



Islamabad POST

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House speaker Pelosi begins Asia tour, no Taiwan update yet

Detailed News On Page-08

Putin says US is main threat to Russia

Detailed News On Page-06



Musk files countersuit against Twitter

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Biden again tests positive for Covid

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden has tested positive for Covid-19 for a second time and is returning to isolation, his White House doctor said Saturday, attributing the result to "rebound" positivity from treatment the US president received. Biden "tested positive late Saturday morning, by antigen testing," following four consecutive days of negative tests, and "will reinstate strict isolation procedures," presidential physician Kevin O'Connor wrote in a memorandum.

Nawaz agreed to hold polls on time

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday said the government's decision to complete its tenure and hold general elections on time had PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif's blessing. Addressing a press conference in Peshawar, the PDM chief was questioned about reports of a split in the alliance's opinion over completing the government's tenure in wake of the recent Punjab by-poll loss to the PTI.

Gill accuses ex-PM of taking 'bribes'

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shahbaz Gill has accused former prime minister and senior vice-president of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) of taking "bribes" from an Indian company. Addressing a press conference in Lahore on Sunday, Gill said that his and Abbasi's accounts were in the same bank, urging the latter to disclose the details of both accounts. "Under what pretext was Shahid Khaqan Abbasi took Rs140 million from an Indian company," he questioned, adding that the former premier had received three telegraphic transfers (TTs) when he was the petroleum minister.

Rupee to gain value in two weeks: Miftah

Ismail says that he has hope that the 'next two weeks will InshaAllah be better'



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Finance minister Miftah Ismail on Sunday said that the Pakistani rupee, which has taken a beating

against the US dollar in recent weeks, should see some improvement "in the two weeks". Ismail was addressing a press conference to speak about Pakistan's economic path forward. "I really think — although I never like

to speculate on the currency market — but I really think that the rupee's true value is far greater [than what it is right now]," the finance minister said. He explained that in the past two months, Pakistan had to part with "a billion and another billion", which put pressure on the local currency. Ismail said that Pakistan bought petroleum products worth Rs3.8 million for which payment was made in July, which is why there was a lot of pressure on the rupee. "This month, the State Bank had to pay \$800 million more compared to the country's inflows," he added. Ismail said that efforts will be geared towards more dollars coming in daily and fewer leaving the country next month. "With our efforts to reduce imports and InshaAllah, with the daily rise in incoming dollars versus a decline in outgoing units, there will be a surplus [of dollars]," he said. "This will lead to a reduced pressure [on the rupee] and the dollar's value against the rupee should then see a

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Govt slashes petrol price by Rs3.05/ltr

The price of high-speed diesel increased by Rs8.95 per litre

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan on Sunday announced decreasing the price of petrol by Rs3.05 per litre for the first half of August 2022, a statement issued by the Petroleum Division said. Earlier it was rumoured that the government may slash the price upto Rs 11 per litre. The price of high-speed diesel has been increased by Rs8.95 per litre. The Ministry of Finance announced slashing of prices, the new prices have come into effect from August 1. Earlier in July, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had slashed the price of petrol by Rs18.50 per litre in order to provide

Continued on Page 06

Flood affected areas

Pak Army, FC relief activities underway

In Balochistan, Jhal Magsi, complete connectivity of Gandhawa is restored

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps (FC) continued flood relief activities in various flood-hit areas of the country where troops were busy in rescue and relief efforts apart from providing medical care and opening up communication infrastructure. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Sunday while issuing fresh flood update, said. It said as per the prevailing rivers situation, all rivers were flowing normal except Indus that was witnessing a low flood at Attock, Tarbela, Chashma, and Guddu.

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PM directs immediate relief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif says the federal government is working with Balochistan government to provide immediate relief to the flood affected people in the province. He stated this in a series of tweets after visiting the flood-hit areas of Balochistan to oversee the ongoing relief work and express solidarity with the

Continued on Page 06

Russia hits S. Ukraine, kills grain exporter

NEWS DESK

KYIV: Heavy Russian strikes hit the southern Ukrainian port city of Mykolaiv overnight and early on Sunday, killing the owner of one of the country's largest grain producing and exporting companies, the local governor said. Oleksiy Vadatursky, founder and owner of agriculture company Nibulon and his wife, were killed in their home, Mykolaiv Governor Vitaliy Kim said on Telegram. Headquartered in Mykolaiv, a strategically important city that borders the mostly Russia-occupied Kherson region, Nibulon specializes in the production and export of wheat, barley and corn, and it has its own fleet and shipyard. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described Vadatursky's death as "a great loss for all of Ukraine", saying the businessman had been in the process of building a modern grain market involving a network of transshipment

Continued on Page 06

Mandatory evacuation of Donetsk ordered

AGENCIES

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday his government was ordering the mandatory evacuation of people in the eastern Donetsk region, scene of fierce fighting with Russia. In a late-night television address, Zelenskyy also said the hundreds of thousands of people still in combat zones in the larger Donbas region, which contains Donetsk as well as the neighboring Luhansk region, needed to leave. "The more people leave (the) Donetsk region

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Khan directs lawmakers to prepare for elections

Imran khan held a meeting with PTI lawmakers in Punjab Chief Minister House

BUREAU REPORT



LAHORE: PTI Chairman Imran Khan meets Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and Moonis Elahi. — DNA

LAHORE, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supremo and former Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday while giving the assembly members of the task of preparing for the new elections, said that the next general elections could be held in 6 to 8 weeks. In this regard, Imran Khan held a meeting with PTI lawmakers in Punjab Chief Minister House Sunday.

Continued on Page 06

Imran, CM Elahi finalise cabinet names

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi on Sunday discussed about the formation of the Punjab Cabinet and other issues. On reaching Lahore, former prime minister Imran Khan called on CM Elahi and discussed the matters related to mutual interests and political situation of the province. According to details the PTI Chief congratulated CM Elahi on the ouster of the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz-led government. The CM and PTI Chief discussed the political situation and matters

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Putin says United States is main threat to Russia — Page 06

Kashmir Council EU to stage protest camp in Brussels — Page 07

Cultural dance 'Move with PINAS' performed at Philippines embassy — Page 08

Riphah University signs MoU with Bay River College, Canada

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding, was signed between Riphah International University and Bay River College, Calgary Canada. The ceremony was held at Gulberg Greens Campus of Riphah International University Islamabad. The Chief Guest of the event was Mr. Michael Lazaruk, Counsellor and Senior Trade Commissioner at Canadian High Commission, Pakistan. The Vice Chancellor of Riphah International University, Prof. Dr. Anis Ahmad, and Dr. Arshad Mahmood, President of Bay River College, Calgary Canada signed the MoU on behalf of the Institutions. The MoU will strengthen the bond and commitment between both educational Institutions. This MoU was signed as a part of

the initiation of the first private Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts in Twin cities, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad. At the Riphah Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts, students will receive the gold class standards of hospitality and tourism industry education and skills to pursue a promising career in the field. This MoU is the start of the mutual collaboration between these institutions in which the focus is laid down on sharing of the Canadian curriculum with Riphah International University for students of Bachelors of Science in Tourism and Hospitality Management -BS THM. The Chief Guest, Mr. Michael Lazaruk, Counsellor and Senior Trade Commissioner at Canadian High Commission Pakistan, appreciated the efforts of Riphah International University in opening the door to new opportunities for Pakistani

youth. He said that this MoU can strengthen the ties between both educational institutes and allow students to come out of the traditional learning methods and learn new approaches of hospitality industry. Addressing the occasion, Mr. Hassan Muhammad Khan, Chancellor of Riphah International University shared the vision behind Riphah International University and IIMCT. He praised university academic leadership for their efforts to uplift the Institute through introducing subjects of Hospitality and Culinary Arts in Twin cities. Moreover, the Chancellor of Riphah International University, thanked Dr. Arshad Mahmood, President at Bay River College, Calgary Canada for signing the MoU and presented a souvenir to Chief Guest Mr. Michael Lazaruk for honoring the event with his presence.



LARKANA: Rescue personnel shifting the flood affected people to the safer places by boat during flood relief operations in flood affected Kacha area of Qubo Saeed Khan. – APP

Police finalizes security plan for a peaceful Muharram

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police through a comprehensive plan finalizes security and decided to deploy more than 11500 Policemen would perform their duties for a peaceful Muharram Ul Haram, said SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi while talking to media here on Sunday. In detail, he said, steps had been taken by the security personnel to ensure a peaceful Muharram Ul Haram all across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Sharing the details of the plan, he said, more than eleven and a half thousand police officers and officials would perform security duties. He said, a total of 62 Imam bargahs and all masajids in the city had been provided with fool-proof security with a total of 116 large and small processions would be organized for which adequate measures of security had been taken. Instructions had been issued for uninterrupted funeral processions to Imam Bargahs, etc besides deploying of Bomb Disposal Unit and sniffer dogs checking at inside Imam Bargahs and on the routes of the processions, SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi said.

"All Imam Bargahs, important and sensitive places including sensitive places have been monitored through CCTV cameras and it is decided to check and re-check the CCTV cameras to ensure and avoid any untoward incident, he informed." SSP Operations said that the Police had also established a Supreme Command Post at Kohati Gate and that it would be enter-linked with other sub-command posts established at six other different locations within the city. was also decided and instructions in this connection had been passed on, to provide three-layer security for Majlis, processions and other mourning ceremonies, he added. "He said, all mourners will be escorted through a three-layer security fence and skilled snipers are posted on all high rise buildings while the process of checking at the entry and exit points of the city is more strict with strict monitoring of people entering the city has already been started." Instructions had been issued to the concerned Policemen to check the data of people staying in inns, guest houses and hotels in the city while closely monitoring them. Monitoring of all Imam Bargahs, pro-

cessions, congregations and other important and sensitive places is ongoing with around 150 closed circuit cameras have been installed at different places in the city. Monitoring process started in the Supreme Command Post Kohati Gate, Police Station East, Police Station Khan Raziq Shaheed, Police Station Gharbi and Police Station Gulbahar, he disclosed. He said this year, in the light of renewed security audit, additional personnel have been deployed at gun posts and plugging points with armored vehicles are present at important and sensitive locations. decision to impose a complete ban on the entry of vehicles within the city during the last days of Muharram and Ambulance, Rescue 1122, Fire Brigade, WAPDA, Northern Sui Gas personnel will be present at the Supreme Command Post, he added. "He said, officials of the district administration and officials from other institutions will be present at the command post all the time and they are actively working for the peaceful conduct of Muharram, SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi said. We have established special coordination with all stakeholders to ensure peace during Muharram, he concluded." – APP

Training and career counselling facility for path to success

PESHAWAR: A five years project focusing on promotion of peace and improved stability in fragile regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through skill training and introduction of sustainable economic opportunities for income generation and livelihood, opened new avenues for thousands towards path of success and stability. The project titled as 'Market and Employment for Peace and Stability (ME4PS)', was jointly launched by HELVETAS, a Swiss based non-governmental organization, and ACTED (Agency for Technical Cooperation and

Development), a French humanitarian organization. The target area of the project was Charsadda, Mohmand and Bajaur districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, benefiting thousands of people. The beneficiaries of the project are mostly youth (male, female including persons with disabilities) who received skill training and counselling about sustainable opportunities for income generation. The project implementation revolved around three steps including social inclusion for mainstreaming of Persons with

Disabilities, Economic Stability by imparting Vocational and Digital Training skills and Business Expansion by educating about new trends of agriculture and trade. "ME4PS facilitated 7391 farmers and SMEs (23 percent women and 76 percent men) to expand their existing businesses in on and off farm value chain," informed Syed Nadeem Bukhari, Senior official of HELVETAS. The project introduced improved technologies to the farmers such as mulch sheets, anti-frost sheets, vertical farming and low cost walk in tunnel. – APP



LAHORE: Ch. Pervaiz Ilahi, Chief Minister Punjab presided over the meeting to review relief activities in flood-affected areas. – DNA

Politicians urged to sit together for country's economy

Due to domestic political upheaval, a surging current account deficit amid depleting dollar inflows from multinational and bilateral lenders as well as shrinking foreign investments

ISLAMABAD: The business community Sunday urged the top leadership of all mainstream political parties to sit together brushing aside differences to evolve a viable strategy to steer the country out of current worrisome economic crunch plaguing the industry. Talking to a delegation of industrialists and traders led by President Pakistan Furniture Importers Association Mian Faryad Ahmad Raza, the Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman and Minister of State Meher Kashif Younis said the deepening political turmoil is one of the major factor responsible for economic instability as de-

preciation is taking heavy toll on stock investors, currency markets crying out for dollars amid liquidity crunch and recording the highest ever weekly inflation spike. He said due to domestic political upheaval, a surging current account deficit amid depleting dollar inflows from multinational and bilateral lenders as well as shrinking foreign investments have brought the foreign exchange reserves and rupee under enormous pressure over the last several months, stoked rapid inflation, forced the State Bank to boost borrowing costs to a multi year high and eroded investors confidence in

the country. He said its admitted fact worldwide that political stability is pre-requisite for sustainable sound economy that's also promise survival of the country. Meher Kashif Younis said Pakistan's current account deficit has surged to \$17.4bln equivalent to 4.6pc the size of economy during the last fiscal year on the rising trade deficit, in spite of multiple actions taken by the government and the SBP since last quarters of 2021 to restrict imports. He said the growth in exports and remittances of expats did somewhat help narrow the yawning gap but elevated global commodity and oil

prices meant that Pakistan would spend more on its energy and other imports that doubled oil import bill to \$2.9bn in June from \$1.4bn in May. Meher Kashif Younis said with the hope IMF releasing funds soon thus unlocking additional financing from other multilateral and bilateral creditors, Pakistan's external sectors may likely perk up in the short term. However, in prevailing scenario, it's not permanent solution what's we need is uninterrupted consistency in our economic policies irrespective change of government. He feared that it will be unfortunate if the top political leaders don't shrink

differences and come on one page saving fragile economy from total collapse in the larger national interests and fails to address structural impediments to exports and FDI because of the grave political instability being witnessed at the moment, he added. He suggested that complete ban should continue on all luxury and other items manufactured in Pakistan and also made an impassioned appeal especially to government and people particularly switching over simple life by strictly observing austerity in line with cardinal teachings of Islam. – APP

Balochistan facing serious situation

QUETTA: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri on Sunday said it was the first priority of the government to control the situation caused by recent heavy rains and floods in Balochistan as soon as possible. In a statement, she expressed her sorrow over losses of lives in recent monsoon rain. She said that due to the recent heavy spell, the people have suffered a lot due to loss of life and property. She said that the provincial government would not leave the people alone in this difficult time. She said that the loss of precious human lives due to the rains and the coming floods in the inner province, including the provincial capital Quetta, the property and livestock have also been washed away in the water, standing crops have been destroyed while the infrastructure has also been severely damaged. She said that under the leadership of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo, his team was continuing the relief activities in the affected areas day and night and all government missionaries and resources were being utilized in this regard. She appealed to support the people, the government institutions, the Pakistan Army and Navy during rescue and relief operations. – APP

Enrolment of students in schools starts from August 1

In the summer zone, from 1st to 14th August, only school heads and teachers will come to school for the admission campaign

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Education Shahram Khan Tarakai on Saturday said that the admission campaign under the name "Parega to Barega Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" has been started in all the schools of the entire province. He said that regular classes will start in the winter zone schools from August 1, and the admission drive will also continue. Similarly, the admission campaign in summer zone schools will also start from August 1 however, regular classes will start from August 15. In the summer zone, from 1st to 14th August, only school heads and teachers will come to school for the admission campaign, he added. The education minister further said that this year admission will continue in both first and second shift schools together so that the children working in the first shift can also get an opportunity to study. He said that this year the entire admission campaign system will be digitized for which the education department has created an app and complete data of all children would be available online on the dashboard. All the record of the newly admitted students promoted

to middle, high and higher secondary level along with complete details would be registered. The education minister said that this year a target of enrolling one million children has been set for which admission campaign will be conducted at every district, tehsil, village council and circle level, adding this year admission campaign, local elders, senior students, parents teachers council members, scouts and school heads will conduct door-to-door admission campaign to enroll children in schools. Regarding educational facilities, the Education Minister said that the schools have free textbooks, excellent educational facilities and competent teachers. The government has fulfilled its responsibility and appealed to the people to fulfill their responsibility by enrolling children in schools. – APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

July 01 / Japan

Self Defence Day

July 01 / Singapore

Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada

National Day

July 01 / Somalia

Independence Day

July 04 / USA

Independence Day

July 05 / Algeria

Independence Day

July 09 / Argentine

Independence Day

July 09 / Mongolia

Revolution Day

July 14 / France

National Day

July 15 / Brunei

Sultan's Birthday

July 21 / Belgium

National Day

July 20 / TRNC

Independence Day

July 23 / Egypt

National Day

July 26 / Cuba

National Day

July 26 / Liberia

National Day

July 30 / Morocco

National Day

Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133

Marriott.....051- 2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

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

Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police....9266044

Motorway Police.....9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489

CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International.4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Citizens advised to mask up at Muharram gatherings

The new cases pushed the coronavirus positivity rate in Pakistan to 3.29% and the number of total COVID-19 cases to 1,553,386

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With Pakistan logging hundreds of COVID-19 cases everyday, the National Institute of Health, Islamabad (NIH) has advised strict adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs), including mask wearing and social distancing during Muharram gatherings.

Gathering and majalis to remember the Shuhada-e-Karbala (martyrs of Karbala) have started as the country observes the first day of the month of Muharram to mark the beginning of the new Islamic year today (Sunday).

Pakistan reported only a single death from COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, the NIH data showed Sunday morning.

As many as 661 new infections were detected in a single day as the country's nerve centre in the fight against coronavirus performed diagnostic tests on 20,080 samples across the country.

The new cases pushed the coronavirus positivity rate in Pakistan to 3.29% and the number of total COVID-19 cases to 1,553,386.

Meanwhile, 171 patients suffering from coronavirus are being treated in critical care units at different medical facilities across the country.

NIH has restricted the elderly and children from attending the gatherings and majalis during Ashura in a COVID-safe manner, as the risk of another outbreak looms with uptick of the virus across Pakistan.

Following are the guidelines for holding gatherings and processions

- COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures i.e mask wearing, social distancing and use of sanitizers/ hand washing should be adhered to
- Organising committees should make arrangements for all SOPs
- Zakirs and participants should be vaccinated against COVID-19
- Venue for conduct of Majalis should be open and spacious with proper ventilation arrangements
- Wearing of masks and maintenance of social distancing is mandatory during majalis and Processions. Availability of masks and sanitizers/ hand washes
- Controlled participation according to capacity of venues and avoidance of overcrowding
- Duration of majalis and processions should be curtailed

- Majalis where SOPs cannot be effectively implemented such as
- homes and private gatherings should be discouraged
- Elderly above 65 years, children and co-morbid may be sensitized to attend Majalis at home through live streaming
- Proper arrangements for cleaning venues with chlorine before and after the events
- Display of COVID-19 SOPs and precautions at prominent places
- SOPs compliance by employing volunteer scouts

Miscellaneous aspects

- Arrangements for food and drinks in spacious and ventilated place.
- Emphasis on use of disposable utensils; preference on pre-packaged boxes for distribution of food.
- Avoiding overcrowding at food distribution points/ locations.
- No handshake and embracing.

Areas of focus

- Some of the aspects meriting necessary actions at the federal and federating units level, include following:
- Messaging by religious clerics for uniform implementation of SOPs /guidelines proposed by NCOC.
- Strict enforcement of SOPs by civil administration.

MoHW reserves 2% quota for employees in Green Enclave-I

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Housing and Works (MoHW) has reserved two percent quota of the total number of plots of each category for employees of nine constitutional bodies in Green Enclave-I, Bara Kahu Housing scheme Islamabad. Around eight plots have been reserved in category-I, 12 plots in category-II, 15 plots in category-III, 17 plots of category-IV and 15 plots of category-V were reserved for the employees of constitutional bodies, a ministry's official told APP. About the Sky Garden scheme, he said the revised layout plan of housing was under process for approval. However, as per tentative plot position in Sky Garden Housing scheme, the two percent quota was also reserved for the employees of constitutional bodies.

The official said that around 22 plots of different categories were reserved in the Sky Garden scheme under 2 percent quota for the employees of constitutional bodies. The list of members in waiting list (who deposited down payment and whose cases were likely to mature for allotment) is subject to verification of service particulars from their department including their Regular appointment in BPS as on date of membership etc, he added. He said the number of applicants who were in waiting list registered under Phase-I against quota of constitutional bodies in Green Enclave-I, Bara Kahu Housing Scheme and Sky Garden Housing Scheme are as under. To a question, he said the project of the FGEHA Lifestyle Residency, EHFPRO G-13 was likely to be completed by December 2022 depending on the availability of funds. – APP

Mehfil-e-Mushaira held at PAC

RAWALPINDI: In connection with the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Pakistan, the PAC organized a Mehfil-e-Mushaira here Sunday. Renowned writer and poet Professor Jalil Ali presided over the Mushaira, while Hasan Abbas Raza, Anjum Salimi, Dr Waheed Ahmed and Ahmed Attaullah were special guests. The guests of honour were Rahman Hafeez, Afzal Khan, and Saeed Raja, while Nasir Ali Nasir performed the program's host duties. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Jalil Ali, in his presidential speech, said that poetry was the best expression of emotions. "A poet is successful who descends from the stairs of the mind and resides in the heart," he added. Jalil urged the need to promote literary and cultural activities in Pakistan so that feelings of peace and love could flourish in society. – APP

VC AIOU represents Pakistan at high-level conference in Malaysia

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum represented Pakistan in the high-level round table conference of Vice Chancellors and Senior officials of Open Distance Learning (ODL) institutions of South Asia held in Penang, Malaysia. This was organized by Asia e University and Commonwealth of Learning (COL). The President/CEO of Commonwealth of Learning, Prof. Dr. Asha Kanwar presided over the conference, while the President/Founder of Asia e University, Prof. Dato' Dr. Ansari conducted the conference, said a news release issued here. VC, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, while talking about digitization of the university, e-Assessment and Quality Assurance, said that Allama Iqbal Open University has digitized the educational system, due to which educational activities continued even in Covid-19. He said that with digitalization we have now expanded our educational services to the entire world and Pakistani and international students residing in any country around the world can easily take admission in AIOU. He added that in the last semester, students from many countries including America, Canada, Japan, Germany, France, China, Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman got admissions in various programs of AIOU.

Dr. Zia said that we are paying special attention to e-Assessment for quality assurance on all levels even as we have given special attention to quality learning in educational activities during Covid-19. Furthermore, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum expressed his desire for educational collaboration in meetings with the Vice Chancellors of other open universities in the region. Innovations during the COVID-19, New Higher Education Paradigm, SGD and role of Universities, Education Technology for Quality Education, New thinking in Graduate Employability, Leaving no one Behind, Future Proofing our Universities were the key topics addressed and discussed by the speakers.



ISLAMABAD: Thick clouds hovering over federal capital at G8 area. – APP

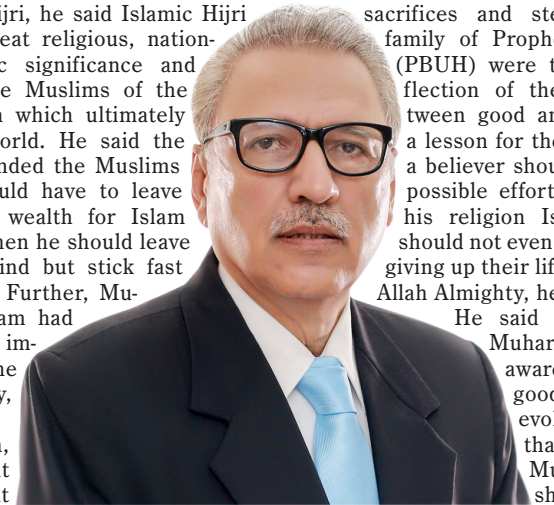
Railways making efforts to vacate Zhob Railway Station

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways was putting all-out efforts to vacate the Zhob Railway Station building as soon as possible which was occupied by unauthorized outsiders and was being used for residential purposes following its permanent closure. The notices as per the new Ordinance of 2021 for removal of encroachment introduced by the federal government were being served to unauthorized occupants, an official in the Ministry of Railways told media. He said the efforts were being expedited with the assistance of local administration and the levies to retrieve the encroached structures and hopefully the encroachment issue would be resolved. The Zhob Railway Station was established in 1920 on the Bostan-Zhob section which was a narrow gauge section and it was closed for passenger traffic in 1985 and for goods traffic in 1990 being uneconomical hence no, renovation of the station was carried out, since its closure, he added. He said the anti-encroachment operation for the vacation of these unauthorized service buildings would be carried out with the help of the district administration of Zhob due to the precarious law and order situation in this tribal area. – APP

President felicitates Ummah at advent of Muharram

The real lesson at the start of the Hijri year was that a Muslim should account for his actions of the past life and plan for the future, the president added

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi felicitated Muslims on the occasion of beginning of Muharram – the first month in the Islamic calendar and prayed that the new Hijri year may bring blessings for Pakistan, Pakistani nation, Islamic Ummah and the whole world. In a message at the advent of Muharram - the start of Islamic



sacrifices and steadfastness of family of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were the eternal reflection of the struggle between good and evil. It was a lesson for the Muslims that a believer should make every possible effort for upholding his religion Islam. Muslims should not even step back from giving up their life in the path of Allah Almighty, he continued. He said the month of Muharram raised awareness about good and evil and evoked feelings that aim of a true Muslim was to shine light on the majesty of the religion of his Creator. Every act of the Muslim should be carried out with the aim to keep the religion supreme, he said adding Muslims with their words and actions make it evident that Islam was a true religion and a blessing for the humanity. The real lesson at the start of the Hijri year was that a Muslim should account for his actions of the past life and plan for the future, the president added. He said people who were holding leadership positions should also make themselves accountable and see how much justice they did to their positions entrusted to them for leading the Ummah. He prayed to Allah Almighty that the coming Hijri year should be safe from all disasters and difficulties and bring peace, progress and prosperity for Pakistan, Muslim Ummah and the humanity. – APP

FPCCI's UBG group starts consultations for elections

ISLAMABAD: Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry's United Business Group (UBG), the largest alliance of chambers and trade associations in the country, has started consultation meetings finalising the best candidates for the annual election of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). Group Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik,(Sitara-Imtiaz) after chairing meeting told media on Sunday that a high level 20-member reconstituted core committee today held first preliminary marathon session to fully ensure the selection of the best candidates. He said that the UBG provincial-level scrutiny committees have been asked submit their recommendations to core committee for the award of tickets to the most suitable candidates contesting elections for the slots of President, SVP and VPs including against women seats. He said final names would be announced shortly after further deliberations and consultations with provincial and local leaders.He said that the highly educated young industrialists and traders enjoying the highest degree of integrity with a spirit of serving the business community would be awarded tickets on merit with consensus.He said under rotation policy, federation president would belong to federal territory. Top leaders across the country from corporate sector and business class including Mian Muhammad Adress,Sheikh Tanvir Ahmad,Rauf Alam,Dr Nouman Idress,Atif Ikram,Sheikh Asif,Sheikh Riaz Ud Din,Arif Jeva and others were present on the occasion. – APP

Residents face water shortage in G-13 sector

ISLAMABAD: The residents of G-13 sector were irked by water supply from the Federal Government Housing Authority (FGEHA) to the area, as they had to bear heavy expenses for getting private water tankers for their houses to fulfill the requirement. According to the residents, despite several complaints the concerned body was unable to address their issues and in particular the supply of sufficient water to the residents. "We have to bear heavy expenses upto Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 on getting private water tankers," they said. They said the water was supplied once a week and sometimes not at all and people were left on the mercy of the tanker mafia. They said that water scarcity has become a worrisome issue for the residents of sector G-13 of Islamabad where demand for supplying the water facility from external sources was escalating due to a sharp increase in its population and minimal availability of tankers and storage tanks in the sub-sectors. – APP

RIU starts kidney patient's treatment

RAWALPINDI: Medical Superintendent (MS) Rawalpindi Institute Of Urology (RIU)Dr Tahir Rizvi has said that around four to five patients were being treated on a trial basis daily at the RIU referred by the Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH). The MS who has the acting charge of RIU informed that over 97 per cent of work had been completed at the institute, while Out Door Patient Department, Emergency and other departments would hopefully become operational in a week. Dr Tahir said that RIU has around 30 dialysis machines, and after the completion of the project, the burden on city hospitals for treating kidney patients would be decreased. He said that the provincial government had provided the required funds, and the process of tenders and quotations was in the final stages for the completion of the project. – APP

Briefs

PM Shehbaz pays tribute to Hazrat Umar (RA)

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday paid tribute to Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) on the occasion of his martyrdom. In a message, the PM said Hazrat Umar (RA) entered Islam with the prayer of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Hazrat Umar (RA) was a companion of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and a leader and a brave commander who, as head of the state, established a comprehensive system of governance, he mentioned. Shehbaz Sharif said Hazrat Umar (RA) was a good administrator and had the characteristics of humbleness and fear of Allah and he strictly followed the principles of Islam. The PM said Hazrat Umar (RA) did great favours to the Muslim Ummah and prayed Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of the companion of the Prophet (PBUH) and let everybody follow in his footsteps. – APP

Marriyum grieved over demise of senior journalist

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of senior journalist Akhtar Baloch. In a statement, the minister said she was saddened to hear the news of Akhtar Baloch's death. Akhtar Baloch's services in the field of journalism would always be remembered, she remarked. She prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude. – APP

FBR issues rebuttal about sending of dollars

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Saturday issued rebuttal about the purported flight of dollars in April 2022 to Dubai through Karachi Airport in 245 suitcases. In a statement issued here on Saturday, the FBR categorically rebutted the contents of the two back-to-back tweets dated 29th July 2022 made by journalist Shaheen Sehbi on the subject alleging that "Credible insiders say within days after Shehbaz Sharif took office as Prime Minister, a plane with 245 suitcases full of US\$ took off from Karachi to Dubai. "A Customs Intel officer who reported the matter was immediately sacked.... my sources have now confirmed the Customs Intel Officer who was sacked in April when he reported Flight of a private plane with 245 suitcases to Dubai is Abdul Rasheed from Sindh." According to the FBR, the contents of Sehbi's tweets are unfounded and absolutely contrary to the facts. "No information has been found in the official record of the Directorate of Intelligence and Investigations-Karachi nor in the Directorate General of Intelligence and Investigation, Headquarters, Islamabad that can corroborate the assertions made in the tweets of Shaheen Sehbi," the FBR said. The board further clarified that Abdul Rasheed Shaikh remained DG Intelligence and Investigations-Customs for over two years and three months which was the longest tenure of a DG in the last 15 years. Furthermore, he was not sacked as claimed by Sehbi in his tweets but was routinely transferred and posted as Member Customs (HQs), FBR on 7th July 2022. He relinquished his charge on 13th July i.e. three months after the purported incident of April 2022. Moreover, the FBR statement said, Abdul Rasheed himself rebutted the incident as alleged in the tweets stating, "I&I Karachi had never reported any such intervention to me nor do I know the person who has attached my name to the story." – APP



ISLAMABAD: An artist giving final touches to artwork at his workplace in Lok Virsa. – APP

CPEC activities resume with renewed vigor

Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood, gave a detailed briefing on third-party participation and extension of CPEC to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD: China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project is once again kicking off after a decelerated stage during previous few years as the present government reiterates resolve to resume the pace of work as witnessed during 2013-2018. The Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N) led coalition government initiated China Pakistan economic Corridor had experienced sluggish advancement during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government with number of projects under the Corridor delaying due to unknown reasons. The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives under the supervision of its minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal has resumed the activity and started interacting with the Chinese concerned authorities to expedite work especially on the stalled projects and include new avenues in the mega project. Both Pakistan and China are engaged in finalizing the agenda of 11th Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) on CPEC where number of new projects in sectors like agriculture, information technology, tourism and others

would be considered besides reviewing work on the ongoing projects. According to sources in ministry of planning, the 11th JCC is likely to be held by next month. Although, the venue has not yet been finalized yet most probably it would be held in Beijing, China. Both Pakistan and China are also mulling over extending the scope of CPEC to Afghanistan and the matter was also discussed at a meeting chaired by Ahsan Iqbal. Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood, gave a detailed briefing on the third-party participation and extension of CPEC to Afghanistan. There is also possibility of holding the meeting of Joint Working Group in Energy between Pakistan and China during first week of August where the issues of 1124 MW Kohala and 700.7 MW Azad Pattan hydro power projects as well as 1320 MW Thar Coal power plant project would be taken up with the Chinese side. A joint study for the future development of Thar Coal had also been made part of the agenda. Two key run of the river hydropower projects have recently completed under

the umbrella of CPEC. The 720 MW Karot Hydropower project has already started its commercial operation while production of electricity from the 880 MW Suki Kenari hydro power project would start soon. "CPEC is back on track and measures are underway to provide sufficient power for Gwadar city," said Ahsan Iqbal at a meeting held to review preparations for 11th JCC meeting and stressed the need for renewable energy projects for the city's development. According to Daily China Net, exports have been set in motion for the first time in the Gwadar Free Zone in the backdrop of exemption from taxes and customs duties for a period of 20 years. Along with exports to foreign countries, the Gwadar Free Zone (GFZ) – both south and north – has also kick-started supply of trade articles and manufacturing items to the local market of Pakistan. Both phenomenal steps, aligned with the eCustom (Web-based One Custom – WeBOC) system are aimed at helping Pakistan realise its dream to become a high-performing export-oriented country in

the international trading landscape. Agvon, an enterprise incorporated into the Gwadar North Free Zone that deals in fertilizers import and processing, said it would sell 20,000 tons of potassium sulphate to Pakistani and international markets. The company is expected to start its production facility by the start of next year. For this purpose, Agvon has already acquired 10 acres of land and the manufacturing setup is under construction. Moreover, another industrial concern operating in the Gwadar Free Zone, HK Sun Corporation, will export its consignment to the tariff area in Pakistan. Talking about overall progress of CPEC, an official in the planning ministry informed that under first phase of the CPEC, numerous major energy projects including hydro, wind and solar projects were executed. "The second component of the CPEC is infrastructure, highways, waterways and bridges which have been built across Pakistan, improving the communication and road infrastructure," he added. – APP

PM prays for peace, prosperity

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, while felicitating the Muslims at the start of Muharram-ul-Haram and new Hijri year 1444, prayed to Allah Almighty to make the new Islamic year a source of peace, prosperity and blessings for the Muslim Ummah especially Pakistan. In a message, the PM said the new Islamic year was a reminder that one should leave behind the ill feelings of the past, learn from one's mistakes and seek forgiveness from Allah Almighty. He asked the Muslims to look into themselves and see whether during the previous year they disobeyed Allah in the matters of prayers, everyday affairs, in their actions, in the matters of right and wrong or whether they violated rights of Allah and rights of the people which might make them shameful before their Creator and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). "Let us change our individual lives by making favours and acceptance of Allah above all else in our worldly and religious affairs." Shehbaz Sharif said, on the occasion of the new Islamic year, he will appeal to the nation to pledge that at the individual and collective level, they will make tolerance and brotherhood their aim in all religious and political matters. "Let us make a pledge at the start of the new Islamic year that we will serve the country with complete honesty." He prayed to Allah Almighty to keep everyone safe during the new Hijri year from all disasters and difficulties and let this year bring peace, progress and prosperity for Pakistan, Muslim Ummah and the whole of humanity. – APP

China Power Hub to purchase local coal

ISLAMABAD: The 1,320 MWs China Power Hub Generation Co. (CPHGC) has invited tenders for the supply of local coal in Pakistani currency, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. The company has sought proposals from firms registered in Pakistan for the supply of 40,000 tons of local coal per month at a fixed price in Pakistani rupees. CPHGC is a joint venture between China Power Int'l Holding and Pakistan's Hubco under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework. The power plant is situated in Hub, Balochistan. The plant was operating with South African and Indonesian coals but is now shifting to local coal as per the government's policy after skyrocketing prices of imported coal. Masood Khan Nasar, owner of a coal supplier company, welcomed the move and said that it will benefit the country and local coal traders in many ways. The price of Indonesian coal has reached Rs 95,000 per ton while coal imported from Afghanistan reaches Karachi at around Rs 75,000 per ton. However, the local coal is available for Rs 40,000 per ton. Regarding the availability and quality of the local coal, Masood said that coal mines in the Duki and Harnai districts of Balochistan could produce as many as 6-8 thousand tons of coal per day. – APP

ANF recovers over 103 kg narcotics

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting two operations managed to recover over 103 kg narcotics besides netting an accused. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF Intelligence conducted a raid near Swabi Interchange and managed to recover 103 kg narcotics including 54 kg opium and 49.2 kg charras from an unattended car. The spokesman informed that ANF Rawalpindi in an operation conducted on Islamabad International Airport recovered 70 Ice filled capsules containing 642 grams Ice from the possession of a passenger namely Jahangir, resident of Swabi, going to Bahrain through flight no GF-771. The capsules were concealed in a shampoo bottle. Separate cases had registered against the accused while further investigations were under process. The spokesman informed that accomplices of the accused would also be sent behind the bars. – APP

IIOJK: The world's largest human prison on planet

ISLAMABAD: The attempt of India to change the legal status of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir with mala fide intentions to bring demographic changes in the state on August 5, 2019 has turned the entire valley into the world's largest human prison for making life there a worst nightmare of terror and trauma. It was through the so-called resolution of the Indian Parliament which has revoked the special status and autonomy granted to the territory under the Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution. Thus the deliberate action of illegal abrogation of the Articles has unleashed a havoc of woes to the locals of the region. The illegal move has urged the residents to retaliate for rights to self-determination. Therefore, the Indian government has launched an

onslaught against the innocent people which had not only deprived them from getting access to basic facilities of life but also forced them to experience worse brutalities at the hands of the occupied forces – from imposing the longest curfews to fake encounters, killings to rapes, arrests to manhandling and detention to torture. Other than the unjust treatment on constitutional front, the forces have also made all possible efforts to curb the local uprising against the deployed forces. Therefore, communication lines were cut off, mobility restricted, access to information denied, political leadership either encountered or arrested in fake cases, in the highest military zone of the world. Referring to recent documented academic re-

searches on Kashmir, Awaiz Bin Wasi, expert on Kashmir issue and Assistant Professor, Riphah International University Islamabad told APP, "It was the ground reality that the IIOJK has become the largest militarized zone due massive presence of occupied forces where the highest number of human rights violation cases reported." He said that the abrogation of the Articles was against the Indian Constitution, UN Resolutions, Geneva Convention, will of the Kashmiri people, and international laws, adding that the Indian Constitution states that the Article 370 could not be revoked unilaterally. The world bodies, international human rights organizations and UN should play its role to restore the autonomous status of IIOJK, he added. – APP

AJK PM lauds Sardar Ibrahim's vibrant role

MIRPUR: Prime Minister AJK Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that Ghazi-e-Millat Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan's sole mission was to rid his nation of the menace of Hindu's slavery and make Kashmir an invincible part of Pakistan. He expressed these views in a statement issued on the occasion of the 19th death anniversary of Ghazi-e-Millat Sardar Ibrahim Khan, the founder president of Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, observed at both sides of the LoC on Saturday. The PM said that the deceased leader's life (from 1915 to 2003) had been a mixture of many ups and downs but he never compromised on his ideals. He said Ghazi-e-Millat pursued higher education from London and was elected as assistant advocate general of the Maharajah Govt. – APP

Housing societies warned of strict action on violation

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General, RDA Capt. (r) Tahir Zafar Abbasi has directed the private housing societies that strict action would be taken against violators of dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the Punjab government. According to a RDA spokesman, the RDA has also directed the management of Bahria Town housing scheme to ensure strict compliance of anti-dengue SOPs. The Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate, RDA has directed Bahria Town administration that strict adherence to SOPs is imperative to counter dengue. The prevailing weather is suitable for dengue larvae breeding, therefore, strict compliance of anti-dengue SOPs is needed to prevent the spread of larvae during the dengue peak season. "The role of private housing societies is very crucial in containing the spread of dengue virus, adding, it is responsibility of every housing society to ensure dengue free environment for the inhabitants," he said. "The recent rains had been declared suitable for the breeding of dengue mosquitoes. Not only could the dengue mosquito breed rapidly in the current climate, but it can also be extremely dangerous to human health, he said. The spokesman informed that a large number of the residents of Bahria town 1, 2, 3, Safari Villas-I, II, and Bahria Phase Town phase-8 were not taking care and not adopting precautionary measures against dengue. – APP

ICCI to organize All Parties Revival of Economy Conference

Zubair Ahmed Malik, former President ICCI & FPCCI said this situation demands that everybody should play a part to get the country out of the current situation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The current economic meltdown is clear to all and everybody is worried while the whole nation is under stress. Therefore, ICCI has planned to organize an All Parties Revival of Economy Conference to bring all stakeholders to one platform and discuss options to turn around the economy. This was said by Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry while addressing a press conference at the National Press Club, Islamabad. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Chairman Founder Group, former Presidents ICCI Zubair Ahmed Malik, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Shaban Khalid, Ahmed Waheed and others were present at the occasion. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that apart from the overall economic situation faced by Pakistan,

energy shortage, high inflation, heavy debts and most of all the reluctance of multilateral donors as well as friendly countries to help Pakistan was a clear sign that a massive storm for the economy has arrived. He said that there are many things that may not be visible to the general public but the chain reaction to the crises can

have serious consequences in the overall retail end, which will hurt the consumers. He said that the restrictions by the SBP upon letter of Credit (LC) and sharp declining foreign currency reserves can lead to a situation where goods and items will be in short supply in the markets. Such a situation will lead to public outcry as our economy is

totally based on consumerism. He said that understanding the ground realities, ICCI has decided to reach-out to all concerned decision makers and seek solutions to the economic crises. He said that ICCI will organize an All Parties Revival of Economy Conference in this regard on August 6, Saturday to highlight these issues with the de-

cision makers. He said that we are not into any political great game nor are we here to extend support to any party. Our sole purpose is to work for reviving the economy. He invited the leadership of all political parties to attend the conference and make it more productive. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Chairman Founder said that the situation is so serious that it can lead to the threat to stability of the country, therefore this conference and these discussions are all apolitical. He said that we are concerned about all the business community including the people who matter, general public and even the state institutions. He said that there is a need to reduce political polarization and bring all the parties in the Parliament and the provincial assemblies at one stage to discuss a way forward and steer the country out of the economic crises. He said that ICCI has already started discussions with several economists seeking their input and collective thought of experts will be presented in the conference.



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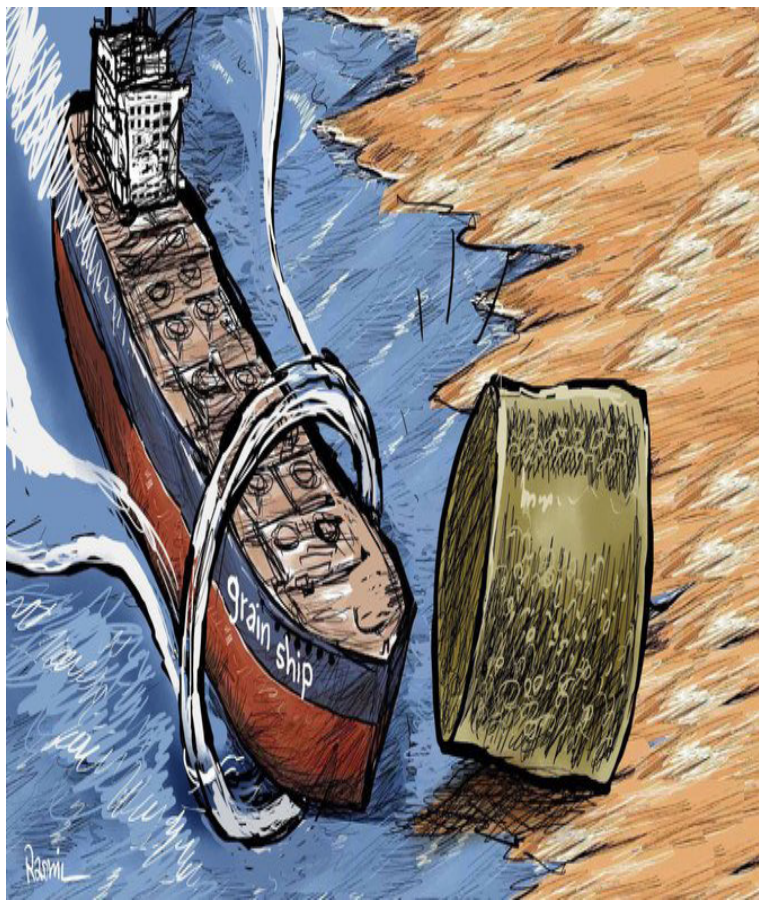
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EU caught in a bind by its dependencies

THE twists and turns European Union members have gone through to arrive at the agreement they reached on Tuesday on reducing their natural gas consumption by 15 percent this winter speak volumes of what a challenge they have subjected themselves to by joining the US-led sanctions against Russia. The purpose of the gas demand reduction is to make savings ahead of winter in order to prepare for possible disruptions of gas supplies from Russia. The European Council also foresees the possibility of triggering a "Union alert" on security of supply, in which case the gas demand reduction would become mandatory, although the European Council specified some exemptions and possibilities to request a derogation from the mandatory reduction target, in order to reflect the particular situations of member states.

In a statement announcing the agreement, the European Council accused Russia of "continuously using energy supplies as a weapon". Yet the EU has put itself in this position by blindly following the United States in its campaign against Russia. As well as providing material support for Ukraine in its conflict with Russia, it has continuously increased its sanctions on Russia, weaponizing market access, finance, logistics and technology. It is ridiculous to expect Russia to keep providing a stable supply of natural gas to the countries that are imposing crippling sanctions on it. The shortage of energy has triggered a chain reaction. As the shortage of energy becomes increasingly acute, many countries, including such green development pioneers as Germany, have started increasing their coal burning to maintain a basic supply-demand balance. That means the US-led sanctions, which are fundamentally contradictory to the needs to build a lasting, sustainable and balanced security mechanism in Europe, are also overdrawn on the future development prospects of the world.

What the European countries need to show is not that they will stand united against their largest energy supplier but that they can work together to prevent European interests from being hijacked by the US – it is the US, not Europe, that has pushed for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to expand to Russia's doorstep. And it is not Russia that has attempted to divide the EU, but the US, with the aim of misleading the EU into believing that binding itself to the US is the only way it can ensure its security. In doing that, the EU has made itself less secure, and turned the continent into a buffer zone for the US in its power struggle with Russia.

China, Pak, CPEC – Background, history, challenges, way forward

Ahmad Jawad



The CPEC will show a major increase in Pakistan's economy by increasing trade with China, Central Asia, Russia, Middle East and Europe. Even within the construction phase and completion of the CPEC there will be...

PAKISTAN is one of the most important countries, population-wise, in Asia. It is considered the sixth most populous country in the world, with an estimated population of almost 220 million people. Most of the people reside in the four provinces of Khyber Pakhtunwala (KPK), Punjab, Sindh, and Baluchistan. It will be the fourth most populous country by the year 2050 in the world. A famous Chinese saying is, "To understand today, one needs to know the history; and to know the future, one needs to review the past."

BALUCHISTAN IS MOST IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF CPEC

Baluchistan is the most deprived province of Pakistan. It is located at the eastern edge of the Iran. It is geographically the largest of the four provinces with 347,190 sq km and equates to 42 percent of the total land area of Pakistan. The population density is very low due to the hilly territory and insufficiency of water and other human resources. It has 26 districts and the approximate population of Baluchistan is about 15 million. Baluchistan is rich in natural resources. The economy is largely based on the production of natural gas, coal, and minerals. The province's natural resources

significantly help to meet the energy needs of Pakistan as a whole. Limited farming in the east and fishing along the Arabian Sea coastline are other forms of income and sustenance for the local population. Baluchistan is very poor in basic education.

It is expected that 2.0 million people are expected to move to Gwadar within a span of 30 years. The port is not yet functioning, but noticeable signs of progress have been seen. Similarly, new residential areas, hotels, buildings, schools, hospitals, and roads are indicative of modern trends. It also is expected to have a positive impact on the rest of the province, which has been neglected for a long time. Gwadar Port is a mega project of CPEC and a vast amount of investment is anticipated in both its infrastructure and extensions.

HISTORY OF CPEC:

The CPEC is an important agreement in improving regional connectivity as "strategic partners." The idea became a reality in 2013 through the visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to Pakistan. The historic memorandum of understanding between the two countries on CPEC was signed on July 5, 2013. In the same year, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited China and signed eight agreements. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited China again and 19 more agreements were signed in 2016. The CPEC is an important part of One Belt One Road (OBOR). It is a package of infrastructure and energy projects, its specific purpose is to upgrade and expand Pakistani infrastructure, linking China's western province of Kashgar with Pakistan's Gwadar Port on the Indian Ocean. Pakistan is a developing country; the CPEC is a great opportunity to enhance its economy. Through this mega project (CPEC), Pakistan's population can reduce its poverty and achieve a higher standard of living.

In April 2015, Chinese president Xi Jinping visited Pakistan. During his visit, approximately 51 agreements were signed between China and Pakistan with a total worth of \$46 billion, which also included the development of the CPEC. The original \$46 billion that China invested in Pakistan under the CPEC has now expanded to approximately \$54 billion. This amount exceeds all foreign direct investment. The result is that, over the last several years, Pakistan has received considerably more aid than it has received from the United States.

Benefits of CPEC:

1. Economic Boost:

The CPEC will show a major increase in Pakistan's economy by increasing trade with China, Central Asia, Russia, Middle East and Europe. Even within the construction phase and completion of the CPEC there will be a visible economic growth in Pakistan by about 3 percent because of increase in industrial development due to the availability of resources.

2. Real Estate:

Between the construction phase of the CPEC and after the completion of CPEC route the value of the land surrounding

is improving significantly and is providing many commercial opportunities to owners and developers of the land.

3. Agricultural Growth:

Due to increase in the agricultural production Pakistan will observe a significant agricultural growth with cooperation of China and sharing modern technology and strategies along with our feasible weather conditions.

4. Foreign Investment:

CPEC will promote foreign investment in Pakistan, which will ultimately show increase in our economic growth rate.

5. Great opportunities of Import and Export:

Another major advantage would be increase in the trade from which revenue will be generated, which will be earned from transiting goods to and from other countries.

6. Employment Opportunities:

CPEC would create employment opportunities for the local people to an extent of about two to three million which will contribute towards economic conditions of the Pakistan.

7. Tourism Development and Promotion:

The CPEC would provide for ideal tourism conditions in Pakistan, facilitating the flourishing of the tourism and hotel industry of Pakistan by providing a safe route and attractive commercial activity around Gawadar city.

8. Pakistan's International role will be more prominent:

Many regional and extra-regional countries will be joining CPEC; this will improve Pakistan's international stature, our contacts and will create an aura of peace and stability in the region.

9. Opportunity to develop and improve Relationship with other regional Countries:

South Asian countries will also prefer CPEC lead geo-economics over geopolitics and resolving major disputes like Jammu & Kashmir will get easier and peace will be achieved successfully. This would also facilitate South Asia's interconnectivity and its connectivity with China, Central Asia, West Asia and Russia.

10. Defence Support:

CPEC will definitely bring vast strategic and economic advantages to Pakistan and regions surrounding it. Not only will CPEC will be beneficial for the country but the citizen of Pakistan will also be able to bear fruits of its development on individual level.

WAY FORWARD

PMNL Govt in alliance with PPP, is putting the CPEC on track with a high speed. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Minister of Planning and development Ahsan Iqbal are expected to take CPEC to new heights in the coming months. Armed Forces of Pakistan are taking extra ordinary measures to provide security to CPEC projects and Chinese nationals working in Pakistan.

People of Pakistan are emotionally connected to CPEC and China. Public support in Pakistan will always be long term security of CPEC. In future, OBOR will be a global connection and CPEC will be the founding stone of OBOR.

Another controversy

FINANCIAL Times' exposé of allegedly dubious PTI funding is just one more matter that can be put to rest rather easily and quickly, yet for whatever reason, these things tend to drag on endlessly in these parts. There's really no need for all the finger-pointing and allegations, especially in an environment as politically toxic as this.

All you have to do is put all the evidence on the table and let the law deliver its verdict. Imran Khan ought to be quicker than the rest in making sure that all the facts are known since he's always gone out on a limb to tell everybody that he's the cleanest of them all; even calling his opponents, whom he's dubbed "thieves," worse than terrorists.

This development is also sure to increase pressure on the ECP to finally announce the verdict in the prohibited funding case, which has gone on for more than eight years now.

And since that, too, is going to open yet another can of worms with PTI already tarnishing the ECP's reputation, the sooner the process of getting to the bottom of this mystery begins the better for everybody.

Let's not forget that the country has been beset by one controversy after another, especially since the PTI government was sent packing in April. And sooner or later, people will have to choose from one of the mainstream parties, who at present are doing nothing more than throwing mud at each other, to lead them out of the multiple crises that Pakistan currently faces. Arif Naqvi and Abraaj Group have graced the headlines many times in Pakistan.

And mostly, the role of the Pakistani private equity genius, who built a multi-billion-dollar empire out of nothing and now languishes in London awaiting extradition to the US, where he could face up to a 290-year prison sentence, has been controversial.

Best of all questions, including this one, are answered in strict keeping with the law, and not delayed unnecessarily.

Washington is eyeing on Tehran

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The JCPOA did not free Iran of its legal obligations. Second, Iran's enrichment did not increase when Trump withdrew from the JCPOA, but when the Biden administration...

TWO weeks ago, Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman demonstrated the Biden administration's magical thinking about Iran at the House of International Students. State Department spokesman Ned Price insisted last week that there was a deadline for talks, but failed to say whether it would be in one day or five years. Meanwhile, Iran's nuclear program continues unceasing. Progressives and the State Department may dislike President Donald Trump for withdrawing from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but that's wrong for three reasons: First, Iran is bound by the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The JCPOA did not free Iran of its legal obligations. Second, Iran's enrichment did not increase when Trump withdrew from the JCPOA, but when the Biden administration ended Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's "maximum pressure" campaign. Here, the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' timeline is definitive.

Third, the JCPOA has not done what Presidents Obama and Biden said they would do. For Biden's team, basing its strategy toward Iran on fantasy rather than reality could quickly lead to the worst: not just Iran acquiring nuclear weapons a moment when Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's adviser Kamal Kharazi says that now it is a very dangerous situation. The question is not when, not if but an endless conflict that will destabilize the region. Biden's team may be obsessive about Iran's nuclear program. Biden probably won't live to see the results. Special Envoy Robert Malley (an American lawyer, political scientist and specialist in conflict resolution, who was the lead negotiator on the 2015 Iran) has never considered the Islamic Republic a threat.

Through the lens of his moral equivalency, he believes that Iran has the right to possess nuclear weapons. Wendy Sherman (US Deputy Secretary of State), "there is a very viable agreement and Iran just has to say, 'yes,'" said Sherman, explaining that internal politics are likely

at play over who is truly the nation's current supreme leader. She also believes privately that a failure in the Iran negotiations will be no worse than his failure with North Korea diplomacy. However, further said North Korea has not (yet) used its nuclear weapons. However, there is no threat for Israel, Saudi Arabia and other regional states from nuclear Iran but it is seriously unpleasant. If the regime collapses in just a day or two and unless popular forces take over Tehran, the theoretically assessed IRGC units that are guarding, commanding and controlling Iran's nuclear arsenal may take power and launch an offensive to achieve their ideological goals before the end.

The disadvantage of such a military strike, of course, is that it validates Iran's rhetoric about its need for nuclear weapons. The history saw that The Islamic Revolution was collapsing when Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded and allowed Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to consolidate power. After all, the biggest drawback of a military strike doesn't topple the regime and nuclear program but delay. Between 2010 and 2012, four Iranian nuclear scientists Masoud Alimohammadi, Majid Shahriari, Darioush Rezaeinejad and Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan were assassinated, while another Fereydoon Abbasi was wounded in an attempted murder. In November 2020, another scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh was assassinated. Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its involvement, but Israeli defense minister Moshe Ya'alon said: "We will act in any way and are not willing to tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran. Unfortunately, this is the scenario to which Biden's Iran policy is now leading."

Washington believes that they should do as much as possible against Iran and South Lebanon (In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon and during the conflict, according to Lebanese sources, between 15,000 and 20,000 people were killed, mostly were civilians.) and imagine that others should just pick up the pieces. Unfortunately, this is the scenario to which Biden's Iran policy is now leading.

Drones and transport could reshape Eurasian geopolitics

James Dorsey

The Ukraine crisis has given a new lease on life to the INSTC, a 7,200-kilometre patchwork of independently operated railroads, highways...

WHEN US intelligence asserted that Iran was selling hundreds of combat drones to Russia, it was signalling more than Iranian support for Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Suggesting that Russia was not capable of serial producing its own drones, the intelligence served to question further Russian military capabilities, already overshadowed by doubt because of the poor performance of Russian military personnel and equipment on the Ukrainian battlefield. The US disclosure followed the inauguration in Tajikistan of Iran's first overseas drone manufacturing facility. The factory produces Iran's Ababil-2 multipurpose reconnaissance and killer drone.

The disclosure likely also drew Gulf attention to Iran's potentially expanding role in assisting Russia, and China, in an increasingly bifurcated world at a time that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were manoeuvring to put their strained relations with the Islamic republic on a more even keel. With Russia, Iranian assistance goes far beyond the supply of drones. Iran stands to gain substantially from being a key node in a Eurasian transport corridor that would help Russia circumvent US and European sanctions. Iran would enhance its geopolitical usefulness by offering a route into Central Asia and Afghanistan that allows India to

circumvent its archenemy, Pakistan. Indian foreign minister S. Jaishankar pushed this month at a meeting in Tashkent of foreign ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to include the Indian-backed Iranian port of Chabahar in the corridor dubbed the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The SCO groups alongside India, Russia, China, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Iran is set to join the organization in the next year.

Earlier this month, at a summit of Caspian Sea littoral states, Mr. Putin hailed the corridor as a "truly ambitious project" that is the centrepiece of Russia's efforts to "improve the transport and logistics architecture of the region."

The Ukraine crisis has given a new lease on life to the INSTC, a 7,200-kilometre patchwork of independently operated railroads, highways, and maritime routes that connect Russia and India through Iran. If successful, the corridor that traverses Russia, Central Asia, the Caspian, Iran, and the Arabian Sea would reduce travel time from 40-60 days to 25-30 days and cut costs by 30 percent. In addition, its significance could be boosted by hook-ups with Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. "The Islamic Republic is indispensable to Russia since transit across its territory links that Eurasian great power with their shared Indian strategic partner, which safeguards Russia's strategic autonomy in these new international conditions," said analyst Andrew Korybko.

Alireza Peyman Pak, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, expects the corridor to enable Iran to double its exports despite dim prospects for a revival of the 2105 international agreement that curbed the Islamic republic's nuclear program. A revival would involve lifting at least some of the crippling US sanctions against Iran.

This month's Russian-Ukrainian agreement to export grain from three Ukrainian Caspian Sea ports under the auspices of the United Nations and Turkey highlighted the body of water's centrality. A shipment in June of two and then 39 containers in July of wood laminate sheets from Russia to India's Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai served as pilot projects for the corridor.

The cargos left St Petersburg for the Russian port of Astrakhan, from where they were shipped to Iran's Anzali Caspian port. They were then taken by road across Iran to Bandar Abbas, from where the cargo moved to Mumbai. The entire journey in both cases took 24 days.

At the same time, RZD Logistics, a subsidiary of Russian Railways, the largest multimodal transport operator in the former Soviet Union and the Baltics, launched a new container train service along the INSTC. Its first train headed from Moscow to Mumbai left the Russian capital on July 8. In an illustration of the new routes, India and Uzbekistan agreed to do a pilot shipment to Mumbai through Chabahar in August. The INSTC has gained significance with a spike in trade between Russia and India, fuelled by Indian imports of Russian oil. Imports in April and May rose by a stunning 272 per cent, with a value of more than US\$5 billion or the equivalent in two months of 50 per cent of average annual trade between the two countries that ranges on average between US\$8 and 11 billion. Few analysts expect the memorandum to be more than a symbolic statement any time soon. The same is true for a Russian-Iranian agreement to create an alternative international payment system that would be unable to put a dent in SWIFT. The Brussels-based group executes financial transactions and payments between banks worldwide.

That leaves arms and transport alongside the conflict in Syria, and a common desire to up-end a US-dominated world order as the potential cornerstones of relations between two of the key powers that bookend the INSTC. Both countries have sufficient interest in these areas not to allow competition for selling oil and gas to Asia at discounted prices because of the sanctions to stymie their cooperation. Said security analyst Ali Ahmadi: "Iran...requires...a strategy for turning trade routes into economic corridors that can benefit its own citizens. If Tehran can rise to the challenge, it will have a key role to play in the development of Asia and East-West trade moving forward."

— Dr. James M. Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and scholar.

Briefs

Rupee to...

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slight drop," the minister added. Ismail said that he has hope that the "next two weeks will InshaAllah be better". He cautioned, though, that although this is his view since he believes "the fundamentals are in Pakistan's favour", but "speculation and sentiments also play a role in this". The finance minister said that the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) has recommended removing the ban on imports. If approved by the cabinet and signed off on by the prime minister, several items will no longer be banned. A ban will continue to remain, however, on imported cars, mobile phones and home appliances. Ismail said that the government aims to convert the current account deficit into surplus. "In the short term, we reduced imports and now over the next two to three months, we will increase exports," he said. The finance minister, to a question on what the government plans to do to arrest the rising inflation, Ismail said: "It is the prime objective of every finance minister to curb inflation and focus on growth. My number one priority has never been to control inflation or to bring growth. My priority has only been to save Pakistan from default." To describe just how grave a situation the country could have fallen into before being "saved", he spoke of Sri Lanka, which recently declared bankruptcy. The minister said: "Of late, petrol in the country cost 90 rupees and was sold at 3,000 rupees in the black market, hospitals shut down due to medicines running out, women would stand in line for three days to get gas to power their stoves, and one had to queue up for 10 days to get petrol."

Govt slashes...

FROM PAGE 01

maximum relief to the consumers. Addressing the nation, the premier said that the government had increased the price of petrol after coming into power to meet the conditions laid forth by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which were agreed by the previous PTI-led government. Stage set to bring country out of economic crisis, PM says after IMF agreement 'Hard work' pays off for Pakistan: Experts weigh in on IMF deal Pakistan finally strikes staff-level agreement with IMF However, as the prices are declining in the international market now, the government has decided to pass on the relief to people and, therefore, has decided to reduce the price of petrol and diesel by Rs18.50 and Rs40.54 per litre, respectively.

Pak Army...

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A low flood at Warsak and medium flood at Nowshera in River Kabul were also recorded. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a maximum 133 mm rain was recorded in Mardan followed by Mohmand (85 mm). After massive rain, dewatering efforts were carried out in Mardan whereas flash floods were reported in local nullahs of Mohmand District. In Southern Punjab, all hill torrents were flowing normal except some increased flow in Mithawan, Kaha and Sanghar Hill torrents. The local commanders visited Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan where relief items were distributed among flood affectees. The medical camps were also established in both districts. In Balochistan, Jhal Magshi, complete connectivity of Gandhawa was restored and there was no isolated area in Gandhawa and it's surroundings whereas relief activities were underway. The Army Medical Camp treated some 115 patients. In Khuzdar, M-8 route was still cut off and work on resumption of connectivity was underway. Moreover, the field Medical Camp established by CMH Khuzdar and FC in Hafizabad treated some 145 affected people. In Naseerabad, there was no rain recorded throughout the day and relief activities were underway for affected population of Babakot and Gandakha. The forces also distributed ration and cooked food among flood victims whereas field Medical Camp in Gandakha treated various patients.

Putin says United States is main threat to Russia

NEWS DESK

ST PETERSBURG: President Vladimir Putin on Sunday signed a new naval doctrine which cast the United States as Russia's main rival and set out Russia's global maritime ambitions for crucial areas such as the Arctic and in the Black Sea. Speaking on Russia's Navy Day in the former imperial capital of St Petersburg founded by Tsar Peter the Great, Putin praised Peter for making Russia a great sea power and increasing the global standing of the Russian state. After inspecting the navy, Putin made a short speech in which he promised that what he touted as Russia's unique Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles, cautioning that Russia had the military clout to defeat any potential aggressors. Shortly before the speech, he signed a new 55-page naval

doctrine, which sets out the broad strategic aims of Russia's navy, including its ambitions as a "great maritime power" which extend over the entire world. The main threat to Russia, the doctrine says, is "the strategic policy of the USA to dominate the world's oceans" and the movement of the NATO military alliance closer towards Russia's borders. Russia may use its military force appropriately to the situation in the world's oceans should other soft powers, such as diplomatic and economic tools, be exhausted, the doctrine says, acknowledging that Russia does not have enough navy bases globally. Russia's priority was to develop strategic and naval cooperation with India as well as wider cooperation with Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and other states in the region, according to the doctrine. "Guided by this doctrine, the Russian

Federation will firmly and resolutely defend its national interests in the world's oceans, and having sufficient maritime power will guarantee their security and protection," the document said. Putin's speech did not mention the conflict in Ukraine, but the military doctrine envisages a "comprehensive strengthening of Russia's geopolitical position" in the Black and Azov seas. Relations between Russia and the West have undergone deepening strain during the five months of the Ukraine conflict. The doctrine also sets out the Arctic Ocean, which the United States has repeatedly said Russia is trying to militarise, as an area of particular importance for Russia. Russia's vast 37,650 km (23,400 mile) coastline, which stretches from the Sea of Japan to the White Sea, also includes

the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Putin said the delivery of Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles to the Admiral Gorshkov frigate would begin within months. The location of their deployment would depend on Russian interests, he said. "The key thing here is the capability of the Russian navy... It is able to respond with lightning speed to all who decides to infringe on our sovereignty and freedom." Hypersonic weapons can travel at nine times the speed of sound, and Russia has conducted previous test-launches of the Zircon from warships and submarines over the past year. In Crimea, Sevastopol governor Mikhail Razvozhayev said Ukrainian forces struck the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the Russian-held port city early on Sunday, wounding five members of staff.

Max Verstappen wins the Hungarian Grand Prix

WEB DESK

BUDAPAST: Red Bull's Max Verstappen drove an outstanding race to win the Hungarian Grand Prix from 10th on the grid despite a spin costing the lead. Verstappen passed title rival Charles Leclerc twice, raising fresh questions about Ferrari's race operations. Red Bull's pit strategy also vaulted Verstappen ahead of pole-sitter George Russell, who lost out on second place to team-mate Lewis Hamilton. Carlos Sainz was fourth and Leclerc sixth as Ferrari's season imploded. The result left Verstappen with an 80-point lead over Leclerc with nine races remaining, an advantage that looks unassailable given Red Bull's steadiness and Ferrari's flakiness. A race gripping from start to finish, featuring divergent strategies, and the constant threat of rain on a grey, windy and cool day, provided a perfect symbol of the season so far. Verstappen was imperious in moving through the field from his lowly grid position, caused by engine problems, Red Bull solid and aggressive on their strategy, and Ferrari uncertain as they converted second and third on the grid to having neither driver on the podium at the finish. Unlike Russell and Verstappen, who were both on softs, Hamilton ran medium tyres at the start, and ran a long middle stint, stopping 13 laps after the Dutchman and fitting soft tyres for a relatively short final stint. It worked a treat. He rejoined in fifth place and soon began to reel in those in front. Leclerc pitted out of the way, abandoning the hard tyres Ferrari had fitted at his second



stop, passing Sainz on lap 61 and then closing in on Russell, who was struggling with worn tyres, and passing him with five laps to go. Ferrari went into the race with an apparently open goal to make up ground on Verstappen but their day fell apart with an apparent series of strategy errors. In the opening laps, Leclerc appeared quicker than Sainz, who was unable to pass Russell in the lead. Sainz made his first pit stop a lap after Russell but came out still behind him. The team ran Leclerc for a further five laps to give him a tyre advantage over Russell in the lead and it worked a treat. He closed in after his pit stop. They battled for five laps but eventually Leclerc passed the Mercedes around the outside of Turn One on lap 31. That appeared to be the race won but Ferrari chose the hard tyres at his second pit stop. He lacked grip

when he rejoined in third place behind Sainz and Hamilton, and was soon passed by Verstappen. His hard tyres never gave any grip but rather than try to hang on, he pitted for softs with 17 laps to go. Still he made no progress and ended up sixth, behind Red Bull's Sergio Perez. Sainz ran a long middle stint like Hamilton and was ahead of the Mercedes until his stop on lap 47. And when Hamilton made his stop four laps later, he caught and passed the Ferrari within 10 laps, relegating Sainz off the podium on a troubled day for Maranello. McLaren's Lando Norris drove a solid race to seventh, beating the Alpines of Fernando Alonso and Esteban Ocon, who did a one-stop strategy using the hard tyre for their second stint. Sebastian Vettel took the final point for Aston Martin on the weekend he announced he will retire at the end of the year.

President directs UBL to reimburse Rs 5.49 million

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi while upholding a decision of the Banking Mohtasib, has directed the United Bank Ltd (UBL) to refund the swindled amount of Rs 5.49 million to a complainant and declared that maladministration on part of the bank had been established. The president rejected UBL's representation against Mohtasib's decision and held that bank had displayed negligence by clearing two stolen cheques bearing forged signatures as established by the bank's own forensic report. He regretted that the bank did not follow its own SOPs which clearly mandated a call back for transfer/clearing/remittance for the amount of Rs 500,000 and above, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Sunday. He highlighted that SOPs were framed for application across the board without giving any discretion or choice to anyone with the underlying objective to avoid the possibility of fraud and fraudulent practices. The president held that since the bank could not establish incontrovertibly its stance against the complainant, had failed to discharge the burden of proof and statutory liability cast upon it under the law, thus, its representation was devoid of any merit and deserved to be rejected. While further dilating upon the representation, the president pointed out that the cheques in dispute bore no stamp or narration required to be affixed on the back of the two cheques as required by the said SOPs. He wrote that there was negligence on part of the bank in matching the signatures on stolen cheques against the admitted signatures of the complainant as per bank's record, adding this fact was very tangible, obvious and sufficient for the bank to settle the claim in favour of the complainant. He said that the forged cheques were a nullity and the customer's account could not be debited on the basis of such cheques. As per details, Feroze Khan (the complainant) was swindled out of his money when cheques were stolen from his office and Rs 5.49 million were debited from his account by the bank without any callback confirmation from UBL, as mandated by law and its own SOPs regarding the clearance of cheques for amounts of Rs 500,000 and above. The complainant had filed a complaint with the Bank for seeking a refund of his lost money but without any result. Subsequently, he approached the Banking Mohtasib (BM) for retrieval of his swindled money, which passed the orders in his favour. — APP

UFC: Amanda Nunes beats Julianna Pena to reclaim title We make history again, this is the best day in my life

DALLAS: Amanda Nunes defeated Julianna Pena by the decision to reclaim her bantamweight title at UFC 277. The 34-year-old Brazilian successfully avenged her shocking defeat to the American in December by dominating both stand-up and grappling. Nunes, who also owns the featherweight belt, beat the 32-year-old, making him the first two-time double champion in UFC history. "We make history again, this is the best day in my life," said Nunes. In the co-main event, Brandon Moreno defeated Kai Kara-France with a brutal body kick in the third round to win the interim flyweight title. Deiveson Figueiredo, the champion of the division, joined Moreno in the cage after the fight, and they mutually decided to have an unprecedented fourth fight for the undisputed championship. In one of the biggest upsets in UFC history, Pena famously submitted Nunes in Las Vegas seven months prior, snapping her 12-fight winning run and winning the belt. In a streak that saw the "Lioness" defeat several current and former champions, including Ronda Rousey, Cris Cyborg, and Valentina Shevchenko twice, this was Nunes' first loss in seven years. — Agencies

India trounce Pakistan in Commonwealth Games 2022

MONITORING DESK

BIRMINGHAM: After a sensational bowling display, Indian batters performed brilliantly to help India secure an eight-wicket win over arch-rivals Pakistan in a reduced-overs contest in the Commonwealth Games 2022. India reached the paltry 99-run target in just 11.4 overs, thanks to opening batter Smriti Mandhana's blistering 42-ball 63. Her partner Shafali Verma 16 (9) looked in nice touch, but young Tuba Hassan got the better of her. Pakistan's Omaima Sohail bowled out Sabhineni Meghana after she scored 14 runs in 16 balls. Earlier, an all-round bowling performance from India restricted Pakistan to a paltry 99 runs in their second match of the Commonwealth Games 2022 at Pakistan won the toss and decided to bat first, which the Indian bowlers took advantage of and bowled out the Green Shirts for 99. Meghna Singh gave India an early breakthrough as she sent Iram Javed back to the pavilion for a duck. Muneeba Ali top-scored for Pakistan as she scored 32 runs in



30 balls before Sneha Rana got the better of her. Skipper Bismah Maroof scored 17 runs in 19 balls but she was trapped for an lbw by Rana. Pakistan's middle-order collapsed quickly as the Indian bowlers put

up a sensational performance to bowl out to a low target of 99. For India, Rana and Radha Yadav claimed two wickets each while Meghna, Renuka Shafali Verma took one wicket each.

New Zealand beats Pakistan in Commonwealth Games 2022

SPORTS DESK

BIRMINGHAM: Pakistan faced defeat against New Zealand by 4-1 in their second match of hockey event in the Commonwealth Games 2022. After a 0-0 score in the first quarter of the match, the second quarter saw three goals as South Africa's Hugo Inglis scored two goals, helping his side get a two-goal lead. Pakistan's Ghazanfar Ali scored a goal to put Pakistan back in the game, but Dylan Thomas regained the two-goal for his team in the third quarter. In the last quarter, Sam Lone scored and extended New Zealand's lead, making the score 4-1. On Saturday, the Pakistan hockey team drew their opening match 2-2 against South Africa. Pakistan will next clash with Scotland in their third match of the Commonwealth Games 2022 on 3rd August.



Mane opens Bayern Munich account

BERLIN: Sadio Mane opened his competitive goal-scoring account for Bayern Munich as the Bundesliga champions defeated Leipzig 5-3 to capture the German Super Cup for a 10th time on Saturday. The African Player of the Year, who ended a six-year stint at Liverpool to move to Bavaria in the summer, also had two goals ruled out for offside in the game played at Leipzig's Red Bull Arena. "I'm really happy to win my first game and first trophy. You can't complain. I'm really happy to be part of this great club," said Mane. Senegalese star Mane was on target on the half-hour mark for his team's second goal in the German season curtain-raiser. — Agencies

PM directs...

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flood affected people. The Prime Minister said the ongoing relief work will be further accelerated. He said about three hundred people, including 124 from Balochistan, have lost their lives in the floods. He said although there is no compensation for human life, however, the federal government is paying one million rupees to every household of the deceased. The Prime Minister said he has also ordered increase in financial assistance for those whose houses have damaged in the floods. He said these are certainly challenging times for the flood affected people but the government will not leave any stone unturned to provide them relief and ensure their rehabilitation.

Russia hits...

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terminals and elevators. Three people were also wounded in the attacks on Mikolaiv, the city's Mayor Oleksandr Senkevych told Ukrainian television, adding 12 missiles had hit homes and educational facilities. He earlier described the strikes as "probably the most powerful" on the city of the entire five-month-old war. Up to 50 Grad rockets hit residential areas in the southern city of Nikopol on Sunday morning, Dnipropetrovsk Governor Valentyn Reznichenko wrote on Telegram. One person was wounded. Ukrainian forces hit Russia's Black Sea Fleet headquarters in Russian-held Sevastopol early on Sunday, the Crimean port city's governor Mikhail Razvozhayev told Russian media. Five staff members were wounded in the attack when what was presumed to be a drone flew into the courtyard at the headquarters, he said. The Sevastopol attack coincided with Russia's Navy Day, which President Vladimir Putin marked by announcing that the navy would receive what he called "formidable" hypersonic Zircon cruise missiles in coming months.

Mandatory...

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now, the fewer people the Russian army will have time to kill," he said, adding that residents who left would be given compensation. Separately, domestic Ukrainian media outlets quoted Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk as saying the evacuation needed to take place before winter begins since the region's natural gas supplies had been destroyed. Zelenskyy said hundreds of thousands of people were still living in areas of Donbas where fighting was fierce.

Khan directs...

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During the meeting, the former PM directed Dr Yasin Rashid to complete the organizational process in two weeks and also directed the lawmakers and party organizers to prepare for early elections. "On May 25, those who violated the sanctity of the worker's houses, the law will take its course regarding them, and I know who betrayed me," Imran added. Earlier, Imran Khan and Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi on discussed the formation of the Punjab Cabinet and other issues. On reaching Lahore, former prime minister Imran Khan called on CM Elahi and discussed the matters related to mutual interests and the political situation of the province. Pervaiz Elahi apprised the PTI chairman about the government's measures to help the flood victims. In this regard, Imran Khan has given instructions to speed up the relief activities in the flood-affected areas.

Imran, CM...

FROM PAGE 01

pertaining to providing relief to the people of Punjab. The CM informed Imran Khan about the relief package announced for the flood-affected families of Punjab. The PTI Chief ordered the CM to do his best to provide relief to flood-affected people. Sources said that several names from the coalition parties, PTI and PML-Q, have been shortlisted for the Punjab cabinet portfolios. It is learnt that Raja Basharat will likely get the portfolio of the law ministry, Murad Raas will be given education ministry, Yasmin Rashid is likely to get the health ministry while Hashim Jawan Bakht's name has been finalized for finance ministry.

Briefs

Former
Philippine
president
Ramos dies

MANILA: Former Philippine president Fidel Ramos, who oversaw a rare period of steady growth and peace that won him the reputation as one of the country's most effective leaders ever, has died aged 94, officials said Sunday. Known as "Steady Eddie" for his unflappable demeanour during the country's regular moments of upheaval, he was frequently pictured chewing unlit cigars as he guided the Philippines with a sure hand from 1992-1998.

A career military man who never previously held elected office, his professional conduct was unlike the bombastic image of many Filipino politicians. He was also the first Protestant to win the top office in the overwhelmingly Catholic nation, despite opposition from some in the Church. He later made an aggressive push for family planning to rein in rapid population growth. But like other top officials of his generation, Ramos played a role in the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, which saw thousands killed and thousands more arbitrarily imprisoned. "It is with great sorrow that we learn of the passing of former President Fidel V. Ramos," said Trixie Cruz-Angeles, press secretary for President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the son and namesake of the late dictator, who took office last month. "He leaves behind a colorful legacy and a secure place in history for his participation in the great changes of our country, both as military officer and chief executive." Ramos's family is expected to release a statement later Sunday. The cause of death has not been released. The European Union delegation in the Philippines expressed its condolences, describing Ramos as a "dedicated statesman" and "pillar of democracy." - APP

India's first
monkeypox
patient
recovers

NEW DELHI: India's first monkeypox case detected more than two weeks ago has recovered and tested negative on Saturday, confirmed health minister of the southern state Kerala Veena George. "All samples were negative twice. The patient is physically and mentally healthy. The skin bumps are completely cured. He will be discharged today," media reports quoted the minister as saying. India has so far reported four monkeypox cases, with three of them in Kerala and the fourth infection in the national capital Delhi. The first case, a 35-year-old resident of Kerala's Kollam district, had tested positive after arriving from the United Arab Emirates. He reached the state on July 12 and was hospitalized with monkeypox symptoms on July 14. Meanwhile, the health condition of the two other monkeypox cases in Kerala state remains satisfactory, and are still under medical observation. - APP

Musk files
countersuit
against Twitter

DNA
HOUSTON: Tesla CEO Elon Musk shot back at Twitter, filing a countersuit Friday against the social media company regarding Musk's decision to abandon his \$44 billion takeover. The 164-page document was sealed after the judge-imposed filing deadline, which means the contents of the countersuit are not accessible through public records. "I have reviewed the counterclaims and declare that the matter contained therein insofar as it concerns my acts and deeds is true, and insofar as it relates to the acts and deeds of any other person, I believe it to be true," said an accompanying filing signed by Musk. Musk agreed to buy Twitter in April for \$54.20 per share in an unsolicited agreement. But the billionaire announced in July that he was pulling out of the deal, alleging that Twitter misrepresented user data and the number of spam bots on the platform is much higher than the company originally disclosed.

Kashmir Council EU to stage
protest camp in Brussels

A number of Kashmiri leaders and political workers were arrested in the occupied territory and atrocities against the people of Kashmir were increased

DNA

MIRPUR: A protest camp would be setup in front of European External Action Service (EU foreign Ministry) in Brussels, the capital of Belgium (at 3 pm) on Thursday, 4th August 2022. The event would be organized by Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) in connection day of 5th August 2019, when Indian government annulled special status of Jammu and Kashmir and imposed lockdown in the occupied Kashmir. A number of Kashmiri leaders and political workers were arrested in the occupied territory and atrocities against the people of Kash-

mir were increased. Chairman Kashmir Council EU Ali Raza Syed said, purpose of the protest camp is to highlight the brutalities against the people of Kashmir committed and other illegal acts in the occupied Kashmir conducted by the Indian authorities. He called for end of atrocities in the illegally occupied Kashmir especially violence against the Kashmiri women and children. Chair of KC-EU asked the international community including UN and EU to play their role for ending atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions giving the right to self-determination to the

Kashmiri people. He also called for withdrawal of occupation forces, an end to its state terrorism, end of genocidal repression, rape, gang-rape, torture, and degrading treatment of Kashmiri men, women, and children. He also demanded easy physical access of international human right organization to the occupied Kashmir. He also called for unconditionally release of all detained Kashmiris including political figures in connection with resistance to the Indian occupation. Ali Raza Syed expressed serious concerns on the deteriorating health condition of the illegally imprisoned Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Mu-

hammad Yasin Malik. Yasin Malik was shifted to a hospital after his worsened health condition in New Delhi's infamous Tihar Jail on Tuesday. He was on an indefinite hunger strike since Friday (July 22) to protest against the unfair trial in the cases registered against him. Yasin Malik demanded to be allowed to appear before the court of law and give response to the fake allegations. Ali Raza Syed urged world's human loving nations, human rights organizations and international community to take serious notice of declining health of Yasin Malik. Life of Yasin Malik is in danger and his health has been declined due to hunger

strike and Indian pressure on him, he said. He asked European Union to take serious and immediate action and send its specially delegation to India in order to prevent threats to the life of Yasin Malik. Indian authorities should be pressurized to accept the demands of Yasin Malik and release him without any delay. It is moral duty of international community to compel India to provide justice to Yasin Malik. Kashmir Council EU also wrote letters to UN and EU authorities asking them to take swift and serious notice about critical health and fair demand of Yasin Malik. He also expressed grave concerns over the hardships

of Shabbir Ahmad Shah and other Kashmiri prisoners in the Indian prisons. He said, Hurriyat leaders and activists lodged in Tihar Jail have been deprived of their basic rights. Chairman KC-EU also demanded for a notice of the severe situation of human rights in occupied Kashmir and particularly conditions of noted Kashmiri prisoners including Yasin Malik, Shabbir Shah, and human rights activists Khurram Parvez and Ahsan Untoo. Ali Raza Syed asked the international community to play its role for a peaceful resolution of Kashmir and said, participation of the Kashmiri leadership in all round of the peace process on Kashmir should be ensured.

New York
governor
declares
state
emergency

DNA

NEW YORK: The New York governor declared an emergency in the state late on Friday amid the monkeypox outbreak. "I am declaring a State Disaster Emergency to strengthen our ongoing efforts to confront the monkeypox outbreak," Kathy Hochul said on Twitter. She also said the move will enable authorities to respond more swiftly, and it paves the way for medical staff to take further steps that will help get more New Yorkers vaccinated. More than one in four monkeypox cases in the US are in New York, currently having a disproportionate impact on at-risk groups, according to Hochul. "We are working around the clock to secure more vaccines, expand testing capacity, and educate New Yorkers on how to stay safe," she said. As of July 29, New York reported 1,383 monkeypox cases, the state health department said. Earlier on Friday, Brazil and Spain confirmed the first monkeypox-related deaths outside Africa. The World Health Organization last week declared a global health emergency over the ongoing monkeypox outbreak.

Cyprus
tourism
rebounds
despite
Russia plunge

AYIA NAPA: Beside sparkling Mediterranean waters at the Cypriot resort town of Ayia Napa, the bars are bouncing with foam dance parties as tourist numbers rebound following two tough years of pandemic. But one key nationality is effectively missing: Russian visitors, as the once lucrative market has been hit by European Union sanctions imposed after Moscow invaded Ukraine. "This year, we expected 800,000 Russian tourists," said Haris Loizides, head of the Cyprus Hotel Association. The Russian market "was wiped out from one day to the next," said Christos Angelides, head of the Pancyprrian Association of Hotel Managers. "Nobody was prepared for this huge change." The key tourism sector, which had contributed 2.68 billion euros (\$2.72 billion) in 2019, 15 percent of GDP, is still counting the cost of the disastrous years of Covid travel chaos. In 2019, before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, a fifth of tourists were Russian - 782,000 out of 3.9 million - making it the holiday island's second largest market after Britain. Last year, despite tough Covid travel restrictions, that share rose to more than 25 percent, with arrivals from Russia totalling nearly 520,000 out of 1.93 million. Operators had hoped this summer would see Russian numbers return to pre-pandemic levels. - APP

Japanese
national
detained in
Myanmar

YANGON: A Japanese man has been detained in Myanmar's commercial capital Yangon, an official at Japan's embassy confirmed Sunday, the latest foreigner ensnared in the junta-ruled nation. A military coup last year sparked rolling protests and a deadly response from the junta, with more than 2,000 people killed and at least 14,000 arrested, according to a local monitoring group. On Saturday, Japanese and local media said filmmaker Toru Kubota, 26, was detained near an anti-government rally along with two Myanmar citizens. "I can confirm a Japanese national was detained yesterday in Yangon," an official at the Japanese embassy told AFP Sunday, requesting anonymity. The embassy is "in contact with the authorities and taking measures to secure their release." The Japanese official, who did not confirm the identity of the detained individual, said they had no information on whether he was arrested during a protest. A junta spokesperson was not available for comment. A small crowd rallied outside Japan's foreign ministry in Tokyo on Sunday, holding placards of Kubota. - APP

China to organise
course on 'BRI
Progress for Pak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Cooperation Centre (ICC) of China's National Development and Reform Commission will organise an extensive course on 'BRI Progress for Pakistan' from August 3 to August 23, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. As many as 25 government officials, scholars and businessmen will take part in the online classes, a document states. The participants will learn from China's development experience in advancing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), promoting multilateral cooperation in more fields under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework, and making greater contribution to BRI progress. The participants are experts in planning and development, int'l cooperation, infrastructure construction, trade promotion and related fields. During the course, the trainers will share their experience and lessons learnt in infrastructure construction with the participants, providing a reference for the latter to draw inspiration from. With resources and experience at hand, ICC is willing to promote multilateral cooperation under BRI, and provide support to enhancing their capability in improving people's living standards, the document states. The course includes presentation of the national conditions of China, Chinese traditional culture, China's development strategy and the opening-up initiative, interpretation of the 14th Five-Year Plan, China's new development concept to build a modern economic system and the success stories in China's growth. The participants will also learn about the prospects of climate change and int'l cooperation under BRI to mitigate its effects, green industry development under BRI, China's int'l cooperation in renewable energy, as well as sustainable development of BRI, and infrastructure interconnectivity.

Iran arrests
Swedish national on
espionage charges

DNA

TEHRAN: Amid growing bilateral tensions, Iran on Saturday announced the arrest of an unidentified Swedish national on espionage charges. The suspect had been under surveillance during previous multiple visits to Iran, which led to investigations and arrest owing to his "suspicious behavior and contacts" and visits to cities not frequented by tourists, said an Intelligence Ministry statement. The person had visited Iran recently after the arrest of "another European spy" to "obtain information" on the identity of that person, it added. The arrest comes after dozens of similar arrests of Europeans and dual nationals by Iran in recent months on various security-related charges. It is unclear whether the case is related to what the Swedish Foreign Ministry said in May about a Swed-

ish national detained in Iran, just days after issuing a travel advisory urging its citizens not to visit the country. Tensions between Tehran and Stockholm have risen since a former Iranian judicial official was detained and put on trial in Sweden over alleged war crimes and mass executions of Iranian dissidents in the late 1980s. After his November 2019 arrest in Sweden, Hamid Nouri, 61, was sentenced to life on July 14 for "serious crime against international law" and "murder," alluding to executions of members of the Mujahideen e Khalq (MEK) in 1988. Iran accuses the MEK, now based in Albania, of carrying out a series of terrorist attacks in the country in the 1980s. Iran slammed the verdict, calling it "politically motivated." In a sign of growing strained ties, Iran's Foreign Ministry recalled its ambassador from Sweden last week to protest the "illegal verdict."



MINSK: Ambassador Sajjad Hiader Khan visited Grodno Region, and met with the Governor. Both sides discussed ways and means for promoting bilateral ties. - DNA

Iraqi protesters camp at
parliament for 2nd day

DNA

BAGHDAD: Supporters of powerful Iraqi Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr have erected tents and are preparing for a long sit-in at Iraq's parliament, deepening a months-long political standoff. On Saturday, supporters of the firebrand al-Sadr forced their way into the legislative chamber for the second time in days, after October elections failed to lead to the formation of a government. "The demonstrators announce a sit-in until further notice," al-Sadr's movement said in a brief statement to journalists carried by state news agency INA. Nearly 10 months after October elections, Iraq is still without a new government despite intense negotiations between factions. Government formation in the oil-rich country has involved complex negotiations since the 2003 invasion led by the United States toppled Saddam Hussein. Supporters of al-Sadr, who once led a militia against the US and Iraqi government forces, oppose a rival, pro-Iran Shia bloc's pick for prime minister - Mohammed Shia al-Sudani. The post conventional-

ly goes to a figure from Iraq's Shia majority. "We don't want Mr al-Sudani," said one protester, Sattar al-Aliawi, a 47-year-old civil servant. He told AFP news

"We were hoping for the best but we got the worst. The politicians currently in parliament have brought us nothing," Abdelwahab al-Jafari, 45, told AFP. Volunteers

est political vacuum in the country since 2003. In June, al-Sadr's 73 legislators quit their seats in a move seen as an attempt to pressure his rivals into fast-tracking the

United Nations chief
calls for de-escalation

NEW YORK: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Sunday called on Iraqi parties to de-escalate the situation and avoid violence amid tension over the nomination of a new prime minister. In a statement, his spokesperson Farhan Haq said the UN chief is "following with concern" the ongoing protests in Iraq that left many people injured. "Freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are fundamental rights that must be respected at all times," he said. The spokesperson urged Iraqi parties and actors "to rise above their differences and form, through peaceful and inclusive dialogue, an effective national government." Tension escalated in Iraq in recent days following the nomination of Mohammed Shia al-Sudani as a new prime minister by a coalition of groups close to Iran amid protests by supporters of influential Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Iraq has been in a political deadlock for nine months following the country's general elections in October 2021 which failed since then to agree on a new government between rival parties. - DNA

agency he was protesting against "a corrupt and incapable government" and would "sleep here" in the gardens of parliament. "The people totally refuse the parties that have governed the country for 18 years," he said. On Sunday morning, the demonstrators marked the Muslim month of Muharram with religious chants and collective meals.

distributed soup, hard-boiled eggs, bread and water to the protesters. Some spent the night inside the parliament with blankets spread out on the marble floors. Others took to the gardens, on plastic mats under palm trees. Al-Sadr's bloc emerged from elections in October as the biggest parliamentary faction, but was still far short of a majority, causing the long-

formation of a government. That led to a pro-Iran bloc, the Coordination Framework, becoming the largest in parliament, but still there was no agreement on naming a new prime minister, president or cabinet. Saturday's demonstration came three days after crowds of al-Sadr supporters breached the Green Zone and entered the legislature on Wednesday

Foreign investors
call for notifying
tariffs of wind

ISLAMABAD: Foreign investors, including Chinese, Kuwaiti and German companies have called upon the Pakistan federal government to issue notifications of the tariffs of as many as 11 wind and solar energy projects with a total capacity of more than 600 megawatts of clean and cheaper electricity, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. The tariffs of these projects have been duly approved by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) but have not been notified so far in the official gazette by the Ministry of Energy, due to which the sponsors are unable to proceed with their plans. NEPRA has approved the lowest tariffs of around 3.5 US cents per unit for these projects, according to a letter sent by the Pakistan Foreign Renewable Energy Investors Forum to the Minister for Federal Board of Investment. The projects include NORINCO Int'l Thatta Power (100 MWs wind power plant) in Sindh province, sponsored by NORINCO International. The P&G Energy, sponsored by Germany-based ib Vogt GmbH, has obtained a license for a 62.2 MWs solar power plant in Gwadar. Also, the Kuwait-based Enertech has obtained a license for a 50 MWs solar power plant in Bostan, Balochistan province. Other projects include the Iran-Pak wind power plant (50 MWs), Sino Well (50 MWs), Shafi Wind (50 MWs), Javed Solar (50 MWs), Kulachi Solar (50 MWs) and Moro Power (25 MWs). The Sindh government has also urged the federal government to issue notifications of the tariffs of these power plants so that work could be started on these projects. - DNA

Indonesia expects deeper
defense co-op with Morocco

ANTARA

JAKARTA: Indonesian Minister of Defense Prabowo Subianto, through his press statement on Saturday, expressed keenness for defense cooperation between Indonesia and Morocco to be boosted in future. On Friday, Subianto received a visit from Morocco's Ambassador to Indonesia Ouadia Benabdellah at the Ministry of Defense Office, here. The minister lauded the visit made by Morocco's ambassador to Indonesia and the defense cooperation established with Morocco. "Indonesia lauds the good relations and defense cooperation built with Morocco, which is based on three pillars," he remarked. These pillars comprise



developing mutual trust, bolstering defense capacity, and encouraging independence of the defense

industry. Meanwhile, Benabdellah expects that the meeting can further solidify diplomatic

relations between Indonesia and Morocco in a more strategic direction in the defense and security sector.

Briefs

Above-normal
rainfall
expected
this month

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani Meteorological Department forecasted "above-normal" rainfall in most parts of the country in August.

The heavy rainfall can trigger flash flooding in hilly areas of eastern Punjab and northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provinces, as well as urban flooding in plain areas such as major cities of the country's southern Sindh province, Punjab and KP, the department said in its Outlook for August. "Due to extreme hydro-meteorological events over catchments, riverine floods cannot be ruled out," it added. The report said that above-normal temperatures in high altitudes are likely to increase the rate of snow-melt in the northern areas of Pakistan, subsequently increasing the chances of base flow in the Upper Indus basin. Northeastern areas of Punjab, southern parts of Sindh, as well as coastal areas of Balochistan, are expected to receive above-normal rainfall, the report said. Sufficient water for irrigation and power sectors will be available in August, according to the forecast. At least 357 people had been killed and over 400 injured as heavy monsoon rains continued to batter Pakistan for more than five weeks, the National Disaster Management Authority said Thursday. — APP

One dead
in clashes
between
Taliban,
Iran forces

AGENCIES

KABUL: Clashes between Taliban forces and Iran border guards on Sunday have left at least one dead on the Afghanistan side, an Afghan police official said.

"We have one killed and one wounded; the cause of the clash is not clear yet," the police spokesman of the southern Afghan province of Nimroz, Bahram Haqmal, told Reuters.

Maysam Barazandeh, the governor of the Iranian border area of Hirmand, was quoted by the semi-official news agency Fars as saying the clashes had stopped and there were no casualties.

Iran's Tasnim news agency said clashes broke out after Taliban forces tried to raise their flag "in an area which is not Afghan territory". Local sources told Reuters that people living near the border on the Afghan side fled their homes to take cover when the clashes intensified. Since taking over Afghanistan a year ago, Taliban forces have frequently clashed with security forces of Iran, which neighbours the country to the west, as well as Pakistan, which neighbours it to the east.

5.6 magnitude
earthquake
hits
Balochistan

DNA

QUETTA: An earthquake struck several parts of the Makran Division of Balochistan on Sunday evening, media reported. Tremors were felt in the Gwadar, Pasni, Ormara, and Kech areas of the province.

According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre, the magnitude of the quake was recorded at 5.6 on the Richter scale. Meanwhile, it measured a depth of 30 kilometres, and its epicentre was Pasni near Gwadar. While no casualties or damage to property were immediately reported, it is worth noting that several areas of Balochistan are already grappling with monsoon floods that have caused considerable destruction in the province. So far, more than 124 people have lost their lives, more than 6,000 houses have been completely torn down, and over 10,000 houses are partially damaged because of the rains.

Cultural dance 'Move with PINAS' performed at Philippines embassy

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, Charge d Affaires of the Embassy of the Philippines hosted a simple but impressive cultural dance performance called Move with PINAS. Diplomats from the ASEAN countries and staff of the embassy took part in the dance performance.

The Charge d Affaires in her remarks said that the promotion of the cultural relations between Pakistan and the Philippines would also strengthen bilateral economic and trade relations.

She added, cultural, diplomatic, and economic and trade ties had been established between the two countries in many potential sectors with wider possibilities of further strengthening bilateral relation.

The Philippines embassy quite recently had held Independence Day celebrations featuring cultural dances and culinary festival.

It may be mentioned here that 1 June 2022 (Republic of Philippines Department Of Foreign Affairs) Movers from all over the world danced to the music of the rondalla as they learned the steps of the spirited and rhythmic La Jota Moncadena as 'Move with Pinas: An Online Philippine Dance Workshop' was officially launched on 28 May 2022.

Similar to 'Move with Malong' of the previous year, Move with Pinas was launched as a way to bring Philippine culture to the mindset of Filipinos and non-Filipinos, as well as to showcase Filipino ingenuity, creativity, and resourcefulness through dance. The participants or Movers, learned the dance's significant and historical background through the 'Know Your Moves' segment.



ISLAMABAD: Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, Charge d Affaires of the Embassy of the Philippines, Acting High Commissioner of Malaysia Deddy Faisal and others taking part in the dance. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, Charge d Affaires of the Embassy of the Philippines and diplomats from the Indonesian and the Vietnam embassies taking part in the dance. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, Charge d Affaires of the Embassy of the Philippines hands over prize to Mr and Mrs Indra Noer of the Indonesian embassy for the best dance performance. — DNA

Death toll from United States
Kentucky flood rises to 25

CHICAGO: The death toll from the heavy rain-caused flooding hitting eastern Kentucky rose to at least 25, including four children from one family, Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear confirmed Saturday. With at least a dozen more people reported missing and certain areas remaining inaccessible, Beshear expected the death toll to continue to rise.

It would probably take years for communities affected by the floods to rebuild, local media quoted Beshear as saying.

Kentucky Power said that 16,000 customers remain without power throughout the state as of Saturday morning. Beshear has declared a state of emergency for all of Kentucky and called in the National Guard to assist the hardest-hit parts Thursday. Three state parks were opened Friday for those who lost their homes to take shelter. Flooding also hit parts of West Virginia and Virginia. West Virginia Governor Jim Justice has declared a state of emergency for six counties. — APP

After starting New Mexico
fire, US asks victims to pay

Biden's measure was meant to bridge FEMA relief and a congressional bill that may pass in the fall to provide 100% federal compensation for losses from the so-called Hermit's Peak Calf Canyon fire

DNA

TIERRA MONTE: After the U.S. government started the largest wildfire in New Mexico's recorded history in April, it is asking victims to share recovery costs on private land, jeopardizing relief efforts, according to residents and state officials.

The blaze was sparked by U.S. Forest Service (USFS) prescribed fires to reduce wildfire risk. The burns went out of control after a series of missteps, torching 432 residences and over 530 square miles (1373 square km) of mostly privately owned forests and meadows, much of it held by members of centuries-old Indo-Hispano ranching communities.

"Today I'm announcing the federal government's covering 100% of the cost,"

President Joe Biden said during a visit to New Mexico in June. Biden was announcing a disaster declaration that covered debris removal and emergency protective measures.

But federal cost-sharing statutes on other federal relief programs are limiting Biden's authority and exposing holes in the government safety net meant to help survivors and restore landscapes.

It is a system more Americans will turn to as extreme fires and flooding become the climate change norm.

Biden's measure was meant to bridge FEMA relief and a congressional bill that may pass in the fall to provide 100% federal compensation for losses from the so-called Hermit's Peak Calf Canyon fire.

Daniel Encinas was among survivors who met Biden and was told by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials he would get timely support at little or no cost.

Sri Lanka president
seeks unity govt

DNA

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's new president Ranil Wickremesinghe has formally invited MPs to join an all-party unity government to revive the bankrupt economy by undertaking painful reforms, his office said on Sunday. Wickremesinghe took office earlier this month after public anger over the island nation's worst economic crisis forced his predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee the country and quit. In a meeting on Saturday with the influential monks of the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, one of Buddhism's most sacred shrines, Wickremesinghe outlined his plans.

"As the president, I wish to start a new journey," Wickremesinghe was quoted as telling the monks in his first meeting with the pow-

erful Buddhist clergy since taking office. "I would like to get all the parties together and go on that journey as well as to form an all-party government."

He has written to all lawmakers asking them to join a unity government.

A former opposition MP, Wickremesinghe, 73, took up the premiership for the sixth time in May after Rajapaksa's elder brother Mahinda resigned and there were no other takers for the job.

Wickremesinghe went onto become the president after Gotabaya escaped on July 9 when tens of thousands of protesters angry at the economic crisis stormed the presidential palace. He fled to Singapore from where he resigned five days later and Wickremesinghe became interim president and later won a vote in parliament confirming his ascension.

US restoring Pakistan's
Category 1 safety rating

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) could upgrade Pakistan's safety rating to Category 1, allowing direct flights from Pakistani airports, the US media reported on Saturday. There have been no direct flights between the two countries since 2017 when the FAA downgraded Pakistan to Category 2 due to concerns over Pakistan's aviation safety record. Simple Flying, a niche news site focused on aviation, reported that the FAA will soon send its inspectors to Pakistan to assess the country's airports and aircraft. The FAA is the largest transportation agency of the US government and regulates all aspects of civil aviation in the country. "Should the country's aviation sector pass the test, there is a good possibility Pakistan will receive a Category 1 rating," Simple Flying reported. Earlier this week, Head of Prime Minister's Strategic Reforms Salman Sufi discussed the possibility of opening up direct flight access for Pakistan with US officials in Washington. Briefing the Pakistani media after the meeting, Mr Sufi said that the US side "conveyed its readiness to have technical discussions with Civil Aviation Authority and other relevant departments and to undertake necessary visits for resumption of direct flights." "To facilitate Pakistani exporters of perishable items to the US, we have also requested the US to appoint an inspector at Karachi port. This will ensure pre-clearance of mangoes and other food items so they can reach their destination in the US without any delays," he said. — DNA

Pelosi
begins Asia
tour, no
mention
of Taiwan

DNA

BEIJING: US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi starts a tour of four Asian countries on Sunday, her office said, without mentioning Taiwan amid intense speculation she might visit the self-ruled island claimed by China. "Speaker Nancy Pelosi is leading a Congressional delegation to the Indo-Pacific region, including visits to Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan," her office said in a press release.

The release said the visit would include those countries, but did not specify whether Pelosi, who is number 3 in the line of presidential succession, might make other stops.

"The trip will focus on mutual security, economic partnership and democratic governance in the Indo-Pacific region," it said.

Gregory Meeks, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was among the delegation listed.

China views visits by U.S. officials to Taiwan as sending an encouraging signal to the pro-independence camp in the island. Washington does not have official diplomatic ties with Taiwan but is bound by law to provide the island with the means to defend itself.

China reports
74 new local
confirmed
Covid cases

BEIJING: The Chinese mainland on Saturday reported 74 locally-transmitted confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 32 in Guangxi and 31 in Gansu, the National Health Commission said Sunday. Altogether 360 local asymptomatic carriers were newly identified on Saturday. Among them, 143 were in Guangxi and 103 were in Gansu.

A total of 140 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals after recovery on the Chinese mainland on Saturday, said the commission. The total number of COVID-19 patients discharged from hospitals after recovery reached 222,553 on the Chinese mainland as of Saturday. — APP