



# Islamabad POST

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**Saudi-Iran deal driving 'wave of reconciliation'**

Detailed News On Page-08

**North Korea's Kim directs cruise missile test**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Babar terms Afghan series a good test**

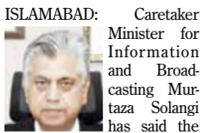
Detailed News On Page-06



**Briefs**

**Interim govt to cooperate with ECP**

FAISAL SHEIKH



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mur-taza Solangi has said the caretaker federal government will extend full cooperation to the ECP and the provinces in the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections. In a telephonic conversation with Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori, he said he will perform duties in accordance with the constitution, and there will be no discrimination against anyone. The Information Minister said conduct of transparent elections is our collective responsibility and it will be performed in line with the constitution.

**EU to keep supporting Pakistan**

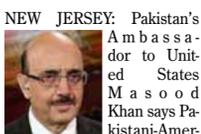
DNA



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the European Union have reiterated the resolve to increase their cooperation in bilateral and multilateral fields. This came during meeting of EU Ambassador to Pakistan Riina Kionka with caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani in Islamabad today. Regional and international issues, matters of mutual interest and relations between Pakistan and European Union were discussed during the meeting. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the growing bilateral ties.

**Masood urges solidarity**

NEWS DESK



NEW JERSEY: Pakistan's Ambassador to United States Masood Khan says Pakistani-American community is a catalyst for moving Pakistan and US closer through people to people exchanges. He stated this while addressing a huge gathering of Pakistani diaspora at annual Pakistan Day Parade in New Jersey. The Ambassador said that Pakistan has passed through much turbulence and faced many challenges and it has survived, and people will see it as one of the most successful nations in comity of nations.

**Bill Controversy**

## Alvi wants secretary removed

Writes to PM Office; wants Ms Humaira as his new secretary; President comes under fire for not acting 'on time'

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In view of President Dr Arif Alvi's Sunday's statement, President's Secretariat on Monday wrote to the principal secretary to the prime minister that the services of serving secretary to the president are no more required. "The services of Mr Waqar Ahmed, Secretary to the President, are no more required and are surrendered to the Establishment Division, immediately," read a statement issued by the President's Secretariat. "It has also been desired that Ms Humaira Ahmed, a BPS-22 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service, may be posted as Secretary to the President," the statement added. President Alvi created a stir on Sunday by claiming that he had not signed the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill and the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, attributing the confusion to his staff's actions. This revelation plunged the country into a state of chaos. In a social media post, the president vehemently denied giving his assent to the two bills. He admitted, however, that his staff failed to return the bills to parliament within the stipulated 10-day timeframe mandated by Article 75 of the Constitution.

### Secretary terms 'allegations' as baseless

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Principal Secretary Waqar Ahmed Monday responded to 'allegations' regarding the bills signing controversy in a letter to President Dr Arif Alvi. President Dr Arif Alvi's Principal Secretary Waqar Ahmed termed all allegations against him as 'baseless' and offered to conduct an inquiry into the matter. In his letter, Ahmed stated that the president's statement created an impression of irregularities in the signing process of the bills. He requested President Dr Arif Alvi to hold an inquiry into the bills signing controversy through the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to ascertain the responsible persons. He told the president that he is fully aware of facts regarding both bills [Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and

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**Toshakhana case**

## SC to take up Khan's plea on Wednesday

The bench will comprise CJP Bandial, Justice Mazahar Naqvi, Justice Jamal Mandokhail

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial will take up Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's petition challenging the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) decision on the Toshakhana case on Wednesday (August 23). Apart from CJP Bandial, the bench will comprise Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail. They will hear the plea filed by the PTI chairman on August 5 challenging the IHC's decision that declared the sessions court's maintainability verdict in the Toshakhana case against the PTI chief "void". IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq gave the court's ruling on eight petitions of the PTI chairman after arguments by both parties - which were completed. The court, however, rejected the former prime minister's request to transfer the case to

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### FIA gets Qureshi's 4-day remand

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A special court in Islamabad, formed on Monday to hear cases filed under the Official Secrets Act, has granted Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) four-day physical remand of Pakistan Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a cipher case. Qureshi, who was arrested on Saturday by the FIA, was presented before the special court today for the hearing of a cipher case registered under the same act. Judge Abul Hasanat, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) judge, conducted the hearing on the case registered against Qureshi under the Official Secrets Act.

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ISLAMABAD: Dr. Tawfiq Bin Fawzan Al Rabiah, Minister of Hajj & Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. - DNA

### PML-N bigwigs in London for consultations

Return of Nawaz Sharif likely to be discussed

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz President Shehbaz Sharif during his visit to London will conduct crucial meetings with PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif and other important leaders of the party, who will join him there. Former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif landed in London on Sunday. A big meeting of Muslim League-N leaders is expected in London any time during this week. It is expected that the return of Nawaz Sharif and the status of the cases he is embroiled in are likely to come up in the meeting, and the two brothers are expected to set a date for the party supreme's return to Pakistan. Several former federal ministers are already present in London to participate in the meetings. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif already summoned top party leaders to London to discuss plans for his return to Pakistan. The leaders who were directed to reach London included former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Khawaja Asif, Rana Sanaullah, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Saiful Malook Khokhar, Ahsan Iqbal and Marrayum Aurangzeb. Apart from these leaders, the PML-N leadership from Pakistan will take part in the meetings through the video link. In the most important meeting, the future political strategy and the future of the country's politics will be considered, the sources added. They will lay focus on legal and political deliberations regarding Nawaz Sharif's return to Pakistan.

## Premier visits Jaranwala PM Kakar assures Christian community of complete safety

PM distributes cheques among families of affected community

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday assured the Christian community that there would be no compromise made regarding the protection of minorities. The premier made these comments during a visit to Jaranwala town in the industrial district of Faisalabad where a crowd vandalised several churches and set scores of houses on fire after a few miscreants made announcements in mosques inciting the mob to attack under allegations of blasphemy. The attack - which took place on August 16 - sparked outrage on social media and among political and religious figures in the country, who condemned the incident, saying that there was no room for such extreme behaviour. "I am saddened by the tragedy based on hate. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure the safety of every citizen," PM Kakar said while speaking to the Christian victims in Jaranwala. Extremism, he said, has nothing to do with any religion, language or region, adding that a

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### 'Pakistan, KSA trusted partners'

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Tawfiq Bin Fawzan Al Rabiah, Minister of Hajj & Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on the Prime Minister. The Saudi Minister is leading a high-level delegation with members from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Saudi Civil Aviation Authority, Communication, Tourism, etc. The Prime Minister welcomed the delegation and expressed satisfaction on the positive trajectory of bilateral relations with the Kingdom. He lauded the vision of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and said Pakistan would always remain a trusted partner of Saudi Arabia. The Prime Minister thanked the Saudi leadership for making excellent arrangements for Hujjaj from

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**Indo-Pak tensions**

## Indian army martyrs citizen along LoC

The incident also left three women traumatized

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: The Indian Army resorted to unprovoked firing along the Line of Control (LoC) in Nikial Sector on Monday, targeting innocent civilians which resulted in the martyrdom of a 60-year-old man, the military said. According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the deceased, identified as Ghias, was a resident of Oli village in Azad Jammu and Kashmir's Koti district. The inci-

dent also left three women, who were cutting grass in the fields, traumatised. "The blatant Indian aggression is a clear violation of existing Ceasefire Understandings. Pakistan desires peace and tranquillity at its borders, however, all necessary measures will be taken to protect the life and property of our citizens," the military's media wing maintained. The ISPR warned that "any misadventure against the people of Pakistan will be befittingly responded to at the time and place of our choosing". This is the second known ceasefire violation incident since February 2021 when the two neighbours renewed their truce in the disputed region.

## Russia says F-16s for Ukraine an 'escalation'

Ukraine's Zelenskiy says F-16s make him 'confident' that Russia will lose the war

CENTRELINE REPORT

COPENHAGEN: Denmark's decision to supply Ukraine with American F-16 fighter jets to fend off Russia's invasion represents an "escalation" of the conflict, Russia's ambassador to Denmark warned Monday. Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy told a crowd in Denmark on Monday that promised deliveries of U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets had made him confident Ukraine could end Russia's invasion. "Today we are confident that Russia will lose this war," Zelenskiy told thousands of people who gathered outside the Danish parliament to hear his speech. Denmark and the Netherlands on Sunday announced they would provide the advanced jets to strengthen Kyiv's Soviet-era air force, as it pursues a grinding counter-offensive against Russian forces in the east. During a visit by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to Denmark on Sunday, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen

said her country would deliver 19 of the jets, six of them by the end of this year, eight next year and five in 2025. "The fact that Denmark has now decided to donate 19 F-16 aircraft to Ukraine leads to an escalation of the conflict," Russian ambassador to Denmark Vladimir Barbin said in a statement. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in July that Moscow would consider the F-16s a "nuclear" threat because of their capacity to carry atomic weapons. "By hiding behind a premise that Ukraine itself must determine the conditions for peace, Denmark seeks with its deeds and words to leave Ukraine no choice but to continue the military confrontation with Russia," Barbin said. "Such a position pushes Ukraine into the abyss and condemns its people to new victims." Washington had announced its approval of the F-16 transfers on Friday. Ukraine may only use the F-16 fighter jets due to be donated by Denmark and the

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## CM for robust medicine supply strategy

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has emphasized the need for a comprehensive strategy to ensure the provision of high-quality medicines in all the hospitals of Punjab. The CM issued clear directives to expedite the availability of quality medications within medical facilities, further instructing the establishment of a transparent framework for medicine procurement, said a handout issued here on Monday. In a proactive endeavor to enhance efficiency, a meticulous and technologically advanced system will be devised for the storage and seamless distribution of medicines to hospitals. Additionally, the proposal to institute a specialized authority dedicated to medicine procurement is actively being considered. Addressing the significance of effective management skills in medicine procurement and storage, the CM underlined a pivotal role in ensuring healthcare efficacy. He underscored the importance of constructing the fool-proof mechanism to oversee the purchase, storage and subsequent distribution of medicines to medical institutions because optimal medical resources are not just a citizen's entitlement but also a governmental responsibility.—APP

## May 9 vandalism, PTI lawyer handed over to military

LAHORE: Advocate Haider Majeed, a lawyer belonging to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, was handed over to the military for trial regarding his alleged involvement in the vandalism that took place at Jinnah House situated in Lahore on May 9. This development follows the recent transfer of Barrister Hassaan Niazi, the nephew of PTI chief, to the military on similar charges. Haider's father, Muhammad Majeed, filed a petition in the Lahore High Court on August 19, seeking the recovery of his son, stating that Haider and Niazi were taken into custody on August 13. The PTI claims Haider is the convener of the Insaf Students Federation's (ISF) Punjab wing. During the hearing at the LHC, Lahore police presented a report stating that Mr Haider had been handed over to the military officials for trial. The report mentioned that both Niazi and Haider were arrested from Abbottabad's Mirpur police station by Sarwar Road police on terrorism charges. The police report included two letters from a military commanding officer, indicating that both individuals were handed over to the military for investigation and inquiry under provisions of the Pakistan Army Act 1952. The case has been adjourned until Tuesday. Haider has previously been involved in legal cases, including one against former interior minister Rana Sanaulah and top police officials, and has represented PTI leader Asad Umar's wife seeking her husband's retrieval. In his plea, Mr Majeed petitioned the court to direct the authorities to immediately produce his son and release him.—DNA

# Serena Hotels signs a MoU to help people with disabilities

Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels mentioned that Serena Hotels is an equal opportunity employer, and many people with disabilities work for the team. He expressed his desire to see this application succeed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels joined hands with ConnectHear to enable an environment of access and inclusion for people with disabilities. ConnectHear is a one-of-a-kind mobile application with real time sign language interface facility to facilitate persons with hearing impairment. The unique product is the brainchild of Azima Dhanjee and Arhum Ishtiaq. Miss Dhanjee grew up as a child of hearing-impaired parents, making sign language her mother tongue and turning her into an interpreter for her parents. Making it a pivotal reason for her to develop this application for ease of accessibility and inclusion for all who suffered from this condition.

Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels mentioned that Serena Hotels is an equal opportunity employer, and many people with



disabilities work for the team. He expressed his desire to see this application succeed. Currently, this application's utilisation will be in Islamabad Serena Hotels for the Food & Beverage outlets

and the reception. The plan is to implement it in other areas of the hotel after the trial run, and subsequently in the rest of Serena Hotel properties across the globe. He emphasised the need for the service industry to be more cognizant in offering inclusive services. This Memorandum of Understanding between Serena Hotels and ConnectHear highlights a new era for the facilitation of people with disabilities, this partnership provides the application with a visible platform for others to follow suit. Serena Hotels is one of those unique brands which has always tried to empower the communities through its different Initiatives; Sports, Public, Adventure, and Culture, and create change by empowering all through it to foster bonds and bolster economic growth in our areas of operation location, and we look forward to a positive outcome of this application, helping us provide more opportunities for all.

## Chairman NDMA reviews damages caused by ongoing floods

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Monday reviewed the situation of damages caused by the ongoing floods in Sutlej River, the situation of major Dams, and the regulation of river flows during the ongoing monsoon spell. The NDMA Chairman presided special National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) session with key stakeholders on the current flood and monsoon situation, a news release said. The session

was attended by representatives of Armed Forces, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Federal Flood Commission (FFC), Provincial, State, and Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs, SDMA, GBDMA), Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Commission (SUPARCO), Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters (PCIW), Rescue 1122 Punjab, Tarbela and Mangla Dam Management. The PMD briefed about the previous days' rainfall observed in the country. They also apprised about the expected rainfall in the

North Eastern parts of the country from August 23 to 25. The PDMA Punjab and Rescue 1122 Punjab briefed about the evacuation, rescue, and relief efforts conducted along the Sutlej River. The FFD reported that Sulemanki headworks would attain a very high flood level by 22 August and a peak in the flow of River Jehlum will be observed from 23 to 25 August which will affect the Mangla dam levels. The Mangla and Tarbela Dam management briefed that the water level in dams and contingency measures are in place. The PCIW briefed about the mechanism in place for in-

formation sharing between Pakistan and Indian dam management. The Chairman NDMA instructed relevant departments to carry out flood damage assessment and gather accurate data. He also instructed PDMAs, GBDMA, and SDMA to increase awareness among the masses about the remedial measures to be taken during the season and to monitor the changing situation vigilantly. He reiterated that the settlements and encroachments in river beds of all major rivers must be cleared by all concerned to minimize the damages.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, Adam Tugio paid a courtesy call on Jamal Shah, Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Cultural Division.—DNA

## CM chairs 7th meeting of standing committee

LAHORE: The 7th meeting of the cabinet standing committee on finance & development was convened under the chair of the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office on Monday. The meeting decided in principle to give a special package to the heirs of

employees, who had passed away during service. In addition, the CM ordered that financial aid to employees' families should be provided within 10 days positively. The committee granted approval for rehabilitation and expansion of Gatwala Road, originating from the Nishat

Abad overhead bridge in Faisalabad. A decision was reached to collaborate with the French Development Agency (AFD) to enhance the efficiency of the Water and Sewerage Authorities (WASAs) in Lahore and Faisalabad. A decision was made to incorporate the

acquisition of snow blowers for the Murree roads into the annual development programme. Concurrently, the green light was given for comprehensive restoration of historically significant gates in Lahore, ensuring their return to their original condition. Moreover, funding was allocated for modernisation of the Lahore Zoo. Funds were allocated to adorn the shrine of Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shaker, and the project.—APP

## PAEI delegation meets envoy of Morocco

DNA

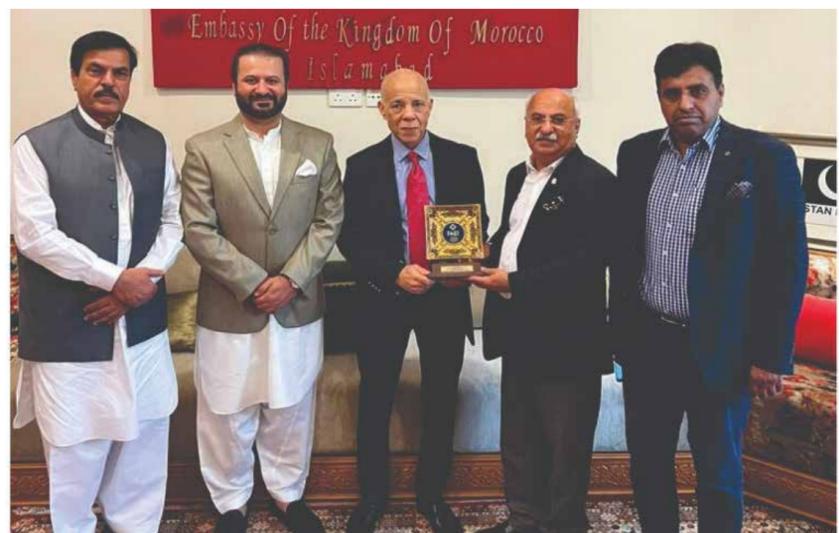
ISLAMABAD: Today PAEI Delegation led by Mr. Khurshid Barlas Founder Chairman Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry met with Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Mohamed Karmoun along with Mr. Fahad Barlas convenor Exhibition, Mr. Amin ur Rahman EC Member, Mr. Shumraiz EC Member PAEI, In the meeting, Chairman Khurshid Barlas invited Moroccan ambassadors to Participate in "3rd Pakistan Housing and Construction Exhibition" that will be held on 17 - 19 November 2023 at Pakistan China Friend Center Islamabad. And he said that a large number of different business community from Various Builders, Developer, Allied Construction, banking projects and tourism industry will participate in three days property exhibitions across the coun-

try. And also told about the international pavilion at the exhibition. The Moroccan ambassador accepted the invitation and assured that

he will fully participate in the third Pakistan International Property and Construction Expo. During the conversation, the Ambassa-

dor of Morocco to Pakistan Mohammad Karmoun said that there is a long-lasting relationship between Pakistan and Morocco. In the

end, Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry also presented the shield to the Ambassador of Morocco, Mohammad Karmoun.



## Governor meets newly-appointed IGP, chief secy

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori on Monday held separate meetings with newly appointed provincial Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam Irfan and Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Riffat Mukhtar. During the meeting, the Sindh Governor felicitated Dr Fakhra Alam on assuming the office of provincial Chief Secretary. Kamran Tessori hoped that the Sindh's bureaucracy, under Alam's leadership, will take comprehensive measures to resolve the issues the people face. He noted that commitment was more important resources to solve the problems of the people. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Fakhre Alam Irfan vowed to work for province's prosperity and said resolving the public issues is among top priorities. Meanwhile, the governor also met Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Riffat Mukhtar and discussed peace and stability in the province and the role of police, among various other matters.

## Elahi handed over to NAB on 8-day physical remand

DNA

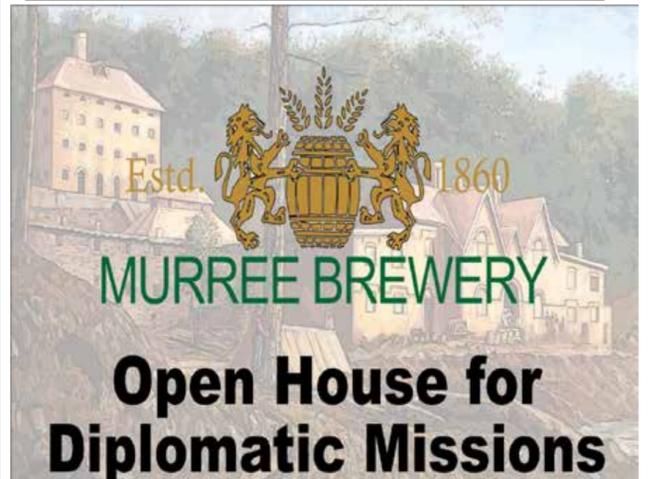
LAHORE: An accountability court in Lahore handed over former Punjab chief minister and PTI President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi to the National Accountability Court on an 8-day physical remand in the Rs250 million corruption case in Gujrat development schemes. The court ordered to produce Elahi again on August 29. NAB prosecutor Waris Janjua requested the court to extend the physical remand of the PTI leader. Elahi's lawyer Amjad Pervaiz opposed the NAB's plea. He said that they have challenged the repeated arrests of Pervaiz Elahi in the High Court and the Supreme Court. He said so far, the decision of the High Court and the Supreme Court has not come. He said if the NAB officials are asking for physical remand, his client should be remanded into NAB custody for only a few days. He requested the court to issue order for Pervaiz Elahi's meeting with his family members. At this point, Elahi came to the rostrum. He said his feet are swollen and he is very ill. He said he needed treatment. However, the court handed over former chief minister Ch Pervaiz Elahi to the NAB on physical remand and ordered the anti-graft body to produce him in the court on Aug 29.

## Chinese company official terms Gwadar seaport CPEC's vital axis

DNA

LAHORE: In a meeting with the business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Monday, Mr. YO BO, chairman of China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC), highlighted the transformative progress of Gwadar under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, saying that the seaport had emerged as CPEC's vital axis. He emphasised that Pakistan's economic circumstances were primarily responsible for only delays in CPEC development. The gathering witnessed the convergence of top officials including LCCI President Kashif Anwar and Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, alongside Mr. Wang, Deputy Manager of COPHC, Aif Khan, Convener of the LCCI Standing Committee on Gwadar Coastal Tourism and the chamber's Executive Committee members. The COPHC chairman underscored the significance of Gwadar within CPEC, hailing it as the project's pivotal axis. The first stage of Gwadar's port and city development, along with the Gwadar Free Zone, has been completed, marking a substantial achievement. Chairman YO BO's testimony outlined

that COPHC's decade-long stewardship had remarkably transformed Gwadar from a modest village into a thriving modern city, replete with cutting-edge technology. Chairman YO BO highlighted China's substantial investments in Gwadar's growth, spanning construction, airport infrastructure, and healthcare facilities. The Gwadar Free Zone, which came under the auspices of the Free Zone Company in 2018, has already established a vibrant phase one, spanning 25 hectares adjacent to the port. Notably, this area has attracted six companies. The North Free Zone, sprawling over 900 hectares, is positioned for industrial and warehousing purposes, and Chairman YO BO emphasized its role in processing raw materials for subsequent export. Addressing Balochistan's economic disparity, Chairman YO BO highlighted the region's untapped potential, brimming with natural resources yet plagued by underdevelopment and negligible trade. The Gwadar port, however, is fully operational, equipped to manage both imports and exports. Chairman YO BO's visit wasn't merely a formality; it was an invitation to the LCCI delegation to explore collaboration and investment opportunities in Gwadar.



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman  
Mobile: 0300 8553342

## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### August

Aug 01/China  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland  
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso  
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea  
Independence Day

Aug 15/India  
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia  
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine  
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay  
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey  
Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz  
Republic  
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia  
National Day

### Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



### Emergency

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Cantonment Board 9270151-3

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Anniversary of Chevening scholarships celebrated

On this auspicious year of the 40th anniversary of the Chevening programme, I am proud we are sending 69 Pakistani students to the UK through the Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships: Jane Marriott

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott CMG OBE celebrated Pakistanis awarded Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships today (21 August 2023).

This year, the UK awarded Chevening scholarships to 46 outstanding Pakistani scholars through a highly competitive selection process. This includes two female Hindu students, and one trans woman. 23 Commonwealth scholars have also been selected from Pakistan with 21 scholars pursuing a Master's programme and two pursuing a PhD programme. These brilliant scholars were selected from across Pakistan.

To honour the legacy of the late human rights champion Asma Jahangir, the British High Commissioner presented Asma Jahangir award to Chevening top ranking female scholar of the year. This year, there was a tie and three talented females received this award including Anila Yousaf and Zaitoon Kareem from Baluchistan, and Varsha Deepak from Sindh. The British High Commission launched the award in 2018 and since then nine female Chevening scholars have been awarded Asma Jahangir Scholarship. This is the first year that UK is offering Chevening scholarships provided by partners in the UK. The first is with Swindon Town Football Club, offering a 1-year Master's degree in Football Coaching or Science either at



Solent University or the University Campus of Football Business at Wembley Stadium. The second is with the University of Essex, offering 2 scholarships in either climate change or heritage and museum studies. British High Commissioner Jane Marriott CMG-OBE said:

"On this auspicious year of the 40th anniversary of the Chevening programme, I am proud we are sending 69 Pakistani students to the UK through the Chevening and Commonwealth scholarships."

"The UK is renowned for its world-class higher education, and these scholarships will benefit

some of Pakistan's brightest students. In turn, Pakistan will benefit from these students once they return to Pakistan and contribute to their various sectors. They join over 2,000 Chevening and over 1,500 Commonwealth alumni in Pakistan, themselves a testament to the strength of the

UK-Pakistan relationship." The scholars have chosen a diverse range of fields and institutions for their studies, including education, social justice, architectural engineering and sustainability, all aimed at addressing pressing global challenges and fostering innovation.

## 2023 K-POP Festival gets huge response in Pakistan

The 2023 K-POP Festival in Pakistan was attended by the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Park Kijun, the Head of the Department of Korean Language and Culture Mr. Ahtisham Hussain, representatives from different Korean companies, and a large number of students and K-POP fans

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The 2023 K-POP Festival in Pakistan, organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea was held at the Pakistan National Council of Arts, in Islamabad. The K-POP Festival was a big success as a huge number of people attended and enjoyed the exhilarating performances of young K-POP fans.

The 2023 K-POP Festival in Pakistan was attended by the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Park Kijun, the Head of the Department of Korean Language and Culture Mr.

Ahtisham Hussain, representatives from different Korean companies, and a large number of students and K-POP fans. Dr. Atif Faraz, The Director of the King Sejong Institute, Ms. Saima Sallahuddin, Assistant Professor at National Council of Arts, and Ms. Ayesha Durrani, Associate Professor at National Council of Arts were the judges for the 2023 K-POP Festival in Pakistan. The K-POP Festival had two categories Vocal and Dance. The performers from both categories performed extremely well. All the participants were very

well aware about the Korean K-POP culture. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea H.E. Mr. Park Kijun appreciated the performances of all the participants and performers. His Excellency mentioned that the 2023 K-POP Festival had a special significance this time as this year marks the 40th Anniversary of the Diplomatic Relations between Korea and Pakistan. His Excellency mentioned that it is indeed incredible how culture and music can connect different people from all across the globe. He said that culture is one of the many unifying

factor between the people of Pakistan and Korea. He further laid emphasis on the fact that such festivals should be held frequently as they enhance people-to-people interactions and further strengthen the relations between two countries. His Excellency shared that he was quite hopeful and optimistic in regards to the future of the bilateral ties between Korea and Pakistan. The winners from both Vocal and Dance categories were encouraged by gift prizes. The people who attended also received gift hampers from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea.

## India's water aggression put heavy dent on South Punjab

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Jahan Ara Wattoo condemned the India's water aggression towards Pakistan and in result unprecedented flood occurred in Sutlej River with a range of 278,000 cuses of water in our 35

years. The Sutlej River has overflowed, Wattoo said Bahawalnagar, Okara, Lodhran, Kasur Bahawalpur, Vehari and Pakpattan will be the main victim districts from the Indian water aggression. She condemned the India role and demanded that Pakistan foreign office should protest on it. In Kasur only, two of the three villagers

who drowned in the floodwater had been fished out while the rescue efforts were underway to find the third person. Jamsheed of village Athath Singh and Aslam and Mola of village Verram Jhugian wanted to shift to a safer place on their own. They were holding hands due to floodwater but the gushing water swallowed them after separating them.

Separately, over 100 buffaloes of a farmer at village Usmanwala near Ganda Singh were swept away while being transported away from flooding. Many people and animals were stranded in the floodwater as the administration failed to move them out of their houses during the last week despite warnings of heavy floods.

## Power sector is sinking faltering economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that the power sector is sinking the faltering economy. The current electricity tariff is killing agriculture, production, and exports while bankrupting the people, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that if the electricity tariff is not reduced immediately, the economy will go down at an unprecedented pace. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the electricity sector has become a big problem for the people and the business community. Reforms and reduced production costs have become necessary for the electricity industry. He said, adding that the price of gas and fuel is continuously increasing while the interest rate is also at a record level, due to which local exporters are not able to compete in the international market and rival countries are replacing them. Mian Zahid Hussain said that until the price of electricity, gas, and interest rates are reduced, there is no possibility of increasing production and exports. The business leader said that the exchange rate is going out of control due to which inflation is increasing again, and the fiscal deficit and current account deficit are also snowballing due to which the value of the currency is depreciating rapidly. Remittances are also coming down significantly and have decreased by seven percent in July, due to which the deficit is increasing, he added. He said that now people are hoarding dollars again as it is widely believed that the local currency will depreciate further, and in these circumstances, economic stability will prove to be a challenge for the current caretaker government. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the current account deficit reached eight hundred million dollars in the month of July after being in surplus for four months, which is difficult to control because the government has promised IMF to lift the ban on imports. As a result, after a 30 percent increase in imports in July, they have reached five billion dollars.

## Nutrition misinformation and health issues

UZMA SIRAJ

Sana 21 years old was a healthy and full of life girl six months ago but suddenly one day in the morning when she was going to university she fell on the floor and fainted. Her mother Mrs. Ahmed while crying said that I don't know what happened with my baby.

When doctor checked Sana he told her parents that there is shortage of glucose, iron and other deficiency in her body due to strict diet. Sana on bed also admitted that she has been taking some diet pills for the last few months from a social media site which claimed that it is very good for immediate weight loss. Besides, she was also on strict diet. It is fact that many consumers are taking personal health

and nutrition decisions into their own hand. This was revealed by an interview Dr. Qamar in an interview. He said that consumers take nutrition's information from different sources including websites, television, radio, newspapers, advertisements, friends, and family which later cause serious nutrition misinformation and health fraud. When we asked what is this health fraud He Informed that Health fraud is defined as misrepresentation of health claims and can range from a self-proclaimed medical expert who has discovered so-called "miracle cure," to a food supplement or drug that is promoted with standard health claims. A Homeopathic practitioner Faqeer Idress in Islamabad said Fad Diets are unusual diets and eating patterns that promote short-term weight loss. These diets are often

trendy and may be beneficial for short periods of time and have not affected for long-term weight maintenance or overall health. Examples include the "grapefruit diet" or "low carb diet." In short nutrition misinformation and health fraud are major causes of many health issues.

On the other hand, famous showbiz personality Saman Bukhari said nutrition misinformation is not supported by science and may be misleading, incomplete and baseless information. It is very difficult for a consumer to differentiate between right and wrong information.

A Pharmaceutical Saleem Jhang said weight-loss schemes and devices are the most popular form of fraud. Weight-loss is a multibillion dollar industry that includes books, fad diets, drugs, special foods, and weight-loss clinics.

Some products or treatments may lead to weight-loss, but the effect is usually temporary. In addition, fad diets may not provide adequate calories or nutrients and can be harmful. Besides, most dietary supplements are not reviewed and tested by the government before they are placed on the market. On the other hand, owner of Exotic Gym Islamabad Mrs. Niazi said the only way to lose weight effectively and safely is to increase activity while decreasing food intakes and consume health food. She said it is better to consult a registered dietician or medical professional to determine a safe and effective weight loss program. Dr. Qammar Siddiqui, health Expert in Islamabad said government plays an important role in addressing lifestyle behaviors and population health, reducing health disparities and chronic

disease. Areas for government involvement include surveillance, research, programming, access to health care, quality assurance and guidelines for diet and physical activity.

When contacted an official of Ministry of National Food Security & Research said government has taken serious notice in this regard and taking various measures to stop of online sale of such life threatening and fad nutrients. It has directed PTA to keep check on such misleading messages and websites which damage health of masses. It has also started various awareness programmes so that people do not get involved in such activities and frauds. On the other hand, an official of PTA said that it is a government responsibility to provide clear information on foods and nutrition.

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## ANF seizes 620 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 23 operations across the country managed to recover 620 kg drugs and 1193 kg prohibited chemical besides netting 30 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 620 kg drugs including 575 kg hashish, 38 kg opium, 5.5 kg Ice drug and 2 kg heroin were recovered during the operations. The spokesman further informed that in an operation conducted near Mandi Mor Pirwadhai, Rawalpindi, two accused residents of Peshawar were arrested with 36 kg opium, 32.4 kg hashish and 2 kg heroin. In another raid, 36 kg hashish was recovered from bus intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad. During the operation, two accused residents of Quetta and Shingla were arrested. In third operation, over 2.5 kg Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a Saudi Arabia-bound passenger resident of Toba Tek Singh, going on flight number FZ-332, netted at Jinnah International Airport. In fourth operation conducted near Al-Asif Square Karachi, 173 kg hashish was recovered from secret cavities of a vehicle. Two accused residents of Karachi were also arrested during the operation.--APP

## Jamal Shah for facilitating children with local literature

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah on Monday stressed the importance of facilitating children with local literature and storytelling to arise their interest in reading to enhance their intellectual caliber as juvenile literature played crucial part in education providing both knowledge and entertainment. The Minister made these remarks during his visit to National Library of Pakistan (NLP) and Department of Museum and Archeology (DOAM) to review the working and performance of the attached departments of the division. On the occasion, Director General NLP Asif Iqbal Khan gave a detailed overview of history, functioning, performance and future plans of the NLP. Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah underscored that proper ramps should be established for the facilitation of differently-abled person at National Library. He said that his division would adopt all measures to equip the library with modern facilities. Later, the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah presided over a meeting to review the progress on various projects of DOAM. Secretary National Heritage and Culture, Humaira Ahmed and other senior officials were also present in the meeting. The DOAM officials informed the meeting that 38 Archeological sites and monuments have been identified in Islamabad Capital Territory. Later, the minister also visited Islamabad Museum at Sir Syed Memorial.--APP

## Police arrest 11 gamblers

RAWALPINDI: The district police arrested 11 gamblers and recovered Rs 18,400 stake money, four mobile phones, and valuables from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Monday. He informed that Waris Khan police conducted a raid and arrested 11 gamblers namely Majid, Dania, Moheed Khan, Jameel, Ramzan, Shah Nawaz, Waqas, Kashif, Bahadur Ali, Adil and, Shehreyar 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, Rawal Paisal Saleem said that gambling was the root cause of other evils and those involved in such crimes did not deserve any concession.--APP

## Briefs

## HRCP to conduct consultation on child labour

ISLAMABAD: The Human Rights Commission Pakistan (HRCP) will conduct a consultation on child labour on Tuesday. HRCP official Muhammad Asif told APP that deliberation aimed to discuss the factors leading to child labour in domestic work, the laws pertaining to this practice and types of exploitation that children faced in this line of work. He added that according to a 2022 study conducted by the International Labour Organization, one in every four households in Pakistan employs a child in domestic work, mostly between 10 and 14 years of age. While there are laws prohibiting the employment of children below a certain age, the weak implementation of these laws, as well as social and cultural acceptance of the practice, has led to many children being employed in domestic work. HRCP would also seek recommendations to curb this human rights abuse, based on insights from participants, including activists for children's rights, state representatives, lawyers and subject experts, he added.

## Exports increase by 17.68 percent to Rs.581.102 bln in July 2023

ISLAMABAD: Exports from the country in rupee term witnessed an increase of 17.68 percent during the month of July 2023 as compared to the same month of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. Exports during July 2023 were recorded at Rs.581,102 million as against Rs. 493,786 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 17.68 percent, according to provisional data released by PBS. On month-on-month basis, the exports however decreased by 13.95 percent when compared to the exports of Rs. 675,280 million in June 2023. The main commodities of exports during July, 2023 were knitwear (Rs. 102,439 million), readymade garments (Rs. 77,202 million), bed wear (Rs. 60,953 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 39,604 million), cotton yarn (Rs.27,266 million), rice other than Basmati (Rs.21,848 million), towels (Rs.20,448 million), madeup articles, excluding towels & bedwear (Rs.14,342 million), rice basmati (Rs.11,059 million) and fruits (Rs.10,045 million). On the other hand, imports into Pakistan during July, 2023 amounted to Rs. 1,041,138 million as against Rs. 1,209,177 million in June, 2023 and Rs. 1,093,124 million during July, 2022 showing a decrease of 13.90% over June, 2023 and of 4.76% over July, 2022.—APP

## Tourists advised to use KKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) on Monday advised the tourists and travellers venturing into the Northern Areas of the country to use Karakoram Highway (KKH) to avoid any inconvenience and untoward situation. According to an advisory of the PTDC, Babusar Gilgit-Baltistan Road was closed for all kind of traffic due to recent floods that submerged a major portion of the thoroughfare leading to the scenic tourism magnet. Babusar Road at Jal (Chalas) had been closed due to the flood, whereas the tourists were going to Gilgit via Babusar road. For more information, guidance or any emergency, the tourists and travellers should contact Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Kite Project Helpline-1422 to get fresh updates about weather, road and flood situation. The travellers enjoy concurrently seeing the mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Kashmir when passing via Babusar Pass. Babusar Top, which is located at a height of 13,700 feet above sea level is one of the most visited tourism site in the Northern Areas.—APP

## Police take action against hate speech on social media

Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan also urged citizens to abstain from engaging in activities that propagate hatred or disseminate misinformation about institutions through social media

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police's Violent Extremism Prevention unit has significantly ramped up its efforts to combat the dissemination of religious, sectarian, linguistic hatred, and propaganda against institutions on various social media platforms. In response to explicit directives from Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the spokesperson of Islamabad police revealed that the Violent Extremism Prevention unit conducted comprehensive surveillance of social media channels, identifying over 700 accounts on platforms like Twitter,

Facebook, and others that were actively disseminating materials related to religious extremism and terrorism. Subsequently, the unit liaised with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to advocate for the suspension of these accounts, resulting in the blocking of more than 200 of them. The ICCPO, expressed the unit's unwavering commitment to combating extremism without bias and underscored its swift response in addressing individuals who promote hateful ideologies on social media platforms. Furthermore, he emphasized that the es-

tablishment of this groundbreaking anti-extremism unit within the Islamabad Capital Police underscored the city's unwavering dedication to comprehensively addressing the threat of extremism.

Alongside proactive engagement with educational institutions, seminaries, and places of worship to counter extremist narratives, the unit maintains a vigilant watch over social media and websites for content promoting political, linguistic, sectarian, and religious extremism. This unit stands as the first of its kind in Pakistan, established within the ranks

of the Islamabad Capital Police under the leadership of ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan. Its recent inauguration was officiated by the National Coordinator NACTA. Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan also urged citizens to abstain from engaging in activities that propagate hatred or disseminate misinformation about institutions through social media. He stated, "The Islamabad Capital Police encourages individuals to promptly report any such activities, thereby supporting our ongoing efforts to maintain peace and safeguard the lives and property of our citizens."



ISLAMABAD: Auditor General Pakistan Ajmal Gondal presenting annual report to the President of Pakistan.—DNA

## 'Redressing traders grievances a top priority'

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Monday appreciated the significant role of business community in the socio-economic development of the state and determined that the problems being faced by the traders community would be resolved on priority. He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of the Central Association of Trade Unions of Azad Jammu Kashmir (CATU) that called on him here. The prime minister said that the government would leave no stone unturned to resolving the problems of the business community across in the liberated territory. The government was cognizant of the traders' role and their selfless contribution to the society, he added. Maintaining the rule of law, he said, was among the top priorities of his government, he added. Stressing the need for across the board accountability, the prime minister said that rule of law was the fundamental re-

quirement to achieve prosperity and progress. "All citizens of the state, regardless of their status in society, are equal before the law", he said, adding that the accountability right from top to bottom level had been started so that no one expected any kind of concession. He said that the government's only mission was to provide the best facilities for the public through effective and transparent use of government resources. He said that the government's job was to ensure the welfare of the people. The prime minister said that he was not accustomed to making false promises, adding "No one can be allowed to cross the ideological boundaries". "The law will take its own course", he said, adding that whoever challenges the writ of the state would be held accountable. He, however, maintained that peaceful protest was the constitutional right of every citizen. He made it clear that the state would never allow anyone to cross

the limits under any pretext. "There is not a single political prisoner in Azad Kashmir", he pointed out. Regarding the provision of electricity to households, the prime minister said that currently 2368 megawatts of electricity were being provided while there was a potential of 12 to 13 thousand megawatts. He lamented that 75% of electricity bills were not being paid by the consumers. Referring to the subsidy given on flour, the prime minister said that the government spent a huge chunk of money on subsidy (nearly a billion per month). The delegation led by its President Sardar Abdul Razaq Khan was comprised of Vice President Sohail Shuja Mujahid, Secretary General Sardar Waseem Khurshid, Central Spokesperson Raja Rafakat Hussain, Sardar Abid Abbasi, Chaudhry Muhammad Akram, Sheikh Arshad Ayub, Sardar Shahid Khurshid, Sardar Irshad Khan, Rashid Latif, Malik Haseeb, Malik Fayyaz Ahmed and others.—APP

## UNICEF Country head calls on Health Minister

ISLAMABAD: UNICEF Representative in Pakistan Abdullah Fadi called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Monday and discussed issues related to the health sector. During the meeting, the UNICEF Country Chief congratulated the Minister for Health on assuming this important responsibility. Dr. Nadeem Jan appreciated UNICEF's services in the health sector. UNICEF has supported Pakistan in every difficult time, said Dr. Nadeem Jan. "We will endeavour to bring effective and exemplary improvements in a short span of time," he said.—APP

## PR charges officials concerned to recover outstanding dues

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Railways has charged its officials concerned to initiate the procedure to recover outstanding dues from the federal and provincial departments, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP on Monday. The Ministry of Railways has asked the federal and provincial departments to pay their outstanding dues worth billion of rupees on account of using its land and other services, within least possible time as the department was facing economic issues. About the amount payable against the different departments, the official said that over Rs 8,375million (over 8 billion) are payable by different departments on account of using its land and various services. He said the federal departments had to pay an amount of Rs 709.084 million, provincial departments Rs1980.217 million and autonomous and private bodies Rs 5685.736 million. To a question, he said Pakistan Railways has upgraded as many as 167 vulnerable un-manned level crossings to manned level crossings, out of 550 which are identified by the department over the entire railway network. "The relevant provincial government provided the finances to Pakistan Railways for the upgradation of un-manned level crossings in the country," he added. He said the department was taking several steps including the up-gradation of un-manned and vulnerable railway level crossings across the country in collaboration with respective provincial governments. The official said there were two types of level crossings over the Pakistan Railways network, un-manned and manned level crossings, adding that the un-manned level crossings were without gate leaves. "There are a total of 1,565 un-manned level crossings over the entire railway network and as per railway policy in vogue, the up-gradation of any un-manned or manned level crossing is the responsibility of road owning authority," he added. He said that a joint survey of Pakistan Railways and the Provincial Government was also conducted in 2013-14 to identify accident-prone/vulnerable un-manned level crossings across the country. The official said that it also mentioned Section 12 of the Railway Act of 1890 that the district administration or road authority should bear the expenses for the upgrade of these un-manned level crossings.—APP

## APHC for release of Kashmiri detainees

He maintained the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir are proud of Hurriyat leaders and activists, who are either in jails or striving on ground for achieving a peaceful and sustainable solution to the Kashmir dispute under UN resolutions

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has appealed to the United Nations and international human rights organizations to put pressure on India to release all Kashmiri political detainees including APHC leadership stuffed under inhuman conditions in jails of India and the occupied territory. The APHC spokesman in a statement issued in Srinagar said India cannot suppress the freedom sentiment of the Kashmiri people through illegal detentions, arrests and harassment, Kashmir Media Service reported. Expressing his deep concern over the plight of Kashmiri detainees, he said that most of these detainees had spent more than two decades in jails. He said some of these detainees include Dr. Muhammad Shafi Shariati, Dr. Mohammad Qasim Fakhtoo, Gulam Qadir Butt, Nazir Ahmad Sheikh, Mohammad Ayub Dar, Mohammad Ayub Mir, Javed Ahmad Khan, Feroz Ahmed Dar, Abdul Hameed Tailee, Tariq Ahmed Mattoo, Mahmood Topi Wala, Bashir Ahmad Pannu, Fayyaz Ahmed, Sharifuddin-Gujjar, Muhammad Ashraf Peer, Khalid Mehboob Phalwan, Maqsood Ahmed Bhat, Pervaiz Ahmed Mir, Mohammad Abbas Wani, Farooq Ahmad Sheikh, Abdul Waheed, Abdul Rasheed Mir and Fahdullah. The APHC spokesman said thousands of illegally detained APHC leaders, activists and youth including APHC chairman, Masarrat Aalam Butt, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Muhammad Yasin Maik, Nayeem Ahmad Khan, Aasiya Andrabi, Ayaz Akbar, Shahid-ul-Islam, Merajuddin Kalwal, Peer Saifullah, Farooq Ahmad Dar, Fehmeeda Sofi, Naheeda Nasreen, Dr Hameed Fayaz, Maulana Abdul Majid Dar, Maulana Mushtaq Veeri, Abdul Rashid Doowoodi, Maulana Abdul Wahid Kishitwari, Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Molvi Bashir Ahmad Irfani, Bilal Siddiqi, Ameer Hamza, Muhammad Yousuf Mir, Mohammad Rafiq Gana, Muhammad Yousuf Fallahi, Showket Hakeem, Mohammad Hayat Bhat, Mehrjudin Nanda, Eng Rashid, Asif Sultan, Fahad Shah and HR activist Khurram Parvaiz are subjected to worst physical torture and biased behaviour in the jails of India and the occupied territory. He pointed out that despite continued detention and physical and mental torture, the morale of all Hurriyat leaders and activists was high and they were ready to render any sacrifice for the Kashmir cause. He maintained the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir are proud of Hurriyat leaders and activists, who are either in jails or striving on ground for achieving a peaceful and sustainable solution to the Kashmir dispute under UN resolutions.—APP

## Pakistan earns \$2,605 million from IT services'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$2,605.340 million by providing different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the twelve months of the fiscal year 2022-23. This shows a nominal decline of 0.53 percent as compared to US \$2,619.100 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding period of the fiscal year 2021-22, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During July-June (2022-23), the export of computer services grew by 0.08 percent as it surged from US \$2,109.370 million last fiscal year to US \$2,110.990 million year under review. Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed a decrease of 4.36 percent, from US \$795.464 million to US \$760.780 million while the exports of hardware consultancy services however increased by 87.97 percent from, US \$2.918 million to US \$5.485 million. The export and import of computer software-related services also rose by 5.58 percent, from US \$566.393 million to US \$598.020 million whereas the exports of repair and maintenance services surge to \$2.855 million from \$1.446 million. In addition, the exports of other computer services increased by 0.09 percent going up from US\$ 743.149 million to US \$743.850 million. Meanwhile, the export of information technology services during the period under review increased by 5.54 percent by going up from US \$5.230 million to US \$5.520 million. Among the information services, the exports of news agency services increased by 3.94 percent, from US \$ 3.448 million to US \$3.584 million whereas the exports.—DNA



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## Vietnam trip heralds more troublemaking

EARLIER this month, US President Joe Biden said he would be traveling to Vietnam "shortly" because the country wanted to elevate its relationship with the United States. According to reports, he is planning to do so in mid-September with the intention of signing a strategic partnership agreement with Hanoi. The agreement will allow for new bilateral collaboration that will boost Vietnam's efforts to develop its high-tech sector in areas such as semiconductor production and artificial intelligence. The more salient, if unspoken, purposes are to strengthen the US' grip on semiconductor production and the implementation of its "Indo-Pacific" strategy, which is all about suppressing China and containing its influence in the region. It is an established tactic of the Biden administration to try and stoke tensions between China and its neighbors, so as to draw the latter closer to the US. If such an agreement is signed, it will mark a significant improvement in US-Vietnam ties, paving the way for closer diplomatic, economic and technological cooperation between them. There is also some conjecture that the US could increase weapon supplies to Vietnam and strengthen its military cooperation with the country.

Such a prospect may bolster Biden's image at home and gain some political capital for him to leverage for the presidential election next year. However, even US experts and officials do not believe that Washington can turn Hanoi against Beijing. High-ranking Vietnamese officials have repeatedly pledged that Vietnam gives top priority to its relations with Beijing.

Two months ago in Beijing, visiting Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh told his Chinese hosts that his country opposes the politicization of economic issues and will never allow any force to drive a wedge between the two neighbors. Hence, it is clear Vietnam does not want to take sides in the US' strategic competition against China. As China has repeatedly pointed out, the US maneuvering is by no means some kind of blessing for the region, but instead a symptom of its pathological need to disrupt regional peace and stability. Countries in the region should remain on high alert to the US' actions as they run counter to the common aspirations of the region for peace, development, cooperation and win-win outcomes. To salvage its waning reputation and influence, the US should cease its attempts to make trouble in the region, and instead demonstrate leadership for the common good of all countries in the region.

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## Politicizing nuclear nonproliferation

IN yet another blow to the already souring bilateral relations, the Joe Biden administration has tightened controls on the export of materials and components for nuclear power plants to China on the spurious grounds that it would help prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Bureau of Industry and Security, an arm of the US Commerce Department, requires exporters to obtain specific licenses to export certain generators, containers and software intended for use in nuclear plants in China. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the federal agency responsible for nuclear energy safety, also requires exporters to get specific licenses to export special nuclear material and source material. The set of restrictions are being rolled out after the Biden administration issued a ban early this month on new US investments in China targeting artificial intelligence, advanced semiconductors and quantum technologies, in addition to the wide range of economic and trade sanctions against China that are already in place.

China is the only nuclear-armed country in the world that commits itself to a no first-use of nuclear weapons policy, and it has always remained a steadfast supporter of the international nonproliferation regime. By suggesting China is not honoring its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the United States is trying to extend the geopolitical conflict with China to the nuclear nonproliferation sector at the expense of global nuclear security. The move only serves to further squeeze the room for any possible improvement in Sino-US relations. One cannot but wonder whether the Biden administration is being sincere when it says it wants to manage relations with China, which it has done on numerous occasions. China and the US have engaged in extensive nuclear energy cooperation over the past several decades, with four Westinghouse Electric Company units using AP1000 technology already in operation in China. The company is now proceeding with the construction of four additional AP1000 reactors in China. The former Donald Trump administration had already issued restrictions on exports of nuclear reactor technology more advanced than the AP1000 in 2018, citing proliferation concerns. The additional restrictions imposed by Washington will only bring more uncertainty to future China-US nuclear cooperation. China remains the world's largest market for nuclear power plants, with plans to build dozens of new nuclear reactors by 2035, with the aim that nuclear power accounts for 10 percent of the country's total power production, as compared with 5 percent at present. Further US restrictions will only hurt the interests of US nuclear companies, and compromise the global green agenda to deal with climate change.

## Jaranwala incident - moving beyond condemnation

Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi



When the Army Public School incident occurred, the state assigned itself the duty to address not the symptoms—terror-related incidents—but the cause—extremism—in society. The awakening to this realization was formulated into a National Action Plan. It was a 20-point agenda agreed upon by all the political and religious parties and fringe elements as an appropriate policy response to thrust back rising tides of terrorism

IN a single day on 16 August 2023, around 19 churches in Jaranwala were ransacked. The mob rampaged through the prominent Christian areas of the city to accomplish its dastardly mission, which had begun on the pretext of defiling of Holy Quran by two Christian brothers. The vigilante mob had gathered strength from the neighborhood by playing into their religious emotions that demanded that an act of blasphemy be responded to with equal force. According to the report, an announcement was made through a mosque calling upon the faithful to take revenge not from the two brothers who were blamed for desecrating Quran but from their entire community—from its children, its women, and its elders. In no time, the city was engulfed in hatred emanating from a story that had neither been investigated nor reported to the police. Unfortunately, by the time the police took control of the situation, the damage had been done. If reports from the crime scene are to be believed, the police allowed the game of hate to take place without intervention. Moreover, like always, not until the news broke out on national media did the police gather muscle to make a foray.

Until now, hundreds of miscreants have been hauled up, along with the two brothers blamed for dishonoring Quranic pages. The Jaranwala incident is part of a series of violent acts perpetrated on minorities in the name of religion. The way the drama unfolded, it is convenient to blame the external forces to have manipulated the event to nudge Pakistan towards a failed state emblem further. I cannot rule out the probability that Pakistan's foes, both within and without, may have scripted this bloody theatre. However, I cannot also turn my sight away from the failure of Pakistan as a state to prevent such incidents from happening, either. As part of the Pakistan Ulema Council's mission to strengthen interfaith harmony in Pakistan, we hurriedly managed to contain the situation from spilling

further. We rallied Christian leadership from across Pakistan and jointly condemned the incident.

We resolved not to allow such incidents to sever our relations as one nation—Christians and Muslims. However, this is a patchwork that we, as the propeller of interfaith harmony, have been doing whenever such a situation arises. The real work is to originate from the state. Only then will we be able to end such incidents? The unforgivable part of this entire story is the ease with which the people's religious feelings were manipulated, just like it was easy to manipulate their religious sentiments four decades back. We have not progressed in building character in our nation. Would I be wrong to assert that this country is a group of people lacking a common objective that helps in character building?

When the Army Public School incident occurred, the state assigned itself the duty to address not the symptoms—terror-related incidents—but the cause—extremism—in society. The awakening to this realization was formulated into a National Action Plan. It was a 20-point agenda agreed upon by all the political and religious parties and fringe elements as an appropriate policy response to thrust back the rising tides of terrorism. Under the plan, a constitutional amendment was made to allow the Pakistan army to trial the terrorists in the military courts with an apparent objective of turning the wheel of justice in the right direction. Many terrorists were hanged to death; terror financing was choked, proscribed organizations were restricted from raising themselves in new attire; registration and regulation of religious seminaries were carried out with effective results; FATA was merged into KP, the use of social media in terror assistance was stemmed, militancy in Punjab was brought down, Karachi operation was completed successfully with the result that target killing was reduced to zero, sectarian violence had almost diminished, though belatedly NACTA was revived. The dissemination of hate material through newspa-

pers, media, and other sources was controlled, and the media was restricted from giving airtime to terror-related activities. I must say that Pakistan.

Army did a tremendous job assisting the civilian government in lending wings to the NAP. Nevertheless, despite all the successes, our failure to revamp the criminal justice system of Pakistan—one of the 20 points NAP agenda—had rendered weak the entire edifice of the National Action Plan. The criminal justice system is a formation of multiple pillars, such as academia, law enforcement, forensic services, the judiciary, and corrections. They support the idea of legal justice to protect the citizens' life and property and ensure the implementation of law and order. Since the Jaranwala incident, I have repeatedly said that had we tried and given exemplary punishment to the culprits of the Gojra and Joseph colony incident, we might have stopped yet another attack on minorities.

I would urge the government of Pakistan to focus on creating a system whereby people are educated about blasphemy and how it should be approached. Training people on how to react if their religious sentiments are attacked is required. Congregational setups such as Juma prayers and church masses should be used to highlight the importance of interfaith harmony. The Pakistan Ulema Council has formed a high-level committee of 20 members, which includes senior religious leadership from Christian and Muslim communities. This committee aims to probe the reasons for the Jaranwala incident in light of previous happenings to identify gaps and recommend measures to bridge them. Over the last year, there has been a considerable reduction in incidents related to blasphemy. Therefore, the sudden spike is both worrisome and detrimental to the future. The sense of community is as important as trust in the justice system of a country for the society to progress. It is time to move on from mere condemnation to address core issues.

## Alvi's Tweet that created a storm...

Qamar Bashir



Ms. Shireen Rehman of the PPP didn't hold back in her critique, going so far as to question the President's competence and suggesting that an inability to manage his own staff renders him unfit to govern the country. She pressed for his immediate resignation, a sentiment echoed by leaders from both the PPP and PML(N) during their tweets and talk shows. However, a contrasting stance emerged from the PTI camp. PTI spokesperson and lawyer Shoaib Shaheen, along with Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, President of PILDAT, took a different perspective

IN a stunning revelation that sent shockwaves through the already turbulent landscape of the country's political and legal arena, the President of Pakistan took to Twitter to vehemently disavow his consent for the Official Secrets Amendment Bill 2023 & Pakistan Army Amendment Bill 2023. With unwavering clarity, he laid bare that his trust had been exploited by his own subordinates, who cunningly maneuvered an unapproved bill past him, subsequent to the stipulated deadline. This deceitful act was then manipulated by the government as a seal of approval. Tragically, these bills were swiftly enshrined into law upon their publication in the official gazette, wielding immediate effect. The repercussions reverberated with unremitting force, as a flurry of arrests ensued, actions that might never have materialized if the bills had not been improperly sanctioned. The President's comprehensive tweet, an exposé of monumental proportions, stirred a maelstrom within the already turbulent waters of the nation's political and legal fabric. The stunning tweet is reproduced hereunder: "As God is my witness, I did not sign Official Secrets Amendment Bill 2023 & Pakistan Army Amendment Bill 2023 as I disagreed with these laws. I asked my staff to return the bills unsigned within stipulated time to make them ineffective. I confirmed from them many times that whether they have been returned & was assured that they were. However I have found out today that my staff undermined my will and command. As Allah knows all, He will forgive IA. But I ask forgiveness from those who will be effected". The tweet was fully loaded, generating many interpretations, hinting that the President's words stood solitary, and only Allah was the witness to President's real intentions. Ironically, these very words inadvertently bared the President's authentic intentions, desires, and mindset. Nestled within his discourse were two pivotal declarations: a steadfast assertion that he had refrained from affixing his signature to the contentious bills and a categorical dissent encompassing the entirety of their provisions. These declarative punches cast a shadow of suspicion over the legality and legitimacy of these newly minted laws, fostering an environment ripe for intricate constitutional and legal complexities to unfurl in the days ahead.

Within those lines to many, a tacit acceptance seemed to emerge—acceptance that both bills, whether justly or unjustly, had metamorphosed into Acts. This revelation was accompanied by a stark realization, a reckoning with the impending consequences that would ripple through the lives of countless citizens, with the President inadvertently owning a substantial portion of their ensuing agony. A subsequent utterance served to reaffirm the President's stance, painting his decision as a conscientious one guided by a bond with a higher power. He professed his alignment with Allah's knowledge of his unwavering reluctance to endorse these bills, thus invoking the hope of divine forgiveness for his ostensibly overbearing action. In this same breath, he extended a heartfelt plea for clemency from those currently bearing the brunt of these legislations, as well as those who might be ensnared in its web in the days

to come, until a future assembly can revise or revoke these legal constructs. In an artful transition, the narrative's trajectory redirected blame towards the President's subordinates, painting them as orchestrators of a deceptive ploy that bore two distinct accusations. Firstly, they allegedly fabricated a falsehood, assuring him that the bills had been dispatched before the stipulated deadline, resulting in their nullification. Secondly, these individuals purportedly brazenly flouted the President's explicit directives.

The contentious tweet cast a shadow of doubt over the legality of both bills, igniting a fervent storm within the media, legal circles, and political echelons. As various stakeholders interpreted the bills through their unique lenses, biases, and vested interests, a cacophony of opinions reverberated. In response, the government's spokesperson took an unequivocal stance, dismissing the tweet's significance and legal validity. Meanwhile, Mr. Ahmad Irfan Aslam, the caretaker federal minister of law, who in a different phase of life shared sunlit conversations, contended that the President's options were limited under Article 48(1) of the constitution. The President could either sanction the bill or offer written recommendations for comprehensive amendments. The constitution stipulated a 15-day window for the President's decision. Failure to either sign the bill or return it within this timeframe would lead to the automatic validation of the bill as an act. In the current scenario, where the bill had not been signed or returned for reconsideration within the designated 15 days, the President's belated tweet was deemed inconsequential—a retroactive gesture with no power to alter the course of events.

Ms. Shireen Rehman of the PPP didn't hold back in her critique, going so far as to question the President's competence and suggesting that an inability to manage his own staff renders him unfit to govern the country. She pressed for his immediate resignation, a sentiment echoed by leaders from both the PPP and PML(N) during their tweets and talk shows. However, a contrasting stance emerged from the PTI camp. PTI spokesperson and lawyer Shoaib Shaheen, along with Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, President of PILDAT, took a different perspective. They highlighted that the President's candid expression of his disagreement with the bills, coupled with his purported instruction for them to be returned unsigned within the stipulated period, warranted prompt action from the government. In their view, the bills should be withdrawn and denotified. This would initiate a fresh legislative process, necessitating presentation to the forthcoming assembly and senate. Should these bodies pass the bills once again, the President's assent would be sought. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob further escalated the discourse, challenging the President to summon the entire chain of command from the relevant section for an explanation. He asserted that strict disciplinary measures, as sanctioned by the law, should be meted out to those officers who intentionally flouted the President's explicit directives. This proposal effectively laid down the gauntlet, urging accountability for those who deviated from established protocol. In the current aftermath, with substantial repercussions hav-

ing already unfolded, the President possesses a strategic set of options. Operating within the framework of Article 48(2), he wields discretionary power to make decisions on matters granted to him by the Constitution. Importantly, actions taken by the President in his discretionary capacity are shielded from challenge on any grounds whatsoever, ensuring the validity of his course of action remains intact. This provision allows the President a measure of latitude to navigate the situation while remaining within the bounds of his constitutional authority. Indeed, by invoking this power, the President has a strategic avenue at his disposal. He could dispatch a letter to the Prime Minister, and if necessary, to the Senate Chairman or the Speaker of the National Assembly. These letters would outline the circumstances wherein the bills were meant to be returned unsigned by the due date, per his explicit instructions, with the sole purpose of rendering them ineffective. This communication would clearly express his dissent and disagreement with both bills.

Subsequently, the President could argue that, in both instances, his dissent and rejection should be considered as having been issued prior to the deadline for returning the bills to the Prime Minister. This maneuver would effectively create a legal instrument. Given that the President's unequivocal orders are immune from legal challenge, the government's options to withdraw the notifications and halt the enactment of the laws would be limited. Should the government decline to adhere to the President's advice, those adversely affected could resort to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. This avenue would allow them to seek an immediate stay order, effectively halting the implementation of the contested laws. Subsequently, they could seek a court ruling that compels the government to withdraw the notifications and reverse any actions taken under the auspices of these laws.

This legal recourse would be grounded in the authority of the judiciary to uphold constitutional principles and ensure proper governance. In tandem with the strategic moves outlined earlier, it would be prudent for the President to initiate swift disciplinary proceedings. He could direct the Establishment Division to commence actions against the civilian chain of command involved in the episode. Similarly, the Ministry of Defence could be instructed to undertake parallel proceedings under the Military Act against the armed forces staff who willfully disregarded the President's explicit directives. The gravity of this situation, with implications on national security, the political terrain, and even the fundamental rights enshrined in Articles 7 to 40 of the Constitution of Pakistan, underscores the need for robust action. By pursuing disciplinary proceedings, the President would not only assert his authority and commitment to accountability but also lay the groundwork for addressing any potential infringement on constitutional rights. This multi-faceted approach ensures that both the immediate crisis and its broader implications are addressed effectively and comprehensively.

## Briefs

## Alvi wants secretary removed

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He accused his staff of not only deceiving him but also undermining his authority, effectively concealing the fact that the bills had not been returned. Meanwhile, the Presidential Tweet has triggered heated debate in the country whether the President action was in line with the legal and provisions. Some legal experts are of the view that the President must have given his view before returning the bill. In other cases, the President had given his comments in detail before referring the bills back to the Parliament for review. But in this case he did not do it. Some legal experts are of the view that a bill cannot become law until and unless it is duly signed by the President. The bill can only become law when it was returned to the parliament and then the joint sitting of the parliament again approved the bill and sent to the President for his consent. In this case if the President does not act within 10 days then it can become a law.

## Secretary terms 'allegations' as baseless

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Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023. Waqar Ahmed clarified that he has no role in making any delay or neglecting the president's orders and he is ready to record his statement. He demanded the president to withdraw orders for transferring his services to the Establishment Division. He revealed in his letter that President Alvi did not issue any written order regarding the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023. He added that he wrote the letter to publicise the facts. The principal secretary claimed that the president has neither signed the bills nor issued a written order to return the bills unsigned. He further revealed that both bills were not received by the secretary's office till today. Prior to Ahmed's letter today, the President's Secretariat said the services of Secretary Waqar Ahmed were "no more required".

## SC to take up Khan's plea on...

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another court and said that Additional Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar would hear the case. On October 21, 2022, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) maintained that the former prime minister made "false statements" and "incorrect declarations" about the gifts and disqualified him under Article 63(1)(p) of the Constitution. Subsequently, the election watchdog moved the sessions court to the federal capital. It sought criminal proceedings against the PTI chief for allegedly misleading the ECP regarding gifts received from foreign dignitaries while he was in office. The PTI chief was indicted in the case on May 10, while his petition to declare the case inadmissible was rejected by the court. On July 4, the IHC overturned the same ruling and directed the sessions court to hear the petitioner and decide the matter within seven days.

## FIA gets Qureshi's 4-day remand

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At the outset of the hearing, the FIA prosecutor sought Qureshi's 13-day physical remand for the recovery of the alleged missing cipher while his counsel Shoaib Shaheen opposed the FIA's plea. The FIA prosecutor informed the court that incarcerated PTI chief Imran Khan was also interrogated in connection with the investigation into the case at Attock jail, the sources said. After hearing the arguments, the court reserved the verdict on FIA's plea.

## Eyes on bigger prizes as Pak, Afghan series begins

"These three matches are a good opportunity for us to test our players in the match situation," Azam told AFP. Azam is the top-ranked ODI batsman and leads a strong side that also boasts openers Fakhar Zaman and Imamul Haq – ranked three and four, respectively

## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan face Afghanistan in a three-match one-day international series in Sri Lanka starting on Tuesday, with skipper Babar Azam seeing it as good preparation for the Asia Cup and World Cup. The first bilateral ODI series between the two teams will be followed by the six-nation Asia Cup, in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, beginning on August 30 and the World Cup in India from October 5. It is a home series for Afghanistan who cannot stage international cricket in their own country because of security fears. "These three matches are a good opportunity for us to test our players in the match situation," Azam told AFP. Azam is the top-ranked ODI batsman and leads a strong side that also boasts openers Fakhar Zaman and Imamul Haq – ranked three and



four, respectively. They are backed up by a potent pace attack of Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf. Afghanistan has world-class spinner Rashid Khan fit again after he withdrew from The Hundred competition in England. "Afghanistan have developed into a good side," said Azam of a team which beat Bangladesh 2-1 in an ODI series last month. "We are not going to take these matches lightly," said Azam, despite Pakistan having won all four ODIs against Afghanistan since the countries first met in 2012. "We have good players who can deal with spin bowling so it is going to be an exciting series," Azam said. Afghanistan are captained by batsman Hashmatullah Shahidi and have new faces in fast bowlers Abdul Rahman, Mohammad Saleem Safi and Wafadar Mo-mand. Tuesday's match is being played in Hambantota, with the remaining two in Colombo on Thursday and Saturday.

## Djokovic defeats Alcaraz to win Cincinnati Open

Djokovic won a record-extending 39th ATP Masters 1000 title

CINCINNATI: Novak Djokovic avenged his Wimbledon final defeat to Carlos Alcaraz by beating the Spaniard in just under four hours to win the Cincinnati Open. The Serb survived match point in the second set before going on to win 5-7 7-6 (9-7) 7-6 (7-4). Top seed Alcaraz beat Djokovic in five sets in last month's Wimbledon final. "The feeling that I have on the court reminds me a little bit of when I was facing [Rafael] Nadal when we were at our prime," Djokovic said. "I don't think I've played too many matches like this in my life." Djokovic compared the draining win to his Australian Open final victory in 2012, when he defeated Nadal in five hours and 53 minutes. "Each point is a hustle. Each point is a battle. You've got to basically earn every single point, every single shot, regardless of the conditions. It's amazing to be able to experience



that with him on the court," Djokovic added. Despite the defeat, Alcaraz will keep the world number one ranking for his US Open title defence. However, Djokovic will return to the top of the rankings if he wins just one match at Flushing Meadows. The 36-year-old Djokovic is tied with the 20-year-old Alcaraz, who was tearful after the defeat in Ohio on Sunday. "This match was really close, but I learned a lot from a champion like you. So congratulations to you and your team." After missing out on match point in the second-set tie-break, Alcaraz found himself 5-3 down in the third, but he saved two match points to pull back to 5-4 before breaking Djokovic's serve to level the set. However, Djokovic went 5-4 up on Alcaraz's serve in the tie-break before winning the next two points to claim victory in three hours and 49 minutes - the longest best-of-three-sets final in ATP Tour history. "This rivalry just gets better," Djokovic said. "It gets better and better. [He's an] amazing player. Tons of respect for him. For such a young player to show so much poise in important moments is impressive. - Agencies

## Spanish FA president criticised for Hermoso kiss

DOHA: Spanish football federation president Luis Rubiales has been criticised for kissing Jenni Hermoso on the lips after Spain won the Women's World Cup. Rubiales kissed Hermoso during the presentation ceremony following Spain's 1-0 win over England in Sunday's final. "I didn't like it," Hermoso said on Instagram, but a statement released later on her behalf defended Rubiales. Government minister Irene Montero said: "It's a form of sexual violence women suffer on a daily basis." Montero, Spain's equalities minister, added that up to now it had been "invisible" and that it is something "we can't normalise". "We should not assume kissing without consent is something 'that happens'," she said. Spain's sports minister Miquel Iceta told Spanish public radio it was "unacceptable" for Rubiales to kiss Hermoso, adding: "The first thing he has to do is to give explanations and make apologies, it is the logical and reasonable thing to do." In a statement released by the Spanish football federation, following her initial comment about disliking the kiss, Hermoso said the moment was a "natural gesture of affection". "It was a totally spontaneous mutual gesture because of the immense joy that winning a World Cup brings," the 31-year-old, who is Spain's all-time leading scorer, added. Rubiales' actions were heavily criticised on social media, with 'dimission ya' - 'resign now' in English - trending on X, formerly known as Twitter, in Spain. Rubiales told Spanish broadcaster COPE that it was "a kiss between two friends celebrating something" and those who saw it differently as "idiots and stupid people". "Let's ignore them and enjoy the good things," he added. - Agencies

## India's lunar lander searches for safe Moon landing spot

NEW DELHI: India's space agency has released images of the far side of the Moon as its third lunar mission attempts to locate a safe landing spot on the little-explored south pole. The pictures have been taken by Vikram, Chandrayaan-3's lander, which began the last phase of its mission on Thursday. Vikram, which carries a rover in its belly, is due to land on 23 August. The photos come a day after Russia's Luna-25 spacecraft crashed into the Moon after spinning out of control. The craft - Russia's first Moon mission in nearly 50 years - was due to be the first ever to land on the south pole, but failed after encountering problems as it moved into its pre-landing orbit. On Monday morning, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said the lander from Chandrayaan-3, which is due to touch down on Wednesday at 18:04 India time (12:34 GMT), has been mapping the landing area and taking images with its "hazard detection and avoidance" camera. ISRO added that the black-and-white images sent by this camera will assist them "in locating a safe landing area - without boulders or deep trenches". - DNA

## Pakistan down India in IBSA World Games

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Pakistan got off to a victorious start in IBSA World Games with an 18-run victory over India in Birmingham on Sunday. Pakistan's visually impaired team was invited to bat first by Indian team after winning the toss at King Edward's School ground. The Men in Green scored 187/8 in allocated 20 overs. Muhammad Salmaan scored 50 off 31 deliveries while captain Nisar Ali scored 46 off 33 and Badar Munir added 37 from 24. For India, Ajay Kumar Reddy took four wickets while three Pakistani batters fell to Nakula Badanayak. In reply, Indians were restricted to 169/7 in 20 overs. At one stage they needed 38 from last three overs but Matiullah bowled a superb 18th over in which he conceded just four runs. India lost three wickets, including one run out, to collapse from 150/3 to 154/6. India's Sunil Ramesh scored 62 while Durga Rao Tompaki added 40 runs against his name. Pakistan's Matiullah got two wickets.

## Shadab, Azam also join Desert Vipers for next year's ILT20

## DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan's all-rounder Shadab Khan and power-hitter Azam Khan have joined Desert Vipers for next year's International League (IL) T20. The franchise announced the signings on their social media accounts which created hype among the Pakistani cricket fans. Shadab is currently the vice-captain of the Pakistan team in white-ball formats. He has recently appeared in Ma-

ajor League Cricket (MLC) in the USA and The Hundred in the UK. He will be in action in the green jersey from tomorrow in Hambantota where Pakistan will take on Afghanistan in three-match ODI series followed by Asia Cup later this month. Azam also brings a lot of T20 league experience to the Vipers' squad who are looking to win the next edition. He is currently playing for Guyana Amazon Warriors in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL). He was signed by the

franchise with a contract worth \$120,000, which makes him the highest-paid Pakistani cricketer in the CPL. The right-handed explosive batter was signed by Vipers in the inaugural edition of ILT20 but he didn't get NOC from PCB. Following PCB's assurance to send its players to the next edition of ILT20, franchises have now started signing Pakistani players for the second season. Earlier, Shaheen Shah Afridi was also signed by the Vipers for next year's tournament.



ISLAMABAD: UNICEF Country head Abdullah Fadil calls on Federal care taker Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan. - DNA

## India announce squad for Asia Cup 2023

The men in blue will start their Asia Cup campaign against Pakistan on Sept. 2

## DNA

NEW DELHI: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced 17-men squad for the upcoming Asia Cup 2023, scheduled to be played in Pakistan and Sri Lanka from August 30 to September 17. Indian team's chief selector Ajit Agarkar announced the squad which saw the return of KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, and Jasprit Bumrah. Rahul, Iyer, and Bumrah were suffering from injuries. With their re-

## Nepal to reach Karachi on August 23

LAHORE: The Nepal cricket team will reach Karachi on August 23 to adjust to Pakistani conditions ahead of the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023. Nepal will take on hosts Pakistan in the opening match of the Asia Cup on August 30 in Multan. It will be their first-ever Asia Cup appearance. According to the sources, Nepal will play practice match on August 24 at National Bank Stadium. They will train on August 25 and will play another practice match on August 27. Nepal will reach Multan on August 27 and will practice there for their first match in the Asian event. - DNA

turn, India's squad looks competitive ahead of Asia Cup and World Cup later this year. Earlier, skipper Rohit Sharma shared his concern over the team's number four batting position. Iyer's arrival must be a relief for the Indian team. Bumrah last played an ODI last year in July. Later on, he got injured and missed T20 Asia Cup and T20 World Cup later that year. India will start their Asia Cup campaign against Pakistan on September 2 in Kandy. They last played an ODI early this month. Currently, the Indian team is playing a T20I series against Ireland at their home. India squad: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, KL Rahul, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya (vc), Ravindra Jadeja,

Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Shami, Mohd. Siraj, Prasidh Krishna  
Traveling stand-by - Sanju Samson  
Meanwhile, Pakistan is all set to start their three-match ODI series against Afghanistan in Hambantota. Two matches will be played in Hambantota whereas the last contest will take place in Colombo. Several Pakistani players including captain Babar Azam have been in Sri Lanka for almost two months. They first played Test series against Sri Lanka followed by their participation in the Lanka Premier League (LPL). Pakistan team will come back to the country after the Afghanistan series as they will start their Asia Cup campaign against Nepal in Multan on August 30.

## Russia says F-16s for Ukraine an 'escalation'

## FROM PAGE 01

Netherlands within its own territory, Danish Defense Minister Jakob Ellemann-Jensen was quoted as saying on Monday. "We donate weapons under the condition that they are used to drive the enemy out of the territory of Ukraine. And no further than that," Ellemann-Jensen said, according to Ritzau news agency. "Those are the conditions, whether it's tanks, fighter planes or something else," he said. Denmark will deliver 19 jets in total. The Netherlands has 42 F-16s available in all but has yet to decide whether all of them will be donated. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday the planes would strengthen Ukraine's air defenses and help its counter-offensive against Russian forces. After months of entreaties from Zelensky for F-16s to bolster the Ukrainian air force, the US recently gave approval for the Netherlands and Denmark to provide Ukraine the American-made jets. Zelensky traveled to both countries Sunday to finalize the delivery deals. "F-16s will certainly give new energy, confidence, and motivation to fighters and civilians. I'm sure it will deliver new results for Ukraine and the entire Europe, the Ukrainian leader said.

## PM Kakar assures Christian...

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society where people care about each other sustains. "The Christian community played an important role in bringing Pakistan to existence and it is the responsibility of every Muslim to protect the minority community." The prime minister also assured the victims that they will fight the enemies of humanity with unity as no society can survive without justice. "The enemies' first target is on the justice system and any society can only exist with justice and fairness." Speaking about the incident, PM Kakar said that the Jaranwala incident represents an ailment, adding that it is a human behaviour taking sating's form. "I was deeply saddened by the Jaranwala tragedy. The state stands with the oppressed and not the oppressor," he said. The PM also added that the enemies will be brought to justice. "I can assure you that our actions will speak louder than our speeches," Caretaker PM Kakar said, warning that no one could predict the future, but in case, any miscreant or group that harboured evil designs against the minorities, including Sikhs, Hindus, or others, would find the authority of the government on the side of the affected segments, shielding them against any harm. He also expressed his gratitude to the upcoming chief justice of Pakistan, the caretaker chief minister and the military leadership for their support to the victims and reiterated that there would be no compromise on the minorities' rights.

## 'Pakistan, KSA trusted partners'

## FROM PAGE 01

all over the world during this year's Hajj season, particularly for Pakistani pilgrims. He expressed the hope that Pakistani Hajj and Umrah pilgrims would continue to receive special treatment from the Saudi side. The Prime Minister also thanked Saudi Arabia for its serious interest in investment opportunities in Pakistan under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The visit is the first by a Minister of Hajj and Umrah to Pakistan. The Saudi Minister thanked the Prime Minister for the warm hospitality extended to him and members of his delegation. He said Saudi Arabia would extend all possible facilitation to Pakistani pilgrims. He said in addition to religious visits, the delegation would also try to promote Saudi tourism to Pakistan.

## Briefs

## KSA rejects accusations of killing Ethiopians

RIYADH: A Saudi government source denied Human Rights Watch's accusations that Saudi border guards killed hundreds of Ethiopian migrants. A Saudi government source told Agence France-Presse that the accusations are baseless and not based on reliable sources. In a report, Human Rights Watch accused Saudi border guards of firing heavily and using explosive weapons to kill Ethiopian migrants who were trying to cross from Yemen into the kingdom.—APP

## Sri Lanka's inflation drops to 4.6 %

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's inflation based on the National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) decreased to 4.6 percent in July from 10.8 percent in June, the Department of Census and Statistics said on Monday. The department said inflation in the food category dropped to negative 2.5 percent last month from 2.5 percent in June. Inflation in the non-food group decreased to 10.9 percent in July from 18.3 percent in June. Sri Lanka's inflation will fall further in August before staying between 4 percent and 6 percent, Director of Economic Research Department at the Central Bank of Sri Lanka P.K.G. Harischandra told journalists in early August. The South Asian country has seen inflation drop steadily since September 2022 when the NCPI recorded an inflation at 73.7 percent.—APP

## MS-22 cargo spaceship completes mission

VLADIVOSTOK: Russia's Progress MS-22 cargo spacecraft left the International Space Station (ISS) on Monday morning and sank in a non-navigable area of the Pacific Ocean, Russia's state space corporation Roscosmos said on Monday. "Today, Progress MS-22 was deorbited, entered the atmosphere and disintegrated. The unburned elements of the ship's structure fell into a non-navigable area of the southern part of the Pacific Ocean," Roscosmos said in a statement. The spacecraft was undocked from the ISS service module Zvezda at 2:50 a.m. Moscow time (2350 GMT Sunday), and the braking engines were fired at 5:58 a.m. Moscow time (0258 GMT). Progress MS-22 was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome on Feb. 9 by a Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket and delivered more than 2.5 tons of cargo to the ISS two days later. With the help of its engines, it carried out seven orbit corrections of the station. A new cargo ship, Progress MS-24, will arrive at the freed place on the module Zvezda in four days. Progress MS-23, which arrived on May 24, remains part of the ISS.—APP

## Sydney Airport sees surge of Chinese passengers

SYDNEY: Australia's Sydney Airport said on Monday that its international recovery had overtaken the domestic part for the first time since COVID-19 travel restrictions eased, as a surge of passengers from China boosted international traffic. According to the airport's monthly update, 1.30 million travelers passed through the international terminal in July, representing an 89.1-percent recovery rate year-on-year, while domestic passenger traffic increased to 2.08 million people, representing an 87-percent recovery rate. In July, Chinese passengers ranked as the No.1 overseas visitors for the first time since 2019, and the number of Chinese nationals coming through the international terminal represented a 76-percent recovery rate year-on-year, up from 69 percent in June. "The underlying result on passenger traffic for July is mixed.—Agencies



BAKU: A delegation of honorable Judges of Islamabad and Lahore high courts led by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi paid a visit to the Embassy. They were briefed on relations including cooperation in law & Justice. Delegation is in Baku to participate in an international workshop.—DNA

## South Africa won't be bullied to side with global powers

More than 20 countries have applied to join BRICS: South African president

South Africa will not be forced to side with any global powers, President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Sunday as he headed to host a summit of major emerging economies. The meeting in Johannesburg this week of BRICS nations — Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa — will seek to widen their influence and push for a shift in global geopolitics. South Africa's hosting of the summit has turned a spotlight on its ties with the Kremlin, especially as it has refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "While some of our detractors prefer overt support for their political and

ideological choices, we will not be drawn into a contest between global powers," Ramaphosa said in a televised State of the Nation address. "We have resisted pressure to align ourselves with any one of the global powers or with influential blocs of nations," he said. Ramaphosa will be joined at the BRICS summit by China's President Xi Jinping, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Russia will be represented by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, with President Vladimir Putin participating online. Putin decided against attend-



ing in person as he is the target of an International Criminal Court arrest warrant that South Africa is in theory bound to enforce. The

warrant set off a diplomatic dilemma for weeks until Putin's decision was announced, given South Africa's longstanding ties with Russia and the former's refusal to arrest ex-Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir in 2015 in a similar situation. Some 50 other leaders who are not BRICS members — among them Iran's Ebrahim Raisi and Indonesia's President Joko Widodo — have confirmed they will attend the talks. The BRICS nations account for about a quarter of the global economy and interest in joining the group has surged this year. At least 40 countries have shown interest in

becoming members, with 23 having submitted their applications. Some of the countries aspiring to be BRICS members include Argentina, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Cuba, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. South Africa has said it supports calls to open up membership of BRICS. "An expanded BRICS will represent a diverse group of nations with different political systems that share a common desire to have a more balanced global order," said Ramaphosa. Expansion plans were first mooted last year, according to South Africa's Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor.

## Progressive candidate wins Guatemala's presidential election

BOGOTA: Center-left anti-corruption candidate Bernardo Arevalo won the second round of Guatemala's presidential election Sunday over conservative candidate Sandra Torres. With more than 98% of the votes counted, the results by the Supreme Electoral Court showed Arevalo winning with 58% of the vote. Torres came in second with 36%. "Viva Guatemala!" Arevalo said on Twitter. Guatemala elected a new president after a turbulent electoral process that was shrouded in controversy. The country's Attorney General's Office tried to disqualify Arevalo's Semilla Movement party over an alleged corruption case that many have called a hoax after he surprisingly finished second in the first round. Days later, a court ordered the suspension of the party and the Guatemalan police raided the party's offices. The crisis prompted widespread protests in the Central American country and boosted Arevalo's presidential aspirations.

Arevalo, 64, the son of former President Juan Jose Arevalo, was the big surprise in the first presidential round on June 25 because no poll showed him as the possible winner. He was positioned as the anti-corruption candidate and distanced himself from the traditional political class that has run the country for years. His victory will mark a shift to the left in the country. During his career, he held positions such as vice minister of foreign affairs in Guatemala, consul in Israel and ambassador to Spain. He is currently a member of Congress.—Agencies

## China launches new satellite for Earth observation

ISLAMABAD: China sent a new Earth observation satellite into space from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China on Monday. The satellite, Gaofen-12 04, was launched by a Long March-4C carrier rocket at 1:45 a.m. (Beijing Time) and has entered the planned orbit successfully. It will be used in a variety of fields, including land surveys, urban planning, road network design, crop yield estimation and disaster relief, Xinhua reported. The launch marks the 484th flight mission of the Long March series carrier rockets.—Agencies

## Egyptian FM, UN envoy discuss Syrian crisis

CAIRO: Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry and the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen discussed on Sunday the latest developments in Syria. During a phone conversation, Shoukry and Pedersen discussed the outputs of the first meeting of the Arab Ministerial Liaison Committee on Syria, which was held in Cairo on Aug. 15, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The committee, which was formed by the Arab League (AL), comprises the foreign ministers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon and the AL chief. The Egyptian minister stressed the committee's keenness to reach a settlement to the Syrian crisis and preserve the unity and stability of Syria. Shoukry and Pedersen agreed to arrange a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the meetings of the United Nations General Assembly in September, the statement said. For his part, Pedersen expressed appreciation for Egypt's efforts to settle the crisis in Syria, praising his intention to coordinate with the various parties concerned in order to build on what was reached in the meeting. After nearly 12 years of suspension, Syria restored its membership in the Cairo-based AL in May. Syria's AL membership was suspended in late 2011 when the Syrian conflict broke out, which led a number of Arab states to recall their ambassadors from Damascus, a move that was slammed.—APP

## Turkiye and Hungary have 'extensive' relations

DNA

ANKARA: Turkiye and Hungary enjoy "extensive" relations based on their deep-rooted ties, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sunday. "We have extensive relations with Hungary based on deep-rooted and solid friendship ties. We are making significant progress in all areas of our relations," Erdogan said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter. Erdogan paid a one-day visit to the capital Budapest for Hungary's National Day celebrations and also the World Athletics Championships. "Our bilateral trade volume reached \$3.5 billion in 2022, an all-time high. We believe that we will reach our target of a \$6 billion trade volume in a short time through joint efforts," he said. The president wished that his visit will be beneficial to further improve bilateral relations. During his visit, Erdogan separately met with his Hungarian counterpart Katalin Novak



and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to discuss bilateral ties as well as regional and global developments. The Turkish leader also attended a reception to mark Hungary's National Day and greeted citizens, who demonstrated their love for him. Erdogan later watched the World Athletics Championships men's 100 meters final at the National Athletics Centre stadium, where he had conversations with his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. On the sidelines, Erdogan also met separately with

his Uzbek counterpart Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik, who is president of the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia, and Zeljka Cvijanovic, a Serb member of the tripartite collective Bosnia presidency. They discussed bilateral ties and regional and global issues. Relations between Turkiye and Hungary were elevated to the level of a strategic partnership in 2013 after the establishment of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. The friendly ties have gained momentum in every field in recent years. This December, the two countries are set to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Hungary said Sunday that it has agreed with Turkiye to further improve their already excellent bilateral relations. The two countries agreed to elevate the level of their relations from a strategic partnership to a priority strate-

gic partnership, Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto said while commenting on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to the country, according to public broadcaster Kossuth Radio. Szijarto said Erdogan will visit Budapest again on Dec. 18, when a meeting of the high-level Strategic Council will be held, during which an agreement on the establishment of a priority strategic partnership and mutual assistance in emergency situations will be signed. "This clearly shows the two countries' commitment to improving bilateral cooperation, from which they benefit a lot," he said. He also disclosed that Hungary is interested in buying natural gas from the TurkStream gas pipeline via Turkiye. Szijarto also said that Turkiye's transit role in energy transportation would be further boosted with the entry into force of a natural gas deal between Hungary and Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan's entry into the European market as a gas supplier.

## UK nurse who killed babies, sentenced to life in prison

LONDON: Lucy Letby, a British nurse convicted of murdering seven babies and attempting to kill six more, has been sentenced to life imprisonment. Letby, 33, killed the newborns between 2015 and 2016 by overfeeding them with milk, poisoning them with insulin, or injecting them with air, while working as a nurse in the neonatal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital in northern England. Condemning her actions at Manchester Crown Court, judge Justice Gross said on Monday: "You acted in a way that was completely contrary to the normal human instincts of nurturing and caring for babies. You deliberately harmed them intending to kill them. In your evidence, you said that hurting a baby is completely against everything that being a nurse is, as indeed it should be." Listing her other offences, which included making "inappropriate remarks" after the deaths of the babies, Judge Gross handed her sentence which was "a whole life sentence for every offence." "You will spend the rest of your life in prison," he said. While Letby refused to appear in court, families of the victims were present. "Lucy Letby has destroyed our lives. The anger and the hatred I have towards her will never go away. It has destroyed me as a man and as a father," said the father of two children who were murdered by Letby. Journalists present at the court described the hearing as "harrowing" on social media. Letby reportedly did not wish to follow the hearing via videolink, from prison. According to local media reports, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak slammed Letby as "cowardly" for not being present. "I think it's cowardly that people who commit such horrendous crimes do not face their victims and hear firsthand the impact that their crimes have had on them and their families and loved ones," he said. "We are looking and have been at changing the law to make sure that that happens, and that's something that we'll bring forward in due course," he added. British Labour Party leader Keir Starmer shared a similar view. "That criminals can cowardly hide away in a shamefully exploited loophole, and one Labour will close. Victims must be at the heart of our justice system," he said in a post on the social media platform X, formally known as Twitter.—DNA

## ICCI inks MoU with NICAT to promote entrepreneurs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and the National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish collaboration in order to promote innovation and entrepreneurship programs for youth. The MoU was signed during a visit of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI along with a delegation to NICAT. Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Convener, ICCI MoU Committee and Imran Jattala, Project Director NICAT signed the MoU in a ceremony held at NICAT. As per MoU, NICAT will support ICCI for incubation and entrepreneurship programs and will collaborate with ICCI for engagement of Pakistan's youth in innovation and entrepreneurship programs in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). NICAT will

display the ICCI logo on its promotional materials and websites as appropriate and subject to joint approval. Similarly, ICCI will work

with NICAT in the incubation & entrepreneurship programs and startup challenges. ICCI will display the NICAT logo on its promo-

tional materials and websites as appropriate and subject to joint approval. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan

Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry He said that Pakistan needs innovators and entrepreneurs to drive the economy and hoped that the MoU between ICCI and NICAT would be helpful in realizing such goals. He said that the market size of the global aerospace and defense industry is US\$697 billion, with commercial aerospace at \$298 billion. Therefore, Pakistan has great potential to capture better share in this huge market by developing a pool of aerospace innovators and entrepreneurs. He lauded the efforts of NICAT for empowering Pakistani talent. Ayub Ghauri, President, National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies highlighted the contribution of his institution for economic transformation by bringing together investors, innovators, entrepreneurs, thought leaders, and talented youth of Pakistan. He hoped that NICAT's collaboration with ICCI would produce beneficial outcomes for the economy.



## Briefs

### Iran says US prisoner exchange to take months

DNA

DUBAI: The process of releasing US prisoners held in Iran will take up to two months, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said on Monday during a press conference. "A specific time frame has been announced by relevant authorities, and it will take a maximum of two months for this process to take place," Kanaani said. Earlier this month, Tehran and Washington reached an agreement whereby five US citizens held in Iran would be freed while \$6bn of Iranian assets frozen in South Korea would be released. Iranian assets that had been frozen in South Korea were transferred to Switzerland's central bank last week for exchange and transfer to Iran, South Korean media reported on Monday. Washington would also release some Iranians from US prisons, Iran said.

### Polls should not be delayed beyond March, says Tareen

LAHORE: Isteqdam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Patron-in-Chief Jehangir Tareen said on Monday that general election should not be delayed beyond March next year and no political party including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should be banned. Addressing the media person after attending a ceremony, where former PTI leader Sumsam Bukhari and others announced joining the IPP here, he said the rate of joining the IPP by leaders of the PTI and other parties was so high that this time they would need a jumbo jet, instead of a small aeroplane. He also gave away party flags to the new party members. Tareen said after new delimitation of constituencies in the light of the census results, general election should be conducted before March. About President Dr Arif Alvi's tweet denying signing of Official Secrets Act and Army Act, Tareen said: "Listening to the president was sorrowful". Replying to a question, he said no political party, including the PTI, should be banned. While addressing the media, Syed Sumsam Bukhari said that audios related to May 9 incident were being associated with him, which were fake. Spokesperson Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan said that Dr Arif Ali should reconsider his behaviour as he was the president of Pakistan and not of Tehreek-e-Insaf. - APP

### UK child-killer nurse facing life sentence

LONDON: A British nurse will be sentenced on Monday for murdering seven newborn babies and attempting to kill six others while they were in her care. Lucy Letby, 33, was convicted of killing five baby boys and two baby girls, making her the UK's most prolific child serial killer in modern history. She was arrested following a string of baby deaths at the neonatal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital in north-west England between June 2015 and June 2016. The prosecution said Letby attacked her young and often prematurely born victims by either injecting them with air, overfeeding them with milk or poisoning them with insulin. Following a trial that started in October, a jury at Manchester Crown Court ended more than 100 hours of deliberations on Friday. The jury cleared Letby of two counts of attempted murder and were unable to reach decisions on six other counts of attempted murder. But the multiple guilty verdicts for murder mean Letby faces the prospect of never being released from prison. Letby fought back tears in the dock as the jury returned their first guilty decisions earlier in August. But she was not in court for the final verdicts and was absent from court at the start of her sentencing. - DNA

# Alvi for strengthening bilateral ties with KSA

The President appreciated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and its leadership for its steadfast support for important Muslim causes, especially the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute, Palestine, and Afghanistan through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and expressed the hope that it would continue to play its important role

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for further strengthening bilateral ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in diverse fields, particularly economy, investment, and culture. He said that Pakistan highly valued its relations with KSA, which were based on common faith, shared history, and people-to-people ties. The President made these remarks while talking to Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah, Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, who along with his delegation, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Welcoming the delegation, the President reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening the existing economic partnership with KSA for the mutual benefit of both the brotherly countries. He underscored the need to expand bilateral trade, adding that great opportunities existed for investment in Pakistan in different sectors such as IT, renewable energy, industrial and infrastructure development, and the hospitality sectors. The President thanked the Government of KSA for making excellent arrangements for the Hajj this year. He hoped that the Government of KSA would expedite the purchase of Pakistan House inside Markaziah in Madina from the compensation amount of two Pakistan Houses demolished in Madina. The President appreciated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and its leadership for



its steadfast support for important Muslim causes, especially the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute, Palestine, and Afghanistan through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and expressed the hope that it would continue to play its important role. He lauded the leadership of the Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Salman, over the normaliza-

tion of relations with Iran, saying that the leadership of the Saudi Crown Prince in the Muslim World is much appreciated. The visiting Saudi Minister said that relations between Pakistan and KSA were very strong that needed to be further enhanced for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah said

KSA would continue to provide good facilities to the pilgrims for Hajj and Umrah. The President also asked the visiting dignitary to communicate his warm regards to His Majesty the King and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince/Prime Minister of KSA. He also thanked KSA for its continued support and financial assistance to Pakistan.

### Germany nabs 2 US soldiers after man stabbed

WEB DESK

BERLIN: Two American soldiers have been arrested in Germany over the death of a young man at a funfair in the west of the country, according to German police. "Following the murder of a 28-year-old man, two suspects were arrested ... They are American servicemen," police in the western city of Treves said in a statement on Sunday. The death occurred when an altercation broke out between several people at a Saubrenner funfair in the small town of Wittlich, in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate between Treves and Koblenz, on Saturday night. During the fight, the victim "was stabbed to death" and "four people, two men and two women, ran away from the scene of the crime", police said, citing witnesses. Two members of the fleeing group, aged 25 and 26, were quickly identified whom police arrested before handing over to US authorities, who will take charge of the case "in accordance with NATO statutes", the police added. "We've never experienced anything like this here," said Wittlich Mayor Joachim Rodenkirch when asked by the local press.

### Police gets 3-day remand of Imaan Mazari, Ali Wazir

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Judge Abul Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain of an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad on Monday handed Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) leader Ali Wazir and human rights lawyer Imaan Mazari into police custody on a three-day physical remand. The prosecution had sought a 10-day physical remand of the suspects in a case pertaining to sedition, intimidation, and inciting people. The cases against them were registered after they delivered a controversial speech at a recent PTM's public rally in the federal capital. Subsequently, the Islamabad police had arrested Imaan and Wazir in the wee hours of Sunday and secured their remand from a local court in Islamabad the same day. They were produced in the anti-terrorism court of Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain in the federal capital earlier today.

### North Korea's Kim directs cruise missile test

SEOUL: Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw a test of strategic cruise missiles, state news agency KCNA said on Monday, as South Korea and the United States kicked off annual military drills that Pyongyang sees as a rehearsal for war. Kim visited a navy fleet stationed on the east coast to oversee the test aboard a warship, KCNA said, without specifying the date of his trip. The launch aimed to verify the "combat function of the ship and the feature of its missile system", while improving sailors' capability to carry out an "attack mission in actual war". KCNA said, adding that the ship's missile hit its target. Kim said the ship would maintain "high mobility and mighty striking power and constant preparedness for combat to cope with sudden situations," KCNA said. South Korea's defence ministry said it had detected signs of the launch, but that the KCNA claims were "exaggerated" and "different from the facts", but did not elaborate. The latest missile test came as South Korea and the United States began the Ulchi Freedom Shield summer exercises on Monday, designed to enhance their joint responses to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. Pyongyang has denounced the allies' military drills as a rehearsal for nuclear war. South Korea's military has said this year's exercises will be held on the "largest scale ever", involving tens of thousands of troops from both sides, as well as some member states of the U.N. Command. - Agencies

### Saudi-Iran deal driving 'wave of reconciliation': China

WEB DESK

BEIJING: China's top diplomat has said that a Chinese-mediated detente between Iran and Saudi Arabia was driving a "wave of reconciliation" in the Middle East and pledged to firmly support Tehran on "issues concerning core interests". Wang Yi, the Chinese foreign minister, made the comments during a phone call with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Sunday, according to China's Xinhua news agency. Wang told Amir-Abdollahian that Beijing appreciated Iran's recent steps to improve ties with Saudi Arabia, including his meeting with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah. Wang also pledged to "continue to support countries in the Middle East in exploring a development path that suits their own national conditions, strengthening communication and dialogue, adhering to unity and self-improvement, and realising good-neighbourliness and friendship". Xinhua said. The surprise detente between Iran and Saudi Arabia, brokered by China in March, followed years of bitter rivalry that had destabilised several Middle Eastern countries, including Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Bahrain. Officials in Tehran and Riyadh have said the two countries' deteriorating relations with the United States was one of the main reasons for their shift in policy.

### Thousands evacuated from Bahawalpur as Sutlej witnesses deluge

BAHAWALPUR: Over 76,000 people have been evacuated from the riverine areas of Bahawalpur as a safety measure following the directives and forecast issued by the Flood Forecast Division, as River Sutlej witnesses deluge. The flood situation arose in Sutlej after India released more water into the river. A report issued by the Flood Forecast Division on Monday stated that Sutlej received a high-level flood at Ganda Singh Wala and Sulemanki Headworks. As per the report, the inflow and outflow of water at the Ganda Singh Wala was 174,062 cusecs, while at the Sulemanki Headworks, it was 146,271 cusecs. Meanwhile, the water level in Tarbela Dam is 1,559.10 feet and 1,242 feet in the Mangla Dam. Meanwhile, the education department has announced the closure of schools in the areas surrounding Sutlej. Flood relief camps will be set up in the schools to facilitate the evacuees. Earlier, Bahawalpur Commissioner Ehtesham Anwar said that the divisional management was engaged round the clock to evacuate people to safer areas from the areas lying near the banks of the Sutlej River. "There is medium to high flood in Sutlej River and we have been continuing efforts to evacuate people to safe areas from the villages lying near banks of Sutlej River passing through Bahawalnagar and Bahawalpur districts and other areas," he said on Sunday. He said the government had also been providing facilities to people to evacuate their cattle to safe areas in view of the flood situation. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Engr. Javed Mahmood Bukhari, the Rector of the National University of Sciences and Technology presenting a souvenir to Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov. - DNA

### Tropical Storm Hilary releases fury on California

LOS ANGELES: The first tropical storm to hit Los Angeles in more than 80 years unleashed floods across parts of Southern California more accustomed to drought, as officials urged the public to stay safe as they began to count the cost of damage. The National Weather Service downgraded the hurricane to a tropical depression but not before California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for much of Southern California, with flash flood warnings until at least 3 a.m. (1000 GMT) on Monday. Mountain and desert areas could get 5 to 10 inches (12 to 25 cm) of rare rain, as much as the deserts typically see in a year, forecasters said. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said she was still worried that people could let down their guard if Hilary left them initially unharmed but later bands of the storm swung back to surprise those who were not prepared. "We know that it could get much worse," Bass told a news briefing on Sunday. "My concern is that people will be a little dismissive and go out when we need people to stay at home, to stay safe." Hilary's center was expected to move quickly across Nevada on Monday, with the storm forecast to dissipate later in the day, the weather service said. The storm had passed northward through Mexico's Baja California peninsula. It killed at least one person in Mexico, triggering flash flooding and sweeping away roads.

Images on social media showed raging, muddy torrents gushing down eroded streets. It crossed the border on Sunday afternoon, hitting San Diego county with its first tropical storm ever recorded and becoming the first to pelt Los Angeles county since 1939. San Bernardino county, to the east of Los Angeles, ordered evacuations of towns in the mountains and valleys where social media images showed torrents of water, mud, rock and trees. In more populated Ventura county northwest of Los Angeles, the National Weather Service warned of life-threatening flooding from heavy rains, which dumped up to 2 inches (5 cm) of rain within two hours. U.S. President Joe Biden ordered federal agencies to move personnel and supplies into the region. Officials said Los Angeles county's 75,000 homeless people were especially vulnerable, as were hillside canyons and areas recently denuded by wildfires. As a precaution, the two largest school districts in the state, in Los Angeles and San Diego, canceled school on Monday. The storm stunned people in the nearby town of Rancho Mirage, where water and debris rushed over closed roads and stranded at least one pickup truck in water that rose nearly to the top of its bed. "It's quite amazing. I've never seen anything like this," said Sean Julian, 54, a resident of the town. "I'm seeing a lot more trees down. And there's a big tree that just fell over there, and I probably shouldn't be out here." - Agencies

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