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Ali Pervaiz sworn in as minister of state



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Member of the National Assembly Ali Pervaiz took the oath of the office of Minister of State here on Friday.
President Asif Ali Zardari administered the oath to Ali Pervaiz in a ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.
The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, parliamentarians, and notables from different walks of life.
Ali Pervaiz was elected as MNA from NA-119 constituency of Lahore on the ticket of the Pakistan Muslim League-N in the recently held by-election.

Punjab CM Maryam attends Elite Force passing-out parade in police uniform

Maryam, on the occasion, announced cash prizes for the top performers.



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE
Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, addressing a passing-out parade ceremony of the Punjab Elite Force, stated on Friday that this force was the sapling planted by Nawaz and Shehbaz Sharif.
Maryam graced the ceremony at the Elite Force Training Centre in Bedian as the chief guest, donned in an elite force police uniform.
The chief minister inspected

the parade which was also attended by members of her cabinet and the Punjab inspector general.
Later, the chief minister addressed the ceremony where she expressed her delight on being at the parade.
She congratulated the successful police cadets, saying she was encouraged to see their passing-out parade as the chief minister.
Addressing the cadets, Maryam said, "I am one of

you. I have come to the [passing-out parade] ceremony wearing your uniform. This is not a uniform, but an emblem of national service very few people are honoured to have."
Maryam, on the occasion, announced cash prizes for the top performers.
The chief minister, addressing the girl cadets, stated that their parents trusted them and dedicated them [their daughters] to the national service.

COAS Asim Munir commends Pakistan hockey team for fine performance

Soon Times Correspondent RAWALPINDI
Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir received the Pakistan hockey team at the General Headquarters (GHQ) Rawalpindi on Friday.
The meeting was also attended by Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) President Tariq Hussain and other PHF officials, the Inter-Services Public Relations said in a statement.
During the interaction, the COAS commended the team for their outstanding performance, stating, "The hockey team has brought immense pride to the nation, and we are committed to providing them with comprehensive support to ensure their continued success." He extended his best wishes to the players for their future endeavours.
The PHF president expressed gratitude to the COAS for meeting and interacting with the team. Pakistan reached the final of the Azlan Shah Cup



2024 for the first time in 13 years. The team won silver medal in the tournament as Japan bagged gold medal by winning the final match.
PM Shehbaz and CM Maryam honour team
Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his optimism about the revival of hockey in the country at a ceremony held to honour the Pakistan hockey team for their outstanding performance in Azlan Shah tournament. He commended the team for its remarkable display on the field, emphasising that their achievement had made the nation proud.
The ceremony was attended by prominent figures including Federal Information Minister Atta Tarar, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, and former hockey players Shahbaz Senior, Samiullah, and Olympian Islahuddin.
PM Shehbaz Sharif greeted the players of the hockey team and honoured them for their excellent performance.



People to get new ID cards, renewal facility at UC level: Mohsin

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed the authorities concerned to prepare a plan for making the identity card system foolproof.
Interior Minister Naqvi visited the NADRA headquarters in Islamabad and met officials.
On this occasion, a meeting was held in which the proposals to make NADRA public-friendly were reviewed.
Naqvi directed for a plan to

make the identity cards system foolproof. He said the plan should be made to make it easy for people to get their ID cards without delay.
He directed officials to set up more NADRA centres in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Islamabad and Rawalpindi.
The interior minister said the facility of making and renewing identity cards would be given at the union council level. He said the biometric machines would be installed at the union council level across Pakistan.

Justice Muneeb to take oath as acting CJP as Justice Isa leaves for Azerbaijan



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa will visit Azerbaijan tomorrow (May 18) to attend the ECO Chief Justices Conference. During his visit till May 25, Justice Muneeb Akhtar will serve as the acting chief justice.
Justice Muneeb Akhtar will take the oath as the acting chief justice tomorrow. The oath-taking ceremony will be held in the Supreme Court Judges Block at 10:30 am.
Justice Yahya Afridi will administer the oath to Justice Muneeb Akhtar. Before leaving for his foreign visit, Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa has returned the protocol.

Court summons Ali Amin Gandapur in 'illegal weapons, alcohol case' on May 20



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Islamabad High Court (IHC) has directed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to appear in person before the court on May 20 regarding a case involving allegations of possessing weapons and alcohol.
During a hearing presided over by Judicial Magistrate Sohab Bilal of Islamabad district and session court, the court handed a questionnaire consisting of nine questions to Ali Gandapur's counsel, Zahoorul Hassan.
The questionnaire seeks responses from the accused regarding various aspects of the case.
Among the questions posed to Gandapur are inquiries about his awareness of the evidence and arguments presented by the prosecution during the hearing, as well as his involvement in a gathering that allegedly violated orders issued by the district magistrate on October 30, 2016.

Pakistan, China agree on more investment in CPEC, peace in region: FO



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Foreign Office Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said on Friday that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar had useful meetings with Chinese officials during his visit to China.
Both countries agreed on peace in the region and investment. Muntaz Zahra Baloch told the weekly news briefing that various investment issues including CPEC were discussed in the meetings of Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

Discussions were also held regarding work on the second part of CPEC. Various issues including regional peace and stability were discussed.
The Foreign Office said that during meetings of Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar with the Chinese authorities, both sides expressed their resolve to curb terrorism and eliminate forces that sabotaged peace.
She said India was involved in human rights violations in occupied Kashmir and Indian

forces were continuing their aggression in the occupied valley. The international community should take notice of the ongoing Indian atrocities in held Kashmir.
Baloch further said series of attacks on Palestinians in Gaza must be stopped forthwith. She said, "Pakistan welcomes the General Assembly resolution on Palestine's permanent membership in the United Nations," she added.

PTI leaders grill Punjab govt over injustice with

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD
Former National Assembly speaker and senior PTI leader Asad Qaiser said that the Punjab government should resolve the issues of farmers instead of making TikTok videos.
The opposition on Friday staged protest demonstration outside the Parliament House to show solidarity with the farmers.
Barrister Gohar, Sahibzada Hamid Raza and other leaders from the opposition benches participated in the protest.
Addressing the press conference, PTI leaders said that the farmers were arrested in Faisalabad when they met them.
"The farmers in Punjab don't have amount for the next crop and the government isn't procuring their



wheat," Sahibzada Hamid Raza said.
Asad Qaiser said that the PTI will not let the wheat crisis to die until the farmers get some relief. "We are standing with the farmers and government should be ashamed on its conduct," he said.
The PTI leaders said that they wanted to raise the issue in the house today but the session was prorogued in a hurry.
"The government prorogued the session just after the proceedings of 15 minutes today. We'll now raise the issue during the session called on June 5," Barrister Gohar said.

As a **CORRESPONDENT**

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Pak Hujjaj's departure for Makkah

Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Friday visited the office of Adillah company/Maktab Asnaad Al-Mutakaamil on invitation of its CEO to discuss Hajj related matters particularly departure of 'advanced caravans' of Pakistani pilgrims today from Madinah to Makkah. Adillah, a service provider company, is responsible for dealing with all hajj related/pilgrim welfare affairs including passport collection, departure of Hujjaj from Madinah to Makkah, visit to Ri azul Jannah,

accommodation and transport facilities. During the visit, the minister held a meeting with CEO of Adillah Company Esam Damiyati and discussed the ongoing Hajj operation in detail. The Adillah CEO appreciated the Pakistan Hajj Mission administration for making comprehensive arrangements to facilitate pilgrims, hoping "This year's pilgrimage will be one of the best experiences, better-management wise." Minister Salik Hussain thanked the Adillah CEO for extending all possible assistance and cooperation to the Ministry

and Pakistan Hajj Mission in ensuring seamless Hajj operation. He also mentioned that digitization of Hajj related services by the Saudi authorities had really worked in improving the arrangements. Moreover, he appreciated the Saudi government for taking a number of innovative measures like formation of new companies, increasing number of hajj welfare staff both male and female and use of latest technology. The Adillah CEO stressed the need for increased interaction between his company

and Pakistan Hajj Mission representatives. Adillah's Head of Investment Management Ahmed Hammad said the company was keen to explore ways and means for enhanced investment in the Hajj related matters with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pakistan Hajj Mission. Operational Manager of the company Aasim Sheenavi said an exemplary dedication had been observed in the team of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pakistan Hajj Mission, eventually leading to a successful Hajj operation 2024.

Innovation, Insight, Inspiration: "International Museum Day 2024 Salutes Museums as Drivers of Change"



Adnan Hameed

As the world prepares to celebrate International Museum Day 2024, on May 18, the city of Islamabad joins in commemorating this occasion with free entry to all its renowned museums. From the Pakistan Natural History Museum to the Pakistan Monument Museum, and from the National Book Museum to the Sir Syed Memorial Museum, Islamabad boasts a rich tapestry of cultural institutions that serve as custodians of our collective heritage. This year's theme, "Museums for Education and Research," resonates deeply with the ethos of Islamabad's vibrant museum community. These institutions, including the Heritage Museum Lok Virsa, have long been at the forefront of promoting education, research, and cultural understanding. Through annual events such as exhibitions,

seminars, curator speeches, art activities, and awareness campaigns, they continuously strive to engage and enrich the public. Through immersive exhibits and educational programs, he has helped foster a deeper appreciation for the diverse cultural tapestry that defines the nation. In Pakistan, the significance of museums cannot be overstated. Having served with over a decade of experience as the former "Incharge Protocol and Visits" of Pakistan Monument Museum, Lok Virsa Islamabad, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the transformative power of museums in enriching minds and bridging cultural divides. With over 2500 delegations of foreign dignitaries including head of the states visiting Pakistan under my stewardship, I've seen how museums serve as powerful vehicles for diplomacy, fostering dialogue and cooperation on the global stage. International Museum Day serves as a poignant reminder of the invaluable role museums play in our society. They are not merely repositories of artifacts and relics; they are dynamic educational institutions that spark curiosity, inspire creativity, and promote cross-cultural

understanding. As we celebrate this day, let us recognize the profound impact of museums in shaping our collective identity and fostering positive change in our communities. In the spirit of this year's theme, let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting museums as vital hubs of learning, research, and cultural exchange. By investing in their continued growth and accessibility, we empower future generations with the knowledge and empathy needed to navigate an ever-changing world. Together, let us celebrate the enduring legacy of museums as guardians of our past, present, and future. In today's interconnected world, museums serve as vital agents of cultural diplomacy, promoting dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect across borders. Through international collaborations, exhibitions, and cultural exchanges, museums facilitate cross-cultural dialogue, fostering a deeper appreciation for our shared humanity and diverse heritage. By showcasing the richness and diversity of global cultures, museums promote empathy and understanding, laying the foundation for a more peaceful and harmonious world.

Gulf States as Mediators in the India-Pakistan Conflict



Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer

In recent years, Pakistan has made concerted efforts to strengthen its ties with Iran although hindered by American sanctions on Iran and concerns regarding cross-border militancy. The prospect of being drawn into Saudi-Iranian proxy conflicts has further complicated Pakistan's diplomatic stance, notably demonstrated by its 2015 parliamentary decision against joining the Saudi-led coalition aimed at combating the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen and reinstating Yemen's internationally recognized government. This neutrality in Yemen's conflict was a difficult choice for Pakistan, given its historically strong relationship with Saudi Arabia which has provided crucial diplomatic and financial support, particularly during times of international isolation following Pakistan's nuclearization in response to India's tests in 1998. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan's efforts to foster alliances with Muslim-majority countries such as Qatar, Turkey and Malaysia have strained Pakistan's ties with traditional Gulf allies, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE. These tensions have inadvertently allowed India to enhance its trade and security relations with the Gulf States. While India's engagement with the Gulf historically revolved around energy imports and labor exports, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought to deepen bilateral ties, both economically and strategically, with countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iran. Pakistan, recognizing the shifting dynamics, has attempted to mitigate strains with its traditional Gulf partners. For instance, former Army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif assumed leadership of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition, comprising 42 nations, in 2017. However, Prime Minister Khan's decision to forgo participation in the alternative Muslim Summit in Malaysia in 2019, seen as a

challenge to Saudi leadership, failed to fully assuage tensions. Meanwhile, India's growing clout in the region was underscored by the UAE's decision to confer its highest civil honor on Prime Minister Modi, even amidst controversy over India's Citizenship Amendment Act, which discriminates against Muslim refugees. Despite Pakistan's pleas, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have refrained from openly opposing India's actions, including the revocation of Kashmir's special status in 2019. However, the fluidity of bilateral relations in the region suggests that these dynamics are subject to change. The interplay between major Middle Eastern powers and South Asian states, particularly India and Pakistan, is increasingly influenced by broader strategic considerations amidst the emerging great power competition between China and the United States. As such, the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East and South Asia remains in flux, with implications for regional stability and global power dynamics.

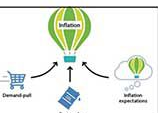
The intensifying rivalry between China and the United States in the Middle East and South Asia has significantly heightened regional insecurities while simultaneously presenting unforeseen opportunities for reconciliation. As China seeks to challenge American dominance in the Middle East, India, too, endeavors to expand its influence to counterbalance China's growing presence in the region. India's collaboration with Iran, exemplified by its investment in the Chabahar seaport, has emerged as a direct challenge to China's investment in Gwadar via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Conversely, China's substantial investment plans in Iran signal its ambition to deepen ties in the region, further solidifying its status as Iran's largest trade partner and facilitating Iran's integration into influential regional blocs. Despite Pakistan's aspirations to mediate between Iran and Saudi Arabia, China achieved a significant breakthrough by brokering the restoration of diplomatic ties between the two Middle Eastern rivals. Amid escalating regional tensions triggered by conflicts such as the

Gaza war, Saudi Arabia and the UAE demonstrate a willingness to de-escalate tensions with Iran rather than exploit them for strategic advantage. Recent efforts to repair ties between Iran and Pakistan, following tensions sparked by missile exchanges, reflect a renewed commitment to enhancing bilateral relations and fostering security cooperation. While the US appears open to increased Saudi and UAE investments in Pakistan, it is concerned about Islamabad growing reliance on Beijing. With the US bolstering military cooperation with India to counter China, its neutrality in potential Indo-Pakistani crises is increasingly questioned. Consequently, the US may encourage regional actors with influence over both India and Pakistan to establish crisis management mechanisms to prevent cross-border escalation. Secret talks facilitated by the UAE between Indian and Pakistani intelligence officials, along with Saudi statements advocating dialogue on the Kashmir dispute, suggest a regional push for conflict resolution. While Indian media views such statements as endorsing its stance against third-party involvement in Kashmir, Pakistan interprets them as a show of solidarity against India's reluctance to engage in Kashmir talks. Despite diplomatic overtures, challenges persist, including India's upcoming elections and the delicate security situation in Kashmir. Despite the potential benefits of reconciliation for India and Pakistan, the current political climate may not favor immediate rapprochement. India's domestic politics and security concerns, coupled with ongoing tensions in Kashmir, present obstacles to meaningful dialogue. However, incremental confidence-building measures and continued international encouragement, particularly from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the US, could pave the way for constructive engagement between India and Pakistan, reducing Pakistan's dependence on China and fostering regional stability and cooperation of the Middle East and South Asia.

Inflation, Economy and Economics



Syeda Sadia Amber Jilani



Inflation has become a dangerous problem for every country, society and even an every person. The daily increase in the prices of essential commodities is making it increasingly difficult for an Economically average person to manage their economic activities. In simpler words, the rising costs of basic necessities are causing financial struggles for ordinary people. Developing Countries like Pakistan, which are already facing economic challenges alongside numerous other issues, are finding this situation even more distressing. Let's look at it in simple terms: what is inflation, it's types and what does Economics say about it? How can we try to control it? In Economics, inflation is a sustained increase in the general price level of goods and services in an economy over a period of time. Basically, It is a macro Economic phenomenon as well as one of the main problems of developing and under developing countries. Types of Inflation: The types or causes of Inflation can be grouped into two main categories. 1. Demand-pull Inflation, (Keynesian Approach)- Inflation due to increase

d is greater than Aggregate Supply at the full employment level and it's result is Inflation. 2. Cost-push Inflation- Inflation or Higher Prices due to increase in Cost of Production. When the costs of production get rise, the Aggregate Supply Curve shifts to left because of low production. Here is also Aggregate Demand is greater than Aggregate Supply which causes prices to rise. But after some times due to higher prices Aggregate Demand decreases. High prices and slow growth lead towards unemployment. The Extreme condition of Cost Push Inflation is called "Stagflation". In that condition, higher inflation relates to higher unemployment (The Opposite Situation of Phillips Curve, PC). Some times expected inflation in future is also the cause of Inflation. Measurement of Inflation: The most well-known indicator of inflation is the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which measures the percentage change in the price of a basket of goods and services consumed by households. Formula: Inflation Ratio = $\frac{P_1 - P_0}{P_0} \times 100$ Inflation the

demand, where Aggregate demand purchasing power of households Or Consumers is decreased, And the quantity demanded by consumers also declines. Consumers are forced to spend much more money for the same basket of goods and services. So, we can say that Inflation has multiplier effects not only on individual's budget but also on the whole economy like unemployment, devaluation of our currency, poverty, Increase in foreign loans and interests. Moreover, it is also harmful for growth. How to Control Inflation: There are two main methods or Ways to Control Inflation. 1. Monetary Policy by Central Bank:- The most important and commonly used method to control inflation is contractionary monetary policy of the Central Bank. Mostly The Central Bank of a Country uses high interest rates and lowering the prices of bonds and securities (in open market operation) to reduce the money supply in the economy. Thus, consumption falls, Aggregate Demand decreases, price fall and inflation slows down. 2. Fiscal policy by Govt:- Strict or Contractionary Fiscal policy by the government is also a method to control inflation in which it might raise taxes and decrease government spending to reduce money supply and consumption level of the Economy that can make the result of falling prices and reducing Inflation.

DC for strict anti dengue measures

Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: Deputy Commissioner Captain (Retd.) Aurangzeb Haider Khan, while reviewing anti-dengue activities, instructed the concerned officers to pay further attention and emphasized that dedication, commitment, and enthusiasm are essential for the success of the anti-dengue campaign. He stressed the critical importance of preventing mosquito

breeding. He was addressing a meeting of the District Coordination Committee for Dengue Prevention on Friday. The Deputy Commissioner stated that anti-dengue teams should regularly check all hotspots. He said, "These teams should closely monitor ponds, pools, construction sites, service stations, hotels and other public places, sending any suspected mosquito larvae for immediate laboratory testing. The rooftops of

government buildings and offices should be inspected. It is necessary to raise public awareness, hold seminars and other educational programs." He appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the anti-dengue teams and follow government guidelines for dengue prevention. The meeting was attended by Chief Executive Officer Health Dr. Asad Aslam and heads of all relevant departments.

KATI welcomes drop in Petroleum prices, calls for transportation cost reductions

Soon Times Correspondent Karachi: The Karachi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) has applauded the recent significant reduction in petroleum prices. President Johar Qandhari emphasized that this decrease in petrol and diesel prices should directly benefit the common man. Qandhari pointed out that while transporters quickly raise fares when petrol prices increase, they have not correspondingly reduced fares despite recent price cuts. This inaction has kept the cost of goods transportation high, affecting both industry and the general public, who continue to face high public transport fares. President KATI called on the government and relevant authorities to enforce fare reductions for both freight and public transportation. He argued that lowering transportation costs is essential to reducing inflation and allowing the public to benefit from the government's positive decision. He stressed the need for the benefits of reduced petroleum prices to be effectively communicated and passed on to the public. He pointed out that



industries are currently burdened with record-high costs due to expensive cargo shipping and freight services.

Prosecutor General Punjab inaugurates District Public Prosecution Office Sargodha



Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha: Prosecutor General Punjab Syed Farhad Ali Shah has said that by improving the links between judiciary, police, prosecution, bar and

media, delivery of justice quickly and at the doorstep of the common man is the main priority of the Punjab government. Concrete and effective steps are being taken in this regard. A Prosecution Facilitation Center has been set up in

Sargodha where complete guidance and facilitation will be provided free of cost from obtaining copy of FIR to other stages of prosecution. He expressed these views while interacting with the media after inaugurating the District Public Prosecution Office Sargodha and Prosecution Facilitation Center along with District and Sessions Judge Akmal Khan and DPO Dr. Asad Ijaz Malhi. District Prosecutor Malik Ehsanullah Tiwana, officials and members of the bar were present on this occasion. The Prosecutor General said that the staff will be present in the facility center from 9 am to 4 pm for the guidance and welfare of the people. He said that the fifteenth facility center has been inaugurated today in Punjab. 1500 prosecutors are currently working across the province while an internship program is also being started for fresh law graduates.

Tariq Bashir Cheema's NA membership restored moments after being suspended

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: The membership of PML-Q senior leader Tariq Bashir Cheema was restored in National Assembly moments after being suspended.



Earlier, the membership of former federal minister was suspended as he used abusive and objectionable language against PTI MNA Zartaj Gul. National Assembly speaker gave a ruling on Friday to suspend his membership for the ongoing session. However, the current NA session was later prorogued for indefinite time period and the membership of Cheema was restored.

Earlier, PML-Q leader has tendered an apology to PTI MNA over objectionable remarks passed during the National Assembly session.

Salaam Family Takaful Limited obtains license to operate as the first ever digital Islamic Life Insurance provider



Soon Times Correspondent Karachi: Living up to its reputation of creating revolutionary solutions and taking unprecedented initiatives, Salaam Takaful Limited has gone ahead and developed another first, not only in Pakistan, but across the globe, a digital only Islamic Life Insurance company, Salaam Family Takaful Limited. The coveted license was handed over to Rizwan Hussain, MD and CEO of Salaam Family Takaful Limited by Akif

Saeed, Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in the presence of Salaam Family Takaful's Shariah board, and their endorsement signified that the new organization with its operations and offerings are completely Shariah compliant. The company will provide a complete end to end digital offering as per the stipulations and guidelines of SECP. On this occasion, Rizwan Hussain, MD and CEO of Salaam

Family Takaful Limited stated, "With this license of our new company, we will be revealing a new brand very soon, which will not only resonate with our values of customer centricity and innovation but will also introduce the much-needed game changing Islamic Life Insurance and Savings offering, never seen before in Islamic Life Insurance segment across the globe. Salaam Family Takaful Limited is the subsidiary of Salaam Takaful Limited.

Summer vacation for schools in Punjab to start from June 1

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE: The provincial education department on Friday announced the schedule for summer vacation across the province as above-normal temperatures hit the parts of country.



The department has issued a notification, stating that the summer holidays will be observed from June 1 to August 14. It added that all public and private schools will reopen on August 15 (Thursday). The department has also revised the school timings to protect students and teachers from the blistering heat. As per the revised schedule, schools will open at 7:00am to 11:30am till Thursday while the classes will conclude at 10:30am on Fridays. Meanwhile, Met office said due to the presence of high pressure in the upper atmosphere, heatwave conditions are likely to develop over most parts of the country

especially over Punjab and Sindh from 21st May and likely to convert to severe heatwave conditions from 23rd to 27th May. Day temperatures are likely to remain 4 to 6°C above normal in Sindh and Punjab from 21st to 23rd and from 06 to 08°C from 23rd to 27th May. Day temperatures are likely to remain 4 to 6°C above normal in Islamabad, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan from 21st to 27th May.

IHC says it didn't stop authorities from blocking SIMs

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq said on Friday the court did not stop authorities from blocking SIMs but barred them from taking action against a private company. The Islamabad High Court conducted hearing of a petition against an injunction to stop action against a private company related to SIM blocking.



As the hearing started, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq remarked that media did not report court proceedings in a correct way. The attorney general said Section 144 provided the complete information relating to tax. "One whose income will be less will obviously not apply, everything is also clear regarding NTN number." Justice Farooq inquired whether those ordinary workers having a kiosk would be included in tax net? The attorney general replied, "Definitely they will not be issued notices by the FBR." The chief justice inquired if somebody was not a taxpayer and his son or

daughter was using the SIM in his name, then what would be done with them? "What will the poor man do who had not registered himself? The attorney general replied, "No poor man will get FBR notice. Notices are being issued to non-filers from November 2023. If a person submits a reply or satisfies the FBR after the notice is issued, the SIM will be restored." The IHC CJ remarked that people were fearing that the FBR would not spare anyone. Referring to different cases relating to tax, the attorney general said the court had to see membership of the company

and how many shares did a Pakistani had in the company? He then requested the court to set aside its order. The court remarked that the order was misreported in media. The court said it did not prevent blocking of SIMs, it only prevented the action against the private company. "Notice is being issued on your request. When do you want it to be fixed for hearing?" the court asked. The attorney general took the stance that he had no idea. He said he had so many cases and the court could fix the hearing on May 22 or 23 next week. The IHC CJ remarked that the main case was scheduled for May 27. The attorney general said a date before May 27 could be fixed by court. Later, the court issued a notice and fixed the case for May 22 for hearing.

Ishaq Dar's appointment as deputy prime minister challenged in IHC

The petitioner submits that the appointment is a violation of Article 4 of the constitution

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: After the Lahore High Court dismissed a petition against appointment of Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar as deputy prime minister on Thursday, a citizen moved the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday. Fahad Shabbir through Advocate Nadeem Sarwar submitted that the appointment was a violation of Article 4 of the Constitution. He said the federal government violated the constitution by appointing Dar as deputy prime minister. The petitioner prayed that the notification of Dar's appointment be declared null and void



and he be barred from work till the final decision of the case. Principal secretary to the prime minister, Cabinet Division secretary and Ishaq Dar have been made parties in the petition.

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Turkey opposition chief cool to constitution talks with Erdogan



ANKARA Turkey's main opposition leader, boosted by sweeping local election gains in March, said he is "far off" opening talks with Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party over a new constitution since the president doesn't abide by the existing one.

In an interview with Reuters, Ozgur Ozel, who was elected chairman of the Republican People's Party (CHP) last November, also called on the government to once again raise the minimum wage, which continues to lag the soaring inflation rate.

The question of whether and how to revise Turkey's constitution could dominate domestic politics this year after Erdogan and his AK Party (AKP) said it is a priority. Analysts say a new document could potentially extend Erdogan's rule beyond 2028 when his current term ends.



Putin says Russia wants a buffer zone in Ukraine's Kharkiv but has no plans to capture the city

KYIV, Ukraine Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that Moscow's offensive in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region aims to create a buffer zone but has no plans to capture the city. Putin's comments on a trip to China were his first on the offensive launched on May 10, which opened a new front in the war and displaced thousands of Ukrainians within few days. It came hours after a massive Ukrainian drone attack on Russian-occupied Crimea early Friday caused power cutoffs in the city of Sevastopol while damaging aircraft and fuel storage at an airbase.



Hezbollah introduces new weapons and tactics against Israel as war in Gaza drags on

Abdul-Sater, the analyst, said the Iran-led coalition known as the axis of resistance

BEIRUT The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah this week struck a military post in northern Israel using a drone that fired two missiles. The attack wounded three soldiers, one of them seriously, according to the Israeli military.

Hezbollah has regularly fired missiles across the border with Israel over the past seven months, but the one on Thursday appears to have been the first successful missile airstrike it has launched from within Israeli airspace.

The group has stepped up its attacks on Israel in recent weeks, particularly since the Israeli incursion into the southern city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip. It has struck deeper inside Israel and introduced new and more advanced weaponry.

"This is a method of sending messages on the ground to the Israeli enemy, meaning that this is part of what we have, and if needed we can strike more," said Lebanese political analyst Faisal Abdul-Sater who closely follows Hezbollah. While the cross-border exchanges of fire have been ongoing since early October, "complex attacks" by Hezbollah began a few days after Iran's unprecedented drone and missile barrage attack on Israel in mid-April. In the past two weeks, Hezbollah has escalated further in response to the Israeli incursion into the city of southern Rafah in the Gaza Strip, a Lebanese official familiar with the group's operations said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to detail military information to the media. The Thursday afternoon attack by a drone carrying missiles came just days after Hezbollah launched three anti-tank guided missiles at an Israeli military post that controlled a surveillance balloon flying over the border. The released camera footage afterward to show they had hit their mark. Hours later, the Israeli military confirmed that the spy balloon had been shot down over Lebanon.

Rescue efforts halted after South African building collapse where 33 died

JOHANNESBURG Officials in the South African city of George halted the search for survivors and more bodies on Friday at the site of a collapsed building where 33 people died.



Rescue personnel and volunteers have been combing through the rubble for 11 days, after the five-storey residential building under construction in the city east of Cape Town crumbled, leaving a cloud of dust in its wake. The Western Cape government said it now believed 62 people were at the site at the time of the disaster. Twenty-nine people survived after being rescued. At one stage municipal officials believed 81 people were on site when the building came down. "The site is empty. We have done our job," Anton Bredell, a Western Cape provincial official, told reporters.

It is believed that migrants from neighbouring Malawi and Zimbabwe were working at the construction site as well as South Africans. A spokesperson for Malawi's foreign affairs ministry said nine Malawians were confirmed to have died in the incident and 11 had been rescued, two of whom were still in hospital. The cause of the building collapse has not yet been established. Investigations are under way. President Cyril Ramaphosa visited the site on Thursday and met families of the victims.

North Korea test-fires suspected ballistic missiles a day after US and South Korea conduct a fighter jet drill



SEOUL, South Korea North Korea fired suspected short-range ballistic missiles off its east coast on Friday, South Korea's military said, a day after South Korea and the U.S. flew powerful fighter jets in a joint drill that the North views as a major security threat.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the weapons launched from the North's east coast Wonsan region traveled about 300 kilometers (185 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said a North Korean missile landed outside Japan's exclusive economic zone.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff statement called the launches "a clear provocation" that threatens peace on the Korean Peninsula. It said South Korea will maintain a firm readiness to repel potential aggressions by North Korea in conjunction with the military alliance with the United States.

North Korea has extended its run of weapons testing in recent months as part of its efforts to enlarge and modernize its arsenal while diplomacy with the United States and South Korea remains stalled. Last week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test firing of a new multiple rocket launch system, according to the North's state media.

North Korea says it has been forced to boost its nuclear and missile programs to deal with U.S.-led hostilities. North Korea cities expanded U.S.-South Korean military training, which it calls an invasion rehearsal. Many foreign experts say North Korea uses its rivals' military drills as a pretext for building a larger weapons arsenal in the belief that it would boost its leverage in future diplomacy with the U.S.

Sports & Showbiz

Pakistan finalise squad for T20 World Cup 2024; announcement soon



LAHORE Pakistan has finalised the 15-member squad for the ICC Men's World Cup 2024, source. The squad includes five pacers, four all-rounders, three wicketkeepers, two batsmen and one spinner. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is expected to announce the team soon after approval from chairman Mohsin Naqvi. The likely squad of Pakistan includes Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Shadab Khan, Saam Ayub, Usman Khan, Harris Rauf, Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Rizwan, Azam Khan, Imad Wasim, Ifthikar Ahmed, Abrar

Ahmed, Shabeen Shah Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Naseem Shah, Akhwa Afridi. The travel reserves would include Salman Ali Agha, Hasan Ali and Irfan Niaz. Meanwhile, reports said the board would announce the squad after Pakistan's first T20I match against England scheduled for May 22. The deadline for announcement of squads is May 24. The ninth edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, which will be a 20-team event, will take place in the USA and West Indies from June 1 to 29.

Netizens start blocking Alia Bhatt for keeping mum on Gaza crisis



The India actor is accused of not speaking out against genocide in Gaza. Alia has seemingly landed on the 'Blockout 2024' list for not addressing the mounting criticism on the ongoing crisis in Gaza. Alia Bhatt is in the headlines after her Met Gala 2024 appearance as she has been receiving hatred for keeping mum on the ongoing crisis in Palestine. Bollywood actress, Alia Bhatt has been making the headlines for her stunning appearance at the Met Gala 2024. The actress' popularity has skyrocketed after her show-stopping appearance on the red carpet, with everyone talking about her surreal look.

Brazil to host 2027 Women's World Cup as Gaza war overshadows FIFA congress

The Women's World Cup will take place in South America for the first time after Brazil was chosen to host the 2027 edition at a FIFA congress Friday marked by debate about the war in Gaza. After the success of Australia and New Zealand in 2023, which earned a record \$570 million in commercial revenue, FIFA chose to continue its push to expand women's football to new continents. Delegates meeting in Bangkok voted by 119 votes to 78 to send the 10th Women's World Cup to the land of samba football, which beat a joint bid from Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. The decision sparked jubilant celebrations from the Brazilian bid team. Brazil, home of women's football great Marta, scored higher than its European rival in FIFA's evaluation report. The FIFA inspectors noted the "tremendous impact on women's football in the region" that South America hosting the Women's World Cup would have. Brazil's bid includes 10 stadiums used for the men's World Cup in 2014, with Rio de Janeiro's famous Maracana lined up for the opening match and final. But work needs to be done, in particular to the Amazonia stadium in Manaus which has stood



almost unused for a decade. The Brazilian Football Confederation has also been in turmoil with legal challenges to its president. Unlike their male counterparts, who have won five World Cups, Brazil's women have never lifted the trophy and made a group-stage exit in 2023. Last year's tournament defied fears that increasing the size from 24 to 32 teams would dilute the spectacle, with over 1.4 million fans streaming through the turnstiles to witness a host of shocks, dramatic turnarounds and breakthrough results. Gone were the lopsided scorelines that were a feature of the previous eight World Cups, reflecting a growth in the standard of women's football.



Schauffele equals record-low major round with 62 to lead PGA

LOUISVILLE Xander Schauffele matched the lowest round in major golf history on Thursday, firing a nine-under-par 62 to seize command after the opening day of the PGA Championship. Reigning Olympic champion Schauffele started off the 10th tee and birdied five of his first nine holes, then birdied four more after the turn in a bogey-free round for a three-shot lead at rain-softened Valhalla. "It feels great, Schauffele said. "If someone told me I'd shoot nine-under I'd have taken it. It's a great start to a big tournament." The 30-year-old American topped the leaderboard over countrymen Tony Finau, Mark Hubbard and Sahith Theegalla on 65. Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy, South Korea's Tom Kim, Scotsman Robert MacIntyre, Belgium's Thomas Detry and Americans Tom Hoge, Collin Morikawa and Maverik McNealy shared fifth on 66. Top-ranked new dad Scottie Scheffler fired a 67, including a 167-

yard, one-bounce eagle from the fairway on the first hole with a 9-iron. "I tried to hit it right at the pin. I was fortunate to get the distance right. It's nice to get a little bit of luck there," Scheffler said. "I did a lot of good things today." Thursday's 64 players under-par were the second-most below par after any round in tournament history -- and more rain is expected Friday and Saturday. Schauffele already shared the record-low round in major golf history with his 62 from the first round of last year's US Open at Los Angeles Country Club, matched by American Rickie Fowler in the same round and South African Branden Grace at the 2017 British Open at Royal Birkdale. "I can't nit-pick. I'll take a 62 in any major day," Schauffele said. He set the Valhalla's course record, breaking the 63 fired by Spain's Jose Maria Olazabal in the first round of the 2000 PGA Championship.