



# Islamabad POST

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## Terror attacks in Pakistan Taliban responsible if Afghanistan soil misused, says US

The development came after the top brass of the Pakistan Army said that sanctuaries and liberty of action available to terrorists of proscribed TTP

MONITORING DESK

KABUL: The United States reiterated that the Afghan Taliban must ensure that their country isn't used for terror attacks as Pakistan blames the neighbouring nation for harbouring hardliners Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). "Taliban has the responsibility to prevent [...] Afghanistan from being used as a safe haven for launching terrorist attacks," US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said during a press briefing.

The development came after the top brass of the Pakistan Army said that sanctuaries and liberty of action available to terrorists of proscribed TTP and other groups of that ilk in Afghanistan is one of the major reasons impacting the security of Islamabad. At the 258th Corps Commanders Conference (CCC) under the chairmanship of Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, the army noted that the TTP had obtained access to the latest weaponry due to their sanctuaries in Afghanistan. The terror attacks in Pakistan have spiked since November last year when the TTP ended its ceasefire agreement with Islamabad, with the armed forces also ramping up efforts against militants. Last week, the Pakistan

## Six FC men injured in Peshawar blast

STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: Six personnel of the Peshawar Frontier Corps (FC) were injured in a blast as their convoy came under attack in Peshawar's Hayatabad area on Tuesday, police said. It was an attack on a convoy of the paramilitary force that was moving through Hayatabad's phase 6, Cantt SP Waqas Rafi said while speaking to the media near the site of the blast soon after the incident. Footage broadcast on television from

the site showed a crowd of people on the road where the blast reportedly took place. The charred remains of a vehicle could be seen in the distance. Later, Peshawar SSP (Operations) Haroon Rasheed said in a statement that an "explosive-laden vehicle" was used in the attack. "We are further investigating the matter," the statement said, adding that a search operation was under way. In his media talk, SP Rafi also said that police were "looking into

for cross-border attacks. Terror activities in the country have soared by 79% during the first half of 2023, a statistical report released by the independent think tank Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) showed. In an interview with BBC Pashto, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, in response to Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif together with veteran sportspersons performing the soft launch of Pakistan's first Sports University. - DNA

## PM launches initiatives for sports promotion

Foreign tourists allowed to use cell phones for 120 days

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday launched multiple initiatives here for promoting sports culture and welfare of the sports persons including the Rs 5 billion Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund. In a ceremony held here, he launched Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund with initial seed money of Rs 5 billion to provide financial assistance and other facilities to the emerging players and retired sportspersons of the country. The prime minister also performed soft launch of the first dedicated Sports University in the country to produce critical pool required for sports events such as planners, managers, technical staff, nutritionists, physiotherapists and

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## PPP, PML-N 'agree to dissolve National Assembly' on Aug 8

As per the law, if the president doesn't approve the summary, the assembly stands dissolved after 48 hours - giving the government enough time to achieve its target of premature dissolution

MONITORING REPORT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) - the two major stakeholders in the federal government - have agreed to dissolve the National Assembly on August 8. The five-year constitutional term of the incumbent National Assembly expires on August 12 at midnight - four days after the date on which both parties have reportedly agreed to dissolve the legislature. According to the sources, August 9 and 10 also came under discussion, but it was decided to go for August 8 to avoid any hurdle in the early dissolution of the assembly. As per the law, if the president doesn't approve the summary, the assembly stands dissolved after 48 hours - giving the government enough time to achieve its target of premature dissolution.

Continued on Page 06

## 'No decision yet on assemblies dissolution'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday asserted that no decision had been taken yet by the incumbent government and its allies regarding the dissolution date of the National Assembly. Reacting to media reports about the NA's early dissolution on August 8, days before its term completes on August 12, the information minister told media "A decision has not been taken yet on the National Assembly's dissolution date."

## Briefs

### 'Chinese bank rolls over \$600 million'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Tuesday that a bank in China rolled over a \$600 million loan to Pakistan, boosting the cash-strapped country's forex reserves. The premier was addressing the launching ceremony of the Prime Minister's Youth Sports Initiative in Islamabad, where he announced to allocate more funds for the development of the youth if he comes into power again. "Yesterday, Exim Bank of China rolled over \$600 million to Pakistan, which increased our foreign currency reserves," PM Shehbaz said and added that assistance from friendly countries is improving economic indicators.

### Court issues notice to Imran, wife

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in the federal capital Tuesday declared a case against the "illegal" marriage of former prime minister Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi admissible. Announcing the verdict, reserved a day earlier, Civil Judge Quadratullah issued notices to the PTI chairman and his wife, summoning them on July 20. Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADSJ) Islamabad Muhammad Azam Khan had remanded the case to a civil judge last week and dismissed another civil court's verdict declaring a petition challenging the legality of the marriage inadmissible.

## Farewell dinner

## FM Bilawal thanks Intl' fraternity for co-op

Recognizes diplomatic corps role in cementing relations; extends gratitude to the friendly countries



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday said that during the last 15 months of the incumbent government, Pakistan's engagement with the world improved, though the true potential of its relationship could not be unlocked. The foreign minister, addressing the dinner reception hosted by him for the diplomatic corps in the federal capital, said that during

his tenure, he tried to restore the engagement with the countries. The foreign minister hosted the dinner to bid farewell to the diplomatic corps as the government shall be completing its tenure next month. He said that he was shocked to see the immense potential for Pakistan in the countries he had been visiting during the last 15 months, he added. Calling it an honor to serve as the foreign minister, he spoke high for

Continued on Page 06

## 'Australia wishes a prosperous Pakistan'

Austrian HC Neil Hawkins calls on Mohsin Dawar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins called on the Chair-



man of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Mr. Mohsin Dawar, at his office in the Parliament House. During the meeting, the areas of mutual interest between the two countries were discussed. The two officials exchanged views on the political, security, and economic situation in Pakistan. Neil apprised the Chairman of Australia's effort to support Pakistan's development in various areas such as water security, women's education, family planning, etc. Mr. Mohsin Dawar welcomed Australia's contribution to Pakistan and highlighted various challenges faced by youth, especially women, in the country in terms of accessing education and employment opportunities. Neil and Mr. Mohsin Dawar expressed their mutual desire to see a democratic and prosperous Pakistan.

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## Punjab govt to crack down on wheat, sugar hoarders

LAHORE: On the directions of Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, the Punjab government has decided to crack down on the hoarders of wheat and sugar in the province, and assigned the responsibilities of monitoring to the Special Branch in this regard.

Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman chaired an important meeting to review the strategy for controlling the prices of flour and sugar, at the Civil Secretariat here on Tuesday.

The administrative secretaries of relevant departments including industries, food and finance, the director food Punjab, officers concerned attended the meeting. The Chief Secretary Punjab said that sale of flour and sugar at higher than the fixed rates is not acceptable, adding that those fleecing the consumers by creating artificial shortage of eatables will be dealt with strictly. He directed the officers to ensure stability in prices of flour and sugar through effective administrative measures. The Chief Secretary said that along with the prices of commodities, their supply and demand should also be closely monitored. He said that the special branch would provide support to the administration for taking action against hoarders.—APP

## Normalcy returns to all rivers except Indus: FFC

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that normalcy has returned to Rivers Sutlej, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Kabul except River Indus which is in low flood at Tarbella. According to the daily FFC report on Tuesday, by virtue of good management of inflows/outflows by the dam management authorities presently there exists healthy combined live storage of 8,890 MAF (66.13% of maximum live storage of 13,443 MAF). Bay of Bengal Monsoon Low earlier over West Jharkhand (India) and adjoining areas presently lies over East Madhya Pradesh (India) after moving westwards. Westerly wave trough prevails over Northwestern parts of Afghanistan, with seasonal low lies over Northwestern Balochistan. At present, light to moderate moist currents both from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal are penetrating into upper parts of Pakistan up to 5000 feet which are likely to become strong. For the ensuing 24 hours, scattered wind thunderstorm/rain of moderate intensity with isolated heavy falls are expected over Islamabad, Punjab (Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Sahiwal, D.G. Khan & Bahawalpur Divisions) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu & D.I. Khan Divisions) besides over the upper catchments of all the major rivers of Indus River System.—APP

# Online Course showcases modern Indonesia for mutual learning

Ambassador Adam M. Tugio says that the OIP brings a wealth of Indonesian experiences and similarities to share with the participants

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Indonesian Embassy and Bahria University are organizing an International Online Internship Program (OIP) featuring prominent experts and scholars from Indonesia to showcase modern Indonesia, share views and explore mutual learning opportunities for further development of ties between Indonesia and Pakistan. The OIP was inaugurated virtually by Dr. Teuku Faizasyah, Indonesian Deputy Foreign Minister for Public Diplomacy. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest said that the OIP applies a two way learning approach, firstly it provides a platform to analyze Indonesia from various aspects and secondly it allows participants to explore potential for co-operation from the current state of bilateral relations. "Through this program we hope to enrich participant's knowledge about Indonesia and at the same time we hope that this program will also stimulate exchanges of views on the topics of discussion among scholars, students and people in general", added the Deputy Minister. Dr. Teuku Faizasyah further said that our two countries have many similarities being the largest Muslim population and shared history of colonization and today both strive for economic and social betterment of its citizens respectively. "Let us not forget that in 1959 Indone-



sia and Pakistan together with Sri Lanka, Myanmar and India initiated the Asian African Conference to advocate the values of solidarity friendship and cooperation. These values remains relevant in the context of today's geo politic and geo economic landscape where we face global competition among major powers". It is therefore, he added, important for two countries to strengthen our cooperation amidst these challenges and continued to invest in efforts to strengthen mutual understand-

ing and people to people between our two countries. He hoped that OIP is one the path to achieve this goal and offered selected OIP alumni to participate in the public diplomacy programs such as Indonesia-ASEAN cultural scholarship

and friends of Indonesia. Director General Bahria University, Islamabad, Rear Admiral Zakaur Rehman in his welcome remarks expressed his gratitude to the Chief Guest, Dr. Teuku Faizasyah for his virtual presence at the OIP's inaugural session. He commended Ambassador Tugio's initiative of organizing the OIP which reflected the level of Indonesian Ambassador Interest in furthering the fraternal ties between Indonesia and Pakistan through education. He urged the participants to fully benefit from the Indonesian panelists discussion on diverse range of topics to enhance their understanding of emerging Indonesia's contemporary dynamics. Speaking on the occasion, Indonesian Ambassador Adam M. Tugio said that the OIP brings a wealth of Indonesian experiences and similarities to share with the participants. He said that beside the religious and cultural similarities the OIP will also highlight Indonesia's great struggle to overcome the successive and multiple enormous challenges including political and economic crises that were quite comparable in nature what Pakistan is experiencing these days. Ambassador Tugio mentioned that in Pakistan Indonesia was synonymous to its founding father President Sukarno, Palm Oil and Bali. "Indonesia was much more than that because it is also a third largest democracy, a global emerging economy of inclusive growth and a pluralistic society with the largest Muslim population in the world", added Tugio. The envoy expressed his pleasure in sharing that Pakistani students were among the highest recipients of scholarships in Indonesia in the last three years. He expressed hope that the OIP will attract more students from Pakistani to study about modern Indonesia and in Indonesia as well. At the session, Dr. Abdul Gaffar Karim from Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta, on the topic of "Discourse on Islam and Nationalism in Indonesia" gave an insightful view on how discourse about Islam and nationalism has continue to resonate in modern Indonesia. He discussed the ongoing debate on Islam and nationalism in Indonesia, a country with the world's largest Muslim population. "Despite not being an Islamic state, Indonesia's 1945 constitution and Pancasila ideology ensure freedom of religion for all faith believers", added Dr. Gaffar Karim. Underscoring Indonesia's diversity and pluralism, he further said that balance between Islam and nationalism remains a subject of constant debate. The Online Internship Program which spans over six weeks will have several dedicated sessions to ensure focused and productive engagement between participants and the speakers on various aspects of Indonesia who joint online from Indonesia. Session 2 will be held on Thursday (20/08) focusing the Indonesia's journey to democracy.

## Minister Sherry Rehman hosts Italian delegation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman, recently welcomed a delegation from Italy to the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination. The delegation included representatives from the University of Milan and the Italian Association EvK2-CNR, with Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese leading the group. Additionally, officials from the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan and UNDP were also present during the meeting, a news release said. Minister Rehman expressed her gratitude for the ongoing

support of the Italian government in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. She acknowledged the remarkable 35-year presence of EvK2-CNR in the Pakistani mountains. The Minister specifically commended the 'Glaciers & Students' project, which is funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AIC), implemented by UNDP Pakistan, and executed by EvK2-CNR. This initiative aims to accomplish several key objectives, including the establishment of 8 Automatic Weather Systems (AWS), the creation of an inventory of Pakistan's 7,200 glaciers, and the provision of capac-

ity-building and training opportunities for students at Karakoram International University and the University of Baltistan, as well as for staff at the Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency. In her opening remarks, Minister Rehman emphasized the urgency of the situation, stating, "Pakistan boasts the largest number of glaciers outside the polar regions, and these invaluable resources are facing significant threats due to climate change. It is imperative that our universities collaborate closely to cultivate a comprehensive understanding among our students regarding climate resilience and management. This project

holds immense significance as it will enable us to effectively map and monitor the changes caused by climate stress on our glaciers. Moreover, we eagerly anticipate exploring potential solutions to mitigate the alarming rise in glacial melt, which has resulted in a staggering 300% increase in Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) events in Pakistan over the past year. Ambassador Ferrarese expressed his gratitude for the enduring friendship and exceptional cooperation between the two nations. He underscored the fact that Italy, too, is profoundly affected by the devastating consequences of climate change.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Finance, Ishaq Dar, Khwaja Saad Rafique, Ambassador of Uzbekistan and Afghan Charge d'affaires are witnessing the signing of Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan joint protocol to connect Uzbek rail network with Pakistan. —DNA

## SECP, FPCCI WEC agree on mutual coop

DNA

KARACHI: The Women Entrepreneur Committee of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and the Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) have agreed to provide awareness and all possible support to women entrepreneurs regarding registration with SECP. During the meeting, it was emphasized that women entrepreneurs should register their businesses with SECP and promote their ventures through digital marketing.

In the 8th Meeting of FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Women Entrepreneurs convened by Nazli Abid Nisar, Convener of the Committee, and Founder President of KWCCI Malir at FPCCI Head Office Karachi, which was graced by Shabbir Hasan Mansha and Rifat Malik Vice Presidents FPCCI. The Additional Registrar of the Securities

& Exchange Commission of Pakistan, Incharge CRO Karachi, Iftikhar Hussain Naqvi, Afzala Shaheen, SVP, Yasmin Arif, VP KWCCI Malir, Convenor Law Committee Lubna Aman Advocate, Dr. Javed Aziz Masudi, Chairman Dept. of Law & Director ORIC SZABUL/Advocate High Court, Dr. Tehreem Farrukh, Associate Prof. of Law/Co-Chairman Dept. of Law & Director ORIC SZABUL Karachi,

Mehwish Kayani, Afzala Yasmeen, Maimoona, Saira Khan, Afshan, Dr. Tuba, Sonia Bisma, Azra, and others also participated. Nazli Abid Nisar, emphasized the importance of empowering women entrepreneurs by providing legal assistance and skills development opportunities. There was a call for increased awareness among women entrepreneurs about institutions like the SECP, TDAP,

NADRA and other institutions. Concerns were raised about women traders hesitating to register with SECP and obtain NTN due to the misconception that they need to rely on male family members for registration. Nazli suggested that a one-window facility should be established at FPCCI to streamline the process, encompassing SECP, TDAP, and NADRA,

to provide support and assistance, including obtaining passports for women traders. The Additional Registrar of SECP, Iftikhar Hussain Naqvi, assured full support from SECP and highlighted that women entrepreneurs can easily register online with SECP by paying a nominal fee of Rs.1500. He also explained the step-by-step process for business registration. Vice President of FPCCI, Rifat Malik, praised Nazli Abid Nisar's efforts in providing workshops and raising awareness for women entrepreneurs, particularly in the areas of health and digital marketing. Advocate Dr. Javed Aziz Masudi provided detailed information to the women entrepreneurs about their rights to inheritance. Advocate Lubna Aman, Convenor of the Law Committee of WCCI Malir, thanked all participants and stressed the importance for women entrepreneurs to acquire knowledge about women's laws through online courses.



## Police claim Margalla Hills rape was 'false story'

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad police on Tuesday claimed the Margalla Hills rape incident was a "false story" borne out of personal enmity. The Islamabad police had registered a first information report (FIR) on Friday of the alleged rape of a woman at one of the hiking trails of the capital's Margalla Hills. The police had said on Sunday they had arrested the suspect involved in the incident.

In a statement released today, the police said the suspect had a quarrel with his colleague who then contacted a group to take revenge. The colleague contacted a member of the group, a resident of Rawalpindi, to "falsely accuse [the suspect] of rape". It added that a member of that group then contacted the purported Sheikhupura-based victim and the two "formed a plan about a rape drama" involving the suspect. "According to the plan, [the victim] had to take the suspect and go to Trail 3. On Trail 3, [the victim] had to pretend being raped and scream. Meanwhile, the rest of the group had to reach the spot and make videos. "The suspect and his family were to be blackmailed and extorted by making videos. The victim had a meeting with the accused at Trail 3 but her partners could not reach the spot. The victim went back to Rawalpindi with the suspect after a long wait. "After that, she lodged an FIR in the police station and went back to Sheikhupura. The police investigated the matter from every angle," the statement read. It added that the purported victim "told all the facts and the plan in front of the magistrate" when she was called to the police station. "This is a group that blackmails people by deceiving them and extorting money from them." The police said that two cases were registered against the purported victim in Sheikhupura and Muridke.—APP

## Shahid Ashraf Tarar to be appointed as FPSC chairman

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to appoint Shahid Ashraf Tarar as the chairman of the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC). Shahid Ashraf Tarar is a retired grade-22 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS). He has been FPSC Member since January 18, 2021.

A notification from the Establishment Division regarding his appointment as the FPSC chairman is likely today. The post of the FPSC chairman has been vacant since the retirement of former FPSC chairman Capt (r) Zahid Saeed on December 15, 2022. Due to the non-appointment of the chairman, important matters including the Central Selection Board meeting have been pending for the last seven months. The selection board makes recommendations for the promotion of federal officers in grades 20 and 21. The FPSC chairman presides over the selection board meeting.—DNA

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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/Argentina
- Independence Day
- July 09/Mongolia
- Revolution Day
- July 14/France
- National Day
- July 15/Brunei
- Sultan's Birthday
- July 21/Belgium
- National Day
- July 20/TRNC
- Independence Day
- July 23/Egypt
- National Day
- July 26/Cuba
- National Day
- July 26/Liberia
- National Day
- July 30/Morocco
- National Day

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Marriott.....051-2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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



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Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489  
CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

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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

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# President for boosting trade cooperation with Maldives

## He expressed these views while talking to the outgoing High Commissioner of Maldives to Pakistan Farzana Zahir

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday underlined the need for increasing trade and economic cooperation with Maldives for the mutual benefits of two countries. He said that there was a great potential to expand bilateral trade and export Pakistani products to Maldives, particularly textiles, fabrics, rice, cement and pharmaceutical. He expressed these views while talking to the outgoing High Commissioner of Maldives to Pakistan Farzana Zahir who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. Talking to the outgoing High Commissioner, the president highlighted that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Maldives in bilateral context and within the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Organization of Islamic Cooper-



ation (OIC), the United Nations and Commonwealth. He said that both countries had commonality of views on important regional

and global issues, particularly the threat posed by global warming. He underlined the need for closer cooperation among countries of

the world to counter the severity of natural disasters as well as climate change that had endangered both developed and devel-

oping countries alike. President Alvi further said that both countries needed to enhance cooperation in the area of tourism and learn from each other's experience. He also highlighted that the isolation and persecution of the Muslims by India was a matter of grave concern and the international community needed to take notice of the brutalities being committed by the Indian security forces against the Muslims, particularly in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). He also called for revitalization of the SAARC enabling it to achieve its objectives. Referring to the rising wave of Islamophobia, the president emphasized that the Islamic countries should work together to counter the Islamophobia. The president also congratulated the outgoing high commissioner on the successful completion of her tenure and appreciated her efforts for improving Pakistan-Maldives ties.

# Senate body questions auction of old chancery building in US

DNA

ISLAMABAD The Senate Standing Committee on Privatisation on Tuesday raised questions on the process of approval to auction the old Chancery Building at Washington D.C. owned by Pakistani Embassy. In the meeting, as per the directions of the Senate Standing Committee on Privatisation, a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs put attendance without the consent and intervention of the Privatisation Commission, the official informed that a meeting was held in which relevant ministry of Finance, Foreign Affairs and Privatisation participated and in which the decision took place, however the Secretary Privatisation denied the fact that the Privatisation Commission was made a part of this

approval at any stage. Committee feeling dissatisfied with the process of approval of auctioning of the building deferred the matter for further report and deliberations by the Foreign Ministry. On Tuesday, a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Privatisation was held under the Chairmanship of Senator Shammim Afridi here at Parliament House to discuss important agenda items pertaining to privatisation and sale and purchase deeds. The committee as previously decided that since the property of Convention Centre Islamabad did not belong to CDA and was sole property of the Ministry of Interior, directed that the Ministry of Interior be summoned to give briefing on its privatisation, the additional Secretary Ministry of Interior put appearance and briefed on the matter.

Foreign Affairs Division and approved the recommendations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) to sell one of the buildings. He said that the building was from 80s' and a very old one. It was told that already a loan of 7 million dollars was taken for its renovation however it was later decided by the IMC, the only appropriate forum to decide the matter, to sell the property. The committee raised serious concerns on its approval without the consent and intervention of the Privatisation Commission, the official informed that a meeting was held in which relevant ministry of Finance, Foreign Affairs and Privatisation participated and in which the decision took place, however the Secretary Privatisation denied the fact that the Privatisation Commission was made a part of this

approval at any stage. Committee feeling dissatisfied with the process of approval of auctioning of the building deferred the matter for further report and deliberations by the Foreign Ministry. On Tuesday, a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Privatisation was held under the Chairmanship of Senator Shammim Afridi here at Parliament House to discuss important agenda items pertaining to privatisation and sale and purchase deeds. The committee as previously decided that since the property of Convention Centre Islamabad did not belong to CDA and was sole property of the Ministry of Interior, directed that the Ministry of Interior be summoned to give briefing on its privatisation, the additional Secretary Ministry of Interior put appearance and briefed on the matter.

# Amin holds productive meeting with Azerbaijani minister

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to enhance collaboration in the digital realm, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Syed Amin ul Haque, held a productive meeting with the Azerbaijani Minister for Digital Development and Transport, Rashad Nabiye. During the meeting, in-depth discussions were held on digital transformation, software development, and IT revenue-related matters, with a focus on fostering stronger ties between the IT and telecom sectors of both countries. Amin ul Haque emphasized Pakistan's deep appreciation for its relations with Azerbaijan, describing them as robust and fraternal. He expressed a keen interest in further strengthening bilateral ties, particularly in the technology sector, and lauded Azerbaijan's commitment to the development of the digital landscape. The Azerbaijani Minister, Rashad Nabiye, expressed his country's desire to bolster mutual cooperation, especially in the domain of IT and software development. He also commended Pakistan's ambitious Digital Pakistan Vision, recognizing the nation's efforts towards digital transformation and the IT industry's significant role in this endeavour. Both sides expressed their commitment to jointly working towards the advancement of the IT and telecom sectors. They agreed that establishing a joint working group would be essential to strengthen the IT and telecom relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's delegation, led by Minister Rashad Nabiye, also had the opportunity to receive a detailed briefing on Pakistan's digital landscape and initiatives, presented by Member IT Syed Junaid Imam. The meeting was attended by Secretary IT, Navid Ahmed Sheikh, Member IT, Syed Junaid Imam, Member Telecom, Muhammad Omar Malik, Member International Coordination, Ajmal Awan, Member Legal, Babar Sahil, CEO of Pakistan Software Export Board, Ali Reza, and COO Ignite, Asim Shahryar Husain. Later, the Azerbaijani delegation also held meetings with CEOs of various IT companies.—DNA

# Food imports reduced by 0.88 % in FY 2022-23

ISLAMABAD: Food group imports into the country during fiscal year ended on June 30, 2023, decreased by 0.88 percent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-June, 2022-23,

the country spent \$8.936 billion on the import of different food commodities as compared to the imports of \$9.016 billion in the same period last year in order to fulfil the local requirements, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of

Statistics. During the period under review, the imports of milk, cream and milk for infants into the country reduced by 11 percent as it came down from \$144.300 million to \$162.140 million, where-

as the imports of dry fruits and nuts decreased by 38.75 percent as it was recorded at \$39.964 million as against the imports of 65.272 million of same period of last year. The import of tea during the last fiscal year also decreased by 9.13 percent as it was recorded at \$569.043 million as against the imports of \$626.185 million of the same period last year. Meanwhile, the spices imports decreased by 30.04 percent as it was recorded at \$151.240 million by end of the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the imports of \$216.183 million in the same period of last year.

However, during the period under review, the imports of food commodities including wheat grew by 34.85 percent as wheat valuing \$1.072 billion imported to tackle with the local requirements as against the imports of \$795.286 million of same period last year. Meanwhile, soya bean oil imports into the country also increased by 60.05 percent during the last fiscal year as soya bean valuing \$315.540 million imported to fulfill local edible oil and vegetable ghee requirements as compared to the imports of \$197.154 million of same period last year.—APP

# ICCI organizes awareness session on Men's Health

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with Maroof International Hospital organized an awareness session on Men's Health to mark the World Men's Health Week. The session was followed by a medical camp to provide free vitals including BP, Sugar, Weight Check, Diet Plans and medical consultations besides performing free of cost lung tests. Asim Rauf, Chief Executive Officer, Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan was the chief guest on the occasion. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that due to inactive lifestyles, many diseases including BP, diabetes, heart problems, cancer and hypertension are on the rise in society. He stressed that awareness sessions should be organized on a regular basis to sensitize the men how to cope with health issues and keep themselves healthy and

fit. He said that a healthy nation would also contribute effectively towards increasing national productivity and improving the economy. Speaking on the occasion, Asim Rauf, Chief Executive Officer, Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan said men usually compromised their health in pursuit of fulfilling the responsibilities of their family members and delayed their surgeries

to meet the expenses of their children like medical treatment or education. He stressed that men should pay more attention to their health that will enable them to take better care of their family members as well. He said that DRAP has been focusing on provision of quality medicines to the people for ensuring early recovery of patients. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said

that a number of men usually developed health issues due to overburdening themselves to meet the family needs and stressed that men should adopt a proactive approach and go for regular health screening to lead a healthy life. Dr. Haroon Naseer, CEO, Maroof Hospital, Islamabad also addressed the session. Dr. Abdul Waheed Medical Director, Dr. Umar Idris Mufti Head of Cardiovascu-

lar Centre, Dr. Imran Ghani Interventional Cardiologist, Dr. Yasir Rehman Consultant Oncologist, Dr. Sohail Naseer Head of Critical Care Unit, Dr. Rashid Ali Khan Head of Psychiatry Department and Ms. Zubia Zubair Psycho Therapist of Maroof Hospital gave presentations on various health issues with tips on how to cure them. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI was also present on the occasion.



# Alvi administers oath of Banking Ombudsman

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday administered the oath of office of Banking Ombudsman to Sirajuddin Aziz. The swearing-in ceremony was held here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The president administered the oath in line with clause (2) of the Article 203C of the Constitution.—DNA

# KSrelief sponsors 12 medical camps

ISLAMABAD: In a groundbreaking initiative, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) has joined forces with Al-Basir International Foundation and Al-Ibrahim Eye Hospital Karachi to sponsor 12 medical camps across Pakistan. These camps are strategically set up in rural and urban areas of Sindh and Baluchistan Province to combat blindness and eye diseases, addressing regions where eye care services are scarce, said a news release issued here on Tuesday. The primary objective of this humanitarian outreach program is to detect and address eye-related issues at an early stage, offering specialized treatment to individuals who lack access or cannot afford such facilities. The impact of this effort has been profound, reaching individuals in various communities of Sindh and Balochistan provinces. The medical camps have already made a significant difference, providing more than 50,000 medical examinations, over 5,000 sight-restoring surgeries, and distributing 12,000 glasses for vision correction, in addition to the medications prescribed by doctors. This initiative ensures that not only do patients receive essential treatment, but they also have access to necessary eyewear, significantly enhancing their visual capabilities. The outreach program, held in the cities of Karachi, Matli, Kundair, Shikarpur, Khairpur, and Kalat, has allowed thousands of residents from these areas to benefit from specialized eye care services, thus improving their quality of life and providing hope for a brighter future. This collaborative effort underscores the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's commitment to humanitarian causes and its dedication to improving the lives of individuals affected.—APP

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www.iba-suk.edu.pk			
NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER			
Tender # PROC/355			
Sukkur IBA University invites sealed bids for following items on single stage one envelope procedure from the eligible and well reputed & experienced vendors registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Department for IBA Community Colleges & Schools.			
S.#	ITEMS	TENDER FEE	
01	Students Uniform	Rs. 2000	
02	Stationary Items		
03	Students School Bags		
04	Shoes for Students		
05	Sports Kits		
06	Winter Wear for Students		
Tender Schedule - Date and Time			
Issue / Sale	Submission		Opening
	From	To	
01	July 19, 2023	August 05, 2023 upto 1:00 pm	05-08-2023 03:00 PM 05-08-2023 03:30 PM
The bids shall comprise a single package containing one sealed envelope. Bid Security 02% of the total bid amount must be attached.			
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>			
i. The bidder must have at least 3 years of experience in the relevant field of similar level.			
ii. Details of turn-over (including in terms of Rupees) of at least last three years			
iii. Registration with Income tax and Sales tax department			
iv. Affidavit that firm has never been blacklisted.			
v. Average annual turnover of last three years should be as mentioned in tender documents			
Tender Fee in shape of Pay order should be in favor of Sukkur IBA University. Bidding documents can be obtained and shall be submitted in the office of Additional Director Procurement as per above schedule. Bidders are requested to give their Best and Final Price as "No Negotiations" is permitted. Bidding Documents containing detailed terms and conditions are also available at Websites www.iba-suk.edu.pk and www.pppms.pprasinhd.gov.pk.			
In case of Government declare/announce public holiday on the date of opening of tenders, the tenders will be submitted/opened on the next working day at the same time.			
Procuring agency reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids prior to the acceptance of a bid as per SPPR Rules 2010. (Amended to date)			
Please send your queries: hari@iba-suk.edu.pk			
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## Briefs

## Export of sports goods increases 10.93% to US\$ 404.797 mln

ISLAMABAD: The export of sports goods from the country witnessed an increase of 10.93 percent during the fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the export of corresponding last year.

The country exported sports goods worth US\$ 404.797 million during July-June (2022-23) as opposed to the export of US\$ 364.901 million during July-June (2021-22), showing growth of 10.93 percent, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Among the sports products, the exports of footballs rose by 24.25 percent, surging from US\$ 190.668 million last year to US\$ 236.897 million during the year under review. The gloves exports, however, dropped by 12.23 percent by going down from US\$ 76.262 million last year to US\$ 66.366 million, the PBS data revealed. Likewise, the exports of all other sports goods rose by 3.06 percent to US\$ 100.966 million from US\$ 97.971 million last year. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the sports goods export witnessed a decrease of 5.53 percent in June 2023 as opposed to the export of the same month of last year.

The sports goods exports in June 2023 were recorded at US\$ 34.265 million against exports of US\$ 36.269 million in June 2022. During the period under review, the export of footballs and gloves decreased by 7.55 and 22.38 percent respectively, whereas the export of other sport products surged by 11.90 percent.—APP

## CPEC 2013-23: Path to economic uplift

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Embracing a vision to transform the world into a global village with abundant opportunities of socio-economic prosperity equally available to all brackets of society, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project set its foot in Pakistan in 2013. With 2023 marking its 10th anniversary, this multibillion-dollar initiative – a flagship project of the Belt and Road initiative – has contributed immensely towards Pakistan's efforts for economic uplift, sufficiency in energy, and fight against poverty by opening doors to foreign and local investment in a myriad of projects. This article gives a broad outline of this ambitious project that ties Pakistan and China in a symbiotic relationship equally beneficial to both. The plans for an economic corridor between Pakistan and China preceded the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The project was first announced in the summer of 2013 when the then prime minister of Pakistan met then Chinese premier in Beijing. The focus was on connecting China with Gwadar through highway, rail, and pipeline infrastructure. The project plans had a five-year horizon for implementation, and the sums involved – ranging between USD 10 and 20 billion – were moderate compared to China's current ambitions in Pakistan. The agreements and MoUs initially signed under the project totalled around \$46 billion with investments in energy (power) and infrastructure. The project virtually connects Kashgar city with the Gwadar Port in Balochistan province.



ISLAMABAD:- A man is buying traditional Carpet from shopkeeper at Weekly Tuesday Market of H-09 in Federal Capital. —Online

## Sino-Pak medicine venture to safeguard human health

Focusing on food and drug homologous substances, the two sides will jointly develop nutrition and health products suitable for pregnant and lactating women and infants in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China "Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Unani Medicine are very effective in maintaining people's health and playing an increasingly important role in the world," said Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Provincial Minister, Department of Health & Population Welfare.

To further promote the modernization and internationalization of TCM and Unani, jointly safeguard the health of Chinese and Pakistani people, and jointly build a community of human health, two international seminars on Traditional Chinese Medicine-Traditional Unani Medicine were hosted at Ningbo University and Hunan University of Traditional Chinese Medicine respectively

this month, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday. The consensus reached by the two seminars includes the establishment of TCM departments in three public hospitals in Sindh, Pakistan, and the establishment of an international clinical research base of TCM in ICCBS; Chinese medicine doctors from Beijing Hospital of TCM and Hunan University of TCM will be selected and sent to Sindh public hospitals to guide and train local western doctors, and Pakistani doctors will be sent to China for training. Ningbo University and Karachi University plan to carry out space breeding and quality evaluation of medicinal materials and characteristic crops. Focusing on food and drug homologous substances, the two sides will jointly develop

nutrition and health products suitable for pregnant and lactating women and infants in Pakistan and register and market them in accordance with Pakistani laws and regulations. Ningbo traditional Chinese medicine has a long history and a rich heritage. The Institute of Drug Discovery Technology (IDDT) at Ningbo University and International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS) at the University of Karachi have reached fruitful results in the field of traditional medicine research and development.

In 2022, the two institutes jointly promoted the space carrying and breeding of traditional Pakistani medicine seeds in Shenzhou 14, which was highly praised by the foreign ministries

of China and Pakistan. Prof. Lv Chaofeng, Vice President of Ningbo University, presented that set up in 1986, as one of the universities in China's "Double First-Class" Initiative, Ningbo University has established cooperation and exchanges with more than 170 higher institutions in more than 70 countries. Prof. Liu Xinmin, WHO EAP member on traditional medicine & Chief Scientist of IDDT, who has been collaborating with Pakistan over 2 decades, said that "IDDT will continue to carry out in-depth cooperation in R&D, clinical trial and registration of herbal products in Pakistan, promote herbal products enter Pakistan and OIC countries, making traditional medicine more modern." Prof. Iqbal Choudhary, Director and Distinguished National Pro-

fessor and Coordinator General of COMSTEC, Vice President of TWAS (Third World Academy of Sciences), also Director of ICBS, emphasized the significance of promoting traditional medicine in the OIC world of 1.9 billion people on 4 continents. He added that "the OIC world faces a host of security and development challenges as well as menace of violent extremism. In addition to national efforts, there is a need for developing partnerships between the most STI influential including China, for collective development." About 40 experts from universities, hospitals and biomedical companies attended the seminar and shared their views on Traditional Chinese Medicine-Traditional Unani Medicine exchanges.

## NCSW in collaboration with UNFPA &amp; CEJ announced Fellowship, GBV &amp; Child Marriages

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Center for Excellence Journalism (CEJ) announced its second National Media Fellowship on issues of Gender-Based Violence and Child Marriages. The fellowship comprised a 10-day capacity-building workshop followed by a refresher course and mentoring process for the production of featured reports in print, electronic and digital media. Stories from all mediums will be considered for the national awards in the categories of print-electronic, digital media, and documentary filmmaking. The fellowship is open to NCSW in collaboration with UNFPA & CEJ announced Fellowship on issues of GBV & Child Marriages and documentary filmmakers from across the country. Journalists from minorities, transgender persons, and persons with special needs are encouraged to apply and the deadline to Apply is August 10, 2023.

## ANF seizes 16 kg drugs in four operations

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its ongoing operations against narcotics smugglers managed to recover 16 kg of drugs and arrested four accused. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, in an operation on M-1 Motorway Islamabad, ANF arrested an accused resident of Khyber and recovered 4.8 kg charas. In a second operation at Islamabad International Airport, over 2.4 kg charas was recovered from the possession of a Bahrain-bound passenger resident of Peshawar going on flight no PK-287. In the third operation, four kg charas was recovered from an accused resident of Thatta, rounded up from Boulevard Mall, Hayderabad area. In the fourth operation conducted near Sona Khan Chowk, Quetta, ANF seized five kg charas and arrested an accused resident of Quetta. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

## Pak to utilize Chinese expertise to boost exports

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Profes-

sor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said China would provide 'know-how' and expertise to increase exports and Pakistan with technical help successful execution

of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs), under the CPEC project. "We have requested China to give us fish, [but] teach us how to catch the fish. Pakistan wants Chinese assistance to increase its exports and in successful execution of the SEZs. So China has promised to attach its experts [with quarters concerned in Pakistan]," he said while addressing an international

seminar here. The seminar titled "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor at Ten: A Gateway to Regional Connectivity," was organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institution (IPRI). IPRI President Ambassador Dr Raza Muhammad, Director Pakistan Institute of China Studies (PICS) Sargodha University Fazul ur Rehman, former SAPM on CPEC Affairs Khalid

Mansoor, Director China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) Dr Hu ShiSheng and Sohail Malik of Team Lead Climate Resourcing Coordination Center (CRC) among the leading speakers who spoke at a panel discussion of the seminar and highlighted significance of China-Pakistan relations besides various aspects of the game-changer CPEC project.—DNA

## China's economic resilience shines

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's remarkable economic resilience continues to shine through as its foreign trade demonstrates steady growth and maintains high standards. Recent data released by the General Administration of Customs reveals that China's foreign trade expanded by an impressive 2.1 percent, reaching a staggering 20.1 trillion yuan (\$2.8 trillion) in the first half of 2023, according to Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. This positive trajectory is underlined by the noteworthy rise in exports, which witnessed a substantial 3.7 percent increase, reaching 11.46 trillion yuan. Although imports experienced a marginal decline of 0.1 percent, amounting to 8.64 trillion yuan, the overall performance of China's foreign trade remains impressive, especially given the complexities of the global economic landscape. China's ascendancy as a global trade leader is further solidified by the strengthening of the U.S. dollar, an advantageous development that has elevated the

competitiveness of China's export commodities and played a significant role in cementing its position within the global supply chain. Several key factors have contributed to this remarkable performance. Notably, the export of domestic enterprises and advanced electromechanical products, specifically electric vehicles, has experienced a sustained upward trajectory. Additionally, the unwavering demand from countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative has further enhanced the positive outlook for China's foreign trade. The remarkable surge in trade between China and countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative highlights the success and significance of this strategic endeavor. The trade in goods between China and countries along the Belt and Road Initiative surged by an impressive 9.8 percent in the first half of 2023. This substantial growth accounted for a substantial 34.3 percent of China's total foreign trade volume, underscoring the significance of this strategic initiative. Simultaneously, the ASEAN continues to maintain its position as China's largest trading partner.

## Pakistan exports \$16.5 bln textile products in FY23

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned over \$16.50 billion from the exports of various textile products during the fiscal year 2022-23, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The textile goods' exports during the same period of last year were recorded at \$19.329 billion, showing a decline of 14.63 percent during the fiscal year 2022-23, according to PBS data released here on Tuesday. The textile products that contrib-

uted positively in trade included raw cotton, the exports of which grew by 104.78 percent by growing from \$6.577 million during FY 2021-22 to \$13.468 million during FY2022-23. Tents, canvas and tarpaulin by 24.93 percent, from \$110.413 million to \$137.944 million, ready-made garments by The textile goods that witnessed negative growth in trade included cotton yarn, the exports of which declined by 30.04 percent, from \$1,206.789

million to \$ 844.283 million. Likewise, cotton cloth decreased by 17.06 percent, from \$2,437.875 million to \$2,021.999 million, the exports of cotton (carded or combed) declined by 31.72 percent, from \$1.631 million to \$1.114 million, yarn (other than cotton yarn) by 31.85 percent, from \$66.188 million to \$45.106 million, knit wear by 13.36 percent, from \$5,121.040 million to \$4,436.779 million and bed-wear by 18.26 percent from \$3,292.882 million to

\$2,691.648 million. In addition, the exports of towels also declined by 10.05 percent by going down from \$1,111.337 million to \$999.594 million, readymade garments by 10.57 percent, from \$3,904.654 million to \$3,491.948 million, art, silk and synthetic textile by 10.38 percent, from \$460.058 million to \$412.289 million, makeup article excluding towels by 18.44 percent, from \$849.121 million to \$692.548 million while the exports of all other textile.—APP



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## Cross-border terrorism

**P**AKISTAN has decided to send its point man on Afghanistan to Kabul this week to deliver a clear message on the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), said officials in Islamabad on Tuesday. Special Representative on Afghanistan Ambassador Asif Durrani is slated to leave for the Afghan capital today. He will arrive in Kabul against the backdrop of simmering tensions between the two countries on 'safe havens' for terrorists. In recent days, Pakistan has increased pressure on the Afghan interim government to tackle the TTP threat, with the former's defence minister and army chief issuing stern warnings to the neighboring country. Last week, the Pakistan Army said it was seriously concerned that militants had found safe havens in the neighbouring nation and threatened to take an "effective response" after 12 of its soldiers embraced martyrdom in two attacks. Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terrorist attacks following Afghan Taliban's return to power in August 2021 and called upon the interim rulers to take decisive actions against terrorists, including the TTP responsible for cross-border attacks. Terror activities in the country have soared by 79% during the first half of 2023, a statistical report released by the independent think tank Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) showed.

In an interview with BBC Pashto, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, in response to Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's remarks that Afghanistan is not fulfilling its obligations under the Doha deal, had said that they didn't sign the peace accord with Islamabad, causing concerns among Pakistani leaders. It is no secret that following the hurried withdrawal of US-led coalition forces from Afghanistan, the Afghan Taliban scavenged all the hardware left behind by their erstwhile foes and put it to use. Photos and videos of Taliban fighters swaggering around Kabul and other areas, dressed from head to toe in US-origin fatigues and brandishing American-made automatic weapons dominated the pages of many publications in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover. So it is not too great a leap to believe that the TTP, who have spiritual and operational linkages with the Afghan Taliban, had managed to arm themselves with the same spoils of war that fighters of the Islamic Emirate have been using. And there is little question of TTP fighters seizing these arms by force, given the bonhomie that exists between the two Taliban factions. Sources in the current Kabul administration claimed that they were taking measures to stop TTP fighters, insisting that such groups could be operating out of the mountainous regions of Khost, Paktika and Kunar – areas where, supposedly, the Islamic Emirate's writ doesn't apply. But those aware of the on-ground situation say that TTP fighters are not wanting for sanctuaries, as was previously the case under the Ashraf Ghani regime. Today, these fighters live openly in the main cities and towns of Afghanistan, and freely move from place to place. The administration in Kabul, however, denies this. A day after the military first expressed its disappointment, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif also accused the Afghan Taliban of not honouring their commitments under the Doha accord, i.e. that they would not to allow Afghan soil to be used against others.

## India's de-Sinicizing its economy

**R**ECENTLY, India has escalated its crackdown on Chinese companies. In June, the Indian government forcefully demanded that companies such as Xiaomi and OPPO appoint Indian nationals as their CEOs, COOs, CFOs, CTOs, and other key positions in their Indian manufacturing units. Additionally, the enforcement agency under the Indian Ministry of Finance in 2022 directly issued a fine of approximately 4.8 billion yuan (\$725 million) to Xiaomi's Indian subsidiary. Since 2020, India has banned hundreds of Chinese applications, displaying a strong stance of economic "de-Sinicization."

During his meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaisankar in Indonesia on Friday, Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee, urged India to provide a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese companies. Why is India suppressing Chinese companies?

India's suppression of Chinese enterprises against the laws of economics is a narrow economic calculation of "overtaking China." China is a major global manufacturing country, and India's industry cannot make progress without made-in-China. Over the years, India has imported a large number products and components from China. This effectively reduces the production costs of Indian companies, improves production efficiency, increases the global competitiveness of Indian products, and drives India's exports to European and American countries. At the same time, Chinese companies, represented by the smart phone industry, have invested in India in recent years, which has boosted employment in the region and improved the quality of the workforce. This complementary cooperation structure between China and India conforms to the overall laws of economic development under economic globalization.

However, India ignores its current situation of lagging far behind countries and regions such as China, the US, Europe, and Japan in the field of digital economic development. India is trying to accelerate catching up with China in key technology areas such as cell phones and promote the digital transformation of the economy. Ultimately, they want to squeeze out China's position in the smart phone industry chain. In contrast, the outside world generally does not hold India's ambitions in high regard. India's motivation appears to be politically driven. The year 2024 is an election year in India. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is eager to win a third term. The BJP continues to wave the flag of nationalism, attempting to play the "anti-China" security card to rally support. In fact, as the world's two largest developing countries and eternal neighbors, China and India clearly have more common interests than differences. China has always viewed and handled the China-India relationship from a strategic and long-term perspective. Even in times of difficulty, China's position has never wavered. India should reciprocate and find a mutually acceptable solution to the border issue rather than letting specific problems define the overall relationship.



## Twists and Turns of Politics

Qamar Bashir



**T**HE political chessboard in Pakistan is currently in a state of flux, with many high-impact twists and turns taking place in the country's political game, which has never had a boring moment in its history. The PTI, which appeared to be invincible a few months ago on the back of unprecedented public support, particularly among the young and educated lot of both men and women, particularly in the urban class all over the country, is now completely shattered, battered, and appears to have lost everything it had gained perhaps over the last 30 years, and it now has to wait for some miracle to happen to save its chairman from obvious arrest and impending disqualification to contest elections. We all remember that the establishment, which has returned as the biggest political broker with a vengeance after the 9th May mayhem, declared him as a number one enemy soon after the ousting of his government in April 2022, and when it does so, it means the end of any political figure or party as long as it remains on its bad books, until any future turn or twist brings him and/or his party back into action, as has been the case in the cases of both PML(N) and PPP. However, given the age of the PTI chairman, who may have another five years of active political life ahead of him and no legacy to follow, if he misses the bus, which appears to be writing on the wall at this point in time, there may not be much meat left in him to resurrect himself or his party in the future. He should be grateful, though, to the PPP, which never endorsed the concept of banning the PTI and disqualifying politicians; otherwise, it may have happened much sooner. The planning of making a new party out of PTI and breaking up PTI must have begun much earlier than the unfortunate

incident of 9th May when 200 army installations around the country were attacked in a premeditated planning most likely conceived and put into action by the retired Army General sympathizers of PTI who have been thoroughly interrogated and along with civilian supporters of PTI who choose violence to achieve their political objectives forgetting rule of law. However, the May 9 incident was an excellent reason to drive the PTI stalwarts away from the PTI and into the arms of the newly founded Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, which was proclaimed on June 9 with an unprecedented electric speed by the same shepherd who had brought them into the PTI. Today (17th July), perhaps the last nail was struck toward total annihilation of PTI when its most ardent supporters and members of PK and national assembly led by his close associates Pervez Khattak and Mehmood Khan announced formation of yet another splinter of PTI, PTI-Patriot, following the same pattern in which PPP and PML were broken down time and again since their formation. PPP was divided into PPP (Shaheed Bhutto) in 1979, PPP (Sherpao) in 1988, PPP (Patriots) in 1997, and PPP (Parliamentarians) in 2016, whereas Pakistan Muslim League (PML) was divided into PML (Q) in 2002, PML (N) in 1999, PML (F) in the 1980s, and PML (J) in 1970. This also means that the makers and breakers of Pakistani politics are still capable of reapplying the same old and time tested strategy with the same effectiveness and fine finish achieving all of their objectives, proving that politicians have never learned from history and have fallen prey to the same hunter time and time again with the same snare and trap and same results. Considering the current political chessboard arrangement, the PTI appears to have few power pieces, just the timid, horrified, and depressed pawns, who, if played smartly and in the face of opponents' erroneous movements, may even vanquish the king. The far-fetched theory, though highly implausible, purported is that all the splinter groups were formed with the tacit support of the PTI chairman to hoodwink the establishment and buy time to cool down its wrath, and these groups, at the time of election, may agree on seat adjustment formula, particularly in KP and Punjab, with full support of the Chairman PTI, and together, they may be able to save some face. Instead of rejoining PTI and contesting elections on the platform of IPP, PTI breakaway stalwarts with the tacit support of PTI chairman may contest elections as independent candidates and after winning the election may lend their support to PTI. Both strategies

are unlikely to succeed, and the establishment's hawkish approach may frustrate them even if they are launched. In comparison to the PTI, the PML(N) possesses numerous power pieces but few pawns on its side of the chess board. In the absence of an opposition leader and an opposition party in the parliament, it will simply design a caretaker government in the center of its choice. It has an election commission on its side, the economy has shown some signs of life for the time being after signing the IMF agreement, their leadership has been exonerated of all corruption charges, and they have prepared the ground for the return of Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan, which is their most powerful piece.. However, given his track record of repeated and critical confrontations with the Establishment, his return may be marred with uncertainty, as the establishment, which is back in the driving seat with vengeance in all sectors of national discourse, may not be willing to take the risk of putting Nawaz Sharif back in the saddle and entering into most imminent confrontation mode soon after he is installed as Prime Minister. As a result, while the PML(N) has demonstrated its complete commitment to re-electing Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister, it may lose the Queen as well as many other power pieces, which will be distributed to either the PPP or the IPP. PPP has a large number of power pieces and quite a few pawns on its side. It is backing the caretaker governments in KP and Punjab, and will ensure that it has its own proportional stooges in the caretaker government in the center, as does the PML(N). It has a hereditary fiefdom in Sindh and is likely to retain power there regardless of the election results in Punjab, KP, or elsewhere. During its reign from 2008 to 2013, it has shown an ability to work well with the establishment. Even now, the establishment has sought Asif Ali Zardari to persuade other politicians to support the no-confidence motion against Imran Khan. He was a member of the opposition alliance that brought the motion forward, and he was also key in convincing some of Khan's own allies to desert and vote against him. On March 8, 2022, he orchestrated the opposition's no-confidence resolution against Khan, which was carried by the National Assembly on April 10, 2022, and Khan was dismissed from office. The big question is why the establishment has helped Jehangir Tareen, who is suffering from serious health issues, and Pervez Khattak, a fervent supporter of Imran Khan, to prop up two separate parties, one primarily driving its members from Punjab and especially from southern Punjab, and the other driving its candidates

from PK province. There could be two major hypotheses. The first possibility is that even the PML(N) and PPP were used to depose Imran Khan, but the Establishment does not trust either of these parties, in the case of the PPP due to its widespread perception as corrupt from the top, and in the case of the PML(N) due to the impending confrontation, especially while Nawaz Sharif is in the saddle, and Maryam Nawaz's belligerent posture. What IPP will accomplish in this case is intriguing. One scenario is that the IPP, which currently controls the majority of PTI electables and has the support of the Establishment, would win significant seats in Punjab and the Centre, while the PTI-P will do the same in KP province and the Centre. They may be able to build governments in the center, Punjab, and KP with the help of celebrated independents, allowing the Establishment complete flexibility to pursue its development agenda and drive the country forward. The second, more realistic theory is that they would not establish a government in the center or provinces, but will garner enough seats in the center, Punjab, and KP to effectively cripple any government formed by the PPP, PML(N), or PTI. In such a scenario, politicians will lose much of their capital in developing consensus on national agendas and will seek the establishment's assistance at every critical moment in the same manner and style that the PTI has done during its time in power, allowing the establishment to pursue whatever agenda it has to steer the country forward without any opposition or confrontation. With decades of experience dealing with establishment, PPP and PML(N) have probably realized the layout of the chess board and, as a result, during the meeting of Zardari and Nawaz in Dubai, they may have jointly thought out the plan to manage IPP and PPP-P in such a way that they both do not pose a critical threat to upcoming governments. Analysts dismiss IPP as an insignificant force with no charismatic leader to attract voters and no plans and strategy to steer the country differently than it has been steered in the past, but they may be wrong in doing so, as prior to the 2018 election, PTI was as insignificant as the IPP or PTI-P, but with the support of the establishment, it became a formidable force and ruled the country until April 2022, but now that this support has been withdrawn, it has collapsed. This critical support appears to be with IPP and PTI-P rather than PPP or PML(N), and history shows that this has worked in the past and will continue to work in the future to determine the political path.

## Women's Empowerment is the Pathway to Prosperity

Mahnoor Ayub



**W**OMEN'S empowerment is a transformative process that aims to create an inclusive and equitable society where women can exercise their rights, participate fully in decision-making processes, and achieve their aspirations. It encompasses various dimensions, including social, economic, and political empowerment. Women's empowerment is crucial for advancing gender equality, fostering sustainable development, and promoting social justice. Women's empowerment can be defined as the process of enabling women to have control over their lives, make choices, and exert influence over the circumstances that affect them. It goes beyond mere gender equality and aims to challenge and change the power dynamics that perpetuate discrimination and inequality. Women's empowerment involves dismantling societal norms and stereotypes that limit women's potential and fostering an environment that promotes their autonomy and agency. Women's empowerment is a global movement that aims to foster gender equality, empower women, and ensure their equal participation in social, economic, and political spheres. It is a critical driver of positive societal transformation and sustainable development. In recent decades, there has been a significant shift in attitudes and policies worldwide, recognizing the importance of empowering women and creating an inclusive society. Historically, the women's empowerment movement has evolved through different waves of feminist activism. The suffrage movement fought for women's political rights, leading to significant milestones such as women's right to vote. Over time, subsequent waves of feminism have focused on various issues, including reproductive rights, workplace equality, and ending violence against women. The significance of women's empowerment cannot be overstated. It is a critical driver of human rights, social progress, and sustainable development. By empowering women, we contribute to building inclusive societies where every individual has equal opportunities and rights. Gender equality is a matter of justice and a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development goals. When women are empowered, they can actively participate in shaping their communities, economies,

and political systems, leading to better outcomes for all. However, women face several challenges on their journey toward empowerment. Gender-based discrimination remains a pervasive issue, perpetuated by societal norms and expectations. Women often confront stereotypes and biases that limit their choices and opportunities. The gender pay gap and occupational segregation persist, hindering women's economic progress. Moreover, violence against women and girls continues to be a global epidemic, affecting millions of lives and stifling their empowerment. Access to education and healthcare is another crucial aspect of women's empowerment. Disparities in educational opportunities and limited access to quality healthcare services pose significant barriers to women's advancement. Denying girls education deprives them of essential knowledge and skills, limiting their potential and perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality. Additionally, inadequate healthcare systems and restricted reproductive rights impede women's overall well-being and restrict their agency. Economic empowerment is a vital aspect of women's empowerment. Unequal opportunities in the labor market, limited access to financial resources, and discriminatory practices impede women's economic progress. Entrepreneurship, which can be a pathway to economic independence, faces barriers for women, including limited access to credit, business networks, and mentorship opportunities. Bridging the gender investment gap and creating an enabling environment for female entrepreneurs is essential for fostering economic empowerment. Political underrepresentation is another challenge faced by women globally. Despite progress in recent years, women continue to be underrepresented in political leadership positions. Barriers such as gender biases, limited access to resources, and discriminatory practices hinder women's political participation. Achieving gender parity in political representation is critical for ensuring diverse perspectives and addressing the needs of all citizens. To promote women's empowerment, various strategies and interventions are necessary. Legal and policy reforms play a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for gender equality. Laws against gender discrimination need to be enacted and effectively enforced. Gender-responsive policies across sectors, such as education, healthcare, and the workplace, can address systemic barriers and promote equal opportunities. Education and skill development are vital for women's empowerment. Ensuring access to quality education and promoting gender-responsive educational systems are essential steps toward leveling the playing field. Encouraging girls' participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, as well as providing vocational training, equips women with the skills needed to thrive in diverse industries. Economic empowerment initiatives are pivotal in breaking down economic barriers. Equal access to employment opportunities, fair wages, and labor rights are essential for women's economic progress. Supporting women-owned

businesses and startups, promoting financial inclusion, and providing access to microcredit can help overcome the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and enhance their economic empowerment. Health and reproductive rights are fundamental aspects of women's empowerment. Ensuring access to quality healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health, is crucial for women's well-being. Addressing issues such as maternal mortality, reproductive rights, and gender-based violence is imperative to empower women to make informed choices about their bodies and lives. Political participation and leadership opportunities are key drivers of women's empowerment. Promoting women's political representation through quotas, affirmative action, and support for women in leadership positions can lead to more inclusive decision-making processes. Enhancing women's leadership skills, providing mentorship programs, and creating opportunities for women to engage in policy advocacy are essential steps toward political empowerment. Women's empowerment has transformative impacts on societies and economies. When women are empowered, they challenge gender norms and stereotypes, paving the way for social transformation and gender equality. By actively participating in decision-making processes, women bring diverse perspectives and solutions to societal challenges. Economically empowered women contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. They become agents of change within their communities, breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty and promoting community development. Women's empowerment encompasses a range of compelling arguments that underscore its significance and the need for concerted efforts to promote it. These arguments highlight the positive impacts of women's empowerment on individuals, societies, and economies. Women's empowerment is crucial for achieving gender equality and ensuring that women's rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled. It challenges societal norms and stereotypes that perpetuate gender-based discrimination, enabling women to enjoy equal opportunities and treatment in all spheres of life. Women's empowerment leads to social progress by breaking down barriers and promoting inclusivity. When women are empowered, they challenge traditional gender roles, contribute diverse perspectives, and participate actively in decision-making processes. This fosters more inclusive and representative societies that value the contributions of all members. Women's economic empowerment is a catalyst for economic growth and sustainable development. By providing equal access to education, employment opportunities, and financial resources, women can participate fully in the economy. Increased women's labor force participation and entrepreneurship contribute to productivity, innovation, and economic resilience. Empowering women has a direct impact on poverty reduction and household well-being. When women have control over financial resources and decision-making

power, they invest in their family's education, health, and nutrition. This not only improves individual well-being but also uplifts entire communities, breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty. Health and Reproductive Rights: Women's empowerment is closely linked to improved health outcomes and reproductive rights. Access to quality healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health, ensures women's well-being and empowers them to make informed choices about their bodies and lives. Protecting and promoting reproductive rights allows women to exercise autonomy and control over their reproductive health. Women's empowerment plays a crucial role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts. Women's involvement, education and skill development are vital for women's empowerment. Ensuring access to quality education and promoting gender-responsive educational systems are essential steps toward leveling the playing field. Encouraging girls' participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, as well as providing vocational training, equips women with the skills needed to thrive in diverse industries. Economic empowerment initiatives are pivotal in breaking down economic barriers. Equal access to employment opportunities, fair wages, and labor rights are essential for women's economic progress. Supporting women-owned businesses and startups, promoting financial inclusion, and providing access to microcredit can help overcome the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and enhance their economic empowerment. Health and reproductive rights are fundamental aspects of women's empowerment. Ensuring access to quality healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health, is crucial for women's well-being. Addressing issues such as maternal mortality, reproductive rights, and gender-based violence is imperative to empower women to make informed choices about their bodies and lives. Political participation and leadership opportunities are key drivers of women's empowerment. Promoting women's political representation through quotas, affirmative action, and support for women in leadership positions can lead to more inclusive decision-making processes. Enhancing women's leadership skills, providing mentorship programs, and creating opportunities for women to engage in policy advocacy are essential steps toward political empowerment. Women's empowerment has transformative impacts on societies and economies. When women are empowered, they challenge gender norms and stereotypes, paving the way for social transformation and gender equality. By actively participating in decision-making processes, women bring diverse perspectives and solutions to societal challenges. Economically empowered women contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development.

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## Briefs

## Taliban responsible if Afghanistan soil misused, says US

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remarks that Afghanistan is not fulfilling its obligations under the Doha deal, had said that they didn't sign the peace accord with Islamabad, causing concerns among Pakistani leaders. In a separate presser, the White House said there is no indication that Afghan refugees in Pakistan or along its border have engaged in acts of extremism. "We've seen no indication that Afghan refugees in Pakistan or along that border are guilty of acts of terrorism," White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters in a press briefing Monday. "And we're grateful to Pakistan for the incredible generosity that they have extended to so many Afghans who are just looking for a safe and secure place to be," Kirby said. "And we'll continue to work with Pakistan as we have on their legitimate terrorism threats."

## FM Bilawal thanks Intl' fraternity for co-op

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the Pakistan's diplomats and officers for their efforts to contribute to the working of the foreign affairs ministry. He told the diplomats that he tried to run the ministry purely on professional terms isolating it from the domestic politics. Coming to the international scenario, the foreign minister said the modern world challenges were not restrained by the borders and exemplified climate change-induced catastrophic floods in Pakistan. He said the issue of the climate change could not be addressed in isolation rather it required concerted efforts. Recalling Pakistan's role at the COP27, the foreign minister said the outcome of the meeting had not been possible without the support from other participating countries. Foreign Minister Bilawal extended gratitude to the friendly countries for their support to Pakistan enabling it to reach the agreement with International Monetary Fund. He told the gathering that the country was heading towards elections and for any government, only way to deliver was to focus on goals and aims by strengthening the institutions including the federal and provincial parliaments.

## PM launches initiatives for sports promotion

FROM PAGE 01  
others. Similarly, PM Shehbaz launched the Prime Minister Youth Sports Initiative to develop sports across the country and to provide world class sports facilities to the youth. He also launched the Elite Sportspersons Development Programme and E-Sports development programme. Addressing on the occasion, Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan's highly talented sportspersons deserved appreciation from the nation as despite limited resources, they promoted the positive image of the country across the world.

He said out of Rs 5 billion allocated for Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund, a direct investment of Rs 2.5 billion would be made to meet various expenses of the players including tickets, logistics, hotel and other expenses. He, however said this amount needed to be increased as it was not sufficient to meet the full requirements of the sportspersons. The prime minister said Pakistan youth was not less talented than the world as if they were fully capable of competing the world. Meanwhile in order to facilitate overseas Pakistanis and foreign nationals visiting the country, Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif on Tuesday inaugurated the Online Temporary Mobile Phone Registration System. The system will allow them to register and utilise their personal mobile phones for up to 120 days from the date of their arrival, without any duties and taxes.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and other dignitaries in a group with Pakistan's leading sportspersons. - DNA

## Pakistan in control after Saud hits double century



Pakistan faltered in their reply before Shakeel, on 69, and Salman, on 61, put on 120 runs to steady the innings and thwart the Sri Lankan spinners

DNA

GALE: Pakistan edged ahead of Sri Lanka on the third day of the ongoing first Test in Galle on Tuesday after a fantastic double hundred by Saud Shakeel. At stumps, Sri Lanka were 14-0 and trailed by 135 runs. The visitors were dismissed for 461, taking a lead of 149 runs, with middle-order batter Saud Shakeel scoring a superb unbeaten double century. Shakeel stunned the audience with his excellent batting, scoring 208 runs with the help of 19 fours. The left-hander found able support in Naseem Shah, who stood firm with six runs in 78 balls, on the third day as the duo added crucial 94 runs for the ninth wicket. Pakistan lost two wickets, Nauman Ali (25) and Shaheen Afridi (9) during the second session but kept the scoreboard ticking which helped stretch their lead in the first innings. Ramesh Mendis bagged a five-wicket haul for Sri Lanka, meanwhile Prabhath Jayasuriya claimed three wickets. Earlier, Pakistan only lost one wicket during the morning session while also scoring 92 runs. Agha Salman was sent back to the hut by spinner Ramesh Mendis after scoring 83 runs with the help of nine fours and a six. Shakeel added 177 runs for the sixth

wicket with Salman as Pakistan recovered after losing early wickets. Shakeel was on 119, with the help of 10 fours, and Nauman Ali on 13 as players headed back to the pavilion for a breather. The third day of the first Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Galle began after nearly an hour-long rain delay. On day two, an unbeaten century stand between Saud Shakeel and Agha Salman rescued Pakistan from a precarious 101-5. In response to Sri Lanka's 312, Pakistan reached 221-5 when rain stopped play with the tourists still 91 runs behind. Sri Lanka's left-arm spinner Prabhath Jayasuriya took three wickets, including skipper Babar Azam. Sri Lanka batter Dhananjaya de Silva had earlier made 122 to hand the hosts a respectable total. "I know I can absorb the pressure with my experience of having played in 50 Tests and can control the game," said De Silva. "That is why the captain and management has trusted in me and given me the number six spot to bat." But De Silva said they still fell "100 runs short" after they elected to bat first at the start of the two-match series. Pakistan faltered in their reply before Shakeel, on 69, and Salman, on 61, put on 120 runs to steady the innings and thwart the Sri Lankan spinners. The left- and right-hand batting

combination of Shakeel and Salman mixed the right dose of caution and aggression, with 12 boundaries and a six between them. The pair showed maturity in tackling the spinners by using their feet to get to the pitch of the ball, with Pakistan scoring at nearly five runs an over. "Coming into these conditions one thing Sri Lanka does really well is hold opposition to miserly run rates and they get the wickets in between as well," Pakistan batter Shan Masood told reporters. "We lost wickets but the way we played allowed us to stay in the game and once we got that healthy partnership going the two teams are in an even-stein position." Sri Lanka had come out roaring when pace bowler Kasun Rajitha got Imamu-Haq out for one and Jayasuriya sent back Abdullah Shafique for 19. The left-handed Masood hit back as he smashed 39 off 30 balls but fell lbw to Ramesh Mendis, who was denied the wicket by the on-field umpire before Sri Lanka successfully reviewed. Azam fell when he got an inside edge onto his pads and the ball looped to short leg, taken by wicketkeeper Sadeeera Samarawickrama. De Silva earlier moved from his overnight 94 to register his 10th Test ton in his 50th match to bolster Sri Lanka's position from a shaky 54-4 on Sunday.

## Schedule announced for Pak-NZ 10 T20Is

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Tuesday that the Men in Green will play 10 additional T20Is against New Zealand in the 2023-24 season ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup next year. After playing three ICC World Test Championship matches in Australia in December-January, Pakistan will travel to New Zealand for five T20Is.

**Schedule**  
12 Jan - 1st T20I, Auckland  
14 Jan - 2nd T20I, Hamilton  
17 Jan - 3rd T20I, Dunedin  
19 Jan - 4th T20I, Christchurch  
21 Jan - 5th T20I, Christchurch  
Meanwhile, New Zealand

cricket team will tour Pakistan in April 2024 for five T20Is as well. The PCB added that the details of the series will be released closer to date. "The additional series will mean in the lead up to the T20 World Cup, to be co-hosted by the West Indies and the USA in June 2024. Pakistan will play 19 T20Is (10 vs New Zealand, three vs the Netherlands, two vs Ireland and four vs England). In addition to the 19 international matches, the PCB will also host its own cut-throat Pakistan Super League 2024 in February/March 2024," the PCB said in a press release.

"To schedule the additional T20Is, the Pakistan Cricket Board, in consultation with Cricket West Indies and New Zealand Cricket, has made

slight changes to its Future Tours Programme 2023-2025. "The two ICC World Test Championship fixtures against the West Indies, originally planned in Pakistan in February 2024, will now be held in January 2025. Likewise, Pakistan's tour to New Zealand for three ODIs and five T20Is, originally scheduled in January 2025, will now take place in April 2025. "Pakistan and New Zealand recently played a highly-competitive and entertaining five-match T20I series in April/May in Lahore and Rawalpindi, which ended in a two-all draw. Prior to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 in Australia, Pakistan had featured and won the T20I series in Christchurch with Bangladesh as the third side. - DNA

## Assault charges against Ryan Giggs dropped

LONDON: Britain's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on Tuesday withdrew assault charges related to domestic violence against former Manchester United player Ryan Giggs which meant that the retrial has been abandoned. The 49-year-old was accused of causing actual bodily harm to his former girlfriend, Kate Greville, coupled with controlling and coercive behaviour. He also faced a charge of common assault of Greville's sister, Emma. In a trial last year, the jury was discharged after failing to reach verdicts on the charges. Giggs denied all charges and a trial date of July 31 was set during a hearing at Manchester Crown Court. However, Kate was no longer willing to give evidence in a retrial as the process had taken a toll on her and her sister, according to a BBC report. - Agencies

## Cristiano Ronaldo closes door on return to Europe, says Saudi Arabia is better

LEGENDARY footballer Cristiano Ronaldo made a startling claim after he said that the Saudi Professional League is better than United States' Major League Soccer (MLS). The statement comes after Ronaldo's long-time rival Lionel Messi was snapped up by MLS side Inter Miami. Ronaldo also said that he doesn't plan on returning to European leagues in the future. "Saudi League is better than the MLS. I'm 100% sure I won't return to any European club. I opened the way to the Saudi League and now all the players are coming here," Ronaldo was quoted as saying by ESPN. "I won't return to European football, that door is completely closed. I'm 38-year-old, also European football has lost a lot of quality. "The only league for me that has a lot of quality and is at a higher level than all the others is the Premier League." Ronaldo signed for Saudi club Al Nassr in a deal believed to be worth more than 200 million euros in December last year. The Portuguese penned a contract which will take him to June 2025. He notched up 14 goals in 16 games this season but it could not help his side claim the Saudi Pro League (SPL) title, with Al Nassr finishing second behind Al Ittihad. Ronaldo headed to the Gulf after being relegated to the bench for Portugal and cut adrift by Manchester United in 2022. United parted ways with the Portuguese star after the veteran forward gave an explosive TV interview in which he said he felt "betrayed" by the club and had no respect for coach Erik ten Hag. - DNA

## PPP, PML-N 'agree to dissolve..'

FROM PAGE 01  
"A general election to the National Assembly or a provincial assembly shall be held within a period of sixty days immediately following the day on which the term of the assembly is due to expire, unless the Assembly has been sooner dissolved," Article 224 of the Constitution states. However, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is bound to hold the general polls within 90 days if the assembly is dissolved before its constitutional term, according to the Constitution's Article 224(2). "Next month, our government will complete its tenure. We will leave before the completion of our tenure and an interim government will come," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said at an event recently. The PPP had earlier proposed that the assembly should be dissolved ahead of its constitutional term. Once the National Assembly is dissolved, the federal government will require a caretaker setup. Article 224 of the Constitution explains the process of appointment of a caretaker government at the Centre and provinces. Until the formation of a caretaker government, PM Shehbaz will continue his duties as the prime minister, albeit for a few days. It is only incumbent National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, out of all elected representatives, who will hold his position until the newly-elected lawmakers take an oath and elect his replacement. For the formation of a caretaker government, PM Shehbaz will write to the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, Raja Riaz, within 48 hours of the dissolution of the assembly, seeking three names for the caretaker prime minister and will suggest three names himself. In case, an impasse between the two leaders lasts for three days on the nominee, the NA speaker will form a committee comprising six members of the outgoing assembly with equal representation from the treasury and the opposition. To the committee, the prime minister and the leader of the opposition will forward two nominees each. The committee then will have three days to evolve consensus on one name. If that fails as well, then the names of the nominees will be referred to the Election Commission of Pakistan for a final decision within two days. The selected nominee will perform the duties as the interim PM until the formation of a new government in the Centre. The caretaker PM also has the power to induct cabinet members.

## Six FC men injured in Peshawar blast

FROM PAGE 01  
the matter and collecting further details. The area has been cordoned off. "We will get to the bottom of this matter, and the culprits involved in the incident will be exposed," he pledged. He earlier told Dawn.com that the incident seemed to be a "suicide blast", adding that a bomb disposal squad was collecting evidence from the scene to ascertain the nature of the incident. Both officials confirmed that six people had been injured in the blast, with the SSP saying that all of them were FC personnel.

## Israeli protesters slam Netanyahu

TEL AVIV: Israeli protesters have once again taken to the streets to vent their outrage at the ruling right-wing coalition led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Crowds of people staged rallies in Tel Aviv, al-Quds, Haifa and Rehovot on Tuesday in a "day of resistance" against the so-called judicial overhaul plan, which sparked the months-long protests in the first place. They blocked traffic on major roads, often in both directions, at multiple locations. "We are saying no to dictatorship," a 62-year-old protester was quoted by Reuters as saying. Some protesters blocked the entrance to the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, then entered the building and staged a rally inside. - Agencies

## PCB finalises venues for Asia Cup in Pakistan

Consequently, due to the Pakistan cricket team's performance in men's ICC events and in bilateral cricket, the PCB's own huge fan-base, which leads to significant commercial value, the PCB was ranked amongst the top-four nations in this Model

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will host Asia Cup cricket matches in Lahore and Multan mainly to avoid travelling and logistic problems surfacing from such a short international venture. "The News" has learnt from a well-placed source within the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) that two venues have been picked to host four matches with Multan likely to get some share. "Multan will get some share from Lahore which will be the main venue in Pakistan. We have tried hard to get a fifth match and even

are still negotiating on it. Since the decision was taken by the previous PCB administration, it is quite a tough task at this point of time," a source within the Board said. The official schedule for the Asia Cup is expected to be announced within the next few days. In yet another move, it is planned that the spectators coming to Sri Lanka for the remaining part of the Asia Cup will be asked to buy tickets in dollars. "We are also trying to evolve a policy where the spectators will be required to buy tickets in dollars in Sri Lanka. A good number of spectators from across the sub-continent and other

parts of the world are expected to travel to Sri Lanka to watch the Asia Cup where Pakistan is expected to play India at least twice. In case both arch-rivals reach the final, it would be the third time that both the teams face each other. A huge number of Indians and Pakistani fans are expected to turn up for these matches," he said. Meanwhile, the PCB official also expressed delight over the ICC revenue adjustment where Pakistan will get the best ever share - the fourth largest after India, Australia and England. PCB, in accordance with its constitutional right, has

recorded its dissent as a matter principle. Consequently, due to the Pakistan cricket team's performance in men's ICC events and in bilateral cricket, the PCB's own huge fan-base, which leads to significant commercial value, the PCB was ranked amongst the top-four nations in this Model. This increased share of revenue will mean that a far greater investment can be made in developing cricketing skills and will be beneficial in taking Pakistan Cricket to new heights. This was a welcome news for the Pakistani fans and our great nation. A number of fruitful meetings were held by Zaka Ashraf,

Chair of the PCB's MC, with fellow cricket board officials on the sidelines of the ICC meetings where collaborations and mutually beneficial programs to further cricket development. On Saturday, a meeting was held between the PCB and ACC officials in respect of finalising the schedule of the Asia Cup 2023. The finalised schedule is likely to be announced during ongoing week. With the opening match scheduled to kick off in Pakistan, the PCB, as the Asia Cup host, looks forward to welcoming cricket fans from across the world to experience Pakistan's renowned hospitality.

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## Briefs

## UK's migration crackdown plan to become law

LONDON: Britain's controversial plan to deter migrants without papers from landing on British shores was on Tuesday poised to become law, prompting criticism from the United Nations. The legislation would outlaw asylum claims by all arrivals via the Channel and other "illegal" routes, and transfer them to third countries, such as Rwanda. It was proposed in response to years of growing numbers of dangerous cross-Channel journeys from northern France in small boats. Opposition to the bill was finally crushed at a late night sitting just hours before a barge that will be used to house migrants arrived at a port on England's south coast. The Bibby Stockholm barge moored in Dorset's Portland Port is expected to house 500 asylum-seekers from later this month. The UN refugee agency condemned the passage of the government's Illegal Migration Bill as a "breach of international law" and warned it would expose refugees to "grave risks". — Agencies

## Kenya braces for 3 days of anti-gov't protest

NAIROBI: Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga has called for three days of anti-government protests starting on Wednesday. The latest demonstrations are against tax hikes and follow two previous sets of protests this year against the soaring cost of living in East Africa's economic hub and alleged malpractice in last year's presidential election, which Odinga lost. The new taxes were to take effect on July 1, but a Nairobi court halted their implementation pending further legal proceedings. Still, a tax increase on petroleum products was imposed, increasing fuel costs. Odinga said more protests could be held after this week. Here's all you need to know about the situation: Odinga announced the protests on June 14 against a new finance bill, which introduced a 1.5 percent housing levy, a 16 percent tax on petroleum products and a 16 percent value-added tax (VAT) on money that policyholders receive as compensation from insurance companies. "That finance bill will be the last nail in the coffin," Odinga told his supporters. "If it is passed, it will make Kenyans slaves of paying taxes. ...When they pass that bill, that will be the trumpet call. Will you be ready?" The bill was signed into law on June 26. On July 10, Kenya's High Court extended an order barring Treasury Cabinet Secretary Njuguna Ndung'u from implementing it. The government mostly obeyed the ruling except for the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority, which increased fuel prices, triggering an increase in public transport costs.—APP

ASTANA - Kazakhstan has cut the economy's energy intensity by 36.7% to a 2008 level over a decade, announced Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Zulfija Suleimenova at a July 17 meeting of the Council on the transition towards a green economy chaired by Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov, reported the Prime Minister's press service. The Concept of the Transition Towards a Green Economy allowed the share of renewable energy sources to reach 4.5%, the area of forests to extend to 5%, and the specially protected natural territories to expand to more than 10% of Kazakhstan's territory. The minister unveiled plans to bring recycling and disposal of household waste to 40% by 2030 and to 60% by 2050 within the concept upgraded with the adoption of the Carbon Neutrality Strategy until 2060. "Waste collection and disposal services should cover 100% of the population by 2040 through the organization of a centralized system in rural areas.—APP

## Kazakhstan's economy cuts energy intensity by 37%

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjarani meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on July 18, 2023. Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Minister for Federal Education and Professional and Technical Training Rana Tanvir Hussain, Advisor to the Prime Minister Ahad Cheema and SAPM Ata Tarar are also present.—DNA

## Kerry hopes climate coop can redefine US-China ties

Kerry told Wang Yi on Tuesday that climate talks could provide a new start for US-China ties, which have been mired in disputes over issues including trade, technology and the self-governed island of Taiwan

## NEWS DESK

BEIJING: John Kerry, the United States' envoy on climate, has held talks with China's top diplomat in Beijing, calling for cooperation to tackle global warming and to redefine the troubled diplomatic relations between the world's two biggest greenhouse gas emitters. Kerry told Wang Yi on Tuesday that climate talks could provide a new start for US-China ties, which have been mired in disputes over issues including trade, technology and the self-governed island of Taiwan. "Our hope is that this can be the beginning of a new definition of coop-

eration and capacity to resolve differences between us," Kerry told Wang in the meeting at Beijing's Great Hall of the People. "We are very hopeful that this can be the beginning not just of a conversation between you and me and us on the climate track but that we can begin to change the broader relationship," he said. Kerry is the third senior US official in recent weeks to travel to China for meetings with their counterparts there, after Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. China broke off some mid- and high-level contacts with the administration of US President Joe Biden last year, in-

cluding over climate issues, to show its anger with then-House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August. Beijing considers the democratically-governed island part of its territory. Other problems have rocked relations since then, including the transit across the US of what Biden administration officials said was a Chinese spy balloon. Kerry told Wang that Biden was "very committed to stability with in this relationship, but also to achieve efforts together that can make a significant difference to the world." "From experience, if we work at it we can find the path again in ways that resolve these challenges,"

Kerry said. "The world is really looking to us for that leadership, particularly on the climate issue." For his part, Wang described Kerry as "my old friend", saying they have "worked together to solve a series of problems between both sides". He praised Kerry and his Chinese counterpart, Xie Zhenhua, for their "hard work" during the 12 hours of talks they held in a Beijing Hotel on Monday. US officials have declined to comment on the Kerry-Xie discussions. Beijing said after the talks that "climate change is a common challenge faced by all mankind". China would "exchange views with the United States on issues related

to climate change, and work together to meet challenges and improve the wellbeing of current and future generations", foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said. As the leading emitter of the greenhouse gases driving climate change, China has pledged to ensure its carbon emissions peak by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. The Biden administration aims to decarbonise the US economy by 2050. While Kerry has sought to ring-fence climate issues from wider diplomatic disputes, China has said that cooperation on global warming could not be separated from broader concerns. In a commentary published on Sunday, the Xinhua state news

agency said recent US-China official interactions are a "good sign for preventing further miscalculations, and steering bilateral relations back on track". But it added that Beijing was seeking more concessions on the political side - something the US has said it will not provide. "It is especially true for the White House to bear in mind that seeking to compartmentalize cooperation with - or competition and suppression against - China in bilateral ties is simply unrealistic in practice and unacceptable for Beijing," Xinhua said. "For China-US cooperation to be healthy and sustainable, bilateral ties must be treated as a whole," it said.

## Turkiye continues to battle forest fires

ISTANBUL: Turkiye continued to battle forest fires Monday, particularly in its western provinces of Mugla, Canakkale and Tekirdag and Adana, Mersin and Hatay provinces in the south. Fires broke out in Ayvacik district in Canakkale, Malkara district in Tekirdag, Datca district in Mugla, Gulnar and Mezitli districts in Mersin, Karaisalı district in Adana and Belen district in Hatay. Canakkale Governor İlhami Aktas said winds fueled the fire's spread but they remained determined in their fight against it. Efforts to control the fire in Canakkale involve six aircraft, 15 helicopters, 109 water sprinklers, 14 pieces of heavy equipment and 543 personnel. The fires in Ayvacik and Malkara districts are being tackled from both the air and the ground. A fire that started at a restaurant in Datca district and later spread to the surrounding forest has been successfully extinguished. Agricultural, maquis and forest areas were impacted.

A fire that broke out in Gulnar district has been contained, while a fire in Mezitli district has been extinguished. Firefighting efforts are currently concentrated in Hatay, Mersin and Canakkale. Agriculture and Forestry Minister Ibrahim Yumaklı said late Sunday that 16 of the 19 forest fires that broke out during the day were under control.—APP

## EU+ countries received record number of asylum applications

GENEVA: EU faces challenges as arrivals increase and applications for asylum reach record highs, the executive director of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUA) said. Presenting Asylum Report 2023 on figures of last year to the European Parliament, Nina Gregori said it was "quite dramatic and unprecedented year." In addition to about 4 million people who fled Ukraine following Russia's war which began on Feb. 24, 2022, applications for international protection increased by one-half to almost 1 million, Gregori said. "So 13 EU+ countries received the highest number of applications on record," she said, noting that countries issued a total of 646,000 first-instance asylum application decisions in 2022 - an increase of one-fifth compared to the year before. Almost 39% of these decisions rented refugee or subsidiary protection, she said, citing the report, and added that the number of asylum cases awaiting first instant decision reached "a level not seen since early 2017" with 687,000. According to the report, seven out of every 10 applications were lodged in five receiving countries: Germany (244,000), France (156,000), Spain (118,000), Austria (109,000) and Italy (84,000). During the record-breaking years of 2015 and 2016, Afghan, Iraqi, and Syrian citizens were the most common applicants for international protection.—APP

## EU foreign ministers to discuss ties with Turkiye

ANKARA: Foreign Ministers of European Union states are set to discuss the bloc's relations with Turkey at a meeting in Brussels later this week, an anonymous high-level EU official announced Tuesday. The official said ties with Turkey are one of the most important relations for the union, emphasizing that Turkey was "still a candidate state" despite the stalled accession process. At a two-day summit in the Belgian capital in late June, the 27 EU heads of state and government invited Josep Borrell and the European Commission to submit a report "on the state of play of EU-Turkiye relations" in light of the recent general and presidential elections in Turkey. The foreign ministers will hold their first conversation on the said report at Thursday's meeting, the official informed. The document is expected to build "on the instruments and options identified by the European Council and proceed in a strategic and forward-looking manner."

The EU has observed changes in Turkey's recent foreign policies and "wants to test Turkey's attitude about the EU and see where relations can go in the coming months." Despite the differences of opinion between the bloc and Ankara over several issues, including the Cyprus issue, Syria, Libya and the Eastern Mediterranean, the bloc wants to keep channels of communication open and maintain dialogue with "an important country like Turkey," EU officials said. The EU leaders previously called for a "speedy resumption of negotiations" under the U.N. framework for finding a "comprehensive settlement for the Cyprus issue." The Cyprus issue is an ongoing dispute between the Greek Cypriot administration in the south and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) over sovereign rights on the island. The TRNC entirely broke away from the south and declared independence in 1983 after a coup aimed at Greece's annexation of the island led to Turkey's mil-

itary intervention, dubbed Cyprus Peace Operation, as a power guarantor to protect Turkish Cypriots from persecution and violence. Turkish Cyprus demanded a two-state solution that would ensure international recognition and equal sovereignty and status, which the Greek Cypriots rejected. Several on-and-off peace talks, including a U.N.-backed reunification solution, have collapsed so far. The crisis also looms over Turkey's accession to the EU, which has been essentially frozen due to political roadblocks by certain EU members, including Greece and the Greek Cypriot administration, for reasons unrelated to membership criteria, according to Ankara. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will also attend Thursday's assembly via video conference. The part of the meeting Blinken will join will focus on Turkey and the aftermath of Ankara's decision to green-light Sweden's NATO membership bid at the Vilnius summit last week. Other topics for the EU diplomats will include Russia

and economic security, as well as support for Ukraine, China, Tunisia and Azerbaijan-Armenia relations. In the meantime, the EU has emphasized it would continue cooperating with the U.N. and Turkey to extend the Black Sea Grain Initiative between Russia and Ukraine. Several officials have expressed full support for U.N. and Ankara's mediation to save the deal, which has proven vital in preventing a global food crisis. A year ago, Turkey, the U.N., Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement in Istanbul to resume grain exports from three Ukrainian Black Sea ports, which paused after the Russia-Ukraine war began that February. The deal has been renewed several times since then, and it was extended for another two months on May 18 until it expired on July 17. Moscow has refused to renew it, saying the part relating to Russia in the agreement "has not been implemented so far," meaning the removal of obstacles to its fertilizer exports along the same route.—Agencies

## Number of Britons regretting Brexit hits new record

LONDON: The proportion of Britons who say Brexit is a mistake has hit a new record high this month, a survey from pollsters YouGov shows. With few economic benefits to show for the June 2016 vote to leave the European Union, 57 percent of Britons said the decision was the wrong one compared with 32 percent who thought it was correct, YouGov said on Tuesday. More than half - 55 percent - said they would vote to remain in the EU again. 31 percent who said they would stay out if the referendum were to be held again. The YouGov survey of more than 2,000 British people showed 63 percent now regard Brexit as more of a failure than a success compared with 12 percent who saw it as more of a success. A further 18 percent said it was neither. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said in May that Brexit is delivering benefits, citing his flagship policy of freeports and value-added tax cuts that he said would make beer and sanitary products cheaper. Economists said freeports - special zones with tax and customs relief and simplified trade regulations - are unlikely to boost Britain's economy but may have limited value as a regional development tool. British business investment has barely grown since mid-2016 in contrast with other advanced economies. While Brexit-supporting economists pointed to the fact that capital grew strongly in the years leading up to 2016 and was bound to slow, business surveys pointed to Brexit as one cause of the stagnation. International Monetary Fund projections put Britain at the bottom of the world's major economies in terms of expected growth in 2023 (0.4 percent). In 2022, the UK economy grew by 4.1 percent. "Prior to the 2008 global financial crisis, the UK had been a strong performer among the Group of Seven countries," the IMF said last week. "But this momentum was lost in the middle of the last decade. By 2022, real business investment was still slightly lower than in 2016 - in contrast to the 14 percent increase among other G7 economies."—APP

## Spain's early election could put the far right in power

MADRID: Spain's general election on Sunday could make the country the latest European Union member swing to the populist right, a shift that would represent a major upheaval after five years under a left-wing government. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez called the early election after his Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and its small far-left coalition partner, Unidas Podemos ("United We Can"), took a beating in local and regional elections. The center-right Popular Party emerged from the May 28 elections with the most votes. Polls for the general election have consistently put the PP in first place - but likely needing support from the far-right Vox party to form a government. Such a coalition would return a far-right force to the Spanish government for the first time since the country transitioned to democracy following the 1975 death of Gen. Francisco Franco, the dictator who ruled Spain for nearly 40 years.

The Popular Party and Vox have agreed to govern together in some 140 cities and towns since May, as well as to add two more regions to the one where they already co-governed. Sen. Alberto Núñez Feijóo, the PP's leader, has not ruled out a partnership at the national level. Led by former PP member Santiago Abascal, 47, Vox opposes abortion rights, denies climate change and rejects the need for government to combat gender violence. Election polling indicates the party could finish third this weekend, a showing that would put Abascal in a kingmaker's role. Nagore Calvo Mendizabal, a senior lecturer in Spanish and European Politics and Society at King's College London, said the likelihood of Vox entering government frames Sunday's parliamentary election "in terms of the future of democracy in Spain as being what is at stake." Vox's manifesto is virtually a "copy-and-paste of the tenets of the Franco regime," Calvo said. It promises, for example, a return to

a highly centralized government by scrapping the 17 regions that came into being after Franco's death. Beyond Spain, a PP-Vox government would mean another EU member has moved firmly to the right, a trend seen recently in Sweden, Finland and Italy. Countries such as Germany and France are concerned by what such a shift would portend for EU immigration and climate policies, Calvo said. Spain took over the EU's rotating presidency on July 1. Sánchez had hoped to use the six-month term to showcase the advances his government had made before a national election originally scheduled for December. Voter concerns over immigration and costs of living, as well as frustration with the EU's perceived interference in national affairs, often have been cited to explain increases in right-wing support in other countries. In Spain, however, the dominant issue is the "honorability" of the Socialist politician who has served as prime

minister since June 2018, according to María José Canel Crespo, a political communication professor at Madrid's Complutense University. For most of the past year, the PP has pursued a hard-hitting media and parliamentary campaign on the need to defeat what it calls "Sanchismo," portraying the prime minister as a liar for his U-turns on major issues. Sánchez said he would never form a government with Podemos, deeming it too radical, but then he did in 2019. Sánchez also said he would not pardon nine separatists who were convicted of sedition after pushing for the Catalonia region's secession - but then he did. The PP claims his minority government betrays Spain by aligning itself with extremists in Basque and Catalan regional parties that ultimately want independence. But the Socialist-Podemos coalition's biggest blunder came in what was supposed to have been one of its signature pieces of

progressive legislation. A sexual consent law passed in October inadvertently allowed more than 1,000 convicted sex offenders to have their sentences reduced, and over 100 gained early release. Sánchez apologized and the law was amended to close the legal loophole, but the episode provided invaluable material for the right-wing parties and right-leaning media outlets. Sánchez "has made it easier for him to be perceived as a liar," Canel said, adding that he did not help his cause when he explained in a television interview that "Sanchismo" stood for evil, lies and manipulation. The 51-year-old prime minister also performed disastrously in the only televised pre-election debate with the PP's Feijóo, 61. Polling analyses show anti-Sánchez sentiment and the fear of Vox entering government has led some 700,000 Socialist voters switching to the PP, according to Canel. "The vote is not going to be about corruption or the economy.—APP



## Briefs

### Rupees weakens against dollar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The rupee weakened by Rs3.78 against the dollar in the interbank market on Tuesday amid waning euphoria surrounding the agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to State Bank of Pakistan, the dollar closed at Rs283.04, 1.34 per cent higher than yesterday's Rs279.26. Recent inflows from the IMF, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had changed the sentiments during last week but the dollar's appreciation on Friday indicated the return of the greenback's domination. Currency dealer Zafar Paracha said that after the loan agreement with the IMF and the commercial loans from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, analysts had expected the dollar rate to fall by Rs2. "But a hype was created, of manipulation and speculation," he said, lamenting that the local currency was treated as a mere company at the stock exchange. "As a result, local and foreign investors are disheartened which inevitably reduces investment and also degrades our [credit] rating," he said.

### Indian opp form 'INDIA' alliance for 2024 election

DNA

NEW DELHI: More than two dozen Indian opposition parties have joined hands to form an alliance called "INDIA" to take on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in parliamentary elections next year. The decision was announced on Tuesday at the end of a two-day meeting of 26 parties in the southern city of Bengaluru. Mallikarjun Kharge, president of the main opposition Congress party, said INDIA stood for "Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance". "India will unite, INDIA will win," Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted in Hindi. The national elections are scheduled in April and May next year when Modi will seek a third term.

### Trump says he's a target in Jan. 6 probe

WASHINGTON: Former President Donald J. Trump said on Tuesday that he recently received a so-called target letter from the special counsel Jack Smith in connection with the criminal investigation into his efforts to hold onto power after he lost the 2020 election, a sign that he is likely to be indicted in the case. It would be the second time Mr. Smith has notified Mr. Trump that he is a target in a federal investigation. The first, in June, was in connection to the investigation into Mr. Trump's handling of national defense material after he left office and his alleged obstruction of efforts to retrieve it. - Agencies

# UK renews a commitment to partnership with Pakistan

The UK will use its full relationship with Pakistan - development, diplomatic, defence and people-to-people links - to help deliver these objectives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) published its new Pakistan Country Development Partnership Summary (CDPS) which sets out a refreshed approach to the UK-Pakistan development partnership. The strategy underlines UK's transition from a traditional aid relationship to a UK-Pakistan partnership for mutual benefit. It aims to unlock progress against Pakistan's constraints to growth including population dynamics, climate vulnerability, gender equality and the structure of the economy. The CDPS is aligned with Pakistan's long-

term development strategies and the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy's objectives are to 1) deliver a step change in human capital, 2) support Pakistan to adopt a more resilient and cleaner growth path, 3) support Pakistan to become a more open society, and 4) promote macroeconomic stability, private sector led growth and resilience to climate shocks. The CDPS also covers programming under the UK's Conflict Stability and Security Fund which underpins UK-Pak co-operation on organised crime, regional stability and hate speech. The CDPS is published alongside FCDO's Annual Report, which sets out the FY23/24 UK-Pakistan bilateral Official Development

Assistance (ODA) allocation as £41.5m. The Annual Report also indicates likely significant growth in UK-Pakistan ODA in FY24/25, based on an expected increase in FCDO's overall ODA budget next year. The UK has provisionally allocated a greater share of next year's ODA to Pakistan, reflecting the aim of boosting efforts to strengthen climate resilience and reduce humanitarian risks following last year's devastating floods. The UK will use its full relationship with Pakistan - development, diplomatic, defence and people-to-people links - to help deliver these objectives. In programme terms, work will be delivered, through existing, scaled-up programmes as well as new programmes

which will be announced in due course. Jo Moir, Development Director at the British High Commission, said: "I am delighted to share our renewed strategy for the UK-Pakistan development partnership. This new strategy aims to transition our approach from a traditional aid relationship to a partnership based on shared security and prosperity. We will work with Pakistan to unlock progress against critical challenges: population dynamics, climate vulnerability and the economy. And we want to use all areas of UK-Pak Dosti - our diplomatic efforts, trade relationship, people-to-people links, development programmes and defence engagement - to achieve these goals."



ISLAMABAD: Syed Naveed Qamar Federal Minister for Commerce and Azerbaijan Minister of Digital Development & Transport, H.E Rashid Nabiyeu, exchanging souvenir. - DNA

## Sindh minister urges dacoits not to harm Hindus

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Giyanchand Essrani, Sindh minister for minorities affairs, has urged dacoits in the province's riverine belt to not harm its Hindu community that has been peacefully residing in the region for the past several centuries. The minister's appeal came when responding to a point of order on the provincial assembly's floor. Meanwhile, commenting on the point of order, a Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) lawmaker Mangla Sharma said that heavily armed bandits belonging to the riverine areas used rocket launchers to attack a temple in Sindh. Sharma said the concerned community had become very frightened after the incident. Essrani, on the other hand, told the house that dacoits had also announced attacking the province's temples belonging to the Hindu community. He added that the bandits were, after all, the natives of this country and should refrain from an act that could defame Pakistan. Essrani feared that Pakistan would be defamed all over the world if any harm was done to Hindus living here. The minister said that the Muslim majority in Pakistan had maintained friendly ties with the religious minorities in the country and did their best to provide protection to their members. "Our life and death both are associated with Pakistan," he pointed out. He said the Hindu community in Pakistan had done no wrong, so their worship places should not be harmed. Sindh police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon has ordered a security high alert at temples situated throughout the province. According to officials, 400 police officers have been deployed at different ranges and districts to ensure the security of temples. The police personnel will perform security duties on administrative grounds, and all deployed at the temples are being tasked with security duties for two months. Sindh Inspector General of Police (IGP) Memon requested Hindus to ensure all possible cooperation with the personnel deployed for security duties at their temples, saying that it is the responsibility of the police to protect minorities and other communities living in the province.

## Prime Minister thanks MBZ for economic support

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a telephonic call with His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, President of the United Arab Emirates today. The Prime Minister conveyed profound gratitude for His Highness' firm support for the economic and financial stability of Pakistan which certainly manifested His Highness' deep affection and care for the welfare of the people of Pakistan. The Prime Minister also conveyed gratitude for the deposits of USD 1 billion in the State Bank of Pakistan. Recalling his successful visit to UAE in January, the Prime Minister reiterated the common resolve of leadership in both countries to translate the fraternal bonds into mutually rewarding economic ties. Prime Minister also conveyed gratitude to His Highness for kind invitation for COP28 and appreciated UAE's role in combating climate change. He also expressed satisfaction on the discussion about prospective solutions to climate change challenges held during COP28 President-designate visit to Pakistan on 6th July 2023. Both the leaders discussed further advancing economic, trade and investment ties and creation of greater opportunities



for the Pakistani workforce in the UAE. The two sides also exchanged views on a range of regional and international issues of mutual interest. Pakistan and UAE have a history of close relationship characterized by mutual trust and understanding, close cooperation, and an abiding tradition of supporting each other. The UAE is home to 1.7 million Pakistanis, contributing to the progress, prosperity and economic development of the two brotherly countries. - DNA

## US nuclear sub puts up power show in S. Korea

NEW YORK: As North Korea has increased the frequency of test-firing its long-range missiles, leading tensions to spiral in the region, a US nuclear-capable submarine visited South Korea for the first time in more than four decades, said a White House official Tuesday, in a show of power. The bilateral relations between the South and the North are at their lowest with no top communication as Pyongyang's leader Kim Jong Un urged for increased weapons development, including tactical ones. Citing the threats, Seoul and Washington have ramped up military

cooperation, staging joint military drills with advanced stealth jets and US strategic assets. They held Tuesday the first NCG meeting in the South Korean capital, which aims to improve nuclear coordination between the two countries and boost combat readiness against North Korea. "As we speak, an American nuclear submarine is making port in Busan today, the first visit of American nuclear submarine in decades," White House Indo-Pacific coordinator Kurt Campbell told reporters after the meeting. The last time Washington deployed one of its nuclear-capable submarines to South Korea was in 1981. Washington announced it would deploy a submarine capable of launching ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads to the Korean peninsula in April, while South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was on a state visit, but did not specify a timeline. "US side demonstrated strong resolve that in case the North attacks South with nuclear weapons it will be met with immediate, overwhelming and decisive countermeasures, leading to the demise of its regime" - DNA

## Muharram moon not sighted

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee on Tuesday could not sight the Muharram moon, which will mark the beginning of the new Islamic year, 1445 AH. This means that the first of Muharram will be on Thursday (July 20) and Youm-e-Ashura will be observed on July 29 (Saturday) Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Moulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad presided over the meeting, which took place at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Quetta. Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfaraz and other officials also attended the meeting. Earlier, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) predicted that the moon would be born on the crossing conjunction point at 11:32pm on July 17 (Monday). "According to astronomical parameters, there is a slight chance of sighting the new moon of Muharram, 1445 AH on the evening of 18-07-2023 i.e. on 29th of Zilhaj, 1444 AH," the PMD said in a notification a day earlier. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court announced that the Islamic year in the Kingdom will start tomorrow (July 19). "According to the Umm Al-Qura calendar, Tuesday will be the last day of the month of Zilhaj, 1444 Hijri, corresponding to July 18, 2023. Wednesday will be the first day of the month of Muharram, 1445 Hijri, corresponding to July 19, 2023," the court announced.

## Imran Khan strongly condemns Peshawar blast

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan strongly condemned the blast in Hayatabad, Peshawar and prayed for the quick recovery of the injured. PTI Chairman said that it was worrying how terror attacks were increasing in KP and Balochistan. "Our security forces are almost on a daily basis being targeted and giving sacrifices," he added. PTI Chairman said that this should become a priority for our intelligence agencies rather than their current obsession of trying to dismantle Pakistan's largest political party.

## Current account stays surplus: Dar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said here on Tuesday that the country witnessed Current Account Surplus (CAS) of \$334 million during the month of June 2023 against the deficit of \$2,321 million during the same month of last year. Talking to media persons, the minister said that this was for the fourth consecutive month that Pakistan had been witnessing surplus in current account owing to the proper management of economy.

# Military Courts: 'Impossible to form full court at this time'

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial Tuesday turned down the government's request to establish a full court to hear the multiple petitions challenging the trial of civilians in military courts, terming the demand "impossible". The CJP's remarks came during a hearing of the petitions in the apex court by a six-member bench that also included Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Mazahir Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha A Malik.

In response to the government's request, made through Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan, the CJP said: "When the bench was first formed, all the judges were consulted and the bench was formed based on the available judges."

"It is impossible to make a full court at this time," he said, adding that doing so is impossible on a technical basis. "Three judges excused themselves from hearing the case; some judges are not in the country," he said.



He further said that two more judges excused themselves on the first day of the hearing. "We were surprised when the government came to the second hearing and objected to a judge. Justice Mansoor excused himself from hearing the case." The CJP re-

marked that the bench had shrunk from nine to six. "No judge has [any] personal interest in a case of public interest," he remarked. Earlier, the AGP had referred to Justice Afridi's additional note in the June 23 order and said that the justice, too, believed a full court should hear this matter. "This is the first case of its kind related to the Army Act," he said, in response to which Justice Ayesha said: "You objected to one member in the last hearing, how are you requesting to make a full court now?" She further slammed the AGP's request saying, "When the case started, you did not object to anyone. Then the government objected to one judge, and now, it is requesting to reconstitute the bench. I am unable to understand your position." However, the CJP then observed that while the bench would consult among itself, it was impossible at the moment.

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