



Islamabad POST

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China's Xi tells army to deepen war planning

Detailed News On Page-08

Wagner chief is not in Belarus but in Russia

Detailed News On Page-07



Zaka Ashraf takes charge as PCB Chairman

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Briefs

Zelensky to meet Erdogan

DNA

ISTANBUL: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will travel to Turkey on Friday for the first time since Russia's invasion for talks with his counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The Turkish presidency said the two leaders could stage a joint press conference after the talks in Istanbul. The meeting is due to focus on an expiring deal to ship Ukrainian grain across the Black Sea as well as next week's NATO summit. But analysts expect Zelensky to push Erdogan to give a green light for Sweden's membership of NATO ahead of the July 11-12 alliance summit in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius.

Sheikh fears foul play in polls for CM

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid has expressed apprehension that majority would be turned into minority in Gilgit-Baltistan in the upcoming polls for the chief minister's seat as it had happened during election for the Karachi mayor. In a series of tweets, the former interior minister said the GB Assembly was locked up by police while the speaker was helpless. He said the rigging in election for GB CM would annihilate democracy which was already weakened by the way polls were held in Karachi and Azad Kashmir.

Tareen's brother 'commits suicide'

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: In a shocking incident, Ishaq Khan, a Pakistan Party (IPP) chief Jahangir Tareen's brother Alamgir Tareen allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself in the head, officials and family members said Thursday. Initially, police sources said Alamgir, 63, allegedly committed suicide at his residence in Lahore's Gulberg area. Later, the reports were confirmed by Jahangir.

'Why did it happen?'

PM comes down hard on Sweden

Shehbaz warns Swedish govt and individuals against recurrence of such condemnable acts

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asked Sweden on Thursday to clear its position on a recent incident of the Holy Quran's desecration in Stockholm, asserting that Pakistan respected freedom of speech but would not tolerate any kind of "propaganda against Muslims". The incident took place last week when a man, who fled from Iraq to Sweden several years ago, tore up and burned a copy of the Holy Quran outside Stockholm's central mosque on the first day of Eidul Azha there. The act has drawn strong criticism from several countries, including Pakistan, Turkiye, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Iraq and Iran, as well as the European Union. Addressing a joint sitting of Parliament—which was convened to register protest over the Sweden incident and adopt a resolution in this regard — PM Shehbaz said Muslims across the world were angry over the incident. "Mr Speaker, we have gathered here today to condemn the desecration of the Holy Quran in the strongest of words, suggest measures to prevent such incidents in the future and pass a resolution on it," the premier said in his speech during the session, which was attended by parliamentarians from both treasury and opposition benches.

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High-time for to act in unison for progress: PM

DNA

TORGHAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said it is high-time for the nation and the State institutions to join hands in making the country progress. The prime minister said it was the responsibility of the government, judiciary, armed forces and the people to act in unison for ensuring development of the country. He was addressing the local elders in Torgghar after laying foundation-stone of Torgghar Bunir Highway, the Bunir-Karakar Link Tunnel and Torgghar-Bunir RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete) bridge on River Indus. The prime minister highlighted the significance of unity, hard work and dedication by the nation to make the future of Pakistan brighter. He said Pakistan recently faced financial challenges and got a staff-level

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Pakistan, Italy sign debt swap accord

Andreas Ferrarese, the Italian Ambassador in Pakistan and Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, signed the EoL

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD :Pakistan and Italy reached an agreement to extend the timeline of the Pakistan-Italian Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSA) through the Exchange of Letters (EoL). Andreas Ferrarese, the Italian Ambassador in Pakistan and Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, signed the EoL and extended the timeline of the PIDSA up to 31st December 2024 on the same procedures, modalities, terms, and conditions as defined in the signed Agreement dated November 4, 2006, between Pakistan and Italy.

During the extension period, the remaining activities of PIDSA will be completed i.e., the remaining debt will be canceled, completion of ongoing PIDSA projects, handing/taking over of assets, impact evaluation of the PIDSA Programme, and final report of the PIDSA Programme. The Government of Pakistan and the Government of Italy had signed an agreement for Development Swap, on November 4, 2006, which came into force in 2009.

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TORGHAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif laying the foundation stone of the RCC Bridge on the River Indus that will connect Torgghar with Buner district. — DNA

Nawaz' acquittal a victory of public: Marriyum



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb says the acquittal of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in the Plot Allotment Reference case by the Accountability Court Lahore is victory of the people of Pakistan. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad this afternoon, she said it has been clearly mentioned in the verdict that there is no misuse of authority.

Continued on Page 06

May 9: Imran Khan booked in 6 cases

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has been nominated in six cases, including the attacks on the General Headquarters (GHQ), military installations, and the incident of arson at Metro Station, in a major development in the probe of May 9 violence, media reported. Sources said three of these cases had been registered on May 9 and the other three on May 10, under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). The joint investigation teams (JITs) are carrying out a probe into all the cases, they added. Sources further stated that the cases had been registered at Civil Lines in Faisalabad, Samanabad, RA Bazar, and New Town police stations.

Plot reference verdict Nawaz acquitted, Court says ex-PM politically targeted

The court acquitted Nawaz from the charges levelled by NAB

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: An accountability court has released the detailed verdict of acquittal of former prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in a plot allotment reference. Accountability Court Judge Rao Abdul Jabbar issued the 20-page detailed verdict on 27 objection applications, filed by Yousaf Abbas and other relatives of Nawaz Sharif, against auction of assets, owned by the former prime minister, here on Thursday. In its detailed verdict, the court held that it appears from the record that proper procedure, as envisaged under Section 87 and 88, had not been completed for declaring Muhammad Nawaz Sharif as a proclaimed offender, because the evidence of process server and another employee had not been recorded. As a result, "the whole proceedings become void ab-initio, having no legal sanctity being devoid of force," it added.

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Acquittal shows political vendetta: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the acquittal of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Nawaz Sharif in the NAB reference proved that he was deliberately implicated in the false case, just to damage him politically. "Thanks to Allah Almighty, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif gets justice," the prime minister said in a statement after an accountability court in Lahore, in its detailed verdict, acquitted the PML-N Quaid in a reference pertaining to the alleged illegal allotment of plots in 1986. He said the court also affirmed that

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Monitoring of General elections Non-invitation of EU observers irks PTI

EU observer mission chief says the invitation should be extended three months before the elections

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Information Secretary Raof Hasan expressed serious concern over the ECP's non-invitation of European Union election observer mission along with other foreign observers for the forthcoming general elections, which could put a serious question mark on the fairness of the polls. In a statement on Thursday, PTI CIS stated

that free, fair and transparent polls was an important constitutional requirement and the very essence of democracy. Raof Hasan said that it was mandatory exercise to invite elections observers from important international institutions including the European Union to ensure transparency in the polls. He maintained that the ECP's refusal to invite representatives of international institutions including EU election observer mission for the elections was worrisome and concerning. Raof Hasan said that the statement of Michael Gahler, the head of the European Union Elections Observer Mission, pertaining to the priorities of the ECP and the prospects of elections in Pakistan was meaningful.

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Pakistan focused on all opponents, not just India — Page 06

EU lawmakers urge int'l probe of Greece migrant tragedy — Page 07

CPEC signature project in China-Pakistan cooperation — Page 08

CPEC an inclusive platform for third parties to benefit

Pak and China were celebrating the 10th anniversary of CPEC which was an important pillar of all-weather strategic cooperative partnership with China

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday reiterated that being an important node in cross regional connectivity, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was an inclusive and open platform for interested third parties to benefit from investment opportunities in its priority areas like industry, agriculture, IT, science and technology, and oil and gas sectors. The Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, in her weekly press briefing, said that both Pakistan and China remained committed to continue expansion and development of CPEC to promote win-win connectivity, development and mutual prosperity. "We will continue to push forward all CPEC projects in a safe, smooth, and high-quality manner,



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Major victory against India at int'l court

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a major legal victory for Pakistan against its arch-rival India, the Court of Arbitration dismissed New Delhi's objection to the global justice body's jurisdiction over the Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project, sources said. The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) is a non-UN inter-governmental organisation located in The Hague. The sources said that the court rejected the Indian objection and

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Pakistan seeks transformative global reset at COP28

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday said Pakistan sought a transformative global reset at the 28th conference of the parties meeting (COP28) to be held in Dubai. "Developing countries like Pakistan need a global reset of the financial system to meet their growing climate resilience needs. I am encouraged to see that the COP28 Presidency is looking towards 'leaving no one behind' as we go into a crucial Global Stocktake at the end of the year. Under the leadership of the incoming president, Sultan Al Jaber, there is an opportunity to not just shift the wall of distrust that has been built around such negotiations but also to bridge the gap between the Global North and the South. Actions at this particular COP are going to signal crucial bend in the path to our collective futures, and to try more realistically to build common ground, and invest in new thinking as well as tools to shift the needle on global goals that are drifting further and further away from meeting Paris goals," stated Senator Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination during a high-level meeting with

a delegation led by Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, President-designate of COP28 and UAE's Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology at the Climate Ministry, a news release said. Minister Al Jaber expressed gratitude to Minister Rehman for her invitation to visit Pakistan and acknowledged Pakistan's leadership in representing the Global South during COP27, noting the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund, which enhanced the vulnerable countries' stake in climate negotiation processes. He anticipated direct engagement and continuous support from Pakistan as the UAE prepares for COP28, highlighting that Pakistan is not just a great friend of the UAE, but also a likeminded partner. Highlighting the Presidency's vision for COP28, Minister Al Jaber emphasized the importance of providing an enabling environment and ample space during the Global Stocktake to steer the world back on the right track. He pledged to introduce practical, pragmatic, and results-driven actions that encompass mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and finance. The focus on finance was particularly emphasized, aiming to ensure its availability, accessibility, and affordability, especially for countries that require it. Additionally, he stressed the need to attract and incentivize private capital on a large

scale, as he felt substantial capital is essential for effectively addressing the climate change challenge. He emphasized the urgency for a transformative approach, not just reformation, of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs), to meet the immense scale of the required funding. Minister Rehman, while expressing appreciation for the vision of the COP28 Presidency, highlighted Pakistan's objective of seeking a global reset at the upcoming COP in the UAE. She emphasized the importance of turbocharging the momentum on existing and new goals that help bridge the gap between action and ambition, with specific priorities aimed at reducing the growing gaps in capacity between the Global North and South. She underscored that climate change should not be a death sentence for those in the arc of extreme climate vulnerability. Furthermore, the Minister reiterated Pakistan's intention to pursue a global reset in financial thinking, with the aim of revamping the financial architecture, raising of finances and ways in which joint goals can be pursued more effectively. She emphasized the need for an exponential broadening of the climate finance pool by bringing the private sector to the table that can support in meeting the objectives set forth.

Teachers play key role in country's development

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Thursday that it was responsibility of the government to provide facilities to universities' students at par with the international standards. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of 'strengthening of Main campus' of the University of Education here, he said that he had visited different sections of the university and observed that all facilities required for research were available like the facilities provided to any top ranked universities of Europe. He further said the government could only provide good infrastructure and it was a job of teachers and students to achieve desired results from the world-class available facilities. In 2013 when the PML-N came into power, the country was facing a lot of challenges but during the tough situation dedicated efforts were made to turnaround the country, he said and added that unfortunately the country's development process was hindered in 2018. —DNA

NDMA convenes flood management conference with key stakeholders

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. General Inam Haider Malik on Thursday chaired the Flood Management Conference to address the potential threat of very high flows from eastern rivers and nullahs and discuss measures being taken to mitigate the impact of possible floods. The conference was attended by key stakeholders including PDMA Punjab, PMD, FFC, PCIW, PID, IRSA, Wafda (Mangla Dam), Engineers Directorate, Pak Army and officials of Rescue 1122. —APP

Wani to be remembered on his 7th Martyrdom Anniversary

MIRPUR: Mass public rallies across Azad Jammu Kashmir and in various parts of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) will reiterate the resolve to continue the mission of Shaheed-e-Hurriyat Kashmiri Burhan Muzaffar Wani on his 7th martyrdom anniversary falling on July 08, unless the liberation of the occupied Kashmir from the Indian bondage was matured. The people of Jammu and Kashmir inhabiting at both sides of the line of control and the rest of the world are all set to pay glorious tributes to the young martyred hero of the Kashmir freedom struggle Burhan Muzaffar Wani and his companions on his 7th martyrdom anniversary being commemorated on Saturday with the renewal of the pledge to continue the mission of the young martyred Kashmiri, till its accomplishment through the liberation of the motherland from the forced and

unlawful Indian occupation. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, mass public rallies and demonstrations besides special prayer meetings for the shaheed Wani and other Jammu and Kashmir martyrs in all ten districts and tehsil headquarters including the capital city of Muzaffarabad will be the hallmark of the martyrdom anniversary of the youngest Kashmiri freedom fighter. In IIOJK, there will be a complete shutdown strike across the occupied valley to mark the day followed by anti-India and pro-freedom rallies and demonstrations on Saturday, says a report reaching here Thursday from across the LoC. Addressing the rallies, speakers will pay rich tributes to young Shaheed Burhan Wani for bringing the Kashmir freedom struggle in the occupied state to the decisive stage through giving the supreme sacrifice of his precious life. In Mirpur, a rally to observe Shaheed Burhan Wani's martyrdom

anniversary will be taken out from the city center under the auspices of various social, political, religious, and public representative organizations representing people from all walks of life. A large number of people from all segments of civil society including traders, political, social, and human rights activists, lawyers, journalists, teachers, students, and private and government servants will lead the rally which will culminate at the site of its beginning. The 22-year-old Shaheed Burhan Muzaffar Wani had secured the great honor to infuse a new spirit and more vigor among the Kashmiri youth to perpetuate the 76-year-old Kashmir freedom movement through persuading the Kashmiri youth for the freedom struggle through social media besides apprising the external world of the exceptional importance of the Kashmiris indigenous struggle for freedom of the motherland from Indian yoke. —APP

6th round of Pakistan Turkiye Bilateral Political Consultation held

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Türkiye have held Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) in Ankara, extensively reviewing entire range of bilateral cooperation covering political relations, trade, connectivity, defence, education, culture, and people-to-people contacts. Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and Türkiye's Deputy Foreign Minister Burak Akçapar, led their respective sides. Noting the importance of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), both sides agreed on early holding of its 7th session in Islamabad. Progress made under the Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) between the two countries was also discussed. While underscoring the existing potential for cooperation between the two countries in various fields, in particular, IT, science and technology, R & D, health, education, agriculture, shipping and maritime, it was stressed to further intensify collaboration in these areas. The two sides appreciated the significant progress made in the defence arena and pledged to take this cooperation to newer heights by utilizing the existing mechanisms and undertaking joint ventures. During the consultations, regional and global issues were discussed comprehensively with the desire to continue to coordinate closely on all issues of mutual concern as well as on multilateral forums, including the UN, OIC, ECO and D8. Acknowledging the historic bilateral relations as a sacred trust passed on by generations, the two sides reiterated their commitment to further strengthen the unique fraternal ties and transform them into economically rewarding multifaceted cooperation. The BPC is an important mechanism to comprehensively review Pakistan-Türkiye bilateral relations and to explore new areas of cooperation to further cement the historic and strategic ties between Pakistan and Türkiye. —DNA

Ground-breaking Ceremony held for extension of Health Care Facility in Sindh

JAMSHORO: The ground-breaking ceremony for "the Project for the extension of Maternal and Child Health Care Facility in Sindh" was held at Liaquat University Hospital Jamshoro, attended by Her Excellency Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho (Minister for Health and Population Welfare), Honorable Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah (Secretary, Department of Sindh), Mr. NAKAGAWA Yasushi (Acting Consul-General of Japan) and Mr. HARA Tsuyoshi (Senior Representative, JICA Pakistan Office). Through the provision of grant of approx. 3.445 billion yen for the project from the Government of

Japan, a mother and child health care facility will be constructed at Liaquat University Hospital, Jamshoro. The new facility will have 98 beds and 30 cots

including a neonatal ICU, a maternal and fetal ICU, outpatient departments, an operation theatre, an obstetrics ward and a laboratory. The construction

of the facility is scheduled to be completed by April 2025. With the opening of the center, access to maternal and child health services in the area will be



RAWALPINDI: RCCI President Saqib Rafiq presenting bouquet to the US Consul General Lahore, William Makaneole during his visit to the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. — DNA

IGP pins rank badges to 52 inspectors

LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar pinned rank badges to newly-promoted 52 inspectors at the Central Police Office, here on Thursday. Sub-inspectors Nasir Aziz Khan, Muhammad Akhtar, Muhammad Abdul Karim, Muzaffar Khan, Tariq Mehmood, Ahmed Nawaz and others were among those who got promotion. The IGP congratulated the officers on their departmental promotion. Additional IG Establishment Raja Rifat Mukhtar, DIG Headquarters Humayun Bashir Tarar, DIG Establishment-I, Dr. Inam Waheed, DIG Establishment II, Zeeshan Asghar, AIG Operations, Asad Ejaz Malhi, AIG Discipline, Ahsan Saifulah and related officers were also present. —APP

Shandur festival to start Friday

PESHAWAR: The inaugural ceremony of the three-day colourful Shandur Festival would be held on July 7 (Friday) at the world's highest polo ground in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister, Muhammad Azam Khan would likely inaugurate the festival that is organized by KP Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), Frontier Corps and district administration. The festival would include colourful events including polo matches, a show of paratroopers and paragiders and Kalash, Chitral, and Khattak dances and songs. It was mentioning that KPCTA has opened camping pods in Sur Laspar for tourists. —APP

US CG Lahore, William Makaneole visits RCCI

DNA
RAWALPINDI: The U.S Consul General Lahore Mr. William Makaneole along with his team visited the RCCI here on Thursday. He was accompanied by the Political and Economic Chief Ms Kathleen Gibilisco, Economic Specialist Ms. Amna Anis and Communication Specialist Ms Rida Rashid. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq, group leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, former Presidents, Syed Asad Mashadi, Dr. Shimail Daud, Raja Amer Iqbal, executive committee members, women members and RCCI members were present on the occasion. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq gave a detailed briefing on the RCCI's current and upcoming programs and projects. He informed that RCCI has been organizing trade

shows and Business opportunities conferences in different cities of USA including Houston, Texas. He stressed on the improved networking, B2B meetings and exchange of trade delegations on reciprocal basis. Matters related to bilateral trade, exchange of trade delegations were discussed. Idea to establish certification centers for gems and stones as well as training institutes for the sector was proposed to the Council General. Trade diversification, IT, women entrepreneurship, Skill Development, renewable energy, gems, tourism, exchange program under education and cultural programs, commerce and promotion of SMEs also came under discussion. The U.S Consul General Lahore Mr. William Makaneole informed that in 2022, bilateral trade between Pakistan and the US reached 9 billion dollars. The Punjab province has a lot of potential in agriculture

and IT. It is very encouraging that Gaming community is very popular in Pakistan. He referred to the Game Developers Conference (GDC) hosted in San Francisco, California, where first-ever 'Pakistan Pavilion,' was set up and more than 35 Pakistani game developers showcased their products to U.S. and international vendors and investors. "We will continue our business relationship with the Pakistani government and business community and added that the US Mission seeks to accelerate the business and trade ties with Pakistan," he added. He also informed that during his stay he has traveled and visited 32 districts of Punjab and further cement the California-Punjab Sister Province/State initiative signed in January. Later U.S Consul General Lahore William Makaneole wrote in the impression book. Ends PRO RCCI

Agreement signed for providing skill courses to inmates

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presided over an agreement signing ceremony between the Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) and the Punjab Prisons Department aimed to facilitate technical courses for prisoners in 10 additional jails across the province. The agreement was signed by the Chief Operating Officer of TEVTA Ahmad Khawar Shahzad and IG Prisons Farooq Nazir, at the CM office. Under this agreement, a total of 16 skill-based courses will be organized in Lahore, Kasur, Sheikhupura,

Pakpattan, Okara, Jhang, Sargodha, Vehari, Toba Tek Singh, and Layyah jails. Upon successful completion of these courses, which typically last between 3 to 6 months, the inmates will receive certificates to support their reintegration into society. The courses will cover a wide range of skills, including electrical work, welding, plumbing, motorcycle mechanics, fashion design, and computer applications. During the event, the COO TEVTA highlighted that each course can accommodate up to 25 detainees. It was mentioned that TEVTA had already provided training to 20,000 inmates, and an ad-

ditional 10,000 prisoners, including women and juvenile offenders, will have the opportunity to receive training. Before this agreement was signed, the caretaker CM chaired a meeting to review the progress of utility stores' establishment in jails. Additionally, a program to establish bakeries in jails, with the support of philanthropists, will be initiated, with the first bakery planned for Lahore's Camp Jail. Duration of phone calls for prisoners has been increased to 300 minutes per month. The meeting also focused on the repair and renovation of 16 jails, which included the installation of modern kitchens. —APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JULY

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

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



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PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Canadian High Commissioner calls on Law Minister Tarar

While discussing civilian trials under the Army Act, the law minister explained that the Act and rules made thereunder were guaranteeing the rights of the accused such as engaging a counsel of his choice to engage, the right to have access to family members or friends and right to file an appeal etc

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, Canadian High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon on Thursday called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar. According to the spokesperson of the Ministry, both sides discussed the long term benefits of partnership and cooperation between Canada and Pakistan in terms of mining projects in Balochistan. The Canadian High Commissioner appreciated the Balochistan government for aiding, facilitating and cooperating in the mining projects with Barrick Gold Corporation. She said that steps towards the development of the region through renewable energy projects were also commendable.

While discussing civilian trials under the Army Act, the law minister explained that the Act and rules made thereunder were guaranteeing the rights of the accused such as engaging a counsel of his choice to engage, the right to have access to family members or friends and right to file an appeal etc. Individuals have also the right to move constitutional courts against the judgments of the military court, he added. The minister mentioned that after the unfortunate Army Public School massacre in 2014, it became indispensable to amend the law and to deal with terrorists organizations under the Army Act.

He also expressed his deep concern about the growing Islamophobia in the world in particular quoting the recent incident of desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden and said that this was an evident example of Islamophobia prevailing in the West. The Government had decided to take part in the protest to convey its message and to keep things within the bounds, he added. The High



Commissioner also informed the law minister that Canadian government had recently appointed a special representative to combat Islamophobia and she assured that Canadian government would be pushing it to have a special mandate against Islamophobia. Lastly, talking about the political situation, the law minister assured that the elections would be held on time and strengthening the democracy was the top priority of the government.

Western world should prevent Islamophobia

President ICCI says the incident of burning the Holy Quran in Sweden is very sad

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the incident of burning the Holy Quran in Sweden is a very sad and worst act. Such events will increase hatred and violence, the sanctity of the Holy Quran is associated with the sentiments of millions of Muslims. No Muslim can accept the desecration of symbols of religious sanctity in the name of freedom of expression. The government should take up this incident at all levels and take effective measures to

prevent such incidents by effectively using the platforms of the United Nations and OIC. A single individual's right to freedom of expression cannot be greater than the sentiments of billions of Muslims. The Islamabad Chamber and the business community across the country support today's protest on behalf of the Prime Minister over this incident. In a statement issued on Thursday, he said that the incident of burning the Holy Quran in Sweden is very sad. The Swedish government has condemned the incident and distanced itself from it, which is welcome but not enough. Governments

cannot limit themselves to condemnation. Muslims around the world are worried about these events. The entire western world, including Sweden, needs to address this. He said that the steps taken by the government of Pakistan in this regard are fully supported by the business community. Pakistan has a place in the Islamic world. That is why major Islamic countries, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, need to play a leadership role on such events that have connected the feelings of Muslims around the world. Due to the efforts of Pakistan, a meeting of the United Nations Human

Rights Council has also been called, while a meeting of the OIC will also be held next week. Pakistan is an active member of all these international platforms. The government should make efforts to prepare such legislation and international charter on these platforms which can completely prevent such humiliating incidents. He said that the western world needs to be convinced that such incidents hurting the sentiments of billions of Muslims. The European Union, the United States, and other countries should take such measures at the government level to combat the storm like Islamophobia.

Moon soon rains: DG says PDMA on high alert

ISLAMABAD: Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Balochistan is on high alert to cope with the moon soon heavy rains that will start lashing parts of the province on July 5th, 2023. "The deputy commissioners of all districts have been provided with necessary relief items on the directives of chief minister Balochistan Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, said Director General PDMA Jhanzaib Khan on Thursday. Heavy downpour, gusty winds and thunderstorm is expected to lash the majority of the regions of the province including Barkhan, Loralai, Sibi, Naseerabad, Kalat, Zhob, Lasbella, Awaran and Musakhail. Torrential rains and thunderstorm damaging electricity pylons and solar plates may cause flooding in hilly areas, DG PDMA warned, urging people to avoid unnecessary travelling during the moon soon spell. He noted that a letter for imposing section 144 in the affected areas have been issued to the deputy commissioners of the concerned district administrations. Expressing government resolve, the DG PDMA said that PDMA is well-prepared to tackle any emergency-like situation. A control room established under the aegis of PDMA is active for 24 hours and ready to respond to any untoward incident. It may be recalled that torrential rain followed by flash flood had wrecked havoc in parts of the province, causing huge human and capital losses in year 2023. Hundreds of people died while huge swathe of agriculture land was destroyed by the catastrophe that hit in the previous year. In view of predictable heavy rains, the government has chalked out a comprehensive strategy to avoid major losses.—DNA

COMSTECH expert visits Lab in Mauritania

ISLAMABAD: The National Agency of Scientific Research and Innovation in Islamic Republic of Mauritania invited Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi, to conduct an audit of the laboratory equipment for the Agency's laboratory in the faculty of science, University of Nouakchott. Mr. Hussain surveyed Biobase fume hood, PCR machine, acid purification unit, NMR instrument, and thermal analyzer and fixed various issues. As a result, all of the equipment are functional now. Mr. Hussain trained the end users at the laboratories to properly handle and care the equipment. In second phase the installation of atomic absorption spectrophotometer, high performance liquid chromatography unit, powder x-ray diffractometer, and FT-IR will be carried out along with the training of properly using and looking after the equipment. This one-week expert visit was arranged as part of exchange of experts for the biomedical equipment repair and technology transfer / reintegration under the COMSTECH - Mauritania program. Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi, has vast experience in international project handling. He has installed and commissioned educational CNC Lathe and Milling Machines in Yemen, and Sri Lanka. Mr. Hussain has installed Tanaka Petroleum Analyzer for Sulfur at Afghan National Standard Authority (ANSA), and Optical Spectrometer at J. S. Foundry Kyrgyzstan. He has also installed and imparted complete training of endues at East West die casting of Ma alloys in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. His work has been recognized with awards by Bruker AXS Germany and outstanding technical support shield by KRL, Islamabad.—DNA

Mega City reopened dealer registration, Bilal Amin

RAWALPINDI: Mega City has re-opened dealer registration on public demand which will give new entrants an opportunity to earn good margins. A large number of dealers and investors from all over Pakistan participated in the successful event and expressed their satisfaction on the ongoing development work in the society. In the event, a detailed review of the projects and development plans of the society was made and the sales partners were promised maximum opportunities for further development. Regional Sales Manager Bilal Amin said in his statement that considering the speedy development and quality, large number of people were willing to be associated with us, in view of which it was decided to reopen the registration for a limited period. Welcoming the prospective partners, he gave the good news that the dealers enclave is being built inside the society.—DNA

IRSA releases 330,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 330,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 417,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1513.50 feet and was 115.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 219,300 cusecs and 180,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1188.00 feet, which was 138.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 57,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 235,300, 187,500, 146,100 and 85,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul.—APP

Preparations ahead of Monsoon season reviewed

He also urged the citizens not to throw garbage, solid waste and building material in major Nullahs and small drains of the town

RAWALPINDI: The third Party notified by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and Punjab Government here on Thursday visited Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) and reviewed the preparations for the Monsoon season. According to a WASA spokesman, the head of the third party, Superintendent Engineer Public Health of the Engineering Department in Gujranwala Division Qaiser Rashid along with his team visited WASA a second time. Managing Director (MD) of WASA Muhammad Tanveer and Deputy Managing Director of WASA Saleem Ashraf were also present on the occasion. The third-party

team also inspected the machinery of WASA and declared the equipment and arrangements for the Monsoon season satisfactory. Qaiser Rasheed added. Along with Nullah Lai, cleaning work of 11 drains of the city was also inspected, he said. The second round of the cleaning work was underway and the process would continue during Monsoon, he added. He said that the Monsoon preparations of WASA were commendable and expressed the hope that the citizens would not face any problems during the period. He also urged the citizens not to throw garbage, solid waste and building material in major Nullahs and small drains of the town.—APP

had been completed while the second round of the ongoing cleaning work by WASA was reviewed today, Qaiser Rasheed added. Along with Nullah Lai, cleaning work of 11 drains of the city was also inspected, he said. The second round of the cleaning work was underway and the process would continue during Monsoon, he added. He said that the Monsoon preparations of WASA were commendable and expressed the hope that the citizens would not face any problems during the period. He also urged the citizens not to throw garbage, solid waste and building material in major Nullahs and small drains of the town.—APP



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan, Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdulrahman Faisal Al-Thani, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Distt Admin prohibits dumping of solid waste

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Dr Hassan Waqar Cheema under Section-144 imposed in Rawalpindi, had prohibited dumping of any solid waste and construction material into Nullah Lai, its tributaries, and other major drainage nullahs. According to an order issued here on Thursday, "The dumping of solid waste and building material into Nullah Lai, its tributaries, and other major Nullahs is causing blockages and hindering the natural flow of water which not only creates an unhygienic environment but also increases the risk of waterborne disease for the residents." "Under Section-144, swimming/bathing in Nullah Lai, its tributaries, and other major Nullahs particularly during monsoon season poses immediate danger and serious consequences, including the risk of drowning." "The order issued by DC Rawalpindi is to remain in force for a period of seven days i.e. July 5-11 within the revenue limits of Rawalpindi." According to the order, no one would be allowed to dump solid waste and construction material into Nullahs.—APP

No power load-management: IESCO

ISLAMABAD, Jul 06 (APP): The Spokesperson of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday said that no power load-management was being carried out across the company's regions. The current demand of electricity stood at 2102 megawatt (MW) and the company was getting electricity as per its demand, the spokesperson said. He said operation staff was available in their respective fields for address of individual complaints. The consumers could lodge their complaints at helpline 118 or phone number 0519252933.—APP

Over Rs. 54b disbursed under Benazir Kafaalat

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has so far disbursed over Rs. 54 billion among more than six million beneficiary women across the country under the Benazir Kafaalat initiative. According to an official source, the disbursement of the fourth quarterly tranche of Benazir Kafaalat for the Financial Year-2022-23 is continued successfully through banks' retailers. Under Benazir Kafaalat, nine million registered beneficiary families are entitled to a quarterly installment of Rs 9,000 per household. The BISP has already released over Rs. 81 billion to its partner banks; Bank Alfalah and Habib Bank Limited (HBL) for disbursement among the beneficiaries through their retail distribution network. Along with Benazir Kafaalat, Benazir educational scholarships are also being given out to the children of registered families, however, 70 percent attendance in the school is mandatory to receive educational scholarships.

Police conduct search operations in different areas

RAWALPINDI: Police have conducted search operations in Transformer Chowk and Mohalla Shah Chan Chiragh in the jurisdiction of Sadiqabad and Banni police stations, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that Rawalpindi district police, women police and other law enforcement agencies under the supervision of senior police officers participated in the search operations. He said that Rawalpindi district police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Capt. @ Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi conducted search operations.—APP

Briefs

CTP issue over 1500 fine tickets for not using helmets

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) under their ongoing campaign against motorcyclists not using safety helmets have issued 1500 fine tickets. According to a CTP spokesman, CTP on the directives of City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan was acting according to the law against the rules violators. He informed that CTP had also launched an awareness campaign about the use of safety helmets among motorcyclists. The CTO said that the CTP were carrying out a special campaign aimed at raising awareness about traffic rules, road safety and the use of safety helmets. On Wednesday, the CTP issued 1500 challan tickets to motorcyclists for not wearing safety helmets. He informed that the in-charges of different circles had been directed to take strict action against helmet-less bikers. Khan said motorcyclists are more prone to head injuries in road accidents. CTP is sticking to its slogan 'Helmet Nah! To Safar Nah!', he said adding, the Education Wing of traffic police was making efforts to spread awareness so that the road journey could be made safe and sound. - APP

Police arrest six gamblers

RAWALPINDI: District Police arrested six gamblers and recovered Rs 54,560 stake money, six mobile phones, and valuables from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that Gujranwala police conducted a raid and arrested six gamblers named Adil, Naveed, Irum Majeed, Nusrat, Muzamal, and Masawar, who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. A case has been registered against them while further investigation is under process. Superintendent of Police, Sadar Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar said that gambling is the root cause of other evils and those involved in such crimes do not deserve any concession. - APP

1500 new employees recruited: Dr Jamal Nasir

RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir on Thursday said that as many as 1500 new employees had been recruited in the District Health Authority department while holidays of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC), Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) and Health Authority staff had been canceled to control the looming threat of dengue spread. Presiding over a meeting along with Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaqat Ali Chatha to review anti-dengue arrangements, he directed the officials concerned to expedite anti-dengue surveillance and ensure the training of anti-dengue teams and their presence in field. The minister asked the Director General Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) to recruit sanitary workers for ensuring cleanliness in housing societies fall in their jurisdiction. Dr Jamal further directed the Deputy Commissioners of Rawalpindi division to obtain No Objection Certificates from the heads of departments that anti-dengue SOPs were being implemented in their offices and government residences. He directed the officials of Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi to register FIRs against those involved in throwing garbage in the Nullah Lai and provide alternate places to make shift markets and rough houses set up along Katarian bridge. Dr Jamal said that RDA will conduct third party validation of anti-dengue activities of municipal corporation. He said that the prevailing weather condition was favorable for dengue larvae upbringing and recent rains had increased the threat of dengue larvae spread which needs to be tackled on an urgent basis. The health minister directed the adoption of arrangements for the drainage of stagnant rainwater as accumulated rainwater was a leading cause of dengue breeding. Furthermore, Dr Jamal directed the concerned to remove stagnant water in graveyards and other public places to stop mosquitoes from breeding after rain and submerged water and warned that no negligence would be tolerated in any arrangements. On the occasion, the health official briefed the meeting that 192 FIRs while 24 people had been arrested over the violations of the SOPs in the district. He informed that Rs 300,000 fine was also imposed over the violations. The health official further briefed that highest number of larvae was found in 425 under construction sites, 308 in plots 112 in shops and 125 in graveyards. - APP

Chinese company adds visitors' attraction to picnic spot in Hala

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pak Matari-Lahore Transmission Co. (PMLTC) has funded the installation of a retired F-7 fighter jet to enhance the appeal of the Mehran Paradise picnic point in Hala town, Matari district, Sindh. This was announced by Syed Gulfam Kazmi, Chairman of the Civil Society Sindh (Hala), an organisation dedicated to improving tourist facilities at the famous picnic spot on the banks of the River Indus, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. PMLTC, owned by a Chinese electric power company, constructed Pakistan's first High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission line between Matari and Lahore. Kazmi informed Gwadar Pro that PMLTC contributed Rs900,000 to the installation of the retired fighter jet, which was donated by the Pakistan Air Force. He also stated that Chinese offi-



cial from PMLTC are expected to visit Mehran Paradise and announce further support for improving facilities at this popular recreational spot. As a token of appreciation for their support, the Civil Society presented a shield to a Pakistani official from PMLTC.

The China-made F-7 fighter jets, a symbol of China-Pakistan defense cooperation, have long served in the Pakistan Air Force.

Sajid Turi explores tourism opportunities Azeri officials

This meeting between Minister Sajid Turi and Chairman Fuad Naghiyev signifies a progressive step in strengthening the bond between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. As both nations boast rich cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and numerous historical attractions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Sajid Turi along with Secretary Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development Zulfiqar Haider, and Zulfiqar Ahmad secretary workers welfare fund held a fruitful meeting with Chairman of the State Tourism Agency, Azerbaijan, Fuad Naghiyev, in Baku to discuss extensive tourism prospects for both countries. The meeting predominantly focused on exploring tourism opportunities in the picturesque northern areas of Pakistan, while also shedding light on religious tourism in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh. During the meeting, Minister Sajid Turi extended warm invitation to Chairman Fuad Naghiyev to witness Pakistan's firsthand by visiting the country. This visit will aim to deepen bilateral cooperation between the tourism authorities of Azerbaijan and Pakistan and foster cultural exchange. The conversation further delved into discussions surrounding the potential for tour operators in

Azerbaijan to explore the incomparable beauty of the northern regions of Pakistan. Recognizing the mutual benefits of such collaboration, Minister Sajid Turi accentuated the importance of strengthening ties between the tourism sectors of both nations. This significant gathering follows in the footsteps of the recent visit by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahbaz Shareef to Azerbaijan, showcasing the growing priority placed on bilateral tourism ties. The exchange of ideas and experiences the two nations to enhance the overall tourism sector by sharing best practices and promoting socio-economic growth through increased international tourism. Furthermore, Minister Sajid Turi underscored the commitment of the Government of Pakistan to promoting tourism with the vision of the Pakistan People's Party. The government's steadfast dedication towards tourism development mirrors its efforts in job creation, infrastructure development, and sustainable tourism practices. This meeting between Minister Sajid Turi and Chairman Fuad Naghiyev signifies a progressive

step in strengthening the bond between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. As both nations boast rich

cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and numerous historical attractions, exploring tourism

potentials will undoubtedly pave a path for long-lasting cooperation and exchange.



Religious scholars condemn burning of Quran in Sweden

MEHTAN PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prominent scholars, intellectuals, and leaders representing various schools of thought and religious denominations from across the country on Thursday strongly condemned the recent incident of burning the Holy Quran in Sweden. In a joint statement, they expressed their outrage and announced that on upcoming Friday would be observed as 'Quran Sanctity Day.' They called for peaceful protests and condemnation of the incident in all mosques, emphasizing the need for swift action against the blasphemous act. The Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, along with respected figures such as Maulana Ziaullah Shah Bukhari, Maulana Muhammad Khan Laghari, Allama Arif Wahidi, Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad

Rafique Jami, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Nauman Hashir, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Pitafi, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui, Maulana Abu Bakr Hamid Sabri, and others jointly issued a statement. They declared that the burning of the Holy Quran in Sweden was an utterly unacceptable act under any circumstances. While acknowledging the timely response from the organization Islamic cooperation following the incident, the religious scholars emphasized the need for concrete actions to address this issue. In this regard, the Pakistan Ulema Council has called for a crucial meeting in Islamabad on July 12, Wednesday, where an extensive action plan would be formulated. The joint statement urged Muslims across the globe to unite against such incidents that hurt the sentiments of the entire Muslim ummah. It stressed the importance of protect-

ing the sanctity of the Holy Quran and called for measures to ensure respect for all religious beliefs. The scholars and leaders expressed their hope that the Swedish authorities would take immediate and appropriate action against the perpetrators to prevent any recurrence of such incidents in the future. The upcoming meeting in Islamabad is expected to be attended by representatives from various religious organizations, scholars, and intellectuals. It aims to establish a comprehensive framework and guidelines for responding to such incidents, protecting the sanctity of religious texts, and promoting interfaith harmony. As the nation prepares to observe 'Quran Sanctity Day,' Muslims in Pakistan and around the world stand united in their condemnation of the desecration of the Holy Quran. The incident has sparked a renewed determination among scholars and leaders to safeguard the revered Islamic scripture and ensure that such acts of disrespect are never repeated.

IMF accord lessens pressure on economy

The dollar has fallen sharply, gold has also become cheaper, inflation is decreasing, the value of Pakistani bonds has increased, while the activity in the stock exchange has started

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt said on Thursday the fears of a default have passed and the pressure on the economy is reducing due to agreement with the IMF. The process of painful reforms needs to be accelerated so that the economy can stabilise, and the people can get some relief, he said. Shahid Rashid Butt said in a statement issued here today that the news of the deal with the IMF has improved the confidence of disappointed business community. The dollar has fallen sharply, gold has also become cheaper, inflation is decreasing, the value of Pakistani bonds has increased, while the activity in the stock exchange has started, he observed. He said that despite all the positives, Pa-

kistan has to repay up to \$25 billion to creditors this year. On the flip side, unemployment has increased, many industries are no more viable, the decline in exports for the month of June was 19 percent as compared to the last year, and people are leaving the country in greater numbers. He said that the government should implement economic and administrative reforms, increase tax revenue without burdening the people, and reduce the deficit and start gradually reducing the multi-billion dollar concessions given to the elite to save the country. If the government delays the reforms, the situation will worsen again, as some quarters are advising it to leave the process of painful reforms to the incoming government so as not to anger the voters. Delaying reforms for political reasons will be a major blow to the credibility and economy of Pakistan, he warned.

Wani imbed a new spirit in Kashmir's freedom

ISLAMABAD: Jammu and Kashmir National Front (JKNF) while paying eulogizing tributes to illustrious Kashmir freedom struggle leader Shaheed Burhan Muzaffar Wani, has reiterated its pledge to take the ongoing liberation struggle to its logical conclusion. In a statement issued here Thursday, the JKNF spokesman Shafiqur Rehman, while lauding the supreme sacrifices rendered by Burhan Wani and his family, said, "Burhan Wani, who imbedded a new spirit in the resistance movement by sacrificing his life, will always be remembered in the history of Kashmir as a symbol of courage and resistance". He said the Kashmiri nation will continue the mission of Shaheed Burhan Wani and other martyrs who laid down their precious lives for the noble cause of freedom from Indian occupation. Hailing the unmatched sacrifices of the Kashmiri nation, he said that the resilience of the Kashmiri nation stands witness to the fact that India has miserably failed in its attempts to suppress Kashmiris' freedom struggle despite using its military might. Paying rich tributes to martyrs of Kargil Shaheed Abid Ali Khan, Muhammad Aslam Shah, Altaf Ahmed Shah and Nazir Ahmed Qurashi who were martyred by Indian air shelling at Kargil on July 4, 1999. Stressing the need for early resolution of the Kashmir dispute, the spokesman said that it was high time that the world should realize the fact that peace in the restive region would remain a distant dream unless the lingering dispute was resolved in line with the wishes and aspirations of Kashmiri people. - APP

Justice Ibrahim as acting PHC Chief Justice

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday appointed Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan as the Acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court. The president made the appointment as the seat fell vacant after the elevation of Chief Justice Musarrat Hilali to the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan is the senior most judge of the Peshawar High Court. The president made the appointment under Article 196 of the Constitution, till the appointment of a new chief justice.



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Green light for Tokyo's plan

On Tuesday the International Atomic Energy Agency released its final assessment report on Japan's plan to discharge the nuclear-contaminated wastewater from Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the sea. It was greeted with relief by Tokyo, but with concerns, questions and objections by much of the international community. The IAEA report does not provide Tokyo with a license to go ahead with its irresponsible plan to dispose of the contaminated wastewater by dumping it in the ocean. Neither the report nor the Fumio Kishida government has provided convincing evidence that the plan is the safest and the best. Instead, they have only triggered more doubts and anger at what is an irresponsibly high-handed action. Chinese experts have pointed out that the IAEA report fails to fully reflect the opinions of all the experts involved in the review, and that the conclusions presented are limited and biased. Since Japan deliberately restricted the IAEA technical working group's authorization to voice critical opinion, the review is exclusively focused on the option of discharging the nuclear-contaminated wastewater into the sea, excluding other possible disposal options. Not to mention that Tokyo has not proved the long-term effectiveness and reliability of the devices used to purify the nuclear-contaminated wastewater, which will be dumped in the ocean for decades, and that the IAEA's report pointed out that Japan's multi-nuclide removal facilities can't remove all the radionuclides from the contaminated wastewater. It should also be noted that Tokyo has not proved the authenticity of the relevant data. Tokyo Electric Power Company has repeatedly concealed or tampered with data over the years. Nor has Tokyo proved that the discharge plan is harmless to the marine environment and human health. According to the China Atomic Energy Authority, the Fukushima nuclear-contaminated wastewater contains more than 60 radionuclides, many of which can't be effectively treated. Some of these radionuclides may spread with ocean currents, and it is not clear how they may affect the ecological balance and marine environment. It seems Japan has devoted more time and energy into trying to persuade and cajole others, including its own citizens, into believing that its hastily adopted plan is safe than in considering what would be the safest way to dispose of its watery hot potato. The widespread opposition in Japan to the move indicates that even the Japanese public does not trust the government's claims. All schools in Fukushima prefecture rejected the Japanese government's proposal to use Fukushima seafood in their meals. Which is probably wise considering the level of caesium-137 in fish caught in the waters off Fukushima prefecture has exceeded the national safety level, and fish caught in the harbor of Fukushima recently had levels 180 times more than the maximum stipulated in Japan's food safety law. Tokyo should sincerely fulfill its obligation to fully consult with all the other stakeholders, as well as relevant international institutions before proceeding full tilt with its imprudent plan.

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Upward momentum in Sino-US ties

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's three-day visit to China, which starts on Thursday, will hopefully help maintain the momentum of the two countries' efforts to prevent their relationship spiraling out of control. Yellen will be the second Cabinet-level member of the Joe Biden administration to visit Beijing in a month following US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit in late June, during which the two sides agreed on the need to stabilize bilateral ties. She will reportedly meet with her Chinese counterpart and other senior officials, with the intention of discussing ways to manage bilateral economic relations and exploring areas where China and the US can "work together to address global challenges". Yellen has long called for a healthy economic relationship with China and supported efforts by the two countries to strengthen dialogue and cooperation. In her testimony before Congress in April, she spoke of the importance of maintaining ties with China and said that "decoupling would be a big mistake" while stressing it would be "disastrous" to cease trading with China. In early June, she told a group of US business leaders that it is critical for the US to work with China on specific and urgent global challenges. The recent positive developments in bilateral ties have taken place after an upturn in ties was disrupted in February due to the so-called China "spy balloon" incident. Although it is too early to predict what fruits Yellen's visit may yield, it has raised hopes that the two sides may at least start to address some of the issues that have impeded the healthy development of Sino-US relations and help create a conducive atmosphere for future mooted talks with Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo on tariffs and sanctions on Chinese tech companies. Yellen herself has questioned the efficacy of such tariffs, which she acknowledges have harmed US consumers. Also, given the US is in urgent need of buyers to purchase US government bonds, China may offer a helping hand, as the continuous improvement in China-US relations is in the interests of both countries. The series of visits by senior US officials are seen as critical to paving the way for a proposed meeting between the leaders of the two countries at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in San Francisco in November. Washington's confrontational approaches targeting China, such as imposing restrictive controls on advanced chips and investment into the Chinese high-tech sector, do not serve that purpose. It is to be hoped that concrete actions will be forthcoming as an outcome of the visits to back up any conciliatory words from the US side.

As you sow, so shall you reap...

Shujaat Hamza



On the order of the Supreme Court (SC), a report submitted by NAB in the apex court revealed that several political leaders, including Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Nawaz Sharif, Hamza Shahbaz, Asif Zardari, Raja Pervez Ashraf, and Shaukat Tareen, have benefited from the government's amendments to the laws of the National Accountability Bureau

Using institutions and government tools against political opponents is a very popular tactic among the politicians of third-world countries and authoritarian regimes. While we might not like to mention our beloved Pakistan among either of the two, the use of state assets and tools to target political opponents, however, remains just as common. Different governments for decades have been using state departments from police to FIA, excessively to keep their opponents in check. In recent past, National Accountability Bureau was perhaps engineered for the exact same purpose. Formed in 1999, the body is tasked with elimination of corrupt practices and money laundering. The tasks and motto sound perfect; to root out corruption and bring to justice the corrupt elites! However, it is a fact that only the politicians from opposition parties are found corrupt and tried under NAB laws. First, General Musharraf used the body as a tool to target politicians. Then the politicians took on themselves to target one another. For years, the main political parties like PML-N and PPP have decried the wrong use of NAB laws against them. More than one former Prime Ministers have publicly called for abolition of the body itself. During the PTI regime, politicians from the opposition parties made hundreds of trips to the NAB offices in cases ranging from corruption to assets beyond means. However, now the tables have turned. Those who were calling for the NAB to be abolished are now masterminding new amendments

to the NAB laws to benefit themselves and target the opponents, or should I write opponent. On the order of the Supreme Court (SC), a report submitted by NAB in the apex court revealed that several political leaders, including Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Nawaz Sharif, Hamza Shahbaz, Asif Ali Zardari, Raja Pervez Ashraf, and Shaukat Tareen, have benefited from the government's amendments to the laws of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The government had earlier limited the duration of custody in NAB to 14 days. This week, Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjarani, acting as the president in the absence of President Dr Arif Alvi, swiftly implemented several amendments to the NAB Ordinance of 1999 through executive decree. This method of legislation, carried out in the middle of the night, has drawn criticism as its primary target seems evident. The ordinance was signed on the advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Under the new amendments, NAB has been given power to detain an accused person for 30 days instead of 14 – an amendment which the ruling coalition would have cried foul when in opposition. The most recent amendments, just when the country is heading towards general elections, is seen by many as another attempt to use the body to target opponents, and in the broader context, influence elections. Throughout their 15 months' rule, the ruling coalition has amended various laws and passed numerous bills to favor their own leaders and to tighten the noose on leaders of a specific political party. As mentioned above, last year, a report submitted by

the NAB to the Supreme Court revealed that the amendments made to the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) 2000 by the PDM's coalition government have ended up benefitting over 90 per cent of cases, including high-profile ones, that NAB was dealing with – whether at the inquiry, investigation or trial stage. Similarly, several other amendments attempted at benefitting the ruling coalition leaders have been made. Just last week, Interim President Sadiq Sanjarani signed into law a bill seeking amendments to Section 232 (Qualifications and Disqualifications) of the Election Act, 2017. Sanjarani signed the summary forwarded by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Earlier, the National Assembly passed the Election Act Law limiting the disqualification of a parliamentarian to a maximum of five years, paving the way for those barred for life from running for a public office. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif and Istikhkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) chief Jahangir Khan Tareen will be among those who benefit from the move. The good news about all these amendments and bills is that at least someone is getting 'relief', even if it's only Mian Nawaz Sharif and his colleagues. Otherwise, the common public has been badly deprived of the 'relief' the incumbent government likes to talk about. With these new bills and legislation being carried out in a hurry, it is evident that the customary usage of NAB and state institutions to target opponents and influence elections is going nowhere.

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Pakistan's Black Gold

Pakistan has been heavily dependent on imported petroleum products to fulfill its energy requirements for decades while the annual energy import bill is about US\$19bn. Due to the high share of oil and gas in electricity generation, electricity prices swelled enormously in the past few years. Meanwhile, electricity shortages hover around 6000-7000 megawatts in peak season. The domestic oil and natural gas resources are projected to expire by 2025 and 2030, respectively. Moreover, incessant depletion of the domestic gas reserves, the supply gap is filled with imported LNG to meet the rising demand which is also another increasing pressure on foreign exchange reserves while the energy crisis is getting worse with

Currently, coal is deemed as the second largest source of primary energy after oil and the first source of electricity generation around the globe. About 40 percent of global electricity is generated through it. The estimated global coal reserves are about 1tr tonnes. The countries having major coal reserves are the USA (252bn tonnes), Pakistan (185bn tonnes), Russia (176bn tonnes), Australia (159bn tonnes), China (149bn tonnes), and India (106bn tonnes). In 2022, the world's coal production was 8.3bn tonnes while coal consumption was 8.03bn tonnes. Among major coal-producing countries, the highest coal production was 4.2bn tonnes in China; 893mn tonnes in India; and 622mn tonnes in Indonesia. With regard to coal consumption, China is the major coal consumer with 4.2bn tonnes, followed by India (1.1bn tonnes), and the USA 465mn tonnes. China and India were also major coal importers with 285mn tonnes and 221mn tonnes of coal, respectively in 2022. Both countries are the largest coal producers, consumers, and importers, while coal is the backbone of their electricity systems. Pakistan's total estimated coal reserves are 185bn tonnes. It is equivalent to 50bn tonnes of oil which is more than Saudi Arabia and Iran's oil reserves. These coal reserves are equal to 2,000tr cubic feet of gas which is 68 times higher than countries' domestic total gas reserves. Moreover, about 100,000 megawatts of electricity could be produced from these coal reserves for more than 250 years. The monetary value of these coal reserves is around US\$30tr. The domestic coal production in Pakistan was 1.2mn tonnes in 1971-72, which improved to around 3mn tonnes in 2000-01. More recently, it rose to 9.2mn tonnes in 2021 and 9.6mn tonnes in 2022. Due to rising demand for coal, Pakistan's coal imports also augmented from 32 thousand tonnes in 1971-72 to 5mn tonnes during 2002-09 and recently touched the highest level of 32.5mn tonnes in 2021-22.

In India and China, more than 70 percent and 60 percent of electricity is generated from coal respectively. But, in Pakistan, 42.3 percent of the total electricity generation is obtained from oil and gas, 23 percent from hydel, 19.5 percent from coal, 7.7 percent from nuclear energy, and 3 percent from wind and solar. Out of total coal consumption, the power sector consumed 47 percent, cement, and other industries 31 percent, and the brick kilns sector consumed 22 percent during July-March FY2023. Pakistan has been heavily dependent on imported petroleum products to fulfill its energy requirements for decades while the annual energy import bill is about US\$19bn. Due to the high share of oil and gas in electricity generation, electricity prices swelled enormously in the past few years. Meanwhile, electricity shortages hover around 6000-7000 megawatts in peak season. The domestic oil and natural gas resources are projected to expire by 2025 and 2030, respectively. Moreover, incessant depletion of the domestic gas reserves, the supply gap is filled with imported LNG to meet the rising demand which is also another increasing pressure on foreign exchange reserves while the energy crisis is getting worse with the passage of time. Michael Kugelman stated in his research study that according to some estimates, the energy crisis dwindled Pakistan's GDP by 4 percent over the past couple of years. Coal is the indigenous precious product of Pakistan. Keeping in view the importance of sustainable and cheap energy through coal; it is the right time to optimally utilize its domestic coal reserves to resolve the energy crisis. It is considered black gold and the lifeline for currently bleeding Pakistan's economy. It is projected that coal demand in Pakistan will escalate up to 50mn tonnes by the end of 2030, becoming the second largest primary energy source. In particular, coal demand is projected to increase by 50 percent in both the cement and brick kilns industries by 2030. More than 70 percent of

thermal power generation will be produced by coal-based power plants by 2030. In Pakistan, most of the coal-based power plants are accustomed to imported coal. By converting these imported coal-based power plants to local coal can save US\$175 per tonne or around US\$2.5bn per annum. It is also pertinent to know that Thar coal has been proven the cheapest source of energy. The average price of electricity per unit generated from it is the cheapest among all fossil fuels, including imported coal, in Pakistan. It is highly recommended that Pakistan must devise a strategy to prepare an urgent action plan to switch its oil and gas-based power generation plants to coal-based power plants to provide affordable and reliable electricity to its citizens. This is the only viable solution to overcome the current energy crisis and fast-depleting foreign exchange reserves, which have currently fallen to around US\$4bn. With this objective, coal power plants in Pakistan need to be modified according to available domestic coal resources. It is worthwhile to mention that in recent days advanced technology for producing clean coal-based power is available around the globe, to decipher the issue of environmental safeguards. Therefore, Pakistan must benefit from advanced coal technologies as demanded by so-called global champions of clean energy. In addition to the coal-based power plants, Pakistan also needs to enhance its solar, hydel, and nuclear-based power generation, particularly through public-private partnership (PPP). At the same time, it will trim down the import bill due to imported oil, LNG, and coal, and save the fast-depleting foreign exchange reserves. Having reliable and affordable coal-based electricity will help in growing sustainable industrial development as well as overall economic development in the country. In short, domestic coal is like black gold that can change the fate of Pakistan's economy. —The author is a researcher at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE).

Briefs

PM comes down hard on Sweden

FROM PAGE 01

He urged National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to constitute a committee for this purpose. The committee, he stated, would come up with recommendations to prevent such incidents in the future, which could be presented at forums across the world. "It will be my responsibility to send the resolution and recommendations to Sweden," he added.

PM Shehbaz said the Holy Quran taught the philosophy of love, respect and patience to the entire world, highlighting that several messengers, such as Prophet Isa, were mentioned in the book. "As Muslims, we respect them, their books and their religion. "Never has anyone heard or seen the Bible being desecrated or burnt here. We respect all these religions so that no one points a finger at our religion or book," he added.

High-time for to act...

FROM PAGE 01

agreement with the International Monetary Fund to avert default. He mentioned in this regard the supportive role of army chief General Asim Munir for clinching the \$3 billion deal with the global lender.

He expressed confidence that Pakistan would soon gain a significant place in the comity of nations. PM Sharif said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was blessed with natural resources, however stressed the need for exploring the avenues of development for the benefit of people.

The prime minister acknowledged the sacrifices of the forefathers of the locals who donated their lands during the formation of Pakistan 70 years ago.

CPEC an inclusive...

FROM PAGE 01

promoting cooperation in areas such as economy and trade, investment, industry, agriculture, health, and science and technology," she remarked. She said Pakistan and China were celebrating the 10th anniversary of CPEC which was an important pillar of the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership with China. The spokesperson recounted that the people of Pakistan had witnessed the remarkable achievements and fruits of high-quality development stimulated by CPEC since its inauguration in 2013.

"Under the first phase of CPEC, China invested around US\$ 25.4 billion in Pakistan, primarily in energy and transport infrastructure sectors. CPEC projects have added: 8000 MWs of energy to the national grid; 510 km of highways; 932 km of road networks; and 820 km of Optical Fiber Line. It has also created about 200,000 jobs in Pakistan," she highlighted.

Major victory...

FROM PAGE 01

declared Pakistan's case admissible. "It will now begin hearing the case on merit," the sources added. Islamabad approached the court in 2007 when the water supply to the country was affected after New Delhi started work on the Kishanganga project. The International Court of Arbitration in 2013 allowed India to make conditional changes to the project design. India had petitioned to remove the case from the jurisdiction of the international court.

Pakistan raised three objections to the Kishanganga project's design saying that the pondage of the project is 7.5 million cubic metres, which is excessive and it should be one million cubic metres. Pakistan also wants India to raise intake by up to 14 metres and also raise the spillways up to nine metres high. The legal battle between the two nations started in January to address the concerns raised by Pakistan over the controversial designs of two hydropower projects being constructed on the Jhelum and Chenab rivers. The first hearing of the 330 MW Kishanganga and 850 MW Ratle Hydropower projects lasted for two days (January 27-28).

Pakistan focused on all opponents, not just India

"As a player, as a captain, I try to perform in all countries, dominate over there and win matches for Pakistan." Ahead of the big white-ball assignments in the World Cup and the preceding Asia Cup, Pakistan will kick off their 2023-25 ICC World Test Championship campaign with a two-match series against Sri Lanka starting July 16

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan captain Babar Azam has said the team is focused on playing well throughout the upcoming World Cup and not only against hosts India. "We are going to play the World Cup, not to play only against India," Babar said during a press conference at the National Bank Stadium on Thursday. Babar said Pakistan would approach all its nine matches of the league stage with a "winning mentality" to increase their chances of taking the crown. "Apart from [India], we have to play against nine teams," he noted. "If we play well against all of them, only then we are going to play in the final." The World Cup is set to be staged in India from October 5 to November 19. Whether Pakistan will travel across the border to take part in the showpiece is, however, yet to be confirmed.

Currently, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, along with the relevant departments of the government is carrying out due diligence as part of a routine process before it gives the green light for team



Pakistan to fly to India. The skipper said his team was prepared for the World Cup and that it was ready to feature at any venue they are asked to play at. "Wherever there is cricket planned for us, we will play

there," he said. "For us, it is always a good challenge to play at different conditions and varying venues and put up a good show. "As a player, as a captain, I try to perform in all countries, dominate over

there and win matches for Pakistan." Ahead of the big white-ball assignments in the World Cup and the preceding Asia Cup, Pakistan will kick off their 2023-25 ICC World Test Championship campaign with a two-match series against Sri Lanka starting July 16.

With conditions in the island nation to support spin bowling, Babar will face a tough decision to play one of two wicket-keepers/batters in Sarfraz Ahmed and Mohammad Rizwan. While Sarfraz showed an exceptional show against spin during Pakistan's last Test series — against New Zealand in December-January — Rizwan is the vice-captain of the red-ball side.

Babar, however, said he would not be uncomfortable not including Rizwan in the playing XI in the Sri Lanka Test if that's what the conditions would demand. "It's too early to say but I'll try to prefer to have Sarfraz as my first choice [as wicket-keeper]," he said. "It's not necessary for the vice-captain to play, it doesn't affect anything. "We will go with the best XI according to the conditions at play," the skipper added.

Pakistan, Italy sign debt swap accord

FROM PAGE 01

Approximately \$100 million (US \$26.52 million & Euro 58.74 million) equivalent to PKR 8.276 billion of Pakistan's debt owed to Italy is to be swapped for expenditure on development projects around the country on Health, Education, Agriculture, and Environment, Micro Credit Schemes, Poverty Alleviation, Rural Development and Infrastructure. Management Committee (MC) is the highest decision-making body of Pakistan Italian Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSA), co-chaired by H.E. the Italian Ambassador and Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs along with representatives of the Federal and Provincial Governments.

Nawaz acquitted...

FORM PAGE 01

The court observed that the proceedings under Section 87 and 93 (A) of Cr.P.C were always considered as a stop-gap arrangement to compel the accused to appear before the court, adding that these proceedings were never considered to be a final judgement, and could be recalled, reviewed and set aside at any stage. The court held that the order for declaring Muhammad Nawaz Sharif as a proclaimed offender was alien to the law, hence, it was recalled in the interest of justice.

The court further held that the record reflected that Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had become a victim of political victimisation and NAB authorities were constrained to prepare the reference at the behest of the then ruling junta to damage and destroy political carrier and goodwill of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, who had been elected as the prime minister thrice.

Acquittal shows...

FROM PAGE 01

Nawaz Sharif had gone abroad with the permission of Lahore High Court as well as the government and he might have joined the investigation had he been in country. "This proves that the then government intentionally got Nawaz Sharif declared an absconder. This stands proved that Nawaz Sharif was made a target of political victimisation by NAB (National Accountability Bureau)-Niazi nexus to inflict him political damage. I congratulate Nawaz Sharif that Allah Almighty has vindicated him in another false case," he remarked. — APP

Non-invitation...

FORM PAGE 01

PTI CIS stated that the role of ECP regarding holding free, fair and transparent elections was criminally disappointing, adding that the EU mission was uncertain about holding of the elections in Pakistan, which was detrimental to Pakistan and democracy. Raouf Hasan said lauded EU Election Observer Mission chief's opposition to efforts to get PTI out of the electoral process, adding that holding elections without interference and state engineering was a guarantor to enhance prestige of Pakistan in the comity of nation.

Nawaz' acquittal...

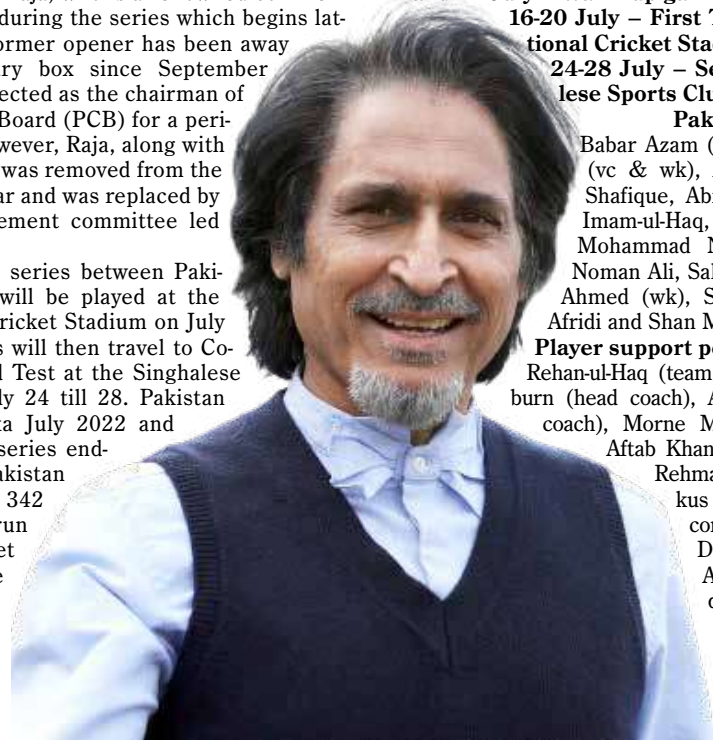
FORM PAGE 01

corruption, elements of kickbacks in the process of allotment of plots in 1990s when Nawaz Sharif was the Chief Minister of Punjab. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that former Prime Minister did not give any favour to Jang Group's owner Mir Shakeel-ur-Rehman in allotment of plots and today's judgment is a testimony in this regard. She said in fact the NAB was forced to made reference against Nawaz Sharif by the previous government to fulfill its nefarious agenda of political victimisation. The Minister said the nexus of PTI Chief and NAB led detrimental impacts on the judicial system of Pakistan as the core mission of their connivance is only political vendetta. Strongly criticizing the previous government of PTI, she said despicable tactics were used to curtail the media freedom during last four years.

Ramiz Raja set to make commentary return

LAHORE: Former captain Ramiz Raja will return as commentator for the upcoming Test series between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Raja, who is a renowned commentator, will call action during the series which begins later this month. The former opener has been away from the commentary box since September 2021, when he was elected as the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for a period of three years. However, Raja, along with other PCB members, was removed from the post after just one year and was replaced by a 14-member management committee led by Najam Sethi.

The first Test of the series between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be played at the Galle International Cricket Stadium on July 16 and the two teams will then travel to Colombo for the second Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club from July 24 till 28. Pakistan last toured Sri Lanka July 2022 and that two-match Test series ended in a 1-1 draw. Pakistan scaled the target of 342 to register the best run chase at the cricket ground and win the first Test by four wickets. However, the hosts bounced back in second Test to level the series with a 246-run win.



Itinerary of Pakistan's tour of Sri Lanka:

9 July – Pakistan land in Colombo

11 and 12 July – Warm-up game

16-20 July – First Test at Galle International Cricket Stadium

24-28 July – Second Test at Sinhalese Sports Club, Colombo

Pakistan squad

Babar Azam (c), Mohammad Rizwan (vc & wk), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Huraifa, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Noman Ali, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfraz Ahmed (wk), Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Afridi and Shan Masood

Player support personnel

Rehan-ul-Haq (team manager), Grant Bradburn (head coach), Andrew Puttick (batting coach), Morne Morkel (bowling coach), Aftab Khan (fielding coach), Abdul Rehman (assistant coach), Driks Saaiman (strength and conditioning coach), Cliffe Deacon (physiotherapist), Ahsan Iftikhar Nagi (media and digital content manager), Lt Col Usman Anwari (Retd) (security manager), Talha Ejaz (analyst) and Malang Ali (masseur). — DNA

Tamim announces shock retirement ahead of WC

DHAKA: Bangladesh ODI skipper and star batter Tamim Iqbal announced his shock retirement from international cricket on Thursday. The development comes three months before the ICC World Cup 2023 begins in India.

The 34-year-old was in tears after bringing the curtain down on his 16-year international career in a press conference. "This is the end for me," Tamim, who made his international debut in a 2007 ODI against Zimbabwe in Harare, told reporters. "I have given my best. I have tried my best. I am retiring from international cricket from this moment."

"I want to thank all my teammates, coaches, BCB officials, my family members, and those who have been with me through my long journey. They kept faith in me. "I also want to thank the fans. Your love and faith in me inspired me to give my very best for Bangladesh. I want to ask for your prayers for the next chapter of my life. Please keep me in your prayers."

Bangladesh, who will start their Cricket World Cup campaign on October 7 against Afghanistan in Dharamsala, are yet to reveal who will lead the side after Tamim's exit. However, star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who captains the T20 side, is one of the leading contenders for role. Left-handed opener Tamim amassed 15,000-plus runs in international cricket, including 25 centuries. He accumulated 8,313 runs in ODI cricket, which is the highest by a Bangladesh batter and his 14 tons in this format is also higher than any of his compatriots.

Tamim led the side in the one-off Test against Afghanistan last month with a stiff back and scored 13 in Wednesday's ODI against Afghanistan in Chattogram, in what turned out to be his last international outing. — Agencies

Schedule announced for BBL 13

MELBOURNE: Cricket Australia announced on Thursday that the Big Bash Twenty20 League will start on December 7 this year. The 13th edition of the eight-team tournament will begin with the Brisbane Heat facing the Melbourne Stars at the Gabba. Both Boxing Day and New Year's Day will host double-headers. The Perth Scorchers will be defending their title after beating the Heat to win an unprecedented fifth crown last season.

BBL 13 FIXTURES – All times AEDT

Thursday, December 7 – Brisbane Heat vs Melbourne Stars, Gabba, 7:15pm

Friday, December 8 – Sydney Sixers vs Melbourne Renegades, SCG, 7:15pm

Saturday, December 9 – Adelaide Strikers vs Brisbane Heat, Adelaide Oval, 7:15pm

Sunday, December 10 – Melbourne Renegades vs Perth Scorchers, GMHBA Stadium, 7:15pm

Monday, December 11 – Hobart Hurricanes vs Sydney Sixers, University of Tasmania Stadium, 7:15pm

Tuesday, December 12 – Sydney Thunder vs Brisbane Heat, Manuka Oval, 7:15pm

Wednesday, December 13 – Melbourne Stars vs Perth Scorchers, MCG, 7:15pm

Thursday, December 14 – Adelaide Strikers vs Sydney Thunder, Adelaide Oval, 7:15pm

Wednesday, December 20 – Perth Scorchers vs Hobart Hurricanes, Optus Stadium, 7:15pm

Thursday, December 21 – Melbourne Renegades vs Brisbane Heat, Marvel Stadium, 7:15pm

Friday, December 22 – Sydney Sixers vs Adelaide Strikers, SCG, 7:15pm

Saturday, December 23 – Melbourne Stars vs Sydney Thunder, Lavington Sports Ground, 3:30pm

Sunday, December 23 – Hobart Hurricanes vs Melbourne Renegades, Blundstone Arena, 7:15pm

Tuesday, December 26 – Sydney Sixers vs Melbourne Stars, SCG, 6:05pm

Tuesday, December 26 – Perth Scorchers vs Melbourne Renegades, Optus Stadium, 9:15pm

Wednesday, December 27 – Brisbane Heat vs Sydney Thunder, Gabba, 7:15pm

Thursday, December 28 – Hobart Hurricanes vs Melbourne Stars, Blundstone Arena, 7:15pm

Friday, December 29 – Melbourne Renegades vs Adelaide Strikers, Marvel Stadium, 7:15pm

Saturday, December 30 – Sydney Thunder vs Sydney Sixers, Sydney Showground, 7:15PM

Sunday, December 31 – Adelaide Strikers vs Melbourne Stars, Adelaide Oval, 7:15pm

Monday, January 1 – Hobart Hurricanes vs Sydney Thunder, Blundstone Arena, 4pm

Monday, January 1 – Brisbane Heat vs Sydney Sixers, Gabba, 7:15pm

Tuesday, January 2 – Melbourne Stars vs Melbourne Renegades, MCG, 7:15pm

Wednesday, January 3 – Sydney Sixers vs Brisbane Heat, C.ox Coffs International Stadium, 6:05pm

Wednesday, January 3 – Perth Scorchers vs Adelaide Strikers, Optus Stadium, 9:15pm

Thursday, January 4 – Melbourne Renegades vs Hobart Hurricanes, Marvel Stadium, 7:15pm

Friday, January 5 – Adelaide Strikers vs Perth Scorchers, Adelaide Oval, 7:15pm

Saturday, January 6 – Melbourne Stars vs Sydney Sixers, MCG, 7:15pm

Sunday, January 7 – Brisbane Heat vs Hobart Hurricanes, Gabba, 7:15pm

Monday, January 8 – Sydney Thunder vs Perth Scorchers, Sydney, Showground, 7:15pm

Tuesday, January 9 – Adelaide Strikers vs Hobart Hurricanes, Adelaide Oval, 7:40pm

Wednesday, January 10 – Brisbane Heat vs Perth Scorchers, Gabba, 7:40pm

Thursday, January 11 – Hobart Hurricanes vs Adelaide Strikers, Blundstone Arena, 7:15pm

Friday, January 12 – Sydney Sixers vs Sydney Thunder, SCG, 7:15pm

Saturday, January 13 – Perth Scorchers vs Brisbane Heat, Optus Stadium, 4:15pm

Saturday, January 13 – Melbourne Renegades vs Melbourne Stars, Marvel Stadium, 7:30pm

Sunday, January 14 – Sydney Thunder vs Adelaide Strikers, Manuka Oval, 7:15pm

Monday, January 15 – Melbourne Stars vs Hobart Hurricanes, MCG, 7:15pm

Tuesday, January 16 – Perth Scorchers vs Sydney Sixers, Optus, Stadium, 7:40pm

Wednesday, January 17 – Sydney Thunder vs Melbourne Renegades, Sydney Showground, 7:15pm

Friday, January 19 – The Qualifier, TBC

Saturday, January 20 – The Knockout, TBC

Monday, January 22 – The Challenger, TBC.

Wednesday, January 24 – The Final, TBC — Agencies

Zaka takes charge as PCB committee chairman

The newly-appointed chairman expressed his gratitude to PM Shehbaz and Asif Zardari

DNA

LAHORE: The new management committee of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) held its first-ever meeting in National Cricket Academy (NCA) Lahore under the leadership of the Chairman Zaka Ashraf on Thursday. NCA director Zakir Khan and other officials welcomed Ashraf and expressed their full and complete confidence in the new chairman.

The members further stated that they are more than ready to work with Ashraf and declared his appointment as a good decision for Pakistan cricket. In the meeting, Chief Finance Officer briefed the Management Committee on the PCB budget. The chairman was also briefed on important issues including the construction of stadiums, and the central contract of domestic players.

Leading his first meeting as a chairman, Zaka Ashraf said that he will give our full attention to the im-

provement of cricket and cricketers. He issued strict instructions about the affairs of the cricket board and said that the complaints of rigging in the elections of regions and associations will be addressed. He added that transparent elections of regions and associations should be ensured.

The newly-appointed chairman expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Asif Zardari. "I am grateful to PM Shehbaz Sharif and Asif Zardari as role models in chief. I will try to live up to their trust. We have to unite and work for the betterment of cricket,"

he said while addressing the committee. "We wanted to bid farewell to Najam Sethi in a dignified manner, we had also sent a message to Najam Sethi. We all have to work together for the betterment of Pakistan cricket," he said. Ashraf said that there is a need for improvement in many

aspects including the Asia Cup and the World Cup. He also directed the Chief Operating Officer Salman Naseer to provide all the documents to the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination for the audit. Ashraf said that if players are given good facilities in domestic cricket, then good cricketers will emerge, adding that Abbottabad, Mirpur and Hyderabad stadiums will be improved, hospitality boxes will be upgraded in stadiums, and more facilities will be given to cricket fans.

Efforts should also be made to increase the income of the Pakistan Cricket Board, the chairman added. The new chairman said that keeping in mind the long-standing desire of the cricket fans of Peshawar, the early completion of Arbab Niaz Stadium should be ensured so that the fans of Peshawar can also enjoy PSL matches. At the end of the meeting, the management committee also approved the decision of Zaka Ashraf, Salman Naseer and Faisal Hasnain to participate in upcoming ICC meeting.



Briefs

Israeli to buy F35 jets through US military aid

TEL AVIV: Israel is about to buy its third fleet of F 35 stealth fighter jets in a deal worth \$3 billion, which is set to be finalized in the coming months. Israel's Ministry of Military Affairs approved the purchase on Sunday. The additional 25 aircraft, manufactured by Lockheed Martin, will increase the number of F 35 jets in Israel's Air Force to 75. The Ministry announced that this new agreement will ensure the continuation of cooperation between American companies and Israeli military industries in the production of aircraft parts. In May 2018, Israel said it was the first country to use the F 35 in combat. The purchase of the fighter jets will be financed through US military aid. The US provides Israel with \$3.8 billion in military aid every year, allowing Israel to use US government approved financing to obtain major American military hardware. The United States is one of the main suppliers of arms and military equipment to Israel, also a staunch supporter of the occupying regime, and its decades long aggression against Palestinians. Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of US foreign aid post world war two. In 2016 the sitting US President, Barack Obama, signed an agreement with Israel providing \$38 billion in US military support over 10 years, including funding for the Iron Dome missile defense system. —APP

Iran, Saudi ministers discuss oil, gas industry

RIYADH: Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji and Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud have exchanged views about the possibility of joint investment in the oil and gas industry. The two sides met on Wednesday on the sidelines of the 8th International Seminar of the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC) in the Austrian capital Vienna, where they discussed the current conditions of the global crude market, the future of the oil market, and the outlook for crude prices. IRNA reported. Owji and Prince Abdulaziz also discussed bilateral issues, including investment in the oil and gas industry and exploring the possibility of joint investment, the report added. It further noted that hydrocarbon trade and the development of joint fields were among the issues raised during the meeting. Iran and Saudi Arabia are founding members of OPEC, an organization enabling the cooperation of leading oil-producing countries in order to collectively influence the global oil market and maximize profit. —APP

17 dead in gas leak at S. African slum

BOKSBURG: At least 17 people, including three children, died in a slum near Johannesburg from a leak of toxic gas apparently used for scavenging gold at an abandoned mine, rescue services said Thursday. Emergency teams received a call at around 8:00 pm (1800 GMT) on Wednesday about a blast in the slum of Angelo, near the middle-class suburb of Boksburg. They discovered a "leakage from a cylinder" containing a poisonous gas, emergency services spokesman William Ntlati said. The leak is believed to have come from a cylinder of nitrate oxide, used in illegal mining activity in and around the settlement, he said. Authorities gave a toll of around two dozen deaths on Wednesday night before revising it downward to 16. Panyaza Lesufi, the premier of Gauteng province, said at the disaster site on Thursday that a 17th person had died after being taken to hospital. "There are five others that were later admitted this morning. There is one under oxygen... Those in the hospital, the total number is 11," he told reporters. First responders found scores of people "lying all over the area, due to inhalation of this toxic gas", Ntlati said. —APP

EU lawmakers urge int'l probe of Greece migrant tragedy

The agency provides advice to EU institutions and governments on policy matters and raises awareness on rights, including access to justice and discrimination

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: EU lawmakers on Thursday pushed for an independent probe into a migrant boat tragedy off Greece in which hundreds of people are believed to have died, calling an internal investigation by Athens inadequate. That stance, also backed by the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency, seeks to shine a light on the June capsizing of an overcrowded vessel headed from North Africa to Europe. "Maybe 600 people" drowned and "around" 110 people were rescued, EU home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson told MEPs, based on information from Greek authorities. She

said the fishing trawler had apparently been used by Egyptian smugglers who sailed it empty from Egypt to pick up to 750 people in Libya for the Mediterranean crossing to Europe. She said the migrants were packed into the "very, very overcrowded boat" according to how much they paid. Pakistani men "stacked" on the bottom, women and children in the middle, and those with "high status" on top. A plane with limited fuel and then a drone used by the EU's border patrol agency Frontex were diverted to overfly the boat, Frontex chief Hans Leijtens told the same European Parliament committee. The drone, which pulled away to observe another migrant boat two hours distant, re-

turned to find "it already had sunk," he said. "We offered to help, but there was no response from Greek authorities," Leijtens said. Some survivors allege that the Greek coast guard caused the tragedy by tying a rope to their drifting vessel and then driving off at high power. The Greek government denies that. It has opened two investigations, one into smugglers it blames for the event, and the other into the actions of its coast guard. The "seriousness" of the tragedy required an "independent and transparent international investigation," the MEP chairing the European Parliament hearing, Birgit Sippel, said. The committee called on Greece and the European

Commission to set up a probe "as a matter of urgency" to examine what actions the Greek coast guard and Frontex took in relation with international obligations for search and rescue, she said. Another MEP on the committee, Sophie in 't Veld, called it "naïve to say 'but, you know, the Greek authorities are going to take care of this and we can trust them'". Johansson stressed that the commission had no powers to conduct its own investigation, nor to set up an EU-wide maritime search and rescue body. While acknowledging that there were "a lot of unanswered questions" about the tragedy, "it's the responsibility of the member states to investigate these

kinds of things". She admitted, though, that "we have to realise that we are not doing enough". "Unfortunately this will happen again," she predicted. The commission's energy was being directed at curbing migration from source countries, including many in Africa as well as Pakistan, and transit countries including Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya, she said. The EU, which is currently looking at speeding up the return of unsuccessful asylum seekers, has been accused by non-governmental organisations and charities such as Oxfam of implementing a "Fortress Europe" policy. The head of the bloc's EU Fundamental Rights Agency,

Michael O'Flaherty, told the parliamentary committee that a "proper investigation" was needed into the migrant boat tragedy off Greece. He also said "we've seen a problem" with EU countries applying an "overly restrictive understanding" of what conditions are required to trigger their international duty to launch sea rescues. The agency provides advice to EU institutions and governments on policy matters and raises awareness on rights, including access to justice and discrimination. On Thursday it presented a new report on preventing and reporting deaths at sea that O'Flaherty said took "close account" of this latest migrant boat capsizing.

Russia kick-starts air drill in Middle East

DAMASCUS: The Russian Air Force has launched a joint exercise with its Syrian counterpart, the Defense Ministry in Moscow announced on Thursday. The two nations are training on "issues of control of the airspace of Syria" and testing the efficiency of Russia's air defenses in the Middle Eastern country, a short statement by the Russian military said. Electronic warfare units are involved in the exercise, preparing for joint action to counter enemy airstrikes, it added. The drill is scheduled to last until the middle of this month. Russian military aircraft have been stationed in Syria since 2015, when Moscow acceded to a request by Damascus to provide assistance in its fight against anti-government armed groups, including militant jihadists. The intervention helped the Syrian Army to regain control over large swaths of the country's territory. —DNA

Pak parliamentary delegation arrives China on a 9-day visit

Understanding China, Understanding Pakistan—Together for A Closer China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future in the New Era



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani parliamentary delegation launched their 9-day visit to China and visited CIIDS for a thinktank dialogue as their first stop

upon landing on the Chinese soil. The dialogue witnessed a constructive exchange of ideas between the two sides. Zheng Bijian, Founding Chairman of CIIDS and Chairman of its academic committee, said that "Before us is not the so-called 'end of history',

but the beginning of a new era—the community of shared future." Pakistan and China, side by side, are undergoing profound changes of a kind unseen in a century, which includes the peaceful rise of China, the decline of the West, and the advent of the community of shared fu-

ture, said Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Pakistani Senator and head of the delegation. The dialogue has boosted, as both sides have agreed, the all-weather friendship between China and Pakistan, and presents a good opportunity to deepen bilateral cooperation.

Iran FM urges effective global action against Israel

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has condemned the Israeli military's two-day offensive in the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, calling on the international community to take immediate action to end the regime's new wave of systematic violence against Palestinians. Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a Thursday meeting with a Palestinian delegation led by Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayeh on the sides of a ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the Azerbaijani capital city of Baku. The top Iranian diplomat underscored the need for immediate and effective measures from the international community, especially the United Nations, to deal with the inhumane practices of the Israeli regime. Israel launched the military campaign against Jenin in the early hours of Monday morning, mobilizing upwards of 1,000 troops as means of supposedly damaging the resistance "infrastructure" in the city and the refugee camp that it hosts. At least 12 Palestinians and one Israeli trooper died as a result of the conflict, during which a steadfast Palestinian resistance response prompted the regime to pull out its forces after less than two days. Israeli troops finally pulled back from Jenin on Tuesday evening, following a 44-hour-long incursion. Meanwhile, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry has pointed to the trail of destruction carried out by Israeli forces during the 44-hour-long incursion into Jenin, demanding formation of a fact-finding mission mandated to develop accurate information on the recent events there. Nasser Kan'ani also questioned whether the United States and certain European countries would consent to a fact-finding team on the deadly Jenin attacks. "Twelve martyrs, 140 wounded, complete destruction of water and electricity networks, complete destruction of 300 houses and damage to some 500 others, and destruction of streets and shops are the upshot of the Zionist army's insane campaign in the refugee camp of Jenin city." —APP

Russia expels Finnish diplomats

MOSCOW: Russia's Foreign Ministry on Thursday announced the expelling of nine Finnish diplomats and shutting down of Finland's consulate in St. Petersburg in retaliation for Finland expelling nine Russian diplomats last month. The ministry said in a lengthy statement that it summoned Finland's ambassador to Russia, Antti Helanterä, on Thursday, and relayed its "strong protest in connection with the confrontational anti-Russian policy pursued by the Finnish authorities." The statement also noted that "the parameters of Finland's accession to NATO create a threat" to Russia's security, and "encouraging the Kyiv regime to (go to) war and pumping it with Western weapons means clearly hostile actions against our country." The statement concluded that "this line of the Finnish authorities cannot remain unanswered." —APP

Threads officially launched by Meta

WASHINGTON: Facebook's parent company Meta officially launched Threads, its text-based Twitter competitor, on Wednesday. Built by the Instagram team, the new app aims to provide a platform for real-time online conversations and sharing text updates. "Just passed 5 million sign ups in the first four hours," Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg posted on his Threads account. In the first two hours, the figure was around 2 million people. According to the company, posts can be up to 500 characters in length and can include links, photos and videos that are up to 5 minutes long. "We are working toward making Threads compatible with the open, interoperable social networks." —APP

Kiev dragging other countries into conflict

MOSCOW: Ukraine's attempts to secure more foreign military aid and make other countries direct participants in the conflict will fail to change its eventual outcome, Kremlin Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday. Speaking to reporters, Peskov was asked to comment on Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky's trip to Bulgaria, in which he intends to discuss further security assistance to Kiev. "The Kiev regime is doing its best to drag as many countries directly into this conflict as possible," Peskov said, adding that some nations are already immersed in hostilities from head to toe. Peskov confirmed that he was not surprised such deliberations were taking place, noting that "fundamentally, all these discussions and their results are in no way capable of influencing the outcome of the special military operation." "The current frontline situation provides ample proof for that," the spokesman added. He was referring to the ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive that, according to the Russian Defense Ministry, has so far failed to gain ground despite being supported by a large amount of Western. —Agencies

Wagner chief is not in Belarus but in Russia: Lukashenko

MINSK: Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin is not currently in Belarus, where he was exiled after the mercenary group's short-lived uprising last month, but in St. Petersburg, Russia, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said on Thursday. "As for Yevgeny Prigozhin, he is in (Russia's) St. Petersburg. Where is he this morning? Maybe he went to Moscow, maybe somewhere else, but he is not on the territory of Belarus," Lukashenko told reporters during a news conference in the capital Minsk. Lukashenko said that he

sees no risks for Belarus if the paramilitary group fighters are deployed in his country, adding that they can be used for the defense of Belarus. "As far as I am informed, the fighters - very serious fighters of the Wagner PMC - are in their permanent camps. They are in those camps where they were placed after the withdrawal from the front for recovery, treatment, rest, and so on. There is a normal rotation for such a war. After (fights in Ukraine's) Bakhmut, they were taken to their camp, where they are today." He also underlined that the

issue of relocation and deployment of the Wagner Group in Belarus has not been resolved yet and it depends on the paramilitary group's management and the Russian authorities. According to Lukashenko, "a legally binding contract" will be signed with Wagner if its fighters are located in the country. "At the level of law or a presidential decree, the framework within which this unit will operate will be determined," he said. Lukashenko further said the relations between Belarus and Russia after the Wagner rebellion will be "even stronger."

On June 24, Prigozhin accused the Russian Defense Ministry of attacking its fighters, declared a "March of Justice," and set off toward Moscow. The Russian Federal Security Service designated Wagner Group's actions "an armed rebellion" and opened a criminal case against Prigozhin, while President Vladimir Putin called the private military company's uprising an act of "treason." Prigozhin, however, later turned back "to avoid bloodshed" and has since moved to Belarus under a deal brokered by Lukashenko. —APP

Uzbek Presidential Elections - 2023: early voting in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Pakistan organized early voting in the Presidential Elections of Uzbekistan in Lahore and Karachi. The voting process was organized in accordance with the Electoral Code. This political event was attended by citizens of Uzbekistan living in these cities and adjacent territories. In the polling stations voters have got acquainted with the candidates and their pre-election programs. The updated Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been distributed among citizens, the new version



of which was approved at a national referendum on April 30, 2023. The citizens of Uzbekistan noted the importance of large-scale reforms carried out in the

country in all spheres of life, their social oriented nature, highly appreciating the priority of protecting the interests of the citizens in the structure of relations

between society and state. "Today we participated in an important political event and voted for the future of our Uzbekistan. We are confident that the President-elect will serve for the

compatriots Kamila and Alina Saed. "Despite the fact that we are abroad, our country ensures the observance of our constitutional rights. We feel our involvement in the reform processes in Uzbekistan, the significance of our choice. This pleases us. Such relations with citizens living abroad increase their sense of personal responsibility for the future of the Motherland", - said Mrs. Jamila Arifbaeva. The citizens also expressed hope that the results of the Presidential Elections will form a solid foundation for the intensive implementation of the goals for the construction of a New Uzbekistan. "Elections are the event for common political decision of the people, the beginning of a new stage in the

Therefore, it is necessary to take the elections seriously. Citizens of Uzbekistan in Pakistan carefully monitor the election campaign of all candidates, their proposals for the further development of our country. The election platform of all candidates is aimed at ensuring the uninterrupted continuation of the

on this, today we made our choice - we voted for the candidate whose proposals are close to our ideas about the future. We are confident that the election results will serve to continue the processes of renewal and development of Uzbekistan", - Albina Kurtbedinova said. Citizens of Uzbekistan can also take



reforms carried out in the country. They differ only in

part in the Presidential Elections and vote on July



further development of our Motherland", said young

development of statehood.



the mechanisms for achieving a common goal. Based

9 (Sunday) at the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad.

Briefs

Major martyred during gun battle with terrorists

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A Pakistan Army major was martyred during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber tribal district's Shakhas area, the military's media affairs wing said on Thursday. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that security forces had conducted an IBO last night after receiving reports about the presence of terrorists. The ISPR said that while security forces were trying to establish "blocking positions to cut [off] the escape routes of [the] terrorists", a party of terrorists was spotted by Major Mian Abdullah Shah – who was "leading the operation from the front". It said that the 33-year-old major, a resident of Kohat, embraced martyrdom as a result of a heavy exchange of fire. "Three terrorists and their facilitators were apprehended. Sanitisation of the area is being carried out to eliminate the terrorists present in the area," the ISPR said. "Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our soldiers further strengthen our resolve," it added. The incident comes three days after an army major and a soldier were martyred in an exchange of fire with terrorists in Kech district of Balochistan, hours after the martyrdom of four security personnel in simultaneous attacks on three checkpoints in Sherani district.

Zardari condoles martyrdom of Army personnel

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari has condoled the martyrdom of Shaheed Major Mian Abdullah in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region. President Zardari also expressed deep sorrow over the martyrdom of Subedar Sahib Khan, Naik Muhammad Ibrahim and Jehangir in North Waziristan. The blood of the courageous officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army will not go in vain, President Zardari expressed. The country stands shoulder to shoulder with its brave soldiers who are rendering great sacrifices for the sake of their nation. He said that the country will be cleansed of the menace of terrorism just as was done in Swat. President Zardari extending condolences to the bereaved families of the martyrs, prayed to Allah Almighty to grant eternal peace to the departed souls and strength and fortitude to their loved ones to bear the tragic loss with equanimity.

CTD arrests 7 'terrorists' across Punjab

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) claimed on Thursday to have arrested seven terror suspects during multiple raids across the province. According to CTD spokesman, Abrarul Haq, Abdur Rehman, Umair, Imran, Ashfaq, Ayub and Moawia were arrested from Rawalpindi, Sahiwal, Bahawalpur and Gujranwala. The terrorists belong to the outlawed Al-Qaeda and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Officials seized explosives, detonators, weapons, bullets and an amount of cash from the arrested suspects. Cases have also been registered against the arrested suspects. Besides, authorities have also arrested 18 suspects during 139 combing operations in Punjab this week. As many as 8,523 people were questioned in the combing operations, the CTD official said.

CPEC signature project in China-Pakistan cooperation

The spokesperson said that with the CPEC as the center, the two sides have established a cooperation framework with ports and transportation infrastructure, energy and industry

DNA

BEIJING: The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a signature project in cooperation between China and Pakistan in the new era and a pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping a decade ago, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Wang Wenbin said on Thursday. "CPEC is a signature project in China-Pakistan cooperation in the new era and a pilot project in the Belt and Road cooperation. This year marks its 10th anniversary," he said during his regular briefing in response to a question asked by APP. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, while addressing a ceremony to mark a decade of the signing of the CPEC framework, said that the CPEC has been playing a pivotal role in transforming Pakistan's economic landscape and the mega project helped Pakistan progress in the region and beyond. The spokesperson said that with the CPEC as the center, the two sides have established a cooperation



framework with ports and transportation infrastructure, energy and industry. The project has been flourishing and generated a large amount of direct investment, created many jobs and brought highways and power generation and transmission infrastructure to Pakistan and contributing to the country's development and regional connectivity, he added. Wang Wenbin said the two countries are also cooperating in agriculture, science, technology, information technology and social wellbeing. "Going forward, we will continue to work for the high-quality development of CPEC and contribute to China Pakistan and regional development," he added. It may be mentioned here that CPEC enters a significant milestone as it celebrates a decade of remarkable achievements in fostering economic growth, infrastructure development and regional connectivity. Launched in 2013, CPEC is a corridor linking the Gwadar port in southwestern Pakistan with Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which highlights energy, transport and industrial cooperation.

10th Iran-Pak Security Committee to deal with threats

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Regarding the firm determination and will of the high officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Seyed Majid Mirahmadi, Honorable Deputy Minister of Interior of the Islamic Republic of Iran arrived in Islamabad on 22 June, 2023 leading as the head of a delegation to participate in the 10th Iran-Pakistan Special Security Committee (IPSSC). Holding the 10th Iran-Pakistan Special Security Committee (IPSSC) indicates pragmatic determination of the authorities of the two brotherly countries to promote bilateral cooperation in realizing common interests.

Pakistan-Azerbaijan military cooperation discussed



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A high level defence delegation headed by Mr. Khalid Ahadov, Advisor to the President of Azerbaijan, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office. The meeting underscored discussion on several key areas of mutual interest and regional developments. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff shared his vision of modernizing PAF's capabilities to achieve operational excellence in air, space and cyber domains.

The Air Chief emphasized the longstanding religious, cultural and historical bonds between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, which are exemplified through robust bilateral relations. He also reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral ties in military-to-military cooperation and the training domain. Chief of the Air Staff further said, "Pakistan values its strong diplomatic and defence relationship with Azerbaijan which is based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability." The Advisor to the President of Azerbaijan lauded the historic & exemplary profes-

sionalism demonstrated by the personnel of Pakistan Air Force and praised the PAF's notable progress in developing a thriving domestic capability in the aviation industry. The visiting dignitary reaffirmed that Pakistan and Azerbaijan enjoy deep rooted cordial relations and wished to further enhance the existing bilateral ties between the two brotherly countries. Earlier, Mr. Khalid Ahadov also visited different installations and technological infrastructure established at Air Headquarters, where he was briefed about the operational capabilities and ongoing projects of PAF's modernization drive.

China's Xi tells military to deepen war planning

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday urged the military to deepen war and combat planning to increase the chances of victory in actual combat, Xinhua news agency said, renewing his call to troops to safeguard China's sovereignty and territory. Xi said the world has entered a new period of turmoil and change and China's security situation has become more unstable and uncertain, according to state-run Xinhua, in comments he made to troops while on an inspection tour of the Eastern Theater Command. The Eastern Theater Command, headquartered in Jiangsu province, is responsible for the security of eastern China, including the East China Sea and the Taiwan Strait. Earlier this year, Xi, in comments after securing a precedent-breaking third term as president, called on China to step up its ability to safeguard national security and turning its military into a "Great Wall of Steel". On Taiwan, the democratically governed island which China claims as its own, China must oppose pro-independence and secessionist activities and the interference of external forces, he said at the time. In particular, China has repeatedly called on U.S. officials not to engage with Taiwanese leaders, viewing it as support for Taiwan's desire to be viewed as separate from China. Since the visit of the then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan in August last year, China has staged war games around the island and conducted drills and live firing in the region. China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control. In 2005, it passed a law giving Beijing the legal basis for military action against Taiwan if it secedes or seems about to. – Agencies

At least 17 killed, 49 injured as rain lashes Punjab

LAHORE: At least 17 people lost their lives on Thursday while 49 others were injured in multiple incidents of roof and wall collapses across Punjab as rains continued to batter parts of the province for a second consecutive day. Detailing the deaths, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said in a statement that four people – including three children under the age of 10 – were

killed in Lahore after the roof of a house near the Bandianwala bridge in the city's Amar Sidhu area collapsed due to heavy rainfall. In a separate incident, 14 people were injured as a wall of the Government Mozang Teaching Hospital, adjoining a neighbouring building, collapsed. They were shifted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. According to the PDMA, six deaths were reported in Gujranwala after a "weak wooden structure" inside a three-storey house collapsed. In similar incidents, three people each were killed in Chakwal and Sheikhpura while one person each died in Jhang and Faisalabad. It said 32 people across the province had sustained severe injuries in multiple rain-related incidents. – Agencies

PM extends full support to UAE hosting COP28 summit

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday extended Pakistan's full support to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the country was set to host COP28 summit in Dubai from November 30 to December 12 this year. The prime minister, in a meeting with President-designate of COP-28 and UAE's Special Envoy for Climate Change, Minister for Industries and Technologies and Chairman Masdar Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber and his delegation, conveyed best wishes to the leadership of UAE for the success of the event. Welcoming Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, the prime minister underscored the importance of high level exchanges and felicitated him on his appointment as President-designate COP28. He expressed full confidence in Dr. Jaber's stewardship of this important global conference. Appreciating UAE's efforts in combating climate change and developing renewable

energy projects, the prime minister thanked the Emirates for its support during last year's devastating floods in Pakistan. He also thanked the UAE for its vital support to Pakistan which has been critical in reaching staff level agreement with the IMF. Prime Minister Shehbaz also briefed the delegation about the Special Investment Facilitation Council established by the government aimed at providing facilitating the foreign investors in diverse sectors. He also shared details of the 10,000 MW solar energy projects for which a road show was already held in Dubai. Dr. Sultan Al Jaber conveyed the greetings and best wishes of the UAE leadership to the prime minister. He showed keen interest to enhance partnership with Pakistan in all domains and emphasized UAE's leadership directions to him to further improve collaboration with Pakistan in the renewable energy sector that would help boost energy security for Pakistan. – DNA

Under IMF conditions, govt to let go of grants, reduce subsidies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: To secure the loan from the International Monetary Fund, Pakistan has assured the global lender that it will tax the construction industry, will let go of supplementary grants and reduce subsidies in energy sector. The government has accepted the strict conditions of the Fund to reach a staff-level agreement on a short-term Stand-By Arrangement through which the forex-starved Pakistan would get \$3 billion. As per the IMF conditions, Pakistan will have to secure \$6 billion from friendly countries. Sources said that the government has assured the IMF to tax the construction industry. The government will also bring the agricultural sector and vendors in the tax net. Under the IMF programme, the government will not issue any supplementary grants. It will also reduce subsidies in energy sector, they divulged. "Pakistan should enhance its tax revenue to avoid deficit," the lender suggested.

"Taxes have 10 percent share in the economy, which is the lowest in the world," the IMF has pointed out to the officials. "Taxation share should be scaled up to 13 percent in the economy to control the deficit," the lender has suggested. Pakistan is required to enhance the number of taxpayers; the monetary fund has further suggested. "Tax revenues could increase with opening imports in the new year," the IMF pointed out. "The country is not required to restructure its loans. The incumbent as well as the caretaker and the new elected governments should faithfully follow the existing standby arrangement," the lender emphasized. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Wednesday that Pakistan would fulfill its commitments made to the IMF to secure a short-term financing deal. A staff-level agreement on the \$3 billion stand-by agreement (SBA) was reached between the local authorities and the IMF team, with the lender's executive board to give final approval on July 12.

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