



Islamabad POST

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Italy PM seeks to build alliance for illegal migration

Detailed News On Page-07

Cambodia PM party claims big win in elections

Detailed News On Page-07



Hamza wins World Junior Squash C'ship

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

US supports free, fair elections

DNA
WASHINGTON: A top-ranking United States official said Friday that Washington was "encouraged" after the crises-hit Pakistani government announced holding elections soon. The coalition government's tenure comes to an end on August 12, but officials have said that they might cut their term short and dissolve the assemblies before the stipulated time - around August 8. "We are hoping for a free, fair, and peaceful election," US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Elizabeth Horst told Pakistani journalists in Washington.

Dar's name in list for interim PM

KHAYAM ABBASI
ISLAMABAD: The government was mulling amending the Elections Act 2017 to empower the upcoming caretaker set-up to take decisions beyond its constitutional mandate with a view to ensure continuity of the recently rolled out economic plan and expedite the process aimed at receiving foreign investment in state-owned entities. Sources in the federal cabinet told media that PML-N was considering proposing the name of Ishaq Dar for caretaker prime minister as part of a broader plan to ensure implementation of the economic policies.

Fazl for recalling envoys from Sweden

NAZIR SIYAL
KARACHI: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazl) chairman Maulana Fazlur Rahman urged the Muslim World to recall ambassadors from Sweden over the desecration of the Holy Quran. Addressing the protestor's rally held against the desecration of the, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman said that such acts are unacceptable for Muslims across the world as Muslims respect the holy scriptures of every religion.

Inaugurates Fsd Satyana bypass Shehbaz urges voters to help PML-N win

The prime minister assures that if given a chance, he will fight for Pakistan

BUREAU REPORT / DNA
FAISALABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday urged the voters to avenge the "rigging" of the 2018 general elections with the power of their mandate during the upcoming general polls by defeating the "political masquerades of PTI". Addressing a ceremony after laying the foundation stone of the Faisalabad Satyana bypass linking Motorway-3, he said: "During the 2018 rigged polls, Imran Khan and his clique were brought to power but the people of Faisalabad will defeat them in the upcoming general elections by massively supporting the PML-N candidates." The premier added that during the four-year PTI, "not a single brick" was laid on the projects initiated by the PML-N government but instead, "a barrage of baseless and awkward allegations were levelled against the opposition leadership." Imran Khan was made the prime minister through rigged polls with malfunctioning of the RTS (result transmission system) and the PML-N was deprived of its seats," he said. The prime minister maintained that "nothing tangible could be witnessed" contrary to Imran's claims about a vast network of public welfare projects. "Where were those \$300 billion they (PTI) claimed were parked abroad," he remarked, highlighting that "not a single penny" could be brought back. PM Shehbaz further castigated the PTI chairman for his claims against seeking financial support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), saying that he had reneged on the agreement with

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Dubai meetings to mull interim set-up

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz arrived in Dubai as Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and PML-N gear up for another huddle in the UAE, media reported Sunday. PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari arrived Friday evening at Dubai's Al-Maktoum airport in a private jet from Karachi. It is likely that the PML-N and PPP leaderships will consult on who the caretaker prime minister will be once the government dissolves the National Assembly at the start of August. Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman will also be consulted for the future political set-up. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl has expressed displeasure over the political meetings held in Dubai last month, saying it was not taken into confidence. Political observers expect that PML-N supremo

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Emerging Asia Cup Pakistan thrash India in final



SPORTS DESK

COLOMBO: All round Pakistan Shaheens defeated India A by 128 runs in the final played in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Sunday to lift the Emerging Asia Cup. Chasing a target of 353 runs, India were dismissed for 224 runs in 40 overs. Spinner Sufiyan Mubeen caused all kinds of troubles for the Men in Blue by taking three important wickets including opener Abhishek Sharma, who scored 61, captain Yash Dull, who was set at 39 off 41, and Harshit Rana, 13,

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while conceding 66 runs in 10 overs. Mehran Mumtaz, Mohammad Wasim and Arshad Iqbal claimed two wickets each. For India, opener Abhishek Sharma was the top run-scorer with 61 runs in 51 balls. Earlier, Pakistan A had set India A target of 353 runs on a good batting surface. Middle-order batter Tayyab Tahir scored a brilliant century to help Pakistan post a massive total on the board after being asked to bat first. Pakistan were in a precarious position after losing five wickets for



FAISLABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates rehabilitation of Faisalabad Circular Road. - DNA

French envoy discusses cooperation with CM Ambassador Galey is in Lahore on an official visit

DNA

LAHORE: Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey met with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at CM Office in which matters pertaining to mutual interests, promotion of bilateral cooperation and enhancing cooperation in various sectors were discussed. Mohsin Naqvi while talking on this occasion stated that Pakistan and France hold excellent cordial relations and there was a need to promote relations between the two countries in economic, trade and other sectors on a durable basis. "We deem the cooperation of France in high esteem with regard to culture, tourism and water treatment" he said.

Continued on Page 06

KP, Punjab worst affected Multiple killed as rains and floods wreak havoc

Land communication has been disconnected with Upper Chitral

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: The recent rains and floods in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have claimed around 15 lives across the different districts in the provinces within 48 hours. At least three people, according to rescue sources, were reported to have died as a result of incidents involving electrocution in Pakpattan on Sunday. Two men, Waqas and Ramzan, residents of Purani Sabzi Mandi and Arifawala, were dead after being electrocuted while bathing, while another incident took the life of a two-year-old baby, Ayesha, who died on the spot after touching an electric wire in the Sikandar Chowk area. In KP's Mansehra and Chitral districts, five people were killed, and over a dozen were injured. On the other hand, houses and roads were washed away after rain-triggered devastation in the districts.

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'Flood situation may rise in Pakistan'

DNA

LAHORE: Caretaker Minister for Information and Culture Aamir Mir on Sunday warned that a flood situation in Pakistan may rise if India receives more monsoon rains. Pakistan has been facing a flood situation for several days as the northern areas of India have witnessed torrential rainfall. Moreover, the neighbouring country has also been releasing water towards Pakistan. Speaking during a press conference at Director General Public Relations

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Eye-opening report Drug abuse, exploitation unearthed at Islamia Varsity

Chief Security officer involved; hundreds of obscene videos confiscated

DNA

LAHORE: Police arrested another official of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) on drug charges, a day after the varsity's chief of security was detained for allegedly possessing crystal meth and 'objectionable' videos and images of IUB students and staff members. On the other hand, a special report by police claimed that a "group of teachers" at the university was involved in the sale of drugs and sexual exploitation of female students and teachers. City Circle police detained the IUB transport in-charge and allegedly recovered 8 grams of meth from his possession, said an FIR, a copy of which is available with Dawn. Police have registered a case under Section 9(2)1 of the Control of Narcotic Substances Act 1997 and started an investigation. On June 28, Baghdad-ul-Jadid police

arrested the IUB treasurer at a picket and claimed to have recovered meth and aphrodisiacs from him. A case was registered against him. Another varsity official held for drug possession; multiple bodies formed to probe allegations. In a similar vein, police detained the university's security chief on Friday and recovered sexually explicit content from his phone, as well as several aphrodisiac pills and drugs from his possession. Sexual exploitation of students: In a special report, police claimed that the two officials held on drug charges were also involved in blackmail and sexual exploitation of students and teachers in the varsity. The report claimed the treasurer "confessed that he along with a group of other teachers would purchase and distribute drugs through students and arrange dance/sex parties".

Continued on Page 06

PDMA appeals public to follow precautions measures amid rain

The rescue, relief camps and rehabilitation operation was also underway at a brisk pace in flood-affected areas of Sindh, Balochistan and South Punjab, he added.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Sunday appealed to the citizens to avoid going near streams and nullahs, electric poles, wires and not to reside in vulnerable buildings as the recent rain spell of this season may cause unfortunate incidents.

PDM spokesperson talking to the PTV news channel warned the citizens living near the coastal belt of Sindh and Balochistan to seriously follow precautionary measures mentioned in advisories to meet any untoward situation due to recent rains. He also assured

that the district administration was prepared to deal with any emergency situation. The PDMA strictly directed all departments concerned to remain active, for the safety of lives and property of people, he mentioned. The PDMA had already issued a list of precautions for the district management and other related departments, he said, adding, emergency staff has also been called for in all relevant departments. Alongside the forecast, he also expressed his serious concerns over rising water levels in the rivers of Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which may lead to medium to high-level floods. He said emergency response teams have been placed on high alert, and all necessary

machinery is being readied to handle any exigencies that may arise. PMD also warned of water logging and localized urban flooding in Karachi and other districts of Sindh. It also advised the public to take precautions and remain watchful during rains.

The rescue, relief camps and rehabilitation operation was also underway at a brisk pace in flood-affected areas of Sindh, Balochistan and South Punjab, he added. He further stressed that the people should donate safe drinking water and shelters which are urgently required for flood survivors and assured that all possible assistance was being provided to the affected areas on a priority basis.

Women's role in global economy highlighted

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Rice Research and Development Board Punjab Shahzad Ali Malik on Sunday said women empowerment is of immense significance in the global economy including Pakistan. He said as it has far-reaching implications on various aspects of economic growth, development, and sustainability. Talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs led by Ms Maheen Kashif, recipient of best CEO award he said when women are empowered and given equal opportunities, it can lead to several positive outcomes that benefit not only women themselves but also society and the overall economy. He said gender equality and women's empowerment are strongly associated with increased economic growth and productivity. He said when women are given access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, they can contribute effectively to the labor force, driving innovation and entrepreneurship, and increasing the overall output and productivity of a country. —APP

Gandhara tourism aims high: Ramesh

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister Task Force on Gandhara Tourism Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankani said that concrete measures were underway to propel Gandhara tourism to six billion dollars within the next three years. "Efforts to promote Gandhara tourism will soon bear the fruits, as a result of which Pakistan will benefit one and half billion dollars in the first year, three billion in the second year and six billion dollars in the third year," he said while exclusively talking to APP. The chairman said that unfortunately Pakistan was not included in the United Nations Buddhist tourist circuit, on the contrary, 70% of Buddhist sites were situated in Pakistan. Countries mentioned in the Buddhist tourism sites circuit encompassed merely 30% of the Buddhist civilization, therefore, efforts were being afoot to highlight Buddhist sites in Pakistan at international fora. —APP

Heavy rains in KP resulted death of four persons

PESHAWAR: Heavy rains all across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa resulted in the death of four people while one person was injured, a report issued by Provincial Disaster Management said here Sunday. According to reports so far, 67 houses were partially damaged and 7 houses were completely damaged due to floods and rains across the province with 39 houses in Lower Chitral while 19 in Upper Chitral were partially damaged due to flood.

On the instructions of the Relief Department, District Administration, PDMA, Rescue 1122, Civil Defence, and related institutions are on alert, a spokesman of the Relief Department said here. Relief materials were pro-

vided to the affected families of Chitral Upper and a detailed assessment of the damage will be started as soon as the flood waters recede in Lower Chitral, spokesman of the Relief Department added. Sensitive communities in Chitral Lower had already been shifted to safer places with food items (dry ration) being provided to the affected families and Dir Lower road has been cleared for traffic by the district administration. The district administration mobilized heavy machinery for the speedy restoration of the roads and the road has been cleared for traffic at Koghuzi, the spokesman said. A one-way road has been opened by the district administration of Dir Upper. The two-way rehabilitation of the

road is in progress, he informed. PDMA had issued a letter to all concerned institutions and district administration besides giving on-the-spot instructions to take precautionary measures regarding rains, flash floods, urban flooding, and flooding in rivers. The Rescue 1122, Monsoon Mock Exercises, Preparation and Training in progress with Rescue 1122 is conducting evacuation training in boats to deal with the possible flood situation in monsoon, said Dr. Khateer Ahmed, Director General of Rescue 1122. Rescue 1122 presented a practical model of exercises in the Kabul River in Nowshera, Dr. Khateer Ahmed said. People trapped in the Kabul River were also rescued by boats, the official of Rescue 1122 said. —APP

China dominated Pak FDI with \$432.7m in FY 23

ISLAMABAD: In the Financial Year 2023 (from July 2022 to June 2023), Pakistan received the highest Foreign Direct Invest (FDI) worth US\$ 432.7 million from China, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday quoting the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)'s latest figures. In FY 2023, Pakistan received \$1.4377 billion in FDI with China leading with 30.09% of the total FDI coming to the country. As per SBP, the FDI inflows/outflows include cash received for investment in equity, intercompany loan, capital equipment brought in/out, equity in accounts abroad, and reinvested earnings. In FY 2023, the total inflow from China remained at \$475.3 million, the outflow was \$43.1 million, net FDI was \$ 432.2 million, net foreign portfolio investment (FPI) was \$0.5 million and the total FDI remained at \$432.7 million. FPI consists of securities and other financial assets held by investors in another country. Along with FDI, FPI is one of the common ways to invest in overseas economies. In June 2023, Pakistan also received \$ 5.8 million from Hong Kong bringing the total FDI from Hong Kong to \$96.6 million in FY 23. In FY 2023, Pakistan received \$182 million from Japan, \$ 172.3 million from UAE, \$135 million from Switzerland, \$118.4 million from the U.S., \$ 71.5 million from Netherlands, \$63.9 million from France, \$62 million from the United Kingdom, \$ 39.8 million.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: British Director development programme called on federal secretary Health itfikhar shallwani in his office.—DNA

Third Pakistan-China Think Tank on 'Decade of CPEC' held

DNA

BEIJING: "The transformational China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of President Xi Jinping's visionary Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), remains at the core of Pakistan-China relationship and is pivotal to Pakistan's future economic progress and prosperity." This was stated by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), while addressing the Third Pakistan-China Think Tank Forum, convened in Beijing on 21 July 2023, as part of the series of commemorative events being held in connection with completion of 10 years

of CPEC. The 15-member Pakistan delegation visiting China participated in the Seminar jointly organised by ISSI and the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), at the CICIR headquarters in Beijing. Led by Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, the delegation includes diplomats, leading

academics, researchers, and media persons. Following the plenary, the separate sessions of the Seminar, titled "Decade of CPEC: Review and Outlook", were moderated by Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC), ISSI; Dr. Hu Shisheng, Director, Institute of South Asian Studies,

CICIR; and Dr. Lou Chunhao, Executive Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, CICIR. The speakers at the event included Ambassador Zhang Maoming, Deputy Director-General, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), China; Head of the Pakistan Delegation Ambassador So-

hail Mahmood, Director General, ISSI; Prof. Dr. Attaulah Shah, Vice Chancellor, Karakoram International University, Pakistan; Dr. Wang Xu, Executive Deputy Director, Centre for South Asian Studies, Peking University; Ambassador Babar Amin, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Norway and Australia; Dr. Mukesh Kumar Khatwani, Associate Professor, University of Sindh; Dr. Wang Shida, Deputy Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, CICIR; and Dr. Fouzia Hadi Ali, Associate Professor and Director, Regional Integration Centre, University of the Punjab. Ambassador Zhang Maoming, Deputy Director-General of Department of Foreign Affairs, in his keynote address during the plenary extended felicitations to ISSI and CICIR on organising the 3rd Pakistan-China Think Tank Forum. Amb. Maoming emphasised that Pakistan and China are good neighbours, good friends, and good brothers.



ISLAMABAD: Motorists are on their way at Express Way during rainy weather in Capital.—ONLINE

PBM organizes awareness event

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A special event was held at the Pakistan Baitul-Mal (PBM) Regional Office here Sunday to raise awareness about Thalassemia and its implications for individuals and communities. The event took place with the guidance of Managing Director PBM Amir Fida Paracha. The ceremony featured Dr. General (Retd) Pervez Ahmed from Armed Forces Bone Marrow Transplant Center (AFBMT) as the esteemed chief guest, while Dr. Zahra and Dr. Kamran also made special contributions by providing valuable information about Thalassemia to the participants. Speaking on the occasion, chief guest Dr. Pervez Ahmed appreciated the efforts of Managing Director PBM for starting Thalassemia awareness program across Pakistan and offered his support in this regard. The chief guest informed the participants about Thalassemia disease and how to prevent it.

He explained that Thalassemia was a hereditary disease that can be inherited from parents to children, often occurring in families with a history of intermarriage or cousin marriages. He emphasized the importance of undergoing Hb electrophoresis testing before marriage to prevent Thalassemia. This crucial step helps in timely diagnosis of the disease, ensuring the protection of future generations from inheriting it, he told.

'Durable peace must to achieve economic growth'

ISLAMABAD: Durable peace is indeed a key factor for success in any region, including South Asia especially for economic growth and social prosperity as well as human development. This was stated by former President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday, while speaking as a chief guest at a seminar on "Peace a key to stability in South Asia". The event was held under the aegis of IT Professionals headed by Mian Faiz Bukhsh, said a press release issued here today. "South Asia is a diverse and vibrant region comprising countries such as Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives," he added. "While the region has immense potential for economic growth, technological advancements, and social development, several conflicts and tensions have hindered its progress," he

observed. He said, "Peaceful conditions are essential for economic growth and investment. When there is stability and security, businesses can flourish, trade can thrive, and foreign investments can flow into the region. He said, "Peaceful relations promote the development of infrastructure, industries, and a conducive business environment, ultimately leading to economic success." Iftikhar Ali Malik said, "Peace paves the way for regional cooperation and integration. South Asian countries can work together to address common challenges such as poverty, climate change, terrorism, and cross-border crimes," he added. "By fostering cooperation, the region can harness the collective potential of its nations and benefit from shared resources, knowledge, and expertise, he said adding that promoting peace necessitates addressing issues such as territorial disputes,

cross-border terrorism, ethnic and religious tensions, and socio-economic inequalities." He said, "Engaging in confidence-building measures, promoting people-to-people exchanges and strengthening regional organizations like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) can contribute to confidence-building lasting." "Peace is fundamental for ensuring stability and security in the region, he said adding that reducing conflicts, tensions, and the threat of violence allows governments to focus on governance, law enforcement, and protecting the rights of their citizens." He said, "A peaceful environment promotes social development and enhances the quality of life for people in South Asia. It enables access to education, healthcare, and basic amenities, which are essential for human development."

Kashif for strengthening local manufacturing sector

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday stressed the need for developing and strengthening of local manufacturing sector as a sound manufacturing sector of a country can produce quality goods. Besides, it helps in reducing reliance on foreign products to reduce imports and promote self-sufficiency, he said while talking to a delegation of industrialists led by Faran Shahid. He said a well-developed manufacturing sector can

help a country diversify its economic base, adding that over-reliance on a few sectors can make an economy vulnerable to external shocks, whereas a diverse economy is more resilient. The thriving manufacturing industry can act as a catalyst for economic growth, job creation, and technological progress, he remarked. He said the government must implement policies and offer incentives to support this sector, recognizing its pivotal role in the economic development of a nation.


He said the concentration of manufacturing industries in specific regions leads to the development of those areas, creating industrial clusters and supporting the growth of related industries and services. He said it is a labor-intensive sector, creating a substantial number of jobs across various skill levels. It not only employs skilled workers in production and engineering but also supports ancillary industries, such as logistics, transportation, and services, leading to further job creation.—APP

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Rs7.50/ unit jump harmful for businesses: PIAF chief

It is unfortunate that the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority is all set to accord final approval for massive raise in electricity base rates up to Rs 7.50 per unit (27 percent) for industry, commercial sector, agriculture tube-wells, AJK, public lighting and other categories of consumers, who will now have to face the brunt of Rs7.50 per unit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: While describing the government's decision to increase electricity base tariff by Rs7.50 per unit as harmful for the trade and industry, as the businesses are already under financial stress, the PIAF Chairman Faheem Rehman Saigol urged the government to reverse the proposed jump in power charges. In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said the government's decision to increase the electricity tariff is anti-industry, and the PIAF strongly condemns the government's move and calls on it to rescind it. He urged the power ministry to identify system constraints and communicate targets to all concerned departments in

order to launch a wartime effort to upgrade the transmission system. It is unfortunate that the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority is all set to accord final approval for massive raise in electricity base rates up to Rs 7.50 per unit (27 percent) for industry, commercial sector, agriculture tube-wells, AJK, public lighting and other categories of consumers, who will now have to face the brunt of Rs7.50 per unit. The PIAF Chairman said that the average sale rate would reach now Rs28.36 per unit from Rs22.59 per unit, posting an increase of Rs5.76 per unit of which variable charges are Rs27.65 per unit - from Rs21.90 per unit with an increase of Rs5.75 per unit and fixed charges of Rs0.01 per unit - to Rs0.70 per unit from Rs0.69

per unit, as the government intends to earn Rs477 billion through this rebasing. Faheem Saigol said that the increase in base rate of electricity is also part of pact signed between government and International Monetary Fund, which says that the government has to notify Nepra's determinations without any delay and amendment. The Regulator is scheduled to hold a public hearing on Monday just as an eye wash, on Motion of Leave of Federal government submitted by the Power Division for adjustment in tariffs of Discos and K-Electric, already approved by the Federal Cabinet through circulation. The rate of one unit of electricity for those consumers who will use over 300 units months will touch Rs55.52 per

unit after inclusion of FCAs, taxes and surcharges whereas for some categories it will be over Rs60 per unit. On July 14, 2023, the Nepra approved average rebasing in tariff of Rs 4.96 per unit across the board but the government, after intensive consultation, decided to pass more financial impact of proposed increase to unprotected domestic consumers and other categories through cross subsidization to protected category of domestic consumers and adjustment of Rs 148 billion subsidy. According to the Federal Government's Motion, the tariff of protected category of domestic consumers will not be changed which means Rs 3.95 per unit for up to 50 units per month, Rs 7.74 per unit for 51-100 and 001-100 units and Rs 10.06 per unit for

101-200 units. He argued that this is a big blow to electricity-heavy industries, if not passed on to the consumers. It could also affect the businesses, who are reliant on grid. Roughly this could mean over Rs50/bag impact if their goods are produced using grid. He said that Pakistan's industry had been harmed by the high cost of doing business, which discouraged investment in capacity and capability and called for easing the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector. He said that the high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for Pakistan's industry, discouraging investment both in capacity and capability, calling for lessening the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector.

GFZ sees another achievement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar Free Zone sees another achievement as work on setting up new exhibition & trading center has been completed, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Sunday.

The project covers an area of about 2,000 square metres. The centre consists of an exhibition hall, business area, meeting rooms, sports area, office, dormitory, etc. It will exhibit Pakistani and Chinese commodities to visitors from home and abroad, noted CCCC-FHDI Engineering CO.,LTD, the project constructor. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As per the project constructor, the new center - as a comprehensive exhibition and sales center as well as a window for international exchanges in Gwadar in the future - will boost the development of manufacturing, trade and logistics and other industries in Gwadar, further promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and further promote the construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Gwadar. "Completed ahead of schedule, the project will become a center for exhibition and sales, trade and logistics in Gwadar. All the hard work and toil in the process will be worth it," CCCC-FHDI Engineering CO.,LTD

Former PTCL employees demand pensions

ISLAMABAD: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) supports the demands of former employees of Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) to receive the increase in pensions that they are entitled to since 2010, with payment of arrears. Around 40,000 retired employees have not been paid their fair share of pensions by the Pakistan Telecommunications Employees Trust (PTET) since 2010, following a federal government notification announcing an increase in pensions payable. These pensioners have also been deprived of medical allowances, which were added to federal employees' pensions in 2010. While this case has been presented at numerous forums, there is still a clear need for decisive action. The Supreme Court ruled in favour of the pensioners in 2015; a Senate Standing Committee took notice of this violation in 2019; and the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications also issued directives to PTET in subsequent years to comply. It is deeply concerning that, despite promises made directly to the pensioners as well, the PTET has withheld the increase in pensions to date. The failure to implement such directives not only flouts the authority of the government and judiciary, but also disregards the pensioners' right to dignity of labour, particularly for vulnerable groups such as widows and the elderly. HRCP demands that the state take notice of the PTCL pensioners.—DNA

Nayyar advises PML-N to take allies on board

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party senior leader and Secretary General Nayyar Hussain Bukhari Sunday advised Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) senior leadership to take all other allies parties on board as a dialogue between PM Shahbaz Sharif and PPP leadership over the matters of caretaker setup is positively continued. "Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) unity and consensus is need of the hour and PPP will accept all that decisions which will come after consensus", he made it clear while talking to a private news channel. Timely and transparent elections in the country will take the country towards stability and progress, he added. Replying to a question, he said the coalition government had faced enormous economic challenges but succeeded in steering the country out of the crisis due to its prudent policies. Pakistan Peoples Party always believed in democracy and has always worked for strengthening.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Editor Daily Islamabad and Centreline magazine Ansar Mahmood Bhatti presenting special reports on FAMTRIP 2023 to the Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio, during a luncheon meeting at the Indonesian embassy.—DNA

Healthy diet campaign being launched: PM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that under his direction, a 'Sehatmand Ghiza, Tandrusti Sadaa (Healthy diet, Health Forever)' campaign was being launched all over Pakistan that would help consumers to get information about the food ingredients served to them. On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said under the drive, every restaurant would inform the consumer about the total calories included in the foodstuff. The prime minister observed that

public health was closely related to the provision of a clean and healthy diet. It was their right to learn about the food ingredients with which they were served so that they could choose food items on the basis of the provision of better and clear information. He said this extensive campaign was being carried out across Pakistan by the Strategic Reforms Unit in



collaboration with food authorities in all provinces. In addition to it, the prime minister in a tweet posted in the Urdu language further said, a complete nutritional information under the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) would be published on packaged food items. Besides, trans-fat acids were being reduced to 2 percent to prevent heart and other related diseases, he added. The PM further stressed that their sports fields should thrive, leaving the hospitals deserted and this campaign would be a harbinger for a healthy future.

Domestic tourists rush to AJK, Murree

ISLAMABAD: The popular hill station of the country including Murree and Azad Jammu & Kashmir had witnessed a huge inflow of domestic tourists on weekends to enjoy the ongoing weather and to beat the heat with the scenic beauty of hill stations. Despite long queues of vehicles on roads, a great rush of tourists was being witnessed on Sunday at the popular tourism destinations of AJK and Murree. "It is unbelievable that we are visiting the beauty and landscape of Muzaffarabad in AJK which makes us feel as if we are somewhere in Europe," said a tourist while talking to PTV news channel. "My family always tries to choose a hill station as my weekend spot, said a young girl, adding, Kashmir Abshar, or Dolai Waterfall, is a magnificent waterfall near Muzaffarabad in Azad Kashmir". No doubt Kashmir waterfall is the main attraction for many tourists from Murree toward Muzaffarabad, said a family. The waterfall is a hugely popular site known for its popularity among travel enthusiasts and locals to those.—APP

'India has turned IIOJK into a abattoir'

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Vice Chairman, Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar said that India has turned illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir into an abattoir where Indian troops are spilling the blood of innocent Kashmiris with impunity to victimize them for challenging the illegal occupation of their homeland by India. According to Kashmir Media Service, Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar in Srinagar deploring the ongoing genocidal campaign in IIOJK said India has soaked the territory into the blood of its innocent youth and hardly any day passes when bloodthirsty troops do not kill Kashmiris. "The recent killing of eight innocent youths in fake encounters in three days is a glaring example that Indian forces are engaged in the systematic genocide of Kashmiris. This ethnic cleansing is aimed to turn Kashmir into a graveyard, kill all Kashmiris, usurp their land, settle non-Kashmiris in the disputed territory and change its demography," he said. The APHC leader said the killing of Kashmiris is the official policy of India and its trigger-happy troops are murdering the innocent in the occupied territory for rewards and promotions. He pointed out that over one million troops enjoying sweeping powers under the draconian law Armed Forces Special Powers Act have been given license to kill the Kashmiris. Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar while paying rich tributes to the Kashmiris who recently fell to the Indian bullets maintained that the mission of the Kashmiri martyrs will be accomplished at all costs. He said the youth who laid their lives for the great cause of freedom are the heroes of the Kashmiri people, who are indebted to those brave souls.—APP

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Briefs

Arrangements for Ashura

RAWALPINDI: District Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema has directed the authorities concerned to complete all the arrangements for Ashura. According to a district administration spokesman, the DC during a visit had inspected the routes of Muharram processions and reviewed the arrangements. He visited different areas of the city and reviewed the routes of mourning processions and other administrative matters. He directed the authorities concerned to complete patchwork of the procession routes immediately and dangling electricity and telephone wires should be fixed properly. The cleaning of sewage lines and manholes covers fixing work on the routes of processions should also be completed as soon as possible, he added. Special steps should be taken to clean the procession routes and Imambargahs, the DC said and directed that in case of rain, timely measures should be taken for drainage of stagnant rainwater from the routes. —DNA

PDM-led govt saves country from default

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi Sunday said that the PDM-led government had saved the country from default after a successful agreement with IMF besides taking other bold decisions. The lower strata of the society was looking towards PPP leadership as they have all the abilities to take the country out of existing challenges, he said while talking to a Private news channel. The PPP is the only voice for the poor and always worked for students, youth, women, labourers and small growers, he added. He said the PPP believes in services to people, not abusive politics, adding, PP will not fight against any political party but against poverty and inflation. Kundi also expressed confidence that PPP leadership Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will receive public support in general elections and general elections in the country will be held according to the constitution and not on the will and whims of a single party. Replying to a query, he replied that any political party that achieved the masses' mandate in transparent election would have all the right to form the government and address the country's problems. —APP

CPEC decade – A voyage to new development heights

ISLAMABAD: Known as the 'iron brothers,' Pakistan and China resolutely reinforced their commitment to bolstering regional connectivity and economic prosperity through a decade-long struggle to elevate China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to unprecedented levels. It was ten years back, when two all-weather friends solidified their commitment by signing a multibillion-dollar CPEC Framework Agreement, marking a significant milestone in their collaborative efforts. China boldly stepped forward, when other countries hesitated to invest in Pakistan, pledging an initial investment of US\$46 billion that later expanded to a substantial sum of US\$62 billion. Now the two countries are celebrating 10 years of undeterred bilateral cooperation with a renewed pledge to move forward at a faster pace towards the CPEC's ultimate destination of regional progress and prosperity. On July 11, a meeting of the 12th (Special) Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) was held in Beijing, co-chaired by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal and Vice Chairman, National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) China, Cong Liang. During the meeting, the minister said the CPEC was a remarkable endeavor that symbolized the deep-rooted ties between China and Pakistan. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Laborers are unloading the bananas from truck at Fruit and Vegetables Market of Sector I-11 in Federal Capital.— Online

Realtors demand urgent withdrawal of high taxes

Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President, Islamabad Estate Agents Association and President, Federation of Pakistan Realtors highlighted the major tax issues of the real estate sector

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The construction and real estate sector is the backbone of the economy as it facilitates the growth of over 70 allied industries, generates economic activities, attracts investment and creates plenty of new jobs. However, the government in the budget 23-24 has imposed high taxes on the real estate sector that would destroy property businesses and ultimately retard the overall growth of the economy. Therefore, the government should urgently engage realtors in consultation and rationalize high taxes on this important sector to save the businesses and the economy from their destructive consequences. This was stressed by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islama-



Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) while addressing a seminar on tax issues of real estate sector organized by ICCI in collaboration with Islamabad Estate Agents Association (IEAA) and Federal of Realtors Pakistan (FORP). Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that many businesses from real estate sectors have already closed down due to high tax rates and if these taxes were not revised, more businesses would face closure. He said that instead of imposing high taxes, the government should provide

attractive incentives to the construction and real estate sector that would bring more investment to the country and help in early revival of the economy. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with IEAA and FORP in their efforts for resolving tax issues. Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President, Islamabad Estate Agents Association and President, Federation of Pakistan Realtors highlighted the major tax issues of the real estate sector. He said that the 1% tax on deemed income of immovable assets under

Sec-7E entails destructive consequences for the real estate and property sector and urged that the government should immediately withdraw this tax to save the real estate businesses from collapse. He said that the WHT on filer buyers and sellers has been raised from 2% to 3% while on non-filer buyers, it has been from 7% to 10.5% and on non-filer sellers from 4% to 6%. He said that these tax measures would have counterproductive impact as they would promote tax evasion instead of improving the tax revenue for the country.

He cautioned that if the government did not revise high taxes on the real estate sector, the realtors would launch a strong protest against such coercive tax measures. Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan former President ICCI & CEO Centaurus, Musarrat Ejaz Khan Chairman Federation of Realtors Pakistan, Abid Khan Chairman IEAA, Ch. Zahid Rafiq Secretary General IEAA, Ch. Masood & Ch. Abdul Rauf former Presidents IEAA, Malik Rahid Tufail, Rana Arshad and others also spoke on the occasion and called upon the government to withdraw high taxes on the real estate sector to save the economy from further troubles.

Economic plan of political, military leadership excellent

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Haripur Chamber of Commerce and Industry said on Sunday that the business community across the country supports the economic recovery plan of the political and military leadership. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's determination to take IT exports to twenty billion dollars is commendable, it said. The Prime Minister's economic views are a message of hope for the masses, traders, and industrialists, said Khuram Sheikh, Patron-in-Chief, Haripur Chamber of Commerce. In a statement issued here today, he said that the entire nation is suffering the consequences of the wrong policies of the past, which should never be repeated. He said that the government should use all resources and capabilities to increase investment,

exports, and remittances because, until the country's income does not exceed its expenditure, it is impossible to achieve economic development. He said that the people are currently stuck in the problems of inflation, unemployment, and uncertainty, and all possible measures need to be taken to give them relief, with the priority being a speedy economic recovery. Khuram Sheikh said that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif knows that the youth of Pakistan are very talented and are doing their best in every field. With Pakistan's IT industry showing promising signs of growth in recent years, the government's focus on maximising the sector's potential is seen as a crucial step towards achieving sustained economic progress, he added. The business leader noted that Pakistan's IT industry is uniquely positioned to become a major contributor to economic growth, job cre-

ation, and foreign exchange earnings. The youth involved in the IT sector are bringing a good name to the country on an international level. If they are given proper facilities, it is not difficult to increase the output of this sector to twenty billion dollars, he observed. He demanded that the decision to provide all required facilities to the youth and investors under one window is correct and must be implemented in letter and spirit. He said that all possible facilities are being provided to local and foreign investors for the development of agriculture, minerals, and energy sectors, which will have positive effects soon. Sheikh said that prosperity can only be achieved through political balance and the continuation of economic policies, as unreliability and disruption in the implementation of policies always have severe consequences for the economy.

Unprecedented hike in power tariff rejected

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rashid Butt said on Sunday that the government has increased the power tariff by 27 percent

which is not acceptable. The decision will hit the masses and all sectors of the economy, including agriculture, industry, services, and exports, while pushing inflation to unprecedented levels, he

said. Shahid Rashid Butt said in a statement issued here today that the government has increased the cost of electricity up to Rs7.50 per unit and that it is not possible for the public.—DNA


VCs conference prepares roadmap to promote peace

DNA

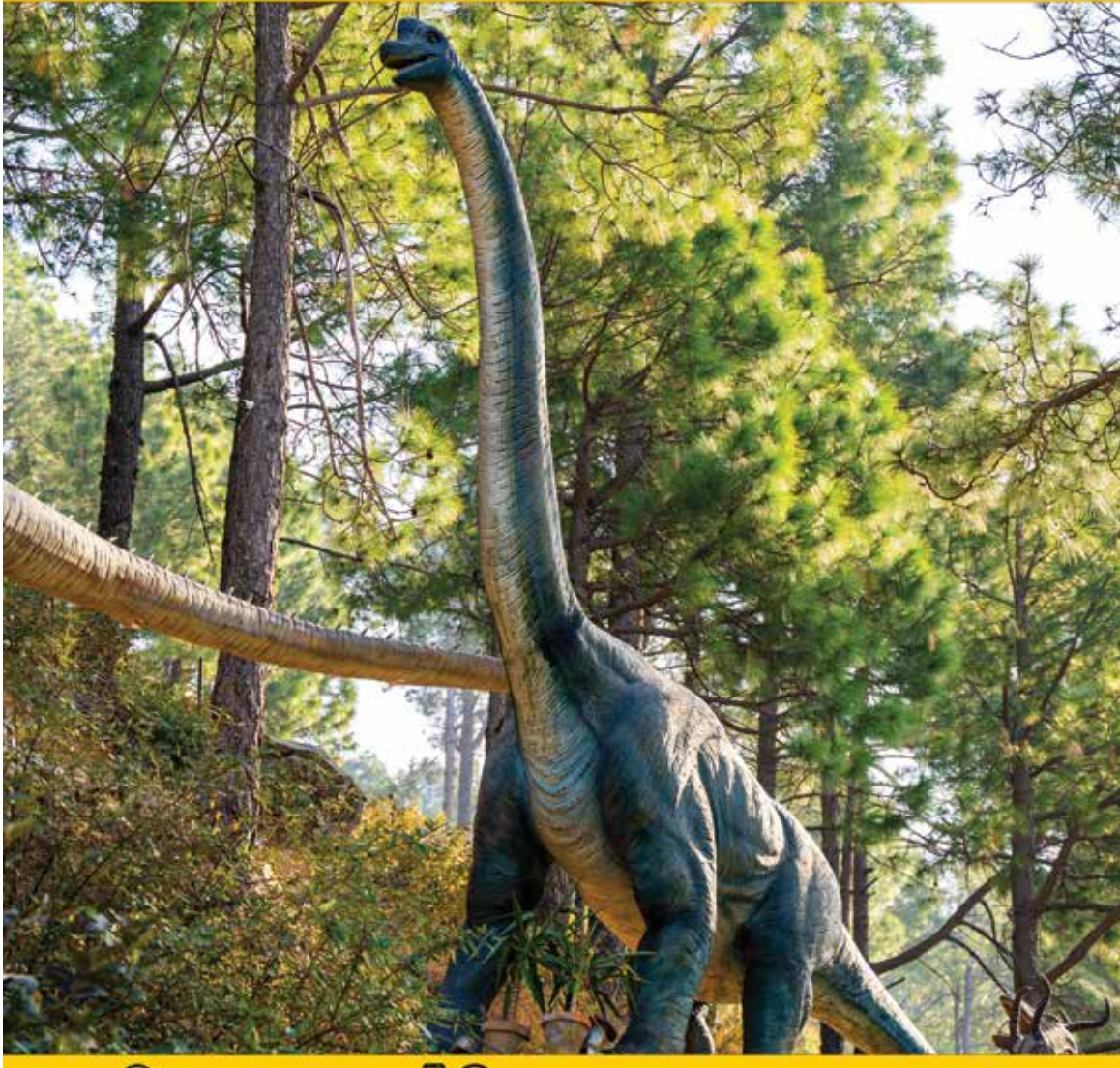
ISLAMABAD: Three days Vice Chancellors Conference on Peaceful and Tolerant University Campuses concluded with a resolution to undertake collaborative practical steps to promote values of peace, tolerance, harmony, respect for diversity, and co-existence at the university campuses through ensuring the effective engagement of students and student-centric approach. They pledged full support for various initiatives aimed at promoting peace, inclusivity, harmony, and tolerance in

society. The conference was organized by Community Resilience Activity-North (CRA-North) in collaboration with the Inter-University Consortium (IUCPSS) and other organizations. The conference witnessed active participation from over 60 esteemed delegates, including 45 Vice Chancellors and senior representatives representing universities across the country including the Newly Merged Districts of KP, Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh and Islamabad. Under the theme of "Unity through Diversity: Embracing Differences," the conference addressed crit-

ical issues pertaining to campus environments and student interactions. The event emphasized the significance of peaceful coexistence, understanding, and mutual respect among students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. Distinguished speakers, including renowned educationists and experts, delivered thought-provoking keynote address and participated in the panel discussions. They highlighted the importance of creating safe and friendly spaces and promoting dialogue to bridge gaps among individuals with varying perspectives, capacity development of the faculty.



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Over 6000 cops to guard 447 Muharram procession

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Over 6000 cops have been deployed to guard 447 processions and 1925 Majalis of Rawalpindi district, said City Police Officer (CPO), Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani.

He informed that Rawalpindi District Police had finalized all the arrangements to ensure foolproof security arrangements for Muharram ul Haram.

The CPO said that over 6000 Police personnel were performing security duties while more than 1000 officers and personnel of traffic Police were also deployed to ensure traffic arrangements. He informed that special security arrangements had also been made for 40 sensitive processions of the district. The officers of district police, ladies police, Elite Force, Traffic Police and Dolphin Force would perform their duties while over 5000 volunteers would also be on security duty during Muharram. The CPO informed that SSPs and Divisional SPs while reviewing routes of the processions were ensuring foolproof security arrangements. Special briefing sessions were also being organized for police personnel. Before the start of the holy month, 'Aman Carvan' of police and leading scholars met with local scholars and administration in Taxila, Murree, Kahuta, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi to ensure law and order during Muharram, he added. Ban on display of weapons and use of loudspeakers would be implemented strictly, he said. Rawalpindi Police control room was monitoring law and order situation 24/7 and special snipers would be deployed on the rooftop at the route of the processions, he said adding, no one would be allowed to join the processions and Majalis without body search. All streets and link roads on the route of the Muharram processions would be sealed. Special arrangements had also been made to monitor social media and strict action would be taken against those who post and spread religious and communal hatred. He further said, Rawalpindi Police were utilizing all available resources to ensure foolproof security during Muharram. The CPO said that the best possible arrangements were being made to ensure law and order and unity during Muharram with the help and cooperation of Ulemas, District Peace Committee and Anjuman-e-Tajran.

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Attacks on tech sector endangering growth

The Joe Biden administration continues to tighten the squeeze on China's high-tech sector. Being an idee fixe, its architects ignore the obvious boomerang effect that inflicts pain on the US. But this is hurting US companies to such an extent that the major US chipmakers can no longer remain silent. The chief executives of Intel, Qualcomm and Nvidia gathered in Washington on Monday to meet with the top officials of the Biden administration, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, to discuss how to ensure that the administration's aggressive policy does not shut these US chip companies out of the lucrative Chinese market. This comes in tandem with the US-based Semiconductor Industry Association calling on the Biden administration to "refrain from further restrictions" on chip sales to China and urging the administration to allow "the industry to have continued access to the China market, the world's largest commercial market for commodity semiconductors". Last year, China accounted for \$180 billion in semiconductor purchases, around one-third of the world's total of \$555.9 billion, and it remained the largest single market, according to the SIA.

The huge and growing Chinese market has been pivotal to the US chip-making industry, given that sales there provide the scale for US companies to fund high levels of investment in research and development back in the US, from which come superior technology and products, which in turn reinforces the US leadership in technology. However, "repeated steps ... to impose overly broad, ambiguous, and at times unilateral restrictions risk diminishing the US semiconductor industry's competitiveness, disrupting supply chains, causing significant market uncertainty and prompting continued escalatory retaliation by China," the SIA said in a statement. The appeal for the Biden administration to forgo new tech curbs on China comes as the White House is planning a fresh round of restrictions on chip exports to China, further escalating its offensive against the Chinese mainland's semiconductor, quantum-computing and artificial intelligence sectors. The US already imposed sweeping export controls in October, making it almost impossible for companies to sell chips, chipmaking equipment and software containing US technology to China. Such acts of "tech hegemony", which violate World Trade Organization rules and threaten the stability of global industry supply chains, risk compromising all the efforts the two countries have made recently to stabilize Sino-US relations. They also run counter to Biden's claim that the US has no intention to seek "decoupling" from China, to halt China's economic development, or to contain China. In an interdependent world, no country will emerge a winner from the politicizing and weaponizing of trade and technology.



Climate crisis and politics

Nothing feels as good as winning. It's been a long time since Labour enjoyed a victory as thumping as the one it scored this week in Selby and Ainsty, a once solidly Conservative patch of rural Yorkshire, and Keir Starmer deserves to savour the moment. In little over three years, he has transformed a defeated and despairing party into a government in waiting. There have been some deeply painful compromises along the way, but finally he can argue that they are starting to pay off.

After Boris Johnson slunk away in disgrace, many assumed his old seat was Labour's for the taking. Instead, the Tories scraped back in by turning what could have been a referendum on their handling of the economy into a referendum on another incumbent: London's mayor, Sadiq Khan, and his decision to extend the capital's ultra-low emission zone to outlying boroughs from August, forcing owners of older and more polluting vehicles to pay a £12.50 daily charge or buy new cars. The case for cutting carbon emissions has never been more blindingly obvious in this summer of freak heatwaves around the globe. In the US state of Arizona, hospitals are treating patients suffering severe burns from contact with baking pavements. Forest fires are ravaging Greece, and Antarctic sea ice levels have fallen to record lows for July. The climate emergency cries out for a non-partisan approach, with political parties pulling together in the national interest as they have over Ukraine. Instead, green policy risks being weaponised for political gain. Already, rightwing voices are urging Rishi Sunak to treat Uxbridge as the model for a Conservative fightback: scrap the planned ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030, restart the war on woke, brand Labour "the political wing of Just Stop Oil" - as the Cabinet minister for net zero, Grant Shapps, puts it. It's less a strategy for winning than for limiting Tory losses, while making the job of an incoming Labour government infinitely harder. Tensions between green ultras and their more cautious shadow cabinet colleagues are hard to resolve because both sides have a point. The Milibandites are right that the climate emergency cannot be ducked, and that backsliding could open up the party's left flank to the Greens (who increased their vote share in all three byelections, potentially at Labour's expense in Uxbridge). But the pragmatists are right that middle England is easily spooked by threats to their wallets or lifestyles. Rishi Sunak should reflect on the legacy he wants to leave behind, much as Theresa May did when she used her final weeks in office to enshrine net zero targets in law. Our fragile planet must not be treated like a political football.

IMF deal and political uncertainty

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



With Imran Khan's term in office expiring next month, the Pakistani government has achieved little progress in addressing the country's mounting economic challenges. The 13-party ruling coalition, which has been in power for the past 14 months, has failed to implement significant economic policy initiatives, resulting in the deterioration of key macroeconomic indicators. Fortunately, immediate

A recent \$3 billion IMF deal has reshaped Pakistan's economic landscape, but it is anticipated to introduce a host of political uncertainties leading up to the upcoming general elections. If the ousted Prime Minister Imran Khan is allowed to participate in the election, he is likely to emerge victorious. Once in power, there is a possibility that he may seek retribution against his political opponents and the military establishment. However, any attempt to disqualify him or invalidate the election could have unintended consequences, involving millions of his followers. With Imran Khan's term in office expiring next month, the Pakistani government has achieved little progress in addressing the country's mounting economic challenges. The 13-party ruling coalition, which has been in power for the past 14 months, has failed to implement significant economic policy initiatives, resulting in the deterioration of key macroeconomic indicators. Fortunately, immediate concerns regarding Pakistan's economic stability were alleviated last week when the government secured a short-term \$3 billion financial package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This much-needed relief, along with the potential for freeing other international debts through the deal, comes at a critical time, as Pakistan was on the verge of defaulting on its external debt after the expiration of a pre-IMF loan on June 30. To meet the IMF's stringent demands, the government has committed to revising its budget, implementing new taxes, and cutting spending to generate

revenue. The news of the deal has bolstered Pakistan's dollar bonds and pleased foreign investors, resulting in the country's shares experiencing their largest single-day surge in 15 years. However, the business community in Pakistan has expressed less enthusiasm about the deal, as they now face higher corporate and other taxes. Moreover, deeper concerns surround the agreement itself, as it adds an estimated \$140 billion in debt and liabilities by June 2023, pushing Pakistan into a potential debt trap. This new loan will make Pakistan the IMF's fourth-largest borrower among 93 countries, accounting for \$10.4 billion of the IMF's total global debt of \$155 billion. Pakistan's external debt stands at one third of its GDP, while its total national debt is equivalent to 84 percent of its GDP. While the IMF loan provides temporary relief, it merely postpones the inevitable challenges that Pakistan must confront in the absence of significant structural reforms required to bolster its economy. The loan could aid in facilitating the transition to a newly elected national government, potentially encouraging major political parties to prioritize economic recovery as a central component of their campaign agendas. However, the multitude of political uncertainties surrounding the elections is likely to divert public attention away from the economy, at least for now. Questions loom regarding whether the federal and provincial competitions will proceed as planned or face delays and potential indefinite suspensions. The participation of new political parties and coalitions, as well

as the potential return of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to lead his Pakistan Muslim League, remains uncertain. The extent to which the elections will be free from violence and how the military might exert its considerable influence to sway the outcome are also matters of concern. However, much of the current uncertainty revolves around Imran Khan and his immediate political future. The crucial question is whether he and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf supporters will be permitted to participate in the elections. If the ousted former prime minister is allowed to compete in a reasonably free and fair vote, there is a belief that he could secure victory and seek retribution against his political opponents and the military establishment once in power. To prevent this, some argue that Khan should either be disqualified from running in the election or find a pretext to cancel the election on national security grounds. Many of his supporters are currently being tried in special military courts for their involvement in the May 9 riots, which resulted in widespread looting and arson across the country. While Khan himself is accused of inciting the protests and is likely to face trial on one of the 150 charges against him, either in a military court or civilian courts, he continues to rally his party and has garnered support from a fragmented media landscape. The reaction of Khan's millions of supporters to his removal from the political scene remains largely unknown. Until the political outcome becomes clear, the difficult economic decisions made by Pakistan through the IMF agreement could be at risk.

Termination of black sea grain initiative and Global Food Security

Gul.i.Ayesha Bhatti



The UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, which include eradicating extreme hunger and food insecurity. The number of people who are hungry and undernourished has been decreasing for at least two decades, but after 2015, it started to rise. The primary causes of this setback, according to experts, are conflicts and wars, as well as climate change-related weather occurrences

In his book *Inglorious Empire*, Shashi Tharoor considered Winston Churchill responsible for the 1942-1945 Bengali famine that was exacerbated by the decisions of Churchill's wartime cabinet in London during WWII. The history of warfare is replete with instances such as this one, in which wars and conflicts imperil the global means of survival by causing food shortages and severe disruptions to economic activities. During World War II, Nazi Germany devised a "Hunger Plan" that, if carried out, might have led to the starving of at least 20 million people in areas ruled by the Soviet Union. The German occupation of Leningrad (St. Petersburg), Soviet Union, between 1941 and 1944 resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people due to starvation. The UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, which include eradicating extreme hunger and food insecurity. The number of people who are hungry and undernourished has been decreasing for at least two decades, but after 2015, it started to rise. The primary causes of this setback, according to experts, are conflicts and wars, as well as climate change-related weather occurrences. The world was alarmed by the prospect of a de facto blockade of the Black Sea following the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which caused grain exports to fall to one-sixth of their pre-war level. Moscow and Kyiv are two of the world's largest exporters of grain, and the blockade could have caused the price of grains to skyrocket. Therefore July 22, 2022, two related agreements were signed in Istanbul: the Memorandum of Understanding between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat of the United Nations on promoting Russian food products and fertilisers to global markets and the Black Sea Initiative on Ukrainian food and Russian ammonia exports. With the ostensible humanitarian goals of maintaining global food security, lessening the threat of famine, and assisting underdeveloped Asian, African, and Latin American nations, this package was negotiated at the proposal of and with the cooperation of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. The agreement sought to prevent starvation by increasing the supply of wheat, sunflower oil, fertilizer, and other goods on the global market, including those used for humanitarian purposes. It aimed to export five million metric tonnes of grain each month as it did before the Ukraine crisis. A week

after its signature, the Black Sea Initiative was inaugurated and a maritime humanitarian corridor was established. Moreover, an Istanbul-based Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) was established for the registration and inspection of participating vessels. It was a successful mission accomplished by the UN and was hoped to save the world from starvation by obeying the terms and conditions of the signed agreement to avoid any further inconveniences. According to the Joint Coordination Centre (JCC), a total of 100 outbound ships carrying more than 2.3 million tonnes of grain have so far departed Ukraine, 36% of this, has gone to States in the European Union, while 30% of the cargo has thus far gone to developing and under-developed states. The records by JCC stated that 20% of the grain was shipped to Turkey, and the remaining 27% was split among Asian nations, including China (7%), The Republic of Korea (6%), Iran (5%), India (4%), Israel (2%), Yemen (2%), and Lebanon (1%). Spain received 15% of the 36% of produce that was exported to the EU; other countries that benefited were Italy (7%), the Netherlands (5%), Romania (4%), Germany (3%), Ireland, France (1%), Bulgaria (1%), and Greece (1%). The remaining 17% of the cargo has arrived in African nations, including Djibouti (1%), Sudan (3%), Kenya (2%), and Somalia (1%). According to the experts the amount of grains delivered to the most deprived regions of Africa are not sufficient to fulfill the need of the people. A variety of food items, including wheat, corn for animal feed, sunflower meal, soybeans, sunflower oil, and sunflower seed, have been transported but only 17% of which reached Africa and other regions that desperately need food. In September 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed concern that "almost all" of the Ukrainian grain shipped as part of a UN-backed agreement to address a global food crisis was ending up in wealthy European countries. He said that only two of the 87 ships transporting grain from Ukraine brought grain for the UN's World Food Programme (WFP). According to Moscow, only 60,000 tonnes of the approximately 2 million tonnes that leave Ukrainian ports are represented by this. However, EU and Ukraine has denied the allegations. Recently, Russia terminated the deal which it called a failure to meet its demands to implement a parallel agreement easing rules for its own food and fertilizer

exports. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russia would "return" to the deal "immediately" if its demands about its exports were met. Kremlin has also complained that not enough grain has reached poor countries under this humanitarian initiative. The World Food Program (WFP) has recognized that "export volumes remain far below pre-conflict averages". Once we consider the subsequent scenario, it can be observed why the commercialization of a formerly humanitarian project is important to consider. Over 17 million hectares of Ukraine's agricultural land are held by western companies including Cargill, DuPont, and Monsanto. They acquired land in Ukraine after Kiev relaxed a 20-year ban on land sales at the IMF's urging, and they were the primary recipients of grain exports from Ukraine. Europeans, on the other hand, purchase Ukrainian food below market rates and prepare it in their own factories for later resale as completed goods with significant added value. In actuality, Westerners profit from both the sale and processing of grain. Notably, Kyiv did not hesitate to carry out strikes against Russian military and civilian targets while the Black Sea Initiative was in effect while using the humanitarian sea corridor and shipping as a cover. In fact, in contravention of the Black Sea Initiative, terrorist attacks have been carried out using the ports and the safe passage that Russia opened for Ukrainian grain shipments. At the moment, when providing access to nutritious food ought to be a top priority on a worldwide scale, it is extremely alarming to see hunger utilized as a tool in geopolitical disputes. After the termination of the deal, the extent of the world's food crisis would keep growing, which might lead to an enormous humanitarian catastrophe. With UN assistance, concerns related to the Black Sea Grain initiative should be addressed. Safe passages for grain transport should not be used for war purposes. In addition, the United States and the European Union should lift unilateral sanctions that remove Russian agricultural products from international markets and create artificial scarcities, as they exacerbate an already dire global situation. The justified distribution of grain shipment to the starved regions of Africa and Asia should be carefully addressed in order to reestablish the Humanitarian deal.

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Briefs

Shehbaz urges voters to help PML-N win

FROM PAGE 01
the lender. The premier said if the people give a mandate to the PML-N in the next general elections, party supremo Nawaz Sharif would be the prime minister and Shehbaz himself would work as "an ordinary worker under my brother's guidance. We, all along with our coalition partners in the government, shall set the country on the path of progress and prosperity," he declared. "If the people decided to bring Nawaz to power in the upcoming elections, within a decade, the former prime minister will transform the country to compete with India on the economic fronts," PM Shehbaz added. The prime minister assured that if given a chance, he would fight for Pakistan, secure its lost place among the community of nations and "break the begging bowl". He opined that such an achievement would not be possible with "witchcraft but by hard work, sincerity, and devotion". Shehbaz said his government had distributed Rs100 billion across Pakistan after last year's devastating floods that affected millions of people. He reminded that the government had steered the country out of default due to the joint efforts of the coalition government. The prime minister also announced giving "millions of laptops" to young people if he came to power again, besides the development of the agriculture, natural resources and minerals sectors.

Dubai meetings to mull...

FROM PAGE 01
Nawaz will meet Maulana Fazl to clear the latter's concerns. JUI-F leaders in Karachi have confirmed to The News that Maulana Fazl will be visiting Dubai next week and will travel to London after his stay in Dubai. On Friday, the head of the Pakistan Muslim League-Functional (PML-F), Pir Pagara Sibghatullah Rashdi, hosted a dinner for Maulana Fazl and his associates in Karachi. Discussions on future political alliances and upcoming elections occurred during the dinner. As the political situation in Pakistan continues to unfold, it will be interesting to observe how these consultations and discussions shape the future political setup.

Drug abuse, exploitation unearthed at Islamia...

FROM PAGE 01
The police revealed that the "group of teachers" would exploit/blackmail girls and implicate them using drugs (ice, liquor, and charas [hashish]) and he was carrying out these activities with the help of the IUB security in-charge. The police intercepted the security chief at a picket at Baghdadul Jadid Morr and recovered 10 grams of ice and five aphrodisiac pills from his pocket and registered a case under Section 9(2)1 of the Control of Narcotics Substance Act, 1997. The report stated that the suspect disclosed that some teachers were involved with him in the "buying, selling, sharing and using these drugs" and they would also organise 'indecent' parties in and outside the campus with students and female staff. After an analysis of his mobile phone, the investigating team also tracked some students for "supplying and buying drugs". The investigation revealed that 11 students enrolled in the university had criminal records and were involved in drug peddling. The investigation report also contained screenshots of "objectionable pictures of the women and communication regarding the sale and purchase of drugs". 'Attempt to defame IUB': The police action against the university officials prompted Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Athar Mehboob to write a letter to Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Usman Anwar, requesting the IG to constitute a high-level inquiry team to investigate the arrests.

Ending Pakistan's 37-year draught

Hamza Khan wins World Junior Squash Championship

"Hamza Khan has recalled the victory of 1986 Squash Champion Jan Sher Khan," said PM Shehbaz

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Pakistan returned to the world squash podium on Sunday when young Hamza Khan made a comeback to beat Egypt's Mohamed Zakaria to win the World Junior Championship in Melbourne. Khan claimed a 3-1 victory over Zakaria in the finale, with a scoreline of 10-12, 14-12, 11-3 and 11-6. This was Pakistan's first World Junior Squash title in nearly four decades as the last Pakistani player to lift this trophy was Jansher Khan, who won the title 37 years ago in 1986. The final between Hamza and Zakaria started off in an exciting manner with two back-to-back games, ending up in tiebreakers. However, Hamza convincingly took the following two games to complete a 3-1 win. Meanwhile, Zakaria took the lead in the second game, which lasted for 26

minutes with a score of 12-10. It was another thrilling encounter as the Pakistani was down 8-10, but denied Zakaria the much-needed game point twice and levelled the match with 14-12 win. The next two games were a total contradiction to what everyone witnessed in first two games. Hamza won the third game without much resistance in just 6 minutes with a score of 11-3, before finally winning the 4th with a score of 11-6. Hamza qualified for the final of the World Junior Squash Championship on Saturday. French player Melvil Scianimanco fought back from two games and match ball down but Hamza prevailed in the decider to qualify for the final. Reacting to the win, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif felicitated Hamza, the nation and all the players for winning the World Junior Squash Championship. Radio Pakistan, citing a statement, said the PM thanked Hamza for



giving the title to Pakistan again after 37 years. "Hamza Khan has recalled the victory of 1986 World Squash Champion Jan Sher Khan," said PM Shehbaz. The PM hoped that Hamza will make Pakistan invincible in Squash again in the near future. He also congratulated Hamza Khan's parents, coach and all the team members. President Arif Alvi recalled that Pakistan "had an unprecedented and yet unmatched supremacy in squash". "I had personally watched many finals among our giants. After a long time a resurgent ray of hope. Well done," said the president. President Alvi stated that he was "overwhelmed with the true and high spirits" of the Pakistani youth who want to bring themselves to the mainstream of sports. Squash legend Jahangir Khan, while talking to Geo

News, also congratulated Hamza on his victory, however, lamented the state of the sport in Pakistan. "I think that it should not have taken us so many years for this victory. In the past, Pakistan had its own position in squash and should have had continuous victories because of the level we used to play at," said Jahangir. He added that even right now it was not too late and Pakistan can regain its lost glory. "We can improve squash and run it on merit. People running squash should be experts and [be appointed on] merit," said the former squash player. He lamented that it was a pity that Hamza's coach could not go with him to the tournament. "If the [squash] federation is run in a professional manner, [Pakistan] can win every year. There is no shortage of talent in Pakistan," said Jahangir.

Women's World Cup

Swedes scrape past South Africa, Dutch do enough

WELLINGTON: Sweden were given a scare by South Africa before winning 2-1 at the death at the Women's World Cup on Sunday while 2019 finalists the Netherlands also began their campaign with victory by a single goal. France, who have never lifted the World Cup but are among the favourites in Australia and New Zealand, face Jamaica in Sydney in the last match of the day. The third-ranked Swedes fought back from a goal down and conjured up the winner in the 90th minute through Arsenal defender Aman-

da Illestedt, much to the relief of their fans in miserably wet conditions in Wellington. A goal early in the second half by Hildah Magaia - in which she suffered a match-ending injury - had given South Africa hope of an upset in front of 18,317 spectators. But that was soon cancelled out by Barcelona star Fridolina Rolfo before Illestedt's late intervention, heading home from close range for a hard-fought victory. It denied the African champions a first point ever at the World Cup. Also in Group F, Italy face

Argentina on Monday. Sweden coach Peter Gerhardsson said "nerves and tension" were behind a shaky start to their World Cup campaign. "It's OK to be nervous but you need to have the courage to still make that pass," Gerhardsson said. The Dutch, losers 2-0 to the United States in the final four years ago, had less trouble against debutants Portugal in the New Zealand city of Dunedin. Defender Stefanie van der Gragt put them on their way after 13 minutes with a powerful header from a corner. The Netherlands now face holders the United States on Thursday in a rematch of their final, with Group E supremacy at stake. Sunday's match in Dunedin, played in front of a crowd of nearly 12,000, saw the Dutch have more of the ball but Portugal threatening on the break. Portugal's first shot of the game finally arrived in the last 10 minutes but the Dutch were ultimately fairly comfortable winners. Two-times former champions Germany enter the fray on Monday when they face World Cup debutants Morocco. Germany are among the favourites to win the tournament but their coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg warned that women's football has never been more competitive. - Agencies



FC Barcelona cancel friendly with Juventus

BARCELONA: FC Barcelona have announced that a significant part of the squad has viral gastroenteritis due to which their friendly game against Juventus has been cancelled. The names of the players who are affected by the infection are yet to be determined. "FC Barcelona hereby informs that the game against Juventus FC, scheduled for today, July 22 at 7:30 pm local time (4:30am Sunday CEST) at Levi's Stadium, as part of the Soccer Champions Tour, has been canceled. A significant part of the blaugrana squad has a viral gastroenteritis," the club stated in an official statement. The news is nothing less than a spirit-crusher for the football fans who had been waiting to see their star players in action for the first time since the previous season ended in May. As of now, it is still unclear if tonight's future will be rescheduled in a couple of days or not because the Catalan club will have to play three games in a span of 11 days, following their jam-packed schedule. Many of the fans were excited to see new signings like Inigo Martinez and Ilkay Gundogan in action but as of now, it seems like they will have to wait till Wednesday (July 26) when the Spanish champions take on the English club Arsenal at Los Angeles Chargers' SoFi stadium. - DNA

Mitrovic situation not ideal

LONDON: Fulham's Aleksandar Mitrovic will not feature in their pre-season friendly against Brentford as the Serb is not training properly, according to manager Marco Silva. The London club reportedly rejected a bid for the striker from Saudi side Al Hilal. British media reported that Fulham rejected a 25 million pound (\$32.14 million) bid for the 28-year-old, who has three years left on his contract. Mitrovic has been Fulham's top scorer in four of their last five seasons, netting 14 Premier League goals in the 2022-23 campaign to guide them to 10th spot. - Agencies

Germany coach calls for 'balance' after penalty glut

MELBOURNE: Germany coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg called for greater "balance" on Sunday after referees awarded penalties in all of the first eight games of the Women's World Cup. In about half the cases penalties were given after referees consulted the video assistant referee (VAR). The sequence of spot-kicks only ended late on Saturday in game nine of the tournament in Australia and New Zealand. Switzerland took the lead against debutants the Philippines

from the spot in the fourth game of the competition after a particularly controversial VAR intervention and consequent penalty decision. "This is definitely not a penalty in my opinion," former Australia international Heather Garriock said on Optus Sport. "I think that's pretty harsh." Ramona Bachmann scored from the spot and Switzerland went on to win 2-0. Ahead of Germany's opening match against Morocco on Monday, Voss-Tecklenburg said she had told her players to be particularly

wary inside the penalty box. "I hope that we will see a balance, not only among the players but also among the responsible referees," said the former international player. "I have been a bit surprised that we have seen that many (penalties) in the initial games." The United States were awarded a penalty in the opening match of their title defence against Vietnam on Saturday following a lengthy VAR check. Alex Morgan failed from the spot but it did not matter in the end, the Americans going on to win 3-0. Asked by AFP afterwards about the glut of penalties and if they were being awarded too easily, US coach Vlatko Andonovski said: "I don't know if they happen too easily or not. - Agencies

Pakistan thrash India in final

FROM PAGE 01
just 187 runs but Tahir took the attack to the Indian bowlers and scored 108 runs in only 71 balls with the help of 12 fours and four sixes. He had an impressive strike-rate of 152.11. Pakistan had got off to a strong start with openers Sahibzada Farhan (65 off 62) and Saim Ayub (59 off 51) scoring fifties and adding 121 runs for the first wicket. However, India bounced back with quick wickets in the middle overs. Tahir added 126 runs in 98 balls for the sixth wicket with Mubasir Khan, who scored 35 runs. Rajvardhan Hangargekar and Rryan Parag took two wickets each for the Men in Blue. India A won the toss and choose to bowl first against Pakistan A in the highly-anticipated final. India were unchanged from the semis while Pakistan made one change, with Mehran Mumtaz replacing Amad Butt. It must be noted that India A defeated Bangladesh A by 51 runs in the second semi-final of the Emerging Asia Cup on Friday. Chasing a target of 212 runs, Bangladesh were bowled out for 160 runs in 34.2 overs. On the other hand, Pakistan A beat Sri Lanka A by 60 runs to qualify for the final of the Asian event.

French envoy discusses...

FROM PAGE 01
The CM said that the provincial government would welcome imparting training to the provincial officers and medical superintendents of hospitals with regard to management skills and would like to benefit from the expertise of France with regard to strengthening the agriculture sector and increasing production. Mohsin Naqvi added the government was thankful to France for providing assistance in its programme to restore the historical buildings. He stated that the Punjab government assigned a task to the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) to restore further five historical buildings. The French Ambassador said that his country would further promote its cooperation with the Punjab government in its programme to restore historical buildings. He said France would review launch of training programme with the Punjab government besides continuing cooperation with the provincial government at every level.

Multiple killed as rains and...

FROM PAGE 01
Hafeezur Rehman, the head of Rescue 1122 in Mansehra, told journalists about the loss of lives due to the rain-triggered flooding in the district. "Five people have been killed and over a dozen injured and houses collapsed. And many arteries have been blocked in the district. Our teams are active all around as the fresh rain spell triggered large-scale devastation," he said. Heavy rain in Mansehra, which began late Friday night, continued intermittently the entire next day and destroyed several houses and blocked roads. The house of an Afghan national, Samiullah, collapsed on the Chinar Road in the district's Thakra area, burying six members of his family under the rubble who were shifted to the King Abdullah Teaching Hospital by Rescue 1122 officials. The doctors, however, pronounced Samiullah's wife and son dead, while the rest were hospitalised.

'Flood situation may rise...

FROM PAGE 01
(DGPR) office, Mir said that the water level in the dam built on River Ravi in India has increased by 90% while Bakhra Dam on River Sutlej has increased by 70%. The minister said that an alert will be issued if a flood situation in the province develops, adding that duties have been imposed for monitoring the situation.

Fernandes, Sancho give United win over Arsenal

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Bruno Fernandes and Jadon Sancho were on target as Manchester United beat Arsenal 2-0 in a friendly in front of 82,262 fans at MetLife Stadium on Saturday. The New York and New Jersey fans of the two Premier League clubs saw a lively first half with both goals, but the game lost its way in the second half with mass substitutions from both teams. United's new Cameroonian goalkeeper Andre Onana, signed from Inter Milan on Thursday in a £44 million deal, did not feature despite flying out to join the team's tour in the United States. Back-up Tom Heaton starting in goal with Fernandes wearing the captain's armband after replacing de-

fender Harry Maguire in that role. Brazilian winger Antony had the first chance for United when he was found in space in the middle of the box but he scuffed his shot which rolled harmlessly wide. Arsenal began their tour of the USA with a 5-0 win over the MLS All Stars on Wednesday and went close to an opener through Gabriel Martinelli, but Heaton produced a fine double save to deny the Brazilian. United took the lead on the half hour mark, with Fernandes cutting in from the right and unleashing a low left-foot drive which deceived Arsenal keeper Aaron Ramsdale. Seven minutes later, Sancho doubled the lead when Arsenal defender Gabriel mis-kicked on the half-way line and the England forward burst away be-

fore blasting confidently home. With United still searching for a central striker in the transfer market, Sancho played in a central role, rather than his

usual position on the wing, and handled the switch well. With both Erik Ten Hag and Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta making full use of their squads after the break

there was an inevitable loss of intensity and United's lead was never in danger. There was an encouraging display from 18-year-old Kobbie Mainoo in the centre of Unit-

ed's midfield and Fernandes was full of praise for the academy product. "Honestly, Kobbie is a great player, he shows great resilience. Everyone can see it. He's good on the ball, strong, he can defend and attack. He's still pretty young but we see a bright future for him. Hopefully he will get more minutes," said the Portuguese. There was an unusual situation at the end of the game with both teams having agreed to take part in a penalty shootout regardless of the result. Although there was nothing at stake in the shoot-out, which United won 5-3, both managers had agreed to take the chance to test their players' mettle from the spot as a useful experience. On Wednesday, United are in action again against Real Madrid in Houston while the Gunners are scheduled to face Barcelona in Los Angeles.



Briefs

CCC
launches
Yellow River
Tourism
Season 2023

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 2023 Yellow River Tourism Overseas Promotion Season is officially launched in Pakistan by China Cultural Center (CCC) in Pakistan on their various social media platforms. The platforms include Facebook Official Page, WeChat Channels, Twitter of Cultural Counsellor and Director China Cultural Center in Pakistan H.E Zhang Heqing. The event will run from July through September, 2023. The Yellow River Tourism Overseas Promotion Season 2023 comprises a number of different exhibitions and documentaries such as documentary series "The Great Yellow River Delta", "Sing along the Yellow River", Photography Exhibition "Explore the Yellow River, Discover Beautiful China", tourism and cultural resources of Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Shandong, Henan, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia and much more, according to CCC. In addition, nine selected routes highlighting the various attractions worth seeing in each region will be launched during the Yellow River Tourism Season, covering the nine provinces through which the river flows. Five selected rural tourist routes that take visitors deep into the villages along the Yellow River have also been introduced. The regions along the Yellow River, the cradle of ancient Chinese civilization, have made significant progress in recent years in terms of coordinated industrial development, ecological protection, and promotion of Yellow River culture.

Flooding
in eastern
Canada leaves
four missing

MONTREAL: Four people in Canada, including two children, were reported missing Saturday in flooding triggered by torrential rains in Nova Scotia, police said. The children were in a car that was submerged, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said. The three other people in the car managed to escape.

In a separate incident in the eastern province, a youth and a man were reported missing under similar circumstances, the police agency said. Heavy rains falling since Friday in Nova Scotia have cut off roads and flooded homes.

Premier Tim Houston told a news briefing that the province had received some 25 cm (10 inches) of rain - the equivalent of three months' rainfall - in less than 24 hours. Houston declared a state of emergency in several areas of the province and urged residents not to join the search for the missing as "conditions remain dangerous." He estimated that it would take several days for the water to recede. —Agencies

India's capital
faces potential
flood

NEW DELHI, July 23 (Xinhua/APP) —Indian capital Delhi's territory faces potential flood as the Yamuna River surpassed the danger mark once again on Sunday.

According to the Central Water Commission, the water level of the Yamuna River was recorded as 206.01 meters at 10:00 a.m. (local time) at Delhi Railway Bridge. Officials attributed the increase in water level to the heavy discharge from the Hathnikund barrage in neighboring Haryana. Reports said over 200,000 cusecs of water were released from Haryana.

The water level is expected to increase further by evening, prompting evacuations in low-lying areas. Some areas might see flooding if the water level rises further. The Delhi government is on high alert and ready for immediate evacuations. The Yamuna River has been flooding parts of Delhi for over a week. The release of water from the Haryana barrage and monsoon rains in Himachal Pradesh contributed to rising water levels. —APP



ISLAMABAD: During the expansion work of Club Road, heavy machinery is being utilized to carry out the construction and development tasks. —APP

Spain votes in snap election
with right favoured to win

Polling stations opened at 9:00 am (0700 GMT) and are set to close at 8:00 pm (1800 GMT), with near-final results expected several hours later

NEW DESK

MADRID: Spain went to the polls Sunday in an early general election in which the conservative Popular Party (PP) was tipped to beat Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Socialists but likely to need the far-right to govern. Final opinion polls allowed under Spanish law published on Monday suggest the PP was on track to win the most seats in the 350-seat parliament but fall short of a working parliamentary majority. That could force the PP to form a coalition with Vox, giving a far-right party a share of power at the national level for the first time since the end of the decades-long dictatorship of General Francisco Franco in 1975. Anti-immigration and anti-feminist Vox is part of a Europe-wide trend of far-right parties gaining support at the ballot box.

The far-right governs alone in Hungary and in coalition with the centre-right in Italy and Finland. Polling stations opened at 9:00 am (0700 GMT) and are set to close at 8:00 pm (1800 GMT), with near-final results expected several hours later. Brauli Munoz, a 53-year-old teacher, said he was hoping the election would result in another coalition government between the Socialists and the far-left. "I think it is the best option in terms of training for the future of our students," he told AFP after voting in Barcelona. Sanchez, in office since 2018, appealed for a "historic turnout" to produce a "strong government" after he cast his ballot in Madrid with his wife. The election is "important not just for us, but also for the world and for Europe," he added. With the election being held at the height of summer with many Spaniards on holiday, a record 2.47 million registered vot-

ers have cast an absentee ballot, according to Spain's postal service. Sanchez warned during an ill-tempered TV debate with PP leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo that PP-Vox coalition government would "take us into a dark time warp that will leave us who knows where." In its electoral programme, Vox pledges to overturn laws on gender violence, LGBTQ rights, abortion and euthanasia as well as outlaw separatist parties and defend tradi-

tions such as bullfighting. Sanchez called the snap polls after his Socialist party and its far-left junior coalition partners suffered a drubbing in May local and regional elections. Under his watch the economy has outperformed most of its European Union peers, growing by 5.5 percent last year, and inflation has dropped below the European Central Bank's 2.0 percent target this year, a rarity in Europe. He has also introduced popular

measures such as a sharp rise in the minimum wage, higher pensions and free commuter rail travel to help households cope with the cost of living crises. But his minority coalition government's reliance on the votes of Catalan and Basque separatist parties to pass legislation has hurt his standing. Many voters are especially angered by his occasional deals with EH Bildu, the heir of the political arm of the disbanded armed separatist group ETA which is blamed for over 850 deaths in its decades-long campaign of bombings and shootings for an independent Basque homeland. Feijoo, who sells himself as a stable and safe pair of hands, has accused Sanchez of allowing "terrorists" to condition Spain's future with his reliance on Bildu. He has vowed to undo many of Sanchez's laws, including one which allows anyone 16 and over to change their gender on their ID card on the basis of a simple state-

ment. "Spain can start a new era," Feijoo told reporters after casting his ballot. Another major blow to Sanchez's popularity was a botched law on sexual consent approved last year which led to roughly 100 convicted offenders to be released from jail because of the way it redefines offences. If the PP and Vox fall short of a working majority, that would give the Socialists a chance to form another government because they have more options to create alliances with smaller parties.

Federico Santi, senior analyst for Europe at Eurasia Group, said left-wing parties "still have more than a fighting chance at retaining a majority in parliament". But analysts said they could not rule out the possibility that neither side could secure a working majority, which would force a repeat election in the eurozone's fourth-largest economy as happened in 2019.



Greek island of Rhodes

Thousands moved to
safety as wildfires rage

ATHENS: Officials on the Greek island of Rhodes evacuated thousands of locals and tourists from villages in the southeast of the Aegean island, where wildfires were raging out of control for a fifth day. High winds and a nine-kilometre (six-mile) fire front running from the centre of the island to its eastern beaches were creating extreme conditions, fire service spokesman Vassilis Varthakogiannis told Skai TV. "This is not a fire that will be over tomorrow or the day after tomorrow," Varthakogiannis added. "It'll be troubling us for days." Another 1,200 people were expected to be evacuated from the villages of Pefki, Lindos and Kalathos, he added. "We had set up firebreaks

around the village of Laerma last night," Konstantinos Tarasias, a deputy mayor of Rhodes, told Open TV. "But a 180-degree change of the winds this morning helped the fire grow much bigger across many kilometres ... reaching a tourist area." In Athens, the foreign ministry said it had activated its crisis management unit to facilitate the evacuation of foreign citizens in Greece due to the ongoing forest fires. Local officials on Rhodes said on Saturday they had moved 30,000 people threatened by wildfires to safety - including 2,000 who had to be ferried off beaches. George Hadjimarkos, regional governor of the South Aegean, told Skai television that the operation,

which was still ongoing, had been hampered by fires cutting off some road access. The aim is to protect human life," he said. Tourists and some locals were being taken to gyms, schools and hotel conference centres on the island where they will stay overnight, while firefighters battled the blaze. In addition, three passenger ferries have been moored at the port of Rhodes to accommodate those rescued, Athens News Agency reported. Members of the coastguard, the armed forces and local authority workers used dozens of buses to help move people away from the fires, said Rhodes municipality official Teris Hatzioannou. Where the fires had cut off road access, some tourists

had to walk to safety. "It is an unprecedented situation for the island," Panagiotis Dimelis, head of the Archangelos village council, told Skai TV, adding that many locals had rushed to help the tourists. For the beach operation, the coastguard said three of its boats led more than 30 private vessels to pick up people from the Kiotari and Lardos beaches on the east of the Mediterranean island. A Greek navy boat was also headed to the area to help, according to the coastguard. Later Saturday, fire services spokesman Yannis Artopoios told ERT TV that new evacuation orders had been issued for the villages of Gennadi and Kiotari with direction to Plimiri on the eastern side of the island. —APP

Cambodia PM party
claims 'landslide'
in election

PHNOM PENH: Prime Minister Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) has claimed a "landslide" victory in national elections described by critics as the country's least free and fair vote in decades. "We've won a landslide victory but so far there is no clear figures yet [on seats won]," said Sok Eysan, spokesperson for the CPP, just hours after polls closed on Sunday. The claim of an election walkover by the governing party followed after Hun Sen said voter turnout hit 84 percent on Sunday. Hun Sen said the strong voter participation proved that a campaign to undermine the election - by what he described as an "extremist" opposition - had failed, Reuters news agency reported. Some 9.7 million people registered to vote among Cambodia's approximately 16 million population. Voters who had destroyed their ballot papers in protest against the election should turn themselves in to authorities or face "legal consequences", Hun Sen said in a message on the Telegram messaging app.



Reuters reported. Opponents and human rights groups had blasted the election due to the lack of credible competition as well as Hun Sen's strongman tactics that have now silenced all opposition to his rule in Cambodia. —DNA

Lula places
new
restrictions on
gun ownership

ASILIA: Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva signed a decree tightening restrictions on civilian access to guns in Brazil, in a move aimed at reversing the pro-firearms policies of his right-wing predecessor Jair Bolsonaro.

The decree reduces the number of guns civilians can possess for personal safety from four to two, reduces the allowed ammunition for each gun from 200 rounds to 50 and requires documentation proving the need to hold the weapons.

It also bars civilians from owning 9 mm pistols, restricting them to members of the police and military.

"It's one thing for the regular citizen to have a gun at home for his protection, as a guarantee, because some people think this is safety. Let them have it. But we cannot allow gun arsenals to be in the people's hands," Lula said Friday during a signing ceremony. During Bolsonaro's presidency from 2019 through 2022, the former president had said "good citizens" should be entitled to protect their families and their assets, and loosened rules on the possession of guns and ammunition. Though Brazil has no constitutional right to bear arms, Bolsonaro argued that "an armed populace will never be enslaved."

Estimates of the number of guns in civilian hands more than tripled to 2.9 million in a country of 214 million people, according to the Instituto Sou da Paz, a non-profit that monitors public security.

That remains far lower than in the United States, and despite the increase in guns, Brazil's rate of slayings remained stable during Bolsonaro's term. The number of homicides during his last year in office, 2022, was at about 47,500 and roughly even with the 2019 rate, according to a report published Thursday by the Brazilian Forum on Public Safety. —APP

3 hurt in
stabbing on
Osaka train

OSAKA: Three people were injured in a stabbing incident on a train in Osaka, western Japan, on Sunday, with the male perpetrator promptly arrested, local authorities said, Kyodo reports. A staff member of the Rinku-Town Station made an emergency call reporting the stabbing to police around 10:25 a.m. The incident is believed to have taken place while the train was in motion. The three victims - a male passenger in his 20s, another in his 70s and a male train conductor in his 20s - were transported to hospital, but authorities said none have life-threatening injuries.

The police arrested the man, Kazuya Shimizu, on the spot on suspicion of attempted murder. He later admitted to stabbing the victims. Shimizu, 37, was carrying three knives when he was taken into custody on the station platform, according to the police. The station in Izumisano, Osaka Prefecture, is located near a large shopping mall and a hospital. —APP

Planning
Ministry to
hold two-day
Forum

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives is all set to organize a two-day forum from Tuesday to develop a roadmap for a stable, agile and transparent governance system in the country. The event titled "Pakistan Governance Forum-2023" would assemble more than 300 participants including 60 distinguished speakers in a bid to foster a path toward a sustainable, vibrant and transparent governance mechanism. The two-day event, being held under a landmark initiative of 'Turnaround Pakistan', is anticipated to serve as a pivotal platform for the exchange of ideas and the formulation of a comprehensive roadmap that will shape the future of governance in Pakistan. Prominent figures from diverse sectors, political leaders, experts, and representatives from civil society will come together to deliberate on a wide range of crucial aspects of governance. —APP

Italy calls Med Migration Conference on Tunisia Model

ROME: Italy has invited Mediterranean countries to Rome for an "international conference" aimed at extending an EU-backed deal with Tunisia to curb the arrival of migrants to European shores. Italy's far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is expecting leaders from the region, the European Union and international financial institutions to meet in the capital, according to a government press release. The full list of participants is unknown, but Meloni has confirmed the presence of Tunisian President Kais Saied, while the prime ministers of Egypt and Malta, Mostafa Madbouli and Robert Abela, respectively, have both said they will attend. During the 2022 election campaign that brought her to power, Meloni vowed to "stop the disembarkation" of migrants in Italy, which the government puts at nearly 80,000 coastal arrivals since January, compared to 33,000 in the same period last year. But while the government has put obstacles

in the path of humanitarian ships rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean, it has failed to stop the departures themselves, which mostly originate in Tunisia and Libya. Italy and the European Commission have sought to step up engagement with Tunisia, promising funding if the country undertakes to stem emigration from its territory. Meloni has also sought to act as an intermediary between Tunisia - cash-strapped and on the cusp of a major debt crisis - and the International Monetary Fund, where a nearly \$2 billion bailout package for the North African country has stalled amid an IMF demand for structural reforms. Last week, the EU signed a memorandum of understanding with Tunisia that provides for 105 million euros in direct European aid to prevent the departure of migrant boats and combat smugglers. The deal also provides for more illegal Tunisians to be repatriated, and for sub-Saharan African migrants in Tunisia to be sent

back to their countries of origin. A much larger EU package to Tunisia, a long-term loan of around 900 million euros proposed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in June, is conditional on approval of the IMF loan. "This partnership with Tunisia must be a model for building new relations with our North African neighbors", Meloni said last week during a visit to Tunis, where she accompanied von der Leyen and Dutch premier Mark Rutte. A senior European diplomat speaking



on condition of anonymity confirmed that the EU is hoping for similar partnerships with Egypt and Morocco. "We must cooperate with the countries of North Africa," a Rome-based ambassador who requested anonymity told AFP. "There is unity in the EU on this principle." But Federica Infantino, a researcher at the Migration Policy Center of the European University Institute in Florence, argued that the new deal with Tunis will change little. "You can't think of migration as the water that comes out of the tap, to be turned on and off as certain politicians see fit," Infantino said. But for Meloni's political needs, even if the deal's objectives are never met, there are "strong symbolic stakes", she added. Human rights groups and charities that rescue migrants attempting the dangerous Mediterranean crossing are up in arms. Human Rights Watch called the deal "a new low in the European Union's efforts

to curb migrants' arrivals at any cost" that "pays only lip service to human rights". "It shows that Europe has learned nothing from its complicity in the horrendous abuses of migrants in Libya, the group said Thursday. "The Mediterranean is not only a graveyard. It is a crime scene", tweeted German NGO Sea-Watch. For independent researcher Yves Pascouau, dialogue between Europe and the countries of migrants' departure is a positive, as are attempts to boost trade and investments in green energy. But as long as migration policy depends on European interior ministers, the issue will only be tackled from a security point of view, Pascouau noted. "What is lacking in the relationship between the EU and third countries is any long-term thinking," he said. According to the UN, more than 100,000 migrants arrived by sea to Europe - most to Italy - in the first six months of 2023. —Agencies

Briefs

Massive crowds rally in Israel

TEL AVIV: Tens of thousands of Israelis have marched into Jerusalem and more protesters took to the streets in Tel Aviv in a last-ditch show of force aimed at blocking Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contentious judicial overhaul plan. Protests have intensified in the days leading up to the debate that began Sunday ahead of a parliamentary vote on Monday which could see a key part of the proposals passed into law. The bill would limit the Supreme Court's powers to void what it considers "unreasonable" government or ministerial decisions. Critics view the legislation as a threat to Israel's democracy. In Jerusalem on Saturday, marchers turned the city's main entrance into a sea of blue and white Israeli flags as they completed the last leg of a four-day, 70km (43 miles) trek from Tel Aviv to Israel's parliament. The group, which grew from hundreds to thousands as the march progressed, were welcomed by throngs of cheering protesters before they set up camp in rows of small white tents outside the Knesset before the expected vote. "Democracy is not as certain as it used to be," said Ido Golan, a protester from central Israel who joined with his partner and two young children, one on his back in a baby carrier.

Networks to remain 'partially suspended' in Karachi

DNA
KARACHI: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Sunday announced that mobile services in some areas of Karachi will remain partially suspended till the 10th of Muharram (July 29). The telecommunication regulator said that the decision to suspend the services is on the instructions issued by the Ministry of Interior. Several complaints have been received as consumers claim that mobile services are being affected in some areas at different times while some people are facing a complete shutdown. The areas where mobile services are either suspended or affected are Steel Town, Gulshan-e-Haid, Jaffer e Tayar Society, Malir 15, Future Colony, Dawood Chowangi, Haji Zakaria Goth. Meanwhile, services are partially suspended in Shah Latif Town, Bhitaiabad, Memon Goth Main Market and Bin Qasim Town including other areas. The federal government has announced public holidays on the 9th and 10th of Muharram (July 28 and 29) on account of Ashura.

After Sweden

Extremists Desecrate Quran in Denmark

They also carried a banner with derogatory statements about Islam

NEWS DESK

COPENHAGEN: A Danish far-right anti-Islam group desecrated a copy of the Quran in Denmark's capital Copenhagen, under police protection. The extremist group called "Danske Patriot" burned the holy book in front of Iraq's Embassy in Copenhagen. As shown in the video posted on social media platforms, they also carried a banner with derogatory statements about Islam before trampling on the Iraqi flag and a copy of the Quran. They attacked protest against the attack on the Swedish embassy in Baghdad. On Thursday morning, a crowd of Iraqis stormed Sweden's Embassy in Baghdad and set it ablaze in protest against the June 28 desecration of a copy of the Quran.

Imran Khan responsible for party's disintegration: senior party official

Exclusive interview with Syed Numan Shah, Joint Secretary Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

EXCLUSIVE

WAHEED HUSSAIN

MAY 9 was a night-mare-shocking for every citizen, who loves the country and its armed forces. The violent protests had a method in the madness. The insanity displayed by some of the leaders, workers, and followers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had a comprehensive strategy, but again majority of the leaders and followers of Imran Khan disagreed with the so-called anti-army narrative of the PTI Chief. Syed Numan Shah, a Central Joint Secretary of PTI, is one of those outspoken leaders of PTI, who still stands with the party, however, vocally disapprove IK's decisions, political narrative, and fascist approach, which led to attacking military installations, desecration the Martyrs (Shuhadas) monuments, and provoking the masses for violence on the 'Black Day' on May 9. During a detailed interaction with one of the senior most members of the party, Numan Shah, has expressed his deep sorrow and anger on the May 9 violent events, which damaged the image of the country- practically devastated and disintegrated the party itself. "Weakening the Pakistan Army meant putting the country's internal and external security at highest risk. The job which could not be executed or done by our worst enemies, was orchestrated, and launched by a political party leader, who claimed to protect the state, its institutions, and masses from all kinds of conspiracies and dangers,"

lamented Numan Shah. "On May 9, I advised the party senior members including Amir Kiani, Imran Ismail, Saifullah Niazi to hold an emergency press conference and forcefully condemn the violence committed on that day. They agreed with the condition to get permission from the President of Pakistan, Dr Arif Alvi. When the president was approached, he agreed with the idea. However, when the President and Saifullah Niazi along with some other party members met the chairman PTI at Police Lines Islamabad, the idea of holding the press conference to condemn attacks on the military installations was dropped. At that time Imran Khan was not willing to condemn the violence against the armed forces installations. The actual condemnation from Khan came many days after the bloody act," he informed. He said, "misinformation has been spread in the public, particularly among PTI followers and workers that anybody, who was associated with the party, had been arrested and persecuted, which was a 'Nazi's kind of propaganda.'" Numan Shah highlighted with full confidence that he was sitting at his residence, doing his routine family and business activities comfortably, without any fear and interference from any government agencies, the reason being that he was not involved in any violent protests or incidents including the one being operated on May 9. He stressed that all those PTI leaders and workers, who had been in hiding or had run away from the country, should come back without any fear. "The law



Syed Numan Shah talks to Daily Islamabad POST

of the land provides protections to its citizens, other than my example, look at Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Asad Omer, Asad Qaisar, and dozens of other PTI leaders and workers, who did not leave the party, but were out of jail and law enforcement agencies custody, through a legal court bail process. This indicates that the PTI chairman's claim that the party has been targeted through a plan, was a concocted-misleading statement, just to gain the political benefit and try to deviate masses and the world's attention from the May 9 crime. Imran should stop this propaganda," he suggested. About those who had left the party before or after the May 9 violent incidents, Numan Shah bit-

terly castigated the ill-conceived policies of chairman PTI, saying that after gaining the power in 2018, Imran Khan was encircled by the inexperienced jokers, who didn't know the ABC of the politics. "They were unaware of the ground realities of the country's political and economic challenges. They wanted to run the country through the social media campaigns, misleading the masses, the process had failed the PTI government and created disappointment among the masses. When somebody within the party tried to point out weaknesses in the so-called policies and decision-making process, he or she was not only ignored by the I.K, in fact, their entry into Bani Gala and PM office was banned.

They were being ignored and did not enjoy access to the then PM. So finally, people got disappointed by the Khan's attitude, and started leaving him and the party. Those who left the party after May 9 violence were the group of politicians, who were against any such action who could put the country's security and its institutions at risk. Many PTI leaders knew that Khan had a bad temperament and could go to any extent for the regaining of power. So, they finally decided to leave the party and find some other political platform to serve the masses," he narrated. He said those who left the PTI because of May 9, had been with Imran for over three decades. "Khan's unilateral decision making, like a dictator, was a pain in the neck of many party leaders. He had an undemocratic attitude. He picked up Osman Buzdar, who failed to perform rather brought numerous stories of corruption and mismanagement in Punjab. Similarly, he selected Khalid Khursheed as Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, whose degree was being declared as a fake. Both these nominees distorted the party image, which used to speak of transparency, fairness, and merit," Numan Shah elaborated. He said cases like Al-Qadir Trust and Toshakhana were like a scar on the face of chairman PTI. "Where was the concept of high moral ground? Khan for 27 years was attacking the former prime ministers and heads of state for misusing their authorities for personal gains. In Al-Qadir Trust he should not have included himself and Bushra BB's names as trustees. He should not have benefited from the 190 million pounds

amount, the money, which was supposed to be deposited in the national exchequer. As it's an open secret that the agreement's copy was not disclosed to the cabinet members, which created doubts about the entire deal. Gifts are attractive and precious, but before coming into power, Khan was against such items, which were presented to the heads of government or state, as they belonged to the country-its people and not to any individuals. In both the cases Khan had damaged his image as 'Mr. Clean'. These cases would haunt the chairman PTI and would also bring some legal trouble to his political career," he continued. "Overseas Pakistanis were the asset and strength of the nation. They are the real ambassadors of Pakistan in different countries. Besides representing our culture in foreign lands, they have been contributing to the national economy through sending huge amounts as remittances. However, most of our brothers and sisters living abroad were unaware of the facts related to the PTI leadership, its decision making and working style. Imran Khan's narrative is fake. He does not follow what he says in his speeches. There was a huge gap between the words he uttered and the actions he took as a Prime Minister and as a party leader. They should judge him through his decisions and actions, instead of listening to the emotional speeches he makes through the media, especially the social media," he advised. Shah was worried about the future of PTI in the coming days and months.

Russian attack on Odesa kills one, damages cathedral

NEWS DESK

ODESA: A Russian air attack on Ukraine's southern port of Odesa early on Sunday killed one, injured nearly 20 and badly damaged an Orthodox cathedral, Ukrainian officials said, adding the icon of the patroness of the city had been retrieved from under the rubble. "Odesa: another night attack of the monsters," Oleh Kiper, governor of the Odesa region, said on the Telegram messaging app. One person was killed and 19 injured, including four children, in the missile attacks that also destroyed six houses and apartment buildings. Fourteen people were hospitalised, he said. The Spaso-Preobrazhenskiy Cathedral, or the Transfiguration Cathedral, was severely damaged, Odesa's military administration said. Odesa's largest church building, it is located in the historic city centre, which is a UNESCO world heritage site. The cathedral's archdeacon, Andriy Palchuk, told Reuters the missile strike had started a fire which only

affected one corner of the cathedral containing non-historic religious artefacts for purchase by worshippers. "When the right altar chapel - of the most sacred part of the cathedral - was hit, a missile piece flew through the whole cathedral and hit the area where we display icons, candles and books for purchase," he said. Ukraine's defence ministry said the cathedral had now been "destroyed twice" - by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. The early 19th-century cathedral was demolished in 1936 as part of Stalin's anti-religious campaigns and rebuilt when Ukraine gained independence from Moscow in 1991. Parts of the building were destroyed, the floors were covered in rubble and chunks were ripped off the cathedral's ornate walls. Several local residents from the surrounding area came to assist with cleaning up the rubble. Russia's Defence Ministry reported strikes on targets in the area but denied it had struck the cathedral and said the building had probably been hit by a Ukrainian anti-aircraft missile. Russia has attacked Odesa with mis-

siles and drones several times since it withdrew on Monday from a year-old deal that had allowed for safe exports of Ukraine's grain from Black Sea ports. Odesa's ports were the departure point for grain leaving Ukraine in the Turkey and UN-brokered agreement. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned Sunday's attack and vowed payback. "This can be no excuse for Russian evil. As always, this evil will lose. And there will definitely be a retaliation to Russian terrorists for Odesa. They will feel this retaliation," he said on Twitter. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni issued a statement condemning the attack and offering assistance in the reconstruction of the cathedral. "The Russian aggressors demolish grain stores, depriving millions of hungry people of food. They devastate our European civilisation, its sacred symbols," she said. In its daily briefing, Russia's Defence Ministry said it had struck targets "where terrorist attacks were being prepared" in the Odesa area and that all targets had been destroyed.

Iran says 4 policemen shot dead in southeast

TEHRAN: Four Iranian policemen were killed on Sunday after attackers fired on a patrol in the restive southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan near the border with Pakistan, state media reported. "Three policemen were martyred in a terrorist attack on a police patrol unit," state news agency IRNA reported. A fourth died later after succumbing to his wounds, state television reported. The circumstances of the attack were not immediately clear. Unrest in the impoverished Sistan-Baluchistan province has involved drug-smuggling gangs. - Agencies

Govt, PTI at odds over Pemra law

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are at odds over the Pemra amendment bill as the party vowed to defend the media freedom that it believes will be undermined by the newly proposed changes to the law, media reported. The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting on Friday approved the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which also includes a definition to disinformation. However, rejecting the draft law, PTI pledged to thwart all attempts to arrest media persons and resist any such effort to curtail the freedom of expression, come what may. PTI's spokesperson alleged that the "puppet govern-

ment" held in abeyance the Constitution for the last 15 months and unleashed a reign of terror to silence the sane dissenting voices in the country. The spokesperson said the PTI is the only federal and the largest political party in the country that would raise its voice in support of press freedom in the country at all fora. He contended that imposing censorship to control the media and free speech was unacceptable. He went on to say that in the absence of the largest representative political force of Pakistan, the legislation by the government had no value, adding that suppression of freedom of expression was the topmost agenda of the government imposed through a conspiracy. The spokesperson said that the sensitivity of the issue could be judged that an illegal, unconstitutional and unjustified ban was imposed on broadcasting the name, statement, photo and speech of the head of Pakistan's largest political party and former PM Imran Khan. Contrarily, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb was of the view that the bill is the "bill of Pakistan, its people, media and journalists, which protects the rights of journalists". She said that restrictions were imposed on the media due to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's (Pemra) order in the PTI's era, when the party tried to bring the Pemra black law, despite opposition from all the political parties and media organisations.

Treaty that created Turkey still evokes pain for some

She was referring to 1915 massacres and the forced deportation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire - an event now labelled genocide by dozens of countries but denied by Turkey

MONITORING DESK

LAUSANNE: The Treaty of Lausanne that formed modern Turkey is still cherished by some but remains a disappointment for others including Kurds and Armenians who hoped for autonomous regions and justice for Ottoman-era crimes. Some of those voices are included in an exhibit called "Borders" - put on by the Swiss city's history museum to look at the significance of the post-World War One deal 100 years after it was signed between Turkey and allied powers like Britain and France on July 24, 1923. Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan commemorated the anniversary in a statement last year, praising elements of it and saying that Turkey had meticulously monitored its implementation. Sevgi Koyuncu, who was born in a Kurdish village and now works in Lausanne, said her people had been "negated by a convention" in an interview filmed in the palace where it was signed. Some 6,000 Kurdish protesters joined a march through the

city on Saturday, waving flags and forming human chains. For Manuschak Karnusian, a Swiss resident whose Armenian grandparents fled what is now Turkey in the early 20th century with the help of missionaries and French warships, the treaty is like a "second genocide". She was referring to 1915 massacres and the forced deportation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire - an event now labelled genocide by dozens of countries but denied by Turkey, which says thousands of both Turks and Armenians died in inter-ethnic violence. "You cannot forget. You must show what this (treaty) means," Karnusian told Reuters, saying that it stood for the "origin of the denial of what happened" to the Armenians. While the agreement was hailed at the time as a chance for lasting peace, some of its outcomes, like the exchange of more than 1.5 million ethnic Greeks and Turks, are now seen as a "terrible mistake", said Jonathan Conlin, a historian at a project that looks at the legacy of the treaty. "I think it (the treaty) has endured because everyone's equally unhappy about it," he said.

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