



Islamabad POST

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Romanian ambassador Nicolae Goia passes away; end of an era

Detailed News On Page-01

Protestors calls Serbia's Vučić to resign

Detailed News On Page-07


Messi terms adapting to PSG very tough

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Sanjrani becomes acting president

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has embarked on his journey to Saudi Arabia to perform the sacred pilgrimage of Hajj. In the absence of the President, Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani has assumed the responsibilities as the Acting President. The Cabinet Division has issued a notification appointing Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani as the Acting President to fulfill the duties during President Alvi's absence. This development ensures the smooth functioning of the government while the President is away.

Asif opposes Senate perks bill

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: In the midst of a severe economic crisis gripping the country, Defense Minister Khawaja Asif on Sunday strongly opposed the proposed Senate chairman perks bill, urging his fellow parliamentarians to stand against it, citing the economic realities facing the country. Speaking in the National Assembly, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader has asked his fellow parliamentarians to stand against it, citing the impoverished state of the country's finances.

Economic stability crucial

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation Faisal Karim Kundi has said the economic stability is vital to tackle other challenges in the country. Talking to a private news channel, he said the PPP's main motto is to conduct elections at specific time after completion of the constitutional period of the government. Commenting on the role of the coalition government, he said we have to cooperate with each other to revive business activity.

IMF deal likely now NA passes budget with amendments

The bill now would go to the President for assent who will sign it into a law



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar speaking in the National Assembly after passage of the budget. – DNA

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Sunday passed the Finance Bill 2023-24 with certain amendments in the proposed budgetary measures and the revised total outlay of Rs 14.48 trillion to achieve macroeconomic stability and the set target of a 3.5 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate. The Finance Bill, moved by Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, was passed with a majority vote after clause-by-clause reading. The House echoed with desk thumping as the House passed the budget. The passage of the Finance Bill has successfully brought to an end the budgetary process started on June, 9 with the budget speech of the finance minister at the National Assembly.

Continued on Page 06

No double-pension: Dar

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar clarified on Sunday that there would be no double pension for government employees falling in the category of Grade 17-22. Responding to a point raised by Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah in the National Assembly, the minister explained that the restriction would not apply to government employees below Grade 17, as there were instances where some employees retired after 15-20 years of service and started another job. The minister stated that if some employees (Grade 17-22) were working on a contract basis after retirement, they would have to choose one pension that suited them, as the policy began from the top. He emphasized that this was an old issue that should have been resolved earlier, which the incumbent government had started to redress. Ishaq Dar mentioned that there was no specific timeframe for pension payments to the dependents of retired employees and widows after their passing.

Continued on Page 06

'Dar must resign'
PTI calls for revised budget, rejects taxes
Qureshi accuses the government of building a false narrative

BUREAU REPORT

MULTAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi Sunday came down hard on Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, demanding that the financial czar resign immediately. Addressing media personnel at a press conference in Multan, the former foreign minister slammed the budget FY24 and said: "Additional taxes of Rs215 billion have been imposed. The nation is already suffering under the burden of taxes, and the financial bill is being revised." "Despite the burden of existing taxes, more had been imposed," he said, adding that the budget presented to the nation is something else while the budget to be approved will be something else entirely. Qureshi also slammed the government's performance and said: "Industries are currently in a state of crisis." About 40% of textile

Continued on Page 06

PTI Sindh expels 6 more members

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: PTI Sindh on Sunday expelled six more party members for skipping the Karachi mayor elections and not voting for the party's supported candidates for mayor and deputy mayor, which it said was "in complete defiance to the party directives". Last month, the PTI had announced support for Jamaat-i-Islami's (JI) mayoral candidate Hafiz Naeemur Rehman but cracks had surfaced within the PTI's city chapter with a group of elected UC chairmen and vice chairmen

Continued on Page 06



KARACHI: Former Chief Justice of Supreme Court of Pakistan Justice @ Gulzar Ahmed presenting souvenir to the US Ambassador Donald Blome. – DNA

US not influencing Pak on China ties

Says trade among partners was key towards economic prosperity

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Ambassador Donald Blome has denied that the United States is pressing Pakistan to choose between the US and China. He was speaking at an interactive session on 'US-Pakistan Relations: Present and Future' organised by the Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations (PCFR) here. Ambassador Blome opined that trade among partners was key towards economic prosperity. The trade must also be equitable and our message to China is to go forward with fair trade terms and Pakistan should demand the same from its economic relationships, he added. He said that for the last four decades,

Continued on Page 06

Pak, Japan political talks tomorrow

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The thirteenth round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Pakistan and Japan will be held on Tuesday in Tokyo, Japan. The twelfth round of these consultations between the two countries was held in 2020 in Islamabad. The Pakistan side will be led by Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan; while, Shigeo Yamada, Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan will lead the Japanese side. During consultations,

Continued on Page 06

Nawaz gets relief from NA Disqualification term limited to maximum 5 years

Nawaz Sharif and Jahangir Tareen will be among those who benefit

Legal committee to pave way for Nawaz's return

STAFF REPORT



MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Sunday amended the law limiting the disqualification of a parliamentarian to a maximum of five years, paving the way for those barred for life from running for a public office. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif and Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) chief Jahangir Khan

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Marriyum hits out at Qureshi over criticism

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday took swipe at Shah Mahmood Qureshi, claiming that those who pushed the country on the verge of default were asking Finance Minister Ishaq Dar to resign. Expressing her thoughts, she schooled her political opponents, saying, "They are preparing to target the nation's economic interests after setting the country on fire and attacking the military installations on May 9". Meanwhile, speaking about Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif, saying, "PML-N Nawaz Sharif will continue to rule coun-

try under a visionary vision". She expressed gratitude to the Pakistani community for according a warm welcome to the Pakistani delegation on their arrival in Paris for a summit on New Global Financing Pact. Earlier, PTI vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the International Monetary Fund has no trust in Ishaq Dar so he should step down as finance minister forthwith. Talking to media persons in Multan, he said that the IMF had rejected the budget. The government has imposed Rs215 billion more taxes. The budget that will be voted on will be the new finance bill, he added. – DNA

Romanian ambassador passes away; end of an era

Diplomatic Corps and all Pakistanis are shocked; Ambassador Nicolae Goia contributed a lot towards promotion of Pakistan and Romanian bilateral relations during his tenure in Pakistan a number of agreements were signed between the two countries

OBITUARY

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan, Nicolae Goia passed away on Sunday, June 24 2023, Ambassador Nicolae Goia of Romania was in Pakistan for more than five years. He had already completed his term, but because of his health reasons, his stay in Pakistan was extended. According to his close aides, he was under treatment in Pakistan for quite some time. It was because of his health that he had decided to extend his stay in Pakistan in order not to disrupt the treatment process. Ambassador Nicolae Goia was a senior Romanian diplomat who was at the last leg of his career. He was about to finish his diplomatic career and retire from service. Ambassador Nicolae Goia contributed a lot towards promotion of Pakistan and Romanian bilateral relations during his tenure in Pa-

kistan a number of agreements were signed between the two countries. During his tenure in Pakistan also a number of high level delegations visited Pakistan and from Pakistan high level delegations were visited Romania the diplomatic community in Islamabad has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the sad demise of Ambassador Nicolae Goia, who was very popular among the diplomatic community because of his professionalism and easygoing personality. A few days ago, Ambassador Nicolae Goia attended a diplomatic reception, which in fact proved his last official appearance. Those who met him at that reception, including myself, simply cannot believe that he has left us because he was very much in his spirits, hale and hearty with benign and welcoming smile on his face. It was indeed shocking news a friend share this news with me. The dean of diplomatic corps had sent a communication to entire diplomatic community and informed them of the



The smiling face heads to his eternal abode, leaving his near and dear ones in shock and pain

death of Romanian Ambassador. Then the news spread like a jungle fire because Ambassador Goia was extremely popular not only among the diplomatic corps but Pakistani people as well. To me, he was more than just an elder brother; he was a cherished companion and a devoted reader of my newspaper, the Daily Islamabad POST. Consistently, he offered valuable feedback on the contents and overall quality of our publication. Each time he shared his thoughts, they resonated deeply with me and provided a wellspring of inspiration. His guidance and suggestions were invaluable, as they propelled me to strive for excellence in every aspect of the newspaper. With his astute observations and insightful comments, he pushed me to explore new avenues, and expand the horizons of our publication. His dedication to our newspaper was unwavering. The officials of the ministry of foreign affairs are in touch with the Romanian embassy and extended full

support to them for the repatriation of the coffin to Romania. The Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif has also expressed his heartfelt condolences. PM Shehbaz said, the ambassador will be remembered for his active role in strengthening Pakistan-Romania relations. The sudden and unexpected news has left everyone feeling deeply saddened and overwhelmed with grief. The departure came as such a shock that it has taken everyone by surprise, leaving them in a state of disbelief. In times like these, our hearts are heavy as we come together to remember the life of the departed soul. Let us send our deepest prayers and wishes for his eternal peace and tranquility. May his spirit find solace and rest in the embrace of a higher power. Let us also acknowledge the strength and resilience of the bereaved family. In the face of this profound loss, they stand tall, united by love and the memories they hold dear. RIP NICOLAE GOIA!!

Inside...

Japan is important for Pakistan:
Ahsan Bakhtawari
– Page 02

High prices force people towards 'Ijtamai Qurbani'
– Page 03

A time-travel novel that will open new possibilities for young writers
– Page 04

Iran's geopolitical realignment with Russia and China
– Page 05

Pakistan knocked out of SAFF Championship 2023
– Page 06

US knew of Wagner coup plans in advance: Report
– Page 07

Uzbekistan greatly values ties with Pakistan: envoy
– Page 08

IMF promoting poverty and inequality in the world

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt said on Sunday that the IMF, World Bank and other such institutions are promoting poverty and inequality in the world.

Their aim is to increase the wealth and influence of Western countries by robbing the poor countries of their resources, he added. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that because of the tactics of these institutions, five percent of the world's population has occupied eighty percent of the resources. The majority of the richest people in the world belong to a Western power, and the IMF is adopting every legal and illegal tactic to increase their wealth, he observed. The business leader said that at present more than seventy countries, including Pakistan, are unable to pay their debts. Self-interested elites who can sell the country's assets but cannot reduce spending control most of these countries. Shahid Rashid Butt said that dozens of countries have been ruined by the IMF's policies and have been forced to abandon national integrity and interests. The ability of such countries to compete in the international market is lost, the economy falls, inflation increases and people's lives become more difficult. In these situations, rich transfer their resources while intelligent people leave their countries and go to Western countries to increase speed of their development, which is a serious brain drain issue. IMF has never stopped any country from corruption and spending spree, but has always victimized the common people. This institution has never brought any country out of crisis, but has worsened their situation, so the sooner the country gets rid of it, the better it is.

FIA arrests most wanted human trafficker from Faisalabad

DNA

FAISALABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Composite Circle Faisalabad has arrested most wanted human smuggler Tahir Nadeem. According to the FIA officials, out of over 30 cases registered against Nadeem, 14 were registered in the Faisalabad Circle. The suspect had extorted millions of rupees from people in return for sending them illegally to countries like Canada, Japan and those in Europe for jobs, they explained. The officials informed that as many as 16 cases of fraud were also registered against Nadeem at various police stations of Faisalabad. The FIA team also recovered 25 Pakistani passports, fake visas, cheque books and fake bank stamps. The officials said raids were being conducted to arrest his accomplices. The FIA has spurned its effort to net the human traffickers across the country after June 13 migrant boat tragedy which capsized and sank in open seas off Greece.—DNA

Japan is important for Pakistan: Ahsan Bakhtawari

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that Japan, the world's third largest economy with a GDP of \$4,940.9 billion, is a country of great importance for Pakistan economically, commercially and diplomatically. The relationship between Pakistan and Japan has a history. There are many possibilities for further improvement of trade relations between the two countries. Japan has one of the oldest population in the world. Pakistan can provide health workers especially nurses to Japan. There are vast opportunities for Japanese investors to invest in dry milk and automobile sector in Pakistan. The role of the embassy is very important in this regard. He expressed these views yesterday while talking to Pakistan's economic minister designated for Japan, Dr. Irfan Abbas Shah, who met him during his visit to the chamber. President Islamabad Chamber said that Japan is in dire need of skilled workers from all



over the world. Pakistan and Japan have an agreement in this regard which needs to be implemented immediately. The government should take SMEDA and other related institutions into confidence and form a comprehensive policy in this regard, courses should be conducted for Pakistani youth to learn Japanese language. He said that in Pakistan, vehicle parts are ordered from outside

and assembled. With the cooperation of Japan, manufacturing should be promoted in Pakistan, which will increase the supply of employment on the one hand and on the other hand, the industry at the local level will also benefit. He said that Japan should set up a baby milk plant in Pakistan, there are vast possibilities of investment in this sector. A technology transfer project from Japan to

Pakistan should be worked on. He said that Japanese investors need to be convinced to build storage in Gwadar, it will not only bring investment to Pakistan but also create employment opportunities. Speaking on this occasion, Economic Minister Dr. Irfan Shah said that Japan is in dire need of skilled workers due to lack of youth, and Pakistanis can take advantage of this. The volume of

Pakistani exports to Japan is four hundred to five hundred million dollars, which can be increased many times. In the past, Japan has set up three plants in the automobile sector in Pakistan, but these plants could not go into manufacturing after assembling, due to several reasons. They will convince Japanese investors to invest in Special Economic Zones in Pakistan. There is scope for increasing the volume of bilateral trade in all sectors in both countries. I assure the Islamabad Chamber that I will be in constant contact with the business community and will play every possible role in bringing the business community of both countries closer.

Speaking on this occasion, Vice President Chamber Engineer Azhar ul Islam said that the Pakistani Embassy should conduct a market survey in Japan, in which apriority list of some items should be made that can be exported from Pakistan to Japan. There should be awareness of the quality so that the local industry pays attention to it.

Ecotourism: KP needs govt patronage to generate employment

MALAM JABBA: Known for its mesmerizing natural beauty, snow clad mountains peaks and lakes, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is a unique province of Pakistan with plenty of tourism sites if properly developed could generate jobs opportunities for youth, bolstering the rural economy and beat the sizzling heat. The lush green Khanspur, Donga Gali, Bagnotar in Abbottabad, Babusir top, Malaika Perbath, Dodipath and Anso lakes in Mansehra, Mahudhand lake and Gabryal mountains velley, Jaz Banda and Malam Jabba in Swat, Kumrat valley in Dir Upper and Chitral are most suited for ecotourism and adventure sports. Besides these scenic valleys, rich cultural heritage of the primitive era, and historical significance, the province offers a diverse range of attractions for ecotourists, mountaineers, adventurers, archaeologists, and culture lovers from D I Khan to Swat and Chitral to Waziristan. Tourists from other districts of KP and other

provinces thronged to Malam Jabba in Swat to enjoy its pleasant weather on weekends. Professor Ehtisham Qaiser, a resident of the Nowshera district told APP, "He loves the scenic beauty of Swat and every year in summer vacations, he along with his five other friends enjoy one week-long tour to Kalam and Malam Jabba to enjoy its pleasant weather." "We hired a rental car and take rooms in the private hotel and then enjoy the whole week at scenic Malam Jabba and Kalam with friends," he said. He said, "Swat's trout fish, river rafting, snowfall and adventure sports features make it unique." The tourists along with families could easily come here to spend some time in its relaxed environment due to better road connectivity and tourism policy before exploring the nearby tourist destinations. "KP is the land of tourism. Ecotourism spots are being developed at premises of small dams include Tanda dam Kohat, Chatri dam in Haripur, Nar-

yab Hangu, Kundal Swabi and Chhalgoza Abbottabad to promote day-long families tourism commonly known as ecotourism and provide relatively cooler weather to residents of these areas during summer," said Hayat Ali Shah, General Manager, KP Tourism and Culture Department while talking to APP on Sunday. He said that the PC-1 of Chatri, Naryab and Tanda dams tourism sites were completed and practical work to start soon. Under an Ecotourism Project, he said that camping pods were established at Sharan near Saiful Malook lake, Gabeen Jaba Swat, Mahaband Buner-Swabi, Allai Batagram, Bamburait Chitral, Tandyani Abbottabad, Bisigram Swat, Yakhtangi Shangla, Saheed e Sir, Malka Swat and Sheikh Badin DI Khan. "Bishigram, Shran, Yakh-tangi, Shaheed e Sir and Malk camping pods have already been opened for tourists while the remaining pods would be shortly

opened after completion of renovation works." "Each pod has two to four beds for families, a wash room and a small kitchen," he said, adding Rs3500 to Rs5000 per day/night stay was being charged against Rs12,000 to Rs15,000 per room by a private hotels at Khagan, Naran and Galiyat valleys. As many as 10 more camping pods at Jargo and Sulatan in Swat, Lashkargha Broghal Valley and Sur-laspur Shandor valley Upper Chitral, Kumrat valley in Upper Dir, Laram Top and Shahi Bin Shahi in Lower Dir, Lilowani Alpuri in Shangla Samanah Top in Orakzai/Hangu and Kalam Swat were planned. One of the key initiatives that the government has undertaken is to increase the presence of police personnel in tourist spots. This has made tourists feel safer and more secure, which has resulted in an increase in the number of ecotourists and adventure sports enthusiasts visiting the province.—APP

Saghar terms Indo-US joint statement as misleading

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter Convener, Mehmood Ahmed Saghar, has expressed serious concern over the Indo-US joint statement and termed it as misleading. Mehmood Ahmed Saghar in a statement issued in Islamabad said that it was quite unfortunate that the joint statement did not mention the Kashmir dispute, Indian terrorism, human rights violations and arbitrary arrests of thousands of Kashmiris languishing in different jails of India and Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), Kashmir media service reported. He said that it was most regrettable that the country (US), which has been a co-sponsor of the historic United Nations resolution that acknowledged Kashmiris' right to self-determination and granted legitimacy to the Kashmir issue, turned a blind towards the abysmal situation in the territory that continues to reel under India's relentless and brutal repression. Saghar, while referring to the US stance on Kashmir dispute, said being a strong proponent of the Kashmiris' right to self-determination, it has

always sought and supported a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute through dialogue and diplomacy. He said America still supports the UNSC resolutions calling for a referendum in the region. As far as the issue of Hizbul Mujahideen is concerned, Saghar said that the US should differentiate between a terrorist and a freedom movement. "Hizb is an indigenous Kashmiri resistance organisation whose sole agenda is to liberate Kashmir from India's illegal occupation", he said, adding that the Hizb, which has never been engaged in unlawful activities, has been working under the ambit of the UN charter. "As per the UN charter Kashmiris have a legal right to armed resistance", the APHC-AJK leader said and added that Kashmiris' ongoing struggle was all about the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination, be it a Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Christian. Urging the Biden administration to revisit its wisdom on Kashmir, Saghar said instead of compromising its ideals the US must take a bold stance and play its much-needed role to resolve the lingering Kashmir dispute.—APP

Lahore to have its first diplomatic enclave

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab caretaker government has approved first diplomatic enclave in Lahore which will be set up inside the Central Business Authority. The US Embassy has sought 110 kanals of land near Babi-Pakistan in Central Business District (CBD). The CBD forwarded the case of foreign embassies seeking land in Lahore to the caretaker government. The Punjab government tasked the CBD to also persuade Turkey, China, UAE and Iran besides the US. The sources said the CBD had demanded one billion rupees per kanal from the US Embassy. American deputy chief mission and US consul general in Lahore had already visited the site. The caretaker government had directed the additional chief secretary to fulfill the legal requirements in this regard. Through diplomatic enclave, the CBD project will become city's far as appealing project as far as investment is concerned.

Yemen's delegation visits Pakistan to study BISP

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Social Welfare Fund (SDF) of Yemen is on a five-day visit to Pakistan to study the Social Protection Model of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) which is serving the most challenged and marginalized segments of society, particularly the women. On the concluding day of the visit, the Secretary Benazir Income Support Programme, Mr. Amer Ali Ahmed held a wrap-up session with the visiting delegation. The Ambassador of Yemen, Mr. Mohammad Motahar Alashbi also accompanied the delegation during the wrap-up meeting. Secretary BISP while addressing the delegation, said that such study visits help both sides to share experiences and ideas and learn from each other. He informed the visiting delegates that the day they arrived in Pakistan, the disbursement of the Benazir Kafaalat tranche was also stated by Benazir Income Support Programme. The Secretary informed the delegation that Rs. 81 billion are being disbursed to nine million deserving families in a quarterly tranche which is in itself a daunting task. The Secretary BISP further said that Pakistan and Yemen are two brotherly countries and enjoy a close cordial relationship.—APP

GB surpasses ICT, AJK in using technology for teaching: Report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Gilgit Baltistan (GB) has surpassed Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in terms of teachers' potential to use technology for teaching, according to the findings of 'Baseline Report-Smart Classrooms' conducted by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. The report highlights the findings of an extensive survey and competency test in schools in Islamabad, AJK and GB. It has also revealed that 100 percent teachers in GB have access to smartphones, indicating a high level of technological readiness among educators in the region.

The report further indicates that students in GB exhibit a higher level of competency in Mathematics compared to their counterparts in ICT and AJK. The findings suggest that the educational system in GB has been successful in cultivating strong mathematical skills among students. However, in terms of English competency, GB students are slightly behind those in ICT, but perform better than students in AJK. While English proficiency may be an area for improvement, GB students still demonstrate a commendable level of competence in the subject. The report presents a comprehensive analysis of Baseline School, focusing on the capacity of teachers and students, utilization of Information Tech-

nology (IT), availability of electricity, internet accessibility, and the potential for implementing smart classrooms. This report aims to provide insights into the school's existing infrastructure, technological capabilities, and readiness for the integration of smart classroom solutions. The survey conducted in GB, ICT, and AJK, collected data on various aspects of schools and displayed the results on Google Maps. The survey utilized a systematic sampling approach to select representative schools in the regions. Trained surveyors visited each selected school and gathered data on parameters such as infrastructure, facilities, teaching staff, availability of electricity, students, and teachers' capacity etc.

315 water filtration plants restored

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Information Minister Amir Mir said on Saturday that out of total 387 water filtration plants in the province that had been dysfunctional for a long time, 315 had been made functional again. The minister said the remaining plants would be made functional by July 10. He went on to say that the purpose of making these plants functional was to ensure the provision of clean drinking water to people. He informed that deputy commissioners oversaw the entire process. Mir said not a single penny from the national exchequer was spent for the purpose. He informed that four million people would benefit from this step of the provincial government.

Relief Deptt unveils Monsoon Contingency Plan

PESHAWAR: The Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Sunday unveiled the Monsoon Contingency Plan 2023, a comprehensive strategy aimed at minimizing disaster risks and facilitating a coordinated and timely response. Under the supervision of the Relief Department, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has actively engaged district administration, provincial and federal line departments, as well as humanitarian partners in developing this plan, incorporating valuable lessons learned from previous incidents. The primary objective is to mitigate the impact of disasters and safeguard the lives and livelihoods of the people residing in the province. According to the Monsoon Plan 2023, ten districts, including Chitral Upper, Chitral Lower, Swat,

DI Khan, Tank, Charsadda, Nowshera, Kohistan Upper, Shangla, and Dir Upper, are identified as very highly prone. Additionally, six other districts, Malakand, Dir Lower, Tor Ghar, Kohistan Lower, Kolai Palas Kohistan, and Peshawar, are classified as high risk. Floods have been an ongoing issue, particularly in lowland areas, resulting in waterborne diseases, loss of human and livestock life, and damage to infrastructure. The Monsoon Plan 2023 addresses this concern through a comprehensive flood risk management approach that encompasses the prevention, mitigation, preparedness, emergency response, and recovery measures. Prevention measures focus on discouraging construction in current and future flood-prone areas, adapting future developments to flood risks, and promoting appropriate land use

and agricultural practices. Mitigation strategies include structural and non-structural measures aimed at reducing the likelihood and impact of floods in specific locations. Preparedness efforts aim to educate the population about flood risks and provide guidance on appropriate actions during a flood. Emergency response plans are being developed to ensure a swift and effective response in the event of a flood. Moreover, the plan incorporates recovery and lessons learned components to minimize the social and economic impacts on affected communities and facilitate their return to normalcy. The PDMA has actively promoted the Contingency Planning process as a preparedness measure for natural hazards, particularly during the monsoon season. The Monsoon Plan 2023 builds upon the lessons learned from past flood events, such

as the catastrophic floods of 2010, heavy monsoon rainfall of 2011, flash floods in 2012, and subsequent disasters. By conducting risk and vulnerability assessments, the plan aims to strengthen preparedness and response capacities while identifying and addressing gaps and challenges. Key outcomes expected from the Monsoon Plan 2023 include raising awareness and building capacity for effective response, anticipating and allocating necessary resources based on threat perception, developing integrated planning capacities, and addressing gaps through preparatory measures. Secretary of the Relief Department Abdul Basit emphasized that disaster risk reduction and management were integral to development and require continuous assessment of vulnerabilities and risks. "Contingency planning

plays a vital role in defining preparedness mechanisms, deployment strategies, and resource utilization before an emergency response is needed," he said. "The Relief is committed to effectively implementing the Monsoon Plan 2023 by considering the recommendations and expertise of all stakeholders involved. This endeavor reflects a shared vision of protecting lives, preserving infrastructure, and minimizing the impact of floods on communities residing in flood-prone areas." Abdul Basit further said, "PDMA KP has already dispatched relief and necessary items to all District Administrations and concerned line departments. Additionally, other essential items can be provided during times of need." "The Relief Department is also conducting mock drills and exercises across the province to enhance preparedness.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

June 02/Italy

National/ Independence Day

June 04/Finland

Armed Forces 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

Birthday 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

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

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

Emergency Ambulance.1122

& Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.5555489

CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

MDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

High prices force people towards ‘Ijtamai Qurbani’

The prevailing economic crunch leading to limited incomes and livelihood amid steady increases in animal prices in recent years has led to the trend of collective sacrifices

RAWALPINDI: The record increase in prices of sacrificial animals is being witnessed across the country and the trend of ‘Ijtamai Qurbani’ is becoming popular under which the citizens are arranging for the religious obligation of ‘Ijtamai Qurbani’. Due to skyrocketing prices of sacrificial animals, most of people are giving preference to the collective Qurbani ritual instead of sacrificing animals individually on Eid ul Azha. This was revealed in a survey of the cattle market conducted by this scribe. The residents of various localities have arranged for combined sacrifices with the cooperation of various religious and social organizations including local madrassas and mosques. A large number of people have also arranged for combined qurbani with their relatives and friends. “It is better to take part in the collective Qurbani arranged by a nearby madrasa or mosque during these hard times of inflation, and we will do so because we will have to spend only Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000 for

a share and its affordable,” said a local resident Faisal. The prevailing economic crunch leading to limited incomes and livelihood amid steady increases in animal prices in recent years has led to the trend of collective sacrifices, another citizen Altaf said. The prices of the sacrificial animals have further increased this year as compared to the last year owing to an increase in transportation charges and other associated expenses. The prices of bulls in the market have increased from Rs50,000 to Rs150,000 per animal as compared to last year while the price of A category bull has increased from Rs100,000 to Rs200,000 and onwards and the price of B category bull has increased from Rs50,000 to Rs100,000 and prices of C category has surged from Rs40,000 to Rs70,000. The prices of goats and sheep have also increased by up to 50 per cent. The price of A category goat/sheep has increased from Rs30,000 to Rs50,000. Prices of B category has increased from Rs20,000 to Rs30,000 and C cat-

egory to Rs15,000 and above. The price of a goat and sheep in the cattle market was witnessed from Rs 60,000 to Rs 130,000 while the prices of bull were recorded from Rs 250,000 to Rs 350,000. Meanwhile, as Eid day was drawing near the sale of sacrificial animals was gaining momentum. Rawalpindi district administration had set up temporary cattle markets at 11 different places in the district in connection with Eid ul Azha. According to a district administration spokesman, the administration on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi had finalized all the arrangements. Five cattle markets were established in Rawalpindi city, two in Gujjar Khan, two in Taxila, and one each in Kallar Syedan and Kahuta. Bhatta Chowk near Koh-e-Noor Mills, Misrial, Gulistan Colony, Dhok Hassu, Kalyal village markets are for Rawalpindi city, he added. A cattle market was established at Mandra Stop Ground and Gulyana Road near Slaughter in Tehsil Gujar Khan. Similarly, cattle markets were

also established in Taxila near Sharif Hospital, G.T Road Wah Cantt and HIT near Sunday Bazaar Timber Market, he added. A temporary cattle market was set up in connection with Eid-ul-Azha at cattle market established on Kalar Syedan near Mangal Bypass. A temporary cattle market had also been set up at Sakhi Sabzwari Chowk near KRL Check Post in Kahuta. Assistant Commissioners, Chief Officer Municipal Corporations concerned had been directed to supervise the cattle markets, he informed. Earlier, the DC office through a notification had directed the authorities concerned to make all necessary arrangements so that the sellers and buyers could be accommodated with necessary precautionary measures in a hygienic environment in the light of the guidelines issued by Punjab government in this regard. The spokesman informed that no one is being allowed to set up market of sacrificial animals in city areas. Special teams had been formed to take action against the violators,

besides imposing fines and confiscating their animals. Like last year, the sellers of sacrificial animals are not being allowed to enter the city in a bid to keep the city clean. According to RCB sources, sale of sacrificial animals had been banned in cantonment areas. Special teams had been formed to fine the violators and even confiscate their animals, they added. The officials of Livestock and Health department talking to APP informed that they have established special camps at city’s entry points, all cattle markets and sale points of sacrificial animals for the prevention of Congo virus. All possible precautionary measures in this regard were being taken, they said adding, solid steps for the treatment of animals suffering from any disease including Congo virus were also being taken so that the citizens could be protected from any threat. Besides all the sale points and cattle markets were being sprayed, they added.The staff of the authorities concerned had also been deployed and the exercise would continue without any break till Eid-ul Azha, they said.—DNA

Govt urged for encouraging furniture Industry

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday urged the government to encourage investments and create a favorable business environment for furniture manufacturers. He said the furniture industry in the country can be successfully promoted and positioned as a competitive player in the global market with effective marketing with the right combination of factors, including export potential, design and innovation, technology adoption, and skill development. Chairing the PFC executive committee meeting, he said Pakistan has a skilled labor force and a rich heritage of craftsmanship in furniture making. He said the country can leverage these strengths to expand its presence in the global furniture market, he said adding that by promoting Pakistani furniture internationally, the industry can attract foreign buyers and increase export earnings. By encouraging designers to create unique and contemporary furniture designs that cater to both domestic and international markets, the industry can also gain a competitive edge and attract more buyers, he added. He said the use of modern technology and production techniques can enhance the efficiency and quality of furniture manufacturing. Promoting the adoption of advanced machinery and production processes, such as computer-aided design and computer numerical control machines, can help the industry produce high-quality furniture at a faster rate, he added. He said Investing in skill development and training programs for craftsmen and furniture manufacturers can improve the overall quality of furniture produced in Pakistan. By enhancing the skills of artisans and workers, the industry can create products that meet international standards, thereby increasing its marketability, he added. Mian Kashif Ashfaq said the government plays a vital role in promoting the furniture industry by providing incentives such as tax breaks, subsidies, and export facilitation.—APP

Over 262,363 children immunized against Measles

RAWALPINDI: As many as 262,363 children from six months to 59 months of age had been immunized against Measles during a week-long drive that concluded last day in the district’s high-risk areas.

District Incharge Anti-Measles drive of Health Authority Chaudary Muhammad Hussain told APP that a special anti-measles drive had been launched in the 42 Union Councils(UCs) of the district including 19 union councils of the city, 8 UCs of Rawalpindi Cantonment, five UCs of tehsil Taxila and 10 UCs of Rawalpindi rural which had been declared high-risk areas.—DNA

No one allowed to collect hides: distt admin

RAWALPINDI: The district administration would not allow anyone to collect hides of sacrificial animals without permission and a No-objection Certificate (NOC) from the relevant authorities as per the directive of the Punjab government. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Office had announced that the applications for collecting hides of sacrificial animals would be received till June 20 and after the deadline otherwise, no application would be entertained. According to a district administration spokesman, the administration would not allow anyone to collect hides without prior permission of the authorities concerned as the Punjab government had imposed a ban on the collection of hides without NoC on Eid ul Azha. The charity organizations intending to collect the hides of the sacrificial animals had been directed to submit applications to the office of DC Rawalpindi for permission letter by June 20. The Home Department of the Punjab Government had banned the collection of the hides without the approval of the competent authority, he informed. The DC office was not receiving any application for the permission letter after the expiry of the above-mentioned date.—APP

Pakistan-China collaboration enhanced

DNA

BEIJING: Pak-China collaboration has enhanced recently to promote Pakistani pharmaceutical development. “China has equalized or surpassed the developed nations’ pharma standards over a period of time. With 30 years of experience in cooperation with China, our progress is accompanied by the dividend of the development of China’s pharmaceutical industry,” said Waheed Ahmed, Chief Executive of Shaigan Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd at the CPHI & PMEC China held last week, according to Gwadar Pro. As Asia’s leading pharmaceutical show for trading, knowledge sharing and networking, CPHI & PMEC China spans all industry sectors along the pharmaceutical supply chain including APIs, excipients, finished dosage, natural ex-

acts, biopharma & CDMOs, animal health&feed, medical supplies, etc. Waheed, who has been attending the expo since 1995, noted that CPHI China is becoming more and more informative due to the major R&D work being carried out in China. China, Pakistan’s largest trading partner and the largest producer of API, attaches importance to investing in chemical labs and training scientists. China’s key technologies are developing rapidly, and the quality of pharmaceutical and mechanical products is reliable, he explained. “This time I am exploring future technologies and newly developed products, especially in biosimilars and new drug delivery systems,” Waheed mentioned, “meeting my over 15 collaborative partners who are all old friends at the expo and witnessing their growth is always a pleasure and opportunity to tap new busi-

ness range.” At the expo, Jack, head of a pharmaceutical packaging machinery manufacturing enterprise integrating R & D, production and sales service told Gwadar Pro that Pakistan has a huge pharmaceutical market of 250 million people, making it one of the most promising pharmaceutical consumer markets. The industry has grown rapidly in recent years and its production capacity has greatly increased, as can be told from the fact that the equipment they provide has been upgraded from small and low speed machinery to large and high speed machinery. “We provide guidance on the use and maintenance of the entire production line to help Pakistan master advanced packaging technology,” Jack added that, “Pakistan’s pharmaceutical industry has a good foundation for cooperation with China.

Mangoes have several health benefits

ISLAMABAD: Mangoes are the most popular and highly demanded fruit during the summer season with various health benefits and over 600 varieties are available in the country. Aside from their sweet, delicious taste, mangoes also offer numerous health benefits, as stated by a nutrition expert. Nutrition Expert Dr Zahid Rizwan informed that mangoes and its nutrients have several health benefits, such as it improves immunity and the digestive health system as some polyphenols found in the fruit might even lower the risk of certain cancers, he said while talking to a private news channel. Commenting on its most impressive nutrient facts is that just 1 cup (165 grams) of fresh mango provides nearly 67% of the DV for vitamin C this water-soluble vitamin aids the immune system, helps the body absorb iron, and promotes cell growth. He explained that Mangoes are also a good source of minerals copper and folate, which are especially important nutrients during pregnancy, as they support healthy fetal growth and development. Mangoes are low in calories yet high in nutrients particularly vitamin C, which aids immunity, iron absorption.—APP

Tourists throng to hilly areas to beat heat

ISLAMABAD: A large number of tourists have thronged to scenic hilly resorts and lush green valleys in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including the Nathia Gali, Ayubia, Naran, Kaghan, and Kalam to enjoy pleasant weather conditions amid scorching heat that gripped various parts of the country. According to a private news channel, Nathiagali, a famous hilly area was attracting a large number of tourists this summer season from all the provinces where owners of hotels, plazas and houses were earning almost double compared to the previous years. With a heavy influx of domestic tourists.—APP

Cantt Boards advise taxpayers to pay taxes by June 28

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi and Chaklala Cantonment Boards have advised the taxpayers to pay their property taxes, conservancy taxes, and water charges for the current year by June 28 and receive a 10 percent discount. The property owners failing to pay the taxes and other charges by the deadline would be facing monetary penalties. According to an RCB spokesman, “The board have sent all the outstanding bills to its taxpayers. However, the individuals who did not receive these bills could contact the RCB main office or RCB Care Centre to avail of the 10 percent discount on taxes.”. For more information and queries about the discount on property tax and other RCB-related matters, the residents could contact the board office, he added. He informed that special arrangements had been made to facilitate the taxpayers. He further informed that RCB on the directives of the Cantonment Executive Officer (CEO) had started a survey to identify dangerous buildings. The Board had directed the owners of the old buildings to take all possible precautionary measures and get the dangerous buildings repaired before the start of monsoon rains. He informed that after completing the survey, notices would be issued to the owners under Section-126 of the Cantonment Act, 1924 and they would be directed to vacate or demolish their dilapidated commercial and residential properties.—APP

Asad Mehmood calls for review of FATA merger

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communication, Asad Mehmood, on Sunday urged the government to thoroughly review the merger of the FATA in light of the ongoing challenges faced by the region. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, the minister emphasized the need to ascertain the desires of the people of FATA through a referendum. Minister Mehmood highlighted that although progress has been observed in the FATA areas, it is crucial to obtain first-hand information about the issues faced by the local population. He urged government officials to personally visit the area and assess the ground realities to gain a comprehensive understanding. Regarding the ongoing discussions about appointments within Pakistan Post, the minister clarified that the matter is currently under review by the committee. He assured the House that details of the findings will be shared once the committee.—APP

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40,000 روپے، 25,000 روپے، 15,000 روپے

اور 7,500 روپے کے پرائز بانڈز (بیسرز) کے حامل افراد

30 جون 2023

پرائز بانڈز (بیسرز) واپس کرنے کا آخری موقع

ملکی معیشت کو متاثر نہ ہونے کے کٹ کٹ گے برحالات ہوئے حکومت پاکستان نے 40,000 روپے، 25,000 روپے، 15,000 روپے اور 7,500 روپے کے پرائز بانڈز (بیسرز) کی فروخت کا سلسلہ بند کر دیا تھا۔ بانڈز کے حامل افراد نے اگرچہ پائے بانڈز یا جس تک داپس یا جس میں کئے ہیں تو وہ تھرہ ہر ج سے پہلے اپنے پرائز بانڈز درج ذیل طریقوں سے واپس یا جس میں کروائیں۔

40,000 روپے اور 25,000 روپے کے پرمیم پرائز بانڈز (بیسرز) سے تبدیل کیا کریں۔

بیشل سیگنر ٹیکسٹ / وائٹس پیگنر سرٹیفکیٹ حاصل کریں۔

ایک ایکٹوٹ کے ذریعے قہرمدول کریں

نوٹ: واپسی کی تاریخ غیر آج نہیں برحالی جائے گی واری تاریخ گزرنے کے بعد مذکورہ بالا پرائز بانڈز قابل واپسی نہیں ہوں گے۔

بانڈز درج ذیل دہرے سے تبدیل یا واپس کرانے جاسکتے ہیں۔

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Ministry of Finance Government of Pakistan

Briefs

Promotion of agro-based industry stressed

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Rice Research and Development Board Punjab Shahzad Ali Malik Sunday stressed the urgent need for the promotion of an agro-based industry that's of immense importance to the country's economy. He said agro-industry contributes to GDP, earns foreign exchange through exports, promotes rural development, ensures food security, and adds value to agricultural products. Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers led Dr Muhammad Arshad Javed, he said a strong and vibrant agro-based industry is crucial for sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and overall development, says a press release. He said the agro-based industry is crucial for ensuring food security in Pakistan. With a growing population, it is essential to have a robust agricultural sector that can produce an adequate quantity of food to meet the domestic demand, he added. Shahzad Ali that value addition enhances the economic viability of agricultural products and increases their shelf life, marketability, and profitability. He said value-added products from the agro-based industry, such as processed foods, textiles, leather goods, and pharmaceuticals, have a higher value in both domestic and international markets, contributing to higher revenues and economic growth.—APP

AIOU unveils admission plan for autumn 2023

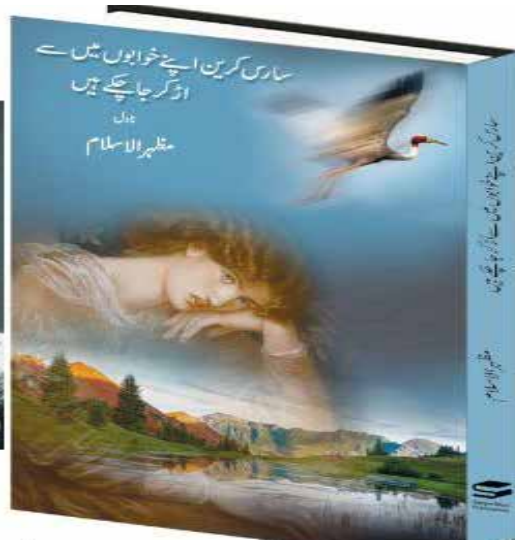
ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has issued an action plan for the admissions of Autumn Semester 2023 for the convenience and guidance of students as per the direction of the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof Dr. Nasir Mahmood. According to the AIOU, Information Counters will be set up to provide information related to admissions to students in all regional offices including the main campus of the university, Facilitation Centers are also being activated in regional offices to guide students. AIOU will also set up Prospectus sale points across the country to facilitate the students at the nearest places to their residences. Admissions for the first phase of Semester Autumn 2023 will commence from July 15, while the admissions for the second phase will start from September 1 across the country.—APP

A time-travel novel that will open new possibilities for young writers

Mazharul Islam's latest novel combines surrealism with reality

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's acclaimed story writer Mazharul Islam has come up with his latest work, a time-travel novel "Sarus Crane Apnay Khwabon mai say Urh kar ja Chukay Hain" or "Sarus Cranes have flown out of their Dreams." In the novel the author has experimented surrealism, reality, time-travel and magic realism all in one book and apparently he has succeeded in it. Of many reasons that make the novel popular, one is obvious that he never drifts along the waters and has always created his own path. The second and equally important is that it is the first-ever 'time travel' novel in Urdu literature. It takes the reader down the ages, for instance, from the contemporary 21st century to 18th century and shows how rich the traditions of the past were and how deeply



people felt about love, art, books, birds and music. The novel in a way is a frank commentary on the redundant and superficial life of today and the longer the protagonist (a man-turned sarus crane) flies into past, the more he realizes that the pure relations are dying and falsehood is prevailing in society.

"The novel is in fact a blend of reality, fantasy, time travel and surrealism," said Mazharul Islam adding he has tried to weave all these ingredients into one romantic cord. And he is successful in this as the reader while going through the 169-page book finds glimpses of ancient traditions of mystics,

Hafiz and Rumi, anecdotes of the holy saints, references to Bible and Quran, mention of Greek and Mughal Sultans (how they endeared Sarus Crane and other birds of its clan and considered them messengers of love, purity and wisdom). For time travel, Mazhar has used the ancient means, one

that Sufis used i.e. dream. Through dream the protagonist, a modern man of the 21st Century turns into a sarus crane and sets off on a long journey in search of his ladylove who is waiting for him in 18th Century. The protagonist during his flight through ages comes across different times and cities

and learns about the people's views, lifestyle, habits and temperament. Islam, as is he known for, uses quite unique unusual names, symbols and metaphors which strike rightly at the heart of the readers and brings home his point of view without saying it all. Some of these are like, "Apahaj Logon Ka Shehr" or "Disabled People's City" "Ashiana-e-Wafa" "Yad Mahal" "Phool Gali" "Atar Gali" "Sukh Chain Gali" "Parinda Gali" and "Darvesh Gali" etc. "Sarus Crane" has gone ahead of my first novel "A Symphony of Dead Flowers" not only in terms of creative freedom but also due to the wide range of subjects that have been discussed here, said he. The author has dedicated the book to Chairperson of the Parveen Shakir Trust, Parveen Qadir Agha, Rana Seerat, Nargis Sethi, Saleem Sethi, Seerat Asghar and Dr Rauf Niazi. Published by Sange-e-Meel, the book is available at the bookstores for Rs1600/-.

BRI tones up new pattern of globalization

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is marking its first decade with flying colors by toning up a new pattern of global connectivity and economic development. Launched in 2013, BRI has evolved into a comprehensive framework encompassing infrastructure development, trade facilitation, financial cooperation, and cultural exchanges across Asia, Europe, Africa, and beyond. As we reflect on its journey so far, it becomes evident that BRI carries both regional and international indispensability, with the potential to anchor economic miracles, adapt to challenges, and contribute to sustainable development. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, so far, China has inked more than 200 BRI cooperation agreements with 151 countries and 32 international organizations. As economic globalization is reeling with unseen upheavals and global economic recovery is in deep water, BRI's global aura becomes a silver lining showing a more important role in boosting the economic growth of relevant

countries and regions. BRI plays a crucial role in advancing world progress by fostering economic development, promoting trade, and enhancing cultural understanding. Through massive investments in infrastructure projects, including roads, railways, ports, and energy facilities, BRI creates new opportunities for economic growth and job creation. By improving connectivity and reducing logistical bottlenecks, the initiative facilitates the movement of goods and services, enabling businesses to expand their reach and access new markets. A research report released by the World Bank in 2019 showed that transportation infrastructure projects under BRI, if fully implemented, would generate \$1.6 trillion in benefits annually in global revenue by 2030 — accounting for 1.3 percent of global GDP. BRI was proposed by China, yet it generates opportunities and benefits for the entire world. For example, the China-Europe railway connects Chinese cities to Poland, Germany, and other European countries, and 16,000 freight trains operated in both directions last year. In the science and education sector,

the Chinese Academy of Sciences has established 10 overseas science and education centers, launched more than 100 research collaboration projects with BRI countries, and trained nearly 5,000 high-level scientists. One of the remarkable characteristics of BRI is its adaptability to evolving challenges and its commitment to resilience and sustainability. Recognizing the importance of addressing environmental concerns, BRI has incorporated the concept of the Green Silk Road, emphasizing ecological cooperation, clean energy, and sustainable development. Efforts are being made to prioritize environmentally friendly infrastructure projects, promote green finance, and ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into the planning and implementation processes. BRI promotes green, sustainable development. It encourages cooperation in green infrastructure, green energy, and green finance, aligning with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The initiative also emphasizes collaboration in public health, with China and its BRI partners working

together to combat and prevent epidemics, enhance public health research and development, and improve global public health governance. In terms of resilience, BRI has shown its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and navigate through geopolitical challenges. It has demonstrated flexibility in responding to feedback and concerns from participating countries and international stakeholders. The initiative has evolved its project evaluation and risk assessment mechanisms, enhancing transparency, accountability, and governance standards. bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, such as the BRI Forum, participating countries are given a platform to address concerns, share best practices, and build consensus on the way forward. As China strives to build a modern socialist country, it will continue to promote the Belt and Road cooperation, delivering tangible benefits to people and contributing to global economic recovery. The focus remains on high-quality, sustainable, and mutually beneficial cooperation, fostering a shared future for mankind.

Citizens urge authorities to repair bumpy roads

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi citizens have urged the authorities concerned to repair bumpy and accident-prone roads as these have not been repaired and re-carpeted for many years and travelling on these dilapidated roads has been causing inconvenience for motorists. The residents of several city areas have demanded the authorities concerned to pay attention on urgent repairs of broken roads which are not only causing traffic jams but also endanger public safety. According to the citizens, several roads have developed potholes and causing hazards for commuters. The broken roads included Kashmir Road, Range Road, Allahabad Road, Trench Bhatta Road, Chor to Masrial Road, Tippu Road, Zakria Masjid Road, Transit Camp Road, Dhoke Ratta, Workshop Road, Marrir Chowk Road, PAF Chowk to Committee Chowk Road, Bostan Khan Road, Westridge Bazaar Road, Gawalmandi Road, Farooqi-Azam Road, Sadiqabad and Rehmanabad Roads, Railway Road, Dehri Hassanabad and several other roads. In the last two years, Municipal Corporation did not launch any major uplift project while Rawalpindi Cantonment Board paid attention to some areas and left several others neglected. The roads from Marrir Chowk to Gawalmandi, Westridge Bazaar to Allahabad, Kashmir Road and others have developed ditches. The residents of the downtown are disturbed over the situation and have demanded of the provincial government to fulfill its promise of launching public welfare projects. "I daily travel on Gawalmandi Road to Saddar and my vehicle has developed faults due to the broken road. Will the authorities concerned compensate us if our vehicle gets damaged due to the broken roads," said Altaf, a resident of Gawalmandi. Najam of Allahabad said his motorcycle developed faults due to the potholes on Allahabad Road and it was difficult for middle class people to spend heavy amounts on repair of their vehicles. Sajid Khan, a resident of Kashmiri Bazaar said that residents of the area had been facing problems due to the bad condition of several city roads. Travel on the roads is time and fuel consuming, he added. Open manholes in several city areas are also endangering the lives of the motorists and pedestrian alike, he added.—APP

RDA intensifies operation against rules violators

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General (DG), Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa has intensified its ongoing operation against the rules violators including illegal housing societies and unlawful constructions. RDA spokesman Hafiz Irfan while talking to APP informed that the authority had also issued notices to the owners of two illegal private housing schemes namely Century Town and Royal Residencia/Royal Apna Ghar. The Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate issued notices to the owners of two Century Town situated at mouza Bagga Sheikh, Bagga Miana and Bagga Sangral and Royal Residencia/Royal Apna Ghar at mouza Paryal at Aagahi Syedan and Jodrian Road. He informed that First Information Reports were also registered against the owners of illegal housing schemes, namely Aurangzaib and Aoun by Rawat Police Station and Chaudhry Zeeshan Aslam by Chakri Police Station. RDA enforcement squad during an operation against illegal and unauthorized commercial buildings sealed 21 commercial properties in Mouza Panjgaran on Kallar Syedan and Chak Beli Khan Road.—APP

PES finalizes plan to help citizens during Eid ul Azha holidays

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Emergency Service (PES) has finalized arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha and directed all its wings to remain on high alert in all tehils of the district during the Eid holidays. The Rescue-1122 Rawalpindi's Emergency Ambulance, Rescue Motorbike Service, and Fire Service would remain on high alert throughout the district to assist the citizens in emergencies during Eid-ul-Azha holidays, said the Rescue-1122 spokesperson, Muhammad Usman Gujar. He informed that District Emergency Officer Rescue 1122 had directed the officials concerned to

utilize all available resources to provide help to the victims of emergencies. Emergency service posts had been set up at cattle markets where trained emergency paramedical staff was available to ensure emergency assistance in case of any emergency, he added. "If there is flash flooding during Eid holidays, Rescue-1122 will be ready to better deal with emergencies in all districts," he said. In Rawalpindi, special duties of rescue personnel had been deployed in control rooms, emergency rescue stations, emergency ambulances, fire tenders, rescue and recovery vehicles, special vehicles,

water bowsters and motorbike ambulances, he said adding, moreover, the key points would be set up in cattle markets of Rawalpindi and all other tehils during on Eid while Eid Gah Sharif, Children Park Gawalmandi, Liaquat Bagh Ground, Jamia Masjid Faizan Madina Adiala Road, Captain Bilal Shaheed Chowk Chaklala Scheme-three, 22 number Chungi and Rawal Park, Kuri Road during Eid-ul-Azha holidays. The rescue posts would also be set up at Central Jamia Masjid Tehsil Gujjar Khan, Central Jamia Ghousia Masumia Masjid Tehsil Kalar Syedan, Central Eidgah.—APP

Dialysis facility to be available at THQ

RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary Health Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir has said that dialysis facility would be available to kidney patients at THQ Murree from July 15. The minister told APP that the hospital's operation theatre would be made functional within a week while the hospital's capacity of 82 beds had been restored. He said that to overcome the shortage of para-medical staff, 14 more nurses had been appointed.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in their work at Kernal Sher Khan Shaheed Road as it is a surprising for people that after inauguration by PM, they uproot the newly constructed road for making underpass for Eidgah road, which is a question mark on the performance of concern authority.—Online

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Putin’s response to an attempted ‘coup’

Hubris. Originally a Greek word, in its English and Russian forms it has come to connote arrogance, haughtiness and excessive pride. Perhaps the most apposite definition at a moment when the Russian people stare aghast at their president, Vladimir Putin, and the chaos he is causing would be “overweening presumption”. Whichever definition is preferred, all accurately describe the fatal flaw that has brought Putin, chief architect of the disastrous Ukraine war, to the perilous place he and Russia occupy today. Facing an armed rebellion led by a man he once counted among his most loyal cronies, Putin seems barely able to believe what is happening in southern Russia. His hasty speech on national television, and the violent and threatening language he employed, well reflected the shock he appeared to be experiencing. How dare Yevgeny Prigozhin, a former Kremlin caterer risibly nicknamed “Putin’s chef”, challenge his authority so fundamentally? The depth of his incredulity is yet another measure of his hubris. Putin was spitting blood on TV, at least metaphorically speaking. By seizing Rostov-on-Don, Prigozhin and his Wagner group forces were guilty of “armed mutiny”, he snarled. “This is a stab in the back of our troops and the people of Russia.” Yet an even bigger offence, he implied, was their “attempt to subvert us from inside”. Us, meaning Putin himself. Putin knows that, while this may primarily be a military confrontation, it is deeply political – and personal – too. After such a panicky, ill-judged initial response, how Putin handles this crisis will be closely watched at home and abroad. He must, if he can, ensure the loyalty of his generals, the regular armed forces and the tens of thousands of more or less reluctant conscripts. A fierce critic of the high command, Prigozhin has demanded Russia’s top general, Valery Gerasimov, and defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, surrender to him. To comply would be to show fatal weakness. But what if other elements in the army, navy and air force share Prigozhin’s disdain for the conduct of the war, in which uncoupled thousands of Russian troops have lost their lives? Putin may be about to find out. The ease with which Wagner overran Rostov could point to wider disaffection. Russia’s soldiers on the ground in eastern and southern Ukraine are already under intense pressure from Kyiv’s counteroffensive. Latest reports suggest the Wagner forces have been instructed to halt their advance on Moscow. Further face-saving negotiation is possible, too, although it is hard to see how Prigozhin survives in his current role. By far the best short-term outcome would be for Putin to recognise the extraordinary damage his “special military operation” is doing to Russia as well as to Ukraine, stop the war and withdraw his troops. Sadly, that’s unlikely. Why? It’s that word hubris again.

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



Preoccupation with ‘China threat’ groundless

Although US President Joe Biden and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried to keep China out of the spotlight during the latter’s just-concluded state visit to the United States, there was no hiding the fact that the two leaders wanted something from each other with China in mind. The specific wording of their joint statement can be parsed for insinuations about China. But the outcomes of Modi’s visit show that neither has an objective view of the international situation, with both leaders reportedly saying that the US-India partnership “will define the next century”. That is wishful thinking. While as a marriage of convenience, Washington and New Delhi may choose to regard each other as “closest partners”, they fail to see the world today is not what it was several decades ago. The world order is not a unipolar one any more when the US, with the help of its friends, could call the shots on major global issues and ride roughshod over other countries. Multilateralism has prevailed in international relations and economic globalization can hardly be reversed when emerging economies have turned out to be an important force for the development of the world economy. It is against this backdrop that China as the world’s second-largest economy speaks up for the interests of the majority of emerging economies and has done what it can to help with the development of underdeveloped countries. It is against this backdrop that China has put forward the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative for the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. China does not pose a threat to any country. What China is trying to do is promote the reform of the global governance system for the benefit of a majority of countries. Instead of seeking hegemonic status, China seeks to cooperate with all countries for mutual benefit, which has found expression in its Belt and Road Initiative and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership between China and neighboring countries. China seeks to develop relations with both the US and India, and has reiterated that the border disputes with India should be settled through talks. If the leaders of the US and India consider China to be the ghost at their feast as CNN put it, it is only because they are too narrow-minded and selfish to see the world from a broader perspective. It may also be because the US is a ghost of its former self.

Is Russia imploding from inside?

Qamar Bashir



The Wagner Group, an armed to the teeth, quasi-military outfit created by Russia to accomplish illegal tasks that the regular army could not do due to the Geneva Convention, and was engaged in dirty work in Ukraine, Syria, Libya, and the Central African Republic, with a sudden change of heart, turned against its creator, and by pulling out from Ukraine, marched toward Russian City of Rostov and captured it today, June 24th. After taking Rostov, the group boasted that the city embraced them with open arms and joined them in the struggle against the injustice and anarchy inflicted on Russia by Putin’s government. The Wagner Group, led by Yevgeny Prigozhin, has threatened to advance toward Moscow to challenge Putin, which analysts describe as a mutiny, coup attempt, and forerunner of civil war and an existential threat to Russia, never seen before. The Ukrainian government has described the coup attempt as an utter defeat of the Russian military and a sign of huge victory by Ukraine against the mighty bear. Putin was visibly enraged in his hastily organized broadcast address in the early hours of Saturday, June 24, 2023, when he accused Wagner’s leader of ‘treason’ and vowed to ‘neutralize’ the revolt with all mighty Russian armed forces. He ordered Wagner group head Yevgeny Prigozhin to surrender, declaring that “the fate of our people is being decided,” accusing Wagner of “armed mutiny” to implode Russia from within and an insult to those fighting on the front. Putin vented his rage and frustration after Prigozhin claimed in a series of videos posted on social media early Saturday that his forces had taken over the headquarters of the Southern Military District (SMD) in Rostov-on-Don and demanded that the defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, and

Russia’s top general, Valery Gerasimov, come to the city 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) south of Moscow to witness their defeat. Yevgeny Prigozhin while sitting between two renowned Russian generals, also announced that his men had also taken control of all military facilities in Voronezh, about 310 miles south of Moscow. Earlier in response to the claims, the chief of Russia’s military intelligence agency, Gen Vladimir Aleksyeyev, called Wagner’s decision a stab in the back of the country and the president, as well as a declaration of war against the Russian military. Meanwhile, the authorities announced a state of emergency and canceled all large-scale events and beefed up security in and around Moscow to reflect the gravity of the threat. For most of us, the “Wagner group” is unknown, and many of us may have no idea about its size, command, purpose, or objective, but this group has posed an enormous threat to Russia’s very existence as Russia’s armed resources are deployed against Ukraine, and any possible threat within the country would be a nightmare for military strategists and planners to effectively counter any uprising, mutiny, or coup which may require Moscow to either pull back Russian troops from Ukraine and pit them against battle hardened Wagner group and its sympathizers which are increasing after every passing day, or re-strategize deployment of the military on two fronts one outside and the other inside the country. This would imply an unambiguous win for Ukraine and other countries that backed it up against Russia’s alleged unjustified aggression. This will cast doubt on the fate of Russia’s president and may result in massive upheavals on the political, military, and social fronts, giving the majority of Russians nightmares and a perfect reason to rejoice for Ukrainians and its western allies. In the worst-case scenario, Putin in his frustration, may decide to end the war with the use of weapons of mass destruction or with the deployment of nuclear weapons as a last resort. Given that Putin, with his KGB track record, is not going to yield so easily, we can expect a lot of Russian blood spilled on Russian soil, but if the rate of desertion in the army increases and there is a popular uprising, then number of Putin’s rule are numbered to much relief to the Ukrainian and other countries in the region, as well as the entire Western Europe and Americans, which by now must have been putting their heads together to find out ways and means to support the Wagner Group to an extent that it remove Putin from power, followed by installing a friendly government in Moscow which would no more be a threat to their interest in the region. The Wagner Group, a Russian private military organization, originally gained international prominence for its alleged

involvement in several wars, including those in Ukraine, Syria, Libya, and the Central African Republic, where it allegedly offered military support to the Russian government. The group was formed and raised under the supervision of Russia’s President, and it was used to destabilize countries deemed to be threats to Russia’s interests. Russia used to achieve all of its nasty objectives with this organization that a normal army could not. The Wagner Group is comparable to private military contractors in the United States such as Academi (formerly Blackwater), Triple Canopy, and DynCorp International. These firms provide a number of services to the US government, including security, training, and logistics, and they are utilized to get around the norms and regulations that regulate the employment of the US military. Wagner Group, like Blackwater, is not bound by the same rules and regulations as the Russian military, giving it more leeway to operate in sensitive areas and protect Russian interests in foreign countries, including but not limited to gathering intelligence on foreign governments and militaries, training and equipping local militias, and conducting covert operations. The Group is led and funded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a former close associate of President Vladimir Putin who is now his fiercest adversary, and it commands over 50,000 fully equipped army, many of them are former Russian military personnel and a sizable number of foreign fighters, including South Africans, Serbians, and Americans. The group has tremendous military resources and a diverse arsenal of weapons, including tanks, artillery, and air defense systems, as well as a fleet of helicopters and airplanes. It is also well-funded, with cash coming from both the Russian government and private individuals and corporations, allowing it to function autonomously in a number of countries throughout the world. Its troops, weapons, and money make it a powerful force, and it has played a pivotal role in a number of conflicts, including the mostly unlikely one, against its own creator, Mr. Putin. Now that the same group that was formed to defend Russia’s interests has turned against its own creator, this is a significant development with potentially far-reaching consequences, especially since the entire Western world and Americans will throw all of their resources, military might, logistical and military hardware in its support. The repercussions of the Wagner Group rebelling against the Russian government would be determined by a variety of factors, including the scale and severity of the rebellion, the Russian government’s response, and the actions of other countries. However, it is apparent that such a development would pose a significant security risk to Russia and the rest of the globe.

There could be several scenarios especially when almost 200,000 Russian forces are committed to war in Ukraine. One scenario could be that Trained in guerilla warfare, the Wagner Group may decide to split into a number of smaller, independent groups to make it more difficult for the Russian government to track and monitor the group, especially if the Russian population begins to support it in the aftermath of Putin’s oppressive policies. In the worst-case scenario, the Russian government may be overthrown, and the entire country may descend into a civil war aided by other countries. The second scenario may be that the Russian government may triumph because its war machine is formidable, with 1.15 million active-duty and at least two million reserve personnel. The Russian military is now the world’s fifth-largest military force, comprising ground forces, the navy, aerospace forces, strategic rocket forces, and airborne forces. These forces were well-armed, with tanks, artillery, aircraft, and missiles, as well as a substantial quantity of dangerous nuclear weapons. The third scenario, especially in the absence of large-scale dissertations and public uprisings, could the annihilations of Wagner. The fourth and the most dreadful scenario could be the use of nuclear weapons which if God forbid, materializes will inflict untold miseries to the people of the entire globe. History has shown that war is never a solution to any problem. A government obsessed and drunk by its military strength may start a war, but in order to achieve their goals, they must contend with many known causes as well as numerous unknown factors, especially coming from some least expected sources, such as the Wagner group’s rebellion against Russia. Russia, like any other country, has once again understood that war is not an option for resolving disputes and conflicts. It simply leads to loss of life, property destruction, and economic disruption. It generates new adversaries and makes resolving future disputes amicably more difficult, resulting in long-term instability and insecurity. There are always other methods to settle problems than fighting. Negotiation and consultation allow the parties to reach a mutually acceptable solution that considers both parties’ interests. In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, there were various possibilities for discussion and consultation. However, these chances were not taken advantage of, and the conflict escalated into war, disrupting the region that would take years to recover from. Parties to conflicts, such as the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, must strive to resolve their differences through dialog and debate rather than war. This is the sole way to ensure that issues are resolved peacefully while also ensuring the region’s long-term security.

Iran’s geopolitical realignment with Russia and China

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Iran has departed from its traditionally balanced relationship between the East and the West and has instead embraced Russia and China. The withdrawal of the United States from the nuclear deal has left Iranian leaders pessimistic about any prospects for a relationship with Washington. Initially, Tehran agreed to sign the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with the Obama administration, expecting substantial reductions in its nuclear program in exchange for a significant lifting of US economic sanctions. Consistent with its long-standing goal of maintaining distance from Washington, Tehran was pleased that the JCPOA allowed it to avoid normalizing relations with its adversary while still benefiting economically from resumed oil exports and foreign investments. However, after the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal, Iran concluded that Washington’s policy towards Tehran was unreliable, and that the US political class could not be influenced. The limited ability or willingness of European countries to defend the 2015 agreement further frustrated the Iranian leadership. Additionally, internal factors such as pressure from hardliners to strengthen the country’s military capabilities, economic weaknesses, and challenges to the continuity of the political system sparked intense debates on Iran’s foreign policy. Although the Iranian foreign and defense policy bureaucracy had decided to reorient Iranian relations towards China and Russia as early as 2019, concrete steps in that direction were taken only during the administration of Hassan Rouhani in August. The Rouhani delegation’s deliberate delays during negotiations with the US and the broader international community, aimed at potentially reviving the JCPOA, serve as a clear indication of this decision. Since President Ibrahim Raisi’s inauguration on August 5, 2021, the eastward axis has assumed a more prominent role. Raisi’s presidency has brought coherence to the overall policy of the Iranian political system, with a focus on maintaining the status quo. This shift was necessary after Rouhani’s presidency, which saw somewhat liberal administrators surrounding the bureaucracy. Throughout the history of the Islamic Republic, Iran’s legislative and judicial branches have consistently demonstrated loyalty to the status quo. However,

with each change of president, the executive branch has had the opportunity to fill approximately 11,000 administrative positions across the country with like-minded individuals. Under the conservative Raisi government, the three branches are determined to maintain the current inertia and coherence of the Islamic Republic. Iran is now pursuing a two-pronged foreign policy approach: a strong shift towards Russia and China, while simultaneously making further concessions on its nuclear program to create the impression that another deal is possible. The implementation of the first approach is being done quietly, while the second approach is receiving wide publicity. Despite lacking support from the general public, particularly the educated and professional classes, Iran has persisted in its turn to the East. Discussions about the country’s foreign policy direction have been confined to the upper ruling class circles. However, three main reasons can be identified for Iran’s growing alliance with China and Russia. Firstly, Iran has a longstanding policy of avoiding normalization with the United States due to concerns about the consequences it would have on the current political system, domestic politics, economy, and culture. The Iranian leadership fears that increased presence of American companies, academic institutions, and civil society organizations would erode their grip on power. Anti-American sentiment also serves to unite the revolutionary class and prevent more pragmatic or internationally-minded groups from gaining power. Secondly, there is a belief among the Iranian revolutionary class that rapprochement with the United States would lead to significant and undesirable changes in the political system. They argue that concessions on the nuclear program alone would be insufficient, and that Iran would eventually have to capitulate completely to the US, reviving memories of the 1953 US-British coup. The revolutionary class, deeply involved in the political and economic arenas of the state, is unwilling to relinquish power or make structural concessions that could facilitate a liberal takeover. Lastly, Iran has historically prioritized its national security over economic development. The reliance on energy exports has provided revenue to sustain the political system. Iran’s active foreign policy is primarily directed towards neighboring and foreign countries, driven by its national security ideology and a strategy of expanding regional influence vis-à-vis major Arab states, Israel, and the United States. Turkey remains one of the few countries in the region with which Iran has maintained stable relations. In recent years, Tehran has forged a military alliance with a significant external power, Russia. Moreover, Iran’s missile and drone capabilities, along with its geopolitical influence in the region, have served as an effective deterrent strategy. However, these notions of national security, threat perceptions, and statecraft leave little room for promoting economic growth in a globalized economy. This is in stark contrast to neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates, which have intentionally focused on economic diversification, high-tech industries, renewa-

ble energy, and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). These countries concentrate their efforts on economic development while maintaining a balance between the West and the East, capitalizing on support from both Beijing and Moscow. They benefit from European and American financial and technology sectors, making substantial profits by selling to those markets. In contrast, economic development is not a priority for Iranian leadership. Instead, Iran dedicates a significant portion of its resources to internal and national security. As a result, even a complete political and economic shift away from the West does not threaten Iranian state-owned companies or have a significant impact on them. Conversely, Western companies and banks have excluded Iran as a potential market due to US and European sanctions. Consequently, Iran’s turn towards the East will likely reduce its economy to selling fossil fuels to China and other Asia-Pacific countries in exchange for imports of raw materials. However, these clients are unlikely to invest in Iranian industries due to the restrictions imposed by current sanctions. Thus, the only plausible investment opportunities for Iran may come in the form of barter, where Iran could export oil in exchange for infrastructure development without involving financial transactions. The timing of Iran’s leadership decision to reduce political and economic dependence on the West, particularly Europe, is significant. The strategic choice was made at a high level to prevent dissenting views within the country. Iran’s deepening ties with Russia and China not only risk jeopardizing its foreign economic relations but also contribute to maintaining progress on its nuclear program as a strategic component of its national security doctrine. Moscow sees Iran’s anti-American sentiment as a highly valuable geostrategic asset. In a sense, Iran serves as the Belarus of southern Russia. Historically, Russia has consistently aimed to keep Iran out of the Western orbit, a policy that has spanned the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the current Russian Federation. Iran is set to receive 24 Su-35 fighter jets and Russia’s S-400 air defense system, while Tehran has provided Moscow with low-cost drones and weapons systems. Additionally, the two countries cooperate in the energy sector, with Russia reportedly supplying Iran with 30,000 tons of diesel fuel in early 2023. However, it remains uncertain whether Russia’s technological limitations in the energy sector will hinder the effective implementation of these plans. While military relations with Russia have expanded since the invasion of Ukraine, there are other motivations behind Iran’s desire to strengthen ties with Moscow. Two main reasons stand out. Firstly, Tehran seeks access to classified information about US and Israeli operations against Iran. Secondly, Iran believes Moscow can provide political and intelligence support during the transition period for Iran’s third supreme leader. These expectations align with Russia’s fundamental interests regarding Iran and the West, regardless of whether Vladimir Putin remains in power. Iran has reached a point where it can no longer rely solely on internal controls and regional deterrence to maintain the political system. Israel’s approach of

establishing security partnerships with non-Arab countries has now extended to the South Caucasus and Central Asian regions. Furthermore, most of Iran’s Arab neighbors currently maintain diplomatic relations with Israel; thereby increasing US influence vis-à-vis Tehran. Faced with limited foreign policy options, including the possibility of reinstating the JCPOA and diminishing prospects of reaching a modus vivendi with the United States in the context of Russia-Western relations, Iran seeks to secure its position in a changing regional landscape and safeguard the continuity of its political system. In this context, as long as Russia’s interests conflict with those of the West, Moscow is likely to exert considerable effort to protect the Islamic Republic of Iran. In contrast to Russia’s strategic calculations, China has primarily focused on political and trade relations with Iran. China has cautiously worked alongside the United States in the Middle East instead of opposing it. Beijing maintains significant short- and long-term business and technological interests in maintaining peace and cooperation with Israel, as well as major Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Moreover, Iran’s oil imports are crucial for China’s global crude supply. China’s mediating role between Iran and Saudi Arabia underscores how its positive relations with the Islamic Republic provide valuable political leverage in the region, serving its global rivalry with the United States. Unlike the United States and Europe, Russia and China do not concern themselves with Iran’s internal political system, constitutional structure, or governmental machinery. Among Iran’s three main adversaries the United States, Israel, and Saudi Arabia – Iran recently recognized the likelihood of rapprochement with Saudi Arabia, marking a complete U-turn in March 2023 with the help of Chinese mediation. Iran’s decision to compromise with Saudi Arabia was influenced by various factors, including the political and financial role of Iranian minorities within Saudi Arabia, as well as Iranian opposition groups in Europe and the US. Iran apparently made concessions in exchange for reduced Saudi support for the Iranian opposition in Yemen. While Yemen holds little value compared to Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria in terms of Iran’s regional influence, the shift in Iranian policy demonstrates an effort to adapt to the evolving geopolitical landscape. The current direction of Iran’s foreign policy not only contradicts Beijing’s or Moscow’s overall international outlook but also aligns with their interests in their tense relationship with the United States. By aligning with Russia and China in security and trade, Iran believes it has secured insurance against any potential adverse UN Security Council resolutions. Additionally, faced with an upcoming period of leadership transitions and successions, Tehran may feel comfortable relying on Moscow and Beijing for financial, political, and security support. However, the Iranian political establishment faces a significant challenge. The social and political environment that emerges as Iran’s third supreme leader consolidates power will determine the sustainability of this unbalanced geopolitical realignment.

Briefs

NA passes budget with amendments

FROM PAGE 01
The bill now would go to the President for assent who will sign it into a law, and effective from July 1, 2023. Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf put all the amendments proposed by lawmakers Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali, Saira Bano, Nisar Cheema, Zahra Wadood Fatimi, Nawab Sher Waseer, Asiya Azeem, which were with majority vote; except Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali's amendment, which was included in the bill by the Assembly's approval. Consequently, the amendment proposed by MQM member Salahuddin was also rejected by the House.

In light of Senate recommendations, the National Assembly also approved the amendments proposed in the Finance Bill 2023-24 by the Finance Minister.

The bill, presented in the House on June 9 by the Finance minister for consideration, got the approval of the National Assembly with certain changes in the figures related to revenue targets and other matters in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Accordingly, the revenue target of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had increased from Rs9.2 trillion to Rs 9.415 trillion, provincial revenue from Rs 5.276 trillion to Rs5.39 trillion, federal government expenditures from Rs 14.46 trillion to Rs 14.48 trillion, the pension volume from Rs 761 billion to Rs 801 billion, the subsidy volume would stand at Rs1.064 trillion, and the volume of the grant at Rs. 1.405 trillion.

No double-pension: Dar

FROM PAGE 01
However, this has now been limited to 10 years. He stressed that such reforms were crucial because the pension budget had reached Rs 800 billion, which was nearly 50 percent less than the current figure a few years back. He warned that without these reforms, it would become unsustainable for the country.

Addressing concerns raised by Ghous Bux Khan Mahar of the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) regarding the withdrawal of the urea subsidy, the minister stated that the government aimed to promote local fertilizer production and achieve self-sufficiency in this sector.

He mentioned that several Pakistani companies were planning to invest over \$200 million in the urea production sector. He assured the House that the challenges faced by the agriculture sector, considered the backbone of the national economy, would be addressed in due course of time through mutual consultation with all stakeholders.

PTI calls for revised...

FROM PAGE 01
industries have closed down and more are being closed; production of large-scale manufacturing is affected, he said. He further contended that the condition of textile and agriculture industries is "bad" and the country's economy is shrinking. Accusing the government of building a false narrative, the former foreign minister said: "Rulers cannot hide the facts." "The agricultural sector is suffering from crisis," he said, adding that fertilizer was running out and a 5% duty has been imposed on it. He further remarked that extensive load-shedding was happening across the country. He said that the responsibility should be assigned to another finance minister. The PTI stalwart further said that keeping in view the country's economy and state of affairs, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had no confidence in Dar. During the presser, Qureshi also took issue with what he said was the government's failure to show responsibility following the joint statement issued by the US and India earlier this week.

The statement emphasised the need for Pakistan to take action against extremist groups based in Pakistan. The PTI leader expressed shock at the indifference shown by the country's officials in the matter.

Pakistan knocked out of SAFF Championship 2023

Pakistan, on the other hand, tasted their second successive defeat and they now will meet Nepal on June 27 in their final Group A outing to fulfill the formalities

DNA

LAHORE: Following a 4-0 demolition at the hands of holders India in their opener the other day, it was expected that Pakistan would give tough time to Kuwait. However, it did not happen as the nimble-footed Kuwait whipped the Green Shirts 4-0 in their second show-down to put them out of the SAFF Championship 2023 in Bengaluru on Saturday. This was the second win for Kuwait and they blasted their way into the semi-finals.

Pakistan, on the other hand, tasted their second successive defeat and they now will meet Nepal on June 27 in their final Group A outing to fulfill the formalities.

Meanwhile, in the other show of Group A hosts India downed Nepal 2-0 to also qualify for the semi-finals with two successive victories. Kuwait, who had entered the game after a 3-1 win over Nepal in their opener, showed great expertise and played tricky game to keep Pakistan unsettled right from the first whistle until the end. Hasan Alan-ezi put Kuwait ahead in the tenth minute when he capitalised on a pass from Mobarak Alfaneeni. Seven minutes later Mobarak Alfaneeni got a through pass from Ali



Matar and made no mistake and slammed it into the top left corner to double his team's lead. Just before breather Al Faneeni added to Pakistan's misery when he

completed his double when smartly assisted by Al-Rashidi. Kuwait were leading 3-0 at half time. Kuwait kept the pressure on the disorganised Pakistan after the interval

as well and found it easy to inflict rallies from both wings. In the 69th minute Eid Al-Rashidi struck a fine goal through solo effort to seal a huge win for Kuwait, who are playing as an invitees in the South Asian region's major event. Former Pakistan assistant coach Nasir Ismail said that Pakistan had no organisation against a better side. "The poor defensive organisation gave big gaps to Kuwait and poor display by the midfield cost Pakistan the game," Nasir told "The News".

"Pakistani players played individual game. The decision to put gloveman Yousuf Butt was wrong and so was playing Hassan Bashir. It would have been more productive had the coach given full time to Waheed. "The diaspora players were exposed in this match after a complete rest and full recovery." Former Pakistan football team captain Mohammad Essa was disappointed by the team's below-par show. "It was a below-par show from Pakistan," Essa told The News. "The coach did not follow merit which cost us the game and now we are out of the tournament. It's not time for more experiments and if we are to develop our football we will have to give chances to the most deserving players," he added.

PTI Sindh expels 6 more members

FROM PAGE 01
announcing plans to not follow their party decision and to abstain from the voting process. Despite the party's reassurance to the JI and directives to party members to make sure of their presence in the June 15 polls, 32 members did not show up to vote and the absence of these elected members led to Rehman's defeat and PPP's Murtaza Wahab's victory. Following the elections, the PTI on June 17 issued show-cause notices to its 32 elected members of the local government for violating party directives and sought an explanation.

Disqualification term limited...

FROM PAGE 01
Tareen will be among those who benefit from the move. The Supreme Court had disqualified both senior politicians in June and December 2017, respectively, after they were found to be "dishonest" under Article 62(1) (f) of the Constitution. Senate – the upper house of the parliament – had earlier this month approved the bill seeking amendments to Section 232 (Qualifications and Disqualifications) of the Election Act, 2017.

"Notwithstanding anything contained in any other provisions of this Act, any other law for the time being in force and Judgment, orders or decree of any court, including the Supreme Court and a High Court, the disqualification of a person to be elected, chosen, or to remain as a member of the Majlis-e-Shoorah (Parliament) of 9 Provincial Assembly under Paragraph (1) of clause (1) of Article 62 of the Constitution shall be for a period not exceeding five years from the declaration by the court of law in that regard and such declaration shall be subject to the due process of law," the bill reads.

Legal committee to pave...

FROM PAGE 01
On the other side, PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif will hold key meetings today. Sources divulged that Nawaz, who was visiting Dubai with his family, will meet the members of royal family. He will also interact with the business community. Nawaz will be accompanied by PML-N chief organiser Maryam Nawaz. Nawaz Sharif had received special treatment from the Dubai authorities.

US not influencing Pak on...

FROM PAGE 01
many policy makers in Washington have viewed Pakistan with the lens of US engagement in Afghanistan. More recently, some commentators try to frame the US relationship with Pakistan in perspective of China or India or Russia, he said and added that it should stand on its own. The US engagement with Pakistan remained very strong, he continued. The ambassador saw Pakistan's economic future bright as an engine of a larger regional economy, connecting South and Central Asia. He hinted at potential of an improved economic relationship with India. He said that on a regional level the US would like to reaffirm its commitment to partner with Pakistan to eliminate terrorism, countering emerging terrorist threats and addressing the roots of instability in this region.

Pak, Japan political talks...

FROM PAGE 01
both sides will review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, including political, trade, economic, connectivity, science & technology, cultural and people-to-people relations - in order to strengthen the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and Japan. These consultations will foster closer cooperation for the mutual benefit of the people of Pakistan and Japan.

Lionel Messi calls adapting to PSG 'very tough'

LONDON: Lionel Messi says his relationship with Paris St-Germain fans "fractured" after a "significant" number of supporters started to treat him differently. Messi, who won the World Cup with Argentina in December, left PSG at the end of last season after two years and has joined Inter Milan. In the second half of last season, Messi and PSG had to increase security around his house. Messi said he was "very uncomfortable" at the beginning of the season, but he was a fracture with a significant group of the Paris fans, which obviously wasn't my intention, far from it. "It happened just as it had happened before with [Kylian] Mbappe, with Neymar. I know that's the way they behave. "I'll take away with me the people who respected me, as I always respected everyone since I arrived and that's all." Messi said he did not know if Argentina beating France in the World Cup final was a factor. He was booed by some PSG fans after being suspended for an unauthorised trip to Saudi Arabia, and again during his final match for the Ligue 1 champions. In a wide-ranging interview, Messi also said he found it "very difficult" to adapt to life in Paris



on and off the pitch following his 2021 move from Barcelona, having missed pre-season and then later having a month out mid-season with Covid. In contrast, he said he felt "very comfortable" at the start of his second season at Parc des Princes but the mid-season winter World Cup "affected the whole season for everyone". In winning the World Cup - Argentina's first in 36 years - Messi added football's biggest prize to a list of trophies that includes a record seven Ballon d'Or titles - awarded to the best footballer each year - four Champions Leagues, one Copa America, 10 La Liga titles with Barcelona and two Ligue 1 crowns with PSG. In May, he broke Cristiano Ronaldo's record for the most goals scored in Europe's top five leagues and, to date, has scored a combined 807 goals for club and country. - Agencies

Tassaduq appointed PCB adjudicator

ISLAMABAD: Former Chief Justice (Retd) Tassaduq Hussain Jilani has been appointed as an Independent Adjudicator to perform functions as provided in Article 7(4) of the Constitution of the Pakistan Cricket Board (2014). The appointment has been made following the approval of the Prime Minister of Pakistan through a notification No.f.2-3/2017-IPC (S-11). Justice (Retd) Tassaduq Hussain Jilani will oversee the overall conduct of the election to the office of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman set to be held on Tuesday at the Board headquarters. He will have all the powers to step in in case of any dispute emerging from the process. There is all probability that former Chairman PCB Zaka Ashraf will return unopposed to the post of chairman Board. However, a set lobby is making all-out efforts to pitch Mustafa Ramday. The notification for the Independent adjudicator says, "the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan/Patron, Pakistan Cricket Board has been pleased to appoint Justice (Retd) Tassaduq Hussain Jilani (former Chief Justice of Pakistan) as Independent Adjudicator to perform the functions as provided in Article 7(4) of the Constitution of the Pakistan Cricket Board (2014) for the smooth conduct of election of the Chairman, Pakistan Cricket Board to be held on 27th June 2023." "The Terms & Conditions of the Independent Adjudicator will be settled by the Pakistan Cricket Board subsequently," it added. Though the PCB Election Commissioner Ahmad Shahzad Rana will conduct and oversee the PCB Chairman elections in case of any dispute erupting, the Independent Adjudicator will have all the powers to take the final decision. - DNA

Martinez wins battle of unbeatens

Referee Charlie Fitch stopped the bout 29 seconds into the 11th round after Martinez opened a bloody gash on the right ear of Bornea early in the ninth

WASHINGTON: Argentina's Fernando Martinez retained his IBF world junior bantamweight title on Saturday with an 11th-round stoppage of Filipino challenger Jade Bornea in a battle of unbeatens at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Referee Charlie Fitch stopped the bout 29 seconds into the 11th round after Martinez opened a bloody gash on the right ear of Bornea early in the ninth. "I definitely saw the injury in the ear," Martinez said through a translator. "I hit it with a left and it popped, it exploded. I just kept going at the ear and that's what ended this fight." Martinez improved to 16-0 with his ninth victory inside the distance while Bornea fell to 18-1 after dropping his first world title bout. "The training camp we had was brutal. It was great," Martinez said. "The stronger fighter



won and it was me." It was the South American's second defense of the 115-pound division crown he captured 16 months ago from Philippines fighter Jerwin Ancajas and kept in a rematch last October, both wins by unanimous decision. Bornea, 28, went to a southpaw stance at the start against Martinez as they traded combinations going toe to toe in the early rounds. Martinez, 31, landed a hard left in the fifth round but a clash of heads denied him a chance to press the advantage. Early in the ninth round, a left hook by Martinez exploded Bornea's right earlobe. Blood splattered and gushed down Bornea's neck but he made it through the round and told Fitch he wanted to continue. - Agencies

Chelsea's fire sale favours rivals

MANCHESTER: Chelsea have embarked on a fire sale following their stunning spending spree, trimming their bloated squad in an effort to comply with financial regulations as they prepare for a new era under Mauricio Pochettino. In their first year under the ownership of an American consortium, Chelsea spent more on transfer fees than any club has ever done in a 12-month period, only to finish 12th in the Premier League - their lowest placing since 1994. The arrival of RB Leipzig forward Christopher Nkunku this week has added to the outlay of more than £500 million (£635 million). But most of Chelsea's business is focused on departures, with key players in the squad that won the Champions League just two years ago set to leave. France midfielder N'Golo Kante has already said his goodbyes to join a wave of star footballers heading to Saudi Arabia, with other Chelsea players expected to follow him. A potential influx of Saudi cash could prove vital to Chelsea's chances of complying with the Premier League's financial fair play (FFP) rules. Clubs are allowed a maximum loss of £105 million over a three-year period, with deductions allowed for spending on infrastructure, youth and women's football. Chelsea looked set to be well

over that limit, having posted £275 million worth of losses in the final two years of Roman Abramovich's reign, even before LA Dodgers co-owner Todd Boehly and private equity group Clearlake Capital took charge. Some of the club's new signings last season such as Enzo Fernandez and Mykhailo Mudryk were handed eight-year deals to minimise the impact of their transfer fees



on the books. For FFP purposes, transfer fees are spread over the number of years of the contract. By contrast, sales can be registered in full as soon as they are completed and Chelsea are in a rush to get business done before the end of football's financial year on June 30. A number of Chelsea's Premier League rivals are circling, keen to take advantage of cut-price deals.

Croatia international Mateo Kovacic is on the verge of joining English champions Manchester City for an initial £25 million. England's Mason Mount is the subject of serious interest from Manchester United, with just 12 months left on his deal at Stamford Bridge. Germany forward Kai Havertz is close to joining London rivals Arsenal for £65 million, while Marc Cucurella could reportedly join Newcastle for around half the £60 million he cost Chelsea to sign from Brighton year. Saudi interest in Edouard Mendy, Kalidou Koulibaly and Hakim Ziyech is making waves. All three found themselves out of favour last season and getting their wages off the books along with receiving a significant transfer fee would come as a blessing. Business links between the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) and Clearlake have resulted in accusations of a conflict of interest. Former Manchester United captain Gary Neville has called for an embargo on transfers from Premier League clubs to Saudi to "ensure the integrity of the game isn't being damaged". However, the Premier League reportedly investigated any links between Chelsea's ownership group and the PIF at the time of last year's takeover and was apparently happy there was no conflict. - Agencies

Briefs

Russian airstrikes kill 9 civilians in Idlib

IDLIB: A total of nine civilians were killed and 30 others injured in a Russian warplane attack on a market in Syria's Idlib de-escalation zone, according to local sources on Sunday. Confirming the casualties, the White Helmets civil defense group said the attack hit the vegetable market in the Jisr al-Shughur district center. The death toll is feared to rise as the injured are referred to hospitals for treatment. Three Russian warplanes departed from the Khmeimim Air Base in Latakia at 10.03 a.m. local time, and carried out air strikes on the vegetable market in the Jisr al-Shug district, the city center, and a village, according to the opposition aircraft observatory. In September 2018, Türkiye and Russia agreed to turn Idlib into a de-escalation zone where acts of aggression are expressly prohibited. The Syrian regime and its allies, however, have consistently broken the terms of the cease-fire, launching frequent attacks inside the zone.

Syria has been embroiled in a vicious civil war since early 2011, when the Bashar Assad regime cracked down on pro-democracy protests with unexpected ferocity. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and more than 10 million others displaced, according to UN estimates.—Agencies

'Türkiye becomes key country in Balkans'

ISTANBUL: Türkiye has become a "key country" in the Western Balkans and its mediating role between Serbia and Kosovo is very important, the Montenegrin prime minister said on Sunday. "(Turkish) President (Recep Tayyip) Erdogan is a leader who can convince the troubled parties in the Balkans to come to the table and find sustainable solutions to the problems in the region. I think Türkiye's mediation role in the tension between Serbia and Kosovo is very important," Dritan Abazovic told Anadolu as part of the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum in Istanbul. As a "superpower", Türkiye, maintains friendly relations with the whole world, he said, adding that all the steps Türkiye will take in global diplomacy are valuable for both the countries in the region and the Balkans. "I hope President Erdogan will be more involved in problems in the Balkans. This is extremely important for ensuring peace and stability in the region," he added. He said Türkiye has started to play an effective role in the Balkans as much as in the EU and US. Recalling that Türkiye was one of the first countries to recognize Montenegro after gaining independence in 2006, he said the relations between the countries have progressed since then.—APP

US knew of Wagner coup plans in advance: Report

The situation escalated only on Friday night, when Prigozhin accused the Russian Defense Ministry of launching a deadly missile strike on a Wagner camp, and vowed retaliation

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: US intelligence agencies strongly suspected that Evgeny Prigozhin was planning a major move against the Russian government, days before the Wagner chief ordered his troops to march on Moscow, The New York Times reported on Saturday, citing sources. According to unnamed US officials interviewed by the paper, the administration of US President Joe Biden and military commanders were briefed on the Wagner preparations as early as Wednesday. As additional details came in, another briefing attended by a narrow group of congressional leaders was reportedly held on Thursday. The situation escalated only on Friday night, when Prigozhin accused the Russian Defense Ministry of launching a deadly missile strike on a Wagner camp, and vowed retaliation. The ministry denied the allegation, accusing him of an "informational provocation."

In the following hours, Wagner troops captured military facilities in the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, while Prigozhin announced that his forces were beginning a "march for justice" with a plan to reach Moscow. On Saturday, the Wagner boss agreed to halt his advance and withdraw his forces in exchange for "security guarantees," as part of a deal brokered by Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko. According to NYT sources, prior to the uprising, Washington officials were in no hurry to alert Russian President Vladimir Putin of an impending threat, as they feared that Moscow could accuse them of orchestrating a coup. Moreover, the US "had little interest" in helping Putin amid the Ukraine conflict and Russia's stand-off with the West, the article says. Still, US officials were reportedly alarmed by a possible conflict between Prigozhin and Moscow, as they worried that Russia's descent into chaos could create

considerable nuclear risks. The NYT report was echoed by CNN, which claimed on Saturday that US officials had believed Prigozhin was planning to challenge the Russian military "for quite some time," but did not know what his ultimate goal was. According to CNN sources, Western officials had prior knowledge of Prigozhin's preparations, including his efforts to accumulate weapons and ammunition. However, the outlet's source noted that "it all happened very quickly," and it was difficult to say whether the Wagner chief was serious about delivering on his threats to the Russian military. On Saturday, when the Wagner insurrection was still in full swing, the Russian Foreign Ministry warned the West that any its attempts to use the unrest "to achieve their Russophobic goals" would be futile. Meanwhile, former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev noted that a coup in a major nuclear power could result in catastrophic consequences, and Moscow would never allow this to happen.

Putin 'victorious' after Wagner revolt

CARACAS: Russian President Vladimir Putin has managed to thwart a civil war in his country, Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro said on Saturday, hours after PMC Wagner chief Evgeny Prigozhin agreed to stand down and cease his insurrection. Speaking at an event commemorating the Day of the Bolivarian Army, Maduro reiterated that Caracas stands in solidarity with Putin. The Russian leader "faced an attempted betrayal and civil war, and at this time he is victorious with Russia at peace," the president said. "From Venezuela, all our support for President Vladimir Putin, Venezuela's brother," he added. His remarks came after the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry, speaking on behalf of Maduro, "strongly condemned" the Wagner Group and its leader Evgeny Prigozhin following their efforts to "promote an armed insurrection... through methods of terrorists." Venezuela has enjoyed close ties with Moscow for many years, with cooperation ranging from investments in the oil industry to arms sales. It has also slammed Western sanctions on Russia over the Ukraine conflict, with Maduro describing them as "a crime [and] an economic war." Meanwhile, Cuba, another country in the region that has had long-established friendly relations with Moscow, also voiced support for Putin. President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez said both the Caribbean country and its people expressed their solidarity with the Russian leader "in the face of attempts to provoke an armed rebellion." —Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Shazia Marri, Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme in a group photo with the delegation of Yemen's Social Fund for Development in Islama bad. Secretary BISP is also present.—DNA

Trend for intra-ethnic marriage strong in Pak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PIDE new research highlighted the significance of inter-ethnic marriages in Pakistan, a country with a diverse ethnic spectrum. The research findings from the PIDE BASICS 1 survey indicate that such marriages play a crucial role in promoting assimilation, social cohesion, and stability, thereby blurring tensions arising from ethnic differences. Language, closely tied to ethnic background, has a profound impact on personal identities, which can sometimes be divisive and undermine unity within the larger identity. The survey employed a new approach to measure ethnic exogamy and homogamy by asking respondents three questions related to the ethnic backgrounds of their parents and the language

spoken in their everyday lives. The results revealed that only a small proportion (1.5%) of marriages in Pakistan are ethnically exogamous, indicating a strong trend of intra-ethnic marriages. However, slight variations exist among different languages, with Urdu, Pothohari, Brahui, and Brushaski showing slightly higher rates of exogamy. Additionally, gender differences were observed in languages such as Urdu, Shina, and Kashmiri. The study also examined the language preferences of children in families with different ethnic backgrounds and found that when parents share the same ethnicity, 92.3% of children spoke the same language as their parents. However, children of exogamous parents exhibited a mixed pattern, with some languages influenced more by the mother's language

and others by the father's language. These findings shed light on the role of inter-ethnic marriages and language dynamics in Pakistan's social fabric. According to a press release issued from the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr. Durre Nayab said while describing the details of the PIDE BASICS Notes 8 that the latest research findings revealed that to capture the prevalence of ethnic exogamy, or homogamy, in Pakistan, the PIDE BASICS 1 survey asked questions in a new way to give a better insight into the issue. In most surveys, language is captured by asking the respondents about the language they speak, and the response to this question is taken as representing their ethnic background. This is misleading, and the results of the BASICS survey confirm this distortion in interpretation.

Protestors calls for Serbian President to resign

FOREIGN DESK

BELGRADE: People are angry with President Vučić's government and his close ties with the tabloid media they claim incites hatred and promotes violence. Thousands of people gathered on Saturday in the centre of Belgrade for the 'Serbia against violence' march. It was the eighth week of protests in a row in the country's capital and this time extended to 20 other cities. These included Serbia's next largest cities of Novi Sad and Kragujevac, and in the smaller towns of Kraljevo, Subotica, Vranje, Sabac and Leskovac. The demonstrators, including members of some opposition parties are calling for the resignation of President Aleksandar Vučić, and also top representatives in media, the police force, and security services. Critics of the president accuse him of authoritarianism and say the tabloid media his government is close to incites hatred and promotes violence. Protestors also want an end to reality TV shows. A growing number of cities are joining the demonstrations.

Greeks vote in 2nd round of general elections

ATHENS: Greek polls opened on Sunday at 7 a.m. local time (0500GMT) for the second time in five weeks to decide who will lead the country for the next four years. Former Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the most likely winner according to the latest polls and on the previous elections result, fell short of the outright majority needed to form a government in the May elections. The latest polls suggested that the New Democracy party is leading with 21.5 percentage points over its main opposition, leftist SYRIZA. "We are voting for the second time in a few weeks for the country to have a stable and effective government with a four-year horizon. I am absolutely certain that the citizens will do their duty with maturity and will vote for their personal prosperity, for their own good and the good of their families, for a stable country that will finally offer conditions of prosperity and social equality for all Greeks," Mitsotakis said after casting his vote at in the northern suburbs. Casting his vote in a school in the western neighborhood of Peristeri in Athens, the leader of the main opposition SYRIZA party, Alexis Tsipras, stressed that Greek democracy needs a strong opposition to control the government. "SYRIZA is the only force that can reliably play this role, support the needs of society, represent the social majority, and also play a balancing role in the political system and democracy," he added. After casting her vote, Elena Tripeirina, a citizen, told Anadolu: "We are waiting for a stable government, I voted for the party ND and I'm anticipating that he will continue to do what he didn't have time to finish in the previous four-year term." Another citizen, Vassilopoulos Panagiotis, told Anadolu: "Stability and normality and a better quality of life for all Greeks, this is what I want." Agencies

Afghan supreme leader says women 'saved from oppression'

KABUL: Afghanistan's supreme leader said Sunday the country's women were being saved from "traditional oppressions" by the adoption of Islamic governance and their status as "free and dignified human beings" restored. In a statement marking this week's Eid al-Adha holiday, Hibatullah Akhundzada - who rarely appears in public and rules by decree from the Taliban's birthplace in Kandahar - said steps had been taken to provide women with a "comfortable and prosperous life according to Islamic Sharia". The United Nations expressed "deep concern" last week that women were being deprived of their rights under Afghanistan's Taliban government and warned of systematic gender apartheid. Since returning to power in August 2021, Taliban authorities have stopped girls and women from attending high school or university, banned them from parks, gyms and public baths, and ordered them to cover up when leaving home. They have also barred them from working for the UN or NGOs, while most female government employees have been dismissed from their jobs or are being paid to stay at home. However, Akhundzada said "necessary steps have been taken for the betterment of women as half of the society". "All institutions have been obliged to help women in securing marriage, inheritance and other rights," his statement read. Akhundzada said a six-point decree issued in December 2021 guaranteed women their rights. Among other things, the decree outlawed forced marriages and enshrined the right to inheritance and divorce.—DNA

Morocco foils 70,781 illegal immigration attempts

NEWS DESK

RABAT: Morocco foiled 70,781 illegal immigration attempts toward Europe in 2022, the interior ministry said in a report published on Sunday. As for the year 2023, some 25,519 illegal immigration attempts were foiled at the end of May, it added. Over the past five years, some 366,000 immigration attempts were foiled, including some 90,000 migrants which were rescued by the Moroccan Navy during operations in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, according to the report. Morocco has become an important crossing point for migrants, mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. Moroccan authorities bust 290 migrant trafficking networks in 2021, and 117 this year until the end of May. The report added that 100 attempted assaults on Ceuta and Melilla, the two Spanish enclaves in Moroccan territory, were aborted over the last five years, involving some 17,500 assailants.

Greater Bay Area to boost Pak-China cooperation

BEIJING: Pakistani jade ornaments, Belgian chocolates, Iranian carpets and Uzbek honey were among a wide range of commodities showcased at this year's Guangdong 21st Century Maritime Silk Road International Expo held in Guangzhou, China earlier this month. The expo attracted over 1,000 participating companies and generated deals worth nearly USD 279 million. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in China, connecting Hong Kong, Macau and nine cities in Guangdong province, is envisioned as an economic powerhouse and drives the Belt and Road Initiative constantly. A lot of exhibitors at the event expressed their appreciation for the fast development of this area and wanted to build more connections. "Our main purpose is to enter the market of the Greater Bay Area through this exhibition platform, said a Zelanian exhibitor at the event," China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Sunday. "The Greater Bay Area is one of the most important areas in China. It has a large population, and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is also very high. I see a huge opportunity for Pakistani traders in this area," said Muhammad Irfan, Pakistani Trade and investment counsellor in Guangzhou. The region combined GDP reached nearly USD2 trillion in 2022, up 25 percent from USD1.65 trillion in 2019. "Most population in the area is urbanized. They have strong consumptive power and great love for international products. This area especially has a very soft corner towards Pakistan. They have very positive reactions toward our products at the exhibition. Muhammad Irfan told us that Pakistan's export to their consular district was around \$350 million in 2020, which jumped to more than \$1 billion last year." "This area has a huge demand for Pakistani raw materials, including copper and aluminum. APP

PIAF asks govt to resolve traders' issues with consultations

He called for promoting industrialization and enhancing exports through lowering cost of production

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) Chairman Fahimur Rehman Saigol, along with PIAF EC members Mudassar Masood, Malik Khalid, Chaudhary Wajid, Zeeshan Sohail, Sheikh Sajjad, Azhar Khan, Secretary PIAF Abdul Saboor and other market representatives visited several city's several markets and major commercial hubs, including Baden Road, Cooper Road and adjacent markets and met officials of organizations there. During this visit, Fahimur Rahman also inaugurated Light Makers, a shop owned by Nadim Saeed and Mian Shehbaz on Biden Road and prayed for the development of their business. During the door-to-door meeting with businessmen, Chairman PIAF

said that the manifesto of PIAF is to solve the problems of the business community on a priority basis. The business community is facing problems like unannounced load shedding, parking, overbilling, departmental proceedings and expensive electricity and gas in the markets. The government should solve the above problems on a priority basis in consultation with the traders. PIAF's mission is to create a stable economy and prosperous business community. He said that business community was facing tough challenges because of limited business. In this context, he sought attention of the government for formulation of regional, provincial and central level task force, and formulation of sector wise regional policies which would help the government address the problems confronted by exporters. He asked

the government to appreciate the role of trade, industry and exporters, providing mass employment to the jobless population of the country. He suggested that One Window Operation should be introduced for the replacing the lengthy procedures that involve interaction of manufacturers with various agencies. The government agencies were harassing the trade and industry every day and Social Security, EOBI and other taxes should be merged and deducted at the source. He called for promoting industrialization and enhancing exports through lowering cost of production, paying early refunds to solve liquidity crunch and relaxing import policy for industrial raw material. He also sought government's attention for formulating aggressive marketing plan and hur-

dle-free policies as well as urgent decisions in favour of trade and industry while taking on board major stakeholders. He called for concerted efforts for exploring new markets both traditional and non-traditional in order to introduce home made products. He urged the government to announce favorable policies and allow duty-free import of raw material and accessories. This move will attract investors and help in setting up new industries in the country which will create wide opportunities for employment. We direly need a stimulus economic package coupled with relief package by the government to maximize production. He also emphasized the need for seeking technical knowhow from China and other countries for the sake of innovation, and improvement of products.

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11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165

Briefs

Pakistani delegation visits Hunan for exchanges

BEIJING: A delegation of Pakistani business representatives visited Hunan, China for exchanges and connections with government institutions, business associations and relevant enterprises. The visit was organized and coordinated by the International Environmental Special Fund of China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CB-CGDF), China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

The Pakistani business delegation, consisting of eight members, was led by Senator and General Abdul Qayyum, along with Sheikh Ejaz Asghar, Vice Chairman of the Pakistan-China Business Forum, Khalid Mahmood, CEO of Pakistan Green Energy Company, and Ms. Wang Lihua, General Manager of Pakistan Woda Limited. The business areas for connections covered new energy, automobiles, steel, household appliances, building materials, electronic products, food processing, and agricultural products. On June 18, the delegation held forums with more than 60 Hunan enterprises. Representatives from the Hunan Provincial Department of Commerce introduced the overall situation of Hunan's industries and the current status of trade with Pakistan. They highlighted the prospects and opportunities that Hunan's industrial capabilities, particularly in engineering machinery, new energy, IT technology, and e-commerce, can bring to the upgrading and competitiveness of Pakistan's industries. — Agencies

Government prioritizes rehabilitation of flood hit areas: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman on Sunday highlighted that the government has prioritized the reconstruction and rehabilitation of areas affected by floods in the federal budget 2023-24. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, she expressed disappointment that the international community seems to have overlooked the plight of those affected by the devastating disaster in Pakistan last year. The minister further acknowledged PM Shehbaz Sharif's unwavering efforts in advocating for climate justice during a conference held in Paris. His representation aimed to raise awareness and seek global support for addressing climate-related challenges faced by Pakistan, she expressed. Meanwhile, Minister for Human Rights Riaz Hussain Pirzada commended the government for introducing various incentives for farmers in the budget. He expressed his belief that these measures would contribute to the overall growth of the agriculture sector which was crucial for the country's economic development. — APP

Wagner's Prigozhin calls off march, agrees to exile in Belarus

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin ordered his mercenaries to halt their march on Moscow to avoid "shedding Russian blood" and agreed to live in exile in Belarus — ending one of the biggest challenges to President Vladimir Putin's decades-long rule. Prigozhin said while his men were just 200km (120 miles) from the Russian capital, he decided on Saturday to turn them back to prevent killings. "They wanted to disband the Wagner military company. We embarked on a march of justice on June 23. Now, the moment has come when blood could be spilled," said Prigozhin in an audio message. "Understanding responsibility [for the chance] that Russian blood will be spilled on one side, we are turning our columns around and going back to field camps as planned." Moscow braced for the arrival of the private army led by the rebellious mercenary commander by erecting checkpoints with armoured vehicles and troops on its southern edge. Red Square was shut down and the mayor urged motorists to stay off some roads.

Wagner's lightning insurrection appeared to develop with little pushback from Russia's regular armed forces, raising questions about Putin's grip on power in the nuclear-armed nation even after the abrupt halt to Wagner's advance. Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko negotiated with the mercenary boss to stop Wagner's troop movement after discussing the issue with Putin. Prigozhin accepted Lukashenko's offer to halt the Wagner group's advance and further steps to de-escalate the tensions, Lukashenko's office said,

Uzbekistan greatly values ties with Pakistan: envoy

Uzbek embassy celebrates International Day of Journalism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan Aybek Arif Usmanov has said relations between Uzbekistan are growing with the each passing day adding trade volume has increased considerably. He expressed these views while speaking to media persons on the occasion of the International Day of Journalism. He further said on June 27, 1906 in Tashkent was published first ever in Central Asia Uzbek newspaper under the title "TARAQQI". As I learned 1st ever newspaper in Urdu by the name "Jam-e Jahon Nama" was published 1822 in Kolkata, and "Daily Jang" urdu newspaper was published in 1939 in Karachi, then "Daily Imroze" in Urdu launched in Lahore in 1947.

He said journalists play an important role in society as a source of news, information and opinion. They provide an important public service by uncovering the truth and holding the powerful accountable. Journalists help create informed citizens who can make decisions based on facts rather than rumor. He said Located at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road, Uzbekistan and Pakistan for centuries serve as a strong bridge connecting Europe, the Middle East, West, South and East Asia with its rich cultural and historical heritage.

'For thousands of years, Uzbekistan and Pakistan are cradles for the world civilization where various nationalities and religions lived in peace, and doing their livelihoods and connected where the cultures

of different peoples enriched each other'.

Ambassador Arif said today we are meeting with you in the eve of the Presidential elections in Uzbekistan and also the coming parliamentary elections in Pakistan. 'The renewed Basic Law unites society around the idea of building a new Uzbekistan. It states that Uzbekistan's foreign policy is based on the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity of states, non-use of force or threat of force, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and norms of international law'. He said Uzbekistan pursues a peaceful foreign policy aimed at developing bilateral and multilateral relations with states and international organizations. Global and regional cooperation processes have reached a new level. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's international initiatives have received broad support from the international community. The foreign policy of the New Uzbekistan has led to fundamental changes in the political atmosphere in Central Asia and to the recognition of close interconnectivity with South Asia and interdependence at the

sub-regional and global levels.

'In order to further strengthen relations with neighbouring countries in the Central and South Asian regions, in last years we have witnessed high-level events with delegations from nearly 30 partner countries and international organizations, and experts from foreign think tanks representing more than 40 states including the delegates of brotherly

Pakistan'. The renewed Constitution which was adopted by people of Uzbekistan opens new horizons for bilateral and multilateral interaction.

Talking about bilateral relations he said, Uzbekistan-Pakistan Inter-governmental Commission on Trade-Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation (IGC) was held in February 24th this year in Tashkent. The Road map agreement to increase bilateral trade upto \$1 billion was signed during IGC meeting and the next step will be the signing of Road map on Industrial cooperation, Inshallah. Transit Trade and Prefer-

ential trade Agreements which became effective since March of this year allowed to reach bilateral trade volume of \$150 mln. It's 2 times larger compared to the same period of 2022 (\$87,6 mln). Both countries enjoy increases in exports. Uzbekistan's delivered to Pakistan exports worth of \$79 mln, growth 2,5 times and Pakistani exports to Uzbekistan reached \$71 mln, growth 1,2 times.

'Let me express my belief that it is a high time for us diplomats and journalists to be a humble servants of further cementing of brotherly relations and re-connectivity between Pakistan and Uzbekistan'. Second Round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan

The second round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan will be held on 26th June, 2023 in Astana, Kazakhstan. The inaugural session of the Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between Pakistan and Kazakhstan was held on 28th February, 2020 in Islamabad.

The Pakistan side will be led by the Additional Secretary (Afghanistan & West Asia) Syed Ahsan Raza Shah while Mr. Kanat Tumyst, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan will lead from Kazakh side. During consultations both sides will review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations in political, trade, economic, connectivity, science & technology, cultural and people to people relations to strengthen the deep-rooted fraternal ties between Pakistan and Kazakhstan with a view to foster closer cooperation for the mutual benefit of their people.

Coverage of Titan sub and migrant boat reveals deep bias

WEB DESK

LONDON: For much of the past week, international news media audiences had to put up with round-the-clock coverage of an incident whose place in the annals of history is far from assured. For as long as the fate of five people inside Titan, a submersible that was headed to the site of the Titanic shipwreck, remained unknown, major media outlets spared no bulletin slot or expense in getting talking heads to hold forth on the topic.

It did not need an elder statesman of America to point out the scandalous contrast between the intense media coverage of the Titan's doomed journey and the almost cursory attention paid to the deaths of possibly hundreds of people off the coast of Greece just days earlier. Still, when Barack Obama did just that at a public forum in Athens, his comments not only struck a responsive chord with the audience but also gave voice to the pent-up frustrations of news consumers worldwide.

"There is a potential tragedy unfolding with a submarine that is getting minute-to-minute coverage all around the world, and it is understandable because, obviously, we all want and pray that those folks are rescued," the former US president said in the Greek capital, where he was attending a conference on child and adolescent mental health initiatives. "But the fact that that has gotten so much more attention than 700 people who sank — that is an untenable situation."

The disaster he was referring to — described as "one of the worst in recent memory" — unfolded far away from the media's gaze in the Central Mediterranean on Tuesday. A fishing vessel carrying an estimated 750 people from Palestine, Syria, Egypt and Pakistan capsized in international waters off Pylos in southern Greece. According to the UN Human Rights Office, 78 people are confirmed dead while at least 500 more are missing. The media conversation concerning the tragedy, however, was quickly drowned out by the noise of technical experts.

Huge crowds circle Kaaba as Haj begins in Saudi heat

MAKKAH: Vast crowds of robed Muslim pilgrims walked solemn circles around the Kaaba, the black cube at Makkah's Grand Mosque, on Sunday as the biggest Haj pilgrimage in several years began in the heat of the Saudi summer.

Islam's holiest site is expected to host more than two million worshippers from 160 countries during the annual rites that could break attendance records, with 1.6 million foreigners already there by late Friday.

"This year, we will witness the largest Haj pilgrimage in history," if things go according to plan, predicted an official with the Saudi Ministry of Haj and Umrah.

"The numbers will exceed 2.5 million pilgrims," added the official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he is not authorised to speak with the press.

The Haj began early on Sunday with the "tawaf" — the circumambulation of the Kaaba, the large cubic structure draped in black cloth with gold trimmings that millions of

Muslims pray towards every day.

"I am living the most beautiful days of my life," said Abdel-Azim, a 65-year-old Egyptian, as he performed the ritual. "The dream has come true," added the retiree, who had saved up for 20 years to pay the \$6,000 fee to take part.

The Haj is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken at least once by all Muslims with the means.

A series of rites are completed over four days in Makkah and its surroundings in the west of oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

On Sunday night, pilgrims will start moving to Mina, about five kilometres (three miles) from the Grand Mosque, ahead of the Haj's climax at Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Mohammed is believed to have delivered his final sermon. Mina, the world's largest tent city, readied to receive the influx of pilgrims on Sunday, with food supplies brought in and security forces deployed around the area. — APP

Israeli forces kill Palestinian teen

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed Aljouni as a member

DNA

OCCUPIED WEST BANK: A Palestinian teenager was left bleeding to death after a shooting attack at Qalandia military checkpoint in the occupied West Bank, according to Palestinian news agency Wafa.

Ishaq Hamdi Ajlouni, 17, was shot and killed by Israeli forces after he opened fire at the checkpoint on Saturday, lightly wounding a security guard, the agency said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed Aljouni as a member. The group is the armed wing of Fatah — the movement that controls the Palestinian Authority, which has limited self-rule in the occupied territory.

"Our heroic fighters ... were able to directly target occupation [Israeli] soldiers at Qalandia checkpoint," the brigades said in a statement. Police said the young gunman, from the Kufr Aqab neighbourhood just north of the checkpoint, used an M-16 rifle to carry out the shooting. The Qalandia checkpoint is the main gateway used by Palestinians between occupied east Jerusalem and Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.

Fighting surges in Sudan's capital and Darfur

WEB DESK

DUBAI: Clashes, artillery fire and air strikes surged in Sudan's capital on Sunday, witnesses said, as a war between rival military factions that has displaced 2.5 million people and caused a humanitarian crisis entered its 11th week. Witnesses also reported a sharp increase in violence in recent days in Nyala, the largest city in the western Darfur region. The UN raised the alarm on Saturday over ethnic targeting and the killing of people from the Masalit community in El Geneina in West Darfur.

Khartoum, the capital, and El Geneina have been worst affected by the war that broke out on April 15 between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), though last week tensions and clashes escalated in other parts of Darfur and in Kordofan, in the south. Fighting has intensified since a series of cease-fire deals agreed at talks led by the United States and Saudi Arabia in Jeddah failed to stick. The talks were adjourned last week. Residents in the three cities that make up the wider capital — Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman — reported fierce fighting from Saturday evening, continuing into Sunday morning.

The army, led by Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, has been using air strikes and heavy artillery to try to dislodge the RSF led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, from neighborhoods across the capital. "Since the early morning in north Omdurman we've had air strikes and artillery bombardment and RSF anti-aircraft fire," 47-year-old resident Mohamed Al-Samani told Reuters by phone. "Where are the Jeddah talks, why did the world leave us to die alone in Burhan and Hemedti's war?"

In Nyala, a city that grew rapidly as people were displaced during the earlier conflict that spread in Darfur after 2003, witnesses reported a marked deterioration in the security situation over the past few days, with violent clashes in residential neighborhoods. There was also fighting between the army and the RSF last week around El Fashir, capital of North Darfur, which the UN says is inaccessible to humanitarian workers.

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