB provincial chief executive has been detained at the GB Islamabad House. A good number of policemen have been deployed outside the GB House to prevent any untoward situation.

The detention follows deadly unrest in the country after the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan who is also chairman of the PTI.

The GB CM represents the PTI in the province. The GB police were also sent to Lahore's Zaman Park residence of the PTI chief as 'protective shield' to prevent his arrest.

**Torch Relay**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari gave torch to Olympian Sadaf Siddiqui during ceremony of 34th National Games Torch Relay here at Pakistan Sports Complex, as organized by Islamabad Olympic Association, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

**Turkmenistan sent humanitarian aid to Afghanistan**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: According to the Order of the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov, a humanitarian caravan with a cargo of medicines and medical supplies, food and textile products weighing about 125 tons free of charge left Turkmenistan on May 11, 2023 for Afghanistan.

Also, by the Decree of the President of Turkmenistan, as part of this humanitarian action, a group of medical workers of the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan is sent to provide medical and advisory assistance in the maternity hospital built by Turkmenistan in 2016 as a humanitarian aid in the village



of Turgundi in Herat province from May 15 this year.

This comprehensive humanitarian action, based on the primordial humanistic tradi-

tions and principles of the Turkmen people, is a continuation of the consistent activities of the Turkmen state to support Afghanistan for many

years, and also serves to further develop traditionally friendly, fraternal and good neighborly relations between the Turkmen and Afghan peoples.

**Prosperous, strong, democratic Pakistan is critical to US interests: State Department**

**News Desk**

WASHINGTON: US State Department principal deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel while briefing the newsmen in Washington on Thursday said that a prosperous and strong, democratic Pakistan is critical to US interests.

He said that Pakistan continues to be an important partner of the US in the region - an important trade partner, an important security partner - and we continue to engage with our Pakistani counterparts on a number of issues.

Replying to a question regarding current unrest in Pakistan, he said we are



monitoring the situation in Pakistan closely, and as the US has said before, we do not have a favored candidate or a favored political party, not just in Pakistan but as it relates to any government system around the world.

He said that a safe and secure, prosperous Pakistan is in the interest of US and we call for the respect of democratic principles and the rule of law around

the world.

Replying to a question regarding shutting down social media platforms in Pakistan, he said that the issues of human rights and press freedom were taken up with Pakistan.

Replying to yet another question, he said that we are looking to continue to strengthen economic ties between our two countries by expanding private sector trade and investment, and there's also an important security collaboration and areas of collaboration on renewable energy, addressing the climate crisis, increasing agricultural trade, and a number of areas.

**Business community wants conducive atmosphere for revival of ailing economy**

**City Desk**

LAHORE: The business community urged the leadership across the political divide to resolve issues at the earliest and provide a conducive business atmosphere for revival of the ailing economy.

Pakistan Stone Development Company's member board of directors Khadim Hussain said while speaking at a gathering of the business community "Pakistan is facing the worst economic crisis. The ever-increasing trade deficit and fast-depleting foreign exchange reserves are a matter of concern".

He said that businesses are facing difficulties even in managing day-to-day affairs. The situation is only going from bad to worse due to the prolonged political unrest.

We first need to make our own house in order as political instability directly affects the economy and businesses.

The prevailing scenario, Khadim Hussain said, is not only affecting foreign direct investment but also discouraging local enterprises from implementing plans of expansion. As such, both the opposition and the ruling coalition partners should sit together for ending the prevailing standoff in the larger national interest."

Mr Hussain, who is also an executive committee member of the LCCI and chief executive officer of Hussain Trading Company, urged the government to devise a doable strategy for the revival of the economy and businesses after due consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

**Amin appreciates GSMA's role to facilitate telecom industry**

**News Desk**



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin-ul-Haque on Thursday appreciated the active role of global system for mobile communication (GSMA) to promote and facilitate the telecommunication industry in Pakistan.

The Minister in a meeting with the head of public policy, GSMA Asia Pacific Jeanette Whyte discussed various issues including the initiatives and policies of the Ministry of IT regarding the telecommunication sector in Pakistan.

The universal service fund chief executive officer Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary and country lead digital transformation GSMA Pakistan Saira Faisal was also present on the occasion.

**Riphah University and RCCI signed an MoU**

**Tahir Rasheed**

ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between ORIC Riphah International University and Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The signing ceremony took place at Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Rawalpindi, and the MOU has been signed by President, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Saqib Rafiq, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academics RIPHAAH, Prof Dr. Yawar Hayat Khan.



The ceremony was attended by Director ORIC RIPHAAH and her team and Vice Presidents of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The MOU outlines the collaboration between RIPHAAH and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation, conducting joint research projects and workshops, providing internships and employment for students, and organizing joint events to enhance the local business community's knowledge and skills.

**Police raid PTI's regional office in Lahore**

**City Desk**

LAHORE: As the crackdown on the PTI intensifies, police on Wednesday raided the party's office at Jail Road and arrested office staff.

Reports said that the police had taken PTI central Punjab president Dr Yasmin Rashid's media coordinator Naveed Ansari, and office's guard and cook as well.

**Islamabad Police arrest 80 miscreants**



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Police have arrested a total of 80 miscreants who were damaging government and public properties in reaction to the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chief Imran Khan.

According to the Spokesman of Islamabad Police, the violent protesters were involved in setting fire to the Tarnol Railway Station, Aerial firing and pulling the track of Pakistan Railways from different points of the Federal Capital.

He said earlier, Islamabad Police had arrested around 108 protesters involved in arson.

Meanwhile, in a tweet, the Islamabad Police said all the roads were open for travellers and the flow of traffic was normal.

The Islamabad Police has also urged all citizens to respect the law as Section 245 was in force in the federal capital for the safety of life and property of the masses as well as the security of the government institutions. He said Pakistan Army, Rangers, Frontier Constabulary and Islamabad Police were authorized to take action against the culprits involved in any kind of illegal activities.

Prove to be a good citizen of the country and respect the law. The law is equal for all and it is the responsibility of everyone to obey it, Islamabad Police said.

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# Time to explore additional resources to fulfill demands of rising population

**Fakhar Alam**

**E**xerting an extraordinary pressure on socioeconomic, food and civic resources, Pakistan's population was rising with a fast pace, making it the seventh largest populous country in the world and second in Muslim states after Indonesia.

Annually growing at about a two percent rate, the country's population has recently touched the psychological barrier of about 233.045 million.

The population bulge has not only overburdened educational institutions, health-care units, motorways, and employment institutions but also caused the shrinking of forests, and depletion of water and agriculture resources in the wake of climate change challenges.

The first national population census disclosed that Pakistan's total population was only 75 million in 1951 and 93 million in 1961 (Incl East Pakistan), 65.3 million in 1972 (Excl East Pakistan), 80.68 million in 1981, 134.8 million in 1998 and it further jumped to a record 207.9 million in 2017, thus showing a record increase of 132.9 million during 65 years.

He warned if the present trend of populace growth continued, the country may cross around 260.3 million population in 2030 and 330.8 million by 2050 mark and in such a scenario, people's access to clean drinking water, quality health-care, education, roads, Govt employment and food services would become merely a dream.

Citing the world bank report, Dr Naeem said the poverty was expected to reach about 37.2 percent (\$3.65 per day) this year in the country.

Causing huge USD 40 billion losses to Pakistan, the last year's flood also affected over 33 million people and around nine million may fall below the poverty line this year.

He said about 20pc Pakistanis i.e. 55 million were reportedly living below the poverty line and suggested a cut on unnecessary expenditures, development budget and imports bill on luxury goods in the wake of a shabby economy.

He said Pakistan was passing through difficult economic challenges and "we need to explore the KP's God-given natural resources including hydel, gemstones, olive cultivation, marble and vast lands to generate employment opportunities for youth."

A KP Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BIT) spokesman told APP that around 14 trillion ton of marble, limestone, dolomite, soapstone, silica and other mineral resources' potential existed in KP. Besides around 70 million carats of gemstones and 1.10 billion bbls of oil reserves potential, he said KP was also blessed with a potential of about 7.5 million tons production of maize, wheat, sugarcane and tobacco per year while its southern districts including Karak, Hangu, Kohat, Bannu, Lakki Marwat and Waziristan carried around 16 trillion cubic feet natural gas reserves.

The northern KP has plenty of suitable sites for the construction of small and

large dams with the potential to generate about 30,000MW of hydropower electricity that could turn around the country's economy besides fulfilling the water and agriculture requirements of the ever-growing population.

"As many as 8,813,025 metric tons (MT) of marble had been produced in 2017-18, 7,990,473MT in 2018-19, 7,700,855MT in 2019-20 and 478,100 MT in 2021-22 (March-July) in Pakistan where marble exports recorded as \$31,030 in 2016, \$28,166 in 2017, \$26,403 in 2018, \$25,377 in 2019, \$17,204 in 2020 and \$24,679 in 2021 besides about USD 3.7 billion annual gemstones exports," according to Economic Survey of Pakistan.

Tariq Waheed, senior geologist of the mines and mineral department told APP that geographical mapping of unexplored mines and mineral deposits in different districts of the province was started with the assistance of the Geological Survey of Pakistan.

Besides exploration studies of lithium metal in Chitral, he said the mapping of a 5,000 square kilometer area in the province including Chitral and 600 sq km area in the Orakzai and Kurram districts was completed.

Mineral and marble testing laboratories were being equipped with modern machinery with an estimated cost of Rs93 million, he said, adding a mineral complex would be established at Hayaatabad where one window facilities and consultancy services would be provided to investors besides granting of a lease for exploration of emerald gemstones of

Rs510 million for Swat.

Waheed said last year, around Rs7 billion in revenue was collected from the mines and mineral sector and reiterated that it could be increased by Rs20 billion per annum if modern technology was used.

Exploration of decorative stones in Mohmand, Bajaur and Khyber, metallic minerals including gold, silver, manganese, iron and chromite, development of rare metallic mines, coal, marbles, platinum, silver and gold reservoirs in Orakzai and strengthening of Project Management Unit (PMU) was completed.

Marble cities on 350 acres in Mohmand and Buner were being constructed to facilitate over 1,000 marble and allied industrial units. Over 28 units have already started production in Marble City Risalpur while 20 and 70 percent portions of Rashakai and Nowshera SEZ respectively while a Salt and Gypsum City are to be established in Karak.

Ahmad Syed, Senior Planning Officer, Agriculture Department told APP that it was high time to shift from conventional to mechanized agriculture farming and palm oil cultivation plants to meet the food requirements of the rising population.

"We produce about 20 percent edible production of the country's total requirement and spend approximately US\$ 4 billion annually on its imports," he said, adding, unfortunately, olive was being cultivated on only 12,000 hectares against four million hectares of land suitable for its farming.



## Syria reconstruction would bring huge benefits for the region

**Dr. Majid Rafizadeh**

**E**xtended domestic conflicts can have a devastating impact on a country's infrastructure, economy, safety and the living standards of its people.

Often, once the conflict finally ends, it can still take many years to rebuild the affected nation, its economy and its infrastructure. One example is Syria, which is currently suffering one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time.

The February earthquake, which inflicted an estimated \$5.1 billion of damage in Syria, has further exacerbated the situation caused by more than 12 years of civil war. Even before that disaster, more than two-thirds of the Syrian population needed humanitarian assistance, according to UNICEF, due to the "worsening economic crisis, continued localized hostilities, mass displacement and devastated public infrastructure."

UNICEF stated last month: "Now, the country is also grappling with severe human and material damage from catastrophic earthquakes and aftershocks ... that have left families in urgent need of food, water, shelter, and emergency medical and psychosocial assistance. Around 90 percent of families in the country live in poverty, while more than 50 percent are food insecure. The economic crisis is worsening negative coping mechanisms and particularly affecting female-headed households while contributing to the normalization of gender-based violence and child exploitation."

The estimated reconstruction cost for Syria is up to \$1 trillion. The longevity of the conflict has played a critical role in imposing significant damage on the country's infrastructure and economy. Several concentric circles of violence were also occurring at the same time, prolonging the conflict. Many rebel groups were not only fighting the government, but also each other, and some proxy and militia groups from other countries became engaged in the domestic war. Meanwhile, there was a global stalemate on reaching a resolution between the US and other Western countries on the one hand and Russia and China on the other. In addition, global terror groups such as Daesh gained prominence at different points during the conflict.

But after more than a decade of turmoil, it is now important, for several reasons, that the international community focuses on measures that can help rebuild Syria.

First of all, it is important to point out that, when a country's economy is impacted to such a significant level, it also has negative effects on other countries in the region. As the World Bank reported in 2020, the conflict in Syria has imposed "a heavy economic and social toll on the country's neighbors in the Mashreq region. From 2011 onward, average annual gross domestic product growth rates were reduced by 1.2 percentage points in Iraq, 1.6 percentage points in Jordan, and 1.7 percentage points in Lebanon in real terms solely because of the conflict in Syria. Cumulatively, these reductions correspond to 11.3 percent of the combined pre-conflict (2010) GDPs across the three countries."

It added: "The fallout was transmitted through multiple channels. With decreasing transit trade through Syria and stalling service exports like tourism, the marginal effect of the trade shock on GDP reached -3.1 percentage points in Jordan and -2.9 percentage points in Lebanon."

In other words, moves to reconstruct and rebuild Syria would not only help improve the living standards of the Syrian people and address the widespread poverty across the country, but they would also assist neighboring countries, particularly Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan, in improving their economic outlook.

Secondly, there may be some concerns that

financial assistance or loans diverted to Syria may not end up being utilized for the reconstruction of the country. But this issue can be resolved if global financial institutions were to monitor the situation and cooperate with the private sector. One important step would be to help expand the private sector in Syria.

Before the conflict erupted, the World Bank Group provided "support to Syria through its technical assistance and advisory services on private sector development, human development, social protection, and environmental sustainability. Following the onset of the conflict in 2011, all World Bank operational activity and missions to Syria were halted. Nonetheless, the World Bank monitors the impact of the conflict on the Syrian people and the economy in consultation with other members of the international community. This helps inform international thinking on Syria from an economic and social perspective and build preparedness for post-agreement recovery efforts, when and if mandated."

Thirdly, rebuilding Syria would help promote security in the country, due to the fact that poverty and conflict-stricken states can often be ripe locations for terror and militia groups to grow, gain power and inflict damage on the country and broader region.

Finally, if the international community were to concentrate on rebuilding Syria, it would also indirectly help to resolve the Syrian refugee crisis. After more than 12 years of conflict, Syria remains the largest refugee crisis in the world. The UN Refugee Agency reported in March that more than "14 million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes in search of safety. More than 6.8 million Syrians remain internally displaced in their own country, where 70 percent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance and 90 percent of the population live below the poverty line."

## Macron must cede some power if he is to save French democracy

**Zaid M. Belbagi**

**I**n 1958, Charles de Gaulle heaved himself out of retirement to bring France's fractured politics under control. With it, the French people, who overwhelmingly voted for his constitutional changes, ushered in the markedly presidential Fifth Republic.

This system, often compared to a monarchy due to the overarching powers it bestows upon the president, has served France well for the best part of 65 years. However, it is becoming increasingly controversial for its capacity to facilitate unilateral government. For example, following months of protests and public anger, the constitution's role in facilitating President Emmanuel Macron's controversial pension reforms have put it under the spotlight, as protesters chant "Down with the Fifth Republic."

Macron lost the sheen of a fresh-faced reformer a year into his first term. Pursuing systemic public spending reforms that rocked the very tenets of the French state, his quest was not aided by his swift adoption of the autocratic tendencies of his Bourbon predecessors. While his first term was characterized by the grueling regular marches of the Yellow Vest movement, it seems his second will bear the scars of his top-down pension system overhaul.

Economic stagnation thereafter, however, saw the growth of the far right and, with it, the dwindling popularity of France's presidents, from Jacques Chirac to Macron. The public's disillusion with this system was initially targeted at individual presidents, but is now aimed at a system that is seen to empower the empowered and is removed from any notions of equality, which French citizens hold dear. This is no more pertinent than in the powers enshrined by the constitution, which are increasingly outdated.

Amid the tumult of the late 1950s, De Gaulle and his Cabinet were granted six months to rule by decree. Article 49.3 came to guarantee this autocratic facility as required. While it is unlikely that De Gaulle envisaged its regular use, France's current Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne has employed it 11 times over the last 10 months.

The current furor surrounding the raising of the retirement age is a clear illustration of the shortcomings of a system in which parliament can often seem irrelevant. The lowest unemployment rate in decades and France's growing role as a financial services hub have done little to temper public anger at a system that modern French citizens see as overly centralized and perpetuating a technocratic elite with a "born-to-rule" political philosophy, which they see as being embodied by Macron.

President Macron's political isolation led to his electoral struggles last summer, which saw gains for the extreme left and right. Even then, before his foray into pension reform, the far left called for a "Sixth Republic" to neuter the powers of what its leader, Jean-Luc Melenchon, has described as the "monarch president." As Macron continues to rely upon the unpopular facets of the hyper-presidential system, he is empowering populist extremists who may very well inherit the same authoritarian powers should the president continue to founder.

France's pension reforms will be a reality from September. However, how Macron will see out the next four years amid such levels of public anger is a real concern. Forever chasing the big idea and seeking to tackle controversial political issues in the hope of enshrining his political legacy, the most rewarding path open to Macron is to seek a more inclusive political system in the time he has left in office. Fathering a new constitution — and thereby a new republic — is the greatest career achievement he can hope for; the only question is whether he will surrender some power to save French democracy.

# Saudi Arabia and Netherlands sign MoU to collaborate on green energy

Spokesman Report

RIYADH: Green hydrogen production has received a boost as Saudi Arabia signed a memorandum of understanding with the Netherlands on Thursday to cooperate in developing the clean gas and expediting the global pursuit to reduce the carbon footprint.

The MoU was signed on the sidelines of the World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam.

During the event, Abdulaziz bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's energy minister, said that the Netherlands could be the primary destination for transporting hydrogen from renewable energy sources from the Kingdom to Europe.

The minister also added that Netherlands and Germany would be Saudi Arabia's "natural partners" in the green hydrogen trade.

"You are putting facilities on the



ground, you are building storages and pipelines, you have a plan," said the minister, Reuters reported.

Green hydrogen is expected to play a crucial role in catalyzing the ongoing energy transition, and it is necessary

to achieve a green gas-neutral economy by 2050, helping to combat global warming.

Saudi Arabia is currently developing a \$5 billion green hydrogen project in NEOM, powered by renewable ener-

gy, to supply 650 tons of carbon-free hydrogen daily. The plant will see its first production in 2026.

The project will export hydrogen in the form of liquid ammonia to the world market for use as a biofuel that feeds transportation systems.

Earlier in April, the Saudi minister met with Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra to discuss the possibility of making the port of Rotterdam the gateway for clean hydrogen exports from Saudi Arabia to Europe.

The meeting also touched on the Kingdom's efforts in clean energy and climate change through its local and regional frameworks — the Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative. Affirming its progress in renewable energy production, Saudi Arabia's SABIC Agri-Nutrients, in May, exported its first shipment of low-carbon ammonia to India.

## Election campaign for early presidential elections begins in Uzbekistan

Spokesman Report

TASHKENT: The Central Election Commission of Uzbekistan today announced the start of a campaign for early presidential elections in Uzbekistan are scheduled for 9 July.

Political parties must apply for registration of their authorized representatives by 13 May and submit documents for participation in elections by 15 May.

The party must nominate its candidates from 17 May to 1 June. Candidate registration documents must be submitted to the CEC by 2 June. Registration must end on 6 June.

In accordance with the legislation of Uzbekistan, only political parties have the right to nominate a candidate for president. Now there are five parties registered in the country.



## Shazia Butt was elected as a councilor from Chatham Hill Manchester



Aarif Chaudhary

MANCHESTER: Shazia Butt works for women's rights from Chatham Hill Manchester, was elected as a councilor with 2605 votes. She is also the Deputy Executive for Early Years Children and youth. Prominent business, political and social personalities went to his house and congratulated him. Other friends in the delegation included Arshad Mahmood Chaudhry—Javed Aslam Chaudhry—Raja Zaheer—Chaudhry Muhammad Anwar Khan—Zahid Fakhr Butt—Azhar Mahmood—Yasir Mahmood—Yasin Mahmood—Yousuf Mahmood—Chaudhry Sadaf Zaid Ghorsi—Mian Afzal—Chaudhry Habib Rehman—Chaudhry Moazzam Anwar Kisana—Chaudhry Imran Ashraf Kisana—Fa Zaim Akhtar—Muhammad Umar Zeib—Hisham Javed—Aqib Hussain—Faisal Hussain—Kashif Hussain—Danish Hussain—Arsalan Hussain—Hasher Javed—Hatim Javed—Umar Zeib—All the personalities included in the delegation congratulated Shazia Butt on winning the councilor election with a huge majority and expressed hope that Councilor Shazia Butt will continue to serve the Tara community. We are proud of the victory of Shazia Butt. It is the fortune of the community living in the ward to be a councilor of a public figure like her. I will not disappoint the community and will use all resources for the betterment of the community. Finally, the guests were treated to Asian cuisine.

# Protest held in Brussels against G20 upcoming meeting in Srinagar

Aarif Chaudhary

BRUSSELS: A protest camp was set up on Thursday, May 11, 2023 at the European headquarters, Brussels against the Indian announcement of holding the G20 meeting in Srinagar, the capital of Illegally Occupied Kashmir.

Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) organized this protest in front of European External Action Service (European Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Among the organizers and participants of the protest camp are Chairman Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) Ali Raza Syed, senior Kashmiri leader Sardar Siddique, Pakistani intellectual Rao Mustajab, senior leader of PPP Belgium Malik Ajmal and other personalities former member of Brussels parliament Dr Manzoor Zahoor, political and social activists Shazia Aslam, Fared Khan, Saleem



Ahmad, Zaheer Zahid, Mahar Nadeem and Raja Abdul Qayyum. A number of children were also present on the occasion in order to express their solidarity with the oppressed people of Kashmir and convey their extreme dislike against Indian brutal actions in the occupied Kashmir.

Meanwhile, several Europeans passing by the protest camp questioned the purpose of the camp to which the organizers explained the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir.

On the occasion, the Chairman Kashmir Coun-

cil EU Ali Raza Syed said that the Occupied Kashmir is part of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir and holding an international event in a disputed territory is a violation of the UN Charter and international norms.

By strongly rejecting the Indian action, Chair of KC-EU Ali Raza reminds the world that Jammu and Kashmir is an issue that has been on the UNSC's agenda for more than seven decades.

International community including European Union should play its suitable role for just and peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue, Chair of KC-EU demanded.

Kashmir but fact is that Kashmir's problem is an internationally recognized issue and international law and UN Security Council resolutions are still viable in the context.

Ali Raza Syed said, Kashmiris have grave concerns on India's decision to hold the G20 Tourism Working Group meeting in the illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) on 22-24 May this year.

He said, through such attempt, India wants to continue its illegitimate occupation of Jammu and

## 21 companies have been deprived of their IT Park resident status



News Desk

TASHKENT: Organizations that have become residents undertake to carry out activities in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations on the procedure for organizing the activities of IT Park, approved by Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers from 15 July 2019 No. 589, and fulfill obligations under the Agreement on the conditions of activity IT Park resident.

Thanks to the special tax regime created in Uzbekistan for IT companies, the number of IT Park residents is growing.

According to the press service, companies that violate the requirements of the Regulations are deprived of their resident status, and tax benefits are canceled with the subsequent restoration of obligations to pay them to the State Budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the prescribed manner.

## Spain to ban some outdoor working

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Spain will ban some outdoor working during extreme heat conditions, Labour Minister Yolanda Diaz said on Wednesday, as the country faces high temperatures more frequently as a result of climate change.

The ban will be in place when the national weather agency AEMET issues an alert warning about a severe or extreme risk of high temperatures. The measure will affect outdoors working such as street cleaning and agriculture, the Labour Ministry added.

"We have already seen many episodes, certainly very serious ones, in cleaning and waste collection in which workers have died from heat strokes," Diaz told reporters.

Climate change is already affecting people, so the government has to act, she said.

## China deeply concerned about escalation of Israel-Palestine conflict: Wang Wenbin

News Desk



BEIJING: China on Thursday expressed deep concern about the escalation of Israel-Palestine conflict and called on the international community, especially countries with influence, to play an effective role and work together to cool down the situation.

"China is deeply concerned about the escalation of conflict between Israel and Palestine and the death and injuries of many innocent civilians," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing held at International Press Center (IPC). "We urge relevant parties, Israel in particular, to stay calm and exercise maximum restraint and immediately end hostilities to prevent any further escalation," he said.

Commending the mediation efforts by Egypt and others, he said, "We call on the international community, especially countries with influence, to play an effective role and work together to cool down the situation."

According to reports, Israel launched air strikes against the Gaza Strip on May 10, resulting in casualties. Armed groups in the Gaza Strip fired about 400 rockets at Israel. Egypt is now mediating for a ceasefire.

## At UN, Pakistan slams India's decision to hold G20 meetings in Kashmir

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has strongly protested India's decision to hold Group of 20 meetings in the UN-recognized disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir later this month, and urged New Delhi not to misuse its position as chair of the body of world's largest economies to "advance their own national agenda." "These stage-managed events are designed to project a false normalcy in occupied Jammu & Kashmir," Ambassador Munir Akram told an ambassadorial-level meeting of the Group of 77, which now has 134 members and is the United Nations' biggest intergovernmental group of emerging countries.

India currently holds the rotating year-long presidency of the G20 and is set to host a leaders' summit in New Delhi in early September.

## Negotiations

Turkmenistan: Within the framework of the two-day state visit of the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov to the Republic of Tajikistan, the Turkmen-Tajik summit talks were held, which began in the one-on-one format.



# Commissioning of frigates help safeguard international maritime sea lanes: Chinese expert

News Desk

BEIJING: Pakistan's geographical location is very important, and the commissioning of four Type 054A/Ps frigates built by China for Pakistan Navy can help safeguard international maritime sea lanes, said Chinese military expert Song Zhongping.

China delivered two Type 054A/P frigates to Pakistan on Wednesday, indicating that all four warships of this class have

been commissioned into the Pakistan Navy.

"The program is a mark of the enduring China-Pakistan friendship and the high-level defense cooperation between the two countries. The vessels are expected to serve Pakistan's seaward defense as well as safeguard regional peace and stability," analysts told Global Times.

A joint delivery and commissioning ceremony for the two Type 054A/P frigates was held

in the Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard in Shanghai.

The two newly built Type 054A/P frigates, namely the PNS Tippu Sultan and the PNS Shahjahan, were commissioned into the Pakistan Navy.

The first ship of this class, the PNS Tughril, was inducted into the Pakistan Navy in December 2021, and the second ship, the PNS Taimur, was inducted in June 2022.

According to experts, the

Type 054A/P is one of the latest multi-role frigates of Chinese origin, equipped with the state-of-the-art weapons and sensors that include CM-302 surface-to-surface missiles and LY-80 surface-to-air missiles as well as an Advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare suite and Combat Management System, enabling ships of this class to operate under multi-threat scenarios.

In his comment over delivery of the two frigates, Song told

Global Times that it also means that the Pakistan Navy's main combat vessels are now superior to their main competitors in terms of comprehensive combat capabilities.

According to experts, as a maritime nation, Pakistan has substantial stakes in keeping its seas safe and secure, including the operationalization of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the global energy highway.



## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
41,325.63	41,074.95	
Day's High	Day's Low:	
41,498.77	41,074.95	
Index Value	Change	
2,421,129,640	+250.68	
Percentage	Time	
+0.61%	11 May, 2023 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,730.58	-10.75	
Percentage	Time	
-0.14%	11 May, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
33,285.00	-246.33	
Percentage	Time	
-0.73%	11 May, 12:40 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
29,126.72	+4.54	
Percentage	Time	
+0.016%	11 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	192.5	194.5
Bahrain Dinar	769.97	777.97
Canadian Dollar	214	216.2
China Yuan	41.76	42.16
Danish Krone	42.63	43.03
Euro	318	321
Hong Kong Dollar	36.97	37.37
Indian Rupee	3.53	3.88
Japanese Yen	2.2	2.25
Kuwaiti Dinar	944.81	953.81
Malaysian Ringgit	64.94	65.54
New Zealand \$	183.93	185.93
Norwegians Krone	27.55	27.85
Omani Riyal	752.33	760.33
Qatari Riyal	79.54	80.24
Saudi Riyal	78	78.8
Singapore Dollar	215	217
Swedish Korona	28.29	28.59
Swiss Franc	324.91	327.41
Thai Bhat	8.6	8.75
U.A.E Dirham	80	80.9
UK Pound Sterling	364	367
US Dollar	302	305

# Pak-Iran gas pipeline is most important for Pakistan: Qureshi

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD : Minister of State for Industry and Production Tasneem Ahmad Qureshi has said that the completion of Pak-Iran gas pipeline is the most important need of the hour. Inshallah, our party will come to power and complete the pipeline. Economic conditions are changing, God willing, Pakistan will never default. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Tasneem Qureshi said that ten different departments are working under of the Ministry of Industry and soon he will issue instructions to the CEOs of these departments to cooperate with ICCI.

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that there is no scope for setting up new industry in the existing industrial zones of the federal capital and the plots have become very expensive. It is the need of the hour that the government should provide assistance in acquiring land in the vicinity of Islamabad for a new industrial estate. He further said that ICCI should be taken on board by the departments working under the Ministry of Industry and Production so



that the business community could provide input to further improve their performance to make them more profitable.

Vice President ICCI Engineer Azhar ul Islam said that the Ministry of Industry is very important and can be helpful for

improving the economic conditions of the country.

ICCI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik, Former President and Secretary General of UBG Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi, Mian Shaukat Masood, Khalid

Chaudhary, Saif ur Rahman Khan, Mahmood Waraich, Fayyaz Gul, Akhtar Abbasi, Zahid Qureshi, Babar Chaudhary, Malik Shabbir, Mirza Nisar and others also spoke on the occasion and gave useful suggestions for improving the country's economic situation.

# Naveed Qamar emphasizes significance of barter trade system for enhancing trade volume

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD :The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry organized a Pakistan-Ethiopia Business Forum in its auditorium during the visit of a high-level Ethiopian delegation to Islamabad. Syed Naveed Qamar, Federal Minister for Commerce and Misganu Arega Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia were the Chief Guests. Fausia Amin, Minister of State for Innovation & Technology and other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Syed Naveed Qamar, Federal Minister for Commerce emphasized the significance of the barter trade system for enhancing trade volume. He said that Pakistan is a potential market for foreign sectors and urged



that the Ethiopian business delegation should explore Pakistan for JVs and investment. He said that Pakistan's Look Africa policy would cover the whole of Africa to improve business relations with it.

Misganu Arega Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia said that Ethiopia attaches great importance to promoting business relations with Paki-

stan. He said that Ethiopia is the fastest growing economy in Africa and has made a 10 years economic development plan. He emphasized that Pakistani investors should explore his country for investment.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Ethio-

pia is less than US\$ 100 million, which is negligible given the actual potential of both countries. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Ethiopia including textiles, rice, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, surgical & medical equipment, sports goods and construction material.

H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan reiterated that they would continue to play a role for further improving business relations between both countries.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Ethiopia should increase industrial cooperation for mutual benefit.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI highlighted the investment potential in the real estate and construction

# SECP registers 1,760 companies in April '23

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 1,760 new companies in April 2023, bringing the total number of registered companies to 191,924. The total paid-up capital (capitalization) of the companies incorporated in April was Rs 2.9 billion.

Approximately 57 percent of businesses were registered as private limited companies, 41 percent as single-member businesses, and 2 percent companies were registered as limited liability partnerships, not-for-profit organizations, and unlisted public companies (LLP). Nearly 99.8% of businesses were registered online. The new registrations also included 70 foreign applicants.

Foreign investment has been reported in 67 new companies, having foreign investors from Afghanistan, Canada, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Jordan, South Korea, the Netherlands, Singapore, Slovakia Republic, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swit-

zerland, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, UAE, UK and US. Major chunk of investment was received from China with 36 companies, Germany, and South Korea with 04 each, Hong Kong, Turkey, South Africa, UK and US with 2 each, and in 13 companies from other countries.

The information technology sector took the lead with incorporation with 267 Companies, real estate development & construction with 228, trading with 222, services with 194, food & beverages with 93, e-commerce with 68, education with 62, tourism with 53, textile with 52, marketing & advertisement, and corporate agricultural farming with 42 each, engineering with 36, healthcare with 33, chemical with 31, pharmaceutical, and power generation with 30 each, mining & quarrying with 27, cosmetics & toiletries with 24, auto & allied with 22, broadcasting & telecasting with 20, communications, and fuel & energy with 19 each, transport with 17, lodging with 16, cables & electrical goods with 15, paper & board with 11, and 87 companies were registered in other sectors.

# Emirates Group announces 2022-23 results



**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Emirates Group today released its 2022-23 Annual Report, reporting its most profitable year ever on the back of strong demand across its businesses.

Emirates achieved new record profits, a complete turnaround from its loss position last year.

Both Emirates and dnata saw significant revenue increases in 2022-23 as the Group expanded its air transport and travel-related operations following the removal of nearly all pandemic-related restrictions around the world.

For the financial year ended 31 March 2023, the Emirates Group posted a record profit of AED 10.9 billion (US\$ 3.0 billion) compared with an AED 3.8 billion (US\$ 1.0 billion) loss for last year. The Group's revenue was AED 119.8 billion (US\$ 32.6 billion), an increase of 81% over last year's results. The Group's cash balance was AED 42.5 billion (US\$ 11.6 billion), the highest ever reported, up 65% from last year mainly due to strong demand across its core business divisions and markets.

HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive, Emirates airline and Group, said: "We're proud of our 2022-23 performance which is not only a full recovery, but also a record result.

This achievement would not have been possible without HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, whose leadership has been critical to our success today and through the years. The architect of Dubai's progressive economic policies, HH Sheikh Mohammed is also the engine behind the Emirates Group's trajectory. Without his drive and support, Emirates will be half the size of what we are today."

Commenting on the Group's 2022-23 turnaround performance, Sheikh Ahmed said: "We had anticipated the strong return of travel, and as the last travel restrictions lifted and triggered a tide of demand, we were ready to expand our operations quickly and safely to serve our customers.

# Illegal Occupation

ABBOTTABAD: A farmer is taking care of Cauliflower plants in Muslim Abad area in City.



Photo: Online

# AlHuda CIBE & Aman Academy Egypt inked Partnership Agreement

DUBAI: Learning Partnership Agreement between Aman Academy and AlHuda Centre of Islamic Banking and Economics (CIBE) has been inked. The Agreement was signed by Mr. Muhammad Zubair Mughal, CEO of AlHuda-CIBE and Mr. Osama Hegazy, Talent Development Manager of Aman Academy Egypt.

According to the Learning Partnership Agreement, both organizations made a joint commitment to cooperate in order to continue strengthening Egypt's financial market potential for Islamic banking and finance, as well as to offer Technical and Shariah advisory, training, and other services. This agreement will prove to be a tremendous step forward for Islamic banking and finance in Afri-

can nations, allowing Aman Academy to fully capitalize on AlHuda-CIBE's competence in the areas of Shariah advisory and consultancy, capacity building, and learning.

AlHuda Center of Islamic Banking and Finance, acknowledges that Islamic banking and finance is rapidly evolving in African countries, and views the Learning Partnership Agreement as a vital step in promoting Islamic banking and finance growth. The agreement will nurture the Islamic finance industry by providing the solutions to bolster the alternative sustainable and emerging financial system in Africa. The agreement will nurture the Islamic finance industry with a new service.

Muhammad Zubair Mughal, said that these moments are very rejoicing when AlHuda CIBE and Aman Academy enter in joint collaboration, we will pool our expertise and resources to achieve the optimum goal of promotion of Islamic finance in Africa. This step will surely benefit Islamic banking and finance in the financial industry. He further added that we will not only be confined to the only agreement rather this relation will be extended to other stakeholders of Islamic finance industry.

He added that according to this agreement, both organizations will work together for the improvement of the awareness regarding Islamic finance in the region. He further said that both organizations will

also work to strengthen the abilities to provide technical and Shariah advisory, research, training and other related services. He said that AlHuda CIBE is keeping an eye on Islamic finance industry of African countries. Furthermore, AlHuda CIBE and Aman Academy will mutually conduct training workshops on Islamic banking and finance by mutual consent.

About AlHuda CIBE: AlHuda Center of Islamic Banking and Economics (CIBE) is a well-recognized name in Islamic banking and finance industry for research and provide state-of-the-art Advisory Consultancy and Education through various well-recognized modes viz. Islamic Financial Prod-

uct Development, Shariah Advisory, Trainings Workshops, and Islamic Microfinance and Takaful Consultancies etc. side by side through our distinguished, generally acceptable and known Publications in Islamic Banking and Finance.

We are dedicated to serving the community as a unique institution, advisory and capacity building for the last twelve years. The prime goal has always been to remain stick to the commitments providing Services not only in UAE/Pakistan but all over the world. We have so far served in more than 35 Countries for the development of Islamic Banking and Finance industry. For further Details about AlHuda CIBE, please visit: www.alhudacibe.com

# Major trading partners have issued cautionary advisories

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI :President of country's top most trade & industry body FPCCI, Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, has unequivocally demanded to restore stability, certainty and law & order in the country as the business, commercial, trade, industry and economic activities have come to a standstill. We have nothing to do with politics; and, as matter of policy, FPCCI remains neutral in all political matters;

nonetheless, we need peace & normalcy in the country, he added.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh has said that he wants to apprise all the concerned quarters that major trading partner countries of Pakistan have issued cautionary and worrisome advisories vis-à-vis travel, trade and other business engagements with Pakistan. It is a nightmare and may have far-reaching negative implications for Pakistani trade & industry, he added.

