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NATO chief: Russia must not win the war in Ukraine

Detailed News On Page-07

Envoy highlights Pak-ASEAN bilateral co-op

Detailed News On Page-08

Aussie upsets Pegula as Halep, Hurkacz fall

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Palestine envoy grieved over helicopter incident

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Ra'be'i has expressed grief over the loss of precious lives in the army helicopter crash. In a statement he said, "On behalf of the Government of Palestine, Palestinian people and on my personal behalf, I would like to convey my deepest condolences, heartfelt sympathies and solidarity with the families of the Armed Forces officers who lost their lives in an unfortunate helicopter crash near Lasbella, where all the six officers and soldiers, including Lt General Sarfraz Ali, embraced Shahadat during flood operation in Balochistan."

PM pushing CPEC ahead, says China

APP

BEIJING: China on Wednesday highly appreciated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for pushing ahead the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with new 'Pakistan speed' and acknowledged his untiring efforts for advancing practical cooperation between the two countries. "We highly appreciate the prime minister's statements. He (Shehbaz Sharif) has done so much for practical cooperation between the two countries," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying said during her regular briefing in response to a question raised by APP.

Government in no hurry to punish Imran

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MUZAFFARABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister (PM) Qamar Zaman Kaira on Wednesday said that the law will take its own course regarding Imran Khan and the federal government is in no hurry to punish the PTI chief.

Reference filed in ECP PDM seeks to get Khan disqualified

The lawmakers from ruling coalition want Khan disqualified for receiving money from illegal donors

IRSHAD ALI/DNA

ISLAMABAD: A group of MNAs associated with the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) – a multi-party alliance with representation of ruling PML-N – on Thursday filed a reference with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) seeking the disqualification of former prime minister Imran Khan from holding public office for allegedly receiving prohibited funding from a number of foreign donors. The reference was submitted by MNA Barrister Mohsin Nawaz Ranjha to Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja, carrying signatures of lawmakers Agha Hassan Baloch, Salahudeen Ayubi, Ali Gohar Khan, Syed Rafiullah Agha and Saad Waseem Sheikh. In its verdict on Tuesday, the election watchdog ruled that PTI had "wilfully" and "knowingly" received prohibited funding from a number of foreign donors. In its order, the commission had also said that it was "constrained to hold that Imran Khan failed to discharge his

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Govt to send declaration against PTI to SC

KHAYAM ABBASI



ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday announced that the government had decided to send a declaration against the PTI to the Supreme Court of Pakistan in light of the Election

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EU gives grant for Vision 2025 program

EU envoy assures to continue helping Pak

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and European Union (EU) here Thursday launched Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) with initial grant of Euros 265 million earmarked for the period from 2021 to 2024. According to EAD press statement issued here, the MIP, covering the period 2021-2027, was launched after call on meeting of the Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka with Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. "This grant provided by the European Union will support the goals set out by the government of Pakistan in its Vision 2025" Secretary of the Economic Affairs Division (EAD),



ISLAMABAD: Secretary EAD and Ambassador of EU exchanging document after signing the agreement. – DNA

Mian Asad Hayat Din. The objectives of the current MIP are guided by the country's strategic development priorities and overall geopolitical programme of the European Commission (2019-2024), with the aim to further enhancing integrated cooperation, as outlined under the Strategic Engage-

ment Plan (2019). The indicative allocations for 2025-2027, as well as the possible modification of other substantial elements of this MIP would be carried out through an inclusive mid-term review of its implementation, jointly with

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PESHAWAR: Ambassador of United States David Blome calls on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mehmood Khan. – DNA

Govt to help rebuild flood affected areas: PM

SHAMIM SHAHID

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that collective efforts by the federal and provincial governments were needed to ensure early rehabilitation of the people affected by flash floods triggered by torrential rains. The prime minister, during his visit to the flood-hit areas of Tank district of the PTI-governed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, lauded the efforts of the national disaster management and provincial disaster management authorities for their rescue and relief efforts. Earlier this week, heavy rains wreaked havoc in parts of KP as floodwaters inundated low-lying areas. Over a dozen people lost their lives in heavy rains and floods caused

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COAS visits Corps of Engineers

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa has appreciated the Corps of Engineers for their outstanding contributions during various operations, especially in counterterrorism. He extended his appreciation during his visit to Risalpur and Nowshehra on Thursday. On arrival at Military College of Engineering Risalpur, General Bajwa laid floral wreath at Shahada monument and offered Fateha. He visited MCE and was briefed about training modules and various training facilities at MCE including Counter IEDs Explosive Munition School, Combat.

Khan hits back at ECP over verdict

'Tell me, if this money is foreign funding, then what about the remittances'

STAFF REPORT/DNA



ISLAMABAD: PTI chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan on Thursday hit back at the Election Commission of Pakistan's verdict in the PTI prohibited funding case saying that taking money from foreign companies wasn't illegal in 2012. In an address to supporters via video link, he said that the law which prohibited taking funds from foreign companies was introduced in 2017, "he said. "But our case is from 2012." His statement comes days after ECP declared PTI to be a "foreign-funded party". It had ruled that PTI

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PTI demands resignation of CEC, ECP members

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Secretary General Asad Umar said that the members of the electoral body and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja should resign forthwith so as to restructure the commission

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Israeli airlines obtain Saudi airspace permit

TEL AVIV: Cathay Pacific and Air Seychelles have overflown Saudi Arabia for Israel flights for the first time, aviation data showed on Thursday, after Riyadh announced last month it would open its airspace to all airlines, paving the way for more overflights to and from Israel. Opening Saudi airspace to flights to and from Israel was a focus of US President Joe Biden's tour of the countries, which do not have formal ties, last month. Riyadh agreed in principle. Air Seychelles said it "became the first airline to receive permission from the Saudi Arabian authorities to overfly their territory", with Wednesday evening's Tel Aviv to Mahe flight. The new route "means a reduction in fuel burn between

500kg-1000kg per flight (and that) the aircraft can now carry an additional 20 passengers per flight," it said in a statement. "The Saudi air traffic controllers were extremely helpful and allowed us to navigate with optimal conditions for passenger comfort," the airline quoted the flight's captain as saying. On Thursday, a Cathay Pacific flight from Hong Kong to Tel Aviv used Saudi airspace, according to aviation website flightradar24. There was no immediate comment from Cathay. Saudi Arabia has allowed airlines, including Israeli carriers, to overfly its territory on flights to and from the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain after the two Gulf states established ties with Israel as part of a US diplomatic drive in 2020. – Agencies

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Furious China fires missiles near Taiwan

Japan protested that five missiles appeared to land in its economic zone

CENTRELINE REPORT

TAIPEI: China deployed scores of planes and fired live missiles near Taiwan on Thursday in its biggest-ever drills in the Taiwan Strait, a day after U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi made a solidarity trip to the self-ruled island. China's military confirmed multiple firings of conventional missiles in waters off Taiwan as part of planned exercises in six zones set to run until noon on Sunday. It activated more than 100 planes, including fighter jets and bombers, and over 10 warships, state broadcaster CCTV said. Taiwan's defence ministry said it scrambled jets to warn away 22 Chinese fighter aircraft that crossed the Taiwan Strait median line into its air defence zone, while Japan protested that five missiles appeared to land in its economic zone. "The U.S.-Taiwan collusion and provocation will only push Taiwan towards the abyss of disaster, bringing catastrophe to

China refutes G7 statement on Taiwan

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi strongly refuted G7 foreign ministers' statement on the Taiwan question on Thursday, saying the group has no qualifications to make accusations against China. He made the remarks on the sidelines of the ASEAN-plus foreign ministers' meetings in Phnom Penh. The statement said China's

Taiwan compatriots," said a Chinese defence ministry spokesperson. Responding to the Chinese drills, President Tsai

countermeasures in response to United States House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan "risk unnecessary escalation." Noting the ins and outs of the tension across the Taiwan Straits are clear-cut, Wang pointed out it is the US that makes provocations, creates crisis and continuously escalates tensions. As the US' open provocations have resulted in an egregious precedent, Wang asked if they are not corrected or countered,

Ing-wen said Taiwan would not provoke conflicts but would firmly defend its sovereignty and national security. "Taiwan

"Do we still need the principle of non-interference in internal affairs? Should international law be upheld? How can regional peace be guaranteed?" Saying the statement confuses right and wrong and makes unwarranted remarks on legitimate measures China has taken to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Wang said the G7 nations have neither the right nor the qualification to criticize China.

will never be knocked down by challenges," Tsai said in a recorded video message to the people of Taiwan.

"We are calm and not impetuous, we are rational and not provocative, but we will also be firm and not shirk." Taiwan said 11 Chinese Dongfeng ballistic missiles had been fired in nearby waters - the first time since 1996. Taiwan officials said the drills violated United Nations rules, invaded its space and threatened free air and sea navigation. It has been self-ruled since 1949, when Mao Zedong's communists took power in Beijing after defeating Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) nationalists in a civil war, prompting the KMT-led government to retreat to the island. The military activity followed Pelosi's unannounced visit of support to Taiwan in defiance of warnings from China. Before the drills officially began, Chinese navy ships and military aircraft briefly crossed the Taiwan Strait median line several times on Thursday morning, a Taiwanese source briefed on the matter told Reuters. By midday, warships from both sides remained in close proximity

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RCCI urges FBR to withdraw fixed tax in electricity bills

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The fixed tax imposed on electricity bills for traders should be withdrawn. The fixed tax has been imposed on electricity bills indiscriminately and without any category. The budget speech and finance bill 2022-23 has a contradiction with respect to procedure and the slab. It is very unfortunate that those who have received a electricity bill of Rs 100 have also been sent a tax of Rs 3,000. Tier 1 category should be maintained for the Jewelry sector on the basis of thousand square feet. These views were expressed by Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce

and Industry (RCCI) President Nadeem Rauf in a meeting with Chairman FBR Dr. Asim Ahmed in Islamabad. Member Planning and Member Customs were also present in the meeting. Former Presidents Najam Rehan, Raja Aamir Iqbal, Malik Shahid Saleem, representatives from Anjuman Tajran, Sheikh Hafeez, Fayaz Qureshi, Executive Member Waseem Riaz, Chamber Member Khalil Noon were also present in the meeting. Chamber President Nadeem Rauf said that declared property should be exempted from deemed income tax, and notices should be issued to non-filers. 17% sales tax on bakery products is excessive, these are daily items and there is no luxury on which

17% is levied, he added. We demand that the harassment be stopped. Filers should be given incentives as this will help in documenting the economy, he said. Chairman FBR Dr. Asim assured the delegation that the Finance Minister is looking into the issue of fixed tax and it is being advertised through newspapers and media that if the tax has been wrongly calculated, it will be adjusted in the future bills. Chamber suggestions regarding tax on deemed rental income are laudable. Chairman FBR welcomed the proposal of the Chamber related to broadening the tax net and also issued instructions for immediate restoration of Tax Advisory Committees at Regional Tax Office level.



PESHAWAR: US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome handing over the keys to KP Minister for Health and Finance Taimur Saleem Khan Jhagra at the KP Governor's House. – DNA

US donates 36 vehicles to KP Health Department

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The United States government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Thursday presented 36 vehicles to the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)'s Health Department to help strengthen tracking and management of infectious diseases, including COVID-19. US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome and KP Minister for Health and Finance Taimur Saleem Khan Jhagra led the hand-over ceremony at the KP Governor's House. "This year marks the 75th anniversary of the US-Pakistan partnership," remarked US Ambassador Donald Blome. "We are proud of our contributions to improve lives here in KP, and we are committed to making the world a better place for

the Pakistani people. With these vehicles and the training provided by USAID, KP health professionals are better equipped to provide accurate and timely information in remote locations and help health officials make informed decisions to protect the public." Taimur thanked Donald Blome for his visit and extended support. He extended his gratitude for USAID support in different health interventions on behalf of the KP government. Talking to the media, Taimur said, "The KP Department of Health is grateful to USAID for the timely support of vehicles provided to all District Diseases Surveillance and Response Units in KP. These 36 vehicles will be fully utilized for COVID-19 surveillance as well as for vaccination campaign monitoring. We cherish our partnership with USAID for strengthening the health system in the province." Across Pakistan, the US has donated 61 million

doses of COVID-19 vaccines to date, with an additional 16 million pediatric doses announced and expected to arrive soon. Since the start of pandemic, the US government has provided nearly \$70.4 million in direct support and \$13.8 million in in-kind support to assist the Pakistani people in the fight against COVID-19, with another \$20 million planned to support further vaccination efforts in Pakistan. The US has also provided 200 ventilators for 64 Pakistani hospitals, which increased Pakistan's respiratory care capacity by 30 percent, and trained 400 healthcare workers on how to operate these ventilators. At the provincial level, the US, through USAID, provided disease surveillance and response teams in all 155 districts across Pakistan and supported the reconfiguration of a 'HealthAlert' phone application for healthcare workers to report new cases of COVID-19 in rural areas.

Charter of economy vital for survival of Pakistan

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: "Charter of Economy" (CE) is imperative for the economic survival of Pakistan and all political parties must realize the gravity of the situation and sign it in greater interest of the nation and country, said Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). Addressing a Press Conference along with the representative of all local trade bodies and associations, he said that political instability has played havoc with the country. "The unprecedented appreciation of dollar is the main cause to destabilize the economy which is directly influenced with the prevailing political uncertainty", he said and added that the value of their

capital has recorded a steep decline and their assets have now been reduced to almost nil. He said that the business community would suffer in the current situation by running their factories or shops and hence they have decided to close down their businesses. He said that the government is playing a role of silent spectator while dollar appreciation coupled with heavy taxation, hike in interest rate, tariff of electricity, gas and petrol has further increased their cost of production and they have been forced to close down their businesses to save them from further losses. He said that in this abysmal situation, the FBR was also harassing the business community by serving them notices. He said that it was a pity that a unit of Rs. 10 million has received a notice of 10.25 million. He said that

political parties must play their role to eliminate prevailing uncertainty and if they failed to do so, we would be constrained to boycott them. He warned that 1.2 million workers would be rendered jobless in Faisalabad alone if the industrial wheel came to a grinding halt. He said that 58 chambers are in touch with him and they fully endorse his idea that political parties must sign the charter of economy to save the dwindling economy. He clarified that this move is totally non-political and they are considering resorting to protestation, stage long march or sit-in immediately after the Ashura Muharram in addition to pulling down their shutters. "This strike may be for an indefinite period", he warned and criticized banks that are plundering businessmen in the wake of dollar appreciation.

Child protection unit established in Lodhran

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHRAN: The foundation stone ceremony of the building of Child Protection Unit was held in Lodhran district, Chief guest of the ceremony Child Protection Bureau Punjab Sa-

rah Ahmed laid the foundation stone of the building. Child Protection Bureau Bahawalpur and Lodhran in-charge Nushaba Malik and other officers were also present in the ceremony. A child protection unit has been established in Lodhran on the instructions of Chief Minister

Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi. Chairperson Child Protection Bureau Sarah Ahmed informed the media about the details and said that the building of Child Protection Unit Lodhran will cost about 33 million rupees. The building of which will be constructed in a period of 2 years.

ICRC organizes workshop for Journalists on Climate Change

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Climate Change experts and journalists highlighted the need of clean, nature based solutions to the problem of climate change and the need of sensitizing journalists towards promoting responsible reporting on the impacts of climate change. These issues were discussed and addressed during a workshop organized for journalists titled "Reporting on Climate Change: Making the Invisible Visible", on August 2-3, 2022 by The Centre for Excellence in Jour-

nalism (CEJ) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Centered around building the technical knowledge and skills of journalists, the workshop's objective was to promote responsible and inclusive reporting on the way climate change is playing out locally. Climate change is deeply intertwined with local patterns of inequality and those already marginalized or in vulnerable situations face disproportionate impacts of this crisis. Veteran journalist and lead trainer for the workshop, Shahzeb Jillani said "It is imperative that we place local communities at the

heart of our stories and highlight the indigenous impacts of climate change that are otherwise absent from mainstream media coverage". The workshop was attended by 13 print, broadcast and digital journalists from various media organizations and featured expert sessions by Malik Amin Aslam, former Minister for Climate Change, Dr. Nausheen Anwar, Director Karachi Urban Lab, Sardar Sarfaraz, Chief Meteorologist at the Pakistan Met Department, Dr. Sher Muhammad, Glaciologist at ICIMOD, and Maaz Tanveer, Head of Communications for HANDS Pakistan.

Integrated approach imperative for family planning

DNA

KARACHI: Stressing the need and importance of family planning towards achieving national goals and country's development, Experts lauded the role of Provincial Minister of Health and Population Welfare (Sindh), Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho and Secretary Health Sindh, Zulfiqar Ali Shah, for their continuous efforts towards putting the agenda of family planning at the forefront and introducing reproductive health bill. These thoughts were expressed in FP (Family Planning) 2030 meeting, held in commemoration of World Population Day. Participants

of the meeting highlighted the impact of high population growth rate on its socio-economic development and emphasized its linkages with rising poverty and disparity, to climate change, high urbanization and urban migration, all restraining investment in human development and improving lives of people. Pakistan has made its FP2030 Commitments in line with its national goals agreed under the CCI Recommendations and the targets set for the National Action Plan. Technical Advisor and Focal Person FP 2030, Dr Talib Lashari highlighted key reforms made under the FP2030 working group such as functional integration between Department of Health

and Population Welfare Department. He added that significant progress has been observed in the areas of staff capacity building, youth engagement, legislative reforms and Life skills-based Education. Dr Lashari also shared the implementation progress of self-injectable DMPA-SC (Sayana Press) in Sindh and noted that CIP is moving to initiate self-injection by clients. Speaking at the event, Country Advisor Gates Foundation, Dr Yasmin Qazi shared the historical perspective on family planning in Pakistan and stressed that we need to work collaboratively to address the gaps and fulfill the unmet needs of couples who want access to family planning support.



PAKISTAN ENGINEERING COUNCIL

Excellence Awards - 2021

Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) being the statutory body for regulating engineering profession and quality of engineering education, is functioning as a key driving force for achieving rapid and sustainable growth in all national economic and social fields. The Council has played a progressive role by making landmark achievements in all directions of engineering at national and international levels, besides extending expert support to the Government as a Think Tank in almost all sectors. With this objective, PEC has announced Excellence Awards to acknowledge the outstanding contribution/ services of eminent Engineers, who have made notable impact in national interest towards socio-economic development of the country.

AWARD CATEGORIES

The Award will be conferred in the following categories:

i. Lifetime Achievement	iv. Innovation and Industrial Project
ii. Academia and Research	v. Engineering Policy and Regulations
iii. Technology and Process Development	vi. International Associates

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- The Nominee must be an Engineer registered with PECOR international/ equivalent professional engineering body in case of Category (vi).
- Must have at least 15 years of professional experience (academia, industry, R&D, management etc.) For Categories (i) to (v), the nominee shall be a Pakistani national having significant contribution(s) to engineering profession.
- For Category (vi) the nominee may be expatriate/ foreign national who contributed towards national interests of Pakistan.

HOW TO NOMINATE

- Nominations shall be made through respective institution/ HEI/ professional body/ industry/ technical organization (legal entity) or group of eminent engineers satisfying the eligibility criteria.
- The nominating body can submit nominations for different categories.
- A nominee may be nominated for more than one category.
- Self-nomination will not be entertained.
- Nomination Form (available at website: www.pecaward.pec.org.pk) duly completed in all respects including supporting documents should be submitted as a hard copy (01 only) along-with soft copy to PEC Head Office at the following address/ email.

Deadline for submission of nominations is Saturday, 20th August, 2022.

The scrutiny and evaluation of nominees will be carried out by PEC Excellence Award Committee as per the approved criteria. PEC reserves the right to reject any nomination.

PID (I) No. 710/22

Registrar/ Secretary

Ataturk Avenue (East), G-5/2, PEC Head Office, Islamabad
Email: pecaward2021@pec.org.pk; Web: www.pec.org.pk
Tel: 051-9206974/ 9219500 Ext. 215, UAN (051) 111-111-732

National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/ CHINA	Armed Forces Day
Aug 01/ SWITZERLAND	National Day
Aug 01/ LEBANON	Armed Forces Day
Aug 01/ SYRIA	Armed Forces Day
Aug 4/ BUKINO FASO	National Day
Aug 09/ SINGAPORE	National Day
Aug 15/ DPR KOREA	Independence Day
Aug 15/ INDIA	Independence Day
Aug 15/ POLAND	Armed Forces Day
Aug 17/ INDONESIA	Independence Day
Aug 24/ UKRAINE	Independence Day
Aug 25/ URUGUAY	Independence Day
Aug 30/ TURKEY	Armed Forces Day
Aug 31/ KYRGYZ	Independence Day
Aug 31/ MALAYSIA	National Day

Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police.....9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIAFlightInfo.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611111
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International.4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Senator Talha Mahmood urges to rationalize real estate taxes

Sardar Tahir Mahmood, President, Federation of Realtors Pakistan said that Pakistan's population was increasing and the country needed over 1.2 million housing units per year to bridge this rising gap

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood on Thursday urged the need to rationalize taxes on the real estate and construction sector to facilitate its better growth that would help revive the economy. He stressed the need to make conducive policies for the construction industry as it played a key role in strengthening the economy. He said that Pakistan needed a business friendly environment and promotion of industrialization to overcome its current economic challenges. He further emphasized that the need for making economic policies in consultation with business community to make them more productive and result-oriented. He said this while speaking as chief guest at the pre-launch ceremony of "ICCI Pakistan Property, Housing and Construction Expo 22", said a press release. The event was organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the expo would be organized from September 9-11, 2022 at Pak-China Friendship Centre. A large number of exhibitors including property developers,



builders, realtors, consultants, marketing companies and others would participate. Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, ICCI said that the purpose of organizing property expo was to create a platform for the business community of property, housing, and construction sectors to showcase variety of their projects under one roof and generate new business leads. He said that the role of the construction industry was vital in the

economic development of the country as the growth of over 70 allied industries was linked with it. He urged the government to extend full support to this sector to address the current economic challenges. Sheikh Amir Waheed, Convener, ICCI Expo Committee gave a detailed presentation to the potential exhibitors about the ICCI Pakistan Property, Housing and Construction Expo 22 and said that the Expo will provide exhibitors tremendous opportunities to market and sell

their property and construction-related projects. Chaudhry Muhammad Masood, Convener, ICCI Builders and Developers Committee assured the participants that the expo would bring historic footfall to help the exhibitors to maximize the business prospects of their construction projects. Sardar Tahir Mahmood, President, Federation of Realtors Pakistan said that Pakistan's population was increasing and the country needed over 1.2 million housing units per year

to bridge this rising gap. He urged the government to provide maximum facilitation to the construction industry to meet rising housing needs and generate more economic activity. Many big players of real estate and construction field including Imarat Group, AAA Associates, J7 Group, 5G Group, Graana, Smart Way Construction, Star Marketing, Ealaan Marketing, Silver Oaks and others attended the event and got booked the stalls of their choice.



RAWALPINDI: Metro Bus Service officials and staff gathered near Rehmanabad Metro Station where metro buses caught fire. - APP

Report presented on street children in capital

ISLAMABAD: A Task Force on Street Children approved by Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat presented its study report to the Federal Ombudsman for implementation. Taking cognizance of the exploitation of children in terms of their involvement in labour and beggary, Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi had directed a study titled "Inquiry into the Plight of Street Children in ICT - Challenges and Way Forward. The research sets out priorities and gives evidence-based recommendations to the key stakeholders. The research was conducted by Syeda Viqar un Nisa Hashmi, Advisor Grievance Commissioner for Children and her team. This is the first ever empirical study focusing on street children in ICT. The Task Force conducted 506 in-depth interviews including 443 street children, 44 community members including parents of street children and 19 officials of LEAs and service providers. The team devised a mechanism for the maximum utilization of the resources for the protection, welfare and development of street children. The research revealed that child labour and beggary to some extent is an outcome of extreme poverty, homelessness abandonment of children, etc., and predominately a lucrative family business of some communities and begging rings. The compelling factors for them to work beg include low income in 83 percent cases, followed by 90 percent illness and disability of parent(s) while in 1 percent case it was drug addiction of parent and guardian. The team also reported that there is no Child Court in ICT and only one Model Police Station has a desk for children. The report stated that street children were picked up by the police, dropped at Edhi Centre and CPI but these centers have no capacity to accommodate these street children therefore, they release them in the evening. The report recommended a robust mechanism for the rescue and care of children in needs; registration of refugees on priority basis and basic facilities of health and to ensure education and health facilities regardless of their status. The report also recommended training of Police and CPI officials to rescue street children. The Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat will hold a high level meeting shortly to implement these policy recommendations. - APP

JUI-F chief lauds PM for relief efforts for flood-hit areas

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has lauded the federal government for making concrete efforts to extend relief and rehabilitate flood affected areas of Tank and Dera Ismail Khan districts. Speaking at a reception held in honour of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who paid visit to the flood affected areas of Tank and several areas including Phapur and Prova tehsils of Dera Ismail Khan, the JUI-F chief said the federal government-led by Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif was very keen to extend relief and rebuild infrastructure in the flood-stricken areas of the two districts which have long been awaiting some relief-oriented measures. He said that the visit was planned earlier but unfortunately it had to be postponed due to inclement weather. Expressing gratitude to the prime minister for personally visiting the flood-affected areas of the two districts, the JUI-F chief who also heads the PTI government did not pay

heed to the development of the area and people had to face several challenges. Thus, he expressed hope that the government would undertake some mega development initiatives as part of the journey of development which had been initiated during the tenure of former Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif. He said that the population of these areas was largely dependent on agriculture, but this sector was badly affected by the recent flash floods which destroyed standing crops, cattle and

rendered people homeless. He also appealed to the government to construct Tank zam dam to prevent Tank from floods in future and bring maximum land under cultivation which would usher in socio-economic development of the area. Opposition Leader in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Maulana Lutf ur Rehman of JUI-F briefed the prime minister on the devastation of the flash floods in the district. He thanked them for extending maximum financial assistance to flood victims. - APP

India cannot crush Kashmiris' spirit of self-determination

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani on Thursday said resolution of the Kashmir issue was essential for peace and stability in the region. They said the use of force against unarmed Kashmiris could not crush their independence movement and unshakable spirit of self-determination. For the restoration of peace in occupied Kashmir, it was necessary to restore Articles 370 and 35-A to their original shape. They expressed these views in their separate messages issued on Yaum-E-Istihlal which is being commemorated on August, 5 in the country. The NA Speaker said that India had deprived the Kashmiris of their freedom and identity by repealing Articles 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution, which was a violation of the

promises made to the Kashmiris at the international fora. The revocation of the articles was a reflection of the hateful policies of the Indian government, he added. The Speaker said that the entire Pakistani nation was united on the Kashmir issue and every child of the Pakistani nation stood by their Kashmiri brothers. "Pakistan is fighting the case of Kashmiris at all international and regional forums through parliamentary diplomacy," he observed. He said the Parliament of Pakistan had always stood by the Kashmiri people and had raised the issue of Kashmir at all the parliamentary fora. He urged the Pakistani nation and media to participate more in expressing solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren on the occasion of Yaum-e-Istihlal day. The speaker also urged the United Nations to implement its resolutions on Kashmir and put pressure on India to stop using force. He strongly condemned the life imprisonment of Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik by India and the atrocities inflicted on him, saying that India cannot suppress the freedom struggle of Kashmiris with its fascist measures. He appealed to the international human rights organizations to play their role in freeing all the Kashmiri prisoners including Yasin Malik. - APP

PTI influencing ECP verdict, says Sherry Rehman

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry on Thursday said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was influencing the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) verdict on its prohibited foreign funding case. Addressing a media briefing here, the Minister said the PTI orchestrated their hoax narrative as they were already aware of the ECP verdict and tried to tarnish public opinion. Sherry Rehman also held that the protest call by Imran Khan and PTI leadership was aimed to hide their incompetence and make minds of the masses that they [PTI] had done nothing wrong. She asserted the PTI's pack of lies could not be justified through any narrative or

opinion making and protest, adding, "the PTI had extremely tried to influence ECP for 8 years and changed nine advocates during the case proceedings. The party insisted to hold in camera proceedings to keep the outcome secret." The Minister underlined that PTI Chairman Imran Khan's declaration in the prohibited



funding case was also false along with 13 unknown accounts that were first not accepted by PTI, and 34 prohibited funding sources that had become exposed. "There is no legal or constitutional reason for the protest call declared by the PTI. Its narrative has decayed and disintegrated. PTI is claiming that they are least both-

ered by the ECP verdict and on the other hand repeatedly announced to hold protests is pointless," she said. The PTI, she said had lied to their voters, the country and accused its opponents for plundering national wealth, adding, "This is a decisive moment that exposed the judicial system prevailing in the country and justice should prevail." She mentioned that foreign funding was being received by many departments but the government of Pakistan's only concern was that they [PTI] had lied to the nation and had hidden its accounts. "Indifference or lack of information is no defence legally as you have to take responsibility of what you submit undersign to any authority," she said. - APP

PIDE delegation calls on Chairman CDA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor of Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) and his team met the Chairman Capital Development Authority at CDA Headquarters on Thursday. During the meeting, it was discussed that due to high traffic pressure on the roads and lack of effective parking arrangements, citizens face problems like traffic jams. In this regard, paid parking plazas will be constructed in the areas where there is more traffic and parking problems. In this regard, the plaza to be built in the blue area will be started as a test case. Before implementation, all stakeholders including the business community will be taken into confidence. Later it will be implemented in other areas also. These measures will not only increase revenue but also help in better handling of parking management. Chairman CDA appreciated the proposal given by PIDE during the meeting and the response to it and asked that this proposal should be implemented immediately.

NHMP pays tributes to police martyrs

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) organized a grand function on the occasion of 'Police Martyrs Day' at the M-2 (North) Line Headquarters on Thursday. Sector Commander M-2 (North) Ashiq Hussain Chauhan, DSP/LHQ Malik Asad Abbas and DSP Beat 5 Sher Ahmed besides other officers of the Motorway Police, relatives of the martyrs and students of the seminary also participated in the ceremony. The fresh police force paid homage to the police martyrs who laid down their lives in the line of duty. Quran Khawani was also held on this occasion. Addressing the participants, Sector Commander Chohan said the police martyrs were proud of the country adding the nation could not achieve its destiny which forgets its martyrs. The police martyrs would be alive in the history and their sacrifices would be remembered forever, he added. Later he distributed gifts among the heirs of the martyrs. - APP

ANF recovers over 100 kg narcotics; arrests five accused

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting raids in Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore and Chaman areas managed to recover over 100 kg narcotics and arrested five accused. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF Intelligence conducted a raid at Srinagar Highway in Islamabad and recovered 57,600 kg charras and 38,400 kg opium from a car. Three accused namely Adil, Hazrat Ali and a woman namely Nazia were also rounded up. In another raid, ANF recovered 102 heroin filled capsules weighing 816 grams from the possession of a passenger namely Shahzad Khan, going to Bahrain at Bacha Khan International Airport, Peshawar. In third operation conducted at a courier office in Lahore, ANF recovered 1,790 grams Ice concealed in leather gloves. The parcel was booked by Kashif Rashed for United States. In another operation, ANF managed to recover three kg Ice and netted an accused. The spokesman informed that ANF Intelligence conducted a raid in Chaman area, near Pak-Afghan Border and managed to recover three kg Ice from the possession of an accused namely Amar Din who was trying to smuggle Ice from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are under process. The spokesman informed that accomplices of the accused would also be sent behind the bars. - APP

Briefs

SPCAI and COMSTECH organize workshop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sino-Pak Center for Artificial Intelligence (SPCAI) located at Pak-Austria Fachhochschule: Institute of Applied Sciences (PAF-IASST), and COMSTECH co-organized an International workshop on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare, agriculture and energy sectors to showcase and debate emerging AI technologies and innovative practices at the COMSTECH Secretariat on Thursday.

The workshop began with the keynote address by Prof. Dr. Atta-ur-Rehman, Former Chairman, Prime Minister's National Task Force on Science and Technology, Pakistan. Prof. Atta shared his views about the impact of AI on various walks of everyday life. He appreciated the remarkable increase of per capita international research publications in the country. The inaugural session of the event was also addressed by the chief guest, Mr. Mohsin Mush-taq, Additional Secretary IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Atif Mashkoo, Managing Director SPCA, Dr. Mohammad Mujahid, Rector PAF-IASST and Prof. Dr. Syed Khurshid Hasanain, Advisor COMSTECH.

The workshop comprised on three technical sessions on healthcare, agriculture, and energy respectively. Each session was addressed by three field experts and followed by panel discussion. The workshop was attended by more than 300 participants in-person and many joined online.

Govt urged to privatize loss incurring SOEs

ISLAMABAD: The business community Thursday urged the government to privatize all state owned enterprises (SOE) incurring heavy losses to national kitty for decades. Talking to a delegation of industrialists and traders led by Waqas Anjum, CEO Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq said that the manifestos of almost all the mainstream political parties throughout the country always advocated divestment of government stakes in SOEs to curtail losses and reduce government footprint in business but not yet materialized even after long span of time spreading over half century.

He was of the view that these SOE cost losses to the state of over 4.5 percent of GDP, according to 2018-19 estimates, including almost 2 percent of GDP on account of only three entities PIA, PSM and Pakistan Railways. While another 2 percent of GDP worth of guarantees are provided by the government to keep them floating, he observed. - APP

NPO to organize webinar on 'PD&TM'

ISLAMABAD: National Productivity Organization (NPO) will organize a webinar on 'Personal Development and Team Management (PD&TM)' on August 11 (Thursday). Personal development is the process of acquiring new skills and qualities to improve your job performance, confidence and self-esteem, according to source in the authority.

Team management refers to the various activities which bind a team together by bringing the team members closer to achieve the set targets. The objective of the training includes self-awareness, higher self-esteem, get a confidence boost, effective team building and promotes learning. The webinar would provide information about Pakistan and PD in TM, PD in management, HRM core skills, motivating and influencing others, applying team theory and fostering constructive team dynamics. It would also highlight advanced communication skills, managing conflict, constructive criticism and peace from personal biases. The programme has been designed for senior management, middle management, team leaders and supervisors. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Banners are displayed at Shahr-e Dastoor in connection with upcoming 'Youm-e-Istehsal' to support Kashmiries on 5th of August. - APP

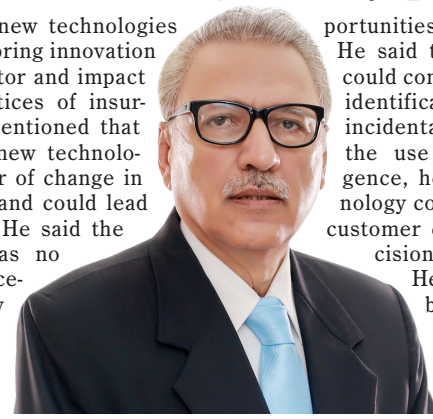
Alvi urges insurance sector to upgrade digital means

President Alvi said new technologies had the potential to bring innovation to the insurance sector and impact the regulatory practices of insurance markets

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday urged the public and private insurance companies to advance the use of digital knowledge as per international standards to ensure maximum risk distribution. He also proposed the companies on involving the Ulama (religious leaders) with an aim to encourage people and spread knowledge about the Islamic Takaful (insurance).

Addressing a seminar on 'Importance of awareness and technology in insurance industry' here at Aiwan-e-Sadr, he said wider privacy and data protection issues required close attention given the digital component of the insurance sector.

President Alvi said new technologies had the potential to bring innovation to the insurance sector and impact the regulatory practices of insurance markets. He mentioned that innovation through new technologies was a key driver of change in the financial sector and could lead to risk distribution. He said the insurance sector was no exception to advancements in technology with possibilities of new methods of service provision as well as greater op-



portunities for data collection. He said the insurance sector could contribute to better risk identification and mitigate incidental losses. Regarding the use of artificial intelligence, he said the new technology could give an improved customer experience with precision and accuracy.

He mentioned that the blockchain, based on distributed computing, could prove helpful in improving the cyber security

of data. Aimed at risk distribution, he said social behaviours were another aspect of tracking records of the insurer besides the empirical evidence. President Alvi recalled that automobile insurance companies in the country used to offer GPS facility for lower insurance premiums, and said the incentives related to health insurance could also encourage people to get insurance.

Besides doing marketing about the product, Dr Alvi proposed the insurance companies conduct a survey on why people avoided getting insured. The event was attended by representatives of insurance companies and experts in the related field. - APP

Private sector urged to attract investment from G-7 countries

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's private sector must make serious efforts to attract sizeable investment from G-7 countries to meet their infrastructure needs besides bringing home manufacturing companies moving out of China. This was stated by Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Meher, while addressing as keynote speaker at a seminar here on "New World Economic Order" held under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum (GREF), says a press release.

He said that the US has announced the launch of the partnership for global infrastructure and investment (PGI) with a seed money of \$600 billion in collaboration

with other G-7 countries including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom. He said program is fully intended to meet the infrastructure needs of developing countries so Pakistani private sector must take timely benefits of it. He pointed out that already some small scale products such as a solar powered projects in Angola, a vaccine manufacturing facility in Senegal, and a \$30 million investment in India increase food security and promote climate adaptation have been announced. He said political turmoil, outdated taxation, regulatory and legal frameworks are attributed major factors

in failure to attract foreign investments, which he added must be rectified on top priority in line with international trade transactions. He urged the need to devise a viable strategy to attract Chinese manufacturing companies to Pakistan which are now fast moving to Vietnam due to domestic political issues. Meher Kashif Younis said on the other hand China has been making its structural economic shift through self reliance and domestic consumption instead of relying on exports and foreign aid. He said for most developing countries, this competition is an opportunity to further their economic interests as both China and the US have

made it clear they would like to keep their existing close relations with them. He said since China doesn't see any conflict between PGII and its BRI (Belt and Road Initiatives) projects, Pakistan can explore how it can benefit both the US and Chinese initiatives. While concluding he said China continues its global integration through free trade agreement and recently inked trade agreements with 14 Asia-Pacific countries through the regional comprehensive economic partnership (RCEP). This is the world's largest free trade agreement covering about one third of the world's population and GDP, he added. - APP

India accelerates pace of demographic terrorism in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: Unsatisfied with the existing forms of state terrorism, India has started sealing residential houses as a punishment to Kashmiris for demanding right to self-determination and bring about rapid demographic change favourable to India. According to reports emanating from Indian and local Kashmiri media, the authorities sealed many houses during past two months with pretext that these were providing shelter to freedom fighters. The action is part of the Indian policy made on lines of Israel, who sealed and demolished houses to fight Palestinian resistance movement back in late 1980s.

The Narendra Modi government was specially focusing on demographic change of Kashmir valley which has around 97 percent Muslim population. The long-term objectives are to (a) disfigure Muslim identity of the state; (b) get the results of plebiscite (if held any point of time) in favour of India. While short-term aims include to (a) inflict damages to economy; (b) deprive Kashmiri people of all the basic human rights; and (c) crush the voice of freedom.

Indian government had made several attempts on Kashmir's demography in the past and gradually reduced the Muslim population of IIOJK. The state of Jammu and Kashmir was Muslim majority princely state at the time of partition, constituting 72.4 percent Muslim population which gradually has been reduced by around 4.13 percent to 68.31 as per census of 2011. Currently the IIOJK population stands at 12.541 million. The history is witness to the fact when around 500,000 Muslims were massacred and over 200,000 went missing from August to November 1947 in Jammu by Hindu fanatics.

This was the first attempt on transforming the demography of Jammu, one of the three regions of the state. Due to this genocide and migration of Muslims in large number, the Muslims, which prior to this massacre, were around 61 percent, became minority of just 30 percent in this region. Another assault on demography of Jammu was made in 1976 when Agrarian Reforms Act 1976 was enacted that provided ownership rights to tillers of land and resultantly records were tempered and thousands of non-Kashmiris were shown tillers. Yet another attack on demography was made during the period from 2001-2011 where in unimaginable growth of cent percent was witnessed in Hindu population in Ladakh, another region of IIOJK. - APP

AIOU Organizes Jashn e Azadi Walk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has organized an awareness walk regarding upcoming Independence Day. Deans, principal officers, teachers, and students participated in the walk, while they were holding national flags in their hands and chanting slogans of 'Long live Pakistan'. Registrar AIOU, Raja Umer Younis led the walk organized by Directorate of Student Affairs, AIOU. In the beginning, a collective prayer was offered for the army personnel who were martyred in the helicopter crash and the flood victims. Registrar, Raja Umer Younis paid tribute to the martyrs. He said that Pakistan came into being because of the sacrifices and long struggle of our elders, so every Pakistani should play a role in the

development of the country. He said that August is the month of commitment and children have to pay special attention to education to show their love for Pakistan and give this country a prominent place in the world. Dr. Mahmood ul Hasan Butt said that Pakistan is not only a gift for us but also a responsibility and we have to play our part to fulfill this responsibility. He said that children should continue their studies with high spirits and contribute in the progress of this country. Dean, Faculty of Arabic, Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi said that August is a month of gratitude for us because in this month we were blessed with an independent country. Freedom is a blessing and our elders have given us freedom at the cost of their lives. He said that as a teacher and as a student we have to recall that for what purposes this country was attained. It is pertinent to mention here that AIOU is celebrating August as independence month and have scheduled different activities throughout the month. - DNA

China also comes forward for help in Baluchistan

The govt also announced fundraising to provide maximum help to locals. Chief Minister Balochistan Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, provincial ministers and government spokespersons have announced to give half of their salaries to fundraising programme initiated for the flood-affected families in Balochistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China has also come forward for humanitarian help in Baluchistan in wake of the devastating flood. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday, about 800-1,000 food packs were distributed among the families living in the camps in flood-affected areas. China also provided around 300 solar panels as the rain destroyed electricity lines in many areas, leaving people without electricity for days. Meanwhile, the report added, the government of Balochistan has fast-tracked rescue and relief operations using all the resources available and has been grappling with flash floods since the rainy season commenced this year, which continues to spell disasters for local people and infrastructure. Around 10,000 small embankments and a number of dams have been damaged. Many bridges and roads linking Quetta to Ziarat,

Chaman, and Sibi have also been broken due to torrential rains accompanied by the massive flood. The death toll has risen to 149 and it is feared that more losses of lives may occur. Rain submerged dozens of villages, incurring damages to 13,985 houses in the province since June 14, out of which 10,429 were partially damaged and 3,556 were completely destroyed. Uncounted houses collapsed due to heavy rains in Zhob district, rendering many families homeless. Due to the collapse of bridges and the perishing of roads, the Awaran and Kohlo districts were cut from the rest of the province. As per government estimation, 0.2 million acres of agricultural land came under water. In response to the natural havoc, the government is in full-scale action to accelerate rescue and relief operations in the affected area of Balochistan. Pakistan Army and Navy troops have also been helping the civil administration in the affected areas. Sol-

diers have been transporting the people trapped in the inundated villages to safe places through helicopters, while food and medical aid are being provided to the affected population. During the relief mission, an army helicopter carrying six officers crashed. As a result, all officers onboard including Gen. Ali, commander of Quetta Corps, Brigadier Amjad Hanif, Brigadier Muhammad Khalid, Major Saeed Ahmed, Major Talha Manan and Naik Mudassar Fayyaz died. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shahab Sharif paid a visit to flood-hit areas and announced a relief package. He said that families of those who have lost their members to the flood would receive Rs1 million each; Rs50,000 were announced for people whose homes were destroyed, while owners of houses that suffered partial damage will be given Rs200,000. The relief package includes, 1,000 tents, 1,000 mattresses, 1,000 hygiene kits, 1,000

blankets, 1,000 quilts, 1,000 tarpaulin sheets, 1,000 mosquito nets, and 20 number of de-watering pumps. The government also announced fundraising to provide maximum help to locals. Chief Minister Balochistan Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, provincial ministers and government spokespersons have announced to give half of their salaries to the fundraising programme initiated for the flood-affected families in Balochistan. Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique said that the federal government and Pakistan Railways are working with the Balochistan government to provide immediate relief to the flood-affected people. In a press conference, the minister said relief centers have been set up at Pakistan Railways from where people can send relief items to the affected people free of cost. The Minister for Railways announced that officers from 17 to 22 grades will donate one day's salary to the flood-affected people.

Structural reforms a prime focus of govt

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance, Miftah Ismail said here on Thursday that the government was primarily focusing on effective structural reforms for cultivation of sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the country.

During a meeting with Asian Development Bank's Ex-Country Director and Chief Thematic Officer in ADB's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, Ms Xiaohong Yang, the minister acknowledged ADB's role in pursuing reform agenda through various projects in Pakistan. According to press statement issued by finance ministry, ADB Country Director Yong Ye and senior officers from Finance Division also participated in the meeting.

Miftah expressed gratitude to ADB delegation for their continuous collaboration and assured them of full cooperation for the speedy implementation of the ongoing programmes.

On the occasion, the ADB delegation apprised the minister about the progress of various projects being undertaken by ADB in Pakistan especially in the areas of energy and social protection.

They reiterated that the Country Partnership Strategy for Pakistan 2021-25 is in complete consonance with the vision of the government of Pakistan.

Ministry seeks applications for Ajmer Sharif

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has sought applications from the aspirant pilgrims who want to pay homage at the mausoleum of Hazrat Khawaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti (May Allah be pleased with Him) in Ajmer Sharif, India. The Hazrat Khawaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti's annual Urs would be observed from January 23 to February 2, 2023, in Ajmer Sharif, India.

As per the ministry's instruction, the intending pilgrims can submit their applications to the section officer (Ziarat) on the prescribed application form till August 20 this year.

The ballot would be held on September 25, if the number of people exceeds from the required length.

It is worth mentioning here that only those people can apply who are fully vaccinated by COVID-19 doses.

The pilgrims will have to provide a fresh PCR test (COVID-19 negative report), issued no later than 48 hours before the departure.

Other details/ instructions regarding the Urs are available in the application form and at the official website (www.mora.gov.pk) as well.

The intending pilgrims should keep in mind that in the light of standard operating procedures of COVID-19, public gatherings are prohibited so that the final decision would be taken by the government of Pakistan after viewing the COVID-19 situation in both the countries at the time of the visit and existing protocol regarding pilgrims' visit to India. - APP

Prohibited funding probe conducted during PTI rule

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik on Thursday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was still reluctant to accept the verdict of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) despite knowing the fact that the probe into the prohibited funding case was conducted during its tenure.

"Imran Khan was the prime minister when the State Bank of Pakistan had submitted record of his party's financial statements to the ECP," said Musadik while addressing a press conference here. "It was the PTI chief who had appointed both the governor of State Bank and the chief election commissioner," he added. - APP

Taiwan diplomacy

DEFENDING the status quo can be a lonely position, especially in an age where the political tempo is set by populists and demagogues. But in diplomacy the best option is often keeping things as they are, even if that means tolerating inconsistency and uncertainty. Such is the situation in the Taiwan strait, where artful imprecision prevents war. The visit to Taiwan by Nancy Pelosi has upset the balance. The speaker of the House of Representatives is the most senior US politician to set foot on the island since 1997. As an assertion of solidarity in the face of China's territorial ambitions across the strait, Ms Pelosi's trip looks like a breach of Washington's "strategic ambiguity" on Taiwan's status: it is not formally recognised as an independent state, but treated (and armed for self-defence) as a sovereign country. Some of President Biden's past statements have also strained ambiguity on the question of how far the US might go to defend Taiwan in the event of an invasion. But Ms Pelosi's trip has triggered a full-blown crisis. Beijing has denounced what it sees as an aggressive provocation and is responding in kind with live-fire military exercises in the waters surrounding Taiwan. That probably doesn't presage an all-out assault, but Taiwan is justifiably anxious when the sabre rattles so close to its shores. It would not take much by way of misunderstanding and overzealous reaction for events to spiral out of control. The uncomfortable reality for outside observers is that China's calculations around Taiwan are opaque. The country's long economic expansion has abruptly slowed; President Xi Jinping's authority is still vast, but not insuperable. It is unclear whether those conditions make it more or less likely he would gamble on a military adventure. Vladimir Putin's wild land grab in Ukraine has shaken the confidence of western analysts in their own forecasts. Most thought Mr Putin would be restrained by a rational evaluation of national interests. There are many stages of escalation between the present face-off and all-out war. Beijing can harry Taiwan with cyber-sabotage. Military exercises can be prolonged into something resembling an economic blockade. Where there is capacity for ratcheting up tension, there is also space for de-escalation. Previous crises in the Taiwan strait have been managed back into uneasy equilibrium. That is the best-case scenario now and one that is available if cool heads and an unfashionable taste for the status quo can prevail.

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Dengue threat

WHILE the threat of Covid-19 has temporarily dwindled, Pakistan continues to face a host of dangerous diseases that resurge annually and adversely affect the health of citizens. In this regard, health officials in Rawalpindi were baffled to detect large number of dengue mosquito larvae at around 16,000 different locations – 15,601 houses and some 1,000 other localities – during indoor and outdoor surveillance campaigns. This alarming situation could lead to a deadly outbreak soon. It is believed that these dengue larvae have been breeding in large scale during monsoon rains that saw many places inundated with water. Where there is stagnant water, dengue mosquitoes are bound to increase in number and become a health threat. The district has been carrying out anti-dengue campaigns but implementation has been lacking, as 99 locations were left out and fake activities were recorded in 377 other locations. Officials have taken timely action by registering FIRs, sealing buildings, issuing challans and enforcing dengue SOPs but a systematic action plan must be carried out to destroy breeding grounds at the earliest before these larvae mature. The ordeal also indicates the importance of draining rain water. With many provinces across Pakistan witnessing unprecedented levels of rain, dengue could very well escalate into a national health crisis. Surveillance campaigns must be carried out across monsoon and flood affected areas to identify and destroy breeding grounds and curb future spread. Urban cities should issue dengue SOPs and officials must work towards draining the remaining water left in affected localities. Abandoned and empty buildings along with ponds, pools and other bodies of water must not be left unchecked. Mostly importantly, the healthcare sector must be notified and well-equipped to deal with any fallout.

Time to hold Taliban accountable on terrorism and human rights

Ishtiaq Ahmad



The War on Terror decimated Al-Qaeda in Somalia and Yemen, but the terrorist organization and its affiliates have managed to survive under the Taliban. This fact is confirmed by intelligence findings submitted...

IN Tashkent last week, the Taliban's acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi reassured world leaders that his regime would never allow Afghan territory to become a safe haven for global terrorism. That commitment came to naught on Sunday, when a US drone strike on a safe house in downtown Kabul killed Al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri. Uzbekistan was playing host to two major global events – an international conference on Afghanistan and a foreign ministers' conference of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. On the sidelines, Muttaqi held fruitful meetings with US Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas West and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also spoke positively on Afghanistan. From the diplomatic spotlight on Afghanistan, it was clear that the world recognized the need to engage the Taliban

regime to secure its pragmatic interests on human rights and counterterrorism. In particular, the US envoy assured he would expedite the process of unfreezing half of the \$7 billion of Afghan central bank reserves by the US Treasury Department to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the Afghan people. Al-Zawahiri's killing has unmasked the Taliban facade: The fact that the world's No. 1 terrorist, with a \$25 million bounty on his head, was living happily under the Taliban's nose means that the world will now find it hard to engage with the group's untrustworthy leadership through diplomatic niceties. Someone in the Taliban hierarchy was clearly sheltering the Al-Qaeda leader. The spectacular incident, being hailed the world over, renders a mortal blow to Al-Qaeda, which emerged from the resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. A decade later, Al-Zawahiri stood next to Al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden to announce that they had joined forces. All hell then broke loose, starting with Al-Qaeda attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and culminating in the heinous events of 9/11. Many nations suffered irreparable losses.

The War on Terror decimated Al-Qaeda in Somalia and Yemen, but the terrorist organization and its affiliates have managed to survive under the Taliban. This fact is confirmed by intelligence findings submitted periodically by the UN sanctions monitoring committee to the Security Council. These findings reveal that Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups have gained more traction across various Afghan provinces in the past year. The number of terrorists is estimated to be 10,000 or even more. It was also reported recently that Al-Zawahiri's "apparent increased comfort and ability to communicate has coincided with the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and the consolidation of power of key Al-Qaeda allies within their de facto administration."

The mounting evidence of the Taliban's nexus with terrorism is also confirmed by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid's response to the US drone strike before the identity of its victim was reported. He tweeted that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan "strongly condemns this attack on any pretext." His silence since the incident provides further credence to this nexus. The Taliban's breach of faith on the issue of terrorism may be particularly upsetting for China, Russia and states in the immediate neighborhood and the Gulf region. They all have specific terrorism concerns but, out of goodwill, have chosen to engage the de facto Afghan rulers in the past year. Together with UN relief agencies, they have proactively tried to heal Afghans' humanitarian woes. China and Russia have openly spoken against US

sanctions on the Taliban regime. In Tashkent, China even announced a tariff waiver on 98 percent of imports from Afghanistan. The Taliban regime has also disappointed the world by not fulfilling its promises to ensure the rights to education, work and freedom of movement of Afghan women and girls, and to include Afghan minorities in the government. Worryingly, all recent reports by the UN and other organizations suggest that the human rights situation has deteriorated drastically under Taliban rule.

The reason for this lies in the Taliban's radical ideological roots and exclusionary tribal traditions. If not held accountable now, the Taliban regime will continue to protect terrorist leaders. Let there also be no illusion that the Taliban will be immune to global persuasion on the rights of women, girls and minorities. What is the way forward then? Luckily, the interests of the great powers and regional states on social and security issues in Afghanistan remarkably overlap. Al-Zawahiri's death has eroded the Taliban's global standing. This creates an ideal opportunity for squeezing the regime and helping the Afghan people. So, what steps can be taken instantly? First, the US' fear of unfrozen Afghan reserves falling into terrorist hands stands proven by Al-Zawahiri's comfortable living in the Taliban's seat of power. Hence, there is no point in negotiating this financial row with the Taliban regime, which lacks the credibility of an honest broker. The money can instead be released to the UN agencies involved in humanitarian operations in Afghanistan. Second, the US, China and Russia – despite being at loggerheads over other global issue such as the lingering war in Ukraine and the emerging row over Taiwan – can join hands at the UN Security Council to take stringent steps to compel the Taliban to compromise on their rigid stance on women's and minority rights. Other external stakeholders in Afghanistan, especially the members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, can exert further pressure without foreclosing the option of persuasion due to reasons of geographical proximity and religious affinity. Finally, the international community has a genuine stake in reengaging the progressive, dynamic and entrepreneurial Afghans inside the country as well as in neighboring states, the Gulf region and the West regarding the future well-being of their homeland. Ultimately, only an inclusive political setup built on the fabric of fundamental rights can pave the way for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan and prevent it from once again becoming the world's hotbed of terrorism.

Courtesy: Arab News

Ayman al-Zawahiri's assassination spells bad news for the Taliban

Abdul Basit

Al-Zawahiri, who assumed the leadership of al-Qaeda in 2011 following the killing of its founder Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan, was an uncharismatic but competent leader

ON July 31, in an early morning drone strike, the United States killed al-Qaeda's 71-year-old leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in a Kabul safe house he had reportedly been staying in with his family for several months. The elimination of al-Zawahiri, a key plotter of the 9/11 attacks, is a significant gain for the US which has been in need of a major victory in its global counter-terror operation since its poorly executed withdrawal from Afghanistan. At the same time, it is a massive setback for al-Qaeda which has long been suffering from financial problems, limited command and control, infighting, and the lack of a geographical haven.

The assassination, however, will perhaps be most consequential for the Taliban, as it will force the group's leaders to reassess their relations with both the US and al-Qaeda, as well as its aspirations for international recognition. Al-Zawahiri, who assumed the leadership of al-Qaeda in 2011 following the killing of its founder Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan, was an uncharismatic but competent leader. He headed al-Qaeda during turbulent times and managed to keep its brand alive despite various US drone strikes eliminating its key leaders and its Iraq branch breaking away to form ISIL (ISIS) in 2014.

Before Sunday's assassination, al-Qaeda was experiencing a slow but steady revival largely thanks to the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan. The group celebrated the Taliban's victory as if it was its own. Since the takeover, al-Zawahiri had been releasing propaganda videos much more frequently, demonstrating his growing confidence. A recent United Nations report confirmed that the group enjoys "greater freedom in Afghanistan under the Taliban's rule" and indicated that some of its members may even be advising the de facto regime.

The killing of al-Zawahiri in a safe house in an upscale Kabul neighbourhood, just 1.5 kilometres (3.1 miles) from the presidential palace, erased any remaining doubts about the continuing partnership between the Taliban and al-Qaeda. The assassination provided undeniable proof that, in clear violation of the 2020 Doha agreement – which made the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan contingent on the Taliban's assurances that Afghanistan

would not serve as a haven for al-Qaeda under its rule – the Taliban was not only allied to al-Qaeda, but it was harbouring its chief as well. The assassination left the Taliban in a difficult position on two fronts.

On the one hand, it likely caused Washington to lose any remaining trust it had in the Taliban regime, and dashed its chances of getting international recognition any time soon. Indeed, after the revelation that the al-Qaeda chief, who helped organise the 9/11 attacks, was allowed to live in Kabul, no country will believe that the Taliban is working to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a haven for terror groups. However, after al-Zawahiri's assassination in Kabul – and the consequent loss of trust between the Taliban and al-Qaeda – they likely will not feel safe leading the organisation from Afghanistan, either.

Due to this lack of a geographical haven in the wider Middle East, the leadership of the group may have to shift to one of the more secure al-Qaeda franchises elsewhere in the world. Currently, the Somali al-Shabab, led by Ahmed Diriyeh, is the strongest and most resourceful al-Qaeda franchise in the world. But Diriyeh, a non-Arab, assuming the leadership position may anger members in Syria, Yemen, Pakistan and beyond, paving the way for the network's disintegration. As a result, despite his uninspiring personality, al-Qaeda may struggle to replace al-Zawahiri.

Furthermore, at the very moment that it lost not only its leader but also its haven in Taliban-led Afghanistan, al-Qaeda is also facing an ISIL resurgence in Africa which threatens its future. After al-Zawahiri's demise, all signs indicate that the end of the terror group he led for a decade is also near. It may also inflict a major blow on the Taliban, and force the group to rethink its alliances with hardliners at a time when it is seeking international recognition. Coupled with ISIL's overall decline and the elimination of its leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Qurayshi, in Syria in February, all this underscores that transnational terror networks have passed their prime. Nonetheless, the threat of transnational terrorism is far from over and would require continuous vigilance, monitoring and kinetic interventions to degrade it as and when needed in unguarded spaces.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Greek provocations against Türkiye are anathema to peace and stability

Tarek Cherkaoui

The latest remarkable feat resulted after Ankara's months-long negotiations to reach a deal jointly with the UN, whereby Russia allows Ukraine to resume its Black Sea grain exports under a set of conditions

ANKARA'S leadership has shown prudence and deft diplomacy in sidestepping Athens' provocations. It's now time for the Mitsotakis government to adopt a pacifist agenda. At a tense news conference on July 29, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu urged Germany to be "an honest broker" and refrain from falling for Athens' propaganda in disputes between Türkiye and Greece. This exchange was just the most recent round of Greek politicking and manoeuvres to provoke a rift between Türkiye and its partners. To Athens' dismay, Türkiye has avoided many of its diplomatic booby-traps. Better still, Ankara managed to score several diplomatic successes and overturn a deck of cards that was increasingly stacked against Turkish interests in the past two years.

Crumbling alliances and arms spending spree: In late 2020, the Kyriakos Mitsotakis government spearheaded the formation of what a commentator recently termed as an "unholy alliance" against Ankara. This grouping included Greece, Greek Cypriots, Israel, and the UAE. Meanwhile, another alliance involved Athens, Paris, and Riyadh. Both these groupings aimed to put pressure on Türkiye in the Mediterranean Sea region, adding more complexity to Ankara's already tense security environment, especially since the Turkish leadership had its hands full, dealing with multi-faceted security threats in Syria, Iraq, and beyond. However, President Erdogan initiated several overtures with yesteryear adversaries, including Israel, the UAE,

Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, in a series of swift and daring diplomatic manoeuvres. These moves reduced regional tensions and allowed Ankara to focus on the most pressing security agendas, namely the threat from terrorist organisations such as the PKK and its offshoot, the YPG/PYD. The resulting dynamics surprised Greece to a large extent, as the web of alliances Athens was knitting against Ankara fell through. The overarching strategy to isolate and encircle Türkiye did not go as planned. Still, Athens managed to draw the support of some Western powers, such as France and the United States, with whom it signed defensive pacts. The Greek authorities also went on a spending spree, acquiring in the process advanced weapon systems. Athens ordered 18 fighter jets (costing 2.3 billion euros) and three frigates from France in 2021. Similarly, the Greek army procured four warships (worth \$6.9 billion) and signed a deal with the Pentagon to modernise existing frigates (a contract worth \$2.5 billion). This arms procurement frenzy suggests more bellicose designs than merely boosting a defensive posture.

Geopolitical developments favourable to Türkiye However, another development perturbed the Greek plans. Russia's incursion into Ukraine resulted in Türkiye stepping up to bring the warring sides to the negotiation table, which recently led to a crucial breakthrough in diffusing the global grain crisis. Owing to the country's geopolitical position and economic and political relations with both Russia and Ukraine, President Erdogan showed once again forward-looking strategic acumen by playing a balancing act and mediating role between Ukraine and Russia, achieving some notable successes in the process.

The latest remarkable feat resulted after Ankara's months-long negotiations to reach a deal jointly with the UN, whereby Russia allows Ukraine to resume its Black Sea grain exports under a set of conditions. This Türkiye-brokered accord will ease the global food crisis and prevent numerous low-income countries from incurring serious food shortages. Importantly, the Russo-Ukrainian conflict once again brought Türkiye's geopolitical stature to the fore, proving that it is an important NATO member that can bring solutions to complicated international tensions. Hence, many Western leaders are in no mood to entertain Greek provocations and caprices against Ankara. Several facts indicate this shift. First, Washington shelved the East Med plans. This project was not commercially viable, but many capitals, at the instigation of Athens, used it to provoke Ankara and undermine its sovereignty.

Moreover, Washington appreciated Ankara's support for Ukraine, whether through humanitarian or military assistance for Kiev or its efforts to avert Russian military vessels from entering the Black Sea. Furthermore, President Erdogan's acquiescence to accept Sweden's and Finland's applications for NATO membership was also seen favourably by US President Biden at the NATO summit in July.

Athens' aggressive stance In light of these positive developments, pro-Greece lobbies in Washington have redoubled efforts to harm US-Turkish relations. After inciting the US Congress to refrain from delivering F-35 fighters to Türkiye, the Greek government continues its bid to join the F-35 co-production programme while lobbying against a potential F-16 sale to Ankara. Furthermore, the Mitsotakis government used the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman to sign multiple accords, including military and security agreements. While the Saudi leadership hinted that these agreements are not to be understood as directed against anyone, the Greek side was mirroring them as a new victory in its alliances against Ankara's regional role. Aside from the aggressive mood in the diplomatic arena, the Mitsotakis government continues to multiply the provocations against Türkiye on the ground. Playing the victim, Athens routinely alleges incursions into its airspace, omitting in the process that Greek pilots were the originators of these provocations while Turkish pilots merely responded to Greek violations of Turkish airspace.

Another key strategic issue between the two parties is the Greek drive to militarise eastern islands in the Aegean Sea. The military consequences are not to be discarded as this Greek posture aims to isolate Türkiye's coastline and even threaten the country's interior. Turkish media has well documented the stationing of Greek troops on islands off the Anatolian coast. This militarisation has occurred in blatant violation of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) and the Paris Treaty of 1947. In the past years, Foreign Minister Cavusoglu has made it clear that the Turkish leadership will not accept 'de facto' situations in the Aegean Sea. In light of the wave of rapprochement and de-escalation that swept the region lately, it would be more productive for Athens to get rid of its self-aggrandisement and maximalist claims. Such an effort would yield far more considerable economic and strategic dividends for the Greek government than further tensions and an arms race that would drain resources in an era of global economic restraint.

Courtesy: TRT World

Briefs

PDM seeks...

FROM PAGE 01

obligations as mandated under the Pakistani statutes... The ruling coalition began demanding disqualification of and strict legal action against the PTI chief soon after the ECP announced its verdict in the case. On Tuesday, PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman pressed upon the government to "make an example" out of Imran Khan.

Govt to send...

FROM PAGE 01

Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision, which ruled that the party had indeed taken prohibited funding. "The decision [announced by the ECP] has clearly proven that PTI is a foreign-aided party," she asserted, explaining that under the law and Constitution, the government was now bound to send a declaration to the apex court.

Govt to help...

FROM PAGE 01

by downpours. Flash floods also washed away animals and household articles in several places. Extensive damage was caused to farms as well as the road infrastructure. During his visit to Tank district of DI Khan today, the prime minister urged the KP government to enhance the compensation of Rs 0.8 million for the deceased to Rs1m to bring it at par with that of the Balochistan government.

Furious...

FROM PAGE 01

as Taiwan also scrambled jets and deployed missile systems to track Chinese aircraft crossing the line. "They flew in and then flew out, again and again. They continue to harass us," the Taiwanese source said. China, which has long said it reserves the right to take Taiwan by force, says its differences with the island are an internal affair.

EU gives...

FROM PAGE 01

national authorities and civil society. The MIP will support Pakistan's Vision 2025 through a Team Europe approach together with the EU Member States. The team approach would deliver on the EU's Global Gateway at country level and support a green economic recovery by collectively investing in and transforming the sectors that generate green jobs.

Pakistan beat Scotland 3-2 to keep semifinal chances alive Pakistan will take on six-time Commonwealth Games hockey champions Australia tonight in their last Pool match

BIRMINGHAM: Pakistan men's hockey team edged out Scotland 3-2 to keep their slim chances of semifinal qualification alive in the opening match of the evening session in Birmingham on Wednesday. In a tie that ebbed and flowed in the favour of both sides it was Scotland that took an early lead, Cammy Golden scoring the opening goal in the ninth minute following a penalty corner.

Another quarter of few chances was blown open by two Pakistan goals in the space of a minute. Afraz got the leveller in the 22nd minute before Abdul Shahid got Pakistan's noses in front in 23rd minute. Suddenly on the back foot, Scotland searched for an equaliser of their own, Jamie Golden went close after some impressive skill but the players headed into half-time with Pakistan leading 2-1.

in the 38th minute to level the tie. Despite some late Pakistan pressure, in which they hit the post, the match remained level heading into the final quarter. Scotland began the final quarter searching for a goal that may have earned them their first three points of the competition. However, it was Pakistan who would get the late winner, Rooman scoring with five minutes left on the clock. There was little time for any more notable chances, Scotland played the last two minutes without a keeper as they desperately searched for another

equaliser but the game ended at 3-2, Scotland without a win in the Pool stage. Scotland sit last on the points table, while Pakistan are just ahead of them, occupying fourth spot. In another Pool A match, Australia outclassed South Africa, clinching three wins from three to secure top spot. Pakistan will take on six-time Commonwealth Games hockey champions Australia tonight in their last Pool match. Pakistan are still in with a chance of making the semi's, but will need to upset the odds and win or at least draw to keep that dream alive. - APP

Aussie upsets Pegula as Halep, Hurkacz fall

SPORTS DESK

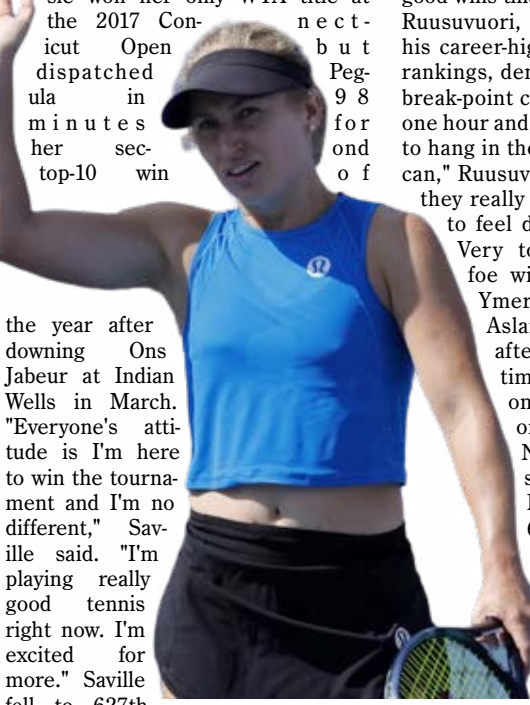
WASHINGTON: Australia's Darja Saville upset top-seeded defending champion Jessica Pegula 7-5, 6-4 on Wednesday at the ATP and WTA Washington Open, where Hubert Hurkacz and Simona Halep also exited. World number 88 Saville ripped the seventh-ranked American in hot and humid conditions while Romanian third seed Halep retired with illness down 7-5, 2-0 to Anna Kalinskaya. "I stayed really composed," Saville said. "I managed the energy really well. It was very hot. But I thought it's hot for everyone so get on with it."

many's Andrea Petkovic 6-3, 3-6, 6-1. The 28-year-old Russian-born Aussie won her only WTA title at the 2017 Connecticut Open but dispatched Pegula in 98 minutes for her second-top-10 win

the year after downsing Ons Jabeur at Indian Wells in March. "Everyone's attitude is I'm here to win the tournament and I'm no different," Saville said. "I'm playing really good tennis right now. I'm excited for more." Saville fell to 627th in the world rankings after Achilles tendon surgery that sidelined her for most of last year. Now she's into her third quarter-final of the year after Miami and Guadalajara. "I'm happy," Saville said. "It creates

good reputation. Players are going to say, 'She's playing well. She has some good wins this year.'" Ruusuvuori, set to rise one shy of his career-high to 43rd in the world rankings, denied Hurkacz on all four break-point chances to advance after one hour and 44 minutes. "I just tried to hang in there and stay as tough as can," Ruusuvuori said. "Long rallies, they really drain you and you start to feel dizzy during the points. Very tough." His third-round foe will be Sweden's Mikael Ymer, who ousted 15th seed Aslan Karatsev 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 after eliminating three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray in round one. Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka ousted Aussie 11th seed Alex De Minaur 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-2. The world number 96 will next face seventh seed Karen Khachanov. US third seed Taylor Fritz beat Australia's Alexei Popyrin 6-4, 6-3 to book a third-round match against British

16th seed Daniel Evans. World number 13 Fritz comes off a five-set Wimbledon quarter-final loss to Rafael Nadal and two weeks in a boot with a stress fracture in his left foot.



CWG: Butt wins first gold for Pakistan



BIRMINGHAM: In a show of spectacular dominance, Pakistan's weightlifter Muhammad Nooh Dastagir Butt claimed the first gold medal for Pakistan in the Commonwealth Games 2022 in men's 109+ kg category at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham on late Wednesday. The 24-year-old Pakistan powerhouse produced a stunning performance as the tightly-packed crowd roared his name. Butt, who was at his best set heavier weight targets from the outset to lift gold with a combined record-breaking total of 405kg. In the snatch portion, he kicked off his participation in style as he lifted 170kg in his first attempt with quite ease. He set a new Games record when he lifted 173kg in the second lift. The lift was reviewed on video; however, the jury confirmed it legitimate. In his final attempt, Butt thought he had registered 175kg, but it was ruled a no lift. In Clean and Jerk, Butt lifted 225kg and 232kg and did not need to go for a third lift. New Zealand's David Andrew Liti remained runner-up to win silver for his effort of 394kg (170kg+224kg), while India's Gurdeep Singh secured bronze with a total lift of 394kg (167kg+223kg). Butt had earned bronze medal in Gold Coast 2018 in what was then the 105+kg category for the heavyweights. - APP

Mbappe effect keeps PSG out of reach

WEB DESK

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe's decision to stay at Paris Saint-Germain was hailed as a boon for French football but it surely rules out any slim chance of a title race as the new Ligue 1 season kicks off this weekend. France coach Didier Deschamps said Mbappe was "shining a positive light on the championship abroad" by choosing to sign a new three-year contract to stay in his home country, a decision which President Emmanuel Macron admitted he advised the striker to take. French league president Vincent Labrune insisted Mbappe's new deal had sent "a strong message for the present and future of our league".

US basketball star jailed for nine years in Russian jail

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: A Russian court has sentenced US basketball star Brittney Griner to nine years in prison on drug charges. Griner, 31, admitted possessing cannabis oil but told the court she made an "honest mistake". But the court convicted her of smuggling and possessing narcotics, and gave her close to the maximum sentence recommended by prosecutors. Griner is a double Olympic gold medalist and is considered one of the best players in the world. She was detained in February at an airport near Moscow when vape cartridges containing cannabis oil were found in her luggage. She had come to Russia to play club basketball during the US off-season. Soon after, Russia invaded Ukraine and her case has become subject to high profile diplomacy between the US and Russia. US President Joe Biden called the sentencing "unacceptable".

dict, the presiding judge in Khimki said she took into account the fact that the American had already spent a considerable time in detention. Earlier, Griner told the court after both sides presented closing arguments: "I made an honest mistake, and I hope in your ruling it does not end my life." "I did not conspire or plan to commit this crime," she added. Griner also said she had received neither an explanation of her rights nor access to a lawyer in the initial hours of her detention, and that she had to use a translation app on her phone to communicate.



Kashmir deserves as much attention as Ukraine

Kashmiris, along with the people of both Pakistan and India, have paid a heavy price due to the conflict, which can be resolved through a UN-prescribed solution

MONITORING DESK

ANKARA: Pakistan's ambassador to Turkey said he hopes advocates of human rights and fair play will take a stand on Kashmir the same way they did in opposing Russia's war on Ukraine. Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947, but claimed by both in its entirety. The South Asian nuclear-armed nations have been to war three times over the disputed region. In August 2019, New Delhi revoked its constitutional autonomy, and split it into two federal territories. Islamabad accuses India of violating UN resolutions, and trying to change demographics of the predominantly Muslim region. "Conflicts and violations of human rights anywhere are a serious issue. On the one hand, it is good that people are talking about the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Kashmir, unfortunately, suffers from a number of issues in the sense that it's 75 years old. It is probably human nature to sometime develop fatigue over old issues," Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi told Anadolu Agency in an exclusive interview. "I believe violations of human rights anywhere are a concern for all freedom and

justice-loving people everywhere. And we hope that having looked at and examined how they took a position on the Ukraine and Russia war, these same advocates of human rights and fair play will also examine their policies toward Kashmir, which is just as deserving of attention," he said. The ambassador highlighted that more than 100,000 Kashmiris have perished in the last 30 years, the latest phase of their struggle for self-determination, including through extrajudicial killings and custodial deaths. They have also endured torture, rape and molestation, collective punishment, denial of the right of freedom of expression and denial of the right to practice their

religion, he added. "I firmly believe that denial of human rights and justice anywhere is a denial of justice and human rights everywhere. If you can stand up for country X, then you can also stand up for country Y," Qazi said. "The actions of India have been noticed by the rest of the world. Here is a democracy that is acting as if it's a totalitarian or authoritarian state with no regard for human rights or democratic norms," Qazi said. He said Kashmir by all rights, by all logic and by all appearances was to be a part of Pakistan. "The prescription is there. The UN Security Council resolutions clearly state that. Just ask about it? India claims to be the world's largest democracy. "So why is India afraid of just asking the Kashmiris (what they want) through a free, fairly administered plebiscite?" he

added. Qazi said it is the international community, particularly the UN, that needs to step up and say "enough is enough, 75 years have passed, you two don't seem to be able to solve the problem on your own." The envoy said Kashmiris, along with the people of both Pakistan and India, have paid a heavy price due to the conflict, which can be resolved through a UN-prescribed solution - a referendum. "Well, as long as it takes. Struggles for freedom have no statute of limitations. They have no time limit. There is no deadline. Now the fourth generation of Kashmiris is living under Indian occupation, and they detest the occupation just as much as the first generation. And this will continue. "Here we have Pakistan having accepted that solution. Here we have India having accepted that solution. There are innumerable statements of the Indian leadership that they will abide by the UN Security Council resolutions. Subsequently, they went back on it. So the solution is there. The only thing is that one of the three parties - and that is India - just needs to look at the problem, look at the solution and have the heart to act as a democracy in Kashmir," he added.



Khan hits...

FROM PAGE 01

had "wilfully" and "knowingly" received prohibited funding - which include a number of foreign donors. In its order, the commission also said that it was "constrained to hold that Imran Khan failed to discharge his obligations as mandated under the Pakistani statutes". Criticising the verdict, Imran claimed that PTI was the only party that raised money through political fundraising, unlike other parties (PML-N and PPP) which he said were run by "mafias". "Across the world, political parties raise money by hosting dinners," he said, explaining that the donations during those events were later given to the party. "Ask these two parties why don't they do this. I will tell you [...] because they know no one will give them money. "And this is the reason why I kept demanding that all the parties should be investigated together. The nation should know how they raise money," he said, alleging that ECP's verdict proved that it couldn't see PTI succeeding. "It is saying that that money raised by overseas Pakistanis is wrong. They are calling it foreign funding," Imran stated. "Tell me, if this money is foreign funding, then what about the remittances and the money that is sent for earthquakes and floods? "The ECP is almost saying that money sent by overseas Pakistanis will be regarded as foreign funding," he said. Talking about businessman Arif Naqvi and the Financial Times report, the PTI chief said that his party had received money in 2012 from two fundraising dinners that Naqvi had organised. He clarified that the businessman was charged with fraud six years later in 2018 and questioned how he could have known about that in 2012. He added that there was nothing wrong with the PTI receiving money from a foreign company of Naqvi in 2012 since it was still allowed at the time, adding that it only became illegal later in 2017. Scores of PTI supporters gathered at Islamabad's F-9 park on Thursday evening to protest against the ECP Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja on Imran's call. Decked in red and green scarves and bands, the crowd chanted slogans against the electoral body and demanded the resignation of all its officials.

PTI demands...

FROM PAGE 01

because only unbiased ECP could put an end on the political instability in the country. The PTI Senators and MNAs including Asad Umar, Pervez Khattak, Omar Ayub, Azam Swati, Shibli Faraz, Faisal Javed Khan, Fawad Chaudhry, Kanwal Shauzab and Sheikh Rasheed participated in the protest of PTI against the top poll body who they termed as biased toward the party. Talking to media outside ECP office, he said that the electoral body and its chief have lost the credibility and the nation trust; hence PTI submitted memorandum against the CEC Sultan Sikandar Raja to ECP officials for playing an unconstitutional, undemocratic and biased role as the CEC. Asad Umar said that the ECP was no longer functioning as a state body, but as a subsidiary of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) coalition. He urged the CEC to resign as two provincial assemblies have already passed resolutions against ECP and have cited a lack of confidence in the body. He said that PTI had come here to submit charter of demands to the commission, demanding that the members of the ECP should resign to uphold the supremacy of law and the Constitution. Asad Umar went on to say that the PTI was the largest political party in Pakistan, however even under the leadership of CEC Raja, the ECP adopted a biased attitude against the party for the past eight years and the ECP's August 2 unlawful judgment was tantamount to take revenge from the party, as overseas Pakistanis were declared foreign nationals. He said that if someone thinks that democracy could be run in Pakistan sans Imran Khan, they are living in fool's paradise.

Briefs

ASEAN
opposes
'provocative'
actions

ISTANBUL: The Southeast Asian regional bloc has opposed "provocative" actions in Taiwan Strait while backing the "one-China policy" and proposing to play its role to facilitate peaceful dialogue between all parties. "ASEAN is concerned with the international and regional volatility, especially in the recent development in the area adjacent with the ASEAN region," said 10 foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in a joint statement released by Cambodia on Thursday. Cambodia is the current chair of the ASEAN and its top diplomats are meeting in the capital Phnom Penh for their regular summit. Without directly naming the Taiwan Strait, the grouping said the developments across the strait could lead to "miscalculation, serious confrontation, open conflicts and unpredictable consequences among major powers."

The statement came as China launched four-day live-fire military exercises around self-ruled Taiwan after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi made an unannounced trip to the island nation, a first trip to the self-ruled island by a sitting US House speaker in 25 years. In 1997, Republican Newt Gingrich was the last House speaker to visit the island, which has maintained its independence since 1949. - APP

Imran Ashraf's
Insta handle
reaches 3 mln
followers

ISLAMABAD: Imran Ashraf, a well-acclaimed Pakistani actor who has won millions of hearts with his phenomenal acting and back-to-back hits, has achieved a 'digital milestone' as he garnered three million followers on Instagram. The 'Dum Mastam' starlet turned to Instagram, shared the news by posting his adorable childhood photo and penned, "From zero to 3 million followers on Instagram and for me 3 million bosses". Overwhelmed by love and support, the heartthrob extended gratitude towards fans and aimed to work with devotion, "I will keep on giving every shot with full of loyalty and keeping your love in my heart and mind". Soon after the announcement was up on the platform, fans and showbiz bigwigs started showering wishes over 'Raq's e Bismil' sensation. Social media queen, Ayeza Khan also congratulated his co-star, to which Ashraf responded, "This is in a flow" followed by a heart emoticon. "Congratulations Imran Ashraf 3 million done, you deserve many more. You performed every character very well," a fan commented on Ashraf's post. - APP

Italy's Salvini
seeks anti-
migrant votes

LAMPEDUSA: Italian anti-immigrant leader Matteo Salvini on Thursday takes his campaign for September elections to the tiny island of Lampedusa, the landing point for thousands of migrants trying to reach Europe. Dozens of overcrowded boats have arrived in and around Lampedusa in recent days from north Africa, some landing directly and others requiring rescue by the local coastguard. As often in the summer months, when the sea is calmer, the island's facilities are overwhelmed, with more than 1,500 people said to be in a reception centre designed for 350.

Salvini, who leads Italy's League party, has made stopping the arrivals the cornerstone of his platform ahead of general elections on September 25, where he is expected to gain power as part of a right-wing alliance. "Italy cannot accept tens of thousands of immigrants who only bring problems," he said on Wednesday, adding: "Italy is not Europe's refugee camp." Prime Minister Mario Draghi's outgoing government last week organised a ferry to take migrants to Sicily three times a week, and AFP on Thursday morning saw dozens of migrants being taken in buses to the port. Salvini has accused the government - which he helped bring down last month by withdrawing his support - of trying to hide the problem before he arrives. - APP

Azerbaijan says any provocation
to be dealt with an iron hand

During the operation, several combat positions of illegal Armenian armed detachments were destroyed, and an airstrike was inflicted on a military unit stationed in the Yukhari Oratagh settlement of former Aghdara region

DNA

BAKU: Members of illegal Armenian armed formations in the territory of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeeping contingent is temporarily deployed, grossly violated the provisions of the Statement of November 10, 2020, and committed a terrorist and sabotage act against the Azerbaijan Army Units on August 3. Serviceman Kazimov Anar Rustam became a martyr as a result of the terrorist and sabotage act. Moreover, members of illegal Armenian armed detachments attempted to seize the Girkhiz high ground, located on a mountain range covering the territory of the Kalbajar and Lachin regions, and establish new combat positions there. As a result of the "Revenge" retaliatory operation conducted by the Azerbaijan Army Units, the Girkhiz high ground, including Saribaba and several advantageous high grounds along the Karabakh range of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains were taken under control. Currently, Azerbaijan Army



Units are carrying out engineering work on the establishment of new positions and laying supply roads on advantageous frontiers.

During the operation, several combat positions of illegal Armenian armed detachments were destroyed, and an airstrike was

inflicted on a military unit stationed in the Yukhari Oratagh settlement of the former Aghdara region. As a result, the manpower of illegal Armenian detachments was annihilated and wounded, as well as several D-30 howitzers, military vehicles and a large amount of ammunition were destroyed. The Republic of Azerbaijan has repeatedly stated that the presence of Armenian armed forces and illegal Armenian armed formations in the territories of Azerbaijan, where peacekeepers of the Russian Federation are temporarily stationed, remains a source of danger contrary to the Joint Statement. The demilitarization of those territories, the complete withdrawal of Armenian troops, and the disarmament of illegal Armenian armed detachments are absolutely necessary. The Ministry of Defense hereby declares that following the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, any terror and provocation committed in the sovereign territories of the country will be resolutely prevented and countermeasures will be even more crushing.

Super Garuda Shield 2022
exercise officially opened

Under the banners of 14 nations, the 16th annual Garuda Shield exercise this year showcases multinational partnership and joint interoperability



ANTARA

JAKARTA: The annual joint military exercise Super Garuda Shield 2022, the cornerstone of the military partnership between the United States and Indonesia, officially kicked off on Wednesday. Under the banners of 14 nations, the 16th annual Garuda Shield exercise this year showcases

multinational partnership and joint interoperability, the US Embassy in Jakarta noted in a statement on Thursday. Expanding from a bilateral training event between the Indonesian Army and the US Army, this year's Super Garuda Shield is now one of the biggest joint, multinational exercises in the Indo-Pacific region. The strong and diverse Super Garuda Shield 2022 fea-

tures a number of "firsts," including the first ever tri-lateral airborne jump among the United States, Indonesia, and Japan, the US Embassy said in its statement. "When we are together like this, we are stronger," Commanding General of the US Army Pacific, General Charles Flynn, stated. Flynn believes that the multinational exercise's planning, opera-

tions, exchanges, and activities can help increase all participating nations' military defense capabilities and work to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific. "Together as a multinational force, Garuda Shield is an important expression of our teamwork, our interoperability, and our unity as a group of nations that seek to have a free and open Indo-Pacific and maintain a rules-based order," he remarked. The opening day ceremony of the annual military exercise showcased a formation of combined forces, highlighting the themes of joint, multinational interoperability, and partnership. Over four thousand combined forces personnel, including first-time participants Australia, Singapore, and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, are participating in support of the exercise. Other participating nations include Canada, France, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, and the United Kingdom.

Russia must
not win war
in Ukraine

DNA

BRUSSELS: NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg warned on Thursday that if Russia wins in Ukraine, it could continue the war in neighboring countries.

It is a "moral responsibility" to support Ukraine in its fight against the Russian invasion and also serves "our own interest that President (Vladimir) Putin does not succeed in his ambitions in Ukraine," Stoltenberg told a Norwegian Workers' Youth League summer camp on the island of Utoya. The world could grow more dangerous if Putin "gets what he wants by using military force," Stoltenberg warned. "If Russia wins this war, he will have confirmation that violence works. Then other neighboring countries may be next," he stated. He also rejected the Russian claims of an "aggressive and expansive NATO," explaining that its members are free, democratic countries that have chosen to join the alliance. Stoltenberg admitted that NATO countries pay a price for their support to Ukraine, but stressed that the contribution in military expenses or higher inflation is only paid in money. "The price Ukraine pays is measured in human lives," he pointed out, calling Russia's war a "brutal and bloody war of attrition." "A more dangerous world means that we have to invest more in defense, to keep the peace," Stoltenberg asserted. In June, NATO leaders agreed on the biggest overhaul of NATO's collective defense and deterrence since the Cold War. The reforms include a new deployment model, with earmarked forces pre-assigned to defend specific NATO countries, 300,000 troops at high readiness, and more pre-positioned equipment and weapon stockpiles on the eastern flank.

Greek
intelligence
confesses
wiretapping
of journalist

DNA

ANKARA: Greece's National Intelligence Service (EYP) confessed wiretapping of a journalist working for CNN Greece, local media reported on Thursday. Citing Reuters, I Avgi, a daily newspaper published in Athens, said Panagiotis Kontoleon, the head of EYP, last week told the parliament's Institutions and Transparency Committee that his agency was spying on journalist Thanasis Koukakis. The committee's closed-door hearing came after Nikos Androulakis, leader of the socialist opposition PASOK party, complained to top prosecutors about an attempt to hack his mobile phone with tracking software. Government spokesman Giannis Oikonomou asserted that Greek authorities do not use the spyware allegedly used in Koukakis' tapping, and do not do business with companies that sell it. Victim of the tapping, Koukakis, told media he does not know how he poses a national security threat as a journalist covering economy policy and banking system. The daily said Koukakis's case came to light in April and the main opposition SYRIZA-PS party called on the examination of the allegations by a parliamentary committee. Its request was rejected then, the report said, adding that only after Androulakis submitted his complaint to the prosecutors at the end of July, the plea by both SYRIZA-PS and PASOK-KINAL to convene the committee was accepted and a hearing followed.

Fear of
energy
crisis in
Switzerland

DNA

GENEVA: Switzerland, like much of Europe, depends on outside energy sources in troubling times as the world grapples with how to fuel its homes, businesses, and industries. Although it sticks to its neutrality and is not part of the European Union, Russia's war on Ukraine and its impact on energy have the Swiss worried about personal heating in the coming winter. There are also calls for the Alpine country to align more with its European neighbors. Switzerland should align with an EU plan for cutting energy consumption to cope with the fallout from the war in Ukraine, Swiss Energy Minister Simonetta Sommaruga said recently. EU countries approved a plan late last month to jointly reduce their gas consumption by 15% between August 2022 and March 2023. Although the decision does not directly commit non-EU member Switzerland, all Swiss imports of natural gas pass through the EU. "The European Commission has asked all member countries to make plans to reach the 15% target, and I am convinced that Switzerland must align itself with the European measures," Sommaruga said in an interview with the Swiss national broadcaster, RTS.

BOE Raises
Rates by Most
Since 1995

DNA

LONDON: The Bank of England on Thursday hiked interest rates 50 basis points to 1.75%, the biggest rise in 27 years, as the UK faces the highest level of inflation in 40 years. The UK inflation was 9.4% in June, with the British central bank projecting it to hit over 13% before the end of 2022. "Inflationary pressures in the UK and the rest of Europe have intensified significantly since the May monetary policy report," the bank said, adding it largely reflects a near doubling in wholesale gas prices since May due to Russia's curb of gas supplies to Europe. The gross domestic product growth in the UK is slowing, the Bank of England said, and rising gas prices has caused "another significant deterioration in the outlook for activity in the country." The bank expected the UK to enter a recession from the fourth quarter of 2022.

Turkish FM,
Blinken discuss
grain export deal

ANKARA: In a phone call, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday discussed the latest on a historic UN-backed deal to resume Ukrainian grain exports through the Black Sea. Türkiye, the UN, Russia, and Ukraine signed a deal on July 22 to reopen three Ukrainian ports for grain that has been stuck for months due to the Russia-Ukraine war, which is now in its sixth month. Cavusoglu and Blinken discussed the historic deal and latest developments on the matter, less than a day after the first ship passed an inspection in Istanbul and proceeded to Lebanon. The two also spoke about bilateral ties, according to the Turkish Foreign Ministry. Meanwhile, Blinken said on Twitter: "Spoke with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu to discuss efforts to unlock Ukrainian grain exports and alleviate the global food crisis caused by Russia's unprovoked, unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine." The historic deal came after agreement was reached between the parties on the UN-led plan during talks in Istanbul to form a coordination center to carry out joint inspections at the entrances and exits of harbors and to ensure the safety of the routes. The US State Department on Wednesday commended the UN and Türkiye "for mediating the diplomacy that resulted in today's significant step, which raises hope of bringing the millions of tons of grain stuck at Ukraine's ports to those facing food insecurity around the world." - APP



KABUL: Pakistan ambassador to Afghanistan, Mansoor Ahmad Khan visited Noor Eye Hospital, Kabul to see the working of free medical eye camp arranged by AIKhidmat Foundation Pakistan. - DNA

Pakistan firmly stands by China: Report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, Russia and North Korea have issued strong statements to express solidarity with China, opposing Pelosi's Taiwan visit, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday. Other regional countries such as UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, with an economic future linked to China, are rapidly moving close to Beijing's position on Taiwan and other international issues. These countries also attended the Beijing Winter Olympics in February 2022, rejecting the American call for a boycott. While China continues to have a rock-solid support in Asia, from the Solomon Islands to Saudi Arabia, the US is losing its allies fast. Pakistan reaffirms its strong commitment to the "One-China" Policy and firmly supports China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Though the

economic crunch has made Pakistan soften its stance on many international and regional issues, its commitment towards China is unequivocal, uncompromising, and unflinching and that is not subject to any sort of pressure. One more thing needs to be made clear. Pakistan-China relations are strategic while Pakistan-US ties are tactical. Pakistan's relationship with China is based on mutual interests and mutual benefit. The US, on the other hand, uses its relationship with countries to its own advantage. The visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has triggered off tensions in and around the Taiwan Strait and would have far-reaching implications. This is an act of blatant provocation challenging the sovereignty of the world's second biggest economic and military power. The ill-planned visit only reflected its arrogance and its spite intention to infringe upon China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. While the world is still assess-

ing and examining the objectives of the visit, one can understand that the US plans to provoke China and test its resolve in defending its geographical boundaries and sovereignty. This visit may further destabilise the already polarised Asian region. This also proves that the arrogance of the US is touching new heights. China till date has given a measured response showcasing its maturity in the international arena and strong resolve to defend its sovereignty. It is heartening to note that Beijing has refused to be lured into the US trap. Nancy's visit also reflects the hidden frustration of the Biden administration after the failure of its policy to mobilise the world against Russia in the wake of the ongoing Ukraine war. It is also clear that the overarching long-term objective of the US is to throw the Asia region into turmoil, which is the fastest developing region in the world. Perhaps the US policymakers want the Asia Pacific to suffer

so that the rise of China could be slowed down. However, the US policymakers need to realize the fact that China cannot be isolated and its development cannot be slowed down as China has enlarged its influence across the world especially in the developing countries. Pakistan, Russia and North Korea have issued strong statements to express solidarity with China, opposing Pelosi's Taiwan visit. Contrary to what Pelosi has said in Taiwan, in 1971, the US affirmed to China that it would pursue new principles with regard to the Taiwan question, which include: the United States would acknowledge that there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is a part of China, and the U.S. side would not support any "Taiwan independence" movement. In the August 17 Communiqué released in 1982, the US reiterates that it has no intention of infringing on Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity, or interfering

in China's internal affairs, or pursuing a policy of 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan'. Four decades have passed, and the US failed to honor its commitments. The US policymakers need to acknowledge the fact that there is a world beyond America. They must know that power has a shelf life and the US is exhausting it. Cracks are already emerging and the US imperialism is imploding. It would soon be no more in a position to invade and steal the resources of the developing and sovereign nations at will. The war against humanity must come to an end. The world is speaking up now. People at world's top organisations like the IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organisation, United Nations and its affiliate organisations used to be handpicked by the US to protect and promote the interests of the US and its allies. But the world is changing now. The US mindset needs to change before it's too late, the report added.

Briefs

Taliban says did not know al-Qaeda leader was in Kabul

DNA

KABUL: The Afghan Taliban has issued its first official comments on the killing of al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in a US drone strike on Kabul, saying the group had no knowledge of the wanted militant's presence in the Afghan capital. In a statement, Taliban senior spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that the group has instructed its investigative and intelligence agencies to conduct thorough and comprehensive probes on various aspects of this case. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has no information about Ayman al-Zawahiri's arrival and stay in Kabul," he added. According to him, no country, including the United States, is under threat from Afghanistan. Furthermore, he said that the Taliban intended to put the Doha Agreement into effect and that its violations had to stop.

Rupee recovers Rs 2.74 against dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan rupee on Thursday recovered Rs 2.72 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 226.15 against the previous day's closing of Rs 228.79. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 217 and Rs 220 respectively. The price of Euro decreased by Rs 2.83 and closed at Rs 230.24 against the last day's closing of Rs 233.07. The Japanese Yen lost 03 paise to close at Rs 1.68, whereas a decrease of Rs 3.86 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 274.91 as compared to its last closing of Rs 278.77. — APP

Govt mulls changing petrol price weekly

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government is considering changing the review process of the price of petroleum products from bi-monthly to weekly, media reported citing Finance Ministry sources. As cash-strapped Pakistan desperately seeks loans to boost depleting forex reserves, the sources said that the change to the review process is a pre-condition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the seventh and eighth reviews. The change will come into place only after the federal cabinet's approval, the sources said, as the government seeks to shift the advantage/burden of the change in international oil prices to the masses.

Pakistan calls upon India to reverse illegal action of Aug 5

Asim Iftikhar said despite all these actions, India has miserably failed to dampen the resilient spirit of the Kashmiri people, who continue to stand firm in their total rejection of Indian illegal occupation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Asim Iftikhar has called upon India to reverse its illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019 and take necessary steps to create an environment conducive for meaningful dialogue for peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute. Speaking at his weekly news briefing in Islamabad this afternoon, he said India has issued millions of fake domiciles aimed at demographic engineering in order to turn the Kashmiri Muslim majority into a minority in their own land. He said India has employed censorship, and crackdown on civil society, human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists, who are harassed and persecuted under the draconian laws. The Spokesperson said New Delhi's illegal steps to undermine the internationally recognized disputed status of occu-

Pakistan to mark Youm-e-Istehsal today

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will observe Youm-e-Istehsal on August 5 (Thursday) to mark the third year of Indian military siege of Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and denounce illegal, immoral and unconstitutional step to strip its special status. The government has planned a series of activities including seminars and conferences to mark the Youm-e-Istehsal and express solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiri people while rallies in their support would be staged across the country with vibrant participation of people from all walks of life. The whole nation will give a message to their Kashmiri brethren that the people of Pakistan would always stand with them in their just struggle for right to independence and against the atrocities committed by the Indian forces. Kashmiri people on both sides of the Line of Control and all over the world will also observe Youm-e-Istehsal to condemn unconstitutional step taken by India on August 5, 2019. The activists of all the political parties of the country will record protest over Indian state terrorism meted out against innocent and unarmed people of IIOJK through rallies and other activities. The civil society organizations will also arrange seminars and other programs to highlight gross human rights violations against the Kashmiri people. — DNA

pled Jammu and Kashmir and to alter the demographic structure of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in violation of international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. He said Since August 2019, at least 660 Kashmiris have been martyred by Indian occupation forces in IIOJK. Asim Iftikhar said despite all these actions, India has miserably failed to dampen the resilient spirit of the Kashmiri people, who continue to stand firm in their total rejection of Indian illegal occupation. He said the Pakistani nation will join the Kashmiris in IIOJK, Azad Kashmir and the world over in solemnly observing Youm-e-Istehsal to denounce Indian atrocities. Paying rich tributes to Kashmiris' struggle, the Spokesperson assure Pakistan's unambiguous, steadfast and all possible support for the realization of their right to self-determination.

AI accuses Ukraine of basing troops in residential areas

DNA

KYIV: Human rights group Amnesty International accused Ukraine on Thursday of endangering civilians by basing troops in residential areas during Russia's invasion in a report that Kyiv likened to Russian propaganda and disinformation. Amnesty workers witnessed Ukrainian forces "establishing bases and operating weapons systems" in some populated residential areas during visits to several frontline areas in Ukraine's east and south from April to July, the report said. "We have documented a pattern of Ukrainian forces putting civilians at risk and violating the laws of war when they operate in populated areas," the report quoted Agnes Callamard, Amnesty International's secretary general, as saying. She called on the Ukrainian government to ensure that its forces were located away from populated areas or for all civilians to be evacuated from those areas first. The report angered several senior Ukrainian politicians. "When there is no analysis of the actions of the enemy in a text about the activities of the Ukrainian armed forces during the war, it is like studying the actions of the victim without considering the actions of an armed rapist," said Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maljar. Presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak accused Amnesty of "participating in (Russia's) disinformation and propaganda campaign". In separate comments to Reuters, he said Ukraine strictly adhered to all the laws of war and international humanitarian law, and that Ukraine was "taking all measures" to evacuate civilians from frontline areas.

Hungarian Defence chief calls on Air Chief



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Lieutenant General Romulusz Ruszin-Szendi, Commander Defence Forces of Hungary called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office. The visiting dignitary appreciated sound professionalism of PAF personnel and also acknowledged the achievements

made by PAF over the years, especially through indigenization. The Air Chief highlighted that both countries enjoy cordial relations and reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral cooperation between the PAF and Hungarian Air Force. Both the dignitaries agreed to further revitalize defence ties including training and indigenous production. Various matters of professional interest and regional security also came under discussion during the meeting.

Afghan business people laud Pakistan's facilitation

DNA

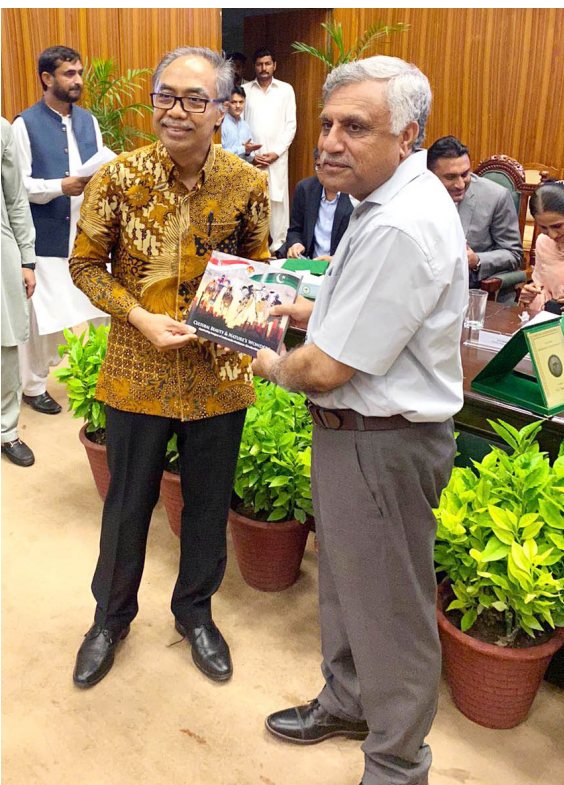
ISLAMABAD: The government of Pakistan is working effortlessly to ensure smooth trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan". This was noted by the Director General Transit Trade Pakistan, Mr. Iftikhar Ahmed during the Focus Group Discussion on Pak-Afghan Trade & Transit held by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), as part of its Beyond Boundaries Pak-Afghan Regional Economic Connectivity initiative. During interaction with the Pakistan government officials, the Afghan business stakeholders tabled concerns regarding existing challenges in bilateral and transit trade. The government officials acknowledged CRSS's efforts in bringing relevant stakeholders from Afghanistan and holding such crucial discussions through the forum of Beyond Boundaries.

The Afghan delegates were given a tour of Karachi Port Terminal (KPT) Head Office, Karachi International Port Terminal (KIPT), and South Asia Pakistan Terminal (SAPT) to apprise them of Pakistan's on-ground facilitation and mechanisms for trade and transit with Afghanistan and other countries. Mr. Khan Jan Alokzai, Co-Chairman, Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce, and Industry (PAJCCI) said that Pakistan has been playing a momentous role in bilateral and transit trade, especially under such unprecedented circumstances. Speaking at the event, Mr. Zubair Motiwala, Chairman of Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industries (PAJCCI) stated, "To achieve the trade potential and produce tangible results, we need to use a proactive & pragmatic approach toward ongoing economic challenges, especially in the context of bilateral trade quantum and relationship".

Protesters mark two years since Beirut blast

BEIRUT: Thousands of protesters marched tearfully in the Lebanese capital on Thursday, marking two years since a cataclysmic explosion at the Beirut port, with chants denouncing the government's failure to uncover the truth behind the blast. In a grim reminder of the disaster, several grain silos that were left heavily damaged by the blast collapsed on Thursday afternoon, only hundreds of metres away from where crowds were gathering at the city's waterfront. The concrete silos cracked and fell, sending a cloud of smoke into the sky. Protesters covered their mouths in disbelief. "Seeing the smoke coming out — especially that I was here during the blast — triggers a very bad memory. It was the same smoke coming from the silos up to the sky," said 31-year-old protester Samer al-Khoury. The protesters, wearing t-shirts stamped with blood-red handprints, were marching from Lebanon's justice ministry to the city's waterfront and then to parliament in the centre of Beirut. The blast flattened swathes of the city on Aug 4, 2020, killing at least 220 people. One of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history, it was caused by massive stores of ammonium nitrate kept at the site in the port and neglected since 2013. "It's important for me to be here today because it's very important for us to ask for justice and accountability for what happened," said Stephanie Moukheiber, 27, a Lebanese woman living in Canada for the last decade, who decided to spend the summer in Lebanon. — DNA

Indonesian envoy highlights Pak-ASEAN bilateral co-op



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Ambassador Adam Tugjo participated in the inaugural session of the Policy Dialogue Forum (PDF) of Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University. Addressing the Forum, the Envoy commended the initiative by the University to establish PDF as an intellectual platform for engaging youth millennials and women to give positive contributions to the socio-economic development of Pakistan. The Envoy highlighted a state of bilateral cooperation and its potential to elevate it further and through Pakistan's engagement with ASEAN. "As the two biggest Muslim population countries, Indonesia and Pakistan shared a lot in common from customs to traditions and from costumes to cuisines", added Ambassador Tugjo. He further encouraged the Forum to give contributions for the implementation of Pakistan's Look East Policy, noting the importance of economic connectivity in the world today either by joining regional trade blocking or by signing bilateral PTA or FTA. The inaugural session was officiated by Prof. Dr. Qamar-uz-Zaman (Vice Chancellor of PMAS-AAUR). Other speakers for this session were H.E. Ms. Naeela Chohan (Former First Female Ambassador of Pakistan), Mr. Nabeel Afzaal (General Manager, Ministry of Telecom & Information Technology), Prof. Dr. Abdul Saboor (Dean Faculty of Social Sciences), Mr. Mureed Hussain Jasra (Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Finance), Mr. Aoun Abbas (Director Current Affairs, PTV News & PTV World), Mr. Shakeel Ahmad Ramay (Chief Executive Officer of AIEDR) and Dr. Ghulam Hussain Baber (Principal Officer Directorate of Students Affairs). Senior faculty members and students of PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi participated in the Forum.

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