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Indonesia welcomes Pakistani investors, says Dy Minister

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Salah helps Egypt secure AFCON place

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PM meets President Aliyev Pak, Azerbaijan agree to deepen trade, energy ties

Cooperation in defence sector also discussed; number of flights to be increased

DNA

BAKU: Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Thursday agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy, trade and aviation sectors to reflect the decades-old strong relationship between the two nations. The bilateral relations were discussed at length in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev at Zugulba Palace in Baku. The prime minister, accompanied by a high-level delegation, was on a two-day official visit to Baku at the invitation of President Aliyev.

At a joint press stakeout following their bilateral meeting, the two leaders told the media of agreeing to introduce flights of Azerbaijan airline between the two capitals, enhance number of military exercises, besides exploring the avenues of cooperation in the areas of energy, investment and education. Prime Minister Shehbaz, who earlier visited the mausoleum of Azerbaijan first president Haider Aliyev and the martyrs monument, spoke high of the President Ilham Aliyev's leadership to build the city's infrastructure and impressive horticulture.

Citing the "pleasant surprises" of neatness and beauty of Baku, the prime minister requested the Azerbaijan president to lend their experts in horticulture and waste management to Islamabad. He told the media that during the "wonderful" discussion, there was a "total unanimi-

ty" of views on various bilateral and multilateral issues as the relationship was built on mutual trust and sincerity of purpose. The prime minister said that the Pakistani flags all across Baku manifested the love between the two people. "Though our ties are so strong since ages, these do not reflect its intensity through trade and investment, exchange of visits and other important areas of cooperation," the prime minister remarked.

Emphasising cooperation in energy sector, he said being an energy-deficient country Pakistan depended upon costly imported fuels spending \$27 billion last year which was becoming unaffordable owing to the challenges of imported inflation and oil price-hike due to the Ukraine crisis.

Earlier, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday visited the mausoleum of National Hero and first President of Azerbaijan Heyder Aliyev in Baku and laid a floral wreath at the mausoleum. The prime minister paid glowing tribute to the services of the Azeri national leader. Later, the prime minister also paid a visit to the martyrs' monument. Shehbaz Sharif will also meet President Ilham Aliyev and both the leaders will later talk to the media.

A delegation of Azerbaijan ministers will also call on the prime minister to discuss the bilateral cooperation between the two countries in trade and energy sectors. At the invitation of President Ilham Aliyev, PM Shehbaz is on a two-day official visit to Baku.



BAKU: Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev meeting in Baku. - DNA

Jane Marriott new British High Commissioner



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The United Kingdom has announced the appointment of Jane Marriott OBE as the next British High Commissioner to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The first female British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane is due to take up her role in mid-July, said a news release.

Prior to this appointment, Jane Marriott was the High Commissioner to Kenya from September 2019 to June 2023. In this role she delivered a new UK-Kenya Strategic Partnership, strengthening ties across mutual prosperity, sustainable development, security and stability, people-to-people links and tackling climate change.

Under Jane's leadership, she oversaw the launch of new clean, green, sustainable energy projects as well as delivering UK-Kenyan cooperation to create the first-ever Kenyan Marine Commando Unit, underlining the UK's commitment to the fight against terrorism in Kenya and the region. Jane also supported the restoration of over 1,000 hectares of deforested land, and under her leadership, the UK established a

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Bilawal hails 'historic' win PPP, JI workers clash after Wahab becomes mayor

According to the results, the PPP leader secured 173 votes

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Jamat-e-Islami's (JI) workers clashed Thursday outside the Arts Council - which was declared a polling station for the mayoral election - after Murtaza Wahab was elected as Karachi's mayor, defeating JI's Hafiz Naeem Ur Rehman. According to the results, the PPP leader secured 173 votes while the JI's Karachi chief bagged 160 votes. The result was also the same for the elections held for deputy mayor, with PPP's Salman Abdullah securing the seat and JI's Saifuddin coming in second. The JI - who had the backing of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

JI rejects result; will go to court

DNA

KARACHI: In a press conference later in the day, JI's Naeemur Rehman said that the "theft of public mandate" was unacceptable to the party. "The people of the city voted for us. These delimitations were fake. They were only done to provide an advantage to one party," he claimed. But at the same time, Rehman said that it was his responsibility to

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Cyclone Biparjoy Landfall commences along Indo-Pak border

NEWS DESK

KARACHI: The landfall of Cyclone Biparjoy, currently classified as a "very severe cyclonic storm", commenced along the Indian Gujarat coast and the Pakistan-India border at 7pm on Thursday, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

In its latest alert, the PMD said the cyclone had moved further east-northeastward during the last three hours and its landfall would be complete by midnight.

"It now lies near latitude 22.9°N and longitude 68.2°E at a distance of about 245km south of Karachi, 200km south of Thatta, and 150km south of Keti Bandar," it said. The alert added that the cyclone would bring winds between 100-120km/h with gusts up to 140km/h with maximum wave height of 20-25 feet. The alert said that widespread wind-dust/thunderstorm and heavy rain was likely in Sindh's Thatta, Sujawal, Badin, Tharparkar, Mirpurkhas and Umerkot districts from June 15-17. It further predicted dust/thunderstorm and rain accompanied with squally winds in Karachi, Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allayar, Shaheed Benazirabad &

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Briefs

Saudi FM to visit Tehran

DNA

TEHRAN: Iranian media reported Thursday that a Saudi top diplomat Faisal bin Farhan is set to visit Iran Saturday, as two Middle Eastern heavyweights are taking steps further to strengthen their bilateral ties after a seven-year diplomatic cut-off. According to Tasnim news agency, "The foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, Faisal bin Farhan, will travel to Tehran on Saturday, June 17, to meet with officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran." Ali Bahadori Jahromi, Iran's gov spokesman said that the Saudi Minister Prince Farhan's visit would see him "take measures to open the embassy of Saudi Arabia in Tehran".

Institutions must ensure elections

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Thursday requested the institutions and judiciary to force the ruling coalition to announce elections in the country reeling under economic crisis. In a series of tweets, the former interior minister said the government had put the national economic autonomy at stake and pushed people into extreme poverty. He blamed the government for its political failure, adding: "Now it [government] is trying to lay blame on others". He said the government had failed to reach an agreement with IMF and it wanted to impose emergency despite the fact that the country needed "election emergency". He said poverty-bitten people were forced to loot others publicly, adding that delay in elections would not be beneficial for anyone.

Dar rubbishes IMF criticism on budget

"Pakistan cannot accept everything from the IMF," says Ishaq Dar

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Hours after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) expressed concerns about the government's failure to broaden the tax base through the budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said that Pakistan is a sovereign country and cannot accept everything the lender demands. Addressing the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, he responded to the IMF objection to the tax exemptions given in the recently unveiled budget. "Pakistan is a sovereign country and cannot accept everything from the IMF," the financial czar told the parliamentarians. He also added that as a sovereign country, Islamabad should have the right to give some tax concessions. "The IMF wants us not to give tax concessions in any sector." The finance minister of the country assured the senators that the government knew how much tax it needs to collect and form where the revenue can be generated. He added that this was the reason the government increased

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FG employees to get salary on June 23

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday announced payment of salaries to the government employees for the current month on June 23, enabling them to meet needs of their families ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. Making announcement on floor of the National Assembly, the minister said he had consulted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who is currently in Baku - the capital of Azerbaijan - on an official visit; and directed the Secretary Finance to ensure issuance of the salaries accordingly. He said the decision had been taken after the heads of different divisions contacted the Ministry of Finance,

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Indonesia welcomes Pakistani investors, says Dy Minister

We primarily focus on developing 10 Tourism Priority Destinations in this period by optimizing accessibility, attraction, and amenities (3A) in the prioritized areas: Ni Made Ayu Marthini Deputy Minister for Marketing

INTERVIEW

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI IN BALI

BALI, INDONESIA: Ni Made Ayu Marthini Deputy Minister for Marketing Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Republic of Indonesia has said Indonesia welcomes Pakistani investors to come here and explore various business avenues as her country offered huge potential, especially in the tourism sector. She added, 'we are seeing an opportunity in the common characteristic of Indonesia with Pakistan, which is similar in having a majority of the Muslim population'. Ni Made Ayu Marthini expressed these views while giving an exclusive interview to the Pakistan media delegation, which is currently in Bali as part of the Indonesian government's FAMTRIP program. The visit is jointly organized by the Indonesian embassy in Islamabad and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. While replying to a question about investment opportunities in Indonesia she said, Indonesia is the world's most sought after tourist destination and let me put it like this that tourism is in fact the jewel in the crown of Indonesia. We would like to promote this and I'm so glad that journalists from Pakistan are here today to see for themselves that what progress Indonesia has made in this sector. She said investment is a big part of the success of tourism that is why we are wholeheartedly working to fetch more and more foreign invest-

ments including from Pakistan. Let me tell you that there are a lot of opportunities for the Pakistani investors because the trajectory of growth

that we see is very high. She said Indonesia had an open policy to make it easy for investors to come and explore business opportunities.



BALI: Ni Made Ayu Marthini Deputy Minister for Marketing Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Republic of Indonesia talking to Daily Islamabad POST. - DNA



"I hope one day we see more and more Pakistani investors come to Indonesia and be part of an innovative growth story. Let me emphasize again, we have to be adaptive. We have to be innovative. And lastly, we have to be collaborative and work together with everybody to achieve happiness. We are eyeing 8.5 million tourists this year and I am glad to share with you that 3.2 million tourists have visited already. So we're quite happy and I believe everyone is very optimistic about future prospects.

The minister further said, the media plays a vital role in promoting the two countries' potential, and people-to-people contacts especially with the similar characteristics of Indonesia and Pakistan, countries with a majority Muslim population. 'Generally, Indonesia provides convenient access to mosques and halal foods, the essential needs for Muslims. Having said that, we are confident to promote our Muslim-friendly destinations, with the highlight of our award-winning designated halal destination, Lombok', she added. She said they had plenty of destinations to offer to Pakistani tourists, with Moslem-friendly tourism as the cherry on top. While replying to yet another question the minister hoped opening of direct flights between Indonesia and Pakistan shall give new impetus to bilateral relations. She said efforts were on from both sides in this regard and hoped a breakthrough shall be achieved sooner rather than later. She called upon the media and the stakeholders of the hospitality industry to play role once the direct air link is established.

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2nd round of talks between TLP, govt held

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq held the second round of talks with the negotiation committee of the Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) on Thursday. The TLP committee was comprised of Dr Shafiq Ameeni, Ghulam Abbas Faizi, Mufti Muhammad Umeer Al-Azhari, Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Baghdadi, and Jeelan Shah. During the talks, both sides agreed to conduct an impartial and speedy trial for the individual who blasphemed against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They also agreed to install a filtering system to remove profane and indecent content from social media. Furthermore, in order to prevent blasphemy against the sacred elements of Islam, a consensus was reached to enhance capacity and efficiency of the existing institution, enabling it to effectively carry out its work. It was also agreed in the meeting to take steps toward the formal establishment of the Counter Blasphemy Department. The Foreign Affairs Ministry would issue a letter to the American government within three working days to seek the release of Dr Aafia Siddiqui, and the government would take more serious measures toward her release and repatriation. — DNA

1,100 more cops to become part of police force soon

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said on Thursday that 11,000 young officials including 2000 women with the latest training would become part of the police force soon. He visited District Police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh and addressed promoted police officers and personnel of Lahore Police. He said he was grateful to caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Chief Election Commissioner and Chief Secretary Punjab for ensuring record promotions of police employees across the province. He said the Lahore Police had been the first in terms of performance despite challenges in all nine regions of the province. The IGP said that joining of 1,100 police officers, promoted in the investigation wing, would improve the investigation matters. He told the young police officers the system of Safe City Authority Lahore had been fixed, and now the project would be launched in other cities also. He said after formation of the service structure in the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), the promotion procedure up to grade 19 had also been approved. He said "we have also formulated promotion structure of wardens and patrolling police, who were recruited in the past". Moreover, all pending promotions from 2009 to 2013 had been completed. He said Rs 1,750 million were being spent on welfare of the police force. Health screening of the entire force had been completed, liver, kidney, heart and other diseases of employees would be treated with the best treatment system in the world, Dr. Usman said. —APP



ISLAMABAD: A view of the fallen monuments of traditions of different provinces at D-Chowk, as such scenes are seen everywhere after speedy winds during storm last night, in Federal Capital. —Online

Sherry Rehman stresses urgency of Climate Action

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman here on Thursday welcomed Denmark's Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy, Dan Jorgensen with his delegation in a high-level meeting. The Danish Minister was accompanied by a delegation that included Climate Ambassador of Denmark, Tomas Anker Christensen and Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan, Jakob Linulf, a news release said. While sharing information and concerns on the possible impacts of Cyclone Biparjoy, Minister Rehman highlighted the longstanding bilateral relations between the two countries and appreciated Denmark's support for Pakistan at the International Conference for Climate Resilient Pakistan, which was held in Geneva earlier this year. She also said that Pa-

kistan was currently bracing for one climate emergency after another, which had put parts of the country in a perpetual recovery trap. "I have consistently highlighted throughout the year that Pakistan has become a hotspot for climate change. The acceleration of climate impacts, with a cyclone hitting the same most vulnerable areas traps entire areas in a cycle of destroyed recovery, where they end up facing the impacts of a fresh disaster while rebuilding from an older one, like the 2022 catastrophic flood. This has already created an arc of extreme vulnerability in the coastal areas of Pakistan, which are likely to be impacted afresh by the Category 3 cyclone. Once again, we are faced with the responsibility of caring for a significantly large population residing in these coastal areas, which will take a long time to recover," the minister said. Minister Jorgensen emphasized the enhancement of joint efforts on the Green Framework cooper-

ation between the two countries. Minister Rehman stated that through a Joint Action Plan, both countries could cooperate in the areas of green energy transition, early warning systems and wastewater treatment. She extended her gratitude to the Danish delegation for Pakistan's inclusion in the Danish Energy Transition Initiative (DETI) and for the extension of DETI's duration for an additional year. She further expressed her appreciation for Denmark's support in the construction of wastewater treatment plants in Faisalabad and Lahore. Minister Rehman emphasized the importance of scaling up such initiatives to encompass other cities across Pakistan. Minister Jorgensen expressed his appreciation for the strong bilateral relations shared between Denmark and Pakistan. He emphasized the significant cooperation between the two nations regarding the urgent and growing crisis of climate change. In particular, he commended Minister Rehman for her instrumental role

and personal dedication, recognizing her as an essential voice representing the Global South, and acknowledged the immense importance of Minister Rehman's engagement in addressing the critical issue. During the meeting, Minister Rehman outlined Pakistan's current climate challenges, and challenges faced in adaptation and mitigation. She said that introducing fresh perspectives and policies presents a considerable challenge, as it could be challenging to fully acknowledge climate change as a pervasive issue that influenced development across all levels and sectors. Jorgensen acknowledged that climate change was no longer a distant concept confined to the future, adding it was an immediate reality impacting the present. The devastating floods in Pakistan served as one of the most severe illustrations of this phenomenon, he added. While discussing way forward on COP28, Minister Rehman said, "As we approach the Global Stocktake, it is crucial to centralize our arguments and direct our

focus towards identifying the shortcomings within the system. This will enable us to realign priorities and effectively tackle the challenges of the present. It is crucial to understand that finance and technical resources play a significant role in bridging the gap between building resilience and avoiding a potential dystopian future. We are significantly off track in terms of meeting the necessary goals to remain within the 1.5°C limit. The usage of plastics, in particular, is projected to triple, exacerbating the existing gaps. At the current pace, we are hurtling towards a 2.8°C world, which will have severe consequences for countries like Pakistan who will feel the burn first." The ministers further reached a consensus on the imperative need to reform the International Financial Architecture to effectively address the requirements of the 21st century, particularly in the context of climate change. Moreover, they recognized the significant milestone achieved with the establishment.

Ambassador designate to Denmark meets with DG KPCTA

PESHAWAR: Ambassador-designate to Denmark, Shoab Sarwar met with Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), Bakhtiar Khan, and discussed matters relating to the promotion of tourism. He was briefed by General Manager Investment, Umair Khattak about the projects and initiatives taken by KPCTA to promote culture and tourism in the province, said a press release issued here Thursday. The ambassador-designate appreciated the work of KPCTA to promote tourism and said that efforts would be made to involve foreign embassies in exploring investment opportunities in KP. He also agreed to involve Scandinavian countries in investment prospects with KPCTA. Speaking on the occasion, the Director General of KP Culture and Tourism Authority, Muhammad Bakhtiar Ahmad said that efforts would be made to interact with the embassy to attract investment for promoting tourism in the province. He mentioned that KP is richly endowed with numerous unexplored tourism attractions that would be promoted to invite foreign investment. — APP

CM orders removal of encroachments

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi Thursday ordered removal of encroachments surrounding drains, with a strong emphasis on facilitating unhindered traffic flow by eliminating obstacles and addressing drainage concerns in ongoing development projects. He stressed the disruptive impact of encroachments on traffic, leading to hardships for the general public. It was further emphasised that the process of encroachment removal should be carried out systematically and without any delay. The meeting held at the CM Office was attended by the chief secretary, commissioner and deputy commissioner Lahore, Chief Engineer LDA and others. — APP

Turkish envoy calls on KP Minister, discusses trade, economic ties

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Mehmet Pacaci called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Adnan Jilil, here in Civil Secretariat on Thursday. During the meeting, the provincial minister and Turkish ambassador discussed matters of bilateral interest

with a special focus on economic and trade relations. The Turkish ambassador was also given a detailed briefing on potential sectors for investment. Talking on the occasion, the caretaker minister expressed that Pakistan and Turkiye have deep-rooted religious and culture-based relations, which have historic aspects. He said that both countries have extended support to each other at the time of

every need, saying this bond will always remain intact. The provincial minister highlighted the possibilities of investment in various potential sectors before the Turkish ambassador and said that the province has attractions for investment in tourism, mineral, engineering, technical education, hydel power, agriculture and other sectors and invited Turkish investors for making investment in these sectors of the province. He

on behalf of the caretaker provincial government congratulated the Turkish ambassador on re-election of the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and also expressed good wishes for the people of Turkiye. Speaking on the occasion, the Turkish ambassador said that Pakistan and Turkiye have been tied in the bonds of Islamic brotherhood and cultural harmony and are interested in further expansion of these relations.



Cultural landmarks' management to be given to WCLA

LAHORE: The meeting held under the chairmanship of caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office decided in principle on Thursday to hand over the management of historic and cultural landmarks of the province to the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA). Recognising the mesmerizing allure and profound historical significance of Punjab's cultural heritage, the chief minister emphasised the imperative of restoring these architectural gems to their original magnificence. He ordered to expeditiously remove encroachments surrounding historical buildings in Lahore, Gujranwala, and other cities. The meeting unanimously resolved to clean up the vicinity of historical buildings and undertake cultural embellishments in the surrounding areas. The CM entrusted the task of restoring historical structures to their pristine glory to the WCLA. The WCLA director-general gave a briefing on the ongoing restoration efforts pertaining to historical buildings and mansions. Notably, deliberations ensued regarding the refurbishment of specific landmarks, including the Samadhi in Shehranwala Garden, the iconic Ram Pyari Mahal in Gujrat, and the historic mansion in Gujranwala. — APP

Release of Biological Control Agents to control Parthenium weed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) Islamabad, in collaboration with CABI, has taken a significant step in combating the parthenium weed, which poses various risks to biodiversity, human and animal health, as well as food security in Pakistan. This invasive species, also known as 'famine weed', not only triggers life-threatening allergic reactions but also serves as a habitat for malaria-carrying mosquitoes while displacing native plant species. To address this issue, a sustainable approach to managing the parthenium weed has been introduced

through the release of 500 stem boring weevils (*Listronotus scapularis*) at the NARC. Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), graced the event as the chief guest, alongside distinguished guests including Dr. Babar Bajwa, CABI's Senior Regional Director for Asia, Dr. Imtiaz Husain, a member of the PSD PARC, and Dr. Shehzad Asad, Deputy DG NARC, who were present at the release ceremony. In his Opening Remarks, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman PARC, emphasized often-overlooked contributions of researchers and emphasized the importance of recognizing

their diligent efforts in developing new crop varieties and environmentally friendly solutions. As the use of pesticides to combat the threat of parthenium continues to rise and pose a significant risk to the organic agricultural industry, the introduction of stem boring weevil is a groundbreaking advancement in ensuring organic agriculture in Pakistan. This permanent, eco-friendly, and zero-cost solution is a vital instrument in mitigating the parthenium threat. Furthermore, Dr. Ali emphasized the urgency of increased research investments and the establishment of platforms specifically aimed at supporting young scientists and researchers. These

measures are essential for bolstering the capacity of the agricultural sector and fostering food security. Dr. Babar Ehsan Bajwa, CABI's Senior Regional Director for Asia, revealed that CABI has been actively collaborating with Pakistan since 1957, which marked the establishment of the initial agricultural research station. PARC, representing the Government of Pakistan, has been working closely with CABI in pursuit of shared goals. Notably, a nature-friendly solution has been discovered to tackle the parthenium problem, taking into account the ecological balance of the environment. Towards the end of the press briefing, 500 Stem Boring Weevils

were released at NARC to combat parthenium and to further investigate the effectiveness of weevils in the fields. The eradication of parthenium rosettes and mature plants can be accomplished through the activity of larvae that feed on the plant stems. These larvae play a vital role in effectively destroying the parthenium infestation, contributing to the overall control of this invasive weed. This introduction offers a more sustainable approach to parthenium management, without the need for chemicals or machinery that could harm the environment. It mitigates the negative ecological impact associated with chemical pesticides and mechanical methods.

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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

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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



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PIA Cargo.....9280979
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CAA.....9281092



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MH.....561116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
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Shifa International 4603666



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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Govt is trying to take Pakistan in right direction

Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtavari said on this occasion that although diplomacy is the first line of defense but Now diplomacy has a fundamental role in the economic development of nations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People Party and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that the current government is trying to take Pakistan in the right direction in the economic field. It will take time for us to recover from the economic disaster of the past. All the attention of the coalition government is focused on getting Pakistan out of the current economic problems. The business community should play a central role in the formulation of economic policies. People's Party has inherited the representation of the moneyed sections of the country. He expressed these views yesterday while talking to the delegation of the business community. The delegation met Chairman United Group Shahzad Ali Malik at his residence. On this occasion, UBG Patron Chief Provincial Minister Punjab SM Tanveer, Secretary General UBG Zafar



Bakhtavari, former President of FPCCI Daru Khan, were also present. Chairman People's Party said that the business community always trusted the People's Party. He said that connectivity with regional countries is the manifesto of PP, barter trade with other neighboring countries including Iran will bring positive results. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman United Business Group Shahzad Ali Malik said that Pakistan's economic problems and their solutions are not hidden from anyone. We hope that all other political

parties, including the People's Party, will pay attention to political stability, we need to bring continuity in the policies, the People's Party has the most important role in the country's politics, we hope the involvement of the business community in the formulation of policies, will be ensured. Patron General UBG and Provincial Minister Punjab SM Tanveer said that the most important thing at this time is to continue the development of the country's industry, increase exports and stabilize the country's economic situa-

tion. In this regard, the role of other major parties including People's Party is the most important, it is a fact that the industries and commercial circles across the country are facing similar problems for which the politicians and the business community have to come together. Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtavari said on this occasion that although diplomacy is the first line of defense but Now diplomacy has a fundamental role in the economic development of nations. Pakistan should also

move towards economic diplomacy instead of political diplomacy. Because after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the nations that have developed have shifted their diplomacy to economics rather than politics. People's Party has formulated business-friendly policies in every period of its power, that's why People's Party is considered business-friendly. Former FPCCI President Abdul Rauf Alam, Lahore Chamber President Kashif Anwar, Khyber Chamber President Jawad Kazmi, Sargodha, Sheikhupura, Larkana and Rahim Yar Khan Chamber Group Leaders Aamir Atta Bajwa, Manzoor Malik, Mumtaz Ali Sheikh were present in the meeting. And Rauf Mukhtar, President of Pakistan Business Forum Momin Malik, businessman leader Rehman Chan, Dr. Nauman Butt, Saadat Shah, Sohail Malik, Isfandyar Mandukhel, Muhammad Shafiq, Malik Jahangir and Azzizal Rehman Chan Pir Nazim Hussain Shah were also present.

IHC suspends PIC's decision

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday suspended the decision of Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) for sharing meeting details of central selection board with the citizen. The court served notices to respondents and adjourned hearing of the case till next date. IHC's Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case challenging the decision of PIC filed by establishment division. Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Arshad Kayani said that the applicant before the PIC was a citizen not a civil servant. He said that it was the discretionary power of the Prime Minister to impose ban on sharing of any information. The court remarked that the appeal had been filed after a long time to this the AAG said that they got the PIC order late. The court adjourned further hearing into the case with above instructions.—DNA

Pakistan, Bosnia enjoy historic, friendly ties: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Bosnia Herzegovina Sakib Foric paid a farewell call on Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari here on Thursday and exchanged views on bilateral relations. The minister said Pakistan and Bosnia Herzegovina enjoyed historic and friendly relations. He appreciated the services of the Bosnian ambassador for enhancing relations between the two countries, during his stay in Pakistan.—APP

Ayaz vows to tackle smuggling

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday reiterated his firm resolve of the government to take all appropriate measures to end menace of smuggling and tax evasion for enhancing revenue collection to attain sustainable economic growth in the country. Addressing the ceremony of study conducted by Ipsos on "Unveiling tax evasion: a close look at five sector in Pakistan", the minister stressed the need of complete harmonization among the federal and provincial tax collecting authorities to plug the tax leakages. The minister said that government was striving to take all the stakeholders on board for making viable tax policies to stop tax evasion and enhance local revenue collection, besides incentivizing local manufacturing sector to discourage the imports. He said the unrealistic policies of last government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf have sparked the imports as it jumped to \$85 billion, which not only put huge pressure on local foreign exchange reserves but it also suffered the domestic industry. First time in the history of Pakistan, the transfer and postings were put on sale during last four years, he said adding that as a result all those who purchased these posts work for their vested interests rather than serving the country.—APP

Industrialization is key to success

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industry and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mahmood said that industrialization is key to success and stressed giving due attention to this important sector. He said this while visiting the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), meeting with FPCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, and prominent members of the business community to seek suggestions for improvement in SMEs, said a press release issued here. Aminullah Baig, Vice Presidents Engineer MA Jabbar, Vice Presidents Mirza Abdul Rahman, Chairman Coordination Syed Asad Haider Mashhad, Convener FPCCI were present on the occasion while Muhammad Nadeem Qureshi, Vice President Coordinator Lahore Office Muhammad Ali Mian joined through video link. Speaking on the occasion, Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI said that Pakistan will not be able to stand in the list of developed nations until industrialization in Pakistan is not our top priority. Development of industry will help in increase of export curtail imports and generate employment opportunities for our people. He said that the present century is the century of economy and economically strong nations will rule the world. It takes time for SMEs to quickly integrate and align with larger industrial units until proper financing and facilities are not provided to them. President FPCCI suggested that special areas in our SEZs should be allocated for SMEs. The FPCCI recommended that the government should ensure the provision of special facilities and interest-free loans to promote SMEs in rural areas to curb migration toward the major cities. Federal Minister for Industry and Production said that now everyone has realized that we have to think about the country.—APP

Danish Minister visits Trail-5, plants Amaltas Tree

ISLAMABAD: Denmark's Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy, Dan Jørgensen on Thursday visited the scenic and famous hiking Trail-5 of Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP) and planted an Amaltas (Cassia fistula) Tree to highlight nature conservation significance to fighting climate change. The Danish Minister along with the Ambassador of Denmark Jakob Linulf visited the Trail-5 to view the biodiversity-rich national park. Chairperson Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) Rina Saeed Khan briefed the Danish delegation on the history of MHNP, conservation and protection efforts, biodiversity potential and plant and animal species existing in the national park. The Danish delegation did a brief walk on to the Trail-5 and was presented a detailed briefing on the camera trap videos of leopards

and pictorials of various birds and exotic species. Speaking on the occasion, the Danish minister thanked the IWMB Chairperson for her briefing and visit to the beautiful nature-rich national park. He added that it was an honour for him to visit and plant trees at Trail-5. He hoped that the next time his team return they would have green trees blooming at the Trail-5. The Danish minister was pleased to hear about conservation efforts and termed it an extremely important work. "Preserving nature and biodiversity is critically important, especially for the country facing climate change. We as a nation will support Pakistan at all levels to achieve eco-friendly and sustainable transformation. As true transformation and preservation needs to go hand in hand focussing public, civil society and government nexus working

together," he added. The Danish minister called the MHNP a model that not only preserved nature but rather engaged local communities to take ownership of the nature preserve which was unique and successful. Responding to APP's queries, the Danish minister said the factor that the National Park was a community-engaged and owned protected area was also good for nature protection and changing people's mindset to contain littering and damage to nature. He mentioned that the Danish government was able to launch a new collaboration on green development with Pakistan that would ensure cooperation in green energy transformation. He added that Denmark had vast experience of green energy transformation as it started its journey back in 1970. "We need to focus on clean and environment-friendly

development as it appears to be a cost-intensive endeavour but it is a long-term investment that will pay back for generations. We have expertise in wind power, energy efficiency and water management and we will also share our waste-to-energy technological experiences," he added. The minister to another query replied that the waste should not be looked as a useless or discarded item but rather a solution. The chairperson IWMB said the Danish Minister came especially to visit Trail-5 which was not only full of nature but well protected and looked after by the civil society. She thanked the sponsors and others for assisting IWMB in managing the national park and also expressed her gratitude to the media for supporting IWMB's protection efforts against encroachments and other threats to the national park.—APP

FOSPAH conducts assessment of prison's condition

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAH) Fauzia Viqar Thursday conducted a comprehensive assessment of prison conditions and the treatment of prisoners during her visit to Central Jail at Kot Lakhpat, Lahore. The primary objective of her visit was to ascertain if women prisoners were subjected to any form of harassment, torture, mistreatment, or abuse at the time of arrest, during police custody, and at the prison. After conducting meetings with police officials, prison authorities and, interacting with prisoners, she firmly concluded that no harassment or mistreatment was

reported by women and that reports of sexual harassment were baseless, said a press release issued here on Thursday. During her visit, Viqar held productive discussions with the Inspector General of Police Punjab and, Inspector General of Prisons Punjab Mian Farooq Nazeer, to gain insights into the arrest and incarceration of women prisoners. IG Police Punjab informed the Ombudsperson about the various facilities of the 1787 complaint system, police protection centres, women's safety app for victims of harassment and notified harassment inquiry committees to take up issues of harassment at the work-

place by staff. She was briefed by the IG Prisons about the complaint redressal system in place to address any grievances or complaints regarding mistreatment or abuse. Ombudsperson suggested some improvements in the CMS to get better gender-disaggregated data and improve access of women to complaints mechanisms in prisons. She also inquired about harassment inquiry committees notified in the Prisons Department for prison staff if such mechanisms were available to women prisoners. Viqar interacted directly with the women prisoners to specifically inquire about their experiences of harassment,

torture, mistreatment, or abuse at various stages of the criminal justice process. The comprehensive interviews and discussions with the inmates revealed that there were no substantiated claims of mistreatment, torture, or sexual abuse. "I took these media-reported allegations very seriously and made it a priority to investigate the matter thoroughly. The interactions I had with the women prisoners themselves and with prison officials provided no evidence of mistreatment. It is essential that we rely on factual information and ensure the safety of women in prisons. Clear standards for dignified.—DNA

Govt. presents optimized budget to tackle challenges

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain, expressed his satisfaction with the recently unveiled budget, considering it the best possible outcome given the prevailing tough economic conditions. During his budget speech in National Assembly, he said that huge damage was inflicted on the economy during the tenure of the PTI government. He revealed that even PTI members themselves had expressed concerns about the struggling economy in their tenure and sought its revival. The minister said the situation was even more challenging than initially anticipated, as revealed during the initial briefing to us in 2021 on the state of the economy. Reflecting on the efforts of the PML-N government from 2013 to 2018, he highlighted their successful endeavors to overcome various challenges, particularly in the energy and power sectors. Furthermore, he criticized the circumstances that led to Nawaz Sharif's removal from Prime Minister's office, citing the controversial Aqama case and the subsequent formation of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT). He recalled that during Nawaz Sharif's last tenure as Prime Minister, foreign reserves stood at around 22-23 billion US dollars, inflation was approximately two percent, and the exchange rate was Rs. 105 per dollar.—APP

Shazia for int'l collaborations to protect vulnerable segments

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister and Chairperson, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Shazia Marri Thursday reiterated Pakistan's commitment to address the climate crisis and advocated for international collaboration to protect vulnerable nations from the impacts of climate change. She was speaking at the closing session of the "Global Forum on Adaptive Social Protection: Protecting lives and livelihoods in times of crisis" held in Berlin. She acknowledged the vulnerability of Pakistan to climate shocks, citing recent devastating floods and the ongoing threat of a cyclone hitting the country

and neighboring India. In her talk to the audience, Shazia Marri shed light on the climate vulnerability faced by Pakistan. The country has experienced devastating floods in the past, including in 2010, 2011, 2022, and most recently this year. During the recent floods, approximately 33 million people were displaced, with 6000 pregnant women directly affected. However, the incumbent government, through the Benazir Income Support Programme, successfully distributed cash assistance to those affected by the recent floods, she said. Highlighting the significance of coordination, Shazia Marri emphasized that BISP was working closely with provincial setups on social safety initiatives to maximize the

benefits provided to the targeted segments of society. She expressed willingness to share Pakistan's experiences with the representatives of the 58 countries present at the forum, showcasing the country's commitment to global collaboration for social protection. The minister informed the audience about the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER), which served as a comprehensive database of over 35 million households in Pakistan. The NSER enables BISP to gather essential data and add layers of information to enhance the targeting of beneficiaries, ensuring that the adaptive social protection programme is more effectively tailored to the needs of the potential beneficiaries.

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"Aman of substance" National Day of Italy celebrated

Briefs

Investiture Ceremony Held At Air Headquarters

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Non Operational Military awards were conferred upon Officers, Junior Commissioned Officers, Airmen and Civilian Staff of Pakistan Air Force in recognition of their distinguished services during an Investiture Ceremony held at Air Headquarters, Islamabad today. Air Marshal Muhammad Zahid Mahmood, Vice Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force was the Chief Guest at the occasion. During the ceremony, 98 PAF Officers, 25 Junior Commissioned Officers / Airmen and 17 civilians were awarded Chief of the Air Staff Commendation Certificates, whereas, 17 Officers were awarded the coveted Professional Excellence Badge. 08 Junior Commissioned Officers and Airmen were also conferred upon Tamgha-i-Khidmat (Class-II) and Tamgha-i-Khidmat (Class-III) during the ceremony.

President okays Daycare Centres Bill

ISLAMABAD, Jun 15 (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday signed the Daycare Centres Bill 2023, under which such setups for minor children will be established at the public and private departments in Islamabad. The president assented to the bill in line with Article 75 of the Constitution, the President's House said in a statement. According to the Bill, the federal government will ensure the setting up of daycare centres at the departments having at least 70 employees.—APP

Five gamblers held in police raid

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district Police on Thursday arrested five gamblers and recovered Rs 77,450 stake money, four mobile phones, and valuables from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Patriata police conducted a raid and arrested five gamblers namely Bashir, Sajjad, Adnan, Rahat and Numan who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. A case has been registered against them while further investigation is in process.—APP

Pak is ideally placed as hub of regional connectivity: FO

They said Pakistan government should make its youth aware of the products with potential and greater demand for exchange

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD (15 June 2023): Pakistan is at the crossroads of connectivity development and is a gateway to resource pooling in central and west Asia to bring together and connect the states to achieve greater economic integration and connectivity that is necessary for sustainable development.

This was stated by Syed Ahsan Raza Shah, the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while speaking to a group of foreign diplomats on "Connectivity and Emerging Role of Pakistan" here at Islamabad Stock Exchange auditorium. The briefing was organized by the Asian Institute of Eco-civilization Research and Development (AIERD). Highlighting the importance of connectivity in the region, Mr Shah said that return of peace and stability Afghanistan's is an important factor in this connection. He said economic growth and connectivity are linked to each other and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a vehicle towards greater regional economic growth and prosperity.



To a question, Mr Shah said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is, at Headquarters as well as at Pakistan Embassies abroad, actively engaged with the business community towards enhancing Pakistan's exports and attracting investments. Missions abroad are

under instructions to facilitate greater B2B engagements, he added.

In his welcome address, Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman, Asian Institute of Eco-civilization Research and Development, said Pakistan needs to exploit full potential of

its strategic location and market size. "Pakistan will have to build reliable and efficient soft infrastructure and mechanism for connectivity on the principle of win-win cooperation," he said, adding that "after the completion of first phase of CPEC, Pakistan must

start benefitting from it." He said: "There is no second opinion that CPEC helped build state-of-the-art hard infrastructure, but without soft infrastructure we cannot move forward."

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Chief Executive Officer, AIERD, emphasized on the efficient working which he said is the need of hour. He said Pakistan is surrounded by a number of competitors therefore, it needs to speed up its efforts for regional connectivity. He said CPEC that is a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), will certainly play the role of gamechanger soon. During the interactive session, the participants said that Pakistan's private sector is quite active and has great potential in terms of growth expansion with a great enthusiasm to extend trade relations with the world. They said Pakistani businessmen have great ethical values and professionalism, which is the hallmark for trade connectivity and overall economic stability of the region.

They said Pakistan government should make its youth aware of the products with potential and greater demand for exchange.

Child Protection mechanism to be strengthened

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In order to collaborate on child protection initiatives across the province of Punjab, The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB), Government of Punjab, have signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU). The LOU was signed by Mr. Waqas Dar, Acting Country Director of IRC, and Ms. Sarah Ahmad, Chairperson, the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, in attendance were the representatives of IRC & CPWB. This collaboration signifies the shared vision of both organizations to develop synergies in order to strengthen child protection systems in Punjab and extend quality services to vulnerable segments of society, with

a particular focus on children in the labor force, out of school children, and House Holds led by children. IRC pilot initiative of strengthening case management and case referral system in the districts of Rajanpur & DG Khan have been evolved in close collaboration of CPWB with the financial support of UNICEF. IRC and CPWB aim to work collaboratively to address the pressing needs of children and create a safer and more inclusive environment for children in Punjab. Sarah Ahmad, Chairperson of CPWB, Government of Punjab, speaking on this occasion opined "Children are the future of our nation, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure their safety, well-being, and access to quality services. This collaboration will pave way for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced

by vulnerable children and their families, ultimately leading to a brighter and more secure future for them." Speaking at the ceremony, Waqas Dar, Acting Country Director IRC, stated, "IRC is delighted to join hands with CPWB, Government of Punjab, in our shared commitment to protect children facing vulnerabilities. Through this collaboration, we aim to make a significant difference in their lives and create lasting change in Punjab." The signing of this LOU marks an important milestone in the efforts of IRC and CPWB to strengthen child protection mechanisms and extend vital services to those in need. Through the combined expertise, resources, and commitment of both organizations, the collaboration is expected to have a transformative impact on the lives of children in Punjab.

Chairman NHA reviews preparations to handle emergency situation

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Communications and Chairman National Highway Authority (NHA) Captain (ret'd) Muhammad Khurram Agha on Thursday chaired an emergency meeting of the NHA officials in Quetta and reviewed arrangements to handle situation arising out of Cyclone Biparjio. As there was danger of more intensity in the cyclone, and some low-lying areas of Balochistan might be affected by the storm at any time, he added. On the special instructions of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Minister of Communications Asad Mahmood, the Federal Secretary of Communications and Chairman NHA immediately had reached Quetta. NHA member Balochistan Shahid Ihsanullah while briefing him said that necessary machinery and staff had been sent to all sensitive places which would be ready all the time to deal with any emergency. He said that in Dana Sar highway affected by yesterday's landslide had been opened for traffic immediately while they were in touch with the Meteorological Department to get latest updates on weather situation.—APP

Minister visits FPCCI capital office

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industry and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mahmood visited the Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry Pakistan Capital Office Islamabad for meeting with FPCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, and prominent members of the business community to seek suggestions for improvement in SMEs. Mr. Aminullah Baig, Vice Presidents Engineer MA Jabbar, Vice Presidents Mirza Abdul Rahman, Chairman Coordination Syed Asad Haider Mashhadi, Convener FPCCI were present on the occasion while Muhammad Nadeem Qureshi, Vice President Coordinator Lahore Office Muhammad Ali Mian joined through video link. Speaking on the occasion, Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI said that Pakistan will not be able to stand in the list of developed nations until industrialization in Pakistan is not our top priority. Development of industry will help in increase of export curtail imports and generate employment opportunities for our people. Mr. Irfan Iqbal said that whenever we borrowed from the IMF, our GDP growth decreased instead of increasing and also become a reason for the hardship poor of the country. He further said that the present century is the century of economy and economically strong nations will rule the world. It takes time for SMEs to quickly integrate and align with larger industrial units until proper financing and facilities are not provided to them. President FPCCI suggested that special areas in our SEZs should be allocated for SMEs. As of today a large number of our population is not afforded opportunities to learn skilled and technical education due to non-availability of technical institutions in the country and it is the right time to set up technical education institutions in the country and motivate the young generation to join technical institution and secure their future and set direction of the country towards progress. The FPCCI recommended that the government should ensure the provision of special facilities and interest-free loans to promote SMEs in rural areas to curb migration toward the major cities.—DNA

PHA organizes dengue awareness walk

RAWALPINDI: Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi here on Thursday organized a dengue awareness walk from Liaquat Bagh to Murree Road in connection with World Dengue Day. Director Admin and Finance, PHA officers and employees attended the walk organized to spread awareness among the people about the prevention of dengue. Director Admin and Finance PHA on the occasion urged the citizens to pay special attention to cleanliness asking them to remove stagnant water. He said the administration was creating awareness among people about the danger of dengue and all possible preventive measures were being taken to cope with this disease. He said PHA was working in collaboration with the Rawalpindi District Administration and the District Health Department to combat dengue.—APP

Police arrest 13 drug peddlers

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers and bootleggers conducted raids in different areas and rounded up 13 accused on recovery of over seven kg charras, 15 litres of liquor and other items, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that Pirwadhai, Westridge, Naseerabad, R.A.Bazaar, Race Course and Mandra police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up Shah Zaib, Umar, Gulam, Hashim, Hassan, Javed, Suni Masih, Ahmed, Umair and Abdul Latif for possessing over seven kg charras. Similarly, Bani and Sadiqabad police in separate operations managed to arrest Ahsan, Adil and Amanat for having 15 litres of liquor.

Lawmakers for enhanced incentives in Agr sector

ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers in the National Assembly have called on the government to introduce increased incentives in the budget for 2023-24 to bolster the agriculture sector and achieve self-sufficiency in agrarian products. Participating in general discussions on the federal budget lawmakers in the National Assembly have joined forces to emphasize the need for robust incentives and comprehensive development strategies in the agriculture sector in the budget. Khurshid Ahmed Junejo of the PPP highlighted the urgency of safeguarding agriculture.—APP



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi getting his biometric verification for driving license at Islamabad Traffic Police F-8 Office. — APP

China's exports to USA declines in May


DNA

ISLAMABAD: Alarmingly, China's exports to the United States have witnessed a palpable decline in May in the latest blow to already shrinking bilateral trade. This downward spiral can be attributed to Washington's continuous efforts to sever economic ties with China under a misguided "decoupling" agenda. The repercussions of this poorly-conceived policy are painfully evident, with normalcy in bilateral relations being sacrificed for geopolitical maneuvering. An article carried by Gwadar Pro on Thursday quoted data from China's General Administration of Customs (GACC), according to which bilateral trade between the two nations in the first five months of the year totaled RMB 1,887 bil-


lion (\$274.6 billion), marking a 5.5 percent decrease from the previous year. Indicative of the mounting pressure on Chinese exporters, shipments to the United States saw an alarming 8.5 percent decline during the same period. The economic strain between China and the United States is becoming increasingly evident, with China's trade surplus with the US narrowing by a significant 14.5 percent from January to May. This troubling trend highlights the intensifying challenges for American consumers, who are grappling with a burgeoning inflation crisis that severely hampers their ability to import goods. As a result, China's shipments to the US have been on a downward curve, marking the tenth consecutive month of decline. May's data paints a

grim picture, with China's shipments to the US plummeting to RMB 292 billion—a distressing 12.2 percent drop compared to the previous year. Even on a month-to-month basis, the shipments experienced a slight decline of around one percent from April, increasing concerns about the economic health of the United States. These figures underscore the challenges American consumers face, as their purchasing power is eroded by surging inflation rates. As the cost of living rises, import demand dwindles, and China's export sector bears the brunt of this economic turmoil. The deterioration of the China-US trade relationship serves as a stark reminder of the bitter realities confronting ordinary Americans, whose struggles are exacerbated by their gov-

ernment's failure to address the crippling impact of inflation on their daily lives. Last month, the US Federal Reserve, in its relentless pursuit to curb inflation, raised its key interest rate by a quarter-point, reaching a level not seen in over 16 years. Although intended to restore stability, this move inadvertently caused self-inflicted damage to American consumers. The tariffs imposed on certain Chinese goods during the previous administration under Section 301 have proven to be a painful burden on American businesses, workers, and the overall economy. Unfortunately, the most vulnerable members of society bear the greatest impact from these ill-conceived measures, further deepening the economic disparities in the United States.



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Blinken's visit

THE United States is set to "allow" chipmakers of the Republic of Korea and Taiwan island to continue to operate and expand their current chip-making operations on the Chinese mainland "without worry of pushback" from the Joe Biden administration. According to a report of The Wall Street Journal, Alan Estevez, the US Commerce Department's under-secretary for industry and security, told a gathering of the Semiconductor Industry Association last week that the Biden administration planned to extend earlier chip export control waivers it granted to top chipmakers, such as Samsung, SK Hynix and TSMC, allowing them to send US chip-making tools to their plants on the Chinese mainland. With the Chinese mainland accounting for 40 percent of its chip exports, the ROK's chip exports were down more than 36 percent in May compared with the same period of last year. The decline started 10 months ago as a result of the pressure Washington has put on the ROK to restrict the Chinese mainland's access to semiconductors. Seoul has been pressing Washington to ease the export controls for months. That Japan, which is another key ally of the US in its "chip war" against Beijing, has not received similar benevolence shows the cost-benefit analysis that Washington is carrying out as it tries to get a vice-like grip on supply chains. That should be regarded as the US' recognition that waging an all-out "chip war" against China is unsustainable. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen pointed out at a House Financial Services Committee hearing on Tuesday that it would be a mistake for the US to try to "decouple" from China and called for deepening economic ties between the world's two largest economies, saying that she believes the economic relationship with China is critical. "I think we gain and China gains from trade and investment that is as open as possible, and it would be disastrous for us to attempt to decouple from China," said Yellen. By making the waivers and licenses it issues to foreign companies a "pass" for world trade, the US is seeking to exert control over the global industry and supply chains. In this way it has been trying to hijack world trade with its "competition", "rules-based order" and "de-risk decoupling". What the US has done has seriously undermined international trade rules and the global economic and trade order, posing a huge threat to the stability of the global industry chains and supply chains. It is not only China but the rest of the world that is being victimized by the US' economic coercion. Despite this, neither the outcries of the US' allies nor Yellen's warning seems likely to prompt the administration to change its shortsighted China policy. They will only spur it to adopt more catchwords such as "de-risking" to cover up the coercive, bullying, divisive and suppressive nature of its practices. The Joe Biden administration should take the visit to China by its secretary of state on Sunday and Monday as an opportunity to commit to real actions that match its professed desire to cooperate with China. If instead it views its top diplomat's long-gestating visit as another opportunity to set up its soap box, the odds of Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit having any positive outcomes will not be very high. If that is the case, the possibility of setting bilateral relations on a more upbeat trajectory will have been wasted.

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India twists itself into a knotty situation

IT is ridiculous for a government to instruct a foreign company who it should appoint as its senior executives or how its local business operations should be run. But this is what New Delhi is doing with Chinese mobile phone manufacturers Xiaomi, Oppo, Realme and Vivo. These Chinese companies have been told to appoint Indian nationals to key positions such as chief executive officer, chief financial officer, chief operating officer and chief technical officer. They are also required to appoint Indian contract manufacturers, expand local manufacturing down to component level through joint ventures with businesses and hire local distributors. Such hijacking of Chinese companies is similar to the smash-and-grab practices that the United States has used against Chinese companies to coerce them into giving up a large part of their business interests. The Indian government began targeting Chinese cellphone makers, Xiaomi in particular, from last year, alleging tax evasion and illegal remittances. India has seized \$725 million of Xiaomi's assets, and its high court rejected Xiaomi's bid to overturn seizure of the assets, although the company explained that the contested payments were royalties paid for licensed technologies and an entirely legitimate part of its operation. The border disputes between China and India have been a cause of frictions recently. But that should not be an excuse for India to discriminate against Chinese companies. Chinese phone brands account for four of the top five brands in India, holding as much as 76 percent of the Indian market, with Xiaomi at 24 percent, until late last year. Is New Delhi venting its anger over the border disputes with China by maltreating Chinese cellphone makers or is it just trying to force these Chinese companies out of the Indian market in order to save its own brands? Or is it because India wants to carry favor with the United States by unfairly and brutally treating Chinese companies? On Thursday, White House "Indo-Pacific" coordinator Kurt Campbell said that very successful talks had just been concluded with India ahead of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US next week, suggesting from the timing of the reports that the move may have been a sweetener for soliciting some back scratching from Washington. Whatever the reason, the autocratic move by the Indian government is improper. It will not benefit the Indian economy in the long run. The world is watching how the Indian government is making things hard for foreign companies to do business in the Indian market, and how the Indian government is high-handedly twisting market rules for ulterior motives. With Chinese companies as precedents of such unfair treatment, foreign companies may have second thoughts about making investments or seeking business opportunities in the Indian market.

Taiwan: The potential flashpoint for conflict between China and the US

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Indo-Pacific countries, such as Saudi Arabia, have also not backed coalition efforts against Russia. Such neutrality and indifference is a growing problem in international affairs and undermines counter-terrorism efforts. There is a growing sense in the West that a new Cold War is going to be start but most of the world does not see things that way. China is a bigger threat to Asian countries than Russia, but in the absence of a comprehensive US-led diplomatic campaign, Washington cannot support Taiwan in the Taiwan crisis

AFTER the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there were concerns in western capitals over whether China might take similar action in Taiwan. Against this backdrop, Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan has prompted some security scholars to predict a fourth cross-strait crisis. China will likely ensure that it punishes Taiwan enough to prevent future visits like Pelosi's. This may include economic action, limited military signaling and selective diplomatic action in bilateral and multilateral fora, and aggressive cyber repression. In response, Taiwan and the United States are likely to continue building deterrent defense capabilities to deter Chinese aggression. The US may continue to signal its increased presence and commitment to the region through freedom of shipping operations in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, while keeping lines of communication open to avoid unintended tensions with Beijing. China and Russia believe the United States is playing the role of an arrogant player. This thinking has emerged in many parts of the world, including China. The People's Republic of China places all responsibility for the violence and destruction in Europe on Washington. Russia supports Chinese principle and affirms that Taiwan is a part of China and opposes any form of Taiwan's independence. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has shown that the world should take seriously what Xi and Putin are saying, especially when they speak in their own language. Both countries are determined to destroy the US alliance by force whenever it would be possible. Xi and Putin means that the US alliance has been formed over their opposition and they will oppose it. Statements by top Chinese diplomats should not be dismissed as mere propaganda. This is a clear warning to Washington to abandon its strategy in the Indo-Pacific, and Beijing reserves the option of resistance. From this point of view, Russia's invasion of Ukraine sets an example. Beijing has also warned small countries such as Ukraine to stay away from US plots. According to Beijing, sympathy for Ukraine is good but it is not good to be used as a pawn in Washington's efforts to maintain geopolitical dominance. These messages are also being heard in those countries that remain neutral in international politics. Russia and China continue to oppose any attempt by foreign powers to undermine security and stability in their respective territories. That why China and Russia also oppose further NATO expansion and have called on the

North Atlantic Treaty Organization to abandon Cold War ideological methods. China and Russia also oppose the formation of a bloc in the Asia-Pacific region and remain wary of the negative effects of the US Indo-Pacific strategy on peace and stability in the region. The two countries also express deep concern over the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, which provides deep cooperation between its members in the areas of strategic stability, especially in the nuclear field. Both Beijing and Moscow believe that such measures contradict the security and sustainable development goals of the Asia-Pacific region and it will increase the risk of an arms race in the region, which also poses a serious threat to nuclear non-proliferation. Opposition to President Xi and Putin's Biden administration's new Australia-British-US (AUKUS) initiative has led to violations of non-proliferation treaties. This opposition is also echoing in the West. On the other hand, Australia, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan are committed to supporting Ukraine. Most Southeast Asian nations have supported NATO, Ukraine and the United States. The Philippines and Indonesia also voted in favor of condemning Russia but India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam did not. Indo-Pacific countries, such as Saudi Arabia, have also not backed coalition efforts against Russia. Such neutrality and indifference is a growing problem in international affairs and undermines counter-terrorism efforts. There is a growing sense in the West that a new Cold War is going to be start but most of the world does not see things that way. China is a bigger threat to Asian countries than Russia, but in the absence of a comprehensive US-led diplomatic campaign, Washington cannot support Taiwan in the Taiwan crisis. Many analysts believe that if China invades the Democratic Republic of Taiwan, many countries will remain on the coast. Such a campaign by Beijing to tarnish Taiwan's international image could be dangerous as if a dispute and erupts, it may signal Taiwan's diplomatic isolation that Taiwan is the only province China will bring back. China also has strong economic ties with every country. The United States will need to defend Taiwan, and it often uses its diplomatic and other tactics to keep it at bay. Many countries and US allies do not necessarily agree with all Chinese statements about Taiwan and justify their neutrality. US diplomacy should highlight that China is backtracking on its commitment to peace and endangering the stability of law and order in the

region while it is committed to maintaining peace under the Taiwan Relations Act.

Washington needs to make sure that it does not distance itself from countries or regions that oppose China and Russia. However, the United States has also given China and Russia the opportunity to wield considerable influence in key regions such as the Persian Gulf. The lack of a US trade vision for Southeast Asia and the lack of a security system are obstacles to form a bloc. But Washington only sees how quickly military aid can be delivered and how quickly the right weapons system can get into the right hands in a crisis. Washington does not need to provoke China, but the two states must make promises and work for peace. There are lessons to be learned from Ukraine's failed deterrence efforts. It should be noted that the prevention of war in Ukraine has failed. The United States has no military ties with Ukraine, so it could not help Ukraine directly except through rhetoric. Although the United States has armed Ukraine with disproportionate weapons that could destroy Russia's major weapons system but it has not been able to stop Putin from going to war. On the other hand, Taiwan is also under threat from China and a similar approach will not work to stop China because the United States is not militarily engaged with the island. The United States must build Taiwan's military so that it can work together as an ally to counter the various threats of repression. But that requires careful coalition management, as Washington has been practicing with other potential coalition partners. China relies on global markets for everything from technology and energy to food and agriculture, major metals, minerals and capital. In fact, China's dependency on the global economy did not stop it from trading with Russia. Washington will have to maintain strong ties with all major suppliers in China.

In short, President Xi is using the war in Russia and Ukraine to forge a "new era" that will either destroy or weaken the US alliance. Putin has taught the world that the aggressive statements and threats can wreak havoc. Washington must also review its strategy and highlight the growing threats posed by Beijing to peace and security in Asia in order to protect thousands innocent people from the effects of war. It will take time for these two countries to come down from the mountain of arrogance to stand side by side. Though it is difficult to do so but they have to do to protect Asia from war and its consequences.

Deforestation and conservation issues in Pakistan

Unaiza Maryam



Pakistan faces several environmental challenges that require immediate attention and concerted efforts from the government, communities, and stakeholders. Tackling water scarcity, deforestation, air pollution, waste management, and soil degradation demands a comprehensive approach involving policy reforms

PAKISTAN, like many other countries, is grappling with a range of environmental issues that are having a devastating impact on its ecosystems, communities, and general well-being. From water scarcity to deforestation, air pollution, waste management, and soil degradation, these challenges require urgent attention and effective solutions to mitigate their adverse effects. Water scarcity is one of the most pressing environmental concerns in Pakistan. The country is classified as water-stressed, with a scarcity of clean potable freshwater. Several factors contribute to this issue. First, inadequate water storage infrastructure hampers proper water management and leads to wastage of a significant volume of water. Additionally, climate change has resulted in erratic rainfall patterns, making it difficult to manage water resources effectively. Rapid population growth and inefficient irrigation practices further exacerbate the water scarcity problem. Groundwater depletion due to excessive pumping and water pollution from industrial effluents and inadequate sanitation practices also contribute to the crisis. Addressing water scarcity requires a multi-faceted approach. Improving water management practices, constructing water storage infrastructure, enhancing irrigation efficiency, promoting rainwater harvesting, and raising awareness about water conservation are vital steps. Furthermore, sustainable groundwater management, climate change adaptation measures, and promoting responsible water usage through education and awareness campaigns are crucial in ensuring a reliable and sustainable water supply for Pakistan's present and fu-

ture needs. Deforestation is another significant environmental issue in Pakistan. Unsustainable logging practices, expansion of agricultural land, infrastructure development, fuelwood collection, illegal encroachments, and a lack of forest management and reforestation efforts contribute to the loss of forest cover. Deforestation results in the loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, climate change, and water resource decline. To combat deforestation, strengthening forest governance, promoting sustainable logging practices, implementing forest conservation and restoration programs, involving local communities in forest management, and raising public awareness about forest conservation are essential.

Air pollution is a major concern, particularly in urban areas of Pakistan. Climate change impacts, urban air quality, industrial emissions, vehicular pollution, agricultural practices, and biomass burning contribute to high levels of pollution. Air pollution poses serious health risks, affects agriculture and water resources, and contributes to climate change. Stricter regulations, the adoption of cleaner technologies, promoting public transportation, encouraging renewable energy sources, and raising public awareness about the importance of clean air are necessary to address air pollution. Waste management is a significant challenge in Pakistan due to rising urbanization, population increase, inadequate infrastructure, and limited resources. Municipal solid waste management, recycling, composting, and landfill management are critical aspects. Public awareness and education, a robust policy and regulatory framework, public-private partnerships, and

integrating the informal waste sector into formal waste management systems are essential steps to improve waste management practices. Soil degradation, including erosion, waterlogging, salinity, nutrient depletion, and desertification, poses a serious threat to agriculture and food security in Pakistan. Unsustainable farming methods, deforestation, and poor land management contribute to soil deterioration. Addressing soil degradation requires sustainable land management practices, improved irrigation systems, effective nutrient management, and measures to combat desertification and chemical pollution. Pakistan faces several environmental challenges that require immediate attention and concerted efforts from the government, communities, and stakeholders. Tackling water scarcity, deforestation, air pollution, waste management, and soil degradation demands a comprehensive approach involving policy reforms, infrastructure development, public awareness, education, and international cooperation. Only through collective action can Pakistan protect its ecosystems, safeguard communities, and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come. At the end, I am deeply grateful for Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer's mentorship, as his guidance has not only enhanced my writing skills but also broadened my understanding of the subject matter. His expertise and experience have guided me to delve deeper into the topic, enabling me to present a more nuanced and well-reasoned opinion.

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Briefs

Bilawal, Danish minister discuss cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy of Denmark Dan Jørgensen met with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari here on Thursday and discussed matters of mutual interest. Dan Jørgensen is on a two-day official visit to Pakistan. The two sides discussed bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Denmark in political, trade, economic, investment, agriculture, information technology and energy domains with key focus in the areas of climate change and green transition. The two ministers exchanged the "Plan of Action (2023-2027)" on the Green Framework Engagement Agreement, signed in August 2022. The Plan of Action would pave the way for joint initiatives and projects in renewable energy and green transition driven by technological advancement and collaborative partnerships. It will also contribute towards the realization of Sustainable Development Goals and thus set the foundation for a sustainable future.

PPP, JI workers clash after...

FROM PAGE 01 (PTI) — had already announced that it would resist any attempts to influence the results and alleged that the PPP had "abducted" PTI's union committee chairmen to "rig the polls", a claim that the ruling party vehemently denied. As a result of the clashes, the road leading from the city's Shaheen Complex to MR Kiyani Road was blocked. Vehicles parked there were damaged while a person was injured, and some party workers were arrested. The workers of the rival parties were separated by law enforcers prior to the elections, but they were not enough to keep them calm as they soon clashed after the results were announced. Sindh Election Commissioner Ijaz Anwar warned that action would be taken against all who try to interrupt the peaceful polling, as Rangers have been directed to arrest all those who resort to violence. The mayoral contest was between Wahab and Rehman, as all the other candidates had withdrawn their nomination papers. The respective deputy mayor candidates of the PPP and JI are Salman Abdullah Murad and Saifuddin. According to the entry register, 303 elected members reached the polling station and 33 remained absent. Three elected members of PTI — who were arrested following the May 9 mayhem — were brought in an armoured personnel carrier. The PPP is the largest party in the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation City Council, with 155 seats. The party also secured the support of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, but their combined strength was short of a simple majority to have their mayor elected. The second and third largest parties in the city council are the JI and PTI, with 130 and 63 seats, respectively. As the PTI has supported the JI, their combined votes appeared to be 193, which was more than the simple majority in the house of 367 members. However, a forward bloc emerged within the PTI, and they abstained from voting, remaining absent during the polling. As a result, Naeem secured 160 votes, while Wahab emerged victorious with 173.

FG employees to get salary..

FROM PAGE 01 requesting for early-payment of the June salary to the government employees as the Eid-ul-Azha would fall during last days of the current month. Earlier, the minister said formation of the two anomaly-redressal committees for budget 2023-24 had been revised and its detail submitted before the House for the record. — APP

Asia Cup stalemate ends

ACC accepts Pak Cricket Board hybrid model

PCB Management Committee Chairperson Najam Sethi, in a statement issued by the sport's governing body in Pakistan, thanked the ACC for accepting hybrid model

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: The stalemate over the hosting of Asia Cup 2023 finally ended as the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) accepted the hybrid model presented by Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday. This will be the first time since 2008 that matches of a multi-nation cricket tournament will be staged in Pakistan. 15 years ago, Pakistan had successfully delivered the six-team ACC Asia Cup 50-over tournament. Despite strong opposition from India, the tournament will be hosted in a hybrid model with four matches being held in Pakistan, and the remaining nine matches

being played in Sri Lanka. The ACC announced the decision to accept PCB's model while revealing the schedule for the much-anticipated tournament which was riddled with controversy due to Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) stubbornness. "We are delighted to announce that the Asia Cup 2023 will be held from 31st August to 17th September 2023 and will see the elite teams from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Nepal, compete in a total of 13 exciting ODI matches," the council said in a statement issued in this regard. PCB Management Committee Chairperson Najam Sethi, in a

statement issued by the sport's governing body in Pakistan, thanked the ACC for accepting the hybrid model. "I am elated that our hybrid version for the ACC Asia Cup 2023 has been accepted. This means the PCB will remain as the event host and stage matches in Pakistan with Sri Lanka as the neutral venue, which was required due to the Indian cricket team's inability to travel to Pakistan," said Sethi. He added that Pakistan understands BCCI's position in the matter. "Like the PCB, the BCCI also requires government approval and clearance before crossing borders. In this background, the hybrid model was the best solution

and that's precisely why I advocated for it so strongly. The acceptance of the hybrid model means the event will take place as originally planned, the ACC will stay together and united, and the great game of cricket will continue to thrive and move forward in what will be interesting and exciting times for the subcontinent cricket fans in the coming 20 months," said the former journalist turned cricket administrator. The Asia Cup will feature two groups, with two teams from each group qualifying for the Super Four stage. The top two teams from the Super Four stage will then face each other in the final. The Asia Cup will be a 50-over event as it will be used to pre-

pare for the ODI World Cup scheduled later this year. Pakistan, India and Nepal are in Group 1 of the Asia Cup, whereas Group 2 will feature defending champions Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. It must be noted that the hybrid model was proposed by the PCB after the BCCI refused to send their team to Pakistan for the Asia Cup. India has not toured Pakistan since 2008 due to strained relations between the two countries. The last bilateral series between the arch-rivals took place in 2012, when Pakistan toured India for limited-overs matches. Over the past few years, the two countries have only faced each other in ICC and ACC events.

Pakistan, Sri Lanka agree to bolster ties to promote sports



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari and Sports Minister of Sri Lanka Roshan Ranasinghe on Thursday agreed to deepen the existing people-to-people contacts between the two countries to promote sports. Mazari, who attended the 18th Asia/Oce-

ania Region Inter-Government Ministerial Meeting/Conference on Anti-Doping in Sports in Colombo, held a meeting with Sri Lankan sports minister to discuss promotion of bilateral cooperation in the field of sports, said a press release issued here. Legendary Sri Lankan cricketer Arjuna Ra-

natunga and Secretary Sports Ministry of Sri Lanka were also present on the occasion. Mazari offered support to the Sri Lankan minister to provide coaches for various sport disciplines, particularly hockey, squash and kabaddi. The Sri Lankan minister appreciated Pakistan's

cooperation in the field of sports, especially provision of Rs 52.000 million for the development of sports in his country. Both agreed to improve ties by implementing the existing memorandums of understanding and signing new MoUs, besides exploring new avenues of cooperation. — APP

Salah helps Egypt bag AFCON place

JOHANNESBURG: Liverpool star Mohamed Salah set up the equaliser for Egypt in a 2-1 win over Guinea on Wednesday that secured a place at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations finals. Serhou Guirassy put Guinea ahead on 26 minutes in the central Moroccan city of Marrakech and substitute Mahmoud Trezeguet levelled three minutes before half-time off a Salah pass. Former Aston Villa forward Trezeguet turned creator after 79 minutes with a cross that Mostafa Mohamed slammed past goalkeeper Ibrahima Kone in the Group D matchday five showdown. An eventful night for Turkey-based Trezeguet ended with an added-time yellow card after he refused to be stretched from the pitch following an injury, preferring to limp off. Salah displayed some exquisite touches as Egypt joined hosts the Ivory Coast, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia at the African showpiece from January 13. Among the eight countries already assured of places at the 24-team tournament, only Burkina Faso have not lifted a trophy that symbolises African national team supremacy. It was a third straight group victory of the record seven-time Cup of Nations winners after a stunning 2-0 loss to Ethiopia on matchday two last June that cost coach Ehab Galal his job. Defeat for Guinea leaves the second qualifying place from the group between them and Malawi, who play Ethiopia on Tuesday and the Guineans in the final round during September. If Malawi win both matches they will finish level with Guinea on nine points and head-to-head records will determine who finishes runners-up. Gambia, who exceeded expectations as debutants by reaching the quarter-finals at the last Cup of Nations before losing to hosts Cameroon, edged South Sudan 3-2 in a Group G thriller. South Sudan, who have never qualified, equalised twice before Denmark-based Gambian Hamza Barry scored the winning goal six minutes into added time. Rehan Angier conceded an own goal after only four minutes in the Egyptian city of Ismailia — a temporary home for the Sudanese because they do not have an international-standard stadium. — Agencies



Man City to open title defence at Burnley

LONDON: Manchester City will kick off their bid for a record fourth straight Premier League title away to Burnley, managed by their former captain Vincent Kompany. The fixture list released on Thursday confirmed the Treble winners will visit Turf Moor on August 11 to raise the curtain on the 2023/24 campaign. It will be the second time Kompany, who won the title on four occasions as City skipper, will have faced his old side as a manager, with City winning 6-0 at the Etihad in the FA Cup quarter-finals in March. Pep Guardiola's side, who won the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup in 2022/23, are seeking to become the first English team to win four successive top-flight titles. They have dominated the Premier League in recent years, winning the title in five of the past six seasons. Premier League debutants Luton will play their first top-flight fixture since 1992 away to Roberto De Zerbi's Brighton following day. — Agencies

Haris Rauf becomes goodwill envoy of SDGs Task Force

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's express fast bowler Haris Rauf has been made the goodwill ambassador of SDGs Parliamentary Task Force. Haris graced the National Assembly session today and was welcomed by Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani. "I am pleased today to announce him as the goodwill ambassador of SDGs Parliamentary Task Force," Durrani said during the session. After the session, Haris was welcomed by Durrani and Convenor SDGs Parliamentary Task Force Romina Khurshid as the goodwill ambassador. He was presented with the shield on the occasion. Earlier this year, Haris was given honorary DSP rank by Islamabad police. Haris, who used to play tape ball cricket in Rawalpindi, rose to fame after he was picked up in open trials held by two-time Pakistan Super League (PSL) champions Lahore Qalandars. Qalandars invested in Haris and sent him to Australia under their player development program. Haris featured in



Big Bash League (BBL) before making his T20I debut for Pakistan in 2020. Over the period of time, Haris became the identity of Qalandars and also led Pakistan's bowling unit alongside Shaheen Shah Afridi. Currently, he is the main bowler in Pakistan team. Haris alongside Shaheen also played an important role in

Qalandars' back-to-back PSL title victories. Qalandars, who suffered in PSL initially, bounced back in the tournament to bag back-to-back titles during the last two years. Under the captaincy of Shaheen, Qalandars won PSL seven and eight at their home ground. On both occasions, Qalandars beat Multan Sultans in final.

FIVB approves devt program for Pakistan women's team

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The fresh breath sets for women volleyball players in Pakistan as International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) has approved a one-year development program after reviewing the Empower Sports Academy application for women's volleyball empowerment in Pakistan. The Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) and Empower Sports Academy's commitment to elevating the level of national women's team has given a considerable boost through the FIVB's development programme. This pivotal development is set to bolster the establishment and advancement of the Pakistan Women's Volleyball team. After considering the application of Empower Sport Academy, President International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) Dr. Ary S. Graça F has approved support for Pakistan Women Volleyball team including 12 Months of coaching Support, National Team Coaches Development, Mikasa Volleyball V330W, Senoh Volleyball Nets and Net System, National Federation Sports Management and Administration. Expressing her excitement, Alisha Junaid, President & Founder of Empower Sports Academy, said that we are immensely

thrilled about this crucial grant from FIVB for Pakistan's women's Volleyball team as this backing from FIVB will undeniably invigorate the Pakistan team and serve as a fundamental stepping stone towards elevating the Pakistan women's volleyball team's global stature in the upcoming years." "This promising announcement marks a

significant step in Pakistan's journey towards establishing a strong presence in international volleyball, particularly in promoting and enhancing women's participation in sports", Alisha said, adding that Empower Sports Academy and the Pakistan Volleyball Federation are looking forward to working closely with FIVB and leverag-

ing the resources and support provided to foster the growth and development of the Pakistan Women's Volleyball team. Meanwhile the Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari, who is also President of Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) stated that we are intensely moved and sincerely grateful for the unwavering support from FIVB, adding that Pakistan is home to an exceptional pool of talented women. The minister said that with the right resources, they undoubtedly have the potential to reach world-leading ranks in the world of sports. "We are deeply touched and profoundly appreciative of the consistent backing from FIVB," expressed Shaza Fatima, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, "We are committed to making the most of the resources provided by FIVB, and we promise to continue to promote and uplift the presence and role of our women and Youth in sports." The Empower Sports Academy underscores its commitment to enhancing women's participation by making world-class training and facilities universally accessible to girls across Pakistan. Empower's mission revolves around the creation of safe, encouraging spaces for women to develop their sports skills while inspiring them to embark on professional sports careers.



JI rejects result; will go to court

FROM PAGE 01 protect "each and every vote" and refused to accept the newly-elected mayor. "Our fight is not against the PPP or Mur-taza Wahab, it is against theft and dacoity." "It is against rigging done by the ECP. Our fight is for the people of Karachi, Pakistan, and the province of Sindh," the JI leader asserted. Rehman further stated that his party held the right to peaceful protests and would even approach the courts. Earlier, JI chief Sirajul Haq also raised questions on the mayoral elections.

Dar rubbishes IMF...

FROM PAGE 01 the tax target from Rs7.2 trillion to Rs9.2 trillion in the upcoming budget. "This target is apart from tax exemption. No budget is coming from tax-exempt sectors. We will take the IMF into confidence on this," he said while urging that Pakistan should be allowed to decide on the matter. The minister also added that the government in the new budget is focusing on four drivers for economic growth. He also spoke about the package given to the IT sector, explaining that the government cannot "ban" giving concessions to the youth in the IT sector just on the IMF's demands. "We want to give employment opportunities to the youth through development in the IT sector," the federal minister said. He added that the government has set a target of achieving \$15 billion in IT exports in the next five years. "IT exports were \$2.5 billion this year which is very less. We want to take IT exports to \$4.5 billion in the coming year," he added.

Jane Marriott new...

FROM PAGE 01 'Digital Access Programme' in partnership with Kenyan stakeholders in the tech industry to train users on digital inclusion, cyber hygiene, and the regulation of online content. Jane brings a wealth of thematic and regional experience to her new role having joined the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in 2001, following roles in the Cabinet Office and Home Office. She has previously served as Director of the UK's Joint International Counter-Terrorism Unit; Joint FCDO Director for the Middle East and North Africa; Ambassador to Sana'a, Yemen (2013-15); Deputy and Acting Ambassador to Tehran; and as an adviser to the US Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke. She has also completed two diplomatic postings to Iraq and one to Afghanistan. "I am incredibly excited to be appointed as the next British High Commissioner to Pakistan — a country I am delighted to have visited twice before," Jane said following the announcement of her appointment. "I am looking forward to getting to know this culturally rich and deeply diverse country even better. The United Kingdom's relationship with Pakistan is rooted in shared history. Our people-to-people ties bind our countries together in common partnership, which I will be aiming to strengthen further," she remarked.

Landfall commences along...

FROM PAGE 01 Sanghar districts Thursday and today (Friday). It added that dust/thunderstorm and isolated heavy rainfall was likely in Balochistan's Hub, Lasbela and Khuzdar districts Thursday and today (Friday). The weather alert said that a storm surge of 3-4 metres was expected at Keti Bander, where the cyclone will make landfall, and its surroundings.

Briefs

Russian anti-war activist dies in jail, lawyer says

MOSCOW: A Russian anti-war activist has died in a detention centre in the southern city of Rostov-on-Don where he had alleged he was being mistreated, his lawyer said.

Irina Gak, a lawyer for 40-year-old Anatoly Berezikov, said in a video posted on Facebook that the dead body of her client, who had been due to be released on Thursday, had been taken to a morgue on Wednesday. The video, which was filmed on Wednesday, showed Gak standing outside the detention centre where Berezikov had been held as an ambulance that she said was there to collect his body drove in. Reuters could not independently verify her account. Gak could not be immediately reached by phone. The detention centre told Reuters that it would not be giving out any information about Berezikov. In the video, Gak said Berezikov had complained of beatings and of being given electric shocks and had told her he feared for his life. OVD-Info, a human rights monitoring group, cited an unnamed official in the detention centre as telling it that Berezikov had killed himself in his cell. According to Gak, Berezikov was arrested after he posted leaflets around the city advertising a Ukrainian government project called "I Want to Live," which helps Russian soldiers voluntarily surrender.—APP

Sudan war hits 2-month mark as peace efforts hit hurdles

CAIRO/DUBAI: The conflict in Sudan hit the two-month mark on Thursday with no sign of a resolution as diplomatic peace efforts hit roadblocks and the risk of a broader ethnic war rises. Fighting between the army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which a U.S. diplomat earlier this week described as "suicidal" behaviour, has displaced 2.2 million people and killed at least 1,000, an underestimate according to medics. It has shut down the economy, plunging millions of Sudanese into hunger and dependence on foreign aid, and shattered the health system. The army and RSF, which together ousted autocrat Omar al-Bashir in 2019, began fighting in the heart of the capital on April 15 after disagreeing over the integration of their troops under a new transition to democracy.—Agencies

Situation 'serious' at Ukraine plant: UN nuclear chief

ENERGODAR: UN nuclear chief Rafael Grossi on Thursday said the situation at the Moscow-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine was "serious", but was being stabilised. Grossi arrived at Europe's biggest nuclear plant to assess potential safety risks after the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, which caused huge floods and exacerbated fears for the facility's safety. The dam formed a reservoir that provided the cooling water for the plant.

"On the one hand, we can see that the situation is serious, the consequences (of the dam's destruction) are there, and they are real," Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said on a visit to the plant. "At the same time, there are measures that are being taken to stabilise the situation." AFP saw Grossi arrive at the plant in a white jeep with the IAEA blue flag attached to it. His car was followed by armoured vehicles. Grossi's third trip to the plant came as Ukraine launched its long-awaited counteroffensive, with fighting intensifying in the Zaporizhzhia region. He said the visit to the plant, which was delayed by a day for unexplained reasons, was "compact" but "important."

JCA signed between RCCI and Chambers of Alexandria

Shahraiz Ashraf Malik, said that Egypt is one of the most attractive countries for foreign investments, and it is necessary to work together to create more partnerships and promote cooperation between the Rawalpindi and Alexandria chambers

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Egyptian Chamber of Commerce in Alexandria, headed by Ahmed El-Wakeel, President of the Chamber and President of the Federation of Chambers of the Mediterranean Basin (ASCAME), signed a joint cooperation agreement with the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) at the Chamber's headquarters. The agreement aims to enhance opportunities for joint cooperation between the business communities of the two countries and to harness all capabilities and resources to activate all commercial businesses in the two countries, through the organization of international exhibitions, conferences and various events. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq, signed and exchanged the MOU documents on behalf of RCCI.



Shahraiz Ashraf Malik, Former Vice President RCCI, Sidra Haq, Commercial Attaché at the Embassy of Pakistan Egypt, and Ali Tamkeen, Commercial attaché at the Embassy of Pakistan, members of the Board of Directors, Ashraf Abu Ismail and Mahmoud

Marei, among others, were also present on the occasion. Ahmed Al-Wakil, President of the Egyptian Chamber of Commerce in Alexandria, gave an overview of the history of the "Alexandria Chamber" and underlined the significance and depth of the

Egyptian-Pakistani relations, pointing out that it is necessary to hold joint meetings between the members of the Alexandria and Rawalpindi Chambers in various fields, to increase the volume of trade between the Egyptian and Pakistani sides.

Saqib Rafiq, in his remarks explained that the "Alexandria Chamber" is of a special importance to Rawalpindi Chamber, stressing that the main objective of the meeting is to discuss mechanisms for increasing trade exchange, and concluding more trade and commercial agreements. He expressed the belief that Egypt is the ideal gateway to Africa, and therefore cooperation in the economic, trade and investment fields must be strengthened, to increase the volume of trade exchange and increase the volume of investments between the two sides.

Shahraiz Ashraf Malik, said that Egypt is one of the most attractive countries for foreign investments, and it is necessary to work together to create more partnerships and promote cooperation between the Rawalpindi and Alexandria chambers.

Foreign reserves reach \$9.378 billion

KARACHI: The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 9,378.2 million while reserves held by the central bank reached US\$ 4,018.7 million. The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign reserves of the central bank increased by US\$ 107 million to US\$ 4,018.7 million in the week ended on June 09, 2023. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 5,359.5 million, it added. In the previous week ending on June 02, 2023, total liquid foreign reserves held by the country was US\$ 9,334.8 million. Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were US\$ 3,912.2 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were US\$ 5,422.6 million.—APP

ECB raises rates to 22-year high

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank raised borrowing costs to their highest level in 22 years on Thursday and left the door open to more hikes, extending its fight against inflation that remains stubbornly high even as the euro zone economy flags. The ECB increased its key interest rate - the one banks pay to park cash securely at the central bank - for the eighth consecutive time, by 25 basis points to 22 year-high of 3.5%. Advertisement • Scroll to continue • The key ECB interest rates will be brought to levels sufficiently restrictive to achieve a timely return of inflation to the 2% medium-term target and will be kept at those levels for as long as necessary," ECB President Christine Lagarde said at a press conference following the decision. The central bank for the 20 countries that share the euro also said it expected inflation to stay above its 2% target through 2025 and hinted once again at more rate hikes in the coming months. It raised its 2023 and 2024 projections for "core" inflation, excluding volatile energy and food, which the ECB watches closely.—Agencies

PSX loses 145.28 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 145.28 points on Thursday, a negative change of 0.35 per cent, closing at 41,369.17 points against 41,514.45 points the previous day. A total of 149,676,270 shares were traded during the day as compared to 179,644,403 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.3,606 billion against Rs.3,755 billion on the last trading day. As many as 309 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 77 of them recorded gains and 208 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 24 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were TPL Properties with 21,691,380 shares at Rs.13.81 per share; World-Call Telecom with 17,474,550 shares at Rs.1.15 per share and BankIslami Pak with 9,352,057 shares at Rs.17.55 per share.—APP

Pak, Russia sign MoU for coop on mutual trade

SAINT PETERSBURG: Pakistan and the Russian Federation on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation between Pakistan Customs and Russia's Federal Customs Service on Exchange of Statistical Data on Mutual Trade. Pakistan's Ambassador to Russian Federation Shafiqat Ali Khan signed the MoU on behalf of Pakistan Customs while Secretary Commerce

Muhammad Saleh Farooqi witnessed the signing ceremony held here on the sidelines of Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum, a press release issued by the Ministry of Commerce said. In order to implement the memorandum, the two parties will cooperate in the sphere of exchange of information on the methodology used for the maintenance of foreign trade

statistics, its significant changes as well as the exchange of statistical data on mutual trade, except the data, not subject to disclosure or constituting a state or commercial secret. The purpose of the exchange of information on the methodology used for the maintenance of foreign trade statistics, as well as the exchange of statistical data defined in the memorandum, will be to provide

both parties with the necessary information on mutual trade. According to the MoU, the statistical data will be exchanged every quarter and the parties will provide each other with the statistical data for the corresponding quarter no later than 70 days after the end of the relevant period. Annual data will be provided separately by the parties no later than 120 days after the end of the reporting year.—DNA

Greece scours sea for survivors of migrant boat sinking

Kalamata: Greek rescuers on Thursday scoured the Ionian Sea for survivors a day after a fishing boat overloaded with migrants capsized and sank, killing at least 78 people, with fears that the toll could eventually reach into the hundreds. As relatives in the migrants' home countries frantically sought details of their loved ones, the coastguard said 78 bodies had been recovered and 104 people have been plucked out of the water alive so far. There are fears that hundreds more could be missing, based on testimony from survivors and the fact that no women and children had yet been rescued. "This could be the worst maritime tragedy in Greece in recent years," Stella Nanou of the UNHCR refugee agency told state broadcaster ERT. "It's really horrific," UNHCR staffer Erasmia Roumana told AFP at the port of Kalamata, adding that the survivors were "in a very bad psychological situation." "Many are under shock, they are so overwhelmed," she said. "Many of them worry about the people they travelled with, families or friends." Pictures handed out by the coastguard showed a rusty blue boat with scores of people crammed on deck. Two patrol boats, a navy frigate, three helicopters and nine other ships searched the waters west of the Peloponnese peninsula, one of the deepest parts of the Mediterranean, a coastguard spokeswoman told AFP. In a telegram, Pope Francis offered "heartfelt prayers for the many migrants who have died, their loved ones and all those traumatised by this tragedy". Greece has declared three days of mourning over the tragedy and a senior prosecutor has been assigned to investigate. Political parties suspended their campaigns for June 25 national elections. "One young man started to cry and said, I need my mother... This voice is inside my ears. And will always be inside," Red Cross nurse Ekaterini Tsata told AFP. Around 30 people were hospitalised with pneumonia, dehydration and exhaustion but are not in immediate danger, officials said. A survivor told hospital doctors in Kalamata that he had seen a hundred children in the boat's hold, ERT said. "The fishing boat was 25-30 metres long. Its deck was full of people, and we assume the interior was just as full," coastguard spokesman Nikolaos Alexiou told ERT.—APP



Ahsan launches data portal for PSDP projects

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday officially launched Pakistan's pioneering PSDP portal. For the first time in the country's history, the data of Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) projects (ongoing and previous year) worth Rs 1.1 trillion has been made available at the PSDP portal which has been formally launched on Thursday for the citizens to ensure transparency. The event was attended by the Additional Secretary Planning Ministry, Members Planning Commission, the Chairman of Pakistan Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission SUPARCO and other stakeholders, said a press release issued here. It is noted that the PSDP, which constitutes the Federal Development Budget, serves as a crucial framework for the government's development agenda, setting sectoral and regional priorities under the national plan. This strategic move aims to harness the potential of digital technologies to enhance transparency, improve governance, and promote public awareness of the government's development course and priorities.—APP

IRC, Child Protection and Welfare Bureau to strengthen mechanisms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In order to collaborate on child protection initiatives across the province of Punjab, The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB), Government of Punjab, have signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU). The LOU was signed by Mr. Waqas Dar, Acting Country Director of IRC, and Ms. Sarah Ahmad, Chairperson, the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, in attendance were the representatives of IRC & CPWB. This collaboration signifies the shared vision of both or-

ganizations to develop synergies in order to strengthen child protection systems in Punjab and extend quality services to vulnerable segments of society, with a particular focus on children in the labor force, out of school children, and House Holds led by children. IRC pilot initiative of strengthening case management and case referral system in the districts of Rajanpur & DG Khan have been evolved in close collaboration of CPWB with the financial support of UNICEF. IRC and CPWB aim to work collaboratively to address the pressing needs of children and create a safer and more inclusive environment for

children in Punjab. Sarah Ahmad, Chairperson of CPWB, Government of Punjab, speaking on this occasion opined "Children are the future of our nation, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure their safety, well-being, and access to quality services. This collaboration will pave way for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by vulnerable children and their families, ultimately leading to a brighter and more secure future for them." Speaking at the ceremony, Waqas Dar, Acting Country Director IRC, stated, "IRC is delighted to join hands with CPWB,

Government of Punjab, in our shared commitment to protect children facing vulnerabilities. Through this collaboration, we aim to make a significant difference in their lives and create lasting change in Punjab." The signing of this LOU marks an important milestone in the efforts of IRC and CPWB to strengthen child protection mechanisms and extend vital services to those in need. Through the combined expertise, resources, and commitment of both organizations, the collaboration is expected to have a transformative impact on the lives of children in Punjab.

Bali Beyond Travel Fair 2023 opened

A media and tour operators' delegation from Pakistan also took part in the Fair

DNA

BALI: The Bali Beyond Travel Fair was formally opened on Thursday. The officials from the Indonesia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Foreign Minister of Tourism Infrastructure, Deputy Minister of Marketing Ni Made Ayu Marthini, Deputy Governor of Bali and other prominent figures participated in the Travel Fair. A media and tour operators delegation from Pakistan also took part in the Fair. BBTf is an annual event with the intention to establish a benchmark for travel & tourism events and destinations in Indonesia. Supported by the Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia, BBTf held a B2B events and aims to advance the tourism industry through business session and direct promotion of the best practices in MICE and Leisure Management. Together with exhibitors and buyers from numerous countries around the world, BBTf facilitates Pre-Scheduled Appointments (PSA) and business sessions for buyers and sellers to negotiate on their long-term leisure and corporate travel needs. Corporations, travel agents, hotel & resort

chains, cruise operators, convention planners, venue operators and travel buyers can leverage the two and half days of business-to-business sessions to enhance their respective brands in the Indonesian and Asia Pacific markets. In addition to the B2B sessions, the travel fair will have an extensive program of activities for all delegates. From the

fantastic networking events, to the inspirational knowledge program, the business of meetings has never been so rewarding. Bali was chosen as the venue because it is the gateway to Indonesia's Archipelago for global travelers and the island contributes up to 40% of all visitors to the nation each year. This annual event is led by passionate committees and supported by members of ASITA, public sectors and Government to promote and facilitate the tourism business and development. Member of ASITA BALI consists of 420 tours and travel bureaus (BPW) and 13 associate members spread all over Bali. ASITA BALI is a member of Stakeholder of Indonesian Tourism Industry Association (GIPI) Bali or better known as Bali Tourism Board BALI & BEYOND TRAVEL FAIR, is recognized as Indonesia's leading international travel fair that focuses on promoting tourism in Indonesia to the world by bringing together buyers and sellers in a single B2B forum. This year, the ninth BBTf was held in Bali, Indonesia's gateway of tourism to the world, taking the date from 14 - 17 June 2023 at the Bali International Convention Center (BICC), ITDC, Nusa Dua, Bali.



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Briefs

Pak urges India to end atrocities against minorities

DNA

NEW YORK: United Nations, June 15 (KMS): Pakistan has told the UN General Assembly that India, whose prime minister is visiting the US later this month, was targeting Indian Muslims, Christians, as also Muslims of occupied Kashmir, and called for an end to their harsh suppression. Ambassador Munir Akram in a speech during a debate on 'Culture of Peace' said, "To those who are ready to open their doors to the Prime Minister of India, we urge that they call for a halt to India's oppression and atrocities." "Their silence diminishes their stature and exposes their real commitments to universal human values and human rights as being hollow and hypocritical," the Pakistani envoy told the 193-member Assembly. The US President, Joe Biden, is set to host Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a state visit on June 22. In his remarks, noted for their depth and sweep, Ambassador Akram pointed out that recent times have witnessed a significant rise in hate, discrimination, xenophobia and organized violence against individuals, communities and nations due to their differences of cultures, nationalities, religions, or race.

Palestinians fear violence as Israeli settlements expand

BURQA: Palestinian farmer Salim Mas'oud was home in the occupied West Bank village of Burqa when neighbours alerted him that his barn was in flames. Dozens of Jewish settlers had set the barn alight one late May afternoon, damaging the metal structure and burning hundreds of bales of hay and agricultural equipment, he said. Days later, his neighbour Mohammad al-Bazzari watched on the news as settlers cut the fence around his house, shattered windows and damaged the citrus trees in his garden. "My heart stopped," said the 44-year-old father of two who works at a chicken farm in the city of Ramallah. "Windows can be replaced, plants can be repotted, but if we were to lose a soul, nothing would make up for that." U.S. and European officials have repeatedly expressed concern about settler violence, which reached record levels last year and has continued to increase since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's religious-nationalist government took office in January and accelerated settlement expansion. - Agencies

CTD kills four terrorists in Chaman

DNA

CHAMAN: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Balochistan killed four alleged terrorists in Chaman. According to CTD officials, the killed terrorists were involved in the attack on the Frontier Corps (FC) headquarters in Muslim Bagh, Balochistan last month. The terrorists were affiliated with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan (TJP). The spokesperson further said that the operation was carried out on the information provided by an arrested terrorist Ali Muhammad aka Chota Qadri. Explosives, arms and ammunition were seized from the possession of the killed alleged terrorists. A car that was used in the Muslim Bagh attack was also confiscated from their possession. On Saturday, the Punjab CTD claimed to have arrested nine terrorists of a banned outfit in separate intelligence-based operations (IBOs). The authorities seized explosive material, detonators, bullets and cash from the arrested terrorists.

Indonesia welcomes Pakistani investors, says Dy Minister

The deputy minister further said, first and foremost, MoTCE continuously adapts to the latest global tourism safety and security standards. By all means, cleanliness, health, safety, and environmental sustainability (CHSE) protocol has become the priority for Indonesian tourism

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

WHILE talking about the scope of tourism in Indonesia she said, according to the National Medium Term Development Plan 2020-2024, the tourism sector has become one of the essential strategies for national economic transformation. "We primarily focus on developing 10 Tourism Priority Destinations in this period by optimizing accessibility, attraction, and amenities (3A) in the prioritized areas. In the future, the optimization of 3A is expected to accelerate the value added in the tourism sector", she said. The minister said one of her main jobs was to promote Indonesia's destination to all over the world, and that of course, includes Pakistan. Our promotional activities for international market include participation in international travel and tourism exhibitions, conducting familiarization trips, arranging sales missions, and joint promotion with potential partners. To yet another question she said in the era of tourism recovery, we believe the key to tourism strategies are innovation, adaptation and collaboration. For innovation, we attempt to uplift potential destinations in Indonesia, particularly 10 Tourism Priority Destinations. Hence, tourists can have more diverse experiences beyond Bali, which has already become top of mind for popular destinations. The innovation in tourism is expected to absorb more workforce and increase foreign capital in Indonesia. "In terms of adaptation, we strive for sustainable recovery. One of the ways is to ease the transaction with various digital payment methods. This benefits not only the tourists but also the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to emerge the



BALI: Ni Made Ayu Marthini Deputy Minister for Marketing Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Republic of Indonesia giving a souvenir to Ansar Mahmood Bhatti Editor Daily Islamabad POST, DNA News Agency and Centreline magazine. - DNA

cashless methods that offer flexibility", she further said, "we continuously aim for Penta helix collaboration with academicians, business entities, government (local, national, and foreign government), community, and media". **Giving an account of new destinations she said,** "currently, we are highly promoting our 10 Tourism Priority Destinations, namely Lake Toba in North Sumatra, Borobudur Temple in Central Java, Mandalika in West Nusa Tenggara, Labuan Bajo in East Nusa Tenggara, Likupang in North Sulawesi, Tanjung Kelayang in Bangka Belitung,

Bromo-Tengger-Semeru in East Java, Wakatobi in Southeast Sulawesi, Morotai Island in North Maluku and Raja Ampat in West Papua. The first five aforementioned destinations are designated as Tourism Super Priority Destinations. In addition, as we understand halal tourism demand as extended service has increased in popularity, we proudly introduce Lombok as the compass for our halal tourism. Located in one of 5 Super Priority Destinations, Lombok provides amazing destinations and simplicity for Moslem Tourists to find mosques and halal foods. Halal services' excellence

has led Lombok to achieve the first rank for the World's Best Halal Tourism Destination, according to the Global Muslim Travel Index in 2019. We believe Lombok will be the next popular destination after Bali for Pakistani tourists, she added. The deputy minister further said, first and foremost, MoTCE continuously adapts to the latest global tourism safety and security standards. By all means, cleanliness, health, safety, and environmental sustainability (CHSE) protocol has become the priority for Indonesian tourism. The safety and comfort of tourists during their visit to Indonesia is our top priority, especially after the pandemic. Therefore, we also keep the utmost efforts to accelerate vaccination for tourism and creative economy workers as they are the "frontliners" of the industry. Vaccination for tourism workers and implementing CHSE measures are integral to the recovery and growth of the tourism industry. Vaccination protects the health of workers and visitors, instills confidence, and enables the smooth resumption of international travel. CHSE practices prioritize cleanliness, health, safety, and environmental sustainability, enhancing the overall tourism experience and ensuring the well-being of all stakeholders involved. The deputy minister while responding to yet another question said, in Lombok new racing track Circuit Mandalika has been put in place on the pattern of Formula 1. Last year a big racing event took place there, which attracted huge interest and support from all and sundry especially the sports loving people. Apart from this promotion of cultural linkages with other countries also appears on top of our priority. Village tourism is yet another area where we have been focusing a lot and you may have witnessed this during your trip as well, she concluded.

North Korea fires two short-range missiles

SEOUL: North Korea fired two short-range missiles off its east coast on Thursday, the South Korean military said, less than an hour after Pyongyang warned of an "inevitable" response to military drills staged earlier in the day by South Korean and U.S. troops. The latest action by North Korea came as U.S. President Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, was in Tokyo for meetings with his Japanese and South Korean counterparts. In a meeting with South Korea's national security adviser, Cho Tae-yong, and Japan's National Security Advisor Takeo Akiba on Thursday, the three discussed North Korea's missile programme and confirmed that they would work closely together to get Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons, according to a readout of the meeting released by Japan. Japan's defence ministry said the two ballistic missiles landed within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), possibly having flown in an irregular trajectory. The two missiles landed in the Sea of Japan about 250 km north-northwest of Hegera island, part of Ishikawa prefecture, Japan said. It was the 13th time that North Korea's missiles landed within Japan's EEZ, Japanese vice minister of defence Kimi Onoda said. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida condemned the launches. "The latest missile launch is a violation of Security Council resolutions and an escalation of provocations against the international community as a whole. We lodged a strong protest against North Korea," he told reporters. - Agencies

Pakistan-Belgium set agenda for cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Second Session of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between Pakistan and Belgium was held in Islamabad on 15 June 2023. The Pakistan delegation was led by Ambassador Muhammad Saleem, Additional Foreign Secretary (Europe)

while the Belgian delegation was led by Ambassador Jeroen Cooreman, Director General, Bilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium. The two sides reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and set the agenda for bilateral engagement and cooperation for the next year. They also discussed collaboration at international forums,

including at the United Nations and important regional and global developments. The Additional Foreign Secretary stressed the need for continued high level engagement and dialogue between Pakistan and Belgium. The two sides agreed to make Bilateral Political Consultations a regular annual feature of bilateral engagement. The next round of

Consultations will be held in Brussels next year at mutually convenient dates. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Belgium. Pakistan remains committed to further expand and deepen ties with Belgium in the areas of trade, investment, academic and cultural cooperation, tourism and labour mobility.



Court rejects to hear Pervaiz Elahi's bail plea

DNA

LAHORE: The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) rejected to hear Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) president and former chief minister Punjab Pervaiz Elahi's bail plea in an illegal appointment case. As per details, the judge said that the prosecution's behaviour is intolerable and no one should be allowed to make a mockery of the court. The special judge of the anti-corruption court Ali Rizwan Awan sent the case to senior special judge. Moreover, the prosecution submits the record of cases after several days of delay. The anti-corruption judge said that Pervaiz Elahi and others are involved in fake appointments in the Punjab assembly. The hearing on former chief minister Punjab Pervaiz Elahi's bail plea was adjourned till tomorrow. Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President and former chief minister Pervaiz Elahi was sent on 14-day judicial remand to jail in an illegal appointment case.

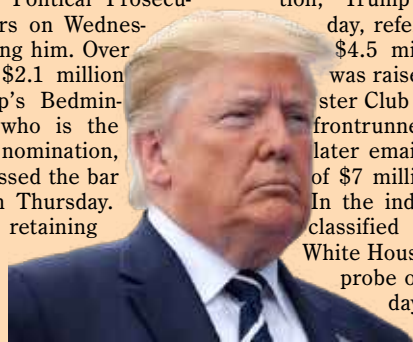
Google shares doodle about general elections

DNA

LAHORE: Google has reminded the people of Pakistan that the general elections in the country are scheduled to be held this year amid ongoing political and economic tension. The google shared a new doodle that features a ballot box with a Pakistani flag on it. When a user taps the doodle, a message pops up stating: "Pakistan National Election 2023". The last general elections in the South Asia country were held in 2018 when the PTI came into power with support of some allies. The PTI chief was ousted from the prime minister's office by the then joint opposition through a no-confidence vote in April 2022. Since then, the Pakistan Democratic Movement-led (PMD) coalition government has been ruling the country. The tenure of the current assembly is set to end on Aug 13 this year. As per the rules, general elections should be held within 60 days of the completion of the National Assembly's term but the period could be 90 days if the assembly is dissolved before the expiry date. The PTI chief, earlier this year, dissolved the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies, calling for the snap elections.

Trump raises \$7m for 2024 campaign since indictment

MIAMI: Former President Donald Trump's 2024 White House campaign said on Wednesday he had raised \$7 million since being indicted on federal charges last week, as his message of political persecution continues to resonate with die-hard supporters. "President Trump Raises Over \$6.6 Million and Counting Since Deranged Jack Smith Announced Political Prosecution," Trump's campaign wrote in an email to supporters on Wednesday, referring to the U.S. special counsel investigating him. Over fundraising while \$2.1 million Tuesday at Trump's Bedminster Club in New Jersey. A spokesperson for the 2024 Republican said Reuters stating that of \$7 million since the indictment. In the indictment, Trump was accused of illegally retaining classified government documents White House and then conspiring to probe of the matter. Trump was charged with obstructing justice and pleaded not guilty in court. - Agencies



Boris deliberately misled parliament, UK report says

WEB DESK

LONDON: Boris Johnson deliberately misled the British parliament in an unprecedented way over rule-breaking parties at his office during COVID-19 lockdowns, a committee said on Thursday in a damning verdict that further tarnished the former prime minister. Almost a year ago, Johnson was talking about remaining prime minister into the 2030s. But the privileges committee - the main disciplinary body for lawmakers - said on Thursday he should now be stripped of having automatic access to parliament. The committee also accused Johnson of being "complicit in a campaign of abuse and

attempted intimidation" towards them. In typically combative style Johnson, who in 2019 led the Conservatives to a landslide election victory, dismissed the report as "a lie" and "a charade", and accused committee members of waging a vendetta against him. The stand-off will do little to heal the deep divisions in the Conservatives and can only pile pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, whose push to try to boost Britain's flagging economy is being overshadowed by the ongoing Johnson drama. The more than 100-page report detailed six events held at Downing Street, the prime minister's offices and residence. "We conclude that in deliberately misleading the House Mr Johnson committed a serious contempt," the committee said.

Russia signals normalcy as Ukraine forces advance

DNA

KYIV: Russia announced plans on Thursday to stage elections in occupied parts of Ukraine in just three months, Moscow's latest bid to signal it is in control even as a Ukrainian counteroffensive has pushed its forces back in some areas. The Ukrainian assault is in its early stages, and military experts say the decisive battles still lie ahead. But corpses of Russian soldiers and burnt-out armoured vehicles lining the roadside in villages newly recaptured by Ukrainian troops attested to Kyiv's biggest advances since last year. Reuters reached the villages of Neskuchne and Storozheve over the past two days, providing the first independent confirmation of the Ukrainian advance several kilometres southwards along the Mokry Yali river into territory Russia had held since the early days of its invasion last year. Several bodies of Russian soldiers lay in the streets of ruined and depopulated

villages. Ukrainian troops in Storozheve told Reuters they had killed around 50 Russians and captured four there. Moscow has not acknowledged any setbacks and says it has inflicted severe casualties on Ukrainians attempting to assault. The Ukrainian military, which had maintained strict silence about the campaign for more than a week, came forward to tout the gains on Thursday, holding its first full media briefing since the counteroffensive began. Troops had captured at least seven settlements and 100 square km (38 square miles) of territory in two major pushes in the south so far, Brigadier-General Oleksii Hromov said. "We are ready to continue fighting to liberate our territory even with our bare hands," he said. The army on the southern front had advanced by up to 7 km (4.4 miles) in the area along the Mokry Yali, as well as by up to 3 km (1.8 miles) on another axis further west near the village of Mala Tokmachka, Ukrainian military officials said. They also described advances in the east

around the ruined city of Bakhmut, which Moscow seized last month as its only major prize for a huge winter and spring offensive that saw the bloodiest ground combat in Europe since World War Two. Russian President Vladimir Putin insisted this week that Moscow's goals in Ukraine remain unchanged despite the Ukrainian counteroffensive. He claimed that Russian forces were inflicting 10 times more casualties on Ukrainians than they were enduring. Russia's announcement of a plan for elections in occupied territory was the latest effort by Moscow to convey that the situation was stable. Russia's TASS state news agency quoted election chief Ella Pamfilova as saying that both the Defence Ministry and the Federal Security Service (FSB) had concluded that it would be possible to hold the votes in September. Russia proclaimed its annexation of four Ukrainian provinces last year, although it does not fully control any of them and does not hold the main population centres of two. Kyiv says any elections

staged by Russians on Ukrainian territory would be invalid and illegal. The big test of Ukraine's offensive still lies ahead. Russia has had months to prepare its defences. Ukrainian troops have yet to reach the heaviest Russian defensive fortifications, which are set back from the front line. Kyiv is believed to have prepared an attack force of around 12 brigades of thousands of soldiers each, most using newly arrived Western armoured vehicles. Only a fraction of them have been engaged so far. Russia, for its part, has released images of Western tanks and armoured vehicles it says it has destroyed or captured. In Brussels, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin presided over the latest meeting of a group of around 50 countries, set up by Washington to coordinate donations of Western arms to Ukraine. "I ask that the members of this contact group continue to dig deep to provide Ukraine with the air defence assets and munitions that it so urgently needs to protect its citizens," Austin said.