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Briefs

Pak rejects Israel's remarks

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Murtaza Zahra Baloch has categorically rejected Israel's statement regarding the adoption of Pakistan's Universal Periodic Report Responding to media queries, she said the UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday adopted Pakistan's Universal Periodic Report unanimously and Israel's politically motivated statement is fundamentally at variance with the otherwise positive tone of the session and the statements made by a vast majority of the countries.

Parvez Elahi granted post-arrest bail

DNA

LAHORE: A banking court in Lahore granted post-arrest bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Parvez Elahi on Tuesday in the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) money laundering case against him. The court accepted Elahi's post-arrest bail plea and directed him to submit a surety bond of Rs500,000. During the hearing, the court observed that FIA had failed to submit case records despite being directed to do so. A special court in Lahore had earlier granted post-arrest bail to PTI leader in the same case after the investigative agency had detained him and requested physical remand.

Govt fails to provide relief: JI Emir

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq has said the rulers instead of discussing their own interests should pay attention on the problems of the people. Those who had taken out rallies and long marches against inflation were ridiculously silent on the soaring prices of basic need items after coming into power, he said criticizing govt of the PDM and the PPP. Taking to different delegations at Mansoorah on Tuesday, he said the unity govt failed to provide any relief to masses in 15 months.

Dar terms development crucial Pakistan gets \$2 billion from Saudi Arabia

The financial support will shore up the depleting foreign exchange reserves

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said on Tuesday that the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has received \$2 billion from Saudi Arabia, in yet another boost for the ailing economy following the \$3 billion Stand-by Agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "This inflow has increased the forex reserves held by SBP and will accordingly be reflected in the forex reserves for the week ending July 14, 2023," Dar said. "On behalf of the prime minister and army chief, I extend our heartfelt thanks to the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their great gesture and support by placing the said deposit of \$2 billion with the State Bank of Pakistan," the minister added. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also expressed his gratitude to Saudi Arabia and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman for ensuring financial support to Pakistan. "This deposit will strengthen Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. It reflects the growing confidence of our brotherly countries and the international community in Pakistan's economic turnaround. We remain committed to making all necessary efforts to improve Pakistan's economy," the premier said. He also appreciated Dar and Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir for their efforts in this regard. Saudi Arabia had already pledged the money to Pakistan and waited for the much-awaited IMF deal to be announced before depositing it. The financial support will shore up the depleting foreign

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Saudi support vital for IMF deal, says Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday thanked the Saudi leadership for their generous and unwavering support for Pakistan, which, he said, was particularly instrumental in securing the deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He was talking to Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy, who called on him, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister asked the ambassador to convey his special gratitude to Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman for the deposit of \$2 billion dollars with the State Bank of Pakistan. He also apprised Ambassador Nawaf about the formation of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to facilitate and fast-track potential investments from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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PPP proposes Aug 8 for assemblies' dissolution Law Minister says there would be no extension in term of NA

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Key ruling coalition partner Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Tuesday proposed to the federal government to dissolve the national and all the provincial assemblies on August 8. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif led federal government and all the provincial assemblies would complete their five-year constitutional term next month. During an informal interaction with the journalists in Parliament House, Minister for Commerce and Investments Naveed Qamar said, "PPP has suggested the government to dissolve all assemblies on August 8." Meanwhile, Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar categorically stated that there would be no extension in the term of the National Assembly. Talking to journalists, the minister said that they were committed to hold free and fair general elections. "There are many minor flaws in the Election Act," he said, adding that a parliamentary committee was reviewing the proposal of Free and Fair Election Network (Fafen), Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development (Pildat)

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Nawaz moves to address Fazl's concerns

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif has invited Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JULF) Emir Maulana Fazlur Rehman to Dubai after he expressed reservations about the former premier's meetings with coalition partners, media reported. The JULF chief has claimed that he was not taken into confidence on the Dubai huddles headed by Nawaz. The PML-N supremo, currently in Saudi Arabia, will leave for Dubai instead of London, where he currently resides. Sources said that coalition partner Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari had convinced Nawaz to hold elections on time.

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Zelensky says Nato 'absurd' for Ukraine membership delay

NEWS DESK

VILNIUS: US President Joe Biden on Tuesday hailed an agreement for Sweden to join Nato as more work remained to determine a path forward for Ukraine's future with the alliance. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky criticised as "absurd" the absence of a timetable for his country's entry. Biden described the summit as a "historic moment" and said the United States agreed with a proposal, yet to be released publicly, to outline a path for Ukraine's eventual membership. However, Zelensky, who arrived on Tuesday to join the Vilnius summit, expressed disappointment with how the negotiations were playing out. The Ukrainian president said it would be "absurd" if Nato leaders did not offer his country a time frame for membership, after the alliance head said it would send Kyiv a "positive message". Kyiv is pushing to be swiftly allowed into the Western alliance, bound together by mutual security guarantees. But divisions among Nato's 31 members mean there will not be a date or straight-forward invitation for Ukraine to join.

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Sweden hails 'historic step'

STOCKHOLM: This is a historic moment for Sweden, which has spent the past year fighting hard to get accepted into Nato. The Nordic country previously embraced wartime neutrality for more than 200 years, but applied for membership last May as part of efforts to improve security and stability in northern Europe, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, until late on Monday night, Turkey had been blocking Sweden's application. Turkey argued Sweden was giving refuge to Kurdish militants, and needed to do more to crack down on rebel groups like the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which it considers a terrorist organisation. The EU and US have also designated the PKK as a terrorist group. Like any of Nato's 31 member countries, Turkey has the power to block new nations from joining the group. The outcome of crunch talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is being seen as a major win for Sweden's right-wing Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif exchanges views with Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Malkiy. - DNA

IMF approves external financing plan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund has approved Pakistan's external financing plan. For the release of its bailout package, the IMF had asked Pakistan to provide it the external financing plan. Then the Ministry of Finance sent the \$8 billion financing plan from the friendly countries to the IMF as per its requirement. The meeting of the IMF Executive Board will be held on July 12. According to the sources in Finance Ministry, Saudi Arabia has deposited \$2 billion in the State Bank of Pakistan. \$3.5 billion are likely to be received from China. A loan of \$1 billion will be taken from the UAE. According to finance plan forwarded to the IMF,

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PM felicitates CPC Pakistan highly values brotherly ties with China

Envoy says China regards Pakistan as important economic partner

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has felicitated the Communist Party of China on its 102nd anniversary and thanked the CPC leadership for its firm support to Pakistan's sovereignty, integrity and economic development. He was talking to Chinese Chargeé D'affaires

PICTURE ON BACK PAGE

Ms. Pang Chunxue, who called on him in Islamabad. Recalling his substantive interactions with President Xi Jinping and more recently with Premier Li Qiang, the Prime Minister appreciated strong personal commitment of the Chinese leadership for strengthening bilateral ties between the two countries. Noting the upward

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Massive potential in Pak-China ties, says Ahsan Iqbal

DNA

BEIJING: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has said there is a massive potential for expanding Pakistan-China relations in the areas of agriculture, industry, technology and mining. He made the remarks at the meeting of 12th Special Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Beijing. Ahsan Iqbal noted that CPEC is a

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Indian Supreme Court to hear pleas on daily basis - Page 08

Unleashing power of gender equality for a prosperous Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is among the eight countries to account for half of the projected global population growth by 2050 with the country's population currently estimated at 240.5 million and is projected to reach a staggering 403 million by 2050, said UNFPA Pakistan Representative Dr. Luay Shabaneh. According to a press statement issued here on World Population Day by UNFPA, he said the country, as home to almost 3 percent of the global population, holds a significant role in shaping the future and well-being of humanity. He said the rapid population growth in Pakistan poses multifaceted challenges and opportunities adding while it presents immense human capital potential, harnessing this potential requires concerted efforts in ensuring gender equality, women empowerment, and access to quality education and healthcare. Women and girls must be at the heart of all efforts. He said that investing in women's health and education, addressing gender disparities, and providing economic opportunities are

critical steps toward paving a path for a sustainable and prosperous future. He advised that empowering women through employment opportunities can harness their potential, with a rise in their participation in the labour market adding that this can further increase the labour absorption needs that is requiring for a substantial rise in economic growth. "It is essential to upscale maternal health and access to family planning which has been painfully slow, hindering our collective ability to create positive change. We also need to challenge societal norms, attitudes, and practices that perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. By doing so, we can create an enabling environment where everyone, regardless of their gender, can thrive and contribute to the betterment of society," Dr. Luay Shabaneh further emphasized. He pointed out that by addressing these disparities and empowering women and girls, the country can unlock immense potential, foster inclusive societies, and work towards a brighter future. "The time for action is now. Government, organizations, communities, and individuals must come together to reinforce their commitment towards achieving gender equality, as it is not

only a fundamental human right but also a catalyst for sustainable development. Let us embrace the power of gender equality and strive to uplift the voices of women and girls, unlocking infinite possibilities for a brighter and more equitable world," added Dr. Shabaneh. On this year's World Population Day, the focus in the country must not be on the numbers but should turn to unleashing the power of gender equality, he said. "Gender-based discrimination not only harms individuals directly affected but also undermines the progress and well-being of society as a whole. Women and girls continue to face numerous barriers and inequalities, limiting their opportunities and stifling their potential", he maintained. World Population Day is celebrated each year on July 11 to raise awareness about global population issues and promote dialogue on the importance of reproductive health, gender equality, and sustainable development. UNFPA is committed to working with the government of Pakistan and other partners to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the country's growing population.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb inaugurating Rehabilitation of Radio Pakistan Peshawar building after the incident of 9th May.—APP

NDMA cautions depts after India releases water in Ravi River

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday issued an advisory alert to the departments concerned for taking preparedness and precautionary measures after India released water into Ravi River.

The NDMA in its advisory mentioned that the Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters (PCIW) and Flood Forecasting Division (FFD) have reported medium-level flows on Eastern River-Sutlej from Harike India with a time lag at Ganda Singh Wala Pakistan was 24 hours. However, low-level flows reported from Ferozpur India with a time lag at Ganda Singh Wala of six hours. The impacts to be incurred by the prevailing situation may be as: Likely the flows will persist over the next 48 hours and will be recorded at Sulemanki in the next 36 to 48 hours, the NDMA said. Moreover, inundation of low-lying areas, flooding of crops astride the Sutlej River, over-topping of roads and inundation of villages may also occur in the due course of time. The NDMA is sharing regular updates with all disaster management responders for taking necessary precautionary measures. It underlined that the quarters concerned should move people and at-risk communities from low-lying areas, preplace flood fighting equipment and machinery, develop adequate stocks of food and medicine in the impacted area and coordinate for restoration of roads and communication links in the region, actions and monitoring.

Robbers snatch pizza, cash from delivery boy

MULTAN: Armed robbers turned out to be fond of pizza eating as they snatched pizza from the delivery boy the late night of yesterday. According to police, three bandits intercepted the delivery boy named Azan at local Gulshan Ehab Colony, when he was moving out to drop pizza at the house on order. They also snatched money worth Rs. 12,000 besides pizza from the boy before escaped the scene. Shah Shams Police Station registered the case on the report of the pizza shop's owner and claimed to have started searching for the criminals right away.—APP

CCP's enquiry uncovers Price Fixing By Urea Producers

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: An enquiry committee of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has concluded its enquiry and recommended the initiation of proceeding under Section 30 of the Competition Act, 2010 against urea manufacturers and the Fertilizers Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council (FMPAC). This enquiry recommendation is based on a prima facie violation of Section 4 'Prohibited Agreements' of the Competition Act, 2010, by manufacturers and FMPAC by announcing the 'Maximum Retail Price' of urea at Rs 1768 per 50 KG Bag. The enquiry was initiated following an advertisement published by FMPAC and its members on 26th November 2021, announcing a 'Maximum Retail Price of Urea' during a period of rising urea prices and reported shortages. According to the Fertilizer Policy of 2001,

urea prices were deregulated, and respective provincial agriculture departments notified urea prices from time to time as it is considered an essential item. These prices, as already fixed by the Companies, are notified by the Agriculture department to use as a reference to check on any profiteering. It was noted that the companies issue their price lists, which are then notified by the respective Deputy Director of Agriculture (Extension) under the authority of the Punjab Essential Articles (Control) Act, 1973. To obtain copies of these price notifications and the underlying company price lists for the years 2021 and 2022, the enquiry committee contacted the Agriculture Department of Punjab. The department provided notifications from 22 districts, as detailed in Table 14 (copies of the notifications have been provided). As per the finding of the enquiry report, the pricing pattern of different Fertilizer manufacturers in the urea industry

exhibit price parallelism (uniform pricing) pointing towards possible collusion in the industry. Specifically, the prices of Engro, FFC, Fatima, and Agritech show a parallel movement, with minor differences between them. For instance, in Rawalpindi, between February 2021 and June 2022, the prices increased by Rs. 232 for Engro, Rs. 233 for FFC and Fatima, and Rs. 230 for Agritech. Interestingly, all companies reduced their prices to Rs. 1850 in May 2022, only to increase them again to Rs. 1950 in June 2022. In Layyah district, from January 2021 to November 2021, Engro, FFC, and Fatima (excluding Agritech) experienced an increase in prices by Rs. 482 per bag or 27.26% between February 2022 and November 2022. These findings highlight the trend of price similarity and the common pricing practices within the urea industry. The enquiry concluded that the advertisement by FMPAC and its members constituted a prima facie decision.

RDA seals commercial buildings at Minara Residencia

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General (DG), RDA, Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa here on Tuesday carried out an operation against unauthorized and illegal commercial constructions and sealed high-rise commercial buildings at Minara Residencia, G.T Road, Mouza Kotha Kalan. According to RDA spokesman, the Enforcement Squad RDA including

Deputy Director, Building Control, incharge/Assistant Director, Building Control, Building Inspectors and others carried out the operation under section 39 of the Punjab Development of Cities Act 1976 against illegal commercial constructions and sealed the high rise commercial buildings. The spokesman said that taking legal action, notices were also issued to the owner of the property namely Khayal Zaman. He said

that the owner of the property had violated approved plans/maps, violated the PDC Act 1976 and RDA Building and Zoning Regulations 2020 and constructed illegal commercial buildings without approval and No Objection Certificates. The spokesman said that the DG had directed the Land Use and Building Control (LU&BC) Wing to take strict action against encroachments, illegal and unauthorized constructions.—APP

Two street criminals arrested; Rs 75,000, weapons recovered

DNA

RAWALPINDI: In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police here on Tuesday arrested two street criminals and recovered Rs 75,000 cash, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Pirwadhai police arrested two members of a street criminal gang including ringleader namely Rehan alias Semi, and Raheem Gul, wanted in various cases. He informed that the police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Pirwadhai Police Station on the directives of the Superintendent of Police conducted a raid and managed to net the accused. As per the preliminary police record, the criminals were also involved in other crimes, he said adding, the accused are being shifted to jail for identification parade.

World Youth Skills Day to be marked on July 15

ISLAMABAD: World Youth Skills Day will be marked on July 15 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan which aimed to encourage youth to celebrate the value of acquiring skills like building, making, and creating as a way to achieve personal success and fulfillment. By empowering young people, they can better advance the broader mission of the United Nations (UN) for lasting peace, sustainable development, and human rights for all, according to UN Secretary-General António Guterres. A UN resolution to establish a World Youth Skills Day was adopted by the General Assembly on December 18, 2014. On the UN's website, they state that education and training are the keys to success in the workforce. However, unfortunately, existing systems are failing to address.—APP

Sindh CM Murad vows to eliminate dacoits

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that the newly elected representatives of the local bodies have taken over, therefore he has decided to announce the next Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) for the vertical distribution of available resources. "We have started spade work to design the next PFC and it will be finalized within a month." This he said while talking to media just after performing the concluding ceremony of the three-day Urs of Abdullah Shah Ghazi at his Mazar on Tuesday. Replying to a question, the CM said that the cabinet had decided to announce the PFC award within a month of the formation of local bodies. "Now the elected representatives of the local bodies have taken over and we are going to form the commission and then the commission decides the formula of the award," he said and added that his government would financially strengthen the third tier of the government. It may be noted that the PFC ascertains the share of available resources between provincial and local bodies, generally known as vertical distribution. It also formulates a criterion for the distribution of allocated funds to local government horizontally among different tiers and local councils. This mechanism of distribution is known as Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) Award. Double salary in local bodies: To another question, the chief minister said that the digitalization of the salaries of the KMC and some other local bodies' employees has unearthed a large number of employees who were drawing double salaries — from KMC and another provincial department. "This is a crime and punishable under the law," he said and added his government has decided to dismiss such employees after fulfilling the legal requirements. Mr. Shah said that similar pension cases have also been found which were being scrutinized and would be dealt with accordingly. Yet to another question, Murad Ali Shah said that he has not received official figures of the digital census. "When I'll receive them officially, I will be able to comment," he said. Giving an oblique reference to MQM, Mr. Shah added that through a press conference on January 27, 2023, they (MQM) had expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the digital census. "They told the media that they have formed committees to facilitate the people to get them registered but it was me who had questioned the methodology of the census," he said.—APP



India-Israel nexus with PTI stands exposed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday strongly condemned the statement of Israel regarding Pakistan at the United Nations and alleged that the Israel-India support for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its chief had fully exposed the sinister nexus behind the May 9 mayhem. Addressing a press conference flanked by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar, Sherry Rehman lambasted the PTI chairman for his reported venomous campaign against the state, who, she claimed, was ever ready to do any

thing to please Israel.



"He (Imran Khan) believes that Israel's violations in Palestine are fine. Today Israel also becomes an ambassador of human rights but in reality she is doing the opposite," the minister added. She denounced the PTI chairman for criticising and opposing his arrest. "He asks why the government did this to me? He says he was arrested in a disgraceful way, but he should know

that no one is above the law," she added. The minister there were some sinister designs behind the curtain. Today the PTI was the best friend of Israel and Indian Prime Minister Modi, and its leader was being "baptized" in the waters of Israel. The PTI workers, she alleged, had desecrated and harmed the monuments of martyrs on the behest of their leader, who now wanted to harm Pakistan as a whole. "Israel is supporting Imran Khan today and what does that mean?" she quipped. The United States had always said that it was not meddling in the Pakistani politics but the PTI chief kept on dragging it, she added. "Israel's blaming of Pakistan in favour of the PTI at the UN meeting is highly condemnable. Imran Niazi is part of the camp that is violating the rights of Palestinians. Israel did not speak even on the arrest and indictment of those involved in the Capitol Hill attack."

Swiss Ambassador calls on Sindh Governor

DNA

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has said that there were ample opportunities for Pakistan and Switzerland in various fields to further enhance their mutual cooperation. This he said while talking to Ambassador of Switzerland Georg Steiner at Governor House here on Monday. Bilateral relations, the need to further enhance bilateral ties, investment opportunities in Sindh and other matters of mutual interest were discussed in detail on the occasion. Governor Sindh said that Sindh offers ideal investment opportunities, especially for foreign investors and any investment from Swiss investors in the province would be wel-

comed. "They would be provided every help and assistance", Governor Sindh said. Georg Steiner also visited the 'bell of hope' and rang the same.

Governor Sindh informed the Swiss Ambassador about the purpose of the 'bell of hope'. The Swiss envoy also went around Quaid's room, where he

witnessed the personal belongings of the father of the nation Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He also inspected the packing process of ration

bags under Taqatwar Pakistan Program. He lauded the measures of Governor Sindh for the welfare and well-being of the common man.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

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

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....112
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 Exchange 9270831-5
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



PESHAWAR. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributes Laptops on merit basis among high achieving students under the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023. —DNA

Pak offers huge potential for Gandhara tourism: President

The re-discovered cities of the Gandhara civilization exhibit many elements of their well-structured and modern lives through paintings, sculptures, coins, pottery and their relation with Buddhis.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday said Pakistan offered the world a valuable window to Gandhara civilization with its unique blend of ancient history, and the Buddha's message of peace and compassion. "In today's world where hatred is on the rise and increasing polarization is fueling conflicts, it's time to rediscover the role of cultural diplomacy to promote dialogue among civilizations," he said in his address here at the three-day Gandhara Symposium 2023. The symposium titled 'Cultural Diplomacy: Reviving Gandhara Civilization and Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan' was organized by Prime Minister's Task Force

on Gandhara Tourism, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), and the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The event gathered monks and inter-faith experts from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, China, Malaysia, South Korea and Vietnam with an objective to explore Pakistan's rich Buddhist legacy and create an enabling environment for Gandhara tourism. President Alvi said Buddha's quest rekindles the spirit of inner reflection with a precept to abstain from taking lives of the living beings and caring for the environment. He highlighted that the Gandhara civilization, which thrived in Pakistan centuries ago, could serve as an informative place for the visitors

from across the globe to explore exquisite Buddhist sites. He urged collaborative efforts to raise awareness about the inclusive and multicultural nature of Gandhara civilization and help the society to absorb diversity of cultures. The president welcomed the Buddhist monks in the country, hoping that their presence would relay a message of peace and harmony. State, man of the PM

Task Force on Gandhara Tourism-Ramesh Kumar Vankwani said the Gandhara civilization continued to mesmerize from all over the world and emphasized the need to preserve and revive the historical Buddhist relics. He said cultural diplomacy helped foster understanding and tradition among civilizations and expressed confidence that the symposium would act as an effective platform in promoting Pakistan's heritage. Director General ISSI Sohail Mahmood in his welcome address said Gandhara civilization, situated at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, served as a melting pot of diverse cultures and civilizations. He said preserving and promoting the Buddhist Gandhara heritage was of paramount

importance for Pakistan. The key objectives of the symposium include creating awareness about Gandhara and fostering a sense of appreciation for Pakistan's rich and diverse cultural heritage, both domestically and abroad. Also, it focuses on considering new initiatives that reinforce the country's cultural diplomacy efforts and help promote tourism, particularly faith tourism. One of the most remarkable aspects of the Gandhara civilization is its artistic creativity. The re-discovered cities of the Gandhara civilization exhibit many elements of their well-structured and modern lives through paintings, sculptures, coins, pottery and their relation with Buddhism.

World Population Day celebrated

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) Muhammad Sarwar Gondal on Tuesday said that the "World Population Day" is celebrated on July 11th every year to raise awareness about the challenges associated with the growing world population. The Spokesman said that these challenges include family planning, gender equality, poverty, maternal and child health and human rights, said a press release issued. He said that this day was firstly celebrated by the Governing Council of the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) when the total world population crossed 5 billion. The slogan of the day is "Say No to Over Population". He said PBS is committed to providing authentic data for fact-based policy making. The Spokesman said the data released by the Bureau of Statistics supports and plays a key role in comprehensive planning for the provision of basic facilities. Allah Almighty has blessed this world with many resources and now it's our responsibility to protect them. He said this is possible only if there is a fair distribution of resources on the basis of population ratio. This way we could provide a better future for our future generations, he added.—APP

Police strengthen security measures

ISLAMABAD: In response to the evolving security needs, the Islamabad Capital Police have intensified its efforts to safeguard the federal capital and mobilize security apparatus. Under the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir, enhanced security measures had been implemented, including the imposition of Section 144, which prohibits demonstrations and gatherings within the city. These measures aimed to maintain peace and security while prioritizing road safety and traffic regulations, such as the misuse of red and blue lights, tinted windows, and traffic rules. Moreover, individuals found responsible for erecting road blockades or occupying pedestrian spaces will be held accountable for their actions. To promote road safety awareness, motorists are reminded of the mandatory use of helmets. Stringent measures will be taken against violators, including those who exceed the permissible limit of two riders on motorcycles. Furthermore, individuals who obstruct roads or occupy pedestrian spaces will face appropriate legal consequences. In line with ensuring public safety.—APP

Pak safe, important country for tourists, says Dr Ramesh

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State, Chairman Prime Minister's Task Force Gandhara Tourism Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani on Tuesday said Pakistan is a safe country for tourism that attracts swathes of local and foreign tourists to explore its architectural beauty. Addressing the Gandhara Symposium 2023 here, the minister welcomed the international delegates and researchers attending the international tourism conference in the country. Vankwani said the international symposium would help promote the religious tourism potential of the country. He said that cultural and religious tourism would bring various countries and societies closer to each other. The symposium would pave the ways to highlight the country's soft image at the international level, he maintained. Dr. Ramesh Kumar also emphasized greater academic research, archaeological excavation, and dissemination of knowledge to uncover new sites to enrich our understanding of the magnificent civilization of Gandhara. He said, "Through cultural diplomacy, we can build bridges and foster greater understanding." The speakers from Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, Nepal, Sri Lanka, China, and Pakistan also expressed their views at the symposium on the Gandhara Civilization and Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan. Eminent stakeholders of Pakistan's tourism industry also participated in the symposium. It is pertinent to mention here, the sole objective of the Gandhara Symposium is to create awareness about Gandhara and to promote and highlight the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Pakistan at home and abroad. The Gandhara Symposium will also help to promote domestic tourism, especially religious tourism.—APP

Walk held to mark population week

RAWALPINDI: To mark World Population Day "Population Week" is being celebrated in a befitting manner by organizing competitions, demonstrating walks and other activities to promote the spirit of family planning which was necessary for proper upbringing of kids and ensuring health of couples. In this connection an awareness walk was organized by the Population Welfare Department in collaboration with the District Health Authority here on Tuesday at Benazir Bhutto Road. Addressing participants of the walk, District Population Welfare Officer, Shireen Sulhan said the issue of rapid population growth could only be resolved with cooperation of the masses and Population Welfare Department was taking all measures to create awareness among the masses about the importance of family planning and extending relevant services so that the marginalized population and young people could plan their families. Shireen said that family planning was vital for development issues, including gender equality, poverty, maternal health, human rights and environmental protection. She said that world population day, was an annual event which was observed on July 11 every year, adding the event was established by the United Nations Development Programme in 1989 and was first marked on 11th July 1990 in more than 90 countries.—APP

Global training for rehabilitation strengthening health from July 16

ISLAMABAD :Global Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (GRLI) six days academic training will start on July 16 to bring together influential figures in the field of rehabilitation and health systems strengthening, both from Pakistan and around the world. The second edition of the GRLI is organized by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, as part of the Learning, Acting, and Building for Rehabilitation in Health Systems (ReLAB-HS) initiative, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), said a news release. The primary aim of the training is to enhance leadership capabilities among participants and address the pressing need for accessible and high-quality rehabilitation and assistive technology (AT) services within their respective countries' health systems. Distinguished local and international speakers and panelists, including Dr. Sania Nishtar, a Member of the Senate of Pakistan, Dr. Alarcos Cieza from the World Health Organization (WHO), and Dr. Cyrus Engineer from Johns Hopkins University, will be featured during the Leadership Institute. Participants will have the opportunity to learn from renowned faculty members representing various disciplines, including rehabilitation, policy, advocacy, medical education, and health systems. The training will encompass keynote presentations, panel discussions, lectures, and interactive group activities. The Leadership Institute aims to produce champions in the fields of rehabilitation and health systems. Alumni from the program will utilize their leadership training to guide strategic action and drive positive change within their organizations. Furthermore, the event offers valuable networking opportunities, enabling participants to connect with professionals from diverse backgrounds, exchange ideas, share experiences, and establish meaningful collaborations for future endeavors. The overall objective of the Leadership Institute is to foster an environment conducive to knowledge exchange and contribute to the realization of a robust and inclusive health system in Pakistan, with a strong emphasis on rehabilitation services. Dr. Abdulgafoor Bachani, Director of ReLAB-HS, expressed his excitement about hosting the second edition of the Global Rehabilitation Leadership Institute in Pakistan. He emphasized the importance of bringing together multisectoral stakeholders to learn from one another and develop the necessary leadership skills to strengthen health systems and meet the evolving needs of the population. Dr. Bachani emphasized the urgency of integrating rehabilitation services into health systems, given the increasing global aging population and the rising number of individuals living with chronic diseases.—DNA

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Briefs

MoU signed to promote Pak-China furniture collaboration

DNA

BEIJING : A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the International Famous Furniture Fair (Dongguan) and the All Pakistan Furniture Makers Association (APFMA) to promote communication and cooperation between Chinese and Pakistani furniture enterprises. The MoU signed between APFMA & Dongguan Famous Furniture Association in presence of Acting Consul General of Pakistan in Guangzhou, Sardar Muhammad. Sardar Muhammad expressed his appreciation for this move, recognizing the potential benefits for both countries in collaborating within the furniture sector. Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. According to the MoU, cooperation will be fostered through business negotiations, technology exchange, market promotion, and other projects. This agreement aims to provide a platform and opportunities for collaboration between Chinese and Pakistani furniture enterprises, promoting mutual benefits and achieving win-win situations. The MoU seeks to leverage the advantageous resources of the furniture industries in both countries to enhance overall competitiveness and international influence.

UBG Chairman resigns due to health reasons

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, United Business Group (UBG), Shahzad Ali Malik on Tuesday tendered his resignation from the position due to health reasons. Malik, who has been serving as the Chairman expressed his gratitude towards the trade leaders who supported him during his tenure, said a news release. In his resignation statement, Malik cited health concerns as the primary reason for his decision to step down. He acknowledged the immense support he received from the trade community across the country and expressed his heartfelt appreciation for their unwavering commitment. Under his leadership, the United Business Group made significant strides in promoting trade and commerce, fostering economic growth, and strengthening business relationships. —APP

ANF in five operations seizes over 90 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country seized over 90 kg drugs and arrested 11 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that ANF in an operation at Islamabad International Airport recovered eight drug-filled capsules from the possession of two Sharjah-bound passengers, residents of Bannu, going on flight no 181. In second operation near M-1, Motorway Toll Plaza, Islamabad, 1150 grams charras was recovered from the possession of two accused, residents of Mardan and Muzaffarabad. —APP

President Alvi for skill development of women

The delegation briefed the President about the steps being taken by WBN for the socio-economic empowerment of women. He commended the efforts of WBN in providing job opportunities to women and taking steps for their financial inclusion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has underscored the need for skill development, digital inclusion, and financial inclusion of women in Pakistan in order to make them financially self-sufficient. He stated that women, who constituted almost 50% of the country's population, needed to participate in all sectors of the economy for their economic empowerment.

He added that women's and girls' education was a vital component that contributed to gender equality as well as to the socio-economic development of the country. The President made these remarks during a meeting with the delegation of Women Business Network, led by Ms Sam Ali Dada, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Women Business Network (WBN) is a



global network of business professionals and corporate leaders that aims to uplift women for key leadership positions in the industry and create opportunities for their businesses. During the meeting, the President urged the delegation to increase employment opportunities for women in the private sector, besides establishing linkages with skill development institutions, such as NAVTTC and TEVTA, to provide women with marketable skillsets. He also emphasized

the importance of skill and educational development of women and girls in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The President highlighted the need for projecting the success stories of women to encourage and motivate other women to take part in business and economic activities.

He also called for taking practical and meaningful steps to address gender disparity. He further stressed the need for integrating women into the mainstream of economic activities for their financial empowerment. The delegation briefed the President about the steps being taken by WBN for the socio-economic empowerment of women. He commended the efforts of WBN in providing job opportunities to women and taking steps for their financial inclusion.

China-Pakistan to set up a natural disaster observation

ISLAMABAD: In a move to enhance collaboration on natural disaster monitoring, China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences will set up a natural disaster observation and research center in the Karakoram Mountains together with Karakoram International University.

This was stated by Hong Tianhua, Executive Director and Researcher of the Joint Research Center at a panel meeting with China-SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center and the All-Pakistan Chinese Enterprises Association (APCEA) held here online, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday. "The research center in Pakistan, to be completed in Passu, GB within 3 years, will monitor glacial lake outbursts, glacier debris flow, and landslides by analyzing the data of glaciers, snow cover, meteorology, hydrology and soil", Hong Tianhua added. China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences, established by Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, serves as a bridge for bilateral cooperation on such areas as natural disasters, ecological environment, resource

development and sustainable development of CPEC.

Last year, in the fight against the floods, the CPEC multi-factor database and data management and information service system of the Joint Research Center played an indispensable role by sharing 26 data sets regarding the deluge. Building on it, the Joint Research Center will also set up a Digital CPEC platform this year. Mr. Hong Tianhua told the audience. "The Digital CPEC platform will support the acquisition, preservation, sharing and utilization of data on ecological environment and disaster prevention and reduction of CPEC", he added. Geological cooperation is incorporated in the China-Pakistan Joint Statement signed in Nov. 2022. Against the backdrop of evolving climate change, it is becoming ever more imperative for countries to join hands in geological research. For China and Pakistan, the momentum is pacing up. Permanent Secretary He Zhixin of China-SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center said that the Center has signed five agreements with Pakistan and carried out cooperation in terms of comparative studies of basic geology, construc-

tion and sharing of geological database for environmental geology and hydrogeology, geological sample analysis techniques and other areas of mutual interest. More than 100 young technicians have been trained through various forms such as technical training courses, jointly implemented projects, academic education and visiting scholar programs, he shared. "In the next step, we will work together with China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences to deepen practical cooperation with Pakistan in the field of geoscience", he said. At the meeting, China-SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center and China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences donated a book entitled Pakistan in the Eyes of Geologists to APCEA. According to APCEA chairman Mr. Yang Jianduo, the book, published in January 2023, allows readers to gain deeper insights into Pakistan by taking them from the south all the way to the north of Pakistan along with the geological investigators. The book will also be translated into English and Urdu to enable more readers to have a better understanding of the resource-rich land.

UVAS holds stakeholder discussion on livestock development

ISLAMABAD: The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Lahore in collaboration with the Punjab Agriculture Research Board (PARB) arranged a discussion on livestock development and research at City Campus on Tuesday. Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Nasim Ahmed and Chief Executive (PARB) Dr Abid Mehmood co-chaired the meeting and sought suggestions and technical inputs from stakeholders and identified priority researchable areas for development of the livestock sector and enhancing profitability of poor livestock farming community in the country. Representatives of dairy industry, stakeholders from public and private organizations, researchers, faculty members from different education institutions and professionals were also present. Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Nasim Ahmed sought suggestions from participants on future necessities of research & development for the livestock sector. He mentioned that the UVAS was always ready in providing support to professionals and industrialists in the uplift of the livestock sector. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Abid Mehmood said that the meeting was aimed to provide a platform to stakeholders to discuss important issues. —APP

PM issues special message on World Population Day

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: World Population Day, being observed across the world today, draws our attention to the vast disparity between the requirements of increasing population and availability of resources as well as the need for affirmative policy actions to empower our communities and the people. Population remains at the heart of effective national planning. For developing countries in particular, managing population growth is key to socio-economic development. No country, however resourceful, can deal with population explosion. Thus drawing a balance between population and resources is fundamental to the fulfilment of the needs of teeming millions. This year's theme "Unleashing the power of gender equality" is a powerful reminder of the imperative to empower our women, girls and men and end discrimination. Their mainstreaming in the national life will automatically help in achieving the development goals and increasing human productivity. Gender equality is not just a human rights issue but also an economic requirement. The idea of balanced development is grounded in the empowerment of communities, who are enabled in not only fulfilling their aspirations of a meaningful life but also becoming a shareholder in the process of development of their societies. Thanks to the multi-faceted factors such as climate change, geopolitical upheavals and dysfunction of markets, the countries are finding it hard to stay on course for achieving Millennium Development Goals. Add to this mix the issue of gender inequality and discrimination and humanity gets farther from SDGs. As we observe World Population Day today, I would urge all stakeholders to invest in empowering communities by building their capacity through the provision of better health and educational facilities and an enabling environment to unlock their potential. For me, the concept of development is not abstract but is rooted in the welfare of the people. Hence all the more reason to invest in effective communication between the policy makers and the people at large for better outcomes. We need to demonstrate greater political will to deal with the challenge.

Islamabad Police complete Data Hub in 25 categories

ISLAMABAD: The police have successfully completed the Data Hub project, covering 25 categories, which will significantly strengthen law enforcement agencies in maintaining law and order and conducting effective surveillance to combat anti-social elements. The completion of the Data Hub by the police marked a significant step forward in bolstering security measures and ensuring the safety of the capital city's residents, the police said. The comprehensive database, spanning 25 categories, will provide valuable insights and information to law enforcement agencies, enabling them to take proactive measures against criminal activities and maintain a secure environment. By consolidating data from diverse sources, the Data Hub will empower law enforcement agencies to gather intelligence, analyze trends, and take prompt action against potential threats. This powerful tool will enhance their ability to identify and apprehend criminals, monitor sensitive areas, and respond swiftly to security incidents. The completion of the Data Hub project is a testament to the dedication and professionalism. —APP

10 Hurriyat leaders

ISLAMABAD: Indian police booked ten Hurriyat leaders and activists under black laws in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). According to Kashmir media service, the arrested persons who have been booked by police under black law Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) have been identified as Shabbir Ahmed Dar, Jahangeer Ghani Butt, Sajad Hussain Gul, Shams-ud-Din Rehmani, Mohammad Yaseen Bhat, Mohammad Rafiq Pahl-oo (alias Saleem Nanaji, Khurshid Ahmed Butt, Firdous Ahmed Shah, Par-ray Hassan Firdousi and Sohail Ahmad Mir. The Indian police official claimed that it has formally arrested 10 persons on charges of conspiracy relating to revival of ongoing Hurriyat activities for freedom struggle. The police said that in this regard, a case under black law Unlawful Activities Prevention Act already stood registered in Police Station Kothibagh in Srinagar. Potentially, Indian police arrested over four dozen Hurriyat leaders and activists during a raid at a hotel in Srinagar where Hurriyat activists and others were holding an Eid Milan party on Sunday. —APP

ENCEC approves many projects


ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Mr. Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Senator Nisar Ahmad Khuhro, Mr. Himayatullah Khan Advisor Finance KP Govt, Federal Secretaries and other senior officers from Federal Ministries and Provincial departments participated in the meeting. The ECNEC considered and approved a Project of Ministry of National Food Security & Research titled "Prime Minister's National Programme for Solarization of Agriculture Tube wells" in Punjab, Sindh,

KPK, and Baluchistan at a cost of Rs. 377,236.275 with a gestation period of three years. Phase-I of the project will consist Rs. 90 billion including 30 billion of PSDP and equivalent share by provincial governments as well as beneficiary farmers for financial year 2023-24. This project is to enhance agricultural productivity through clean and green energy by converting the existing 100,000 tube wells into solar PV system. The project is to be executed by Ministry of National Food Security through Federal Water Management Cell (FWMC) and Provincial Departments of Agriculture.


The ECNEC also considered and approved a project of Government of KPK titled "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Investment & Industrial Support Project (RIISP) to be executed by Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in District Bajur, Khyber, Kurram, Mohmand, North Waziristan, Orakzai, South Waziristan, and erstwhile FR regions at a cost of Rs. 110,700 million including IDA loan of USD 300 million from World Bank and Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa share of Rs. 29,700 million (in kind). The project will be completed in two phases i.e. Phase-I is six years (2023-2029) and Phase-II is also six years (2029-2031).



ISLAMABAD: A painter busy in painting a pedestrian bridge on Islamabad Expressway. —APP



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NATO acting as a malevolent tool

Limitation, so it is said, is the sincerest form of flattery. That is perhaps why NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg feels no qualms about directly parroting the US rhetoric on China. His latest ingratiating mimicry is his signed article, A Stronger NATO for a More Dangerous World, that Foreign Affairs published on Monday. This is a crystallization of the stance he and US President Joe Biden will adopt at the transatlantic alliance's 74th summit that is being held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on Tuesday and Wednesday. It is a stance that has taken the world back to the days that he and Biden seem to view as a lost golden age. In clinging to the past, these Cold War brain-fogged warriors are willing to drain the last drop of blood in Ukraine to weaken Russia, and to expand NATO to the "Indo-Pacific" to "engage with" China. While claiming that "NATO does not see China as an adversary", Stoltenberg makes no bones about the fact that the bloc wears the same uniform pants as the US, alleging in the article: "The Chinese government's increasingly coercive behavior abroad and repressive policies at home challenge NATO's security, values, and interests. Beijing is threatening its neighbors and bullying other countries." "It is not our adversary, but it must be treated as one" is the Catch-22 logic the Biden administration has drafted for its China policy. Stoltenberg has been increasingly brazen in singing from the Biden administration's hymn sheet since NATO adopted a guideline policy that identified China as a strategic challenge to the alliance at its summit in Madrid in June last year. The article shows that Stoltenberg and Biden are aiming to forestall any wavering from the other members which may be having doubts about falling in behind them. Neither France nor Germany, for instance, defines China, a major economic and trade partner of both of them and a collaborator in addressing global challenges, as a "strategic challenge". But within NATO, they have come under huge pressure to toe the US' line. That Stoltenberg has invited the leaders of Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand and Australia to attend the Vilnius summit is not with the aim of upholding peace and security in the Asia-Pacific, but because the Biden administration views them as useful reinforcements to bolster its plan to push NATO into the region. The haste with which Stoltenberg openly endorsed NATO opening a "liaison office" in Japan in January – when his tenure was thought to be drawing to an end – even before an agreement was reached among all members, was a telling sign that he was intent on at least laying the groundwork for this before leaving office. Now that he has been granted a fourth extension, the Vilnius summit bodes ill for the world, as he looks set to show his gratitude to Washington by keeping the fires of the Ukraine crisis burning and accelerating the bloc's expansion into Asia.

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Supplying cluster bombs: wrong decision

Twenty-thousand Laotians, almost half of them children, have been killed or injured by unexploded ordnance since the Vietnam war ended. It is half a century since the US stopped bombing Laos, having dropped more than 2m tons of cluster munitions; decades on, people then unborn are still paying the price. On one estimate, it will take another 100 years to fully clear the country. This is the true cost of cluster munitions. They are not only indiscriminate in showering dozens or hundreds of bomblets over a large area, but also have a lethal legacy because so many fail to explode, only to later be trodden on or picked up – often by curious children. For these reasons, more than 120 countries have signed the convention prohibiting their use, production, transfer and stockpiling. The US, Russia and Ukraine, however, have never been signatories. Russia has used them extensively in Ukraine, including in populated areas where no military personnel or infrastructure were evident. Kyiv has also employed them, more sparingly, but reportedly at the cost of civilian lives in Izium (though it denies they were used there). Now the US will supply more as part of a \$800m (£625m) military aid package, at Kyiv's request. Ukraine's counteroffensive has failed to gain the traction it needs, and supplies of artillery shells are running low. The argument is that, however significant the risks and long-term costs of using cluster bombs, civilians will pay a far higher price where Russian forces prevail. Cluster munitions are effective in combating dug-in ground troops, like the Russian forces along the vast frontline. But the same, of course, could be said for chemical weapons, and the US rightly finished destroying its remaining stockpile of those on Friday.

Ukraine's defence minister, Oleksii Reznikov, says it has given written guarantees that it will not use the US-supplied weapons in Russia, nor in urban areas where civilians might be killed or wounded. It will also record their use, to expedite demining when the conflict is over. The US claims its munitions are far safer than those used by Moscow, with dud rates "not higher than 2.5%" versus Russian devices that reportedly fail 30-40% of the time. Experts say test results don't reflect real world conditions and that, in any case, the sheer number of submunitions still means a deadly aftermath.

Invasion has forced Ukraine to make tough decisions about how to defend itself. The US was nonetheless wrong to meet its request. The decisions of the world's most powerful country and military are key to determining global norms. Before Donald Trump took office, it had made some recent steps towards controlling cluster munitions. But it should never have deployed them, including in Afghanistan and Iraq in the early 2000s. It should not have rejected the convention banning them. And it should not be supplying them to Ukraine. Their use will have terrible long-term consequences for civilians there – and perhaps, through the example it sets, for civilians elsewhere too.

Why is AF-Pak so important to SCO's success?

Qamar Bashir



Pakistan's Prime Minister aptly highlighted during his address to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit today (4th July, 2023) that both Pakistan and Afghanistan are pivotal for the success and achievement of the SCO's set objectives, which are to: strengthen mutual trust, friendship, and good-neighbourly relations among member states, promote effective cooperation in politics, trade and economy, science and technology, culture, and education, and for a variety of compelling reasons, the achievement of these lofty goals is intrinsically tied to the peace, security, and economic well-being of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Because they are in the heart of the SCO's focus area, Central Asia and the larger Eurasian region, and share borders with six SCO members: China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, and India. As a result, they hold a crucial strategic position in the region and are vital partners for the SCO in fostering security and stability. They have large populations and growing economies, making them attractive potential markets for SCO members. They share a history and culture with many SCO member countries and can help to improve cultural understanding and collaboration within the organization. Pakistan has good ties with both China and Russia and can act as a bridge between the SCO and the West. By working together, Pakistan and Afghanistan can help ensure that the SCO remains a stable and inclusive body capable of solving 21st-century concerns. Afghanistan, as the Prime Minister correctly stated, is located in a strategically vital region, and peace and security there will assist to enhance regional stability and collaboration. He asked the international community to take this situation seriously and to engage the interim Afghan administration in meaningful ways in order to establish a more peaceful and stable future for Afghanistan and the region as a whole. Afghanistan needs peace and security for a variety of reasons, including the country's long history of conflict and vio-

lence, which has had a devastating impact on the country's people, who deserve to live their lives free of fear and violence, and to enjoy their basic human rights, such as the right to education, healthcare, and employment. Peace and security would create a more stable climate in which businesses could operate, resulting in economic growth and employment creation. Peace and security would make it more difficult for terrorist groups to function in the country, reducing the region's and the world's threat from terrorism. The international community should take a number of steps to improve Afghanistan's security situation, including: providing financial assistance to Afghanistan to help rebuild its infrastructure and economy, creating jobs and improving living standards and supporting the interim Afghan government in its efforts to build a stable and secure country. This might involve training and equipment for Afghan security forces, as well as encouraging dialogue and reconciliation among Afghan factions. Ending the violence and paving the path for a more peaceful and stable future for Afghanistan requires addressing the core causes of conflict in Afghanistan, such as poverty, inequality, and a lack of opportunity, encouraging education and employment, and supporting women's rights. The Prime Minister did not mince words when he asked India, without naming it, to stop violence and lynching, as well as the destruction of places of worship for ethnic and religious minorities in India, and to resolve the issue of illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions. The Prime Minister's strong words will undoubtedly put much-needed pressure on India to reconsider its policy of genocide against minorities and take steps to end violence against them, which is critical for achieving the SCO goal of creating a more just and inclusive society in which all members of society feel treated fairly and have the same rights. The resolution of the Kashmir issue is also critical to accomplishing the SCO's goals. The Kashmir conflict has raged for decades, causing significant instability in the region. A resolution to the issue would assist to alleviate tensions and promote regional peace and security. The UN resolution on Kashmir urges for a peaceful resolution of the dispute through discussions between India and Pakistan, as well as the protection of all Kashmiris' human rights, regardless of ethnicity or religion. By supporting the UN resolution on Kashmir, the SCO may assist to foster peace and security in the region, preventing conflict and instability, ending prejudice against minorities, granting them their rights, and safeguarding them from violence. The SCO can help to prevent war and instability in the region, as well as promote full involvement of minorities in society and economic prosperity. While referring to the SCO's main objectives of promoting peace, security, and stability in the re-

gion, the Prime Minister stated that terrorism, extremism, and religious bigotry, in all of their manifestations, are threats to the peace, security, and stability of the SCO region and the world, and must be combated at the individual, societal, organizational, national, and global levels. This warning should be taken seriously by the SCO leadership, who should take steps to prohibit the use of terrorism, violence, and intimidation to achieve political ends. It endangers peace and security by instilling widespread fear and disorder, which leads to conflict between governments and groups. Extremism is a curse just as severe as terrorism. Extreme or fanatical political or religious beliefs are a threat to peace and security because they breed violence and intolerance, erode societal cohesion, and lead to conflict. Religious bigotry is another demon that thrives on intolerance or hatred of people of other faiths. It endangers peace and security by inciting violence and discrimination, undermining social cohesion, and causing conflict. The SCO has taken terrorism very seriously and has put in place a variety of counter-terrorist and counter-extremism programs, including the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), which is in charge of coordinating counter-terrorism activities among member states. The SCO Interbank Consortium is in charge of countering financial crime, including terrorist financing, as well as the SCO Convention on Countering Terrorism. It also promotes interfaith dialogue and understanding among its member states in order to reduce religious bigotry and intolerance, promote human rights and democracy in its member states in order to create a stable and inclusive environment, and narrow the space for terrorist and extremist groups to operate which however needs to be reevaluated periodically and improved upon perpetually. During his speech, the Prime Minister emphasized that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has the potential to strengthen connectivity, promote energy security, boost trade, create jobs, reduce extremism, and encourage cultural exchanges. CPEC, being a major infrastructure project and a key component of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), can help to improve connectivity between China and the SCO's member states in Central Asia, making it easier for people and goods to move between these countries and promoting energy security for the SCO's member states by connecting as many SCO oil and gas producing and consuming countries as possible. CPEC will help to create jobs and economic opportunities in Pakistan and Afghanistan in general, will promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges among, and will aid in the development of understanding and trust which is critical to the SCO's success. In addition, it will aid in the promotion of regional cooperation and economic development, generating billions of dollars in investment and creating millions of jobs, providing a much-needed boost to the economies of SCO member nations. While stressing the formation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), the Prime Minister correctly described them

as a significant tool for SCO countries to boost economic development and attract foreign investment. SEZs are important for providing the SCO with a much-needed economic and investment edge because they offer lower tax rates, special customs arrangements that allow businesses to import and export goods, simplified regulations that make it easier for businesses to operate, access to good infrastructure such as roads, railways, and airports, and access to a skilled workforce. The SCO nations can also learn from China's experience with SEZs, where they have been very effective in attracting international investment and promoting economic development. Since its inception in 2013, the Shanghai Free Trade Zone (SFTZ) has attracted over \$300 billion in global investment. During his speech, the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of poverty eradication, and he was correct in calling on the SCO to play a significant role in assisting member states in eradicating poverty by investing in poverty reduction initiatives, promoting regional cooperation, and advocating for international cooperation to make a real difference in the lives of millions of people. To reach this crucial milestone, the SCO can implement a number of measures. It can: provide financial assistance to its member countries in order to help them implement poverty reduction programs, create jobs, and boost economic growth; support education and healthcare programs in order to improve people's quality of life and reduce poverty; and promote good governance in its member countries in order to create a more stable and predictable environment for businesses to operate, resulting in economic growth and job creation, which can help to reduce poverty. In order to achieve its goals, the SCO will also need to provide mutual assistance, funding and grants for research projects, and developing and implementing poverty reduction programs. The SCO leadership should take the Prime Minister of Pakistan's words seriously, as it will undoubtedly assist to promote peace, security, and stability in the area. Terrorism, extremism, and religious prejudice are all dangers to these goals, which can be mitigated by encouraging interfaith communication and understanding, as well as advancing human rights and democracy in its member nations and addressing the root causes of these scourges. The SCO has already achieved major strides in security cooperation, such as counter-terrorism and counter-extremism. However, it could do more to cooperate on other security issues, such as border security and cyber security, combat cyberwarfare and climate change as well as building trust and understanding among the people of the SCO's member states, and addressing the root causes of conflicts, such as terrorism, extremism and intolerance, poverty and inequality, and a lack of opportunity in order to become a major force for peace, security, and prosperity in the Eurasian area.

Northern Areas: A Paradise for nature lovers

Fatima Mushtaq



The Northern Areas are the most remarkable and captivating region of Pakistan, where the three famous mountain ranges, the Hindukush, the Himalayas, and the Karakoram, meet.

The northern areas of Pakistan attract tourists due to their abundance of beautiful meadows, snow-capped peaks, mountains, lakes, trees, and glaciers. Geographically, the Northern Areas are administratively divided into two divisions, which are further divided

The Northern Areas is an administrative region of Pakistan, with its capital in Gilgit. It is home to the Karakoram Range, which boasts more than sixty peaks with heights above 7,000 meters. Northern Pakistan, also known as Small Pakistan, is a specific tourism region located in the northern and northwestern parts of Pakistan. It comprises Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Pothohar Plateau in Punjab. The Northern Areas are the most remarkable and captivating region of Pakistan, where the three famous mountain ranges, the Hindukush, the Himalayas, and the Karakoram, meet. The northern areas of Pakistan attract tourists due to their abundance of beautiful meadows, snow-capped peaks, mountains, lakes, trees, and glaciers. Geographically, the Northern Areas are administratively divided into two divisions, which are further divided into seven districts. The two Baltistan districts are Ghanche and Skardu, and the five Gilgit districts are Gilgit, Diamer, Ghizer, Astore, and Hunza-Nagar. Gilgit-Baltistan is the northernmost region of Pakistan. The best time to visit the northern areas is from June to August when the weather is warm, and the plants and flowers are in full bloom, providing a great experience for nature enthusiasts. The northern areas are generally cold due to their high altitude, although the temperature is somewhat higher on the Balochistan plateau. The coastal areas are influenced by sea breezes. The northern areas of Pakistan have been a peaceful tourist region for decades, with only a few incidents of harassment reported. Most travelers have had easy and safe experiences in Hunza. Chapursan Valley is a remote and beautiful valley in the northern areas of Pakistan. The northern areas of Pakistan have several features that attract tourists. They are blessed with plenty of meadows, snow-capped peaks, valleys, mountains, tall trees, lakes, rivers, grassy lands, beautiful weather, and snowfall, among others. It is in this region that the Himalayas, the Hindu Kush, and the Karakoram mountain ranges meet. Hunza Valley is a particularly beautiful tourist destination, offering a rich history, culture, and colorful traditions. The beautiful environment and cool temperatures, even in summer, are among the key attractions. The northern areas allow visitors to witness the beauty of the world and experience different aspects of nature. Islamabad:

The federal territory of Islamabad is considered part of northern Pakistan due to its mountainous region straddling the Himalayas, Karakoram, and Hindu Kush ranges. It is home to some of the highest peaks and long-est glaciers outside the Polar Regions. Murree: A mountain resort city located in the Galyat region of the Pir Panjal Range, Murree is known as Pakistan's most recognized hill station. It offers breathtaking scenery and a cool climate, making it a popular destination throughout the year. Naran Kaghan: Situated along the flow of the River Kunhar, this valley is renowned for its glaciers, crystal-clear lakes, waterfalls, and frosty mountain streams. Naran Valley is adjacent to Kaghan Valley, and both are collectively referred to as Kaghan-Naran. Hunza: Among the most beautiful areas of Pakistan, Hunza Valley is often called "Heaven on Earth." It is a mountainous valley located in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan and is known for its snow-capped mountains and rugged landscapes. Hunza Valley is divided into three regions: Upper Hunza, Central Hunza, and Lower Hunza, each consisting of various villages and towns. Khunjerab Pass: The highest pass in Pakistan, Khunjerab Pass serves as the border between China and Pakistan. Located in the Karakoram Range, it is the highest concrete international crossing point and the highest point on the Karakoram Highway. Gilgit-Baltistan: A mountainous region bordering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Kashmir, China, and India, Gilgit-Baltistan is famous for its natural beauty, including snow-capped mountains, cold deserts, and lush forests. It is a popular destination for mountaineers, trekkers, and landscape enthusiasts. Notable peaks in the region include K2, Nanga Parbat, and Rakaposhi. Fairy Meadows: Located near the base camp of Nanga Parbat in the Diamer District of Gilgit-Baltistan, Fairy Meadows is beautiful grassland known for its stunning views and proximity to the ninth tallest mountain in the world. It is surrounded by alpine trees and offers a picturesque setting. Skardu: Skardu is a city situated in Gilgit-Baltistan, known for its high mountains, blue waters, and rich cultural heritage. It serves as a gateway to the Gilgit-Baltistan region and offers various attractions, including lakes, forts, and national parks. Skardu is famous among mountaineers and climbers. Chitral Valley: Located in the northern area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chitral Valley is renowned for its natural beauty, simplicity of its residents, and unique culture. It is nestled in the Hindukush range and offers attractions

such as forts, polo grounds, and the famous Kalash Valley. Swat Valley: Known as the "Switzerland of Pakistan," Swat Valley is celebrated for its snow-capped mountains and scenic landscapes. It has undergone significant security improvements in recent years, making it a popular tourist destination. Mingora, the largest district in Swat, offers attractions like the Swat Museum and Mingora City Bazaar. Kalam Valley: Located in the northern part of the Swat Valley, Kalam Valley is known for its picturesque beauty, stunning mountains, and proximity to the Swat River. It offers a unique flora and fauna and is a popular destination for nature lovers. Kumrat Valley: Situated in the Upper Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kumrat Valley is known for its natural beauty, including lush green forests, snow-capped mountains, rivers, and waterfalls. It attracts tourists with its foggy mountains and captivating scenery. These are just a few of the many incredible places to visit in the northern areas of Pakistan, each offering its own distinct charm and natural wonders. The Northern Areas of Pakistan, with its administrative capital in Gilgit, is a region of outstanding beauty and captivating landscapes. This specific tourism region comprises Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Pothohar Plateau in Punjab. The Northern Areas are characterized by the convergence of three world-famous mountain ranges: the Hindukush, the Himalayas, and the Karakoram. This region attracts tourists from around the world due to its abundance of stunning meadows, snow peaks, mountains, lakes, and glaciers. The Northern Areas of Pakistan are a treasure trove of natural wonders, cultural heritage, and warm hospitality. With its diverse range of attractions and breathtaking landscapes, this region continues to attract tourists from around the world, providing them with an unforgettable experience amidst the splendor of nature. At the end, I thank to Respected Sir Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer for his valuable source of guidance to write this piece. He generously shared his time and knowledge, providing me with valuable feedback and constructive criticism that has significantly improved the quality of my work. His patience, encouragement, and willingness to engage in meaningful discussions have been truly inspiring.

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Briefs

Pakistan gets \$2 billion from Saudi Arabia

FROM PAGE 01
exchange reserves at the central bank, which had dipped to cover barely a month of controlled imports. The executive board of the IMF will meet on July 12 to review the \$3 billion Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) for Pakistan, the staff-level pact for which was finalised last week. Pakistan was absent from an earlier schedule released in June, igniting speculation that the IMF was not going to release funds from an earlier programme that expired on June 30.

Saudi support vital for IMF deal, says Shehbaz

FROM PAGE 01
He emphasized that mutually rewarding Pakistan-Saudi cooperation in key areas, including IT, energy, infrastructure and labour must be fast-tracked and augmented. Ambassador Nawaf, while expressing satisfaction on the current trajectory of bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries, noted that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were bound in a fraternal relationship marked by mutual trust and understanding, close cooperation, and an abiding tradition of supporting each other through thick and thin. The prime minister reiterated that Pakistan eagerly looked forward to the visit of the crown prince and prime minister to Pakistan at his earliest convenience. — APP

Zelensky says Nato 'absurd' for Ukraine...

FROM PAGE 01
Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Kyiv would get more military aid and security guarantees, an easing of formal conditions to join, as well as a new format of cooperation with the alliance, the so-called Nato-Ukraine Council. "I expect allies will send a clear, united and positive message on the path towards membership for Ukraine," Stoltenberg said on arriving to the talks he was due to host. US national security adviser Jake Sullivan also said the gathering would send a "positive signal" about Kyiv's membership bid. Zelensky, however, spoke against what he saw as weak wording around Ukraine's bid for Nato membership. "Uncertainty is weakness. And I will openly discuss this at the summit," Zelensky tweeted. "It's unprecedented and absurd when a time frame is not set, neither for the invitation nor for Ukraine's membership," he said on the Telegram messaging app before joining the summit as a special guest. The alliance backs Ukraine in its battle against Russia's 16-month-old invasion, but several members — notably US President Joe Biden — oppose giving Ukraine a timetable for membership. The summit, in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, is taking place as Ukraine's long-awaited counteroffensive, which began last month, proceeds more slowly than hoped.

Nawaz moves to address Fazl's concerns

FROM PAGE 01
Meanwhile, Nawaz tasked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to woo Fazl about the Dubai meetings between the PML-N and PPP leadership. Sources divulged that the JUI-F emir — the chief of the ruling parties alliance Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) — accompanied by Minister for Communication Asad Mehmood, called on PM Shehbaz at the PM House on Monday.

'Top cricketers want to move to USA,' says Sami

"There is no better place to live than Pak only if you have money. I moved to the USA because there was nothing for longer-format players there. Only players, who play in PSL, feel secure in Pak, otherwise, there are plenty of top cricketers who want to move to USA," he shared

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan's former Test cricketer Sami Aslam claimed that plenty of top cricketers in the country want to move to the United States of America (USA) to have a better cricket future. In 2020, Sami left Pakistan and pursued professional cricket in the USA. The left-handed batter, who represented Pakistan in 13 Tests and four ODIs, had said that he left the country due to lack of opportunities. In a recent interview, Sami shared that top Pakistani cricketers contact him in search of better opportunities in the USA. "There is no better place to live than Pakistan only if you have money. I moved to the USA because there was nothing for longer-format players there. Only players, who play in the PSL, feel secure in Pakistan, otherwise, there are plenty of top cricketers who want to move to the USA," he shared. Sami was roped in by Major



League Cricket (MLC) and got a three-year contract. He was also granted 'Green Card' within six months. "Even if you play

the whole domestic season in Pakistan, you don't make as much money as you make here for playing in just a small event. Recently, 20-30 cricketers from Pakistan came here to play a tournament, they earned much more than what players get after playing a complete domestic season of three to four months in Pakistan," he mentioned. "Currently, there are not many openings for players because the management here is not offering contracts. We came in the first lot of players from Pakistan who got contracts," he concluded.

It must be noted here that Sami will represent Texas Super Kings (TSK) in the upcoming inaugural edition of MLC, starting on July 14. TSK is backed by the owners of the Indian Premier League (IPL)'s five-time champion franchise Chennai Super Kings (CSK). Apart from Sami, Ehsan Adil and Hamad Azam (MI New York), Imad Wasim and Azam Khan (Seattle Orcas), Shadab Khan and Haris Rauf (San Francisco Unicorns), Saif Badar (Los Angeles Knight Riders) will also be seen in action during MLC season one.

Ahsan, Hamza depart for U21 Snooker Championship



LAHORE: Pakistani cueists Ahsan Ramzan and Hamza Ilyas have departed for Saudi Arabia to participate in the World U21 Snooker Championship which is starting today. Ahsan, who won the Asian Under-21 Snooker Championship earlier this month, accompanied by Hamza, national age-group snooker champion, trained in Lahore for the championship. Ahsan will face Tirdad Azadipour of Iran tomorrow in his first match. The Pakistani cueist had beaten Azadipour in Asian Under-21 Snooker Championship's semi-final earlier last month. On the other hand, Hamza will meet Iraq's Umar Al Fahad in the morning whereas India's Arav Sancheti in the evening tomorrow. Ahsan defeated Iran's Malad Pouri by five-two in the final. The young Pakistani cueist looked favourite from the start as he took the lead of 4-0 by winning the first four frames convincingly. Despite a very strong comeback by the Irani as he won the fifth and sixth frames, Ramzan did not lose his grip on the game and finished the game by winning the seventh frame and claiming the title. He won the match with frame scores of 48-46, 70-5, 61-6, 62-29, 30-71, 55-67, 101-27. — DNA

Tottenham sign winger from Shakhtar Donetsk

LONDON: Tottenham have signed Manor Solomon from Shakhtar Donetsk on a five-year deal. The 23-year-old Israeli winger spent last season on loan at Fulham, where he scored five goals in 24 appearances. Solomon becomes Tottenham's fourth signing of the summer after winger Dejan Kulusevski, goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario and England midfielder James Maddison. The deal is reported to be a free transfer. Tottenham finished eighth in the Premier League last season and missed out on European qualification. Solomon joined Fulham on loan from Shakhtar after exercising a Fifa rule allowing Ukraine-based players to suspend their contracts. The rule, applying to players who are not Ukrainian nationals, was introduced by the world governing body following the invasion by Russia. Solomon's performances helped Fulham to a 10th-placed Premier League finish and manager Marco Silva was keen to keep him. He has 35 caps for Israel and has scored seven goals since making his international debut in 2018. Shakhtar Donetsk is trying to negotiate with Tottenham over a fee for losing Solomon to the Premier League since last month when the side threatened to sue Spurs if they tried to sign Solomon on a free transfer. "We are sure Tottenham executives understand that Shakhtar invested significant money in the Solomon transfer, an investment that Ukrainian clubs in our difficult position simply cannot afford to lose," Shakhtar Donetsk CEO Sergei Palkin told The Athletic. Regardless, Solomon will be able to line up against his former teammates next month, when Spurs host Shakhtar in a friendly at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Sunday, August 6. — Agencies

England name squad for fourth Ashes Test

LONDON: England named an unchanged squad for the fourth Ashes Test against Australia, which will take place at Old Trafford from July 19-23, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced on Tuesday. After losing the first two Tests, England made a comeback in the series with a three-wicket win at Headingley last week. England need a victory in the fourth Test in Manchester to keep the series alive ahead of the fifth Test at the Oval in London. Earlier, England captain Ben Stokes opened up about the thrilling run-chase in the third Test. "I'm not going to lie, I was a bit nervous at the end," Stokes said. "We knew we needed to win this one to keep alive our hopes of winning the Ashes. I walked about two kilometres around the Headingley dressing room in the last half-hour, I didn't actually watch the last 20 runs being scored. It's a completely different place when you can't do anything, you can't influence the game any more. You're left watching and hoping things are going to go your way. Because of where the series was at before this game started the whole performance with bat, ball, field — it was just an unbelievable effort from everybody." Meanwhile, Australia captain Pat Cummins said that he has thoroughly enjoyed the series so far. "We were in control when Moeen (Ali) got Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith and we just needed to keep going," Cummins said. "Unfortunately it happens. I thought getting up to 250 gave us something pretty competitive to bowl at but it wasn't quite enough. It is still 2-1. We take each Test in its own right. They have been a great watch so far. It's great cricket. I actually really enjoy being out there."

England squad:
Ben Stokes (captain), Moeen Ali, James Anderson, Jonathan Bairstow, Stuart Broad, Harry Brook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Dan Lawrence, Ollie Robinson, Joe Root, Josh Tongue, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood. — Agencies

ICC Player of the Month winners revealed

WEB DESK

SHARJAH: Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga and Australia's Ashleigh Gardner won the ICC Player of the Month awards for June on Tuesday. Hasaranga claimed 26 wickets during the month at an average of just 10.00. He also became the first spinner to take three consecutive five-wicket hauls in ODI cricket during the on-going ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe.

"I am extremely happy with this award, and it comes at an important moment for Sri Lanka Cricket, after we made it to the Cricket World Cup in India. I am privileged and honoured to have been chosen as the ICC Men's Player of the Month," said Hasaranga. Australia's Travis Head and Zimbabwe's Sean Williams were also in the running for the award in the men's category. Meanwhile, four wickets for 99 in the first innings and match-winning figures of eight for 66 in the second in the Test match against England en-

sured that Gardner won the award in the women's category. "Thank you to everyone who voted me the ICC Women's Player of the Month. "To win an Ashes Test match at Trent Bridge was a special moment for our team and I'm happy I was able to contribute towards the win. "Winning a Test match overseas is one of the biggest challenges in cricket, it's certainly a game that we will remember for a long time to come. "The women's Ashes series has seen record-breaking crowds in England, it's an exciting time for our sport and I'm thrilled to be part of it." Gardner won her third Player of the Month award after beating Tammy Beaumont of England and Hayley Matthews of the West Indies.



LONDON: Marketa Vondrousova in action during her match against Pegula in Wimbledon 2023. —DNA

Sudan army refuses to attend talks in Ethiopia

Multiple diplomatic initiatives to halt the fighting have produced only brief respites, with the UN warning on Sunday that Sudan was on 'the brink of a full-scale civil war, potentially destabilising the entire region'

WEB DESK

ADDIS ABABA: Sudan's government refused Monday to join a regional meeting aimed at ending nearly three months of brutal fighting, accusing Kenya, which chaired the talks, of favoring the rival paramilitaries. A power struggle between Sudanese army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF),

spilled into war in mid-April and has since killed thousands of people and displaced millions. The east African regional bloc IGAD had invited the foes to a meeting in Ethiopia's capital on Monday, while fighting still raged across Sudan. Neither Burhan nor Daglo personally attended the talks in Addis Ababa, although the RSF sent a representative to the "quartet" meeting led by Kenya, South Sudan, Djibouti and Ethiopia. Since April 15, around

3,000 people have been killed in the violence, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, but the actual death toll is believed to be much higher as parts of the country remain inaccessible. A further three million people have been displaced internally or fled across borders, according to the International Organization for Migration. Multiple diplomatic initiatives to halt the fighting have produced only brief respites, with the UN warning on Sunday that

Sudan was on "the brink of a full-scale civil war, potentially destabilising the entire region." Previous truce deals have been brokered by Saudi Arabia and the United States, but the east African bloc now seeks to take the lead. However, on Monday Sudan's foreign ministry said its delegation would not participate until its request to remove Kenya as chair of the talks was met. The ministry had asked for "Kenyan President William Ruto (to) be replaced... in particular be-

cause of his partiality," the statement said. In a communique released after Monday's meeting, the quartet noted "the regrettable absence of the delegation of the Sudanese Armed Forces in spite of the invitation and confirmation of attendance." Daglo had sent a political adviser to the talks in Addis Ababa, while the RSF in a statement denounced "irresponsible behavior" on the army's part. The quartet agreed to "mobilize and concentrate the

efforts of all stakeholders toward delivering a face-to-face meeting between the leaders of the warring parties," its statement said. It also called on the rival generals to "immediately stop the violence and sign an unconditional and indefinite cease-fire." IGAD said it would request the African Union to look into possibly deploying the East Africa Standby Force — usually tasked with election observer missions — in Sudan "for the protection of civilians and... humanitarian access."

Massive potential in Pak-China ties, says Ahsan Iqbal

FROM PAGE 01
remarkable endeavour that symbolizes the deep-rooted ties between China and Pakistan. He recalled that this monumental project, initiated under the visionary leadership of President Xi and the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif, had been instrumental in transforming the economic landscape of the region. It has fostered connectivity, enhanced trade, and opened up new avenues for shared prosperity. The Minister emphasized that CPEC is the topmost national priority of the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and these avenues provided an opportunity to consolidate successes and further enhance potential future cooperation. Ahsan Iqbal reiterated Pakistan's commitment to provide consistent policies and conducive environment for Chinese companies and citizens working in Pakistan.

IMF improves external financing plan

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan would receive \$50 million each from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. It also included in its external financing plan the \$350 million pledged during the Geneva Conference. Pakistan is waiting for the IMF Executive Board meeting in which the government is expecting that the recently agreed upon \$3 billion IMF loan will be approved. However, there is no mention of Pakistan in the scheduled meeting of the Fund on July 12.

PPP proposes Aug 8 for assemblies' dissolution

FROM PAGE 01
and different political parties. He vowed to make public the recommendations of the parliamentary body. The statements came a day after Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said the assemblies could be dissolved earlier than the scheduled date of August 13 to "facilitate" the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

Pak highly values brotherly ties with China

FROM PAGE 01
trajectory in Pakistan-China ties and deepening economic and financial relationship, Shehbaz Sharif thanked China for its support for Pakistan's economic stability and expressed his firm commitment to further deepen development cooperation between the two countries under the rubric of Global Development Initiative and CPEC. Conveying the best wishes and felicitations of the Chinese government for Pakistan, Ms. Pang Chunxue underscored that Pakistan is an All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partner of China and a time-tested friend. She highlighted that Chinese government and the Communist Party of China accorded a special place to Pakistan in its neighborhood diplomacy and looked forward to further deepening relationship in all fields of bilateral cooperation. Thanking the Prime Minister for his virtual participation in the first High Level Forum on Global Development Initiative, the Chinese Charge d' Affaires expressed China's resolve to implement GDI projects in Pakistan as envisaged by the leadership of two countries. Ms Pang Chunxue underscored that CPEC is a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative and that Chinese leadership would continue supporting Pakistan's efforts for developing CPEC as the high-quality demonstration project of the BRI.

Briefs

Iran president's Africa tour delayed

NAIROBI: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will kick off his Africa tour a day late on Wednesday, the foreign ministry in Nairobi said after he failed to appear at a press event. The rare visit to Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe marks the latest diplomatic effort by the Islamic Republic to forge new alliances and ease its international isolation. The three-day trip will be the first by an Iranian president to Africa in 11 years. Raisi was scheduled to hold a press conference with Kenyan President William Ruto on Tuesday morning, but neither showed up. "The schedule of the president has now been reviewed to allow for finalization of key MoUs (memoranda of understanding) that are central to the furtherance of relations," Kenya's foreign ministry said.—APP

Kuwait Finance Minister resigns after 3 months

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's Finance Minister Manaf Abdulaziz Al Hajri has submitted his resignation after three months in office the Kuwait News Agency KUNA reported. The resignation was approved by Ahmed Al-Sadoun, Kuwait's national assembly speaker during a meeting on Tuesday. Al Hajri was appointed as finance minister in April by the prime minister during the cabinet reshuffle. A general election in September had delivered a mandate for change, bringing 27 new lawmakers to the 50-member assembly. However, in March, Kuwait's Constitutional Court annulled the decree dissolving the previous parliament and reinstated it.—APP

UK unemployment climbs as inflation weighs

LONDON: UK unemployment rose back to four percent in the three months to the end of May, official data showed Tuesday, as the economy struggles with stubbornly-high inflation. The unemployment rate increased from 3.8 percent in the three months to the end of April, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement. The rate was back at four percent for the first time since the start of 2022. Analysts' consensus had been for unemployment to remain at 3.8 percent. Despite the rise, finance minister Jeremy Hunt said Britain's "jobs market is strong with unemployment low by historical standards". The ONS added that pay excluding bonuses had risen at record levels. "Due to high inflation, however, the real value of weekly earnings are still falling, although now at its slowest rate since the end of 2021," noted Darren Morgan, director of economic statistics at the ONS.—APP

Chinese, PCJCCI discuss low-cost energy projects

LAHORE: A Chinese delegation from Huzhou visited Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) to discuss the scope of investment in low-cost energy projects here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Tuesday. The delegation was headed by Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiandeng, Hi-Tech Electric Co. On this occasion, PCJCCI President Moazzam Ghurki said, "We are fully confident that the future of China-Pakistan relationship is broad and bright." He said that low-priced energy was produced in China through incineration of waste materials. This model could prove to be a solution to energy crisis and environment pollution in Pakistan. He also said that many Chinese companies were willing to invest in Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) incineration for power generation. Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiandeng, Hi-Tech Electric Co said that in Pakistan about 3,000 MW electricity could be generated using agricultural residue.—DNA

ICCI Tourism Summit will have positive impact on tourism

He said that tourism is not only an industry that promotes economic growth and development, but is a bridge that connects different cultures

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD () Ambassadors of Bangladesh and Nepal have said that the ICCI International Tourism Summit 2023 is a very successful effort to promote tourism. Joint efforts are needed to promote tourism in the entire South Asian region including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The northern regions of Pakistan are not only exemplary in their beauty, but their importance increases further with the vast business opportunities, they expressed

these views while expressing his views regarding the ICCI International Summit. Bangladesh High Commissioner Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique has said that I congratulate the President Islamabad Chamber and his entire team for the successful organization of the "First ICCI Tourism Summit Skardu 2023". The initiative taken by the Islamabad Chamber to provide an opportunity to see the natural beauty of the northern regions has not only had a positive impact on the tourism industry of Pakistan but also improved the cordial

relationship between the Islamabad Chamber and the High Commission. He said that there is a huge potential for tourism in the South Asia region. All the neighboring countries including Pakistan, Bangladesh need joint measures to attract tourists from other regions of the world. Regarding the summit, Tapas Adhikari, Nepal's ambassador to Pakistan, said that Pakistan has a rich tourism heritage which can create tremendous economic opportunities, boost employment and increase income. Islamabad Chamber's initiatives to

expand the beautiful tourist destinations of Pakistan for economic activities and promote tourism are commendable. The first ICCI Tourism Summit in Skardu 2023 was a milestone to promote tourism in the Gilgit-Baltistan region which has the world's highest peaks in the Himalayas, Karakoram Range and Hindu Kush Mountains. I attended the summit with the rest of the diplomatic community and witnessed the hospitality, natural beauty, culture, history, food and agricultural products of the region. President Islama-

bad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawar said that I am extremely grateful to the foreign ambassadors for participating in the ICCI International Tourism Summit. Without their participation, we can not hold this summit successfully. I am happy that we have been able to present this best region of Pakistan to the world. The ambassadors of Turkey, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Maldives and other countries participating in the summit reviewed the beauty of the northern region and business opportunities. I hope the results

of this concerted effort of the Islamabad Chamber will come out soon. He said that the success of Skardu as a tourist destination is not only dependent on government policies and infrastructure but also requires collective efforts of all of us. As ambassadors, government officials and civil society members, we have a shared responsibility to promote Skardu as a model for sustainable tourism. He said that tourism is not only an industry that promotes economic growth and development, but is a bridge that connects different cultures.



Pakistan Embassy in Tokyo is extending full cooperation to city governments in Japan to enhance export of manpower from Pakistan to Japan under various agreements. In this regard, today Ambassador Raza Bashir Tarar and Mayor of Biratori city in Hokkaido exchanged friendship (1/2)—DNA

FPCCI welcomes Pak, Kazakhstan direct air link

DNA

LAHORE: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Tuesday welcomed commencing of a direct air link between Pakistan and Kazakhstan as it would help enhance bilateral economic cooperation and prove to be a milestone in forging mutual business and economic integration with Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states. FPCCI President Irfan Iqbal Shiekh told the media here that direct flights would increase the possibilities of economic cooperation between the two countries. Two flights in a week from Almaty, the industrial hub of Kazakhstan to Lahore would help enhance economic activities. Irfan Iqbal said the Kazakhstan Ambassador to Pakistan Yezzan Kistafin deserved appreciation for playing an important role in the launch of a direct air link between the two brotherly countries. He said that economic relations between the two countries would improve further with the start of direct flights. He said the business community of Pakistan considered that the step would positively impact trade relations with Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Sheikh expressed his views by highlighting its positive impact on various aspects of the bilateral relationship between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. He emphasized that introducing a direct air flight between our two nations would bring about a transformative change, fostering increased trade, cultural exchange, and mutual understanding. He said the direct air route between Kazakhstan and Pakistan was pivotal in enhancing commercial activities and bolstering bilateral trade. By providing a convenient and efficient means of transportation, this direct flight would undoubtedly encourage entrepreneurs, traders, tourists and investors from both countries to explore new opportunities, expand their operations, and forge stronger economic ties. In addition to its economic significance, Irfan Iqbal Sheikh underscored the importance of cultural exchange between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. The direct air flight will facilitate more significant interactions between people from both nations, immersing them in each other's vibrant cultural heritage. This exchange would undoubtedly foster more profound understanding, appreciation, and friendship between the two countries, he added.

China-Pakistan to set up a disaster observation research Center

DNA

ISLAMABAD In a move to enhance collaboration on natural disaster monitoring, China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences, established by Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, serves as a bridge for bilateral cooperation on such areas as natural disasters, ecological environment, resource development and sustainable development of CPEC. Last year, in the fight against the floods, the CPEC multi-factor database and data management and information service system of the Joint Research Center played an indispensable role by sharing 26 data sets regarding the deluge. Building on it, the Joint Research Center will also set up a Digital CPEC platform this year, Mr. Hong Tianhua told the audience. "The Digital CPEC platform will support the acquisition, preservation, sharing and utilization of data on ecological en-

vironment and disaster prevention and reduction of CPEC", he added. Geological cooperation is incorporated in the China-Pakistan Joint Statement signed in Nov. 2022. Against the backdrop of evolving climate change, it is becoming ever more imperative for countries to join hands in geological research. For China and Pakistan, the momentum is pacing up. Permanent Secretary He Zhixun of China-SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center said that the Center has signed five agreements with Pakistan and carried out cooperation in terms of comparative studies of basic geology, construction and sharing of geological database for environmental geology and hydrogeology, geological sample analysis techniques and other areas of mutual interest. More than 100 young technicians have been trained through various forms such as technical training courses, jointly

implemented projects, academic education and visiting scholar programs, he shared. "In the next step, we will work together with China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences to deepen practical cooperation with Pakistan in the field of geoscience", he said. At the meeting, China-SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center and China-Pakistan Joint Research Center on Earth Sciences donated a book entitled Pakistan in the Eyes of Geologists to APCEA. According to APCEA chairman Mr. Yang Jianduo, the book, published in January 2023, allows readers to gain deeper insights into Pakistan by taking them from the south all the way to the north of Pakistan along with the geological investigators. The book will also be translated into English and Urdu to enable more readers to have a better understanding of the resource-rich land.

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Zong, Sehat Kahani join hands

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecommunications operator announced a partnership with Sehat Kahani, a pioneering telemedicine platform to extend the reach of telemedicine services across Pakistan. The new collaboration was launched during a contract signing ceremony held here, said a news release on Tuesday. The contract signing between Zong 4G and Sehat Kahani marks an important milestone in their partnership. The ceremony was attended by the presence of Dr. Sara Saeed Khurram, CEO of Sehat Kahani, and representatives from Zong 4G. Through this collaboration, Zong 4G and Sehat Kahani aim to extend the reach of telemedicine services across Pakistan. Telemedicine has emerged as a game-changer in healthcare, allowing patients to consult healthcare professionals remotely, thereby reducing the barriers of distance and time. By harnessing Zong 4G's robust network infrastructure and Sehat Kahani's innovative telemedicine platform, individuals in even the most remote regions will have access to quality healthcare. This year, Sehat Kahani and Zong 4G plan to increase awareness on a diverse selection of topics in the area of health and mental well-being. Their focus will be on oncology, water & airborne diseases, mental well-being, and lastly, mother and child health. Zong 4G and Sehat Kahani have a long-standing relationship, having previously collaborated on various sustainability initiatives. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the two organizations joined forces to provide free online consultations, ensuring access to healthcare during challenging times. Furthermore, in the wake of the devastating floods that hit Pakistan in 2022, Sehat Kahani, with unwavering support from Zong 4G, established medical relief camps in the affected areas. This initiative showcased their commitment to delivering healthcare services to those in dire need. Dr. Sara Saeed Khurram expressed her enthusiasm by speaking about the partnership, saying, "We are thrilled to partner with Zong 4G to further strengthen our mission of providing accessible healthcare to all Pakistanis. This collaboration will enable us to expand our telemedicine services and significantly impact the lives of millions."

NHMP making dedicated efforts to control accidents

ISLAMABAD: National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) have been making dedicated efforts to control accidents on motorways and federalized highways by ensuring strict enforcement of traffic laws. An official of NHMP told APP on Tuesday that strict enforcement of law under National Highways Safety Ordinance 2000 and imposition of fines under section 79 of NHSP, 2000 against violators specially involved in careless driving, over speeding, lane violation etc were among the steps taken to control accidents. He said that FIRs under section 279 and other relevant sections of Pakistan Penal Code were also lodged against the violators found in rash or negligent driving. The official said that extensive use of day and night speed checking cameras was being done to avoid accidents due to over speeding. Moreover, he said that checking of tyres with treads and air pressure gauges were also being done at toll plazas to prevent tyre burst accidents. He said that anti-doing points were established to avoid accidents due to dozing at the wheel. In addition to that surprise and random checking of vehicles at night time to check the physical status of drivers was being done, he added. He said that road safety seminars and walks at the beat and sector level were arranged on road side hotel/pumps and truck stations to inform drivers regarding road safety. The NHMP official said that seminars, walks/counselling and briefing sessions were also conducted for the drivers regarding mechanical fitness of the vehicles.—APP



Call on Permanent Representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Munir Akram by Mr. Samuel Rizk, Resident Representative of UNDP Pakistan & ASG Kanni Wignaraja, UNDP Asia Pacific Director, in New York.—DNA

Sakinah Care marks World Population Day

ISLAMABAD: Sakinah Care, a prominent healthcare organization dedicated to improving reproductive health and empowering women, joins the global community in observing World Population Day 2023. This significant occasion serves as a reminder of the challenges and possibilities associated with global population and reproductive health. With an unwavering commitment to enhancing maternal, newborn, and infant health for Pakistan's most vulnerable population, Sakinah Care strives to ensure that every woman has access to the necessary resources and support to make informed decisions about their reproductive well-being. Through comprehensive initiatives and advocacy.—APP

Briefs

Japan: 3 die as island hit by 'heaviest' rainfall

DNA

TOKYO: Three people were killed and three others are missing in flooding in southwest Japan caused by the region's "heaviest" rain ever. Rivers overflowed and hillsides collapsed as record amounts of rain were dumped on parts of Kyushu island. The national weather agency logged 402.5mm falling in Kurume on Monday, the highest ever recorded in the city. Roads and powerlines were cut, and thousands were ordered to evacuate as further downpours were expected. Satoshi Sugimoto, of the Japanese Meteorological Agency, said he believed the downpours were "the heaviest ever experienced" in the region.

At least three people died in the flooding but the toll could rise, government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno told AFP news agency. Three people were missing in some of the remotest areas of the island. "We express our condolences to those who died, and our heartfelt sympathy towards those who were affected by the disaster," Mr Matsuno said.

Twitter better for 'freedom of speech': Taliban official

DNA

KABUL: Twitter owner Elon Musk's freewheeling approach to the platform's handling of censorship has won support from an unlikely quarter - Afghanistan's Taliban. Anas Haqqani, a senior Taliban leader without an official portfolio, said late on Monday that Twitter had "two important advantages" over other social media platforms following the launch of Meta-owned rival Threads. "The first privilege is the freedom of speech. The second privilege is the public nature and credibility of Twitter," he tweeted. "Twitter doesn't have an intolerant policy like Meta. Other platforms cannot replace it." The remarks drew an angry reaction from some users, who noted the Taliban government did not allow its own citizens the same rights. The Taliban had a low-key presence on social media until they stormed back to power in August 2021. Before that, many of their accounts - and those of sympathisers - were frequently blocked as fast as they were created.

North Korea condemns US cluster munitions plan

SEOUL: North Korea on Tuesday condemned U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to send cluster munitions to Ukraine as a "criminal act" and demanded an immediate withdrawal of the plan. The fact that Biden had admitted it was a difficult decision showed he was aware of the disastrous consequences of the use of cluster munitions, North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said in a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency. "I, on behalf of the DPRK government, vehemently denounce the U.S. decision to offer WMD (weapons of mass destruction) to Ukraine as a dangerous criminal act to bring a new calamity to the world, and strongly demand the U.S. withdraw the decision immediately," she said. DPRK refers to the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Reclusive North Korea has forged closer ties with the Kremlin and backed Moscow after it invaded Ukraine in February last year. "The U.S. has made a very dangerous choice ... which brings to light once again its true colours as destroyer of peace regarding aggression and massacre as its national policy and mode of existence," Choe said. - Agencies

Article 370 abrogation

Indian Supreme Court to hear pleas on daily basis

"Hearing to commence on August 2 at 10:30 am and then proceed on a day-to-day basis," the report quoted the Indian apex court as saying

MONITORING DESK

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court of India has decided to conduct "day-to-day" hearings on a set of petitions challenging the abrogation of occupied Kashmir's special status from August 2, Indian media outlets reported on Tuesday. In 2019, India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had revoked occupied Kashmir's special status by repealing Article 370 of the constitution. The move allowed people from the rest of the country to have the right to acquire property in occupied Kashmir and settle there permanently. Article 370 had limited the power of the

Indian parliament to impose laws in the state, apart from matters of defence, foreign affairs and communications. Kashmiris, international organisations and critics of India's Hindu nationalist-led government had termed the move an attempt to dilute the demographics of Muslim-majority Kashmir with Hindu settlers. According to The Indian Express, a five-member bench - headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud - took up the petitions questioning the constitutional validity of the Indian government's Aug 2019 decision to abrogate Article 370. "Hearing to commence on August 2 at 10:30 am and then proceed on a day-to-day basis," the report quoted the Indi-

an apex court as saying. It stated that the Indian government had a day earlier submitted an affidavit in the court, saying that it had "brought unprecedented development, progress, security and stability to the region, which was often missing during the old Article 370 regime" and that it was a "testament to the fact that Parliamentary wisdom..." was "exercised prudently". However during the hearing today, Justice Chandrachud said the "Centre's latest affidavit regarding the present status of occupied Kashmir with its special status revoked would not have any bearing on the constitutional issues raised in the petitions and shall not be relied upon for that purpose". The Indian Express said. Separately, Indian news agency ANI reported that the court had appointed two advocates as "nodal counsels for the preparation of common convenience compilations of documents". "Written submissions shall also be filed on or before July 27 and no further additions to the convenience compilation shall be permissible," it quoted India's top court as saying. Commenting on the hearing, former chief minister of occupied Kashmir Omar Abdullah said today's proceedings were "just the beginning". "We hope that the hearing ends soon and Supreme Court's decision comes before us soon," he told ANI.

Russian top military official shot dead

MOSCOW: A Russian military official who had commanded a submarine in the Black Sea and appeared on a Ukrainian blacklist of alleged war criminals has been shot dead by an unknown assassin while on his morning run. Russia's top investigative body said Stanislav Rzhitsky, 42, was gunned down early on Monday in the southern city of Krasnodar. Rzhitsky's address and personal details appeared on the Ukrainian website Myrotvorets (Peacemaker), a vast unofficial database of people considered to be enemies of Ukraine. On Tuesday the word "Liquidated", in red letters, had been superimposed on his photograph on the site. Anton Gerashchenko, a Ukrainian interior ministry adviser, tweeted that Russian media were pointing the finger at Ukraine. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Pang Chunxue, The Chargeé D'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - APP

ECP issues non-bailable warrants for PTI chief, Fawad

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) issued non-bailable arrest warrants on Tuesday for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief and former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry for failing to appear before the commission in contempt proceedings. The ECP had initiated contempt proceedings last year against the PTI chief and then party leaders Chaudhry and Asad Umar for repeatedly issuing statements against the electoral body and its chief election commissioner. The PTI chief and Chaudhry remained absent from the hearing today while

Umar was represented by his assistant lawyer Umaima Mansoor, who submitted a request to adjourn the hearing as Advocate Anwar Mansoor was on leave on medical grounds and Umar was also occupied with medical check-ups. This irked the four-member ECP bench led by the commission's Sindh member Nisar Durrani. ECP member Akramullah Khan remarked that all hearings could not be adjourned in this manner. Umar's legal representative replied that the former PTI general secretary and former federal minister had appeared before the ECP several times. - DNA

Israel protests flare over new SC bill

TEL AVIV: Thousands of protesters blocked Israel's main airport and major highways on Tuesday as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-right coalition pressed ahead with a justice bill that has opened the deepest splits seen in the country in decades. A day after parliament passed a key element in the bill, which aims to curb the power of the Supreme Court, crowds of flag-waving protesters stopped morning traffic in major intersections and on highways nationwide. Some lay down on roads, while others threw flares. - DNA

Flash floods rage in Vermont, New York

NEW YORK: Torrential downpours unleashed flash floods on the U.S. Northeast on Monday that washed out roadways, overwhelmed rivers, prompted 50 swift boat rescues and killed a woman who was swept away in front of her fiancé, officials said. More than 13 million Americans were under flood watches and warnings from Eastern New York state to Boston and Western Maine to the northeast, the National Weather Service said in its forecast Monday, after storms that began over the weekend inundated rivers and streams. Private forecaster AccuWeather estimated damages and economic loss at \$3 billion to \$5 billion, preliminarily, based on its own method of evaluation. More than 1,000 flights to and from airports across the region, including New York's LaGuardia and Boston's Logan, were delayed or canceled on Monday due to the rains. Amtrak suspended passenger train service between the state capital Albany and New York City after flooding damaged tracks, as did the Metro-North commuter railroad which shares some of the same track. New York and Vermont were the hardest hit states. More precipitation was expected overnight and into Tuesday, creating further flood hazards, the service said. Vermont officials were calling the flooding the worst since Hurricane Irene reached the state as a tropical storm in 2011. "This is an all-hands-on-deck" event, Vermont Governor Phil Scott told news conference. Parts of Vermont had already received between 7 and 8 inches (17 and 20 cm) of rain, turning streets into raging rivers. - Agencies

Monsoon rains in Pakistan claim 86 lives since June 25

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Tuesday reported the death of at least 86 people since June 25 during the ongoing monsoon rains across Pakistan, resulting in a loss of lives and property. In the past 24 hours, Pakistan has recorded at least six fatalities and nine injuries, with three deaths occurring in both Sindh and Punjab, according to the NDMA. Punjab has been the most impacted province, with 52 casualties, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with 20 deaths. Balochistan

reported six deaths, Sindh recorded five, and three fatalities occurred in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Among the deceased, at least 37 are children, while 33 men and 16 women have also been killed in different incidents. At least 151 people have been injured owing to the havoc caused by recent rains, which include 56 men, 43 women and 52 children, as per the NDMA record. The authority also reported that a total of 97 houses were damaged by monsoon rains and floods. The NDMA's forecast also mentioned the risk of medium to high level flood at Jassar in River Ravi, while there is moderate flood risk in River Chenab.

Saudi Envoy calls on Air Chief



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Nawaf Saeed Al-Malakiy, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office today. The meeting was focused on areas of mutual interest and regional developments. During the meeting, Chief of the Air

Staff shared his pragmatic policy decisions aimed at modernizing PAF through smart acquisition of niche technologies, upgradation of infrastructure and revitalization of operational & training domains. The Air Chief highlighted that Saudi Arabia being the center of the Muslim world and a significant strategic partner has longstanding religious, cultural and historical bond with Pakistan which is exemplified through robust bilateral relations. He also reiterated his unwavering commitment to enhancing the existing ties in realms of military-to-military cooperation and training. Highlighting the bond of brotherhood between the two nations, the Air Chief said, "Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic and defence relationship with Saudi Arabia which is based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability."

Govt denies sacking journalist for asking PM tough question

DNA

PESHAWAR: Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that journalist Azam Chaudhry - who is reported to have claimed he was "taken off air" from the Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) for asking a question related to press freedom from the prime minister - was never an employee of the state-run broadcaster. "He is and has only been a member of an issues-based analyst pool for PTV. He has not been removed from this pool and has not been asked to leave. Nothing of the sort has been communicated to him," the minister said. Aurangzeb's clarification comes after several local media outlets reported that Chaudhry, who is also the president of the Lahore Press Club, was "told he was no longer with PTV". According to a report published in the Express Tribune, the journalist received the message after he attended a press conference in Lahore, where he had asked a question from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif regarding "diminishing space for freedom of speech" in the country.

The report said Chaudhry had asked a two-part question from the premier in which he had pointed out restrictions on the media across the country and enquired when these curbs would end. In response to the journalist, the premier had expressed his disapproval of the restriction but then deflected the query to Aurangzeb. The Express Tribune report quoted Chaudhry as saying that "he was informed that PTV would be doing a panel program from the Governor House after the PM's press conference, where he would also be joined by Sajjad Mir and Salman Ghani". But he was told after the press conference that he was "off aired and told that he was no longer with PTV". "The journalist said that he was part of the pioneer team of the program 'Ba-Khabar' that started airing last year. He added that according to the last communication he had with PTV, he was not with them officially as there was nothing given to him in writing as he was on contract and they were not bound to give him any written intimation," the report added. Responding to the reports today, Aurangzeb said they were "completely false and baseless".

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