



Islamabad POST

Friday, July 14, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

US envoy terms IMF agreement positive development

Detailed News On Page-08

Envoy extends invitation for CIS games

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LeBron James provides update about his future

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Briefs

Banning any party not on agenda

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said on Thursday that banning any political party was not on agenda. Speaking to media, Tarar said that up to 99 per cent of the work on the electoral reforms had been finished. "During the parliamentary committee meeting, reservations on the PTI were raised in a few instances. These issues, nevertheless, are not too sensitive and may be resolved. We will address the PTI's issues," Tarar maintained. Earlier today, a meeting of the parliamentary committee was held under the chairmanship of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

Police to be provided facilities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan on Thursday laid the foundation stone of Women Police Station in Islamabad and pledged that all needs of police force will be fulfilled on priority basis to enhance its performance. Speaking on the occasion, he said seventeen hundred recruitments have been made in Islamabad police which also including women. Rana Sanaullah further said that development projects of one hundred and fifty billion rupees are underway in the federal capital.

General elections as per schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy Engineer Khuram Dasgiri Khan has said that general elections 2023 would be held as per the schedule of the Election Commission of Pakistan. Talking to a private television, he said there would be no delay in the next elections after the dissolution of assemblies. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has assured the nation that his government will hand over the reins to an interim setup next month after the completion of their tenure.

Elections on time

Interim setup to take charge in August: PM

The premier thanked China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE for "sincerely" cooperating with Pakistan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has assured the nation that his government will hand over the reins to an interim setup next month after the completion of their tenure. "In August 2023, we will give responsibility to the interim government," he said in a live address on Thursday. The premier repeated the circumstances in which the coalition government - a group of 13 political parties - came to power in April 2022. "[We] cleaned up the mess of four years in 15 months and doused the fire that had engulfed the economic and foreign relations front," he said, adding that during their 15 months in power, the coalition government "saved the state, not politics". However, PM Shehbaz added that he is a firm believer that Pakistan can come out of the conspiracies it faces by working day and night. Coming back to the previous regime, he said that the last International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme - signed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government - was in the way of economic recovery. "However, now the new stand-by agreement has been signed." A day earlier, the IMF approved a 9-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) for Pakistan for an amount of about \$3 billion days after reaching a staff-level agreement with the country. The premier also thanked China,

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Parliamentary panel expedites work on electoral reforms

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms has expedited the work on the amendments to the election laws by examining 73 rectification proposals presented before it, media reported. The panel has reportedly decided to finalise the recommendations by the next week and get the reforms to the Election Act approved by both houses of parliament before the end of the tenure of the National Assembly, which Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said will be in August. An in-camera meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms headed by its chairman and Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. Committee members, including Law Minister Azam Tarar,

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IMF transfers \$1.2 billion to Pakistan

Balance amount of \$1.8 bn will be provided after two reviews

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Thursday transferred US\$1.2 billion to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) out of total \$3 billion under the Stand-By Agreement (SBA) that was approved by the IMF board the previous day. Talking to media persons, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said that the balance amount of \$1.8 billion would be provided after two reviews that would be held in November 2023 and February 2024. The finance minister said that the IMF funds would help improve foreign exchange reserves, adding that in total around \$4.2 billion were added to the country's reserves during the week. These include \$2 billion from Saudi Arabia, \$1 billion from United Arab Emirates and \$1.2 billion from IMF. The state bank would issue the exact figures on Friday he said adding that the reserves are expected to reach between \$13 to \$14 billion.

Continued on Page 06

IMF deal, a self-evaluation moment: PM

DNA

MULTAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the deal inked with International Monetary Fund (IMF) was a moment for Pakistan to reevaluate its policies towards attaining the goals of financial self-reliance. "The IMF agreement is not a moment of rejoice, but to assess the state of affairs as to how the country has become dependent on loans and foreign grants," he said in his address at the PM Youth Loan and Laptop Scheme event here at the Bahauddin Zakariya University. The IMF's executive

Continued on Page 06



MULTAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif distributes laptops among the high achievers of public sector universities under the PM's Youth Laptop Scheme at Bahauddin Zakaria University. - DNA

India failed to suppress Kashmiris

Spox vows to continue to support its Kashmiris

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Thursday said India's unabated repression over the last seven decades has failed to break the will of Kashmiri people for the right to self-determination. At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch urged the Afghan authorities to fulfill their promises that their soil will not be used for terrorism against Pakistan. She said it is their responsibility to ensure that their land is not used against Pakistan, and Afghan authorities have accepted this responsibility on various occasions. On the situation in the Indian illegally occupied

Continued on Page 06

Imran condemns Israel for targeting Pakistan at UN

Says corrupt, fascist govt destroying Pakistan internally, externally

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan strongly condemned Israel for targeting Pakistan on human rights violations and said that the country had never been targeted by any state in this vile manner as Israel had the audacity to do now. Imran Khan, in a statement on Thursday, said: "Absolutely shameful how Israel with the worst record along with India of human rights violations as an Occupation force against Palestinians in Occupied territory, had the audacity to target Pakistan." "The Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs) are an essential part of UN functioning and Pakistan has never been targeted by any state in this vile manner as Israel had the audacity to do now. Totally condemnable," he added. Imran Khan said that Israel continued its massacre of Palestinians showing it was a rogue state beyond the pale of all international laws and norms of behaviour. "Sadly for us, it not only shows a complete

Continued on Page 06

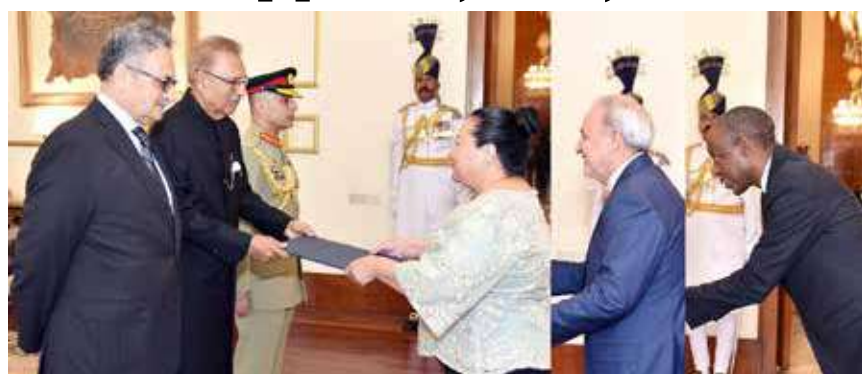
Gul Bar elected GB CM, PTI condemns election

DNA

GILGIT: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) forward bloc leader Gul Bar Khan was elected as Gilgit Baltistan's new chief minister on Thursday, days after controversy marred the top post's polls. Gul Bar, who received 19 votes of the 20 members present in the house, was elected unopposed as three other candidates vying for the post withdrew their nomination papers. All 11 members of the PTI's 'like-minded group' boycotted the polling, claiming rigging. Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) strongly condemned the 'broad daylight robbery' of public

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Alvi for expanding ties with the Philippines, Iran, Rwanda



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said that Pakistan wanted to expand bilateral ties with the Philippines, Iran, and Rwanda in the fields of trade, economy, investment, culture, and people-to-people contacts. The president made these remarks while talking to the Ambassadors-designates of the Republic of the Philippines and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the non-resident High-Commissioner-designate of the Republic of Rwanda, who presented their diplomatic credentials to the president and made separate calls on him, here at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Talking to the Ambassador-designate of the Philippines, Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, the president said that Pakistan was keen to expand bilateral relations with the Philippines across all areas of cooperation and expressed the need to explore new avenues of cooperation to further diversify bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Speaking to the Iranian Ambassador-designate to Pakistan, Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddam, the president highlighted the need to promote economic engagement and mutually beneficial economic exchange between the two countries through

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Inside...

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Rival tribes in Parachinar agree on ceasefire

Kurram administration informed on Thursday that the initial outbreak of armed clashes occurred last Friday afternoon when armed tribesmen positioned themselves and engaged in fighting, resulting in five fatalities with at least 23 injured

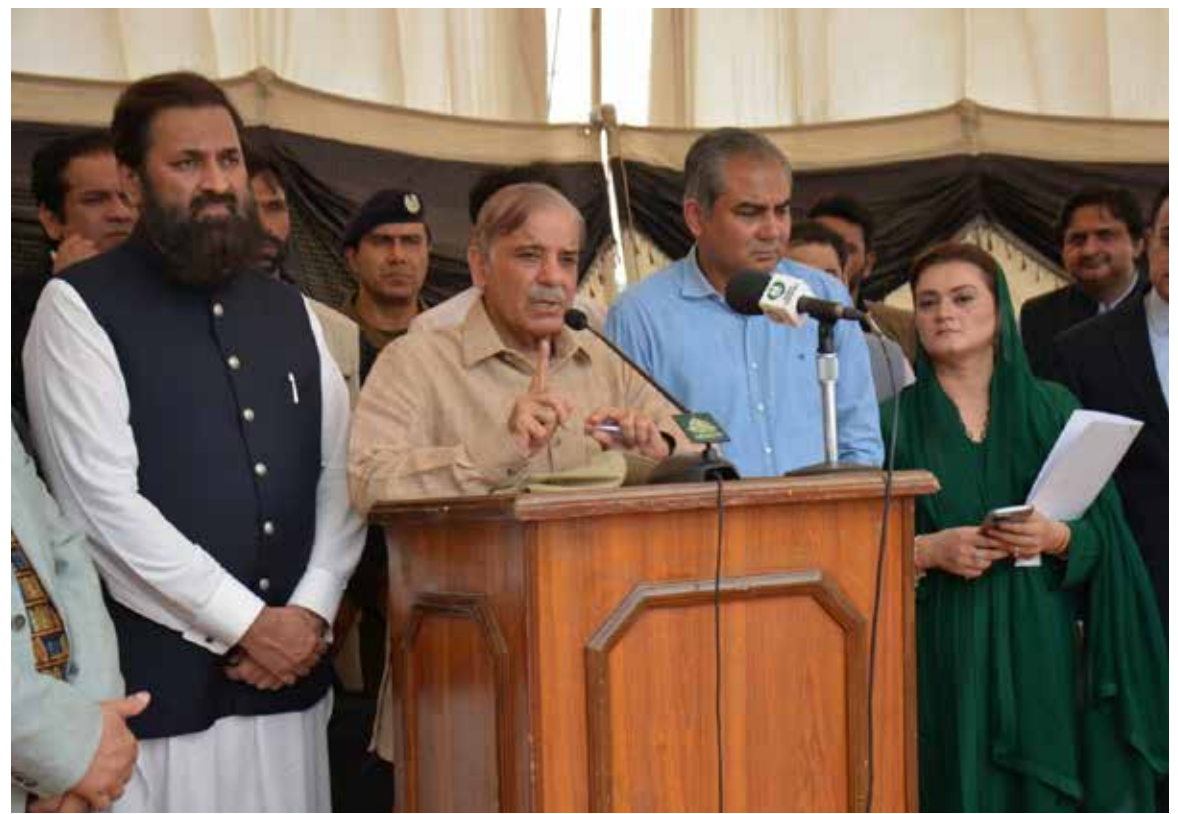
SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The death toll from clashes in Kurram tribal district over a disputed land reached 13 the other day, however, finally the rival tribes have reached a ceasefire agreement following extensive negotiations with a 30-member peace jirga since confrontations started on July 7, last in the Upper Kurram area. Kurram administration informed on Thursday that the initial outbreak of armed clashes occurred last Friday afternoon when armed tribesmen positioned themselves and engaged in fighting, resulting in five fatalities with at least 23 injured. Initially, the district admin-

istration claimed to have brokered a ceasefire through their efforts and the involvement of a local Jirga. However, clashes reignited during the night in various localities of the Tari Mangal area, known for volatile law and order situations. A 30-member peace jirga, led by Commissioner Kohat, diligently conducted multiple meetings with the elders from both sides since Tuesday, last. As per the ceasefire agreement, security forces will be deployed to bunkers to ensure compliance with the ceasefire. The issue of demarcation of common land (Shamlat) will also be discussed at a later stage. Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Turi announced that the jirga's talks with the rival groups

had been successful, with both sides agreeing to the ceasefire. He further mentioned that the tribesmen had begun vacating their bunkers, indicating their commitment to de-escalating the situation.

Gohar Bangash, another member of the jirga, stated that the police and army would be deployed at the bunkers to maintain peace and stability in the region. According to MS Parachinar, Dr. Qaiser Abbas, the death toll over the past five days has reached to at least 13, with nearly 90 individuals sustaining injuries during the clashes. The situation remains tense, but the ceasefire agreement offers a glimmer of hope for a respite from the violence that has plagued the region.



MULTAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif talking to media in Multan.—DNA

PHA introduces mobile app for geo-tagging of trees

LAHORE: The Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) has taken an initiative for geo-tagging of trees in urban forests, parks, green belts and along highways. The PHA had introduced a mobile application in collaboration with the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB). According to a spokesman for the PHA, the mobile application for geo-tagging of trees has been named as "Re-green Lahore" and first training session for the directors and field officers here at the PHA Headquarters. Experts of the PITB and Deputy Director PHA Hassanul Haq imparted training and highlighted key features besides using the application. The PHA officers of all zones have been assigned the task of geo-tagging of trees through the mobile application.—DNA

DC orders section 144 in city in Muharram

PESHAWAR: The Deputy Commissioner Peshawar on Thursday notified that section 144 will be enforced in the city from Muharram 1 to 15 to maintain peace and tranquility during the holy month of Muharram ul Haram. A notification issued here said that a ban would be imposed on pillion riding in the city from Muharram ul Haram 1-15.—APP

pursuit of Azan (the call to prayer), he added. Remarkably, each martyr bore the indelible mark of a bullet on their chest, symbolizing their unwavering commitment, as none had been shot in the back. Reflecting on the abhorrent policies of the Dogra Maharaja, PM Anwar Haq shed light on the tyrannical and anti-Muslim practices that plagued Kashmir during the early 1930s. Muslims were subjected to dehumanization, their worth undermined, while the desecration of mosques and the Holy Quran became a haunting norm.—DNA

Establishment of FATA University gift for youth

PESHAWAR: The central leader of Jamiat Ulema Islam (F) and Member of the National Assembly James Iqbal on Thursday welcome the establishment of FATA University by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and termed it a gift for the young generation of tribal areas. In his statement issued here, he said that the Prime Minister has adorned the tribal youth with the jewel of education, adding that the step would ensure peace, development, and

prosperity in the tribal districts. James Iqbal who was also President of Parliamentarians Forum Pakistan, demanded the government to immediately change the name of FATA University in consultation with the tribal elders. While congratulating the tribal people on the establishment of the varsity, he said that the distribution of laptops among the talented students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was a good initiative by the Prime Minister. The world is

moving forward with advancements in modern technology and it is high time to facilitate the young generation especially who belong to backward areas in this regard so that they could play their imperative role in peace, progress and development in the country. He urged the government to ensure more participation of the students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in education scholarships, laptops, and skills development courses.—APP

Daughter, son-in-law arrested for killing PTV Cameraman

PESHAWAR: Resolving the mystery behind a blind murder, the Gulberg police here on Thursday arrested the daughter and son-in-law of a cameraman, involved in his murder, police told media on Thursday. Police said a team headed by SP Cantt, Waqas and police officers succeeded in arresting the accused involved in the murder of a PTV Cameraman, Wajid Hussain within three days of time. Police said the daughter of the deceased and her husband, Muhammad Junaid were found to be the killers of Wajid Hussain. The incident occurred three days ago in Al Noor Street of Gulberg where a PTV Cameraman, Wajid Hussain was murdered inside his home by an unknown accused. A case on the complaint of the son of the deceased, Danish, was registered at Gulberg police station. The investigative team of police included relatives of the deceased in the investigation and found out the statements of his daughter and son-in-law as suspicious. When further interrogated, the daughter of the deceased and her husband confessed to killing Wajid Hussain over a property dispute. Police said the dagger used during the murder has also been recovered from the accused while further investigation was underway.

Kashmir Martyrs Day Illumines the Heroic Journey of Kashmiris struggle for freedom

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq reflects upon the significance of Kashmir Martyrs Day on Thursday, a day etched in the annals of history as a glorious chapter in the relentless struggle for the Kashmir freedom movement. In a

resounding message issued regarding Martyrs' Day, PM Haq emphasized the profound historical significance of July 13, which witnessed the martyrdom of 22 courageous Kashmiri Muslims at the hands of the oppressive Dogra forces within the confines of the occupied Srinagar central jail. With utmost

reverence, the Prime Minister paid homage to these valiant Kashmiri martyrs, acknowledging the exceptional nature of the events that unfolded on that fateful day in 1931. It was a moment unparalleled in Islamic history, where 22 Kashmiris, one after another, fearlessly offered their lives in the

COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Medum Afshan Younas Civil Judge Gujrat
Title: Khan Muhammad. Versus Farkhanda Bibi etc.
Notice to: Husnain Ali, Wasif Ali S/O Shoukat Ali caste Gujjar R/O Musa Kamala Tehsil & Distt. Gujrat. Present living Abroad
Suit for Declaration with consequential Relief, Permanent Injunction etc.
Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 12-09-2023, otherwise case will be decided ex parte.

COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Mohsin Ali Civil Judge Gujrat.
Title: Amanat Ali. Versus Province of Punjab etc.
Notice to: 1-Province of Punjab through District Collector Gujrat, 4-Muhammad Anayat, 5-Amanat Ali Sons Ahmad Khan, 6-Sugra BiBi, 7-Rani BiBi, 8-Kousar BiBi Daughter Ahmad Khan, 9-Abdul Ghani, 10-Tariq Aziz, 11-Sana Ullah S/o. Muhammad Khan Cast Bhatti R/o. Surakhpur Tehsil & District Gujrat.
Suit for Declaration with consequential relief Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 13-09-2023, otherwise case will be decided ex parte.

Czech Envoy inaugurates human rights training for rural women

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Building the capacity of women to promote and protect human rights at village level is essential for a sustainable culture of peace and democracy in the society", said Sameena Nazir, executive director of PODA, a women's rights NGO in Pakistan that organized the training.

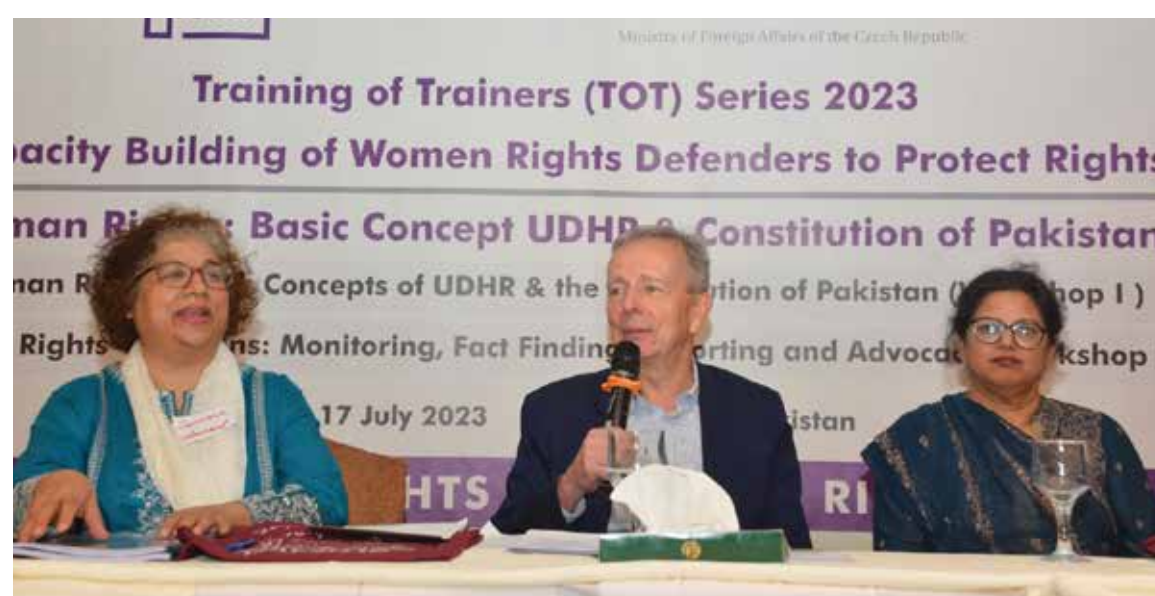
Mr. Tomas Smetanka, Ambassador Czech Republic to Pakistan in his inaugural remarks said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic is pleased to support this Training of Trainers on Capacity Building of Women Rights Defenders to Protect Rights. Advocate Jehangir Jadoon, Advocate General, ICT, Chairman Islamabad Bar Council, Prosecutor General ICT, Board member Legal Aid and Justice Authority also addressed the workshop and in his remarks highlighted the importance of defending the rights of vulnerable members of society. He shared that the government of Pakistan is

making all efforts to provide free legal aid to the poor and has made special programs for the protection of women and children. The first part of this workshops is organized by PODA as a Training of Training (ToT) from 13 to 17 July 2023 in Islamabad for 25 women from 20 districts of Pakistan. Each trainee will then provide this training to another 10 women in her district

to increase the circle of learning and empowerment for women rights. The five day training will include practical sessions on basic understandings and concept of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Constitution of Pakistan and develop district level monitoring, fact finding, reporting and advocacy plans for documenting women rights violations and

preparing awareness and protection activities with local communities and government departments such as police, social welfare and child protection offices. The training participants included university students, social mobilizers, journalists, community activists, police official, teachers, health workers and representatives of community groups. The

trainees were selected from districts Naseerabad, Quetta, Jafferabad of Balochistan, Buner, DIKhan, Haripur, Mansehra, South Waziristan of KP province, District Ghotki, Khairpur, Jacobabad, Sukkur, Shaheed Benazirabad of Sindh and the districts from Punjab included Bahawalnagar, Bhakkar, Chakwal, Jhelum, Khanewal, Maianwali and Rajanpur.



WB's \$100m for Punjab to help curtail population growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: World Bank (WB) Country Director for Pakistan Najy Benhassine on Thursday said the institution's approved assistance of \$100 million for the Punjab Family Planning Programme would help curtail population growth in the most populous province of the country. The WB funds sanctioned for the province, which is the home to more than half of Pakistan's total population, "would ensure provision of quality family planning services free of charge," he remarked.

"This important program aims to achieve universal access to reproductive healthcare and to raise the usage of family planning methods in Punjab to 60 percent by 2030," the WB Country Director said in a news release. He termed the programme "critical" for Pakistan's development, as excessive population growth rates hampered development, slowed the accumulation of human capital, and contributed to keeping families in poverty. He said it would also institutionalize quality of care across the family planning services delivery system. "It will support public information and advocacy campaigns so that more families are made aware of the benefits of family planning." The WB official said the programme would scale up innovations, such as clinical franchising, voucher schemes, and family planning counseling through community leaders, piloted in different districts of Punjab and had shown improvements in family planning outcomes. Through an extensive network of Lady

Health Workers, Family Welfare Workers and Community Health Workers that are linked to health facilities, family health clinics and family welfare centers, Najy Benhassine said the programme would reach areas and communities that had limited or no access to family planning services. He said the programme would scale up the voucher incentive scheme, social marketing, male and community leaders' engagement and youth platforms for increasing utilization of family planning services, adding it would also improve the interpersonal communication skills of family planning service providers. "Family planning enables couples to make informed choices about the number of children they want to have, and when they want to have them," said Manav Bhattarai, Team Leader for the programme.

High Commissioner of Ghana to Pakistan visited SCCI

SIALKOT: High Commissioner of Ghana to Pakistan Eric Owusu Boateng visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik welcomed the distinguished guest. Addressing an important meeting with the Sialkot business community at SCCI Auditorium here on Thursday, High Commissioner of Ghana to Pakistan Eric Owusu Boateng acknowledged the need to transform economic and political relations into stronger economic ties. He

emphasized the importance of facilitating direct trade and addressing challenges like indirect sourcing and limited export channels. He expressed his commitment to working closely with SCCI, promoting cooperation, exchanging information, and identifying tradable products. While appreciating the trade and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Ghana, the President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik discussed the trade opportunities in both countries and highlighted to

the distinguished guest the export products produced in Sialkot and their potential for consumption in the Ghanaian market. SCCI President said that there was a huge potential to increase this volume of trade. He said that Sialkot is an important economic hub and totally export-oriented city of the country. Mr. Malik said that currently the trade volume between the two countries was only around 60 million dollars which could be increased by adopting a better trade strategy.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

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- 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
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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
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Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Pakistan and Iran should take advantage of regional changes

Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam says with the improvement in Iran-Saudi relations, a new era of peace, development and prosperity is beginning in the region. Pakistan and Iran need to take advantage of these opportunities together

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry under the leadership of President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari met with the Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam. In the meeting held at the Iranian Embassy, issues of mutual interest were discussed. Improvement of trade relations between the two countries, barter trade, energy projects and other issues were also discussed. Speaking on this occasion, Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam said that the new changes taking place in the region are a great opportunity for Pakistan and Iran. With the improvement in Iran-Saudi relations, a new era of peace, development and prosperity is beginning in the region. Pakistan and Iran need to take advantage of these opportunities together. He said that he came to Pakistan specially on the instructions of Iranian Supreme Leader syed ayatollah khameneii. Improvement of trade relations between the two countries is his priority. Trade between Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Russia in local currencies will benefit all regional countries. He said that the current



trade volume between Iran and Pakistan can be increased through the exchange of rice, meat, sports goods, surgical instruments, fruits, dry fruits, agricultural implements, energy and other commodities. He said that direct flights should be started between Islamabad and Tehran so that the large population of the two countries consisting of more than 30 crore people can benefit from the opportunities in each other's countries. There is a need to innovate the road and rail system between

Iran and Pakistan to reduce the cost of transporting goods. He said that Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline is in the interest of both countries. This project should be completed soon for peace and rapid development in the region. He said that Pakistan and Iran are part of organizations like D8, ECO and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Both the countries should play a role to activate these regional organizations. The total population of Pakistan, Iran and Turkey is around 40 crores, all the projects of development

and prosperity of the three countries should be completed with speed in which railway and road should be priority. Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Iran have not only share border, but both countries are connected by mutual historical and cultural ties. Both the countries have actively supported each other in every difficult time. The warmth of existing relations needs to be used to promote trade and business. The

development and prosperity of Pakistan and Iran are interlinked. Direct air connectivity, rail and road systems should be improved on a priority basis.

In this regard, the two governments should form a joint plan of action. He said that it is necessary to exchange the trade delegations of the two countries on a regular basis. He said that approval of barter trade project with other countries of the region including Pakistan, Iran is a historic opportunity. This will not only benefit Pakistan and Iran but the entire region will benefit.

Speaking on the occasion, Group Leader Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik said that despite being neighboring countries, Pakistan and Iran could not benefit from each other's capabilities. Now is the time for Pakistan and Iran to increase their dependence on each other and take steps to promote mutual trade. Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that the peace of Pakistan and Iran is connected to each other. Insecurity can be controlled by promoting business activities in Balochistan and Iranian border areas. Maqsood Tabish, Ijaz Sheikh, Chaudhry Javed Iqbal were also present in the meeting.

\$4.2 billion credited to Pak in 3 days

Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has shared that State Bank of Pakistan has received US \$1.2 billion from IMF

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani on Thursday said that \$4.2 billion have been credited to Pakistan in last 3 days from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Giving breakup figures, the coordinator tweeted that \$2 billion were received from Saudi Arabia, \$1 billion from UAE and \$1.2 billion from IMF. He said that Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has shared that State Bank of Pakistan has received US \$1.2

billion from IMF, following the approval of the US\$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) by the IMF Executive Board the previous day. He said that remaining amount of \$1.8 billion would be credited in 9 months, following two quarterly reviews. He said more inflows were expected from multilateral development partners including World Bank (WB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB), which would further improve country's foreign exchange reserves, he added. "FM @MishaqDar50 has just announced that US\$1.2 billion have been received from the IMF in @StateBank_ Pak, following the approval of the US\$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) by the IMF Executive Board yesterday. The remaining amount (\$1.8 billion) will be phased over the program's duration (9 months), following two quarterly reviews.... With this inflow, Pakistan has now received a total of \$4.2 billion from Saudi Arabia, UAE, and the IMF over the last 3 days:- Saudi Arabia: \$2 billion; - UAE: \$1 billion; IMF: \$1.2 billion.... More inflows are expected from multilateral development partners (including WB, AIIB, IDB) in the coming weeks and months, which will further improve Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves", he tweeted.

IMF deal will stabilize rupee: RCCI

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The agreement with the IMF is a welcome and positive development for Pakistan's economy. The agreement will not only send a positive message to investors, but will pave the way for aid funds for the rehabilitation of friendly countries, foreign financial institutions and flood-affected areas, Acting President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce Faisal Shahzad remarked in a TV interview. This would further boost the foreign exchange reserves and support the rupee to stabilise around the current value, he added. He said that the agreement will help increase exports and promote industrialization in the country. He said that the confidence of local and foreign investors will be restored. Faisal Shahzad further added that the business community is hopeful that the government will take stakeholders on board to implement the industry reforms introduced in the budget.

Islamabad Police bolster security measures

ISLAMABAD: In preparation for the upcoming religious observance of Muharram-ul-Haram, the Islamabad police have vowed to implement stringent security arrangements. A high-level meeting, chaired by SSP (Operations) Malik Jameel Zafar and attended by senior police officials, was held to review the security measures. The authorities emphasized the utilization of advanced technologies such as safe city cameras, smart cars, surveillance cameras, and drone cameras to maintain high vigilance and ensure the safety of processions. Stringent directives were issued to organizers, emphasizing the cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the police. —APP

Talha stresses media's role for spreading culture of tolerance

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood Thursday said that the government is committed to providing full support to promote religious tourism in the country so the media should play a positive role in spreading a culture of tolerance and interfaith harmony "Media platforms are a huge effect on people's lives and thus should aim at spreading the speech of moderation and tolerance against hate speech and extremism," he said while talking to a private news channel. "There is no stability in our existence without spreading the true spirit of brotherhood, unity, solidarity, and coexistence, regardless of religion and the diversity of cultures," he further mentioned. Replying to a question, he said Islam is a religion of peace as it turned enemies into brotherly friends and preaches love among humans irrespective of caste, colour, creed, or gender. He said we reject propaganda drives against Muslims in any part of the world saying our great religion Islam preaches peace, compassion, tolerance, and harmony. As Muslims, we strongly believe we have to respect all other religions and their sacred books, he mentioned. Answering another question, he said it is the need of the hour that world Muslim countries should sit together and chalk out a comprehensive plan to counter blasphemous incidents.

COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Medum Afshan Younas Civil Judge Gujrat Title: Zubaida Shahzad. Versus Chief Officer etc.

Notice to: Shahzad Mahmood S/o. Muhammad Sharif R/o. Mohallah Eidgah, Kunjah Tehsil & District Gujrat. Presently Residing Italy. Suit for Declaration with consequential relief Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 20-07-2023, otherwise case will be decided ex parte.

COURT NOTICE

In the Court of Medum Afshan Younas Civil Judge Gujrat

Title: Syed Sajjad Haider. Versus Chairman NAD-RA etc.

Notice to: 2-Syed Muhammad Abbas Shah S/o. Syed Sajjad Haider cast Syed R/o. Moin ud Din pur Tehsil & District Gujrat. Presently Residing Italy. Suit for Declaration with consequential relief Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 20-07-2023, otherwise case will be decided ex parte.

Citizens, authorities concerned to remain watchful

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday urged the citizens and authorities concerned to remain watchful amid start of new spell of monsoon. The federal minister took to Twitter to share the update as the new spell of monsoon season had commenced. Senator Rehman said that rains with thundershowers were likely in different areas of Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh.—APP

FTO praises FDI role in promoting economic growth

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on Thursday lauded the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) role in promoting economic growth and development by bringing in capital, technology, expertise, and job opportunities to host countries. Speaking at a round table conference on "Impact of excessive screening on global foreign direct investment", he said its important for countries to protect their national security and economic interests, however, lengthy screening measures can indeed have negative impact on global FDI, said a press release. He said it is equally important to strike a balance between security concerns and promoting a welcoming environment for foreign investors. He said if developed countries impose overly restrictive or burden some screening processes, it can discourage foreign investors and hinder the flow of investments especially in developing countries especially Pakistan. He said the

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has also recently cautioned that excessive screening may result in missed opportunities for the host country to attract valuable investments. In today's globalized economy, countries compete for FDI, and if potential investors face onerous screening processes, they may choose alternative destinations with more favorable investment climates, he added. He said transparent and efficient screening procedures that focus on genuine security risks without unnecessary barriers can help mitigate the negative impact on global FDI. Meher Kashif Younis said investors with decreased confidence and reduced competitiveness may opt for countries with more streamlined and efficient screening mechanisms instead. He said it can make a country less competitive compared to others with more investor-friendly environments said adding that international investment in the renewable energy supply chain is growing and China is the second largest FDI host country in the world.

DG health stresses media awareness to utilize 'Humraaz app'

ISLAMABAD: Director General Health Ministry of Health, Dr Baseer Khan Achakzai Thursday stressed media and youth's active role in spreading awareness for utilizing 24 hours available government "Humraaz app" to improve the mental health of the public. Talking to the PTV news channel, he called for joint efforts by stakeholders, including media and provincial governments, the community, students in medical universities, and health professionals to work for the prevention and treatment of mental health disorders. To support people's health, the government has launched a revolutionary program in the field of health and introduced a free mobile application "Humraaz" and a free helpline "1166" on which people can share their problems and issues with experts. He said there is a need to develop positive behavior at a young age to prevent people from falling prey to mental health issues at a later stage in life, adding, around 3 million population need mental health treatments which need more awareness through media. He said that introducing the 'Humraaz app' is a great initiative by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and the main reason to launch this app is to reduce negative thinking, anxiety, and stress among people. Replying to a question, he said that with the help of 'Humraaz app' we reached 30 to 35 thousand people, adding, we need to reach more people with more awareness drives. To another query, he replied that it was a matter of serious concern that 24 per cent of the country's population was suffering from mental health-related issues, whereas only 700 to 800 mental health professionals were available in the country to cater to the needs of this population.—APP

PAKISTAN RAILWAYS HEADQUARTERS OFFICE LAHORE.

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed offers are invited against Tender No.334-W/72-C/DP/2020-21 on FOR basis for Marshalling Yard Pipri, Karachi in accordance with Public Procurement Rules – 2004 (Single Stage – Two Envelope procedure):

#	Description of Project	Qty	Selling Date	Opening Date	Cost of Tender Document (non-refundable)
1.	Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Electric Overhead Travelling Crane 10/3 Ton capacity	One	14.7.2023 to 07.08.2023	08.08.2023	Rs.1000/-

2. Tender documents are available in the office of Project Director (CTM) / Dry Ports, Pakistan Railways, Headquarters Office, Lahore. Tender document can also be downloaded from www.pakrail.gov.pk and www.ppra.org.pk free of cost.

3. The bids prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents, alongwith security money Rs.800,000/- must reach office of Project Director (CTM) / Dry Ports, Pakistan Railways, Headquarters Office, Lahore on or before **Tuesday, August 08, 2023 till 12:00 hours**. The tender will be opened publicly at 12.30 hrs. on the same date.

4. Any further information can be obtained from the office of the undersigned on any working day. A pre-bid conference shall be held on **01.08.2023** at 11:00 hours in the office of Project Director (CTM) / Dry Ports, Pakistan Railways, Headquarters Office, Lahore.

PID L 137

(Raja Irfan Ahmed)
for. Project Director (CTM) / Dry Ports,
P.R, Headquarters Office, Lahore.
Ph. No. 042-99205214

Briefs

New trends in furniture industry

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Thursday said that new trends and modern designs are essential for gaining a competitive edge, driving sales and profitability, enhancing brand image, embracing sustainability, leveraging technology, and expanding into international markets. Talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs and furniture manufacturers led by Ms Nida Ejaz, he said by embracing these trends, furniture manufacturers can thrive in a dynamic and evolving industry, said a news release issued here. Modern furniture designs often incorporate technological advancements to provide enhanced functionality and convenience, he added. He said that the integration of features like smart furniture, wireless charging, and Internet of Things (IoT) connectivity can make furniture more appealing to tech-savvy buyers. Similarly, keeping up with new design trends allows manufacturers to leverage technological innovations and offer products that align with the digital age. He said the latest design trends often emphasize sustainable and eco-friendly materials and manufacturing processes. "With growing environmental awareness, customers are increasingly seeking furniture that is produced responsibly. By incorporating eco-friendly practices into their designs, furniture manufacturers can attract environmentally conscious consumers and contribute to a greener future," he added. He further added that by staying updated with the latest design trends, furniture manufacturers can create products that resonate with buyers' choices, leading to increased sales and customer satisfaction. Furniture is a global industry, and design trends vary across different regions and cultures.—APP

Police enhance facilitation for driving license applicants

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police, specifically the Traffic Division, has taken steps to ensure increased convenience for individuals applying for a driving license. The focus is on providing comprehensive facilities and equal treatment to all applicants. Chief Traffic Officer Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer led a special meeting with the licensing department and traffic headquarters to assess the measures implemented for enhancing citizen convenience. He emphasized the significance of maintaining a civilized demeanor while interacting with citizens and highlighted the importance of comprehensive facilities for obtaining driving licenses. During the meeting, the outstanding performance of the traffic staff was recognized, and special instructions were issued to further enhance their services.—APP

PBM commits to empowering underprivileged in Pakistan

The MD PBM in a statement highlighted the establishment of 46 Sweet Homes across the country, providing care for orphaned children

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), a national social welfare organization, led by Managing Director Amir Fida Paracha, is dedicated to combating poverty and uplifting marginalized communities in Pakistan. The MD PBM in a statement highlighted the establishment of 46 Sweet Homes across the country, providing care for orphaned children. Additionally, PBM has set up 163 Women Empowerment Centers, promoting skill-based education for women, and 159 Child Labor Welfare Schools. Furthermore, 18 Shelter Homes have been established, and the "Roti Sab Kay Liye" program has been introduced, which offers meals through 20 food trucks. The organization has successfully implemented the Orphan and Widows Support Program (OWSP) in ten districts, extending financial assistance to widows and orphans. He ap-

preciated the support provided to individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, and the needy, through medical treatments and educational opportunities. These programs have had a positive impact on the lives of deserving citizens. He expressed the organization's commitment to enhancing the effectiveness of its programs by fostering public-private partnerships. By engaging local and international donors, PBM has gained increased resources and efficiency. In the past years, PBM has allocated Rs. 24.7 million for the care and sponsorship of 4,408 children in Sweet Homes. Additionally, Rs. 40.28 million was spent on shelter and meals for 891,375 individuals in Shelter Homes, and 5,070,614 people were provided meals through the Roti Sab Kay Liye program. Through the Orphan and Widows Support Program, Rs. 162.4 million was disbursed among 857 families in ten districts. Women attending the Women Empowerment Centers not only receive

free vocational training but also receive a daily allowance of Rs. 50. Vocational training has been provided to approximately 14,490 women at a cost of Rs. 4.6 million in the past year. The education of 18,787 students in Child Labor Rehabilitation Schools has been supported with Rs. 4.5 million. These schools offer free books, stationery, uniforms, and monthly stipends to enrolled children. Elderly residents in Old Homes in Lahore have been allocated Rs. 16.29 million for their well-being. PBM has allocated Rs. 7.21 billion for medical assistance, including treatment for various medical cases such as cancer, heart diseases, general medicine, surgeries, eye surgeries, and dialysis. Additionally, 1,996 wheelchairs have been distributed through the Special Friends program, and over ten million deserving individuals have received artificial limbs, with an expenditure of over Rs. 10 billion. Furthermore, financial assistance of Rs. 80,700,000 has been provided to

1,807 disabled and needy individuals. Educational opportunities have been extended to 23,335 eligible students, with an expenditure of Rs. 729 million. Financial support of Rs. 261,267,500 has been granted to 18,844 Special Friends, and 2,252 sewing machines have been provided to skilled women. Although Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal serves as a significant government institution offering free medical treatment to impoverished patients, financial constraints prevent thousands of children from receiving cochlear implant (hearing device) surgeries. Efforts are being made to secure additional funding in the annual budget to address this issue. The organization emphasizes transparency and merit in the distribution of resources for all its projects. Despite limited resources, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal strives to expand the scope of its programs and extend assistance to every deserving individual in the country.

Computer coding in curriculum to strengthen students' knowledge

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said by adding the country's Constitution and computer coding to the national curriculum, the government had established the base for future generations to be well-equipped in knowing their rights and responsibilities. In a tweet, he said, curriculum is the backbone of any educational infrastructure. "The idea is that when our children take charge of this country, they are well-versed and thoroughly equipped with constitutional as well as information technology knowledge," he said. He mentioned that his Strategic Reforms Unit led by Salman Sufi had spearheaded this reform with the Ministry of Education. The purpose, he said, is to ensure the implementation of meaningful educational interventions with impact in the short span of the government's tenure.

IESCO field formations put on high alert in view of possible rains

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) Dr. Muhammad Anjad Khan on Thursday said that field formations have been put on high alert due to the forecast of monsoon rains by the Pakistan Meteorological Department. The primary objective of IESCO is to ensure uninterrupted power supply and clearing any faults in the system promptly, said a press release. To achieve this, measures have been taken to enable direct monitoring of power supply and faults from the control room at the central and circle level. Additionally, the availability of officers has been ensured to address any issues that may arise. The customers are advised to maintain a proper distance from electrical wires, poles, transformers, and other electrical installations during rainfall. It is recommended to avoid touching electrical equipment when the body and hands are wet. Properly fix any faulty wiring and never leave electrical equipment on standby. It is also advised not to iron clothes with bare feet, avoid using metal wire to hang clothes, and refrain from touching broken electrical wires. The IESCO Chief also issues instructions to line staff to use all safety equipment.—APP

Afghan Turmoil led to the first ever trilateral counter-terrorism talks

China and Iran didn't have any potential as yet of transforming into an alliance, instead, the increased activities of terrorist groups inside Afghanistan made the neighbouring states realized of the common threat

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: "The first ever trilateral talks on counter-terrorism between Pakistan, China and Iran is the result of an overall deteriorating security situation in the region", said Mr. Fraz Naqvi, a leading expert on the Middle Eastern and West Asian affairs. He expressed his views in a roundtable discussion organized by Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad.

While hailing the development as a positive step, Mr. Naqvi argued that such dialogues on counter-terrorism between the three countries could not be labelled as the extension of SCO platform. Although SCO also operated a wing on counter-terrorism but it was largely non-operational due to the prevailing differences between the member states on the definition of terrorism, he further added. Mr. Naqvi clarified that this tri-

lateral meeting between Pakistan, China and Iran didn't have any potential as yet of transforming into an alliance, instead, the increased activities of terrorist groups inside Afghanistan made the neighbouring states realized of the common threat. While touching upon the geopolitical angle, Dr. Naveed Qaisar of Quaid-i-Azam University said that the rivalry between the US and China had been dominating the global politics.

The receding role of the US from the Middle East allowed China to fill the void and since, China was a rising power, it was natural for regional states to align with it, he argued. Lastly, scholars, practitioners and academicians agreed that such a cooperation on counter-terrorism was beneficial for Pakistan and it could help Pakistan to assume a greater role in the region to counter the Indian attempts of isolating Pakistan.

Calls for marketing strategy to promote IT services

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Rice Research and Development Board Punjab Shahzad Ali Malik on Thursday stressed the urgent need for developing a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote Pakistan as a preferred destination for IT services and solutions for capturing growing global markets. Talking to a delegation of industrialists led by CEO IT Professionals Mian Faiz Bukhsh, the chairman said investment in improving the country's IT infrastructure, including high-speed internet connectivity, reliable power supply, and data centers would create a conducive environment for IT companies to operate and attract foreign investment, said a press release. He said Pakistan's IT sector growth and potential holds importance for the country's economy. He emphasized that the IT sector has become a crucial driver of economic growth,

contributing to the development of the domestic market, foreign trade, e-government initiatives, and fintech advancements. To catalyse economic growth through digital transformation, Pakistan needs to address the challenges of low adoption, enhance internet connectivity across the country, and priorities efforts to improve digital literacy among its population, he added. He urged the government to introduce policies and regulations that promote ease of doing business for IT companies. Shahzad said streamlining administrative procedures and tax incentives will definitely attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in the IT sector. "Government also must encourage collaboration between the public and private sectors to jointly invest in the IT industry. This can involve partnerships in research and development, infrastructure development, skill development, and

market access initiatives", he added. He said government should also promote research and development by allocating resources and incentives for development activities in the IT sector. He said it will foster innovation, leading to the development of cutting-edge technologies and solutions that can be exported to international markets. He underlined the need to address the small size and financial limitations of local IT firms, the low domestic demand for IT services, and the lack of exploration of non-traditional export markets. Shahzad Ali Malik said setting up more technological parks and Incubators is need of the hour where IT companies can operate and collaborate. He said these dedicated spaces can provide infrastructure, mentorship, and networking opportunities, enabling startups and small businesses to thrive and scale their operations.—APP

Irfan calls for judiciary to deliver

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Irfan Siddiqui Thursday said that his leadership firmly believed in the supremacy of the constitution and stressed the need to simplify laws for the general public to provide speedy and easy justice for all. "Law should be treated equally for everyone and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should be held accountable for its anti-state acts over the past few days", he demanded while talking to the PTV news channel. "Democracy can only flourish if the undemocratic forces are held accountable in a country and the courts should dispense justice without any discrimination," he added. Replying to a question, he replied that all cases against Imran Khan are based on facts, adding, the scale of justice should be balanced first and then elections will be acceptable in the country.—APP

Hamza Sohial teases fans with latest drama trailer

ISLAMABAD: Hamza Sohial, the budding Pakistani starlet left citizens in awe as he dropped the spellbinding teaser of the upcoming serial alongside the gorgeous Anmol Baloch. Son of veteran actor Sohail Ahmed, rose to fame after his exceptional performance in star-studded and highly acclaimed project 'Raqeab Se' has proven that he inherited his father's prowess. Turning to his social media handle, the 'Fairy Tale' sensation treated fans with first official teaser of latest masterpiece along with the caption "Can true love always awaken and find its true soul?" According to the local television's official Instagram page, the upcoming collaboration "unravels the intricacies of love, where past traumas collide with present desires" Shortly after, the enchanting teaser grabbed citizens as well as celeb's attention. Fans flooded the comment section with loved-up comments and best wishes for the entire team. Applauding the 'Fairy Tale' co-star, Bollywood diva Sehar Khan commented "best of luck". To which, Sohial also responded with gratitude. Produced under the banner of 7th Sky Entertainment, the much-talked-about serial is directed under the vital direction of Mazhar Moïn and penned by the lady with a golden pen Seema Munaf. Featuring the top-notch Pakistani starlets, the stellar cast includes Anmol Baloch, Hamza Sohial, Mohsin Abbas Haidar, Suqaynah Khan, Fazila Qazi, Hibba Aziz, Erum Akhtar, Ayesha Gul, Sabiha Hashmi, Akbar Islam, Zia Gurchani, Salma Asim, Kashif Mahmood and Agha Mustafa.—APP

IT Ministry signs agreement to enhance connectivity

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology has embarked on two significant projects worth Rs. 69.8 billion to bolster connectivity in Balochistan province. Federal Minister for Information Technology Syed Amin-ul-Haque and Minister for Science and Technology Agha Hassan Baloch here on Thursday jointly initiated the execution of these projects. The agreements were signed by USF CEO Haaris Chaudhary and Ufone's Chief Executive Officer Hatem Bamatraf. The projects, funded through the Universal Service Fund via Ufone, aim to provide the fastest connectivity to commuters and residents along the motorway. The first project will involve an investment of Rs. 47.82 billion in laying 478 kilometers of optical fiber cable, linking Gwadar, Quetta, Awaran, Khuzdar, Jhal Magsi, Qambar Shahdaddot, and Larkana. The second project, costing Rs. 19.6 billion, will offer broadband services to 34,000 individuals in 47 villages surrounding Sibi.—APP

Crisis of good governance in Pakistan

Furthermore, the training should be given to them properly on the parameters of patriotism and pro-welfare of people. Award should be given to honest and capable bureaucrat

IQRA LIAQAT




Pakistan suffers from a number of crisis. Every crisis has a negative effect on its polity and society. But the foremost crisis that Pakistan is suffering is that of good government. It is the care of all other problems. Government is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage the resources of a country. It is always based upon certain rules and laws established by the members of a society. The purpose of these laws

is to make the governance pro-welfare of the people. The goal of governance is human development though decreasing human suffering and increasing opportunities. Good governance is exercising authority in accordance with the established laws and any subversion from these laws is bad governance. Good governance ensures human security and makes the environment conducive to human progress and prosperity. Bad governance gives birth to many problems in the form of poverty, unemployment terrorism and corruption. Crisis flee at the hand of good governance and multiply under bad governance. Firstly, failure of democracy is the main cause of crisis of governance. The people having vested interest have let the democracy to flourish. The selfish politicians, land lords, military and bureaucracy have equally contribution in the failure of democracy.


Resultantly, no government of people could survive for a long time and give birth to this crisis of governance. Secondly, lack of accountability has also contribution in crisis of governance. No independent accountability programme has been launched for those, who misused their authority. It is universally accepted that strong institutions are key for governance and weak institution promote bad governance. Pakistan is also facing such situation. Here persons sitting at thrown are more powerful than the institution itself. Resultantly, they use these institution for their personal benefit and gains. They take no interest in the welfare of the people. Lack of implementation of policies has also furnished the grounds for poor governance Change in the constitution and policies makes little difference if these policies are the helms affairs are inaccessible. They pay no intention to for off areas. People

living in backward policy are badly suffering from concentration of power at center. They have to travel long for even a minor problem. So, the quality of governance negatively affect from centralization. One of the most damaging effects of the poor governance is the prevalence of corruption. The corruption in Pakistan is increasing day by day. It has become a norm in our society. Transparency international has ranked Pakistan among the most forty corrupt countries of the world. Corruption given birth to a host of problems like, poverty, illiteracy, law lessens fiscal deficit, tax evasion terrorism, low quality of life, poor infrastructure and even serious threat to life in the form of low standard. Thirdly, decentralization is also an important factor for good governance. The power must be devalued at local level along with management of resources and decision making authority. This brings government to the doorstep

of the people. Moreover, this would solve problems of the people at local level and in better way. Furthermore, it would help in narrowing the gap among the people and government. Fourthly, independence of judiciary is also vital for good governance. Judiciary should be separated from the executive. Political involvement in the judicial affairs should be made Zero. This would ensure justice independence and for all. Moreover, the grievances of people should be properly addressed. Last but not the least honest and capable bureaucracy can play a vital role in establishing good governance. No state can succeed without an efficient and capable bureaucracy. Civil servants they should be paid adequately. Furthermore, the training should be given to them properly on the parameters of patriotism and pro-welfare of people. Award should be given to honest and capable bureaucrat.



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Nato's future

DESPITE excitable speculation before the Vilnius summit, there was never a serious prospect that Ukraine could join Nato while it is at war – as Kyiv has acknowledged. Membership cannot be granted retrospectively amid a conflict. Article 5, which sets out the principle of collective defence – an attack on one is treated as an attack on all – works as a deterrent, not as a do-over. Nor was there much prospect of this meeting even agreeing to a concrete timetable for membership afterwards. The alliance operates by consensus, but the US calls the tune because it pays two-thirds of the piper's wages. It has made clear repeatedly that it regards membership for Ukraine as a distant prospect. There are significant disagreements over how best to guarantee Ukraine's security in future, while reducing the risk of Russian escalation now. Nonetheless, Nato looks stronger and more united than it has for years – while Russia is still regrouping after Yevgeny Prigozhin's mutiny. Four years ago, Emmanuel Macron said that the alliance was "brain dead". More recently, he acknowledged that Russia's invasion of Ukraine had revived it. Nato has been strengthened more by necessity than choice. Europe's challenges go far beyond Russia. The others were spelt out by Josep Borrell, the European Union's foreign affairs chief, in a speech last autumn that outlined how longstanding certainties had been upended: "You – the United States – take care of our security. You – China and Russia – provided the basis of our prosperity. This is a world that is no longer there," he warned. There is an internal threat, too: "Inside our countries ... the radical right is increasing." The greatest challenge is the prospect of another term for Donald Trump, who as president discussed withdrawal from Nato. Could pressure on Congress and the Pentagon see off such a threat in future? Perhaps. If not, European security minus the US would be not only immensely militarily challenging, but would require extensive recalibration. Without Washington setting the line, decision-making might prove more difficult. Even without a second Trump presidency, the US pivot back to Europe may not survive its growing tensions with China. While spending across the European continent has risen markedly in recent years, there are questions about whether shifting rhetoric has been fully matched by reality, especially in Germany's case. Living up to promises would both encourage the US to remain engaged, and ready Europe for a world where Washington does not. The need to "keep the Americans in" is not a new problem – it was a key part of the founding principle of Nato, as described (unofficially) by its first secretary-general. But it has rarely been more challenging.



Pushing eastward

IT seems that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's plan to set up an outpost in Japan was temporarily shelved at the just-concluded leaders' summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, as it did not make it into the communique the alliance issued afterward. Division over the plan was reported even before the summit kicked off, with French President Emmanuel Macron insisting that the geographical expansion would risk shifting the alliance's remit too far from its original North Atlantic focus. That the world's biggest military alliance's ambition to expand its presence and influence into East Asia is being driven by the US should be evident to all. The summit's communique was intended as a show of unity but it failed to cover up the differences that exist among the NATO members. Apart from taking the Japan plan off the table for now, NATO also failed to set a timetable for Ukraine's membership, which drew much ire from the Ukrainian president, who called it "unprecedented and absurd". While some Eastern European members are pressing for an explicit commitment on when Ukraine will join, the United States and Germany are reluctant to give a timetable. And although the communique mentioned China 15 times, alleging that "China's stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values" and that China poses "systemic challenges" to the alliance, this is little more than a sop to the US, since it is copybook rhetoric of the Joe Biden administration. Nonetheless, although some of the other members may be digging in their heels, it is still the US that is calling the shots for NATO, and it will continue to push for the alliance to have a greater presence in the Asia-Pacific. The Biden administration has been cajoling and encouraging the US' regional allies, the so-called Indo-Pacific Four – Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea – to become more involved in the administration's "Indo-Pacific strategy", and all four strengthened their cooperation with NATO at the summit. The four countries, which have been part of NATO's "global partners" grouping since the early 2010s, are transitioning to the Individually Tailored Partnership Programs to both expand and institutionalize cooperation with the alliance in areas such as counterterrorism cooperation, arms reduction and non-proliferation, emerging technologies, cybersecurity, science and technology and cooperation for interoperability. That NATO is strengthening ties with the US' allies in the Asia-Pacific is an ill trend that will put regional peace and stability in jeopardy, and exacerbate bloc confrontation. The security fabric in Europe is already in tatters. The world should remain on high alert now that the US is setting NATO's sights on the Asia-Pacific.

Is there a nexus between Israel and PTI ?

Qamar Bashir

This praise was won by the pragmatic and charismatic leadership of Pakistan's delegation's head, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar who tactfully and forcefully highlighted many measures taken...

DURING the review of the United Nations Human Rights Council's (UNHRC) Universal Periodic Report (UPR), which was finally adopted on July 10, 2023, Israel submitted various recommendations criticizing Pakistan's human rights record. It objected to Pakistan's reluctance to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that addresses discrimination, demanded the end of widespread use of the death penalty, particularly against children and people with disabilities, urged Pakistan to take all appropriate steps to prevent arbitrary arrest, torture, and other ill-treatment, and bring those responsible for such acts to justice. On July 12, the Pakistani Foreign Office sternly rejected Israel's recommendations, calling it "politically motivated" and "fundamentally at odds" with the positive tone of the UNHRC session, and stating that, despite Israel's "long history of oppression" of Palestinians, Pakistan "can certainly do without its advice on protecting Human Rights." Meanwhile, all political parties took advantage of this incredible opportunity to question the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf party for Israeli support and used all of their ammunition to construct an awesome nexus between Israel and the PTI. However, Israel was not alone in making such proposals; in fact, these recommendations, which were eventually endorsed by the UNHRC on July 10, 2023, were among the 340 made by other member nations. Pakistan accepted 70% of the 340 recommendations, totaling 253, while noting 84 and rejecting only three based on politically driven accusations, including Israel's proposals. Pakistan's pragmatic, positive, and forthright response astounded the member nations, who praised and thanked Pakistan for having the bravery to accept the bulk of the recommendations, indicating its commitment to the promotion and preservation of human rights. The member states lauded the government's efforts to improve legislation to protect vulnerable and marginalized groups, as well as moves to increase women's participation in society. The member acknowledged that Pakistani women's political participation was among the highest in the area and lauded the government's efforts to reach the SDGs, as well as initiatives to make the country more robust to the harmful effects of climate change. This praise was won by the pragmatic and charismatic leadership of Pakistan's delegation's head, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar who tactfully and

forcefully highlighted many measures taken by Pakistan's parliament and government over the last five years, coincidentally during the PTI's tenure in power, to improve the legal environment for the protection of human rights in the country and strengthen its compliance enforcement mechanism. She made a persuasive argument to defend Pakistan's human rights record and reacted to the various committees, groups, and member nations' suggestions. These proposals, for the most part, fall into eight broad categories, including gender discrimination, religious discrimination, arbitrary and summary executions, military courts, enforced disappearances, the Antiterrorism Act of 2017, and torture and inhumane treatment of inmates. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women expressed worry about Pakistan's refusal to remove its declaration issued upon accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and encouraged Pakistan to ratify the Convention and advised Pakistan to ensure that women human rights defenders and political activists can exercise their political rights and are effectively safeguarded from intimidation, reprisals, and violence, and that those guilty are tried and punished. It also stressed the removal of prejudice against disabled people. In her response, Hina Rabbani Khar stated that Pakistan had enacted several progressive pieces of legislation in the last five years in accordance with its international human rights obligations, focusing on the fundamental rights and liberties of the most vulnerable and marginalized people including but not limited to Pakistan amendment in the 2010 Protection of Women in the Workplace Act in 2022 to broaden the definition of employees to include non-traditional workplaces and to broaden the term of workplace harassment, parliament passed the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act of 2021 to reinforce legal deterrents against the threat of rape, the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act of 2020 and acts depriving women of their property rights, setting up to helplines across Pakistan, and support desks manned only by female police officers were set up in a number of police stations, Zainab Alert Response and Recovery (Amendment) Act, 2020 was passed, and an alert system for reporting missing children was set up. She also mentioned a 2018 law that protected the fundamental rights of transgender people, including inheritance, education, decent employment, property ownership, and participation in public affairs. Notable is the fact that in her argument, she invoked the authority of legislation and initiatives enacted by the PTI government. Four mandate holders for the special procedure addressed issues pertaining to arbitrary and summary executions, safeguards pertaining to fair trial and due process, the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and the protection of juvenile offenders' rights by the government under the application of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997. The Human Rights Committee acknowledged that military courts ceased to exist in March 2019, but regrets that 59 prisoners were executed based on military court sentences. Diverse holders of mandates for special procedures expressed concern over the consistent rise in enforced disappearances and reaffirmed their recommendation that Pakistan criminalize enforced disappearance. The Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading

treatment or punishment expressed grave concern regarding the lack of legislation for the prevention and punishment of torture and urged Pakistan to enact legislation defining and criminalizing torture in accordance with international law. Diverse mandate holders for special procedures reaffirmed their concern that the Anti-Terrorism Act and the Pakistan Protection Ordinance appear to permit forms of arbitrary detention that facilitate prolonged incommunicado detention, torture, and enforced disappearances, which frequently result in the extrajudicial execution of the victim. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) advised Pakistan to amend its existing laws, including the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016 and the Citizen Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules of 2020. Additionally, UNESCO urged Pakistan to continue investigating cases involving the assassination of journalists and to report voluntarily to UNESCO on the status of judicial follow-up. Hina Rabbani while forcefully defending the country argued that the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022 was enacted to combat torture and preserve fair trial and due process rights and a Juvenile Justice System Act, which mandated the handling of juvenile cases in accordance with human rights principles, was passed in 2018. While responding to the question of death penalties she argued that Pakistan had imposed a moratorium on the death penalty for several years. However, the moratorium had been lifted after the horrendous terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in 2014. The Minister highlighted that the death penalty was applied only for the most severe crimes, in full compliance with due process, under a final judgment rendered by a competent court and with the right to seek pardon or appeal for commutation, and that there had been no executions in Pakistan since December 2019. She also referred to the Railway Act which had been amended in October 2022, to reduce the provision for capital punishment to a life sentence for acts of sabotage targeting railway networks. While responding to the observations of harassment of journalists, she said that the landmark Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021 had been enacted, reflecting the high importance Pakistan attached to the freedom of opinion and expression. While fortifying her defense, she referred to the National Education Policy Framework 2018 which had been formulated to accelerate the pace of universal and equal access to quality education by all, updation of the National Action Plan for Human Rights in 2020 to make it more comprehensive and address any previous gaps. An Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in 2021 to ensure that human rights due diligence was conducted in the business sector, human rights awareness programme 2020 launched to educate, and raise awareness among the public and office bearers about international human rights commitments and follow-up actions, a human rights information management system had been established at the federal and provincial levels in 2021 for the collection of data on human rights indicators, the National Commission for Human Rights had launched policy guidelines 2018 on the protection of human rights defenders to ensure the safety of defenders and to the National Commission on Rights of the Child, established in 2020, monitored child rights situations and addressed victims' grievances.

Again all legal instruments which provided foundations of her arguments were passed during PTI's tenure. All these acts which provided the foundation of the Minister's arguments were passed during the tenure of PTI in power. Some speakers said it was concerning that a law was passed in 2023 which tightened blasphemy laws, which were often used to persecute minority groups. The Government lacked the political will to protect the rights of religious minorities and had rejected multiple recommendations which called for the repeal of blasphemy laws. There had been concerning incidents when mobs targeted those accused of committing blasphemous crimes, often resulting in their deaths. A number of speakers called on Pakistan to repeal the laws, which were incompatible with the country's international obligations. It was also regretful that Pakistan had not adopted a comprehensive anti-discrimination law which allowed religious minorities to effectively challenge the State and other actors. Khar said Pakistan was taking due care of the rights of minorities in the country. "Individuals belonging to various religions are equal citizens of Pakistan and as a responsible state, we are fully committed to protecting and promoting their fundamental rights and freedoms, and added that Pakistan has taken safeguards against the misuse of the blasphemy law in the country, citing Section 211 of the Pakistan Penal Code which calls for action against any person who falsely accuses another person of blasphemy. In its concluding remarks, the UNHRC praised Pakistan for accepting most of the recommendations and acknowledged that it had paid particular attention to the rights of women and children, as well as education and health, among others. Pakistan was also mindful of the recommendations made in other areas, such as minorities, media, and law enforcement; it had viewed them on merit and they would remain part of the overall human rights agenda in the days ahead which it added would help in furthering respect and protections for all its people, especially in the field of economic, social and cultural rights. It appreciated Pakistan's consistently demonstrated strong political will to promote and protect all human rights of everyone and to enact wide-ranging legislative, policy, and institutional steps taken across the spectrum of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in line with its international human rights obligations, focusing on the fundamental rights and freedoms of the vulnerable and the marginalized. It applauded Pakistan's resolve to take further meaningful steps to implement the accepted recommendations, especially pertaining to sustainable development, women's empowerment, protection of the child, poverty alleviation, social protection schemes, and protecting rights of persons with disabilities, among others. Hina Rabbani Khar was able to defend most of the critical recommendations and save face because of the legislations enacted and administrative and enforcement steps taken during 2018 to 2022 and win praise and appreciations of UNHRC members, which was incidentally the period of PTI in power, therefore it is only fair that while creating an evil nexus between PTI and Israel, proper acknowledgement of PTI's legislative and administrative efforts may also be made.

— The writer is the Former Press Secretary to the President

Geopolitical stability promotes trade flows and economic interests

Iqra Hanif



Trade and Connectivity: Pakistan aims to improve trade and connectivity with Central Asia to diversify its trade routes and reduce dependence on traditional routes. It has been a proponent of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program, which focuses on improving regional connectivity, energy trade, and infrastructure development

GEO-ECONOMIC interests are strategic economic objectives that influence a country's foreign policy and international relations, often related to economic growth, national security, and the promotion of national economic interests. Economic interests can include: Access to resources: Countries may seek access to natural resources to ensure a stable supply for domestic industries and economic growth. Market access: Governments strive to secure trade agreements and market access to promote exports, expand markets, and increase economic competitiveness. Countries may seek foreign direct investment (FDI) to access new markets, technologies, resources, and skills, promote economic growth, and create job opportunities. Energy security: Countries must pursue diverse energy sources, develop energy infrastructure, and engage in energy diplomacy to reduce dependence on specific suppliers and mitigate energy-related risks. Infrastructure development: Building and upgrading infrastructure can improve trade, connectivity, and economic development, and countries can invest in infrastructure projects to foster economic integration and influence. Financial influence: Countries may promote their currency as a reserve currency or establish financial institutions to extend their economic influence globally. They may also engage in economic cooperation, such as regional trade agreements or international financial aid, to strengthen economic ties with other nations. Intellectual property protection: Protecting intellectual property rights is essential for fostering innovation, attracting investment, and supporting technology-driven industries. Countries may advocate for stronger protections to protect their economic interests. Geopolitical stability: Countries must maintain geopolitical stability in key regions to ensure uninterrupted trade flows, protect investments, and avoid disruptions that could negatively impact economic interests. Geo-economic interests are a country's efforts to leverage its economic resources, trade relationships, investments, and infrastructure to improve its economic well-being, competitiveness, and national security. Pakistan has long recognized the importance of Central Asia in its geo-economic interests. The region is

strategically located between Pakistan, China, Russia, and Afghanistan and is rich in natural resources. It is seen as a gateway to major markets such as Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia. Pakistan's geo-economic interests in Central Asia can be understood through various dimensions: Trade and Connectivity: Pakistan aims to improve trade and connectivity with Central Asia to diversify its trade routes and reduce dependence on traditional routes. It has been a proponent of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program, which focuses on improving regional connectivity, energy trade, and infrastructure development. Energy Cooperation: Pakistan seeks to engage in energy cooperation with Central Asian countries to meet its growing energy demands and reduce dependence on traditional energy sources. Projects like the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline aim to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India, demonstrating Pakistan's interest in accessing Central Asian energy resources. Economic Partnerships: Pakistan is exploring opportunities for investment, joint ventures, and trade agreements with Central Asian countries to expand bilateral economic relations. It is interested in sectors such as agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and information technology, which can benefit from Central Asian resources and markets. Regional Stability and Security: Pakistan considers regional stability and security in Central Asia essential for its own security interests and promotes it to create an environment conducive to economic cooperation and development. Afghanistan has been facing security challenges. Counterterrorism and Extremism: Pakistan seeks to cooperate with Central Asian countries to address common challenges such as terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking. Cooperation in intelligence sharing, border management and joint operations can contribute to regional security and stability, which is essential for trade and economic integration. People-to-People Contacts: Pakistan aims to foster cultural and people-to-people exchanges with Central Asian countries through tourism, educational collaborations, and cultural exchanges to strengthen ties

and facilitate economic cooperation. Pakistan recognizes the significance of Central Asia for its geo-economic interests, particularly in trade, energy cooperation, transport infrastructure, and investment opportunities. Trade relations between Pakistan and Central Asia have been growing, with efforts to promote bilateral trade agreements, enhance transit trade, and explore opportunities in sectors like textiles, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals. However, challenges such as logistical constraints and complex customs procedures need to be addressed to unlock the full potential of trade. Energy cooperation is increasingly important, with projects like the TAPI gas pipeline aiming to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan to India, benefiting all participating countries and enhancing regional energy integration. Pakistan is also interested in importing natural gas and exploring renewable energy projects in collaboration with Central Asian countries. Transport infrastructure, including road connectivity, rail links, air connectivity, and the development of strategic ports like Gwadar, plays a vital role in connecting Pakistan and Central Asia, facilitating trade, transit, and people-to-people exchanges. Central Asia offers attractive investment opportunities for Pakistan, such as energy and natural resources, infrastructure development, manufacturing, agriculture, information technology, tourism, and financial services. Pakistani companies can explore joint ventures, technology transfer, and collaboration in these sectors to benefit from the region's resources and growing consumer market. To fully realize the potential of Central Asia for Pakistan's geo-economic interests, it is essential to continue promoting dialogue, collaboration, and investment in key areas, while addressing challenges such as infrastructure development, trade facilitation measures, and capacity building. By leveraging Central Asia's strategic location, resources, and historical affinities, Pakistan aims to enhance its economic growth, energy security, regional integration, and cultural ties with the region.

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Briefs

Interim setup to take charge in August: PM

FROM PAGE 01
Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for "sincerely" cooperating with Pakistan during its difficult time. PM Shehbaz added that his government has also developed a comprehensive plan for economic recovery. He also said that in one-and-a-half years they were in power, they brought the country out of hopelessness and showed the light of hope. He added that it was a journey from unemployment to re-employment. "It is the only coalition government formed for the shortest term," the premier further said. The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government, he said, is paving the way for investment from Gulf countries in agriculture, industry, energy and defence sectors. "The confidence of the business and investment community is slowly being restored," PM Shehbaz said and added that "now is the time to break the cycle of debt". "Let's erase hatred, share love, become one nation," appealed the PM. He assured that they will reduce inflation and bring employment like they did before.

Parliamentary panel expedites...

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Dr Fehmida Mirza, Commerce Minister Naveed Qamar, Senator Taj Haider, MNA Afzal Dhandla, Senator Manzoor Ahmed, Senator Kamran Murtaza and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) secretary attended the meeting. Talking to the media after the meeting, Sadiq ruled out the possibility of banning any political party, saying there was no proposal to ban any party as the committee's job was to make electoral reforms. "We will review the contentious issues on Thursday besides drafting the agreed-upon proposals. The controversial issues which need further discussion will be examined on Monday," he said. Sadiq said there was a thorough discussion on proposals for electoral reforms, and effective proposals were taken into consideration for the transparent conduct of elections. He said many things were done during former chief justice Saqib Nisar's tenure, and the committee was trying to fix controversial decisions related to elections.

Alvi for expanding ties with...

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the established institutional mechanisms and private-sector collaborations. He called for further expanding economic ties by strengthening the existing institutional mechanisms, besides making the Border Sustenance Marketplaces functional. Talking to the High Commissioner-designate of Rwanda to Pakistan, James Kimonyo, the president emphasized the need to further strengthen trade and economic relations, adding that the business communities of the two countries needed to exchange visits to boost bilateral trade. He remarked that Rwandan businessmen should explore the Pakistani market, especially for the import of rice, textile products, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, and sports goods. The president felicitated the envoys on their appointments and expressed the hope that they would play their role to further increase bilateral cooperation with Pakistan.

Imran condemns Israel for targeting...

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collapse of our diplomacy by this corrupt and fascist government that is destroying Pakistan internally and externally, but also shows our descent into the law of jungle where might is right," he added.

Belarus' Envoy extends invitation for CIS games

The Federal Minister conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador for the invitation to participate in the prestigious CIS Games. Recognizing the importance of such events in promoting goodwill and offering Pakistani athletes an international platform, Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fostering sportsmanship and cultivating talent.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan H.E. Andrei Metelitsa called on the Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan-Ur-Rehman Mazari in Islamabad today. Federal Secretary Ahmad Hanif Orakzai and Chairman Pakistan Sports Board Shoaib Khoso were also present. In a significant move to deepen bilateral relations and foster sports ties, the Ambassador of Belarus, H. E. Andrei Metelitsa paid a diplomatic visit to Minister for IPC today. During his visit, Ambassador expressed his desire to explore avenues of collaboration between the two nations. In a meeting an invitation was extended by Ambassador on behalf of the Belarusian Minister for Sports and Tourism Mr. Sergey Kovalchak to Pakistan's Minister of IPC along with his team for participation in the forthcoming games of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)/ Non-CIS Countries from 4 to 14 August this year. The CIS Games, renowned for their celebration of sportsmanship and solidarity, have evolved into a prominent platform for athletes from participating countries to showcase their skills and nurture friendly



competition. The Federal Minister conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador for the invitation to participate in the prestigious CIS Games. Recognizing the importance of such events in promoting

goodwill and offering Pakistani athletes an international platform, Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fostering sportsmanship and cultivating talent. He further expressed his dedication

to developing robust sports infrastructure to support the aspirations of Pakistani athletes. The Minister also exchanged key information about Pakistan famous Sports and its structure at various levels. He also told the ambassador that 16-member team from Pakistan will participate in the categories of Boxing, swimming, karate and wrestling at the 2nd edition of CIS Games in Belarus. The discussion extended beyond the CIS Games, encompassing broader avenues of cooperation. They both exchanged their desires to explore opportunities for collaboration in various sports including football, hockey, wrestling, and tennis. The focus was on fostering knowledge sharing, organizing coaching programs, and facilitating exchange programs to enhance the technical capabilities of athletes and coaches from both countries. In the end H.E. Andrei Metelitsa expressed his sincere appreciation for the warm welcome extended to him and underlined the significance of cultural and sports exchanges in strengthening the bonds between Belarus and Pakistan. He commended Pakistan's commitment to the development of sports and applauded the performances of Pakistani athletes on the international stage.

Dele Alli says he was sexually abused aged six

LONDON: Everton midfielder Dele Alli says he was sexually abused when he was six years old. In an emotional interview with former England footballer Gary Neville, Alli revealed the abuse he suffered as a child before he was adopted aged 12. He said he was "molested" aged six, started smoking aged seven and was dealing drugs at eight years old. Alli, 27, recently spent six weeks in rehab because of a sleeping pill addiction and mental health issues. One of football's brightest young talents, Alli was

part of the England squad that reached the semi-finals of the 2018 World Cup and helped Tottenham to the Champions League final in 2019. However, his form dipped and he left Spurs to join Everton in February 2022 before going on loan to Turkish side Besiktas last season. Alli, who earned the last of his 37 England caps in 2019, returned to Everton at the end of last season because of injury. "When I came back from Turkey, I found out I needed an operation and I was

in a bad place mentally," he told The Overlap. "I decided to go to a modern-day rehab facility for mental health. They deal with addiction, mental health and trauma. "I felt like it was time for me. You can't be told to go there. You have to know and make the decision yourself or it's not going to work. I was caught in a bad cycle. I was relying on things that were doing me harm. "I was waking up every day and I was winning the fight, going into training, smiling, showing that I was happy - but inside I was definitely

losing the battle. It was time for me to change it." In a statement, Everton said: "Everyone at Everton respects and applauds Dele's bravery to speak about the difficulties he has faced, as well as seek the help required. "Dele will not be conducting any further interviews in relation to his rehabilitation, and we ask that his privacy is respected while he continues his recuperation from injury and receives the full care and support needed for his physical and mental well-being." - Agencies

Everton rope in Ashley Young

LONDON: Everton have roped in former England full back Ashley Young on a one-year deal, the Merseyside club announced on Thursday. Young, who spent nine years at Manchester United, is a winner of the Premier League, Serie A, Europa League, FA Cup and League Cup. The 38-year-old became only the third Englishman to win Italy's top-flight title after moving to Inter Milan in 2020. He was at Aston Villa, who did not renew his contract when it expired last month, during the last two months. "I'm delighted to be an Everton player and to have joined this massive club. I can't wait for the season to start and walking out at Goodison Park is going to be an unbelievable feeling and to hear the passionate fans behind me. "The manager was important in me signing. I know him and know what his passion and desire is like. His honesty, will to work hard and his hunger for the game is second to none," Young told evertontv. "I know things haven't gone too well for Everton in the past couple of seasons but the manager's ambition, speaking to him and hearing what he wants to do to change the Club around, was a key factor in my decision. "The other is the size of Everton. It's a massive club and the fanbase is one of the best. Having them behind me is a fantastic opportunity. - Agencies

IMF transfers \$1.2 bln...

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The minister thanked Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif and his economic team for their untiring efforts made during the past eight months in materializing the programme. The minister said that the agreement was limited to 9 months to enable new elected government to take decisions for future. He said, Pakistan was going forward in positive direction and highlighted that there was need to consolidate the gains and take the economy to growth trajectory. It is pertinent to mentioned here that the IMF Executive Board had approved the Stand-by Agreement (SBA) for US\$ 3 billion for Pakistan. The staff level agreement on SBA amounting Special Drawing Rights (SDR) 2,250 million (about \$3 billion or 111 percent of Pakistan's IMF quota) was reached during the last week of June after IMF staff team led by Nathan Porter held in person and virtual meetings with the Pakistani authorities to discuss a new financing engagement for Pakistan under the arrangement. The new SBA builds on the authorities' efforts under Pakistan's 2019 Extended Fund Facility supported program, which was due to expire in end-June.

IMF deal, a self-evaluation...

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board on Wednesday approved the \$US3 billion stand-by agreement for Pakistan to help overcome its current financial challenges. The prime minister said though the country had averted the dangers of default, however, consistent efforts were required to stabilize the economy from recent external shocks. He emphasized a united approach by all segments of the country including the government, the State institutions, and the nation to lead the country towards financial self-reliance. "A nation, which learns from its mistakes and takes corrective measures, attain the goals of prosperity," he said. Terming youth the future of Pakistan, he said the development policies must ensure their inclusion in the national mainstream.

Gul Bar elected GB CM, PTI...

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mandate in Gilgit-Baltistan and said that it was the darkest day for the democracy. Reacting to the GB CM elections, PTI Spokesman that depriving a party with 22 seats in the 33-member house of the right to rule was slap on the face of democracy and the constitution. He said that democratic and constitutional identity of Pakistan was badly dented in front of the world due to this insult of public mandate. The PTI spokesperson stated that the unscrupulous criminal elements in the guise of politics facilitated the shameful invasion on people's right to vote and democracy. He went on to say that conspiracies hatched behind closed rooms turned the minority into a majority in the GB like these elements did in AJK.

LeBron James provides update about his NBA future

WEB DESK

MIAMI: The American basketball superstar LeBron James talked about his NBA future at the 2023 ESPY's Award on Thursday, where he confirmed that he will continue playing. James, 38, was present at the 2023 ESPY's award where he was also awarded for the Best Record-Breaking Performance as he became the league's all-time leading points scorer. "I don't care how many more points I score, or what I can or cannot do on the floor," James said during the awards in Los Angeles. "The real question for me is: Can I play without cheating this game? The day I can't give everything on the floor is the day I'll be done. Lucky for you guys, that day is not today." It will be the 38-year-old's 20th NBA season where he has already won four NBA championships. The Lakers reached the Western Conference Finals in 2022-23 but were battered by Nikola Jokic's Denver Nuggets. After the final, James sparked concern among fans after he said that he is considering his future. "We'll see, we'll see what happens going forward," James said after the Lakers' loss. "I don't know. I don't know. I've got a lot to think about, to be honest. I've got a lot to think about, to be honest. Just for me, going forward with the game of basketball, I've got a lot to think about. Appreciate it." It must be noted that despite reaching the 40s, the American has shown no sign of decline and is still performing at the top level and was one of the most important players for the Lakers in their run to the finals of Western Conference Finals last season. James, after debuting for his hometown team Cleveland Cavaliers in 2003, became the youngest player to win the NBA Rookie of the Year award at 19.

Ashwin completes 700 wickets in international cricket

WEB DESK

DOMINICA: Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Wednesday (July 12) became the third Indian bowler to take 700 wickets in international cricket during the first Test against West Indies in Dominica. Ashwin, 36, wreaked havoc for the West Indies batters on the first day of the opening Test and took a fiver to go past the

700-wickets mark in international cricket. Only Anil Kumble (956) and Harbhajan Singh (712) have more wickets than the 36-year-old. The Tamil Nadu-born Ashwin currently has 479 Test wickets to his name besides 151 in ODIs and 72 in T20Is. He finished the innings with figures of 24.3-6-60-5, recording his 33rd five-wicket-haul in Test matches. The 36-year-old made his comeback in the Test team after

the World Test Championship (WTC) final against Australia in June - which India lost, in the first Test against the Caribbean side. Ashwin's first victim was the legendary West Indies batter Shivnarine Chanderpaul's son - Tegenarine Chanderpaul, who fell prey to the ace-spinner for 12 runs. The hosts continuously struggled against the bowling attack of the Blues and could not stand for long as they were all out for just

150 runs. Ashwin completed his fiver after removing Alzarri Joseph who failed the read the off-spinner's delivery and got himself out for just four runs. India started their batting after sending the entire West Indies side back to the pavilion and scored 80-0 in 23 overs at the Stumps on day one. Yashashvi Jaiswal (40) and the skipper Rohit Sharma (30) will resume batting for India on day two.

Thailand's reformist leader fails to become PM

WEB DESK

BANGKOK: The reformer who won Thailand's election has failed to win enough votes in parliament to become prime minister. Pita Limjaroenrat swept to victory in May as voters rejected nearly a decade of conservative military rule. He and his allies have a lower house majority but could not win over the

249-seat senate, all appointed by a previous military government. Mr Pita also faces last-minute legal challenges which could yet disqualify him. He denies breaking election rules. During his campaign he accepted the result of the first round of voting, but added: "I am not giving up." Ahead of the parliamentary vote, Mr Pita, the leader of the progressive Move Forward party, had said he

was confident. "I will try my best in showing my vision and explaining all senator's doubts," he said. Mr Pita also said there were attempts to "block the majority government of the people from getting to run the country in various ways." "This is quite normal for the path to power in our country... I am encouraged and hopeful to fix things as they come until the dream of mine and the people can be reached," he told the Thai Rath TV channel. Apart from parliamentary numbers stacked against him, Mr Pita appeared to face another blow to his ambitions on Wednesday when Thailand's notoriously conservative Constitutional Court accepted a recommendation from the Election Commission that he be disqualified.

Sajid Ali gets honored by Shaor Foundation

The certificate presented to Mr. Sajid Ali symbolizes the acknowledgment of his dedication and tireless efforts in advancing the principles of democracy, social justice, and public welfare. It serves as a testament to his outstanding leadership

QALB E ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: In a momentous event held at the Avari Express Hotel in Lahore, Mr. Sajid Ali, the representative of the Pakistan Peoples Party and one of the country's top five young political leaders, was honored with a distinguished certificate. The esteemed award was presented by Mr. Andreas Hergenrother, the Country Representative of Hanns Seidel Foundation Pakistan, and Shaor Foundation Pakistan. The ceremony, attended by prominent politicians, intellectuals, and social activists, showcased the recognition and appreciation

of Mr. Sajid Ali's notable contributions to politics and social development. As the sole recipient from all over Pakistan, his achievements have solidified his position as a respected and influential figure in the political landscape of the country. The Hanns Seidel Foundation, a renowned German political foundation, aims to promote democracy, good governance, and sustainable economic development. Their collaboration with the Shaor Foundation, a Pakistani non-profit organization dedicated to education and civic engagement, reflects a shared commitment to fostering positive change in Pakistan.



The certificate presented to Mr. Sajid Ali symbolizes the acknowledgment of his dedication and tireless

efforts in advancing the principles of democracy, social justice, and public welfare. It serves

as a testament to his outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to the well-being of the Pakistani people. During his acceptance speech, Mr. Sajid Ali expressed his gratitude to both foundations for recognizing his endeavors and emphasized the importance of collaboration and partnership in driving positive societal change. He reiterated his commitment to serving the nation and vowed to continue working towards a prosperous and equitable Pakistan. Mr. Andreas Hergenrother, in his address, praised Mr. Sajid Ali for his exemplary leadership and emphasized the significance

of nurturing young political leaders who possess a deep understanding of the challenges faced by the country. He also commended the efforts of both foundations in promoting political awareness, education, and fostering sustainable development in Pakistan. The event provided a platform for like-minded individuals and organizations to come together and discuss pressing issues, exchange ideas, and explore potential avenues for cooperation. The exchange of diverse perspectives and expertise further emphasized the need for collaboration and collective action to overcome the complex challenges facing Pakistan.

India failed to suppress Kashmiris

FROM PAGE 01
Jammu and Kashmir, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said since 5th August 2019, over seven hundred and eighty Kashmiri people have been martyred by the Indian occupation forces. The spox said India's unabated repression over the last seven decades has failed to break the will of Kashmiri people for the right to self-determination. Mumtaz said Pakistan will continue to support its Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their just struggle against Indian oppression till the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in the UN Security Council Resolutions. Responding to a question, the spokesperson said Indus Water Treaty is an important document that has served both Pakistan and India.

Briefs

Biden to meet Finnish leader after NATO summit

HELSINKI: US President Joe Biden will meet the leader of newest NATO member Finland on Thursday, after G7 powers vowed to back Ukraine for as long as it takes to defeat Russia. Biden will meet with Sauli Niinisto, the president of the Nordic country, which shares a 1,300 kilometres (800-mile) border with Russia and which ended its historic military non-alignment following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The trip comes after NATO leaders dashed Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy's hopes for a clear timeline to join the military alliance, saying they would offer an invite only when "conditions are met".

G7 nations later offered Ukraine a package of long-term security commitments and vowed to stand with Kyiv for "as long as it takes" to defeat Russia.

Besides Niinisto and the Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo, Biden will meet Sweden's Ulf Kristersson, Norway's Jonas Gahr Store, Denmark's Mette Frederiksen and Iceland's Katrin Jakobsdottir.

The topic of the discussions is cooperation between the Nordic countries and the United States on security, environmental and technology issues.

Biden will be the first US president to visit Helsinki since Donald Trump's summit five years ago with Russian President Vladimir Putin. —APP

Google launches ChatGPT rival Bard in EU, Brazil

PARIS: Google announced Thursday that its AI chatbot Bard was now available in around 50 more countries, including all 27 EU nations and Brazil, as it expands access to its answer to Microsoft-backed ChatGPT. US tech giant unveiled Bard in February but delayed its release in the European Union as the bloc plans to regulate artificial intelligence amid concerns about risks associated with the rapidly growing technology.

Google has raced to catch up with rival Microsoft, which has rushed to integrate ChatGPT-like powers in a wide array of its products, including the Bing search engine.

Bard is "now available in most of the world, and in the most widely spoken languages," Bard's product lead Jack Kracwzyk and vice president Arnag Subramanya wrote in a blog. "As part of our bold and responsible approach to AI, we've proactively engaged with experts, policymakers and privacy regulators on this expansion," they said. The company said it would incorporate user feedback and take steps to protect people's privacy and data as it broadens access to Bard. The AI tool can now be used in over 40 languages including Arabic, Chinese, German, Hindi and Spanish. It was previously available in three languages — English, Japanese and Korean. Google also announced new features, including receiving audio responses from Bard or answers in five different styles: simple, long, short, professional or casual. Another new feature allows users to upload photos that Bard can analyse for information. —APP

Chinese yuan strengthens against dollar

BEIJING: The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 238 pips to 7.1527 against the U.S. dollar Thursday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the U.S. dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day. —APP



MULTAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with high achievers who received laptops under the PM's Youth Laptop Scheme at Bahauddin Zakaria University.—DNA

UN experts slam Israel for forcibly evicting families

, Israeli police evicted Nora Ghaith and Mustafa Sub Laban from their home in the Old City of Jerusalem in the early hours of 11 July

UNITED NATIONS: The forced eviction and displacement of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family and many other Palestinian families in east Jerusalem by Israel may amount to a war crime of forcible transfer and must be immediately reversed, UN experts have said. In a statement issued Wednesday by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), the experts said it was "deeply shocking and heartbreaking" to see an elderly Palestinian couple, Nora Ghaith and Mustafa Sub Laban, evicted from their family home where they lived all

their lives and raised their children. "As we have repeatedly said, forced evictions of Palestinians in east Jerusalem are part of Israel's apartheid machinery at work, designed to consolidate Jewish ownership of Jerusalem and racially dominate the city's population," the experts, including Francesca Albanese, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, said. According to the news release, Israeli police evicted Nora Ghaith and Mustafa Sub Laban from their home in the Old City of Jerusalem

in the early hours of 11 July. The Ghaith-Sub Laban family, who had a protected lease on the house since 1953, reportedly faced constant harassment and lawsuits from Israeli authorities and settlers seeking to seize their home under an inherently discriminatory law that applies to Palestinians in east Jerusalem, the release added. The experts noted that the case of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family was representative of a widespread and systematic practice by Israel to forcibly evict and displace Palestinians from east Jerusalem

and "de-palestinize" the city. Across east Jerusalem, there are reportedly around 150 Palestinian families at risk of forced eviction and displacement by Israeli authorities and settler organizations. "Israel's transfer of its own population into the occupied territory is a gross violation of international humanitarian law and a war crime [...] Nothing speaks more blatantly of its intention to annex and colonize the occupied territory in violation of international law," they said. "Israel must immediately cease these deliberate acts, which not

only deliberately violate Palestinians' rights to self-determination, non-discrimination, development, adequate housing and property, but also traumatize the affected family and the entire Palestinian community living defenceless under Israeli rule, and violate the fundamental norms and principles of international law," the experts added. The Human Rights Council-appointed experts added that it is "the duty of other States to put an end to the unrelenting assaults on the system of international law." Accord-

ing to the news release, the experts have repeatedly raised these issues with the Government of Israel without any response to date. In addition to Ms. Albanese, the rights experts voicing concern included the special rapporteurs on violence against women and girls, contemporary forms of racism, human rights of internally displaced persons, and the right to development; the independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons; and members of the working group on discrimination against women and girls.—Agencies

North Korea fires ballistic missile

NEWS DESK

LONDON: North Korea fired its first Intercontinental ballistic missile in three months after warning of "shocking" consequences to protest alleged US surveillance activity close to its territory.

Some experts say North Korea likely launched its developmental, road-mobile Hwasong-18 ICBM, a type of solid-fuel weapon that is harder to detect and intercept than its liquid-fuel ICBMs. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un previously called the Hwasong-18 his most powerful nuclear weapon.

Seoul and Tokyo report the missile was fired around 10 am from the region of Pyong Yang and flew 1000 kilometres before landing in waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. They said the missile was launched at a high angle in what observers say was an apparent attempt to avoid neighbouring countries.

Call to lure new tax payers in the system

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan's tax assessment system needs essential changes to prompt development of the national economy. These views were expressed by Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), President Lahore Muhammad Momin Ali Malik while speaking to members of LCCI on Thursday. He said that the capability and capacity of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to implement policies and the political will to pursue those outside the tax net is required. He said any action taken in a hurry for instant tax revenue would affect the profitability of formal sector businesses as well as the tax collection system. "Taxes ought to be straightforward, foreseeable, and in favour of business expansion and the formalisation of economy. It should be the goal to increase tax revenues by expanding the tax base and improving the profitability of current taxpayers. Currently, the sector that accounts for 20 per cent of GDP contributes a disproportionate 56 per cent of taxes. More jobs should be created, value-added exports should rise, and sensible import substitution should be encouraged. Taxes should be looked at in relation to manufacturing and commercial importers, as well as corporates and other types of business structures like Association of Persons," he elaborated. Momin Malik asserted that corporations, particularly those which were listed and adhered to a higher standard of governance and accountability, their owners and shareholders should not be penalised. "According to the PBF office-bearer, the wholesale, retail, and real estate sectors had the potential to bring in Rs747 billion in tax revenue". He explained that by raising the initial investment required to cover the tax that must be paid in early loss years.—Agencies

Pakistan hopes to take CPEC into next phase

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan is looking forward to taking the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into the next phase with greater vigor and hopes to see the fruits of the CPEC benefit not only China and Pakistan, but the whole region, said Ahsan Iqbal, the Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. Ahsan Iqbal was talking to the Global Times in an interview after a meeting of the 12th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of the CPEC in Beijing. Iqbal, who has extensive experience and long-standing involvement in the CPEC, said he was overwhelmed at how much has been accomplished by the CPEC in just 10 years. The beauty of the CPEC is that it is a project between two countries that enjoy a very unique relationship, Iqbal said. "Normally, countries come close when they need to, and they get farther away when they don't need each other. But in the case of China and Pakistan, it has been always spring. There has never been autumn in this re-

lationship." This year marks a decade of the CPEC. The landmark project was formalized on July 5, 2013. The CPEC has done a great service to Pakistan, helping it overcome the energy crisis, develop modern infrastructure and restore the country's image as an investment destination. Prior to the CPEC the world used to look at Pakistan as a very dangerous country, the minister said. Pakistan would be facing an extreme energy crisis today without the projects launched under the CPEC, Iqbal emphasized. Everyone in Pakistan has benefited from the great contribution that has been made by the CPEC, he added. If there was a lack of electricity, factories would be closed and workers would be laid off; patients in hospitals and students in educational institutions would also be stranded. He mentioned the Thar region of Pakistan, which was once a backward area, saying the CPEC has transformed the region into a source of energy for the country. Local education, employment, hospitals and schools have also flourished. The projects also

empower local women in the region, Iqbal noted. "You will be amazed to see that local women are driving the heavy trucks, which take coal out of the mines." In total, the CPEC projects have created about 200,000 job opportunities. Iqbal said Pakistan now has a lot more vigor to move forward on the CPEC, adding that many projects that were delayed in previous years were completed in the last year. He said that Pakistan is looking forward to taking the CPEC into the next phase with greater vigor. "I hope that the next phase will bring many dividends for the wider region beyond Pakistan and China. We hope one day the whole of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East will benefit from the CPEC." When talking about the mega projects within the second phase of the CPEC, Iqbal expressed his hope to see the start of major upgrades to the Main Line 1 railway between Karachi and Peshawar with China's help as soon as possible in 2023. Modernization and upgrades are urgently needed for this aging railway line, especially as it was badly damaged by the floods last year.

REO reviews staff performance

DNA

SIALKOT: Regional Emergency Officer (REO) Gujranwala Syed Kamal Abid reviewed the performance of rescue officers of Sialkot and Narowal districts of the last six months during his visit at Rescue Central Station Sialkot. According to rescue spokesperson, under the special direction of Founder Director General Punjab Emergency Service Department Dr. Rizwan Naseer, Regional Emergency Officer (REO) Gujranwala Syed Kamal Abid reviewed the performance reports in detail and expressed his satisfaction. He urged the officers to continue performing their duties with the same enthusiasm. "Keep inspecting the stations, vehicles and equipment under your jurisdiction so that there is no delay in helping the public", he added. REO said that a healthy rescuer can perform the duty in a better way.

CPEC brings Chinese companies, technologies to Pak

DNA

BEIJING: Thanks to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan is now slowly moving from imported fuels to local fuel for power generation and from outdated technology to new Chinese technology, Minister for Power, Khurram Dastgir Khan has said. "This shift is happening and Chinese companies are much more visible now. They are bringing their technology, their management to Pakistan, and they are teaching Pakistani engineers and workers," he told Xinhua in a recent interview at a power transmission project under the CPEC. The deeper penetration of Chinese companies into the energy sector was one of the major positive developments that had happened in the country as a result of CPEC, Khan said. Highlighting the prospects of the transmission network, he said that 660kV Mattari-Lahore high-voltage direct current transmission project under the CPEC was the most advanced transmission project in Pakistan's history. The project, being the only transmission project under CPEC, was crucial for Pakistan as it connected the country's south to the north and vice versa, he said. This is now one of the principal backbones of Pakistan's national transmission line, he said, noting that it had been operational for over 1,000 days without any issue, which was also a testament to the Chinese and Pakistani engineers who worked here and who had done so well in very challenging circumstances. Regarding the 10th anniversary of CPEC this year, the minister said China supported Pakistan in 2013 when no other country was willing to invest. By the end of 2022, CPEC has brought 25.4 billion U.S. dollars in direct investment to Pakistan and has created about 236,000 jobs for the country, as per a recent data revealed by Chinese embassy.

Doctors walk out in UK health service's biggest strike

LONDON: Hospital doctors in England on Thursday staged the biggest walkout in the history of the UK's state-funded National Health Service, prompting fears for patient safety. The unprecedented five-day stoppage over pay and staff retention is the latest in eight months of industrial action across the NHS, which is already reeling from a vast pandemic backlog. "The NHS has been running on goodwill and now this is the last chance to change that," said 27-year-old junior doctor Arjan Sing, on a picket line outside London's University College Hospital. He said colleagues were planning to leave for countries that "care about their doctors". "Doctors have realised they work in a global market, they're not restricted to this country," he added. Nurses, ambulance staff and other medical workers have all joined picket lines in recent months, adding to pressures on patient appointments. The industrial action by junior doctors — those below consultant level — will run until 7:00 am (0600 GMT) on Tuesday. It comes against a background of walkouts across the economy from train drivers to lawyers over the past year as the UK battles a crippling cost-of-living crisis. Senior hospital doctors, known as consultants, in England will also begin a 48-hour strike on July 20, with radiographers following suit from July 25. The bitter row between junior doctors and the government has seen them call for their 2008-9 pay levels to be restored — something the government says would mean an average pay award of about 35 percent. The British Medical Association's Junior Doctors Committee says medics have effectively had a 26-percent pay cut in real terms in the last 15 years, as salaries have failed to keep pace with soaring inflation. —APP

JULY 2023

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Briefs

NA final session to be summoned next week

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The last session of the existing National Assembly is expected to be summoned by the next week. It is to be mentioned here that the lower house of the Parliament will complete its five-year tenure on August 13. Sources said that the final session of the NA will continue until the assembly stands dissolved. A key legislation with regard to amendments in the Election Act 2017 and electoral reforms, which has been under the hammer now will be the final piece of the legislation that will be passed by the current lower house, sources said. A parliamentary committee on electoral reforms with Ayaz Sadiq MNA in chair, considering thorough overhaul of the election law with key amendments. A number of amendments to the Election Act 2017 will be introduced to ensure timely submission of the election results. The parliamentary body is expected to present its report on proposed electoral reforms to the Parliament by the next week. According to the sources privy to the parliamentary committee proceedings, the body have 73 proposed amendments in the election law and 70 of which have been reviewed.

Rain-wind storm expected in various parts

ISLAMABAD: Rain-wind/thundershower is expected in Kashmir, Pothohar region, upper Punjab, north-eastern Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the next 24 hours, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD). Heavy falls are also likely at isolated places during the forecast period. While the weather will remain mainly hot and humid in most parts of the country. As per the synoptic situation, monsoon currents from the Arabian Sea were continuously penetrating the upper and central parts of the country and are likely to continue in the coming days. A westerly wave was also likely to enter the upper parts of the country on Friday (evening/night). During the last 24 hours, the weather remained hot and humid in most parts of the country. However, rain-wind/thunderstorm occurred at isolated places in Kashmir and Punjab. The rainfall recorded in various parts was Punjab: Faisalabad 29 mm, Jhelum, Mandi Bahaudin 17, Mangla 13, Hafizabad 06, Gujranwala, Kasur 04, Sialkot (City) 03, Narowal, Gujrat, Okara, Bahawalnagar 02, Bahawalpur (Airport), Multan (Airport), Sahiwal 01, Kashmir: Rawalakot 28 and Kotli 05 mm. - APP

Differences between PPP, JUI deepen

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Differences between Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) deepen further. According to sources, PPP decided to meet PM Shehbaz Sharif soon regarding their reservations regarding Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Haji Ghulam Ali. Sources within PPP revealed that Governor KP is misusing his powers and the KP government has imposed governor rule beyond their authority. The posting, transfers and development projects are released from the Governor's house and the bureaucracy also works on the orders of Governor KP, sources added. Furthermore, the development funds are also issued to specific parties, however, the PPP has already informed the Governor KP directly. Earlier, it was reported that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) President Maulana Fazlur Rehman 'wants' delay of general elections for a year.

Migrant boat tragedy

Greek coastguard 'pressured' survivors to blame Egyptians

The revelations raise fresh questions about how the Greek authorities handle such disasters

MONITORING DESK

LONDON: New evidence found by a leading British media organization casts further doubt on the Greek coastguard's version of events surrounding last month's deadly migrant boat sinking, in which up to 600 people died. Two survivors have described how the coastguard pressed them to identify nine Egyptians on board as traffickers. A new video of the overcrowded boat foundering at sea also challenges the Greek coastguard's account. It was taken when the boat was said to be on a "steady course". BBC Verify has confirmed the footage was filmed when the coastguard claimed the boat was not in need of rescue - and was in fact filmed by the coastguard itself. We have also confirmed that the larger

vessel in the background is the oil tanker Faithful Warrior, which had been asked to give supplies to the migrant boat. The official Greek coastguard account had already been challenged in a BBC Verify report - but now we have seen court documents which show serious discrepancies between survivors' witness statements taken by the coastguards, and the in-person evidence later presented to a judge. A translator has also come forward with his account of a people-smuggling investigation last year, after another group of migrants were rescued by the coastguard. He describes how witnesses from that incident were intimidated by the coastguard. The legal case collapsed before it could reach trial. The revelations raise fresh questions about how the Greek authorities handle such disasters. Both the Greek coastguard

and Greek government did not comment and declined our requests for interview. Soon after the 14 June sinking, nine Egyptian men were detained and charged with manslaughter and people-smuggling. But two survivors of the disaster say migrants were silenced and intimidated by Greek authorities, after suggesting the coastguards may have been to blame for the tragedy. For the past month, allegations have been made that the coastguard used a rope to tow the fishing vessel, causing it to sink. The two survivors we spoke to in Athens - who we are calling Ahmad and Musaab to protect their identities - say that is what happened. "They attached a rope from the left. Everyone moved to the right side of our boat to balance it," says Musaab. "The Greek vessel moved off quickly causing our boat to flip. They kept dragging it for quite

a distance." The men described how they spent two hours in the water before being picked up by the coastguard. When I ask how they knew it was that amount of time, Musaab says his watch was still working so he could tell. Once on land, in Kalamata, they claim the coastguard told survivors to "shut up" when they started to talk about how the Greek authorities had caused the disaster. "When people replied by saying the Greek coastguard was the cause, the official in charge of the questioning asked the interpreter to tell the interviewee to stop talking," says Ahmad. Ahmad says those rescued were told to be grateful they hadn't died. He says there were shouts of: "You have survived death! Stop talking about the incident! Don't ask more questions about it!"

EU urges India to protect minorities in Manipur

STRASBOURG: The European Union parliament on Thursday called on India to end violence and protect minorities in the Manipur state, slamming the "nationalistic rhetoric" it said was adding to tensions. The motion came as Indian PM Narendra Modi began a two-day visit to France, where he will attend the traditional Bastille Day military parade as a guest of honour. MEPs expressed concern over clashes between Manipur's majority Meitei, who are mostly Hindus and live in and around the state capital Imphal, and the mainly Christian Kuki tribe in the surrounding hills. The EU parliament said the violence has "left at least 120 people dead, 50,000 displaced and over 1,700 houses and 250 churches destroyed". EPs called out "nationalistic rhetoric" and parliament adopted a resolution on Thursday urging Indian authorities to "promptly halt the ethnic and religious violence and to protect all religious minorities". The Kuki community had protested Meitei demands for reserved public job quotas and college admissions as a form of affirmative action. This also stoked long-held fears among the Kuki that the Meitei might also be allowed to acquire land in areas currently reserved for tribal groups. The resolution noted that "intolerance towards minority communities has contributed to the current violence and that there have been concerns about politically motivated, divisive policies that promote Hindu majoritarianism in the area." "The Manipur state government has also shut down internet connections and severely hindered reporting by the media, while security forces have been implicated in the recent killings, something that has further increased distrust in the authorities". - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Attorney General of Pakistan Anwar Mansoor Usman Awan called on Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf. - DNA

India set to buy French Rafale jets, submarines

NEW DELHI: Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's arrival in France, India's defence ministry has given initial approval for the purchase of 26 Rafale fighter jets for its navy and three Scorpene class submarines, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said. The Indian premier visit aims to deepen ties with New Delhi's oldest strategic partner in the West; meanwhile, a slew of high-profile defence deals and a new joint plan to ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific seem to be in the offing. The approvals were granted Thursday by the Singh-led Defence Acquisition Council, the

apex body for military capital procurements in the country. The deal will be for the purchase of 26 Dassault Aviation (AM.PA) Rafale fighter jets, including four trainers, and for three Scorpene class submarines to be made by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders (MAZG.NS) with France's Naval Group, two sources familiar with the details told Reuters. The ageing fleet of India's Russian-made platforms, Moscow's inability to perform maintenance work, and delays in India's indigenous manufacturing plans for parallel

platforms have necessitated the two new defence deals. The marine version of Dassault's Rafale jets, intended for India's first indigenous aircraft carrier commissioned last year, outperformed the American Superhornet F18s in tests last year for Indian requirements. Details on the deal value are not known yet. Singh tweeted that the "price and other terms of purchase will be negotiated with the French Government after considering all relevant aspects, including comparative procurement price of similar aircraft by other countries".

Govt makes state broadcasters financially viable, says Marriyum

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday said that the present government during its 14-month rule had taken several steps to transform the Pakistan Television Corporation and the Radio Pakistan into financially viable organizations. Apprising the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting about the reforms carried out in the state broadcasters, the minister said the former government had planned to auction the national assets, including Radio Pakistan and PTV. The committee meeting chaired by Javaria Zaif Jafar, was attended by its members Zaib Jafar, Kiran Imran Dar, Zulfiqar Ali, Naz Baloch, Dr Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, Nasir Khan Musazai and Asiya Azeem. Secretary Information and

Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan, Principal Information Officer Mubasher Hassan, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Chairman Saleem Baig and other officers of the Ministry of Information also attended the meeting. The minister said now both the Radio Pakistan and the PTV were now on moving path of self-reliance and due to the prudent policies of the present regime, the latter had earned a record profit worth Rs 5.5 billion during the current year. The government, she added, had regularized all contract employees of the PTV to boost its performance. She informed the panel that the PTV Peshawar Center had started 24-hour transmission of its programmes in regional languages, including Pashto, while Multan and Karachi centres were airing round-the-clock their programmes in Saraiki and Sindhi languages respectively. All studios of the PTV Lahore had been upgraded, she said, adding a virtual studio was set up in the PTV Islamabad Center. Marriyum said for the promotion of filmmaking, the PTV Film Division had been established, besides setting up the Film Production Institute at the PTV Academy. She said now film production and media related courses were being started in the PTV Academy. Cinemas were being established on the premises of the Radio Pakistan Lahore and Peshawar, and their foundation stones had been laid, she added. - DNA

US envoy Donald Blome terms IMF deal positive development

DNA

PESHAWAR: United Ambassador Donald Blome Thursday termed the IMF stand-by agreement for Pakistan a very positive development the stabilising the economy of the country. Pakistan was confronted with various economic challenges and the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) agreement would help the country overcome the crisis soon, he added. The ambassador was addressing a ceremony to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) by the Board of Revenue of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Provincial Ombudsman Office and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for cooperation in digitalization of land record in the Newly Merged Districts (NMD). Besides Ambassador Blome, the MoU signing ceremony and handing over of equipment for digitalization of land record system in NMDs was also witnessed by Secretary KP Board of Revenue

Department Khalid Khan and Provincial Ombudsman Rakhshanda Naz. The ambassador said the US was the largest investor in Pakistan. He said that inheritance rights to women in properties would help them to financially support their families. He said that Pakistan had generously accepted and supported the Afghan refugees for several decades. During the ceremony, the USAID has provided \$5 million worth of equipment to the KP Board of Revenue that would help augmenting its capacity for accurate land measurements. The MoU was aimed to support government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to strengthen transparency and accuracy in the land records and registration system, promoting economic growth and investment in NMDs. The United States also announced a new partnership to empower the ombudsman secretariat by providing training to the department's staff on women rights and land settlement regulations. The initiative was aimed to

raise awareness about ombudsperson crucial role in safeguarding women's rights including property inheritance. Secretary Board of Revenue Department, Khalid Khan said digitalizing land records system was underway in the seven subdivisions of NMDs that would give inheritance property rights to women and address land settlements issues among tribesmen. He said land digitalization in merged areas would help increasing efficiency, accuracy and convenience. Appreciating the support of US, he said land digitalization in all 49 subdivisions in merged areas would be completed in three to four years. Initially the project was started with an estimated cost of Rs 1200 million under which 90 percent manual work on property and settlement issues in merged areas were completed. Provincial Ombudsman, Rakhshanda Naz said the project would economically empower women in tribal districts after digitalization of land records and would long disputes among tribesmen.

Hot weather sweeps across southern Europe

MADRID: Europe heatwaves A heatwave is sweeping across parts of southern Europe and north-west Africa, with potential record-breaking temperatures in the coming days. Temperatures are expected to surpass 40C (104F) in parts of Spain, France, Greece, Croatia and Turkey. In Italy, temperatures could reach as high as 48.8C (119.8F). A red alert warning has been issued for 10 cities, including Rome, Bologna and Florence. On Tuesday, a man in his forties died after collapsing in northern Italy. Italian media reported that the 44-year-old worker was painting zebra crossing lines in the town of Lodi, near Milan, before he collapsed from the heat. He was taken to hospital where he later died. "We are facing an unbearable heatwave," Italian politician Nicola Fratoianni tweeted. "Maybe it's the case that in the hottest hours, all the useful precautions are taken to avoid tragedies like the one that happened today in Lodi." People have been advised to drink at least two litres of water a day and to avoid coffee and alcohol, which are dehydrating. One group of tourists on the streets of Rome told the Reuters news agency they were using sprinklers and thermal water as part of efforts to keep themselves cool. - Agencies

Palestine lauds EU Parliament's report

RAMALLAH: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, expresses its profound appreciation to the European Parliament for the recent adoption of their report; "we commend the European Parliament's unwavering support for the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders and the call for recognition of Palestinian statehood". This action stands as a strong reaffirmation of the representative of peoples of Europe, and EU's commitment to upholding international law and human rights, acknowledging the urgency of the Palestinian cause, and the necessity of acting in accordance with international consensus. The alignment of this report with the 2014 Council conclusions demonstrates an encouraging and substantial shift towards justice and peace. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine greatly appreciates the resolution's clear stance in support of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, as well as the clear stance in support of ICC work, its impartiality, and neutrality. - Agencies

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