



# Islamabad POST

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**Iraq expels Swedish envoy, warns of cutting bilateral ties**

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**Internship program shows democracy**

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**Won't allow use of soil against any country**

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## Ukraine FM meets Shehbaz

# Pakistan urges negotiated end to Ukraine war

The Premier highlights that the conflict has a significant global impact

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif received Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Dmytro Kuleba in Islamabad. The Foreign Minister is on a bilateral visit to Pakistan from 20-21 July 2023.

They recalled the warm and friendly relations between their countries ever since Ukraine gained its independence. They resolved to enhance the bilateral relations between the two countries in diverse fields such as trade, investment, defence, education and culture as well as on regional and global matters of mutual interest including the security situation in South Asia and Eurasia regions.

The Prime Minister highlighted that the conflict in Ukraine has had a significant global impact that had hurt the economies of many countries. They stressed the need for a negotiated and diplomatic settlement in line with the UN Charter. Foreign Minister Kuleba briefed the Prime Minister on the current situation in Ukraine, recalling that their countries had always enjoyed long-standing and cordial relations grounded in cooperation and friendship with the common objective to contribute towards global peace and regional stability.

## Pakistan to support peace initiative

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Ukraine on Thursday agreed to expand cooperation in all areas of mutual benefit including trade, investment, agriculture, food security, defense cooperation, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts. "In our meeting today, we agreed on the importance of regular dialogue and engagements to further strengthen the bilateral ties. We have also agreed to hold meetings of various institutional mechanisms in due course. We will continue to build on our conversation to add more substance to our relations," Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said in a joint press conference here along with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba. He said building bilateral trade

and economic ties was a priority area for Pakistan. The Ukrainian Foreign Minister said the both sides agreed to reinvigorate the bilateral mechanisms as both looked forward to holding the inaugural meeting of the Ukrainian and Pakistani Commission of the economic cooperation. Pointing to an important issue of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Dmytro Kuleba said during the meeting he briefed the minister about the Russian withdrawal from this initiatives on Monday and about its consequences for global food security. "We regret that it will be Ukraine and countries of Asia and Africa, who will suffer the most from Russia's withdrawal", he said adding that by doing so Russia significantly undermined global food security that would result in hike in global food prices.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif exchanging views with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba. - DNA

## PM, son Hamza acquitted in another case



BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: In a major development, an accountability court in Lahore on Thursday accepted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shehbaz's plea for acquittal in a Rs7 billion money laundering case. The court acquitted the prime minister along with all the co-accused, including Hamza, Nusrat Shehbaz (wife), Javeria Ali (PM's daughter), Muhammad Usman, Masroor Anwar, Shoaib Qamar, Qasim Qayyum, Rashid Karamat, Ali Ahmed and Nisar Ahmed, except for one. The court, however, issued a perpetual arrest warrant for PM Shehbaz's daughter Rabia Imran, who had been declared absconder in the case.

The accused had filed petitions seeking acquittal, basing their argument on NAB's inability to present any evidence against them. The NAB investigators also confirmed that no evidence was found. While announcing the verdict reserved earlier this month, the court said that it had no other choice except to acquit the accused, as NAB had said that it did not have anything against them. The anti-graft watchdog had filed the reference for the inquiry underway since 2018, in August 2020, when PM Shehbaz served as the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly.

## Polls on 2017 census ECP says fully ready for timely general election

Elections to be held by Oct 11 if assemblies dissolved on Aug 12

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would hold elections by Oct 11 if assemblies were dissolved on Aug 12, said ECP Secretary Umar Hameed on Thursday. Speaking to the media, Hameed said the ECP would keep in touch with the media before general elections, adding that the ECP had placed 60 recommendations before the electoral reforms committee. "All our recommendations have been approved," he added. He went on to say that it would be implausible to comment before the electoral watchdog's recommendations were formally approved, adding that the ECP was ready to hold general elections. "The ECP will take four months for

## MQM-P demands elections on new census

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) leaders held a meeting with the election commission officials on Thursday and demanded to hold general elections 2023 on new census data and delimitations. The MQM-P delegation headed by Dr Farooq Sattar held a meeting with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) officials Thursday. During the meeting,

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## Briefs

### Imran can be arrested over cipher: Sanaulah

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah on Thursday stated that the FIA might arrest former prime minister Imran Khan if he fails to cooperate with their investigation into the cipher. The minister's warning comes a day after Imran's ex-principal secretary - in an alleged confession that surfaced on Wednesday - accused his former boss of using a cipher from Pakistan's mission in the US to gain political mileage and build an "anti-establishment narrative" on the back of the "confidential" document. Sanaulah had on Wednesday also held a press conference to lend credence to the confessional statement circulating on social media and assail the PTI chief.

### Buzdar summoned on July 31

DNA

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Lahore on Thursday summoned former Punjab chief minister Sardar Usman Buzdar in assets beyond sources of income case on July 31. According to sources, it was for the 16th time that the bureau had summoned Buzdar in the case as the former chief minister had been continuously skipping appearances before the inquiry team. The NAB high-ups are yet to make up their mind on arresting Buzdar as they think it will not be appropriate to arrest him at an inquiry stage.

## Nine people injured 2 cops martyred as blast rattles Khyber

PM Shehbaz condemns the terrorist attack

SHAMIM SHAHID

KHYBER: At least four people were martyred on Thursday in a blast at the tehsil compound office in the Bara area of Khyber tribal district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, said rescue officials. Rescue 1122 officials have so far confirmed the martyrdom of three police officials; at least nine other people, including civilians, were injured. A critically injured police official succumbed to his injuries while under treatment and another body was recovered from the rubble, said rescue services. The powerful explosion, which police officials said occurred near the main gate of the compound, caused a part of the building to collapse and heavy machinery was called to the scene to aid in rescue efforts. A senior police officer said two suicide attackers tried to enter the compound, but "timely action" by security personnel foiled the attack. "Immediate retaliation by personnel killed the attackers," he added. "A major attack has been foiled," said In-

spector General (IG) Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Police Akhtar Hayat Khan in a brief statement. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the terrorist attack. He expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of the policemen in the blast. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear this loss with fortitude.

The prime minister directed the authorities to provide the best medical facilities to the injured. He said the police personnel halted the suspects by risking their lives and foiled the nefarious intentions of the terrorists. "The personnel of the law-enforcement agencies ensure the safety of the people by risking their lives," he added. He said he, along with the whole nation, paid tributes to the brave policemen. Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah also condemned the terrorist attack and prayed for the police officials who were martyred in the incident. Pledging to eliminate terrorism, he said

Continued on Page 06

## Manipur: Outrage after women paraded naked in Indian state

WEB DESK

MANIPUR: A video showing two women being paraded naked by a mob in the north-eastern state of Manipur, hit by violent ethnic clashes, has sparked outrage in India. The police say they have opened a case of gang rape and arrested a man, adding that others will be held soon. On Thursday, parliament's session in Delhi was disrupted as lawmakers demanded a debate on the issue. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also said the incident had "shamed India" and that "no guilty will be spared". "I assure the nation, the law will take its course with all its might. What happened with the daughters of Manipur can never be forgiven," he said, finally breaking his silence on Manipur more than two months after violence erupted. Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud also expressed concern over the assault, saying the Supreme Court was "deeply disturbed over the video". Telling the government to inform

the court about the steps being taken against the accused, the chief justice said "we will take action if you don't". Deadly violence has plunged Manipur, a scenic Indian state bordering Myanmar, into turmoil for more than two months. Clashes between members of the majority Meitei and the Kuki tribal communities have resulted in their complete segregation. At least 130 people have died and 60,000 have been displaced. The two women, who are Kukis, were assaulted by men of the Meitei group. Police say the assault on the women took place on 4 May but it made national headlines on Thursday after the video started going viral on social media. The federal government has asked all social media companies to delete the video from their platforms. The horrific video of the two women was widely shared on social media on Wednesday. It shows them being dragged and groped by a mob of men who then push them into a field. The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) said in a statement that the atrocities had been committed in

a village in Kangpokpi district against women from the Kuki-Zo tribal community. It also alleged that the women had been gang raped. It's well known that women's bodies often become a battleground during riots and conflicts, and rape and sexual assault are used as instruments of violence to punish them. The sexual assault of the Kuki women in Manipur is the latest example. The footage showing the women weeping, wincing in pain and begging their attackers to show some mercy is disturbing to watch. The fact that the first arrest has been made only now, more than two months after the attack was reported to police, does not inspire confidence in the authorities - all the more so since many of the men are clearly identifiable in the footage. But the outrage that followed the video's emergence in India has put the spotlight on the horrific crime. It has also raised questions about the failure of the state in comforting the survivors - and finally forced Mr Modi to make a statement on the ethnic violence that is tearing Manipur apart.

L A L A

Cultural PATTERNS AND MODERN HUES

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## Nawab of Junagarh Muhammad Jahangir Khanji passes away

ISLAMABAD :Nawab of Junagarh, Muhammad Jahangir Khanji passed away in Karachi on Thursday, confirmed his spokesperson. Khanji was admitted to a private hospital after being diagnosed with cancer where he breathed his last. The funeral prayer of the Nawab will be offered on Friday (tomorrow) at Junagadh House Karachi after Namaz e Juma. The deceased has left his mother, widow, and two children to mourn his death. Political and social figures have expressed deep grief over the sad departure of Nawab of Junagadh. The Nawab dedicated his entire life to the independence of the Junagadh state and continued his struggle till the last breath of his life. The death of Nawab Muhammad Jahangir is a great loss to the country and his family. Nawab of Junagarh or Junagarh refers to the now defunct ex-lineage of rulers of the princely Junagarh State in British Raj, nowadays Junagarh district in the state of Gujarat in India. It must be noted that Junagarh was a princely state and at the time of partition over 550 states were given the choice to join either Pakistan or India. The Nawab of Junagarh decided to join Pakistan. —APP

## Pakistan Navy inducts two modern naval ships in national fleet

KARACHI: The Pakistan Navy Thursday inducted two newly constructed Type 054 A/P Frigates PNS SHAHJAHAN and TIPPU SULTAN into the national fleet. The induction ceremony of two newly constructed Type 54 A/P Frigates PNS SHAHJAHAN and TIPPU SULTAN was held here at Karachi. Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif attended the ceremony as Chief Guest who was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on arrival at PN Dockyard, a Pakistan Navy news release said. The ships are fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors having capability to undertake naval operation under multi threat environment. The induction of ships in PN Fleet will significantly enhance the Combat Readiness of Pakistan Navy. Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest acknowledged PN efforts in ensuring seaward defence of Pakistan and contribution towards promoting peace and stability in the region. The minister emphasised geo-strategic and geo-economic significance that necessitate a potent Naval Force to safeguard maritime frontiers of the country and induction of these modern naval ships would significantly strengthen the defence capabilities of Pakistan. He also appreciated the efforts of Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard, China for timely construction and delivery of the ships to Pakistan. Earlier during the welcome address, the Chief of the Naval Staff termed the induction of modern ships a major milestone in modernizing PN Fleet. He acknowledged the support of Government of Pakistan for various PN modernization projects. The ceremony was attended by civil, military and government representatives of Pakistan including officials of Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard, China.—APP

# ICCI for focusing on halal industry to boost exports

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan has huge potential to enhance exports of halal products and stressed that the government should cooperate with the private sector in capitalizing on this untapped potential to boost exports and strengthen the economy. He said that the size of the global halal market is around USD 4 trillion, but Pakistan's share in it is negligible. He emphasized that the government should formulate conducive policies for halal industry to take exports of this sector up to USD 5-6 Billion in a few years. He said this while addressing a multi-sectoral stakeholders policy dialogue on "Inspiring Change by Export Oriented Halal Trade & Industry" organized by Global Halal Services (Pvt.) Limited. Ahsan Bakhtawari said



that the strict compliance of halal standards, quality certifications and government's support can help to make significant increase in the export of halal products. He said that the Halal meat is one of the fastest-growing markets globally, contributing 16 percent to world trade and Pakistan being a Muslim country should take full advantage of it. He stressed that China, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia and Central Asian States should be targeted instead of relying on only Arab countries for halal meat exports.

He urged that the government should mobilise all institutions working for promotion of halal food exports to realize the full export potential of this industry. He emphasized that the government should designate special Halal meat zones and provide

them a 10 years tax holiday to attract new investment in this sector. ICCI President said that Pakistan has the potential to play a significant role in the global halal meat industry and become a market leader since it has all the required ingredients. He said that there is a massive economic potential for Pakistan to capitalize on its status as a Muslim country and build greater credibility to market its halal products around the globe. He said that besides beef, Pakistan should also tap avenues in seafood, ostrich, mutton and poultry farming to enhance its export turnover. It will not only diversify our economic outreach but also add to the country's overall food security. Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI and other speakers also highlighted the export potential of halal industry and stressed that the government should cooperate with the private sector to boost exports of this sector.

## Two important personalities join PTI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In what appears to be a big blow to the efforts to crush the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), as two prominent political and social figures expressed their full confidence in PTI Chairman Imran Khan and PTI's philosophy and formally announced joining the party. Two important political leaders one from Sindh and one from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa officially joined PTI. Both the leaders made their formal announcement in a meeting with PTI Chairman on Thursday. Pir of Ranipur from Khairpur, Sindh, Pir Niaz Hussain Jilani and Haroon Leghari from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced their joining of the party, which clearly indicated that attempts to force people to leave PTI by unleashing a reign of terror failed to yield the desired results. Contrary, an unprecedented increase has been witnessed in contacts with the PTI leadership by major political personalities from various parts of the country. Pir Niaz Hussain Jilani was elected District Nazim of Khairpur by defeating the daughter of former Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah. Haroon Leghari belonged to the constituency of former federal minister Pervez Khattak. Both personalities expressed their full confidence in the PTI leadership, Imran Khan's philosophy of rule of law and haqqeeqi Azadi. Both the leaders strongly condemned the ongoing worst human rights violations and massacre of democratic values in the country. They expressed their determination that they along with their colleagues would leave no stone unturned to spread the message and manifesto of PTI in the public. PTI Central Information Secretary Raouf Hasan was also present in the meeting. PTI Chairman welcomed both Pir Niaz Hussain Jilani and Haroon Leghari into the PTI fold.

## Religious scholars commemorate Hazrat Umar's martyrdom day

ISLAMABAD: Ulema and Mashaykh from all corners of the country on Thursday gathered to observe the solemn day of the Martyrdom of Hazrat Umar Farooq (Radhi Allah Anho) with unwavering religious fervor. The commemoration, which took place on the first day of Muharram, saw numerous religious gatherings organized across the country, including in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The purpose of these gatherings was to remember and reflect upon the life and sacrifice of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), the second caliph of Islam, and a revered figure in Islamic history. Born in the year 584 CE in the city of Makkah, Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), also known as Umar

ibn al-Khattab, embraced Islam during the early years of the prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Throughout his life, he played a significant role in the development and propagation of Islam. Following the passing of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (RA), he assumed the mantle of leadership as the second caliph and exhibited wisdom and fortitude in his responsibilities. Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and the Middle East, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, shed light on the numerous achievements of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA). He stated

that his martyrdom had a profound impact on the Muslim Ummah, however, despite the grief of losing their beloved leader, the Muslims remained united and steadfast in their commitment to the principles of Islam, fostering a sense of community and solidarity among believers. He emphasized Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) as a symbol of justice and fairness, stating that his martyrdom reinforced the importance of upholding these values in the eyes of Islamic law. During his caliphate, he said the Islamic Empire experienced significant territorial expansion, with his successors continuing his legacy by further spreading Islam to distant

lands. Furthermore, he said Hazrat Umar's (RA) caliphate played a crucial role in the codification of Islamic law and jurisprudence, with his rulings serving as the foundation for the development of the Shariah. The late caliph's dedication to education was also highlighted by Ashrafi, noting that he established schools and institutions to promote learning and his martyrdom inspired a renewed commitment to knowledge and scholarship within the Muslim community. He said the principles and leadership style of Hazrat Umar (RA) continued to inspire future Muslim leaders, guiding them in their governance and decision-making.—APP

## Establishing peace, harmony utmost priority of government

PESHAWAR: Establishing peace and harmony is the first priority of the government on which no compromise will be made, said Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali during his visit to Supreme Command Post and reviewed the arrangements made for foolproof security during Muharram-ul-Haram on Thursday. Commissioner Peshawar Division Muhammad Zubair, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Shah Fahd, Director General Syed Waqas Ali Shah, Director East Zone Rehman Khattak, and Capital Metropolitan were also present. Appointed Focal Person Engineer Muhammad Riaz Khan along with others visited the Supreme Command Post established for Muharram Al Haram. He inspected the control room in the Supreme Command Post, on which he was given a detailed briefing. Peshawar Mayor Haji Zubair Ali visited Kohati Gate and other areas inside the city and reviewed the measures taken for Muharram. On this occasion, Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali expressed his determination that foolproof security will be ensured during Muharram. He said that our forces have always fought against criminal elements and their People have sacrificed their lives and the public should also cooperate with the forces. He said that all the law enforcement agencies should keep in touch with each other and use all the resources to ensure the peaceful conduct of Muharram. Issued orders for uniform security and safety arrangements for meetings, processions, and other programs of all schools of thought, including the Shiites.—APP

## Seminar on "China-Pakistan relations in international dynamics," held

SHANGHAI: The 15-member delegation visiting China participated in a Seminar, titled "China-Pakistan Relations in International Dynamics," organized by the Pakistan Study Centre, Fudan University, Shanghai. The delegation, being led by Am-

bassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI includes diplomats, leading academics, researchers and media persons. The seminar was moderated by Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) and Dr. Zhang Jiegen, Associate Professor

and Executive Director, Pakistan Study Centre, Fudan University. The speakers in various sessions included: Prof. Lin Minwang, Professor and Assistant Dean, Institute of International Studies, Fudan University; Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan, Head China Study

Centre, COMSATS University, Islamabad; Prof. Zhang Jiadong, Professor and Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies, Fudan University; Dr. Ayesha Alam, Head Pakistan Studies Department, Hazara University; Prof. Xin Qiang, Professor and Associate Director, Centre for American Studies, Fudan University; Prof. Dr. Kausar Takrim, Director, China Study Centre, University of Peshawar; and Prof. Guo Xuetang Professor and Associate Dean, Law School.—APP

## Collective efforts require to promote women's empowerment

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: Collective efforts were required to provide a conducive environment for empowering women and attracting them to entrepreneurship. President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) Saqib Rafiq said this during an interactive session with the delegation of Shaor Foundation for Education and Awareness (SFEA) and Rawalpindi Women's University who visited RCCI here on Thursday. He said efforts must be made to improve access to finance, technology, innovation and good governance. "An environment that enables women entrepreneurs to access the resources and offer the support needed to develop their businesses,

scale them up and make them sustainable." Saqib added that concerted effort by policymakers, financial institutions, the private sector and women entrepreneurs' networks was required to foster

such an ecosystem and multi-sectoral collaboration. He also briefed the delegation about the current activities of the chamber. Chairperson Fakhra Shadab, Project Manager

SFEA Ms Wardah Iftikhar, and distinguished women members of RCCI were also present. During the interactive session, suggestions and recommendations were shared to improve the Industry-Academia linkages,



## The narrative of the people will win

NUSRAT KHAN

Hundreds of cases have been filed against Imran Khan, in fact the decision-making forces are using all government resources to politically eliminate the former prime minister. Who is forcing Jahangir Tareen and Pervez Khattak to form new parties is now an open secret. Speculations are also going on that there is a complete plan to defeat Tehreek-e-Insaf in the upcoming general elections. The question arises as to what is the fault of the former prime minister, Imran Khan does not ask anything from the rulers except that the people should be given the right to rule, the practice that has been going on for

decades should end and the election results should be arranged before the election. No matter what anyone says, the achievement of ex-prime minister is no less that he has made the common man aware of the real problem of Pakistan, in the game of dictatorship going on under the guise of democracy, only the poor people are losing. For example, what was the past of the parties included in PDM, who will file corruption cases against them, this is part of our history, what was the overall performance of those who came to power three times. Of course, Pakistan stands at the crossroads of history, we have to decide what kind of Pakistan we will give to the future generations, that is, a country whose children

are drowning in debt or a country in which the majority of the people have access to the basic necessities of life. A well-informed citizen of Pakistan knows why our rulers take loans from international financial institutions at interest, in fact the main reason is that they want money for their lavish spending. The irony is that the rulers are transferring money out of the country for themselves and their families, but the poor man is paying the price. It can be asked how long this game will last. Every informed Pakistani knows that due to the policies of the PDM government, there has been such a storm of inflation that it has become difficult for the poor man to maintain a relationship. The salaried class thinks that they

should meet the electricity, gas and kitchen expenses or spend on children's education, the situation of the small business class is also not good. PTI chairman is right that the time has come for the nation to decide whether to remain entangled in 70 years of unsolved problems or to abandon the dream of a bright and secure future. It can only be regretted that even an able and dutiful officer like Azam Khan was forced to testify against ex-prime minister, the objective being to send the PTI chairman to jail before the election. The common man of Pakistan is surely worried about what kind of election the rulers want, in which instead of the votes of the people, they are trying to make the people who obey

them as rulers. The truth is that the government is completely panicked, it wants to arrest Imran Khan at all costs and send him to jail, but at the same time it is afraid of the public reaction. The anti-Imran Khan forces know very well that despite all the use of state machinery, the popularity of the former prime minister is increasing day by day. PTI chairman's popularity at the global level is evident in the fact that the IMF did not approve the issuance of loans to Pakistan until after meeting with the former prime minister to ascertain his consent. The common Pakistani knows that Imran Khan is actually fighting for his bright and secure future, that is why his heart and mind are with ex-prime minister.

## Working of Punjab Police developed on modern technology

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the working of Punjab Police has been developed on modern technology through software, applications and other programs. He expressed these views while talking to the under-training officers participating in the 37th Mid-Career Management Course who came on a study visit to the Central Police Office, here on Thursday. He said police service centers across the province have provided fast and efficient service to the citizens. The IG Punjab said that equal attention and provision of additional resources have been ensured for anti-crime operations as well as investigations. Thousands of officers have been promoted according to the merit and seniority to raise the morale of the police force, he added. Dr. Usman Anwar further said that the health screening of the force is complete, vaccination is ongoing, bravery medals are being launched for successful completion of dangerous operations. The delegation from National Institute of Management Karachi was informed about the working and professional affairs of Punjab Police. Dr. Usman Anwar informed the training officers of the delegation about service delivery and recent anti-crime measures. He also answered the questions asked by the under-training officers included in the delegation.—DNA

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### National Days and Armed Forces Days

#### JULY

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

#### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



#### Emergency

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



#### Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489  
CAA.....9281092



#### Hospitals

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



#### Departments

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

#### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Ukrainian FM Dmytro Kuleba planted a tree of friendship at Foreign Office, on Thursday. —DNA

### Addressing underlying issues

# CASS seminar calls for countering extremism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, successfully concluded a seminar on 'Advancing Resilience: Unleashing the Potential of Countering Violent Extremism in Pakistan.' The event featured insightful presentations from Mohammad Ali Babakel, Additional Inspector General (Operations), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police; MS Azeema Cheema, Director of Research and Strategy at Verso Consulting; and Dr Farhan Zahid, an international counterterrorism expert. Mr Mohammad Ali Babakel's presentation focused on Pakistan's evolving efforts in countering extremism, highlighting both successes and challenges. He emphasised the

complexity of measuring success in countering extremism, as it cannot be instantly quantified due to its nuanced nature. He also addressed the disparity in technology usage between the state and violent non-state actors, stressing the need for effective policy implementation, monitoring, and communication strategies. He underscored the importance of highlighting Pakistan's best practices in countering violent extremism and the need for greater investment in education. The speaker also stressed the significance of assessing factors such as ethnic and sectarian fault lines, service delivery impact, and political marginalisation in addressing extremism. Ms. Azeema Cheema discussed the crucial role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in countering

violent extremism. She emphasised the need to dispel the narrative of 'Pakistan exceptionalism' and urged a comprehensive approach to policy implementation. Ms Cheema highlighted the challenges faced by CSOs due to regulatory frameworks and pointed to the need for a comprehensive policy framework to address hate speech and disinformation online. Dr Farhan Zahid underscored the importance of partnerships



with international entities engaged in CVE initiatives, such as the United Nations and the Global Counterterrorism Forum. He highlighted the role of technology in countering extremism, including robust monitoring mechanisms for online platforms and the integration of counter-narratives into educational curricula. Air Marshal Farooq Habib (Retd), Senior Director at CASS and the seminar's moderator, acknowledged

the lack of consensus on the definition of violent extremism. He stressed the importance of addressing underlying issues contributing to extremism, such as the acceptance of violence and the politicisation of Islam. 'CVE in its essence is a 'whole of nation' rather than a 'security-only' approach. This attribute makes it mandatory that the subject is debated openly, understood collectively and employed wholeheartedly, he urged. President of CASS, Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan (Retd), highlighted the crucial role of national interests in shaping objectives and formulating effective strategies. He put emphasis on the need to define and document national interests transparently. Air Marshal Khan also pointed to the signif-

icance of both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in countering extremism and called for concentrated efforts to address hate and intolerance in society. The seminar provided a valuable platform for experts and policymakers to share insights and strategies to counter violent extremism in Pakistan. The discussions underscored the importance of comprehensive approaches, investment in education, international partnerships, and pragmatic and holistic policy frameworks to achieve long-term resilience and stability under a whole-of-nation approach. It was attended by retired military officers, scholars from various think tanks, journalists, and students, who actively participated in the interactive question and answer session.

## Javed demands action against 9th May facilitators

ISLAMABAD: Federal minister and senior leader of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Mian Javed Latif Thursday said that if the mastermind of May 9 gets any concession, and urges all political parties to revive the nation's confidence. "The May 9 day is the blackest chapter in the 75 years' history of Pakistan, and "it brought shame to us across the globe", he said while talking to a Private news channel. "Our nation knows how to protect the honour of their martyrs, he said, adding, the tragic is heart-rending events of May 9 are a wake-up call for us and we need to show unity". Replying a query, he replied that during the previous tenure of the PTI, the entire opposition was pushed to the wall, but they faced all the ordeals and never thought to mount any attack on any civilian or military installation. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) has lost popularity among public for promoting uncivilized language, adding, PTI had also been involved in spreading unethical culture in the society. To another query, he said after May 9 incident the delayed elections are not in favor of the country, adding, elections in the country would be held on time. He said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership faced jails even in tough situations, but never raised hue and cry like PTI chairman. There were many people in the PTI who did not support the politics of its leadership, he added.—APP

## FTO launches helpline to address taxpayer grievances countrywide

ISLAMABAD: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Asif Mahmood Jah on Thursday launched a helpline to guide, facilitate and address the genuine grievances of the aggrieved taxpayers without loss of time especially the business community on top priority across the country. Addressing the orientation and awareness session of the business community Coordinator to FTO Meher Kashif Younis and Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House, said "The FTO has been endeavoring for redressing grievances of the aggrieved taxpayers in the wake of maladministration of the tax functionaries of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)." "The helpline will fully ensure uninterrupted speedy and free-of-cost relief to the aggrieved taxpayers. In this regard, the FTO has launched a public awareness campaign to reach out the existing and prospective taxpayers for building their confidence to fulfill their national obligation by paying due taxes timely in national exchequer." He said, "The FTO secretariat has developed and launched CMIS software for the convenience of taxpayers. Communication with the complainants through short code SMS service has also been initiated." He said, "Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has approved the mobile short code 9386 and also developed a monitoring dashboard aided with graphical representations of data for the FTO to monitor daily progress in CMIS." —DNA

## Footwear exports increases 31.74% to \$178.550 mln

ISLAMABAD: The footwear exports witnessed an increase of 13.74 percent during the fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the exports of corresponding period of the last year. Pakistan exported footwear worth US \$178.550 million during July-June (2022-23) against the exports of \$156.983 million during July-June (2021-22), showing growth of 13.74 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the

exports of footwear also increased by 35.50 percent by going up from 18,839 thousand pairs to 25,528 thousand pairs, according to the data. Among the footwear products, the exports of leather footwear rose by 14.07 percent as it surged from \$124.535 million last year to \$142.059 million during the current year. The canvas footwear exports of the country stood at \$ 1.377 million during the current year against \$ 1.411 million during last

year, showing a decrease of 2.39 percent. Likewise, the exports of all other footwear goods increased by 13.13 percent during the fiscal year under review as these went up from \$31.038 million last year to \$35.114 million. Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the footwear exports appreciated by 18.81 percent during the month of June 2023 as compared to the same month of last year. The footwear exports during June 2023 were recorded at \$17.852 million against the

export of \$15.026 million in June 2022. During the period under review, the export of leather and canvas footwear witnessed an increase of 19.70 and 202.01 percent respectively. In addition, the export of all other footwear export also rose by 9.85 percent, it added. On month-on-month basis, the exports of footwear commodities also rose by 45.29 percent during June 2023 as compared to the exports of \$12.287 million in May 2023, the PBS data revealed.—APP

## Khan's ego put diplomatic relations at stake

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Thursday lashed out that the national economy was ruined, diplomatic relations were at stake due to the ego of Imran Khan during his four-year rule and his own party was being split now. "PTI government did nothing for the welfare of poor masses during the four years in the government", he said while talking to a Private News Channel.

The economy was in a downward trajectory when the PML-N led-government took over last year, he said, adding, during the last 15 months due to the personal efforts and vision of the Prime Minister, now the economic situation is much under control. Replying to a question, he said the coalition government after coming into power diverted all its attention on putting the economy back on track, adding, the PTI regime's deviation from the IMF agreement resulted in the delay of the program.—APP

## NEPRA notifies Rs 1.90 per unit increase

ISLAMABAD: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Thursday notified Rs 1.90 per unit increase in power tariff for the consumers of all power distribution companies (DISCOs) for May under monthly fuel cost adjustment (FCA) mechanism. The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) on behalf of XWAP-DA DISCOs has sought Rs 2.5 per unit increase for the said period in its petition to the power regulator, said a notification issued here. The Authority conducted public hearing into the petition on July 5 under the chair of Chairman NEPRA Tauseef H Farooqi. The increase would be applicable to billing month of July. It would also be applicable to all consumers except life-line, KE and electrical vehicle charging stations.—APP

## IRSA releases 431,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 431,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 556,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1520.47 feet and was 122.47 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 260,100 cusecs and 192,100 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1210.20 feet, which was 160.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 66,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively.—APP

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## Briefs

## Call to release Mirwaiz

ISLAMABAD: Anjuman Aqaf Jama Masjid Srinagar while extending greetings to Muslims on the advent of new Islamic year - 1445 AH, has demanded release of its incarcerated President Mirwaiz Umar Farooq from house detention. According to Kashmir media service, the Anjuman in a statement issued in Srinagar said, "Every new year provides us with an opportunity to go for self-introspection and reflect upon what is happening around us and as such, we need to learn lessons from our past and strive for the betterment of our present and future." "We must also submit ourselves completely to the will of Allah (SWT), strengthen our bond with our Creator - Allah (SWT) and deepen our love and devotion with our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW) so that we as Ummah are able to discharge our religious responsibilities in a much better way." It also expressed hope that the new Islamic year brings happiness, progress and prosperity for us. On the occasion, the Anjuman expressed deep sorrow and regret over the fact that it has been three years of the illegal and arbitrary detention of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who is about to complete four years of imprisonment is a cause of great anxiety and worry for the people of Kashmir. It stressed the need for the immediate release of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and the blessed days of Ashura and asked the authorities to remove the restrictions imposed on him.—APP

## Healthy weight, balanced diet

ISLAMABAD: Expert on Thursday expressed serious concern over the rising number of Diabetic patients in the country and stressed the need to aware communities with the help of media to restrain inactive lifestyles, unhealthy eating habits, and lack of exercise and physical activity, which are among the major controllable factors to prevent the disease. "Most of these cases are type 2 diabetes, which is largely preventable through regular physical activity, a balanced diet, and the promotion of healthy living environments", a Specialist from Lahore Dr Uneeba syed while talking to PTV News channel said. The number of people living with diabetes was increasing every year in Pakistan while the average age at which people were contracting diabetes was also getting lower in the country, due to which teenagers getting diagnosed with diabetes had become a routine due to obesity, she said. Early diagnosis and treatment are key elements to prevent the complications of diabetes and achieve healthy outcomes," she added. "Highly processed foods that are high in calories and low in vitamins, minerals, and fiber break down quickly in the body and can cause a rapid rise in blood sugar levels," she mentioned.

## RDA issues notice to owners of illegal housing scheme, Rose Valley

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) here on Thursday issued notice to the owners of illegal housing scheme namely Rose Valley. According to RDA spokesman, RDA on the directives of the Director General (DG), Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa, issued notice to the illegal housing scheme in Mouza Adiala on Adiala Road. He informed that the Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate RDA issued notice to the owners namely Zafar Mushtaq, Sharif Ahmad and Haris Iftikhar for cheating/misleading the citizens. The Director MP&TE RDA had also issued demolition order against the housing scheme while First Information Report (FIR) was also lodged against the owners, he said adding, the sponsors were also warned to immediately stop the marketing of unapproved and illegal housing scheme.—APP

## Sino-COMSTECH coop for S&amp;T capacity building

Prof. Choudhary granted visiting professorship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary visited China during July 12 to 18, 2023 as the coordinator of a four-member COMSTECH-Pakistan joint delegation. This was a joint delegation of COMSTECH and the ministry of health, Sindh. Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Provincial Minister, Department of Health & Population Welfare, Government of Sindh and Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH, along with other officials

were the part of the delegation. Prof. Choudhary said that during the visit, along with bilateral cooperation and COMSTECH-Sino cooperation in the field of healthcare, traditional medicines, nutrition, drug discovery and development for health, it was decided in the meeting with the higher representatives of the ministry of health of China that "Sino-COMSTECH International Forum on Food and Nutrition" will be held in Islamabad early next year. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that there was a decision that Hunan University of Chinese Medicine will offer 10-20 fellowships for

technicians and technologists training in different fields of scientific research and disease diagnosis. He said that they will also offer 4-6 Post-doc positions for the researchers of OIC member states. This Sino-COMSTECH S&T capacity building program will soon be launched. Prof. Choudhary further mentioned that this was also decided that a project will be initiated to assess the nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating mothers and new born babies in order to develop complementary food as nutritious supplements for their health. The COMSTECH-Pakistan joint

delegation participated in health dialogues with Chinese health ministry, hospitals, institutions, and enterprises for exploring more possibilities of cooperation between China, Pakistan, and COMSTECH member states in the fields of health and medicine. While addressing the seminar on "Sino-Pak traditional medicine collaboration to safeguard human health", Prof. Choudhary, emphasized the significance of promoting traditional medicine in the OIC world of 1.8 billion people on 4 continents. He added that the OIC world faces a host of security and development challenges, as

well as menace of violent extremism. He said in addition to national efforts, there is a need for developing partnerships between the most STI influential countries including China, for collective development. During the visit two institutions, Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Capital Medical University and Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST), Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), recognizing the contribution of Prof. Choudhary to the field of medicine, granted him visiting professorship.

## 950 officials to regulate traffic during Muharram

RAWALPINDI: The City Traffic Police (CTP) here finalised all the arrangements for Muharram under a comprehensive traffic plan formulated to ensure the security of the mourning processions. According to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan, there would be a complete ban on parking of any vehicle or pushcart on the route of the procession. As many as 950 traffic officials including DSPs, inspectors, traffic wardens and traffic assistants would perform duties on city roads to control the traffic flow during Muharram, he added. He said, traffic police officers and wardens had also been directed to take action against rules violators. Fork lifters would also move with Muharram processions, he said. The CTO informed that the wardens had been directed to remove all kinds of encroachments from the procession routes besides keeping a vigil on suspected persons and things. Entry of vehicles on the route of the processions would be blocked by erecting barricades and other hurdles, he added. He informed that a special campaign had been launched to check the tinted glass and without number plate vehicles.—APP

## Police arrest 16 lawbreakers

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers conducted raids in different areas and rounded up 16 accused on recovery of over seven kg charras, 53 liters liquor, Rs 120,000, a motorcycle and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Bani, Waris Khan, New Town, Taxila, Rattaamral, Pirwadhai, Wah Cantt police held Hera Masih, Shaf Ali, Waqas Ahmed, Khalid, Toseef, Hamza, Shah Zaib, Tamoor, and Khalid and recovered over seven kg charras. Similarly, Kahuta, Sadiqabad, City and Dharmial police arrested Muhammad Azam, Shakeel, Mansoor, Numan and Waqas and recovered 53 liters liquor from their possession. Meanwhile, Sadiqabad police in their operation managed to bust a gang and arrested two robbers and street criminals namely Mohsin Iqbal, ringleader and Najam Saqib and recovered 120,000 cash, a motorcycle and other items from their possession. Divisional Superintendents of Police had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers.—APP

## President condoles with families of soldiers

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday condoled with the family members of Pakistan Army soldiers who embraced martyrdom in a terrorist attack in Zhob, Balochistan on July 12. He paid tributes to the martyrs and appreciated their services for their country. The president contacted with the family members of Havaldar Muhammad Usman, Subedar Sikandar and Naeb Subedar Mustafa via telephone to offer his condolences and sympathies to them. He also extended his sympathies to the family members of Lance Naek Gul Hameed, Neak Javed Shehzad, Sepoy Muhammad Yousuf, Faheem and Maqsood. Paying tributes to the services and sacrifices of the martyrs for their country, President Alvi thanked the families of the martyrs on behalf of the nation. He also acknowledged the martyred troops' sacrifices and love for their country. President Alvi prayed to Almighty Allah for the elevation of ranks of the departed souls in paradise.—APP

## SAARC chamber urges Afghan govt to fulfill commitment

ISLAMABAD: The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Thursday urged the Afghan Taliban to fulfill their commitment made in Doha, with the goal of promoting peace in the region, specifically between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and preventing the use of Afghan soil against Pakistan. Talking to a delegation of traders led by Mian Faiz Bukhsh Arain, SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik said that the Doha agreement, signed between the United States and the Taliban in February 2020, outlined various commitments from both sides, said a news release issued here. One key aspect of the agreement was the Taliban's assurance that they would not allow Afghan territory to be used by any group or individual to threaten the security of other countries, including Pakistan, he added. By urging the Taliban to honor this commitment, octogenarian trade leader of South Asia is emphasizing the significance of stability and cooperation between Muslim nations. By preventing Afghan soil from being utilized for activities that could harm Pakistan, he believes that both countries can work towards maintaining peace in the region. He said promoting peace and stability in the region is crucial for fostering economic growth, facilitating trade, and enhancing the overall well-being of the people in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is in the best interests of both nations to ensure that their territories are not used as safe havens for extremist groups or as launchpads for cross-border attacks, he asserted. By reminding the Afghan Taliban of their commitment, Iftikhar Ali Malik emphasised to play a constructive role in maintaining peace and security in the region.—DNA



ISLAMABAD 'President Dr Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to Captain (R) Shahid Ashraf Tarar as the Chairman of the Federal Public Service Commission, at an oath-taking ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.—DNA

## 'Modus operandi for seeking resolution to Kashmir issue unchanged'

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The revocation of Article 370 did not alter the modus operandi of the resolution of Kashmir issue. The UN resolutions have remained a binding document that promises the right of self-determination through a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir. Indian illegal move of revocation of the special status of Kashmir was vehemently rejected by the Kashmiris. Kashmiri women, and the youth has shown more resilience in the post-revocation time. Pakistan needed a multipronged, inclusive approach to project the Kashmir cause more effectively. These were the views expressed by the experts in a roundtable discussion on 'struggle for freedom in

Kashmir: a critical appraisal' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Shabana Fayyaz, Associate Professor at QAU, said that we needed to work on effective narrative building to counter Indian propaganda that has been targeting the Kashmiris' struggle for self-determination since 1948, adding that, since 9/11 especially, New Delhi has been trying to transform this struggle into a 'state terrorism'. For a better narrative, 'we need to focus on three important areas; political, diplomatic, and the media, she stressed. In response to Indian claim that the Kashmir struggle was Pakistan-sponsored, she said that 'we need to assert through effective campaign that Pakistan is not the only

country that support the Kashmir cause, the entire Muslim world, and the UN have maintained a principal stand vis-à-vis the right of determination for the Kashmiris'. Highlighting the role of women in the Kashmir struggle and the fight against Indian atrocities, Dr Mujahid Gillani, president of Kashmir Youth Alliance, said that women have emerged as warriors, they have embraced new roles to protect their rights in the evolving situation, he added. He urged the international community to take notice of Indian forces' inhuman treatment of Kashmiri women as the figures of rape cases were high and increasing. Sobia Khurshid, Assistant Director at NUST said that Indian revocation of the special status of Kashmir was a calculated move as

there was a huge Indian military presence already in IJOK, adding that, there was a complete internet shutdown before and after August 5, 2019, she added. She argued that the Indian move of revocation backfired as New Delhi lost the support of even its like-minded groups in IIOJK. She further argued that it has become a diplomatic challenge for New Delhi how to defend its decision globally. Mr. Yasir Rahman from PTV News stressed the need to develop synergy between all the state institutions, and groups working on Kashmir to better project Pakistan's narrative. He added that we need to apprise the world about life in Azad Kashmir where people were enjoying more freedom as compared to IIOJK which has become a prison under heavy Indian military presence.



ISLAMABAD: Hina R Khar met Ambassador of Syrian Arab Republic today. They Discussed bilateral relations & opportunities for enhancing cooperation in areas of trade & commerce.—DNA


## NUST, UNFPA observe World Population Day

ISLAMABAD: To commemorate the World Population Day, NUST School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) jointly organized a seminar "Envisioning a Resilient Future for Pakistan's Population: Challenges and Way Forward" on Thursday.

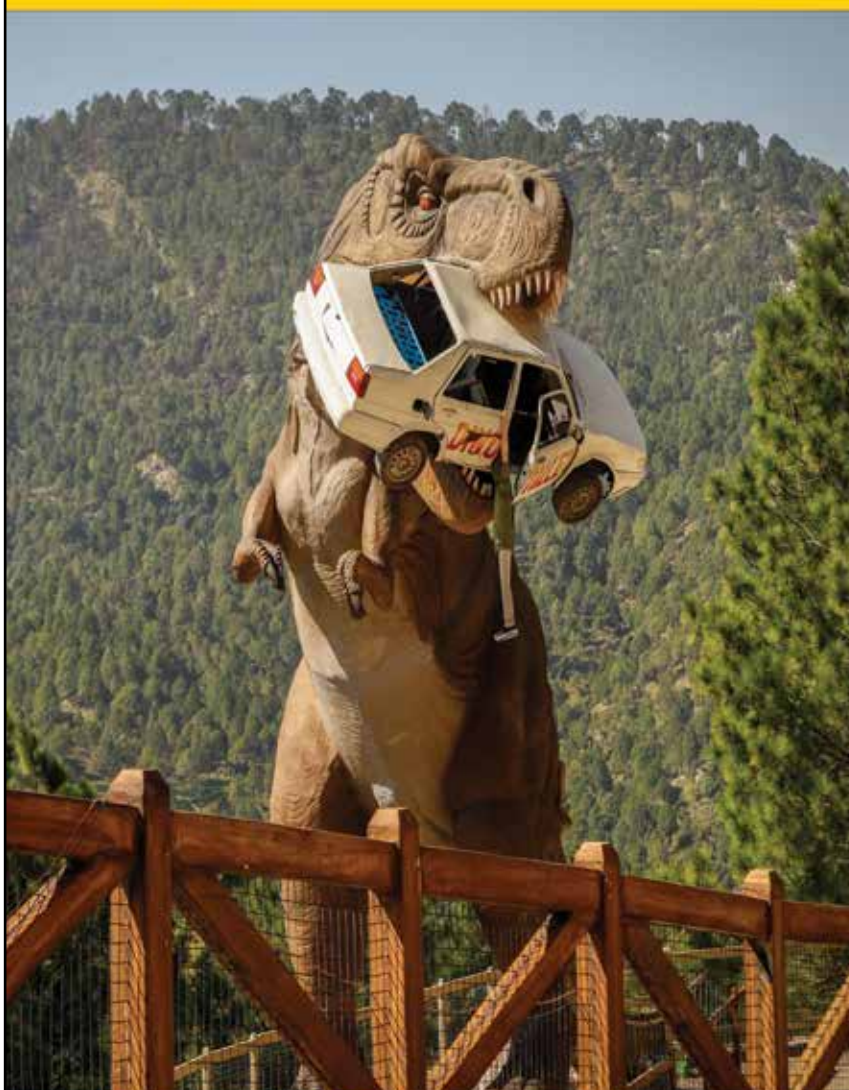
Assistant Country Representative UNFPA, Dr Rubina Ali in her keynote address, congratulated SSH on the establishment of Center of Excellence on Population and Wellbeing Studies (CePWS) - a research centre committed to population and demographic studies. Dr. Rubina said that although

the population growth rate is exponential in Pakistan, focus must remain on ensuring the rights of every individual. She stressed the need for capacity building of individuals as well as institutions to address population related issues. In her opening remarks, Director CePWS, Ms Rehma Rabab Hyder shared the vision and purpose of the newly established center. Dean SSH, Dr. Salma Siddiqui underlined the importance of pursuing Sustainable Development Goals towards ensuring quality of life and wellbeing of population. The Country Representative UNFPA, Dr Luay

Shabaneh joined the panel discussion through a video message. He acknowledged the significance of CePWS-NUST in navigating the current population landscape of the country. He emphasized evidence-based decision-making through collecting, combining, analysing and presenting data and statistics. He maintained that by engaging all stakeholders, issues can be better evaluated and addressed. Other distinguished panelists included Dr G M Arif (Former President PAP and Ex Joint Director PIDE), Dr Muhammad Fahim Khokar, Professor IESE-NUST.—APP



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## Fifa Women's World Cup

When the inaugural Fifa-backed Women's World Cup took place in 1991, the tournament was given a weird title designed to distance it from the "real" competition – the one played by men. Notwithstanding a lack of resources and a belittling name, the "First Fifa Women's World Championship for the M&Ms Cup" was an undeniable success and a beginning. As the ninth Women's World Cup kicks off in Australia and New Zealand on Thursday, such crass chauvinism has largely disappeared. But the booming popularity of the female game continues to outstrip expectations. The demand for tickets for Australia's opening game with the Republic of Ireland was such that the match had to be moved from a 45,000-capacity venue to Sydney's Accor Stadium, which holds more than 80,000. A year after England's Lionesses actually did bring football home by winning Euro 22, Australia's Matildas look set to enjoy a similar level of passionate backing.

Plenty of other impressive numbers suggest that this World Cup will be a superb showcase for the planet's most upwardly mobile sport. Thirty-two countries – a record number – will compete in 10 venues across nine cities. Close to one and a half million tickets, another record, have already been sold. These are stellar statistics. But this being women's football, perpetually undervalued and underfunded, due recognition and reward are never achieved without a struggle. This year, finally, broadcasting rights to the games have been sold separately from the men's competition, and the money on offer has tripled to \$152m. Parity with the men has been promised for 2027. After admirable collective pressure from players for a levelling-up of pay and conditions, Fifa has also agreed to pay a proportion of the money directly to team members – an invaluable boost to the careers of those representing poorer countries in an amateur or semi-professional capacity. From Thursday, though, the focus will be on the football, in what promises to be the most open and exciting Women's World Cup for a long time. The United States, winners of the past two tournaments, are a team in transition, and a hat-trick of triumphs may be beyond them.

In front of a fervent home audience that has already taken the Matildas to its heart, the stage could be set for Australia's prolific striker and captain, Sam Kerr, to inspire her side as Lionel Messi inspired Argentina in Qatar. As the women's game blossoms across the world, feeding off the momentum afforded by occasions such as this, the spectacle of a famously sports-mad nation in jubilation would provide a fitting climax. Whoever triumphs in a month's time, the biggest World Cup in the history of women's football also has the ingredients to become the most memorable.

## Vision, action required for breakthrough

Meeting with former United States secretary of state Henry Kissinger in Beijing on Thursday, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that 52 years ago when the world was at a critical juncture, Chairman Mao Zedong, Premier Zhou Enlai, US President Richard Nixon and Kissinger himself, had made the right decision to initiate the normalization of China-US ties.

It was a momentous and courageous decision that has not only benefited the two countries but also changed the world. Looking back on the more than half a century of meaningful, reciprocal interaction between the two countries since then, China and the US should draw inspiration from that breaking of the ice. Kissinger has visited China more than 100 times over the past 52 years, and is widely perceived in China to be an old friend of the Chinese people who has made historic contributions to the development of Sino-US relations. The Joe Biden administration should take a leaf out of his book. Kissinger's informal visit coincides with an official visit to Beijing by Biden's top climate envoy John Kerry. Kerry is the third senior Biden administration official to travel to China in a month following US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. Such an intensive series of high-profile visits are indicative of the two sides' mutual desire for contacts and communication. Yet, given the current fragile nature of China-US relations, contacts and communication are not enough on their own to bolster ties. Although Washington has supposedly changed its approach from "decoupling" to "de-risking," it continues to suppress China on many fronts, including economic and geopolitical. Prior to Kerry's visit, the White House was reportedly planning further restrictions on US investments in China. And the US has never ceased making provocative moves to pressure Beijing on its core interests, such as the Taiwan question. As such, no matter how many envoys Washington sends to Beijing, unless it changes its ways, there can be no substantial or sustained upturn in relations. The US should cast aside the delusion that it can exert strategic and economic pressure on China at will while counting on China's cooperation on issues of Washington's choosing. To arrest the deterioration in their relations, both sides need to make concrete efforts to build trust and translate goodwill into deeds.

China and the United States are once more at a crossroad, and both sides must once again make a choice, Xi told Kissinger. The choices they make will be of profound significance, not only for the two countries, but for the world.



## NA's early dissolution: PTI's gain?

Qamar Bashir



With an additional month at their disposal, the IPP and PTI-P will have more time to adjust to the new realities that struck them and their members a little earlier than the rest of the nation. In many instances, the hastily garnered members learned of their entry into the new parties shortly before or during the widely publicized gatherings. The entire nation witnessed PTI stalwarts hiding their faces, avoiding the cameras they had previously sought affectionately, making deliberate gestures and moves intended to convey the message of their forced participation, and a few of them even claimed that they learned the purpose

The two major political parties in Pakistan have finally agreed to hold elections in accordance with the constitution, which stipulates that elections must be held within 60 days if the National Assembly is dissolved at the end of its normal term, or within 90 days if it is dissolved earlier. If the assemblies are dissolved earlier than their customary duration, the most pressing issue is who will benefit from an additional thirty days. With an additional month at their disposal, the IPP and PTI-P will have more time to adjust to the new realities that struck them and their members a little earlier than the rest of the nation. In many instances, the hastily garnered members learned of their entry into the new parties shortly before or during the widely publicized gatherings. The entire nation witnessed PTI stalwarts hiding their faces, avoiding the cameras they had previously sought affectionately, making deliberate gestures and moves intended to convey the message of their forced participation, and a few of them even claimed that they learned the purpose of the meeting only when it began. They will make the most of this extra month to create comradeship, gel together, understand the vision, mission, and objectives of their newly formed parties, and develop their manifestos, which is not a difficult task given that the only option they have is to copy and paste sections of manifestos of other parties that are readily available on the internet. These extra 30 days may provide the PTI with much-needed time to heal its wounds, gather strength, regroup, and develop an election strategy with whatever strength and energy they have left after attending the multiple and never-ending court hearings in different parts of the country, many of which are scheduled at the same time and same day in different and distant parts of the country, and appearing before the GIT, NAB, and FIA and police stations and consuming most of the party's time and energy. In contrast, postponing elections will negatively impact both the PML(N) and the PPP. Both parties have exhausted all available options and discharged every round from their arsenals. Their greatest accomplishment, however, will remain the annihilation of the PTI and reduce the larger than life size of the PTI Chairman. They have used all of their intelligence, knowledge, and experience to improve the country's financial and economic condition, reduce poverty, provide education to all school-aged children, reduce inflation, increase the value of the Pakistani rupee, attract investment, reduce imports and multiply exports, and align Pakistan's ranking on all vital indicators with that of developed nations. These are their extravagant claims that contradict the facts on the ground.

Furthermore, they may be able to sell the growth in foreign exchange levels, which are expected to fall soon after making some crucial debt payments, because our liabilities have grown out of proportion to our sources of income. By any stretch of the imagination, we will not be using these borrowed funds and deposits to increase our sources of income, but rather to pay off urgent internal and external obligations. Soon, the people will be bitten by the IMF's proposed financial and economic stringent measures and will

be looking for someone to blame, and it will be in the interests of both the PPP and the PML(N) to allow the people to vent their feelings against the caretaker governments for two months before returning to power after winning the elections, which now look much more difficult with the formation of two new parties allegedly with the support of the establishment, to achieve some concrete objectives and not for fun. If only the PTI was the only target, the establishment might have chose to strengthen and support either the PPP or the PML(N), but it appears that the target is the PTI and the PPP/PML(N).

Like PPP and PML(N) this one additional month does not suit JUI and other smaller parties. This to them means one more month out of power, especially when they have a fixed vote bank that will not alter whether the elections are held a month earlier or later. There are however two stakeholders which are going to benefit from an additional month before going to elections. The members of the caretaker government who will have a full month to enjoy being in power and establishment to consolidate and strengthen the gains it has made after 9th May and also further strengthened and finetune its new products IPP and PTI-P and made them strong enough to achieve all the set objectives which may include, either winning the election, or damaging the traditional parties so much that they would even if in the government will be ransomed by the opposition, giving complete control on national discourse to the Establishment. The decision to go for election as per constitution was taken during a meeting between Asif Zardari and Nawaz Sharif held in Dubai, but fact is that the entire nation will remain on razor's edge and in a state of disbelief till the elections are actually held on the face of different theories of setting up government of technocrats, extending the period of caretakers and our propensity to disregard and trounce constitution with impunity. The Nation is also deeply concerned and worried and correct in its right to express doubt regarding holding of free, fair and transparent elections, and even if held in fair manner, acceptance of its result by the stakeholders. One thing is certain that only that party would accept the result which will win the elections while all other parties are likely to reject the elections. PTI, which is battered, deeply wounded and truncated, is likely to reject the elections due to charges of pre-poll rigging which allegedly started soon after the ouster of PTI Chairman from the office of the Prime Minister and reached its peak after the unfortunate incidents of 9th May, in the guise of which the party as if now has been split by two ceaseless surgical operations first into two parts and later into three parts, and while keeping in view the pattern, new splinter groups of PTI may emerge in Balochistan, Sindh and later in GB and AJK. At this point of time PTI most likely is the only party which is subjected to ruthless crackdown, therefore may feel correct in to object for not being provided with level playing field and may have ample reasons to reject the election results and continue its politics of agitation, only if, it was allowed to exist till that time, and Imran Khan was still its chairman. The PML(N), PPP and JUI will not accept elections results if the IPP and PTI-P will win more seat than

its actual worth of disproportionate to other parties. In this backdrop both PPP and PTI should rethink many times before committing to dissolve the assembly before its routine tenure. The routine duration of the NA will be completed on 12 midnight of 12th August, 2023. Which would mean that the summary seeking President's approval will have to be sent to the President on or before 8th August. The president had the option to approve the proposal the same day, and if he chose not to approve, the assembly would automatically stand dissolved after 48 hours from date and time of sending the summary to the president house. But the big question is that, "can the government without any reason dissolve the assemblies before completing its normal period which ends on midnight of 12th August 2023", the answer is yes. The duration of the National Assembly is primarily governed by two articles of the constitution. Article 52 states that the "National Assembly shall, unless sooner dissolved, continue for a term of five years from the day of its first meeting and shall stand dissolved at the expiration of its term" If the assemblies are dissolved under article 52, elections must be held within 60 days of the dissolution date. Article 58 specifies the procedure to be followed if the NA is dissolved before the end of its usual tenure. It states that "the President shall dissolve the National Assembly if so advised by the Prime Minister; and the National Assembly shall stand dissolved at the expiration of forty-eight hours after the Prime Minister has so advised, unless sooner dissolved." If the parliament is dissolved early, the Prime Minister is not required to give a reason, and it cannot be contested in any court of law. Both PML(N) and PPP have already chosen who is going to be the next caretaker Prime Minister and members of the cabinet. Reportedly, their interviews have already been convened like they were convened in 2008 by Asif Ali Zardari in the newly constructed Bilawal House, which as a Director media I witnessed by myself. I saw the coming in of all potential caretaker Prime Ministers, Chief Ministers and cabinet ministers and later, also witnessed them taking oath. The PPP is of the strong opinion that the caretaker Prime Minister should be a politician whereas, PML(N) may narrow down on one media elite. Rest is a piece of cake, the Prime Minister will write to Raja Riaz, the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, a stooge and would seek his opinion to complete the formalities. There is no likelihood of any impasse and therefore, the name of the caretaker Prime Minister will be finalized and notified in the coming days. Who after swearing in will choose his cabinet. The government once formed will be empowered to take day to day routine decisions and to assist the election commission in holding of so called free, fair and transparent elections, the credibility of which has already been under question even before they are held. The only way to pull the country out of its financial quagmire, state of hopelessness and despair, and put it on the path to development and prosperity is for elections to be held in a free, fair, and transparent manner, and it is a hope against hope that all stakeholders will accept the election results. However, if we as a country fail this test, as seems inevitable, we will continue to slide deeper into obscurity and insensitivity.

## Indian pundits rally in support of Europe's anti-migrant sentiment

James Dorsey

Indian politicians and commentators have rallied in defense of anti-migrant sentiment in Europe to forge alliances and undercut criticism of Hindu nationalism that targets minorities, foremost Muslims. In response to criticism, most recently by the European Parliament, of India's handling of violent ethnic clashes in the north-eastern city of Manipur in which some 130 people were killed, the pundits seek to bolster right-wing and autocratic resistance to meaningful discussions about migrant, minority, and human rights. The European Union has already put those discussions on the back burner by focusing instead, for example, in Tunisia, on enlisting autocrats to deter illegal immigration. This week, the EU signed an agreement with Tunisia that provides the North African country with US\$118 million to stop smuggling, strengthen borders, and return migrants. In addition, the EU has offered Tunisia a US\$1 billion loan to help resolve its economic crisis, provided the country successfully concludes an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The loan would come out of US\$16.39 billion budget announced in June by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to foster partnerships with third countries, provide help to refugees in the Middle East, and react to humanitarian crises. The EU-Tunisia agreement stipulates that migrants should be treated with "full respect of human rights." Yet, in recent weeks, Tunisia has forcibly taken hundreds of Black sub-Saharan Africans to the desert and hostile areas on the borders of Libya and Algeria after racial unrest in Sfax, Tunisia's second-largest

city. Tunisian President Kais Saied has accused migrants of plotting to change the country's demographics in conjunction with "traitors who are working for foreign countries." In the same vein, like Ram Madhav, a member of the executive of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Hindu nationalist cradle of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and former secretary general of Mr. Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and retired Major General Harsha Kakar, have sought to reduce Europe's migrant problem to one of Muslim resistance to integration and/or assimilation. "The question of integrating immigrant Muslims into mainstream societies as equal citizens is bothering many countries today. Rising lawlessness, street violence, gangsterism, mushrooming growth of madrasas and Arabic schools, increasing insistence on speaking in Arabic, wearing head-to-toe Burqa, and occupying large public spaces for daily prayers have been seen by many in the West as deliberate acts of defiance to nation-state ideology," Mr. Madhav said in one of his weekly Indian Express columns. In another column, Mr. Madhav noted, referring to those fleeing Nazi Germany, that "European immigrants had not had much problem integrating with the French mainstream." For his part, Mr. Kakar charged migrants in Europe constitute a "time bomb." In an implicit echo of Hindu nationalist tropes, Mr. Kakar asserted that "immigrants, especially in Europe, where they are considered cheap labour for the economy, do not have loyalty to their new country."

Mr. Kakar quoted a French politics expert as saying that in France, most ghetto residents "disrespect France, they hate it, and they don't want to integrate." Messrs. Madhav and Kakar's argument reinforces right-wing and autocratic reasoning that economic development

and the fight against terrorism take precedence over human rights. Egyptian general-turned-president Abdel Fatah al-Sisi has stepped further by insisting that "lack of education, a roof above one's head, inability to secure a job, (and) no hope for the future, constitute violations of one's human rights." Even so, the argument of Messrs. Madhav, Kakar, and Al-Sisi is self-incriminating given that poverty and lack of opportunity in developed and developing countries stem mainly from failed government social and economic policies and a lack of good governance on both sides of the divide. Mr. Kakar acknowledged the social and economic disenfranchisement and perceived racism driving violent protests like those recently in France but attributed the cause to "the inability to integrate immigrants into society mainly because numbers are large and beyond the ability of the state to manage." Beyond absolving the state of its responsibilities, putting the onus on migrants, and ignoring that Europe's labour shortage makes addressing social and economic inequities a necessity, Messrs. Madhav and Kakar's attempts to reinforce European anti-migrant and anti-Muslim sentiment seem to be designed to forge a common ground that would shield India from criticism of Mr. Modi's questionable Hindu nationalist policies. Lost in the pundits' argument is that Europe's post-World War Two generations of migrants and their descendants were initially on the continent at European countries' invitation. In 1975, the Paramaribo Express, the air link between the Suriname capital and Amsterdam, was overbooked as the Netherlands offered citizenship, in advance of the Latin American country's independence, to any Surinamer in the Dutch mainland on or before a specific date. Northern European countries

invited many North Africans, Turks, and South Europeans as guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s but failed to integrate them on the mistaken assumption that their stay would be temporary. Additionally, Western aid, and economic, and foreign policies frequently disadvantaged developing economies and supported autocratic, often corrupt regimes in Africa and Asia that stymied equitable economic development at home. The vast number of irregular migrants currently washing up on European shores and flooding the United States border with Mexico are partially due to those policies. To be fair to Messrs. Madhav and Kakar, European anti-migrant sentiment is genuine and cannot be ignored. "India can...serve European liberals not so much as a model but rather as a warning from which they can learn," said politics scholar Joerg Friedrichs. One lesson Europe can learn is that "when trying to accommodate minorities, ruling elites must not lose touch with prevailing perceptions of fairness among the majority," Mr. Friedrichs said. Another is "that majorities should resist the lure of narcissism" or self-righteousness to avoid being trapped in hypocrisy. Mr. Friedrichs likened Europeans' "narcissistic image of themselves as torchbearers of democracy and human rights" to Hindu nationalist assertions that Muslims should be taught a lesson if they exploit Hindu tolerance and generosity. Noting that many followers of populist parties in Europe and Mr. Modi are "disenchanted liberals rather than rabid nationalists," Mr. Friedrichs suggested that "instead of alienating them further, liberals should try to gain them back by showing that they care about the majority at least as much as about minorities."

## Briefs

## Pakistan to support peace initiative

FROM PAGE 01

He said Ukraine considered Pakistan a good partner and it was ready to work in all areas especially in the area of food security. Bilawal said it was in larger interest of Pakistan as well as the developed world that this grain deal should be restored. "I will be reaching out to the United Nation Secretary General and to my counterparts in Turkey and Russia to discuss Pakistan's concerns and our desire the black sea grain initiative to be restored", he assured his Ukrainian counterpart. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said during the meeting, the current Ukrainian situation was also discussed and he expressed Pakistan's deep concern at the prevailing situation and offered condolences on the loss of precious lives and immense human suffering. "In a gesture of solidarity with the people of Ukraine and despite our own economic challenges, we have sent humanitarian assistance, he said adding that prolonged conflict brought immense hardship and suffering to the civilian populations. He hoped that peace will prevail so that the people of Ukraine and Russia could enjoy peace dividends. He also emphasized the importance of peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts through dialogue and engagement and Pakistan's readiness to support peace initiatives which can bring peace to the region. Bilawal said Pakistan had vested interest in promoting peace and reconciliation. "We hope for a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy." The minister also appreciated the Ukrainian government for its principled stance in supporting the resolution on countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence at the Human Rights Council in Geneva on July 12.

The Foreign Minister of Ukraine said since Ukrainian independence, the two countries had enjoyed excellent relationship. "We were always standing next to you in term of food crisis." He recalled that two years ago Ukraine felt pleasure to help Pakistan encountering the wheat shortage as the Ukrainian traders delivered more than one million tons of grain to Pakistan. He also thanked Pakistan for providing humanitarian aid in the time when Ukraine needed it at most and "we understand it was not easy decision in terms of domestic economic situation but this is what friends do, they help each other in time of greatest needs". He said during the meeting the both sides deliberated upon boosting trade, solving the existing problems such as that of Pakistani students who had studied in Ukraine before the war started. He said he also briefed the minister about the opportunities, Ukraine's offered in the area of digitalization of state services to make government more convenient. Replying to a query, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari categorically stated that Pakistan did not had any agreement with Ukraine with respect to the military supplies to Ukraine since the war began. "Since the war began, we have not concluded any agreement for defence supplies to Ukraine," he added. During the delegation-level talks at Foreign Office, Pakistani side was led by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while the Ukrainian side by its Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. Earlier on arrival at the Foreign Office, the visiting dignitary was received by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar and other high-ranking officials of the FO. During the two-day visit, the Ukrainian foreign minister will also call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The PM highlighted that the conflict in Ukraine has had a significant global impact that had hurt the economies of many countries. They stressed the need for a negotiated and diplomatic settlement in line with the UN Charter. Foreign Minister Kuleba briefed the PM on the current situation in Ukraine, recalling that their countries had always enjoyed long-standing and cordial relations grounded in cooperation.

## Japan embassy, SPJD donate nine ambulances to PRCS

The handover ceremony for the ambulances took place at the PRCS National Headquarters after a 3-day specialized training session

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) arranged a commemoration event to mark the commissioning of nine ambulances donated by the Embassy of Japan GGP (Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects) Unit in Islamabad and the Society for Promotion of Japanese Diplomacy (SPJD) in Tokyo. The handover ceremony for the ambulances took place at the PRCS National Headquarters after a 3-day specialized training session. The event was attended by prominent figures, including Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, PRCS Treasurer Mr. Irshad Mehmood, member of PRCS managing body Brig (Retd) Abdul Hadi, Secretary General Muhammad Abaidullah Khan, Counselor of the Embassy of Japan Mr. Ishii Kensuke, officials from the Japan Embassy, SPJD trainers, as well as PRCS officers and volunteers. During the 3-day training, the SPJD delegation from Japan provided specialized training to PRCS drivers, first aiders, and relevant volunteers in Emergency



Medical Services (EMS). This training aimed to ensure the optimal utilization of the donated ambulances and enhance the capabilities of PRCS in providing efficient emergency medical services. At the closing ceremony held at the PRCS National Headquarters, Chairman PRCS

Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari expressed gratitude to the Embassy of Japan GGP Unit and the Society for Promotion of Japanese Diplomacy for their generous donation of ambulances. He emphasized the significance of strong partnerships in bolstering PRCS's capacity to deliver

effective emergency medical services to the people of Pakistan. Sardar Shahid Ahmed also expressed hope for the continued support from the Japanese counterparts in the future. Counselor of the Embassy of Japan Mr. Ishii Kensuke, speaking on the occasion, highlighted that the specialized training provided by the Japanese delegation would further enhance the skills and knowledge of PRCS personnel, enabling them to respond to medical emergencies with professionalism and expertise. He acknowledged the value of the ambulances as a significant addition to PRCS's emergency response capabilities. During the event, Chairman PRCS presented mementos to the delegates from the Society for Promoting Japanese Diplomacy (SPJD) and praised their efforts in training PRCS staff in Emergency Medical Services. Certificates were distributed to the participants of the 3-day training session, and Chairman PRCS, along with others, inspected the ambulances and observed a simulation exercise on emergency services performed by PRCS drivers and first aiders.

## 2 cops martyred as blast...

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the whole nation stood with the security forces in fight against terrorism. The attack comes hours after two policemen embraced martyrdom and two others suffered injuries when terrorists opened fire at a check post located in Raigi Model Town area of Peshawar due to which four policemen suffered injuries. The deceased policemen were identified as head constable Wajid and driver Farman. The injured were identified as constable Sayar and constable Feroze. The country has seen surge in terrorism in recent times, especially after Islamabad asked Afghanistan to take action against terrorists involved in launching attack against Pakistan.

## ECP says fully ready for timely...

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determination if new census is approved," he added. Earlier Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said a decision on the dissolution of the National Assembly had yet to be made. Taking to Twitter, Aurangzeb made it clear that no date had been decided for the dissolution of the NA yet. The date of the NA's dissolution would be decided in consultation with the allied parties, said Aurangzeb. Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M) expressed reservations over coalition government's decision of holding elections on the old census. Federal Minister for Science and Technology and BNP-M leader Agha Hassan Baloch in a statement said that holding the upcoming general elections on the basis of old census is unacceptable.

## MQM-P demands elections...

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the MQM-P leaders urged ECP to organise general elections 2023 on the basis of new census data and delimitations. The political party also expressed reservations about flaws in electoral lists and census. The MQM-P delegations also presented evidence of flaws in Karachi's electoral lists to the ECP officials. Dr Farooq Sattar said that the upcoming general polls must be held on new census data. He claimed that the flaws in delimitations and voters data can be removed in 15 to 20 days. "We demanded the prime minister for holding elections on new delimitations. The premier has also assured the MQM-P of fulfilling the demand." The delegation also expressed serious reservations on the recent census statistics in which Karachi's population was undercounted. Sattar said that 30% of Karachi voters have been shifted to other constituencies far from their current residences.

## Russia bombards Ukraine ports, jolting world grain markets

MYKOLAIIV: Russia jolted world grain markets with an escalation in the Black Sea, mounting a third straight night of air strikes on Ukrainian ports and issuing a threat against Ukraine-bound vessels to which Kyiv responded in kind. At least 27 civilians were reported hurt in the air strikes on the ports, which set buildings ablaze and damaged China's consulate in Odesa. The United States said Russia's warning to ships indicated Moscow might attack vessels at sea following Moscow's withdrawal this week from a U.N.-brokered deal to let Ukraine export grain. The signals that Russia was willing to use force to reimpose its blockade of one of the world's biggest food exporters set global prices soaring. Moscow says it will not participate in the year-old grain deal without better terms for its own food and fertiliser sales. - Agencies

## FIFA Women's World Cup New Zealand and Australia begin with emotional wins

WEB DESK

AUCKLAND: Fans danced in the stands as players shed tears of joy after New Zealand got their Women's World Cup campaign off to a winning start on an emotional and historic night at Eden Park. For Australia a few hours later, it felt more like getting the job done as they beat Republic of Ireland through a Steph Catley penalty, the Arsenal player taking the captain's armband after Sam Kerr was dramatically ruled out shortly before kick-off with a calf injury. Two 1-0 victories, two different perspectives - with the New Zealand perspective one of "tears" and "goosebumps". "Seeing them have tears in their eyes and enjoying it in front of their family and friends at the end, I will never forget these moments," New Zealand boss Jitka Klimkova said after Hannah Wilkinson's winner against Norway. Even Prime Minister Chris Hipkins joined in the New Zealand celebrations, hours after he addressed the nation following the deadly shooting in Auckland that had cast a shadow over what was supposed to be a day of celebration. "He came to the locker room and was very proud for this team," added Klimkova, the Czech coach who was appointed in August 2021 and spent the first few months of her reign unable to step foot in New Zealand due to Covid restrictions. The Football Ferns had waited a long time for Thursday's big moment.



They had failed to win a game at their previous five World Cup appearances and few outside New Zealand gave them much hope against Norway. If they defeat World Cup debutants the Philippines on Tuesday then New Zealand can start planning for the knock-out rounds for the first time. In front of a passionate crowd of 42,137 - a record crowd for a football match in New Zealand - they produced a memorable performance that will live long in the memories of those present. "I still have goosebumps and emotions," Klimkova said an hour after the final whistle. "We have waited for this moment for such a long time. Hearing our fans getting behind us like that, it's an

unforgettable moment for me. It's an incredible feeling." Excitement had been building across Auckland as the city prepared to kick off the Women's World Cup, the culmination of years of effort to bring the largest ever standalone women's sporting event to its shores. The Football Ferns have been hard to ignore as they stared down from giant billboards, while some of the players' faces were projected onto the city's Sky Tower - a 328-metre tall tourist attraction - on the eve of the tournament. Wilkinson, whose goal earned her country a famous win, spent the last few minutes of the match with her head in her hands, sitting on the bench as Norway threatened a late equaliser.

## Mountaineer Naila Kiani achieves unique feat

The Mount Everest, K2, Lhotse, Annapurna, Gasherbrum 1 and 2, and Nanga Parbat are among the mountains she has climbed before

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan's renowned climber Naila Kiani became the first Pakistani woman to summit all 8,000-metre peaks in the country after she successfully summited Broad Peak, the 12th highest peak in the world at 8,047 metres, on Thursday. She has scaled eight 8,000-metre peaks worldwide out of a total of 14. "Naila has successfully ascended Pakistan's fifth and final 8,000-metre peak at 2.03 am today [Thursday]," said Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) Secretary Karrar Haidri. "She is also the first Pakistani woman to ascend Broad Peak, complete the climb of all five 8,000-metre peaks in Pakistan, and scale eight 8,000-metre peaks worldwide," he added. The Mount Everest, K2, Lhotse, Annapurna, Gasherbrum 1 and 2, and Nanga Parbat are among the mountains she has climbed before. She was also awarded the third-highest civilian award, Sitara-e-Imtiaz, in recognition of her achievement of successfully summiting the world's highest peak, Mount Everest in May. Earlier, another Pakistani mountaineer Sajid Sadpara summited Broad Peak without any help of supplementary oxygen and Sherpas, local support, on Wednesday. Sadpara has now climbed all five eight-thousanders in Pakistan without any help of supplementary oxygen. It must be noted that Sajid, son of the legendary mountaineer Ali Sadpara, aims to climb all 14 eight-thousanders without the aid of supplemental oxygen. He successfully climbed Nanga Parbat without the help of supplementary oxygen and Sherpas in June. He has also summited K2 (8,611m), Gasherbrum-I (8,080m), and Gasherbrum-II (8,035m) in Pakistan, as well as Manaslu (8,163m) in Nepal, without supplemental oxygen. Sajid has also achieved the unique feat of climbing the world's highest peak Mount Everest without the support of supplementary oxygen and assistance from Sherpas in May 2023.

## PVF requests Govt. for compensation over AVC penalty

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) has raised the issue of US 20,000 dollars penalty with the federal government for non-participation in AVC Challenge Cup due to non-issuance of NOC by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the details, Chairman of Pakistan Volleyball Federation Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob has written a letter to Director General of Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shoaib Khoso and their copies have also been sent to Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari, Foreign Secretary Asad Majeed Khan, Secretary IPC Ahmed Hanif Orakzai to highlight all the reasons on imposing fine by Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC). PVF chairman informed them that AVC Challenge Cup for Men was scheduled from 08-15 July 2023 in Taipei City, Chinese Taipei in which 17 countries confirmed their participation including Pakistan and Pakistan volleyball team was scheduled to depart on 05 July for Chinese Taipei but we were informed at the last minute that foreign office has not issued NOC to the Pakistan Volleyball Team for participation in the AVC Cup under one China Policy.

## PFF National Challenge Cup's final round kicks off Oct 21

LAHORE: The final round of the National Challenge Cup 2023 will start on October 21, the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) announced on Thursday. A total of 16 formidable teams have qualified for the final round, comprising 14 victorious teams and 2 deserving runners-up. The teams include KRL, Pakistan Army, Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Navy, WSTC, Otto Crain, SA Farms, WAPDA, SA Gardens, HEC, PACA, NIMSO, Asia Ghee Mills, Pakistan Railways, Pakistan Police, and Masha United. The tournament will conclude on November 6. To ensure a smooth organization of the event, the PFF has already dispatched invitations to all the participating teams. A request for confirmation of their availability by the 10th of September has been extended

to each team. Subsequent to receiving the teams' confirmations, the draws will be conducted, and the schedule for the matches will be announced in due course. Football's governing body FIFA and Asian Football Federation (AFC) backed the Haroon Malik-led PFF's Normalisation Committee (NC) on Wednesday. The development comes after the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination had asked FIFA President Gianni Infantino, in a letter dated June 19, to consider withdrawing the nomination of chairman of the PFF Normalisation Committee (NC) and, instead, appoint a Focal Person to monitor football affairs and liaise with the Ministry and Pakistan Sports Board to conduct elections of PFF. The IPC ministry had also accused PFF NC of wasting four years since its appoint-

ment in the year 2019. However, FIFA, in its reply to IPC, has clarified that the "current normalisation committee was only able to properly fulfill its mandate starting from the end of June of last year". "We would like to point out that although the PFF Normalisation Committee was appointed by FIFA on June 27, 2019, its current four members were nominated on January 19, 2021 only, following the inability of the previous members to carry out their mandates as per the instructions of FIFA," FIFA stated in the letter. "Furthermore, the suspension of PFF by FIFA, which lasted from April 6, 2021 until June 29, 2022, made it impossible for the normalisation committee to carry out its mandate during that period as it had no premises nor staff at disposal," it added. - DNA

## Saud stars as Pakistan beat Sri Lanka to win first Test

Azam scored 24 in 28 balls, with the help of five fours, before being trapped by Prabath Jayasuriya in front of the stumps

SPORTS DESK

GALE: Pakistan defeated Sri Lanka by four wickets to win the first Test in Galle on Thursday. The visitors took a 1-0 lead in the two-match series, thanks largely to a brilliant double ton by Saud Shakeel in the first innings. Pakistan had resumed their run-chase of 131 runs at 48-3 with Babar and Imam-ul-Haq on the crease. Azam scored 24 in 28 balls, with the help of five fours, before being trapped by Prabath Jayasuriya in front of the stumps. Saud Shakeel also couldn't stay at

the crease till the end as he was dismissed after scoring 30 runs in 38 balls. Imam played an impressive knock and remained unbeaten on 50 runs, which included four fours and a six. Agha Salman smacked a six on the very first ball he faced to help Pakistan get over the line. In the final session yesterday, Jayasuriya claimed two top-order wickets of Pakistan after dismissing Abdulah Shafique (8) and Shan Masood (7). Meanwhile, nightwatchman Nauman Ali was run out after attempting a suicidal second run. Sri Lanka were dismissed for 279 in their second in-

nings on day four, which meant that Pakistan were set a target of 131 runs to win the match. Abrar Ahmed and Nauman Ali were the chief destroyers for Pakistan after claiming three wickets each. Meanwhile, Shaheen Afridi and Agha Salman bagged two wickets each. Dhananjaya de Silva, who scored a ton in the first innings, was the top scorer for the home side once again after notching up 82 runs. It must be noted that Saud Shakeel notched up his maiden double century in Tests as Pakistan took a 149-run lead against Sri Lanka in the rain-hit opening match.

The visitors were bowled out for 461 in the final session on day three after a frustrating ninth-wicket partnership of 94 between Shakeel, who remained not out on 208, and Naseem Shah, who scored six off 78 balls. Spinner Ramesh Mendis ended with a five-wicket haul but Shakeel combined with the tailenders including a 52-run seventh-wicket partnership with Nauman Ali, who scored 25. But it was his 177-run partnership with Agha Salman, who hit 83, which brought Pakistan back in the game after slipping to 101-5 in their reply to Sri Lanka's 312.



## Briefs

## Plane crash kills 5 politicians in Colombia

BOGOTA: A small plane crashed in central Meta department Wednesday, killing five members of Colombia's Democratic Center party along with the pilot, said the country's civil aviation authority. The party identified the victims as former senator and ambassador Nohora Tovar and her husband, Guillermo Perez, the party's coordinator in Meta; Dimas Barrero, a deputy representing Meta; Felipe Carreno, the department's gubernatorial candidate; Oscar Rodriguez, a Villavicencio councilman; and the pilot, Heliodoro Alvarez. The Cessna T210N, which served as an air shuttle, "took off from the airport in Villavicencio (Meta's capital) at 7:40 a.m. (1240 GMT) and last had contact with air traffic control at 7:58 a.m. (1258 GMT)," the agency said in a statement.—DNA

## Turkiye issues arrest warrant for far-right Danish politician

ANKARA: A Turkish court issued an arrest warrant for Rasmus Paludan, a far-right Danish leader, following his controversial act of burning a copy of the Quran in front of the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm. The incident, which took place on Jan. 21, sparked outrage and condemnation across the Islamic world. The investigation launched by the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office against Paludan on the charge of "publicly insulting the religious values" is ongoing. As part of the investigation, the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office requested Paludan's arrest to obtain a statement regarding the Quran-burning incident. The Ankara 8th Criminal Court of Peace, upon evaluating the request, decided to issue an arrest warrant for the Danish politician. Türkiye's condemnation came after Paludan was given permission to burn the Muslim holy book outside the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm.—APP

## One dead, 48 injured in Johannesburg blast

JOHANNESBURG: A body was found in central Johannesburg early Thursday after an unexplained blast ripped through a busy street at rush hour the previous evening, the emergency services said. The explosion blew a hole in the road and gouged out cracks, skittling pedestrians and cars. "(In the) early hours of this morning, we managed to recover a body of a male person on site where the explosion occurred," Emergency Management Services spokesman Robert Mulaudzi said. Panayza Lesufi, the premier of Johannesburg's Gauteng province, told a media briefing that 48 people were injured. Witnesses reported chemical odours and escaping vapours after the powerful blast, which overturned vehicles.—Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif in a Group photo wedding ceremony of Aurangzeb Rauf, son of former President FPCI Abdul Rauf and daughter of PML-N leader Sheikh Arsalan.—DNA

## Iraq expels Sweden Envoy, embassy stormed over Quran burning

The Iraqi prime minister, Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, also recalled his country's charge d'affaires in Sweden, the government said on Thursday, and suspended the working permit of Swedish telecom company Ericsson on Iraqi soil, according to state media

BAGHDAD: Iraq has expelled the Swedish ambassador only hours after Iraqi protesters angered by the burning of copies of the Quran in Sweden stormed the Swedish embassy in central Baghdad, scaling the walls of the compound and setting it on fire. The Iraqi prime minister, Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, also recalled his country's charge d'affaires in Sweden, the government said on Thursday, and suspended the working permit of Swedish telecom company Ericsson on Iraqi soil, according to state media. Early on Thursday morning, demonstrators at the embassy waved flags and signs showing the influential Iraqi Shia religious and political leader Muqtada

al-Sadr, according to Al Jazeera's Mahmoud Abdelwahed in Nasiriya, southern Iraq. The burning of the embassy was called by supporters of al-Sadr to protest the second planned burning of a Quran in front of the Iraqi embassy in Stockholm on Thursday. While protesters in Sweden kicked and partially damaged a book they said was the Quran, they did not burn it as they had threatened to do. The Finnish embassy in Baghdad is adjacent to the Swedish embassy, in an area enclosed by blast walls. Finland's ambassador to Iraq, Matti Lassila, told the Finnish public broadcaster YLE that the staff of the Swedish and Finnish embassies were proactively evacuated Wednesday and were uninjured. All

embassy staff were safe, the Swedish foreign ministry press office also said in a statement, condemning the attack and highlighting the need for Iraqi authorities to protect diplomatic missions. Iraq's foreign ministry also strongly condemned the attack. "The Iraqi government has instructed the competent security authorities to conduct an urgent investigation and take the necessary security measures in order to uncover the circumstances of the incident and identify the perpetrators of this act and hold them accountable according to the law," the foreign ministry said in a statement. However, a statement later on Thursday from the government said that it would sever diplomatic ties with Sweden if a second

Quran burning takes place in the country. "The Iraqi government has informed the Swedish government through diplomatic channels that any recurrence of the incident involving the burning of the Holy Quran on Swedish soil would necessitate severing diplomatic relations," the statement from the prime minister's office said. By dawn on Thursday, security forces had deployed inside the embassy and smoke rose from the building as fire-fighters extinguished stubborn embers, according to witnesses. Most protesters had withdrawn, with a few dozen milling around outside the embassy. Protesters have vowed to continue protesting "if any more burnings of the Quran happen", Al Jazeera's Ab-

delwahed added. The demonstrators are prepared to "take matters in their own hands" if the "Iraqi government does not dismiss the Swedish diplomatic mission immediately", he said. "We are mobilised today to denounce the burning of the Quran, which is all about love and faith," protester Hassan Ahmed told the French news agency AFP at the embassy. "We demand that the Swedish government and the Iraqi government stop this type of initiative," he said. Swedish media reported that Salwan Momika, an Iraqi refugee in Sweden, had organised the planned burning on Thursday. Salwan also burned pages of a copy of the Quran in front of Stockholm's largest mosque on June 28 during Eid al-Adha, a hol-

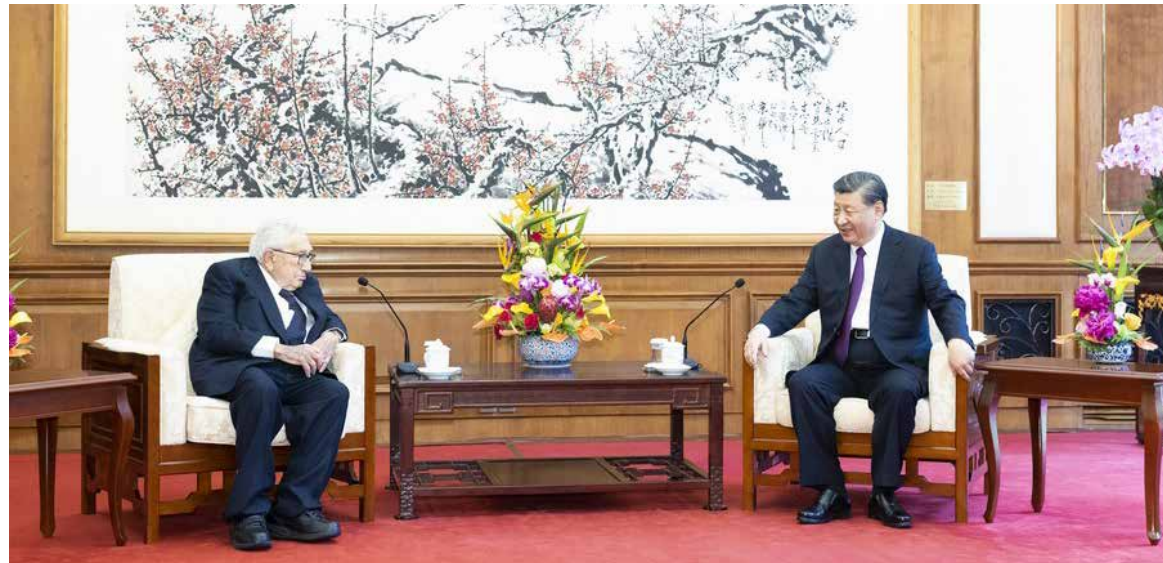
day celebrated by Muslims around the world. That earlier incident also prompted supporters of Muqtada to storm Sweden's embassy in Baghdad the following day. The governments of several Muslim countries, including Iraq, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Morocco issued protests about the incident, with Iraq seeking the man's extradition to face trial in the country. Swedish police had granted Momika a permit in line with the country's free speech protections, but authorities later said they had opened an investigation over "agitation against an ethnic group", noting that Momika had burned pages from the Islamic holy book very close to the mosque.—Agencies

## UK sanctions people, businesses 'linked' to Wagner's Africa ops

LONDON: Britain on Thursday announced sanctions against 13 individuals and businesses it said have links to the Russian mercenary group Wagner in Africa, accusing them of crimes there including killings and torture. The people and entities targeted — which will no longer be able to deal with UK citizens, companies and banks, and have any UK assets frozen — are allegedly involved in Wagner's activities in Mali, Central African Republic (CAR) and Sudan. They include the purported head of Wagner in Mali, Ivan Aleksandrovich Maslov, its chief in CAR, Vitalii Viktorovich Perfilev, and the group's operations head there Konstantin Aleksandrovich Pikalov. London noted Pikalov is known as the "right hand man" of Wagner founder Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has already been sanctioned by Britain alongside several of his key commanders who have participated in Russia's war in Ukraine. "The Wagner Group is committing atrocities in Ukraine, as well as acting with impunity in countries like Mali, Central African Republic and Sudan," the UK's Minister for Africa Andrew Mitchell said in a statement unveiling the sanctions. He added the new measures "expose despicable individuals who have commissioned violations of international humanitarian law, holding them to account for the severe harm they are inflicting on innocent civilians for financial gain". Britain accuses Maslov of directing Wagner mercenaries in Mali to participate in a March 2022 massacre alongside local forces, killing at least 500 people in summary executions as well as carrying out rape and torture. It said Perfilev and Pikalov were sanctioned for "deliberately targeting civilians" in CAR, with the latter responsible for directing torture and targeted killings.—APP

## Speakers call for boosting US-Pakistan economic ties

WASHINGTON: Speakers at a 'Conference on Diplomacy for Development', held in Houston, Texas, called for deepening the economic relationship between Pakistan and the United States in order to bring the two countries even closer together. The Conference was organized by the International Academy of Letters USA, the Rupani Foundation, and the Ismaili Council for the South Western USA. Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, and the US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Elizabeth Horst, jointly chaired a session on the "Role of Trade Diplomacy in Pakistan-US relations". The session was attended by thirty-five prominent Pak-American businessmen, entrepreneurs, professionals and area experts having successful business ventures and who are also investing in different projects in Pakistan, according to a press release of the Pakistan embassy. Dr. Tanvir Ahmed, a businessman, underscored the importance of investment in education and health sector which he said was critical in enhancing productivity of the young population. Dr. Azeem-ud-Din, a pediatric hematologist-oncologist in Houston, highlighted his efforts in promoting and projecting Islamic art. He emphasized the need for greater efforts to introduce Pakistan, its culture and its products to the US audience. Muhammad Saeed Sheikh, President, Houston Karachi Sister City Association, underscored the need for greater exchanges, especially trade delegations between Pakistan and the US for building strong linkages between the business communities of the two countries. Nasruddin Rupani, Chairman Rupani Foundation and the Ibn-e-Sina Foundation, called for putting greater focus on 'impact investment'. —Agencies



BEIJING: President of China Xi meets with Henry Kissinger, says China ready to bring ties with US steadily forward.—DNA

## Kabul Expo attracts over 600 investors from region, including Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Over 600 investors and businessmen from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkmenistan are participating in the 2nd Imam Abu Hanifa International Expo and Trade Fair being held in Kabul. Arranged by the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries from July 16-22, the Expo is also being participated by a huge number of women traders and industrialists along with their products. Being termed a positive step towards the revival of Afghan economy and its access to regional and international markets, the event is being participated by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan and over 25 renowned Pakistani industrialists, which is the largest trade delegation in the event. The Imam Abu Hanifa Expo is a mega event considering the history of Pakistan-Afghanistan trade relations.—Agencies

## NATO in Cold War dream undermines global peace, stability

Huan YUPING

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit, which was held on July 11 and 12, once again revealed the organization's Cold War mentality. It issued a communique that distorted China's position and policies and deliberately smeared China, exposing NATO's dangerous attempt to meddle in affairs beyond its geographical scope, create division, and foment confrontation. This proved that NATO has never reflected on the troubles and disasters it has brought around the world, which plunged many of its member countries into security dilemmas. However, it is still in its Cold War dream, seeking further expansion and creating new troubles around the globe. As a so-called defensive alliance, NATO "defends" itself by waging wars. After the end of the Cold War, it has repeatedly lit the fuse of confrontation and created wars around the world, from Bosnia and Herzegovina

to Kosovo, from Afghanistan to Iraq, and from Libya to Syria. According to incomplete statistics, the wars launched or participated in by NATO after 2001 have killed hundreds of thousands and displaced tens of millions of people. The root cause for the current warfare and security dilemmas in Europe is NATO's long-term addiction to expansion and confrontation. George Kennan, the former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union noted that expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era. NATO has unshirkable responsibilities for the Ukraine crisis. Before the crisis escalated, the Minsk Agreements reached by relevant parties and the efforts made by the international community could have had the opportunity to maintain peace. However, NATO kept provoking conflicts, which once again brought the European continent to warfare. Since the full escalation of the Ukraine crisis, NATO took advantage of the situation

and tried to expand and perpetuate the crisis, which made it more difficult to resolve the crisis through political means. Facts prove that the so-called defensive alliance is exactly a saboteur of global peace and stability. Again, the NATO summit this time invited a few Asia-Pacific countries, with an aim to enhance its collusion with the latter. It even blatantly claimed that the "Indo-Pacific is important for NATO." However, NATO's intention to move eastward to the Asia-Pacific region is all too clear. The claim that it remains a regional alliance and does not seek a geopolitical breakthrough is just weakly stated. The scope of NATO's activities is far beyond the North Atlantic region. Over the years, the organization has taken great pains to expand its so-called partnership network. It meddles in the affairs of Eurasia with its Partnership for Peace program, interferes in the affairs of the Middle East and North Africa with the Mediter-

anean Dialogue, plans to enter the Gulf with the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, and expands toward the Asia-Pacific region with a global partnership program. A trick frequently used by NATO to seek expansion is fanning up the so-called "security threat" and provoking value confrontation. At the NATO summit this time, the alliance arbitrarily sold the "China threat" theory and groundlessly claimed that China is a "systemic challenge." Its true intention was to peddle security fear and seek excuses for its expansion into the Asia-Pacific. To maintain the long-term prosperity and stability of the Asia-Pacific, regional countries need to respect each other, carry out open and win-win cooperation and properly handle their disputes. NATO's eastward foray into the Asia-Pacific would only intensify regional tension and trigger bloc confrontation and even a new Cold War. Asia-Pacific countries do not welcome NATO's expansion to the region, and even many NATO states do not approve

of it. The Asia-Pacific does not need an "Asia-Pacific version of NATO." Javier Solana, former Secretary General of NATO, noted that "global NATO" or "NATO plus" could divide the world into adversarial blocs. The hot and cold wars of the last century indicated that expanding military blocs and creating bloc confrontation can never bring peace and security, but only lead to wars and conflicts. NATO seemingly follows the principle of consensus-based decision-making, but it prioritizes the interests of the United States and its actions mirror American wills. The theory of the so-called "China threat" hyped at this NATO summit is highly identical to the false information about China spread by the United States, which fully revealed the intention of Washington to transform NATO into a hegemonic tool oppressing China. Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright once stated at the end of the 1990s that U.S. support for greater European efforts would be con-

tingent on avoiding "three D's": discrimination against non-EU NATO members, decoupling of European and North American security, and duplication of NATO's operational planning system or its command structure. In other words, it's a must for the United States to keep its control over European security via NATO, and Europe's goal of strengthening strategic independence and defense construction must make way for American hegemony. Over the past more than three decades, NATO has shifted its strategic focus for times, from pushing for expansion in Central and Eastern Europe to interfering in other countries' internal affairs around the world, and to bucking down to anti-terrorism after the war in Afghanistan. Today, it refocuses on major-country rivalry and accelerates its eastward foray into the Asia-Pacific. These changes are highly consistent with the United States foreign policy adjustment. However, a "NATO under the rein of the

United States" is not consistent with European interests. Just as French President Emmanuel Macron reiterated, European countries need to develop more strategic autonomy lest the continent become a "vassal" in the event of a great-power confrontation. The top priority of Europe is not cooperating with other countries on agendas around the world, and Europe should not fall into bloc confrontation. The world today is different from the one that was trapped in the Cold War. NATO should immediately stop smearing China and fabricating lies about China, abandon the outdated philosophies of the Cold War mentality and zero-sum game, give up its erroneous addiction to military expansion, stop seeking so-called absolute security, and stop troubling Europe and the Asia-Pacific. It must quit seeking excuses for its expansion and play a constructive role in maintaining world peace and stability.

## Briefs

### Petroleum dealers announce strike on July 22

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) on Thursday announced shutting down fuel pumps across the country on July 22, demanding an increase in profit margins amid an inflation crisis. "We will shut down all petrol pumps across Pakistan on July 22, 6pm," said the association, which further says it has more than 10,000 members. In a statement, the association said the petroleum minister was informed about their concerns but to no avail. The official communiqué said interest rates and inflation have hit operators' businesses and called for the dealer's margin to be increased. It said sales have slumped by 30% due to Iranian fuel being smuggled into the country. "Around 8,000-9,000 (operators) ... represented by us, will be shut on July 22," Abdul Sami Khan, chairman of the association, told a news agency. The association said the supply of petrol will remain suspended until the demands are met.

### Indian landslide kills 16, rescue paused

IRSHALWADI: The death toll from a massive landslide in western India rose to 16 late on Thursday, as rescue operations were suspended with around 100 people still feared trapped, officials said. Land gave way in the middle of the night in the remote mountain hamlet of Irshalwadi, in the state of Maharashtra, about 60 km (37 miles) from Mumbai, flattening several houses and trapping many who lived there. A wave of extreme heat, wildfires, torrential rain and flooding has wreaked havoc around the world in recent days, raising new fears about the pace of climate change. Rescue workers recovered 16 bodies before night fell and local authorities advised they suspend the search, Director General of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Atul Karwal, told media. - Agencies

### Met Office forecasts heavy rains

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has issued a forecast of more monsoon spells from July to September in Pakistan. Talking to a state run news agency here on Thursday Director of PMD, Zaheer Ahmad Babar said that urban flooding due to torrential rains is expected during the extended moon soon season and urged disaster risk management institutions to adopt comprehensive strategies to safeguard human lives. - DNA

# Two latest Type 054 A/P Frigates inducted into fleet

The Chief Guest acknowledged PN efforts in ensuring seaward defence of Pakistan and contribution towards promoting peace and stability in the region

DNA

KARACHI: The induction ceremony of two newly constructed Type 054 A/P Frigates PNS SHAHJAHAN & TIPPU SULTAN held at Karachi. Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif graced the ceremony as Chief Guest. On arrival at PN Dockyard, the Honourable Minister was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi. The ships are fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors having capability to undertake naval operation under multi threat environment. The induction of ships in PN Fleet will significantly enhance the Combat Readiness of Pakistan Navy. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest acknowledged PN efforts in ensuring seaward defence of Pakistan and contribution

towards promoting peace and stability in the region. The Federal Minister emphasized on geo-strategic and geo-economic significance that necessitate a potent Naval Force to safeguard maritime frontiers of country and induction of these modern naval ships will significantly strengthen the defence capabilities of Pakistan. He also thanked and appreciated the efforts of Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard, China for timely construction and delivery of the ships to Pakistan. Earlier during the welcome address, Chief of the Naval Staff termed the induction of modern ships whereby achieving a major milestone in modernizing PN Fleet. He acknowledged the support of Government of Pakistan for various PN modernization projects. The ceremony was attended by civil, military and government representatives of Pakistan including officials of Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard, China.



### Army to be deployed for Muharram security

ISLAMABAD: The federal government Thursday approved the deployment of armed forces across the country to ensure security during the holy month of Muharram. The authorities in Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, and G-B, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir had sought the deployment of the military to control the law and order situation. Following up on their request, the Centre - under Article 245 of the Constitution - authorised the "deployment of army troops/assets and civil armed forces troops/assets" to ensure peace. Holy month, marking the beginning of the new Islamic year 1445 AH, will begin today (July 20) and the Youme-Ashura will be observed on July 29 (Saturday). A notification from the interior ministry mentioned that exact number of troops, date, and area of deployment of the army would be worked out by local authorities. - DNA

## Won't allow use of Afghan soil: Taliban assure Pakistan



WEB STAFF

ISLAMABAD: Taliban on Wednesday told Pakistan that Kabul will not allow anyone to use Afghan soil against another country. Taliban's interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi met Special Representative for Afghanistan Asif Durrani, who arrived in Kabul on Wednesday to discuss the latest security situation in the region. "Muttaqi said that Afghans will never harm anyone; we will allow none to use our soil against another country; & our efforts will always be directed at working for regional security & stability," Abdul Qahar Balkhi, spokesman for the interim foreign ministry, said in a tweet. Durrani visited Kabul after Islamabad urged the Taliban to take action against terrorists using Afghan soil to launch attacks in Pakistan. The US State Department also warned

the Taliban against using its territory from being used as a "safe haven" for terrorist attacks. "I will say we have made very clear that we believe the Taliban has the responsibility to prevent - Afghanistan from being used as a safe haven for launching terrorist attacks," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a press briefing on Monday. Last week, 12 soldiers of Pakistan Army were martyred while seven terrorists were killed in two attacks and subsequent operations in the Zhob and Sui areas of Balochistan that further increased tension between the two neighbours. This February, Pakistan's top defence and intelligence officials warned of action against Kabul if terrorists involved in cross-border attacks are not eliminated, hinting at the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a faction of the Taliban which has attacked military and civilian installations across Pakistan over the past decade.

## China's Xi gets nostalgic with 'old friend' Kissinger

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping told Henry Kissinger that "old friends" like him will never be forgotten, striking an easy tone in their meeting in China's capital on Thursday, amid efforts by Beijing and Washington to mend frayed ties. "Once again, China and the U.S. are at a crossroads of where to go from here, and once again, both sides need to make a choice," Xi told the former U.S. diplomat. Kissinger played a key diplomatic role in normalising ties between Washington and Beijing in the 1970s when he served as secretary of state and national security advisor in the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. Noting that Kissinger has just celebrated his 100th birthday and has visited China more than 100 times, Xi said his visit this time is of "special significance." "The Chinese people never forget their old friends, and Sino-U.S. relations will always be linked with the name of Henry Kissinger," Xi told him at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, where foreign dignitaries are often received. Kissinger, who is widely respected in China and has paid regular visits since leaving office, said he was grateful Beijing had arranged the meeting in the building where he had met with Chinese leaders during his first visit. "The relationship between our two countries is a matter of world peace and the progress of human society," China's official news agency Xinhua cited Kissinger as saying. "Under the current circumstances, it is imperative to maintain the principles established by the Shanghai Communiqué, appreciate the utmost importance China attaches to the one-China principle, and move the relationship in a positive direction," Kissinger said in the meeting. - Agencies

## Public holiday on 9, 10 Muharram

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Thursday declared the 9th and 10th of Muharram (July 28 and 29) as public holidays on account of Ashura. "It is for general information that the Prime Minister is pleased to declare 28th to 29th July, 2023 (Friday & Saturday) as public holidays on the occasion of Ashura (9th & 10th Moharram 1445 AH)," a notification issued by the Cabinet Division stated. The country marked the first of Muharram, the beginning of the new Islamic year 1445 AH, Wednesday evening (July 19), which means Youme-Ashura will be observed on July 29 (Saturday). Earlier, the Sindh government imposed a ban on pillion riding on 9th and 10th Muharram across the province in line with security arrangements planned for Ashura. Moreover, the Federal Ministry of Interior has decided countrywide deployment of the Pakistan Army troops during Muharram. "Army troops being deployed countrywide under Article 245", a circular dispatched to the provinces read. The interior ministry has sent the circular to four provinces, Gilgit Baltistan and the Azad Kashmir government. "The military troops being deployed on the request of the provinces for maintenance of law and order," the ministry stated. - DNA

## SBP plans to launch first-ever digital currency

ISLAMABAD: SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad Thursday revealed that the central bank is working on a plan to launch Pakistan's first digital currency, known as the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). He made these remarks while briefing Senate's Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Senator Saleem Mandviwalla at Parliament House. According to a press statement, the committee received briefing on the inclusion of Budget recommendation of the Senate in the Budget 2023-24. It was briefed that the Finance Division budget wing received 55 recommendations for Financial Budget 2023 from the Senate Committee, however, most of recommendations were related to Federal Board of revenue. The Ministry briefed that recommendations related to Privatization of loss making enterprises, increased budget allocation for health sector, funds for rehabilitation of flood victims, availability of food items at subsidized rates, rise in TV Fee from 35 to 50 RPs and mechanism for subsidies on fertilizers, solar energy production and daily food items were fully adopted, however the Ministry partially adopted recommendations such as grant of tax holidays to export industry, laptops schemes etc. - DNA

## Belarus says Wagner training special forces

MOSCOW: Belarus said Thursday that instructors from mercenary group Wagner have begun training the ex-Soviet country's special forces, nearly a month after an aborted rebellion in Russia. Wagner fighters and their leader were due to move to Belarus as part of a deal to defuse their revolt, which was the most serious challenge to Russia President Vladimir Putin's power. "Despite the rain, it's hot at the Brestsky training ground," the Belarusian defence ministry said in a statement, releasing pictures of masked fighters in combat gear. "Over the course of a week, special forces units and representatives of the company will practise combat tasks at the Brestsky training ground," the ministry said, referring to Wagner. Wagner, which played a key role in the Ukraine offensive, sought to topple Russia's military leadership during its brief rebellion last month, before backing down. Belarusian strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko offered Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin refuge in Belarus and said his army would benefit from the combat experience of Wagner commanders. Last week Minsk said that the defence ministry and Wagner had worked out a "road map" on sharing experience and that the instructors started training territorial defence forces. On Wednesday evening, a video emerged purporting to show Prigozhin addressing his fighters in Belarus, in what was the first footage of the mercenary chief since the aborted rebellion. - Agencies

## Internship program highlights Indonesian democracy

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The second session of the online internship program being co-hosted by Indonesian Embassy and Bahria University, Islamabad, was held on Thursday highlighting Indonesia's transition to democracy. The Internship Program was launched virtually by Dr. Teuku Faizasyah, Indonesian Deputy Foreign Minister on its inaugural session on July 18, at the Bahria University, Islamabad. Indonesian Ambassador Adam M. Tugio and Director General Bahria University Rear Admiral Zakaur Rehman were also present on the occasion. The program featuring prominent experts and scholars from Indonesia provides excellent opportunity to the participants to learn various significant aspects of the modern Indonesia and explore ways to further deepen the historic ties between Indonesia and Pakistan. The OIP which is an initiative by Ambassador Adam Tugio has been appreciated by the participants for encouraging the vital role of the academia to the strength of the bilateral relationship of the two coun-



tries. At the Session 2, the Speaker Prof. Firman Noor, the Head of the Political Research Center of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, enlightened the participants about the Indonesia's transition to become a full fledge and active democracy. The Session explored Indonesia's history of democracy, emphasizing democracy being the continuum process and the need for consistent fostering by government, political parties and all the stakeholders to function and deliver for socio-economic development.

Prof. Firman Noor argued that though constitutionally Indonesia is not an Islamic country but believes Islam and democracy are compatible and that democracy contributes to progress and prosperity. He stated that the democratic process in Indonesia has not been linear, with political experiments and reforms introduced and implemented during its transition towards the right political system for Indonesia. He mentioned that some reforms resulted in political instability that harmed the economy. The speaker gave an overview about the 1945 Constitution highlighting the amendments to accommodate democratic development in the country. He went into detail in explaining about the liberal Democracy, Guided Democracy or Pancasila Democracy that Indonesia experimented. He also elaborated that how Pancasila being the Indonesian philosophical foundation served the nationhood and preserved Indonesia's diversity during the testing times of political instability and transition. He mentioned that reformation era that began in 1998 has seen democracy taking root in the society.