



# Islamabad POST

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**Greta joins protest hours after conviction**

Detailed News On Page-07

**China lashes out at Japan over chip curbs**

Detailed News On Page-07



**Iraq supports talks for Yemen peace**

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## Briefs

### Interim PM as per Constitution

**MEHTAB PIRZADA**  
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday said the caretaker prime minister would be appointed as per the procedure enshrined in the Constitution. The announcement for the purpose would also be made accordingly, the minister said in a news statement. According to the Constitution, the PM and the opposition leader would finalize the interim PM's appointment after consultation, Marriyum noted. She said PM Sharif would consult with allied parties and also seek the guidance of PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in that regard.

### Khar for realizing blue economy potential

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar has stressed on holistic policy framework and enabling domestic ecosystem for realizing Pakistan's maritime and blue economy potential. She was chairing annual talks between Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Naval Headquarters in Islamabad on Monday. The Minister of State called for pro-active approach to seek effective international partnerships in maritime domain.

### PPP, PML-N want 'puppet' caretaker setup

**DNA**  
RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Monday hit out at the ruling partners, stating that the PPP and the PML-N wanted to install a caretaker PM who would serve their interests. Talking to Twitter, the former interior minister said the decision regarding the formation of the caretaker setup would not be an easy task. Lashing out at the ruling parties, he said they wanted to provide benefit to their relatives.

## 'Fake news' PPP says no consensus on interim PM

Sherry denies that her party had been consulted; Dar says election act to be amended

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: PPP leader Sherry Rehman rejected reports on Monday that a name for the caretaker prime minister had been finalised, terming them "fake news". "No name [for the caretaker PM] has been shared with us ... and neither has PPP made any decision regarding this," she said in a press conference alongside PPP Information Secretary and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Faisal Karim Kundi in Islamabad. "No such agreement has been reached, no name has been finalised at least from our side," she asserted. "We haven't even floated any names." But some media reports suggested yesterday that a name had been finalised, she said, adding that this was not the case. "The PPP's party position is the same as before - which is our democratic position entrenched in the Constitution - that it's better if the caretaker government is non-partisan." Speaking on the matter, Rehman explained that deciding on the caretaker PM's name was a consultative process and involved discussions among multiple parties, as well as the opposition leader. Reiterating that unbiasedness was one of the requirements of an election, she said, "We are inclined towards it". Rehman said her party had formed a three-member committee for consultation on the caretaker setup.

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### Fazl to 'visit' Dubai to meet Zardari, Nawaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman likely to visit Dubai to meet former president Asif Ali Zardari and PML-N supremo, Nawaz Sharif to 'discuss' caretaker setup. The contacts between Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam are gearing up as the date for end of the present assembly is coming nearer. Sources having knowledge of the development said Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif have contacted Fazlur Rehman after which he is likely to visit Dubai to meet both the leaders. The three bigwigs will 'finalise' the names for the caretaker governments. Earlier, the ruling coalition parties, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) rejected

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## Lawyer's murder case SC bars police from arresting Imran Khan

Imran Khan accuses PML-N of trying to create a situation

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Monday got relief as Supreme Court (SC) restricted the police from arresting the former prime minister till August 9 in the case of senior lawyer Abdul Razaq Shar's murder in Quetta. The deposed prime minister, who was ousted in a no-confidence vote last April, has a petition subjudice in the SC against his nomination in the case related to Shar's shooting in Quetta in June. Advocate Shar was gunned down by unidentified people on three motorcycles while he was on his way to the Balochistan High Court (BHC) on June 6. A first information report (FIR) had been registered against Khan, and others on the complaint of the slain lawyer's son, Advocate Siraj Ahmed, in Quetta, under the charges of murder, Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and other provisions. A three-member bench comprising Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Mussarat Hilali directed Khan to appear before the court on August 9.

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### ECP asks police to arrest Imran

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday asked the Islamabad Capital Territory Police (ICT) to carry out its obligation for complying with a non-bailable arrest warrant issued for former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in a case relating to contempt of the electoral body on May 11. The development came hours after the ousted premier, who was removed from power via a parliamentary vote last year, got relief as the Supreme Court restricted the police from arresting Khan till August 9 in the case of senior lawyer Abdul Razaq Shar's murder in Quetta.



LAHORE: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Islamabad Mr. Khazar Farhadov and CEO of SOCAR Ms Mariam Almaszade called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

### At least 133 killed in rain related incidents

More heavy rain likely in different parts of country

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: At least 133 people have been killed and 215 injured in rain-related incidents since the start of monsoon on June 25 as torrential rains wreaked havoc across the country mainly in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), according to a report issued by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). Every year, between June and September, monsoon winds bring rains to South Asia, accounting for 70% to 80% of the region's annual rainfall. These monsoon rains are a mixed blessing for the region. On the one hand, they are crucial to the livelihoods of millions of farmers and food security in a region of around two billion people. On the other hand, they bring landslides and floods. According to a breakdown provided by the NDMA, 65 deaths occurred in Punjab, 35 in KP, 11 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 10 in Sindh, 6 in Balochistan, five in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and one in Gilgit Baltistan (GB). The majority of the deaths were mainly due to electrocution and building collapses, official data showed. On Sunday, officials said the latest monsoon spell in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa claimed around 15 lives across the different districts in Punjab and KP provinces within 48 hours.

## Flexible terms Pak-Azerbaijan sign framework deal for LNG procurement

PM terms the agreement as a major milestone in bilateral relations

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan has signed a framework agreement with Azerbaijan for LNG procurement on flexible terms. The agreement signed between Pakistan LNG Limited and Azeri Company SOCAR in Lahore was witnessed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said the life of this agreement is one year which is extendable to one more year. He said under the agreement, Azerbaijan will offer one Cargo of LNG each month and it will be up to Pakistan to either accept the cargo or not. He said there will be no financial penalty if Pakistan does not accept the cargo. The Prime Minister termed the agreement as a major milestone in the fraternal relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He especially thanked the President of Azerbaijan for playing a pivotal role in this agreement. Alluding to his recent productive and fruitful discussions with the President of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister said we have given

approval to Azeri airline to land in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. This is a big step forward to promote tourism and investment and exchange of delegations between the two countries. Shehbaz Sharif an Azeri delegation of horticulture experts is also arriving in Pakistan today on his invitation. He said we want to learn from their expertise to make the landscape of Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and Lahore as beautiful as that of Baku. On the occasion, the Prime Minister also touched upon the matter of recent increase in the power tariff saying it was done so under the agreement reached with the IMF. He however clarified that this increase will not burden about sixty three percent of the total domestic consumers. He said thirty one percent of the consumers have also been given partial subsidy. In his remarks on the occasion, the Ambassador of Azerbaijan said that both the countries are deepening their cooperation in diverse fields including energy, defence, IT and transport. He said the two sides are also negotiating a preferential trade agreement, expressing the confidence that they will be successful in this regard as well.

## Centcom chief, COAS discuss regional security

Both reiterated the desire to further enhance bilateral relations in all fields

DNA

RAWALPINDI: US Central Command (Centcom) chief, General Michael Erik Kurilla, Monday discussed the regional security situation with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir. The development came during the top US military official's meeting with COAS Munir at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, the



Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. Gen Kurilla acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's successes in the fight against terrorism and Pakistan's continued efforts to bring peace and stability to the region. During the meeting,

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## Relocation of banned TTP to North-Western Afghanistan

The Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid, as quoted by the Afghan News Agency, stated that TTP fighters currently residing in Khost, Kunar, and other border areas of Afghanistan will be stationed in northern Afghanistan

SHAIM SHAHID

**A**MIDST fuelling anger of Pakistan, the Taliban regime in Emirate Islami Afghanistan is facing opposition in connection with its promises pertained to shifting or relocating militants associated with banned Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP) away from Pak Afghan border to Northern or Eastern Afghanistan. Non Pushtoons communities like Uzbeks, Tajiks and Turkmens along with Shia Hazara's are showing severe resentment over Taliban rulers commitments with Pakistan, pertained to relocating these Pakistani Taliban, to western and northern Afghanistan. Besides Non Pashtun Afghanistan, Iranian authorities are also unhappy with this decision as it could fuel Sunni extremism in parts and parcels of Afghanistan bordering its eastern provinces. The Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid, as quoted by the Afghan News Agency, stated that TTP fighters cur-

rently residing in Khost, Kunar, and other border areas of Afghanistan will be stationed in northern Afghanistan. The plan involves relocating these fighters to remote provinces away from the Durand Line. In the light of Zabih Ullah Mujahid's statement, almost all of these TTP militants are sheltering near Pak Afghan border from where according to Pakistani authorities they cross over the border for terror purposes and return to their sanctuaries. But the question arises as Pakistani authorities have time and again made huge claims of protecting its soil with fencing of Pak Afghan border. In mid of May, during a tripartite conference at Islamabad, the two countries reached a shared understanding regarding the project. Besides Pakistan and Afghanistan, China was the third participant of the tripartite conference. China has assured financial support to Afghanistan in connection with the relocation project. Pakistan believes the presence of banned TTP along with Pak Afghan border in Afghanistan territories is the major cause

of growing violence and terror in all over Pakistan. However, Pakistan's nationalist and democratic minded circles are considering "fuelling violent acts caused by the military establishment's wrong policies based on what was framed by the then ISI Gen. Hameed Gul." The recent allegations of Pakistan, multiplied with threats of chasing militants inside Afghanistan are not new. Similar attack was made by Pakistan against Jalalabad in 1989. The attack was sanctioned/allowed by the then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan despite opposition of late Prime Minister Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and some of her cabinet members. At that time, Kabul was governed by the late President Dr. Najib Ullah. After evacuation of USSR troops, President Najib Ullah troops had not only repulsed this over two weeks long attack but even early 1990, it had foiled Defense Minister Shah Nawaz Tanai lead military coup with alleged support of Pakistan through Gulbadin Hekmatyar. Though soon after tripartite conference

and starting of relocation of banned TTP militants from certain areas, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mumtaz Zahra Baloch had declined to comment on the report during a weekly press briefing in Islamabad couple of weeks back, but now Taliban rulers working on different option in the wake of opposition from non Pushtoon communities. While declining to comment, the foreign spokesperson Ms Zahra Baloch told media, "I would not like to go into specifics on this particular issue. We are engaged with the Afghan interim government on the serious concerns that Pakistan has about the menace of terrorism." "Our regular engagement is an ongoing process. All aspects of countering this menace remain under discussion between the two sides. Besides, it is not appropriate for us to make comments on any such media statements," she said, adding "Islamabad is looking forward to working "closely" with the Afghan side to counter the terrorist threat." Couple of days back, in the high level security high ups conference at Rawal-

pindi-Islamabad, the participants directly held no other than banned TTP for ongoing deadly violent acts in Pakistan. And on such grounds, the Afghan regime of Tehrik Taliban Afghanistan was asked to behave otherwise it was threatened with dire consequences. In reaction, the Emirate Islami Afghanistan has not only rejected Pakistan's charges but the Deputy Information Minister and chief spokesperson has repeated, "there is no presence of Pakistani militants in Afghanistan. All these Pakistani militants engaged in terror acts are sheltering across the border in Pakistan." Whatever might be the nature of Pakistan's allegations and reaction to the Taliban regime, reports reveal that after the previous May, the Kabul regime had shifted certain families to Orazgan, which is considered South-western part of Afghanistan. Likewise a few families belonging to Waziristan have been shifted to Northern Afghanistan.

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# NTDC, AFD sign 180 mln project agreement for NTDC projects

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: French Development Agency (AFD) and the National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) entered into a project agreement for the provision of 180 million soft loan for the construction of NTDC projects. Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan, Managing Director NTDC and Mr. Philippe STEINMETZ, Country Director AFD, signed the project agreement here Monday on behalf of their respective organizations. The funds provided through this loan will assist NTDC in the execution of various projects aimed at enhancing the

power transmission and distribution systems in Punjab. The projects include the construction of a new 220 kV grid station and a 50 km transmission line in Arifwala, which will be connected to the MEPCO distribution system. Additionally, the existing 220 kV grid station in Vehari will be upgraded to 500 kV level, along with a 48 km transmission line. This upgrade will significantly increase the transmission capacity and benefit the consumers of MEPCO. Furthermore, a new 500 kV grid station in Sialkot together with 91 km of transmission lines will be constructed and connected to the GEPSCO distribution system.

This loan will support NTDC to provide reliable and efficient power supply in major cities of Punjab. The funding will also enhance the efficiency of the transmission of power in Pakistan. Such benefits will contribute in improving affordability and scaling up the energy supply. It will also provide a reliable power supply to the biggest industrial and sports city of Sialkot. The signing ceremony was attended by General Manager (PD North), Chief Engineer (Substation Design), Chief Engineer (Dasu Transmission Line Project), DG Human Resources, Dy. Manager PMU NTDC and representatives of AFD.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday. — DNA



## Governor Sindh lauds USAID's contribution in social sector

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori while lauding the contribution of USAID in the social sector in the province, has said that USAID is helping in the provision of improved facilities to the masses, especially health and education sectors. This he said during a meeting with the Consul General of USA in Karachi Ms. Nicole Theriot at Governor House here Monday. Bilateral relations, investment opportunities in the province, projects of USAID,

IT program under Governor's initiative and other matters of mutual interests were discussed on the occasion. Governor Sindh said that US investment would generate employment and help in reducing poverty. IT program is aimed at making the youth financially empowered, he added. Consul General said that US investors are interested in investing in various sectors in the province. She lauded various public welfare projects including IT courses

for youth. Later, she visited the 'Bell of Hope' where Governor Sindh informed her about the objectives of installing this bell. She also witnessed the registration process of Taqatwar Pakistan Ration bogs and distributed ration amongst registered persons. Ms. Nicole Theriot along with Governor Sindh visited Quaid's Room and saw the personal belongings of the father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah preserved

## Khar calls for realizing blue economy potential

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar Monday stressed the importance of holistic policy framework and enabling domestic ecosystem for realizing Pakistan's maritime and blue economy potential. Hina Rabbani was speaking at annual talks between Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Pakistan Naval Headquarters. She urged pro-active approach for seeking effective international partnerships in maritime domain. The Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) Vice Admiral Ovais A Bilgrami led the respective sides for the talks. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar presided the meeting. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs was also represented in the meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity for a comprehensive overview of Pakistan's maritime interests including in the domain of maritime security, blue economy, disaster management, environmental protection and climate change imperatives. Pakistan's participation in various regional and international forums dealing with maritime issues and opportunities for international collaboration and capacity-building in various fields were also discussed. — APP

## Minister brushes aside hearsay on caretaker nominations of cabinet

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman Monday rebuked hearsay and fake information on various media outlets pertaining to nominations of caretaker setup. The minister flanked by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi here at the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Secretariat clarified the media on propagated stories pertaining to the nominations of interim setup. Senator Rehman said there were many rumours proliferating on the reputed media outlets. She clarified that the PPP had two clear views, one that there was no nomination shared with the party whereas SAPM Kundi also informed media in that regard. The minister that no nominations were decided by the PPP leadership for

interim cabinet and the Party had maintained its previous and constitutional stance. "There has been news circulating that PPP had completed the caretaker. It is visible that after the 18th Constitutional Amendment this process has been made transparent and inclusive whereas it engages all the parties including the opposition leader in the consultative process," she said. The minister said that there was no agreement on caretaker set up but rather it was a fake news. However, she said a three-member committee was constituted to hold consultations in this regard. She urged the media to avoid perpetrating fake news. Senator Rehman underlined that her party had repeatedly demanded on time polls as it was important for the stability of the country. She also mentioned that Co-Chairman PPP, Asif Ali

Zardari, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and the entire leadership had been demanding to hold the general elections as per the constitution. "We expect a level playing field for all the political parties in the upcoming elections. However, there will be surely a consensus on the nomination of interim Prime Minister but it will take time. However, we are listening to all the parties at the moment," she said. The senator mentioned that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari recently handed over property papers to women in flood affected areas as they were denied possession rights earlier in Sindh. She said that the initiative was as per the vision of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. "50,000 houses reconstruction have been approved and the process has started in the flood-affected areas. We have focused the most vulnerable.—APP

## WCLA designates 15 historic buildings as heritage sites

LAHORE: The Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) has officially declared 15 historically significant sites and havelis as heritage properties. The decision was taken during a recent session of the Heritage Conservation Board of WCLA, where 18 properties were carefully reviewed for consideration. The designated heritage properties now protected under the provisions of the WCLA Act 2012 include the following: 1.Nisar Haveli, 2.Noori Building, 3.Gurdwara Janam Astan, 4.Samadi Bhai Mani Singh, 5.Baoli Bagh, 6.Govt Rang Mahal School, 7.Jain Hall, 8.Qamar Manzil, 9.Deputies House, 10.Shamsher Singh Haveli, 11.Haveli Wajid Ali Shah, 12.Tehsil Haveli, 13.Makhzan-ul-Aloom Building, 14.Khalifa Manzil, 15.Sabil Wali Gali. — APP

## Reham Khan in limelight for wearing Peshawari chappal

ISLAMABAD: Reham Khan, a seasoned journalist and the ex-wife of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, has garnered attention once more and this time for her footwear selection. The internet was buzzing with rumours about the television personality's fashionable shoes when she posted pictures of her trip to Pakistan with her husband, Mirza Bilal, on social media. On her official Instagram account, Reham has been sharing photos from her visit to the stunning green mountains in the Hazara area. Her most recent image, in which she is shown wearing Peshawari chappals—a kind of shoe also worn by her ex-husband Khan—drew the most attention from the internet because of her shoes.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Sanitation Workers of Capital Development Authority are on duty at Flood Relief Camp at Super Market in Federal Capital. — Online

## NDMA holds special NEOC session with key Stakeholders on Current Monsoon Situation

ISLAMABAD: Acting Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Brigadier (Approved Major General) Naiknam Muhammad Baig on Monday presided the special National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) session with key stakeholders on current monsoon situation. The session was attended by DG Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), representatives of Federal Flood Commission (FFC), provincial disaster management authorities (PDMAs), State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), Armed Forces and PCIV,

a news release said. The Acting-Chairman NDMA reviewed restoration of roads and bridges, monsoon-related incidents and rescue & relief operations in parts of country including Chitral, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in the past two days. He instructed relevant departments to prepare resource contingency plans, implement early warning systems and disaster mitigation interventions in hazard-prone areas by learning from the experiences of Floods 2022. He noted that proactive measures are essential in mitigating disaster impact and called for tangible actions before disaster strikes. The DG PMD

briefed on rainfall data in last 24 hours and upcoming monsoon spell. He informed that next monsoon spell is expected to bring heavy rains in the upper parts of the country from July 31st to August 6th, triggering urban flooding in major cities, flash flooding and landsliding in hilly regions. He apprised of major reservoirs including Tarbela and Mangla which are nearly full at 79% and 74% respectively. It was mentioned that two Indian dams Pong & Their are also close to capacity and there is a possibility of flood flow from India into River Indus, which may affect Lahore adversely. The FFC in-

formed that all major rivers are currently within normal limits. The PDMAs, GBDMA, and SDMA presented details of rescue and relief operations and restoration work of blocked communication infrastructure in their respective regions. The Acting-Chairman NDMA directed Provincial Authorities to undertake public awareness on all media channels and social media to maximise general public's knowledge on risk associated with monsoon season and make arrangements for allocation of their resources according to PMD's weather projections.—APP

## ATC extends judicial remand of Ijaz Chaudhry

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Monday extended the judicial remand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ijaz Chaudhry for another 14-day in connection with the Jinnah House attack case. The court ordered the police to produce the PTI leader again on the expiry of the remand term, August 7.—APP

**Lost of Bachelor Degree**

**I Tahirim Fatima, son of Sheikh Ashfaq Ahmed, Bachelor of Science BS (TN)-12/WAH Telecommunication & Networking degree issued by Comsats University, which was lost on 09-12-2021 in the area of D-12 Islamabad. FIR has been registered in the concerned police station on 20-7-2023. Kindly contact on below mentioned Address: House No. 493-CB Mahalla Asif Abad, Wah Cantt, Tehsil Taxila, District Rawalpindi.**

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**Court Notice**

بجواب جناب ڈاکٹر محمد نواز صاحب سول جج کی کورٹ رولنگ کے مطابق...

25 جولائی 2023 کو عدالت میں...



## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JULY

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

### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949
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### Emergency

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



### Enquiry

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



### Hospitals

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



### Departments

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

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480
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# ICCI calls for economic empowerment of women

Dr. Sonia Saleem, Senior Vice President, Dr. Joharia Azhar, Sadaf Abbasi Executive Members of IWCCI and others were in the delegation

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Women are half of the total population of Pakistan, who are endowed with immense talents, but due to lack of better opportunities, women are currently unable to play an active role in the economic development of the country, so the government should take favorable policy measures for the economic empowerment of women, which will pave way for Pakistan to move towards sustainable economic development. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry during its visit to ICCI led by Rizwana Asif President. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that developed countries have achieved rapid economic development by focusing on better development of women, but in Pakistan, women still do not have better opportunities to participate in economic development, although our women are second to none in terms of talent and capabilities. He emphasized that the government should address the key issues being faced by women entrepreneurs on a priority basis and provide them with maximum ease in



doing business so that more women feel motivated to start their own business, which will not only reduce poverty and unemployment from the society, but the economy will also move towards fast recovery. He assured that ICCI will cooperate with IWCCI to solve the problems of women entrepreneurs. Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Rizwana Asif, President, Is-

lamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that getting a loan for business is the major problem for women, due to which many of them are unable to start their own business. She said that the SBP has increased the policy interest rate to 22 percent, which has made it almost impossible for women entrepreneurs to take loans from banks. She demanded

that the government should introduce a new scheme to provide easy loans to women for business startups, which will boost business activities and increase prosperity. She further said that the government has made a significant hike in the prices of electricity and gas, which has also increased the difficulties of business women. She demanded that the government

should review the utility prices and bring down the interest rates to single digits, which would significantly reduce the cost of doing business and strengthen the economy by increasing business activities. Dr. Sonia Saleem, Senior Vice President, Dr. Joharia Azhar, Sadaf Abbasi Executive Members of IWCCI and others were in the delegation.

# Value of rupee and dollar has to be left to market

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that strengthening the value of the rupee makes exports difficult while making imports cheaper. A strengthened currency reduces exports and increases imports, which drain the forex reserves, and the country has to borrow, which burdens 240 million people in the country, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the value of the rupee and dollar must not be controlled to boost exports and remittances. Efforts to control the value of currency reduced textile exports by \$2.8 billion in 2023. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that non-textile exports, which were 12.46 billion dollars in 2022, fell to 11.23 billion dollars in 2023. He said that in order to increase exports, it will also be necessary to improve the overall business environment by looking at issues such as energy price and uninterrupted supply, access to capital, tax re-

forms, import restrictions, competition, the supply chain, and the implementation of positive policies. The business leader said that it has become impossible for the business community to increase production and exports by borrowing at a 22 percent interest rate, while exporters are unable to invest due to delays in refunds, which is a major obstacle to increasing exports. Mian Zahid Hussain added that the textile policies made since 2014 have not been fully implemented, which not only affects the confidence of investors but also affects exports. If the textile policy had been fully implemented, it

would have been possible to increase textile exports by 25% per year. Under the State Bank's Temporary Economic Refinance Facility (TERF) scheme, an investment of three hundred billion rupees was made in the country at a very low mark-up, which increased exports by 5 to 6 billion dollars, but due to the non-supply of gas and electricity, their increasing prices, and other problems, this investment could not be taken advantage of. The energy price should be at par with the other countries in the region; otherwise, investments would be lost and many people would become unemployed.

# Capital Police issued 2,330 fine tickets to traffic rules violators

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police has expedited stern legal action against the traffic rules violators and issued 2,330 fine tickets to road users during the last 24 hours, a police public relations officer said. Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad capital police expedited stern action against traffic rules violators and took stern action in order to implement the traffic rules and maintain the smooth flow of traffic in the federal city. Various police teams issued 2,330 fine tickets to road users over violation of traffic rules in which 371 challan were issued over lane violation, 38 for red signal violations, 53 for using mobile phone during driving, 32 for amateur driving, 01 over violation of one-way, 14 for violation of zebra crossing, 03 vehicles for having pressure horns, 44 for having tinted glasses, 51 for having fancy number plates, 568 bikers for riding without helmets and 57 motorists for violations of different traffic rules. The Chief Traffic officer (CTO) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanweer said that strict action would be taken against traffic rules violators. Islamabad capital police personnel have been directed to ensure implementation of traffic rules irrespective of status and rank and demonstrate patience while issuing traffic violation tickets to the road users. He further said that Islamabad capital police is utilizing all available resources to facilitate the general public. He also appealed to the citizens to follow the traffic rules. The personnel of the force issue traffic violation tickets not as a punitive measure but the purpose is to ensure a safe road environment in the capital and secure lives of people, he maintained.

# Commissioner, RPO visit control room

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta along with Regional Police Officer (RPO), Rawalpindi Syed Khurram Ali here on Monday visited the control room set up to monitor security arrangements during Muharram ul Haram. The Commissioner was briefed regarding the security arrangements finalized for the routes of the 7th, 8th, 10th and 11th of Muharram processions and Majalis. The control room would remain operational 24 hours and focal persons of all the departments concerned would remain on duty, he directed. Security arrangements were being monitored through cameras, he said adding, night vision cameras were also being used for effective monitoring of the processions and majalis. Implementation of Muharram Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures would be ensured strictly, he said. All available resources were being used to maintain law and order situation during Muharram, Liaquat Ali said. RPO informed that fool-proof security arrangements were finalized for Muharram. —APP

# OICCI commends PM's leadership in securing IMF SBA

ISLAMABAD: The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) has commended Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his finance team for timely leadership and initiative in securing the IMF's Standby Agreement

(SBA) of \$ 3 billion for next nine months to ensuring that the economy was not subjected to additional shocks. "Together with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) rapid lending of \$1.2 billion, the friendly

countries have also helped uplift the foreign exchange reserves, thereby providing a significant step towards economic stability and progress," OICCI President Amir Paracha said in a statement on Monday. He said this sentiment was

reflected in the developments at the Pakistan Stock Exchange, currency market and the business environment in general. The OICCI president also appreciated the upgraded Pakistan's long term foreign currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) to 'CCC' from 'CCC-' by the Fitch Rating agency. Pakistan Bonds in the international market had also rallied post the announcement, he added. —APP

# Senate chairman nominates panel of presiding officers

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Monday nominated a 'panel of presiding officers' for the upcoming 331st session in a significant move aimed at ensuring the smooth functioning of the upper house of parliament. This decision came in accordance with Sub-Rule 1 of 14 of the Rule of Procedure and Conduct of Business. The panel of presiding officers comprises three distinguished members of the Senate: Senator Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Rubina Khalid, and Mohsin Aziz. Their role will be to efficiently conduct the business of the house in the absence of both the Senate chairman and deputy chairman. In a poignant moment during the session, Senate Chairman Sanjrani requested Senator Maulana Faiz Muhammad to lead the assembly in offering Fateha for the souls of those who tragically lost their lives in recent terrorist attacks and the devastating rains and floods that have impacted various areas of the country. Senator Maulana Faiz Muhammad, with heartfelt prayers, sought forgiveness and the highest ranks in Jannah (paradise) for the departed souls. He also called for patience and strength for the bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity. The 331st session promises to be one of significance as the members come together to address crucial matters concerning the welfare and progress of the country.

## JULY 2023

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## Briefs

## Tea imports reduces 9.13% in last fiscal year

ISLAMABAD: Tea imports into the country during financial year ended on June 30, 2023 reduced by 9.13 percent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from June-July, 2022-23 about 231,449 metric tons of tea costing \$556.043 million were imported as against the imports of 253,748 metric tons valuing \$626.195 million of same period last year, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Meanwhile, imports of sugar decreased by 97.06 percent during 12 months of last fiscal year as 6,205 metric tons of sugar valuing \$0.0546 million imported as compared to the imports of 312,477 metric tons costing \$191.720 million of same period last year. In last fiscal year spices imports into the country also decreased by 30.04 percent as 147,193 metric tons of different spices worth of \$151.240 million were imported during the period under review as compared to the imports of 138,413 metric tons valuing \$216.183 million of same period last year. It is worth mentioning here that food group imports into the country during the period under review decreased by 0.88 percent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-June, 2022-23, the country spent \$8.936 billion on the import of different food commodities as compared to the imports of \$9.016 billion in the same period last year in order to fulfill the local requirements. On the other hand the exports of food commodities from the country decreased by 7.25 percent as it was recorded at \$5.022 billion as against the exports of \$5.415 billion of the corresponding period of last year.—APP

## MG Pakistan to introduces new variants

ISLAMABAD: MG Pakistan, a prominent player in the country's automotive industry aims to introduce two new variants of its popular models, the MG HS Excite and 2.0 AWD, in a bid to further strengthen its market presence and cater to evolving consumer preferences. As part of their expansion strategy, MG Pakistan is also turning its focus towards the sedan segment, which currently holds a substantial 45% market share said a news release. Asif Ahmed, General Manager Marketing Division, expressed optimism about the potential of the sedan market and revealed that their first sedan offering for Pakistani consumers might be the MG GT, a 1600 CC Sedan car. Following the remarkable success of the MG C-SUVs, with over 15 thousand units sold in the last two and a half years, MG Pakistan sees great potential in the sedan category, as well as in other C and D SUVs. Key to MG Motors' vision is the localization of high-value parts to enhance competitiveness within the domestic market and explore potential export opportunities.—APP

## MD PBM visits RCCI

MEHTAB PIRZADA

RAWALPINDI: MD Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Aamir Fida Paracha visited Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and attended the meeting of the Standing Committee on Human Rights. President RCCI Saqib Rafiq briefed MD Bait-ul-mal in detail about the ongoing activities of the Chamber, especially the ongoing programs under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). He said that the Chamber has also been actively participating in the rehabilitation and relief work of natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes. He said that every year the chamber organizes blood donation camps for thalassemia affected children. He assured full support and joint efforts/

## President for fostering trade and economic linkages with Ethiopia

The President made these remarks while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Mian Atif Sharif

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has asked Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Ethiopia to foster trade and economic linkages with Ethiopia by facilitating and enhancing interactions between the two countries' business communities. He also urged the Ambassador to work towards increasing trade volume with Ethiopia by reaching out to Ethiopian businesspersons for the import of Pakistani products. The President made these remarks while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Mian Atif Sharif, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Talking to the Ambassador, the President said that Pakistan-Ethiopia bi-



lateral ties were marked by common history, interests, and support for each other on various international fora. He said that the bilateral relations between

the two countries needed to be further cemented by taking the mutual trade volume to its full potential.

The President also called for

enhancing cooperation in the field of education and people-to-people contacts, adding that students in Ethiopia could benefit from online/video educational materials/courses of the Virtual University of Pakistan and Allama Iqbal Open University to enhance their skill sets. He stated that Pakistan's offer of training young Ethiopian Diplomats at the Foreign Service Academy and scholarships for banking courses would further help improve bilateral ties with Ethiopia. The President asked the Ambassador to create awareness in Ethiopia about the rising tide of Islamophobia in the world and the need for collective efforts to promote inter-faith harmony and mutual respect. He also urged the newly-appointed envoy to highlight the human rights violations and atrocities being committed by India in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) as well as the maltreatment of minorities in India.

## Pak to develop green hydrogen in collaboration with China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: There are good prospects for Pakistan to develop green hydrogen in collaboration with China. Right now, on the side of Jambhir, the Sindh government has set up a project with China in which they are producing hydrogen, but it has not yet reached a mature level that we can use it in the whole of Pakistan as a fuel. Pakistan has taken the initiative, this is a good thing and, in the future, they will be able to do good things in green hydrogen technologies, said Najma Memon, Professor at NCE in Analytical Chemistry, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Monday. "The concept of green hydrogen

is still new in Pakistan. As we have very good ties with China, which is now the world's top user and producer of hydrogen, China can be a good option for Pakistan to cooperate with in green hydrogen," said Najma Memon said. Hydrogen is a clean fuel which doesn't emit carbon and cause environmental pollution. The advantage of green hydrogen is that the sources of energy used to produce hydrogen are also green, like solar and wind. The whole world is moving towards green energy. A lot of research is being done on this," Najma Memon added. He pointed out that hydrogen is not fully utilized due to the issues of conversion to energy and its transportation. "For hydrogen

production, if you want to convert it into energy, you have to make a fuel cell. Academia can help a lot in fuel cell technology because materials have to be made and tested. A consortium can be formed so that the energy-related centers and the material-related researchers will work together with academia, then a very good output can come. Moreover, hydrogen doesn't run like electricity in wires, it has to be transported. So pipeline infrastructure has to be laid. It will take some time." He suggests that Pakistan should cooperate with China to develop green hydrogen-related technology. "China is the world's largest hydrogen producer and hydrogen user. Our fuel cell

and electrolyzer equipment for green hydrogen manufacture are world-leading. Coupled with domestic substitution of related materials and equipment, the cost of green hydrogen has begun to decline," said Zhu Gongshan, Chairman of Global Green Energy Industry Council (GGEIC). One recent example can be the green hydrogen plant in Kuqa City of Xinjiang, China, which is constructed by Sinopec Group. The plant began operations last month, which can produce 20,000 metric tons of hydrogen per year. All major equipment and materials used in the project, including photovoltaic modules, electrolytic cells, hydrogen storage tanks and hydrogen transport pipelines, were locally produced.

## Air Chief felicitates Hamza Khan

DNA

ISLAMABAD Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, congratulated Hamza Khan on winning the World Junior Squash Championship 2023, held in Melbourne, Australia. The young squash player Hamza Khan won the title by defeating Mohamed Zakaria of Egypt with a score of 3-1 during the final match played in the coastal city of Melbourne. The Air Chief expressed his felicitations to the young champion for bringing the title back to Pakistan after a gap of 37 years. He further said that this victory has evoked memories of Jansher Khan's triumph in the 1986 World Squash Championship and termed it a revival of Pakistan's glory in the game of squash. Chief of the Air Staff further said that the entire nation takes pride in the outstanding performance by the talented player, which has raised the national flag high in the sport of squash. Being the President of Pakistan Squash Federation, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force said that PAF has been tremendously contributing for the promotion of Squash in the country and reiterated his resolve that PAF along with PSF would continue to support young talent to bring more such victories for the nation. He also lauded the unwavering commitment of the Senior Vice President of Pakistan Squash Federation, Air Vice Marshal Kazim Hammad and the Contingent Manager, Air Commodore (Retired) Aftab Sadiq Qureshi in making utmost efforts for the provision of quality training and supporting the talented youth to excel in the game of Squash. The Air Chief appreciated the hard work put in by the coaching staff for providing international standard training and coaching facilities to the young players. He also lauded the PSF's management in making concerted efforts for bringing back the lost glory in the game of squash.



## ANF seizes 37 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its operations against drug-traffickers managed to recover 37 kg narcotics and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that in an operation, ANF recovered 1.5 kg Ice drug being sent to a foreign country through a parcel booked at International Mail Office Rawalpindi. Ice was concealed in Hot Pots. In another operation, one kg Ice drug was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Peshawar, travelling in public transport. The accused was arrested near M-1 Motorway Toll Plaza. On the accused's information, the co-accused, a resident of Islamabad, was also arrested along with a vehicle from the Khanapul area in Islamabad. In the third operation, 17.7 kg of hashish concealed in a plastic bag was recovered from the area of 'Jarubi Zakhakhel Khyber'. 10.2 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Karachi arrested near Mirpur Road Karachi. In fifth operation, 350 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for a foreign country at the courier office, Jinnah International Airport.—APP

## Rupee sheds Rs1.11 against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD, Jul 24 (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed Rs 1.11 devaluation against the US Dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 287.92 against the previous day's closing of Rs 286.81. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 291.5 and Rs 294 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by 12 paise to close at Rs 319.01 against the last day's closing of Rs 319.13, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen gained 01 paise to close at Rs 2.03, whereas an increase of 90 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 370.02 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 369.12. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 30 paise and 29 paise to close at Rs 78.38 and Rs 76.76 respectively.—APP

## Pak to host 3rd D-8 Ministerial Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will host the 4th D-8 Senior Officials Meeting and 3rd D-8 Ministerial Meeting on Tourism Cooperation for the first time in the country on August 4-5 at Bhurban, Murree. The meeting, being organized by the Pakistan

Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), will be followed by the technical visit to the Federal Capital on August 6. It was decided in the 2nd D-8 Ministerial Meeting held in Malaysia in 2019 that Pakistan will host the 3rd D-8 Ministerial Meeting

preceded by 4th D-8 Senior Officials Meeting. However, the meeting was postponed in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Awn Chaudhry, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Tourism & Sports / PTDC Chairman, called on the Secretary General

of D-8 Secretariat in March and decided to organize the meeting later this year. The advisor, while chairing an inter-ministerial meeting here on Monday on the preparation and organization of the D-8 Ministerial Meeting, said it was aimed at promoting Pakistan's tourism potential and exploring tourism trade opportunities of the member states. The meeting could also open new avenues of socio-economic development, he added.—APP

## Pakistani pink salt witnesses growing popularity in Chinese market

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "In recent years, the popularity of Pakistani Himalayan pink salt products, including salt lamps and bath salt, has been growing in China. Pakistan can further expand its export to China by enhancing its marketing and packaging," said Hussain Haider, Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. According to General Administration of Customs of China, Pakistani Himalayan pink salt to China reached \$4,968,223 in 2021 and \$5,747,492 in 2022,

an year-on-year increase of 15.68%, which shows the gradually expanding market and promising prospects of pink salt exports to China. The improvement can be attributed to a combination of factors, including increased awareness among Chinese consumers about the health benefits of pink salt, marketing campaigns, and the establishment of strong trade partnerships between Pakistani exporters and Chinese importers. The rise in pink salt exports to China has not only boosted the Pakistani salt industry but also provided a much-needed economic

boost to the country. Increased demand has created new jobs in the mining and processing sectors, contributing to the overall growth of the local economy. Ismail Suttar, chairman of Salt Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (SMAP) and president of Employers Federation of Pakistan, pointed out at a webinar on the promotion of Pakistani pink salt jointly held by the Consulate General of Pakistan in Shanghai and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan last week that as the popularity of pink salt continues to grow.

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## Chinese countermeasures

Some US lawmakers have recently accused Beijing of using “coercive economic practices” to achieve worldwide dominance over the United States. These accusations were reiterated at a hearing of the US House of Representatives days after US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen wrapped up her trip to Beijing to discuss the nations’ economic relations. Witnesses testified the environment in China is becoming increasingly “restrictive” for US entities.

It is these US lawmakers that have played key roles over the past few years in getting more than 1,300 Chinese entities on various US blacklists. Yet despite such attempts, US investment in and trade with China has maintained stable growth. The affected US companies have never ceased trying to persuade Washington to weigh the country’s losses against the gains, and expressed their confidence in the Chinese market by continuing to expand their operations and increase their investment in China. However, the US politicians, who are gripped with an anti-China frenzy, continue to regard the long-term systematic attack on Chinese enterprises in the high-tech sector as necessary. They continue to ignore the fact that, while the US government and legislature are trying to demarcate more and more fields as forbidden zones for Chinese companies’ operations in the US and dramatically increase the bureaucratic hurdles for them and their US partners, China is doing the opposite, welcoming companies from around the world to the country and granting them equal treatment. As a matter of fact, most examples the US lawmakers provided in the recent hearing on China’s alleged “coercive economic practices” are nothing but countermeasures the Chinese side has been forced to take to safeguard its core interests against the US’ provocations, ranging from sanctioning the few US companies selling weapons to secessionists on the Taiwan issue to its latest anti-dumping investigation into imported propionic acid originating in the US announced on Friday. The anti-dumping probe into the US propionic acid that was launched on the same day was in response to the US House of Representatives’ Thursday banning of releases of oil from the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve from being exported to China. China’s welcome to foreign companies and investment is heartfelt and that should be evident to the whole world. Foreign direct investment in China increased 5 percent year-on-year to a record \$189.1 billion in 2022. From January to June this year, 24,000 new foreign-invested enterprises were established nationwide, an increase of 35.7 percent year-on-year, and investment in high-tech industries increased by 7.9 percent. It is suggested that the US politicians stop dismantling the foundations of Sino-US relations, and accept that the US has to co-exist with China.

## Deadly heat is a disaster and a tragedy

Visitors are making perilous trips to California’s Death Valley as temperatures climb to within a few degrees of the highest on record. And there’s no doubt it takes a certain breed to trek into some of the worst heat humanity has known. But as this miserable heat persists, with July poised to be the hottest month ever recorded on Earth, I found myself thinking about why some people are fixated on experiencing these temperature extremes, even if vicariously through a news story or a photo next to a practically melting thermometer. It’s understandable that the thrill-seekers among us would be drawn to places like Death Valley National Park, where temperatures in recent days have reached 129 degrees during the day, and remained as high as 120 degrees after midnight, to feel the furnace-like blast of hot air firsthand and experience how it tests the limits of human survival.

But these are life-threatening conditions, as was sadly demonstrated at the park Tuesday with the death of a 71-year-old hiker. And to me, such extreme temperatures should be seen less as a curiosity than a disaster and a tragedy. Among the weather-related hazards made worse by climate change, extreme heat is the No. 1 killer, responsible for an estimated 3,900 deaths in California from 2010 to 2019. The heat that has smothered the Southwest and other parts of the U.S. for more than two weeks has inflicted a widespread toll, especially on the elderly, outdoor workers and those without air conditioning.

Climbing temperatures in places like Death Valley are not some kind of natural wonder for a bucket list, like seeing a total solar eclipse or climbing Mt. Everest. They are part of a spiraling, unnatural human disaster caused by our own ongoing pollution of the atmosphere that sustains life on this planet. California has long been a land of extremes, swinging from severe drought and destructive wildfires to floods and landslides. The lowest point in North America, Death Valley’s Badwater Basin, is just 135 miles from the highest point in the lower 48 states, Mt. Whitney. We have the world’s biggest, tallest and oldest trees. But climate change is amplifying California’s boom-bust cycle so much that our past range of experience grows less relevant by the year. This summer – even with extraordinary heat – is likely to be one of the coolest of the rest of your life. As climate scientist Michael Mann put it earlier this summer, “it’s a ‘new abnormal’ and it is now playing out in real time – the impacts of climate change are upon us in the form of unprecedented, dangerous extreme weather events.” It won’t begin to change until we stop burning fossil fuels. Until then, we’ll have no choice but to get used to heat that is at once frighteningly extreme and no longer so remarkable.



## ‘Neutral’ caretaker setup

Talha Bilal



Interestingly, the caretaker governments appointed by the same coalition parties’ government in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have exceeded their constitutional limit, as the mandatory elections within the stipulated 3 months’ time after dissolution of assemblies were skipped. Many in the political arena as well as judicial experts have termed it ‘unlawful’, as even the Supreme Court had directed to hold elections on both the assemblies in April. Now many are raising concerns that the same tactics might be used in an attempt to delay the general election to a comparatively favorable time

The idea of a caretaker setup is to rid the authorities of any political influence, and hold the elections in a transparent manner and complete the fair transfer of power in a democratic way. However, its not always the case.

Leaders and activists of Bangladesh’s main opposition party have constantly warned the government that a ‘neutral caretaker government’ must be formed to conduct the country’s general elections, which are due to be held in December. The ruling Awami League party, however, has brushed aside the demand for a caretaker government at various public functions. The South Asian country will hold its 12th national elections in December or January next year, which the ruling Awami League government wants to hold under the administration of incumbent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, which the opposition parties have vehemently rejected. In 2011 the Bangladesh Awami League led government abolished the caretaker government through passage of the 15th amendment of the constitution, since then the elections take place sans the ‘neutral’ caretaker setup, and always receive allegations of mass rigging and engineering. Nevertheless, Sheikh Hasina has comfortably been getting a landslide majority since then.

In Pakistan, both major coalition partners have agreed that a politician should be appointed as the head of the interim set-up ahead of general elections in October or November this year, with PPP’s Qamar Zaman Kaira saying that no politician could be appointed as a judge and vice versa. Earlier, the practice of appointing a retired judge or any other professional had been mostly followed. Now, the ritual is about to change as the coalition govt is set to amend the laws to ‘empower’ the interim Prime Minister and appoint a loyalist to the post for better ‘neutrality’, as the PML-N announced that an amendment was being introduced to empower the interim setup to have powers similar to that of an elected government. These powers would allow the caretakers to take ‘important decisions’.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has nominated Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar as the caretaker prime minister, according to media. Dar is a close confidant and a relative of Sharif family. They said the party is taking the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and other coalition partners into confidence over the Dar’s nomination. On the other hand, the PPP has established a consultation committee which comprised federal ministers Khurshid Shah, Naveed Qamar and former prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani. The top leadership of the major govt parties was in Dubai to mull upon the caretaker setup.

Interestingly, the caretaker governments appointed by the same coalition parties’ government in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have exceeded their constitutional limit, as the mandatory elections within the stipulated 3 months’ time after dissolution of assemblies were skipped. Many in the political arena as well as judicial experts have termed it ‘unlawful’, as even the Supreme Court had directed to hold elections on both the assemblies in April. Now many are raising concerns that the same tactics might be used in an attempt to delay the general election to a comparatively favorable time. The PML-N will not be willing to hold general election while Imran Khan walks free and Nawaz Sharif remains abroad. That is one of the reasons the government is dissolving the assemblies two or three days ahead of completion of tenure, to get more time for things to go their way. Meanwhile, the PPP has been vocal about holding the general election in time, unlike the JUI-F, which has often teased with the possibility of delay in elections. The ruling coalition apparently wants PTI Chairman Imran Khan be dealt with before going into the elections. It seems that the government is still suffering from the Imran Khan paranoia. As if all the censorship and legal woes put on him are not sufficient, the ruling parties want him behind the bars, disqualified before they call the general election. However, the public sentiment for the incumbent rulers is at its lowest in years, and the rulers are well aware of it. Nothing seems to help them gain

the ground and support they lost during the past year and a half. The general perception that the coalition government has been more interested in benefitting themselves and quash their own cases than providing any relief to the masses is visibly strong. Just last week, the government added to the woes of inflation-weary people already bearing the brunt of record inflation by approving a massive increase in base tariffs of electricity. With the latest surge, the base tariff of electricity increased by up to Rs7.50 per unit, which will add thousands in electricity bills every month. Adding fuel to the fire are the revenge politics, brutal tactics to shun opponents and silence the critics. Those in charge must realize and admit that unlike the 90’s, the vast majority of people cannot be made to buy the narrative. With the use of social media platforms at unprecedented high level, the historical ways of gaining support and building favorable narratives by using TV and newspaper medium is not as effective as it once was. The only path suitable for the government to prove Imran Khan wrong and make their ‘people-friendly govt’ point was by relieving the masses of their woes, in which they have failed. Even the ‘experienced financial maestro’ Ishaq Dar has been unable to bring any good news for the inflation hit economy. As things stand, even if there is no PTI on the ballot paper, it will still be very difficult for the government parties to make the voters vote for them, if the elections are held on time. And their desperate efforts to make the situation work out in a better way for them has proven to be a disaster. The last thing the coalition parties would want now is to make the already skeptical elections more dubious by appointing controversial caretaker officials. It is high time that the people are allowed to choose their representatives in a free and fair manner. The country and economy cannot withhold any more inconsistency and chaos.

–The writer is a student at Quaid-e-Azam University

## How China became an ideal partner in the Middle East

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

China is also attempting to project itself as a global peacemaker, which will definitely enhance its legitimacy, prestige and status on the international level. Foreign Minister Qin Gang in April declared that China is prepared to broker peace talks between Israel and Palestine with the aim of finding a resolution to their long-standing conflict. “China is willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation with Palestine to promote an early, comprehensive

It is important to examine China’s policy toward the Middle East, which has been shown to be successful and productive for several key reasons. First of all, China’s Middle East policy is multidimensional, with its first facet composed of putting a significant emphasis on diplomacy. This policy is strengthening Beijing’s soft power in the region and increasing its engagement and footprints in the Middle East, specifically in the Gulf region, and first and foremost toward Saudi Arabia and the UAE. A core pillar of China’s diplomatic role in the Middle East is maintaining and promoting peace and stability by preventing conflicts and tensions from spiraling out of control and leading to full-fledged war.

China is also attempting to project itself as a global peacemaker, which will definitely enhance its legitimacy, prestige and status on the international level. Foreign Minister Qin Gang in April declared that China is prepared to broker peace talks between Israel and Palestine with the aim of finding a resolution to their long-standing conflict. “China is willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation with Palestine to promote an early, comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestine issue,” Chinese President Xi Jinping told Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas during the latter’s visit to China in June. Beijing has also become one of the first countries to be engaged in the reconstruction of Syria. It hopes to bring peace and stability to the Arab state after a memorandum of understanding was signed last year between the Chinese ambassador and the head of the Syrian National Council. Syria is another Middle Eastern nation that recently joined China’s Belt and Road Initiative, China’s emphasis on soft power, rather than employing coercion and hard power, is part of its broader Belt and Road Initiative, which is a global investment

strategy that is improving the infrastructure of more than 150 countries. This critical project was incorporated into the Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party in 2017. The Belt and Road Initiative has two parts: the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The key objective of the initiative is to construct “a unified large market and make full use of both international and domestic markets, through cultural exchange and integration, to enhance mutual understanding and trust of member nations, ending up in an innovative pattern with capital inflows, talent pool, and technology database.” Any conflict between countries in the Middle East has the potential to ignite a regional conflagration, which will not serve the interests of China or the nations of the region. Another prominent recent example of Beijing employing diplomacy is the historic deal it brokered between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which was announced in March and was seen by some experts, scholars and policy analysts as a sign of China’s increasing influence in the Middle East. The agreement was a key development not only in terms of restoring ties between two Middle Eastern powers – Saudi Arabia and Iran – but also in reducing tensions and enhancing peace and security in the region. Improved ties between Riyadh and Tehran could have a significant impact on the region’s geopolitical and economic landscapes as well. The second pillar of China’s policy toward the Middle East is anchored in not only the traditional oil and gas trade, but also in long-term investments in other areas, including in some Middle Eastern nations’ infrastructure, clean energy and information technology.

For instance, Beijing has committed itself to a significant investment in Iran via various fields. In 2021, China and the Iranian government signed a 25-year strategic partnership deal, which is now in the early stages of implementation. According to the Tehran

Times: “The Chinese foreign minister approved of his Iranian counterpart’s views expounded in his op-ed published in China’s Global Times. Wang (Yi) said the Iranian foreign minister’s views show the promising horizon in relations between Tehran and Beijing. The top Chinese diplomat underlined his country’s readiness to expand cooperation with Iran in financing, energy, banking and cultural sectors.” Positive partnerships between China and Middle Eastern nations can also be found in other areas, including addressing climate change, renewable energy and the solar industry. For example, during a state visit by Xi to Riyadh last December, Saudi Arabia and China signed a memorandum of understanding on hydrogen energy. Beyond gaining enhanced global legitimacy and status, it is worth noting that Beijing has a vested financial interest in stressing diplomacy and promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. China has strong trade and economic relationships with Saudi Arabia and other regional countries beyond its oil imports. According to Deutsche Welle, China “has cultivated strong economic and political ties with both Riyadh and Tehran in recent years. Saudi Arabia is China’s largest oil supplier, with trade between the two countries amounting to \$87 billion in 2021. Commerce between Iran and China, meanwhile, was worth more than \$16 billion in the same year, with Tehran depending on the Asian giant for as much as 30 percent of its foreign trade.” In a nutshell, China’s engagement with the Middle East has been efficient, well-informed and successful due to the fact that it uses a multidimensional policy focusing on employing soft power, playing the key role of peacemaker and mediator, and carrying out long-term investments not only in the oil and gas sectors, but also in clean energy, renewable energy, infrastructure and technology.

–Courtesy: Arab News



## Briefs

## PPP says no consensus on interim PM

FROM PAGE 01  
"They will inform the party leadership of the [proposed] names, but no decision has been taken regarding this yet ... It should be clear now that we have not settled on a name." She also denied that her party had been consulted on appointing the caretaker PM from the current federal cabinet. The PPP leader further said her party's leadership had maintained that elections should be held on time, within the constitutional term, be it 60 days or 90 days. "We believe it will be better for the country and its stability," she said.

## Fazl to 'visit' Dubai to meet Zardari, Nawaz

FROM PAGE 01  
receiving any suggestions from PML-N regarding Ishaq Dar for caretaker prime minister's (PM) slot. Maulana Fazlur Rehman-led JUI-F and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari-led PPP rejected such reports regarding their agreement on appointing Ishaq Dar as the caretaker PM. Sources closer to PPP told that no agreement was made on Ishaq Dar's name for the slot.

## Relocation of banned TTP to N-Western Afghanistan

FROM PAGE 01  
But now the non Pushtoos are publicly opposing this project of relocation of Pakistani militants. Besides others former Vice President Amar Ullah Saleh, Rashid Dostam and Ahmad Masoud while opposing relocation of TTP militants to Northern and western Afghanistan, also urged the UN and other global organs to take its early notices. The history of banned TTP slipping into Afghanistan is not new but it started in 2009 with the ending of military operation Rah-i-Kaafar in Swat valley and its adjacent districts. At that time, the then TTP Chief Mullah Fazal Ullah was mysterious escaped from Swat and landed in Kunar province of Afghanistan. Later he was followed by militant commanders like Maulvi Faqir Mohammad, Latif Mehsud and others from North and South Waziristan and Mangal Bagh from Khyber. In the wake of military operation Zarbi-Azab commenced on June 15th 2014 in North Waziristan, Hafiz Gul Bahadar shifted to Afghanistan's South-Eastern zone. The Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid, as quoted by the Afghan News Agency, stated that TTP fighters currently residing in Khost, Kunar, and other border areas of Afghanistan will be stationed in northern Afghanistan. The plan involves relocating these fighters to remote provinces away from the Durand Line. No one can deny the fact that Afghan Taliban have out rightly regretted Pakistan's demand of either taking action or evacuating banned TTP militants. In fact, both TTA and TTP are from the same school of thoughts with similar goals in both the neighbouring countries and other regional countries. Taliban are staunch Sunnis and known for their hostile attitude towards Shia's. Iran is already in close links with all Non Pushtoon Afghans who are dominating almost Northern and western parts of that war-devastated country. Since signing of Doha Qatar agreement, TTA Or Emirate Islami Afghanistan are very well exposed in its obedience and loyalties to US lead allies especially Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Pakistan has already expressed doubts over banned TTP links with several other foreign countries. On such grounds, shifting of these TTP associated militants to Northern and Western parts of Afghanistan could be considered another shift in prolonged war, being fought by a number of global powers through regional countries on the soil of Afghanistan.

## Pakistan Women's Squash Premier League 2023 kicks off

Sadia Gul said that women's premier league is not just a tournament but it aims to promote and inspire the young girls to showcase their talent and to excel in the game of squash

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Talented deaf and dumb squash player Sana Bahadur thrashed Pakistan number one squash player Noor ul Ain in the first round by 3-2 in the inaugural edition of Pakistan women's squash premier league 2023 here at the Mushaf Squash Complex Islamabad on Monday. According to event organiser Sadia Gul, who is also national women coach said that the two days event will provide an opportunity to local players to improve their game as first time girls from Quetta also participating in the premier league organised by the Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) with the collaboration of Women in Sports (WinS) and Serena Hotels. Sadia Gul said that the women's premier league is not just a tournament but it aims to promote and inspire the young girls to showcase their talent and to excel in the game of squash. She said



that 16 players are divided into four teams namely Warriors, Tigers, Shaheen and Panther. On day one Sana Bahadur of team panther's beat national ranking top player Noor ul Ain (Warriors) by 3-2 to upset them

in the premier league. Noor ul Ain led the match by 11-13, 11-8, 11-9 but Sana Bahadur gripped the game and never allowed Noor ul Ain to come back in the game and won the last two games by 13-11 and 11-8.

Faiqa Fida 9 years old girl belongs from team Shaheen also beat Farwa Batool of Warriors by 11-7, 6-11, 11-8, 11-9 while Quetta girl Irum Zehra of team Panthers beat Zayna Zuabir(team Warriors) in close match by

9-11, 11-2, 9-11, 11-4, 11-2 Another close match was witnessed between Mehwish Ali of team Tigers and Sana Bahadur of panthers which were won by Mehwish by 11-9, 9-11, 7-11, 11-5, 11-7 respectively

## Popp doubles down as Germany maul Morocco 6-0

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE, July 24 (Reuters) - Talismanic captain Alexandra Popp scored a brace as Germany launched their bid for a third Women's World Cup title with a 6-0 demolition of debutants Morocco on Monday. In the tournament's most one-sided match to date, veteran striker Popp led from the front, heading in two first-half strikes before Klara Buehl, Lea Schueller and two own goals blew out the score after the break in front

of 27,256 at Melbourne Rectangular Stadium. The Germans' cake-walk put them top of Group H on three points, with rivals Colombia and South Korea to play their opener in Sydney on Tuesday. "We stayed true to ourselves," Germany coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg told reporters. "It was a great to have a 6-0 score ... I look forward to the next match, but today we want to be happy with what we did today. It was truly a team performance." Seven months after the Moroccan men's fairytale run to the World Cup semi-finals in Qatar, the Atlas Li-

onesses became the first Arab team to take the field at the women's showpiece. They will hope for better in their next match against South Korea after humiliation against the Euro 2022 runners-up, who took little time to get into their groove and were ruthless to the finish. "As it stands we came across a team which was superior to our own - David and Goliath," said Morocco coach Reynald Pedros. "They had something that we didn't. I think it goes without saying we were probably going to lose but I think we didn't need to lose by six goals." Under

the first burst of sustained German pressure, Morocco were quick to crumble. A poor clearance allowed Kathrin Hendrich space on the right to swing in a cross that goalkeeper Khadija Er-Rmichi misread and Popp thumped in from directly in front in the 11th minute. Morocco regrouped under captain Ghizlane Chebbak, who launched a long-range effort in the 24th minute, causing Germany's keeper Merle Frohms to scurry across for the save. The first shot on goal energised the Moroccans but their set piece defending proved a dead weight. Whirling around in the box, Popp scored again in the 39th minute, Buehl's corner pinged off the back of her head. An animated Chebbak demanded more from her team in a fiery halftime address but 23 seconds after the restart, the Moroccans conceded a third goal. After Lina Magull hit the woodwork from close range, Buehl swooped on a clearance and filed a sizzling, low strike into the right corner. The night grew ugly for the Moroccans as defender Hanane Ait El Haj put the ball into her own net less than 10 minutes later.



## Al-Hilal make record £259m offer for Mbappe

RIYADH: Saudi Arabian side Al-Hilal have permission to speak to Kylian Mbappe after making a world record £259m bid for the Paris St-Germain forward. The 24-year-old France captain, who has a year left on his contract, has refused to sign an extension at the French champions and was not selected for their pre-season tour to Japan. PSG want to sell Mbappe now rather than see him leave for free next summer. Neymar's £200m move from Barcelona to PSG in 2017 is the current record. PSG activated Brazil forward Neymar's release clause to make him the most expensive player in the world. Should he move, Mbappe will have commanded two of the three highest fees paid for a player after joining PSG from Monaco for £166m in 2017. Chelsea, Manchester United, Tottenham, Inter Milan and Barcelona have all expressed an interest in Mbappe, who has previously said he intends to leave PSG for free at the end of next season. The feeling at PSG is that he has already agreed to join La Liga giants Real Madrid on the expiration of his contract. However, chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi has made clear his determination to take a tough stance, saying it is "impossible" that Mbappe be allowed to leave on a free transfer in 2024. - Agencies

## Sweden is risking its ties with the Muslim countries

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: If the Swedish government does not change its laws regarding the spread of hate, the Organization of Islamic Conference will act, Saudi geopolitical analyst Salman Al-Ansari told the Arab News weekly show "Frankly Speaking." "If the Swedish government and its legal system don't rectify their laws with regards to allowing extremists and radicals to spread hate, then I won't be surprised if there will be a unanimous decision to take measures by the OIC." Al-Ansari's comments came as the OIC issued a statement on Sunday condemning in the strongest terms the burning of a copy of the Qur'an by a far-right extremist group called Danske Patriotier, or Danish Patriots,

outside the Iraqi Embassy in Copenhagen on Friday. The incident is only the latest in a spate of incidents in Denmark and Sweden that have stirred up a diplomatic storm, which now threatens the Nordic states' relations with the Muslim world. Earlier in the week, Salwan Momika, an Iraqi immigrant living in Sweden, desecrated the Qur'an, just weeks after he set fire to pages of the holy book outside a Stockholm mosque. In January, Rasmus Paludan, a far-right Danish leader, also burned a copy of the Qur'an in front of the Turkish embassy in Stockholm. Muslim leaders and governments across the Islamic world have condemned these acts, which had been permitted by local authorities ostensibly in line with the right to freedom

of expression. In a statement on Sunday, Houssein Ibrahim Taha, the OIC's secretary-general, expressed his deep dissatisfaction with the repeated incidents of "transgression against Islamic sanctities," adding that such acts "constitute incitement to religious hatred, intolerance and discrimination" that would have dangerous consequences. "Burning the copy of any holy book, whether it's the Holy Qur'an, the Bible, the Torah, or any sacred book, is absolutely disgusting and unjustifiable, and it's an action of extreme hate. If this is not hate, then what constitutes hate? This is my question," Al-Ansari said. He accused Swedish authorities of hypocrisy, highlighting cases of far-right activists justifiably facing prosecution for using Nazi slogans while anti-Muslim acts went unpunished.

## SC bars police from arresting Imran Khan

FROM PAGE 01

At the outset of the proceedings, the PTI chief appeared before the court as directed by the bench on the last hearing. However, the arguments from the complainant's lawyer couldn't be given due to his absence. Meanwhile, the Balochistan advocate general requested the court to order the former prime minister to appear before the investigation officer (IO) in the case. At this, Justice Naqvi inquired why the PTI chief was required to join the probe. Justice Afridi then directed the government lawyer to take directives on the reason for including Khan in the investigations and state them to the court before the complainant's lawyer on the next hearing. Later, the court adjourned the hearing till August 9 at the request of the case's complainant.

Khan had moved the SC to quash the FIR that nominated him in the murder case of the advocate Shar. Besides bail in the case, he also requested to set aside the Balochistan High Court's (BHC) decision to reject a similar petition. However, the two-member bench of the SC comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsen and Justice Ayesha A Malik rejected Khan's bail plea and refused to suspend the BHC's order without hearing other parties in the matter. The court held that a two-member bench of the apex court could not suspend the order passed by the learned high court's two-member bench, directing the PTI chief to approach the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) for fixation of the case before a three-member bench. Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said that Mr Dentonic and his desperate bunch of criminals deliberately attempted to create a law and order situation to implicate him and PTI in May 9 like cases to start a crackdown on them. PTI Chairman said: "Today again was a deliberate attempt to create a law and order situation by Mr Dentonic and his desperate bunch of criminals. He said: "I presume to implicate me and PTI in other cases, just like May 9th was used as a pretext to start a crackdown on us."

## Centcom chief, COAS discuss regional security

FROM PAGE 01

apart from the regional security situation, matters of mutual interest and defence cooperation were discussed, the military's media wing mentioned. "Both reiterated the desire to further enhance bilateral relations in all fields," the ISPR said. The meeting comes as both nations - Pakistan and US - called on war-torn Afghanistan to ensure that its soil isn't used as a safe haven by terrorists. The United States had last week reiterated that the Afghan Taliban must ensure that their country isn't used for terror attacks as Pakistan blames the neighbouring nation for harbouring hardliners Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). "Taliban has the responsibility to prevent [...] Afghanistan from being used as a safe haven for launching terrorist attacks," US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said during a press briefing. The top brass of the Pakistan Army has said that sanctuaries and liberty of action available to terrorists of proscribed TTP and other groups of that ilk in Afghanistan is one of the major reasons impacting the security of Islamabad. The terror attacks in Pakistan have spiked since November last year when the TTP ended its ceasefire agreement with Islamabad, with the armed forces also ramping up efforts against militants.

## Pakistan dominate SL on first day of 2nd Test

Abdullah and Shan carried the innings for Pakistan and scored 108 runs off 117 balls. Shan played a quick knock of 51 runs which is now called as 'Pakball formula' on social media

COLOMBO: Abdullah Shafique and Shan Masood built up a strong partnership after Pakistan lose opening batter Imam-ul-Haq earlier in the third session on day one of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Colombo on Monday. After bowling out Sri Lanka for 166 runs, Pakistan were off to a poor start with batting followed by the early dismissal of Imam. The left-handed batter scored just six runs before walking back to the pavilion. Abdullah and Shan carried the innings for Pakistan and scored 108 runs off 117 balls. Shan played a quick knock of 51 runs which is now called as 'Pakball for-

mula' on social media. Babar (8\*) is at the crease with Abdullah (74\*) as Pakistan walked out at stumps with 145-2 in 28.3 overs. Asitha Fernando took two wickets for the hosts. Abrar Ahmed and Naseem Shah rattled Sri Lanka before Tea on day one as they were bowled out for 166 in the first innings. The bowling duo went berserk on Sri Lankan batters who couldn't find any clue to settle down at the crease. Dhanajaya de Silva tried hard to replicate his first Test's heroics here but he could only score 57 before falling to Abrar with Saud Shakeel taking a well-judged catch.

Abdullah Shafique once again took a blinder at short



leg off Abrar to remove unlucky Sadeera Samarawick-

rama who got out in the same way for the third time in a row this series. Ramesh Mendis resisted a bit with his 27 runs but Sri Lanka fell apart just before Tea. Abrar bagged four wickets while Naseem managed three. Shan Masood, with a brilliant throw in the third over, provided an early breakthrough for Pakistan in the opening hour of the first day. Nishan Madushka remained unlucky as the throw went straight to thrash the stumps on the striker's end. Shaheen Shah Afridi removed Kusal Mendis in the seventh over to further dent the hosts who decided

to bat first after winning the toss following a delay due to early morning rain. It was not too late when Naseem promised to be real destruction for Sri Lanka as he took back-to-back wickets in quick succession. The right-arm pacer bagged Angelo Mathews and Dimuth Karunaratne within his two overs closer to the 15th. Mathews (9) and Karunaratne (17) were two experienced batters who were the need for Sri Lanka in the tough time. Dhanajaya de Silva and Dinesh Chandimal walked off at Lunch with Sri Lanka suffering at 79-4. - Agencies



## Briefs

**Suicide bombing in Somalia capital kills 20**

MOGADISHU: More than 20 people, including soldiers, were killed and dozens others wounded on Monday when a suicide bombing rocked the Somali capital, Mogadishu, a senior official said. A senior security officer in Mogadishu, who spoke to Anadolu on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on talking to the media, said a suicide bomber blew himself up at a military training facility in Mogadishu, killing more than 20 people, including new recruits and military personnel. "The suicide bomber blew himself up during busy hours on Monday. At the time when the blast occurred, there was a large queue of new recruits at the Jalle Siyaad military training camp," he said. He added that dozens of people were also injured in the attack, who were rushed to hospital for treatment. Local media put the casualties at more than 30 people. Somali-based Al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist group, Al-Shabaab, claimed responsibility for the deadly attack. — Agencies

**'Nixon predicted Ukraine conflict in 1994'**

WASHINGTON: Former US president Richard Nixon warned his successor Bill Clinton nearly 30 years ago that Ukraine could plunge into bloody turmoil, while predicting major political changes in Russia, according to a document made available to the public last week. In a seven-page letter dated March 21, 1994 and cited by the Wall Street Journal, the late president gave his take on the volatile post-Soviet political landscape right after he returned from a trip to Russia and Ukraine. Nixon described Ukraine as "indispensable" and warned that the situation there was "highly explosive." "If it is allowed to get out of control, it will make Bosnia look like a PTA garden party," he said, referring to the 1992-1995 ethnic conflict in the Balkans that claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people. The former president pointed to an "unpredictable" political situation in the country, lamenting that "the Ukrainian parliament... is even worse than the Russian Duma." He urged Clinton to strengthen the American diplomatic presence in Ukraine and prioritize funding for Kiev. Nixon also noted that the political clout of then Russian president Boris Yeltsin had "rapidly deteriorated," adding that "the days of his unquestioned leadership of Russia are numbered." —APP

**9 injured in mortar explosion in Taiwan**

BRINING: At least nine people were injured in a mortar explosion as Taiwan on Monday began five-day live-fire annual military exercises. The island nation's Defense Ministry said the explosion happened at an ammunition depot at the Hsiang Feng military base in the northern port city of Keelung near the capital Taipei. Focus Taiwan news website reported. It said the incident occurred at around 3 p.m. (0700GMT) when technical personnel were conducting an inspection and two of the injured are critical. Authorities are investigating the cause behind the explosion. Known as Han Kuang, Taiwan is holding the 39th edition of the military exercises since 1984, across Taiwan Strait. All branches of Taiwan's armed forces are participating in the exercises which include live-fire drills and computerized war games. The military exercises "test the Taiwanese military's capability to fend off a Chinese invasion," Focus Taiwan said, quoting the island nation's Defense Ministry. It said China flew 11 jets while six naval vessels from the mainland sailed around Taiwan on Monday. As part of the drills, Taiwan's Air Force fighter jets flew to the eastern side from Taiwan's western part "in a simulation of an invasion." —DNA



COPENHAGEN: A group of 118th National Management Course participants at National School of Public Policy, Lahore is presently visiting Denmark to study its Electric Vehicle Policy and role of government and private sectors in its implementation. The delegation visited the embassy for an intro briefing. —DNA

## Pak-US education alliance bridging both nations

DNA

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to United States Masood Khan says education has been a robust link between Pakistan and United States from 1950s till today. He was addressing a batch of 25 visiting Pakistani students under 'Study of the US Institutes' program at Embassy of Pakistan Washington DC. "From the 1950s till today, education has been a robust link between Pakistan and United States," said Pakistan's Ambassador to United States. "Last year was a good year because the number increased to 8000, registering 17% increase. This number should further increase given our population and the number of students coming out of universities of Pakistan," he said. "We must have more students here in the United States,"

stressed the Ambassador. Addressing a batch of 25 visiting Pstudents under 'Study of the US Institutes' (SUSI) program and visited the Embassy of Pakistan Washington DC for call on the Ambassador. SUSI is a 5-week long educational initiative for fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting education cooperation between Pakistan and the United States. The program, held annually since 2010, provides young minds with a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in American society, history, and values. The Ambassador congratulated the students on their selection for an enriching SUSI program. "You have made us proud," he said. The Ambassador told the students that it was a unique opportunity for them to visit US seats of learning, enriching their experience and broaden their intellectual horizon. "You will take

valuable inputs from here back to your own environments. And this is a process of cross fertilization. Intellectual capabilities recognize no boundaries. Your peers and also the environments in which you work, they will benefit directly from your experience," said the Ambassador. Highlighting imitation, emulation, and innovation as the three key stages for societal progress, the Ambassador expressed the hope that the extraordinary experience would empower the visiting students to replicate and adopt what they have observed and experienced during their stay in the United States. The Ambassador reminded the students that they represented a rich civilization having an experience of seventy five years in nation building and surviving many upheavals. "This short course should inspire you to come back,

to interface our two countries, to enrich shared intellectual heritage of our two nations," he said. Masood Khan thanked the U.S. government and all those involved in organizing the SUSI program for their commitment and support to promote educational cooperation between the two countries. He also appreciated University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and the US mentors for hosting the visiting fellows. The Ambassador urged the visiting students to nurture the contacts that they have made with their peers and US counterparts and building their networks. "Your net-worth would be determined by your networks in your future lives," he added. The Ambassador also interacted with the participants and invited them to share their thoughts about the program and its learning experience.

While sharing their experiences, the participants emphasized both the commonalities and distinctions between Pakistan and the United States. They lauded remarkable organizational skills that they observed at the individual and societal levels, the formulation and execution of policies at state and federal level, the interactive environment, the appreciation of diversity, the spirit of inclusivity, the provision of equal opportunities and presence of an informed and vigilant citizenry to guard their rights and discharge their responsibilities. They also noted relentless pursuit of the American dream as a defining aspect of US society. The Ambassador extended his best wishes for their future endeavors and looked forward to their continued contributions to strengthening Pak-US relations.

## Greta joins climate protest hours after conviction

MALMO: Climate activist Greta Thunberg helped stage a protest in the southern Swedish city of Malmö on Monday just hours after a local court fined her for disobeying a police order during a similar protest over a month ago. Thunberg, 20, who became the face of young climate activists worldwide after staging weekly protests in front of the Swedish parliament, admitted during the proceedings that she had disobeyed the police order but pleaded not guilty and said that she was acting out of necessity. Advertisement · Scroll to continue "It is absurd that those who act in line with science should

pay the price for it," she told reporters in the Malmö district court. Thunberg and other activists from the group Reclaim the Future blocked the

road for oil trucks in Malmö harbour on June 19. She was charged for failing to leave when ordered to do so by police. After the sentencing Thunberg and other

activists headed back to Malmö harbour to block traffic again. Advertisement · Scroll to continue Thunberg earlier told the court that her actions were justifiable. —DNA



## Pakistan's sugar exports to China top \$18 million in first half of 2023

BEIJING, July 24 (: Pakistan's exports of sugars and sugar confectionery crossed \$18 million in the first six months of 2023. Quoting General Administration of Customs of China, Ghulam Qadir, Commercial Counsellor at the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing said on Monday that this export achievement this year demonstrates the country's commitment to economic growth and trade diversification. According to Gwadar Pro, the growing demand for Pakistani sweets in the Chinese market reflects the high quality and authenticity of these products, along with strengthened trade relations between the two nations. "As Pakistan continues building on this success, there are bright prospects for further export growth and strengthened bilateral cooperation, heralding a sweet future for both countries," Ghulam Qadir added. Qadir explained that Chinese consumers have shown increasing interest in unique and exotic treats from around the world, and Pakistani sweets have become popular due to their rich flavors and traditional recipes. The authentic taste and stringent quality standards of Pakistani confectionery have established a niche market for these products in China. He further said that exports of chemically pure sucrose (community code 17019910) to China remained at \$18.11 million, while last year during the same period it was only \$0.6 million. The total export of sugars and sugar confectionery to China reached \$18.22 million from January-June 2023.—APP

## BRICS expansion to be discussed at upcoming meeting

DNA

BEIJING: The discussion on expanding BRICS, the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is expected to be high on the agenda of an upcoming meeting of senior officials to prepare for the BRICS Summit in August, observers said. They also said that since its inception in 2006 as BRIC (South Africa was added in 2010), the group of emerging economies have upheld the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, practised true multilateralism and achieved solid results in pragmatic cooperation, thus becoming increasingly attractive to other countries. China has sent Wang Yi, Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, to

attend the 13th Meeting of BRICS National Security Advisers and High Representatives on National Security in Johannesburg, South Africa, on Monday and Tuesday, China Daily reported. South Africa is this year's BRICS chair. According to Anil Sooklal, the country's ambassador to the group, more than 40 countries, including all the major developing Global South countries, have expressed interest in becoming BRICS members, and 22 countries have formally asked to join. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has also invited the heads of all African countries to the upcoming BRICS Summit in Johannesburg to engage in dialogue with BRICS leaders. "With the joining of more developing countries, BRICS is expected to better represent the Global South with a louder voice on the world stage," said Yao Jinxiang,

an assistant researcher at the China Institute of International Studies' Institute of Developing Countries. While BRICS members account for 42 percent of the world's population, they have less than 15 percent of voting rights in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. "African countries and BRICS nations share similar views and interests in improving and reforming the current international order and global governance system. Africa as a whole can make a



joint call with BRICS for accelerating reforms in financial, monetary and other sectors," Yao said. He Wenping, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of West-Asian and African Studies, said that joining or cooperating with BRICS will help Africa expand cooperation with more emerging economies and developing countries. "For example, the BRICS New Development Bank can provide Africa with more opportunities in trade and economy, investment and financial assistance, among other things," she said. She said China and Africa also expected Wang's visit to find common ground on how to resolve the Ukraine crisis. According to the researcher, as the crisis continues, inflation as well as energy and food crises triggered by Western

sanctions have had a negative impact on African countries. "Africa and China have highly consistent positions regarding the crisis, and the two sides can play a joint role in promoting peace talks," she added. Besides the two-day BRICS meeting in Johannesburg, China-Africa cooperation is also on the agenda of Wang's trip, which has taken him to Ethiopia and Kenya. Wang reiterated China's commitment to cooperation with Africa under the frameworks of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in meetings with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Kenyan President William Ruto. They spoke highly of the mutual respect that China has shown in its cooperation with African countries and hailed China as an example for developing countries.—Agencies.

## China lashes out at Japan over chip curbs

BEIJING: China has strongly criticized export curbs on chip-making equipment that took effect in Japan on Sunday. Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning claimed the new Japanese measures were "clearly directed" against Beijing, and said the Chinese government was "deeply dissatisfied." "China urges the Japanese side to bear in mind the overall interests of China-Japan economic and trade cooperation and its own long-term interests and refrain from abusing export control measures," Mao added. According to the spokeswoman, Beijing has repeatedly warned Tokyo against introducing measures that allegedly violate international economic and trade rules. Japan first announced the export restrictions in March as a draft revision to its Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act. After the curbs entered effect on Sunday, 23 chip-manufacturing items now require government approval for export. Among them is equipment for cleaning, check-ups, and lithography – a technology essential in producing cutting-edge chips. Japan did not mention China specifically as the main target of the restrictions. The move is part of a wider campaign launched by the US last year to limit China's access to advanced chip-manufacturing technology. Last October, Washington rolled out a sweeping set of export controls which included a measure to cut China off from certain semiconductor chips made with US equipment anywhere in the world. Since then, Washington has been pushing key chip-making nations and allies such as the Netherlands and Japan to follow its lead and introduce export restrictions of their own. The Dutch government introduced export controls in June, limiting the sales of Dutch-made advanced chip-making machinery to China. Chinese analysts have warned that Beijing will take any measures necessary to safeguard its own interests, the Global Times newspaper reported on Sunday. — DNA

## Iraq stands firm for stability in Yemen

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said Sunday that his country supports dialogue between the parties to the conflict in Yemen and the establishment of permanent stability in the country. Hussein was speaking to reporters after meeting with his Yemeni counterpart Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak in the capital Baghdad. "There is an undeclared cease-fire in Yemen. We wish for all parties in Yemen to engage in dialogue for this cease-fire to be effective. The Iraqi government is ready to provide support in this regard. We maintain good relations with all parties in Yemen and support the achievement of lasting stability in the country," he said in a joint press conference. Hussein expressed Iraq's readiness to provide support in improving the humanitarian situation by facilitating the entry of health and food supplies into Yemen. "We also wish for Yemen to resume its exports of oil and gas. We support the Riyadh Agreement signed in 2019 and Saudi Arabia's efforts to unite Yemeni parties at the negotiating table. We also hope that this will lead to a consensus that will end the war," he added. Hussein also said that a delegation from Iraq's foreign and interior ministries will be sent to Yemen to monitor the situation of Iraqi citizens in the country. He pointed out that a "political consultation agreement" has been signed between the two nations. Bin Mubarak expressed his country's willingness to further strengthen relations with Iraq. He said they support Iraq's mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which has positive implications for Yemen's situation. "As the legitimate government of Yemen, we are committed to the unofficial cease-fire," bin Mubarak said. Bin Mubarak highlighted that Yemen is still facing an economic war. —APP

## 15 dead, all missing passengers found after Indonesia boat sinks

KENDAR: At least 15 people were killed on Monday after a wooden boat sank off the coast of Indonesia's Sulawesi island, search and rescue officials said, adding that all missing passengers had been accounted for. The boat sank with 48 people onboard just after midnight (1700 GMT on Sunday), the local office of Indonesia's search and rescue agency said in a statement. Six people were rescued and taken to hospital for treatment, it added, and the cause of the sinking was being investigated. Muhamad Arafah, head of the local search and rescue agency in Kendari city in Southeast Sulawesi, said in the statement that the 27 other passengers had been accounted for and all the victims had been identified. The agency had earlier reported that 19 were missing and that search efforts were ongoing, but Arafah said the operation had now been "declared finished and closed". The boat was crossing a bay between the villages of Lanto and Lagili in Central Buton regency on Muna island, said local rescue office spokesperson Wahyudin, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. — DNA

## Palestinian state delegation meets ICJ registrar

THE HAGUE: State of Palestine's delegation, headed by Dr. Riad Malki, met Registrar of Int'l Court of Justice, Mr. Philippe Gautier, and submitted Written Statement on UN's request for an advisory opinion (Res. 77/247) about Question of Palestine. In its Written Statement, the State of Palestine provided innumerable evidence of Israel's illegal policies and practice and drew a clear picture of the wrongs and indignities suffered by the Palestinian people over decades. The Court's verdict is clear: Israel's colonial occupation & annexation of Palestinian land, racial discrimination, apartheid, and its systematic denial of rights including self-determination are flagrantly unlawful! It's time for an immediate, unconditional, and complete end. These proceedings show the world's desire for the Court's counsel on legality & accountability regarding Palestine's rights. Palestinians face existential threat as Israel denies self-determination & freedom. Urgent action needed! State of Palestine trusts Int'l Court of Justice's independence & commitment to uphold int'l law for justice & peace. Ready for constructive engagement in the Court's next stages. — Agencies



## Briefs

**UK charges Muslim preacher with 'terror' offences**

### MONITORING DESK

LONDON: A 28-year-old Canadian man, Khaled Hussein, has also been charged with membership of a proscribed organisation after being arrested on the same day as Choudary when he arrived on a flight at Heathrow Airport, police said. Once Britain's most high-profile Muslim preachers, London-born Choudary was imprisoned in Britain in 2016 for encouraging support for the ISIL (ISIS) armed group before being released in 2018 after serving half of his five-years-and-a-half sentence. ISIL has been proscribed as a "terrorist group" in Britain since June 2014, making inviting support for the group a criminal offence punishable by up to 10 years in prison. Judge Timothy Holroyde said during his 2016 sentencing that Choudary was "calculating and dangerous" and had shown no remorse. Choudary, former head of the now-banned organisation al-Muhajiroun, drew attention for praising the men responsible for the 9/11 attacks on the United States and saying he wanted to convert Buckingham Palace into a mosque. British police previously said that the group was suspected of being the driving force behind the 2005 London bombings, while Michael Adebolajo, one of the men who hacked to death British soldier Lee Rigby on a London street in 2013, had attended protests Choudary had organised.

**Cyphergate: FIA grills Qureshi for 2 hours**

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) grilled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi for nearly two hours on Monday as it probes the controversial US cypher. Qureshi appeared before an eight-member team headed by FIA Islamabad Zone Director Rana Abdul Jabbar after it had summoned him — as he is one of the central characters in the cypher saga due to his position as the foreign minister during PTI's tenure. Officers from different FIA wings and one grade-19 officer each from three different intelligence institutions were also present during the PTI vice chairman's interrogation. Former PTI secretary general Asad Umar also appeared before the FIA team. PTI Chairman Imran Khan has also been summoned on July 25 (today). The investigation into the cypher picked pace after the Lahore High Court withdrew the stay order on summons to the ex-premier, and a day after it, Khan's then-principal secretary Azam Khan "recorded" a statement, terming the US cypher a "conspiracy" used by the ex-PM to "manipulate for creating a narrative against establishment and opposition".

**Nine killed in civilian plane crash in Sudan**

### WEB DESK

WAD MADANI: Nine people, including four soldiers, were killed Sunday evening when a civilian plane crashed in Sudan due to "technical" reasons, the army said, as the war in the east African country entered its 100th day. The fighting has left millions trapped in their homes and some without water, particularly in the suburbs of the capital Khartoum where residents were calling for food donations to help them survive. In a war-devastated district of the city, Abbas Mohamed Babiker says he and his family have only been able to eat once a day.

# PM to launch Journalists Health Card scheme

The information minister says that the health insurance form was now available online for media workers and journalists

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Monday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would formally launch Journalists Health Insurance Card Scheme on August 7. She stated this after launching the registration process for Journalists Health Insurance Scheme by uploading its form on the website of the Press Information Department and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The minister said that the health insurance form was now available online for media workers and journalists and they would be able to register themselves through the online health insurance form. The minister said that for the first time, the government had allocated Rs 1 billion for the health insurance of working journalists in the federal budget. Marriyum Aurangzeb uploaded this online registration form along with journalists present there while Principal Information Officer Mubashar Hassan was also present on the occasion. The minister congratulated Secretary Information and Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan, PIO Mubashar Hassan and the entire team of the Ministry of Information for launching the scheme. Talking to the media persons, she said that the Prime Minister had allocated funds worth Rs 1 billion for working journalists. She said that health insurance for working journalists and artists was the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The minister said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had launched the health card scheme in 2013 which continued in the PTI era after the change of its name. She said



said that an online form of health insurance card scheme for journalists was being released. This registration form would be available on the website of the Press Information Department, she said and added that the process of registration of journalists was being started. The health insurance form was simple and easy to fill and all details related to health issues were available in the form, the minister said. She said that all health facilities were being provided to journalists in the health insurance card scheme. "Health insurance and salaries of journalists have always been an issue in Pakistan", she remarked. During 14 months, she added Rs 110 million had been recovered from the platform of ITNE and direct payments had been made to the employees in print

media. The minister said Minimum wage, job security of electronic media had been addressed in the amended PEMRA law, adding it was the Prime Minister's directive to ensure health insurance to journalists as soon as possible and all working journalists had been included. This project was for the whole of Pakistan, journalists from all over the country should start registering in it, she maintained. "Health insurance facilities from the government are for journalists across the country, not for journalists of Islamabad only", she remarked. She said during the tenure of the present coalition government, no action had been taken against journalists having critical views about its policies and performance. In the present government rule no journalists attacked, kidnapped, arrested or fired

at as was the practice during the previous government, she added. Taking a jibe on PTI tenure, regarding the title of media predator given to Imran Khan by Reporters Without Borders, she the current government did not get that title, on the contrary the ranking of freedom of expression in Pakistan improved by seven ranks. Replying to questions from media persons, she said that the health insurance scheme was not only for press club members, it was for all journalists and media workers. "It is not mandatory for a journalist to be a member of the Press Club for health insurance registration," she said. The minister said all stakeholders were involved in the process of preparation of PEMRA (Amendment) Bill 2023 and no one opposed the bill or issued any adverse statement. She said that the Pakistan Broadcasters Association had issued a statement regarding the PEMRA (Amendment) Bill. Only a certain group was indulged in propaganda against PEMRA Amendment Bill 2023, the minister added. She remarked that these people thought that they would continue spreading propaganda in the country and no one would question them but this would not happen now. She said that registration of journalists for health insurance would be done through digital form to ensure transparency. The minister said that the PM's Health Card and health insurance card for journalists were two separate schemes. A journalist who is benefiting from the Prime Minister Health Card Scheme would not be eligible for the Journalists' Health Insurance Scheme, she said in reply to a question.

## Palestine provides evidence of Israeli crimes at ICJ

THE HAGUE: State of Palestine's delegation, headed by Dr. Riad Malki, met Registrar of Int'l Court of Justice, Mr. Philippe Gautier, and submitted Written Statement on UN's request for an advisory opinion (Res. 77/247) about Question of Palestine. In its Written Statement, the State of Palestine provided insurmountable evidence of Israel's illegal policies and practice and drew a clear picture of the wrongs and indignities suffered by the Palestinian people over decades. The Court's verdict is clear: Israel's colonial occupation & annexation of Palestinian land, racial discrimination, apartheid, and its systematic denial of rights including self-determination are flagrantly unlawful! It's time for an immediate, unconditional, and complete end. These proceedings show the world's desire for the Court's counsel on legality & accountability regarding Palestine's rights. Palestinians face existential threat as Israel denies self-determination & freedom. Urgent action needed! State of Palestine trusts Int'l Court of Justice's independence & commitment to uphold int'l law for justice & peace. Ready for constructive engagement in the Court's next stages. — Agencies

## Committee formed to probe Bahawalpur varsity scandal



LAHORE: Punjab interim Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi Monday formed a three-member inquiry committee to look into the "drug peddling and immoral activities" at the Islamia University Bahawalpur. "A high level 3-member team, including a provincial Secretary and two DIGs, will submit an inquiry report within 72 hours. The law will take its course, and all involved in this disgraceful incident will be dealt according to law. Let us strive for a safer and morally upright society," tweeted Naqvi.

The committee includes Secretary Minerals Babar Aman Babar, along with DIG Amin Bukhari and DIG Raja Faisal, to thoroughly investigate all aspects of the controversy, identify the involved individuals, and present a report to the chief minister. The issue dates back to the arrest of the university's Director Finance Mohammad Abu Bakr, who was taken into custody by the police on June 24. The university official was arrested at a checkpoint, where the police found crystal ice and other prohibited drugs in his possession for which he was subsequently charged, media reported. The university's chief security officer, Syed Ejaz Hussain Shah, was also arrested by the Baghdad-ul-Jadeed police under the same circumstances three days ago. It was only after the police had confiscated the mobile phones of both the university officials that they later had the forensics done. The inappropriate videos, images of students and officials, as well as chats, were found in their confiscated mobile phones in the wake of which the police submitted a comprehensive report to the Punjab chief minister. As per reports, the two arrests were made after the police acted upon internal information. The university has already termed the episode "unfortunate," stating that the institution has taken action against it. The university also said that it had received 22 such complaints. Later, however, the Vice Chancellor Dr Athar Mehboob wrote to the Punjab inspector general, mentioning that the police had taken illegal action against the university officials and demanded a probe committee comprising senior officials look into the issue in a transparent manner. — DNA

## Moscow drone strike; Russia warns retaliation

MOSCOW: Russia spoke of taking harsh retaliatory measures against Ukraine after two drones damaged buildings in Moscow early on Monday, including one close to the Defence Ministry's headquarters, in what it called a brazen act of terror. Nobody was hurt in the attack, of which a senior Ukrainian official said there would be more, but one drone struck close to the Moscow building where the Russian military holds briefings on what it calls its "special military operation", a symbolic blow which underscored the reach of such drones. Roads nearby were temporarily closed, windows on the top two floors of an office building struck by a second drone in another Moscow district were blown out, and debris was scattered on the ground, a

Reuters reporter who saw the aftermath of the incident said. "I was asleep and was woken up by a blast, everything started shaking," Polina, a young woman who lives near the high-rise building, told Reuters. A third "helicopter-type drone" which was not carrying explosives fell on a cemetery in a town outside Moscow, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement in which it vowed that all those responsible would be found and punished. The Kremlin said it would press on with its campaign in Ukraine and meet all the aims of an operation which Kyiv and much of the West say is a brutal war of conquest. The Moscow drone attack, though not serious in terms of its human cost or damage, was the most high-profile of its kind since two drones reached the Kremlin in May. — Agencies

## IMF blames Dar, Tarin for derailing programme

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Describing the failed four-year Extended Fund Facility (EFF) as a "missed opportunity", the IMF blamed both the PTI and PDM, particularly under the economic stewardship of Shaukat Tarin and Ishaq Dar, for irresponsible budgetary expansion and exchange rate interventions, respectively. The IMF staff report released after the signing of the \$3 billion Standby Arrangement detailed step-wise 'stop and go' cycles of the \$6.5bn EFF that repeatedly went off the track over almost four years. The fund separated the programme period broadly into three phases: first, an early phase with considerable success in stabilising the economy; second, the pandemic phase; third, an extended stop-and-go phase. The sequence of shocks (Covid-19, Ukraine war, 2022 floods) coupled with compounding policy reversals in the second half of the programme required multiple recalibrations and the original programme goals fell out of reach.

Soon after July 2019, the authorities' decisive policy implementation started to reverse Pakistan's large imbalances, allowing for successful completion of the first review in December 2019. The external adjustment advanced quickly as the transition to a market-determined exchange rate proceeded in an orderly way and fiscal performance was consistently strong. Aside from health-related containment measures, their response included a temporary fiscal stimulus, a large expansion of social safety nets, monetary policy support, and targeted financial initiatives. Although policy priorities inevitably shifted and the pace of implementation slowed amid Covid-19, the authorities remained committed to medium-term objectives. The programme resumed with the completion of the combined 2nd-5th reviews in March 2021 and in April 2021 Pakistan was able to access international markets for the first time since 2017. At this stage enters then-finance minister Shaukat Tarin. "Amid the robust recovery...the authorities deviated from the EFF path with the passage of an expansionary FY22 budget.

## National maritime policy framework urged

ISLAMABAD: Annual Staff Talks between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Naval Headquarters were held today at the Foreign Office. The Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) Vice Admiral Ovais A Bilgrami led the respective sides for the talks. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ms Hina Rabbani Khar presided the meeting. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs was also represented in the meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity for a comprehensive overview of Pakistan's maritime interests including in the domain of maritime security, blue economy, disaster management, environmental protection and climate change imperatives. Pakistan's participation in various regional and international forums dealing with maritime issues and opportunities for international collaboration and capacity-building in various fields were also discussed. The participants of the meeting were unanimous on the need for early finalization of a comprehensive national maritime policy framework to synergise the efforts of all relevant stakeholders in the maritime domain for a holistic pursuit of the maritime interests of Pakistan. The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs underscored the need for developing an enabling domestic ecosystem for the realization of the maritime and blue economy potential of Pakistan and the proactive pursuit of effective international partnerships in the maritime domain. The participants pledged to deepen their interaction and coordination and work with the relevant stakeholders for the achievement of this objective. — DNA

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