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160 years of modern Romanian diplomacy: Bogdan Aurescu

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US Ambassador pays tribute to Quaid-e-Azam

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Pak-India clash always has pressure

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Briefs

All govt promises to be fulfilled

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb has said promises made with the public in the budget vis-vis relief, reducing inflation and bolstering exports by strengthening the agriculture, industrial and IT sectors will be fulfilled. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Thursday, she said the economic policies are heading in the right direction. She pointed out that the rupee has started appreciating against dollar as a result of these policies.

Pakistan committed to root out terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to countering the three evils of terrorism, extremism and separatism. Talking to Director of Sub-Committee on Counter-Terrorism of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Ruslan Mirzayev in Islamabad on Thursday, he commended contribution made by SCO-Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCORATS) towards regional peace and security.

Asif warns of increasing TTP threat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Wednesday said the law-and-order situation in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) was worsening because Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-led provincial government had previously welcomed the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Asif expressed these views on the floor of the National Assembly while responding to MNA Mohsin Dawar, who had voiced concern over the increase in incidences of terrorism in the province following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

Pak values ties with EU: PM

Newly appointed EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka calls on the PM; wants deepening of relations

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The Prime Minister underlined that Pakistan attached high importance to its relations with EU as well as its historically close and cooperative bilateral ties with EU member states. Recalling his recent telephone conversations with the EU Council President Mr. Charles Michel and the President of the European Commission Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, the Prime Minister expressed the confidence that the upcoming visits to Pakistan by the EU Parliamentary delegations as well as the next rounds of political and security Dialogues under EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan would pave the way for more substantive cooperation between the two sides. He credited the current GSP Plus scheme with enhancing the mutually beneficial trading ties between Pakistan and EU and hoped that Pakistan would continue to be part of the arrangement beyond 2023.

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EU Ambassador calls on Law Minister

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kionka on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar at the Ministry of Law. Both the dignitaries discussed issues of mutual interest and further development of bilateral relations. The Law Minister informed the EU Ambassador about the legislation in Pakistan regarding enforced disappearance and missing persons. He also informed the EU Ambassador about legislation regarding minorities in Pakistan. He said that solving the issue of missing persons was among the priorities of the government. The government was fully aware of the issues of minorities in Pakistan and was committed to solving their problems, he added.

EU envoy plays national anthem on Trumpet

The EU is one of Pakistan's largest trading partners. The EU supports Pakistan's integration into the world economy



Dr Riina Kionka Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: As a special gesture to honour Pakistan on its 75th Independence Day, the EU Ambassador Dr Riina Kionka played the national anthem on trumpet. This unique way to mark the 14th of August when Pakistan obtained independence in 1947 was shared through a special campaign on the social media channels of the European Union Delegation to Pakistan in Islamabad. The year 2022 also marks the 60 years of EU-Pakistan relations in a long

standing partnership that makes both countries stronger together. In Pakistan, the EU is committed to a stable, democratic and pluralistic country that respects human rights and benefits from its full economic potential by supporting sustainable and inclusive development for all its citizens. The collaboration between the European Union and Pakistan is grounded in the Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP) signed in 2019. Areas of cooperation under the SEP include peace and security,

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed Ambassador of the European Dr. Riina Kionka calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Pak diplomat in Spain sacked over harassment charges

MONITORING REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A senior Pakistani diplomat and Consul General of Pakistan in Spanish city of Barcelona, Mirza Salman Baig, has been sacked from his position on sexual harassment charges levelled by a local staffer of the consulate. The sources said that the name of the staffer lodged the complaint with Pakistani Ambassador Shujat Ra-thore in Madrid, who later re-ferred the matter to Foreign Office in Islamabad for further investigation. The Foreign Ministry sent a two-member team to Barcelona and Madrid to probe the case. They completed the investigation, on the basis of which the Foreign Office removed the officer from his position and recalled him to the headquarters in Islamabad, where he is facing disciplinary proceedings. According to more details, the victim who was hired locally also filed the complaint with the Spanish justice department which contacted the Pakistan Ambassador in Spain. In her complaint, she alleged that the counsel general used to send her messages through social media, which, she claimed, were harassment. She in her complaint also claimed that the officer tried to make sexual assault on her in a hotel in Barcelona. Mirza Salman Baig during the interrogation, however, denied the charges against him and disclosed that he wanted to sack her (the complainant), which was why she turned against him.

13 August Jalsa Imran says will tell what true freedom entails

Terms absence of rule of law one of the biggest problems in Pakistan

IRSHAD ALI

ISLAMABAD: PTI chairperson Imran Khan Thursday said he will show the masses what true freedom actually entails on August 13 during his "power show" in Lahore on the eve of Independence Day. Addressing the minority convention in the federal capital, he said that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) signed the Madina Pact with the non-Muslims, "which proves that a humane society is created when people have humanistic values." "The country cannot move forward until justice prevails," he said, asking the people present at the convention to highlight those countries where

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'Imported' govt destroying Pakistan: Fawad

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry lashed out at the 'imported' government for plunging the country into the quagmire of problems and said that the cabal of crooks just came to Pakistan to rule and loot and plunder

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Top Taliban cleric killed by IS blast

KABUL: A senior Taliban cleric known for his fiery speeches against the Islamic State (IS) was killed Thursday at his madrassa in the Afghan capital in a suicide attack claimed by the jihadist group. Rahimullah Haqqani, who had recently spoken publicly in favour of girls being allowed to attend school, had survived at least two previous assassination attempts - including one in Pakistan in October 2020. "He is the only one martyred," Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadran told AFP, adding that at least four others were wounded in the blast. Government spokesman Bilal Karimi confirmed his death "in an attack carried out by a cowardly enemy", but did not offer further details. Hours later, IS claimed the attack on its telegram channels, saying the bomber had detonated his explosive vest inside the office of the cleric. Haqqani was one of the most "prominent advocates for the Taliban and one of the biggest of them who incited to fight" IS, jihadist monitoring group SITE said, translating a statement from IS. Taliban sources said that although he held no official position, Haqqani was an influential figure who had taught many of the group's members over the years. Scores of Taliban officials took to social media to express their condolences. "You have fulfilled your responsibility. Destiny cannot be prevented, but the Muslim community has been orphaned," tweeted Mobin Khan, a former spokesman for the Kabul police. Haqqani was known for angry speeches against IS, who have claimed several attacks in Afghanistan since the Taliban's return to power in August last year. - APP

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UN alarmed as Ukraine nuclear plant shelled again

Crimea airbase badly damaged, satellite images show; UN Secretary General warned the fighting could "lead to disaster"



CENTRELINE REPORT

KYIV: More shelling of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant has been reported, with Ukraine and Russia again blaming each other for the attack. Each side said there were 10 hits on the plant's administrative office and fire station on Thursday. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned the fighting could

"lead to disaster" at Europe's largest nuclear plant, seized by Russia in early March. Ukraine warned that Russia may provoke the world's worst nuclear accident. On Wednesday, foreign ministers from the G7 group of industrialised nations said Russia must immediately hand back control of the plant to Kyiv. The facility and its surrounding area in central-eastern Ukraine saw shelling last week, with Russia and Ukraine also accusing each other over that attack. Ukraine says Russia has turned the site into a military base, launching attacks from there, knowing that Ukrainian forces are unlikely to retaliate. Moscow denies the claim. In a statement on Thursday, Ukraine's nuclear agency Enerhoatom said that "Russian invaders again shelled the Zaporizhzhia plant and territories near the nuclear facility".

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Applications open for Chevening S. Asia Fellowship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chevening South Asia Journalism Fellowship (SAJP) online application window is now open to receive applications for the 2022/23 cohort. The scheme is aimed at mid-career journalists from South Asian countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives who are passionate about increasing their knowledge, networks, and potential through tailored short courses, research, or professional placements at UK institutions. The fellowship scheme is hosted by the University of Westminster and funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office. Only online applications are being accepted between 02 August and 12 October 2022. Interested journalists can find all the information about eligibility, timelines, and the online application system on

our website: www.chevening.org/apply or www.chevening.org/fellowship/sajp. Seven journalists from Pakistan will be selected who will undertake a bespoke fellowship titled 'Good Governance in a Changing World: the Media, Politics, and Society'. These fellows will participate in eight intensive weeks of lectures, visits, and discussions that introduce them to key UK academics, media, and political figures in the field. They will also spend time meeting their peers in some of the UK's top media organisations, as well as running a symposium on a topic of their choice in the final week. Fellows of the scheme will also be invited to participate in exclusive networking events and talks. On graduating, fellows will join over 50,000 other Chevening Alumni who together form an influential and highly regarded global network. The British High Commission support women and minorities. In the last two years 58% of journalists chosen for the SAJP pro-

gramme in Pakistan were female. We strongly encourage female journalists to apply for the scheme. SAJP Fellow, Saher Baloch, a bilingual correspondent for BBC Urdu, said: "This Fellowship was one of the best experiences of my career, where I got to meet colleagues from different South Asian countries and learn from them. It was encouraging to see many female journalists as part of the cohort and I wish more women would apply for this fellowship in the future." This year is historic as it marks 75 years of UK-Pakistan relations. To mark the anniversary, a second phase of the Chevening Mentoring scheme will be launched later this year to support women and minorities in the journalism profession. The first phase was launched earlier this year with 50% of mentors being female Chevening journalists. The British High Commission will continue to celebrate 75 years of UK-Pakistan relations with a series of events and activities throughout 2022.

President UBG holds important meetings with business leaders

DNA

KARACHI: President of United Business Group (UBG) Zubair Tufail arrived in Islamabad in connection with the election activities of Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) Election 2023 and after arriving in Islamabad last night, Zubair Tufail met with the representatives of various associations and chambers

of commerce. According to the central spokesperson of UBG Gulzar Feroze, Zubair Tufail also discussed with Atif Ikram Sheikh, the presidential candidate and Arif Yousuf Jawa as the senior vice president candidate in the federation election on behalf of UBG. On this occasion, UBG leader Malik Sohail Hussain was also present. Zubair Tufail said that the stage of nomination of candidates for the seats

of vice presidents in the FPCCI elections on behalf of the United Business Group will be completed soon. Chairman UBG Shahzad Ali Malik and other Leaders will make an important visit to Karachi in the next few days, the UBG leadership is deciding on the nomination of candidates on merit after consultation. President UBG Zubair Tufail strongly condemned the heinous campaign

against the military helicopter accident in Lasbella and said that our brave forces are not only the forces of Pakistan but also the forces of the entire Islamic world. We have helped and served the nation, we are always ready to make any kind of sacrifice by the side of our brave forces, unfortunately some political elements are continuing the propaganda campaign against the army which is intolerable.

Navy search, rescue operation off Gwadar

KARACHI: On August 9th, an Indian sailing vessel 'Jamna Sagar' sunk in Arabian sea near Gwadar with 10 crew members onboard. On responding to distress call, Pakistan Maritime Information Centre requested a nearby merchant ship MT KRUIBEKE to provide necessary assistance to the stranded crew of drowning sailing vessel, said a news release on Thursday. The merchant ship eventually recovered 9 crew member and continued voyage to its next port Dubai and onward disembarked the crew. At the same time one Pakistan Navy Ship along with two helicopters also reached the areas and located the dead body of one crew member who was earlier missing at the time of drowning of sailing vessel. The dead body was recovered and handed over to Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) authorities for further proceedings. - APP

10 outlaws, criminal gangs held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital territory police have arrested 10 outlaws including five members of two criminal gangs from different areas of the city and recovered eight stolen motorbikes, cars, drugs and weapons with ammunition, a Police Public Relation Officer said. He said that, following the directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Dr. Akber Nasir Khan, DIG (Operations) Sohail Zafar Chatha had categorically ordered all zonal officers to curb the crime in their respective areas and arrest those involved in looting innocent people and involved in illegal activities.

Following these directives, Kohsar police station team arrested four members of a dacoit gang namely Zakar Ullah, Kaftan Khan, Farshad and Sana Ullah and recovered two stolen motorbikes and four pistols along with ammunition from their possession and different cases were registered against them in kohsar police station. Similarly, Ramana Police team arrested a wanted member of a bike lifter gang namely Umair and recovered 06 stolen motorbikes from his possession and further investigation is underway. Likewise, a Karachi company police team apprehended a bootlegger namely Aadir Munair and recovered 40 liters liquor from his possession.

Erratic rain events to cause severe humanitarian crisis

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday said abnormal monsoon rains would remain a regular feature and the country's overall infrastructure was not ready for such disasters which would lead to severe humanitarian crisis. The minister was expressing these views at the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change presided by Senator Seemee Ezdi held here that discussed the prevailing weather conditions, monsoon rain damages and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) events management. Sherry briefed the forum that the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) or MET office, which comes under the Ministry of Aviation, was responsible for weather warnings. She said that it was the role of the provincial government for preventive measures and rescue and relief operations. She added the MET office warnings which were loud and clear, were of no use since the provincial governments did not have the capacity to rescue a disaster because of its

infrastructure, road construction and poor rain water drainage system. She said that as long as the nullahs (water channels) would not be cleared and the country would not equip itself with enough resources there would be no way forward. "All the stakeholders should sit together and work on a plan each contributing to redress this problem which will now seem to occur regularly as the climate change occurs globally." Senator Taj Haider, while discussing possible solutions to address such calamities, said the country was also lacking water reservoirs, through which adversity could be changed into opportunity and accumulate water, addressing the issue of water scarcity. The Secretary Ministry for Climate Change also argued that early warning was area-specific as certain areas could not forecast due to lack of modern equipment. He said that one million people were residing at the bed of the River Indus when the flood occurred and these residents disseminated in the local area which continued to disrupt the rescue and relief operation. - APP

PHC stops FIA from probe of Asad Qaiser

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) here Thursday stopped the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from investigating former speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser in the PTI prohibited funding case till next hearing. The FIA summoned the former National Assembly speaker for questioning him today, but he refused to appear before the body as he had challenged their decision to summon him a day earlier. In a short order issued after today's hearing, the court prohibited the anti-corruption watchdog from investigating the ex-NA speaker till the next hearing. The court asked the FIA what were the directions that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had issued to the body regarding the probe. The PHC asked the FIA whether the federal government asked it to probe the PTI leaders. It also asked the FIA whether the probing under the Political Parties Order 2022 comes under the ambit of the body. On Wednesday last, Asad moved the Peshawar High Court against the start of an inquiry by FIA into two bank accounts of his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, allegedly managed by him from 2008 to 2013 as its then provincial president. Qaiser filed a petition requesting the court to set aside a notice issued by a FIA official to appear before him in connection with the bank accounts inquiry. - APP

Pak-China agri co-op to counter climate change: Report

Sixty percent of the population of Pakistan is directly or indirectly reliant upon rain-fed agriculture that depends on predictable weather patterns. Global climatic change affects its agriculture and its impacts seem to increase daily

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China and Pakistan have agreed to further strengthen cooperation on natural disasters prevention and mitigation to build a China-Pakistan community with a shared future which will ensure a stable platform for preservation of natural resources, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday. It was believed that mainly cooperation in agriculture needed to counter climate change. This year Pakistan has experienced the hottest summer in the last thirty years which has badly affected its people, crops and fruits alike.

The heat was intensified, prolonged and widespread and coupled with below-average rainfall, impacting hundreds of millions of people in the country. According to an official study (2020-2021), rice crops would be badly affected in the country due to alarming high temperature. Even wheat and rice yields will decrease by 6 percent and 15-18 percent respectively across Pakistan, except for the northern areas. Climate change also geared up water shortage in the country even "metropolitan cities" like Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and many others are facing the bitter reality of water depleting situation. Life has become more vulnerable

and miserable in big cities in the country. Cholistan is one of the most affected areas, which is going through acute shortages of water. People are suffering and losing their sources of livelihood, e.g. livestock. Sixty percent of the population of Pakistan is directly or indirectly reliant upon rain-fed agriculture that depends on predictable weather patterns. Global climatic change affects its agriculture and its impacts seem to increase daily. Therefore, Pakistan should seek cooperation with China on diverse sectors of agriculture production, climate change, water conservation, cultivation of hybrid crops, scientific cooperation to mitigate spillo-



ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the PM on Interfaith Harmony, Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi addressing at a dialogue held in connection with National Day of Minorities. - DNA

FESCO to celebrate I-Day with enthusiasm

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) is celebrating the 75th Independence Day of Pakistan with great enthusiasm. On August 14, the day will begin with special prayers for the security and development of the country after the Fajr prayer. The main flag hoisting ceremony will be held at FESCO headquarters at 9am, in which Chief Executive FESCO Engr. Bashir Ahmed along with FESCO officers and employees will sing the national anthem in unison after the flag hoisting, while flag hoisting ceremonies will also be held in Jhang, Sargodha and Mianwali Circles of FESCO jurisdiction. All FESCO offices including SEs, XENs, SDOs & ROs will be illuminated with lights and will be decorated with bunting.

Minorities day observed in befitting manner

ISLAMABAD: The National Day of Minorities on Thursday observed across the country to honour the services rendered by minorities for the creation of Pakistan and their subsequent contribution in nation building. The government of Pakistan had declared August 11 as National Minority Day in 2009. To celebrate Minority Day, National Assembly organized a Minority Convention at the National Assembly Hall in connection with the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of 1st Constituent Assembly in Islamabad. Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf said that the founder of Pakistan in his inaugural address to the 1st Constituent Assembly presented the constitutional outline for newly independent state of Pakistan where every citizen of the state was declared an equal citizen without distinction of color, race, religion, caste and language. The convention was attended by Federal Ministers, Parliamentarians, Members of Provincial Assemblies, and leaders, representatives and notables of all religious minorities. Events, seminars, and social gatherings were arranged across the country on the day by members of various religious minorities. The day was basically dedicated to the minorities, who played their constructive role in the Pakistan movement. Pakistan was the first country in the world which reassured its minorities about their future rights by specifically allocating a portion of the national flag. - APP

Russian CG visits IoBM, highlights changing trends in diplomacy

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Russian Consul General in Karachi, H.E Mr. Andrey Viktorovich Fedorov visited the Institute of Business Management (IoBM) on August 10, 2022. During his talk, he shed light on Pakistan-Russia diplomatic ties and how they have evolved over the last many years. Mr. Fedorov shared that Russia has offered several scholarships to Pakistani students. He highlighted the changing trends in diplomacy and the

geopolitical status of various regions and how they will impact Central Asia, South Asia, and Europe. Earlier, in his Welcome Address, President IoBM, Mr. Talib Karim shared that the talk by H.E Mr. Andrey Fedorov will bring to light a better understanding of the Russian culture and traditions. He added that IoBM has created an academic linkage with the Institute of Business Studies in Moscow. He was hopeful that IoBM will continue to invite Russian dignitaries to share ideas, research, and infor-

mation. IoBM will also revive its student exchange program with Russia, President IoBM said. Professor Dr. Shahida Wizarat, Dean, College of Economics and Social Development (CESD), IoBM shed light on the economic, social, and political relations between third world countries and Western nations. Dr. Nadia Ayub, Associate Dean, CESD, gave the vote of thanks. This event was organized by IoBM's CESD and Entrepreneurship and Management Excellence Center (EMEC).



1,450 new industrial units to be set up

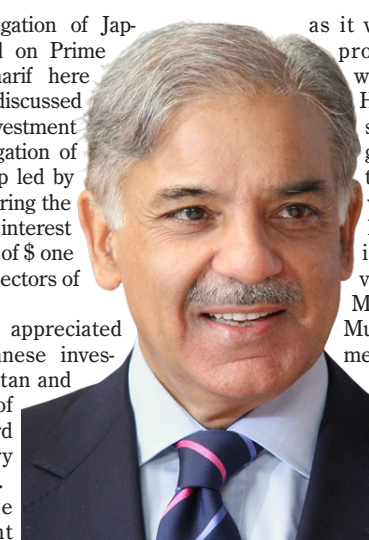
LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Industries and Commerce Mian Aslam Iqbal said on Thursday that 1,450 new industrial units had been set up in 24 small industrial estates of the province. He was presiding over a meeting in the committee room of the Punjab Board of Investment & Trade (PBIT) to discuss affairs and development projects of the department. The minister ordered for speeding up development work in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and said that development work at industrial states should be completed by working day and night. He said that a new board of Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development & Management Company (FIEDMC) should be formed and all matters of the board should be set right within a month, adding that the PBIT would decide the applications for SEZ enterprises' status within three days. He said that delay would not be tolerated under any circumstances in this regard. He ordered for speeding up the pace of colonization in industrial states and said that the development work

of export processing zone Sialkot should be completed on priority basis. Mian Aslam Iqbal ordered to speed up the loan schemes of Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) and also directed the Director General Industries to fully implement the price control mechanism. He said that the target of preparing quality skilled manpower must be achieved, adding that three new technical universities had been established in the province aiming to impart technical education to the youth. - APP

PM welcomes Japanese investment of \$ 1 billion

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Japanese investors called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday and discussed matters related to investment in Pakistan. The delegation of BPS Investment Group led by founder Takaji Tsuji during the meeting expressed its interest to make an investment of \$ one billion in the different sectors of the Pakistani economy. The prime minister appreciated decision of the Japanese investors to invest in Pakistan and directed officials of the Investment Board to take all necessary steps in this direction. He welcomed the Japanese investment

as it would lead to progress and prosperity in the country and would create employment. He assured all possible assistance of the Pakistan government for the investors. He further said Japan was a sincere friend of Pakistan and Pakistan valued its cooperation in Japan in various sectors. Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Investment Board Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Minister for Education Rana Tanvir Hussain, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatimi and officials concerned attended the meeting. - APP



CM vows to support CP&WB

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi appreciating performance of the Child Protection & Welfare Bureau (CP&WB), vowed to extend governmental support to the bureau for protecting rights of underprivileged children. During a meeting with Chairperson CP&WB Sarah Ahmad here on Thursday, the chief minister said the CP&WB had played an important role in the welfare of abandoned children and added that the scope of the CP&WB needed to be extended to every district of the province. Elements involved in torture and abuse of children besides using them for beggary did not deserve any leniency, he asserted and maintained that indiscriminate action against them was the need of the hour. - APP

Briefs

Iran rejects US claim of plot to kill ex-NSA

MONITORING DESK

TEHRAN: Iran dismissed as "fiction" on Thursday US allegations that it had plotted to kill former White House national security adviser (NSA) John Bolton in retaliation for the assassination of one of its top commanders. The US claim comes at a crunch moment in talks on reviving a nuclear deal between Iran and major powers that Washington had abandoned in 2018 but has said it wants to rejoin, with Iran now considering what European Union mediators have called a "final" text. "The US Justice Department has made allegations without providing valid evidence, creating a new work of fiction," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said. "This time they have come up with a plot involving individuals like Bolton whose political career has failed," Kanani scoffed. "The Islamic republic warns against any action that targets Iranian citizens by resorting to ridiculous accusations." The US Justice Department said on Wednesday that it had indicted a member of Iran's Revolutionary Guards over allegations he had offered to pay an individual in the United States \$300,000 to kill Bolton. The plan was likely set in retaliation for the US killing of top Guards commander Qasem Soleimani in Iraq in January 2020, the department said.

Lebanon hostage-taker turns self in after drama

BEIRUT: Bystanders hailed as a hero an armed customer who held bank staff hostage for hours Thursday in Lebanon because he couldn't access funds frozen after the country's economic collapse. The suspect, identified only as Bassam, was armed with a rifle and had doused the interior of the bank with gasoline, security sources said. But after eight hours the incident ended peacefully. "Bassam you are a hero!" cheering bystanders chanted outside the bank. The incident was the latest involving local banks and angry depositors unable to access savings that have been locked in Lebanese banks since the country's economic crisis began in 2019. Official media said the suspect turned himself in when the bank agreed to give him \$30,000 out of his more than \$200,000 in trapped savings. "Employees taken hostage have also begun to leave the bank," Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA) said. An AFP correspondent at the scene saw hostages and the suspect being escorted away in police cars from the Federal Bank branch where the drama unfolded, near west Beirut's commercial centre of Hamra Street. - APP

West pledges \$1.55 bln in military aid to Ukraine

COPENHAGEN: Western countries on Thursday committed more than 1.5 billion euros (\$1.55 billion) in cash, equipment and training to boost Ukraine's military capabilities in its war against Russia, Danish Defence Minister Morten Bødskov said. The money, which was pledged by a group of 26 countries at a conference in Copenhagen, will be used to supply existing weapons, missiles and ammunition, increase weapon production for Ukraine, train Ukrainian soldiers, and de-mine war-torn areas in Ukraine. "We will continue to assist Ukraine in its military needs," Bødskov told journalists at the end of the conference that brought together European defence ministers to discuss long-term support for the country's defence against Russia's invasion.

Pak, China vow to strengthen cooperation in diverse fields

This resolve was expressed in a meeting between Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani and China's Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have reaffirmed the resolve to further strengthen their cooperation in diverse fields for mutual benefit. This came at a meeting between Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani and China's Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong during a meeting in Islamabad on Thursday. They also emphasized for collective efforts for regional peace and prosperity. In his remarks, the Chairman Senate said strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries will take their relationship to new heights. Sadiq Sanjrani said both the countries have always stood by each other in difficult times. He said Pakistan is committed to the timely completion of CPEC. He said the enemies of CPEC will not succeed in their designs. He said providing protection to the Chinese workers in Pakistan is our top priority. The Chinese envoy said Pakistan is a close friend of China. He said his country desires to further strengthen relations with Pakistan. He said China will continue his efforts for regional peace. A day earlier, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani reiterated Pakistan's strong commitment to the One-China policy and reaffirmed Parliament and the people of



Pakistan's unflinching support for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Pakistan is deeply concerned over the evolving situation in the Taiwan Strait, and Parliament of Pakistan believes that it has serious implications for regional peace and stability, he said in a statement issued here on Wednesday. The Chairman Senate

remarked that the world is already reeling through a critical security situation due to conflicts, with destabilising implications for international food and energy security.

US ambassador pays respects to Quaid-e-Azam

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: US Ambassador Donald Blome visited the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and paid his respects to the founder of Pakistan ahead of country's 75th Independence Day. Ambassador Blome laid a floral wreath at the mausoleum and signed the guest book on behalf of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. Ambassador Blome later visited the tombs of Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first Prime Minister, and Fatima Jinnah, Jinnah's sister. He toured the adjoining museum and admired the artifacts related to the life of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Ambassador Blome noted in the guestbook, "It is a great honor to be here at the Mazar-e-Quaid to pay my respects and commemorate the legacy of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. United States shares Quaid-e-Azam's vision of a Pakistan at peace with itself and its neighbors, a Pakistan of religious tolerance, economic prosperity, and social inclusion. On behalf of the American people, I offer Pakistan warm congratulations on its 75th Independence Day." This year marks 75 years of bilateral relations between the United States and Pakistan. The United States values this long-standing cooperation with Pakistan and has always viewed a strong, prosperous, and democratic Pakistan as critical to U.S. interests.



Afghan suspect in killing 4 makes court appearance

WASHINGTON: The Afghan Muslim man, who is a primary suspect in a string of killings, including 3 Pakistanis, in Albuquerque, a city in the southern US state of New Mexico, faced a judge for the first time Wednesday and was ordered held until an upcoming detention hearing, according to media reports. Muhammad Syed, 51, made a court appearance virtually (via Zoom) and was told he's being charged with the murders of 41-year-old Aftab Hussein, killed on July 26, and 27-year-old Muhammad Afzaal Hussain, slain on Aug. 1- both Pakistanis. He was also called a suspect by police in the two other slayings of Naem Hussain, another Pakistani, and Mohammad Ahmadi, an Afghan. "The state believes at this time there are no conditions that would keep the community safe with Mr. Syed's release," Bernalillo County Assistant District Attorney Joshua Boone told the court. A detention

hearing in Syed's case was set for Monday, a court spokeswoman said. Syed was arrested Tuesday following tips from the public, authorities said. He was stopped by police while driving near Santa Rosa, New Mexico, more than 100 miles east of Albuquerque. Authorities found firearms during a search of his home, as well as information showing Syed may have known the victims "to some extent" and that "interpersonal" conflict may have led to the killings, police said Tuesday. One of the firearms recovered has been linked to bullet casings found at scenes of two of the killings, while casings for a handgun found in his car when he was stopped were linked to one of the scenes, according to the arrest affidavit. Syed told police "he was driving to Texas to find a new place for his family to live because the situation in Albuquerque was bad," referring to the killing of Muslim men, the affidavit said. On Wednesday, Syed, the primary suspect, heard proceedings through a Pashto interpreter and initially asked to address the court. But he eventually accepted the advice of defence lawyer Megan Mitsunaga and Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Judge Renee Torres to remain silent. - APP

European firefighters battle 'monster' wildfire in France

DNA

BORDEAUX: More than 1,000 firefighters are battling a "monster" wildfire in south-western France that has already destroyed nearly 7,000 hectares (17,300 acres) of forest, officials say. The raging blaze near the city of Bordeaux has gutted a number of homes and forced 10,000 residents to flee. "It's an ogre, it's a monster," firefighter representative Gregory Allione told France's RTL Radio. Strong winds and high temperatures are hampering the firefighting operation. President Emmanuel Macron announced that Austria, Germany, Greece, Poland and Romania "are coming to aid" France in battling the blaze. "European solidarity at work!" he tweeted. This summer France and a number of other European countries have seen a wave of deadly wildfires, triggered by record temperatures and droughts

across the continent. More than 1,000 deaths have been attributed to the heat in Portugal and Spain. In the UK, an amber extreme heat warning has now come into force, with temperatures forecast to hit 37C (99F) in some areas over the next four days. The heatwave will probably affect health, transport and working conditions, the authorities warn. The huge wildfire in France's Gironde region has been raging for two days near the commune of Landiras, about 30km (19 miles) south-east of Bordeaux. A number of firefighters have had to be urgently redeployed from other regions to boost the ongoing operation. They are being backed by specialist aircraft that have been dropping water and flame retardant. But despite all the efforts, the blaze was still out of control on Thursday, local officials said. "It's the first time we've seen a fire like this," French firefighter Jérôme Jean told BFMTV

news website. Meanwhile, firefighters from Germany, Greece, Poland, Austria and Romania are being sent to France to fight a blaze south of Bordeaux that has reignited after being brought under control two weeks ago, the European Commission announced on Thursday. The deployment, at France's request, was hailed by French President Emmanuel Macron, who wrote on Twitter: "Thank you. European solidarity is at work!" France has also requested data from the EU's Copernicus satellite on burned areas, according to the commission. Germany has sent a specialized unit of firefighters from Bonn, Düsseldorf, Leverkusen, Königswinter and Ratingen to France, according to the western city of Bonn. Firefighters from the state of Lower Saxony are accompanying them. France is also to receive four firefighting aircraft currently stationed in Greece and Sweden.

400 private schools close in Afghanistan

KABUL: More than 400 private schools have closed their doors due to various reasons including economic problems, reported a local television channel the Tolonews on Thursday. Tolonews quoted Zabihullah Furqani, a member of the Union of Private Schools, as saying that many students gave up school due to poverty, while girls from grade six to 12 can't attend classes under the current restriction. Zabihullah Mujahid, chief spokesman of the Taliban-run administration, has reportedly said that the restriction on girls attending schools is based on religious reasons. Earlier, the administration's education ministry said that the closure of girls schools above grade 6th is temporary and would resume within the framework of Sharia, or Islamic laws, in the future. Tolonews quoted Mohammad Daud, the former head of the Union of Private Schools, as saying that thousands of people would lose their job with the closure of the schools. - APP

Maritime Security rescues Chinese seafarer

DNA

Pak Navy rescues 9 crew members of Indian vessel

The ship namely "Jamna Sagar" sunk with 10 crew members aboard on Tuesday (August 9), the navy spokesperson said in a statement

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistan Navy on Wednesday saved nine crew members of an Indian vessel after it drowned in the Arabian Sea near Gwadar, according to the Director-General Public Relations. The ship namely "Jamna Sagar" sunk with 10 crew members aboard on Tuesday (August 9), the navy spokesperson said in a statement, available with Dawn.com. "The navy immediately responded to the distress call and the Pakistan Maritime Information Centre requested a nearby merchant ship 'MT KRUIBEKE' to provide necessary assistance to the stranded crew of the drowning sailing vessel," the spokesman said. "The merchant ship eventually recovered nine crew members and continued voyage to its next port Dubai and onward disembarked the crew." Separately, the statement said that one Pakistan Navy ship, along with two helicopters, reached the area and located the dead body of one crew member who had gone missing when the vessel drowned. His body was recovered and handed over to Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) authorities for further proceedings, it added. Earlier this year, the Pakistan Navy had intercepted and tracked an Indian submarine. In a statement, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar had said that the Indian Navy had deployed its submarine against Pakistan with "ulterior motives".

KARACHI: The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) base Sadaqat received distress call through Pakistani local fishermen. 01x Chinese Seafarer namely Zuo Xiang Wei was visually sighted by local fishermen drowning near Phitti Creek. The individual was recovered safely in coordination with local fishermen boat Al Madina Reg No 21675-B. Initially, First Aid was given to the rescued Chinese seafarer at PMSA base at Ibrahim Hydri. The survivor was transferred to HQ PMSA, for detailed medical checkup. Later, it was confirmed that individual fell from a merchant vessel namely Xin Shang Hai (IMO 9307231) of Cosco Shipping on 10 Aug 2022 in near approach to Karachi harbour. Coordinated efforts of Pakistani fishing boat Al Madina and PMSA ensured safety and rescue of Chinese national which was highly appreciated by HE the Consulate General of China. Timely response by PMSA assets is a clear manifestation of PMSA resolve that it remains committed to safety of lives at sea.

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