



# Islamabad POST

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**Shavkat Mirziyoyev gets re-elected as Uzbekistan's President**

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**Dutch PM says to quit politics after elections**

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**Rybakina into last eight at the Wimbledon**

Detailed News On Page-06



**Briefs**

**Fazl claims was offered Senate chair**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a startling revelation, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday claimed that former director-general (DG) of the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Faiz Hameed had offered him to become chairman of the Senate. Fazl, who is also the president of the ruling Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), made the revelation during an informal interaction with senior journalists in Peshawar. The JUI-F leader said that the former spymaster had called him for a meeting but he refused.

**Lahore court acquits PM's son**

DNA

LAHORE: Lahore's Special Court (Central) on Monday acquitted Suleman Shehbaz, son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a Rs16 billion money laundering case registered with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Suleman, who returned to Pakistan in December 2022 after four years of self-exile in London, was accused in the money laundering case registered with the FIA while the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had nominated him in an assets-beyond-means reference. He was declared a proclaimed offender in both cases.

**NAB to arrest ex-CM Buzdar**

DNA

LAHORE: The NAB has decided to arrest former Punjab chief minister Usman Buzdar as he failed to appear before NAB Lahore despite repeated summons in assets beyond income case. Sources said Buzdar, despite 14 summons, did not appear before the NAB Lahore. The legal team of the former chief minister requested that he (Buzdar) could not appear today as well but NAB rejected the request and refused to entertain any further communication from the counsel.

## PM directs to ensure safety arrangements

**Mohsin Naqvi says flood situation "under control"; over 300 people rescued in Narowal**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday instructed authorities to make foolproof arrangements for handling a flood-like situation in the Ravi, Chenab and Sutlej rivers. The directives come as many cities in Punjab are expected to receive spells of heavy rain over the next 24 to 48 hours, while Chenab and Ravi rivers will be flooded due to an incessant downpour in India's northern states, which has increased the water discharge towards downstream areas. A day earlier, at least 95 people, including five Rangers personnel, stranded near Ravi and Tawi rivers were rescued as water in the rivers rose to dangerous levels. In a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office today, the premier directed authorities to prepare for timely and safe evacuations. He also told authorities to spread awareness among the people in affected areas that could potentially be affected. He appreciated Rangers and Rescue 1122 personnel for the timely evacuation and assistance of the people trapped by flood water. "I, along with the whole nation, pay tribute to the country's dutiful personnel," PM Shehbaz added. Later in the afternoon, Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the flood situation in the province was under control, adding that the water flow in all the rivers was steady. He said a medium-ranged flood discharge of 150,000 to 200,000 cusecs

## Over 200 rescued in Shakargarh

DNA

SHAKARGARH: A collaborative rescue operation kick-started on Monday by the Punjab Rangers and Rescue 1122 teams in the province's Tehsil Shakargarh after India released excessive water a day earlier, causing flash floods near the bordering village. Through the rescue operation, the teams managed to save at least 223 residents of the area — mostly women and children — stranded in the midst of rising water levels in the River Ravi. They were later brought to safer locations as Punjab Rangers' rescue team stayed in the border area to deal with the situation unfolding. The border village of Jalala in Shakargarh has also suffered crop damage as a result of the floodwaters originating from India. The crops cultivated by local paddy farmers were submerged while they themselves remained trapped.

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## Mirziyoyev re-elected as Uzbekistan's President

87.05% of voters voted in the favour of Shavkat Mirziyoyev



The Central Election Commission of Uzbekistan: as per preliminary results of the presidential election held on July 9, 15.6 mln i.e. 79.8% casted their votes. More than 13,625,000 voters (87.05%) voted for Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev who has won in early president's elections: Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the candidate from Uzbekistan Liberal Democratic Party — 87.05%; Mr. Ulugbek Inoyatov, the candidate from the People's Democratic Party — 4.2%; Mrs. Robakhon Mahmudova, the candidate from "Adolat" Social Democratic Party — 4.43%; Mr. Abdushukur Hamzaev, the candidate from the Eco Party — 3.74%.

ANSAR M. BHATTI

TASHKENT: President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has secured a landslide victory in the presidential election held on July 9, being re-elected as the President of Uzbekistan with an overwhelming 87.1% of the vote. The Central Election Commission of Uzbekistan announced the preliminary results, revealing the extent of the president's popular support. A significant number of voters participated in the election, with 15.6 million citizens, accounting for 79.8% of registered voters, casting their votes. Among them 87.05%

voted in the favour of Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Voting across the landlocked country of around 36 million people began at 8:00 am local time which continued uninterrupted till 8 pm. In some areas voting concluded even before time. The Uzbek government had made elaborate arrangements for the Uzbek Diaspora living in various countries. The Uzbek missions in various countries were turned into the polling station and the process was completed well before the holding of the Presidential election on July 9, 2023. Under the rule of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan has strengthened traditional relations with Beijing and Moscow. Both Pakistan and Uzbekistan also enjoy excellent relations. The recent visit of the Uzbek President to Pakistan had further strengthened this relationship. Pakistan values its relations with Uzbekistan, rooted in religious affinity, common values, geo-strategic significance, potential for

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## Those involved in anti-state campaign to be punished



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murrimum Aurangzeb has emphatically stated that those involved in malicious campaign against the state institutions will not be spared and taken to task as per the law. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad this afternoon, she said there will be zero tolerance towards these wicked and mischievous elements. The Information Minister said investigation is continuing into May 9 violent incidents, which were executed, planned and orchestrated by the PTI Chairman. She

said this is the only person who desecrated the memorials of martyrs and is involved in the attacks on military installations and other buildings including Radio Pakistan. Murrimum Aurangzeb said the PML-N leadership always appeared before the courts and faced the trumped up cases registered during the PTI tenure. She, however, said the PTI Chairman is making hue and cry to deflect accountability. She said the PTI Chairman should appear in courts and respond in corruption cases including Toshakhana, foreign funding and Al-Qadir Trust. The Information Minister said the PTI Chairman is a black spot on our politics who incites people for violence and preaches terrorism. Responding to a question, the Information Minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif over the last one year has made efforts to stabilize the economy and provide relief to the common man. She said the economic revival plan rolled out by the government will benefit the people. To another question, the Information Minister said the government will complete its constitutional tenure. She said the party, which has always given relief to the people, eliminated terrorism and stabilized the economy is not running from elections.



ISLAMABAD: JUI-F President Molana Fazlur Rehman calls on PM Shehbaz Sharif. — DNA

**Courts extend PTI chief's interim bail**

The PTI chief arrived at Judicial Complex to attend the hearings

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Three Islamabad courts extended on Monday PTI Chairman Imran Khan's interim bail in 11 cases till July 19. The cases were among 16 registered against Imran for allegedly inciting violence, defaming institutions and violating the law, in which he had earlier secured an extension in interim bail on June 19. The PTI chief arrived at the Federal Judicial Complex (FJC) to attend the hearings as the Islamabad High Court had last month accepted his plea to shift the courts that took up these cases to the FJC from Sector F-8 Markaz. ATC Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain heard three cases against

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## Agreement with IMF Fitch upgrades Pak rating citing external liquidity

Says the upgrade reflects Pakistan's improved funding conditions

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Global rating agency Fitch on Monday upgraded Pakistan's long-term foreign-currency issuer default rating (IDR) to 'CCC' from 'CCC-', citing the country's improved external liquidity and funding conditions following the staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a nine-month Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) in June. Pakistan had secured the badly-needed \$3bn short-term financial package from the IMF last month, giving the economy a much-awaited respite as it teeters on the brink of default. The executive board of the IMF will meet on July 12 to review the new arrangement. In a statement, Fitch said: "We expect the

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**Ishaq Dar lauds 'positive news'**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Global rating agency "Fitch" has upgraded Pakistan's long-term foreign-currency rating to Triple C (CCC) from IDR (Issuer Default Rating). In a tweet, Minister for Finance, Ishaq Dar said it is another positive news towards current economic revival journey. The Finance Minister also congratulated the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the nation, government allies and his economic team for

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ICCI Summit will help to promote tourism and business — Page 04

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Rybakina reaches last 8 as tearful Maia quits — Page 06

Mushahid lauds China Media Group for Pak-China friendship — Page 07

Russia confirms Putin met with Wagner chief — Page 08

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## Flavours of Japan SAKURA opens its doors in DHA, Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: Hashoo Hotels, a renowned name in the hospitality industry, proudly announced the grand opening of its celebrated Japanese restaurant, Sakura, in the vibrant heart of DHA, Karachi. Originally located within Pearl-Continental Hotel Karachi, this first standalone branch of Sakura in Phase 6, DHA, will be the fourth Sakura outlet in Pakistan, promising to continue its tradition of unmatched dining experience for all Japanese cuisine enthusiasts. The prestigious opening ceremony took place on 7th July and was graced by esteemed guests, including His Excellency, Mr. Yasushi Nakagawa, Acting Consul General of Japan to Karachi, renowned celebrities, notable socialites of Karachi, the management teams of Hashoo Hotels, Pearl-Continental Hotel Karachi and Sakura. Sakura's new establishment in DHA, Karachi, is poised to carry forward

the rich tradition of excellence and top-notch service that has become synonymous with its previous branches. Set to captivate diners with its tastefully adorned interior, a team of highly skilled chefs under the expertise of Japanese Chef Fumio Kikuta, and impeccable service, ensuring a seamless overall guest experience. The restaurant aims to become a beloved destination for seasoned food connoisseurs and casual diners. "Sakura's opening in DHA, Karachi marks an exciting milestone for Hashoo Hotels as we continue our commitment to providing exceptional culinary experiences to our esteemed guests," said Mr. Haseeb Gardezi, Chief Operating Officer, Hospitality and Education Division, Hashoo Group. "With its exquisite ambience, skilled chefs, and authentic Japanese flavours, Sakura is set to become a culinary destination of choice for food enthusiasts in Karachi." Spread over three floors and a seating capacity of 108, Sakura presents a modern

and stylish design, perfect for various occasions. Indulge in the flavours of udon noodles or savour the perfection of mouthwatering barbecued delights, expertly grilled over the traditional robata grill - a first in Pakistan. The captivating sushi bar showcases the artistry of the skilled chefs, who meticulously craft each sushi piece with precision, offering an immersive and fascinating dining experience. Guests can also witness the skilful mastery of Japanese grilling techniques at the live teppanyaki counter, transporting them to the extraordinary East. "Karachiites, prepare yourselves to embark on a gastronomic journey that will whisk you away to the enchanting land of Japan," said Chef Fumio Kikuta. "Sakura awaits you with open doors and a menu that promises to redefine your culinary expectations." Experience the unrivalled flavours and ambience of Sakura in DHA, Karachi. Discover the true essence of Japanese cuisine and immerse yourself in an extraordinary dining experience.



## Gandhara Symposium to promote interfaith harmony

ISLAMABAD: Head of the Prime Minister's Task Force for Gandhara Tourism Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani Monday said that Pakistan hosting the prestigious 3-days international "Gandhara Symposium which aims to promote peace, interfaith harmony and friendly atmosphere for the tourists in the country. "The objective of the symposium is to raise global awareness about the historical and cultural significance of the Gandhara civilization and Buddhist heritage in Pakistan", he said while talking to PTV news channel. He further explained that participants including journalists, representatives from civic society, and diplomats from numerous friendly nations are expected to grace the occasion. Replying to a question, he replied Pakistan for religious tourism is of vital importance and the present government was paying attention to promoting religious tourism in the country and effective steps are being taken in this regard. He said

the government is determined to promote tourism, especially historical sites, scenic beauty of the country, and religious tourism. To another question, he said it's being late to work on Pakistan's geography and the Buddhist community, adding, it will create job opportunities for the local people, and bring foreign exchange to the country struggling with severe economic crunch. He said the exchange of cultural and religious practices among countries now will be expected to foster interfaith understanding and strengthen bonds between nations. Earlier a group of young artists working on Gandhara called on Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, Chairman PM's Task Force on Gandhara Tourism here Monday at Sir Syed Memorial Museum to share their work on Gandhara and display the works during the 2-day Gandhara Symposium. Dr. Ramesh Kumar selected their work on Gandhara featuring paintings, sculptures in

diverse mediums and ideas exploring potential and opportunities for Gandhara tourism in Pakistan. He said these artists are our assets and we must create opportunities for them to polish their talent and attract young generation to the field of visual art. The Chairman PM Task Force said the works contributed by these budding and established artists will be displayed during the two-day Gandhara Symposium and after this grand event, we will hold a national level Gandhara Art Competition to involve art students and artists for promotion of Gandhara tourism at home and abroad through such competitions. "Pakistan has huge potential of tourism especially Gandhara tourism and we have rich heritage of Gandhara civilization that needs to be preserved and promoted and the Task Force on Tourism is endeavoring to protect and maintain these sites besides attracting both local and international tourists", he added.—APP

## River Chenab flows in medium flood:FFC

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) on Monday said that heavy rainfall in the catchment areas of River Chenab has resulted in flooding situation at its various control structures and it was running in "medium flood" in its reaches "Marala-Khaniki-Qadirabad". According to daily FFC report, all other major rivers of Indus River System (IRS) were flowing under "normal flow condition". Medium to high level flooding in river Ravi at Jassar (1st Control Station in Pakistan on River Ravi) and medium level flooding in its other Nullahs during the next 24 hours. Present combined live storage of the country's major reservoirs (Tarbela, Mangla & Chashma) is 8.279 MAF Vs 2.817 MAF of last year at the same date against total value of 13.443 MAF. According to Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Lahore, deep trough of Westerly Wave earlier over Northern parts of Pakistan lies over Kashmir & adjoining areas and is moving away in eastwards direction.

## PTA clarifies reports of Twitter blocking gov't official account

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has addressed recent claims circulating on social media and certain sections of the news media regarding Twitter's alleged blockage of access to the Government of Pakistan's official account in

Gilgit-Baltistan and the platform changing the region's location to parts of India. "PTA's thorough investigation has revealed that no such problem exists, contrary to the information being circulated" said a news release. In response to the claims, PTA conducted ex-

tensive on-ground testing to ascertain the veracity of the reports. The findings indicate that any sporadic issues encountered are limited to a very small number of iOS devices, affecting only a handful of users. These incidents are not of significant magnitude and do not reflect a widespread problem as suggested by the circulating news. Twitter's alleged blockage of the Government of Pakistan's official account in Gilgit-Baltistan and the alteration of the region's location to parts of India have been deemed baseless by the PTA. —DNA

## Allahyar and 100 Flowers of God holds a special show to a packed audience

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allahyar and the 100 Flowers of God, Pakistan's first-ever stereoscopic, 3D film directed by Uzair Zaheer Khan and produced by 3rd World Studios, released on Eid ulAzha, held a thunderous special show here today, for the benefit of media, socialites and celebrities. After a bustling Red Carpet which the cast of the

film and many more notable celebrities were spotted giving interviews and getting photographed, the audience were ushered into the cinema to view the film in 3D. The highly entertaining Pakistan action-packed animation film that boasts of an A-list cast received a standing ovation and a thunderous response from everyone present at the event. The audience was in awe of the amazing animation and cinematography,

and thoroughly enjoyed the first 3D Pakistani production. The film contains OSTs from Ali Zafar, SanamMarvi, Ali Noor, Grehan the band amongst others. Transporting viewers into a magical world filled with wonder, adventure, and valuable life lessons, the film follows the captivating journey of young Allahyar, a brave boy who must overcome his fears and join forces with an unlikely group of magical creatures to save



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has sent 1500 Kgs of special Bangladeshi mangoes as gift to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The mangoes were handed over by the Bangladesh High Commission to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. —DNA

## PHC seeks details of cases against PTI leadership

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court on Monday directed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to submit details of the cases and inquiries registered against PTI leaders Shehryar Afridi and former president of Peshawar City, Irfan Saleem. The bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Waqar Ahmed conducted a hearing in a case filed by Shah Faisal Atmanakhil and Arshad Ali Advocate on behalf of the petitioners. The lawyers of the petitioners requested the court to provide details of the cases and inquiries registered against the petitioners. The court ordered the provincial government to provide details of cases and inquiries on Tuesday, July 11 and adjourned the hearing. Meanwhile, five more arrested workers of PTI involved in vandalism on May 9 and 10 were presented before the anti-terrorism court. The inquiry officer of police told the court that the five accused including Usman, Khaista Gul, Mansoor, Zafar Khan and Nasir were allegedly involved in the May 9 and 10 vandalism and needed to be probed.—APP

## Nasir Shah inaugurates project for beautification of Shahr-e-Faisal

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, on Monday, along with Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab inaugurated a project of beautification and improvement of Shahr-e-Faisal. A series of development and beautification work would be carried out under an Rs.195.71 million project on the 18 km long major artery From Jinnah International Airport to Hotel Metropole for improving the environment, facilities for pedestrian movement, landscaping and artistic works and designs. Syed Nasir Hussain Shah while speaking at the occasion said that the project was aimed at the beautification of Shahr-e-Faisal so that visitors, both international and local, entering Karachi through the major artery have a better look at the metropolis. The minister said that the Sindh government under the leadership of CM Murad Ali Shah was working day and

night to materialise Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's vision of development, welfare and improvement. He said that all the concerned departments of the Sindh government and city government as well as the cantonments and CAA were on a single page and work with coordination to complete the project and achieve desired objectives. Nasir Shah said that the PPP Sindh government was carrying out hundreds of development projects across the province and particularly in the provincial capital to ensure better facilities for the people and to resolve their problems. Sindh government had completed record projects despite natural calamities and non-cooperation of the previous PTI federal government, he claimed adding that number of completed projects was higher than any other province of Pakistan. Nasir Shah said that all the concerned departments and civic agencies exhibited remarkable performance on Eid-ul-Azha and ensured cleanliness and sanitation in Karachi during all the days of

Eid. He appealed media to portray the positive developments taking place besides highlighting the issues and problems of the people so that a positive image of Karachi could be highlighted across the world. Responding to a media query, Nasir Shah said that the people of Karachi had given mandate to PPP in local government elections and now all the LG bodies across the province were empowered to carry out development works and resolve the problems of the public at the grass root level. All the civic bodies including KDA, LDA, MDA, and water board were under the supervision of Mayor Karachi to ensure better service delivery to people of the metropolis, he said adding that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has directed for empowerment of LG bodies and authority was delegated to elected representatives. Nasir Shah said that PPP has strengthened its vote bank in Sindh through record development and welfare works and in the next general elections PPP would not only sweep the entire Sindh province.

## Pakistan's active diplomacy vital to counter Indian onslaught

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Tehreek-e-Jawanan Pakistan (TJP) Mohammad Abdullah Hamid Gul on Monday said India was heavily investing in social media and disinformation campaigns to damage Kashmir Movement world over that demanded Pakistan to come up with an active diplomacy and long-term unanimous policy on Kashmir to counter Indian onslaught. After the August 5, 2019 revocation of Article 25-A and 370 of Indian Constitution, the Hindutva regime of Modi not only stripped off the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) but rather secured a huge victory for themselves on the diplomatic and political level, said the TJP Chairman in an exclusive chat with APP on Kashmir Movement in the aftermath of G-20 Summit. Gul claimed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, many critical things happened in the occupied territory of Kashmir as Indian occupant forces badly crushed the freedom struggle of the innocent Kashmiris with impunity under the garb of the pandemic lockdown. He said the Indian government had rolled out 4G internet services in the IIOJK which were previously banned in the occupied valley that indicated the confidence of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leadership in the fact that no major resistance could be offered by the innocent Kashmiris. He mentioned that undoubtedly India had identified the US weakness as other than India no one in the region was contesting China but rather they had congenial ties with its arch-rival. US-India trade volume, he said had exceeded US\$80 billion whereas India on the other hand had border skirmishes and territorial disputes with China creating a troubling situation for the latter. He alleged that diplomatically India had neutralised Pakistan as it had trampled the US sanctions against Iran by promoting an oil trade with it, supporting it in its thick and thin, managing good business with Russia and at the same time was a member of BRICS (the powerful grouping of the world's leading emerging market economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa aimed to promote peace, security, development and cooperation), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the number one ally of the US. Abdullah Gul suggested that since India had excelled in diplomacy over the years, Pakistan also needs to set its house in order and have clear priority goals to achieve success for the Kashmir cause. He demanded that Pakistan should have a separate Kashmir House not the one functioning in Islamabad but rather a separate centre based on the idea of exploring Kashmir's historic and cultural relations and developing video evidence archives to provide a proper platform for the youth to study and promote its separate identity for the understanding of the world. Kashmir, he said had its own unique food, culture, history, customs and traditions that existed for centuries. The TJP chairman regretted that the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Affairs founded to contest Kashmiris right to freedom at global foras was headed by a non-Kashmiri. "The government of Pakistan appoints that individual as Chairman of Kashmir Committee who is not a Kashmiri, neither speaks nor understands Kashmiri language and also has no idea about its history.—APP

## Lost and Found

I, Tayyab Riaz s/o Muhammad Riaz (CNIC-6110181860161) have lost my Vehicle Identity Card of Suzuki Cultus (AAW-314), Model-2016, Chassis No-SF410PK528431 and Engine No-PKF621565 at G-11 Islamabad. Finder may contact Mobile No-03120360519 Madina Town, Alipur Farash, Islamabad.

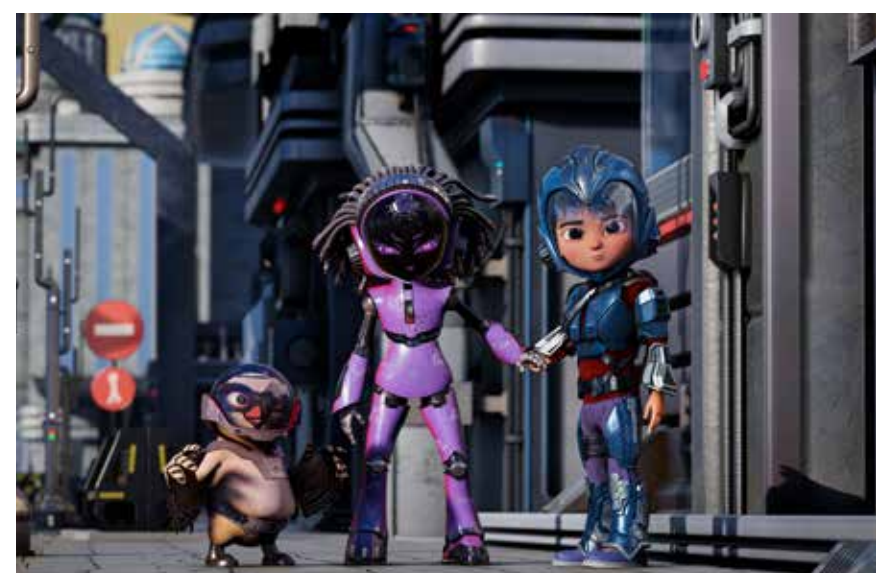


the beautiful enchanted valley from destruction. An exciting, fast-paced, adventure Allahyar ends up saving their planet from an imminent doom, caused by decades of deforestation and pollution and gives it to a clean renewable energy option. The other prominent themes explored in this story are social inequality and injustice, as well as strength in unity and the value of friendship. It is a film that celebrates life through relatable and relevant characters that are both visually appealing and culturally appropriate role-models for youngsters to idolize. Starring Iqra Aziz as Aira, Azfar Jafri as Hero, Anum Zaidi as Allahyar, Ali Zafar as Minister, Meera as Bush Princess, Humayun Saeed as Sage, Bushra Ansari as Aunty Liz, Nadia Jamil as Cameo and Azlan, the film lives up to its promise of quality acting along with action, drama and comedy, and what's more, social messages that were greatly appreciated by the audience. After the screening of the film, the cast and crew were available for questions and answers. Speaking on the occasion, Uzair Zaheer

Khan, the director/producer of the film, said "We are thrilled to unveil 'Allahyar and the 100 Flowers of God' as Pakistan's first-ever, 3D animated film. Produced

excellence, coupled with cutting-edge technology, has brought this imaginative tale to life in a visually stunning 3D animation format. We are proud to be

motion capture solution; Leisure Club, the official merchandise partners and McDonalds Pakistan amongst others. Set to captivate audience



with meticulous attention to detail and a passion for storytelling, this project is the culmination of years of hard work, creativity, and the tireless efforts of our talented team. As you saw, the studio's relentless pursuit of ex-

a part of Pakistan's growing animation industry and contributing to its development." Presented by 3rd World Studios and distributed by Mandviwalla Entertainment, the film's partners include Movella, the world's leading 3D

es with its enchanting story and groundbreaking visuals, this extraordinary cinematic creation marks a significant milestone for Pakistan's animation industry and is a must-watch for audiences round the world.



## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JULY

July 01/Japan
Self Defence Day
July 01/Singapore
Armed Forces Day
July 01 / Canada
National Day
July 01/Somalia
Independence Day
July 04/USA
Independence Day
July 05/Algeria
Independence Day
July 09/Argentine
Independence Day
July 09/Mongolia
Revolution Day
July 14/France
National Day
July 15/Brunei
Sultan's Birthday
July 21/Belgium
National Day
July 20/TRNC
Independence Day
July 23/Egypt
National Day
July 26/Cuba
National Day
July 26/Liberia
National Day
July 30/Morocco
National Day

### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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



### Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Enquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489  
CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



### Departments

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to Dr Syed Muhammad Anwar as the Alim Judge of the Federal Shariat Court, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. — DNA

## 48th INSC; Chairman PAEC inaugurates 'scientific spring'

INSC helps scientists to share knowledge and to learn from each other's experiences. PAEC has been regularly organizing the college every year since 1976. The venue of the college is the famous tourist spot of Nathiagali, which attracts a large number of participants from across the world

ISLAMABAD: The 48th International Nathiagali Summer College (INSC) on Physics and Contemporary Needs was inaugurated at National Center for Physics (NCP) Quaide-Azam University on Monday. The INSC was inaugurated by the Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Raja Ali Raza Anwar. In the 48th International Nathiagali Summer College, a distinguished group of 30 experts from developed countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, China, Russia, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Australia, Spain, Türkiye, Romania, and Chile has been invited to deliver lectures on crucial topics throughout the two-week event. Out of a pool of over 1,200 applicants, approximately 250 researchers from universities and research organizations across Pakistan have been carefully selected to participate in the College.

This diverse gathering promises to facilitate meaningful exchanges and foster valuable connections among the participants, enriching the scientific community in Pakistan. The scientific activities of the International Nathiagali Summer College (INSC) are designed to encompass a wide range of topics at the forefront of knowledge in Physics and related disciplines. Each year,

the College focuses on three to five subjects that are of current interest, emphasizing their applications and their relevance to the specific needs of developing countries. In the 48th college, the topics being covered include 'Advances in Plasma Physics and Allied Technologies', Semiconductor Materials and Devices, Quantum Optics and Devices, Advances in Pulsed Power Technology and its application and New Trends in High Energy Physics. In his inaugural speech, Chairman PAEC, Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwar underscored the significance of science and technology in the current era of rapidly expanding frontiers of knowledge. He emphasized that for a nation to achieve genuine progress and prosperity, it must prioritize the acquisition and effective utilization of scientific advancements. Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwar highlighted that the assimilation and intelligent application of technology serve as the driving force behind a modern economy. To commemorate the 75 years of science and technology in Pakistan since its independence, a series of special seminars were also arranged highlighting the development of four key technologies. Minent scientists of the country elaborated the development of these technologies to reflect on the progress made

and show case the achievements over the years. The keynote speakers included Dr. Ansar Pervez, former Chairman PAEC, who provided an extensive account of the progress and advancements in nuclear technology in Pakistan and Dr. N.M. Butt, former Director General, Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PIN-STECH), who offered detailed insights into the development of materials technology within the country. The other keynote speakers included Dr. Manzoor Ikram, Director, National Institute of Lasers and Optronics (NILOP), who shed light on the advancements in laser and quantum technology in Pakistan; and Dr. Shahid Mehmood Baig, Chairman, Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), who shared valuable information on the progress and breakthroughs in the field of biotechnology in Pakistan. The two-week scientific discourse activity referred as 'scientific spring' will conclude on July 22. The idea of holding the International Nathiagali Summer College on Physics and Contemporary Needs came from the distinguished Nobel Laureate, Professor Abdus Salam who emphasized the vital need of communication for transferring and sharing scientific knowl-

edge among the scientific community. INSC helps scientists to share knowledge and to learn from each other's experiences. PAEC has been regularly organizing the college every year since 1976. The venue of the college is the famous tourist spot of Nathiagali, which attracts a large number of participants from across the world. This unique opportunity enables young scientists hailing from developing countries to establish and renew connections with globally renowned scientists. Throughout its history, the INSC has attracted approximately 1,050 distinguished scientists and speakers, including 08 Nobel Laureates, from renowned universities, research centers, and industries in developed nations. These eminent individuals have delivered lectures at the INSC, sharing their valuable knowledge and insights. Their audience has comprised over 1,000 foreign scientists hailing from more than 75 developing countries, along with approximately 11,500 scientists from Pakistani research and development institutes and universities. The INSC has served as a platform for global collaboration and knowledge exchange, fostering a rich and diverse scientific community.—APP

## FAO delegation receives briefing about BISP's initiatives

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: A high level Mission from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), led by Mr. Benjamin Davis, Director of the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division at FAO HQ Rome, called on Secretary Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Mr. Amer Ali Ahmad, to discuss various initiatives of the programme. During the meeting, Secretary BISP provided an overview of the BISP and initiatives undertaken by it. The FAO delegation also included Mr. Mark Johnson, Social Protection Expert at

FAO HQ Rome, Mr. Bhalla Economist, also from FAO HQ Rome, Ms. Garima, Economist at FAO HQ Rome, and Mr. Aamer. The meeting is part of their 5-day visit to Pakistan aimed at identifying technical support from FAO on poverty graduation. Secretary BISP underscored the crucial role of the Benazir Income Support Programme in providing cash support to the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of Pakistani society. He highlighted the significance of the comprehensive dynamic database maintained by BISP, which serves as the foundation for effective programme's implementation. During the meeting, Sec-

## CDA holds public hearing at Citizen Club

ISLAMABAD: Environment Wing, Capital Development Authority organized an important public hearing regarding restoration of Ecosystem and elimination of wild mulberry and invasive plants at Gandhara Citizen Club, F-9 Park, Islamabad on Monday. In which Member Environment, DG Environment, DG Inspection, Director Regional and other CDA officers participated. In the public hearing, Private and Public institutions and people from different walks of life including Madam Nighat, Head of Allergy Center NIH, Islamabad, Waqar Zakaria, Member, Islamabad Wildlife Management Board, Muhammad Yaqoob, DIG Forest, Muhammad Munir Environmentalist, Dr. Parvez, Environmentalist and a large number of citizens also participated. On the occasion of the public hearing, the participants informed the citizens about invasive plants of different areas of Islamabad. Dr. Parvez, environmentalist, while speaking in the seminar said that tree of Paper Mulberry is rapidly lowering the groundwater level. Ms. Nighat Head of Allergy Centre, NIH, emphasized on allergies and conditions caused by poisonous plants and emphasized the importance of ecosystem, Environment experts explained ecological relationships between plants, animals and humans. The environment experts highlighted that paper mulberry, conocarpus, lantana and parthenium etc are invasive plants, which are causing economic and environmental damage. This includes the destruction of other species, the closure of water facilities and waterways, the destruction of wild life, the transfer of air borne diseases to human beings and other negative effects on human life. Later, the citizens who participated in the seminar were also given an opportunity to express their views. On this occasion, the importance and usefulness of increasing green areas and planting new plants was also highlighted, including eliminating environmental pollution.—DNA



## IWMB confiscates protected birds illegally sold at H-9 Sunday Bazaar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) successfully conducted a raid at illegal sale points of protected birds in the H-9 Sector of the federal capital and confiscated endangered birds of different species. The IWMB team comprising of Assistant Director Wildlife, Ayesha Shehzad, Aneeb Ahmed, Field Supervisor Zaheer Khan and others during a routine visit to Sunday Bazaar, H-9 Sector and other areas inspected various shops at selling birds and pets in the federal capital, the IWMB spokesperson told

APP while briefing on the enforcement efforts of the Board. He said the IWMB raid team carried out the operation across various areas of the federal capital specifically targeting bird shops. The raid team successfully confiscated Rose-ringed Parakeets, Alexandrine Parakeets, and Black Partridges, which are



protected species under wildlife conservation laws, he added. Furthermore, during the raid conducted by the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board's team,

two individuals were apprehended on the spot for their involvement in the illegal trade of protected bird species. A first information report (FIR) has been lodged against the accused, initiating legal proceedings to hold them accountable for their actions. The FIR stated that the two individuals had misbehaved with the raid team and made objectionable remarks against their effort to impede the action against them. The IWMB raid team had also confiscated many precious Markhor trophies, leopard hides, Indian Rock Python, and Green turtles and rescued many black bears during various raids in the past.

## Pakistan has vast investment opportunities

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin-ul-Haque has emphasized the abundant investment opportunities available in the country across multiple sectors, particularly in Information Technology (IT). In a statement, he said that the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MOITT) is committed to extending comprehensive support and facilities to businesses and investors in various domains, including Incubation Centers, Software Technology Parks, Mobile Manufacturing, and the Telecom sector. The minister's remarks highlight the government's recognition of the potential for growth and development in Pakistan's IT industry. With a skilled workforce, a growing digital infrastructure, and a conducive environment for technological innovation, Pakistan has become an attractive destination for investment in IT-related ventures. The MOITT, under Syed Amin Ul Haque's leadership, aimed to foster a favourable ecosystem for businesses and investors by providing necessary resources, infrastructure, and assistance. This includes establishing Incubation Centers that offer support, mentoring, and resources to startups, facilitating the growth of emerging technology companies. Additionally, Software Technology Parks will be established to create specialized zones equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, encouraging the growth of software development.—APP

## Eco Hike 2023 organized to promote Eco-friendly tourism

ISLAMABAD: With an aim to explore the untouched beauty of Kashmir and promote Eco-friendly tourism, the Bagh Alpine Club, in collaboration with MTBC successfully organized the Eco Hike 2023, with an aim to explore the untouched beauty of Kashmir and promoting Eco-friendly tourism. The event which was held under the supervision of Alpine Club of Pakistan witnessed the participation of approximately 70 individuals from all four provinces of Pakistan and various districts of Azad Kashmir, said a press release. The breathtaking Eco Hike took place along a challenging 40-kilometre trail in the Pir Panjal Range of Bagh District. Participants embarked on an exhilarating journey from Ganga Choti to Noor Gala, traversing through picturesque villages and rugged terrain. Overnight camping amidst the enchanting surroundings of Mastan Dhok added a unique cultural experience to the adventure. The primary objective of Eco Hike 2023 was to discover the verdant meadows and majestic mountains of Kashmir, which remain largely unexplored, while simultaneously promoting clean tourism and combating environmental pollution. The event aimed to raise awareness about the importance of preserving natural resources and fostering a sustainable tourism industry. To further strengthen the cause of Eco-friendly tourism, Bagh Alpine Club continues to organize such engaging activities that connect individuals with nature and raise environmental consciousness. The event was made possible through the sponsorship of MTBC, Pakistan's leading IT company.—APP

## Secy Housing Punjab visits city areas

RAWALPINDI: Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Punjab, Sajid Zafar Dall along with Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaqat Ali Chhatta and Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khurram Ali here on Monday visited different areas of Rawalpindi city and reviewed Safe City project. They visited various areas including Kutchery Chowk, Peshawar Road, IGP Road, Pirwadhai and Liaquat Bagh. The secretary in a briefing was informed that the security situation of Rawalpindi city would be improved further through Safe City project. The Safe City project would prove to be highly effective in combating crime, he said adding, the project would increase the sense of security among the citizens. The use of technology to improve security had become indispensable, the Commissioner said adding, the Safe City project was being launched in Rawalpindi and Murree. The project would improve the law and order situation, he added. The Safe City was a project to ensure public safety, the Commissioner said. The administration was fully mobilized regarding the Safe City project and all available resources would be utilized for the safety and protection of the citizens, he added.—APP



## Briefs

PSX stays  
bullish, gains  
377 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 377.82 points, a positive change of 0.85 percent, closing at 44,585.13 points against 44,207.31 points the previous trading day. A total of 440,221,059 shares were traded during the day as compared to 247,993,312 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.12.086 billion against Rs.8.512 billion on the last trading day. As many as 342 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 238 of them recorded gains and 82 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 22 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 28,194,334 shares at Rs.1.26 per share; JS Bank (R) with 17,939,500 shares at Rs.0.22 per share and Unity Foods Ltd with 20,659,220 shares at Rs.20.18 per share. Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.220.00 per share price, closing at Rs.6,675.00, whereas the runner-up was Raffhan Maize with an Rs.65.00 rise in its per share price to Rs.8,355.00. Shield Corporation witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.24.37 per share closing at Rs.300.53; followed by Siemens Pakistan with Rs.22.80 decline to close at Rs.716.00.—DNA

Over Rs 58b  
disbursed  
under Benazir  
Kafaalat so far

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has so far disbursed over Rs. 58 billion among more than 6.5 million beneficiary women across the country under the Benazir Kafaalat initiative. According to an official source, the disbursement of the fourth quarterly tranche of Benazir Kafaalat for the Financial Year-2022-23 is continuing successfully through banks' retailers. Under Benazir Kafaalat, nine million registered beneficiary families are entitled to a quarterly installment of Rs 9,000 per household. The BISP has already released over Rs. 81 billion to its partner banks; Bank Alfalah and Habib Bank Limited (HBL) for disbursement among the beneficiaries through their retail distribution network. Along with Benazir Kafaalat, Benazir educational scholarships are also being given out to the children of registered families, however, 70 percent attendance in the school is mandatory to receive educational scholarships. In case of any complaint, the beneficiaries can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil Offices or call on toll-free helpline number 080026477 of Benazir Income Support Program. The BISP messages are only sent from 8171 while messages from any other number should not be trusted.—APP

ICCI Summit will help to  
promote tourism and business

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the Islamabad Chamber has organized this first event of its kind in the northern regions, which will continue. He said that tourism is not only a means of earning dollars or improving the economy, but its promotion will highlight the positive image of Pakistan around the world

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of Turkey Malaysia and Syria in Pakistan have termed the first ICCI International Tourism Summit a great effort by the Islamabad Chamber for the promotion of tourism. According to the ambassadors, the beauty of the northern regions of Pakistan can attract tourists from all over the world. Attending the conference held in Skardu, one of the top tourist destinations in the world, is a very pleasant experience. The highest peaks of the northern regions of Pakistan can become the center of adventure tourism. Turkey's Ambassador Dr Mehmet Pachi said that like Turkey, Pakistan has great potential for tourism. Unfortunately, in the past, the security situation in Pakistan has been a hindrance to the development of tourism, but now things have improved. He said that the Islamabad Chamber has done its best by organizing the summit to present the northern regions to the world. I hope that its positive effects will come out soon. He said that Turkey is one of the



most famous tourist destinations in the world where millions of tourists visit every year. Turkey is ready to fully cooperate with its brother country Pakistan in this regard. He said that Skardu is one of the most beautiful places in the world. Turkey is working to equip the airport here with modern facilities. We are trying to start Turkish Airlines direct flight to Skardu soon. Discussions are ongoing in this regard as well. He said that adventure tourism is developing in the world. There

are many world highest peaks in the northern regions of Pakistan which can become a favorite place especially for European tourists. President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the Islamabad Chamber has organized this first event of its kind in the northern regions, which will continue. He said that tourism is not only a means of earning dollars or improving the economy, but its promotion will highlight the positive image of Pakistan around the world. He said

that the large number of foreign ambassadors participating in the conference is our success. The government should learn from the experiences of brother countries like Turkey and Malaysia to frame the policy. He said that the federal government, provincial government and related institutions need to work together for the promotion of tourism in the northern regions. Regarding the conference, Azhar bin Mazlan, the ambassador of Malaysia posted in Pakistan, said

that tourism is the most important part of Malaysia's economy. Pakistan has many places that can attract not only Malaysian tourists but also large number of tourists from other countries of the world. Malaysia will fully cooperate with Pakistan in this regard. ICCI Tourism Summit is the best step for branding the most beautiful northern regions of Pakistan. Such initiatives should continue. He said that the beauty of the northern regions surprised me. With very pleasant weather, high mountains and clean atmosphere, this region can prove to be a paradise for tourists. He said that Malaysia is starting direct flights with Pakistan. I would suggest that work should be done to bring Malaysian airlines to other tourist destinations including Skardu. Regarding the conference, Ambassador of Syria Dr. Ramez Alraee said that I am grateful to the Islamabad Chamber for giving me the opportunity to participate in the conference. The northern regions of Pakistan can be called the Switzerland of the East. Such a conference can lead not only to tourism but also to business development.

Workers  
remit \$27.024  
in FY 23

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The overseas workers' remittances during the fiscal year 2022-23 were recorded at US \$27.024 billion, according to the data issued by the State Bank of Pakistan on Monday. On a month-on-month basis, the overseas workers' remittances increased by 3.85 percent from \$2.102 billion in May 2023 to \$2.183 billion in June 2023. On a year-on-year basis, the overseas workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$ 2.183 billion in June 2023, posting a decrease of 21.72 percent as compared with the same month of the previous year's inflow of \$ 2.789 billion. During FY 2021-22, the workers' remittances were recorded at US \$ 31.278 billion which show a decline of 13.06 percent as compared to the remittances of during the period under review. According to the remittances' inflows during June 2023 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$515.1 million), the United Arab Emirates (\$334.7 million), the United Kingdom (\$343 million) and the United States of America (\$272.3 million). During the corresponding month, the overseas Pakistanis living in Bahrain sent \$37.4 million, from Kuwait \$70.5 million, from Qatar \$76.9 million whereas \$87.2 million were dispatched from Oman.

Zong 4G and Sehat Kahani join  
forces to empower Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecommunications operator, is pleased to announce a new chapter in its partnership with Sehat Kahani, a pioneering telemedicine platform. The new collaboration was launched during a contract signing ceremony on the 7th of June in Islamabad. The contract signing between Zong 4G and Sehat Kahani marks an important milestone in their partnership. The ceremony was graced by the presence of Dr. Sara Saeed Khurram, CEO of Sehat Kahani, and representatives from Zong 4G. Through this collaboration, Zong 4G and Sehat Kahani aim to extend the reach of telemedicine ser-

VICES across Pakistan. Telemedicine has emerged as a game-changer in healthcare, allowing patients to consult healthcare professionals remotely, thereby reducing the barriers of distance and time. By harnessing Zong 4G's robust network infrastructure and Sehat Kahani's innovative telemedicine platform, individuals in even the most remote regions will have access to quality healthcare. This year, Sehat Kahani and Zong 4G plan to increase awareness on a diverse selection of topics in the area of health and mental well-being. Their focus will be on Oncology, water & air borne diseases, mental well-being, and lastly, mother and child health. Zong 4G and Sehat Kahani have a long-standing relationship, having previously collabo-

rated on various sustainability initiatives. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the two organizations joined forces to provide free online consultations, ensuring access to healthcare during challenging times. Furthermore, in the wake of the devastating floods that hit Pakistan in 2022, Sehat Kahani, with unwavering support from Zong 4G, established medical relief camps in the affected areas. This initiative showcased their commitment to delivering healthcare services to those in dire need. Dr. Sara Saeed Khurram expressed her enthusiasm by speaking about the partnership, saying, "We are thrilled to partner with Zong 4G to further strengthen our mission of providing accessible healthcare to all

Pakistanis. This collaboration will enable us to expand our telemedicine services and significantly impact the lives of millions." In his remarks, Zong 4G's official spokesperson stated, "We have been increasingly proud of Sehat Kahani in its past efforts in the areas of digital medicine and it gives us great pleasure to join hands again to revolutionize the healthcare landscape of Pakistan." The partnership between Zong 4G and Sehat Kahani holds immense potential to transform healthcare accessibility and delivery in Pakistan. Through their combined efforts, the two organizations strive to empower communities, improve healthcare outcomes, and create a brighter and healthier future for all.

CDNS achieve Rs  
1.6 trillion targets  
through fresh bonds

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year from July 1st to June 30th, 2022-23. "The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2022-23) which will "promote the savings culture in the country," the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Monday. In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture, he said. Responding to a question, he said the CDNS surpassed its annual target in the previous fiscal year and set a historic record of Rs 1,250 billion in savings till June 30, 2022. It had set an annual gross receipt target of Rs 980 billion from July 1 to June 30 of the previous financial year 2020-21 to promote savings in the country. The senior official said the CDNS had set a Rs 250 billion annual collection target from July 1 to June 30 for the year 2020-2021 as compared to Rs 352 billion during the same period for the previous year (2019-20) to enhance savings in the country. The CDNS had set Rs 352 billion annual collection target for the year 2019-20 as compared to Rs 350 billion for the previous year (2018-19), he added. Replying to another query, he said CDNS had reviewed and set a target of Rs 70 billion in the fiscal year (2022-23) for Islamic investment to introduce the new products in the market. In the current financial year, CDNS would achieve the investment target of Rs 70 billion, he maintained. Replying to a question, he said, "The CDNS has digitized National Savings Certificates (NSCs) for the convenience of consumers and to modernize the institutional process." He said the CDNS and Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDCP) signed an agreement to start a pilot project for the digitization and dematerialization of NSCs last week. The senior official said, "This will increase investment in National Savings and increase consumers' confidence." He said, "This agreement between National Savings and CDCP is a part of the automation and digitization of the institution."—DNA

Four drug  
peddlers  
netted

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers conducted raids in different areas and rounded up four accused on recovery of over five kg charras. According to a police spokesman, Airport, Rattaamral, Pirwadhai and Sadiqabad police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up Sajid Hussain with 2400 grams charras, Imran for having 1050 grams charras, Hamid Iqbal for carrying 1220 grams charras and Hassan Ahmed on recovery of 1013 grams charras. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other law-breakers, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Attorney General for Pakistan, Mansoor Usman Awan, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

## Gilgit Baltistan' Budget

WAJHULLAH FAHIM

The government of Gilgit Baltistan presented its provincial budget for the fiscal year 2023-24. The total outlay of the budget is more than PKR 116 billion, out of which 74 billion has been allocated for non-development expenditure and more than 28 billion allocates for development expenditure. During a budget speech finance ministry, Javed Manwani mentioned this region depends upon federal government grants for its development and non-development expenditure but if we look at the budget we can observe such constraints have not been considered during budget formation and allocation. In the ADP of fiscal year 2022-23 for the educational sector sixty-seven developmental schemes were added but still, the majority of them are not completed. For the fiscal year 2023-24 Rs1.57 billion has allocated for the development of the education sector and the number of projects is seventy but the majority of previous year development schemes of the education sector have yet not been completed. During the budget speech finance ministry said the government of Gilgit Baltistan spend Rs160 million for treatment of people in different hospitals in Pakistan and more than 90 million for hiring

highly qualified medical specialized doctors of Shifa international hospital in Gilgit Baltistan. But still, people are facing health issues because this region is a mountainous area and most places do have not basic health facilities. For the fiscal year 2023-24, only Rs 1.37 billion has allocated for the health sector. If the government of Gilgit Baltistan is providing health expenditure from the CM health endowment fund then why private hospital doctors are appointing in Gilgit Baltistan? Before such intervention on emergency basic health care centres need to be established in flug far areas of Gilgit Baltistan. Energy crises both in the summer and winter seasons become a prominent issue for this region. Besides allocation of billion rupees in federal PSDP, the GB government has allocated Rs 4.17 billion for the power sector. Such allocation has been made for hydro-power generation since most hydro-projects are constructed on streams without assessing feasibility reports hydro-power projects are not sustainable. Other renewable energy sources such as wind and solar are ignored in this budget also. Both national and international reports have declared this area is highly prone to climate change. But in the budget, this challenge is completely ignored. In non-development expenditure, eighty million has been allocated for post-dis-

aster management. Most developed nations allocate funds for pre-disaster but unfortunately for natural disasters, a single development project has not been included in the budget. As Gilgit Baltistan has become a famous destination for both local and foreign tourists. In the budget, Rs170 million is allocated to the Ministry for Tourism, culture and youth affairs. This allocation shows how much government is serious about sustainable tourism and such little amount will use for different cultural and tourism-related events. Climate changes and the unplanned influx of tourism is the biggest threat to the future of the region but ignorance of provincial government raising questions about the credibility government. In the budget, the government set its priorities for economic development such as revenue generation, community development, and employment opportunities. In Gilgit Baltistan now the majority of families directly or indirectly depend upon the tourism sector for their earnings. Many research reports mentioned focusing on other sectors such as crops, fisheries, minerals and mines due to seasonal tourism in the region. According to the official reports of the fisheries department of Gilgit Baltistan, this sector generated more than Rs400 million revenue per year and the GB government signed with the Chinese government for exporting

cherry, but in the budget, Rs500 million has allocated for development crops, livestock, and fisheries. As this area is mountainous areas minerals are present abundantly and proper focusing on this sector can help in generating revenues and employment opportunities which can stimulate economic growth. In the budget, this sector has been neglected. In short such type of budget cannot improve economic growth in the region. Sectorial allocation needs to be revisited. Before addition of new projects and schemes, proper evaluation of old projects needs to start and bring reforms in short-comings so that targeted goals and objectives can achieve. In the power sector, road and communication where the federal government allocates funds via PSDP, they should have small share in the provincial budget. In the budget due to financial constraints new induction in the public sector has been banned, then why fund has allocated for revenue authority? Why taxes are not purposed for business elites? Why do forestry and fisheries not show as non-taxes revenue? If a financial constraint is a genuine issue, why people are appointed coordinators of CM? Budget should help in promoting economic activities and also justify acts of the government.

—The writer is MPhil Public Policy PIDE Islamabad

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## NATO should say no to expansion

It was expected that the leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would approve the proposal to open a liaison office in Japan at their upcoming summit, which is being held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on Tuesday and Wednesday. But France appears to have put a spoke in the wheel, as French President Emmanuel Macron insists that its expansion to the Asia-Pacific would risk shifting the alliance's remit too far from its original North Atlantic focus. There are many who share the same view, especially as NATO is trying to get a foot through the door in Asia after it provoked the Ukraine conflict with its eastward expansion in Europe. Arguably, it is that conflict that has revived the transatlantic alliance, which, prior to the outbreak of the hostilities in Ukraine, Macron described as "brain dead". How can NATO, an organization that has helped Washington shatter the peace in Europe, contribute to safeguarding peace and stability in Asia? Particularly when NATO's creep into the region is clearly targeting China, which NATO now claims poses "systemic challenges" to it. Such rhetoric could have come straight from Washington's mouth, showing who is in the driving seat as the military juggernaut continues its relentless push eastward. Many countries in Asia have voiced concerns and objections to NATO's plan, as they know well that the organization's presence no matter how seemingly innocuous would be a harbinger of trouble. By not allowing their differences to escalate into acrimony, Asian countries have been able to maintain peace and stability in the region, cultivating a conducive environment for the region's strong development momentum in the past decades. NATO's move to establish a liaison office in Japan is an initial foray into the region that bodes ill, no matter how it is sliced. When NATO leaders meet this week in Vilnius, they should know the world wants them to send a positive message that the organization will contribute to resolving differences, de-escalating tensions and calming the crisis in Ukraine, not simply an announcement that it will unconditionally follow Washington's lead by getting itself in a position to start asserting itself in Asia. Instead of looking to Japan for a fuse-laying Far East invite, the other leaders of NATO should concentrate on what is happening in Europe and use their summit as an opportunity to forge agreement on swapping their one-sided military-support approach for a concerted stance on promoting peace talks, even if it gets up the US president's nose. They should recognize that Washington's decision to send cluster munitions to Ukraine shows the US' war lust continues unabated.



## Cluster munitions move a nasty piece of business

Well, well, well. On Feb 28 last year, then White House press secretary Jen Psaki said that the use of cluster munitions "would potentially be a war crime". But then, such things have rarely troubled the White House, which considers the United States to be a law unto itself. It was demonstrated once again by US President Joe Biden, who approved the inclusion of cluster munitions in the US' latest \$800 million military assistance package to Ukraine. Biden is on a visit to the United Kingdom en route to Vilnius, Lithuania, where he is due to deliver a major speech on Wednesday, "highlighting how the United States, alongside our allies and partners, is supporting Ukraine, defending democratic values, and taking action to address global challenges" at the 74th NATO Summit. But even the UK, a normally unquestioningly loyal retainer of the US, has qualms about this latest support. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said, tactfully, on Saturday that the UK is a signatory to the treaty banning cluster munitions, and "discourages" their use. Spanish Defense Minister Margarita Robles was even more forthright, saying that while respecting the decisions of a sovereign country, Spain did not support the US decision to send cluster bombs to Ukraine, "we are against sending cluster bombs". And rightly so, as Gilles Carbonnier, vice-president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said at a conference in Switzerland last year: "Cluster munitions remain one of the world's most treacherous weapons." That is because, "they kill and maim indiscriminately". The munitions also have a high failure rate when deployed, and the unexploded munitions can be detonated by civilian activity years or even decades later. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen warned on Telegram that the munitions could pose "a great danger to Ukrainians for many years, or up to a hundred years". His words are both poignant and pertinent as Cambodia was a victim of the US' profligate use of cluster bombs in the 1970s. It was because of the risk to civilians that much of the world has banned the use of these weapons through the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which also prohibits the stockpiling, production and transfer of them. In all, 123 nations have joined that convention, although the US, Ukraine, Russia and 71 other countries have not. US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said at the White House's daily media briefing on Friday that US officials "recognize the cluster munitions create a risk of civilian harm". But he added that Ukraine was running out of artillery and needed "a bridge of supplies" while the US ramps up domestic production. For the US, Ukraine is its proxy in efforts to weaken Russia, and it is clearly willing to bleed Ukraine to the last drop of blood to achieve that objective. Not to mention that the US has a stockpile of cluster munitions that it no longer uses after phasing them out in 2016, so it is a convenient, if unscrupulous, way to offload them. Whichever way you look at it, it is a dirty and despicable deed.

## New IMF deal: A slushy walkthrough!

Air Commodore Khalid Iqbal (Retd)

IMF had asked Pakistan for assurances of \$6 billion for external payments. However, Pakistan has gone an extra mile to give assurances of \$8 billion. China will provide \$3.5 billion to Pakistan, of which Islamabad would keep \$2 billion in deposit, while the commercial banks of Beijing will provide the country with \$1.5 billion. Moreover, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will provide \$2 billion and \$1 billion, respectively. Pakistan will also receive \$500 million from the World Bank in addition to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's \$250 million.

After nine arduous months of ping-pong with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Pakistan has secured a Standby Arrangement (SBA) of a paltry \$3 billion spread over nine months. During these negotiations, Pakistan kept teetering on the brink of default – an unprecedented agony for each and every Pakistani. Courtesy of political uncertainty, this SBA appears wobbly even before it could take effect. Moreover, the government's commitment to continually implement reforms will be tested as it goes into elections that are due by October 2023. Fitch Ratings and Moody's Investors Service have warned of continued threats to Pakistan's financial sustainability despite the SBA lifeline from the IMF due to its \$25 billion debt liability during the ongoing financial year. According to the Bank of America Securities, Pakistan is facing an acute liquidity crisis in debt management, directly undermining its financial stability. With the newfound \$3 billion, Pakistan's total IMF borrowing will be \$10.4 billion and it will become the fourth largest IMF borrower in the World. This calls for pulling the country out of the debt trap instead of trumpeting the approval of SBA. Until a post-SBA programme is agreed upon, Pakistan's ability to secure loans from other bilateral and multilateral partners on an ongoing basis over the longer-term will be severely constrained. As of now, the SBA seems to be busting at the seams. The IMF has objected over the recent supplementary grants and has demanded that the parliament should not approve these. The international lender has also pointed out that taxes have only 10 percent share in the economy – which is the lowest in the world – and its share should be jacked up to 13 percent to control deficit. It has further emphasised that the incumbent, as well as the caretaker and the upcoming elected governments, should faithfully follow the provision of \$3 billion SBA for nine months. Pakistan's sovereignty is thinning out as IMF's Pakistan Mission is directly engaging

major political parties for their assurance to implement the SBA after the elections. Luckily, all prospective winners of the polls have assured their support. However, Michael Gahler, the head of the Election Observation Mission of European Parliament, has said that they see no signs of election in Pakistan this year. IMF had asked Pakistan for assurances of \$6 billion for external payments. However, Pakistan has gone an extra mile to give assurances of \$8 billion. China will provide \$3.5 billion to Pakistan, of which Islamabad would keep \$2 billion in deposit, while the commercial banks of Beijing will provide the country with \$1.5 billion. Moreover, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will provide \$2 billion and \$1 billion, respectively. Pakistan will also receive \$500 million from the World Bank in addition to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's \$250 million. The \$350 million pledged during the Geneva Conference will also be handed over. It is alarming that the government has set a target to raise a record high debt-financing of Rs11.10 trillion from domestic banks in the first three months of the current fiscal year. The funds will primarily be used to pay off maturing old debt and partially finance the large fiscal deficit. The debt servicing costs alone exceed Rs7.3 trillion (\$25.6 billion), representing half of the total budget spending and around 80 percent of the country's expected tax revenues. Pakistan first entered an IMF programme in 1958. It has since gone back to the lender another 22 times. It is important to note that in the last programme, or in around two dozen programmes prior to that, structural reforms were conspicuous by their absence. This is not the first time that we are in such a financial mess. This has happened in the 1990s, 2000s, 2010s, and in the 2020s, and it has been a protracted collective failure of national leadership across the board. No government was able to withstand the pressure of

traders, feudal lords and real estate tycoons. Hence, tax net could not be broadened. This, in turn, created a hazard, wherein the compliant taxpayers continue to bear the cost of non-performance by the country's economic handlers. For the past three decades, various governments declared their intent a number of times to broaden the tax base by bringing those who do not pay their fair share into the tax net. However, nothing happened. Securing short-term relief is not an end in itself; rather actual work has only begun. The economy cannot be fixed by just continuing to be in an IMF programme; it requires political will to take bold decisions. Nations never develop on loans as conditional loans impinge upon political and economic sovereignty of the country besides compounding woes of the masses. The people of Pakistan have had a bitter taste of such programmes as these were accompanied by preconditions that increased inflation to unbearable limits without improvement in the overall capacity and capability of the country to repay loans. We are certainly in for a long haul. The onus lies on the present as well as future governments to enact and implement much-needed fundamental reforms to rescue the country from a perpetual economic turmoil. A collective national effort extending to 10-15 years is essential to re-rail the economy. Pakistan's deliverance from loans requires a vision, unity, hard work and sacrifice. The national leadership needs to stand up to the occasion and inculcate a national resolve of "never again". After the signing ceremony of the SBA, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif represented the national sentiment in his comment: "I pray that this is the last IMF deal". But this is easier said than done. Air Commodore Khalid Iqbal (Retd) is Director National Security at Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore Pakistan. He may be reached at info@cassilhr.cass

## World will be forced to grapple with coming Palestinian storm

Baria Alamuddin

This is collective punishment in its purest form. In a vicious practice which has become horrifically normalized, hundreds of armed vigilante settlers – the radicalized, illegal occupiers of Arab land – went on the rampage through Palestinian towns, terrorizing families and attacking citizens. Burnt and destroyed buildings included a school and mosque, and 310 settler attacks on Palestinians were monitored in just 24 hours. At least 155 Palestinians have been killed so far in 2023. There has also been a spike in Israeli deaths – giving

As always, the punitive methods Israel's armed forces deployed against Palestinian civilians serve only to create the conditions they pretend to address. This is how you create new generations of angry young men with nothing to lose, drive armed groups into the arms of Iran, and cultivate children whose overriding desire is to avenge mothers, uncles or sisters. Sadeel Naghniyah, 15, was shot dead by an Israeli sniper in Jenin last month. Her father said: "My son is 9 years old and he sees his sister killed. He sees death and destruction around him. What will that teach him? To resist." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his generals know this. But how else do you appease your extreme-right base, or take the wind out of the sails of Israel's massive anti-Netanyahu protest movement? Netanyahu is Israel's arsonist-in-chief – deliberately igniting inferno after inferno in the exalted cause of his personal political survival. Western politicians also know this, but lamely issue anger-inducing statements about supporting "Israel's security and right to defend its people," aware that Israel is shooting itself in the foot by fueling out-of-control vicious circles of reciprocal provocation. Britain's Foreign Office feebly muttered that Israel's invasion of Jenin "must respect the principle of proportionality." Would such a ludicrously out-of-touch statement have seemed appropriate as Putin obliterated Bakhmut? And what is Britain planning to do after Israel so spectacularly failed to observe any such "proportionality"? Palestinians are scarcely accorded the right to exist, let alone defend themselves. Life was already nearly impossible in Palestinian cities where expanding populations live on top of each other, as Israel inexorably gobbles up new swaths of land. In Jenin's densely populated refugee camp, 15,000 people are crammed into a square half-kilometer. Outsiders fail to recognize how apocalyptically destructive Israel's incursions are. The Jenin attack was the largest Israeli military operation in the occupied West Bank since September 2000, during the Second Intifada. They deployed a heavily armed brigade-sized force of up to 2,000 troops, with armed drones, tanks and armored bulldozers. Tarmac

roads were ripped to shreds by those bulldozers in the search for roadside bombs, streets were strewn with burnt-out family cars, multistorey buildings were smoking wrecks, thousands of people were displaced, hundreds injured, and 12 dead. Nablus suffered a comparable fate. This is collective punishment in its purest form. In a vicious practice which has become horrifically normalized, hundreds of armed vigilante settlers – the radicalized, illegal occupiers of Arab land – went on the rampage through Palestinian towns, terrorizing families and attacking citizens. Burnt and destroyed buildings included a school and mosque, and 310 settler attacks on Palestinians were monitored in just 24 hours. At least 155 Palestinians have been killed so far in 2023. There has also been a spike in Israeli deaths – giving the lie to Netanyahu's assertions that Israelis can enjoy a calm and secure environment when all efforts toward peace have been thwarted. Is it any surprise that many Israeli dual nationals are already departing? Even Netanyahu acknowledged that this was just "the beginning of regular incursions." The epidemic of violence is again spreading to Gaza, where there was a tit-for-tat exchange of fire, including Israel hitting a weapons manufacturing facility. Hostilities across the Israel-Lebanon border in recent days are a further wake-up call that the region is unraveling into anarchy. These territories that Netanyahu attacks with impunity are not his to pacify. Palestinians have repeatedly demonstrated willingness to share their historic homeland, but Netanyahu's farthest-of-far-right fascist allies are hellbent on stealing it all: expediting construction of thousands of additional illegal West Bank homes, annexing huge chunks of territory, and seeking to entrench fully fledged apartheid as an irreversible reality. After a recent fact-finding mission, representatives of the Elders, an international NGO of senior statesmen and peace advocates formed by Nelson Mandela in 2007, bluntly stated that Netanyahu's government had demonstrated "an intent to pursue permanent annexation rather than temporary occupation, based on Jewish supremacy," damningly adding that they had heard "no detailed rebuttal of the evidence of apartheid."

On how many occasions during 1990s and 2000s peace processes have Western leaders complacently lectured audiences that regional peace was impossible until the Palestinian issue was resolved? But under Donald Trump and now Biden, the attitude prevailed that Israel could be allowed to throttle Palestinians out of existence – as long as they did it quietly. The war crimes of Jenin demonstrate how wrong-headed this was, even though we are only witnessing the tip of the iceberg of the forthcoming cycle of violence, which will suck in all those nations which that are affected by Middle East security whether they like it or not. We can celebrate the vigorous manner in which the Western world has mobilized support for Ukraine, while also asking: why only Ukraine? Are Ukrainians the only nation who deserve support in resisting brutal occupation, relentless bombing of their cities, and imperialist oppression? Why are Ukrainian soldiers daily championed in the Western media as heroic freedom fighters, while any Palestinian youth who picks up a rock is a "terrorist" who deserves to die? Are human rights, self-determination, and democratic freedoms not supposedly universal values? Palestine is not an "Arab" or "Muslim" issue, but a global cause that strikes at the core of our humanity. If we desire a world in which wars of aggression against the people of Ukraine and Taiwan are unthinkable, we must start by unambiguously regarding the occupation of any nation's land as illegal, carrying an obligation of action to redress these historic crimes. But all those global governments who genuinely don't give two hoots for justice are once again going to be compelled to grasp the Palestinian conundrum with both hands, if they have any desire at all to stem the oncoming tsunami of violence. Hopes and expectations for our futures – to be doctors, lawyers, artists or musicians – are what provide our lives with purpose and structure. After being brutalized from birth, enduring a thousand humiliations, indignations and tragedies, is it any shock that Palestine's younger generation, having had all other possibilities closed to them, seek out the single avenue that Netanyahu has left open – as freedom fighters and liberators of their lands?

—Courtesy: Arab News



## Briefs

## PM directs to ensure safety...

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was gauged in the Chenab river at Khanki and Qadirabad. "However, the rest of the rivers are gauged at normal ranged water flow." Naqvi added that the Punjab government was taking updates from irrigation and other departments after every six hours. Separately, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stressed that the government and relevant institutions will have to work together to trigger the second agriculture revolution in the country. Addressing the National Seminar on Agriculture and Food Security is being held at Jinnah Convention Centre in Islamabad today, he said the Gulf Countries are ready to invest in Green Pakistan Initiative which will enhance our agriculture productivity and equip it with the latest technology. He said the initiative is likely to attract investment to the tune of thirty to fifty billion dollars in the next four to five years. He said this will also provide job opportunities to four million people. He credited Army Chief General Asim Munir for envisioning this initiative. He was confident that our agriculture economy will revive in the next two years. The Prime Minister assured to extend full facilitation to the farmers in order to bolster agri productivity. He said it is the responsibility of the government to provide conducive environment to the farmers through provision of quality seeds, pesticides and fertilizers. The farmers should also get due price of their crops. He said the country witnessed record wheat production this year as the government enhanced the wheat support price. He expressed the confidence that the cotton crop will also see a major boost because of increase in its minimum support price.

## Over 200 rescued in Shakargarh

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan's eastern neighbour released at least 185,000 cusecs of water in River Ravi on Sunday. Resultantly, excessive water from India reached Kartarpurjassar through NainaKot and is expected to reach Lahore via Shahdara in the next 48 hours. Meanwhile, there is flooding in River Ravi, Nullah Baean and other tributaries. The administration, as per officials, is on alert in the districts adjacent to River Ravi and Chenab, while relief camps have been set up in various districts in view of the floods. According to Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), there is moderate flooding in Chenab at Marala as well as Shakargarh and Nullah Baean, low-level flood in Khanki and Kadirabad in Chenab, while the flow of water in other rivers, including Ravi is normal. The flow of water in all rivers, barrages, dams and canals is being continuously monitored. The control room, meanwhile, is monitoring the entire situation in Punjab. Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday said there is no flood in the province. India, he added, had released the same amount of water in Ravi last year, which was 31,000 cusecs when it reached Lahore.

## Courts extend PTI chief's interim bail

FORM PAGE 01

Imran today, out of which two had been filed at Lahore's Khanna police station and one at Islamabad's BharaKahu police station. Separately, Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADS) Farrukh Fareed presided over a hearing on two cases registered against the PTI chairman at Islamabad's Shahzad Town police station. At the outset of this hearing, Barrister Salman also informed this judge that his client had joined the investigation in a total of seven cases, including two of Shahzad Town. He also told the court that Imran had to appear at the IHC as well, adding that there were "nine new cases".

## Rybakina reaches last 8 as tearful Maia quits

Rybakina had just broken for a 3-1 lead in the first set when the Brazilian 13th seed winced in pain and clutched her back after netting a backhand

LONDON: Holder Elena Rybakina was given an easy ride into the Wimbledon quarter-finals after Brazilian opponent Beatriz Haddad Maia retired midway through the first set with a back injury. Rybakina had just broken for a 3-1 lead in the first set when the Brazilian 13th seed winced in pain and clutched her back after netting a backhand. Haddad Maia called on the physio and kept grimacing as her back was being manipulated courtside. After leaving Centre Court to receive further treatment, she limped back in an attempt to resume the match following a 10 minute interval. However, the way she stiffly avoided bending over to pick up her racket from her chair to resume the contest signalled that all was not well and that the match might soon be over. The 27-year-old Brazilian tearfully went through the motions for one more game, grabbing her back after every point as she struggled to move around or make contact with the ball. Less than a minute later, a distraught Haddad Maia clutched her eyes in an attempt to stop the tears rolling down her face. After a quick exchange with her team in the players' box, the 27-year-old shook her head to confirm she could no longer continue and gingerly walked up to

Rybakina to share an embrace. "It's never easy to finish a match like this and I hope it's nothing really serious," said 24-year-old Moscow-born Kazakh Rybakina, who will next face either two-time champion Petra Kvitova or last year's runner-up Ons Jabeur. "It was really unlucky for Beatriz and I hope she gets better," added the third seed. The abrupt ending denied Roland Garros semi-finalist Haddad Maia of a chance to notch up a hat-trick of wins over Rybakina and also ended her hopes of becoming the first Brazilian woman in 55 years to reach the last eight of the grasscourt major. Win or lose, Victoria Azarenka knew here would be no hand-shake offered by Ukrainian rival Elina Svitolina at the end of Sunday's Wimbledon contest that had been billed as the 'battle of the mums'. What the Belarusian did not expect was to be booed off court after she had played her part in entertaining the Court One crowd for close to three hours in an exhilarating contest that needed a third-set match tiebreak to decide

the winner. A puzzled Azarenka was left bemused and she struggled to face the cheering fans, she banged both her fists together above her head and departed the arena with the boos still ringing around her ears. Calling the reaction "unfair", Azarenka did not want to make a big deal of it, realising that perhaps the crowd were not aware as to why she did not offer to shake hands with Svitolina at the end of the fourth round match. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with Moscow using Belarus as a staging ground for what it calls a "special military operation", Svitolina has stuck to her stance of not shaking hands with players from both countries. Asked in a press conference if she felt that she was being victimised by the crowd, Azarenka snapped: "Victim? Victim that

somebody didn't shake my hand? Please. I think we've got bigger..." "I can't control the crowd. I'm not sure that a lot of people were understanding what's happening, so... It's probably been a bit of Pimm's throughout the day." No matter how harshly she felt done by the crowd, she refused to blame Svitolina for her predicament. "I know Elina for a very long time. I've always had a good relationship with her. And the circumstances, it is what it is, and that's it," said Azarenka, who turned up for her press conference hiding her eyes behind a pair of dark sunglasses. "I haven't done anything wrong, but keep getting different treatment sometimes. "She doesn't want to shake hands with Russian, Belarusian people. I respected her decision. What should I have done? Stayed and waited? "There's no thing that I could do that would have been right, so I just did what I thought was respectful towards her decision. But this conversation about shaking hands is not a life-changing conversation." While it seemed everyone was only focusing on the events that unfolded after Svitolina had sealed her place in the last eight with an ace, Azarenka felt the on-court duel deserved more plaudits. - Agencies



## Pakistan win Gamers8 Tekken 7 Nations Cup in Saudi Arabia

## SPORTS DESK

RIYADH: Pakistan team, comprised of Arsalan Ash, Khan, and Atif Butt, defeated South Korea in the grand final to win Gamers8 Tekken 7 Nations Cup in Saudi Arabia on Sunday. The Pakistani trio stunned South Korea and won the grand final by 3-2 to win the tournament. After Arsalan lost the middle game, Atif made an impressive comeback to hand a convincing victory to Pakistan. The champion team Pakistan bagged prize money of \$500K. It must be noted here that a prize pool of \$1 million was kept for the championship. On the convincing victory, the Pakistani players gathered massive praise and recognition on social media. Earlier, Pakistan outclassed South Korea 3-0 in the upper-bracket final. The thrilling clash ended with Pakistan's Atif winning the boss match 3-2 against Korea's star player Knee. South Korea, after losing upper-bracket final against Pakistan, met Japan in the lower-bracket final. Korea beat Japan to once again lock

horns with Pakistan, this time in the grand final. Arslan is known as one of the best Tekken players in the world, who has won three EVO titles winner in Tekken 7. He won the EVO Japan 2019 Championship and Evo Championship Series 2019, becoming the only player to have won both at that time. He was also awarded the best E-Player of

2019 by EPSN. Arslan is also a CEO 2021 Champion and the 2022 Combo Breaker Tekken 7 tournament winner, where he grabbed the title after defeating all of his 10 opponents. Atif is the current Tekken World Tour Finals champion after winning the title in 2022 while remaining undefeated in the tournament. Meanwhile, Khan was the runner-up at Evo 2022.



## Pakistan to host FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers

LAHORE: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has been granted hosting rights of FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers for the first time in history. In an announcement made today, FIH confirmed that Pakistan will host men's qualifiers from January 13 to 21 next year. Pakistan is lined up with China and Spain who are the other two countries to host the men's and women's events. As many as eight teams will travel to Pakistan for the event. After 1990 when Pakistan hosted its last hockey World Cup, an eight-team event will be happening in Pakistan for the first time. Pakistan hosted Hockey Champions Trophy in 1994, 1999, and 2004 but these events featured only six teams. In 2018, Pakistan last hosted a FIH event, featuring four teams. Women: Changzhou, China (one tournament) and Valencia, Spain (one tournament) Men: Lahore, Pakistan (one tournament) and Valencia, Spain (one tournament) Pakistan will participate in the upcoming Asian Games, scheduled from September 23 to October 8 in Hangzhou, China. If Pakistan win Gold in the event, they won't be a part of the Qualifiers in the country. Haider Hussain, the general secretary of PHF, said they are ready to host an international event after so many years. "It's honour for us to get the hosting rights of an international event," said Hussain. "After 1990's Hockey World Cup, we are going to host an international event which will have eight teams. I hope the excitement and curiosity would be the same as it were back then," he added. Hussain also believes that Olympic Qualifiers will break the ice for more international events in the country. The PHF, meanwhile, has started planning for hosting the event in a successful manner. - DNA

## Andreeva loses after racquet throw

LONDON: Russian 16-year-old Mirra Andreeva's Wimbledon run ended in controversy after she was docked a point for throwing her racquet. The qualifier, who had already been warned for hurling her racquet after losing the second set, received a point penalty that gave Madison Keys match point in their fourth-round encounter. Andreeva saved that point but went on to lose 3-6 7-6 (7-4) 6-2. "I didn't throw the racquet, I slid," she protested to the umpire. She did not shake hands with umpire Louise Azemar Engzell as she left court two in a hurry having previously enthralled fans by her brilliant displays on the big stage. The Russian had been two games from victory in the second set - leading 4-1 - before 25th seed Keys tightened up on her errors to take it to a tie-break, which she won. - Agencies

## PSG sign Hernandez from Bayern Munich

## WEB DESK

PARIS: Paris Saint Germain have confirmed the arrival of Lucas Hernandez from Bayern Munich, the club announced on Sunday. The Frenchman signed a five-year contract with PSG which will keep him at the club till 2028. The centre-back joined the French club for a €50m fee in total. "Paris Saint-Germain is delighted to announce the signing of Lucas Hernandez. The French international defender, who will wear the number 21, has signed a five-year contract with the Club," the club said in an official announcement. Lucas, 27, is a versatile footballer who can play as a centre-back as well as a left-back. However, in the previous season, he played a major part of the season in the middle. "I'm really excited! I've been waiting to join PSG for a long time, and it's finally happened. It's a very special day for me and I'm very happy to be here," Hernandez was quoted by PSG's official website. Hernandez joined Bayern in 2019 from Atletico Madrid and quickly established himself as a key player in the team. He also won 10 trophies with the Bavarian club, including a UEFA Champions League (UCL) and four Bundesliga titles. PSG have already secured the signings of Marco Asensio and Milan Skriniar in the past week. Asensio was brought in as a free agent from Real Madrid where he spent

eight years and won 17 titles. Earlier on July 5, Luis Enrique was announced as the new PSG manager signing a two-year deal. Enrique, 53, joined the French capital after spending seven months as a free agent leaving his role as Spain's head coach after they were knocked out in the Round of 16 by Morocco in the World Cup 2022 in Qatar. Luis Enrique has previously managed Spanish club FC Barcelona (FCB) where he spent three seasons and guided the club to nine titles. The Spaniard won the treble in his first season with the Catalan club where he defeated Real Madrid in the league title race, Juventus in the UEFA Champions League (UCL) final and Athletic Bilbao in Copa del Rey final.



## Pakistan Shaheens ready to defend title

## DNA

LAHORE: Mohammad Harris-led Pakistan Shaheens will depart in the wee hours of Tuesday from Lahore for Sri Lanka via Dubai to feature in the eight-team ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup. The 50-over tournament will be played from 13 to 23 July in Colombo. Shaheens are slotted in Group B with India A, Nepal and UAE A. Shaheens will open their campaign on 14 July with the match against Nepal, after which they play UAE A and India A on 17 and 19 July, respectively. Top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals which will be played on 21 July. The final of the tournament will be held on

23 July. Before the team's departure, the 15-member squad along with four non-traveling reserves players took part in the six-day camp, which was held at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore. The players under the supervision of coaching staff led by head coach Mohammad Masroor worked on different aspects related to 50-over cricket including net sessions. Apart from 22-year-old Harris (five ODIs and nine T20Is), defending champions Shaheens will have the services of seven cricketers that have represented the Pakistan Men's team before. The international players in the squad are: Arshad Iqbal (1 T20I), Kamran Ghulam (1 ODI), Mohammad Wasim Jnr (2 Tests, 14 ODIs, 27

T20Is), Sahibzada Farhan (3 T20Is), Saim Ayub (8 T20Is), Shahnaaz Dahani (2 ODIs, 11 T20Is) and Tayyab Tahir (3 T20Is). Mohammad Harris said: "We are ready for the ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup. We won't let the pressure of being defending champions affect us. Instead, we will keep things simple, remain composed, and strive for consistent performances. "The players have shown great commitment and dedication during the camp, and we have prepared ourselves according to the conditions in Sri Lanka. Having been to Sri Lanka before, we are familiar with the challenges we may face. "Our team's combination is excellent, with a talented group of all-round players.

Each member brings something unique to the table, and I have complete confidence in their abilities. "This tournament serves as a crucial opportunity for everyone to showcase their skills and stake their claim for a spot in the national team. With a great deal of white-ball matches scheduled for the men's team in the future, there are plenty of chances for players to make a mark and secure their place." Head Coach Mohammad Masroor said: "The players have trained really hard and responded well in the training sessions here at the National Cricket Academy. They have shown dedication and determination, which is commendable. This is an excellent platform for these young cricketers to demonstrate their

abilities and aptitude. "It is truly remarkable to see that most of the players in the squad have shared experiences playing together at the age-group level. This familiarity and camaraderie amongst them are valuable assets for our team. I have high hopes that this unity will translate into good results for the team. Together, they can achieve great things and leave a lasting impact in this tournament." Squad: Mohammad Harris (captain, wicketkeeper) (Peshawar), Omair Bin Yousuf (vice-captain) (Karachi), Amad Butt (Sialkot), Arshad Iqbal (Swabi), Haseebullah (Quetta), Kamran Ghulam (Peshawar), Mehran Mumtaz (Rawalpindi), Mubasir Khan (Islamabad), Mohammad Wasim Jnr

(North Waziristan), Qasim Akram (Lahore), Sahibzada Farhan (Charsadda), Saim Ayub (Karachi), Shahnaaz Dahani (Larkana), Sufiyan Muqeem (AJK) and Tayyab Tahir (Gujrat) Non-traveling reserves - Abdul Wahid Bangalzi, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Junaid and Rohail Nazir Player support personnel: Shahid Aslam (manager), Mohammad Masroor (head coach), Hanif Malik (batting/fielding coach), Umar Rashid (bowling coach) and Imtiaz Ahmed (physiotherapist) Pakistan's fixtures in ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup Group B: • v Nepal, 14 July • v UAE A, 17 July • v India A, 19 July

## Mirziyoyev re-elected as Uzbekistan's President

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mutually beneficial and enhanced economic and defence cooperation. On several occasions leaderships of both countries have reiterated the desire to further enhance bilateral relations including efforts for peace and security in the region. It may be mentioned here that a high powered Pakistan delegation comprising parliamentarians and media people also witnessed the electoral process. Among them included Pakistani Senators Faisal Saleem Rehman, Sitara Ayaz, Editor Daily Islamabad POST/DNA and Centreline magazine Ansar Mahmood Bhatti and others. After the referendum while talking to members of the Parliament the President had said that it's easy to say, but we have to work hard to put the reforms into practice. For these purposes, allocating an additional 30-40 trillion UZS from the State budget annually is necessary. Due to this, every year, we will have to build hundreds of new kindergartens, schools, and hospitals. "As a priority task, we will also use new opportunities to raise youth policy, development of education and upbringing, science, culture, and sports to a new level. We will regularly increase wages, pensions, allowances, and stipends. We will further expand the range of social services for our veterans, lonely elderly people, people with disabilities, and citizens in need of special attention and care", the President said. In the renewed Constitution, Uzbekistan is defined as a state of law. The number of norms on human rights guarantees has also increased thrice, he said.

## Fitch upgrades Pak rating citing...

FROM PAGE 01

SLA to be approved by the IMF board in July, catalysing other funding and anchoring policies around parliamentary elections due by October." However, it said the programme's implementation and external funding risks remain due to a "volatile political climate and large external financing requirement". Talking about IMF-driven reforms taken by the government, the agency noted that Pakistan had recently taken measures to address shortfalls in its revenue collection, energy subsidies and policy inconsistent with a market-determined exchange rate, including import financing restrictions. It said these issues had held up the last three reviews of Pakistan's previous IMF programme, before its expiry in June. "Most recently, the government amended its proposed budget for the fiscal year ending June 2024 (FY24) to introduce new revenue measures and cut spending, following additional tax measures and subsidy reforms in February. The authorities appeared to abandon exchange-rate management in January 2023, although guidelines on prioritising imports were only removed in June." On risks regarding the implementation of the programme, Fitch said Pakistan had an "extensive record of going off-track on its commitments to the IMF". "We understand the government has already made all the required policy actions under the SBA. Nevertheless, there is still scope for delays and challenges to implementation as well as new policy missteps ahead of the October elections and uncertainty over the post-election commitment to the programme," it stated.

## Ishaq Dar lauds 'positive news'

FORM PAGE 01

this achievement. Pakistan had secured the badly-needed \$3bn short-term financial package from the IMF last month, giving the economy a much-awaited respite as it teeters on the brink of default. The executive board of the IMF will meet on July 12 to review the new arrangement.



## Briefs

## NUST hosts training program for department chairs

ISLAMABAD: The University of Utah organized a 3-day training workshop for department chairs of public universities on strategic planning, as part of the USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA). Hosted by the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) Islamabad, the workshop was attended by 30 dept. chairs representing 16 partner universities of HESSA. These universities have partnered with USAID's HESSA to strengthen their capacity of developing and delivering market-driven education and research to enhance graduate employability. Facilitated by Dr. Mike Barber, University of Utah and Dr. Sajjad Ahmad, University of Nevada Las Vegas, the department leadership prepared strategic plans for their respective sections, developed mission and vision statements and core values, and developed goals and performance indicators to measure success of their departments. Building on from the earlier batch, this training focused on the required skills to be a successful leader with a visionary approach to sustainable improvement in faculty and student success. In his opening remarks, Dr. Mike Barber welcomed the faculty from HESSA's 16 partner universities and elaborated the objectives and impact of the project. Dr. Osman Hasan, Pro Rector Academics NUST welcomed all the participants on campus and appreciated USAID for the continuous support to advance higher education in the country and for engaging international experts in all its trainings.—DNA

## Pak-China enjoy exemplary friendship

BEIJING: Minister of State for Health Service, Regulations and Coordination, Mahesh Kumar Malani has said that China and Pakistan are all-weather friends and strategic cooperative partners and both countries enjoy exemplary friendship. He particularly lauded China for helping Pakistan in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic and extending all-out support during last year's floods. Mr. Malani made these remarks in a special conversation with China Media Group's Urdu service. China helps Pakistan in every difficult time, especially in the days of Covid and similarly, China fully supported us when we were facing a flood situation last year, he added. Mahesh Kumar, who recently visited China along with a high-level parliamentary delegation, also appreciated the Chinese leadership and people for extending support to mitigate recent economic challenges faced by the country. Talking about Chinese modernization, Mahesh Kumar said that the progress and development achieved by China under the leadership of President Xi Jinping is very commendable.—DNA

## Mushahid lauds China Media Group for Pak-China friendship

In this way, a successful meeting of Central Asian states was hosted under the leadership of China. China is not only promoting peace and development in the region, but is also playing its role in solving the problems faced by other countries and regions of the world.

DNA

BEIJING: Chairman, Senate's Defense Committee, Mushahid Hussain Syed has paid rich tributes to the China Media Group's Urdu service for playing an important role in the promotion and development of China-Pakistan friendship. "My first contact with China was also due to the Urdu service of Radio Peking. Today, when there is a lot of news and information everywhere, China Media Group's Urdu service is playing an important role in the development of relations between the two countries," he said in an interview with China Media Group's Urdu Service. Mushahid Hussain Syed has recently led a high-level parliamentary delegation to China. While talking about

the important measures proposed by the President of China Xi Jinping, Belt and Road Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, he said that these initiatives will help mankind in the present era and provide sustainable solutions. He said that the way China under the leadership of President Xi Jinping helped and guided the world, especially in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, is admirable. The changes that the world is witnessing today are the major changes that have occurred in the hundred years. They can be countered only through collaborative thinking, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation. Unilateralism, protectionism, and factional politics have no place in today's world. He said that Pakistan's great philosopher poet Allama Iqbal had

predicted the leadership role of China in his poems a hundred years ago and today it is proving to be true under the leadership of President Xi Jinping. Mushahid Hussain Syed said that President Xi Jinping has always talked about dialogue between civilizations, mutual respect and learning from each other. The best way to deal with the challenges facing the world today is to respect each other, respect the development path chosen by all countries and abandon the Cold War mentality. He said that the present century is the century of Asia and Asia is offering solutions to the problems faced by the world under the leadership of China. China is promoting peace in the world and the Chinese diplomacy under the leadership of President Xi Jinping brought great news to the

world at the beginning of the current year. Diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran have been restored through the mediation of China. The Arab League looks united once again. The President of Palestine has been invited to visit China and the voice of Palestine has been strengthened. In addition, Chinese Foreign Minister visited Pakistan and started a new era of friendly neighbor diplomacy between China, Pakistan and Afghanistan and between China, Pakistan and Iran which will start a new era of development and stability in the region. He said that today, it is a matter of happiness that the decisions of Asia are being made within Asia. In this way, a successful meeting of Central Asian states was hosted under the leadership

of China. China is not only promoting peace and development in the region, but is also playing its role in solving the problems faced by other countries and regions of the world. China is also playing a positive role in Russia-Ukraine conflict resolution. Mushahid Hussain Syed described the Chinese-style modernization as an excellent development model. He said that in China's development journey, all people are taken forward, the best example of which is China's glorious victory in the war against poverty. Mushahid Hussain Syed said that thanks to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, there has been remarkable progress in the fields of infrastructure, energy, employment, health and education in Pakistan in the last ten years.

## 40 held; arms, drugs recovered

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The district police during search and strike operations on Monday arrested 40 accused in different areas of the district and recovered arms, and drugs from their possession. According to a police spokesman, following the instructions of District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani the police conducted search and strike operations in different areas in the jurisdiction of Gomal University Police Station, Band Korai police station, Cantt police station, Shaheed Nawab Police Station and Dera Town police station. During the operations, a team of Band Korai police station led by SHO Anwar Khan Khattak checked 20 houses and arrested five suspected persons and recovered three 30-bore pistols, one 9mm pistol, 18 cartridges and 96-gram hashish from their possession. Similarly, the Gomal University Police station team led by SHO Malik Sajid checked 15 houses, ten vehicles and three hotels during the operation. The police arrested three accused including Muhammad Tariq, Kifayat Ullah and Muhammad Zafar recovering a 12-bore rifle along with six cartridges and two 30-bore pistols along with 12 cartridges from their possession.—APP

## Serena hosts a panel discussion about higher education's challenges

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels under its Public Diplomacy initiative Raabta hosted a panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities surrounding access to higher education in Pakistan. Due to limited access, and or lack of awareness amongst the talented students it hinders social mobility, perpetuates inequality, and constrains the country's progress. The panel discussion brought together experts, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to explore the barriers, discuss effective strategies and propose actionable recommendations to enhance access to higher education in Pakistan.



The moderator of Raabta, Sidra Iqbal, a vocal advocate of social issues related to gender inclusion and diversity, curated the event. The event was attended by members of academia, non-profits' representatives working for education outreach, members of dip-

lomatic missions, government officials and students from various colleges and universities. The panel comprised of eminent educators, policymakers; Dr. Osman Hasan, Pro-rector Academics NUST, Mr. Saleem Abdul Razaque, Programme Director USEFP,

of the higher education commission in creating opportunities which are inclusive for all genders. A Q & A session followed the discussion that engaged the audience, comprising of students from various educational institutions, were responded with by the

panel of experts and were informed about various outreach programmes that are available, for future leaders of tomorrow. The discussion was broadcast live for those who were unable to attend in person to ensure access to the discourse for all wishing to participate.

## One dead as Japan warns of 'heaviest rain ever'

KURUME: One person was killed and hundreds of thousands were urged to evacuate their homes in southwestern Japan on Monday, as forecasters warned of the "heaviest rain ever" in the region. Torrential downpours after a week of steady rain have caused rivers to burst their banks and sodden earth to collapse in deadly landslides, including one that killed a 77-year-old woman. The woman's home was engulfed overnight in Saga region, the local fire department told AFP. Her husband was recovered conscious and taken to hospital. A second woman was feared dead after last being seen clinging to a car in rising floodwaters in neighbouring Oita region, officials there said. At least nine other people were missing in landslides in Fukuoka and Oita regions, where more than 420,000 people were under a top-level evacuation warning stating: "Your life is in danger, you need to take action immediately." Nearly two million more in Fukuoka, Hiroshima, Saga, Yamaguchi and Oita were under a lower-level warning.—APP

## Clashes continue over land dispute despite ceasefire in Kurram

PESHAWAR: Defying a ceasefire agreement, a dispute between two tribes in various areas of Kurram tribal district entered its fourth day on Monday. According to local administration and police, the clashes initially erupted in Boshetra Dandar locality of Parachinar, the district headquarters, and subsequently spread to Khar Kallay, Balishkkel, Pesar and Teri Mengal over a disputed piece of Shamilat (common land). In the past three days, the clashes have resulted in at least six fatalities and over 38 people sustaining injuries. However, the latest reports indicated no casualties in the recent clashes. Initially, five people were killed during the first two days of the clashes. On Sunday, one person lost his life in the Teri Mengal area, while three others sustained injuries in the Pesar area. Additionally, one person was killed, and two others were injured in the clashes in Balishkkel and Khar Kallay areas. The injured have been taken to the District Headquarters Hospital in Parachinar and Sadda Hospital, with the condition of three of the injured individuals reported as critical. Tribal leaders, along with Federal Minister Sajid Turi, security forces, and the police, have been diligently working towards restoring peace in the region. Yesterday, they held a meeting with the elders of both tribes, which led to a ceasefire agreement. However, despite the promises of a ceasefire, firing resumed last night, undermining the agreement.—APP

## China, Solomon Islands elevate 'strategic' ties

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare announced the launch of a comprehensive strategic partnership on Monday afternoon, a year after striking a security deal that set off a scramble from the United States and its allies to counter Beijing's growing influence in the Pacific Islands region. Sogavare had arrived in Beijing on Sunday. He also met with China's Premier Li Qiang, with whom he presided over the signing of fresh agreements on police, economic and technical cooperation. "We are here to further boost relations," Sogavare told Li following a ceremony at which a Chinese military band played the Solomon Islands' national anthem. The Solomon Islands, 2,000km (1,243 miles) northeast of Australia, has been China's biggest success in a campaign to expand its presence in the South Pacific. Sogavare's government switched official recognition in 2019 to Beijing from Taiwan, the self-ruled island democracy claimed by the mainland's ruling Communist Party as part of its territory. "Solomon Islands, sir, has a lot to learn from China's development experience," Sogavare told Li. The two governments "have decided to establish a comprehensive strategic partnership of mutual respect and common development", Li said.—DNA

## Joe Biden visits Britain ahead of NATO summit

LONDON: President Joe Biden met Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on a flying visit to London on Monday, as both readied to join a NATO summit where Ukraine is expected to push to join the alliance once its war with Russia is over. The 80-year-old US leader stepped out of his presidential limousine "The Beast" and was greeted with a handshake on the steps of Downing Street by Sunak. The meeting comes just over a month after the pair met in the White House, with the UK eager to maintain that the so-called "special relationship" is as strong as ever. Biden said the two countries ties were "rock solid", as he entered Downing Street. Signs of strained ties have been seen, however, notably in Biden's attitude towards UK wrangling with the European Union over post-Brexit trade in Northern Ireland. Sunak, struggling to reset the UK government after the turbulent tenures of Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, also wants the UK to be part of future moves to regulate new artificial intelligence technology. As the summit loomed, there have also been signs of divergence over Washington's provision of cluster munitions to Ukraine, and concern echoed by other Western allies. Biden said the decision to send the weapons was "very difficult" but Ukrainian forces conducting a counter-

offensive against invading Russian troops were "running out of ammunition". The move raised concerns from rights groups due to the danger unexploded bombs pose to the civilian population. Sunak did not directly criticise the United States but reiterated that the UK was one of 120 signatories to an international accord banning the use and supply of cluster munitions. "We will continue to do our part to support Ukraine against Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion," he said. White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan on Sunday played down any rift between the two leaders and in NATO, saying the Biden and Sunak were "on the same page strate-

gically on Ukraine". NATO leaders are meeting in the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, on Tuesday and Wednesday, where President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is hoping for a clear signal that it can join the alliance. Western allies agree that Ukraine cannot join while war is still raging, as it would pull NATO into direct conflict with nuclear-armed Russia. But the United States is seen as most hesitant about its membership. Biden has described Kyiv's bid as "premature". "I don't think it's ready for membership in NATO," he told broadcaster CNN. From Lithuania, Biden will travel to Finland, NATO's newest member, for a US-Nordic Leaders Summit.—APP

## Digital economy vital for sustainable development



DNA

BEIJING: Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal on Monday shed light on the importance of growing the digital economy, termed digital economy is vital to ensure sustainable development of the country. The minister made these remarks while speaking at the panel discussion titled: "Industrialization & Digital Era Connectivity," organized by the China International

Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) here. It is noted that the Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal is on a four-day official visit to China to attend a special commemorative 12th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) to be held on July 11 (tomorrow) to mark the 10-year celebrations of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC enters a significant milestone as it celebrates a decade of remarkable achievements in fostering economic growth, infrastructure development,

and regional connectivity. While highlighting the importance of "Industrialization & Digital Era Connectivity," the planning minister said that industrialization and digital-era connectivity have transformed the world as both have brought unprecedented opportunities for progress, economic growth, and global connectivity. However, he emphasized the harmonization in digital policies and standards by stronger collaboration through multilateral forums.

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**Briefs**

**German envoy calls on Aleem Khan**

DNA

LAHORE: German ambassador to Pakistan Alfred Grannas on Monday called on Istikhkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) President Abdul Aleem Khan. The meeting underscored the exchange of thoughts on Pakistan's political situation. Grannas said Pakistan-German trade volume was 2.3 billion euros. Pakistan exports textile, leather garments, surgical instruments, and rice to Germany, while it imports machinery, chemical, and industrial equipment. Both countries have a potential to expand trade in food processing and IT sector. Khan said trade activity between Pakistan and Germany should increase, adding that Germany was known for its values of leadership qualities in the international community. Grannas said he was a fan of Pakistan's hospitality, especially that of Lahories. At the end, Khan presented a shield to Grannas.

**Death toll from clashes in Kurram rises to 9**

DNA

KURRAM: The death toll from last week's clashes between two tribes over a piece of land in different areas of Kurram tribal district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa increased to nine on Monday. Kurram District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) Medical Superintendent Dr Qaiser Abbas Banghash confirmed the toll, saying that 42 people had been injured in the clashes so far. "Three wounded persons are in critical condition," he said. "We are trying our best to save their lives but we are facing problems due to the shortage of medicines in the district." The clashes in Kurram, which have been ongoing for the last four days, started in the Boshetra Dandar locality of Parachinar, the district headquarters, and spread to other areas, including Khar Kallay, Balishkhal and Pekar Teri Mengal over a piece of Shamilat (common land). Five people were killed in the first two days of clashes. On Sunday, another person was killed in the Teri Mengal area and three others were injured in the Pekar area. Another death and two injuries occurred due to clashes in Balishkhal and Khar Kallay areas.

**Gold shines as price increases slightly**

DNA

KARACHI: The price of gold in Pakistan increased slightly on Monday as the week started in line with the depreciation of the rupee against the dollar. According to data released by All-Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA), the price of gold (24 carats) gained Rs800 per tola and Rs686 per 10 grams to settle at Rs209,000 and Rs179,184, respectively. Meanwhile, the price of the yellow metal remained unchanged at \$1,925 per ounce in the international market. The gold rate has been volatile in Pakistan recently amid continued political and economic uncertainty, and high inflation. People prefer to buy this precious commodity in such times as a safe investment and a hedge. Data shared by the association showed the price of silver also remained the same at Rs2,480 per tola and Rs2,26.20 per 10 grams. In the last session on Saturday, the prices of the yellow metal fell by Rs200 per tola. Meanwhile, the local currency lost minimally by 0.68% against the greenback in the interbank market today, according to the data shared by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

**Russia confirms Putin met with Wagner chief**

The Putin-Prigozhin meeting took place at the Kremlin on June 29 and involved commanders from military company, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks with Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin for three hours, days after a short-lived rebellion led by the mercenary chief and his private army, the Kremlin has confirmed. Monday's announcement came shortly after Russia's defence ministry published a video featuring the country's military chief, Valery Gerasimov, marking the first time he has been seen publicly since Wagner's rebellion aimed to oust him. Both updates appeared to be an attempt by Moscow to take control of the narrative surrounding the Wagner Group after a turbulent period. During last month's unexpected yet brief revolt in Russia, the Wagner chief denounced Gerasimov and

Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu, accusing them of failing to provide his fighters in Ukraine with ammunition. The Putin-Prigozhin meeting took place at the Kremlin on June 29 and involved commanders from the military company, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said. The confirmation of a face-to-face meeting with Putin, who has branded Prigozhin a backstabbing traitor, adds a new twist to the uncertainty surrounding the mercenary chief. His fate and whereabouts have been unknown since the abortive mutiny, which many observers say has severely weakened Putin's authority. According to Peskov, Putin offered an "assessment" of Wagner's actions on the battlefield in Ukraine and "of the events of June 24" - the armed rebellion which was halted

just before hoards of mercenaries planned to march on Moscow. The president also "listened to the explanations of the commanders and offered them options for further employment and further use in combat" during the meeting. "The commanders themselves presented their version of what happened," Peskov said. "They underscored that they are staunch supporters and soldiers of the head of state and the commander-in-chief, and also said that they are ready to continue to fight for their homeland." Thirty-five people took part in the talks, including Wagner commanders and the leadership of the company, namely Prigozhin himself. Tensions had come to a head on June 24, after Prigozhin raged for months at Russia's top brass in foul-mouthed diatribes, accusing them of incompetence in their war

efforts in Ukraine. Prigozhin had cast his Wagner fighters as leading on the battlefields and, throughout the Ukraine war, has been first to announce gains against Kyiv's troops, ahead of the Russian army. Last month's mutiny threw the top mercenary's long-standing relations with Putin into question and, so it seemed, he was exiled to Belarus, under a deal brokered by President Alexander Lukashenko. Minsk added to the uncertainty surrounding the pact last week, saying Prigozhin was no longer in Belarus, and had returned to Russia. Observers see the rebellion as the biggest challenge to Putin's authority since he came to power. Wagner commanders "stressed that they are staunch supporters ... of the head of state", Peskov said. "They also said that they were ready to continue fighting for the motherland."

**Germany sends troops to Australia**

DNA

MUNICH: Germany will, for the first time, send troops to Australia as part of joint drills with about 30,000 service members from 12 other nations, underlining Berlin's increased focus on the Indo-Pacific amid rising tensions with China in the region. Up to 240 German soldiers, among them 170 paratroopers and 40 marines, will take part in the Talisman Sabre exercise from July 22 to August 4, the largest drills between Australia and the US, held biannually, according to army chief Lieutenant General Alfons Mais. "It is a region of extremely high importance for us in Germany as well as for the European Union due to the economic interdependencies," Mais told the Reuters news agency in an interview published on Monday, hours before the first German troops were to leave for Australia.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar called on Speaker National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf at Parliament House. - DNA

**Turkiye links Sweden's NATO bid to EU accession**

"Almost all the NATO members are EU members. I now am addressing these countries, which are making Turkey wait for more than 50 years, and I will address them again in Vilnius"

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said he would back Sweden's NATO candidacy if the European Union resumes long-stalled membership talks with Ankara. "First, open the way to Turkey's membership of the European Union, and then we will open it for Sweden, just as we had opened it for Finland," Erdogan said in a televised media appearance on Monday, before departing for the NATO summit in Lithuania. "This is what I told" US President Joe Biden, the Turkish leader said when the pair spoke by phone on Sunday.

Erdogan also said Sweden's accession hinges on the implementation of a deal reached last June during the alliance's summit in Madrid, adding that no one should expect compromises from Ankara. Turkey wants Sweden to crack down on groups that it deems national security threats, including the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its Syrian extension. It wants the extradition of what it calls "terrorists" to be returned to Turkey from Sweden and a lift of the arms ban Stockholm imposes on Ankara. Journalist Resul Serdar, reporting from Istanbul, said Sweden argues that Turkey's requests cannot be decided by the government, but the country's judiciary institu-

tions. "However, Erdogan says that this is a security matter and despite positive steps, PKK supporters still hold demonstrations [in Sweden] and this is not acceptable," he said. Turkey first applied to be a member of the European Economic Community - a predecessor to the EU - in 1987. It became an EU candidate country in 1999 and formally launched membership negotiations with the bloc in 2005. The talks stalled in 2016 over European concerns about human rights violations in Turkey. "I would like to underline one reality. Turkey has been waiting at the EU's front door for 50 years," Erdogan said. "Almost all the NATO members are EU members. I now am addressing these countries, which are making Turkey wait for more than 50 years, and I will address them again in Vilnius." Patrick Ruby, a defence analyst, said there is increasing pressure on Turkey from numerous parties in the military alliance - led by Biden.

**SC returns Aun's plea seeking ban on PTI**

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court registrar's office on Monday returned Istikhkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Additional Secretary General Aun Chaudhry's petition seeking a ban on the former ruling party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The registrar's office raised various objections to the plea filed by Chaudhry, once a close aide of PTI Chairman Imran Khan. Chaudhry had thrown his weight behind Jahangir Khan Tareen and resigned as special adviser to the Punjab chief minister in August 2021 after he was asked to clarify his position on whether he stands with Tareen or the party. He had made the decision when differences start emerging between Khan and Tareen in connection with a high-profile sugar scam. In its objections, the registrar's office stated that the requirements of Article 184(3) of the Constitution were not fulfilled while filing the petition. It is not clear in the plea how the imposition of a ban on the party comes under Article 184(3) of the Constitution, the office added. The registrar's office further said that the plea does not explain how it is banning the PTI a matter of public interest. In addition to this, the apex court stated that the IPP's leader, who is also the adviser to the prime minister on sports and tourism, did not approach the relevant forum ahead of filing the petition. Under Article 248 of the Constitution, the prime minister and the defence minister cannot be made a party in the case, the registrar's office added. - DNA

**Six killed in China kindergarten attack**

Violent crime has been on the rise as the economy has grown in recent decades and the gap between rich and poor has widened rapidly

BEIJING: Six people were killed and one wounded in an attack at a kindergarten in southern China's Guangdong province on Monday, a spokeswoman for the city government said. "The victims include one teacher, two parents and three students," she said. She did not offer details about the identities or ages of the victims, nor the weapon used in the attack, which took place in the city of Lianjiang. "One suspect has been arrested," she said, adding that a police investigation was under way. The suspect was a 25-year-old male surnamed Wu, local police said in a statement. The incident took place around 7:40am (2340 GMT on Sunday), the state-backed China News Network reported. Videos shot by passersby claiming to show the crime scene were removed from video-sharing platforms Douyin and Twitter-like Weibo. While guns are strictly controlled, China has been struggling with a spate of mass stabbings. Violent crime has been on the rise as the economy has grown in recent decades and the gap between rich and poor has widened rapidly. - Agencies

**West, Islamic bloc clash expected at UN body**

NEWS DESK

GENEVA: In the wake of a condemnable incident of the desecration of the Quran in Sweden, the Human Rights Council is set to debate a contentious draft proposal on religious hatred on Tuesday (tomorrow). The initiative has underscored major rifts in the UN body and challenged human rights protection practices. Pakistan presented a draft resolution on behalf of the 57-nation Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the council, describing the incident in Stockholm last month as "offensive, disrespectful and a clear act of provocation" that incites hatred and constitutes a human rights violation. The draft - which condemned "recurring acts of public burning of the Holy Quran in some European and other countries" - has stoked opposition from Western diplomats

who argue it aims to safeguard religious symbols rather than human rights. "We don't like the text," one Western diplomat said of the draft, which will be presented to the Human Rights Council in Geneva on Tuesday. "Human rights are supposed to be attached to individuals, not to religions." The OIC initiative also stokes tensions between Western states and the Islamic organisation at a time when the group has unprecedented clout in the council, the only body made up of governments to protect human rights worldwide. Nineteen OIC countries are voting members of the 47-member council, and other states, such as China, have aligned with their draft resolution. It remains to be seen whether Pakistan will succeed in rallying all OIC countries behind it. A Saudi-led effort to end a Yemen war crimes probe prevailed in 2021.

**No end to deadly violence in India's Manipur**

MONITORING DESK

CHURACHANDPUR: Bawla (name changed) and more than a dozen other residents of Langza village in India's northeastern state of Manipur are keeping a watch as the sound of gunfire closes in on the group. As the day breaks and they start moving to a vehicle to escape, Bawla hears a sport utility vehicle approaching them. They start to run away from it. "I ran for a distance and hid myself when I found a nook," he told media. From where he was hiding, he heard some voices. "Don't shoot, let's capture him alive," came a voice. Then he heard more gunshots. Bawla stayed hidden for three hours, before escaping up the hill to Tunning, a nearby village, where he was told his friend David Thiek had been beheaded. Only hours ago, Thiek was running behind Bawla as they were being chased by the attackers in an SUV. Now his severed head

was hung at the entrance of the Langza village and the rest of his body was burned. The July 3 incident underscores the horrors still unfolding in Manipur, a remote Himalayan state where ethnic clashes between Meitei and Kuki-Zo tribes have killed at least 140 people and displaced more than 50,000 people in two months. The mainly Hindu Meiteis form a narrow majority among Manipur's 3.5 million population, as per India's last census conducted in 2011. The group is largely concentrated in the prosperous valley area around Imphal, the state capital, in central Manipur. They also enjoy political dominance, with the state's chief minister N Biren Singh of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) himself being a Meitei as are the 40 legislators in the 60-member state assembly. On the other hand, the minority Kuki-Zo tribe, along with the Nagas, are predominantly Christian and form about 40 percent of the state's population. They mostly live in the hills around the valley.

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