



# Islamabad POST

Saturday, July 02, 2022

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**Tunisian President unveils draft of new constitution**

Detailed News On Page-06

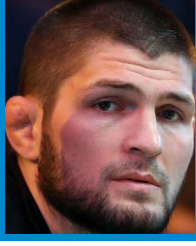
**Kyiv must speed anti-corruption reform: Ursula**

Detailed News On Page-07



**Father's death changed my life: Khabib**

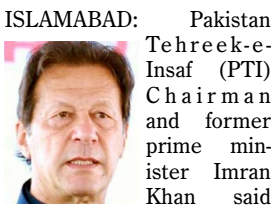
Detailed News On Page-06



## Briefs

**Pakistan sole sufferer of conspiracy**

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan said Friday that Pakistan was the sole sufferer of the regime change conspiracy and the nation is now being enslaved, ARY News reported. Imran Khan addressed a webinar organised by the Islamabad Policy Institute to highlight the impacts of the regime change in Pakistan. The webinar was titled "Regime Change: Impact on Politics, Security and Economy". The former prime minister said that the current situation has sparked a debate on what happened to the country. As per the economic survey, the national economy was improving during the PTI tenure. "Improvements were seen in the sectors of agriculture, industry and others during the PTI tenure. On what basis, our government was removed via a foreign conspiracy."

**Assange lodges appeal**

NEWS DESK



LONDON: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on Friday filed an appeal against his extradition to the United States, as supporters denounced the British government. Assange, who turns 51 on Sunday, has been held in a high-security prison since 2019. On Friday his wife Stella was among dozens of people who demonstrated outside Britain's interior ministry to demand his release. Home Secretary Priti Patel approved the extradition last month, but court officials confirmed to AFP an application to appeal had been received on Friday. "We're not at the end of the road here," Stella Assange, who married the Australian publisher earlier this year, told reporters when Patel announced her decision.

## Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. – Editor

## Inside...

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## Punjab political turmoil

# CM Punjab re-election on July 22

By-polls will decide province's fate, says Hamza Shehbaz

SHUJAAT HAMZA

**Elahi expresses satisfaction**

DNA

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: The Supreme Court Friday announced that the re-election for the Punjab chief minister's slot would be held on July 22 – after the provincial government, PTI, and PML-Q reached a consensus on the matter. The PTI had filed a plea in the top court seeking the annulment of the Lahore High Court's (LHC) decision that had ordered the governor to hold the re-count for the Punjab CM's slot today at 4pm. During today's hearing, Punjab Assembly Speaker Pervez Elahi – a contender for the CM's slot – had initially agreed that Hamza Shehbaz could remain the chief minister till July 17, but the PTI disagreed. In a bid to break the deadlock, the top court directed Elahi to speak to PTI Chairman Imran Khan and come up with a solution – as it adjourned the hearing for the third time. After the hearing resumed, all the parties agreed that Hamza would remain the chief minister

Continued on Page 06

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League – Quaid (PMLQ) leader and Punjab Assembly speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi on Friday while expressing satisfaction over Supreme Court's verdict on the Punjab Chief Minister election said that what we wanted has been accepted by the court. Talking to the media, Elahi said that a fair decision has been taken today, what we wanted has been accepted by the apex court and the session of the Punjab Assembly will be held as per the rules. Briefing the media on the order, he said that the court decided there would be no "use of police" or "victimisation" during the July 22 elections. "The election would be held only in the Punjab assembly building, not at any other place," he added.



The Ambassador of the United States to Pakistan, Mr. Donald Blome, calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. – DNA

## Indian SC: Nupur must apologise

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Nupur Sharma, a former spokeswoman of India's ruling party whose remarks on the Prophet Muhammad and his wife Aisha sparked huge protests and triggered a diplomatic row, should apologise, the nation's top court has said. "She and her loose tongue have set the country on fire," the Supreme Court said on Friday during a procedural hearing on several criminal complaints filed against Sharma. "This lady is single-handedly responsible for what

is happening in the country," it added. "She should apologise to the whole nation." Anger engulfed India and the Muslim world last month after Sharma made the incendiary comments on the prophet during a TV debate, with nearly 20 countries calling in their Indian ambassadors for an explanation. Rallies were held in neighbouring Bangladesh and Pakistan, as thousands of demonstrators in the two countries called for a boycott of Indian products. In India, at least two demonstrators – one a teenager – were

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visits the UAE staff during mango show at Islamabad Serena Hotel. Ambassador of UAE Hamad Alzaabi briefs the foreign minister. – DNA

**Mango Festival at Serena Hotel draws huge interest**

CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani thanks FM Bilawal for gracing the occasion

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with Serena Hotels and Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Association organized a Mango Festival at Serena Hotel today. This was part of the series of activities and events being organized throughout the year to commemorate 75 years of the Pakistan's Independence - Pakistan's Diamond Jubilee. Under the theme of Pakistan At 75 and "75thPayKuchKhaas", the event focused on projecting Pakistan's culinary and agrarian richness linked to production of more than 200 varieties of mangoes "king of fruits" that are exported all over the world.

Another related picture on Page 08

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari graced the event as Guest of Honour. Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood, CEO Serena Hotels Mr. Aziz Boolani, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Ambassador Atadjan Movlammov of Turkmenistan, Patron-in-Chief PFVA Mr. Waheed Ahmed and Senior Vice Chairman PFVA Mr. Ch. Shoaib Ahmed were present on the occasion. A large number of Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Islamabad participated in the event. In his remarks, the Foreign Minister highlighted the significance of the festival as part of the events celebrating the 75th anniversary of Pakistan's Independence. The Foreign Minister underscored the fact

Continued on Page 06

## Very difficult to control load shedding: PM

Slams PTI for shady LNG deal

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Friday it was a "very, very difficult challenge" for the government to control loadshedding as he slammed the PTI for not securing cheap gas. In his address during a meeting held on loadshedding at the Prime Minister's Office, PM Shehbaz said it is the government's responsibility to ensure an end to power outages, but at the same time mentioned that it has refrained from buying expensive gas – used for generating electricity. Pakistan is facing an escalation of its power crisis after the nation last month failed to strike a deal for natural gas supply for July. Tenders for this month were scrapped on high prices and low participation. State-owned Pakistan LNG Ltd scrapped a purchase tender for July shipments of liquefied natural gas

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## Inflation peaked to 14-year high

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose to 21.32 per cent in June, the highest in over 13 years, data shared by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) revealed on Friday. Last month, inflation was recorded at 13.76pc. In June, inflation rose 6.34pc month-on-month (MoM) and 21.32pc year-on-year (YoY), which was the highest figure since December 2008 when inflation stood at 23.3pc. According to the PBS, inflation increased by 19.84pc in urban areas and 23.55pc in rural areas.

Continued on Page 06

## 17 dead in Southern Ukraine missile strikes

The news came after NATO leaders wrapped up a summit in Madrid

AGNECIES

KYIV: At least 17 people were killed and dozens wounded Friday in missile strikes on Ukraine's Odessa region, a day after Russian troops abandoned positions on a strategic island in a major setback to the Kremlin's invasion. The news came after NATO leaders wrapped up a summit in Madrid, with US Pres-

ident Joe Biden announcing \$800 million in new weapons for Ukraine. "We are going to stick with Ukraine, and all of the alliance are going to stick with Ukraine, as long as it takes to make sure they are not defeated by Russia," he said. But Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov compared surging diplomatic tensions to the Cold War, telling reporters: "As

Continued on Page 06

## Envoys of USA, Turkiye, Australia, EU, present credentials

### Pakistan wants friendly relations with all countries: President Arif Alvi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed envoys of the United States of America (USA), Turkiye, Australia, European Union (EU), Bhutan, and Sudan presented their credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi during the Presentation of Credentials Ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Later, the Ambassador of the USA, Mr Donald Armin Blome, Ambassador of Turkiye, Dr Mehmet Pacaci, High Commissioner of Australia, Mr Neil Hawkins, Ambassador of European Union, Ms Riina Kionka, the Ambassador of Sudan, Mr Salih Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Siddig, and non-resident Ambassador of Bhutan, Mr Rinchen Kuentsyl, made separate calls on the President. While talking to the Ambassador of the USA, the President emphasised that a constructive and sustained engagement between the two countries on the principles of mutual respect and mutual interest was vital to promote peace, development and security in our region. He added that this year would mark the



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of USA, Donald Armin Blome, Ambassador of Turkiye, Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, HC Of Australia, Neil Hawkins, Ambassador of European Union, Riina Kionka, Ambassador of Sudan, Salih Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Siddig, and Non-Resident Ambassador of Bhutan, Rinchen Kuentsyl, presenting their credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-E-Sadr. – DNA

75th anniversary of the establishment of Pak-USA diplomatic ties which would be celebrated befittingly. The President

noted that there had been a healthy momentum of engagement between Pakistan and the USA through dialogues

on the Climate Change, Health, Energy, Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). "We encourage US

companies to invest in Pakistan and reap

Continued on Page 06



# US, FC KPK sign agreement for \$10.5 mln projects

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: United States Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Todd D. Robinson and the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan INL Section Director Mark Tervakoski joined Inspector General of Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa South Major General Muhammad Munir Afsar, Deputy Inspector General of Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa North Major Brigadier Sajid Majeed, and other senior Frontier Corps leadership as they inaugurated new training structures and signed an agreement for two joint projects worth approximately \$10.5 million (2.1 billion PKR) on July 1, 2022.

The ceremonies were held at the Pakistan Army General Headquarters in Rawalpindi and celebrated the completion of 45 new structures at FC KP North's Warsak Training Center, including accommodation barracks for

500 men and 128 women, classrooms, and facilities for physical training. The \$5.9 million U.S. government-funded project was completed in 2020 but the inauguration was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials also signed an agreement for the construction of women's facilities at eight existing FC KP South regional headquarters. The \$4.6 million U.S. government-funded project will provide barracks, dining halls, kitchens, and other facilities which will support stationing of up to 128 women Frontier Corps members at each location. "It is clear these investments will have a lasting positive impact," said Robinson in his remarks. "The strengthening of law enforcement's presence and the writ of government in remote and under-governed areas leads to increased public safety and prosperity for the people of those regions." Regarding the women's facilities,

Robinson said, "The United States is pleased to partner with Pakistan to enhance opportunities for women to access justice and to participate in the administration of justice." He further noted that, "as more women join the ranks of Pakistan's various public safety forces, they will inevitably deepen their agencies' understanding of women's safety issues and enhance the quality of service offered to all Pakistanis."

This year marks the 40-year anniversary of partnership between INL and Pakistan under the banner of "Justice, Security, and Prosperity," with more than \$1 billion invested over four decades by the United States government to improve public safety and enhance law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial capacity across Pakistan.

The INL Bureau works in more than 60 countries to help combat crime and corruption; counter the narcotics trade; improve police institutions; and promote court systems that are fair and accountable.

## 37th meeting of National Highway Council held



ISLAMABAD: The 37th meeting of the National Highway Council, the supreme body of the National Highway Authority (NHA), was held under the chairmanship of Minister for Communications and Postal Services Asad Mahmood on Friday. Addressing the meeting, the minister said that the National Highway Council was a forum in which the most important

issues were discussed and the council was determined to play an active role for smooth running of affairs of the authority, said a press release. The minister was of the view that if the problems were timely catered there would have been no impediment in the development of the institution.

NHA had a global reputation for construction and

repair of roads, hence improving its performance and timely completion of ongoing construction projects was the primary responsibility, he added. Financial and administrative matters of NHA were discussed. The matter of reserving housing quota for NHA employees in federal housing schemes was discussed. Matters relating to NHA rules and regulations

were also discussed in the context of the Rules 1995. Various aspects of construction, extension and maintenance schemes of NHA were also taken into consideration. The meeting was attended by Federal Secretary for Communications and Chairman NHA Capt (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha and other members and senior officials. – APP



**WAZIRABAD:** On the occasion of the visit of Deputy Director Colleges Gujranwala Prof. Zahid Farooq to Government Associate College for Women GT Road Wazirabad, Principal Prof. Ayesha Ishrat, Vice Principal and Superintendent Rana Ijaz Ahmed are receiving him. – DNA

## Drug rehabilitation initiative a big move for addicts

The Drug Free Peshawar drive is also providing benefits to Afghan drug addicts who are getting equal treatment. At the rehabilitation centers, the addicts are getting medical treatment, physical exercise, psychiatric counseling, religious teaching and music as well, he continued

PESHAWAR: Say no to drugs, Say yes to life', was the message conveyed by more than two dozen chronic addicts getting treatment at a detoxification centre as part of initiative taken by District Government of Peshawar to rehabilitate people hooked on drugs including heroin, ice and others. "We want to convey to the people that life is very precious, it cannot be wasted by indulging one self into drug addiction," says addicts while talking with media men during a ceremony held for encouragement of people benefiting from the initiative taken by district government of Peshawar. Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz-Mehsud, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar was chief guest at the ceremony held after completion of one month of treatment. The ceremony was also attended by, Shaifiullah Khan, Secretary Social Welfare, Nasita Mohsin and other officials. Stage secretary at the ceremony, Imran Khan apprised participants that he was also a drug addict and after getting treatment at Faqirabad Rehabilitation center had recovered and now running two shops of tailoring in Ramdaz bazar and Mattani area.

More than two dozen drug addicts are admitted at Rehabilitation Center of Peshawar run by Social Welfare De-

partment at Faqirabad area and within around 30 days of treatment are showing very positive signs of recovery towards normalcy. "The drive for rehabilitating drug addicts is launched in pursuance of the directives of Chief Minister KP, Mahmood Khan," says Riaz Khan Mehsud while talking with media.

"Titled as 'Drug Free Peshawar', the rehabilitation drive is providing treatment to around 1300 drug addicts in eight

centers of the province, Riaz Mehsud added." Among 1300 addicts around sixteen were female who were also getting proper treatment at a center and would recover soon, Commissioner informed newsmen. He also disclosed that blood tests of the addicts found around 44 as HIV Aids positive who have been sent to Islamabad at Zindagi (life) NGO for treatment purpose and are admitted there. The Drug Free Peshawar drive is also providing benefits



to Afghan drug addicts who are getting equal treatment. At the rehabilitation centers, the addicts are getting medical treatment, physical exercise, psychiatric counseling, religious teaching and music as well, he continued.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, Riaz added, has allocated an amount of Rs. 100 million for treatment of drug addicts and for making Peshawar free from drugs. We are paying around Rs. 25000 per addict per month to private rehabilitation centers where they are admitted for treatment. However in the new budget, he went on to say, an amount of Rs. 300 million has been reserved for this purpose. On success of pilot project of drug rehabilitation, it will be extended to other districts of the province step by step, Commissioner Peshawar announced. Riaz Mehsud also expressed the hope that on basis of its success, the project would serve as role model for replication in other provinces of the country. He also told the instructors that he would personally visit one center every day with monitor outcome of the initiative and progress of treatment. The drug addicts were found very optimistic about their return to normalcy after completion of three months treatment. – APP



**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation, Shazia Marri distributing cheques among deserving women under interest free loan programme by Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund in Quetta. – DNA

## Benazir Nashonuma Program Centers to be opened in every district of Balochistan: Marri

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson BISP Shazia Marri on Friday said that the government is committed to provide social protection to the women of Balochistan by making them economically strong so that they can play their role in the development of Pakistan. She expressed these views during a function held in collaboration with the non government organization Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) to distribute interest free loan cheques among the women from different parts of Balochistan here at the local hotel of Quetta. Members of the National Assembly Rubina Irfan, former MPAs including

Rahila Hameed Durrani, Ghazala Gola, former Senator Roshan Khurshid Barocha and leaders of the political parties also attended the ceremony.

While addressing the event, the federal minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety said that "Benazir Nashonuma Program Centers" will be opened in every district of Balochistan from next month. As many as 25 vehicles will be given to the BISP to outreach the needy women in all districts of Balochistan. "0.2 million children are benefiting from Benazir's education program; she said, reiterating the government resolves that Balochistan will be given top priority in the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Security plans. Sharing further details about the Benazir Income Support Program, she noted that BISP is the largest social

security program in Asia which has benefited 80,000 families.

"Efforts are being made to make Balochistan socially strong so that their sense of deprivation is removed," she said, urging that the people of Balochistan should have the right to their resources. She said that the way in which work is being done at the community level with the people of Balochistan is commendable. Strong and thriving Balochistan will guarantee strong Pakistan. Federal Minister further said that the Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan, therefore, it must be given due attention. Shazia Marree noted that along with giving a sizable amount for education of the children, in addition stipends are also being given to boys and girls. I have come to Balochistan not merely to make announcements but initiate practical work.

## Teaching hospitals start providing free medicines at OPDs

FAISALABAD: The teaching hospitals of Faisalabad have started providing free medicines to patients at outdoor patients departments (OPDs). Deputy Commissioner (DC) Lt (ret'd) Sohail Ashraf visited Government General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad on Friday and said that in the first phase, free medicines facility would be available at the OPDs of Allied Hospital, District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital, Government General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad, Children's Hospital and Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology. He said that more than 90 kinds of medicines would be available at the OPDs of teaching hospitals. The hospital administration was also directed to adopt an effective mechanism so that all OPD patients could avail free medicines facility. He also checked availability of free medicines at General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad and expressed his satisfaction. He stressed vigilance in anti-dengue measures in addition to strict implementation of coronavirus standard operating procedures (SOPs) in hospital. – APP

## President FCCI floats innovative idea to utilize sacrificial animals waste

"The total value of these sacrificial animals is around 300 Million dollars"

### ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has floated an innovative and productive idea to commercially utilize the offal, intestines and waste of the sacrificial animals. In a statement issued here today, he said that Muslims perform the sacred ritual of "Zabeh" every year throughout the world. According to a conservative estimate 3 Lac cows, 4 Lac goats, 1 million sheep and 1 Lac camels are sacrificed by the faithful Muslims in Pakistan alone. "The total value of these sacrificial animals is around 300 Million dollars", he said and added that maximum sacrifices are performed in major cities like Faisalabad, Lahore, and Karachi where the offal and entrails are thrown into the streets and open spaces which produce

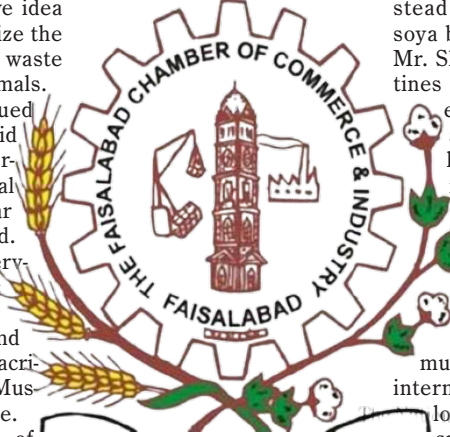
obnoxious and loathsome smell in addition to polluting the atmosphere. He said that the skins of the sacrificial animals are collected by the religious and welfare organizations to generate funds while the meat is consumed by the

people. "But the offal and entrails are thrown outside to litter in the streets", he said and added that their decaying fills the city with an abhorrent smell. "On the other hand, the Solid Waste Management Company has to deploy additional force and vehi-

cles to lift this unwanted leftover of the sacrificial animal to the dumping site for their safe disposal", he said and added that offal and entrails are rich in protein and could be used in the manufacturing of chicken feed instead of costly imported soya bean meal.

Mr. Sheikh said that intestines are exported to other countries which are used in making hotdogs, a popular readymade food for the public. He said that in view of the importance of its food value, divisional and district administration must negotiate with the international buyers and local feed mills for the supply of this waste as

its auction could generate much needed funds. He hoped that the administration would start negotiation with the feed mills and other prospective buyers for their safe and productive disposal to off load the financially starved FSWMC.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

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June 02 / Itlay	National/ Independence Day
June 04 / Finland	Armed Forces Day
June 06 / Sweden	National Day
June 10 / Portugal	Portugal Day (National Day)
June 10 / Jordan	Arab Revolution & Army Day
June 11 / United kingdom	Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth
June 12 / Philippines	Independence Day
June 12 / Russian Federation	Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation (National Day)
June 13 / Zambia	Armed Forces day
June 17 / Iceland	National Day
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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey and students and faculty of NUML watching a documentary on the occasion of a reception held at the French residence. – DNA

# Cells for talented youth to be set up at ministries: PM

PM Sharif said the brilliant ideas of youth would be incorporated in policy-making so as to formulate them in a more practical way. Head of PM’s Strategic Reforms Salman Sufi said the main objective of establishing Innovation Hub under the vision of PM Shehbaz Sharif was “putting the public back in public policy”

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the government would set up special cells for talented youth at all ministries to encourage them work on their innovative ideas for national policy-making. Addressing at the launch of Innovation Hub, he said the step aimed at encouraging the youth to involve in national development. Being set under the Prime Minister’s vision, the Innovation Hub will play an important role in harmonizing policy making with the needs of the country by incorporating the views of all stakeholders particularly country’s talented youth and manpower. PM Sharif said the innovative project

would receive valuable feedback from stakeholders to help the government improve and refine its national policies. He said modern education and technology had immense significance in today’s world, and urged the experts, intellectuals and youth to connect with the government through their suggestions. He stressed the importance of research work to explore the potential of various subjects



for the benefit of general public. The prime minister said he would personally promote the Innovation Hub which would act as an effective platform for youth to excel. PM Sharif said the brilliant ideas of youth would be incorporated in policy-making so as to formulate them in a more practical way. Head of PM’s Strategic Reforms Salman Sufi said the main objective of establishing Innovation Hub under the vision of PM

Shehbaz Sharif was “putting the public back in public policy”. Besides himself, he said, the panel of experts comprising Faisal Bari, Mosharraf Zaidi, Shahrukh Wani and Ayesha Raza Farooq would finalize the ideas. He said the selected proposals would be presented to the prime minister, which would later become part of the national policy. This would be the first time that the general public would be involved in national policy-making, he added. The youth present on the occasion gave their input about women development, tourism and hotel management, technology, and the need for improvement in educational curriculum. – APP

## MoIB to introduce digital system for ads distribution

Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid, Principal Information Officer Mubashir Hassan and other senior officials attended the meeting

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has decided to introduce digital system for distribution of advertisements, checking of circulation figures of newspapers and magazines. The decision was taken in a meeting of the Ministry of Information chaired by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb. This would prove to be a big step for ensuring transparency in the distribution of government advertisements. Briefing was given to the meeting regarding the list of newspapers and magazines and their publication. The meeting discussed adopting a comprehensive policy on ABC for national and regional newspapers and magazines, sources said.

Sources said that details were given on issues related to regular publication and circulation of newspapers and periodicals. The meeting was also briefed on the details of newspapers and magazines on the Central Media List, sources said. The meeting took a decision in principle that advertisements will be issued to newspapers and magazines published regularly in a fair and transparent manner. It was decided that advertisements would be issued to only newspapers and magazines being published regularly. Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid, Principal Information Officer Mubashir Hassan and other senior officials attended the meeting. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkmenistan, Atadjan Movlamov calls on State Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik for strengthening ties between both countries. – DNA

## Cattle markets brimming with sacrificial animals

ISLAMABAD: As the holy Eid ul-Azha is drawing near, majority cattle markets elsewhere in the country including the capital city are brimming with eye-catching heavyweight and unique name sacrificial animals, welcoming buyers in huge numbers. Citizens of all ages are seen to be visiting different localities for buying sacrificial animals and the traders from far flung areas have also started roaming in capital streets with their animals to attract buyers, said a PTV news report. All kind of animals including cows, bulls, camels, goats, lambs are becoming the part of cattle markets across the country, proving to be equally important for the Islamic festival, said

a trader. Citizens specially youngsters are enjoying the best time while enjoying around at ‘Maweshi Mandi’ (cattle market), after attaching the unique names of animals for sacrifice, said a citizen. To attract more buyers, sacrificial animals are decorated with colorful garlands, sterling bands, embellished belts and crowns, said another customer. A trader in Rawalpindi cattle market, who also appeared with heavyweight white-colored bull to attract the citizens, said every farm owner was proud of their merchandise, adding, “I feed my cattle healthy food, which consists of butter and milk”. On the other hand, a citizen complained that the prices of sacrificial animals had been hiked almost 100% ahead of Eid. “Cattle traders are fleecing people with exorbitantly high prices for sacrificial animals that has made it difficult, if not impossible, for common citizens to sacrifice,” he said. He demanded the authorities concerned to control inflated prices of sacrificial animals, adding, they should introduce some price regulatory mechanism to curb unfair pricing of sacrificial animals for easing the burden on low and middle-income citizens. – APP

## ‘Palm oil supply from Indonesia to complete by July 10’



The Ambassador said decision was made after lengthy deliberations on food security in Indonesia and revised soon as it is part of a short-term policy that would stabilize palm oil prices in the local market

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan, Adam Mulawarman Tugio on Friday said that palm oil supply operation from Indonesia to Pakistan would be completed by July 10, 2022. “So far five ships have arrived in the port city of Karachi and another five will arrive by July 10 of this month,” Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Mulawarman Tugio told APP here. The Ambassador

said that in last month on the June the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and the President of Indonesia Joko Widodo had discussed the issue of increasing the supply of palm oil to Pakistan after Indonesia lifted the ban of palm oil exports in last months of May. He said the Indonesian government then decided to use 10 ships for oil supply in the next three weeks to meet Pakistan’s needs. “Pakistan is a brotherly Islamic country with which Indonesia has strong economic, trade and diplomatic relations, adding, Indonesia will always continue its cooperation to meet the need for palm oil in Pakistan, Ambassador Adam said.” Replying to a question, he said that the Indonesian government temporarily banned global palm oil exports to regulate local markets and provide subsidized palm oil to locals in the start months of May 2022. The Ambassador said the decision was made after lengthy deliberations on food security in Indonesia and revised soon as it is part of a short-term policy that would stabilize palm

oil prices in the local market. The Ambassador said that the global consumption of palm oil worldwide was currently 70 MT, of which 33 MT was produced in Indonesia. Similarly, Indonesia was the world’s largest exporter of palm oil, which also impacts the local Indonesian market and had to be adjusted according to its prices, he said. Replying to another question, he said that Indonesia has lifted the global ban on palm oil export from last week of May and now palm oil supply in Pakistan would be improved. Indonesia is the largest supplier of palm oil to Pakistan as the palm oil would now be available in the local markets, he said. In this regard, the Indonesian government was paying special attention to increase the supply of Palm oil into Pakistani markets. He acknowledged that due to the ban on exports of palm oil, people and traders of Pakistan had faced difficulties. For that matter, the Indonesian embassy in Islamabad would fully cooperate with the local market, said the ambassador. – Agencies

## PAF capable of timely responding to enemy

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Air Marshal Muhammad Zahid Mahmood Friday said PAF was a professional force having capacity to timely respond to any nefarious design against the country. The vice chief addressed the National Defence University (NDU) course participants at Nur Khan Auditorium of Air Headquarters Islamabad, said a PAF news release issued here. While addressing the audience, he appreciated the quality academic stimulus and level of training imparted at the National Defence University. Speaking on prevailing security challenges and technological advancements, the vice chief expressed his confidence in the combating potential of Pakistan Armed Forces. He emphasized that our Armed Forces always remained poised to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the nation. Later on, Muhammad Zahid Mahmood interacted with the course participants. – APP

## PM directs mechanism to reduce Metro Bus fares

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday directed the authorities concerned to introduce a coordinated mechanism for reduction in the fares of Metro Bus Service to provide relief to the masses. The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review progress on Orange, Blue and Green Line Bus services in the federal capital, called for completion of landscaping of Orange Line Metro Bus Service from Faiz Ahmed Faiz Terminal to the Islamabad Airport within seven days. The prime minister was also apprised of the progress on the Bhara Kahu Bypass project. The prime minister directed to ensure the preservation of forests during the execution of the project. He said the work on the Bypass should be launched at the earliest by awarding the contract to top companies through a transparent bidding. He said through this project, it was essential to address the traffic issues faced by the people of Bhara Kahu which would also facilitate the travellers to and from Murree. – APP

## Indian troops martyred 35 Kashmiris in June

ISLAMABAD: Indian troops in their unabated acts of state terrorism, in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, martyred thirty five (35) Kashmiris during the last month of June. According to a report released by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service, of those nine were killed by the troops in fake encounters or in custody. The killing rendered two women widowed and six (6) children orphaned in June. During the month, at least three people were injured after Indian troops and police personnel used brute force on peaceful protesters while 104 civilians, mostly youth and political activists, were arrested. – APP

## Police net 41 beggars from city roads

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police on Friday arrested 41 beggars to discourage the menace of begging and avoid the risk of road accidents due to jaywalking. According to a police spokesman, the Beggars Squads on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi Waseem Riaz conducted raids in different areas and took action against professional beggars and detained them in different police stations of the city. On the occasion, Waseem Riaz said that special beggar squads were working hard to overcome the increasing number of professional beggars. – APP



## Briefs

NH&MP  
issues rain  
advisory

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NH &MP) has issued an advisory for road users to exercise caution, adherence to safety rules and keep driving slow during rainy weather conditions. In an advisory issued here, NH&MP urged motorists to ensure their vehicles are in good condition and check the tires, breaks, windshield wipers and lights before travel. Motorway Police urged motorists to keep a safe distance between vehicles, drive carefully, carry first aid kit, keep necessary tools, fasten seat belts, pay attention to the road and refrain from using phones when driving. The NH&MP also urged road users to avoid unnecessary travelling during inclement weather. – APP

Over 704,000  
children  
immunised

RAWALPINDI: Chief Anti-Polio Program, Punjab Syeda Ramla Ali Friday said that more than 704,000 children under five years of age had received anti-polio drops during a week-long drive that started in the entire district on June 27. While visiting the Saddar area of Rawalpindi to check the performance of polio teams, Ramla said that crippling disease was a national issue, and it was the responsibility of all to play an effective role in making the country polio-free. She said that anti-polio drops were safe and had no harmful effects. Speaking on the occasion, Ramla lauded the role of polio workers who were doing their job with dedication in the scorching heat. She directed the teams to ensure that every child must be vaccinated. The chief informed that around 4,465 polio teams, including 856 area inmates and 242 medical officers, were administering polio drops to 948,000 children less than five years in all tehsils of the district. Ramla urged the citizens, particularly the parents, to come forward and play their role in eliminating the crippling disease from society. – APP

USC staffers  
planning  
to observe  
shutter down  
strike across  
country

ISLAMABAD: All Pakistan Workers Alliance Utility Stores Corporation (USC) Central Secretary General Arif Hussain Shah on Friday said the USC's staffers were planning to observe shutter down strike across the country. Talking to media, he said despite court orders, the corporation's daily wages and contract employees were not being regularized. USC's Board of Directors were not giving their due rights as they had not provided the disparity reduction allowances including 25 percent and 15 percent of 2021 and 2022 respectively, he added. Arif Shah said the announcement of minimum wage of Rs25,000 had not been implemented yet.

PACF  
dispatches  
54 tons of  
relief items  
for quake-hit  
Afghan people

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Afghanistan Cooperation Forum (PACF) on Friday dispatched three truckloads of relief items for the quake-affected people of Afghanistan's Paktika province. Arranged by Alkhidmat Foundation, the relief items contained family ration bags, tarpaulin sheets, blankets, tents, medicine and winter package. The aid consignment was handed over to Afghan Commander Molvi Sajid at Angoor Adda border. A five-member volunteer team of Alkhidmat Foundation, including medics also went along with the aid convoy to carry out relief activities in the earthquake-affected areas. – APP

Info Ministry to jump start  
creative economy in Pakistan

The Fest feature of the application has provided some of the leading Film Festivals to partner with RINSTR for digital viewing of their films and documentaries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held at Pakistan Television Headquarter, between Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Maryam Aurangzeb and CEO RINSTR Amir Jahangir to discuss entrepreneurship and foster the creative economy through platform models. The rise of the creative industries presents significant opportunities for transforming youthful energy into new ideas, organization, and a future vision for societies. The Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting appreciated the initiatives of RINSTR and showed great interest in collaboration to uplift film, culture and heritage, drama, and fine arts in promoting the country's creative potential at both international as well as regional levels. The Minister said, "providing quality arts education can help the young population gain skills and attributes that are currently in high demand, such as problem solving, flexibility, persistence, and cooperation. The Minister appreciated the efforts of RINSTR and expressed her desire that the Pakistan Television Corp. should work with RINSTR for digital initiatives. In this regard multiple national video and music competitions would be planned. She also asked RINSTR to train the PTV employees for digital content creation through mobile phones, including mobile



journalism and mobile film making. Amir Jahangir, CEO RINSTR briefed the Minister that RINSTR is Pakistan's first short-form video platform for emerging storytellers and filmmakers. He said, "it is the only platform for Pakistanis to showcase and express their content through a user generated approach". He further said that RINSTR is working with more than 60 universities across Pakistan to create opportunities for the young people to explore, create, showcase, and monetize the creative economy. RINSTR is working in collaboration with the academia, industry, and the civil society to kickstart a new creative economy of USD 150 million that can generate a livelihood for more than 400,000 content

creators in the next three years.

With the changing content consumption patterns, young people are particularly adept at accessing information and content through digital platforms, as they are at using digital apps and content for these platforms. With expanding online networks and digital technologies, creativity has become an increasingly popular way for youth to express themselves that help to foster social cohesion. There is a need to equip youth with the skills and techniques to run creative enterprises, help them in developing artistic creative skills by integrating culture into education systems.

The Finance Bill 2022 has proposed a five years' tax holiday for film procedures, and on establishing new Cinema houses, production houses, film museums, and tax rebate on export of film and drama for ten years, as well as producers income is exempted from Income Tax. Eight percent withholding tax on distributors and producers has also been withdrawn. The import of machinery, equipment and other items shall be exempt from Custom Duty for five years. Finance Bill 2018 and Custom Act, 1969 is being amended through Finance Bill 2022 to introduce zero% sale tax and entertainment duty on import of equipment for film and drama. Because of these measures, Pakistan's film industry will be rejuvenated whereas Pakistan's

severed relation with international media will be restored. Encouragement of new talent will provide career opportunities to youth in the film industry.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is working on a mission to inform, educate and entertain the people and to the Projection and promotion of Government's policies and programs as well as the soft, progressive, and democratic image of Pakistan. MOIB is playing a vital role in creating an informed society and promoting national cohesion and media development.

RINSTR is the outcome of the thought leadership of Dice Foundation USA's Creative Arts and Media Initiative (DICE CAM). It is part of Dice Foundation's National Innovation Basket (NIB) program, which aims to create media as cornerstones of Pakistan's growth strategy.

RINSTR is Pakistan's first short-form digital media platform for on-demand streaming and for creation of user generated original content on iRINSTR. It also has a feature for Content Competition where more than 100 academic institutions in Pakistan are competing in various thematic areas. The Fest feature of the application has provided some of the leading Film Festivals to partner with RINSTR for digital viewing of their films and documentaries. This has created an unprecedented experience for viewers in the country.

PTDC to hold 'Int'l tourism  
conference' in August: MD

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation Aftab-Ur-Rehman Rana on Friday said that PTDC would hold an international tourism conference in August to promote agritourism, which would contribute greatly to the socio-economic development of the rural areas. In an exclusive interview with PTV news channel, he said that all local and international stakeholders would participate in the upcoming conference in which around 20 to 22 countries would take part, adding, online sessions would be arranged within embassies. "Pakistan has a huge tourism potential that PTDC wants to introduce to the world", Aftab said, adding, "we are inviting the countries to learn from their experience on promoting tourism". MD PTDC said that the aim of the conference was to promote the rural tourism activities for strengthening the

local, provincial and national economy and putting the country's rural areas on the road to progress and development as tourism helps in the development of rural areas and living standards of host communities. He said that Pakistan would promote harvest season tourism in villages, adding, tourist would discover rural culture, history and folklores during this season. Agritourism would help rural people to preserve their heritage and culture as well, Rana said. With the help of government, local farmers in villages would establish guesthouses and cottages for tourists, he mentioned.

Replying to a question, he said that government in cooperation with farmers would arrange festivals, quarterly or annually to attract tourists. A responsible tourism awareness drive would also be launched through newspapers and social media platforms

on keeping the tourist sites clean, he added. To maintain hospitality standards and address the issues of internet connectivity, PTDC was continuously in talks with telecommunication authorities to provide 4G/5G internet facilities in hilly areas of the country, MD Aftab Ur Rehman said, adding that series of workshops would also be conducted to control prices at tourist spots. He further said that executive lavatories for tourists and banking services would also be part of the tourism related projects. Responding to another question, MD Rana said the international conference on tourism was aimed at bringing together leading academic scientists, researchers and research scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results on all aspects of tourism and hospitality specifically during the time of COVID-19 pandemic. – APP

PNCA to showcase  
puppet show

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) would organize a free 'Puppet Show' featuring folk dances, stories and skits for children on Saturday 4 pm at National Art Gallery Islamabad. The purpose of such shows was to create awareness among community regarding rights and responsibilities of children and parents, help and support poor children and their families by providing equal opportunities for quality education of girls and boys, PNCA spokesman told APP.

He said the show was aimed at highlighting the importance of provision of nutrition, clean water and clean environment for the healthy growth of children. Likewise, it also aimed at educating children on the danger of drugs, and how parents could protect their children from falling prey to such evil temptations. The shows were important for creating awareness among children on how they could protect themselves from all types of abuse, and laborious work, he added. Such public messages, he said, would be presented through the stories of 'Meena Ki Kahani' (Meena's story) and 'Roshan Mustaqbil.' 'Meena ki Kahani' is a story of a village child girl who despite her desire to acquire education and go to school like her brother was denied so. Somehow, at a later stage her parents realize importance of education for girls and allow her go to school. – APP

Govt to raise  
domestic edible  
oil production

ISLAMABAD: In an effort to take the country towards self reliance in food commodities especially in edible oil, the government has planned to increase the annual domestic edible oil production up to 4.793 million tons in 10 years. At present the country produces 0.745 million tons of edible oil annually which is only 8% of the total demand of the commodity of over 5 million tons. In a meeting held here, presided over by Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, it was informed that in order to meet the demand, Pakistan imports 4.5 million tons of edible oil annually. The move would help minimizing the huge import bill of the food group that was recorded at US\$7.575 billion during first 11 months (Jul-May) of the year 2021-22. The import of palm oil was recorded at \$3,058 billion while that soyabean oil stood at \$217.7 million during the period under review.

The meeting that was held to review the plans with respect to achieving self dependency in the edible oil here today. It was informed in the meeting that it has been planned that the production would be gradually increased from current 0.745 million to 1.192 million in five years and 4.793 millions in next 10 years. The meeting was attended by the authorities of ministry of National Food Security and Research, and ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives.

On the occasion, Ahsan Iqbal directed that the plan to take the country towards self reliance in edible oil should be discussed with all provincial stake holders and after taking them in confidence on this issue, a feasible roadmap should be finalized within a week. The minister said the investors in the edible oil production sector should be given special incentives to boost local production. He said making the country self dependence in the edible oil was the top priority of the government's development agenda and in this regard he directed to engage the private sector to expedite the process of achieving the self reliance. Ahsan Iqbal also directed to ensure the supply of edible oil to the people keeping the basic hygiene rules. – APP



ISLAMABAD: an US-delegation headed by Dilawar Syed, State Department's Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail. – DNA

Initial spells of monsoon  
rains lash different parts of country

ISLAMABAD: Monsoon rains have started with the initial spells in parts of Northeast Punjab, Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Friday provided much needed relief to the citizens from the severe hot and humid weather conditions prevailing for the many days.

The rain lashed different parts of the country including the scattered parts of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad during the night time and Friday morning decreasing the temperatures. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), more thun-

dershower rain with isolated heavy falls are expected in Northeast Punjab, Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the coming days.

Strong monsoon currents are also likely to enter southeastern parts of Sindh and Balochistan from Saturday which would produce rain-thunder-shower with heavy to very heavy falls in Tharparkar, Umerkot, Sanghar, Badin, Mirpurkhas, Thatta, Hyderabad, Tando M. Khan, Tando Allayar, Karachi, Dadu and Jamshoro districts during July 02-05. Rain-thundershower with isolated heavy falls is expected in

Shaheed Benazirabad, Noshero Feroz, Sukkur, Larkana, Khairpur, Shikarpur, Qambar Shahdadkot, Ghotki and Kashmore districts during the period. Rain-thundershower with heavy to very heavy falls is expected in Khuzdar, Barkhan, Lasbella, Kohlu, Sibbi, Awaran, Naseerabad, Panjgur from July 02-05. Rain-thunderstorm with few heavy falls is expected in Quetta, Zhob, Dalbandin, Nokkundi, Noshki, Qila Saifullah, Mastung, Kalat and Coastal belt (Gawadar, Pasni and Ormara) during the period. – APP

Weekly  
inflation  
goes up by  
3.63%

ISLAMABAD: Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) based weekly inflation for the week ended on June 30 for the combined consumption group, witnessed an increase of 3.63 percent as compared to the previous week.

SPI for the week under review in the above mentioned group was recorded at 197.92 points against 190.98 points registered in the previous week, according to the latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) released here Friday.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 28.05 percent. The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16=100 is covering 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

Sensitive Price Indicator for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732 witnessed 3.79 percent increase and went up from 197.06 points in last week to 204.53 points during the week under review. Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased by 4.87 percent, 3.55 percent, 2.84 percent and 3 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 28 (54.91%) items increased, 06 (11.76%) items decreased and 17 (33.33%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded increase in their average prices on WoW basis, included tomatoes (31.53%), onions (7.86%), tea lipton (4.60%), eggs (2.56%), pulse mash (2.30%), pulse gram (2.17%), pulse moong (1.83%), milk fresh (1.81%), potatoes (1.67%), bread (1.59%), cooking oil 5 litre (1.40%) and pulse masoor (1.34%), electricity charges for q1 (27.89%), washing soap (2.56%) and LPG (1.15%). – APP

Police  
launches  
search  
operation in  
'A' block area

RAWALPINDI: Police on special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi on Friday launched a search operation in 'A' block and adjoining areas in the jurisdiction of Sadiqabad police Station, said a police spokesman.

He informed that heavy police contingents, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel and Ladies police under the supervision of senior police officers conducted a search operation in the area and searched 37 houses besides checking particulars of 20 tenants. 80 persons were also checked during the search operation, he added. Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations, Rawalpindi Waseem Riaz Khan said that search operations were being conducted to net criminals and lawbreakers. – APP

ANF recovers  
over 228 kg  
narcotics;  
arrests seven  
accused

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and FC Khyber Pakhtunkhwa conducted two operations on Friday and managed to recover over 228 kg narcotics besides netting seven accused. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF and FC Khyber Pakhtunkhwa conducted an operation near Gharbi check post, District Kurram and recovered 82 kg charras from the possession of six accused. In another operation conducted near Kharlachi Border Terminal, District Kurram, ANF and FC recovered 146.400 kg charras from secret cavities of a truck and arrested an accused namely Jamroz Khan resident of Kurram. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are under process. – APP

## Pak, UNICEF vow to enhance co-op for child rights

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada had a meeting with Abdullah Fadi, UNICEF Country Representative in Pakistan here on Friday. Both sides reiterated their resolve to further enhance their working collaboration for protection and promotion of child rights, said a press release issued here on Friday. Government of Pakistan through the Economic Affairs Division has signed Pakistan-UNICEF Country Program 2018-22. Under this program, two-year Rolling Work Plan (2021-22) has been signed between Ministry of Human Rights and UNICEF. Goals of this work plan are the prevention and protection of children from abuse at ICT level.

Mr. Fadi acknowledged Pakistan's efforts for realization of child rights. He expressed his satisfaction over the ongoing projects and said that UNICEF would extend its maximum support and assistance towards Ministry of Human Rights for the cause of child rights. He said that there was a need to engage more and more

stakeholders and social mobilisers to create awareness on child rights and prevention of child abuse. Minister for Human Rights thanked and appreciated UNICEF team for their perpetual support, collabora-



tion and coordination for development activities in the country. He outlined government's commitment to the promotion of child rights. Minister stated that Child Labor Survey that is being conducted



with the help of UNICEF would play an instrumental role in generating data on child issues leading towards better policy formulation. He further said that Ministry of Human Rights is working with an agenda to make the capital a child friendly city that would serve as a model for other provincial governments and for this purpose, strengthening and revamping of the Child Protection Institute and National Commission on the Rights of Child is well under way. Islamabad Child Protection Act, 2018 was enacted to provide protection services to the vulnerable children at ICT level. Under Section 10 of the Act, The Child Protection Institute (CPI) was established under the Ministry of Human Rights to prevent abuse, maltreatment, injury and exploitation of children. CPI was made functional with the support of UNICEF. The main objectives of CPI were to rescue and provide safe shelter, psycho-social, reunification and referral services. – APP



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## Pak-China ties

CHINA'S Polit Bureau member Yang Jiechi visited Islamabad and held separate meetings with PM Shehbaz Sharif, FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and COAS QamarJavedBajwa. Earlier this year former PM Imran Khan made a four day visit to Beijing where he also met President Xi. In May BBZ visited Beijing to hold meeting with Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Earlier this month a senior tri-service military delegation led by COAS Bajwa met Chinese military and govt officials in Beijing. The high level interaction underlines the closeness of Pak-China ties. China has helped Pakistan maintain political and economic stability. In March this year China rolled over \$4.2b debt providing a major financial relief to Pakistan. Earlier this month China deposited \$2.3 billion to boost State Bank of Pakistan reserves while this also helped to enhance rupee's parity against US dollar. Pak-China friendly relations have helped contain adventurist tendencies in South Asia. While recognizing the importance of the Kashmir dispute China has all along encouraged both sides to resolve the issue through peaceful means. China has however reservations over three issues with Pakistan i.e., failure to put an end to terrorist attacks on Chinese working on projects in Pakistan, failure to fulfil commitments with Chinese investors and slow implementation of CPEC. In July last year, nine Chinese nationals were killed in terrorist attack in Dasu. In April this year, three Chinese teachers died in a suicide attack in Karachi. The attacks caused serious concern and indignation in China. China's Prime Minister Li Keqiang repeated his government's demand for punishment for those involved in the attack and for enhancement of security for Chinese institutions and citizens in Pakistan. Last year a number of Chinese companies said they were not interested in making further investment in Pakistan. They cited inappropriate treatment, especially in payment to companies that had invested in the power sector. In Decembr2021, Rs230b worth of payments to Chinese power plants were still pending. There is need on the part of the govt to resolve the long standing complaints. The implementation of the CPEC plan has been delayed and neglected. Gwadar city has still no proper power and potable water facility. Last year in September a Senate panel expressed concern over the slow pace of development on the CPEC. Unless grievances over the three issues are removed, the Chinese side will have a genuine cause to complain.

## Growing cases of covid-19

FEDERAL government has decided to immediately restore the National Command and Operations Center (NCOC) in the wake of rising cases following the sixth wave of Corona. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has also convened a meeting of the NCOC and issued necessary instructions. The meeting was attended by officials from the Ministry of Health and other relevant departments. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif expressed concern that the number of corona cases has been increasing rapidly in recent times. It should be noted that the National Institutes of Health had warned that if precautionary measures were not taken, there could be a dangerous increase in Corona. According to the statistics, 694 cases were confirmed across the country in 24 hours. The number of cases may be much higher as the number of tests is less. If more tests are done, the rate may increase. A total of 15,462 tests were conducted across the country in a single day, of which 694 confirmed the corona virus. The number of victims of the epidemic is increasing in Mardan, Peshawar and Islamabad. Pakistan is one of the countries that has taken significant steps to deal with the Corona epidemic. That is why the death rate in Pakistan is lower than the rest of the world and the cases are lower than the global rate. NCOC's role was brilliant and the media also worked day and night to create awareness among the people. Strict measures by the government and the administration and the creation of an effective system to implement the SOPs have prevented a dangerous outbreak of the Corona-like epidemic, but as the Corona trend has been observed around the world. The new wave in the United States, Canada, Europe and India itself has created a very worrying situation. With the decline in corona cases in Pakistan, precautionary measures have been abandoned, the ban on social distance and masks has been lifted, and it is understood that the virus has now been completely eradicated, unlike other viruses. They never end and remain in one form or another. In the same way, the corona virus is now a reality and the world has to live with it. Lifestyles in major countries have changed accordingly. Therefore, we also have to change our ways with precautionary measures against corona. The Federal Ministry of Health has warned that catastrophe could ensue if safety precautions are not taken. God forbid that such a time should come, but for that the nation must once again create the same spirit that was seen on the occasion of the first and second wave of the Corona epidemic when everyone took precautionary measures with full force. And all the SOPs that were designed to defend against Corona were being followed.

## FBR for the non-filers

Mohammad Shaaf Najib

The tax policies pursued by the FBR have not only increased the complexities and issues faced by the public and organizations, they have also acted as a barrier to economic activity and thus economic growth. Heavily taxing all transactions has a regressive impact on the number of transactions in the economy and thus leads to a reduction in economic activity, but unfortunately...

FBR due to its inability to meet the revenue targets has come under sheer criticism for a very long time now. While it is set to cross the targeted collection for the first time in around two decades, severe criticism still exists, and rightly so. The criticism on FBR is not just about failing to collect revenues, but the entire taxation system of the country. The collection shortfall is just a product of that damaged system. The government, and thus FBR, have remained too focused on just the revenue. In pursuit of meeting the targets, basic principles of taxation have been widely ignored for quite some time now. The tax base has not been broadened, at least not signifi-

cantly. Those outside the tax net, remain comfortably in the same zone. On the other hand, the tax burden continues to increase on the existing taxpayers. A surge of indirect taxations has put the poor and lower middle class in never ending misery. Continued expansion of the withholding tax regime has not only helped increase the tax burden on an already tax heavy economy, but also shifted the collection burden from FBR to withholding agents. Increased documentations and processes only add to the costs attached with taxation, which already has remained quite a complex system in Pakistan. Given the vastness of the withholding regime in the country as of now and the continued expansion in it, it will not be long when everyone might end up as a withholding agent for the FBR in one way or the other. This though does beg the question that if the burden of ensuring tax collection through withholding taxes is shifted to the general public and organizations, then what is the need of such a large staff for the FBR itself? The tax policies pursued by the FBR have not only increased the complexities and issues faced by the public and organizations, they have also acted as a barrier to economic activity and thus economic growth. Heavily taxing all transactions has a regressive impact on the number of transactions in the economy and thus leads to a reduction in economic activity, but unfortunately the FBR and finance department fail to see this impact in their pursuit of revenue targets. There though is one group of people that are satisfied with the approach of the country's revenue authorities, i.e. the non-filers. The distinction of tax rate for filers and non-filers is not only principally against the laws laid down by the government and revenue departments including FBR, as it

allows people to carry out their activities and transactions without filing the taxes. It moreover also acts as an incentive for non-filers to remain non-filers.

By paying a slightly more amount over the tax that the person would have paid as a filer, the non-filer earns the right to hide their actual income levels and not pay any taxes on that. If anything, this data must have been used by FBR to compare the transactions being performed by the non-filers and their lifestyle. Non-filer transactions should have been used to bring into tax net and penalize the people hiding their incomes. Unfortunately, the FBR has failed to make any real progress on that. Instead, it keeps on questioning only those who continue to file taxes regularly. The distinction between filer and non-filer tax rates must be abolished immediately and instead a single rate of taxation should be applied on the said transaction regardless of tax filing status. If then, anyone is involved in a transaction that may reflect taxable income but is not filing taxations, the FBR and other relevant authorities must investigate and penalize the non-filers.

There is a great degree of distrust among the public regarding the FBR, and the public not to be blamed for this. The common perception is that if you, as individual or an organization, are filing your taxes honestly and regularly, then you must always keep looking over your shoulder for possible questioning and harassment at hands of the revenue authorities. On the contrary, if you are not filing your taxes at all, then you need not worry as the authorities will never even look towards you.

— The writer is a Research Fellow at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad. Views expressed are his own and do not express views or opinions of PIDE

## Can NATO save Eastern Europe?

Sabina Fati

NATO's new Strategic Concept emphasizes that the alliance cannot rule out the possibility of an attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its individual members. The document presents the abyss on the edge of which Europeans – and not only Europeans – are standing. Syria, North Korea and Russia have already used chemical weapons in recent times; China and Iran are covertly developing nuclear capabilities; dangerous non-governmental players continue to arm themselves

IN NATO's Strategic Concept 2022, Russia is mentioned 14 times and China 11. This strong focus on the dangerous alliance between Moscow and Beijing highlights the fact that NATO heads of state and government are well aware of the impending risks for which they must urgently prepare. NATO's eastern flank is to be strengthened in several ways. Poland and Romania will be upgraded to essential pillars of NATO in eastern Europe. Troops under direct U.S. command will be moved to the region in order to contain Russia. NATO will also remain open to new members and now describes the western Balkans and the Black Sea as "strategically important." NATO's new Strategic Concept emphasizes that the alliance cannot rule out the possibility of an attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its individual members. The document presents the abyss on the edge of which Europeans – and not only Europeans – are standing. Syria, North Korea and Russia have already used chemical weapons in recent times; China and Iran are covertly developing nuclear capabilities; dangerous non-governmental players continue to arm themselves. Beyond the depressing overall picture NATO's new Strategic Concept describes, there are several internal threats coming from within NATO itself. As yet, the alliance does not appear to be taking them seriously. Some NATO countries have serious problems with loyalty to Euro-Atlantic values. Political instability in various member states is damaging the unity of the alliance and the Balkans are still staggering beneath the weight of historical regional enmities. NATO may be able to protect Romania and Poland against a Russian attack, but it cannot protect them against the evil they are inflicting on themselves. In both of these eastern EU NATO member states, the judiciary has clearly been subordinated to politics.

Yet this evil, which subverts the rule of law, is being disregarded – because of the indispensable help Romania and Poland are providing to Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees. Hungary actually seems closer to Russia than to NATO. Turkey is pursuing its own strategy of increasing its influence in both the Middle East and the Balkans. Bulgaria is teetering on an unstable seesaw, losing its balance each time it leans away from Moscow. Similarly, the westward direction taken by Slovakia and the Czech Republic has never been an irreversible one. Croatia has one seat of power that backs Russia – the president – and one – the prime minister – that prefers the West. Bulgaria is busy undermining North Macedonia, Tirana still dreams of a Greater Albania, and Serbia's politicians stand with Russia anyway. All these regional rifts work in Russia's favor: It can stir up the troubled waters and seek its own advantages there. In Romania, Prime Minister Nicolae Ciuca, a pro-Western general, remains vulnerable, despite the fact that the judiciary came to his rescue when he was accused of plagiarizing his doctoral thesis. Not only is the Romanian state becoming increasingly paternalistic, but it also tending toward autocracy: The mass media and the judiciary, even the constitutional court, are controlled by politics. Increasingly, the model of Viktor Orban's Hungary is spreading to other countries. Populism is making a powerful comeback everywhere in Europe. But this phenomenon is much more dangerous in the east than in the west, because the institutions there are still weak and do not even have the will to fight back. In that part of the continent, democracy, so far, has been little more than an interlude in a history dominated by dictatorships and autocracies. The question is: Can NATO rely on countries that are increasingly dispensing with democratic freedoms and stifling the rule of law?

— Source: DW

## The cards in Putin's hands

Elias Harfoush



Putin is playing many cards to fight back; he is escalating militarily in Ukraine, seizing as much territory as he can in the Donbas in Eastern Ukraine and beginning to integrate them, administratively and economically at this stage, into Russia's administrative and financial system. He also has the economic escalation card, which he is playing by restricting global supply of food and energy

THE Russian war on Ukraine dominated the two summits that brought Western countries together in the German province of Bavaria and the Spanish city of Madrid. G7 leaders sought to show their unity as they declared their support for Ukrainian President Zelensky and affirmed that they are standing by his country politically and militarily. Consequential de-

cisions were made. Significant increases in military aid and funding were announced. Long-range missiles were promised to Ukrainian forces, as was the persistence of training on Western weapons. Growing apprehension of Russia's threat to European security was voiced. The "historic" decision to open the door to Sweden and Finland joining NATO, a step that these two countries could not have taken before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, given their longstanding commitment to neutrality, was prompted by this apprehension. Although Putin tried to downplay the implications of this decision, saying that he had no problem with Finland and Sweden taking whatever path they wanted, he warned that building military bases in these countries would lead to a similar reaction on Russia's part, which would impose "an equivalent threat to the countries coming to us with these threats." Finding a way around the challenges posed by the new geopolitical situation he finds himself in will prove a difficult task for Putin. A quick glance at the map shows that Russia is now surrounded from the West and that it has no friendly neighbors besides Belarus. And the Russian President, who had been complaining that the West was "at his doorstep" before the invasion of Ukraine, will share a 1,300 kilometers border with NATO once Finland joins. Not only are they at the door, but Russia's entire western border would also require constant attention to defend. A state of affairs that the leadership in Moscow had not seen during the worst phases of the Cold War. Putin is playing many cards to fight back; he is escalating militarily in Ukraine, seizing as much territory as he can in the Donbas in Eastern Ukraine and beginning to integrate them, administratively and economically at this stage, into Russia's administrative and financial system. He also has the economic escalation card, which he is playing by restricting the global supply of food and energy. In this tactic, Putin sees a weapon useful for undermining Western cohesion and pushing other regions and countries, especially India and African countries, to speak out against the continuation of the war. The political escalation card has manifested itself in attempts to exploit the positions of several Western countries (such as Hungary, France and Germany) that seem more inclined to keep the door open to reaching an agreement with Moscow and seeking a peaceful resolution to the Ukrainian war. Although Western leaders tried to demonstrate their cohesiveness at the G7 and NATO summits, we have seen many signs that countries have divergent views regarding the implications of military escalation against Russia.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been the most explicit among Western leaders in pointing out these disparities; from the get-go, he has been calling on other leaders to show clear and robust support for Ukraine as it seeks to preserve its independence and reclaim the territories lost as a result of the invasion.

The most effective card in Putin's hands is constantly spooking the West with the dangers of a nuclear confrontation with Russia. Keir Giles, an expert in Russian affairs at The Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London, has said that Russia's escalating threats influence the decisions of these countries and push them to think twice about providing the Ukrainians with advanced weaponry they need to retrieve the territories they had lost and that President Zelenskyy keeps asking for. Putin feels he can mitigate his military inferiority vis-a-vis the West by spooking Western concerns about the consequences of escalation. Putin, Medvedev, and others' references to Russia's possession of nuclear weapons and its ability to reach any European targets have been explicit. In addition, Western countries are struggling with the economic ramifications of the war, which has raised prices and weakened support for the decision-makers of these countries. The Russian President does not face problems of this kind, as expressing discontent leads to imprisonment in Russia. Moreover, there is the fact that Putin has a clear vision of what he wants to achieve in this war, while Western countries' views of what they would consider an acceptable way out of the crisis are ambiguous and contradictory.

The Russian President wants full control of Eastern Ukraine and to prevent Ukraine from making sovereign decisions that go against Moscow's interests, in other words subjugating Kyiv to the will of the Kremlin. As for Western countries' stances, they range from accepting compromise solutions on Crimea and Donbas to refusing to end the war before Russian troops withdraw from all the territory they have occupied since March 2014. Nonetheless, the most important element in the Russian-Western standoff is the arsenal. This war is not being fought with words but with weapons. And as long as the West remains reluctant to provide weapons that could alter the balance of power in favor of Ukraine and push Putin to face the possibility of a defeat, the war will continue to be in Moscow's favor. In time, it will turn into a war of attrition for the Europeans, the Ukrainians, and the world, while the Russian President feels no need to worry or reveal any of his figures or losses.

— The writer is a Lebanese writer and journalist Source: Asharq Al-Awsat



## Briefs

## Mango...

FROM PAGE 01

that Pakistani mangoes were popular the world over due to superior quality as well as the huge number of varieties being grown in Pakistan. It was highlighted that Pakistan's missions abroad were organizing mango tasting festivals in their host countries and showcasing the variety and richness of the Pakistani mangoes. The event was attended by over 300 persons that included members of the Diplomatic Corps, Business Executives, Bureau Chiefs of Local and Foreign Publications, Representatives of Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Association, and Officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Embassies of China and UAE also set up stalls offering mango based dishes from their own cuisine.

## CM Punjab...

FROM PAGE 01

till the re-election — July 22. In a 4-1 split decision a day earlier, the LHC had wrapped up PTI's case against Hamza's election to the CM's slot, while ordering a recount of the votes cast during the Punjab chief executive's election but with the exclusion of 25 PTI dissidents' votes, in line with the apex court's interpretation of Article 63(A). But in its bid to remove Hamza from the post of Punjab chief minister, PTI had earlier in the day approached the SC to challenge the orders of the LHC to hold a vote recount on the CM poll — which was held on April 16. The SC accepted the plea for an immediate hearing and formed a three-member bench. The hearing was headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, while Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail were part of the bench, too.

## Envoys of...

FROM PAGE 01

dividends from the lucrative benefits offered by Pakistan's Special Economic Zones", he said. He further highlighted that Pakistan was actively involved in engagement with its diaspora in the USA in the Tech sector and was desirous of more tech sector investments from the US companies. Talking to the Ambassador of Türkiye, the President noted with satisfaction the convergence between the two countries on critical issues, including Kashmir, Northern Cyprus, Islamophobia, and Afghanistan. He said that both countries would celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two brotherly countries, on November 30th this year, in a befitting manner. He further underlined that Pakistan remained committed to furthering bilateral trade and investment ties with Türkiye. While talking to the High Commissioner of Australia to Pakistan, the President said that Pakistan offered attractive investment opportunities in different sectors. "Australians companies can invest in infrastructure development, agriculture, renewable energy, mining, manufacturing, water and waste management", said the President. He further stated that Pakistan offered a large pool of highly skilled human resources in many areas with professionals qualified from top Pakistani and Western Universities. He also expressed satisfaction over the ample educational opportunities being offered in Australia for Pakistani students.

Talking to the Ambassador of the EU delegation to Pakistan, the President stated that Pakistan valued its relations with the EU and was satisfied that Pak-EU relations were moving in a positive direction in all spheres of coordination. "Economic and trade ties are the key feature of Pakistan and EU multidimensional relationship", said the President. He highlighted that GSP+ has been a mutually beneficial scheme and has played an important role in the expansion of Pak-EU bilateral trade. He further said that Pakistan saw the GSP+ scheme as a constructive engagement for the betterment of its economy and promoting its economic agenda. While talking to the Ambassador of Sudan, the President appreciated the historically fraternal ties, bilateral cooperation, and coordination at OIC and UN between the two countries. Talking to the Non-Resident Ambassador of Bhutan, the President said that Pakistan took immense pride in its rich Buddhist heritage.

# Ammad, Sana wins PSF Junior Squash Circuit-II title

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Talented youngsters Muhammad Ammad from Pakistan Air Force and Sana Bhadur from Pakistan Army clinches the PSF Junior Squash Circuit No II title in their respective categories here at Mushaf Squash Complex Islamabad on Friday. Squash Legend and Vice President of Pakistan Squash federation Qamar Zaman graced the closing ceremony as chief guest who along with Secretary Pakistan Squash Federation Wing Commander Armghan Aziz distributed prizes and trophies to the players. In Boys U-19 category final Muhammad Ammad from PAF shown their best skills and never allowed his opponent Anas Ali Shah from Punjab to comeback in the final match. Muhammad Ammad won the U-19 boys title with a game score of 11-4, 11-5 and 11-8. In Girls U-19 category, talented Sana Bhadur from Pak Army won the title by beating Mehwish Ali from KP with a game score of 9-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-5 (3-1). In Boys U-11 category, Mr Faizan Khan from Punjab won the title by beating Syed Muhammad Hussain from Punjab with a game score of 11-3, 11-2, 7-0 (Retd Hurt). In Boys U-13 category, Mr Ahmed Rayyan Khalil from PAF won the title by beating Mr Shahzaib, also from PAF with a game score



of 8-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-5 (3-1). In Boys U-17 category, Mr Abdullah Nawaz from PAF won the title by beating Mr Hura-ra Khan, also from PAF with a game score of 11-4, 11-9, 11-6. In Boys U-15 category, Mr Azan Ali from Pak Army won the title by

beating Mr Umair Arif from KP with a game score of 2-11, 12-10, 11-8, 14-12 (3-1). As part of Juniors' Development Programme & Talent Hunt at grass root level, Pakistan Squash Federation organized five days long PSF Junior Squash Circuit

No II as the number of participants for circuit-II significantly increased as this time 263 players participated from all over Pakistan. They included 99 players from Punjab, 121 from KP, 29 from Sindh and 14 from Balochistan.

## Shandur Polo Festival kicks off in Chitral

DNA

CHITRAL: The three-day Shandur Polo Festival kicked off on Friday with a colourful opening ceremony held at



the world's highest polo field with an altitude of 12,500 feet in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's Chitral district. The polo teams marched past the opening ceremony while children from different schools recited the national anthem.

On this occasion, local artists also performed Kalash, Chitral and Khattak dances and songs. The paragliders and paratroopers received special tributes from the spectators at the inaugural ceremony jointly organised by the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government and Frontier Corps North. On the first day of Shandur Polo Festival, three matches were played between different teams. A large number of tourists from all over the country flocked to the area to enjoy festival. Senior civil and military officials, local administration officials and a large number of locals attended the event. The three-day festival features polo matches as well as fireworks and campfires for the participants. The festival couldn't take place for a few years due to Covid-19-induced restrictions, but it is being held this year with the consent and mutual coordination of both K-P and G-B governments.

## 'Father's death changed my life'

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: : Former Russian UFC fighter Khabib Nurmagomedov, the longest-reigning UFC Lightweight Champion, shared how his life was changed after he lost his father Abdulmanap Nurmagomedov back in 2019 due to COVID-19. Speaking on the occasion of his induction to UFC Hall of Fame, Nurmagomedov said his perception about life was totally different when his father was alive.

"I can do whatever I want in life. I can buy any house in the world. But after my father's demise, my this perspective about life has changed completely," he shared. "I remember like 10 years ago, my mind was completely different. 'Oh, I'm going to become champion. I'm going to become rich. I'm going to buy everything', 'But everything what happened the last two years, this has changed my mind and changed the way how I was thinking," he maintained. Nurmagomedov ensures his father's legacy by giving back to the next generation of athletes, including current UFC lightweight contender Islam Makhachev. "Right now what I'm doing, you guys believe me, if nothing happens the next four or five years, we're going to have three more UFC champions from our gym. Believe me, guys. You can save this video, and you're going to understand what I'm talking about," he concluded.

## Tunisia unveils draft of new constitution

AGENCIES

TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied has validated the draft of a new constitution and unveiled it to the public ahead of the constitutional referendum scheduled for July 25. The draft constitution, published late Thursday in the official bi-weekly gazette Journal of the Republic of Tunisia, comprises 10 chapters and 142 articles, with the most notable Article 1 stipulating that Tunisia is a republic with a presidential system. The draft details that the president exercises executive power with the assistance of the government, the head of which is appointed by the president and will not be presented to the parliament for a vote of confidence. It meets expectations that Tunisia will abandon the mixed presidential-parliamentary system under the country's 2014 constitution, as Saied has vowed to reshape the political system on many occasions.

Also as expected, the draft constitution sets a new parliamentary chamber for "regions and districts," echoing the president's long-held vision for a decentralized democratic model that he described as a "democracy of individuals." It also limits the presidency to a maximum of two terms, but the term can be extended when the president decides there is an imminent danger to the country. The last chapter stipulates that the exceptional measures, announced by Saied and approved in September 2021, will remain in force until the next parliamentary elections due in December 2022. The new constitution keeps most parts of the sections in the 2014 version that enumerated rights and liberties, including freedom of speech, the right to organize in unions, and the right to peaceful gatherings. However, it forbids strikes held by certain sectors, such as security, army, and court. Tunisia has been trapped in an economic crisis, with declining public services, an increasing unemployment rate, and chronic political paralysis.

## Harila, Tseng successfully summitt Nanga Parbat

36-year-old Harila from Norway set a world record becoming the fastest woman to climb; Tseng is first Taiwanese to scale Nanga Parbat

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Two foreign female climbers have successfully summited Nanga Parbat, the world's 9th highest mountain peak at 8126m, on Friday morning to complete first major summit in Pakistan of the season. Karrar Haidri, the secretary of Alpine Club of Pakistan, confirmed to Geo News that the climbers Kristin Harila of Norway and Grace Tseng of Taiwan reached on top this morning at around 11:00am PKT. Both the climbers were joined by Nepali team-members who were part of summit as climbers. Kristin was accompanied by Pasdawa Sherpa, Dawa Ongju Sherpa and Chhiring Namgel Sherpa while Grace Tseng was joined by Nima Gyazen Sherpa and Ningma Tamang Dorje. 36-year-old Kristin Harila from Norway set a world record becoming the fastest woman to climb Mount Everest and Lhotse in less than twelve hours in May. She is aiming to become the first woman in history and the second person ever to climb all 14 peaks above 8,000m in just 6 months. Only 44 people in history have summited all 14 peaks, in completing this challenge Kristin would also become the first person

to do so from a Scandinavian country. The 36-year-old hopes to match or surpass Nepali adventurer Nirmal Purja and his groundbreaking 2019 record of six months and six days. "I am feeling great. Nice weather, 11.5 hours since camp 4. I am glad to have completed the first peak in Pakistan", Kristin said in a message from the summit of Nanga Parbat before starting the descend

to base camp. 29-year-old Grace Tseng is first Taiwanese to scale Nanga Parbat. She had earlier become the 1st female in the world to climb Kanchenjunga in Autumn season. She is also the youngest female to climb Annapurna without O2 at the age of 29. Nanga Parba is her 8th peak of above 8,000m as she also aims to climb all 14 8,000m of the world.



## Pakistani-made footballs to shine at Doha World Cup

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan's national football team is 200th out of 211 teams in the FIFA world rankings, but the country's more than 200 million people will still be feeling part of the 2022 FIFA World Cup finals to be played in Doha this winter. Together with China, Pakistan is supplying the soccer balls to be used in the forthcoming mega event, which this time will be held in the winter instead of the summer due to the hot weather in the Qatari capital. "We have once again been chosen to supply soccer balls for the World Cup, which is an honour for us and a testimony of the quality we have maintained," said Khawaja Masood Akhtar, the chairman of Forward Sports, a contracting manufacturer of global sports brand Adidas. Nestled on the outskirts of Punjab's Sialkot, workers at the company's sprawling facility are working extra hours to ensure on-time delivery of the footballs. The city, which borders India, has been famous for producing the finest quality sports goods and has been supplying footballs for mega-events for a long time. Production of high-quality footballs is not Sialkot's only forte. It also exports sports

goods ranging from cricket bats to hockey sticks and from shining (cricket and hockey) balls to other accessories like kits, shoes, and gloves. The country earns \$1 billion annually from sports goods exports, including \$350 million to \$500 million from footballs alone. Declining to give the exact number of footballs the company will supply for the World Cup due to restrictions from Adidas, Akhtar said it would be "not in thousands but millions". Named "Al-Rihla," Arabic for "The Journey," the official match ball for the 2022 World Cup was unveiled in March by Adidas in Doha. Forward Sports, which also makes footballs for the German Bundesliga, the French league, and the Champions League, was also the official football provider of the 2014 and 2018 World Cups in Brazil and Russia. The soccer ball to be used in the forthcoming tournament is technically termed "thermo bonded," which was first introduced in the 2014 World Cup. Before that, Pakistan had supplied hand-stitched soccer balls for most of



the World Cups from the 1990s to 2010. Other types of soccer balls produced in Sialkot are "glued" and "hand-stitched." Thermo bonded balls are made by attaching the panels through heat — the latest technology adopted by Adidas and transferred to Forward Sports in 2013. There are no stitches. "We have made some changes in (the design of) footballs this time, keeping Qatar's culture, environment, architecture, and flag in mind," Akhtar said. "And it will be environment-friendly," he said, adding that for the first time, only water-based inks and glues have been used in the making of the footballs. Soaring inflation and energy tariffs combined with rising labour costs have not turned out to be a problem for Akhtar. "Everything is running smoothly, as we chalked out our plans, keeping all these factors in mind. In fact, we have hired some additional labour to ensure on-time deliveries," he said. Football is a popular sport in otherwise cricket-obsessed Pakistan, particularly in rural areas.

Yet the national team is ranked 200th in the FIFA World Rankings. Lacking glamour and government funding while having to deal with intra-federation schisms and land-grabbing petty mafia who have been sweeping up sports grounds, football in Pakistan has gradually declined from its rank as fourth on the Asian continent in the 1960s. Straddling the edge of the Arabian Sea, Lyari, a small shantytown of Karachi, is known as "mini Brazil" among soccer fans for the talented football players that this run-down locality has produced over the decades. The area has over the last 74 years produced a large number of players who have won many titles for the country, especially between the 1950s and 1960s, known as the golden era of Pakistan's national football team. In April last year, FIFA suspended the Pakistan Football Federation's membership for six months, citing a hostile takeover of the federation's head office by a rival group. The action was taken when the group refused to vacate the office and hand it over to a FIFA-approved group. The membership, nonetheless, was restored by FIFA after a period of over a year on Thursday.

## Very...

FROM PAGE 01

after it received an offer that would've been the most expensive shipment ever delivered to the nation, according to traders with the knowledge of the matter. It was the third time in June that Pakistan failed to complete an LNG tender for July, and the country's inability to purchase fuel threatened to exacerbate electricity shortages just as hotter weather boosts air conditioning and power demand. "We have refrained from procuring expensive gas and the previous government missed the opportunity to purchase cheap gas," the prime minister said in a scathing attack on the PTI.

## Inflation...

FROM PAGE 01

Multiple sectors witnessed double-digit inflation but the trend was driven largely by transport, which saw a 62.17pc rise and perishable food items, prices of which increased by 36.34pc. Other sectors in which inflation was measured in the double digits are: Non-perishable food items (24.43pc), Restaurants and hotels (21.85pc), Furnishing and household equipment maintenance (18.76pc), Alcoholic beverages and tobacco (17.6pc), Miscellaneous goods and services (15.83pc), Recreation and culture (14.35pc), Clothing and footwear (13.72), Housing and utilities (13.48pc), Health (11.3pc), Education and communication were the only two sectors where inflation was in the single digits at 9.46pc and 1.96pc, respectively. The PBS press release, while detailing the rise in non-food-related commodities, showed that motor fuel, liquefied hydrocarbons and electricity charges saw massive increases year-on-year, with motor fuel prices rising by at least 95pc.

## 17 dead in...

FROM PAGE 01

far as an Iron Curtain is concerned, essentially it is already descending... The process has begun." There was a glimmer of hope however, when Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who visited Moscow on Thursday after a trip to Kyiv, said he had given Russian President Vladimir Putin a message from their Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Neither side has revealed what was in the note. Hours after the summit ended, missiles were fired at an apartment building and recreation centre in the southern region of Odessa, a strategic flashpoint that is home to Ukraine's historic port city of the same name. The nine-storey apartment building was partially destroyed, leaving 14 people dead and 30 wounded, including several children, the emergency services said. Three people, including a child, were killed and one wounded in the attack on the recreation centre, they said. The strikes, in the Bilgorod-Dnistrovsky district, were launched by aircraft that flew in from the Black Sea, said Odessa military administration spokesman Sergiy Bratchuk. "The worst case scenario played out and two strategic aircraft came to the Odessa region," he said in a TV interview, adding they had fired "very heavy and very powerful" missiles. Bratchuk urged people not to post online information about the rescue operation.

## Indian SC...

FROM PAGE 01

killed in police fire while a number of homes belonging to Muslims were bulldozed in what critics called "collective punishment" by the authorities for holding the protests. This week, two Muslim men were arrested in the northwestern city of Udaipur for allegedly beheading a Hindu tailor who had posted in support of Sharma on Facebook. Also this week, police in New Delhi arrested journalist Mohammed Zubair, a vocal critic of the government who had helped draw attention to Sharma's remarks through his fact-checking website Alt News and on social media. Zubair was arrested on Monday and remains in custody over a four-year-old tweet, depicting an image from a 1983 film which showed a hotel named after a Hindu god.



Briefs

China seeks Marcos Jr's co-op

BEIJING: China forwarded a four-point proposal to the newly-inaugurated president of the Philippines to “usher in a new golden age” in bilateral ties. After attending the oath-taking ceremony of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., China’s Vice President Wang Qishan hailed the Marcos family for its “great contributions to enhancing the China-Philippines friendship.” Marcos Jr. was inaugurated as the 17th president of the archipelago nation at a ceremony in Manila on Thursday. “The Chinese side has always given priority to the Philippines in its neighborhood diplomacy, and is ready to work with the new Philippine government in carrying on their friendship, boosting mutual trust and deepening co-operation so as to usher in a new ‘golden age’ in bilateral ties,” Wang told the Filipino president. Beijing’s gestures to Manila come after Marcos Jr. last month said: “There is no wiggle room there. Our sovereignty is sacred. We will not compromise it in any way.” His statement had come in response to Manila’s conflict with Beijing in the hotly contested South China Sea where the two countries share maritime borders. However, early this month Marcos Jr. said China was “our close neighbor and good friend,” adding that the Philippines “will continue to pursue an independent foreign policy.” The two countries contested the South China Sea at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in 2016 where Manila emerged victorious as Beijing’s claims over the resource-rich sea were invalidated by The Hague-based authority. – **Agencies**

China hit back at Ardern’s comments

AUCKLAND: The Chinese Embassy in New Zealand has hit back at comments by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern that China is becoming more assertive. In a statement released overnight, it said her comments were unhelpful, regrettable and wrong. Jacinda Ardern told NATO leaders that China had become more assertive and more willing to challenge international rules and norms. Ardern participated in a session with the alliance’s Indo-Pacific partners and spoke directly to world leaders at the summit in the Spanish capital, Madrid. New Zealand is not a member of NATO but was invited by the alliance’s secretary general to demonstrate its “close partnership” with countries in the Pacific region. In her speech, Ardern singled out China’s actions as a cause for concern. – **Agencies**

Trial of US star opens in Russia

KHIMKI: The trial of US basketball star Brittney Griner, detained in Russia since February, opened on Friday as tensions rage over Moscow’s offensive in Ukraine. “The trial has started,” Polina Vdovtsova, the spokeswoman for the court in the town of Khimki outside Moscow, told reporters. Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist and WNBA champion, faces up to 10 years in prison on charges of drug smuggling. The trial was partially closed, with a limited media presence, which Vdovtsova said was “on the request of the defence, the request of Griner herself”. The six-foot-nine inch (2.06 metres) star was brought into court in handcuffs. She wore a white T-shirt with US music icon Jimi Hendrix on it. The 31-year-old came to Russia in February to play there during the US off-season, and was detained at a Moscow airport after she was found carrying vape cartridges with cannabis oil in her luggage. Griner was detained days before Russian President Vladimir Putin defied US warnings and sent troops into Ukraine, prompting Western powers to impose sweeping sanctions on Moscow. – **Agencies**

Jakarta bolsters food resiliency to anticipate global crises

Several conditions to be stipulated include the utilization of Govt Reserve Rice (CBP), the release of CBP stock, and fund utilization for stock release

JAKARTA: The government will boost national food resiliency and prepare various strategic moves to anticipate the global food crisis, Coordinating Economic Affairs Minister Airlangga Hartarto stated during a limited coordination meeting on the food policy. “This meeting is a follow up to the president’s instruction on strategic food availability which, until July, is relatively safe, both in terms of supply and price stability,” he noted here Thursday. The meeting, attended by several ministries or institutions leaders, discussed the latest conditions concerning the national food situation and precautionary measures against global crisis in the food sector. At the meeting, discussions were also held on various efforts to be made to maintain national food resiliency. Indonesia has adequate food availability until the end of 2024, Hartarto stated. In fact, Indonesia no longer imported rice in the last three years. The meeting also

Govt aims to add one million new SMEs

PADANG: The government, through Presidential Regulation No. 2 of 2022 on 2021–2024 national entrepreneurship development, is seeking to add one million new small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by 2024 to increase the country’s entrepreneurship ratio. Ninety-nine percent of entrepreneurs in Indonesia run micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), Cooperatives and SMEs Minister Teten Masduki noted during the “Entrepreneurship Interactive Dialogue and Public Lecture” themed “Young Entrepreneurs Wanted” here on Friday. However, only 3.18 percent of them are in the established entrepreneurs category, he added during the program held to unveil the ministry’s cooper-

ation with Andalas University for bolstering startup capacity. “This is very small when compared to Singapore, which has established MSMEs that reached 8.76 percent, with the number of population at less than 5 million people,” he elaborated. Indonesia currently has a population of 270 million, but entrepreneurs make up only 3.18 percent of it. Meanwhile, the proportion of entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Thailand is already higher than in Indonesia at 4.74 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively. Therefore, the government is seeking to add one million new entrepreneurs so that, by 2024, their composition rises to 3.95 percent. – **ANTARA**

discussed Indonesia’s plan to immediately export rice. Based on data outlined during the internal meeting with the president, rice stocks, as per December 2021, stood at seven million tons, he noted. Meanwhile, the Indonesian Bureau of Logistics’ (Bulog’s) stocks reached over one million ton, so it is still safe to set aside 200 thousand tons for export, he stated. During the meeting, Hartarto, along with other officials, also discussed aspects related to regulation, permit, and readiness to execute the rice export process that will be conducted immediately. In addition, discussions were held on the Bulog rice aid in 2022 for 19.14 million Beneficiary Families (KPM) and revision of Presidential Regulation No. 48 of 2016 on bolstering Bulog’s assignment. Several conditions to be stipulated include the utilization of Government Reserve Rice (CBP), the release of CBP stock, and fund utilization for stock release. – **ANTARA**

Parliamentary collaboration must to promote contacts

DNA ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Friday underscored that parliamentary cooperation and institutionalized collaboration can help promote people-to-people contacts especially with the African countries. According to a message received here, the chairman exchanged views on matters of mutual significance and stressed cooperation, trade, economic links, expediting regional growth and development with the delegates and parliamentary heads of different countries including Speaker of Algeria, Brahim Boughali, Deputy Speaker of Gambia, Seedy Njie and Deputy Speaker of Libya, Mr Fouzi Salim on the sidelines of the conference of the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) Parliamentary Network in Azerbaijan.

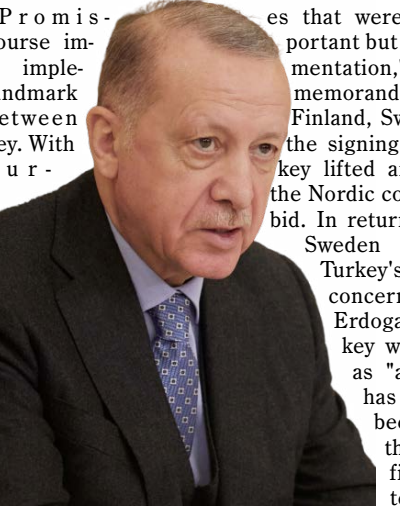
During the meetings, Senate Chairman highlighted the significance of such conferences and underlined Pakistan’s desire for peace and development in the region and beyond and urged the parliaments to play role in this regard. “We must utilize parliamentary diplomacy as a tool to promote regional peace, and harmony and make collective efforts to resolve issues hampering development”, he emphasized. He said that Pakistan’s “Look Africa” policy has been helpful in opening up new avenues of cooperation, enhanced connectivity and trade links. Chairman said that global dynamics of inter-state relations and cooperation have changed, and called for diversified bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Senate Chairman informed that Pakistan was keen to further deepen ties with African countries. “Trade and investment opportunities can be explored through frequent exchanges in business sectors”, he observed. He enticed African investors to explore investment opportunities in collaboration with their Pakistani counterparts. Chairman underpinned the significance of parliamentary cooperation, adding that parliamentary friendship groups can help in building synergy required to create a common ground for smooth working and develop an understanding for mutual benefit. Parliamentary leaders from different African countries while appreciating Chairman’s remarks said that Pakistan was an important country for us and in the region. They underscored the need for more institutional collaboration. Parliamentary leaders also acknowledged Pakistan’s stance presented by Senate Chairman during the conference on NAM Parliamentary Network.

NAM Parliamentary conference wraps up

NEWS DESK BAKU: The Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network Baku conference concluded with a closing ceremony on July 1, Azernews reports. The conference was devoted to the theme “Strengthening the Role of National Parliaments in Promoting Peace and Sustainable Development in the World,” the report added. Speaker of the Azerbaijani Parliament Sahiba Gafarova emphasized the significance of the event in her closing remarks, stating that key problems were discussed and decisions were reached within the scope of the conference. “We elected the chairman and vice-chairmen of the Parliamentary Network, approved its logo and flag. Thank you for electing me to chair the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network. I am sure that the issues reflected in the Baku Declaration will be successfully implemented. The future development of the Parliamentary Network will help us move to a new stage, and our cooperation will be further expanded,” Gafarova stressed. Within the framework of the two-day conference, the leaders of the delegations made a report and stated their views on the current problems in the world and noted the role of the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network to jointly fight against these problems. Bilateral meetings were also held within the framework of the conference.

Erdogan warns Turkey may still block Nordic NATO drive

NEWS DESK ANKARA: An accord signed with Finland and Sweden to lift Turkey’s veto on their NATO membership bids is not the end of the matter and obliges the Nordic states to keep their promises, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was cited as saying on Friday. After four hours of talks in Madrid on Tuesday, Erdogan and his Finnish and Swedish counterparts agreed on a series of security measures in return for backing by Ankara, which had raised concerns about terrorism and arms embargoes. Speaking to reporters on a flight back from the NATO summit in Madrid, Erdogan said there was no need to rush ratifying the two bids in Parliament. Ankara should first see if they keep promises made under the memorandum, including on extraditing suspects sought by Turkey, he said. “This should be known: These signatures don’t mean the issue is done ... Without our Parliament’s approval, this does not go into effect. So there is no need to rush,” Erdogan said. “The ball is in their court now. Sweden and Finland are not NATO members currently. When there is any mistake, we already have undeniable documents and we will do what is necessary,” he added. Erdogan said the decisions taken at Madrid will bear fruit in time.



“Promises that were made are of course important but the main point is implementation,” he said on the memorandum signed between Finland, Sweden and Turkey. The signing of the memo, he lifted an objection to the Nordic countries’ NATO bid. In return, Finland and Sweden will address Turkey’s terrorism concerns. However, Erdogan said Turkey will be cautious as “a country that has repeatedly been stabbed in the back in its fight against terrorism.”



Tokyo: Charge d’ Affaires Ismat Hassan Sial meeting with Dr. Shigeru Saito, President of the University of Toyama during her. – DNA

EU chief urges Ukraine to speed anti-corruption reform

FOREIGN DESK

KYIV: The president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen told Ukraine’s parliament on Friday that EU membership was “within reach” but urged them to press forward with anti-corruption reforms. “You have created an impressive anti-corruption machine,” she told the lawmakers by video link. “But now these institutions need teeth, and the right people in senior posts.” Von der Leyen’s warm address heaped praise on Ukraine’s parliament and President Volodymyr Zelensky’s government for their swift and successful push to become candi-

dates for EU membership. And she stressed that Brussels and the EU member states were firmly behind Ukraine in both its battle with the ongoing Russian invasion and the quest to be “reunited with our European family”. But she also insisted on the need to build on reforms already introduced since Ukraine’s 2014 revolt against its previous government to battle corruption and the grip of oligarchs on its economy. “The new head of the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office and the new director of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine should be appointed as soon as possible,” she said. Von der Leyen urged the Ukrainian parlia-

ment to pass laws in line with norms promoted by the Council of Europe to improve selection procedures for independent judges on the constitutional court. “Institutions must come to life, so that they can deliver on the aspirations of your people,” she said. Ukraine applied for EU membership just five days after Russia’s February 24 invasion and the 27 existing member states accepted its candidacy on June 23, in a strong signal of support. But the accession process could take many years, and the candidacies of Turkey and several countries in the western Balkans have stalled as western capitals insist on tough economic and legal criteria.

Xi marks HKSAR’s 25th anniversary

FOREIGN DESK

HONG KONG: While Hong Kong residents shared high expectations as the city was reborn from the chaos and difficulties with firm support from the central government, President Xi Jinping delivered an important speech, summarizing the practice of the “one country, two systems” principle, pointing out a clear direction for Hong Kong’s future, and injecting confidence and momentum for its growth. In a speech delivered at the ceremony celebrating the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to the motherland and the inaugural ceremony of the sixth-term government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Xi said the “one country, two systems” principle has withstood the test of practice and time, and been supported by all Chinese people and recognized by the international community. The principle is an unprecedented great initiative, and its fundamental purpose is to safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, and maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and Macao, Xi noted. There is no reason to change a good system, and it must be upheld for a long time.

Japan begins 3-month energy saving period

WEB DESK

TOKYO: The Japanese government for the first time in seven years requested Friday that businesses and households begin a three-month period of conserving electricity to avoid a power crunch as temperatures have hit record highs during a scorching heatwave. The government did not specify an exact target for a reduction in power use through September, but urged people to lower power consumption levels without causing disruption to firms’ operations or the daily lives of citizens. The government said that between 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. local time, when solar power generation declines, it would be particularly important for people to take energy-conserving measures to avoid a power crunch. Temperatures topped 40 degrees Celsius at a record six locations across Japan, according to local media, and hit 37.0 degrees Celsius in Tokyo on Friday, breaking the country’s “extreme heat” line of 35 degrees Celsius for the seventh straight day. As a result of the unusually hot temperatures for this time of year, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) urged people to continue using air conditioners amid concerns over heatstroke and other heat-related illnesses.

Turkey detains 13 IS suspects

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkey on Friday detained 13 Islamic State (IS) suspects in police raids in southern Mersin province, the state-run TRT broadcaster reported. The police revealed that the suspects entered the country illegally, and some of them were allegedly responsible for money transfers on behalf of the group. Upon examining a hard disk drive belonging to a suspect detained previously, the police found many photographs of the group’s members, as well as images of conflicts, executions, and propaganda of the extremist group and extended the scope of the investigation. An operation was carried out at the residence of 14 suspects on early Friday with the participation of 200 police officers. 13 of the suspects were detained, and the search continued for the remaining one person. The Turkish government designated the IS a terrorist organization in 2013, blaming the group for a spate of deadly attacks in Turkey since 2015. The Turkish counterterrorism forces have been conducting operations against the IS members in the country. Turkey’s southern border with Syria has been a major crossing point for Syrians and foreign fighters since the crisis started in the neighboring country in 2011.

Yang’s visit reaffirms Pak-China strategic ties

AGENCIES

BEIJING: Chinese top diplomat Yang Jiechi’s visit to Pakistan reaffirms all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries after Shehbaz came into office, Hu Zhiyong, a research fellow at the Institute of International Relations of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, told Global Times. China always puts China-Pakistan relations a priority in neighboring diplomacy, and is willing to strengthen coordination with Pakistan on multilateral affairs and safeguard the common interests of developing countries, said top Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi during a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. “China views Pakistan as an iron-clad friend and reliable brother and China-Pakistan mutual trust and friendship remain solid as a rock no matter how the international landscape changes”, said Yang, who is a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee.

China regards the bilateral relations as a priority in neighboring diplomacy, and is willing to work with Pakistan to further strengthen communication and strategy coordination to maintain the traditional friendship, and enhance strategic mutual trust, deepen pragmatic cooperation in construction of China-Pakistan Economic

“It proves that China-Pakistan ties won’t change along with government reshuffles and strong ties between the two nations bring regional stability and peace in the turbulent era”

Corridor (CPEC), join hands to build closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future, Yang noted. Yang said China appreciates Pakistan’s support for the Global Security Initiative and Global Development Initiative and stands ready to work with Pakistan to implement the initiatives so as to make Asia and the world more peaceful,

secure and prosperous. PM Shehbaz said developing relations with China is the cornerstone of Pakistan’s foreign policy. Pakistan firmly pursues the One-China principle and supports China in safeguarding its core interests and major concerns. It proves that China-Pakistan ties won’t change along with government reshuffles and strong ties be-

for development, and no force can hold back China’s development and growth. Pakistan is ready to work with China to deepen practical cooperation in various fields, speed up the construction of the CPEC and push the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to a new height, Shehbaz said. The communication between the two countries’ leaders further deepens bilateral cooperation on CPEC, a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative, Hu noted. In their meeting, Yang also conveyed greetings from Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang to Shehbaz. Shehbaz also asked Yang to deliver his greetings to the Chinese leaders. Recalling the recent visit of tri-services delegation to China led by the Chief of Army Staff, the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the expanding defense and security cooperation between Pakistan and China, which is contributing to regional peace and stability, according to a statement by the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing to the Global Times. Besides, both Yang and Shehbaz agreed to further strengthen cooperation in safeguarding regional security and counterterrorism.

tween the two nations bring regional stability and peace in the turbulent era, Hu said. “The Pakistani government and people thank China for its long-term selfless assistance and are ready to learn from China’s successful experience in economic development and the fight against COVID-19”, Shehbaz said, adding that China has bright prospects



## Briefs

## Pak, India exchange lists of prisoners

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan on Friday exchanged the lists of civilian and fishermen prisoners in each other's custody. The Government of Pakistan shared with the Indian High Commission a list of 682 Indian prisoners detained in Pakistan, including 49 civilians and 633 fishermen. "This step is consistent with clause (i) of the Consular Access Agreement between Pakistan and India, signed on 21 May 2008, under which both countries are required to exchange lists of prisoners in each other's custody on 01 January and 01 July every year," the Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement.

The Indian government also simultaneously shared a list of 461 Pakistani prisoners in India, including 345 civilians and 116 fishermen with the High Commission for Pakistan in New Delhi. — APP

## Modi, Putin discuss global issues

DNA

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed bilateral and global issues including Ukraine over the phone on Friday, Indian Ministry of External Affairs said.

The two leaders reviewed the implementation of the decisions taken during Putin's visit to India in December last year and exchanged ideas on how to further encourage bilateral trade in agricultural goods, fertilizers and pharma products, according to a statement. The leaders also discussed global issues, including the state of the international energy and food markets. Regarding the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, Modi reiterated India's long-standing position in favor of dialogue and diplomacy, the statement said.

## French, Australian leaders meet

DNA

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron has told new Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese he wanted to focus on the future as they try to rebuild relations badly strained by his predecessor's decision to ditch a submarine contract with Paris. Relations between the two Western allies reached a low last October when Australia cancelled a multibillion-dollar French submarine programme and opted for submarines to be built with US and British technology instead.

Receiving Albanese at the Elysee Palace in Paris on Friday, the pair were asked if Australia should apologise. "He's not responsible for what happened," Macron replied. "We'll speak about the future, not the past." The decision to scrap the lucrative contract had incensed Paris. Macron reacted with fury, recalling the French ambassador to Australia, accusing the then-Australian prime minister, conservative Scott Morrison, of lying, while the French foreign minister said Canberra had "stabbed its ally in the back".

But Morrison's party lost elections in May and his Labour successor has pledged to rebuild ties with France. In his statement at the French presidential palace, Albanese thanked Macron for the warm welcome and appeared to allude to the dispute: "Trust, respect, and honesty matter," he said. Paris, which has one million citizens living in territories spanning the Indian and Pacific Oceans and 8,000 troops stationed there, had made Australia a cornerstone of its Indo-Pacific strategy to counter the rise of China. France has supplied warplanes to India and Indonesia in particular to build military ties with countries in the region.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chinese Charge D Affaires, Foreign Secretary, Ambassador of UAE and others cutting cake on the occasion of mango festival held at Islamabad Serena Hotel. — DNA

## Taliban supreme leader hails Afghan victory in Kabul

He also reportedly said the world should stop telling the Taliban how to run the country. "Why is the world interfering in our affairs?" he was quoted as saying. "They say 'why don't you do this, why don't you do that?' Why does the world interfere in our work?"

AGENCIES

KABUL: Mullah Haibatullah Akhonzada, the reclusive supreme leader of the Taliban, has attended a major gathering of religious leaders and elders in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. More than 3,000 men were expected to attend the three-day gathering that started on Thursday at Kabul's Polytechnic University and is expected to rubber-stamp the Taliban's rule over Afghanistan. The arrival on Friday of Akhonzada, who had not been filmed or photographed in public since the group returned to power in August last year, was broadcast on state radio. Cheers and chants, including "Long live the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan", the Taliban's name for the country, were heard. "The success of the Afghan jihad is not only a source of pride for Afghans but also for Muslims all over the world," Akhonzada said in a speech, according to state-run Bakhtar News Agency, using the Arabic word signifying a spiritual struggle. He also reportedly said the world should stop telling the Taliban how to run the country.

"Why is the world interfering in our affairs?" he was quoted as saying. "They say 'why don't you do this, why don't you do that?' Why does the world interfere in our work?" Akhonzada also offered prayers for the victims of a powerful earthquake last month that killed more than 1,000 people in the country's east.

The appearance of Akhonzada had been rumoured for days — although media were barred from covering the event. Akhonzada, who is believed to be in his 70s and bears the title "Commander of the Faithful," rarely leaves Kandahar, the Taliban's birthplace and spiritual heartland. Apart from one undated photograph and several audio recordings of speeches, he has almost no digital footprint.

The leader's presence raised the security alert. On Thursday, two gunmen were shot dead near the venue. Officials said the two started firing from a rooftop but were "quickly eliminated by mujahideen with the help of Allah the almighty". Women were not allowed to take part in the meeting, although media reports suggest the reopening of girls' schools will be discussed.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi told state broadcaster RTA on Wednesday that male delegates would represent women. "When their sons are in the gathering it means that they are also involved," he said. Habiba Sarabi, who in 2005 became the first woman to become a governor of an Afghan province, told Al Jazeera the Taliban's "mindset is that women should stay at home." "They don't believe in human rights and that's why no woman was invited inside the Loya Jirga," the former governor said. Political analyst Lutfullah Lutf said the gathering failed to represent diverse political opinions and that the decision for women to be excluded "speaks for the ideology of the Taliban." The fact that the group is excluding them from the political sphere is "saddening in a nation where 50 percent of the population are women," Lutf told Al Jazeera. The Taliban has kept a complete lock on decision-making since taking over the country and touted the gathering as a forum to hear a range of voices on issues facing Afghanistan.

Deputy Taliban chief and acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani also addressed

the meeting on Friday, saying the world was demanding inclusive government and education, and the issues needed time.

"This gathering is about trust, interaction, we are here to make our future according to Islam and to national interests," he said. The Taliban notably did not call the gathering a Loya Jirga — a traditional Afghan way for local leaders to have their grievances heard by rulers — instead titling it "the Great Conference of Ulema", the term in Islam for religious scholars and clerics. The meeting comes as finance and central bank officials from the Taliban-led government are meeting US officials in Qatar to discuss economic and aid issues following the June 22 earthquake.

Overstretched aid groups already keeping millions of Afghans alive rushed supplies to the quake victims, but most countries responded tepidly to Taliban calls for international help. The international cut-off of Afghanistan's financing has deepened the country's economic collapse and fuelled its humanitarian crises. Millions in the country rely on international aid to have enough food to live.

## Covid-19 positivity at 4 month high

ISLAMABAD: Amid fears of a resurgence of Covid-19, Pakistan on Friday reported nearly 700 new cases as the positivity rate rose to 3.9 per cent. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), 694 new coronavirus cases were recorded during the last 24 hours, up from 641 a day earlier. The number is the highest since March 10 when 723 infections were detected.

The positivity rate also rose to 3.93pc from 3.41pc a day earlier. Further, 17,640 Covid-19 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours while 101 patients were in critical care. However, no deaths were reported during this period.

In a statement, federal Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel said that the government was taking several measures to control the surge in cases. The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has been holding meetings on a daily basis to overview the virus situation in the country, he said.

"But we want the public to adopt precautionary measures and follow standard operating procedures (SOPs) religiously. "Specially during Eidul Azha, make sure you are wearing masks in public spaces and practicing social distancing," the minister stressed. Avoid going to crowded areas, don't hug or shake hands on Eid and get immunised against the virus, he added.

Patel also urged the ulema to ensure social distancing inside mosques and at religious gatherings. Meanwhile, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah held a meeting of the provincial task force on coronavirus, during which he emphasised that the positivity rate must be brought down before Eidul Azha. The meeting was attended by provincial ministers Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Nasir Shah and Sharjeel Memon, Karachi Administrator Murtaza Wahab, Parliamentary Secretary for Health Qasim Soomro, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Inspector General of Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, Principal Secretary to CM Fayaz Jatoi, Interior Secretary Dr Saeed Ahmed Magnejo, and other officials and health experts. The health secretary informed the meeting that the positivity had started rising in the province from June 24. The number of cases on that date was 248 while infections during the last 24 hours rose to 465, he said. — DNA

## Taliban, US talks held on unblocking foreign reserves

DNA

DOHA: Top officials from Afghanistan and the US held a two-day meeting to discuss the possible unblocking of foreign reserves in the land-locked country. Afghanistan's interim Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi met with US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West in Doha, Qatar. The two sides were joined by officials from the Treasury, and financial and banking sectors in the meeting which.

Afghan Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul QaharBalkhi said in a statement that the US Treasury representative shed light on "their talks on frozen Afghan assets with the US Justice Department and legal experts." Since last year, the interim Taliban administration has been asking the US to unblock \$7 billion of Afghanistan's foreign reserves. The US has decided to donate half of the reserves to victims of 9/11, a move which has spurred criticism. The meeting also "covered various political, economic and humanitarian

issues," the statement added.

Muttaqi told the American side that Afghanistan is undergoing "positive changes" after Taliban returned to power last August and called the "security situation in Afghanistan extraordinary and exemplary."

The US announced \$55 million in humanitarian aid to victims of last week's earthquake in Afghanistan. The Afghan side welcomed the aid, while reiterating its demand on the release of Afghan assets and the lifting of sanctions on Taliban leaders and the country's banking sector.

"Engagement with the new Afghan Islamic government should be cooperative and positive instead of pressure tactics to achieve progress," Muttaqi said. He repeated Taliban's pledge to the Doha agreement saying they "remained committed to not allow anyone to use the territory of Afghanistan to harm neighboring and world countries."

British Embassy Chargé d'affairs for Afghanistan Hugo Shorter also called on Muttaqi in Doha. The UK government announced over \$4.2 million in aid to Afghan earthquake victims.

## West not committed to serious negotiation: Raeisi

The Western side has almost never either stopped or toned down its unconstructive claims against the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear energy program and the quality of the country's cooperation with the United Nations' nuclear agency

## Iran will coordinate with EU

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: President Ebrahim Raeisi denounces the West's refusal to abandon its constant accusations against Iran amid ongoing negotiations about potential restoration of the Islamic Republic's 2015 agreement with world countries.

"The West's accusation campaign against Iran amid the talks bespeaks their non-commitment to the requirements of serious and real negotiation," the chief executive told Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani during a telephone conversation on Thursday. The United States left the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in 2018. It then returned the sanctions that the accord had lifted. Since last year, Vienna has been hosting many rounds of talks among the JCPOA's remaining parties to examine the prospect of the deal's revival. Raeisi's remarks came right after the Qatari capital of Doha finished hosting two days of follow-up negotiations.

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Following two days of fresh negotiations in the Qatari capital of Doha aimed at reviving the ailing 2015 deal, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations says Tehran will "coordinate" with the European Union on the next stage of the talks. "Our team is ready to engage constructively to reach a deal," Majid Takht-Ravanchi said in a post on his Twitter account after he delivered a speech at a meeting of the UN Security Council on Thursday. Following Doha talks, We'll coordinate with EU on next stage of talks. Our team is ready to engage constructively to reach a deal. If US acts realistically & shows serious intention to implement its obligations, agreement is not out of reach. The top Iranian diplomat added that the sides to the deal, officially known as the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), can reach a final agreement on the revival of the multilateral agreement in case of the US acts realistically and shows seriousness. "If US acts realistically & shows serious intention to implement its obligations, agreement is not out of reach," Takht-Ravanchi said. The Doha talks started on Tuesday, in a high-stakes diplomatic process aimed at breaking the stalemate in efforts to restore the JCPOA, with EU coordinator Enrique Mora shuttling between Iran's top negotiator Ali BagheriKani and Robert Malley, the US special envoy for Iran. At the end of the talks on Thursday, Iran and the EU said they would keep in touch "about the continuation of the route and the next stage of the talks." The EU is tasked with coordinating indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States during the process. Iran does not sit down with the US as it is no longer a party to the deal.

The Western side has almost never either stopped or toned down its unconstructive claims against the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear energy program and the quality of the country's cooperation with the United Nations' nuclear agency.

The latest of the accusations came on Thursday as the United Nations Security Council met to discuss the latest report by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the implementation of the Council's Resolution 2231 that endorses the 2015 nuclear deal.

Richard Mills, deputy US ambassador to the UN, told the meeting, "Iran has yet to demonstrate any real urgency to conclude a deal, end the current nuclear crisis and achieve important sanctions lifting."

EU Ambassador to the United Nations Olof Skoog said, "I am concerned that we might not make it over the finishing line." "My message is: Seize this opportunity to conclude the deal, based on the text that is on the table. The time to overcome the last outstanding issues, conclude the deal, and fully restore the [agreement] is now."

## Nuclear warheads expected to increase in next 10 years

DNA

ANKARA: Nuclear-armed nations are projected to seek out more weapons in the coming decade, despite the fact that there has been a drastic decline in the number of nuclear warheads worldwide during the past 50 years.

According to the data gathered by Turkish News agency from Stockholm Institute for Peace Research (SIPRI) and other related sources, the number of nuclear warheads could rise globally.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was signed on July 1, 1968, and entered into force in 1970 to prevent an escalating nuclear arms race as the US used the first nuclear bomb in the world against Japan in World War 2. The agreement is based on three basic principles: the prevention of nuclear proliferation, the use of nuclear energy for civilian purposes and nuclear disarmament.

Nine countries have nuclear warheads with the US and Russia owning about 90% of these warheads, which total 12,705. As of January 2022, the US has 5,428 warheads while Russia has 5,997.

China has 350 warheads, France 290, and the UK possesses 225 warheads. The list continues with Pakistan having 165, India 156, Israel 90, and North Korea 20 nuclear warheads.

SIPRI's "2022 Yearbook" report warned that the number of nuclear warheads could rise globally again after the Cold War if countries with nuclear weapons do not take concrete action on disarmament as soon as possible.

## Pakistan refuses to abolish death penalty

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has refused to ratify the "tough conditions" placed by the European Union (EU) including the abolition of death penalty for the extension of new Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) status for 2024 due to "legal and political implications". Islamabad has decided to expedite engagement with the EU to seek some waiver regarding the ratification of new protocols.

The GSP is an entrenched trade and development policy instrument, which is in place since 1971. Pakistan is a major recipient of the GSP+ scheme for the last seven years. There is zero duty on several products under this status which is set to expire on December 31, 2023.

Under the current GSP+ system, the EU continues monitoring the progress made by the beneficiary countries towards the implementation of 27 international conventions.

Since the beneficiary countries will have to re-apply for the scheme's extension, their record of compliance is given due consideration. Sources told The Express Tribune that the EU Parliament had proposed additional conventions for the new GSP+ scheme (2024-34). These conventions include the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) — Individual complaints against State party in ICC — and First Optional Protocol to the International Convention Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) — Individual complaints against State party in ICCPR-UNHRC.

## OGRA notifies hike in LPG price

ISLAMABAD: Following massive hike in prices of petroleum products, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has announced another hike in the price of LPG for July. According to the notification, the regulatory authority has increased the price of LPG by Rs 1.66 per kg, after which the price of one kg of LPG has been fixed at Rs 220.42. The price of a 11.8 kg domestic cylinder of LPG went up by Rs 19.62, after which the new price was fixed at Rs 2,600.97. It is pertinent to mention here that in June, the domestic cylinder of LPG was Rs 2581.35. — DNA