



Islamabad POST

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Education is the cornerstone of progress: Tugio

Detailed News On Page-08

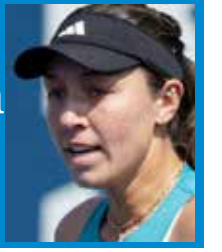
Niger's ousted President in 'good spirit'

Detailed News On Page-07



Pegula stuns Swiatek to reach Montreal final

Detailed News On Page-06



1 soldier martyred

Armed forces kill 6 terrorists in 2 incidents

Two terrorists were killed in an attack on convoy in Gwadar, four sent to hell in Bajaur shootout

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GWADAR: Security forces killed two terrorists in an exchange of fire in Balochistan's Gwadar district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Sunday. According to the military's media wing, terrorists attacked a military convoy using small arms and hand grenades during the terror activity. "However, due to an efficient and swift response, two terrorists were sent to hell with no harm to any military or civil persons," the ISPR said in the statement. It added that the security forces remain determined to thwart the efforts of the enemies of peace and prosperity in the country. In a statement issued by ISPR earlier, a soldier was martyred and four terrorists were killed while another was apprehended after a shootout in the general area of Charming of Bajaur district. It further said that the security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Charming on the "reported presence of terrorists". "During the conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange occurred between security forces and terrorists," the military's media wing stated. After subduing the militants, the forces apprehended the terrorist who remained alive during the operation. Weapons, ammunition, and explosives including a suicide vest were also recovered from the terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous "terrorist activities against security forces and killing of innocent citizens, especially suicide blasts", it added. The ISPR said that the martyred soldier was identified as Sepoy Muhammad Shoab, 24. It further stated that the sanitisation of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area.

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Chinese Embassy condemns terrorist attack

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: On August 13th, a convoy carrying Chinese citizens was attacked near the port of Gwadar in Balochistan, Pakistan. The incident caused no casualties on the Chinese side, and the relevant personnel have been properly placed in safety. The Chinese Embassy in Pakistan strongly condemns this terrorist act. The Embassy and the Consulate General in Karachi launched emergency response immediately, requesting the Pakistani authorities to conduct a thorough investigation on the attack, severely punish the perpetrators, take practical and effective measures to prevent similar incidents from happening again. China will continue to work with the Pakistani side, to jointly counter the threats of terrorism and earnestly protect the safety of Chinese personnel, institutions and projects in Pakistan. Given the current security situation, the Chinese Embassy reminds Chinese citizens in Pakistan to be vigilant and take preventive measures against security risks, to ensure the safety of their lives and property.



KAKUL: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir reviews parade at PMA Kakul on the occasion of August 14.—DNA

Hafeez Shaikh likely to be finance minister
Jalil Abbasi may be FM



DNA

ISLAMABAD: A few names in the upcoming caretaker cabinet have appeared on the scene.

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Shehbaz urges Kakar to ensure 'transparent, impartial' elections

PM terms Kakar's choice as a "welcoming" development

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed hope that the caretaker PM-designate Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar will ensure the conduct of transparent, free, and impartial elections, which are likely to take place next year. The premier's message for Kakar came in a statement released by the PM's Office on Sunday in which he also congratulated him for being selected for the coveted post. The prime minister termed Kakar's choice for the top position as a "welcoming" development as the senator hails from Balochistan. PM Shehbaz referred to the caretaker prime minister as an educated and patriotic person. The premier said that the administration under his own leadership has worked hard day and night to bring the country to economic stability in the last 16 months, hoping for Kakar's interim government to

Shehbaz to leave for London

DNA

LAHORE: Former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will leave for London along with his wife Nusrat Shehbaz, who is presently admitted at Lahore's Itefaq Hospital, in the next few days for her treatment. On the other hand, the condition of Nusrat, who is admitted at the hospital for the last four days, is still unstable. They disclosed that other members of Shehbaz's family would also accompany them on the visit. Furthermore, they said, during his stay in London, Shehbaz would also meet with Nawaz Sharif, his elder brother and also the ex-prime minister.

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Briefs

Kakar resigns as Senator, party leader

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The caretaker Prime Minister-designate Anwarul Haq Kakar has resigned from the Senate and BAP party. In his Twitter message he said, "Owing to the fundamental responsibility conferred upon me as the caretaker Prime Minister, I have decided to surrender my membership of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and relinquish my Senate position. Prayers requested from everyone".

Musadiq meets PM Shehbaz

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday met former Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadiq Malik and discussed the overall political situation and matters of mutual interest. The prime minister appreciated the performance of the ministry led by Dr Musadiq in difficult economic conditions. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated Anwarul Haq Kakar on his appointment as caretaker prime minister and expressed the confidence that he would ensure holding of free, fair and impartial elections in the country. The prime minister said that trust reposed by all parties in Kakar's name proved their proper choice as the upcoming caretaker PM was an educated person and patriot.

Mengal slams Kakar's appointment as PM

"Such decisions have created more distance between us and you"



STAFF REPORT

QUETTA: Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M) Chairman Akhtar Mengal on Sunday expressed his displeasure with the appointment of Senator Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar as the interim prime minister, claiming that such decisions created "more distance" between his party and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). "You have nominated such a person as the caretaker prime minister whose appointment has closed the doors of politics for us," Mengal stated in a letter to PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif. He added: "Such decisions have created more distance between

us and you." Kakar was named interim PM after the second round of consultations between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Leader of the Opposition in the outgoing National Assembly Raja Riaz on August 12. Kakar is a lawmaker belonging to Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), and the appointment of this relatively obscure politician from Balochistan surprised people, apparently including Mengal. However, in his letter, Mengal also expressed his displeasure with the way PML-N was preferring to ally with the army instead of taking politicians on board. "A solution is being sought by consulting the establishment instead of politicians," he wrote, adding that the "atrocities" of military-led regimes from General Ayub to General Musharraf were not yet forgotten. He further accused the PML-N of "forgetting" the "conspiracies and unconstitutional" actions of the former military ruler and president general (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf and former chief of army staff General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Continued on Page 06

Caretaker CM 2nd round of talks remains inconclusive

Names likely to be finalized today

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The second meeting between Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and opposition leader Rana Ansar concluded without reaching a consensus on the name for the caretaker chief minister of Sindh. Another meeting has been scheduled for tomorrow between the both to settle the issue. During the meeting, various names were considered for the caretaker chief minister, but no concurrence was gained. Rana Ansar, while addressing the media after the meeting, emphasised that this was the second round of consultations, and efforts

Continued on Page 06

No let-up in Russia-Ukraine war

7 killed in Russian shelling on Ukraine's Kherson region

Two men were killed in the neighboring village of Stanislav, where a woman was also wounded

NEWS DESK

KYIV: Seven people - including a 23-day-old baby girl - were killed in Russian shelling in Ukraine's southern Kherson region on Sunday, the country's Internal Affairs Ministry said. Artillery shelling in the village of Shiroka Balka, on the banks of the Dnieper River killed a family - a husband, wife, 12-year-old boy and 23-day-old girl - and another resident. Two men were killed in the neighboring village of Stanislav, where a woman was also wounded. The attack on Kherson province followed Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar's comments on Saturday attempting to quell rumors that Ukrainian forces had landed on

the occupied left (east) bank of the Dnieper in the Kherson region. "Again, the expert hype around the left bank in the Kherson region began. There are no reasons for excitement," she said. Kherson regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said Sunday that three people had been wounded in Russian attacks on the province on Saturday. Elsewhere, Ukrainian military officials said Saturday evening that Kyiv's forces had made progress in the south, claiming some success near a key village in the southern Zaporizhzhia region and capturing other unspecified territories. Ukraine's General Staff said they had "partial success" around the tactically important Robotyne area in the Zaporizhzhia region, a key Russian stronghold that Ukraine needs to retake in order to continue

pushing south towards Melitopol. "There are liberated territories. The defense forces are working," General Oleksandr Tarnavskyi, commander of Ukraine's southern forces, said of the southern front. Battles in recent weeks have taken place on multiple points along the over 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line as Ukraine wages a counteroffensive with Western-supplied weapons and Western-trained troops against Russian forces who invaded nearly 18 months ago. Ukrainian troops have made only incremental gains since launching a counteroffensive in early June. Meanwhile, a Russian warship on Sunday fired warning shots at a Palau-flagged cargo ship in the south-western Black Sea,

Continued on Page 06

CALL TENDER

Establishment of a restaurant

THE EMBASSY OF FRANCE in Islamabad is renting out 475 m² of built-up space as of October 1, 2023.

Location : Villas Bangla (475 m² out of a total of 943 m²), located in the diplomatic enclave. G5 / Islamabad

For a symbolic fee, the candidate retained will have to perform the following duties:

- Open and run a restaurant (lunch/dinner), including works
- Highlight the French gastronomy in the menu
- Ensure custodial and surveillance management
- Green spaces maintenance

The application form and the tender documents can be obtained upon request by calling the following number: 301 856 02 35

Application must be sent to the following address: sga.islamabad-amba@diplomatie.gouv.fr before August 25, 2023 (1.00 pm).

All offer submitted without the dully completed application form will not be considered admissible.

Hashoo Group, CDA join hands for a Greener Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In a symbolic gesture aligning with the spirit of Pakistan's Independence Day, Hashoo Group, the leading hospitality conglomerate, collaborated with the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to orchestrate a grand tree plantation drive on August 11th. The event, attended by Mr. Murtaza Hashwani, Deputy Chairman and CEO of Hashoo Group and Mr. Noor-ul-Amin Mengal, Chairman of Capital Development Authority, along with executives from both sides, marked a remarkable step towards a more sustainable and eco-friendly future by planting trees along the Srinagar Highway (Rest Area), Islamabad. As the nation prepares to celebrate its 76th Independence Day, Hashoo Group and CDA recognized the sig-

nificance of nurturing the environment and giving back to the country that has nurtured them. Mr. Haseeb Gardezi, COO, Hospitality and Education Division, Hashoo Group, shared his thoughts on the occasion, stating, "Our tree plantation drive isn't just about planting saplings; it's a demonstration of our collective responsibility towards the environment. We are proud to stand together with CDA to safeguard the environment for future generations. Tree by Tree, We Unite." Mr. Murtaza Hashwani's visionary leadership and initiatives towards a sustainable future were at the heart of this endeavour. This drive resonates with his commitment to achieving a Net Zero future and reducing carbon footprints through tangible actions. By planting trees and envisioning Pakistan's green flag

in nature, Hashoo Group and CDA set a precedent for other businesses and institutions to embrace sustainability. Hashoo Group, a trailblazing hospitality entity, boasts an impressive portfolio of five-star, four-star, and select service hotels spread across Pakistan. Committed to growth and excellence, Hashoo Group is not only a leader in the hospitality sector but also champions the cause of quality hospitality education through Hashoo School of Hospitality Management, offering education opportunities across the country at its campuses in Islamabad, Peshawar and Karachi. The collaborative tree plantation drive exemplifies Hashoo Group's unwavering dedication to environmental responsibility, community engagement, and contributing positively to the nation's progress.



Trans Peshawar daily ridership reaches 316,000

PESHAWAR: Trans-Peshawar spokesperson on Sunday claimed that the daily ridership of Zu-Peshawar (the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system of Peshawar) has reached to 316,000 during ongoing year. "Out of the total 316,000, about 80,000 are women," she said in a news release on Sunday. "Zu Peshawar has hit a record total ridership of 216.2 million since its inception in August 2020 with 77.7 million passengers last year," she maintained, adding 314,000 Zu cards were issued during last year. In three years of operations, she said Zu Peshawar has provided employment opportunities to more than 3000 people. Over 25,000 complaints were resolved through Zu Helpline.—APP

Iconic Nazia Hassan remembered

LAHORE :Nazia Hassan, one of the most iconic figures in the pop music history of Pakistan, was remembered here on Sunday.

Nazia passed away 23 years ago on August 13 at the age of 35, following a prolonged battle with lungs cancer. She was born on April 3, 1965. The "Queen of Pop", as she was called, started her career at the age of 10 as a child artist. Nazia rose to prominence through a popular Pakistan Television programme 'Sung Sung'. Talking to APP, PTV Senior Producer Agha Qaiser said that Nazia made her playback singing debut with the song 'Aap Jaisa Koi' in an Indian film, Qurbani, in 1980. Her debut album, Disco Deewane, was released in 1981, and it charted in 14 countries worldwide, and became the best-selling Asian pop record at that time, he added. To a query, Agha said that Nazia Hassan enjoyed widespread popularity across South and Southeast Asia. Along with her brother Zoheb Hassan, Nazia went on to sell over 65 million records worldwide, he added. Her English language single 'Dreamer Deewane' made her the first Pakistani singer to make it to the British musical charts. Nazia Hassan was also a lawyer and a social activist. A graduate of Richmond, The American International University, and the University of London, she received numerous national and international awards. In 1980, she became the first Pakistani singer to win the Filmfare, a prominent Indian film award, at the age of 15 and remains the youngest recipient of the honour to date. She was also a recipient of the nation's highest civilian award, Pride of Performance. In addition to singing in films, Hassan was also a philanthropist and was appointed by UNICEF as its cultural ambassador in 1991. Her last album, Camera Camera (1992), was part of a campaign against drugs.—DNA

CM Naqvi felicitates nation on Independence Day

LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has extended heartfelt congratulations to the nation on the occasion of the 76th Independence Day. In his message, he expressed his warm felicitations to all fellow countrymen on the occasion of the 76th Independence Day. He acknowledged the immense blessing of freedom and expressed his gratitude to Allah Almighty for the nation's growth over personal interests and collaboratively elevate the stature of Pakistan. The main event, to be organised by the Punjab government to mark the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan, is scheduled at Huzuri Bagh on Monday. Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi is set to attend the occasion as the chief guest. During the significant day, the CM would embark on a visit to Mazar-e-Iqbal, where he would pay his respects by laying wreaths and offering Fateha, said a handout issued here on Sunday.—DNA



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ISLAMABAD: Mohammad Mustafa Pirzada with friends celebrating independence day.—DNA

3 CDWP, 12 ECNEC meetings held in 16 months

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has launched a 16-month performance report while highlighting its key achievements made from April 2022 to August 2023. The 29-page report contained details of achievements made by the ministry from April 19, 2022 to August 9, 2023, a news release said on Sunday. During the period under review, the Planning Commission managed to hold 33 meetings of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) and 12 meetings of the Executive

Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC). A large number of development projects and schemes of strategic significance were considered and approved during this period, said the report. The report emphasized that special attention was given to the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) as the Planning Ministry increased the PSDP from Rs500 billion to Rs1150 billion for 2023-2024, overcoming financial limitations while ensuring transparency through the PSDP Portal, which provides digital access to 1.1 trillion worth of PSDP data. While highlighting the performance of the CDWP, the

reports said that CDWP-approved projects showed the sensitization of priorities to carry out national development schemes. After the infrastructural projects, the major emphasis had been laid on the projects of human resources development. It further said since April 2022, the Planning Ministry has placed special emphasis on youth empowerment and inclusive development. This section includes several strategic initiatives undertaken by the Ministry as part of the PM's Youth Development Programme. Under this programme, six initiatives are on education, four center around engagement and opportunities, and two

each for employment and entrepreneurship. Similarly, the report said, National Top Talent Scholarship Programme would provide the Pakistani students with Masters and Ph.D. degrees in the top 25 universities of the world, for which Rs 4.7b had been allocated. The establishment of Centres of Excellence on Emerging Technologies, the National Centre for Nano-Technology, the National Centre for Quantum Computing and the National Institute of New Manufacturing was a great success of the Planning Ministry. Furthermore, the establishment of the National Growth Centre would help in increasing the country.

Three-Day Paragliding Independence Day Festival begins

PESHAWAR: A 3-day Independence Day Paragliding Gala festival is being organized by Orakzai Scouts on the occasion at Samana Airfield of the Orakzai Tribal district with Paragliding pilots and women paragliding from all over the country are participating in this festival. Strict security arrangements have been made, and tourists from different parts of the country have turned to Samana, a scenic tourist's site in District Orakzai. According to the details, a 3-day festival and paragliding gala have been organized by the Pak Army Orakzai Scouts in the Orakzai tribal district at Samana, a tourist destination at an altitude of 7,000 feet. Regular events have started on Sunday after practice jumping and Para-Demonstration. Paragliding pilots are performing their stunts. This festival will continue till August 14, the Day of Independence. Food stalls and cultural stalls have also been organized on this occasion. District Police Officer Nazir Ahmad Khan Tanuli checked the security arrangements and said that national tourists and athletes will participate in the festival for which all arrangements have been completed. Tourists can come and participate in the area without any fear or danger. The in-charge of the Paragliding Club (retired) Brigadier Ali Gohar said that Orakzai Samana is the best place for paragliding at the national level.—APP

KP police launches operations against wanted criminals: SP

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police has launched multiple operations against wanted and hardcore criminals across the district during last month, recovering valuables, illegal weapons and drugs from the suspects, said Superintendent of Police (SP) Rural Zone Zafar Ahmed Khan. The SP while talking to media men on Sunday said the suspects involved in the indiscriminate killing of a citizen were traced and arrested within the limits of Chamkani Police Station. The accused identified as Sana, Saeed and Bashir, who killed a man named Bilal, a resident of Tangi, near Kurona, Shaga Kalan, on July 21, during a robbery incident. The nabbed suspects have

confessed their crime during preliminary investigation. A pistol used in the crime was also recovered from the possession of the accused, SP Khan said. Similarly, in other operations, the accused involved in arms smuggling to different cities of the country including Punjab were also sent behind the bars. Likewise three police stations gave recovered 37 pistols, 7 Kalashnikovs, guns and several cartridges from the possession of the accused. Cases were registered against the accused and further investigation was started. He said the suspects involved in drug smuggling were also held during the said period, recovering 66 kilograms of hashish and two kilograms of opium. The accused used to smuggle drugs to

Punjab and other cities of the country through vehicles and motorcycles that also confiscated. Shabbaz, son of Muhammad Ayub, the leader of another gang involved in the robberies, was also arrested and the stolen mobile phones and Rs 80,000 in cash were also recovered. The accused belongs to an organized band of robbers who are involved in stealing cash, including valuable mobile phones, from citizens on the way. The SP disclosed that eight criminals were arrested during the crackdown against criminals involved in murder, attempted murder and other serious crimes, including other criminal elements. All the arrested criminals have admitted their involvement in various crimes during preliminary investigation.—APP



On the auspicious occasion of Independence Day of Pakistan, I extend my heartiest felicitations to all fellow citizens.

Certainly, 14 August is a historic day in our national history, which reminds us of the firm resolve and unwavering determination of our illustrious forefathers. No doubt, they stood united under the charismatic and visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in pursuance of a separate homeland. Many a hardship came their way but they never flinched or faltered. Eventually, their efforts were crowned with success and a sovereign state-Pakistan came into being. We bow our heads in humility before Allah Almighty for bestowing on us the blessing of independence and pay tribute to our elders for their out-of-the-ordinary sacrifices. At the same time, we also salute our brave sons of the soil who have laid down their lives for the preservation of our hard-earned freedom all along.

My Dear Countrymen! Pakistan is facing diverse challenges, which demand our capabilities to remain consistently high. Let us resolve to work for this purpose with the same determination and commitment that was shown during the journey towards independence. I am confident that PAF's commitment to self-reliance through indigenisation will ensure a more robust defence of the aerial frontiers of our motherland. In this regard, the newly established National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) will not only augment our defence capability but will also fulfil PAF's vision of industry-academia linkage alongside offering new opportunities for Pakistan's economic, technological and strategic gains with local and global partnerships. I assure you that this journey of self-reliance will continue with undiminished zeal. I take this opportunity to thank all my countrymen for their wholehearted support, love and respect for Pakistan Air Force and want to reassure that as always PAF, in synergy with Sister Services, will make every effort for defence of our beloved country. Insha Allah, together we will make Pakistan a stronger and impregnable state. On this happy day, we show solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters, who have been suffering oppression and rendering supreme sacrifices for over seven decades.

May Allah Almighty guide our efforts and give us strength to come up to the nation's expectations. Aameen!

Air Chief Marshal
ZAHHEER AHMED BABER SIDHU, NI (M)
Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force

PAKISTAN AIR FORCE
A SYMBOL OF PRIDE FOR THE NATION

Message of UAE envoy on 14 August

Message from His Excellency Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, the UAE Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion of 76th Pakistan Independence Day: In my 7th year in this beautiful country, it gives me great privilege to be celebrating with my Pakistani Brothers and Sisters, Pakistan Independence Day. Through wise forethought, diplomatic efforts, and trade and business exchanges enacted over the last few years, the UAE and Pakistan relationship has become a successful model for bilateral relations and has been elevating to another level, closer than ever. Our collaboration today went way beyond economic affairs, it has ex-



tended into the domains of education, culture, science, and technology.

I sincerely wish further progress and continued success to our friends,

the Pakistani people and may you enjoy continued peace and prosperity

during this independence Day celebration and beyond.—DNA

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/Burkina 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

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



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MH.....5611116
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RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov cuts the ribbon along with Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan Chakkrid Krachaiwong, Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Reza Amiri-Moghaddam and MD PTDC Aftab-ur-Rehman Rana to inaugurate first tourism investment Expo at local hotel in City. —Online

PIAF warns of record inflation

The high inflation environment affects decision making of all economic agents in economy, like investors, savers, consumers and producers through uncertainty about the expected payoffs from their decisions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has warned the record inflation and high cost of doing business would hurt economic growth, demanding a careful policy to keep it in control. PIAF Chairman Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said that the most serious threat to the economy in the current fiscal year would be inflation, as the government plan of approaching the donors for further financial assistance will bring a fresh wave of price-hike, because inflation is already hitting economy due to continuous rise in oil prices and depreciation of local currency. He predicted that inflation would remain high and may even increase further due to market frictions caused by rel-

ative demand and supply gap of essential items, exchange rate depreciation and recent upward adjustment of administered prices of petrol and diesel. The PIAF leader called for keeping check on government expenditure and high cost of debt servicing to contain budget deficit, as the Pakistan's federal budget deficit projection has been revised to history's highest to over Rs 6 trillion, highlighting the unending fiscal woes that have pushed the country into a debt trap despite putting additional burden of billions of rupees on industry in the current fiscal year. Expressing serious concern over the high jump in country's budget deficit, PIAF Chairman Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said the revision has been made in light of agreement with the International Monetary Fund, which exposed the massive un-

derreporting of expenditures at the time of budget presentation by the Finance ministry. This is a highly unsustainable level and has already pushed the country into a situation where debt restructuring seems to be the only viable option. The PIAF chairman maintained that the failure to reform the tax system and increase revenue collection is a major factor behind heavy domestic and foreign borrowings by the government. In view of the low level of available FX reserves, the debt management strategy of Pakistan may have to be revisited, to ensure the stability of Pakistani rupee and restoration of international capital markets' confidence in the economy of Pakistan. In the last fiscal year, Pakistan had registered a record federal budget deficit of Rs 5.5 trillion, breaching the

annual target by a wide margin of Rs 1.5 trillion. He advised the government to avoid hard restructuring, which is painful. Instead, it urged Pakistan to go for debt re-profiling with the official and commercial creditors under the G20 Common Framework. He stated that debt stabilisation was unlikely in the short term given the need to address the flood consequences and finance the current account deficit. At the same time, international rating agencies have continued to downgrade Pakistan in 2022-23 in the CCC category and the sovereign USD yield curve is now inverted, reflecting market expectations of default and ensuing restructuring by Pakistan. He said that due to the lagged effect of floods, production losses, especially of major agriculture crops, has not

yet been fully recovered. Consequently, the shortage of essential items has emerged and persisted. Inflation may further jack up as a result of second round effect. He said the IMF loan would have devastating effects on the economy, as with more taxes and increased rates of utilities, cost of production would further increase. This will render Pakistani exports uncompetitive in the global market. PIAF chairman said that there is a consensus that a low inflation rate helps economic activities, while high inflation hurts economic growth. The high inflation environment affects decision making of all economic agents in economy, like investors, savers, consumers and producers through uncertainty about the expected payoffs from their decisions.

Iranian ambassador issues message on 14 August

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the eve of the 76th Independence Day of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, I would like to extend my heartfelt felicitations to the government and honorable nation of Pakistan. Iran was the first country that recognized Pakistan and with which established diplomatic relations. Since then, Iran and Pakistan's historic relationship, based upon history long Commonalities and Links, has during the time strengthened and nurtured into a solid brotherhood. Today we celebrate together the 76th year of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries. I wish peace, unity, stability, security and prosperity for Pakistan.

CTO urges parents not to allow underage drivers to show stunts

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan has urged parents to keep an eye over children and not to allow underage drivers to show stunts on motorcycles and cars, particularly on August 13 and 14. According to CTO, CTP had issued a traffic plan to facilitate commuters and the general public on Pakistan Independence Day (August 14) to be celebrated on Monday. Tamoor Khan informed that 38 special pickets would be erected in the city and on entry points of Murree to thwart one-wheeling on eve of August 14 and strict action would be taken against one-wheelers. —APP

PNCA to organize grand culture show

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has planned a series of cultural activities to celebrate Independence Day on August 14. Director General PNCA Muhammad Ayub Jamali told APP that prominent artists from all four provinces including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir would perform in the grand culture show to be held at PNCA auditorium at 7:00 p.m. The artists including Fazal Jutt, Wahid Bakhsh Faqir, Sajid Ali, Liaqat Ali Baloch, Malang Group, Zafar Ali and team, Bano Rehmat, Mubashara Hafeez Mesh Baloch, Sunila Baig and Rizwana Khan would present National songs in the grand show. National Performing Arts Group, PNCA will also present folk and regional dances in the show. —APP

AIOU to close MPhil, PhD admissions on August 15

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU)'s admissions for autumn semester 2023 face-to-face programs including BS, M.Sc (Hons), MBA, MPhil, MS and PhD programs will close on August 15, while Admissions for matric, FA and I.Com will continue till September 5. According to AIOU, the admission forms and prospectus of all programs are available on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk). New students who wish to apply to face-to-face programs can apply online till 15th August on the university website (https://online.aiou.edu.pk) while those already enrolled in these programs (current students) will be able to enroll till 22nd August. The entrance test/interviews for admission to MPhil, MS, and PhD programs will be held from August 17 to 23. Merit Lists of successful candidates will be uploaded on the university website within two weeks. —DNA

Police finalize strict security arrangements for Murree

RAWALPINDI: A comprehensive security and traffic plan has been devised by Rawalpindi District Police for Independence Day that includes the deployment of more than 800 personnel during the night of August 13 and 14 as well as the establishment of several checkpoints to control one-wheeling in Murree. The district and traffic police would implement special security and traffic arrangements for Murree to facilitate the tourists coming to the hill station to celebrate the Independence Day. According to a district administration spokesman, depending upon the crowd and parking situation, the entry of vehicles would be restricted in Murree. Special police squads had been formed to prevent one-wheeling and maintain traffic in Murree, he said. As many as 38 pickets and six special squads had also been formed to prevent one-wheeling and car-skating in Rawalpindi city which would be in full action on the night of August 13 and August 14 and the violators would be sent behind the bars, he added. The spokesman said that special arrangements had been made for Murree with the establishment of special pickets at all entrances of the hill station to prevent one-wheeling and implement the orders of the district administration. Chief Traffic Officer Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan had directed the authorities concerned to take strict action against one-wheelers, and no negligence would be tolerated in this regard, he added. He said that on the occasion of Independence Day, no one would be allowed to take the law into their hands and hooliganism and road blocking would not be tolerated under any circumstances. He appealed to the parents to keep an eye on their children and avoid giving them a bike or car so that they don't face any legal trouble. Meanwhile, Rescue-1122 Murree has also chalked out an emergency plan to handle any emergency, if any. —DNA

Archbishop urges nation to join hands

ISLAMABAD: Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad, Bishop of Islamabad-Rawalpindi Diocese believes that the Independence Day (August 14) inspires the entire nation of Pakistan to contribute for the prosperity and development of our beloved country. On the joyous occasion of the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan, Dr. Joseph Arshad, who was also President of Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference congratulated all the citizens and the whole nation of Pakistan. He said this day we should also remember the sacrifices of our ancestors who shed their blood for independence. He said today the hearts and souls of people were passionately filled with sentiments of love, peace and prayers to celebrate the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan. He was of the view that the Christian leadership also played a key role in the freedom movement of Pakistan which can never be forgotten. Even after the Independence, the Christian community served the nation in all sectors, especially in health, education and social services which is zealously continued even today. —DNA

14th August Independence Day

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Celebrating Independence Day, Pakistan Navy congratulates the nation while remaining committed to defend the sovereignty of its maritime frontiers and help the nation in the wake of disasters & challenges

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Defenders of Maritime Frontiers of Pakistan

Surface

Sub-Surface

Air Arm

SDF & Marines

Briefs

Death anniversary of Nazia Hassan observed

ISLAMABAD: The 23rd death anniversary of Pakistani pop singer Nazia Hassan was observed, here Sunday. Nazia Hassan who was born on April 3, 1965, in Karachi, rose to prominence through the popular Pakistan Television program *Sung Sung*. Nazia Hassan started her music career as a teenager with song "Aap Jaisa Koi" which earned her international fame. Her debut album, *Disco Deewane*, released in 1981, charted in 14 countries worldwide and became the best-selling Asian pop record at the time. She enjoyed widespread popularity across South and Southeast Asia. Along with her brother Zohab Hassan, Hassan went on to sell over 65 million records worldwide. Her English language single *Dreamer Deewane* made her the first Pakistani singer to make it to the British musical charts. She was also a lawyer and a social activist. A graduate of Richmond, The American International University, and the University of London, she received numerous national and international awards including Pakistan's highest civilian award, *Pride of Performance*.—APP

World Humanitarian Day to be marked on Aug 19

ISLAMABAD: World Humanitarian Day will be marked on August 19 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan the day honors all humanitarians who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause, and those who have lost their lives in the cause of duty. It aims to increase public awareness about humanitarian assistance activities worldwide and the importance of international cooperation. World Humanitarian Day is a day dedicated to humanitarians worldwide, as well as to increase public understanding of humanitarian assistance activities. The day aims to honor humanitarian workers who have lost their lives or injured themselves in the course of their work and to acknowledge the ongoing work of humanitarian staff around the world. Many communities and organizations try to increase the importance of humanitarians by distributing publicity and information material. Additionally, some try to speak to the press to help spread these key messages of World Humanitarian Day, while other groups organize public events worldwide that feature humanitarian work. For the year 2010 and beyond, it is anticipated that World Humanitarian Day will focus on particular humanitarian themes to help increase public awareness.—APP

BISP Nashonuma – A contributor to prevent stunted growth

ISLAMABAD: The prevalence of stunted growth among children due to malnutrition is still one of major daunting tasks with most of developing countries butressing efforts to cope with this challenge for ensuring the well-being of their future generations. This challenge becomes further enormous for countries like Pakistan where according to statistics, malnutrition rates touch a stunting figure of 40.2 percent besides 28.9 percent underweight and 17.7 percent wasting persist and are indicative of an ongoing child nutrition crisis. Such levels of malnutrition rank Pakistan as the second-highest burdened country in the region and ring alarm bells for the policymakers as how they could lift this nation to the international horizons for competing with the developed nations. Taking cognizance of the gravity of the situation, the Benazir Income Support Program launched a valuable initiative of Benazir Nashonuma for preventing stunted growth in children, besides extending benefits to the poor on various fronts.—APP

“Pakistan’s Youth are leaders of tomorrow”

Climate change affects all parts of our society. Therefore, together with our Pakistani partners, we want to amplify voices that are often left unheard: that of the youth: German ambassador

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan-German Climate and Energy Partnership (PGCEP), in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Government of Pakistan, organised an event in celebration of International Youth Day on Friday. The event, titled "Youth 4 Climate Action: Young Voices, Bold Solutions," was held to harness the energy and creativity of young individuals towards addressing the pressing challenges posed by climate change. Alfred Grannas, the German Ambassador to Pakistan, noted, "Climate change affects all parts of our society. Therefore, together with our Pakistani partners, we want to amplify voices that are often left unheard: that of the youth." International Youth Day is celebrated annually on August 12th. This year, the event focused on highlighting the importance of young people's engagement in sustainable development and climate action. PGCEP recognises the significant role that the youth play in shaping the future and believes in their



potential to drive positive change. Mujtaba Hussain, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change, spoke, "We want to build a climate resilient Pakistan, as we stand at a critical moment where climate adaptation and mitigation have become the need of the hour. It will be your generation

who will have to deal with the consequences of the decisions taken today. This is why I am happy to be able to address all of you today, and stress how important the role of the youth is for us at the government level." The event featured a series of engaging activities and thought-pro-

voking discussions for young participants to learn from, so they can become effective advocates for climate action. Distinguished speakers from across Pakistan shared insights and experiences regarding climate change, gender, vulnerable communities being disproportionately affected by

climate disasters, and the role of youth in advancing these issues. "We are excited to bring together young minds from diverse backgrounds to celebrate International Youth Day with a focus on climate action. The enthusiasm and ideas of the youth are vital in shaping policies and initiatives that drive sustainability and combat climate change," said Tobias Becker, Country Director, GIZ Pakistan. The event provided a platform for networking opportunities and fostering dialogue among the youth, climate change-makers working at the grassroots level, and government stakeholders. Participants shared actionable solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change. PGCEP remains committed to supporting initiatives that engage youth in climate and energy discussions, facilitating knowledge exchange, capacity building, and empowerment. The partnership is a collaborative effort of Germany and Pakistan aimed at fostering sustainable development, climate resilience, and clean energy solutions in Pakistan. By combining the expertise of both countries, the partnership seeks to address the challenges of climate change and energy security.

Admin to organize fireworks, cultural program

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration has finalized arrangements to organize a fireworks show and cultural program at Liaquat Bagh Murree Road Rawalpindi on Saturday, August 13 at 10:30 PM in connection with 'Independence Day' celebrations. According to a district administration spokesman, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta, Duty Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema and other senior officers would attend the program. He informed that a musical night 'Mera Pakistan' would also be organized by Rawalpindi Arts Council on August 13, at 8 PM. The citizens were invited to come and join their family and friends and celebrate Independence Day celebrations while entry would be free, he added. Sonia Azeem, Mubashara Hafeez, Rizwana Khan, Ashaq Malik Ghouri, and a traditional folk dance party would enthrall the audience. Commissioner of Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta would be the chief guest at the program.

Ufone 4G brings independence day offer

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani telecom company, Ufone 4G has introduced an amazing cashback offer for its customers on key bundle subscriptions via easypaisa, to celebrate the spirit of freedom this Independence Day i.e. 14th of August, 2023. Ufone 4G users can get 14% cashback, amounting up to Rs.200 per bundle to freely engage in the national day festivity with

seamless voice and data connectivity. The 14% cashback offer will be available on selective bundles, including Digital Grand Offer, Weekly Digital Offer, Social Hero and UPower 150 where customers can pick any bundle from 10GBs to 100GBs to enjoy Ufone 4G's quality connectivity. Apart from providing the best value for money, the offer will bring much-needed ease and convenience to users during the holiday. The snapshot

Offers	Current Price	New Price	%
UPower 150	150	129	-14%
Social Hero	245	210	-14%
Weekly Digital Offer	430	370	-14%
Digital Grand Offer 1400	1200	1032	-14%

Being a customer-centric telecom brand, Ufone 4G continuously introduces discounted offers and cash-

back to facilitate and help enhance the user experience of its customers. The company goes beyond its obligations to ensure that its customers get full value for money and an unbeatable user experience at all times. That is why, Ufone 4G's discount, cashback and value packages are accessible via all traditional and digital platforms nationwide. Ufone 4G users may avail of the cashback offer on easypaisa app through self-subscription only.

Ever-increasing production cost real threat to trade

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has said that high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for the trade and industry, as ever-increasing cost of production is the real threat to the economy amidst frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar. FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar, while strongly rejecting the significant jump in electricity prices and hike in gas tariffs to meet the IMF condition, has said that it will put additional burden of billions of rupee on consumers. In a statement issued on Sunday, the Chairman of the BMP observed that it is unfortunate that the authorities

in all governments continued to approve billions of rupees' additional burden on consumers through a direct tariff increase and an indirect increase through the withdrawal of subsidies given to exporters and farmers earlier. He said that the government liquidity and external vulnerability risks are elevated and there remain considerable risks around it's ability to secure required financing to fully meet its needs for the next few years. Mian Anjum Nisar said that constant hike in power tariff has pushed the electricity prices higher and added to the already soaring cost of trade and industry. The Businessmen Panel chairman asked the government to shut down all expensive oil-based power plants to ensure availability of cheaper energy for consumers. He condemned the government for shifting power distribution companies' inefficiencies' burden to the

consumers by jacking up the tariff under the guise of Fuel Charges Adjustment. It is to be noted that the authorities had pledged to stop any further rise in circular debt adding that around Rs 250 billion was added to the gas circular debt annually though the actual figures are available with Petroleum Division. However, if 11.5 percent price hike for SNGPL and 11 percent tariff for SSGC was not implemented then the circular debt will rise to Rs 740 billion. At present, the gas tariff for residential consumers is Rs 450 per mmbtu in the Sui Southern Gas Company system against the prescribed price of Rs 850 per mmbtu and Rs 400 per mmbtu in the Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited system against the prescribed price of Rs 1,007 per mmbtu, showing a significant gap between sale price and actual cost of gas. Moreover, there will be an additional increase of Rs3.62 per unit in the cost of

electricity on account of quarterly surcharge to collect Rs73 billion, excluding the impact of the pending fuel cost adjustments. FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman observed that the aggressive economic measures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency have been negatively affecting running businesses. With a view to deal with fiscal challenges Mian Anjum asked the economic managers to work on the three-way strategy by implementing short-term goals that will help to keep generating resources for smooth fiscal operations, medium-term goals where they should focus on financial inclusion, documenting the economy by designing a system where all businesses can be registered and properly document their income including collection of sales tax.

Dasu HPP completed & Traffic Diversion Tunnel open to traffic at KKH

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A traffic diversion tunnel has been inaugurated on Friday as part of the ongoing construction work for the main abutment under the Dasu Hydropower Project (DHPP) by WAPDA. This tunnel has been strategically created at the existing Karakoram Highway (KKH) to facilitate the uninterrupted flow of general traffic. This initiative aims to ensure the smooth movement of vehicles while the construction work on the main abutment is underway, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Sunday. The tunnel was inaugurated by Anwar ul Haq GM/PM DHPP, WAPDA Kohistan along with Fidencio Mendez Project Manager Dasu Hydropower Consultant (DHC). Senior Management and members were present on the occasion from WAPDA, DHC and China Gezhouba Group of Companies (CGGC). The traffic diversion tunnel



situated near the Logoro area on the existing KKH will not only maintain the flow of traffic but also accelerate the progress of construction on the left-side abutment of the dam at the DHPP. "After the completion of LBDT, this tunnel will be used as a flushing tunnel to flush the deposited silt from the reservoir of the Main Dam," reads an official statement. China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) has been working on DHPP as the Main Works Contractor of DHPP. China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), Power Construc-

tion Corporation of China Ltd (PCCC), Zhongmei Engineering Group Ltd, and CGICOP are also involved in the project. HPP is being constructed across River Indus, upstream of Dasu town in Upper Kohistan, KP. The 4320 MW DHPP is planned to be completed in two stages. The under-construction Stage-I is with an installed generation capacity of 2160 MW and the stage-II will be of 2160 MW capacity. On completion of both stages, Dasu will become the project with the highest annual energy generation in Pakistan.

Vote without violence

PODA organizes series of trainings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "To strengthen women's voice and agency in electoral processes, it is crucial to ensure women's participation, maximize it and remove hurdles which bar them to play their vibrant role in the progress and development of the country", said Ms. Sameena Nazir, President-CEO Potohar Organization for Development (PODA) on the occasion of the training of trainers held on Saturday in Islamabad. One-Day Training of Trainers for Building the Capacity of Rural Women Leaders to Promote Votes without Violence was organized here in a local hotel which was attended by 15 promising rural women leaders belonging to different tehsils of district Rawalpindi.



Imparting knowledge and skills to enhance capacity building of rural women,

at the initial stage PODA with the support of NDI aims to empow-

er a batch of 240 women from four provinces across the country.

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Violence reaches new heights

THE assassination of the Ecuadorian presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio on Wednesday marked a frightening new moment, even in a country where homicide levels are rocketing. Rising violence and crime are the central issue of the election in which the former journalist fought. The 59-year-old, shot dead as he left an event in Quito, was a courageous whistleblower who campaigned on the slogan: "It's time for the brave". While he had reported death threats from a gang leader, and the incumbent president, Guillermo Lasso, has blamed organised crime groups, much remains to be determined. Mr Villavicencio's outspokenness on corruption and alleged links between organised crime and politics had made him enemies among the political class and in areas such as the oil industry. What is clear is that murder and violence linked to the drugs trade have soared in Ecuador in recent years, a pattern also seen in other Latin American countries previously regarded as relatively safe and stable, such as Chile. The homicide rate rose almost fivefold between 2016 and 2022, to 22 people per 100,000. Guayaquil, the most violent city, registered nearly as many violent deaths in the first half of this year – 1,390 – as it did in the whole of last year. The national state of emergency declared by Mr Lasso in the wake of the assassination follows last month's declaration of a state of emergency in prisons, where hundreds of prisoners have been killed in clashes. Guayaquil has seen multiple successive states of emergency declared after horrific violence, including a bombing. Behind all this lies what the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime describes as "a prolonged surge in both the supply of and demand for cocaine" globally. Europe has bolstered demand as more American consumers have turned to fentanyl. Mexican cartels, Balkan gangs and even the 'Ndrangheta mafia have expanded into new territory, including Ecuador, supercharging local criminal groups and increasing both the frequency and the extremity of violence. At the same time, counter-drugs operations in Brazil, Colombia and Peru may have displaced some activity. In the past, some leaders in the region have resorted to brutal crackdowns that trample over rights and only fuel the problems in the longer run – as El Salvador is doing now – or cut quiet deals allowing gangs to continue their trafficking if they keep down the body count. There are no easy fixes, but Ecuador's 18 million citizens lack confidence that their leaders are determined to solve the crisis. Crime this week wrought havoc on the nation's politics – but it is political failures that have allowed it to flourish.



Toxic effects from alleged security threat

THE 2023 National Intelligence Strategy released on Thursday is an unfortunate new expression of the United States government apparatus' determination to treat strategic competition with China as the country's priority security challenge. Besides cultivating further hostilities, it will do substantial disservice to the ongoing efforts to inject stability into the already volatile bilateral relationship. Building on the 2023 Security Assessment Report of the US Intelligence Community that was issued in February, the new document features a definitive focus on China and Russia as preeminent national security challenges, with the emphasis on China. According to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the National Intelligence Strategy "is a foundational document" that is derived from a consensus among 18 intelligence elements and provides strategic direction for the US over the next four years. Despite the "immediate and ongoing threat" Russia poses, "it lacks the across-the-spectrum capabilities of the PRC", the report states. It asserts that the People's Republic of China "is the only US competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do so". Such a claim is consistent with other policy documents of the Joe Biden administration, reflecting a clear dedication to an all-of-government concentration on countering the alleged threats from China. Taken together, these policy documents point to a dangerous turn in the US' China strategy that threatens to fundamentally change the nature of the two countries' relations. Increasingly they are helping China hawks turn what has generally been a constructive and mutually beneficial partnership into a relationship dominated by animosity, which not only causes distress for the Chinese, but also many Americans. The toxic effects have been obvious in the two sides' diplomatic rhetoric, which is getting less and less friendly as time goes by. Washington sounds tougher on China with each passing day, which is only serving to convince Beijing that it will be perceived as an enemy regardless of what it does to try and prove the contrary. Even setting aside the "good old days" of engagement, it was not that long ago that the two governments were careful to show conspicuous restraint when commenting on emerging differences over issues of concern. That kind of restraint has evaporated though as the China hawks in Washington have stepped up their efforts to push bilateral ties toward a geopolitical showdown. More than ever before, the relationship looks like having embarked on a path of no return, a course of collision. But, ironically, it is equally evident that neither party truly wants that collision to occur. Beijing continues reiterating its desire for a "healthy" relationship. The Biden administration keeps expressing a commitment to cooperate whenever, wherever possible. The Jekyll and Hyde nature of the US administration in terms of what it says and what it does is the root cause of the problematic relationship between the two countries, with the latter encouraging the China hawks to go ever further in their provoking of Beijing.

Arab youth seek certainty in religion and tradition

James Dorsey

The ASDA'BCW results are echoed by Arab Barometer, which regularly surveys public opinion in the Middle East like the public relations company.

Michael Robbins, director and co-principal investigator of Arab Barometer, has noted a stark increase in Arab youth wanting clerics to have greater influence on government decisions. "In 2021-2022, roughly half or more in five of ten countries surveyed agreed that religious clerics should influence decisions of govt," Mr. Robbins said. He said that "while youth ages 18-29 have led the return to religion across MENA (Middle East and North Africa), the rise in support for religion in politics is more widespread across society. In most countries, both older and younger members of society are shifting their views in concert"

AJUST-published survey suggests Arab youth are returning to traditional values. The survey contrasts starkly with another, only partially released poll, in which a growing number favour religious reform.

The conservative trend in the just released 15th Arab Youth Survey 2023 conducted by Dubai-based public relations company ASDA'BCW reflects an earlier Arab Barometer poll. At the same time, those polled in the youth survey offered seemingly contradictory responses to questions.

If accurate, the trend casts a shadow over social reforms enacted by leaders such as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and United Arab Emirates President Mohammed bin Zayed that have enhanced women's rights and professional and leisure opportunities and created Western-style entertainment industries.

Mr. Bin Zayed has gone further than Mr. Bin Salman by reducing, if not removing, restrictions on alcohol consumption and cohabitation. The Saudi crown prince is believed to want to follow suit. Earlier this year, the Saudi Tourism Authority surprised many by announcing that LGBTQ tourists would be welcome in the kingdom.

Similarly, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, alongside Bahrain, recently released Barbie in contrast to Kuwait and Lebanon, which banned the movie because it violated religious and social norms.

Two months earlier, the kingdom and the Emirates removed 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse' from their release schedules for similar reasons. It's not clear how the release of Barbie and the welcoming of LGBTQ tourists sit with 54 per cent of those polled by ASDA'BCW, who emphasized the importance of religion, tradition, and family in their personal and public lives.

In a similar vein, 76 percent were concerned

about the loss of traditional values and culture. Sixty-five per cent overall and 72 per cent in the Gulf prioritised preserving religion and tradition over creating a tolerant, liberal, and globalised society.

Seventy-three percent disagreed that religious values held the Arab world back. More than sixty per cent wanted their country's laws to be based on Sharia.

In line with those results, ASDA'BCW reported that the number of youths who believed that the "Arab world needs to reform its religious institutions" was decreasing. Fifty-eight percent agreed in this year's survey compared to 79 per cent in 2019.

The ASDA'BCW results are echoed by Arab Barometer, which regularly surveys public opinion in the Middle East like the public relations company.

Michael Robbins, director and co-principal investigator of Arab Barometer, has noted a stark increase in Arab youth wanting clerics to have greater influence on government decisions. "In 2021-2022, roughly half or more in five of ten countries surveyed agreed that religious clerics should influence decisions of government," Mr. Robbins said.

He said that "while youth ages 18-29 have led the return to religion across MENA (the Middle East and North Africa), the rise in support for religion in politics is more widespread across society. In most countries, both older and younger members of society are shifting their views in concert."

Mr. Robbins added, "Results from nationally representative public opinion surveys... strongly suggest that political Islam is making a comeback. In most countries surveyed, young and old citizens demonstrate a clear preference for giving religion a greater role in politics. This is the first time that support for political Islam has increased meaningfully...since the Arab Uprisings of 2011."

ASDA'BCW and Arab Barometer's results

contrast starkly with a recent, partially released Washington Institute of Near East Policy survey suggesting that Saudis increasingly favour religious moderation and may be more open to religious reform.

Forty-three per cent of those surveyed by the Institute agreed that Saudis "should listen to those among us who are trying to interpret Islam in a more moderate, tolerant, and modern direction." When asked the same question four years ago, only 20 per cent agreed.

Moreover, 65 percent surveyed by the public relations company said religion played too big a role in regional affairs. However, that figure dropped from 72 per cent last year. The survey left open what aspects of regional affairs youth meant.

Another potential contradiction was the trend towards conservatism juxtaposed with 80 per cent of those surveyed stressing the need for respect for freedoms, equality, and human rights.

The concern about traditional and religious values and the contradictions suggest complex youth attitudes towards aspects of reform.

Youth's emphasis on tradition and religion also indicates that deepening national rather than religious and tribal identities remains a work in progress in the Arab world.

Underscoring the complexity of the identity shift, just over half of those surveyed by ASDA'BCW attributed less significance to Arabic than their parents.

The reduced weighting of the language implied an inclination towards a more globalized society. Yet, squaring the circles is difficult, with youth saying they are less focused on globalisation.

The contradictions speak to uncertainty sparked by rapid social and economic change. Religion and tradition appear to emerge as anchors as religiosity among youth increases.

Climate change challenges require bold leadership

Andrew Hammond

315India decided that two of the four focus themes for the G20 this year would be green development and sustainable development (the other two are empowerment of women and technological transformation). Modi must therefore start banging heads together in the coming weeks in an attempt to get some movement on climate issues. He is well aware that while the G20 was once widely viewed as having seized the mantle from the G7 as the premier forum for international cooperation and global governance...

THE 2015 Paris Climate Accords came at a time of relative geopolitical harmony, including in relations between China and the US. It is sometimes forgotten that one of the key developments that preceded the landmark agreement was months of intensive diplomacy between Beijing and Washington, culminating in a bilateral climate pact in November 2014. The shared global leadership that was on display then is, sadly, largely lacking on the world stage right now but must be revived, at least in relation to this most fundamental of issues. As we move into what UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has described as the age of "global boiling," the history books will not look favorably on failure to agree greater cooperation on the issue.

This is especially the case given the fact that so many parts of the world are already suffering the effects of climate change. In recent weeks, for example, parts of China, including Beijing, have been battered by the heaviest rain in 140 years. The country has also recorded its hottest-ever temperature, 52 degrees Celsius (125.6 degrees Fahrenheit), amid the wider heat waves that have also affected Europe and North America. One model that has been proposed to concentrate minds on the issue is a form of "war-time leadership." This would involve a determined focus on the core objective of tackling climate change, while forging a greater sense of national and global unity on the issue, and with the involvement of the private sector a key element for achieving a positive outcome. One example here is the way in which the COVID-19 pandemic drove the discovery and development of vaccines, rapidly and at scale.

One of the key challenges to forging such a sense of unity is the darker geopolitical landscape now compared with 2015, and not only because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. For example, tensions are also running significantly higher between China and the West, which greatly complicates the pathway to a step change in climate change leadership. The spike in geopolitical tensions was in full view at the recent G20 meeting of environment ministers, when there had been high hopes for greater accord despite wider geopolitical disagreements.

Collectively, G20 nations account for about 80 percent of carbon emissions. Yet while there is no better forum, in theory, to try to push forward the climate agenda, its results have been pitiful so far this year. As the world endures the hottest temperatures on record, G20 member nations have made virtually no progress on climate policy fundamentals. Yes, after their meeting at the end of July the G20 environment ministers did issue a long outcome document committing to environmentally sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and to actions such as reversing land degradation, accelerating ecosystem restoration, halting biodiversity loss, and promoting a resilient blue economy.

However, there was no breakthrough on hugely scaling up the use of renewable energy, or on reaching an agreement to phase out fossil fuels, especially coal. This provoked exasperation among some ministers and officials, including EU Environment Commissioner VirginijusSinkevicius, who said "we simply are nowhere" and "the glass is ... certainly empty when we look at G20 commitments to address climate change."

Noting that some delegations had even tried to row back on previous climate pledges, he added that "we cannot be driven by the lowest common denominator or by narrow national interests. We cannot allow the pace of change to be set by the slowest movers in the room."

It is not only officials who are critical of attitudes and progress but also scientific experts such as Peter Newman, a member of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. He said humanity is entering a critical period in which "we're facing death and seeing that climate change is not an idea just of science; it is real and it hurts." Populations face the growing prospect of "baking in an oven," he added. The lack of progress on the issue is also frustrating Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His country holds the presidency of the G20 this year and he still has high hopes for this year's summit, even though it takes place against the backdrop of the most unpredictable global landscape in years, if not decades. In total, India will host more than 200 meetings in about 50 cities, involving ministers, top officials and representatives of civil society.

The pinnacle of all this will be the leadership summit in New Delhi in September. It will be attended by about 30 heads of state and governments from G20 member states and other invited countries, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain and the UAE, plus representatives of international organizations such as the UN, the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

India decided that two of the four focus themes for the G20 this year would be green development and sustainable development (the other two are empowerment of women and technological transformation).

Modi must therefore start banging heads together in the coming weeks in an attempt to get some movement on climate issues. He is well aware that while the G20 was once widely viewed as having seized the mantle from the G7 as the premier forum for international cooperation and global governance, in the past decade and a half it has failed to realize the full scale of the ambition some thrust upon it. This is in part because it has no formal mechanisms for ensuring implementation and enforcement of agreements between the leaders of member states.

Modi must therefore try to make his personal mark as host of the G20, not least because it could affect his prospects for reelection as prime minister next year. As a savvy politician, he is well aware of the prestige the G20 enjoys. Moreover, he is keen to buttress his government's credentials as a global green leader. To that end, he has highlighted the fact that India is one of the top five countries in terms of installed renewable energy capacity, and met its targets for installed capacity of electricity generated from non-fossil-fuel sources nine years ahead of its target date of 2030. With Modi under pressure in the run-up to the main G20 summit, he will try above all else to exceed expectations in terms of outcomes. Whether he achieves this, however, will depend to a significant extent on whether geopolitical divisions within the grouping improve or escalate in the weeks ahead.

— Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Armed forces kill 6 terrorists...

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan has seen a steep rise in terrorist activities including several suicide bombings and gun attacks mainly targeting police and law enforcement agencies in the northwestern provinces, which resulted in hundreds of deaths and damage to properties. The last incident of terrorism was the deadly suicide blast on the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) convention in Bajaur, which killed over 60 people, including children. The resurgence of militancy has been witnessed, particularly since the return of Taliban rule in neighbouring Afghanistan and the end of the ceasefire between Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Islamabad. Meanwhile, cross-border militancy continues despite Islamabad's multiple reminders to Afghanistan for not living up to its commitment to ensuring that its soil is not used for terrorism in Pakistan.

7 killed in Russian...

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the first time Russia has fired on a merchant ship beyond Ukraine since exiting a landmark UN-brokered grain deal last month. According to Russia's Defense Ministry, the Sukru Okan was heading northwards to the Ukrainian Danube River port of Izmail. "The captain of the dry-cargo ship did not respond to the request to stop for inspection for the carriage of prohibited goods. To force the ship to stop, warning fire was opened from automatic small arms from a Russian warship," Russia's Ministry of Defense wrote on Telegram, adding that the ship later stopped and allowed an inspection team to board. Four weeks ago, Moscow withdrew from a key export agreement that allowed Ukraine to ship millions of tons of grain across the Black Sea for sale on world markets. In the wake of that withdrawal, Russia carried out repeated strikes on Ukrainian ports, including Odesa, and declared wide areas of the Black Sea unsafe for shipping.

Mengal slams...

FROM PAGE 01

Just yesterday, the outgoing PM had expressed pride in being the apple of the establishment's eye for the past 30 years. Speaking during a farewell ceremony before the announcement about the country's caretaker PM at the Prime Minister's House, he remarked that a hybrid system that works for the country's progress is better. Moreover, Mengal also took issue with some decisions of the outgoing government. He took issue with the fact that the Pak-China Gwadar University was being built in Lahore instead of Balochistan. Punjab has no scarcity of educational institutions; however, being on the periphery, Balochistan's several cities are in urgent need of better educational institutes, especially for higher education. He wrote that renaming the Gwadar airport after Feroz Khan Noon — a former prime minister — was shocking as Balochistan's population may not even be aware of his name. He further contended that whereas in the last census, the population of Balochistan was about 2.24 million, in the most recent census — approved by the Council of Common Interest (CCI) and to be the basis of the upcoming elections — 7300,000 fewer people were recorded.

Shehbaz to leave for...

FROM PAGE 01

Sources explained that previously too Nusrat had remained admitted at a London hospital, and now would fly to the UK capital after getting a clearance from doctors. The former prime minister had dashed to Lahore yesterday immediately after nominating Anwaarul Haq Kakar as the country's caretaker prime minister.



ISLAMABAD: Diplomats, defence attaches and other players posing for a group photo on the occasion of Mango Fest Diplomatic Golf Cup. — DNA

England relishing 'huge' WC semi-final clash with Australia

"That's what the World Cup is all about -- seeing top teams on the biggest stage with their fans behind them," she said

SYDNEY: England say they are relishing playing in front of what promises to be a partisan 80,000 home crowd in their Women's World Cup semi-final against co-hosts Australia on Wednesday. The European champions had a taste of what awaits when they fought back from a goal down to beat Colombia 2-1 on Saturday during what felt like a home game for the well-supported South Americans. The Lionesses will be back at

the imposing Stadium Australia in Sydney on Wednesday with both teams attempting to win the World Cup for the first time. Alessia Russo scored the winner in the 63rd minute against a physical Colombia and the Arsenal forward said she had enjoyed playing in front of a hostile crowd. "That's what the World Cup is all about -- seeing top teams on the biggest stage with their fans behind them," she said.

"We've had a taste of that tonight because their fans were incredible and (Australia) is another test, but one that is exciting, not only to face the hosts but to be in a semi-final. "So yes, keeping the dream alive." England's Dutch coach Sarina Wiegman praised her side's resilience, having fallen behind in the 44th minute, before Lauren Hemp's equaliser in first-half injury time and Russo's winner. They will need plenty of that

character if they are to overcome an Australia side who prevailed 7-6 on penalties over France and have the weight of a nation behind them. "That's huge, but this was big too. It felt like an away game, but we just concentrated," Wiegman said. "It's just really fantastic that we can be here and be part of it. "We're through to the semi-finals and we are going to stay till the end of the tournament." Wiegman was asked by one re-

porter whether she fully appreciated the long-standing sporting rivalry between her adopted country and Australia. "I just think it's going to be really big but I've now had a couple of questions about it so it's probably going to be bigger than I imagine now," said Wiegman, who took the Netherlands to the 2019 final, where they lost 2-0 to the United States. "I'll talk to my players and staff and see what that rivalry is then." — Agencies

Pegula stuns Swiatek to reach Montreal final

MONTREAL: Jessica Pegula of the United States upset world number one Iga Swiatek on Saturday before wet weather left the American waiting to discover the identity of her WTA Montreal Open final opponent. Fourth seed Pegula took advantage of an error-strewn display by Poland's Swiatek to complete a 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 6-4 victory in 2hr 30min. But heavy rain over the Montreal region washed out Saturday's second semi-final between fourth seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan and 15th seed Liudmila Samsonova. Rybakina, who battled through weather delays on Friday before clinching her semi-final berth in the early hours of Saturday morning, or Samsonova will now face a grueling double-header with a well-rested Pegula awaiting in the final. "It feels great," Pegula said after her win over Swiatek. "No better way to



earn it, right? It was tough match. I felt like I was in control. "But as the world number one does and a champion, she played some really great tennis at the end of the second set and in the third. So, she made me earn it." Reigning French and US Open champion Swiatek, meanwhile, was left reflecting on a scratchy display that saw her suffer no fewer than 11 breaks of serve. A jittery first set opened with five straight breaks of serve before Pegula finally managed to hold to take a 4-2 lead. Swiatek continued to struggle with her serve in the next game, and Pegula was soon 0-40 up. Although Swiatek fought back to level at deuce, she was soon in trouble again, yanking a forehand wide at break-point down to give Pegula a 5-2 lead. Pegula then served out for the set, taking a 1-0 lead with an emphatic ace down the middle. — Agencies

Sinner, de Minaur vie for Toronto title

TORONTO: Jannik Sinner and Alex de Minaur both dominated opponents in straight sets on Saturday to reach the final of ATP Toronto Masters. Sinner, runner-up last spring in Miami, reached his second final of the season at the elite level with a 6-4, 6-4 defeat of American Tommy Paul. De Minaur put an Australian into a Canadian final for the first time since 2001 with his 6-1, 6-3 defeat of Alejandro Davidovich Fokina. The last Aussie to reach title match here was Patrick Rafter — who had lifted the 1998 trophy. De Minaur maintained his hardcourt form from last weekend in Los Cabos, where he finished runner-up to Stefanos Tsitsipas. Sinner had to battle in his fourth career Masters semi-final, claiming the opening set in 53 minutes and winning a 46-shot rally to take a 5-2 lead in second set. Sinner was broken while serving for victory but recovered a game later for victory on his third match point. "This was a fight, he was playing great," winner said. "This is what I play for — the big matches. I know the feeling of a Masters 1000 final. Hopefully I can show my best tennis tomorrow. "I'm happy with how I reacted to situations on the court. I'm happy to be in the final again. The pressure is something great, it's positive." Sinner leads de Minaur — his doubles partner this week — 4-0 in previous meetings. World number 18 De Minaur will bid for his eighth career trophy and second this season after winning a wind-swept semi-final over Davidovich Fokina that was littered with service breaks. — Agencies

Kylian Mbappe reinstated by PSG

PARIS: French superstar Kylian Mbappe was reinstated in Paris Saint-Germain's first team on Sunday just as Neymar was said to be negotiating a move to join the cash-rich Saudi league. It has been a rocky build-up to the new Ligue 1 season for champions PSG with both Mbappe and Neymar left out of new coach Luis Enrique's team for Saturday's underwhelming opening goalless draw against Lorient. After being sidelined for several weeks amid an ongoing contract dispute Mbappe watched from the Parc des Princes stands. But the club's prize asset is now back in the fold, for the time being at least. "After very constructive and positive discussions between Paris Saint-Germain and Kylian Mbappe before the PSG-Lorient match, the player was reinstated in first-team training this morning," PSG said in a statement. Brazilian star Neymar was in contrast conspicuous by his absence on Saturday, the official line being he was suffering from a "viral syndrome". — Agencies

Manchester United's splurge put to test

MANCHESTER: Manchester United kick-off their season at home to Wolves on Monday with fresh hope they can end a 10-year wait to win a Premier League title despite the lingering uncertainty over the club's future. Nine months on from an announcement by owners, the Glazer family, that they were exploring a sale of the club, the process has stalled. Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim Bin Hamad Al Thani and British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe appeared locked in a battle for control of the club during several rounds of bidding. However, supporters' hopes that a new owner could be in place by the start of the new season have been dashed. Deeply unpopular with fans since they saddled the club with debt in a £790 million (\$1 billion) leveraged takeover in 2005, the Glazers are reportedly seeking a world record £6 billion for a sports club. Protests are planned at Old Trafford on Monday, but they have consistently fallen on deaf ears during the Americans' nearly two decades in charge. Despite the uncertainty, United manager Erik ten Hag has again been backed heavily in the transfer market to try and build on a positive first season in charge. The former Ajax boss overcame a disastrous start to his reign 12 months ago to guide United back into the Champions League and end a six-year trophy drought by lifting the League Cup back in February. Ten Hag has addressed key positions in a near £200 million outlay on goalkeeper Andre Onana, midfielder Mason Mount and striker Rasmus Hojlund. Onana, who previously worked under Ten Hag at Ajax, is a more natural fit for the Dutchman's preference for a ball-playing goalkeeper than David de Gea, who departed United after 12 years as number one. Mount was both a fans' favourite at Chelsea and trusted by a series of coaches at Stamford Bridge only to exit his boyhood club over a contract dispute. But in spending up to £72 million on 20-year-old Dane Hojlund, there are doubts over whether United have overspent on potential rather than prioritising the present. An expected offensive to try and land Harry Kane never materialised, as the England captain instead headed to Bayern Munich from Tottenham in his quest for silverware. — Agencies

Paralluelo gives Spain X factor at World Cup

"It was difficult to give up one sport, but it was a step I had to take and I couldn't be in a better place," she said at the time

AUCKLAND: Women's World Cup semi-finalists Spain might be defined by technique and a mesmerising passing game, but the player who gives them that precious something different is Salma Paralluelo. The 19-year-old took Spain to this stage of the World Cup for the first time with her brilliant winner against the Netherlands in the quarter-finals. The Barcelona ace, who was once a promising athlete before concentrating on football, struck on the counter-attack in extra time after coming off the bench. A starter in every round before that, she also played a big part in the 5-1 demolition of Switzerland in the last 16 with her deliveries from the left wing, two of which led to goals for Aitana Bonmati. With Alexia Putellas still recovering full fitness following a serious knee injury, midfielder Bonmati has been the leader in Jorge Vilda's team that will face Sweden in the last four in Auckland on Tuesday. But Paralluelo could have a big role to play against a physically imposing Swedish side thanks to her pace, direct running and power on the flank. "She is a player with enormous potential and she is a long way from touching the ceiling in terms of what she can do," Vilda said. "She is very young and has only been focusing fully on training for football for a year. We will see the best of Salma in the future. "She is already shining now, but I am sure that in the future she will do so even more." Vilda must consider whether to recall Paralluelo from the start or whether to focus first on passing Sweden into



up combining football with athletics. "I started doing both when I was seven. At first it was just a game for me but little by little as I grew up I started to realise I could go further," she said of her early footballing days in an interview with FIFA.com last year. Paralluelo won medals in several different track disciplines, taking part in hurdles and triple jump. She also competed in the 400 metres at the 2019 European Indoor Championships in Glasgow, when aged 15. Paralluelo's budding football career took her to Villarreal, where she suffered a ruptured ACL in her left knee in April 2021 that kept her out for nine months. In July last year she joined Barcelona, the emerging superpower of European women's club football, just after another injury ruled her out of the Spain squad for the European Championship in England. That move meant giving up athletics once and for all. "It was difficult to give up one sport, but it was a step I had to take and I couldn't be in a better place," she said at the time. Having helped Barca win the Champions League in June, she is now hoping to beat Sweden and go on to win a third world title with Spain. Paralluelo was part of the team that won the Under-17 World Cup in 2018 and scored twice in the final as Spain beat Japan 3-1 to win last year's Under-20 World Cup. "She is unique. It is difficult to find players like her, whose background is in athletics and who has so much quality on her left foot and a really good shot," said Bonmati. "When we have played together we combine well and we try to play her in either in space or to her feet. You can do both with her." — Agencies

Shehbaz urges Kakar to ensure 'transparent, impartial'...

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continue ensuring the same policies for keeping the economy stable. He has urged Kakar to ensure continuity of development, construction, and economic improvement, which is essential for the betterment of Pakistan and its people. "I pray that the caretaker prime minister and his cabinet fulfill the expectations of the people and the constitution," PM Shehbaz said in his message for the interim premier. The prime minister further thanked Leader of the Opposition Raja Riaz who helped in the consultation process. "A good name was agreed upon while following the constitutional procedure," a statement released by the PM Office mentioned quoting the premier. A day earlier, Senator Kakar was appointed as the eighth caretaker prime minister of Pakistan, after consensus was reached between the outgoing PM and Riaz, following which President Dr Arif Alvi signed the advice sent by them. Senator Kakar is currently the chairman of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), and he is widely regarded as an intellectual. He holds a Master's degree in Political Science and Sociology, and he is an alumnus of the University of Balochistan. "The trust entrusted in Anwarul-Haq Kakar's name by all the parties is a sign of our right choice," the statement read.

2nd round of talks remains inconclusive

FROM PAGE 01

were made to agree on a suitable nominee. However, if an agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be taken to the parliamentary committee for further discussion. It is worth noting that Justice (R) Maqbool Baqir has been nominated by the Sindh Government for the role of Caretaker Chief Minister. On the other hand, the opposition has put forward the names of Shoaib Siddiqui, Younis Dhaga, and Dr. Safdar Abbasi as potential candidates. It is to be recalled that Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori Friday dissolved the provincial assembly after signing the summary sent to him by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. The Sindh cabinet got dissolved with the dissolution of the provincial assembly. However, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah will continue to hold the office until the appointment of a caretaker Sindh chief minister.

Hafeez Shaikh likely to be finance...

FROM PAGE 01

Dr Hafeez Shaikh has been tipped as the Minister of Finance while an industrialist from Karachi Gohar Ejaz may be made Minister of Industries. While the season diplomat Jalil Abbas Jilani may be picked as the caretaker Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Shoaib Suddle Minister of Interior, Lawyers leaders and a PPP stalwart Ahsan Bhon may be made Minister of Law while former bureaucrat and a close confidante of Nawaz Sharif Zulfiqar Cheema and Sarfraz Bugti may also be given ministerial portfolios.

England want Stokes, Archer to return for World Cup

LONDON: The defending champions England's head coach Matthew Mott wants Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer in the squad for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 which will be held in India. Stokes, 32, announced his ODI retirement in July 2022 to manage his workload and focus mainly on red-ball cricket. However, with World Cup approaching and Stokes being one of the most important pillars of this English team, everyone wants to see the hero of the 2019 World Cup final — who scored an unbeaten 84 against New Zealand — in squad. — Agencies

Briefs

Anti-govt protest continue in Serbia

BELGRADE: Hundreds of Serbians gathered Saturday in cities across the country in anti-government protests, and demonstrations against the president and to denounce violence. Crowds gathered for the 15th "Serbia Against Violence" demonstration in the national capital of Belgrade, also in Novi Sad and Nis, to denounce two recent mass shootings after a demand by opposition parties. The crowd marched to the government building and gave a message that they would continue with the protests. Protesters demanded an end to the perceived promotion of violence in the media. They also demanded the resignation of government ministers involved in security. The gatherings began shortly after two mass shootings in less than 48 hours that left at least 17 dead May 7.

The crowd in front of the parliament building in Belgrade marched through the city. Protesters in Novi Sad held posters that read: "Everything must stop" and said they would not give up on their demands. The crowd in Nis expressed dissatisfaction with the government. Protesters also demanded the dismissal of the management of Serbian State TV (RTS) and its Supervisory Board, which determines which channels will broadcast. As part of new measures taken by the government, 1,800 schools have been each assigned two police officers. —APP

Russia says it foiled Ukrainian drone attack

MOSCOW: Russia claimed on Sunday that it thwarted Ukrainian drone attacks over the Belgorod and Kursk regions. "Today, at around 4 a.m. (0100GMT), an attempt by the Kyiv regime to carry out a terrorist attack by one aircraft-type unmanned aerial vehicle on objects in the Russian Federation was thwarted," the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement on Telegram. The statement noted that the drone was detected and destroyed by Russian air defense systems in the region, adding there were no casualties or damage. The ministry claimed that another drone attack at about 11 a.m. Moscow time (0800GMT) was foiled by air defense systems in the region, adding that no casualties or damage were reported. In a later statement, the ministry also reported a third drone attack in the Kursk region at about 11:30 a.m. Moscow time (0830GMT) which caused no damage or casualties. Ukrainian authorities have not yet commented on the attack, and independent verification of Russia's claim is difficult due to the ongoing war. Ukraine is said to have unleashed a series of attacks on Russia's border regions in recent months, notably Bryansk and Belgorod, which were hit with drones and artillery and raided by paramilitary groups. —DNA

Turkiye rescues 58 migrants in Aegean Sea

IZMIR: The Turkish Coast Guard rescued 58 irregular migrants in the Aegean Sea late Saturday after they were illegally pushed back into Turkish territorial waters by Greek authorities. Coast guard units found 45 irregular migrants in a rubber boat off the coast of Seferihisar district in western Izmir province in one operation. Thirteen were also saved by coast guard units off the coast of Dikili district in the province in a separate mission. The migrants were taken to the provincial migration authority for regular procedures. Turkiye and global rights groups have repeatedly condemned Greece's illegal practice of pushing back irregular migrants, saying it violates humanitarian values and international law by endangering the lives of vulnerable migrants, including women and children. Turkiye has been a key transit point for irregular migrants seeking to cross into Europe to start new lives. —Agencies

Chief of the Naval Staff official visit to Malaysia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi called on Naval Leadership of Royal Malaysian Navy during an official visit to Malaysia. Upon arrival at Ministry of Defence, Chief of the Naval Staff was received by Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob and was presented Guard of Honour. During meeting with Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy, matters of bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security were discussed. The Naval Chief underscored the contribution of Pakistan Navy towards regional maritime peace and stability through its initiative of Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) and participation in Combined Maritime Force. The Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy appreciated Pakistan Navy role in support of collaborative mari-



time security in the region and acknowledged significance of strong bilateral defence collaboration.

Later on Pakistani Naval Chief visited Malaysian National Defence College PUSPAHANAS. Chief of the Naval Staff was received by President of PUSPAHANAS and was presented Guard of Honour. Thereafter a detailed briefing was given to the Naval Chief on the training being imparted at the college. Chief of the Naval Staff also called on DG National Hydrographic Center (NHC) and was briefed on the roles and capabilities of National Hydrographic Center. Admiral Niazi sought to enhance collaboration between Malaysian National Hydrographic and Hydrographic Services of Pakistan to learn from each other's experience. Pakistan and Malaysia historically enjoy brotherly relations and the visit of Naval Chief will further augment and expand defence ties between the two countries in general and navies in particular.

China vows 'forceful' response over Taiwan VP's USA visit

BEIJING: China on Sunday vowed "resolute and forceful measures" over a weekend trip by Taiwan Vice President William Lai to the United States it said it was closely monitoring. Lai - the frontrunner in Taiwan's presidential elections next year - is officially making only transit stops in the United States en route to and from Paraguay, where he will attend the inauguration of president-elect Santiago Pena. Taiwan is claimed by China, which has vowed to take the island democracy one day - by force, if necessary - and ramped up political and military pressure. "China is closely following the development of the situation and will take resolute and forceful measures to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity," an unnamed spokesperson for the foreign ministry said in a statement published online. Lai has been far more outspoken about independence than Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, to whom Beijing is already hostile as she refuses to accept its view that Taiwan is a part of Chi-

na. The Harvard-educated doctor-turned-politician has previously described himself as a "pragmatic Taiwan independence worker", and reiterated this week when speaking with a local television channel that Taiwan was "not part of the People's Republic of China (PRC)". "The Republic of China and PRC are not subordinate to each other," he said, using Taiwan's official name. On landing in New York on Sunday, Lai said on Twitter, now rebranded as X: "Happy to arrive at the Big Apple, icon of liberty, democracy and opportunities," adding that he was greeted at the airport by representatives of the American Institute in Taiwan, the United States's de facto embassy for the island. "Looking forward to seeing friends and attending transit programs in New York," he wrote. Lai is expected to continue to Paraguay, then stop in San Francisco on his way back. In the week leading up to Lai's departure, incursions by the Chinese military around Taiwan's waters and airspace - which have been happening near-daily in the

China urges Philippines to contain tensions in S. China Sea

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Saturday called for joint control of the situation in the region, following the tension caused by the spraying of a Philippine ship on a reef near the Spratly Islands last week. Wang made assessments about the situation in the South China Sea with his counterparts during his visits to Singapore and Malaysia, Beijing-based Xinhua News reported. China and the Philippines should work together to find an effective way to contain tensions in the region, Wang said. Noting that China has expressed its desire to resolve differences with the Philippines through dialogue many times before, he said they hope the Philippine side will stick to the consensus and the mutual trust created by the development in bilateral relations. Bilateral relations between Beijing and Manila have spiraled down, primarily because of disputed maritime claims in the South China Sea. The latest incident of firing water cannon by the Chinese Coast Guard at the Philippine vessels triggered a sharp reaction from Manila. Beijing justified the action and asked the Philippines to remove its warship from disputed islets. Manila has rejected such a demand. Manila under Ferdinand Marcos Jr. since last year has been leaning toward the US, making more military bases accessible to American troops. —Agencies

past year - were larger than usual. On Wednesday, the defence ministry said 33 Chinese warplanes and six vessels had been detected around the island. —APP

Iran to use \$6 billion in unfrozen funds to purchase commodities

TEHRAN: Iran's top banker announced Saturday that Iranian funds frozen in South Korea have been released following a prisoner swap deal with Washington. Mohammad Reza Farzin, the head of the Central Bank of Iran, said in a social media post that the released amount will be deposited to Iranian bank accounts in Qatar. He hastened to add that the funds will be used for purchasing commodities that are exempted from US sanctions. Iran's Foreign Ministry confirmed Thursday a prisoner exchange deal with the US, ending two years of negotiations, with each side releasing five prisoners. A statement noted that Tehran received a "necessary guarantee" for Washington's "commitment in this regard," referring to the release of around \$10 billion in funds blocked in South Korea and Iraq. Iran's state media cited officials who said the American prisoners will be freed from Evin Prison "within the framework of an agreement mediated by a third country" and only after the funds are transferred to Iranian bank accounts in Qatar. Farzin said the country had nearly \$7 billion stacked in South Korean banks in the Korean currency, won, but due to the devaluation of the currency in recent years, the amount tumbled to \$6 billion. He said a third party, in a veiled reference to Qatar, has agreed to change the funds from won to euro and deposit them into six Iranian banks in Qatar. Pertinently, Qatar and Oman played a key role in facilitating the prisoner swap agreement as well as the unblocking of Iranian funds in South Korea and Iraq. The White House said Friday there would be restrictions on how Iran intends to use the funds, with spokesman John Kirby saying the US would have "full visibility" where they are directed and used. The deal came less than one week after the Iranian parliament approved a bill to refer the case of frozen funds in Seoul for arbitration after President Ebrahim Raisi wrote a letter to speaker Bager Qalibaf. —DNA

Malaysia's key state elections end in status quo

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's key elections in six states have ended in a status quo outcome as Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's unity government and the opposition alliance, Perikatan Nasional (PN), clinched three states each. Both the ruling and the opposition parties retained the states they governed before the polls, local English daily Malay Mail reported, citing results announced by the country's election commission late Saturday night. The opposition PN retained Kelantan, Kedah, and Terengganu states, with unofficial results showing the coalition had swept to more than two-thirds of supermajorities in these states. Anwar's Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition and its unity government ally Barisan Nasional (BN) have officially retained Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and Penang after about seven million votes were tallied to see which party will govern six of the federation's 13 states. Saturday's vote in six states had been the toughest political challenge yet to Anwar, who, according to many, has lived up to the call by retaining the states his party previously governed. Anwar was appointed prime minister in November last year to head a unity government after an indecisive general election. The election of state assembly members does not affect his current two-thirds majority in parliament. —Agencies

Migrant deaths are 'open wound' for humanity

VATICAN CITY: The number of migrants dying in the Mediterranean is an "open wound" for humanity, Pope Francis said Sunday after a week marked by a string of deadly shipwrecks. At his weekly Angelus prayer, the 86-year-old pontiff offered his prayers for the 41 people reported missing on Wednesday by four survivors brought to safety on the Italian island of Lampedusa. He recalled "with pain and shame" UN figures showing more than 2,000 migrants have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea since the start of the year. "It is an open wound in our humanity," he told pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square. "I offer encouragement to the politicians and diplomats who are seeking to heal it, in a spirit of solidarity and brotherhood." He also hailed "the commitment of all those who work to prevent shipwrecks and rescue sailors". Francis - who regularly urges better treatment of those who flee their homes for a better life elsewhere - had this week already warned against becoming "indifferent" to the deaths. —APP

Transferring legacy of forefathers national responsibility

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Nazaria-i-Pakistan Council (NPC), Mian Mohammad Javed Saturday urged the nation to follow the guiding principles of Qaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and promote the ideology of Pakistan in real spirit. "I belong to the generation who has witnessed the creation of Pakistan, enthusiasm and countless sacrifices of lives, property and honour for the sake of the country. Women and children were even part of this struggle who fearlessly used to raise the slogans "Ley Key Rahain Gey Pakistan" and "Ban Key Rahey Ga Pakistan", he said. In an interview in connection with the Independence Day, falling on August 14, Prof. Javed said, "Independence Day is a perfect time to acknowledge the numerous sacrifices rendered by our forefathers who gifted this homeland, it is our utmost responsibility to make this country strong, invincible and prosperous for the next generations". He pointed out, "One thing should be remembered that Pakistan was established through a mass movement under the leadership of Qaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as per the vision of Allama Muhammad Iqbal to enable Muslims to live with religious and ideological independence. —Agencies

Global young leaders dialogue annual forum held

ISLAMABAD: The Global Young Leaders Dialogue (GYLD) 2023 Annual Forum held here to highlight youth power in achieving sustainable goals. It was organized by the Center for China and Globalization (CCG). The forum coincided with International Youth Day as designated by the United Nations and marks a return to an in-person GYLD community gathering after a two-year hiatus. "[GYLD] is a very timely initiative at a time and in a world that is faced with multiple challenges - geopolitical tensions rising prices of food and fuel, energy crisis, climate change, hunger and poverty - putting pressure on many, especially on the developing countries in terms of economy," said Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque while addressing the Forum, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Sunday. Themed "Global Development and the Power of Young People", this year's forum gathered about 150 participants from nearly 30 countries and regions, including youth leaders, scholars, officials, and so on. On the occasion, participants shared insights on topics of global focus, such as, cross-cultural communication, climate change and sustainable development of cities. Young people in all their diversity are a driving force in accelerating change for the realization of sustainable development goals, world peace, and greener and healthier planet. I am so pleased to see a dialogue like this one has been convened by CCG in China," said Sima Sami Iskandar Bahous, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women. —DNA

Niger's ousted president in 'good spirits' despite detention

KIGALI: Niger's ousted president is in "good spirits" despite being in detention without electricity and a lack of contact with relatives, his former advisor said Saturday. Mohamed Bazoum, his wife and son are reportedly held hostage at his palace in the national capital of Niamey since a July 26 coup. "President Mohamed Bazoum has high spirits, but no longer has any contact with his relatives," Hamidou Amadou N'Gade, former advisor to the deposed president posted on Facebook, citing Bazoum's doctor. Amadou N'Gade said the president's means of communication, particularly his mobile phones, are not operational after electricity was cut almost two weeks ago. "It is urgent that the hostage-takers reconnect elec-



tricity in these times of hot weather and mosquitoes. Anything can happen to him out of sight and ears from the eyes and ears of the whole world and his family," he wrote. The visit was approved following growing international demands for his release. Bazoum's relatives told the media that his personal doctor "delivered food and medicine" Saturday and was able to speak to him, his wife and son. This was the first visit to Bazoum since that of Chad's transitional President Mahamat Idriss Deby, on July 31. US Acting Deputy Secretary of State Victoria Nuland was prevented from seeing Bazoum when she visited Niamey on Aug. 7, after holding "frank and difficult" talks with junior officers. Recent reports had painted a grim picture of Bazoum's health since

his overthrow. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres denounced "the deplorable living conditions" in which Bazoum and his family are said to be living. Human Rights Watch demanded Friday that coup leaders ensure the safety and well-being of Bazoum, his family and others who are arbitrarily detained. "Nigerien coup leaders are subjecting Bazoum and his family and undisclosed others to abusive treatment in violation of international human rights law," Carine Kanenza Nantulya, deputy Africa director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement. Meanwhile, a delegation of religious leaders from Nigeria, led by respected scholar Sheikh Abdulahi Bala Lau, the national leader of the Jama'atu Izalatul Bidi'ah wa Ikkamatus Sunnah, the largest Salafi movement. —APP

Hawaii fire death toll climbs to 93

LAHAINA: Anger was growing Saturday over the official response to an inferno that levelled a Hawaiian town, killing at least 93 people in the deadliest wildfire in the United States for over 100 years. More than 2,200 structures were damaged or destroyed as the fire tore through Lahaina, according to official estimates, wrecking \$5.5 billion in damage and leaving thousands homeless. Hawaiian authorities have begun a probe into the handling of the fire, with residents saying there had been no warning. "The mountain behind us caught on fire and nobody told us jack," Vilma Reed told AFP. "You know when we found that there was a fire? When it was across the street from us," Reed, whose house was destroyed by the blaze, said she was depending on handouts and the kindness of strangers. "This is my home now," the 63-year-old said, gesturing to the car she has been sleeping in with her daughter, grandson and

two cats. Lahaina, a town of more than 12,000 and former home of the Hawaiian royal family, has been reduced to ruins, its lively hotels and restaurants turned to ashes. A banyan tree at the center of the community for 150 years has been scarred by the flames but still stands upright, its branches denuded and sooty trunk transformed into an awkward skeleton. - Deadliest in a century - The County of Maui said in a Saturday night update the number of confirmed fatalities had increased to 93, up from 89. Governor Josh Green had warned that the official death toll was bound to grow. "It's going to continue to rise. We want to brace people for that," he said. The new toll makes the blaze the deadliest in the United States since 1918, when 453 people died in Minnesota and Wisconsin, according to the non-profit research group the National Fire Protection Association. The death toll surpassed 2018's Camp Fire in

California, which virtually wiped the small town of Paradise off the map and killed 86 people. Maui Police Chief John Pelletier said only a small fraction of the disaster zone has been searched and only two victims have been identified because of how badly they were burned. "The remains we're finding are from a fire that melted metal," he said. "We have to do rapid DNA to identify every one of these. "When we pick up the remains... they fall apart." Firefighters were battling at least one other blaze in Maui on Saturday night, in the inland mountainous Upcountry. The Pulehu/Kihei fire in the south was declared 100 percent contained on Saturday night. Hawaii congresswoman Jill Tokuda told CNN that officials had been taken by surprise by the tragedy. "We underestimated the lethality, the quickness of fire," she said. Green, the governor, defended the immediate response, saying the situation had been

complicated by the presence of multiple fires and by the strength of the winds. "Having seen that storm, we have doubts that much could have been done with a fiery fast-moving fire like that," he said. Hawaii Attorney General Anne Lopez said her office would examine "critical decision-making and standing policies leading up to, during and after the wildfires on Maui and Hawaii islands this week." Maui suffered numerous power outages during the crisis, preventing many residents from receiving emergency alerts on their cell phones - something Tokuda said officials should have prepared for. No emergency sirens were sounded, and many Lahaina residents have spoken of learning about the blaze because of neighbors running down the street. "We have got to make sure that we do better," Tokuda added. In its emergency management plan last year, the State of Hawaii described the risk wildfires posed

to people as being "low". Maui's fires follow other extreme weather events in North America this summer, with record-breaking wildfires still burning across Canada and a major heat wave baking the US southwest. Europe and parts of Asia have also endured soaring temperatures, with major fires and floods wreaking havoc. Scientists say human-caused global warming is exacerbating natural hazards, making them more likely and more deadly. For many who fled the flames, the misery was compounded Saturday as they were prevented from returning to their homes. Maui police said members of the public would not be allowed into Lahaina - even some of those who could prove they lived there. "If your home or former home is in the affected area, you will not be allowed to (enter) until the affected area has been declared safe," a press release said. —Agencies

Briefs

Russian warship fires warning shots on cargo ship

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: A Russian warship on Sunday fired warning shots at a cargo ship in the southwestern Black Sea as it made its way northwards, the first time Russia has fired on merchant shipping beyond Ukraine since exiting a landmark United Nations-brokered grain deal last month. Russia in July halted participation in the Black Sea grain deal that allowed Ukraine to export agricultural produce via the Black Sea and Moscow cautioned that it deemed all ships heading to Ukrainian waters to be potentially carrying weapons. Russia said in a statement that its Vasily Bykov patrol ship had fired automatic weapons on the Palau-flagged Sukru Okan vessel after the ship's captain failed to respond to a request to halt for an inspection. Russia said the vessel was making its way towards the Ukrainian port of Izmail. Refinitiv shipping data showed the ship was currently near the coast of Bulgaria and heading towards the Romanian port of Sulina.

Man arrested for killing American wife in Lahore

DNA

LAHORE: An American woman, who was married to a Pakistani, was killed by her husband in Lahore's Factory Area, police told Geo News on Sunday. The law enforcement officials arrested the suspect, identified as Kazim Khan, from the graveyard while he was trying to bury his wife. The victim, who has been identified as Diana Cristo Khan, was physically tortured and killed by Kazim, the police added. They also said that the suspect was in the cemetery trying to bury his wife when the grave-digger called the police, adding that they also seized the murder weapon.

SBP projects decrease in inflation, growth to pick up

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) expects that Pakistan will see a gradual decline in inflation and an improved economic outlook, media reported Sunday, citing a senior SBP official. Speaking on a podcast released on Saturday, SBP's Monetary Policy Department Director Fida Hussain explained that this expectation was the basis of the bank's decision to keep its policy rate unchanged.—APP

Education is the cornerstone of progress: Ambassador Tugio

The Embassy of Indonesia Promotes Prestigious Dual Degree Program from Bandung Institute of Technology and Coventry University: Indonesian Ambassador



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Indonesia in Islamabad organized an informative session for the promotion of a prestigious dual degree program offered by the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) in collaboration with Coventry University, UK at the National Library of Pakistan. This innovative partnership aims to provide Pakistani students with a unique opportunity to acquire world-class education on fully-funded scholarships and expertise from two renowned institutions. The Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, Adam Tugio expressed his enthusiasm for this collaborative initiative stating: "Education is the cornerstone of progress

and this dual degree program exemplifies the strong ties between Indonesia and Pakistan. By joining forces with Coventry University, we aim to provide Pakistani students with a global learning experience that equips them with the skills needed to excel in today's interconnected world." Professor Dr. Benny Tjahjono, representing Coventry University shared his perspective on the program, "Coventry University is excited to be part of this collaborative effort with ITB. This dual degree program brings together the strengths of two distinguished institutions, offering students a comprehensive and diverse education that transcends borders. We look forward to welcoming Pakistani students and contributing to their academic and personal growth.", he added.

Assistant Professor, Dr. Yuliani Dwi Lestari said, "ITB has a long-standing commitment to academic excellence and innovation. Through this dual degree program, we aim to foster a dynamic learning environment where Pakistani students can engage with a global network of peers and professors. This collaboration aligns with our vision to create well-rounded graduates who are equipped to address complex challenges." She further stated that students admitted to this program will benefit from a comprehensive curriculum that combines the academic strengths of both institutions. This program will offer a diverse range of disciplines, including engineering, technology, business, and the sciences. Through this partnership, students will

be able to gain valuable insights and perspectives from two distinct academic environments, enhancing their cross-cultural competencies and preparing them for international careers. The event was concluded with an engaging question and answer session. Students from different universities attended the session with a keen interest in the program. The Bandung Institute of Technology and Coventry University dual degree program will enable students to spend portions of their academic journey at both campuses, gaining exposure to different teaching methods, research opportunities, and cultural experiences. This dynamic opportunity will enrich their education and contribute to their personal and professional growth.

South Korea grapples with back-to-back stabbings

DNA

SEOUL: A knife darting out in a packed subway car. An assailant, chasing shoppers, stabbing wildly in the street. These nightmares have played out in the minds of many South Koreans following a mass stabbing attack last week - the country's second in as many weeks. On 21 July, a man attacked commuters in the capital, killing one person and stabbing three more at a subway station. He later told police he lived a miserable life and "wanted to make others miserable too". Then, on 3 August, 14 people were injured in Seongnam, south-east of Seoul, when a man rammed his car into pedestrians near a subway stop, and then ran into a department store, where he stabbed nine people. One woman died later from her injuries. The second attacker, Choi Wanjong, 22, was a delivery driver and high-school dropout who had been diagnosed with schizoid personality disorder. Police said he had googled news about the first attack before his own rampage. "What's happening in South Korea these days?" cried citizens online afterwards - dazed by back-to-back stabbings in a nation known otherwise for low rates of violent crime.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Azhar Mazlan as the Chair of ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI) presided over the first ACI Heads of Mission meeting at the High Commission of Malaysia. — DNA

Trump heading for Republican 'coronation' as rivals struggle

DES MOINES: As Florida Governor Ron DeSantis flipped pork chops in front of the cameras at the Iowa State Fair on Saturday, a plane appeared in the broiling blue sky. It was Donald Trump's Boeing 757 private jet. It circled the fairgrounds, and thousands in the crowd looked up and went wild, cheering for the Republican former president. An hour later, Trump arrived in a motorcade from nearby Des Moines airport to a rock-star reception,

stealing DeSantis' thunder and reducing his nearest rival for the Republican presidential nomination to a bit-part player at one of the biggest political events on the U.S. political calendar. It was a moment that epitomized the state of the 2024 Republican presidential nominating race: Trump is far ahead in national polling, eclipsing Florida's governor and the rest of the field, who have so far been at a loss over how to narrow that gap. The Iowa State Fair is a political

must for aspiring presidential candidates in the Midwestern state that kicks off the Republican nominating contest in January. But with Trump leading DeSantis by 34 percentage points among likely Republican primary voters in an Aug. 3 Reuters/Ipsos poll, and the rest of the field languishing in single digits, the fair this year had the air of a coronation rather than a beauty pageant.— Agencies

Indian Muslims in Haryana face calls for economic boycott

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Hindu far-right organisations have called for an economic boycott of Muslim businesses and keeping Muslims out of villages after deadly communal violence broke out in India's Haryana state. Sectarian clashes erupted in Nuh district on July 31 after a religious procession by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad organisation reportedly came under attack, killing six people including two security guards. The clashes soon spread to other districts. In Gurugram, a mosque was set on fire and its deputy imam, Mohammad Saad, 22, was killed. So far, Haryana police arrested 312 people and took at least 106 into preventive detention, said Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij. After the violence, there were protest calls by various Hindu groups. At one demonstration on August 2, in Hansi city of Hisar district, one speaker - Krishna Gurjar from Hindu far-right group Bajrang Dal - can be heard giving an ultimatum to local businesses to fire any Muslim employees working for them or face a boycott. "Any shopkeeper who keeps any Muslim employed in his shop, then we will paste posters for their boycott outside their shops and will declare them traitors of our community," Gurjar said via a loudspeaker in a rickshaw on a busy road with hundreds of followers, along with police officials, walking with him. "Only Hindu hawkers will be present here. If after two days any Muslim hawker is found, then whatever will happen to him only he will be responsible." Gurjar later told Al Jazeera, "I spoke about evicting outsider Muslims, such as Rohingyas." Asked if he wants Muslims of Hansi to leave the city, he replied, "Bajrang Dal's aim is not to scare anyone. But Bajrang Dal won't be scared itself and won't let the Hindu community be scared." Lawyer Shahruck Alam, who recently challenged hate speech before the courts, called the economic boycott calls against Muslims "part of a pattern of structural violence against them".

At least 21 killed as landslide sweeps houses in China

BEIJING: As China has been under the wrath of severe weather conditions with people destruction and torrential downpours, the number of deaths from landslide in the province of Shaanxi rose to 21 with six others missing, according to authorities Sunday. Chinese broadcaster CNR reported that the landslide occurred Friday in the village of Weiziping, south of Xi'an sweeping away two houses and damaging roads, bridges, electricity supply, and other infrastructure. "Twenty-one people were found dead so far, and six others are still missing," the Xi'an emergency management bureau said in an online statement.—DNA

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