



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, August 01, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

War coming to Russia as Medvedev threatens nukes

Detailed News On Page-07

Ankara, Baku eye stronger bilateral ties

Detailed News On Page-07

Pakistan, China economic ties on right path

Detailed News On Page-08



Several MOUs signed

Pakistan ready to contribute to shared progress

PM hails China as brother country; Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng receives warm welcome at PM House; Visiting dignitary terms Pak-China friendship is unique

SHUJAAT HAMZA
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that "Pakistan is absolutely ready to contribute towards Chinese President Xi Jinping's vision of the shared destiny of progress and prosperity."
ceremony of six agreements and MOUs for the promotion of bilateral cooperation between China and Pakistan.
PM Shehbaz said that the documents signed by the two countries are aimed at further enhancing economic relations between the two countries.
He added that under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), more than \$25 billion worth of invest-

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE
ment has taken place in Pakistan's power and hydel sector, road infrastructure and public transport.
Shehbaz maintained that "we are now entering the second phase of the CPEC which will envisage investments in sectors, such as, agriculture and information technology."
He added that both ML-1 and Karachi circular railway projects are of immense importance, expressing the confidence that both sides "will successfully achieve these and many other projects". He was also confident that this will help Pakistan stand on its own feet". The premier said both

President confers Hilal-i-Pakistan on Chinese vice-premier

MAHNOOR ANSAR
ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday conferred the Hilal-i-Pakistan award on Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng, in recognition of his contribution to the Pakistan-China friendship and promotion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The award was conferred at a special investiture ceremony held at the Awan-e-Sadr and attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, services chiefs, National Assembly Speaker, Senate Chairman, federal ministers and parliamentarians. Conferred on both Pakistanis and foreign nationals, the Hilal-i-Pakistan award is meant to recognize those people who have made a meritorious contribution to the national interests of Pakistan. At the outset of the ceremony, the national anthems of both countries were played. At the invitation of the Government of Pakistan, the Special Envoy of President Xi Jinping, the Vice Premier of China and Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, is visiting here to attend the 10th-anniversary celebrations of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He has played a prominent role in China's international economic

stan award is meant to recognize those people who have made a meritorious contribution to the national interests of Pakistan. At the outset of the ceremony, the national anthems of both countries were played. At the invitation of the Government of Pakistan, the Special Envoy of President Xi Jinping, the Vice Premier of China and Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, is visiting here to attend the 10th-anniversary celebrations of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He has played a prominent role in China's international economic

Continued on Page 06

to Pakistan's prosperity and development. He underlined that Pak-China friendship is unique and has withstood the vicissitudes of time due to deep fraternal ties between the peoples of two nations. He Lifeng reiterated that as an iron-brother and strategic partner, China would continue its existing economic and financial support to Pakistan.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi confers the Hilal-e-Pakistan award on Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng. - DNA

SBP keeps key policy rate unchanged at 22%

NAZIR SIYAL
KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Monday decided not to change the interest rate in the country and announced to maintain the base interest rate at 22 percent. SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad addressed the news conference after the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting and announced the new

Continued on Page 06

PTI voices concern over rising terrorism

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) expressed shock over the unprecedented upsurge in the tragic incidents of terrorism in the country and added that even then, the PDM government and entire state machineries were pursuing one-point agenda to dismantle PTI rather

Continued on Page 06

Targetting of JUI rally US, Saudi Arabia, Iran appalled at loss of lives in Bajaur blast

The US stands with the people of Pakistan in these testing times against will continue supporting Islamabad in its efforts to combat terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States of America, Saudi Arabia and Iran have strongly condemned the suicide bombing in the Bajaur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a condolence statement issued by the US embassy, a US spokesman extended condolences to the families of the victims of the Bajaur blast. The lives of innocent people were lost in the blast, there is no place for such terrorism in a peaceful and democratic society, the statement said. The embassy stated "We strongly condemn this heinous

Continued on Page 06

Death toll from blast rises to 54 FIR registered against unidentified culprits

SHAMIM SHAHID
PESHAWAR: The death toll from Sunday's suicide bombing at a Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) gathering in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district

Continued on Page 06

Mariyum Aurangzeb says No name finalized for caretaker PM

FAISAL SHEIKH
ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb on Monday said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has not chosen or ruled out any candidate for interim prime minister as yet. As per details, the Information Minister in a tweet rejected reports and speculation by certain sections of the media about caretaker

Prime Minister appointment She said that the appointment of the interim PM will be carried out according to the procedure laid down in the Constitution, both in letter and spirit. She said that the PM would consult with all allied parties in the government and would obtain guidance from PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to identify the most suitable candidate. The minister said that after consulting with allies,

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

'Elections might be delayed for two years'

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Raja Riaz Ahmed, the opposition leader in the National Assembly (NA), said he foresees two potential scenarios for upcoming general elections. The polls, he shared during an interview with a private TV channel, may occur either within three months, in November of this year, or be delayed for up to two years. The senior politician emphasised that holding elections in November would obstruct the country's economic strengthening, asserting he doesn't see the polls taking place until the nation achieves financial stability.

Value of Pak minerals \$6.1 tln

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum, Musadik Malik, termed the forthcoming mineral conference titled "Dust to Development" as a journey of prosperity that eventually extricate Pak from the quagmire of economic challenges. The financial value of Pakistan's minerals amounted to 6.1 trillion dollars, surpassing the total net worth of corporate giants such as Apple, Amazon and Google, minister said while addressing a press conference here. He said that 'Dust to Development' was the commencement of a new era of mining in Pak as its scope was not limited to mining, but smelting and export as well.



RAWALPINDI: Visiting Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng meets General Syed Asim Munir, COAS. Both reiterated the desire to further enhance and strengthen bilateral relations in all fields. - DNA

Much ado about the caretaker government

As for the possibility of Nawaz Sharif becoming the next Prime Minister of Pakistan, it seems to be a formidable challenge in the current scenario, though not entirely without hope

ANALYSIS

ANSAR M BHATTI

R ICTIONS among stakeholders in the political system are intensifying as the current assemblies near the end of their term this month. According to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement, the National Assembly will be dissolved before August 12, leading to elections within 90 days. The PML-N believes that this 90-day period will allow them to engage in election canvassing and strategize for the potential return of Nawaz Sharif. It is worth noting that the Chief Justice of Pakistan is set to retire next month, and President Arif Alvi's tenure will come to an end in September. The PML-N speculates that the replacement of the sitting Chief Justice with Justice Faez Isa might favorably impact Nawaz Sharif's situation, potentially facilitating his safe return. As per the PML-N's plan, after the departure of CJP Umar Atta Bandial, they intend to file a plea for the protective bail of Nawaz Sharif. If the plea is granted, the PML-N supremo will return to Pakistan to participate in court proceedings with the aim of seeking a favorable outcome. It is essential to keep in mind that these de-

velopments are subject to legal processes and institutional procedures, and the situation might evolve as events unfold. At first glance, it is evident that there is unrest within the ruling alliance, including the PPP, which shares power with PML-N and other allies without being part of the PDM. The process of appointing a caretaker government has proven to be a challenging task, with both sides vying for a prime minister who aligns with their interests. The suggestion of Ishaq Dar as the interim prime minister has not been made without reason. The PML-N is particularly insistent that whoever assumes this role must be subservient to their agenda. The situation highlights the complexities and tensions within the political landscape, as various factions seek to secure their positions and influence during this transitional period. The Establishment is not an exception either. Amidst swirling speculations of potential election delay, the political arena brims with fervent activity. Parties have wasted no time in launching their electioneering efforts, forming strategic alliances and diligently courting those who stand on the precipice of decision. Interestingly, no party currently appears to have a bright chance of achieving a clear victory if the elections are held in a free and fair manner. Two main factors contribute to this situation: First, the incumbency factor will play an important

role if the two mainstream political parties, PML-N and PPP, perform poorly in the elections. Second, there are claims that the powers-that-be will ensure no political party attains an absolute majority. Some insiders suggest that no party will secure a majority in elections for the next two decades or even longer. Ideally, a timely transition of power through representative elections is beneficial for the stability and progress of a country's political system. However, the effectiveness of such elections can be compromised if the same group of politicians returns to power repeatedly, rendering the electoral process futile. To enhance the electoral system and ensure meaningful outcomes, several key improvements can be considered such as encouraging a diverse range of candidates to participate in elections, representing various backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives. This can bring fresh ideas and alternative solutions to the table. By implementing new ideas, the electoral process can become more effective, inclusive, and meaningful, ultimately leading to a stronger and more responsive representative government for the benefit of the country and its people. Unfortunately, no government has ever tried to reform the electoral process simply because they don't want to allow sincere and genuine leaders

to emerge. This happens to be a fundamental flaw in our electoral system and without rectifying this flaw holding of independent and all inclusive election shall always remain a dream. Coming back to the caretaker set-up, it must be composed of people having no affiliations with any of the political parties and institutions if there is a genuine desire to give this country an election that can ultimately produce a genuine leadership. The defence minister and the information minister in their recent interviews tried to give an impression as if the Establishment were not on the same page with the political dispensation when it comes to appointment of the caretaker government. Even the prime minister in his interview with a private TV channel on July 30 made it clear that the government had nothing to do with the ban on PTI Chairman. The similar views were expressed by the information minister as well. These statements of course are not without a purpose. As for the possibility of Nawaz Sharif becoming the next Prime Minister of Pakistan, it seems to be a formidable challenge in the current scenario, though not entirely without hope. The country's influential establishments have a reputation for retaining long-lasting impressions. The statements made by Nawaz Sharif and his daughter, especially concerning the military and the former

Army Chief General Bajwa and ISI Chief Faiz Hameed, still resonate vividly in the minds of the people. Therefore the PML-N has to do a lot in order to win Establishment support for Nawaz Sharif if it earnestly wants him back as the PM. Summing up, the 15-month tenure of the government appears to have been a complete failure. Even the members of the ruling parties, particularly the PML-N, openly acknowledge that they couldn't meet the expectations of everyone due to having too many leaders at the helm. The lack of a clear chain of command led to chaos and disorganization. Many within the PML-N sincerely believe that forming a coalition with the PPP was a significant mistake. According to them, the PPP had nothing to lose from joining the government, while the PML-N, unfortunately, sealed its own political fate by making that decision. In a post-election scenario, considering the situation, it seems improbable that these two political parties will remain partners, especially at the federal level. The underlying tensions among the key stakeholders could present an opportunity for PTI to regain its position as a significant player in the political arena. Moreover, the party should be afforded the same opportunities to participate in the election process as any other political entity, considering that it represents a substantial portion of the population.

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/Argentina
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 Inquiry.....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

RMB to become parallel int'l currency soon, says Dar

He said both the countries were helping each other on all international and domestic issues in the world forum like United Nations Security Council, UN General Assembly and all other forums

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday while welcoming the opening of Bank of China's second branch here said Renminbi (RMB) would soon become an internationally adopted parallel currency. Addressing the opening ceremony of Bank of China, Ishaq Dar said that it was a historic movement as six years ago he had handed over the license for opening of the bank's first branch to its President in Belgium. Now, it's a big coincidence that BOC was opening its second branch, which he said was a great privilege for him to wit-

ness. The minister congratulated BOC President and his team for extensive efforts in opening the branch and also appreciated cooperation by Pakistan authorities and finance ministry in this regard. The minister also congratulated Deputy Governor Peoples Bank of China, his team and officials of China embassy. Ishaq Dar said that BOC, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), China Development Bank and Peoples Bank of China were all great financial partners of Pakistan. He said Pakistan had been passing through a turbulence phase during the last one year and ex-



tended heartfelt appreciations to Chinese Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peoples Bank of China and Chinese

Commercial Banks for supporting Pakistan to overcome difficulties. He said Pakistan was out of the turbulence phase as recently one of the rating agencies had upgraded ratings for the country, which he said was now moving from stability to growth again. He expressed the hope that Renminbi (RMB) was going to be internationalized soon adding five countries have already formalized the currency and more countries were planning to do so. He said it would become a parallel international acceptable currency and congratulated Deputy Governor BOC in advance. He said that BOC Deputy

Governor shared that Pakistan was already benefiting from RMB adding that during his (Dar's) last visit to China under the leadership of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, he had proposed enhancement of facility upto RMB 50 billion. He expressed the hope that cooperation between the two countries in terms of economic and diplomatic ties would reach to new heights. He said both the countries were helping each other on all international and domestic issues in the world forum like United Nations Security Council, UN General Assembly and all other forums.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate, Mirza Muhammad Afridi presenting souvenir to President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Duarte Pacheco at Parliament House.—DNA

ICCI , Al-khidmat sign MoU for uplift of vulnerable people

Both organizations have agreed to explore collaboration in different fields of relief work including establishment of skill development for orphans, community services, orphan care, microfinance and education

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and Alkhidmat Foundation Islamabad (AKFI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work jointly for the uplift of vulnerable people of society and provide relief to the needy and poor people of all the communities. The MoU was signed by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Hamid Mehmood Athar, President, Alkhidmat Foundation Islamabad during a ceremony held at ICCI. Both organizations have agreed to explore collaboration in different fields of relief work including establishment of skill development

for orphans, community services, orphan care, microfinance and education. Both sides would share expertise, explore resources, enter into partnerships for the common cause of empowering and helping the vulnerable population. Both would join hands in initiatives including disaster management, social work, community welfare, community training and development, other special campaigns and tasks like relief campaigns in Ramazan, Roshan drive and on any sudden calamities that occur in the country or abroad. Both sides will provide a joint platform for making the AKFI and ICCI members socially active citizens of Pakistan by training them as volunteers. Both sides would work to raise funds for the projects related to

Skill Development Center, Orphan Care, education, Microfinance, health and poverty alleviation. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry termed the MoU a positive development for the welfare of the vulnerable segments of the society. He said that AKFI is doing many laudable projects to improve the lives of the poor people of the society and ICCI's cooperation with it would further strengthen its efforts in achieving this goal more effectively. He said that ICCI facilitate in building Skill Development Centre to enhance skills of the economically deprived individuals/orphans/widows so that they could become productive citizens and play more

effective role in the economic development of the country. Hamid Mehmood Athar, President, Alkhidmat Foundation Islamabad said that he was happy to sign MoU with ICCI as its cooperation with AKFI would further strengthen its hands to deliver for the deprived people of the society. He said that AKFI will provide volunteers to ICCI and its member industries for distribution of relief goods to vulnerable segments of the society. AKFI would also involve ICCI members in collection of relief goods including food items, medicines, items of daily use like clothes, shoes, blanket, coats, jackets, etc. for the poor and deprived people by establishing facilitation desks in ICCI and in its other concerns.

Bid opening committee flags serious flaws in teacher training project

ISLAMABAD: The Bid Opening & Evaluation Committee (BOEC) constituted by the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training (MOFE&PT) for the project of "National Institute of Excellence in Teachers Training (NIETE)" raised multiple objections and observations regarding the proposal submitted by the M/S Orenda/Taleemabad. Professor Muhammad Ihsan Ul Haq, member of the committee who was also the Principal and project director of the Federal College of Education (FCE) representing the BOEC, expressed concerns over the quality and efficacy of the vendor's offering. He and some other members of the committee identified multiple deficiencies in the proposal, which included a lack of objective evaluation criteria and an inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (M&EF) that failed to meet their expectations. Despite claiming third-party validation from reputed institutions like LUMS and NUST, the vendor's proposal lacked a concrete framework for assessing the level of embodied pedagogical skill. One critical observation made by the members was the absence of any mechanism for formative assessment in the vendor's project proposal. The lack of details regarding the question bank, quality of questions, and the process of question development raised serious doubts about the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed teacher training program. The MOFE&PT had invited proposals in June from qualified and registered entities to undertake the crucial task of teacher training under the NIETE project. However, eyebrows were raised as the tender conditions seemed to heavily favor one particular vendor, M/S Orenda/Taleemabad, leaving it as the sole bidder. Allegations have surfaced, suggesting that other firms were restricted from participating, casting doubt on the fairness of the selection process. The accusations of an unfair tender process, coupled with the Bid Opening & Evaluation Committee's reservations about the vendor's proposal, have cast a shadow on the integrity of the NIETE project. A teacher at FCE on the condition of anonymity told APP that there were determined efforts by some officers to award the contract to Taleemabad, lacking experience in running teacher training programs.—APP

Speaker, deputy condemn Bajaur blast

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Perwaiz Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani strongly condemned the bomb blast in the workers' convention of Jamiat Ulema Islam in Khar, Bajaur Agency. They expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of innocent lives in the explosion. While expressing heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, they said that killing innocent citizens is a very shameful act. They also said that terrorists and extremist elements involved in these cowardly acts are enemies of humanity and the country. While expressing their resolve to eliminate this menace, they said that the entire nation is united to eliminate terrorism. They said that terrorists are playing with the lives of innocent citizens to achieve their nefarious goals which is condemnable in every sense of word. They prayed to Allah Almighty to raise the ranks of the martyrs in the explosion and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss. They also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the explosion.

Regional connectivity fundamental pillar for Pak-China coop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The experts at a special talk on Monday said robust regional connectivity would serve as a fundamental pillar for economic development, enabling optimal utilisation of the myriad opportunities that as yet remain untapped for China and Pakistan. The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) hosted a distinguished Chinese delegation comprising scholars from the Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS), China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), and Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences (SASS) led by Dr Liu Zongyi, Director of SIIS, the delegation included Dr Wang Shida, Deputy Director and Associate Research Professor at CICIR; Mr Yuan Jianmin, Counsellor of the Government of Xinjiang autonomous region; and Dr Li Jingfeng, Director of Regional & Strategic Research Office at SASS, a news release said. The roundtable titled "Forging Stronger Bonds: CASS Welcomes Chinese Delegation for Productive Talks on Pakistan-China Relations and Mutual Cooperation" provided a platform

for in-depth discussions on Pakistan-China relations and explored avenues for further enhancing this relationship to yield mutual benefits in a rapidly evolving global order. Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani, Former Foreign Secretary and Advisor to President CASS, moderated the roundtable. In his talk, Dr Zongyi focused on the economic aspects of Pak-China relations and discussed various

challenges and opportunities. He underscored the significance of enhancing regional connectivity and fostering a community of shared interests. Dr Wang Shida contextualised the relationship between the two countries in the evolving geostrategic environment marred by strategic competition. Other speakers raised concerns regarding the volatile security and economic situation in the region. The

participants explored the critical role that Pakistan and China's cooperative relations could play in addressing the multifaceted challenges of the contemporary world. Both sides agreed that by reinforcing their strategic cooperation and collaborative efforts, the two nations could help shape regional dynamics in the future. Both sides discussed the cooperation between China and Pakistan

in the Aerospace domain and laid emphasis on further strengthening cooperation in this area. In his concluding remarks, President of CASS, Air Marshal (R) Farhat Hussain Khan extended heartfelt gratitude to the visiting delegation and expressed optimism that such scholarly discussions would lead to a deeper appreciation of each other's perspectives on vital regional and global issues.



Briefs

N15 re-aligned highway of Suki Kinari hydro project open

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The N15 Re-aligned Highway of CGGC Suki Kinari Hydropower Project in Pakistan is open, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. This marks that the N15 Re-aligned Highway will replace the original N15 Highway and continue to play the mission of ensuring the local transportation and tourism industry's livelihood. The original N15 highway at the site of the project is important for traffic and tourism but is prone to be flooded after the project is put into production due to water storage in the reservoir area. The completion of the N15 Re-aligned Highway will not only guarantee water storage in the reservoir in the future but also ensure smooth transportation. Suki Kinari Hydropower Project, located on the Kunhar River in the Kaghan Valley of Mansehra District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's "Early Harvest" projects.

ANF seizes 1565 kg drugs in two operations; arrests two

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting two operations managed to recover 1565 kg drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that in an operation conducted near Yaro area in Quetta, ANF recovered 1550 kg charras concealed in a container of cotton bales. The drug traffickers were trying to smuggle charras from Afghanistan to Karachi via Chaman. Two accused residents of Chaman were also rounded up during the operation. In another operation conducted in Jarobi area in Khyber, 15 kg charras concealed in a deserted area was recovered. Cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added. —APP

Death anniversary of Mirza Adeeb

ISLAMABAD: The 23rd death anniversary of the dramatist, playwright, and short story writer Mirza Adeeb was observed on July 31 (Monday). According to Private News channel, his birth name was Dilawer Hussain Ali, but he came to be known in the literary world as Mirza Adeeb. Mirza Adeeb wrote plays and short stories in Urdu and Punjabi language which won him six prizes and awards from the Pakistan Writers' Guild. He was given Presidential Award for playwriting in 1969, the Pride of Performance Award for literature in 1981, and his play, Pas-e Pardah won him the Adami Adabi Award. —APP

CPEC historic project

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman on Monday warmly welcomed Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng on behalf of Pakistan People's Party to participate in the 10th anniversary celebrations of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "This historic project (CPEC) has been an important milestone in strengthening our bilateral relations," the minister said while sharing her heartfelt welcome note on her official Twitter handle account for the visiting dignitary. Senator Rehman said her party was proud of the lasting friendship between Pakistan and China which was founded by Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Chairman Mao Zedong. The minister accorded the credit of the CPEC as a proud project to President Xi Jinping and former President Asif Ali Zardari. —APP

Intl Parliamentarians' Congress breaks ground in Diplomatic Enclave

FAIAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The International Parliamentarians' Congress (IPC) celebrated a momentous occasion with the groundbreaking ceremony of its new permanent headquarters at the Diplomatic Enclave in Islamabad. Esteemed guests, including Honourable Parliamentarians, His Excellency Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corps, and other prominent figures, graced the event. This momentous occasion reflects Pakistan's steadfast commitment to promoting parliamentary diplomacy and strengthening global cooperation. In his address, Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, expressed profound gratitude to the Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan for steadfastly supporting the IPC's mission. The Prime

Minister's visionary leadership and commitment to global harmony align perfectly with the IPC's objectives, fostering continued collaboration in tackling pressing global challenges.

"The IPC has evolved into a powerful platform uniting 193 parliamentarians from 50 countries worldwide. Its focus on promoting international cooperation has resulted in significant progress on borderless issues such as peace, security, economic stability, and environmental sustainability," Chairman Senate remarked. He highlighted the recognition garnered by the IPC, with "The Parliamentarian," the Journal of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association CPA, acknowledging its success in bridging nations and fostering meaningful global discourse. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani expressed confidence in the IPC's collective resolve, vowing to build upon past

achievements and make further progress towards shared goals. He extended heartfelt gratitude to all IPC members for their unwavering dedication and support, emphasizing that this milestone signifies not just the foundation of a building, but a testament to their commitment to a better future. He underscored that the IPC and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) share a deep bond of unity and mutual respect, united by a vision of promoting dialogue, cooperation, and legislative action for global peace, prosperity, and progress. Their guiding principles align, further solidifying their roles on the world stage. "As the IPC embarks on this new chapter, the road ahead may present challenges, but the collective determination of its members will continue to drive positive change and foster a better world," Chairman Senate concluded. In his address, IPU President Mr. Duarte Pacheco

extended heartfelt congratulations to the IPC team for this remarkable achievement. He emphasized that the IPC's new headquarters stands as a testament to Pakistan's unwavering dedication to fostering global understanding through parliamentary diplomacy. President Pacheco highlighted the significance of collective action in addressing the world's challenges, asserting that only through collaboration can we effectively tackle global issues and create solutions for the betterment of humanity. He commended Pakistan's commitment to establishing channels of dialogue and recognized this groundbreaking as a historical moment in the journey of parliamentary diplomacy. President Pacheco underscored the pivotal role of the new IPC building in providing a platform for people from all walks of life to share ideas and work together in an efficient manner. He concluded on an optimistic note, stating that this ceremony marked not an end

but the beginning of a stronger and more united future. Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar conveyed warm congratulations to the IPC team on behalf of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He affirmed the Prime Minister's unwavering support for the vision of IPC and reiterated the belief in parliamentary connectivity as a powerful means to connect parliaments from around the world. Senator Tarar underscored the vital role that IPC plays in shaping the world through the exchange of ideas and experiences. He expressed commitment to continuously support this noble cause that fosters international understanding and cooperation. The groundbreaking ceremony of the IPC's new headquarters marks a historic milestone in the realm of global parliamentary diplomacy. With the unwavering commitment of Pakistan and the support of visionary leaders, the IPC is poised to become a hub for fostering

collaboration, dialogue, and cooperation among nations. This momentous occasion symbolizes the beginning of an era of heightened international engagement and collective action. Later, the IPU president along with other dignitaries visited Parliament House. He called on the Chairman Senate at Parliament House where both engaged in fruitful discussions on strengthening inter-parliamentary relations between Pakistan and the IPU, and exploring avenues to address global challenges through parliamentary diplomacy. Highlighting the spirit of international cooperation, President Pacheco lauded Chairman Senate for his unwavering commitment to the establishment of the Permanent Headquarters of the International Parliamentarians' Congress in Islamabad. "Both organizations will contribute towards fostering unity and strengthening parliamentary ties worldwide", said President IPU.

HEC announces Phase-10 of Peridot Research Program

The program is implemented in Pakistan by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and in France, jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Development (MAEDI) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESRI)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invited applications from August 16th, 2023 to October 6th, 2023 for the 10th Phase of Peridot Mobility grant program. According to official sources from HEC, the desired candidates can submit application through online portal research.hec.gov.pk. PERIDOT is the Franco-Pakistani Hubert Curien Partnership (PHC) Program providing opportunities to

Pakistani and French researchers to interact for joint research activities.

The program is implemented in Pakistan by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and in France, jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Development (MAEDI) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESRI). The objective of this program is to develop new scientific and technological cooperation between French and Pakistani higher education institutions/research laboratories by supporting the mobility of researchers from both sides. The Program, launched in 2014, proceeded its 9 phases till 2022. In last 9th phase Three partnerships have been approved. PERIDOT awardees will be selected competitively using a merit-based, independent, transparent evaluation and selection process based upon international standards. The process is described in the Sections below: This mobility grant is focused on supporting research in any of the identified

priority areas/disciplines, including Sustainable Energy, Environment and Climate change, Agriculture, Food Security and Health, Humanities & social sciences. It is worthy mention here that projects on social challenges of environmental issues shall be strongly encouraged. Applicant (PI) must be a regular faculty member (PhD or FCPS/MCPSP/FRCS) of the Higher Education Institutions (public and private) or hold a contract equivalent to the length of project duration.

China-Pakistan-Universities' level linkages get boost

ISLAMABAD: "The cooperation in the realm of education, be it university-to-university linkages, academia-industry collaboration or the number of Pakistani students studying in China, are all reflective of the confidence and stability of the unique ties between Pakistan and China," said Ms. Afifa Shajia Awaiz, Education Attaché of Pakistani Embassy in China. At the 2023 "Shared Aspirations, Beyond Khunjerab PASS" Pakistan Theme Day China-Pakistan Education Cooperation Promotion Conference held by Pakistan China Center at SCO Demonstration Area (SCODA) on Saturday in Qingdao, Ms. Afifa Shajia Awaiz noted that the growing economic ties between the two countries have laid the groundwork for partnerships in the education sector. According to Gwadar Pro, the number of Pakistani students studying in China stands at a good 26,000 and 25 percent of them are recipients of different types of scholarships offered by the Chinese government. These students are enrolled in a wide range of disciplines such as medicine, engineering, and information technology, and pursue sub-specializations and hyper-specializations in specific domains. Expressing her gratitude to the Chinese government for offering scholarships and facilitation to Pakistani students on a preferential basis. —DNA

Bilawal visits UAE

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari paid an official visit to the UAE Sunday to condole over the death of Sheikh Saeed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the brother of President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. In Abu Dhabi, the foreign minister met his UAE counterpart Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and offered heartfelt condolences on the death of Sheikh Saeed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who passed away on July 27, 2023, according to a Foreign Office press release. The two Foreign Ministers discussed bilateral relations between Pakistan and the UAE and exchanged views on regional and global developments in the region. They expressed satisfaction over bilateral multidimensional cooperation including in trade, investment, energy, information technology and infrastructure. —APP

Pakistani female athletes shine

DNA


ISLAMABAD: All the athletes participating in the World University Games for Pakistan are female, highlighting the potential for women's sports and the capability of Pakistani young women, said Agha Hunain Abbas Khan, Acting Consul General Counsate of Pakistan in Chengdu. Agha Hunain Abbas Khan told Gwadar Pro that their success not only brings glory to their nation but also serves as a reminder for young girls aspiring to pursue sports.

The all-female cast was selected on the basis of being the best during Pakistan's recently held national games, where all of them secured gold in their chosen sport. A ten-member delegation, including the five athletes, is representing Pakistan in the World University Games in Chengdu, China. Manisha and Maleeha, twin sisters from Gilgit Baltistan, will be representing Pakistan in Taekwondo, while Fiza, hailing from Quetta, will bring her talents on the wushu mat. Uzma, studying in Faisalabad, competes in the hammer throw, while Amtul, who


was the star of the national games, having bagged four medals (two gold, a silver, and a bronze) before, would try to beat her personal bests in the long and triple jump in Chengdu. "As Pakistan continues to nurture its sporting talent, it is crucial to provide adequate resources and build a support system around the athletes. The Higher Education Commission is doing a great job of providing full scholarships for student-athletes, and it is hoped that various institutes can come together to build a holistic approach to ensure continued success. —DNA

Pak-China to enhance technical collaboration producing hybrid chilli

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China will soon sign a deal to have technical collaboration on hybrid chilli and subsequent export of chilli to China under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Talking to Gwadar Pro, Chairman of Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Shahzad Ali Malik said, "besides ongoing hybrid rice collaboration between Pakistan's Guard Agri and China's Longping, another agreement is going to be signed for the cultivation of hybrid chilli and subsequent export of chilli to China." He said the signing ceremony will be held during the 1st International Food and Agriculture Exhibition on 10th - 12th August 2023 at Karachi Expo Centre, where Guard is exhibiting along with Longping and Litong Food. "Hybrid chilli seed will be provided by Peppara Seeds along with technical support for commercial cultivation and buyback of dried chilli for export to China will be through Litong Food," he added. Pakistan-China collaboration in the agricultural sector, particularly in the development of new varieties of hybrid seeds in the private sector has significant benefits for both countries. Chairman PHHSA who is also visiting China said that such projects can lead to the creation of tailored hybrid seed varieties that cater to the specific needs of Pakistani farmers and align with the country's agricultural practices and climate. He emphasized that fruitful meetings between agricultural organizations from different countries can be beneficial for exchanging knowledge, technology, and expertise in the field of seed development and agriculture. Hybrid seed development in Pakistan has a significant impact on food security by increasing crop productivity, resilience, and nutritional value. To ensure its effectiveness, there must be continued investment in research, infrastructure, and extension services to facilitate the adoption of hybrid seed technology by farmers across the country. —DNA



10 Minutes Drive From The Monal



☎ 051 8770065 / 66 / 67 📞 0300 8881811 / 0300 5221018 / 0345 555335
UAN: 051 111 777 778 🌐 dinovalley.pk 🌐 dinovalley.pk

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 303

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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

UK is still content to stay in US' pocket

The rarity of his public appearances has apparently not given MI6 chief Richard Moore's July 19 speech at a think tank event in Prague its expected originality. Although it is reportedly the only public appearance the head of the United Kingdom's Secret Intelligence Service plans to make this year, Moore used it to parrot Washington's China threat clichés, rather than focusing on the real threats to the UK. The country is blindly allowing itself to be used as a pawn in the United States' geopolitical game in both Europe and the Asia-Pacific. In the speech, Moore claimed that China is "absolutely complicit" in the Ukraine crisis, trying to "steal" the research of British universities, and setting "data traps" when cooperating with other countries. As the Chinese embassy in the UK said in a subsequent readout, Moore's "accusations" against China are totally groundless and slanderous and malicious in nature. China firmly opposes and strongly condemns them. Since he talked the same talk as Washington on the Ukraine crisis, it is natural that Moore felt unhappy with China on that issue. Out of the need to wear out Russia and control Europe, the US has not only brokered the conflict but also sought to protract it as long as possible. However, being neither the one that created the crisis nor a party to it, China has consistently called for peace talks and is committed to facilitating a political settlement of the issue. Compared with the US' one-sided stance, China's position on the Ukraine crisis has always been balanced. Moore's comments are no surprise, the US club has been doing its utmost to discredit the peace plans put forward by China, as well as Indonesia, Brazil, India and African countries. Washington is well aware that these proposals, which prioritize a cease-fire and aim to secure a lasting agreement between the two belligerents, touch upon the crux of the issue. The UK would do better to take a serious and objective look at what is really in its best interests rather than just aping the US and smearing genuine pro-peace efforts that the UK doesn't have the capacity to make. It is time for countries such as the UK to liberate themselves from the bewitching fantasy Washington has spun for them that they cannot survive outside the protective umbrella of the US. Nations should realize that not only can they, but they would do better by not toying the US' line as the world will be a more stable and peaceful place. As for Moore's other smears they are easily dismissed by anyone without prejudice. China-UK scientific research cooperation is voluntary and mutually beneficial. Moore's attempt to sabotage the cooperation benefits neither side. And the so-called "data traps" are nothing more than malicious fabrications. As the embassy's readout points out, China's exchanges and cooperation with other countries are aboveboard and upright. The international community is well aware which party is engaged in massive-scale monitoring, surveillance, and espionage and which countries are abetting it.



Tokyo swallows bitter pill of own making

With its stringent quality control, food imported from Japan, mainly rice, seafood and vegetables, has always enjoyed high esteem in the Chinese market. But that is no longer the case. The Fumio Kishida government's lack of transparency over the discharging of the nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the ocean, which will reportedly start from August, has left all parties, including the Japanese people themselves, in the dark about the harm that may cause to the marine environment. This has raised questions about the safety of Japan's seafood exports. It is ridiculous for Tetsuro Nomura, Japanese minister of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, to say at a news conference on Friday that China's practice of strengthening customs inspections on food imported from Japan for safety reasons is "unacceptable". Instead of engaging neighboring countries, the parties that will bear the immediate brunt of the move, in exploring ways to find a better way to dispose of the radioactive water, Japan only arranged some "field research" for the International Atomic Energy Agency in the hope of obtaining approval from the world's nuclear watchdog for its plan. Although the IAEA report released late last month endorsed the feasibility of the Japanese plan, the report has quickly become part of the controversy itself for its apparent lack of objectivity and representativeness. The IAEA chief has admitted the agency is not responsible for proving the Japanese plan is the best option, implying the IAEA should not be held accountable for any possible environmental impacts. That's why the IAEA report has aggravated the concerns of the Republic of Korea, China and some Pacific island countries. Instead of lending legitimacy to Japan's plan, the IAEA has suffered a heavy loss to its own credibility as well. As a veteran agriculture and food expert, with more than 35 years of experience in the sector, Nomura will be well aware that Japan is reaping what the Kishida government has sowed. The news conference was nothing but a stunt to help the Kishida government to divert the anger of the affected Japanese farmers and fishermen from itself to China. The Japanese government has provided them with special compensation long before their produce was boycotted by the international community, which speaks volumes of Tokyo's deep understanding of the harm the radioactive water may do to the marine environment and ecology. It is the stringent "quality control" of the Kishida government in keeping the risks of its nuclear-contaminated water discharge plan in a "black box" that has ruined the image of Japanese food. Time will tell that what the Kishida government believes to be the most economical way of disposing of the water will prove to be the most expensive one.

CPEC: A bridge to the future

Qamar Bashir



Both Pakistan and China have held several events in both countries to highlight the achievements accomplished by CPEC over the previous ten years. As the finale of these events, Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng has already arrived in Pakistan (30th July, 2023) to preside over a ceremony commemorating the tenth anniversary of the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Mr. He, a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, is in-charge of China's global economic relations and the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, of which CPEC is a flagship project.

Over the last decade, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been a huge success story. The project has aided in the improvement of communication between China and Pakistan, as well as the economic prosperity of both countries. It has been a decade of success in terms of enhancing connectivity between China and Pakistan, including the transformation of Gwadar into a modern port city, the upgrade of the Karakoram Highway, and the facilitation of goods and people movement between the two nations. It has been a prosperous decade, as the CPEC has promoted economic development in both China and Pakistan, increased investment, and helped both countries' economies thrive. CPEC has brought the two countries closer together and has contributed to the development of trust and understanding. A decade of hope: CPEC has aided in the improvement of infrastructure, the creation of jobs, the expansion of the economy, and the giving of hope to people for a better future. CPEC is a success story that is still unfolding, and it is certain to have a long-term positive impact on both the countries and the region.

According to an authentic research study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), CPEC has the potential to increase China's GDP by \$2.5 trillion and Pakistan's GDP by \$350 billion, while also creating up to 7 million employment in Pakistan by 2030. According to another analysis by the Centre for Global Development, CPEC may enhance trade between China and Pakistan by \$30 billion while lowering transportation costs up to 30%. According to these analyses, the economic benefits of CPEC are and will continue to enhance the lives of millions of Pakistanis by improving access to roads, railroads, and power, provided that concerns about debt sustainability and environmental damage are addressed. The tangible advantages gained to Pakistan in the last 10 years have been summarised eloquently by the Ambassador of Pakistan to China Mr. Moin ul Haq, with whom I had the honour to work as a Press Minister in the Embassy of Pakistan to France (2015-2020). He is an accomplished gentleman, a compassionate, caring, and affectionate senior, with distinct communication and leadership skills, who supports a clear vision and is passionate about Pakistan. In the following comments, he described tangible benefits in a report delivered to the president for his review. Over the last ten years, 888 km of road network have been constructed, and 13 major energy projects have added over 8000 MWs of energy to Pakistan's national grid. A new 878-kilometre transmission line has been constructed to evacuate 4000 MW of electricity. An 820 km long cross-border optical fibre cable has been installed, which cumulatively has enhanced Pakistan's GDP by 1.2%. After the second phase of CPEC is completed, the contribution of CPEC is expected to grow exponentially. These tangible outcomes of CPEC have negated the concerns expressed by the United States, India, and some Western countries that

CPEC will give China too much influence in the region and that Pakistan's debt burden will increase and would make Pakistan more vulnerable to Chinese influence. Both Pakistan and China have held several events in both countries to highlight the achievements accomplished by CPEC over the previous ten years. As the finale of these events, Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng has already arrived in Pakistan (30th July, 2023) to preside over a ceremony commemorating the tenth anniversary of the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Mr. He, a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, is in-charge of China's global economic relations and the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, of which CPEC is a flagship project. He will meet with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Arif Alvi separately, in addition to being the ceremony's Chief guest with Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. CPEC is the flagship project of China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Chinese government launched OBOR in 2013 in an effort to connect Asia, Europe, and Africa via a network of highways, railroads, ports, and other infrastructure projects to facilitate trade, investment, and connectivity. In 2013, President Xi announced the initiative during state visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia. The plan had two components: the Silk Road Economic Belt on land and the Maritime Silk Road. Initially referred to as the One Belt, One Road initiative, the two were eventually renamed the Belt and Road Initiative. According to the Green Finance and Development Center, China's investment in BRI projects in 2022 was about \$67.8 billion and in pursuance of this initiative so far China has signed over 200 deals with Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal and quite a few other countries. This is however far less than the commitment made by the Chinese government in 2017 to invest over \$ one trillion under this initiative. In Pakistan, the road and highways arteries built under CPEC are providing much-needed connectivity within Pakistan and with regional and international countries. Under this project, approximately 888 kilometers of brand new motorways and highways have been constructed, with another 853 kilometers of world-class roads currently under construction. In the first phase, the completed motorways included KKH Phase II (Havelian - Thakot Section), Peshawar-Karachi Motorway (Multan - Sukkur Section), Hakla - D.I. Khan Motorway, and Orange Line Metro Train - Lahore. Moreover, package I of the Main Line-I (ML-I) railway upgrade project will be initiated in the middle of this year. New Gwadar International Airport, Pak-China Friendship Hospital, Gwadar East Bay Expressway, and Gwadar Technical & Vocational Institute have all been completed. Gwadar, Pakistan's deep sea port on the Arabian Sea, is a key component of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and has the potential to become a major regional trade and transit

hub. The government has made substantial investments in the development of Gwadar port and the associated infrastructure, including roads, railways, and pipelines, which will increase connectivity and facilitate trade with neighbouring nations including China, Iran, and Afghanistan. Eleven power projects totaling over 6,370 MW have been completed, 880 km of transmission lines have been installed, and projects totaling around 1200 MW are anticipated to be completed by 2023-2024 which will provide much needed power pivotal for socio-economic and industrial growth. Additionally, approximately 192,000 jobs have been created by CPEC investments and their secondary effects.

The CPEC has already entered its second phase, during which socioeconomic development, science and technology, agricultural cooperation, and industrialization will be the focus of cooperation.

Of the agreed-upon 27 socioeconomic development projects, 17 fast-track projects have been initiated and are proceeding smoothly, while seven projects have been completed and five are in progress.

During the most recent meeting of the outgoing Chinese ambassador, Mr. Nong Rong, with President Alvi, which I also attended, the President expressed his satisfaction with the substantial progress made to complete the already commissioned projects, launch new projects, and advance the ML-1 project in order to accelerate the country's development. The President specifically mentioned Chinese-Pakistani cooperation in the joint production and marketing of JF-17 Aircraft on the global market, which, according to him, would expedite the export of cutting-edge fighter aircraft and meet the security needs of the purchasing nations. The President mentioned in particular the success of a garment factory that was established in Lahore in a record-setting five months and began producing garments for internationally renowned brands. It was also decided to replicate this model of success in other regions of the country. Both Pakistan and China have time and again reaffirmed their commitment for speedily implementing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, to take the decades-old geo-political relations to geo economic orbit. CPEC would ultimately help in creating a regional economic bloc of three billion people through improved regional integration and connectivity, and Pakistan could play a critical role being located in the centre of three engines of growth – South Asia, Central Asia and China. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a multibillion-dollar initiative that has the potential to revolutionise the economy of Pakistan. To realise the full benefits of CPEC, Pakistan's leadership, bureaucracy, government, and nation must all contribute. As CPEC takes shape, we must be patient and understanding. CPEC represents a fantastic opportunity for Pakistan. However, it is merely an opportunity. It is up to Pakistan to grab this opportunity and ensure its success.

It is time for Surgical solution

Dr Luay Shabaneh



Enhancing the concept of accountability is instrumental to track progress. Accountability means that all government engagements and initiatives are not measured by activities initiated and money spent, but by the actual change that was made in the life of people

On 14 July, the Law and Justice Commission and the Federal Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation, and Coordination organized an international conference on calibrating population and resources to enhance Pakistan's resilience. The conference brought national, provincial, and high-level experts from different parts of the world to explore ways and opportunities on population dynamics and the success stories in other regional and international experiences. It was a bitter moment for many participants to see that statistics categorized Pakistan's performance in the group of underperforming countries suffering from conflict such as Afghanistan and Somalia; Pakistan deserves to have performed better. While the conference acknowledged the important initiatives by the federal and provincial governments on the population narrative and improving services and advocacy, the recommendations of the conference sent three important broad messages that Pakistan needs to accommodate urgently to make genuine changes in the spectrum of calibrating population and resources. Only human rights-based approaches can bring sustainable solutions and make genuine change. Governments can not impose on families or women if or how many children they should have; it is their sole right to families themselves. Couples do not consult demographic trends, population size, or governments' plans anyway when they decide to have another baby, but they consult their own circumstances. Government, as a duty-bearer, must ensure that couples, as a right-holder, are empowered to implement their own decisions by providing them with high-quality, accessible, and affordable women-preference contraceptive services, and relevant information about family planning and its methods, benefits, etc. This includes empowering women to enjoy their reproductive rights, meaning being protected from forced marriage, and forced

pregnancy, and to be able to plan with their husbands their own spacing schemes. Reproductive rights include also but are not limited to, women having the choice to invest in their own human capital including delaying marriage until they complete the aspiration of education and economic empowerment, as well as being protected from gender-based violence. Women in Pakistan comprise a missed economic and social opportunity, and investing in their skills, education, and opportunities is a strategic direction to make a genuine change in the population agenda. Enhancing the concept of accountability is instrumental to track progress. Accountability means that all government engagements and initiatives are not measured by activities initiated and money spent, but by the actual change that was made in the life of people. The current governance structure for entities engaged in population agenda is not the most effective and efficient option and does not involve the concept of AAP (accountability to affected population). Furthermore, the population agenda is a national concern; it cannot be left to the population welfare and health departments with the current segregated structures and programs. It should be upgraded at the chief minister and prime minister level while PWDs and HDs lead the implementation. Ministries of finance, planning, education, and other ministries are key partners and leaders and equally own the population agenda. The segregation of population programming between different structures limits the ability of inclusive programming; integration, modernization (or reform) might be an option to create an enabling environment for the AAP approach. A surgical solution that creates enabling incubator for genuine change is the most viable option; business as usual is not an option. This includes revisiting the NFC formula to make it target-focused instead of demand-driven when it comes to population agenda. It is

important that the NFC incentives and Taxing system encourage achieving population targets as stipulated in Pakistan's Vision such as gender equality, literacy rate, minimizing out-of-school adolescents, women's economic participation, women empowerment, reducing GBV, the increase in the rate of the prevalence of modern contraceptive, and other relevant output indicators instead of incentivizing population growth. This also includes empowering the culture of data-driven decisions and evidence-based policy and program implementation. Knowing that more than half of SDG targets do not have available data to measure is a real challenge to measure progress. Data accessibility and making official statistics a "Public Good" and enhancing the right to access public information are important to make a real change. Census is one of the most important instrumental tools for planning at the lower disaggregated level, most of the federal systems keep the census as a federal function to ensure impartiality and independence because it is a symbol of sovereignty where governments count people in their sovereign territories. Pakistan might consider aligning its national statistical system with the ten fundamental principles of official statistics of the United Nations and their consequent revisions and ethical codes of conduct. The conference has shown that political momentum and anxiety about population growth can be translated into commitment and action that leads to genuine change; this has happened in Bangladesh, India, Iran, Tunisia, Indonesia, and other countries. But to achieve that, Pakistan needs champions and leaders who are decisive and equipped with knowledgeable teams. UNFPA is committed to supporting the government of Pakistan both at the federal and provincial level and I am sure all other development actors and donors are willing to help once Pakistan decides to move from anxiety to genuine action and where to go and how to grow.

Briefs

Pakistan ready to contribute...

FROM PAGE 01
Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal and the vice chairman of the National Development and Reforms Commission of the People's Republic of China signed the document and the signing ceremony took place at the PM House. PM Shehbaz and the Chinese vice-premier witnessed the ceremony. The first document was signed on the joint cooperation committee of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the second document was related to the establishment of an expert exchange mechanism within the framework of CPEC. The third document was signed by the Secretary Ministry of National Food Security Zafar Hassan and the Chinese Charge D'Affaires Pang Chunxue for the export of dried Chillies from Pakistan to China. Member Planning of National Highway Authority Asim Amin and Chinese Charge D'Affaires Pang Chunxue signed the fourth document on the realignment of the Karakoram Highway Phase II project feasibility study.

President confers Hilal-i-Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01
relations and implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, of which CPEC is a flagship project. As the Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission (2017-23), he was instrumental in the planning and execution of multiple CPEC projects in Pakistan. Being a great friend of Pakistan, He Lieng worked for industrialization and socio-economic uplift of Pakistan, besides helping the execution of energy projects.

US, Saudi Arabia, Iran appalled at loss of...

FROM PAGE 01
act of violence, which has resulted in the loss of innocent lives and harm to many. Such terrorism has no place in a peaceful and democratic society. "We stand in solidarity with the people of Pakistan in this difficult time," it added said, adding that We reiterate our commitment to support Pakistan's efforts in combating terrorism and ensuring the safety of its citizens. The statement further said that the US stands with the people of Pakistan in these testing times against will continue supporting Islamabad in its efforts to combat terrorism. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry has also denounced the suicide attack that took place at a political rally in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and that left at least 44 people dead. "The ministry reiterates the Kingdom's constant position and that calls for rejecting violence and terrorism anywhere in the world, expressing the Kingdom's full solidarity with Pakistan and its brotherly people," the ministry said in a statement. For all the latest headlines follow our Google News channel online or via the app.

No name finalized for caretaker PM

FROM PAGE 01
the prime minister will consult with the leader of opposition in the National Assembly to take a decision on the matter, as per the Constitution. Earlier, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Monday decided to hold the third round of consultation regarding the nomination of caretaker setup after the assemblies dissolution. It has been reported that PPP Co-Chairman and former President Asif Ali Zardari played a crucial role in overseeing the selection of suitable candidates for the caretaker prime minister's position.

Japan thrash Spain 4-0 in Women's World Cup warning

Miyazawa turned provider in the 29th minute, driving forward before finding Ueki, whose shot took a giant deflection and snuck inside the top corner



WELLINGTON: Hinata Miyazawa scored twice and set up another as Japan stunned Spain 4-0 at the Women's World Cup on Monday to set up a clash with Norway in the knockout stage. The Japanese delivered a lesson in clinical counter-attacking and led 3-0 at half-time to issue a World Cup warning against one of the title favourites. The 2011 champions Japan topped the group to play another former winner in Norway while Spain will face Switzerland in the last 16. Miyazawa's brace took her to four goals for the tournament while Riko Ueki and Mina Tanaka bagged the others for a hugely impressive Japan. Boasting a host of European club stars, Spain dominated possession in front of a crowd of

20,957 in Wellington. But they didn't create a single clear chance as Japan soaked up pressure and broke with pace, with lethal effect. It was a tactical masterclass from Japan coach Futoshi Ikeda, whose team denied space and time to Barcelona stars Alexia Putellas and Aitana Bonmati. "The Spanish team, with that kind of offence, we decided to respond with a compact defence," Ikeda said.

"Once we recovered the ball, we tried to attack to the maximum at speed," Japan's three first-half attempts resulted in three blistering goals as their speedy front line took advantage of a disorganised Spanish defence missing injured captain Ivana Andres. It was Japan's first win in five attempts over Spain. Their 11 goals is the

Australia surge into last 16

MELBOURNE: Co-hosts Australia rescued their Women's World Cup hopes with a 4-0 thumping of Canada to sweep into the last 16 at the expense of the Olympic champions on Monday. The Matildas came into the clash needing victory to ensure they made the knockout round after a stunning 3-2 defeat to Nigeria left them on a knife-edge. They thrived on the pressure in front of more than 27,000 in Melbourne to consign Canada to an early flight home, with Hayley Raso scoring twice. Australia top Group B ahead of Nigeria, who drew 0-0 with Ireland, and set them up for a clash against the second-placed team in Group D - likely Denmark or China - in the next round. "I'm so, so proud of this team," said coach Tony Gustavsson. "The players, there's something special about this group. "In the press conference yesterday someone asked if this was legacy-defining, a crossroads moment for this team, and yes it was. But we didn't shy away from it," he added. "The way the players performed tonight, all the talk about Sam (Kerr), they just went out and played their game, stayed true to who they are." Talismanic striker Kerr remained on the bench as a precaution despite declaring herself available after a calf injury that had ruled her out of Australia's first two games. Real Madrid's Raso put them ahead in the ninth minute, firing low into the corner after captain Steph Catley fed a teasing low cross. They had a goal controversially disallowed 10 minutes before break, but put it behind them and Raso made sure on their very next attack for her second with a close-range tap-in. - APP

most by any team at the tournament while they're one of four sides yet to concede a goal. Miyazawa is also the tournament's leading scorer, although she was denied a chance to add to her four goals when replaced at halftime. A beaming Miyazawa said leading the race for the golden boot was a surprise and a "great pleasure". "I never imagined it. All of the goals are because of the other players giving me the right passes. So it's everybody's goal, not just me," she said. With both teams having already qualified after coasting past pool opponents Zambia and Costa Rica, sixth-ranked Spain were considered the favourites to top the group. Only needing a draw to do so, the Europeans controlled the ball

for long periods but they had few answers when their opponents broke with speed. Spain coach Jorge Vilda conceded he'd been out-thought tactically. "As the head coach I'm responsible for this defeat," he said. "Yes I was surprised, they were exerting a lot of pressure. "We had to break this low block that they had but we were not able to get past their lines to attack... and little by little they started scoring goals. "We have not seen the best Spanish team yet and I'm convinced that against Switzerland the team will react positively." The opener came in the 12th minute when Miyazawa outpaced the defence to reach Jun Endo's curling pass from halfway before slotting low past Misa Rodriguez. - APP

Pak may invest in Azerbaijan's renewable energy sector



DNA

BAKU: A proposal for Pakistani companies to invest in Azerbaijan's renewable energy sector was made by Javid Abdullayev, Director of the State Renewable Energy Agency of Azerbaijan, during a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer of the Alternative Energy Development Council of the Energy Ministry of Pakistan, Executive Director of

the Private Energy and Infrastructure Council Shah Jahan Mirza.

At the meeting, information was given on the potential of Azerbaijan's renewable energy, measures to realize this potential, and export opportunities. Pakistani companies have been invited to participate in future renewable energy auctions. Shah Jahan Mirza informed Azerbaijani colleagues about the reforms in the energy sector of Pakistan

and the development of the renewable energy sector. The invitation to Pakistani companies to invest in Azerbaijan's renewable energy sector is part of a larger effort to increase cooperation between the two countries. The Azerbaijan-Pakistan Technology Forum was held in Baku to establish relations between the IT companies of Pakistan and the state and private partners in Azerbaijan. Representatives from 35

companies from Pakistan that operate in the fields of artificial intelligence, blockchain, cloud technology, and a number of areas of the ICT sector participated in the forum. Pakistani IT companies have also been invited to operate and invest in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan. The government of Azerbaijan is doing reconstruction work and building smart villages and smart cities in the liberated territories, and Pakistani IT companies have the potential to help in these processes. The Pakistani IT sector is very big, and there is great potential to expand cooperation in the IT sector. The Ministry of Digital Development Minister, as well as other high government officials, participated in the forum. Pakistani IT companies also have aspirations to provide IT education to children.

Nigeria into World Cup last 16

BRISBANE: Nigeria drew 0-0 with Ireland on Monday to seal their place in the last 16 of the Women's World Cup and a likely date with England. The stalemate left Nigeria second behind co-hosts Australia in Group B, meaning they will meet the winner of England's Group D. European champions England face China on Tuesday needing only a draw to top the group. Nigeria, who stunned Australia 3-2 on their last visit to Brisbane, recovered from a sloppy first half to get the draw they needed and reach the knockout stage for only the third time in nine attempts. Nigeria coach Randy Waldrum said his team were improving but would have to do even better if they want to extend their World Cup, especially with England possibly looming. "We have to be good defensively," the American said. "I think in the short time the team has been together they've done a good job with their defence. "We now have to grow offensively. It will probably be England and I think you are going to get to watch a very good match. "But we have to get better defensively first." The Nigerians showed little of the flair that helped them down Australia in the last match, particularly during a scrappy first half during which they were outfought by an Ireland side only playing for pride after two losses. They found it hard to penetrate the Irish defensive line, with lone striker Asisat Oshoala a forlorn figure up front. Barcelona's Oshoala had only one chance in the first 45 minutes and should have put her side in front after latching onto a terrible backpass from Louise Quinn and finding herself one on one with keeper Courtney Brosnan. But her shot just missed to the right-hand post and Ireland were off the hook. Nigeria came out with far more purpose in the second half as the Irish seemed to begin to feel the pace of the first period. Brosnan pulled off a miraculous save in the 51st minute to deny Uchenna Kanu, who hit a powerful header that bounced awkwardly in front of the keeper. - Agencies

Death toll from blast rises to 54

FROM PAGE 01

rose to 54 on Monday as the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) registered a first information report of the attack. The blast occurred in Khar, a town bordering Afghanistan, and according to eyewitnesses, hundreds of party workers along with local leaders were present at the JUI-F convention when the explosion ripped through it. Speaking to the media in Peshawar, KP CTD Additional Inspector General (IG) Shaukat Abbas said the death toll from the blast had risen to 54 while the number of injured people stood at 83. He added that 46 of the deceased had been identified. According to the CTD official, the convention began at 2pm and the blast occurred at four past ten. "We have collected ball bearings from the site of the blast," he said, adding that the group behind the blast and that there was no specific target of the attack. The additional IG further stated that the suspects "have been almost tracked down in the initial action" taken so far, adding that a forensic report pertaining to the incident was awaited. Earlier, Dr Naseeb Gul, the district medical superintendent of the Khar hospital, told Dawn.com today that the death toll of the explosion increased to 46 after another injured person succumbed to his wounds.

SBP keeps key policy...

FROM PAGE 01

monetary policy in Karachi today. The SBP stated that the base interest rate will remain at 22 per cent. SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed said a significant reduction in the rate of inflation was observed and it will further decrease in the coming months. The SBP governor revealed that the MPC decided to keep the interest rate unchanged at 22 per cent for the next one and a half months. The decision comes amidst the backdrop of the country grappling with a high inflation rate, which currently stands at 29.2 per cent. The State Bank's Monetary Policy Committee thoroughly reviewed the economic data and the prevailing inflation situation before arriving at the decision to maintain the interest rate. It was noted that there has been a significant improvement in the current account due to the government's initiatives. The inflation rate is expected to be around 20-22 per cent for the current fiscal year, indicating some relief compared to the previous rate. The State Bank's efforts to stabilize the foreign exchange reserves have been commendable, with reserves now reaching 8.2 billion dollars. Governor Jameel Ahmed expressed hope about further improvement in foreign exchange reserves by December.

PTI voices concern...

FROM PAGE 01

than to reining in the monster of terrorism, which was rearing its ugly head again. PTI spokesperson stressed the need that it was a high time, the incumbent government and the state institutions should reconsider their priorities and all political forces should set aside their political differences so as to devise a well-thought-out strategy to deal with the menace of terrorism once and for all. He said that the entire nation was in great shock and saddened by the loss of precious lives in the tragic Bajaur blast. He stated that Pakistani nation sacrificed thousands of precious lives to eradicate the scourge of terrorism and restore peace in the country. However, he noted that an alarming uptick in terrorist incidents was witnessed during the last one year, which reflected the wrong and flawed priorities of the incumbent government. The PTI spokesperson said that a total of 636 incidents of terrorism were reported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone in the last one year, adding that the provinces of KP and Balochistan were badly affected by the new spate of terrorism, putting a serious question mark on the PDM government's strategy in dealing with terrorism.

Adidas, Man Utd sign new deal

LONDON: Manchester United said it had signed a new 10-year deal with German sportswear giant Adidas on Monday, worth a minimum £900 million (\$1.15 billion) according to the BBC. The two have been partners since the 2015/16 season, reuniting after a 23-year hiatus, and both parties said the new deal would focus substantially "on the Manchester United women's team". "The new deal increases the focus on the Manchester United women's team since their reintroduction in 2018 - continuing Manchester United and adidas's commitment to drive the women's game forward," read a statement on United's website. Bjorn Gulden, CEO of Adidas, said the two were a natural fit given their respective status in the sport. "Adidas and Manchester United are two of the most important brands in international football and it is very natural for us to continue our cooperation," he said in a statement. "We will combine tradition and innovation to please both the players and the fans." United gave no figure for the new deal but the BBC said it was worth at least £900 million. The BBC also reported that failure to qualify for the Champions League for two consecutive seasons would reduce the annual payments by 30%. - Agencies

Barcelona to host 2023 Wheelchair Tennis Masters events

ISLAMABAD: The International Tennis Federation (ITF) has announced that Barcelona would host the NEC Wheelchair Singles Masters and ITF Wheelchair Doubles Masters for the first time in 2023. The ITF's year-end wheelchair tennis championships for singles and doubles would take place from October 30 to November 5 at the Emilio Sanchez Academy, with Spain becoming the fifth country to host the NEC Wheelchair Singles Masters and the fourth country to host the Doubles Masters, said a press release. Spain would also become the third country after Netherlands and USA to host the Singles Masters and Doubles Masters simultaneously. De la Puente enjoyed a highly successful 2022, winning his first Grand Slam men's doubles title at the US Open, and ended the year by winning his first ITF Wheelchair Doubles Masters title alongside Argentina's Gustavo Fernandez. De la Puente subsequently finished 2022 as the year-end No. 1 player on the men's doubles ranking. The NEC Wheelchair Singles Masters, the ITF's year-end championship for the world's top eight men's, women's, and quad singles players, was first held in 1994 in Eindhoven, Netherlands, where it remained until 1999 before moving to Amersfoort for a six-year period. In 2006 the Singles Masters moved to a new Dutch host venue in Amsterdam, which staged the event until 2010. In 2011 the Singles Masters was held outside of the Netherlands for the first time and has since been hosted in Belgium, Great Britain, and the USA before now moving to Spain in 2023. NEC has been the title sponsor of the Singles Masters since its inception in 1994. In 2018 the NEC Wheelchair Singles Masters celebrated its 25th edition before NEC celebrated 30 years of their sponsorship of ITF wheelchair tennis activities in 2021. The first ever Doubles Masters took place in 2000, alongside the NEC Wheelchair Singles Masters, in Amersfoort. Featuring the world's top eight men's partnerships, top six women's partnerships, and top four quad partnerships on the UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour, the Doubles Masters became a standalone event for the first time in 2003, when it moved to Italy for a period of six years. - DNA

Pak win second consecutive match in Norway Cup

The national team pulled ahead just six minutes into the game thanks to a goal by Saud Ahmed. Abid Ali then doubled Pakistan's advantage within a minute. Saud and Abid then struck again respectively and put Pakistan in command with a 4-0 lead after just 15 minutes. Scott McNol finally glimmered a ray of hope for hosts when he pulled one back to reduce Pakistan's lead to 4-1

DNA

OSLO: Pakistan street child football team on Monday, edged Arvoll IL 2-1 to qualify for the next round of the ongoing Norway Cup here. This was the national team's second consecutive victory in the ongoing tournament, which handed an 11-1 thrashing to Frigg Oslo FK 11-1 in the campaign opener on Sunday. In their second match, however, the national street child football team got off to a contrasting start as Arvoll pulled ahead with an early strike in the first half. Pakistan created a few chances in the middle phase of the first half but finally scored an equaliser, minutes before the break. Abdul Wahab struck the first goal for Pakistan. The visitors, relishing the momentum, pulled ahead in the second half courtesy of Tufail Shinwari, who scored the

match-winner. Pakistan's 2-1 advantage remained intact till the final whistle, meaning the national team progressed into the next



round with one game to spare. Pakistan street child football team will now take on Skjold IL in their last Norway Cup group fixture to

morrow. Notably, Pakistan had a dominant start to their Norway Cup campaign as they blew away Frigg Oslo FK 11-1 by the scoreline of 11-1. The national team pulled ahead just six minutes into the game thanks to a goal by Saud Ahmed. Abid Ali then doubled Pakistan's advantage within a minute. Saud and Abid then struck again respectively and put Pakistan in command with a 4-0 lead after just 15 minutes. Scott McNol finally glimmered a ray of hope for the hosts when he pulled one back to reduce Pakistan's lead to 4-1. McNol's goal, however, failed to change the fortune of the Frigg Oslo side as Pakistan struck twice in quick succession to go into the break with a 6-1 lead. The Green Shirts put on an even more dominant show in the second half as they scored five more to their tally to finish at 11-1, the biggest margin of victory in the Norway Cup by now. Abid Ali was the star performer for Pakistan in the first match as he scored four goals.

Briefs

Briton in Cyprus who killed ill wife handed jail

NICOSIA: A British pensioner in Cyprus who killed his terminally ill wife was sentenced Monday to two years' jail but then released because of time already served, his lawyer said. David Hunter, 76, was initially tried for the premeditated murder of his 74-year-old wife Janice, who suffered from blood cancer, on December 18, 2021. But he was convicted last week of the lesser charge of manslaughter for what the court heard was the mercy killing of his wife of more than half a century. Factoring in the time Hunter has already spent behind bars since his arrest and good behaviour, he was being freed imminently, his defence lawyer said.

"David Hunter was given a two-year sentence which means that he will be released from custody immediately," said British lawyer Michael Polak of the group Justice Abroad.

"We are very pleased with the sentence of the court today." The Paphos Criminal Court decision was unanimous, with the three judges saying they had taken into account the personal circumstances as well as the need to send a deterrent message. Hunter, a retired miner from the English region of Northumberland, and his wife had been teenage sweethearts and married for 52 years. In December 2021, Janice, who was suffering from advanced leukaemia, begged her husband to end her life, the court heard.—DNA

World Bank approves 300 mln USD for Bangladesh gas distribution system

DHAKA: The World Bank has approved 300 million U.S. dollars to help Bangladesh improve the efficiency of gas distribution and end-use through prepaid metering systems for residential and industrial consumers and reduce methane emissions along the natural gas value chain. The Gas Sector Efficiency Improvement and Carbon Abatement Project will address natural gas leakage and losses along the gas transmission and distribution network, reduce wastage in use by residential and industrial users, and strengthen network monitoring capabilities, said the Washington-based lender in a statement received here Friday. It will install more than 1.2 million prepaid gas meters in Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions. Among these, 1.1 million prepaid meters will be deployed in Greater Dhaka covering 54 percent of residential customers of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited, and 128,000 prepaid meters in the Rajshahi division, covering the entire residential customer base of Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited (PGCL). It will also pilot rolling out about 50 smart meters to larger industrial users to demonstrate the viability of smart meters to better monitor and manage gas use in the industrial sector.—Agencies

Elections only way to build a new Libya: UN envoy

TRIPOLI, Libya: A new Libya can only be built through an electoral process and the country's future should not depend on the House of Representatives and High Council of State, the UN envoy for Libya said Sunday. Abdoulaye Bathily made the remarks during a speech at the Forum of Elders and Dignitaries of Fezzan in the capital Tripoli, according to local media outlets. Bathily said the UN mission was working to support Libyans to find solutions to the crisis without favoring one party over the other and that when a new government is elected, stability could prevail in the country. He said the country's future should not depend on the House of Representatives and the High Council of State but on the aspirations of the people.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Vice-Premier of State Council of China, He Lifeng witnessing the signing ceremony of agreements/MoUs regarding cooperation between the two countries in various fields.—DNA

Ankara, Baku eye stronger ties amid rapprochement

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov was in the Turkish capital of Ankara on Monday. The top diplomat met his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan and was later received by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. At a joint news conference with Bayramov, Fidan reiterated Türkiye's commitment to ties with Azerbaijan and strong support for the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia. For his part, Fidan said that the Lachin Road, the only land route giving Armenia access to Karabakh, is Azerbaijan's territory and that Baku can take any measure on it. Azerbaijan emerged victorious in its attempt to retake occupied Karabakh from Armenia after years of invasion. "Lachin Road is Azerbaijan's territory. Therefore, Azerbaijan takes whatever measures it deems necessary. Taking (measures) is also one of its greatest sovereign rights. Medical transitions are also possible. Other routes, which are suitable for extensive material transport, have also been allo-

ated. When we look at all these evaluations, we think that there is no justification for criticizing Azerbaijan on this issue," he said. Azerbaijan has called on countries and international organizations that have made anti-Azerbaijani statements to respect its sovereignty and territorial integrity, especially concerning developments in Karabakh and the Lachin road. Despite ongoing talks on a peace

agreement, tensions between Baku and Yerevan have risen in recent months concerning the Lachin road, as well as Azerbaijan's establishment of a border checkpoint on the road. Fidan said that it is "extremely important" that the peace talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia conclude. The minister added that agreements between Armenia and Azerbaijan should be

signed soon, adding: "This represents a great opportunity for other countries in the region." He also called upon the international community "not to discriminate" against one side in peace talks and support them without bias for one party. The United States and Russia are among the superpowers engaged in peace-brokerage efforts between Azerbaijan and Armenia. About the key Zange-

zur corridor land route in the southern Caucasus, Fidan said its opening is "vital." "The road to regional stability is through a comprehensive peace agreement. For this, the opening of the Zangezur corridor is of great importance," he added. The Zangezur region was originally part of Azerbaijan, though the Soviets gave it to Armenia in the 1920s, leaving Azerbaijan deprived of a direct overland route to its enclave of Nakhchivan. Following its 44-day war with Armenia in the fall of 2020, Azerbaijan has focused on planned connections, including motorways and a 43-kilometer (26.7-mile) railway through the corridor. The corridor would be near or adjacent to Armenia's border with Iran, reportedly making Tehran concerned the project might cut off its frontier with Yerevan.

"A strong Türkiye means a strong Azerbaijan and a strong Azerbaijan means a strong Türkiye," Fidan said at the news conference, noting that the Shusha Declaration signed by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in 2021 showed the world this concept.



Allies key to counter China in Pacific: US

SYDNEY: The United States will rely on allies rather than a major expansion of its own forces to counter any Chinese military risk in the Pacific, a US general has told AFP. Beijing enjoys "very clear" advantages in the region, said Major General Joseph Ryan, commander of the 12,000-strong 25th Infantry Division on Oahu, Hawaii. He cited China's expanding military defences, its long-range rocket missile capability and the ease with which it can position forces and equipment in the Pacific. By contrast, in the event of conflict, the United States and its allies would have to traverse international waters or the territories of multiple nations, requiring their permission as well as the mobilisation of

air, land and sea transport. "I don't see a major expansion of US military presence in the region," Ryan said while in Darwin at the weekend for multinational military exercise Talisman Sabre. "What I do see is increased partnership, opportunities for partnership and perhaps some increased growth in the region," he said. Tensions between Beijing and Washington have flared in recent years over self-ruled Taiwan, China's disputed claims over a swathe of the South China Sea and a tug-of-war for influence in the South Pacific. China claims the democratic island of Taiwan as part of its territory and has vowed to take it, by force if necessary. But Ryan said this may be "only the first issue in a larger campaign" by China

to "at a minimum, become a regional hegemon in Southeast Asia, but certainly to enhance their global aspirations". According to the US Defense Department, China has the world's largest navy, the third-largest air force, and by some measures, the biggest army. The US relationship with Solomon Islands, which last year signed a secretive defence pact with China, was "complicated", the general said, despite a shared history dating back to World War II when Allied forces fought the Japanese on the island of Guadalcanal. Ryan said he could understand why the Solomons might be "frustrated" with the United States, following a recent visit he made to the archipelago. "I was struck

by the lack of development there so I am not surprised that our relationship with the Solomons remains complicated today, because we were there, we fought hard there, and now there are some challenges there and we haven't been back," he said. The United States restored its embassy in Solomon Islands in February after a 30-year hiatus. Three months later, it opened an embassy in Tonga. US embassies are also planned for Vanuatu and Kiribati. Solomon Islands is a sovereign nation but it should be "careful" about its relationship with China, the general said. Beijing, too, had "every right" to operate in the region, he said, "as long as everybody is obeying the same set of international norms that have been set since World War II".—DNA

War 'coming to Russia as Medvedev threatens nukes

KYIV: At least four people were killed and 43 injured in a Russian strike on an apartment building in central Ukraine on Monday, according to the country's Interior Minister. Russia hit Kryvyi Rih in the morning with two missiles, which destroyed several floors of a residential building, wrote Igor Klymenko on Telegram. Four people were killed and 43 were injured, he said at midday, adding three residents were rescued and 30 evacuated. A 10-year-old child was among those killed. The second missile hit a university, according to Klymenko, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy denouncing "Russian terrorism". Speaking to Euronews in July, Dr Jade McGlynn, Research Fellow in War Studies at King's College London, said Moscow was deliberately "terror bombing" civilians in a bid to demoralise the population and undermine their resolve. The Kremlin called on Monday Ukrainian drone strikes an "act of desperation" by Kyiv, whose counter-offensive was "failing", it claimed. "It's obvious the counter-offensive is not successful," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, claiming Ukrainian forces have had "no success" on the battlefield. "In an act of desperation, the Kyiv regime is resorting to such terrorist strikes," he said. Ukraine has recaptured Russian-occupied territory in the south and east, though Zelenskyy previously said progress was not as fast as he would like. Ukrainian forces are facing solidly entrenched Russian troops that have had months to dig in.—Agencies

South asks North Korea to choose 'right path'

SEOUL: Miffed over a military parade that was attended by Russian and Chinese delegations in Pyongyang, South Korea on Monday called on North Korea to choose the "right path." "We express strong regret over how North Korea is adhering to nuclear development and an attitude of confrontation rather than seeking denuclearization and peace despite this year marking the 70th anniversary of the armistice," Seoul's Unification Ministry spokesman Koo Byoungsam said on Monday. Last week, Russian Defense Minister Gen. Sergey Shoigu shared the stage with Kim Jong-un as the North Korean leader presided over a military parade to mark the 70th anniversary of North Korea's "Victory Day." A delegation led by Li Hongzhong, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the Chinese National People's Congress, also attended the parade. Urging Pyongyang to "suspend" its nuclear development, Seoul called on North Korea to "come forth to choose the right path," Seoul-based Yonhap News reported.—Agencies

Arizona faces extreme heat

WASHINGTON: The US state of Arizona is facing extreme heat as conditions continue to wreak havoc, with temperatures expected to exceed 43 degrees Celsius (109.4 degrees Fahrenheit) in the coming week. According to data from the US National Weather Service (NWS), temperatures in Arizona will continue to exceed 43 degrees Celsius (109.4 degrees Fahrenheit) in the coming week. For the past 10 days, temperatures in Arizona have exceeded 43C. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, over 5,000 heat records were broken across the country in the past 30 days. "According to ERA5 data from the EU-funded Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), the first three weeks of July have been the warmest three-week period on record and the month is on track to be the hottest July and the hottest month on record," said the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on Thursday. "These temperatures have been related to heat waves in large parts of North America, Asia, and Europe, which along with wildfires in countries, including Canada and Greece, have had major impacts on people's health, the environment, and economies," it added. California, which Arizona shares a border with, has also been experiencing extreme heat, with Central Valley temperatures averaging around 37C (98.6F) for most of July. The Los Angeles Times reported that the 70,000-acre wildfire that began in California's Mojave National Preserve before spreading into Nevada remained 0% contained on Sunday as firefighters battled deadly "fire whirls" caused by extreme heat and unstable winds.—APP

Thousands of coup supporters march in Niger's capital

DOUALA: Thousands of backers of the coup in Niger marched through the streets of the capital Niamey on Sunday, a day after the mutinous soldiers who staged it called for a demonstration. "A support march organized by our compatriots has been underway since 9 a.m. (0800GMT) at the Place de Concertation in Niamey. This show of force has been unheard of in the capital for more than 10 years, no doubt testifying to how much they were gagged by the old power," Gen. Abdourahmane Tchani said on Twitter. He accompanied the statement with a video of people demonstrating in the streets of Niamey. Numerous images published on social networks and by local media also showed people in the streets of the capital and in front of the French embassy waving Russian flags and calling for the withdrawal of France from Niger. The demonstrations do not represent public opinion throughout Niger.—APP

Denmark considers banning Quran-burning protests

COPENHAGEN: The government says desecrating Islam's holy book can fuel extremism and have negative geopolitical impacts. Denmark announced on Sunday it was considering banning Quran-burning protests, which have created tensions with the Muslim world. Islam's holy book has been desecrated at several demonstrations in Sweden and Denmark recently, fraying diplomatic relations between the pair and several Middle Eastern countries. The Danish government claims the stunt plays into the hands of extremists and sows division, though defenders see it as a necessary - yet unsavoury - part of freedom of speech. The authorities want to "explore" the possibility of stopping situations where "other countries, cultures and religions are insulted", especially if they have "significant negative consequences for Denmark... particularly in terms of security," the foreign ministry wrote in a statement. "This must of course be done within the framework of freedom of expression

protected by the constitution," it added, stressing such liberty was one of Denmark's most important values. At the end of June, Salwan Momika, a 37-year-old Iraqi refugee in Sweden, set fire to the Quran outside Stockholm's main mosque. Last week, he again stomped on and tore up a copy of the book outside the Iraqi Embassy to show his opposition to the faith. The incident caused a diplomatic spat with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran which summoned Swedish diplomats. Algeria also recalled the representatives of Denmark. Hundreds of Iraqis also invaded and set fire to the Swedish embassy in Baghdad as a result of the incident. The Swedish ambassador was expelled from Iraq, while Iran has indicated it will not accept a new ambassador from the Scandinavian country on its territory. The Danish Foreign Ministry notes Quran-burning protests have "reached a level where Denmark, in many parts of the world, is perceived as a country that

facilitates the insult and denigration of the cultures, religions and traditions of other countries." The "main purpose" of some of these demonstrations is to provoke and "could have important consequences", it claimed. Denmark's far-right has also seized on rancour, with the Danish Patriot movement posting a video of a man desecrating and burning what appears to be a Quran. Trying to copy the previous incident, nearly a thousand demonstrators gathered at night in Baghdad and tried to walk towards the Danish embassy, but Iraqi police dispersed them with truncheons and tear gas. In a separate statement, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on Sunday he had been in close contact with his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen, adding Sweden was mulling something similar. "We have also started to analyse the legal situation in order to consider measures to strengthen our national security and the security of Swedes in Sweden and around the world.—Agencies

Sweden urged to take 'concrete action'

ANKARA: Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has called on Sweden to take concrete measures to prevent the burning of the Quran, a source from Türkiye's Foreign Ministry said Sunday, a day before another burning took place in Stockholm. Sweden and Denmark have seen several incidents in recent weeks where copies of Islam's holy book have been damaged or burned, causing outrage among Muslims. Sweden's Embassy in Baghdad was stormed and partly set ablaze by protesters in response to the burnings. In a phone call, Fidan told his Swedish counterpart Tobias Billstrom that the continuation of such "vile actions" under the guise of freedom of expression was unacceptable, the source said. Fidan and Billstrom also discussed Sweden's NATO military alliance membership application, the source added, over which Ankara holds a veto. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on Sunday that he had held talks with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and agreed the situation was dangerous. "We need to take measures to strengthen our resilience," he said in a post on Instagram. The Swedish government said this month that it would examine whether it could change Sweden's Public Order Act to give police the possibility to stop demonstrations that threatened Sweden's security. "Ultimately, it is about defending our free and open societies, our democracy and our citizens' right to freedom and security," Kristersson defended. Tobias Billstrom declined to comment.—Agencies

Briefs

Niger junta arrests senior politicians after coup

NIAMEY: The military junta that seized power in Niger detained three more senior politicians from the ousted government on Monday, their party said, widening arrests in defiance of international calls to restore democratic rule. As turmoil from the takeover spread from the streets to the markets, sources said the regional central bank had cancelled Niger's planned 30 billion CFA (\$51 million) bond issuance, scheduled for Monday in the West African regional debt market, following sanctions. The African Union, the U.N., the European Union and other powers have condemned the junta's overthrow of elected president Mohamed Bazoum last week - the seventh military takeover in less than three years in West and Central Africa. The coup has raised fears for the security of the surrounding Sahel region. The United States, former colonial power France and other Western states have troops in Niger and had been working with the government battling militant forces linked to Islamic State and al Qaeda. Western concern over the coup is also sharpened by Niger's position as the world's seventh-biggest producer of uranium, the radioactive metal widely used for nuclear energy and treating cancer. Junta forces arrested the ousted government's mines minister, the head of the ruling party, and oil minister Mahamane Sani Mahamadou, who is also the son of former president Issoufou Mahamadou, the Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS-Tarayya) said. - Agencies

Trump's bid to quash Georgia probe rejected

DNA
WASHINGTON: The judge presiding over a Georgia grand jury investigation into Donald Trump on Monday rejected the former U.S. president's bid to disqualify the prosecutor leading the inquiry and block any indictments stemming from the probe. Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney also denied Trump's request to quash a special grand jury report that included recommendations on whom to charge in connection with a campaign to overturn Georgia's 2020 election results, when Democrat Joe Biden narrowly carried the state. The report has remained sealed pending charges in the case. Monday's ruling arrived potentially only days before possible indictments. Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis has strongly indicated she intends to ask a grand jury to approve charges sometime in the next three weeks, telling judges that her staff will mostly work remotely as a safety precaution. Security barricades were erected outside the county courthouse last week.

Wagner likely to need new recruits, says Prigozhin

DNA
MOSCOW: Russia's Wagner Group is currently not recruiting fighters but is likely to do so in future, according to a message published on Monday which appears to be from the mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin. The future of Wagner and Prigozhin has been unclear since he led a brief mutiny against the Russian defence establishment in late June and the Kremlin said he and some of his fighters - who have fought in some of the fiercest battles of the Ukraine war - would leave for Belarus. Despite that, Prigozhin attended a meeting with President Vladimir Putin five days after the mutiny and was photographed last week in St Petersburg, where Putin was hosting African leaders.

24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACCESSION TO THE THRONE OF KING MOHAMMED VI



ISLAMABAD: Chief guest Rana Tanveer Hussain Federal Minister for Education, Ambassador of Morocco Mohammed Karmoune and others cutting cake to celebrate the 24th Anniversary of the Accession to The Throne of King Mohammed VI of Morocco. - DNA

Bilawal angry over reports on caretaker PM's names

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister and PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari dismayed over the reports regarding caretaker Prime Minister's name. According to sources, the PPP chairman sought explanation from the consultation committee regarding the fake news. Sources said that the committee submitted an explanation to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and informed him that no agreement on the caretaker Prime Minister has been made with PML-N yet. PPP is yet to suggest names for the caretaker Prime Minister, sources added. Earlier on Monday, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) decided to hold the third round of consultation regarding the nomination of caretaker setup after the assemblies dissolution. Sources within the PPP have informed that their party has already completed the process of consultation and deliberations regarding potential names for the caretaker prime minister. They are now prepared to present their nominee for the coveted position in today's meeting with the PML-N. It is pertinent to mention here

Elections will be held on time, reiterates Marri

SANGHAR: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation, Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Shazia Marri said on Monday that the elections will be held on time. Speaking to media persons at the Benazir Nashonuma Center established at Rural Health Center Jam Nawaz that Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Raja Riaz will hold a round of consultations with the opposition members over the caretaker setup on Wednesday. Raja Riaz said, he will suggest three names for the office of caretaker prime minister in his talks with the government over the matter. "These names could likely be included economist, politician and technocrat," he added. However, it's worth noting that report started making rounds that Ishaq Dar is likely to become caretaker

prime minister (PM) as Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) becomes active to convince coalition parties in this regard. Ishaq Dar is the current finance minister and is considered to be a close ally of the former prime minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif. However, the ruling coalition parties, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) had rejected to receive any suggestions from PML-N regarding Ishaq Dar for caretaker prime minister's (PM) slot.

Clashes continue between factions in Palestinian camp

SIDON: Clashes continued Monday for the third day in a Palestinian camp in Lebanon between members of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah group and Islamist factions. The death toll from the fighting rose to nine, officials said. A Lebanese army spokesperson confirmed the latest casualty figures at Ein el-Hilweh camp. Two soldiers stationed outside the camp were lightly wounded, Col. Fadi Abou Eid said. Despite attempts by Lebanese parties and some of the Palestinian factions to broker a cease-fire, "the shooting and shelling have not stopped in the camp until this moment," said Adnan Rifai, a member of the popular committee that serves as a governing body in the camp. The Lebanese army mans a checkpoint outside and typically does not enter the camp, which is under the control of the Palestinian factions. The clashes erupted on Sunday after militants shot and killed a Palestinian military general from the Fatah group, Abu Ashraf al Armoushi, and three escorts as they were walking through a parking lot, according to another Palestinian. The official spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to talk to the media. On Saturday, an unknown gunman had tried to kill militant Mahmoud Khalil but instead fatally shot his companion. Later on Sunday, Palestinian factions said in a joint statement that they had agreed to a cease-fire during a mediation meeting hosted by the Lebanese Shiite Amal movement and militant Hezbollah group in the city Sidon. But the cease-fire did not hold. Some residents in Sidon neighborhoods near the camp fled their homes as stray bullets hit buildings and shattered windows and storefronts. The public Sidon General Hospital evacuated its staff and patients. A Fatah statement condemned the killing of its security official, saying the attack was part of a "bloody scheme that targets the security and stability of our camps." It vowed to hold the "perpetrators accountable." - Agencies

Permission awaited for caretaker PM, says Sheikh Rashid

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed says every party is ready to install its own caretaker prime minister but awaiting permission. In a message on social networking site X (formerly Twitter), Rashid said that in the next eight days, not only the decisions relating to promotions, changes, appointments and more uplift schemes would be made, but also the affairs pertaining to party's infighting and issues with powerful quarters would be sorted out. He said the ruling parties wanted a caretaker prime minister who would be their puppet, act as a stooge and would do everything exactly according to their wishes and demands. Rashid said a prime minister who could not execute his plan to bring his brother back to the country despite having a diplomatic passport in 15 months, how could he solve problems of the poor country fellows. The former interior minister said when the PDM would go to public without protocol, they would come to know how popular they were. "Who would like to make investment in a country where 60 people are killed in terrorism in a day? he stated. The AML chief said silence of Maryam Nawaz and Asif Zardari was not without purpose. He said, "The rift among PML-N leaders is widening. It seems there is something wrong," he said. - DNA

Xi appoints new chief of China's nuclear arsenal

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping, also the military's commander-in-chief, on Monday appointed a new head of the armed force overseeing the nation's conventional - and nuclear - missiles, one day before the anniversary of the People's Liberation Army. Wang Houbin, former deputy commander of the navy, was named the new head of the PLA Rocket Force, and Xu Xisheng, its new political commissar, with both men acquiring the top rank of general, according to state media. Until his move to the PLA Rocket Force, Wang had been deputy commander of the navy since 2020. He was previously also the deputy chief of staff at the Navy. Xu was formerly the deputy political commissar of the Southern Theatre Command, one of the PLA's five theatre commands. State media did not say where the PLA Rocket Force's previous chief, Li Yuchao, was reassigned or state his whereabouts. The new appointments came a day ahead of the 96th anniversary of the PLA's founding on Aug. 1. Xi has repeatedly urged the military to deepen war and combat planning to increase the chances of victory in actual combat to safeguard China's sovereignty and territory. China says it is committed to a defensive nuclear strategy, and pledges to no first use of nuclear weapons. It says it will also not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or nuclear weapon free zones. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng. - DNA

Rains, floods wreak havoc across the country

LAHORE: There is no end in sight to flood situation in the country as persistent monsoon rains and water released by India into rivers has made things even worse. Raging River Sutlej at Arifwala has claimed the life of a 14-year-old boy besides washing away two protective embankments and developing cracks on Bahawalnagar road. Similarly the river continues to wreak havoc at Chishtian in south Punjab as it has washed away a protective embankment besides inundating several localities and crops sown over thousands of acres of land forcing

people from their homes in search of safe places. Area residents have complained that nobody from the administration has come to rescue them, and they have to safe locations on their own. They have appealed to Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi to take notice of the situation. Hundreds of acres of precious land was flooded after water from River Indus spilled over into nearby localities at Karor Lal Isan. The situation has forced people to move to safe places. Locals have said that the situation is getting worse by the day. On the other hand, rising water

level in River Indus at Qadirpur in Ghotki (upper Sindh) has set off alarm bells ringing as Deputy Commissioner (DC) Muhammad Usman Abdullah has asked the concerned officials to remain prepared in order to deal with any emergency. The DC has cancelled the leaves of all irrigation department staff and directed the executive engineer irrigation and director water board to keep an eye on the Bacha embankment. He has also asked people living in the vicinity of the river to move to safe locations along with their cattle immediately. - Agencies

Pak, China economic ties to reach new heights: Dar

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has expressed the confidence that economic and diplomatic ties between Pakistan and China will touch new heights in the time to come. Addressing the opening ceremony of Bank of China, Islamabad branch on Monday, he said China had always supported Pakistan at world forums. "Renminbi (RMB) would soon become an internationally adopted parallel currency," he said. He said China was Pakistan's time-tested friend. Dar especially thanked China and its financial institutions for extending tremendous financial support to Pakistan during the difficult times. Ishaq Dar said that it was a historic movement as six years ago he had handed over the license for opening of the bank's first branch to its President in Belgium. Now, it's a big coincidence that BOC was opening its second branch, which he said was a great privilege for him to witness. The minister congratulated BOC President and his team for extensive efforts in opening the branch and also appreciated cooperation by Pakistan authorities and finance ministry in this regard. The minister also congratulated Deputy Governor Peoples Bank of China, his team and officials of China embassy.