

# Islamabad POST

Saturday, June 10, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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**Trump indicted in classified documents probe**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Palestinian President to visit China**

Detailed News On Page-07

**China warns Europe against Taiwan ties**

Detailed News On Page-08



**'No new taxes'**

## Govt presents Rs14.4 trillion federal budget

Minimum wage increased to Rs32,000, Fiscal deficit balloons to Rs6,923bn, Govt employees to get up to 35% salary raise

**Rs 42.41 billing reserved for polls this year**

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has allocated around Rs42.41 billion in the next fiscal year's budget for the upcoming general elections – probably falling in October or November of 2023. It has also reserved a sum of Rs15 billion for the security of the polls. According to the details, an amount of over Rs5.60 billion has been allocated for the project management unit and voting in the budget. More than a sum of Rs4.83 billion has been reserved for the printing of ballot papers. Similarly, an amount of Rs270 million has been allocated for the printing of election lists. The federal government has also reserved Rs1.79 billion for the election training wing. An amount of more than Rs500 million has been allocated for media coordination. It has also reserved a sum of over Rs1.2 billion in the next budget for election preparations.

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar Friday unboxed a Rs14.46 trillion budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, introducing "no new taxes" and envisaging an economic growth of 3.5% as the crisis-riven country looks to persuade the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to release more bailout money. "We took and are still taking tough decisions which rescued the economy from default," he reiterated – a statement that the incumbent rulers have stressed time and again.

**Key takeaways**

- No increase in duties on the import of essential items.
- Customs duties on raw materials of diapers, sanitary napkins exempted.
- Customs duty reduced from 10% to 5% on non-localised (CKD) heavy commercial vehicles (HCVs).
- Payments made through credit/debit cards to restaurants/resorts to be taxed at 5%.
- Filing of sales tax return for availing concessionary fixed tax rate of 0.25% for IT & ITeS exports not required anymore.

Continued on Page 06

**Salient features of ICT tax on services measures, reliefs**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Following are the proposed budgetary measures pertaining to ICT (Tax on Services) Ordinance, 2001 for FY 2023-24 -Services provided by restaurants including cafes, food (including ice-cream) parlors, coffee houses, coffee shops, de-ras, food huts, eateries, resorts and similar cooked, prepared or ready-to-eat food service outlets etc. are proposed to be taxed @ 5% if payment is made through debit or credit cards, mobile wallets or QR scanning.

**REVENUE MEASURES:**  
-Electric power transmission services are proposed to be taxed @ 15%.

**STREAMLINING MEASURES:**  
-Granting the status of cottage industry to the freelance exporter of IT and IT enabled services. Such freelance exporters will not be required to

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif signing the Budget 2023-24 documents after its approval by the Cabinet to be laid before the National Assembly. – DNA

**Nawaz to return before polls: Rana**

Says Khan Sahib has played with the politics of this country

FAISAL SHAIKH

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Friday that Nawaz Sharif would return to Pakistan 60 to 90 days before the general elections. "Mian Sahib will give the date of his return. No one can give the date of return to Mian Sahib," the interior minister stated. While commenting on the formation of a new party, he said that they all had gathered in one party in 2018. "Why to worry when they have gathered in another party," he added. "They will gradually learn that their own stage has turned upside down," he said about the PTI defectors. "Khan Sahib has played with the politics of this country. He brought hatred and rudeness into politics. He wanted to make the country meet a disaster, [but] he himself met a disaster," he stated. "Mian Sahib has accepted the request to lead the party [PML-N] in the elections," he declared, adding that Mian Sahib would return to Pakistan 60 to 90 days before the general elections. "If PML-N gets the majority [in the elections], the prime minister will be the one whom Nawaz Sharif wants to be the prime minister," he said. "The party has not taken any decision on political alliance or seat adjustment in the general elections," he declared. "My personal opinion is that the PML-N should not form an electoral alliance with any party. Seat adjustment is possible, and we should keep this option open," he suggested.

**IMF gives verbal assurance on loan revival, says PM**

Says the govt is cognizant of common man problems

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said a verbal agreement has reached with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for signing the new agreement. Addressing to a cabinet meeting called for the approval of the 2023-24 budget, PM Shehbaz hoped that the new agreement with the IMF will be signed by the month end. He said the government has fulfilled all the conditions of the IMF. Criticising PTI government of the past, he said that the PTI government destroyed Pakistani economy that resulted into historic inflation. He said the historic inflation has increased the suffering of the poor manifold. Prime Minister Shehbaz said a country's sound economic growth was linked with its political stability. "Without political stability, even billions of budget could not make a difference in improving the economic situation," he said.

Continued on Page 06

**Budget to restart journey of progress: Marriyum**

Says four years of PTI ushered in destruction

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said the federal budget for fiscal year 2023-24 would restart the journey of progress and development in the country which had witnessed

Continued on Page 06

**Briefs**

**Khattak to be made IPP secy gen**

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: PTI bigwig Pervez Khattak is likely to be made secretary general of the newly-established Istihkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) led by Jahangir Tareen, sources told media on Friday. The sources confirmed that the PTI stalwart has been in touch with the sugar baron for "many days" and will join the new party along with his colleagues. The development comes less than two weeks after Khattak announced in a presser that he was stepping down from his position as president of the party's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter.

**Seat adjustment possible with IPP**

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif hinted at the possibility of the Nawaz League's seat adjustment with Jahangir Khan Tareen's newly announced political party, the Istihkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) in upcoming elections. According to a private TV channel, he talked to the media persons before the National Assembly's budget session in Islamabad on Friday.

**Holiday Notice**

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

– Editor

## PTI terms budget Jugglery of words

Hammad blasts prime minister for taking credit FATF grey list success

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Hammad Azhar said that all targets in this budget were artificial and not realistic like last year, besides finance minister did not outline any plan to reduce inflation or to save the sinking economy. In a reaction to Ishaq Dar's budget speech on Friday, Hammad said: "All targets in this budget are artificial and not realistic like last year." He said that targets regarding economic growth, tax collection, inflation rate, imports and remittances were written only to balance the budget, as they had nothing to do with reality. Similarly, he said that there was a figure fudging of Rs. 1,000 billion in the amount of interest payments and non-tax revenue. Hammad Azhar stated that the finance minister did not outline any plan to reduce inflation or save the sinking economy, as the industrial production fell by 25% in the last two months due to the ban on the import of raw materials and the shrinking economy.

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## No one buying FM's mumbo jumbo: PTI

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson said that they expected Ishaq Dar to hand over his resignation and apologize to the nation for unleashing record-high 38% inflation on the citizens, crippling the economy with 0% growth and taking the economy on the brink of default with SBP reserves falling below \$ 4 billion. In response to Ishaq Dar press conference, PTI spokesperson said that the Economic Survey FY2023 paints a truly dismal picture of the economy. Under the PDM government, economic

Continued on Page 06

## Counterattack: Russia reports fighting, Kyiv keeps a mum

Moscow and pro-war Russian bloggers reported intense battles on Friday on Zaporizhzhia front near city of Orikhiv

CENTRELINE REPORT

KYIV: Russia reported heavy fighting along the front in southern Ukraine on Friday, where bloggers described the first sightings of German and U.S. armour, signalling that Ukraine's long-anticipated counterattack was under way. With virtually no independent reporting from the front lines and Kyiv maintaining a strict policy of silence, it was impossible to assess whether Ukraine was having success in penetrating Russian defences to drive out occupying forces. The counteroffensive is ultimately expected to involve thousands of Ukrainian troops trained and equipped by the West. Russia, which has had months to prepare its defensive lines, says it has repelled attacks since the start of the week. Kyiv has so far said its main effort has yet to begin. Moscow and pro-war Russian bloggers reported intense battles on Friday on the Zaporizhzhia front near the city of Orikhiv, around the mid-point of the "land bridge" linking Russia to the Crimea peninsula, seen as one of Ukraine's likeliest targets. Ben Barry, senior fellow for land warfare at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said

Continued on Page 06

## US announces additional \$2bn aid package

WASHINGTON: The package would include critical air defence and ammunition capabilities, including Hawk air defence systems and missiles, unmanned aerial systems and laser-guided rocket munitions. The package will also include support for training and maintenance, the Defense Department said in a statement. It is being provided under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) and marks the beginning of a contracting process to provide additional priority capabilities to Ukraine. "The United States will continue to work with its allies and partners to provide Ukraine with capabilities to meet its immediate battlefield needs and longer-term security assistance requirements," the Pentagon statement concluded. – DNA

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# Govt providing facilities for survivors of GBV

PESHAWAR: The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is providing facilities to help survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) learn skills that will help them become more self-reliant. This was stated by Deputy Secretary (DS) of Social Welfare & Women's Empowerment (SWWE) Warda Latif at the consultation on "Protection and Response Mechanism for GBV Survivors" organized by the Aawaz II programme here. The event brought together more than sixty women, persons with disabilities, transgender persons, and religious minorities from across the province, including the districts of Peshawar, Nowshera, Buner, Lower Dir, Abbottabad, Mardan, Malakand and Kohat. DS explained, "Around 125 industrial training centres have been upgraded to provide advanced skills for GBV survivors, linking them directly to the market, which is a substantial step towards reintegrating violence survivors in society." She also gave details of efforts to expand and improve Dar-ul-Aman

and extend the outreach of the Bolo Helpline. Aawaz II has its presence in 14 districts of KP, with a focus on addressing issues related to GBV violence, child marriages and social cohesion." "The programme has established volunteer forums at village, district and provincial levels which link service providers with the community to respond to their needs directly," shared Rafat Yasmin, Gender and Inclusion Advisor, Aawaz II. "District Committees on the Status of Women (DCSW) have been nominated in all districts of KP, but their official notification is pending due to the need for amending the KPSCW (KP Commission on the Status of Women) law to align the DCSW with KP's local government law," stated Amna Durrani, Director Programmes, KP Commission on the Status of Women. Programme Analyst Gender/GBV from UNFPA Office Zikriya said, "Government departments like Police, Health and Social Welfare must have strong coordination at multiple levels to ensure effective delivery of

services for protection and response to GBV." "UNFPA is supporting the Social Welfare Department in developing a database for Dar-ul-Aman and Bolo Helpline," he added. Participants from 14 districts in KP shared their challenges in accessing government facilities and put forward recommendations to enhance services. The recommendation was to ensure that women and transgender persons facing violence are facilitated in registering First Information Reports (FIRs) by setting up dedicated desks or assigning trained personnel at police stations to handle gender-based violence (GBV) cases sensitively and efficiently. Improve accessibility of Dar-ul-Aman (shelters) for Women with Disabilities and provide training and sensitization to the staff working with women with disabilities to address their needs effectively. Moreover, to establish specialized safe homes designed specifically for transgender persons to provide them with protection, support, and opportunities for skill development.—APP

# CM attends passing-out parade of 24th police batch

DNA

LAHORE: The Elite Police Training School organised a passing-out parade for the 24th batch of police officials, comprising 39 women and 542 men, who completed the basic elite combat course. Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi was the chief guest at the ceremony on Friday. He observed demonstra-

tions of martial arts, firing techniques, counter-terrorism operations, and other skills and commended the professionalism displayed by the police officials. The graduating jawans saluted the CM as he examined the passing-out parade, distributing awards to the best performers. In his address, the CM congratulated the officials and urged them to fulfill their duties diligently in the fight

against criminals. He highlighted several initiatives undertaken in the past four months for the improvement of the police force and assured that the government would prioritize addressing other issues related to the police. The chief minister announced an increase in the allowance for the Elite police force to Rs 10,000 and promised its approval in the upcoming cabinet

meeting. He also mentioned the development of a service structure for the Special Branch and the removal of the shortage of instructors and trainers at the Elite Police Training School. More measures will also be taken with the permission of the election commission. Additionally, night-vision gear will be procured for the Elite police force to enhance their night time operations, he added.



# Balighur Rehman hosts Turkish academics at Governor's House

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman on Friday hosted Dr Mustafa Ayden of the Eurasian University Union from Turkey at the Governor's House. Rectors and academics of private sector universities were also present. The governor said the government was paying special attention to promote higher education in the country and bring it on a par with the international standards. He said as the chancellor, he had taken various measures for improvement of universities in the public and private sector in Punjab. The governor said he had formed consortia on the seven most important ar-

reas and the universities are working together on these consortia. He said that he was focusing on promoting synergy between the universities, adding that the public and private sector universities could benefit better from each other's experiences. Balighur Rehman said Pakistan and Turkiye had unprecedented historical and fraternal relations, adding that the two countries are bound in a strong relationship in terms of religion, culture and history. Dr Mustafa Ayden of the Western University Union, speaking on the occasion, said there is great potential in higher education in Pakistan.

Dr. Mustafa Aiden said that the meetings with university authorities in Lahore remained very useful. He said that thousands of Pakistani students are studying in Turkish universities. He said that the private sector was playing important role in promotion of higher education. Dr. Mustafa Ayden said that Lahore is a historical city and there is great learning opportunity by seeing the historical places here. He said that Pakistan was the first to help the earthquake victims in Turkey. He said that the people of Turkiye could not forget the love of Pakistanis for them. Dr. Mustafa Ayden thanked

the Punjab governor for inviting him to Governor's House and invited his host to attend the conference in Turkiye as a special guest. Chairman Superior University Prof. Dr. Chaudhry Abdul Rehman said that Dr. Mustafa Ayden's visit to Pakistan would create opportunities for further improvement in the higher education sector of the country. The Punjab governor presented a souvenir to Dr. Mustafa Ayden. His wife presented a traditional Punjab chador (shawl) to the wife of Dr. Mustafa Ayden while Dr. Mustafa Ayden presented traditional Turkish souvenirs to the governor.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf Saeed Al-Malki meets with the Ambassador of Sudan, Saleh Muhammad Ahmed Muhammad Siddique. — DNA

# Sherry exhorts fishermen to avoid venturing in open sea

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday advised the fishermen in the coastal areas of the country to avoid venturing into the open sea due to prevailing tropical cyclone BIPARJOY formed over Southeast Arabian Sea. In her message regarding the cyclone, the federal minister said as per the weather advisory issued by Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Cyclone Biparjoy was moving towards north and northeast after changing its direction. Senator Rehman said the cyclone might move further towards Pakistan's Makran coast as it continued to change and it may intensify further. She added that the fishermen were advised not to venture out into the open sea from Monday, June 12 until the system passes over the Arabian Sea. "Coastal areas may be affected due to high tides. All concerned authorities especially PDMA Sindh and Balochistan are advised to review the preparations. Ensure public safety for people living in coastal areas and create awareness among people," Sherry Rehman said. She also underlined that there was a possibility of rain, thunder and strong winds from the night of June 13 to the morning of June 14 in the coastal area of Sindh and Makran. "We are vigilant and continuously monitoring the storm and also collecting information from 6 international sources," Sherry Rehman added.—DNA

# ATC dismisses bail petitions of 18

LAHORE:

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday dismissed post-arrest bail petitions of 18 accused involved in setting a container on fire at Kalma Chowk, during May-9 riots. The court dismissed bail petitions of accused, including Ali Raza, Salman Khan, Ameer Hamza, Ammar Masood, Zareef Khan, Nadeem, Ali Hassan, Ghulam Mohiud Din, Sarfraz, Shahid Fareed, Javed, Abdul Samad, Shabir and Nauman Butt. However, the court granted post-arrest bail to 12 accused and ordered them to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each for obtaining the relief.—APP

# Indian Sikh pilgrims arrived in Hassanabdal to offer religious rituals

DNA

WAH CANTT: Around 170 Sikh pilgrims arrived at Hassan Abdal to offer their religious rituals in connection to 174th death anniversary of Guru Arjan Dev also known as Jore Mela aimed strict security measures. Upon their arrival officials of local administration, Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) and the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC), local administration welcome them. Speaking

on the occasion, the Party leader of Sikh yatrees Sardar Gurbachan Singh said that Pakistan was their second home for Sikhs living in all around the world. Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) deputy secretary Shri Saif Ullah Khokhar has said that the Sikh pilgrim would leave for Gurdwara Nanaka Sahib on June 10. He assured that the Sikh pilgrims would be provided with the best facilities during their 10-day stay in the country. He said that Pakistan remains committed to pre-

serving sacred religious places as well as providing necessary facilitation to the visiting pilgrims. Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC) Pardan Sardar Amir Singh said that the main event of Jore Mela and rituals in connection to 174th death anniversary of Guru Arjan Dev – 5th of 11 Sikh guru will be held on June 16 at Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Lahore. The pilgrims will also visit other holy sites including Gurdwara Nankana Sahib and Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib.

# Sub-committee on aviation makes recommendations on alleged fake pilot licenses

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Sub-Committee on Aviation, chaired by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, has successfully concluded its proceedings on the issue of alleged fake pilot licenses. The committee convened to examine and analyze the matter, aiming to find a resolution that upholds the integrity of the aviation sector and safeguards the future of affected pilots. During the discussions, the Director-General of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) reiterated that the CAA has administrative powers and is not involved in any criminal actions. Following the directions of the Cabinet

Division and the Supreme Court, the CAA wrote a letter to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to initiate appropriate action. The Director-General stressed the importance of fixing a time limit for canceled licenses. The CAA is currently amending its rules, and a summary will be presented to the Cabinet for approval. It was clarified that the licenses of pilots were canceled by the Cabinet Division and not by the CAA, he underlined. Pilots without any FIRs against them will be cleared, he added. Senator Mandviwalla emphasized the urgent need for a swift

resolution to protect the affected pilots, as their future hangs in the balance. He highlighted that the court is awaiting the findings and report of the committee, urging a prompt solution to the issue. Furthermore, he expressed concern over the negative impact this matter is having on the country's reputation and the national carrier. The representative from FIA stated that they cannot withdraw cases against the accused license holders. Senator Mandviwalla called for granting relief to innocent license holders, urging the FIA to persuade those who have obtained court stays.—DNA

# Newly commissioned PNS Shahjahan arrives Karachi

KARACHI: Newly commissioned Pakistan Navy Ship SHAHJAHAN has arrived Karachi. PNS SHAHJAHAN was commissioned on 10 May 23 in a graceful ceremony held at Shanghai, China which was attended by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi as Chief Guest.

During her maiden voyage to Pakistan, PNS SHAHJAHAN visited Malaysia and participated in Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) along with other 30 participating countries. During the stay at Langkawi, ship was visited by various dignitaries, delegates and locals. Later,

PNS SHAHJAHAN visited Colombo, Sri Lanka. The visit was aimed at strengthening bilateral ties, enhancing interoperability and exploring new vistas of cooperation between the two navies. Upon arrival at Colombo, Pakistan Navy Ship was warmly welcomed by officials of Sri Lankan Navy.—DNA

# Govt spends over Rs 1598m in FY2022-23 for media advancement


ISLAMABAD: The federal government has so far spent an amount of Rs 1598.116 million in the fiscal year 2022-23 to execute multiple projects of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the advancement of the media sector. According to a budgetary document unveiled here Friday, an amount of Rs 2100 million was allocated in PSDP 2022-23 for five ongoing and twelve new projects of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, aimed at improving production, transmission, quality of audio signals, increasing the coverage area of radio network and digitalization of terrestrial network of Pakistan Television Corporation (PTVC). These projects were also aimed at upgrading and restructuring of Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), imparting training to the media professionals and

journalists, capacity building of the officers and officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and promotion of local film industry. Six out of the 17 projects are expected to be completed by June, 2023 while the remaining 11 will be carried over to the next financial year 2023-24. Under PSDP 2022-23, an amount of Rs 204.650 million was allocated to PTVC for one each ongoing and new project. The ongoing project was aimed to digitalize the terrestrial network of PTVC, while the new project titled "Establishment of National Film Institute at PTV Academy, Islamabad" sought to establish an integrated production and post-production facility as well as an academy to impart training in film trades in the premises of PTV Academy H-9, Islamabad. For Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), under

PSDP 2022-23, an amount of Rs 562.777 million was allocated to three each ongoing and new projects. The three ongoing projects of PBC were aimed to strengthen radio coverage in the uncovered areas of Balochistan (Gwadar) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir through installation of digital-enabled medium wave transmitters. As far as the three new projects of PBC are concerned, the first one pertains to establishment of Saut-ul-Quran FM network phase-II to transmit the marathon transmission of Holy Quran through FM network in 19 districts across the country. An amount of Rs 212.777 million was earmarked to the project for completion. The second project titled "Up-gradation of Studios and Master Control Room of PBC" sought to renovate the studios and master control room, replace outdated

equipment and upgrade the signal and sound quality of the programs. An amount of Rs 100 million was allocated to the project which has been utilized on the renovation of the studios and purchasing of electric power and other equipment for the said project. The third project, titled "Rehabilitation of Medium Wave Services from Khairpur" aimed to promote local language and culture and strengthen radio coverage in uncovered areas of the Khairpur District and counter cross border propaganda. An amount of Rs 100 million was allocated to the project. The released amounts have been utilized on civil work of the Broadcasting House Khairpur and procurement of electric power and other equipment. Under PSDP 2022-23, an amount of Rs 162.709 million was allocated to one ongoing and two new projects of Press Infor-

mation Department (PID). The project titled "Establishment of Pakistan Information Centre Phase-I" aims to establish Information Centres for imparting training and capacity building of media professionals/journalists at seven cities including Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The project is nearing completion as the trainings and workshops have been conducted for journalists and media practitioners at all seven locations. The second project titled "Establishment of PID Media Cell to Counter Violent Extremism" is part of the National Security Policy Implementation Plan. Work on the project is in progress. The entire balance cost of Rs 298.956 million was given to the project titled "Restructuring of News Operations of APP by Replacing Existing Outdated.—



**Job Opportunities**  
(Teaching Positions / Administrative)  
Advertisement No. 1/2023

Applications are invited for following Administrative / Teaching positions at Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi on BS/Contract basis. Application forms, detailed terms and conditions are available at the University website i.e. [www.fjwu.edu.pk](http://www.fjwu.edu.pk)

- (i) Assistant Professor (BS-19)  
(Public Health, Biotechnology, Bioinformatics, Behavioral Sciences (Applied Psychology))
- (ii) Lecturer (BS-18)  
(Public Health, Biotechnology, Bioinformatics, Behavioral Sciences (Applied Psychology))
- (iii) Deputy Director Administration & Coordination (BS-18)
- (iv) Deputy Director (Academics) (BS-18)
- (v) Deputy Treasurer (BS-18)
- (vi) Assistant Controller of Examinations (BS-17)
- (vii) Assistant (Accounts) (BS-16)
- (viii) Hostel Warden (Female only) (BS-14)
- (ix) Security Guard (BS-5)
- (x) Driver (BS-4)
- (xi) Child Attendant (Female) (BS-1)
- (xii) Sanitary Worker (BS-1)
- (xiii) Nalb Qasid (BS-1)

**Project Posts**

- (i) Deputy Director QEC (BS-18)(Contract)
- (ii) Assistant (QEC)(BS-16)(Contract)

**Last Date of Submission of Application Forms is June 26, 2023.**

The University reserve the rights to increase/ decrease the number of posts, not to fill any post, withhold, the appointment against any advertised post or accept/ reject any application without assigning any reason.

For further information contact:  
Deputy Registrar, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi.  
Tel. 051-9292900 Ext 1014  
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**IPL No 4573**



## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JUNE

- June 02/Italy  
National/ Independence Day
- June 04/Finland  
Armed Forces Day
- June 06/UAE  
Day May 06/UAE
- June 06/Sweden  
National Day
- June 10/Portugal  
Portugal Day (National Day)
- June 10/Jordan  
Arab Revolution & Army Day
- June 11/United Kingdom  
Birth Day of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth
- June 12/Philippines  
Independence Day
- June 12/Russian Federation  
Day of Sovereignty of the Russian
- June 13/Zambia  
Armed Forces day
- June 17/Iceland  
National Day
- June 18/Seychells  
National Day
- June 25/Croatia  
National Day
- June 25/Mozambique  
National Day
- June 26/Azerbaijan  
Army Day

### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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& Rescue Services.4451122  
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Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

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



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Met Office.....9250360-6  
RDA.....5555864  
TMA.....5770886  
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

## BISP-KfW ink MoU worth € 27m to enhance poverty alleviation efforts

Secretary Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Amer Ali Ahmed, and Country Director of KfW, Sebastian Jacobi, signed the MoU at a ceremony held here on Friday.

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and KfW, a German Development Bank, have joined hands to enhance their efforts in alleviating poverty and supporting flood victims in Pakistan through signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth Euro 27 million. Secretary Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Amer Ali Ahmed, and Country Director of KfW, Sebastian Jacobi, signed the MoU at a ceremony held here on Friday. The signing ceremony was witnessed by the Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS) and Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Ms. Shazia Marri, Secretary PA&SS division and other officials of Benazir Income Support Programme. The MoU entails a generous contribution of 27 million euros from the German Bank to support the rehabilitation and cash assistance of flood victims in Pakistan. One of the key provisions of the agreement is the allocation of an additional cash assistance amounting to Rs 30 million to the flood victims, aiming to provide immediate relief and address their urgent needs. Furthermore, the MoU also includes an investment of two million euros for the initiation of a pilot project under the Benazir



Nashonuma Programme, which focuses on improving the nutritional status of vulnerable communities particularly the girls in the areas that were worst hit during the flood last year. During the signing ceremony, Ms. Shazia Marri briefed the KfW team about the various initiatives undertaken by the Benazir Income Support Programme, emphasizing the dire need to invest in the nutritional needs of the impoverished population. Recognizing the importance of early intervention, Marri said

that Benazir Income Support Programme had been actively addressing the nutritional needs of the beneficiaries. The minister said that first thousand days of a child's life were crucial in preventing stunting and ensuring proper growth and development. To prevent stunting among the children, special nutritional food and immunization are provided to children aged between 6-23 months. Additionally, awareness sessions on hygiene, sanitation, and nutrition are also conducted for young girls. This

MoU will further increase our ability and outreach to address more population, Shazia Marri added. The minister briefed the KfW delegation that to date, Benazir Income Support Programme had registered over 6,43,000 thousand pregnant women, and lactating mothers under Benazir Nashonuma. As part of its ongoing development program, the organization has disbursed Rs 24 billion, effectively supporting vulnerable communities across the country. This agreement with KfW is expected to further

enhance the programme's impact and its outreach, she stated. Speaking at the event, Ms. Shazia Marri announced plans to increase the budget of the Benazir Nashonuma from 21.8 billion rupees to 32 billion rupees. This increase in funding demonstrates the government's commitment to prioritizing poverty alleviation and social welfare in Pakistan. Director General (CCT), Naveed Akbar provided an overview of the MoU at the start of the ceremony, highlighting the significance of the collaboration and its potential to bring about positive change in the lives of BISP beneficiaries. While highlighting the importance of the MoU, Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmed said that the signing of this MoU between the Benazir Income Support Programme and KfW reinforced the commitment of both organizations to work together for the betterment of the Pakistani people. By pooling their expertise and resources, they aimed to tackle poverty, provide support to flood victims, and improve the nutritional well-being of vulnerable communities in Pakistan, the secretary added. Jacobi, commended the efforts being taken by the Benazir Income Support Programme in pulling people out of poverty especially in alleviating malnutrition and stunted growth.

## Rs 6000 mn allocated in PSDP for IT, Telecom

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has allocated Rs 6000 million in the public sector development programme (PSDP) for financial year 2023-24 for ongoing and new schemes of the Information Technology and Telecom Division. According to the budgetary documents, out of the total allocation, Rs 5,940 million has been earmarked for 30 ongoing schemes, while Rs 60 million has been allocated for two new schemes. Among the ongoing schemes, notable allocations include Rs 548 million for Cyber Security for Digital Pakistan, Rs 397 million for the Expansion of Broadband Service in cities and towns of AJK and GB (SCO), Rs 225.301 million for the High Impact Skills Bootcamp in Islamabad and Karachi, Rs 300 million for Hybrid Power Solution (Solarization) for Remote Sites of SCO in GB, Rs 500 million for the President's Initiative for Cyber Efficient Parliament, Rs 540 million for the Technology Park Development Project (TDP) in Islamabad, and Rs 300 million for the upgradation of the Transmission Network and Replacement of Optical Fiber Cable in AJK and GB. For new schemes, Rs 10 million has been allocated for the Digital Economy Enhancement project funded by the World Bank, and Rs 50 million for the Expansion of GPON FTTH Services in Eleven New Existing Cities Phase IV.—APP

## PTA conducts raids against illegal internet providers

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) in coordination with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), carried out two successful raids in Ethad Park Chungi Amer Sidhu, Lahore, and Tehsil Chowk Sarwar Shaheed, District Kot Addu, against illegal internet service providers, operating without a valid license from PTA. During the raids, operational internet setups and allied equipment were confiscated, said a news release. Three persons were arrested by FIA (one in Lahore and two in Kot Addu). The culprits have been taken into custody for further investigation. The successful efforts against illegal internet service providers can be attributed to PTA's unwavering commitment, continuous monitoring.—APP

## President directs LESCO to pay grant to ex-employee

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday directed the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) to pay Rs 200,000 as a "marriage grant" to a retired employee for the marriage of his son who had been denied payment by LESCO. The LESCO had denied the payment on the ground that he had applied for the grant after the expiry of the prescribed time limit of six months. "We should take care of such people, who due to ignorance of the law or being unaware of the benefits for which they might be eligible due to their service, are

unable to benefit from them in time", the president said. He regretted that the employee was not aware of his entitlement and found out from others that a marriage grant for his son was possible. He further held that it was the responsibility of government agencies to inform people about such benefits. President Alvi gave these remarks while accepting a representation filed by Muhammad Asif (the complainant) against the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib. As per the details, Muhammad Asif was an employee of LESCO and, after his re-

irement, he applied for the "marriage grant" in respect of his son. He was denied payment on the ground that his son's marriage was held on 02.12.2018 whereas the complainant applied for the grant on 08.12.2020 i.e., after the expiry of about 2 years. As per SOP regarding marriage grants, all applications should reach the office of the Chief Executive of LESCO within a period of six months from the date of marriage and a maximum of one year in special cases. Feeling aggrieved, he approached Wafaqi Mohtasib,

which held that LESCO did not commit any maladministration and rejected his complaint. Subsequently, he filed a representation with the president against Mohtasib's decision. The president in his decision observed that the entitlement for the marriage grant was not disputed except that the application was submitted late. He said that government agencies should keep people informed about such benefits for which they might be eligible so that they were not deprived of their entitlement.

## Rs3200 mln earmarked for Revenue Division

ISLAMABAD: The federal government will spend around Rs3200 million on 16 projects of revenue under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) during the upcoming financial year 2023-24. According to a budget document issued on Friday, an amount of Rs 2519.476 million has been allocated for 12 ongoing development projects and Rs 680.524 million for 04 new development schemes of the Revenue Division. Among ongoing schemes, Rs432.715 million earmarked for the establishment of customs check post/warehouse warehouses (Ziarat cross, Rakhni, Badini, Manikhawa and Qamar-din karez-northern Balochistan). The government has allocated Rs 415.623 million for the development of an integrated transit trade management system (IITTS) under ADB regional improving border services projects while Rs 300 million for the construction of a regional tax office at Sargodha. About Rs282.483 million is allocated for the construction of an additional office block for RTO Sahiwal while Rs 250 million is for the construction of a custom complex at SOST involving sepoy barracks, an E-facilitation centre, transit accommodation and a customs forensic laboratory. Among new schemes, the government has allocated Rs413.032 million for the purchase of land for the regional tax office Gujrat whereas Rs 140.270 million for the purchase of land for the regional tax office Peshawar. Rs 50 million earmarked for the construction of a zonal office and transit accommodation at Gawadar while Rs 77.222 million was for construction of transit accommodation at Landi Kotal (KPK) for Torkham Customs Station.—DNA

## 7 centres to facilitate tourists on Eid in Murree

RAWALPINDI: Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Capt (R) Qasim Jaz on Friday directed the officials to make Murree a wast free city free before Eid Ul Azha and prepare a contingency plan for the convenience of tourists. Presiding over a meeting to review the arrangements being made for the eid at the hill station, he said that seven facilitation centres besides a central control room would be set up to help the tourists while pamphlets would also be distributed with relevant official's contact numbers in case of emergency. Qasim said

facilitation centres would be set up at GPO Chowk, Kashmir Point, Jhika Gali, Barian, Lower Topa, Kaldana and Satra Mile. He said that Murree was the hub of tourism and it was the responsibility of the administration to provide best kind of facilities to the visitors efficiently. The ADCR added the tourists would also be informed about Murree weather and arrangements made by the administration through FM radio, print, electronics and social media. Qasim said that the representatives of administrative bodies including the Murree Ad-

ministration, Police, Rescue 1122, Tourism, Health Department, Civil Defense and others would be present at the facility centres to provide awareness to the tourists. To save the tourists from rushing, a comprehensive traffic plan would also be in place to monitor the traffic flow with the help of CTV cameras. The machinery of the highway department would also be in operational condition to deal with any emergency. At the same time, medical staff would be available round the clock at the hospitals during eid days, he added.—APP

## Govt earmarks Rs 3.4bln for Defence under PSDP

ISLAMABAD: The government has earmarked a sum of Rs 3.4 billion for various ongoing and new schemes of the Defence Division under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2023-24. According to the budgetary document released on Friday, out of the total allocation, the government allocated Rs 3395 million from the local component and Rs 5 million from the foreign aid component. Under the ongoing schemes, Rs 190 million have been allocated for the Development of ICT and Artificial Intelligence Based Precision Agriculture System utilising dual-use Aerospace Technologies Green AI, Rs 853 million for Establishment of (NASTP, ACP, Rs 60 million for Feasibility Study for Establishment.—APP

## RCCI terms fiscal budget as industry friendly

### DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has termed the fiscal budget 2023-24 as balanced, with special focus on drivers of growth and industry friendly under a challenging economic environment. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq while giving remarks after the Budget Speech said that a detailed version will be presented after looking at the budget documents. He said that key suggestions submitted by RCCI have been added in the budget document which is very satisfactory. However, he cautioned that it is not clear how 9200 billion tax targets will be met. Group leader Sohail Altaf said that the overall budget is positive and no harsh measures have been taken. He lauded the abandonment of covered area condition from TIER1. RCCI has always pushed for promoting

non-conventional sectors like IT, Gems, minerals etc. It is laudable that the Government has exempted tax and duties on the import machinery for minerals, he added. The tax exemption on solar panels is appreciable, as it will ease load on Power Management and also its an environmentally friendly initiative. A significant amount of Rs 450 billion has been allocated for Benazir Income Support. This will provide relief to the marginalized sections of the society. While appreciating the government for prioritizing the 'five Es' - 'exports', 'e-Pakistan' through digitization, the 'environment', 'energy & infrastructure', and 'equity & empowerment', Saqib Rafiq said that business community is very hopeful that the priorities set by the current government will be carried forward by the incoming governments and added that RCCI has been vocal for consensus on charter of economy and continuity of policies.

## Capital police establishes new Division "SOAN"

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move to restructure its departments, the Islamabad Capital Territory Police have established a new Division "SOAN," dividing 27 police stations into five distinct divisions. The decision was formalized through a notification issued by the Chief Commissioner's office, in accordance with the recommendation put forth by Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP). Under the reorganization, the newly formed division, "SOAN," joins the existing divisions of the President, City, Rural, and Industrial Area, which were previously part of Islamabad Capital Police. Driven by the recommendation of the ICCPO, the Chief Commissioner's office duly issued the official notification for the creation of the new division.—APP

## NDMA holds NEOC session on Cyclone BIPARJOY

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday held a special National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) session presided by Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik to review the development of 'Severe Cyclonic Storm' (SCS) BIPARJOY over the Arabian Sea. The relevant stakeholders including Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh, PDMA Balochistan, K-electric and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) Headquarters were among the attendees of the session, a news release said. The NEOC forum provided an update on the cyclone, stating that there are currently no major threats to coastal areas in Pakistan. However, the cyclonic system may intensify further due to favourable environmental conditions. It has slightly changed course and is moving in a north-northeast direction, possibly drifting toward the Makran Coast of Pakistan. The Chairman NDMA informed the session that the developing situation is continuously being monitored in NEOC, and NDMA Alerts will be provided every three hours on the NDMA Twitter handle and website for public information. The Chairman NDMA instructed PDMA to conduct a local-level needs assessment, deploy manpower and machinery, and work closely with relevant departments. During the meeting, PDMA of Sindh and Balochistan shared their progress on mass communication efforts, risk assessment, and logistics support for areas at risk of disaster. The focus was on proactive measures to manage disasters effectively.—APP

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## Briefs

CTO visits  
Taxila  
Facilitation  
Center

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Tamoor Khan here on Friday visited Taxila Facilitation Center and inspected the arrangements being finalized to provide 24/7 driving licensing facilities to the citizens. In charge of Licensing gave a briefing about the driving test track and 24/7 licensing services. The CTO on the occasion said that after successful 24/7 driving licensing facilities at Traffic Headquarters Rawalpindi, soon the same would be provided at Taxila. He said that City Traffic Police (CTP) was taking all possible steps to facilitate the citizens according to the vision of Deputy Inspector General Traffic, Punjab Mirza Faran Baig. The CTP was providing the licensing facilities 24/7 to the residents of Rawalpindi district, Tamoor Khan said. The citizens having original ID cards could avail of the licensing facilities from the nearest facilitation centre.—APP

25 drug  
peddlers,  
bootleggers,  
illegal weapon  
holders netted

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Friday arrested 25 accused besides recovering over 9.5 kg charras, 45 liters liquor, 10 pistols, ammunition and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Rattaamral, Pirwadhai, Waris Khan, Sadiqabade, Gujar Khan, and Rawat police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and arrested Abdul Majid, Naem, Habibullah, Sher Ali, Imran, Jamshaid, Abdullah, Masood, Asif and Huzafa on recovery of 10 pistols 30 bore and ammunition. Similarly, Bani, Naseerabad, Taxila, Gungmandi, Pirwadhai and Kalar Syedan police rounded up 10 accused and recovered over six kg charras and 45 liters liquor. He informed that Zareen Gul was held with 1400 grams charras while Asif was sent behind the bars for having 1380 grams charras. Ali, Sanab Gul, Akash, Latif Waqar, Naqash, Sajid, Waqas and Siddique were netted for possessing 3250 grams charras and 45 liters liquor.—APP

Court returns  
5th reference  
against Zarari

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Thursday returned four fake accounts referenced to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) including one against former president Asif Ali Zardari. Accountability Judge Muhammad Bashir announced the verdict regarding returning of the references. Asif Zardari's lawyer Farooq H. Naek and NAB prosecutor appeared before the court. Farooq Naek pleaded that these references did not fall in jurisdiction of accountability court after the amendments in the NAB Ordinance and it could not continue trial in the said cases. He prayed the court to return references to the anti-graft watchdog.—APP

## Experts for proactive strategy to counter growing risks of drought

ISLAMABAD: The experts at a consultative workshop on Friday called for a proactive multi-pronged strategy to counter growing risks of drought causing serious impacts on agriculture, livelihoods and health of local communities mostly at risk of natural calamity due to exacerbating global warming and climate change. The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) organized a consultative workshop on Early Drought Warning System (EDWS) for Pakistan here to engage experts, academia, public departments and relevant agencies for multi-stakeholder dialogue. Director General, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Mahr Sahibzada Khan in his welcome remarks highlighted the rising vulnerability of the region and the country due to shift in rainfall and precipitation patterns influenced by environmental degradation. Research Group Lead-

Construction of Expo Center  
Gulberg Green, Islamabad  
Chamber agree on coop

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Intelligence Bureau Employees Cooperative Housing Society (Gulberg Green) President Tariq Mehmood said that the society continues its cooperation with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce in terms of national development, promotion of exports, social and cultural events. The construction of the Expo Center in Islamabad is a long-standing project of ICCI, Gulberg Green is fully cooperating with the Chamber in this regard. Within a week, the MoU regarding the construction of the expo center will be finalized between the two organizations. We are trying to complete this important project as soon as possible. He expressed these views on Friday while speaking during his visit to the Chamber at the invitation of President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari. On this occasion, the construction of Expo



Center in Gulberg Green under Islamabad Chamber and other issues of cooperation between the two organizations were discussed. Bilal Barki, Sajjad Sati, Muhammad Zaheer, Mudassar Zia, Masood Ahmed and others were also present in the delegation.

President Gulberg Green Tariq Mehmood said that the Expo Center is very important for industrial and national development, China has developed rapidly through similar Expos. I congratulate the President of Islamabad Chamber and his entire

team for this long-standing project, the society will fully cooperate with the Chamber to ensure the construction of this project as soon as possible. Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that there are expo centers in Karachi, Lahore and other big cities. While Islamabad is the most important diplomatic, governmental, parliamentary and commercial center, it still lacks the facility of an expo center. We wish to establish an Expo Center in Gulberg Green, which is located at the most important location of Islamabad. With this project, the importance of the society will increase and its role in the country's business activities will also increase. He said that it is our wish that this most important project of the country's economy should be inaugurated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif after the agreement on the construction of the Expo Center. On this occasion, Islamabad Chamber Senior Vice President Fad Waheed, Vice President Engineer Azharul Islam, Former President Khalid Javed, Zafar Bakhtawari, Najeeb Elahi, Naveed Malik, Faizan Shahzad, Waqas Khan, Khalid Chaudhry and others participated.

Unani, traditional Chinese medicines  
provide more medical options

ISLAMABAD: Unani and traditional Chinese medicines can provide more medical options, treating various diseases. "We should provide alternate ways of treatment to our people so that they can get better health facilities. Cooperating with China can help us achieve that," said Syed Shabib ul Hasan, vice chancellor of Hamdard University, the oldest and largest traditional medicine college in Pakistan, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Friday. During COVID-19, Pakistani traditional medicine, Unani medicine, played a part in Pakistan and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) also played a great role in China along with allopathy. "We have signed MOUs with

Chinese universities to promote traditional medicine, including identification and cultivation of herbal medicine and mutual recognition of quality standards." Syed Shabib ul Hasan noted. This year, more TCM training programs are provided to Pakistani students. The acceptance of TCM in Pakistan has also been increasing these years. "Chinese government has invested and provided opportunities to train Pakistani students in TCM. However, we are not giving such importance to our traditional medicines." Syed Shabib ul Hasan stressed that Unani medicine should be promoted in the same way that TCM has been promoted. "We can develop medicines on the basis of our herbal plants, and China can help." He added. "WHO has calculated that more than 42% of drugs avail-

able in the market are derived from plants or natural products. There is richness of herbs in Pakistan, we have advantages in topography," Ahsana Dar Farooq, Dean of Eastern Medicine of Hamdard University suggested doing joint research projects about how Unani practitioners and TCM practitioners diagnose a disease to see what is common and what is different between the two systems. "There are many similarities between TCM and Unani medicine. For example, we both focus on balancing and holistic, which means considering the whole body, while allopathic medicine focuses on a single symptom. I think the main difference is the ingredients. TCM has some ingredients that are not in our area." "The effect of their collaboration is that more Unani herbs will be used in China, more Chinese

herbs will be used here," said Hakeem Abdul Bari, head of Research and Development in Hamdard Laboratories of Pakistan. He told us that a number of Chinese herbs have already been commonly used in Pakistan. "Herbs whose names include Chini or Khatai are mostly from China, such as Revand Chini, Jazwar Chini, Revand Khatai. Cinnamon also comes from China, which we call Dar Chini. There are also many herbs going to China from us, such as fennel." Pakistani herbal medicines have rich resources in the treatment of respiratory and skin diseases, and the products are exported to Central Asia and other countries. "Our lab is collaborating with Chinese institutions that also order from us. There are at least 15 to 20 types of herbs exported to China from here," he added.

Chinese-Urdu calligraphy  
competition promotes  
cultural exchanges

ISLAMABAD: A Chinese-Urdu calligraphy competition was held to promote Sino-Pak cultural exchanges. It was arranged by the Karachi branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) to celebrate the 72nd anniversary of China-Pakistan diplomatic relations. According to Gwadar Pro, it was aimed promoting friendship and harmony among its staff members, they organized a Chinese-Urdu calligraphy competition and award ceremony centered around the theme of "Friendship and Harmony," aiming to spread the essence of friendship. More than 40 Pakistani and Chinese employees enthusiastically participated in the competition. During the competition, the contestants learned the key points of Urdu calligraphy and Chinese calligraphy online, and wrote down "Harmony and friendship lasts forever", "China-Pakistan friendship lasts forever", "China-Pakistan friendship is higher than mountains and sweeter than honey" in each other's language. The strong friendship between China and Pakistan is fully integrated between the lines. Multiple winners of the competition were selected through online mutual assessment of Chinese and Pakistani employees. Senior management of the branch attended the ceremony to present awards on 30 May to the winners and jointly celebrate the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. The successful holding of this calligraphy competition has enriched the cultural life of the employees and promoted cross-cultural integration.—DNA

ANF recovers  
5411 grams  
drugs; arrests  
11 including  
three women

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force in their ongoing operations against drug smugglers managed to recover 5411 grams drugs and arrested 11 accused including three women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that on tip-offs, two operations were conducted at Islamabad International and Jinnah International Airport and nine Bahrain-bound passengers, members of a family including three women were rounded up. Arrested accused, residents of Peshawar, Mardan and Charsada, were going on flight no PK-187. ANF recovered 575 heroin and 159 Ice drug filled capsules weighing 3453 grams heroin and 788 grams Ice drug from their possession, he added. In another operation at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi, 91 heroin-filled capsules weighing 1170 grams were recovered from the possession of another passenger.—APP

SECP  
registers 2,539  
companies in  
May 2023

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 2,539 new companies in May 2023, bringing the total number of registered companies to 194,466. The total paid-up capital (capitalization) of the companies incorporated in February was Rs 2.7 billion, said a press release issued here. Approximately 57 per cent of businesses were registered as private limited companies, 40 per cent as single-member businesses, and 3% as limited liability partnerships, not-for-profit organizations, and unlisted public companies (LLP). Nearly 99.7% of businesses registered online. The new registrations include 65 foreign applicants. The information technology sector took the lead with the incorporation of 407 companies, followed by trading with 339, the real estate development & construction.—APP

## Experts for proactive multi-pronged strategy to counter growing risks of drought

ISLAMABAD: The experts at a consultative workshop on Friday called for a proactive multi-pronged strategy to counter growing risks of drought causing serious impacts on agriculture, livelihoods and health of local communities mostly at risk of natural calamity due to exacerbating global warming and climate change. The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) organized a consultative workshop on Early Drought Warning System (EDWS) for Pakistan here to engage experts, academia, public departments and relevant agencies for multi-stakeholder dialogue. Director General, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Mahr Sahibzada Khan in his welcome remarks highlighted the rising vulnerability of the region and the country due to shift in rainfall and precipitation patterns influenced by environmental

degradation. Director Water, Food and Ecosystems, Dr Mohsin Hafeez presented a detailed outline of the Institute's endeavours in terms of enhancing the country's climate and water resilience including capacity building, training of quarters concerned, research on core issues and solutions devised to address the issues due to global warming impacts on the region in the areas of water management and governance. Research Group Leader Water Risk to Development and Resilience, IWMI Dr Giriraj Amaranth via online addressed the workshop. He opined that there was a need to look at countries from sub-national and regional levels for proactive and enhanced drought resilience measures. He also underscored the need to ensure that SAARC region was promoting integrated drought management, future efforts to develop decision support information products and the lack of


impact assessment needs to be looked into. During the second session, Deputy Director PMD's National Drought Monitoring Centre (NDMC) Dr Shahzada Adnan informed that the PMD has seven dedicated early warning centers for different natural hazards that issued short, medium, and long term forecasts comprising 126 Met observatories and 86 automatic weather stations. He underlined that decision-making was important in the forecast process to avoid misleading weather projection indices. He said the country had winter, monsoon and heatwave periods, whereas its data of weather over the last seventy years was alarming as precipitation was increasing in central areas and northern parts that possessed over 7,000 glaciers. The country, last year witnessed 150 glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) events in the northern area, particularly Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) areas.

PAFLA to host Pakistan's first  
ever Future of Work Conference


ISLAMABAD: As a representative of more than three million freelancers working in the country, the Pakistan Freelancers Association (PAFLA) is all set to host a conference titled "The Future of Work (FoW): Collaborating with Freelancers, Influencers, and Entrepreneurs for Success in the Digital Age". The event which is the first of its kind to take place in the country, aims to highlight the contributions of the local freelancer community to the national exchequer and the economy while calling for more conducive policies in the upcoming

budget, said a news release. Pakistan's freelancing ecosystem is amongst the biggest in the world, ranking amongst the top five nations in terms of the number of freelancers and the revenues they generate on a yearly basis. In fiscal year 2022, these individuals gen-

erated close to \$400 million for the national economy which was nearly 15% of total ICT exports of \$2.62 billion from Pakistan during this period. Making continuous efforts to groom, mentor and develop this community, PAFLA's latest endeavor.—APP



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## NATO in Asia-Pacific

The strong objection against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization setting up a liaison office in Japan raised by French President Emmanuel Macron, which Japan mooted months ago, has apparently taken Tokyo by surprise. "Various considerations are under way within NATO. At this point, I will refrain from commenting with prejudice," Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told a news conference when asked about a report published by the Financial Times on Monday. In the report, Macron said that NATO should not expand its reach beyond North Atlantic and added: "If ... we push NATO to enlarge the spectrum and the geography, we will make a big mistake." Since France can veto the move, which will be decided at the coming NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 11-12, to which Japanese officials have also been invited, Tokyo should realize it still has work to do to get the nod even though it has money which NATO needs. The wait-and-see attitude of Tokyo, as reflected by Matsuno's prevarication on the question put to him at the news conference, is actually a distress signal the Fumio Kishida government has sent to Washington. After attending the NATO Summit in Madrid last year and hosting the NATO chief in early February, both firsts, it seemed a foregone conclusion that the office would be established, particularly after the G7 Summit in Hiroshima last month, followed by the de facto Quad summit in the same city. However, Washington has chosen to remain silent on Macron's remarks — which shows how sensitive the proposal is — leaving the Kishida government high and dry. No matter how far Tokyo and Washington go in their bid to persuade Macron to change his mind, they will not be able to reverse the regional countries' collective opposition to the move. Although both NATO and Japanese leaders intentionally played it down during their meeting in February, the so-called liaison office will serve as a strategic outpost of the transatlantic alliance in the Far East, giving it a greater leverage to interfere in regional affairs and incite bloc confrontation. As Chinese Defense Minister Li Shangfu warned on Sunday at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, the attempts to push for NATO-like alliances in the Asia-Pacific is a way of kidnapping regional countries and exaggerating conflicts and confrontations and these alliances will plunge the Asia-Pacific into a whirlpool of disputes and conflicts. NATO's expansion in Europe broke the security balance triggering the Ukraine crisis. All peace-loving countries in Asia should shut their door on it.



## Republican primary

Donald Trump has an excess of companions in the race for the Republican nomination for 2024, but a paucity of rivals. The quantity of candidates in the presidential primary so far appears in inverse relationship to the threat they pose to him. The main question prompted by several recent declarees is not how they might win or what they might offer, but simply "why?" (Mike Pence, Chris Christie), or even "who?" (Perry Johnson). No one can predict what will happen in this race, and upsets do happen. Large fields and long shots positioning politicians for a future bid or the vice-presidential slot on the ticket are nothing new in primaries. Nor are improbable, often self-funded entrants. But the current flurry of activity — Mr Pence, former New Jersey governor Mr Christie and North Dakota's governor Doug Burgum all announced runs this week — seems to be prompted less by the belief that Mr Trump is beatable than by the belief that Ron DeSantis isn't the man to beat him. Mr Trump's savaging of Mr DeSantis shows he takes nothing for granted. But he is polling more than 50% among Republicans, while Mr DeSantis is a distant second on about 20%. Mr Trump has the status of a former president, yet pitches himself as an insurgent. His personal conduct and erratic politics are already priced in, and he has delivered for his base — notably on the supreme court and, therefore, abortion. Mr Pence trails in distant third: though vice-presidents often win presidential nominations, he is loathed both for backing his former boss's iniquities until the 11th hour — and for certifying 2020's election results and rejecting the lie that Mr Trump had won. His support is in single digits, at about 5%, as is that of Nikki Haley, former governor of South Carolina, and Mr Trump's ambassador to the UN. Tim Scott, also of South Carolina, and only the second black Republican senator ever directly elected, has impressed some pundits but is even further behind. The concern of anti-Trump Republicans is that the sheer number of candidates will split the votes of those pondering an alternative. While Mr Christie has laid into Mr Trump, and Mr Pence did so in his campaign launch, Mr DeSantis has vacillated before hardening his line — and still refuses to comment on Mr Trump's claims that the last election was stolen. The others criticise him only in veiled terms. They hope to pick up Mr Trump's supporters should he be hobbled, perhaps due to some unforeseen act or his multitude of legal woes. Prosecutors have formally notified the former president that he is a target of the criminal investigation examining the retention of national security materials. It is far from clear that any of the cases against him will obstruct his return. Yet the biggest threats to Mr Trump's political prospects still appear to remain outside his party.

## TAPI, dawn of a new era

Qamar Bashir

The Afghanistan segment is being built along the highway and will run for 774 kilometers through Kandhar and Herat in Afghanistan. Later, it will travel 826 kilometers through Pakistan, passing through the cities of Quetta and Multan before ending in Fazilka at the Indo-Pakistan border in the Punjab region of India. The pipeline will initially transport 27 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year, which will be raised to 33 billion cubic meters after one year of operation. The following timeline was assigned to the project, which was conceived in 1999: 1999: Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to study the feasibility of a natural gas pipeline. 2003: India joins, three countries

Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India (TAPI) also known as peace pipeline is a 1,800-kilometer (1,120-mile) natural gas pipeline with a capacity to transport approximately 14 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, originally scheduled to be completed in 2023. According to the agreement, Pakistan and India were each scheduled to acquire 42% of the entire volume of produced gas, and Afghanistan 16% of the gas, equivalent to 5.11 billion cubic meters, in addition to collecting \$400 million per year as a transit fee for the pipeline. The 56-inch TAPI gas pipeline with a pressure of approximately 10,000 kilopascals (kPa) will transport gas from Turkmenistan's Galkynsh gas field, also known as South Yolotan Osman, which has 16 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, to Afghanistan over a distance of 214 kilometers. The Afghanistan segment is being built along the highway and will run for 774 kilometers through Kandhar and Herat in Afghanistan. Later, it will travel 826 kilometers through Pakistan, passing through the cities of Quetta and Multan before ending in Fazilka at the Indo-Pakistan border in the Punjab region of India. The pipeline will initially transport 27 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year, which will be raised to 33 billion cubic meters after one year of operation. The following timeline was assigned to the project, which was conceived in 1999: 1999: Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to study the feasibility of a natural gas pipeline. 2003: India joins, three countries sign a trilateral agreement to build the pipeline. 2006: The four countries sign a framework to finalize the terms of the project. 2008: The signatories created the TAPI Pipeline Company Limited (TAPICL). 2010: The four countries sign a gas sale and purchase agreement (GSPA). 2011: Construction on the Turkmenistan section of the pipeline begins. 2012: Construction on the Afghanistan section of the pipeline begins. 2013: Construction on the Pakistan section of the pipeline begins. 2016: The Turkmenistan section of the pipeline is completed. 2017: The Afghanistan section of the pipeline is completed. 2018: The Pakistan section of the pipeline is completed. 2023: The TAPI pipeline is scheduled to start commercial operations. The project was initially on track, but due to the security situation in Afghanistan and tensions between Pakistan and India, numerous deadlines were missed. However, the idea of successfully commissioning TAPI has now become a reality following the peace in Afghanistan. According to credible sources, there is an unusual quiet in Afghanistan, with killing having ceased in late 2021 across the vast majority of Afghan land. Under Taliban administration the country is far more tranquil than it was a year ago. The Taliban have removed hundreds of checkpoints on highways and roads, enforced policing as part of ambitious plans for a huge security structure which made possible for the

stakeholder to move ahead with full speed simultaneously on all aspects of the project. With Turkmenistan leading, Turkmenistan Gas Enterprise (5%), Inter State Gas Systems (5%), and GAIL (5%) formed a special-purpose consortium known as the TAPI Pipeline Company (TPCL) in November 2014 to execute the \$10 billion project. A stone-laying ceremony was performed in Mary, Turkmenistan, near the Galkynsh gas field, to commemorate the commencement of construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan segment of the TAPI gas pipeline in December 2015 (originally planned in 2011). The four countries inked an investment agreement for the development of the TAPI project in February 2016. The ceremony to celebrate the start of work of the pipeline's Afghanistan-Pakistan segment was held in February 2018 (it was originally scheduled in 2017). The TAPI pipeline is being constructed in two phases. A free flow pipeline with a capacity of delivering approximately 11bcm/year will be developed in the first phase, with two compressor stations in Turkmenistan. The second phase will add six compressor stations in the Afghanistan and Pakistan regions to increase the delivery capacity to approximately 33bcm/year. Overall, the pipeline will supply 90 million metric standard cubic metres (Mmscm) of natural gas a day. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is funding the TAPI project and serving as the project's transaction adviser. In December 2016, Turkmenistan received a \$700 million loan from the Islamic Development Bank to fund the project. The remaining three countries contributed \$200 million to the TAPI initiative. Penspen, a UK-based firm, was hired to do technical feasibility studies for the TAPI project. Penspen subcontracted Royal Haskoning DHV to conduct several studies relevant to the initiative's environmental and social protection components. ILF Consulting Engineers was granted a contract to conduct the pipeline's front-end engineering and design (FEED) studies. Global Pipe Company, a Saudi-German joint venture, was awarded a \$40 million contract for the construction of the TAPI gas pipeline. The contract also includes the supply of technical supervision services for the pipeline network's Afghanistan-Pakistan segment. The TAPI pipeline is currently under construction. The pipeline's Turkmenistan segment is nearly 80% complete, and the Afghanistan part is around 60% complete. The pipeline's Pakistan section is still in the development stages. However, India as yet has doubts and aspires to fully participate in the project. One of India's main concerns was that once the project is operating, many Indian companies will rely on it. Pakistan can use this by cutting off supply during times of conflict, resulting in massive losses. Furthermore, India, which is a stakeholder, has yet to officially recognize the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. However, Pakistan, which is short on energy, has expressed a willingness to continue with the TAPI gas pipeline project even without India. If In-

dia decides to abandon the project, Pakistan is said to be willing to buy India's projected portion of the gas. The interim Afghan government is prepared to raise a special force to protect the pipeline, which would profit from transit fees equal to about 80 to 85 percent of Afghanistan's yearly budget, providing a significant incentive for the Afghan side to assure pipeline security. Pakistan is also planning to incorporate Saudi capital or a multilateral financial mechanism into the initiative to reshape the region's energy and security situation. If the Saudis agree, companies such as the SDF, PIF, and Exim Bank might be brought on board, potentially resulting in the establishment of a cascade of industries such as transferring natural gas from Turkmenistan to Gwadar, converting it to LNG and exporting it to energy-starved Europe and the entire west. Unlike Turkmenistan, which is expected to earn billions of dollars in export earnings from natural gas sales, Afghanistan will benefit from job creation, economic growth potential, and the regular payment of transit fees and gas to its people. Pakistan will benefit from enhanced natural gas supply, a considerable economic boost, and an uninterrupted supply of price competitive natural gas at its doorstep, reducing the dependency of millions of residential users and thousands of industrial units on expensive and unpredictable imported oil and gas. India would benefit from increased natural gas supply, which would help it meet its growing energy demands. Because TAPI gas is expected to be less expensive than alternatives such as liquefied natural gas (LNG), which is transported by tanker and then regasified at its destination. LNG is more expensive than pipeline gas due to the additional expenditures of liquefaction and regasification. According to a study conducted by the Asian Development Bank, TAPI gas may be up to 20% cheaper than LNG imports. Because TAPI gas will be transported straight from Turkmenistan to India via Afghanistan and Pakistan, there will be no need for liquefaction or regasification. The lower cost of TAPI gas may help recipient countries reduce their reliance on imported LNG and their sensitivity to price shocks. This project saw rapid progress despite many hiccups due to the Shahbaz Speed, and if this speed maintains its momentum in the coming days, days will not be far away when our households will enjoy uninterrupted supply of gas and our industries will not only enjoy cost-effective raw materials for many of their processes, but would also meet their energy needs, making their products and services cost-effective in comparison to their competitors and would capture domestic and international market share. Furthermore, the country would save precious foreign currency that would otherwise be used to import gas and oil from expensive and volatile international markets.

—The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

## Knowledge economy: Pakistan's path to progress, Prosperity

Uzma Rana



A few years ago, a country's strength was determined solely by the number of arms it possessed and the technology of its missiles. However, in today's world, science and technology have surpassed these traditional indicators of power. We are now living in an era dominated by scientific knowledge, where security, economy, power, politics, and even social life are all interconnected with knowledge. The true measure of a superpower today lies not in its high-tech weaponry, but in the brilliance of its intellectual minds. Countries endowed with vast natural resources but lacking in intellectual capacity find themselves economically suppressed by those with limited resources but great minds brimming with innovative ideas. Fortunately, Pakistan has recently recognized the importance of a knowledge-based economy and has made efforts to join the ranks of developing countries. Numerous autonomous projects have been initiated within the country, as well as collaborative ventures with friendly nations. It requires the combined determination and efforts of the government and

its citizens to fully appreciate and embrace the concept of a knowledge economy in order to thrive in this new world era. The progress witnessed in the world today is the culmination of a long process of evolution. We did not stand where we are today since time immemorial. Mankind has made tremendous efforts and traversed diverse stages to reach this point, where we are ready to embark on journeys to other worlds. What was once a nightmare for early humans is now an absolute reality. The industrial revolution brought about a radical change in the history of humanity, leading us through various stages until we arrived at the third wave of industrialization, encompassing information technology, trade, business, and artificial intelligence. Throughout this journey, knowledge has remained the driving force behind each progressive stage. It is through knowledge that humanity has gained superiority over all other creatures in the universe. The game of the mind is fueled by knowledge, ultimately shaping the world we inhabit. As Claire Fagin aptly put it, "knowledge will bring you the opportunity to make a difference." The progress of the world today is collectively proportional to the knowledge economy of all countries combined. What were once utopian ideas have become the beautiful realities of today. Man is diving into the depths of the oceans and exploring space, developing chemicals that render him invisible, conducting surveillance on enemies without leaving a trace, practicing agriculture in saline water, and even turning deserts into fruitful lands. All these miracles are the language of growth. Humanity is doing an incredibly great job, innovating in every sphere of life, leading to an economic boost. Education, health, shelter, food, infrastructure, and governance all directly link to knowledge and innovation. Just take a look around you; all the successful individuals today started with a single great idea that changed the course of their entire lives. The truth of the ages is that investing in innovative minds is much safer than investing in weapons. Today, enemies no longer fight on battlefields but in laboratories and libraries. Similarly, in the economic sector, the more you learn, the more you earn. Countries like China, Russia, America, and Britain have recognized this fact and are investing in the development of intelligent minds. They have transformed their education systems to meet modern requirements and equipped them with the necessary resour-

es. They now prioritize the education of their citizens over harming the people of their enemies. It is high time to follow the blueprints of Plato's education system. Currently, the top twenty countries in the world contribute to 75 percent of the global economy. An economy based on knowledge is enduring and secure, devoid of the threats of loss or depletion. As a developing country, Pakistan is gradually realizing the importance of a knowledge-based economy in its path to progress, but there is still a long way to go. Countries committed to progress value their people and ensure their protection both within and outside their borders, whereas the treatment of our national heroes is no longer a secret. Dr. Abdul Salam, Dr. Abdul Qadeer, Abdul Sattar Edhi, and many others are real assets to our country, but we have lost them. However, we haven't lost them all. Our country is filled with brilliant minds and determined youth who have the potential to bring greatness to our nation. They simply require the right platforms and opportunities to thrive. Education and information infrastructure serve as the new foundations for progress. Economic incentives within institutional frameworks and innovative systems act as catalysts for the idea of a knowledge economy. There is no ambiguity in accepting the fact that the global village is based on the internet, and e-commerce plays a significant role in national revenue. In Pakistan, we are still far from experiencing an industrial boom. Having loyal leadership alone is not enough; we need educated guidance in this race. We can no longer rely solely on land resources. In a knowledge economy, a successful business is a community with a purpose, not just a piece of property. Recently, the government of Pakistan has taken commendable initiatives to enhance the country's knowledge economy. Four major initiatives deserve special mention. The Prime Minister Technology Driven Task Force encompasses projects such as the Pak-Austria Fachhochschule University in Haripur, which is collaboration with eight foreign universities. Two more universities with similar objectives have been established in Islamabad and Sialkot. Scholarships worth 13 billion rupees have been awarded for PhD programs. Other projects under this initiative include the Punjab Information Technology Board, the Save City Project, Smart Policing, and the collaboration with China to manufacture Bullet Trains. The HEC budget has witnessed a 600% increase, and the improvement in tax collection can be attributed to these

projects. Notably, major departments such as NADRA and FBR have been linked for better functioning. Additionally, the MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) initiative promotes virtual learning, enabling students to learn online from universities around the world while residing in Pakistan. The STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) project has established 30 new schools in the Islamabad Capital Territory, where students are taught basic subjects at a primary level, expanding their career options and fostering specialization among responsible citizens. The Matric Tech Program combines traditional and vocational training with formal education, while the Go School e-project introduces e-learning through Zoom classrooms, making education accessible to a larger number of students who are unable to attend physical schools. Moreover, it facilitates access to international-standard education while residing in Pakistan. The Pakistan Digital Vision Policy 2019 aims to transform numerous public departments from manual to digital working systems. This includes the digitization of the land record system, the implementation of the Pakistan Citizen Portal, the digitalization of the tax system, the incorporation of ride-hailing services like Uber and Careem, telehealth services, virtual education, E-courses, video sessions, the utilization of biometric systems, improvements in the police system, the introduction of e-challan systems, and many other endeavors. The Pakistan Electric Vehicle policy seeks to promote the use of electric vehicles to reduce fuel consumption and combat the adverse effects of climate change. This is achieved through the implementation of low taxes on the import of electric vehicles, encouraging their adoption and usage. The Presidential Initiatives for Artificial Intelligence and Computing is a federally administered program aimed at promoting schemes related to artificial intelligence and computing to enable Pakistan's growth and excel in this field in competition with the rest of the world. Currently, artificial intelligence has surpassed human capacities. Given Pakistan's weak economy, the prevalence of poverty prevents a significant portion of its population from accessing schools and colleges. Therefore, efforts to promote a knowledge economy are the wisest decision of our time. Literacy serves as the most fundamental currency in the knowledge economy.

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## Briefs

## Govt presents Rs14.4 trillion federal...

FROM PAGE 01

Five-year tax holiday announced for agro-based industries being SMEs set up on or after July 1, 2023, from tax year 2024 to tax year 2028.

Customs duties exempted on specific papers and art cards and board used for printing of Holy Quran.

Incentive for exporters of IT and IT enabled services by allowing duty free import of IT related equipment equivalent to 1% value of their export proceeds.

Withdrawal of capping of the fixed duties and taxes on the import of old and used vehicles of Asian Makes above 1,300cc.

Sales tax on contraceptives and accessories exempted.

The requirement of shop area for tier-1 retailers proposed to be withdrawn.

0.6% advance adjustable withholding tax on non-ATL persons on cash withdrawal re-imposition.

Monetary limit of foreign remittance remitted from outside Pakistan increased from Rs5 million to (rupee equivalent of) \$100,000.

Waiver announced for 2% final withholding tax on purchase of immovable property for nonresident individual POC/NICOP holder where immovable property is acquired through foreign remittances remitted from abroad.

Rationalisation of Super Tax under section 4C to apply on all persons across the board earning income above Rs150 million: insertion of additional three new income slabs of Rs350 million to Rs400 million, Rs400 million to Rs500 million and Rs500 million above to be taxed at 6%, 8% and 10% respectively.

The finance minister mentioned that the country faced numerous internal and external challenges over the last year. Still, the government upped its efforts and tried to provide relief to the people.

Dar mentioned that although the nation suffered massive losses of \$30 billion due to unprecedented floods, the government is bidding to resume the IMF programme and take the country on the road of development.

"We have completed all the prerequisites of the ninth IMF review [...] we are hoping to reach an agreement with the IMF," the minister told the members of the lower house.

**Current account deficit**  
He said that one of the major problems of the Pakistani economy is the current account deficit, adding that it had swelled to \$17.5 billion during the fiscal year 2021-22. The finance minister mentioned that due to the "prudent decisions of the incumbent government" — majorly the import curbs — the CAD has been reduced by 77% to \$4 billion. Likewise, he said, the trade deficit has been reduced by \$21 billion.

"The threat of default has been averted due to the tough decision of the government and the fall in foreign exchange reserves has been slowed down," the finance minister said.

Increasing remittances  
The finance minister said remittances are a crucial part of foreign exchange reserves, representing 90% of the country's exports.

In a bid to promote remittances through formal channels, the government has proposed the following steps:

- Abolishment of 2% final tax on the purchase of immovable property.

- Introduction of a "diamond card" for people sending over \$50,000 — through which they can get one non-prohibited bore license, gratis passport, preferential access to Pakistani embassies and consulates, fast-track immigration at Pakistani airports, special prizes through draws.

**Education**  
Highlighting the importance of education, the finance minister said that although this falls under provincial jurisdiction, the federal government always plays its part.

For the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the federal government has proposed an allocation of Rs65 billion under the current expenditure, while Rs70 billion have been allocated for under the development expenditure.

It was also revealed that Pakistan Endowment Fund would be established for the financial aid of the sector, for which Rs5 billion have been allocated in the budget.

## Novak Djokovic to play for record 23rd major title

Djokovic won his 20th straight Grand Slam match and will play for a men's record 23rd major title — and a third Roland Garros trophy — against either No. 4 Casper Ruud or No. 22 Alexander Zverev. He would tie Serena Williams at 23 majors, with only Margaret Court's 24 ahead of them

PARIS: Novak Djokovic's dream of lifting a men's record 23rd major trophy is three sets away from becoming reality. In a blockbuster meeting, the two-time Roland Garros champion defeated world No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz, 6-3, 5-7, 6-1, 6-0, on Court Philippe Chatrier Friday evening. Djokovic has now remarkably taken 20 of his past 21 major semifinals en route to his 34th Grand Slam final appearance. For two sets, Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz played some of the most incredible tennis fans have witnessed in recent history. And then the 20-year-old world No. 1 was beset by cramps early in the third set of their highly anticipated French Open semifinal — and suddenly the match took a dramatic turn. No. 1 Alcaraz could barely move, began swinging for the fences and the match soon ended with No. 3 Djokovic winning, 6-3, 5-7, 6-1, 6-1. The 36-year-old Serb improved to 27-0 in major semifinals after winning the first set.

"First and foremost, I have to say tough luck for Carlos," Djokovic said on court. "Obviously, at this level the last thing you want is

cramps and physical problems in the late stages of a Grand Slam. So I feel for him, I feel sorry, I hope he can recover and he can come back very soon.

"I told him at the net, he knows how young he is, he's got plenty of time ahead of him, so he's going to win this tournament I'm sure many, many times. He's an unbelievable player, incredible competitor, very nice guy so he deserves all the applause and all the support." Djokovic won his 20th straight Grand Slam match and will play for a men's record 23rd major title — and a third Roland Garros trophy — on Sunday against either No. 4 Casper Ruud or No. 22 Alexander Zverev. He would tie Serena Williams at 23 majors, with only Margaret Court's 24 ahead of them. His 34th major final ties Chrissie Evert for the most ever. The last time a French Open final was played without Djokovic, Rafael Nadal or Roger Federer was 2004. The champion will take home about \$2.5 million, while the runner-up earns \$1,248,019.

Having already won the Australian Open in January — with a torn hamstring — Djokovic would be

half way to the calendar Slam if he wins on Sunday. He came within one match of doing so in 2021 but lost in the U.S. Open final to Daniil Medvedev in straight sets.

Djokovic is currently tied with his longtime rival Nadal at 22 majors. Nadal withdrew ahead of the tournament with a hip injury and said 2024 would be his final season. Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Margaret Court currently hold the record for most grand slam titles in their respective singles fields. Nadal became the sole holder of the men's singles record after edging past Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic with his 2022 Australian Open triumph. He then extended his lead at the French Open, before Djokovic pulled back within one at Wimbledon. Djokovic's triumph in the 2023 Australian Open final where he beat Stefanos Tsitsipas saw him draw level with Nadal at the top of the men's standings. Swiss icon Federer will not have the chance to add to his grand slam haul after announcing his retirement following the Laver Cup in Sept. 2022. — Agencies



## Swiatek puts French Open title on line against Muchova

PARIS: Reigning French Open Iga Swiatek will attempt to become the first woman to successfully defend the title in Paris in 16 years on Saturday when she faces surprise finalist Karolina Muchova. World number one Swiatek is bidding for a third Roland Garros crown in four years and fourth Grand Slam title following her 2022 US Open victory. Justine Henin was the last woman to win back-to-back French Open titles when she captured her third in a row and fourth in total in 2007.

Swiatek, 22, has yet to drop a set in this tournament but will be wary of her Czech opponent who knocked out second seed Aryna Sabalenka in the semi-finals after recovering from 2-5 and match point down in the final set.



Swiatek's last-four win over Beatriz Haddad Maia of Brazil coupled with Sabalenka's agonising defeat ensured the Pole will remain at number one heading into the grass-court part of the season. She is the youngest woman since Monica Seles in the early 1990s to reach three French Open titles, while world number 43 Muchova is the fourth lowest ranked player to reach the showpiece match here.

Swiatek, then just 19, was ranked 54 when she lifted the trophy in 2020 — three years after Jelena Ostapenko's shock triumph. Muchova's compatriot Renata Tomanova was runner-up in 1976. It is still early in her career but Swiatek is starting to establish a dominance at Roland Garros best associated with Rafael Nadal, the record 14-time French Open champion.

"Rafa, what he did and what he's still doing, it's pretty amazing," said Swiatek. "I never kind of knew that it's gonna be possible for me. "So it was totally out of my reach, if I can say that. And still he played so well so many years, I don't know if it's going to be possible for me." With a 27-2 record at Roland Garros, Swiatek will be the overwhelming favourite, but Muchova has won all five matches in her career against players in the top three — four of them at Grand Slams. "It's nice. I didn't really even know about this statistic. It just shows me that I can play against them," said the 26-year-old. She came from a set down to beat top-ranked Ashleigh Barty in the quar-

ter-finals at the 2021 Australian Open, showing she has a knack of rising to the occasion in a career slowed by injuries. Once a top 20 player, Muchova was sidelined by an abdominal problem for seven months in 2021 while she ended last year's French Open in a wheelchair after suffering an ankle injury. Only last September, her ranking was outside the top 200.

"There has been many moments, many lows, I would say, from one injury to another," said Muchova. "For sure when I missed Australian Open last year, and I was in a pretty bad state health-wise, I was working out a lot to try to get back. "Some doctors told me, you know, maybe you'll not do sport anymore. — Agencies



## 2025 Champions Trophy to be shifted from Pak

LAHORE: The 2024 T20 World Cup, initially planned for West Indies and USA, and the 50-over 2025 Champions Trophy set to take place in Pakistan, might undergo changes according to reports. Instead of the T20 World Cup, West Indies and USA could potentially host the Champions Trophy, while the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) may receive monetary compensation for the switch. According to News18, the International Cricket Council (ICC) is considering shifting the 2025 tournament from Pakistan to the Caribbean, while the 2024 T20 World Cup would be moved to Scotland and Ireland. However, these discussions are in their early stages and have only been conducted verbally. The broadcasters for the next ICC media rights are also in agreement with this proposal, and if things progress smoothly, the changes may be implemented.

The proposed change is primarily driven by the scheduling constraints faced by the United Kingdom, which can only host events in the May-June window. As the original schedule for the 2024 tournament aligns with this time frame, Ireland and Scotland have been considered as alternative hosts for the T20 World Cup. Shifting the Champions Trophy to West Indies and the USA offers the United States an additional year to develop the necessary infrastructure for hosting the tournament. Moreover, since the Champions Trophy features fewer matches compared to the T20 World Cup, it is seen as a more logistically viable option for the West Indies and the USA.

It has been noted that the current infrastructure situation in the USA is not very encouraging, and hosting an event like the T20 World Cup would pose significant challenges. The lack of ready venues and the potential financial losses for broadcasters in the sub-continent, where returns are typically high, are some of the concerns raised. "The current infrastructure situation in the USA is not very encouraging. Even if they successfully host the upcoming Major League Cricket, hosting an event like the T20 World Cup is a different ball game altogether. Where will you host the matches when the venues aren't ready? — DNA

## Liverpool sign Argentine Mac Allister

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool signed Argentine World Cup winner Alexis Mac Allister from Brighton on Thursday for a fee that could rise to a reported £55 million (\$69 million). The 24-year-old is the first piece in a midfield rebuild for Liverpool, who finished a disappointing fifth in the Premier League. "It feels amazing," said Mac Allister, who is understood to have signed a five-year deal at Anfield. "It's a dream come true. It's amazing to be here and I can't wait to get started. "I wanted to be in from the first day of pre-season, so it's good that everything is done. I'm looking forward to meeting my teammates. "It was a fantastic year for me — World Cup, what we achieved with Brighton — but now it's time to think about Liverpool and try to be a better player and a better human being every day." Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp is seeking to bolster his midfield options after the departures of James Milner, Naby Keita and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain. The club were priced out of a move for England teenage star Jude Bellingham, who is set to join Real Madrid after the clubs agreed a fee of 103 million euros (\$110 million). Liverpool, who struggled last term after nearly completing an unprecedented quadruple in 2021/22, have been criticised for failing to reinforce their ageing midfield over recent transfer windows. — Agencies

## CS directs to finalize arrangements of Shandur Festival

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry on Friday directed the authorities concerned to finalize arrangements for Shandur Polo Festival and ensure steps for the successful holding of this signature event of the province. The Chief Secretary gave the instruction in a high-level meeting held here at Civil Secretariat, to review preparations for Shandur Polo Festival. The meeting was attended by administrative secretaries of home, tourism, information, communication and works departments and the Director General of KP Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) while Commissioner Malakand, Regional Police Officer, Deputy Com-

missioners of Upper and Lower Chitral participated through video link.

Secretary Tourism informed the meeting that this year also the historical and world's highest altitude polo festival at Shandur, District Chitral would be commencing from 7 July to July 9. The event would be held at the world highest polo ground at a height of 12,264 feet, he said, adding that elaborate arrangements are being finalized for the event. Referring to arrangements, he explained that a tent village and prefabricated washrooms would be set up, wherein boarding and lodging facilities would be provided to both foreign and domestic tourists. He said that apart from polo matches, local music and performing art would

be displayed besides setting up stalls. The chief secretary asked secretary finance to provide funds required for the festival and directed him to ensure that the resources are utilised in a transparent manner. He also directed that the National Highways Authority to review the road leading to Shandur Polo Ground to make it usable for traffic and ensure availability of heavy machinery at places where there is a risk of road closure due to flooding in streams. Similarly, travel advisories should also be issued for the convenience and safe travel of tourists so that they do not face any inconvenience. The Chief Secretary further instructed that the deputy commissioners and district police officers should prepare a comprehensive plan including traffic plan for the upcoming event. The Chief Secretary stressed the need to make all-out efforts for the successful holding of Shandur Polo Festival, saying that such events portray a positive image of Pakistan, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all over the world. — DNA

## Messi doesn't want 'pressure' of Barca return: Xavi

"Imagine Messi, in the focus he's got on him, he's never got calm, he has to behave perfectly, he has to be perfect on the pitch, he has to be best in every way"

BARCELONA: Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez said Thursday he understood Lionel Messi's desire to avoid the "pressure" of a return to the Catalan giants this summer. Messi, 35, announced Wednesday he will play at American side Inter Miami in Major League Soccer after ending his two-year spell at Paris Saint-Germain.

The Argentine playmaker, a seven-time Ballon d'Or winner, had options to return to the Catalan club where he carved out his legacy, or take a megabucks move to Saudi Arabia. "He hasn't had a good time in these two years (in Paris) and now he doesn't want that type of pressure," Xavi said on Twitch. "It's a personal

decision and the circumstances didn't help, but the decision is Leo's and we have to respect it, he's the best in history."

Xavi said he had spoken a lot with Messi over the past few months but he noticed "a change" over the past few days. "Maybe he didn't see it so clearly, and you have to respect that — many times we don't put ourselves in the shoes of others, we lack empathy and being Leo can't be an easy thing," said Xavi. "Imagine Messi, in the focus he's got on him, he's never got calm, he has to behave perfectly, he has to be perfect on the pitch, he has to be the best in every way." Messi, who arrived at Barcelona as a



13-year-old and went on to become the best player in the club's history, was forced to leave in 2021 with the club's financial situation preventing them giving him a new deal.

The forward, who won the World Cup in December 2022 with Argentina, was jeered by PSG fans after the team were eliminated in the Champions League last 16 for the second year running. "Excitement was generated because we were both talking, we talked a lot, we were all excited — first him, then me and then the club," added Xavi. "A lot of the time you want something but the circumstances don't help, he explained it very well. "He wants to lower the

level of pressure, and if he returned here, it would be straight back to 10 out of 10." Messi said in an interview with Spanish media that he was afraid Barcelona's economic situation might make a return difficult and he didn't want to run the risk of reaching the end of the summer without a club.

The player also admitted he was looking forward to enjoying his life more in Miami, while still giving his all to his new side. "I want to enjoy myself again, spending time with my family, day to day," said Messi. "I'm in a moment where I want to go out of the spotlight a bit, think more about my family." — Agencies

## Salient features...

FROM PAGE 01

file sales tax return. -Rate of tax on IT based system development consultants is proposed to be reduced to 15% from 16%. -Scope of IT and IT enabled services is proposed to be harmonized with scope envisaged under the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001 on the proposal of Ministry of Information Technology.

## Counterattack...

FROM PAGE 01

reports from the Russian bloggers of German-made Leopard tanks and U.S. Bradley armoured vehicles near Tokmak south of Orikhiv, if confirmed, would provide the first evidence that Ukraine's new brigades of Western-armed troops had joined the battle. In all, Kyiv has 12 brigades totalling 50,000-60,000 troops ready to unleash in the counteroffensive. Nine of the brigades have been armed and trained by the West. "They've got a choice of how many they commit initially and how many they keep in reserve in case the battlefield dynamics change," Barry said, adding that Ukraine's initial priority would be trying to keep the Russians off balance and gain tactical surprise through deception and camouflage.

In a statement, the Russian defence ministry said: "The armed forces of Ukraine continued attempts to conduct offensive operations in the southern Donetsk and Zaporozhzhia directions."

## IMF gives verbal...

FROM PAGE 01

The prime minister said the common man was bearing the brunt of inflation, however, the government was taking steps to provide them relief in the budget. The government, he said, accepted all the requirements of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and hoped that a staff-level agreement would be reached in near future. Since assumption of power 14 months ago, he added, it had to deal with the challenge of IMF, post-flood situation and global inflation, he added. Referring to the devastating floods triggered by climate change, he said that it inflicted losses worth over \$30 billion on the country's economy.

## Budget to restart...

FROM PAGE 01

four years of economic destruction, joblessness, chaos and anarchy during the PTI government's tenure. "Four years of PTI ushered in destruction, but now this budget will chart the country on a course of prosperity and development," he said while talking to the media persons outside the Parliament House.

## PTI terms budget...

FROM PAGE 01

He went on to say that the government was totally clueless and had no plan as how to get the country of the current quagmire. "The budget has a new external debt target of \$8.5 billion but this would not be possible without IMF while PDM government seems in no mood effective decision making because they do not care about the economy, as they are only concerned about PTI Chairman Imran Khan," he added. Hamid went on to say that the PDM government brought down the pace of economic growth from 6 percent to negative in one year, decreasing exports and remittances \$ 7 billion, adding that large-scale industrial output fell by 25% in the last two months.

## No one buying...

FROM PAGE 01

activity has collapsed to a standstill with 0% growth in the current year (0.3% to be exact), compared to two years of nearly 6% growth under the PTI government. "The epic failure of the PDM government has led to a 'never seen before' crisis with 8 million workers becoming unemployed in FY2023, the unemployment rate rising to 10%, and causing nearly 18 million households to fall below the poverty line," the spokesperson said.



## Briefs

**Russian, Chinese generals discuss military cooperation**

## DNA

MOSCOW: Russian Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov on Friday discussed military cooperation with his Chinese counterpart Liu Zhenli via video link, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

Gerasimov congratulated Zhenli over his recent appointment, wished him success, and said that the visit of Chinese Defense Minister Li Shangfu to Moscow in April was "of great importance for the development of defense cooperation."

"We highly appreciate the fact that after being appointed to the post, Colonel-General Li Shangfu chose Russia as the first country for his foreign trip, as did Chinese President Xi Jinping, who paid a state visit to our country in March," he said. Gerasimov said coordination between Moscow and Beijing has a "stabilizing effect" in the world.

"An example is the joint military exercises both on a bilateral basis and within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and SMOA Plus (coordination format of 10 Asian countries), which contribute to the deepening of positive contacts in the defense sphere," he added.

The official said joint trainings of Russian and Chinese armed forces should continue. "I am convinced that today's talks will serve to further strengthen the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership in the defense sector. Taking this opportunity, I invite you to visit Russia at a convenient time for you," he said.

**Ukrainian refugees at risk of poverty in Austria: UN**

GENEVA: Refugees from Ukraine are at risk of slipping into poverty in Austria, according to a survey released Friday by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

About 38% of the refugees surveyed said they could barely meet their basic needs in Austria over the past three months, while 17% can no longer cover them at all.

Regarding access to the Austrian labor market, 30% said they have work at the moment, while 26% have no work. About 70% of the workers indicated that their current employment is at a lower level than their previous employment in Ukraine. A total of 533 refugee households from Ukraine in Austria were surveyed online from January to March, allowing information to be collected from over 1,500 individuals. About 4% of the respondents plan to return home within the next three months, 42% hope to return home one day, while 37% are still undecided on this issue.

"The data collected impressively shows that the course must now finally be set to give refugees from Ukraine longer-term prospects in Austria. This urgently requires a change in the system," writes Christoph Pinter, head of UNHCR Austria, on the organization's website.

The risk of poverty is currently exacerbated by the fact that refugees from Ukraine are in the basic care system, which is actually designed for asylum seekers and for a short duration of stay, according to Pinter. "Refugees from Ukraine should have the opportunity to arrive in Austria both emotionally and economically. For this, they need access to more rights and also a longer-term residence title," Pinter further writes. According to the head of UNHCR Austria, special consideration must be given to the large number of mothers and children who have fled alone, and to the high percentage of people with special needs, which according to the survey is 17%.—APP

# EU chiefs hail migration deal, Orbán calls it 'unacceptable'

"Member states have full discretion as to the type of solidarity they contribute. No member state will ever be obliged to carry out relocations," the Council said in a statement explaining the outcome of Thursday's meeting

## NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: Official reactions are pouring in after home affairs ministers struck a major deal to revamp the European Union's migration and asylum policy.

Ursula von der Leyen, who, upon becoming president of the European Commission, made the overhaul one of her top priorities, called the agreement a "huge milestone."

"Migration is a European challenge," von der Leyen said in a tweet. "Working together, we can achieve a common solution."

Charles Michel, president of the European Council, an institution that has witnessed countless debates on migration over the past years, most of which were as polarising as they were fruitless, said the deal represented "truly a big step." Von der Leyen and Michel sent their personal congrat-

ulations to Ylva Johansson, the European Commissioner for home affairs, for her perseverance and hard work. In her capacity, Johansson has continuously defended the need to move forward with the so-called New Pact on Migration and Asylum, a holistic proposal that she presented in September 2020 with the aim of establishing a unified, coordinated migration policy among the 27 member states. The New Pact, which seeks to replace the ad-hoc crisis mode that is currently in place, has been the focus of intense discussions and was at times seen as a proposal condemned to failure. But on Thursday evening, in a surprising turn of fate, home affairs ministers gathered in Luxembourg struck a provisional deal on the pact's two main pillars: a system of mandatory solidarity to manage the arrival of asylum seekers and a common framework to streamline

border procedures. "It has been a marathon," Johansson said. The vote took place un-

der the rules of qualified majority and secured a margin of support wider than anticipated, with Italy and Greece, two frontline countries, voting in favour despite having voiced concerns earlier in the day.



der the rules of qualified majority and secured a margin of support wider than anticipated, with Italy and Greece, two frontline countries, voting in favour despite having voiced concerns earlier in the day. Austria, a country that has taken a hard line on migration, also gave its go-ahead. "It was important to show



Chancellor Karl Nehammer. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Malta, Lithuania and Slovakia chose to abstain, diplomats with knowledge of the negotiations told Euronews. In the end, only two countries opposed the file: Hungary and Poland. "Forced relocation does not solve the problem of mi-

gration, but it violates the sovereignty of the member states," Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki



gration, but it violates the sovereignty of the member states," Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said in a short tweet published on Friday morning. "Poland will not pay for the mistakes of the immigration policies of other countries."

— something that is actually not foreseen under the proposal. "This is unacceptable, they want to forcefully turn Hungary into a migrant country," Orbán said, according to his spokesperson. His deputy minister of interior, Bence Rétvári, who took part in the Luxembourg discussions, expanded upon Budapest's position, saying the reform will place a "disproportionate burden" on Hungary and encourage the arrival of new migrants. Rétvári claimed "pro-migration governments" had pressured other member states into accepting the draft law, making a "mockery" of the EU's decision-making process.

The European Commission insists the new system is not based on "mandatory relocation" but on "mandatory solidarity." The reform will offer member states three options to collectively cope with situations of migration pressure

## Stages final school strike

# Greta Thunberg vows to keep fighting for climate

## WEB DESK

STOCKHOLM: Despite graduating, the Swedish climate activist behind the global school strikes says "The fight has only just begun".

Greta Thunberg staged her final School Strike for Climate on 9 June. The Swedish activist sparked the global youth movement in 2018 when she encouraged students to skip classes on Fridays to demand action against climate change.

Since then, millions of students in more than 180 countries have participated in the Fridays for Future strikes, calling for the fossil fuel industry to transition to renewable energy, among other demands.

"When I started striking in 2018 I could never have expected that it would lead to anything," Greta tweeted this morning. "Some more people joined,



and quite suddenly this was a global movement growing every day."

9 June marks strike week 251 for Thunberg.

"Today, I graduate from school, which means I'll no longer be able to school strike for the climate," tweets Greta. "This is then the last school strike for me." But this definitely isn't the end of her activism at large. "We're still here, and we aren't planning on going anywhere," she continues. "Much has changed since we started, and yet we have much further to go."

In a thread on Twitter this morning, Greta took the opportunity to highlight the socioeconomic factors underpinning the climate crisis. "We are still moving in the wrong direction, where those in power are allowed to sacrifice marginalised and affected people and the planet in the name of greed, profit and economic growth," she tweeted.— Agencies

## Palestinian president to visit China

RAMALLAH: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will visit China next week at the invitation of President Xi Jinping, the Foreign Ministry in Beijing announced on Friday. China has signaled its intent to back Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. "At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, President of the state of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas will pay a state visit to China from June 13 to 16," spokesperson Hua Chunying said in an official release on the Foreign Ministry's website on Friday. The statement follows a declaration from Foreign Minister Qin Gang in April, in which he expressed China's willingness to support peace negotiations after separate conversations with Israeli and Palestinian diplomats. Qin backed "steps to resume peace talks" in a phone call with Israel's foreign minister, Eli Cohen, the Xinhua news agency said in April, adding that "China is ready to provide convenience for this."



The Chinese diplomat also made similar calls for peace talks in a discussion with the Palestinian foreign minister, Riyad al-Maliki, Xinhua reported. In both exchanges, Qin stated that China's platform for peace negotiations is based on the so-called "two-state solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Xinhua said. Beijing's efforts to establish the resumption of talks between Israel and Palestine comes as China focuses elements of its foreign policy towards acting as a mediator in various regional disputes. In March, Beijing brokered renewed ties between regional rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia, inserting itself into a political theater in which the United States has for decades acted as the chief diplomatic influencer. The move casts Washington to the sidelines in regional disputes such as the Yemeni civil war, largely considered a Tehran-Riyadh proxy conflict. Israel's Foreign Ministry also said that it expects China to play a productive role in its concerns about Tehran's nuclear ambitions.—DNA

## Iran denies report of nearing 'interim deal' with US

TEHRAN: Iran has denied a report that it is nearing an "interim deal" with the US that would see some sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on Iranian uranium enrichment.

Iran's mission at the UN in a statement on Friday dismissed the report published by the Middle East Eye website that claimed a breakthrough in talks between Tehran and Washington to reach an "interim deal." "There is no interim deal (meant) to replace the JCPOA," said Iran's UN mission, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as Iran nuclear deal, stressing that no such agreement is on the agenda. A spokesman for the White House National Security Council also earlier rejected the report, calling it "false and misleading." Citing two sources, the Middle East Eye in a report on Thursday said that Tehran and Washington were nearing a temporary deal that would bring sanctions relief to Iran in exchange for a reduction in nuclear enrichment activities. It said the talks have taken place on US soil, adding that Washington is still reluctant to rejoin the 2015 nuclear accord it unilaterally abandoned in May 2018. According to the report, the Iranian side was represented by Amir Saeed Irvani, Iran's ambassador to the UN, while the American side was represented by Robert Malley, the Joe Biden administration's special envoy on Iran. The two sides "engaged in several face-to-face meetings," the report stated. Under the deal, the report said, Iran would "cease its 60 percent-and-beyond uranium enrichment activities and continue its cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog for monitoring and verification of its nuclear program.—APP

## Enhanced co-op with Arab League key to resolving conflicts

NEW YORK: UN political chief Rosemary DiCarlo said Thursday that enhanced collaboration with the Arab League could potentially pacify conflicts in the Middle East region.

From settling the conflict in Sudan to realizing a two-state solution in Israel and Palestine, cooperation with the League of Arab States is critical to stabilizing the region, DiCarlo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, told the Security Council on Thursday.

"Together, we can achieve what neither organization can achieve on its own," she said, presenting the UN secretary-general's latest report on the region.

Recent strains on multilateralism have seen trust in institutions and processes sorely tested, most recently

by the uneven response to the COVID-19 crisis, she said. "Defiance of international law and the norms that bind us is making international and regional cooperation to maintain peace and security ever more difficult," she said. "In such a fraught context, it is heartening that the relationship between the UN and the League remains robust."

Drawing attention to the latest regional developments, she underscored pressing matters of common concern, such as the ongoing crisis in Sudan, where the national army and a rival paramilitary group persist in street clashes.

She emphasized the importance of upholding the ceasefire agreement brokered in May and stressed the need for long-term

peace in the region.

"The role of the region will be key to ending the conflict," DiCarlo noted.

Shifting focus to Israel and Palestine, she highlighted the persistent tensions and frequent escalations in the occupied West Bank. The UN official emphasized that unilateral actions, including Israeli settlement expansion, undermine the collective endeavors to achieve a two-state solution.

In addition, the lack of progress in holding Palestinian elections across the West Bank, Gaza and other occupied territories must be addressed, she said.

"We share a common goal with the League of Arab States: a two-state solution," DiCarlo said. "This is the only path to sustainable peace between the two peoples." She expressed

appreciation for the advancements made in Libya and applauded the Arab League's endorsement of the United Nations' endeavors to facilitate a political resolution. With upcoming elections on the horizon, she emphasized the Libyan people's aspiration to democratically elect their leaders and end the cycle of perpetual political transitions. She noted that the recent regional meetings regarding the 12-year-old conflict in Syria could result in a negotiated political solution if the current momentum is maintained.

More broadly, DiCarlo said the region possesses immense potential, including the fact that 60 percent of its population is under 30. The UN supports a joint initiative reaching out to Arab youth, she said.—APP

## Japan passes immigration reform bill

TOKYO - A contentious immigration reform bill was passed by Japan's parliament on Friday.

The legislation will amend Japan's immigration law to permit authorities to deport people who repeatedly apply for refugee status, a move that opponents say could lead to people being returned to their home countries, where they will face persecution. Here are four things to know about the bill:

The bill makes three key revisions to Japan's immigration law.

First, it will establish a framework to accept "quasi-refugees" fleeing from conflicts such as the war in Ukraine. Japan currently only recognizes people as refugees who face persecution for their "race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion." People fleeing conflict are often disqualified.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year highlighted some of the shortcomings of the current system. Japan has accepted some 2,400 people, mostly Ukrainians, as "evacuees," temporarily granting them resident status. The amendment would allow quasi-refugees to qualify for resident status, to work and to receive national pensions. Quasi-refugees would also face fewer hurdles to obtaining permanent residence status.—APP

## Swiss lawmakers reject aid package for Ukraine

BERN: Swiss lawmakers have refused to back a proposal for a \$5.5 billion aid package for Ukraine over the next five to 10 years, local media reported on Thursday.

Opposing the motion, Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis said that Switzerland is already making a sizeable financial contribution to Ukraine and hosting refugees from the war-torn country, according to the Swissinfo news platform.

The Swiss government has already allocated around 1.5 billion Swiss francs (\$1.7 billion) for Ukraine and its region for the 2025-2028 period, he added.

Cassis said that the Swiss government wants to help with reconstruction in Ukraine, but he stressed that a careful clarification of the needs and financing is necessary. The decision came a day after the Swiss Senate approved a plan to permit buyers of Swiss weapons to re-export them to third countries, including Ukraine, under strict conditions.—Agencies

## US suspends food aid to Ethiopia

WASHINGTON: The US Agency for International Development (USAID) announced on Thursday it has halted all food aid to Ethiopia after it discovered a "widespread and coordinated campaign" to steal contributions. The US is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia, and the decision to suspend food deliveries followed a country-wide review that determined a sweeping effort "is diverting food assistance from the people of Ethiopia," a USAID spokesperson told Anadolu on condition of anonymity. "As a result, we made the difficult but necessary decision that we cannot move forward with distribution of food assistance until reforms are in place," the spokesperson said in an emailed statement.

"Our intention is to immediately resume food assistance once we are confident in the integrity of delivery systems to get assistance to its intended recipients and when assistance is people-centered, needs-based, evidence-based, and independent," they added. USAID did not ascribe responsibility for the theft, but it had previously moved to suspend food deliveries in the northern Tigray region in early May alongside the World Food Program. The latest decision appears to indicate the problems are far more widespread. Ethiopia is in the midst of a biting drought affecting the wider Horn of Africa region, and is continuing to recover from a civil conflict that ended.—APP

# Beijing denies on reports of spy base in Cuba

## FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China on Friday slammed media reports, which cited unnamed American officials, that it was establishing a spy base in Cuba, calling them "rumors" and "slander." The Central American island nation as well as the US have also denied such reports.

Wang Wenbin, spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, however, said: "Spreading rumors and slander is a common tactic of the US." He was reacting to a story by the US-based Wall Street Journal (WSJ) that Cuban and Chinese officials reached an agreement to establish a facility to conduct what is known as signals intelligence collection. "The US has illegally occupied the Guantanamo

Bay base in Cuba for a long time, engaged in ulterior activities, and imposed an embargo on Cuba for more than 60 years," Wang told reporters in Beijing, according to the Chinese daily Global Times. The US "should reflect on itself, stop interfering in Cuba's internal affairs under the banner of freedom, democracy and human rights, and immediately cancel its commercial and financial blockade of Cuba," said Wang.

Cuba late Thursday denied claims that China and the Havana administration have agreed to establish a base on the island country to spy on the US. Rejecting the report, Carlos Fernandez de Cossio, Cuban deputy foreign minister, called it totally "untrue and unfounded" and said that such news was "promoted by the malicious

intention to justify the unprecedented reinforcement of the economic blockade, destabilization and the aggression against Cuba." He said that the Cuban government rejects any "foreign military presence in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the numerous military bases and troops of the US, and especially the military base that illegally occupies a portion of our national territory in the province of Guantánamo."

The US has also denied the report. China's plan to establish an electronic intelligence facility in Cuba, as reported in the WSJ citing "US officials familiar with classified intelligence," was "not accurate," Pentagon spokesman Patrick Ryder told reporters on Thursday. Responding to US Secretary of State Antony Blink-

en's plans to visit China, Wang said: "China's stance in dialogue with the US is consistent and the door for communication is always open." "But the crux of the problem is that we cannot 'communicate for the sake of communication,' let alone 'say one thing and do another,'" said the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman. "The US should stop interfering in China's internal affairs, stop harming China's interests, and stop undermining the political foundation of bilateral relations while claiming to build 'guardrails'," Wang added.

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reported that Cuban and Chinese officials reached an agreement to establish a facility to conduct what is known as signals intelligence collection. Rejecting the report, Carlos Fernandez de Cossio, Cuban deputy foreign minister, called it totally "untrue and unfounded" and said that such news was "promoted with the malicious intention to justify the unprecedented reinforcement of the economic blockade, destabilization and the aggression against Cuba." He said that the Cuban government rejects any "foreign military presence in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the numerous military bases and troops of the US, and especially the military base that illegally occupies a portion of our national territory in the province of Guantánamo."



## Briefs

### Canadian wildfires spread in British Columbia

#### WEB DESK

OTTAWA: Wildfires spread in the western Canadian province of British Columbia on Friday, while hundreds of fires continued to burn on the other side of the country in Quebec, sending wildfire smoke billowing across North American cities. Canada is enduring its worst start to the wildfire season, with 2,392 fires so far this year and 4.4 million hectares (10.9 million acres) burned, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC), roughly 15 times the annual average over the last decade. The CIFFC reported 427 active fires, of which 232 were out of control. Around 2,500 people were told to evacuate the community of Tumbler Ridge in northeastern British Columbia on Thursday. Officials also expanded evacuation orders for the Donnie Creek fire, the second-largest recorded in the province. But in the eastern province of Quebec, fire fighters contained blazes that had threatened hydro-electric facilities in the Lac-Saint-Jean area, about 300 km north of Quebec City, public broadcaster Radio-Canada said on Friday.

### NATO may base troops in Sweden, govt says

#### DNA

STOCKHOLM: Sweden will allow NATO to base troops on its territory even before it formally joins the defence alliance, the prime minister and defence minister said on Friday. Sweden applied last year to join NATO as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Objections from Turkey and Hungary have delayed the bid and Sweden now hopes to join by a NATO summit in Lithuania next month. "The government has decided that the Swedish Armed Forces may undertake preparations with NATO and NATO countries to enable future joint operations," Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and Defence Minister Pal Jonson said. "The preparations may consist of temporary basing of foreign equipment and personnel on Swedish territory. The decision sends a clear signal to Russia and strengthens Sweden's defence," they said in an opinion piece in daily Dagens Nyheter. Russia would for the foreseeable future remain a threat against neighbouring countries, they said, and they were uncertain of the extent of President Vladimir Putin's territorial ambitions.

### Pak envoy meets key US senator in Washington

#### DNA

WASHINGTON: Pakistan Ambassador Masood Khan on Thursday met Senator Chris Van Hollen—a member of the influential US Senate Foreign Relations Committee—in Washington and "discussed ways to build resilient Pak-US relations" in multiple fields. In a statement today, Ambassador Masood Khan said it was an honour for him to meet Senator Hollen to discuss ways to build resilient Pak-US relations in multiple fields. Born in Karachi, Senator Hollen is admired as a friend of Pakistan by all, he said. During his meeting with the Pakistani envoy, Senator Hollen said that he has always advocated robust ties between Islamabad and Washington especially in economic, commerce, and educational spheres. It comes against the backdrop of a campaign launched by PTI, wherein they approached US lawmakers and asked them to mobilise the administration of President Joe Biden to pressurise Islamabad over the human rights situation in the country.

# Trump faces federal charges in classified documents case

"I AM AN INNOCENT MAN!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform on Thursday, after he announced that he had been indicted. Trump lawyer Jim Trusty told CNN the charges include conspiracy, false statements, obstruction of justice, and illegally retaining classified documents under the Espionage Act

WASHINGTON: Former U.S. President Donald Trump faces a new legal challenge - this time from the government he used to lead - when he appears next week in federal court in Miami on charges of illegally retaining classified documents, obstruction and other crimes. The indictment of a former U.S. president on federal charges is unprecedented in American history and emerges at a time when Trump is the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination next year. Trump faces seven criminal counts related to his treatment of sensitive government materials he took with him when he left the White House in January 2021, according to a source familiar with the matter. He is due to appear in court on Tuesday, a day before his 77th birthday. ABC News, citing sources, reported that U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon has been initially assigned to oversee the case. It is unclear whether she will preside over the trial. Cannon, appointed by Trump in 2019, made decisions that favored him in legal

skirmishes during the documents investigation last year. Her rulings were overturned on appeal. Investigators seized roughly 13,000 documents from Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, nearly a year ago. One hundred were marked as classified, even though one of Trump's lawyers had previously said all records with classified markings had been returned to the government. Trump has previously said he declassified those documents while president, but his attorneys have declined to make that argument in court filings. "I AM AN INNOCENT MAN!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform on Thursday, after he announced that he had been indicted. Trump lawyer Jim Trusty told CNN the charges include conspiracy, false statements, obstruction of justice, and illegally retaining classified documents under the Espionage Act. He said he expects to see the charging document by Tuesday, when Trump is due in court. Trump is the first current or former president to face criminal charges.

It is the second criminal case for Trump, who is due to go on trial in New York next March in a state case stemming from a hush-money payment to a porn star. Trump's legal woes have not dented his popularity with Republican voters, according to Reuters/Ipsos polling. His main rivals have so far lined up behind him to criticize the case as politically motivated. Trump served as president from 2017 to 2021, and he has so far managed to weather controversies that might torpedo other politicians. He describes himself as the victim of a witch hunt and accuses the Justice Department of partisan bias. Special Counsel Jack Smith, who is heading the investigation, is leading a second criminal probe into efforts by Trump and his allies to overturn his 2020 election loss to President Joe Biden, a Democrat. Smith has been given a degree of independence from Justice Department leadership to pursue the politically sensitive cases. Trump also faces a separate criminal probe in

Georgia related to efforts to overturn his loss to Biden in that state. Smith convened grand juries in both Washington and Miami to hear evidence, but has opted bring the case in the politically competitive state of Florida, rather than the U.S. capital, where any jury would likely be heavily Democratic. Under federal law, defendants have a right to be charged where the activity in question took place. A Florida prosecution, legal experts say, could head off a drawn-out legal challenge from Trump's team over the proper venue. The Republican state-by-state presidential nominating contest kicks off early next year, and the party is due to choose its nominee for the November 2024 election in July of that year. If Trump is elected president again, he would have the power to derail any federal case against him, though he would not have the ability to derail state cases. Trump is not the only top government official to draw scrutiny for retaining classified documents. - Agencies

### Two children 'still critical' after France knife attack

#### DNA

PARIS: Two children were fighting for their lives a day after being stabbed by a man in a park in the French Alps, the government said Friday. "There are still two children considered to be in critical condition," government spokesman Olivier Veran said in an interview with French media, adding that the children had undergone "surgical interventions". He also cautioned against jumping to conclusions in the case, in which the alleged attacker is a Syrian refugee. "We obviously need transparency, and everything must be done so that this type of drama does not happen again, but once we have done preliminary work," he said. In an attack that shocked the nation, a man armed with a knife stabbed four preschool children and two adults Thursday at a playground and public park in the normally tranquil lakeside town of Annecy. The child victims were aged between 22 and 36 months. The motive for the rampage remained unclear, with a local prosecutor saying "there's no obvious terrorist motive".

### PTI's Ali Muhammad re-arrested in Mardan

#### DNA

MARDAN: Shortly after an anti-terrorism court (ATC) ordered his release, former PTI MNA Ali Muhammad Khan was re-arrested in Mardan on Friday for the fifth time since protests took place in the wake of party chief Imran Khan's arrest on May 9. Ali Muhammad was first arrested by the Secretariat police on May 11 under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order Order (MPO) in connection with the violence that took place on May 9. Earlier in the day, ATC Judge Syed Obaidullah Shah ordered the PTI leader's release in all cases connected to the violent protests and instructed authorities to set him free if he was not implicated in any other case. In an order, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, the court rejected the prosecution's plea for Ali Muhammad's 14-day custody and noted that the record "reveals that the accused [...] is not directly charged in the FIR and has subsequently been charged on hearsay".

### UN: Taliban plan to ban int'l groups 'horrendous'

#### DNA

UNITED NATIONS: The UN said it was extremely concerned about the Taliban's plan to ban international organizations from providing education in the country. "If this would come to pass, this will be another horrendous step backward for the people of Afghanistan and especially for women and girls," said UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric. "Our colleagues in Kabul are speaking to the de facto authorities. We're trying to ascertain exactly what is being planned. We have not gotten anything official." "Every person has a right to an education, and we want to make sure that the de facto authorities guarantee access to education for children and young adults," he added. It is the latest restriction in the country after the Taliban decree in December 2022 that banned Afghan women from working for NGOs. Taliban rulers have mounted a sustained attack on human rights despite their commitments to protect human and women's rights. Women and girls have been deprived of their rights, including the right to education, and disappeared from public life under the Taliban. Thousands of women have since lost their jobs or were forced to resign from government institutions and the private sector.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors and High Commissioners of the ASEAN countries in a group photo with the Additional Secretary Asia Pacific Amir Khurram Rathore and others at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. - DNA

### Biden to hold first 2024 campaign event

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden will hold his first campaign event next week in the swing state of Pennsylvania, according to a statement released by the White House. Biden, 80, will attend a rally with union members in Philadelphia on June 17, the statement said. Biden said in April he would run again for president, citing his administration's investment in infrastructure and job creation, and a need to push back against extremism popularized by his predecessor Donald Trump. With fewer than 13 million people, a median household income below the national average, and a voting pool that is more than 80% white versus 69% nationwide, Pennsylvania has been a fiercely contested state in recent elections. - Agencies

### CM reviews legal proceedings against rioters

LAHORE: Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday chaired a meeting to review legal proceedings against the miscreants involved in the May 9 attacks. During the meeting, progress in the process of prosecution against the miscreants was also reviewed. It was briefed that the database of 1,163 more criminals involved in the May 9 incidents had been found. It was also briefed that the process for the identification of 1,163 miscreants in a scientific way had also been started. The chief minister ordered to ensure early arrest of the fugitive miscreants. - DNA

# Beijing wants end to terror attacks on Pak-Iran border

#### DNA

ISLAMABAD: For the first time, China, together with Pakistan and Iran, has decided to find ways and means to counter the threat of terrorism facing the region, media reported. In this regard, the Foreign Office on Thursday announced that the first Pakistan-China-Iran Trilateral Consultation Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Security was held at the director general level on Wednesday in Beijing. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General (Counter Terrorism) Abdul Hameed led the Pakistan delegation.

"The delegations held detailed discussions on the regional security situation, particularly the threat of terrorism faced by the region. Based on the outcome of these consultations, the three sides have decided to institutionalise the trilateral consultations on counter-terrorism and security," the Foreign Office said during her weekly media briefing. "Further details will be worked out in due course," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said. For China, which is behind the CPEC projects in the region, this trilateral cooperation would go a long way to ensure that security threats are addressed for these projects to be completed. China has also sensed that the continuing border incidents on the Pak-Iran border, where non-state actors carry out terrorist attacks inside both countries, should be contained. Meanwhile, as Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik visited the United States to discuss the future of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, the FO spokesperson struck a cautious tone. "As we have said in the past, for Pakistan the IP project is an important project and we remain committed to it. There are certain complications with regard to its implementation." "In that context, we remain en-

gaged with both Iran and the United States. Exact details of the meetings that the Minister of State for Petroleum held in the United States may be ascertained from the concerned ministry," she said. Meanwhile, Pakistan said that it has seen the statement from Iranian Naval Chief Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, who had proposed an Ocean Naval Alliance including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, India and Pakistan. "We will examine any proposal when it comes to Pakistan. At this stage, we are not in a position to comment on a statement which has been made," said the spokesperson.

# China warns Europe against official ties with Taiwan

BEIJING: China urged Europe on Friday not to have any official exchanges with Taiwan or support "independence forces" ahead of a planned trip to the continent next week by Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu. Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky confirmed Wu was due to visit Prague next week, saying on Friday state officials were not expected to shift from their existing policy towards Taiwan. Taiwan, which is claimed by China, has no formal diplomatic ties with any European country except the Vatican. Beijing regularly denounces any form of contact between

Taiwanese and foreign officials, viewing it as encouraging global recognition of Taiwan's separate status from China. On Wu's Europe trip, which Taiwan's government has not officially confirmed, he is expected to speak at a think-tank event in Prague immediately after Czech President Petr Pavel, Reuters reported on Thursday. Asked about the visit on Friday, Czech Minister Lipavsky said he had "been informed" about Wu coming to Prague. "Of course, the Czech government has a fairly clear policy on how we maintain relations with Taiwan, so I don't expect us to veer from

this in any way," he said, adding he would be travelling during the visit. The Czech Republic has no diplomatic ties with Taiwan but has built up economic and cultural relations. Beijing views Taiwan as being part of "one China" and demands other countries recognise its sovereignty claims, which Taiwan's democratically-elected government rejects. Speaking at a regular news briefing in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Taiwan didn't have a foreign minister, only a "head of the region's local foreign affairs department". - Agencies

# US group draws parallel between Hindutva forces to Nazis

"India today is ruled not just by a political party the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), but its mother organization the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)," report said

ISLAMABAD: A US-based human rights group "Justice for All" has drawn a parallel between the Hindutva ideology and the Nazis, citing the ongoing persecution of the minorities in India. The organization's report titled "The Nazification of India" compares 12 different mechanisms of hate and persecution from the Nazi playbook, and how they are being implemented in India today. India, the largest democracy in the world has become the weakest at the hands of the fascist Hindutva ideology, said the report released by the Chicago-based human rights organization. It said that Hindutva ideology is not only inspired by Nazis and Fascists

of Europe, but their treatment of the Muslim minority closely follows developments that resulted in pushing Jews to the gas chambers. The report was released in the recent past at a Congressional briefing "to mark the anniversary of the Gujarat pogroms of 2002 against Muslims which propelled the BJP-RSS regime to control India." "India today is ruled not just by a political party the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), but its mother organization the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)," the report said. The report said that what happening in India today was "clearly demonstrates that India is on a dangerous trajectory to becoming a Nazi-inspired, fascist,

majoritarian state, where its minorities and particularly its more than 200 million Muslims, face an impending danger of genocide." At the briefing, Hena Zuberi of Justice for All explained the reasons behind some terms used in the report, like "The BJP-RSS regime," and "The BJP-RSS machine." These terms "reflect the intrinsic links and collaborative relationship between the gas chambers, hate, othering, and boycotts of Jews, ghettoization, and pogroms." "The fact that these parallels are seen is not a surprise since the early leaders of the RSS openly declared that the Nazi model was a good one for India to adopt. And recently, Hit-

ler's popularity has grown widely in the country." The report also explores how Narendra Modi not only got away with facilitating a pogrom but was also elected the Prime Minister of India - twice. It further notes that "while Modi's fortunes continue to rise in India, India's positioning around the world continues to fall." Authors of the report cite the Freedom House, which "downgraded" India in 2021 to "partially free," as well as the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index that placed the world's largest democracy in the category of "Flawed Democracy." It also mentions Reporters Without Borders, which, in 2022 placed India "among the worst countries in terms of media freedom, ranking it 150th out of 180 countries." Noting that the non-profit Genocide Watch has already warned that the situation in India "reached the stages of polarization, preparation, and persecution respectively, the 6th, 7th, and 8th stages of the Ten Stages of Genocide", the report insists, "The world must heed these warning signs and act as a matter of urgency to prevent history from repeating itself." The report wants global leaders to "condemn the gross human rights violations occurring in India and pressure the government to hold true to India's secular constitution." - APP