



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Possibilities of military clash with NATO 'Obvious'

Detailed News On Page-08

Ex-President Hassan Rouhani faces cases

Detailed News On Page-07



Hamza Amin wins Gold Championship

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Justice Baqar to be sworn in

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh caretaker Chief Minister-designate Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar will take the oath to his office in a swearing-in ceremony to be held on August 16 CM today. Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori approved the appointment of Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar as caretaker Chief Minister and also issued a notification. The governor while exercising his powers conferred on him under Article 224 (1-A) of constitution, accorded approval for appointment of former Supreme Court Judge, Justice (r) Maqbool Baqar as Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh.

Rabbani opposes delay in polls

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Senator Raza Rabbani on Tuesday said that six days passed to dissolution of the National Assembly, but the ECP has yet to announce about elections. "Time passes rapidly over the 90 days constitutional deadline for elections but regrettably the ECP has yet to issue a comprehensive statement on the election," Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Senator said. "The ECP should inform about the time limit it required for fixing boundaries of constituencies after approval of the digital population census results," Rabbani said.

PDM parties' hopes dashed to ground

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed said on Monday all the hopes and aspirations of the PDM parties dashed to ground on appointment of caretaker prime minister. In his message on social networking website X, Rashid said the 13 parties seemed ashamed of each other. The PDM parties had not even courage to congratulate each other on appointment of caretaker PM.

CJP tells ECP

Delimitations must be done transparently

DG law election commission fails to give election date to the apex court

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Tuesday said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should conduct delimitations of constituencies in a transparent manner. The remarks of CJP Bandial came whilst heading a two-member bench, which was hearing petitions against delimitations of provincial constituencies PS 7, 8, and 9 Shikarpur, which were challenged in the apex court in 2018. During the hearing, CJP Bandial remarked that the delimitations of constituencies were a matter of public interest and that it had been brought up in the top court several times. "Election commission should conduct delimitations in a transparent manner," the top judge said asserting that if the tapeder modifies the circle even slightly, it can affect the votes a candidate receives. Furthermore, CJP Bandial inquired when were the general elections being held. To this, the Director General (Law) Muhammad Arshad shrugged his shoulders. "As yet, no date for the elections has been decided. The election commission should resolve all issues before the polls," the CJP said. "This matter is more sensitive in Sindh. Grievances often come forth that delimitations in the province were not correct," he added. After hearing the arguments, the SC referred the matter back to the electoral body.

ECP issues guidelines for caretaker govts

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) issued a set of guidelines to interim governments in the Centre and provinces on Tuesday, asking them to assist the electoral watchdog in holding polls in accordance with the law. The instructions were listed in a notification, which has been issued as the country heads into an election period and the National Assembly (NA) and all four provincial assemblies in the country stand dissolved. The notification, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, states that the ECP is "mandated with the constitutional duty to organise and conduct elections in terms of Article 218(3) of the Constitution and to make such arrangements as are necessary to ensure that the elections are conducted honestly, justly,

Continued on Page 06

Nawaz expected to return by September

Ex-PM could return to Pakistan in the middle of September

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif is set to return to Pakistan by mid-September, media reported on Tuesday. A Sharif family source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that Nawaz will leave for Pakistan from London "after a month". This would mean that the former prime minister will return to Pakistan in the middle of September. The Sharif family's lawyers and political aides had advised the PML-N supreme to come to Pakistan immediately after ending his Europe and Middle East visit which started two months ago and ended last week when Nawaz reached London. However, some within the PML-N have advised Nawaz that it's better to arrive in mid-September. "Nawaz Sharif's decision to return to Pakistan after ending nearly four years of exile is final and everything is in order," said the source who has been part of the negotiation and the arrangements. Former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam have been in touch with Nawaz regularly about various ups and downs related to his Pakistan return.

Continued on Page 06

Samsam parts ways with PTI

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Former Punjab minister Samsam Bukhari on Tuesday announced to part ways with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) after condemning May 9 violence, media reported. Samsam Bukhari made this announcement after meeting Istekham-e-Pakistan Party chairman Jahangir Khan Tareen in Lahore. The meeting was also attended by senior leaders of the party including Aun Chaudhry, Noman Langrial and others. The former provincial minister is likely to join IPP in the coming days. Bukhari in his statement said like every patriotic Pakistani he also condemns May 9 violence, triggered after the arrest of the former prime minister in Al-Qadir Trust case. He also urged the need for joint efforts for the betterment of the country.

Court throws out Khan's plea seeking bail extension

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad has rejected incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's plea seeking an extension in interim bail in six cases related to the May 9 incidents. The PTI chief arrest in a corruption case on May 9 this year triggered violent protests with the party supporters attacking defence and military installations in many parts of the country. Hundreds of PTI workers and leaders were arrested for their alleged involvement in the riots while the authorities had accused the former premier of being the mastermind of the violent protests. Judge Muhammad Sohail announced the verdict on Tuesday saying that it would be convenient if the former prime minister, who was removed from power via a parliamentary vote last year, joined the investigation related to the cases. The six cases were registered against the incarcerated PTI chief in Karachi Company, Ramna, Kohsar, Tarnool and Secretariat police stations of the federal capital. The judge said the bail PTI chief cannot be extended in light of the Supreme Court verdict. The ousted premier was put behind bars at Attock Jail earlier this month after a trial court in Islamabad sentenced him to three years in prison and

Continued on Page 06

Elahi remanded to NAB custody

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: A Lahore accountability court on Tuesday remanded PTI President Chaudhry Parvez Elahi to the custody of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) till August 21 in a case pertaining to bribes over development project contracts. A day earlier, the former Punjab chief minister was arrested by the anti-corruption watchdog shortly after he was released from Adiala jail. He was set free upon the completion of his 30-day detention, which was under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) ordinance. But as soon as he walked out of Adiala jail's gate, he was taken into custody by a NAB team, headed by Deputy Director Najamul Hassan. The team consisted of personnel from the bureau's Rawalpindi and Lahore zones. Later, police obtained a one-day transitory remand of the PTI leader from a court in Rawalpindi. The NAB alleges that Elahi received bribes/kickbacks in exchange for getting the "contracts of road schemes of Gujrat Highways Division awarded to favourite/hand-picked contractors".



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chaired a meeting on economy in Islamabad on 15th of August, 2023. - DNA

President approves Pemra Amend. Bill

President Alvi assures media workers of his support



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday accorded his approval to Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) Amendment Bill 2023. The president approved the bill under Article 75 of the Constitution of Pakistan, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. Earlier, President Alvi assured media workers and the journalist community of his support for the Pemra Amendment Bill 2023. The president was talking to a delegation of representatives of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), and Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMEND), who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. The delegation included Afzal Butt, Arshad Ansari, Naz Afreen Saigol, Sarmad Ali, Shahab Zuberi, Shakeel Masud, Ijazul Haq, Kazim Khan, Ayazul Khan, and Azhar Abbas.

Cabinet to be small

Economic reform my govt's top priority: Kakar

PM says caretaker govt to ensure continuity in economic policies

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has sped up the consultation for the formation of the interim cabinet, sources told media on Tuesday. The sources added that the interim PM has decided to form a small cabinet and personally review the profiles of all possible candidates. "I don't want to put more burden on the country suffering from economic problems," the caretaker prime minister told his friends, according to the sources. Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that the government would ensure continuity in the economic policies, besides further improving them. He said that further enhancement of foreign investment under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was among the top priorities of the

Continued on Page 06

Names of cabinet members emerge

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interim Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has sped up the consultation for the formation of the caretaker cabinet, media reported on Tuesday. Sources privy to the development told media that the names of caretaker ministers under consideration include former foreign secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani, former civil servant Shoaib Suddle, former senator Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti and former information minister Muhammad Ali Durrani. Sources said that Jalil Abbas Jilani, which was earlier reported to be

Continued on Page 06

TURKISH AIRLINES
BEST PART OF THE JOURNEY
Stopover IN ISTANBUL
EASY VISA
FREE ACCOMMODATION
Economy Business

Inside...

Implementation of GSP Plus Conventions to help Pakistan - Page 02

President assures support on PEMRA (Amend) Bill 2023 - Page 03

Exorbitant prices of back-to-school supplies haunt parents - Page 04

Manipur, sexual violence and the 'least condemned war crime' - Page 05

Spain beat Sweden 2-1 in a thrilling finish to reach final - Page 06

Wang Yi to attend China-S. Asia expo ceremony in Kunming - Page 07

Donald Trump indicted in Georgia election inquiry - Page 08

**Faheem Anwar
to head RISJA
(R) Committee**

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Rawalpindi Islamabad Sports Journalists Association "RISJA" (R) has formed a committee headed by veteran and respected journalist Faheem Anwar Khan. The Committee will have all the powers to decide on the RISJA (registered) matters including holding of sports award ceremony/seminar. RISJA Committee includes senior members Shehryar Khan, Afzal Javed, Sohail Raja and Khuram Shehzad. It is also clarified that no elections of the registered have been held since January 2022. The RISJA (registered) five-member committee will look into modalities and will conduct scrutiny in accordance with the constitution. All those violated RISJA constitution in any capacity have nothing to do with the registered body as they are no more members of RISJA (registered). The association has also rejected malicious and baseless propaganda launched by some elements against respected honorary chairman Abdul Mohi Shah and senior journalist Afzal Javed. Registered RISJA reserves all the rights to take legal opinion in this respect. The association has also paid tribute to Chairman RISJA by appreciating his efforts to help generate funds for the award ceremony and measures he took for the welfare of sports journalists.

**Parvez Elahi
remand in
NAB custody
till Aug 21**

LAHORE: An accountability court on Tuesday handed over former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Chaudhry Parvez Elahi to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on physical remand till August 21 in a case of receiving kickbacks in development projects. Earlier, the NAB team produced the PTI president before Accountability Court Judge Zubair Shahzad Kiyani amid strict security. Advocate Amjad Pervaiz requested the court to grant him 5 minutes to talk to his client before submitting arguments, which was granted by the court. Special prosecutor Waris Ali Janjua, who represented the NAB, requested for physical remand of Chaudhry Parvez Elahi. He argued that four persons had already been arrested in connection with the case. He submitted that as chief minister Punjab, Parvez Elahi gave a development package of Rs 72 billion for Gujrat division alone. He submitted that a list of 200 projects was finalised and approval was given for the projects on a fast-track basis, in violation of the rules and regulations. He further alleged that after settling the matter of the kickbacks, the amounts for the projects were released even before the commencement of the work. He submitted that the step was also a violation of the law and the bureau had strong evidence in this regard. At this stage, Parvez Elahi's counsel Advocate Amjad Pervaiz submitted that the cases were pending at the Supreme Court and the Lahore High Court against the arrest of his client. Therefore, the court should give the physical remand of Parvez Elahi till Monday, so that the decision of the Supreme Court and the Lahore High Court would also come. —APP

Enhanced trade with the EU states**Implementation of GSP Plus Conventions to help Pakistan**

Charles DELOGNE, Ambassador of Belgium says implementation of GSP Plus conventions, especially labor rights, human rights and environmental protection would help Pakistan to further improve its trade with EU countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Charles DELOGNE, Ambassador of Belgium to Pakistan said that the implementation of GSP Plus conventions, especially labor rights, human rights and environmental protection would help Pakistan to further improve its trade with EU countries.

He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). Abid Hussain, Trade Commissioner of Belgium Embassy also accompanied him on the occasion. The Envoy said that Belgium is the 5th largest trading partner of Pakistan in the EU and it is interested to further enhance cooperation with Pakistan in various sectors including trade, scientific research and education sectors. He said that the IMF agreement was key to Pakistan as it has provided more flexibility to it and added that Pakistan should ensure its implementation to save its



economy from more problems. He said that PIA is in negotiations with the EU to reopen its flights and the start of PIA flights would facilitate Pakistan's trade promotion with EU countries. He said that Pakistani educated and skilled workers can directly apply to Belgium companies and his embassy is ready to facilitate them in signing employment con-

tracts in case of their selection by Belgium companies. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Belgium enjoy cordial relations, but their bilateral trade of just over US\$ 1 billion is not matching with their actual potential. He said that both countries

should promote business linkages between their private sectors to explore new areas of promoting bilateral trade. He said that Belgium can also cooperate with Pakistan in agriculture, food processing, IT, renewable energy and construction sectors. He said that Pakistan is establishing many special economic zones under CPEC and investors of Bel-

gium should explore joint ventures and investment in them. He assured that ICCI would like to work with the Belgium Embassy to further strengthen connectivity between private sectors of both countries. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the Stand-By Arrangement with the IMF would address the balance of payment issues of Pakistan and stressed that Belgium should share its expertise in achieving better economic development with Pakistan to improve our economy. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan has suffered huge human and economic losses due to being the frontline country against war on terrorism and EU countries should cooperate with Pakistan in overcoming its current economic challenges. Kashif Zaheer, Khalid Chaudhry, Aslam Khokhar, Ch. Irfan, Malik Shabbir, Akbar Siddiqui Chughtai, Ms. Nagina Khaleeqe, Ms. Nasira Ali and others were also present on the occasion.

**RIBJA elections 2023 won
by Progressive panel**

Murtaza Malik successful with the entire panel

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Rawalpindi Islamabad Bureaus Journalists Association RIBJA Annual Election Completed, progressive panel took the field. Murtaza Malik President Fayyaz Chaudhry Secretary General Syed Abeer Shah Kazmi Secretary Finance Yasir Mahmood Abbasi Secretary Information while Ehsan Ali Narejo Malik Asif is the vice president. Meanwhile, PPPIslamabad President, CDA Labour Union President and RIUJ congratulated the newly elected members on their success. Iqbal Niaz Hydari Waqar Chaudhry won the special nomination of Vice President of Women, Asia Umeer Khattak, Arshad Ali Yousafzai Hussain Bangash Shakeel Paswal, Babar Hussain Nauman Supra will be elected on the seats of joint secretaries, while Sardar Shaikat Mahmood Khan will be elected on the seats of the governing body. Malik Siddique Awan. Ejaz Abbasi Alam Noor Haider - Mansoor Zafar. Chaudhry Irfan Khatana - Sardar Masood Hanif. Syed Aqeel Shah Kazmi. Makhdoom Arshad - Numan Bashir - Javed Mirza - Shahid Rizvi. Bilal Azimi Waqar Khan Yousufzai Sardar Waqar Khan. Haji Wahid-ul-Zaman - Faizan Haider. Omar Mughal Jawad Golra - Shams Niazi. Khalid Chaudhry. Ali Shamoony. Nazia Altaf, Raja Amir Latif. Ammar Yasir, Mohsen Mubasher, Tahir Mahmood Kayani, Zeeshan Qayyum. Riaz Shahid - Sarmad Sabri. Raza Bangash was elected. Earlier, Chairman Election Committee Senior Journalist Mehboobur Rahman Tanoli read out the notification of the newly elected officials of the Executive Body while Member Election Committee AKNS President Amjad Chaudhry read out the notification of the newly elected officials of the Governing Body. Addressing the reception ceremony held at the Press Club, National Press Club President Anwar Raza said that Rabja is the swordman of the journalistic community who always played the role of the first team of the journalist community in the struggle of the tough times and made the history of Rabja. The struggle is written on the wall. Sardar Shaikat Mahmood, the former president of Rabja, is our reliable partner who has given us full support in the struggle for the rights of the journalist community on every occasion, for which all the friends of Rabja are worthy of praise. Congratulating all the newly elected officials of his cabinet, he said that to face the challenges of the future, Rabja will have to move forward with mutual unity.

**CM for boosting efforts to
rehabilitate drug addicts**

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the 'Roshan Ghar' rehabilitation center for drug addicts in Raiwand on Tuesday, where he assessed the facilities provided for the recovery of individuals struggling with drug addiction. He thoroughly inspected the various sections and wards dedicated to the drug addicts, engaging with them and encouraging them to overcome their addiction. During the visit, Mohsin Naqvi emphasised the need to enhance the rehabilitation and treatment services for drug addicts. He also issued directives for the establishment of new centers to cater to their rehabilitation. He assigned the task of building additional centers to the Secretary of Social Welfare and the Secretary of Health, with a mandate to complete centers with a combined capacity of 400



beds across different areas of Lahore within a span of two weeks. The CM also highlighted the importance of providing quality nutrition and regular supply of fruits to the addicts at 'Roshan Ghar'. He pledged

to allocate all necessary resources for effective treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and he stressed the significance of digitizing the records of these individuals. While touring the facility, Mohsin Naqvi visited the

computer lab and domestic tailoring lab that serve the drug addicts. He acknowledged the devastating impact of addiction on families and expressed his commitment to helping those affected find a path to recovery. —DNA

**CCPO
commends
police
personnel**

LAHORE: Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana has said that Lahore police had made extensive security arrangements on the occasion of Independence Day. In a media statement on Tuesday, he commended the officers concerned and personnel of Lahore police for their excellent security and traffic management arrangements. Adequate security was provided to citizens and families visiting parks, recreational spots, and public places, he added. The CCPO stated that the police officers and personnel deserve applause for the peaceful conduct of Independence Day celebrations. He also mentioned that all units of Lahore police demonstrated excellent coordination and teamwork. Lahore police remain committed to the protection of its citizens.

The CCPO stated that on Independence Day almost 110 cases had been registered and accused were arrested during crackdowns against unauthorized weapons. Additionally, in action against one-wheeling 365 cases have been registered and one-wheelers were also arrested. —APP

**Senior citizens
to be provided
absolutely free
services at
their doorstep**

LAHORE: Following the visit of Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, Commissioner and DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa presided over an important meeting related to One Window Cell, here on Tuesday.

During the meeting, Additional DG Housing Captain (R) Shahmir Iqbal and Additional DG UP gave a briefing to the commissioner. According to the directions of Chief Minister Punjab, the senior citizens will be provided absolutely free services at their doorstep.

It was decided in the meeting that citizens above 75 years of age will get the documents delivered at their homes from today. The Commissioner and DG LDA directed to launch "LDA at Doorstep" drive for the senior citizens from today.

On this occasion, Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that according to the directions of the Chief Minister Punjab, cases related to overseas Pakistanis will be resolved on priority basis. The applications of overseas Pakistanis will be processed in 10 days instead of 14 as per the instructions of the Chief Minister. —APP

**Int'l traders want
to develop ties with
agro-based SMEs**

LAHORE: The traders of China, Indonesia, Belgium and ASEAN (Association of South East Nations) have evinced keen interest in developing trade relations with local SMEs dealing in food and agriculture products. It was disclosed by Farhan Aziz Khawaja, Chief Executive Officer of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) on Tuesday while commenting on SMEDA's participation in the 1st International Food and Agriculture Exhibition (FoodAg-2023) organized by the Trade Development Authority Pakistan (TDAP). The exhibition, he said, had provided a unique opportunity to SMEDA for meeting 500 international SMEs from 60 countries along with 15 regulatory and development bodies of the visiting countries. "We held exclusive meetings with delegates of ASEAN, Indonesia, China and Belgium for promoting SME to SME trade relations in food and agriculture sector," he added and appreciated the role of Pakistan's commercial counsellors in managing networking with international SMEs and the respective SME development agencies. The CEO SMEDA informed that the meetings with Indonesian and Chinese Embassies have paved the way for MOUs at secretariat level to strengthen SMEs trade relations and also share experience on SME development with SMEDA. A delegation of the overseas Pakistanis businessmen from Belgium has also expressed deep interest in promoting export of Rice and Potato from Pakistan to Belgium with support of SMEDA, he said and informed that the delegation is right now visiting Khanqah Dogran along with a team of SMEDA for examining fields of Rice and Potato and also meeting with local farmers and SMEs dealing in these products. It is notable that SMEDA team led by CEO Farhan Aziz Khawaja, apart from strengthening networking with international SME bodies, had helped set up an exclusive pavilion comprising Agro-based SMEs of Sindh and Baluchistan under GRASP; a project being undertaken for Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress in Sindh and Baluchistan. —DNA

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**Kenyan delegation keen to explore
opportunities in Pakistan**

LAHORE: Kenyan delegation head Geoffrey Gichuru Mutura has said that Kenya is gateway to most of African economies including Rwanda and South Sudan. He was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Tuesday. LCCI Acting President presented the address of welcome while other members of the delegation, Rachael Waithira Mwangi and Sajida Parveen Butt also spoke on the occasion. Mutura said, "We came to Karachi to visit an exhibition and have seen a lot of opportunities in Pakistan." LCCI Acting President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry hoped that participation of the delegation in the 1st International Food & Agriculture Exhibition organized by Trade Development

Authority of Pakistan in Karachi would have been helpful. "This expo would have given excellent rundown of the potential of Pakistan's agriculture & food sector which is not limited to growing and selling fruits & vegetables rather we are doing really well in the fields like Halal meat, rice, seafood, confectionery items, spices, processed food items, cooking oil/ghee, honey and tobacco etc. It is worth mentioning that Pakistan's food exports are well above US \$ 5 billion," he added. He commended the role played by Mr. L.D. Khan Commercial Counsellor based in the High Commission of Pakistan in Nairobi who recommended the team to visit Pakistan to attend the expo and also have direct interactions with

the business community in Karachi, Lahore and Sialkot. "We would certainly like to make your visit result-oriented so that you may succeed in achieving all objectives you have set before leaving from Kenya to Pakistan." The head of the Kenyan delegation said that Kenya is the exporter of tea, coffee and avocado to the West. He said that they were also looking for a market for its products in Pakistan and also finding potential exporters of food mainly potato, onion and other food items as Kenya has been facing a drought for months. He said, "We are also interested in machinery and other related items." Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry said that Pakistan and Kenya maintain good diplomatic relations that were historically

established in the 1960s, when Pakistan expressed its support for Kenya in getting independence from British rule. "Both countries are members of the Commonwealth of Nations and have common views on various international issues. The trade volume between Pakistan and Kenya is around US \$ 684 million. Pakistan's exports to Kenya are around US \$ 242 million while the imports are around US \$ 442 million. With joint efforts, there is a potential to take this trade volume to at least US 2 billion," he added. He said, "We accord great importance to Kenya as an important economy in the African region. This is in line with the 'Look Africa' Initiative launched in 2017 by the Ministry of Commerce Pakistan. Under this policy, African

countries prioritized for trade promotion are Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Morocco, Senegal, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Tanzania, and Ethiopia being top ten economies of Africa." He said that under the 'Look Africa Plan' Pakistan was seeking to negotiate preferential trade agreements with three African trading blocs including Southern African Customs Union (SACU), East African Community (EAC) which also include Kenya and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The LCCI Acting President hoped that the said plan will go a long way in exploiting the export potential abundantly available in African markets for Pakistan. It is needless to mention that your support can play key role in realizing these objectives. —APP

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
Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-29
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Aug 15- A stunning view of the Bari Imam Shrine illuminated with colorful lights as decorated by authority due to the starting of Urs Mubarak, which will be from 15 August till 17 August in Federal Capital. Online

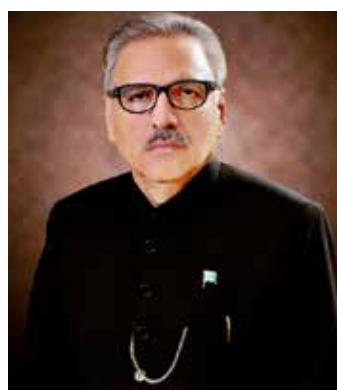
President assures support on PEMRA (Amend) Bill 2023

The President also asked the members of the delegation to volunteer to educate the youth about fake news and disinformation

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has assured media workers and the journalist community of his support for the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Amendment Bill 2023. The President expressed these views while talking to a delegation of representatives of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), and Association of Electronic Media

Editors and News Directors (AEMEND), who called on him, at Awan-e-Sadr, today. Talking to the delegation, the President appreciated the collective efforts of the media community for introducing amendments to the PEMRA law, especially to protect the rights of media workers. He said that the linking of government advertisements with the payment of dues to electronic media employees would help address their issues. The President held a thorough discussion with the visiting delegation on various aspects of the proposed legislation, adding that the amendment bill had brought



improvements to the existing media law. The President also asked

the members of the delegation to volunteer to educate the youth about fake news and disinformation. He highlighted that teenagers were among the most vulnerable populations to the scourge of fake news, and they needed to be educated and sensitized about its implications. He remarked that the media, especially senior journalists, should enhance linkages with academia and universities to guide and educate students about fake news and the new developments taking place in the field of journalism. The President also urged the need to promote diversity of thought and opinions by

promoting dialogue in society and free exchange of ideas. He said that the dynamics of new forms of media, especially social media, should be understood, adding that it was the responsibility of media to educate the people on morality and the use of social media in a responsible and constructive manner. The delegation briefed the President about various provisions of the new bill that would benefit the journalist community as well as media employees. The delegation thanked the President for his support and for taking interest in addressing the issues faced by the media community.

University of Tehran offers adjunct professorship to Prof. Choudhary

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The President of the University of Tehran, offered Adjunct Professorship to Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary at the Institute of Biotechnology and Biophysics, University of Tehran. Through a letter addressed to Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, he offered Adjunct Professorship in recognition of outstanding contribution of Prof. Choudhary. He further mentioned that the expertise, experience, and perspectives of the university's adjunct professors are highly val-

ued assets to the academic programs of the university. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary is world renowned medicinal chemist. He has published 1,175 research papers in the fields of organic and bioorganic chemistry in international journals, 76 books and 40 chapters in books published by major US and European press. He has secured 40 US patents so far. Prof. Choudhary's work has been cited by the researchers from around the world by 27,407 times and his h-index is 70. By now 94 national and international scholars have completed

their PhD degrees under his supervision. Prof. Choudhary is D.Sc., Ph.D., and C. Chem. He has been awarded by different governments of Pakistan with Hilal-e-Imtiaz, Sitara-e-Imtiaz, and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz. He has been elected fellow by world renowned science academies named Academy of Sciences for the Developing World, Islamic World academy of Sciences, Pakistan Academy of Sciences, Royal Society of Chemistry, and Chemical Society of Pakistan. Prof. Choudhary has been honored by the President of

Iran with Khwarizmi International Award, President of Azerbaijan, with ECO Award in Education and the Prime Minister of Pakistan with COMSTECH Award in Chemistry. He has also received prestigious Mustafa (pbuh) Prize, Friendship Award of Peoples Republic of China, TWAS Young Scientist Award, and Prof. Abdus Salam Prize. He has been given the prestigious title of "Distinguished National Professor" by the Higher Education Commission in 2004 and Meritorious Professor by the University of Karachi in 2013.

PTCL & Ufone 4G mark independence day

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's largest telecommunication company, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) marked the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan with weeklong celebrations at PTCL Group offices nationwide. The weeklong activities culminated in the main flag hoisting and cake-cutting ceremony, held at PTCL G8 Office in Islamabad. The ceremony was attended by top leadership, senior management, employees, and their families. The celebration was an employee-driven initiative, featuring cultural days, local cuisines, patriotic movie screenings, and much more. The PTCL Group team participated in these activities with great zeal and fervor. The teams dressed in green and white national colors throughout the week, to express their enthusiasm and pride in their national identity. The fundamental aim behind the celebrations was to strengthen PTCL Group's proud Pakistani identity and help employees to reconnect with their socio-cultural and historical roots. The related events helped PTCL and Ufone 4G team members to explore various hues, colours, tastes and artistic expressions from Pakistan's rich cultural heritage, highlighting the need for finding strength in diversity. Sharing his thoughts, Group Chief People Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, Shoaib Baig said, "PTCL Group engaged in a series of social and cultural activities to relive our spirit of independence.—APP

Food Security and Environmental Concerns in Pakistan

AQSA AMJID



Pakistan, owing to its vast and fertile expanse, has established itself as a dominion of agriculture. This attribute of ample arable land has bestowed considerable impetus upon the agricultural sector within the nation. Chief among the crops cultivated in Pakistan is wheat, an essential and prominent staple. This crop flourishes throughout the expanse of the country. The cultivation of wheat, from an economic perspective, bears significant importance, as it stands as a pivotal factor in the economic framework. Wheat, a fundamental grain, burgeons during the spring season, and in select regions, during the winter months in Pakistan. As the world's second most populous nation, Pakistan ranks as the second-largest consumer of wheat following China. Such lofty demand underscores the vital role wheat plays in satiating the burgeoning population. The cultivation of wheat serves as an indispensable practice to cater to this es-

calating populace. The result of this wheat cultivation manifests in Pakistan's global standing, as it occupies the sixth position worldwide in terms of annual wheat production, yielding approximately 25 million metric tonnes annually. This ubiquitous grain stands as the paramount staple crop within Pakistan, constituting a cornerstone for nourishment and subsistence for millions. The inception of wheat cultivation traces back to nearly ten millennia ago. Its common appellation, "Einkorn," serves as a testament to its historical origin. This origin finds its roots in southeastern Turkey. In terms of genetics, wheat assumes a diploid character. Its prominence remains unparalleled, as it contributes substantially to the daily caloric intake of numerous individuals across the globe. The cultivation of spring wheat, designated as a "Rabi" crop, transpires within the provinces of Sindh, Punjab, NWFP, and Balochistan. In select regions of northern Balochistan, a limited scale cultivation of winter wheat is also observed in Pakistan. Predominantly, Punjab shoulders the majority of wheat cultivation, accounting for 71.17% of the total output, while a smaller fraction thrives in Sindh, amounting to 31.38%. Notably, per-acre yield slightly favors Sindh with 2316 kg compared to Punjab's 2410 kg. While most wheat thrives in irrigated and fecund soil, a minor share (10%) is grown in rainfed areas within Punjab. Wheat, a primary cereal crop, is extensively cultivated on the expansive canvas of Pakistan. It stands as a pivotal wellspring of sustenance for the swelling population. Flourishing optimally under the temperate warmth ranging from 21 to 24°C or 71 to 75°F, and benefiting from adequate sunlight during grain filling, wheat occupies a paramount role in the country's sustenance. The orchestration of wheat cultivation assumes a pivotal role in safeguarding the country's food security. This crop contributes nearly 13% to Pakistan's agricultural GDP and engages over 40% of its labor force. Noteworthy regional variations in wheat production are apparent across Pakistani cities. Wheat production, however, faces formidable competition from other water-intensive crops like rice and sugarcane. The interplay between wheat production and Pakistan's food security unveils a complex and multifaceted scenario, with far-reaching implications for dietary patterns of the populace. Wheat production occupies an integral niche in Pakistan's sustenance, yet surmounting challenges remain imperative to ensure its sustainable trajectory. A judicious orchestration of resources, encompassing land, water, and agricultural practices resilient to climate fluctuations, is the need of the hour. The inherent challenges in scaling up wheat production are profound. A gamut of factors bears upon Pakistan's wheat production in relation to its food security: Wheat production in Pakistan heavily hinges on irrigation, a factor that has led to substantial land degradation. Erosion, salinization, and waterlogging are prevalent

concerns that undermine crop yield, thereby jeopardizing food security. With agriculture heavily reliant on water resources, Pakistan grapples with the dual challenges of limited arable land and declining per capita water availability due to population expansion and climate shifts. As wheat cultivation demands substantial water allocation, competition for this finite resource can engender conflicts and exacerbate food insecurity. Pesticides are deployed extensively to safeguard wheat crops, but undue application poses risks to human health and ecosystems. The indiscriminate use of these chemicals can lead to soil and water contamination, heralding long-term environmental and health consequences. Pakistan, owing to its vast and fertile expanse, has established itself as a dominion of agriculture. This attribute of ample arable land has bestowed considerable impetus upon the agricultural sector within the nation. Chief among the crops cultivated in Pakistan is wheat, an essential and prominent staple. This crop flourishes throughout the expanse of the country. The cultivation of wheat, from an economic perspective, bears significant importance, as it stands as a pivotal factor in the economic framework. Wheat, a fundamental grain, burgeons during the spring season, and in select regions, during the winter months in Pakistan. As the world's second most populous nation, Pakistan ranks as the second-largest consumer of wheat following China. Such lofty demand underscores the

vital role wheat plays in satiating the burgeoning population. The cultivation of wheat serves as an indispensable practice to cater to this escalating populace. The result of this wheat cultivation manifests in Pakistan's global standing, as it occupies the sixth position worldwide in terms of annual wheat production, yielding approximately 25 million metric tonnes annually. This ubiquitous grain stands as the paramount staple crop within Pakistan, constituting a cornerstone for nourishment and subsistence for millions. The inception of wheat cultivation traces back to nearly ten millennia ago. Its common appellation, "Einkorn," serves as a testament to its historical origin. This origin finds its roots in southeastern Turkey. In terms of genetics, wheat assumes a diploid character. Its prominence remains unparalleled, as it contributes substantially to the daily caloric intake of numerous individuals across the globe. The cultivation of spring wheat, designated as a "Rabi" crop, transpires within the provinces of Sindh, Punjab, NWFP, and Balochistan. In select regions of northern Balochistan, a limited scale cultivation of winter wheat is also observed in Pakistan. Predominantly, Punjab shoulders the majority of wheat cultivation, accounting for 71.17% of the total output, while a smaller fraction thrives in Sindh, amounting to 31.38%. Notably, per-acre yield slightly favors Sindh with 2410 kg compared to Punjab's 2316

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Daraz Launches "Proudly Pakistani" Initiative

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Daraz, Pakistan's leading e-commerce platform, has announced the launch of its "Proudly Pakistani" initiative, a pioneering effort aimed at showcasing the nation's rich cultural heritage while uplifting local artisans and communities. The initiative kicked off on August 14th, aligning with Pakistan's Independence Day, and embodies Daraz's commitment to promoting cultural diversity, economic empowerment, and community development.

Under the "Proudly Pakistani" initiative, Daraz has scouted sellers on-ground as well as partnered with the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) to support artisans hailing from various corners of the country including Gilgit, Peshawar, interior Sindh, and Multan. These organizations have been working tirelessly to upskill artisans who have been honing their craft for generations, producing exquisite cultural handicrafts that are a testament to Pakistan's artistic heritage.

NDMRF to kick off first ever three-day DRR Expo

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDMRF) is going to inaugurate the country's first-ever three-day disaster risk reduction expo at the Pak-China Friendship Center that will continue from August 16-18 with a vibrant gathering of local and international experts on the subject matter. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with the NDMRF is organizing a national-level Pakistan Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR-23) under the title Making Resilient Pakistan. Chief Executive Officer (CEO), of NDMRF, Bilal Anwar in a video message shared on the official Twitter handle of the Fund informed the masses regarding PEDRR-23. During PEDRR-23, a large number of high-level dignitaries, representatives from the international community, government officials, humanitarian organizations, academia, media, and members of the private sector would attend the event. He said, "PEDRR-23 will comprise of multiple activities including seminars, panel discussions, green talks, student competitions, and academic paper presentations. NDMRF looks forward to collaborative efforts in making it a success." —APP

Briefs

Healthy diet can prevent obesity, Expert

ISLAMABAD: A Health expert Tuesday advised that all parents should monitor their children's eating habits and encourage the development of healthy eating and regular exercise for better mental health. Talking to a private news channel, a health specialist Dr. Shabana Naz explained that children eat excessive amounts of food, and the calories they consume mostly go unburned due to a lack of physical activity. She emphasized the need to build more and more playgrounds and parks to promote the culture of walk, exercise, jogging, and other recreational activities in children youth, and elderly people. She warned that rising obesity among children and youths is putting them at risk for several ailments, including coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes. "Children, as well as people of all ages, have been adapted to the Western lifestyle of consuming fast food at random in our country," she noted. Awareness campaigns should be launched to encourage healthy lifestyles, she said, adding, "We have to educate children at homes and schools on how they can stay fit."—APP

Proud to be part of Pak-China first feature Movie

ISLAMABAD: Popular makeup artist and fashion designer Aasma Khan has said that she was proud to be part of the Pakistan-China first collaborative feature Movie "Ba'tic Girl". Talking to APP, she said that she had also worked on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Cultural Caravan which was one of the successful projects. Aasma Khan said that she had done numerous international fashion photo shoots as well, adding that "I have completed my fashion designing from Hunerkada College of Visual & Performing Arts". "I have always had an artistic mind since I was a little child and that mindset of always coming up with something creative and different that has prepared my mind for the role that I am playing today and who I am.", she added.—APP

Police arrest six for possessing illegal weapons

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police on the directives of the Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations conducted raids in different areas and netted six accused of possessing illegal weapons. According to a police spokesman, Bani, Race Course, Taxila, Saddar Wah, and Rawat police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and arrested six namely Anwar, Muzamil, Waseem, Asif, Umair, and Jawad, and recovered five 30-bore pistols, a 32 bore pistol and ammunition. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process. Divisional Superintendents of Police said that strict action.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used to expand a new lane on Islamabad Expressway. —APP

Exorbitant prices of back-to-school supplies haunt parents

"We cannot less the price of stationery items on our own as we are getting these items on increased prices too. Ultimately, we are left with no option but to shift this burden on the customers", he said

ISLAMABAD: With back-to-school essentials in demand amid opening of the educational institutions in the federal capital after summer vacation break, majority of the parents are grappling with the exorbitant prices of all school items. Most of private schools start their new academic session after the summer break when most of parents have to purchase back-to-school essentials for their kids by physically visiting the stationary stores or ordering through online suppliers. The price of school supplies from glue, color pencils, markers, lunch box, water bottles, geometry boxes, school bags, and cut boxes to textbooks, notebooks, and uniforms has registered a significant increase which made it difficult for families, especially salaried class, to manage the ed-

ucational expenses. "I have spent around Rs 20,000 to purchase only the textbooks of my son studying in Grade II while I still have to buy the stationary items and uniform as per the list provided by the school administration", Shais-ta Adil, a mother of two children said. "Although it has become difficult to bear the expenses of my one school-going son who is studying in private school, we have no option left when the government institutions lack facilities and educational standards, she lamented. Abid Shah, another parent said, "I was surprised to hear the price of the trolley bag which was Rs 12,000 during my visit to the school supplies shop what to talk about the other items". Talking to APP, he said, "Getting education in a private school has become a luxury keeping in view

the increasing fee structure and a long list of stationary and other items they give. The fee of my son studying in early year class is Rs. 23,000 besides annual charges of Rs 25,000 which is too hard to afford during the prevailing price hike situation". Another parent, Farah Hamid said that instead of making things easier for the parents, the private schools provide a long list of stationary items to the parents for buying which are hardly used during the whole year. "Not only the parents have to buy all the stationary themselves but these schools also grab annual charges for stationery too in the name of artwork, overburdening the parents", she observed. She urged the concerned authorities to keep check on unusual increase in

the prices of school items in the markets and take action against the unjust price hike. Tahir Mehmood, who is associated with the profession of teaching for a long time, said that parents already struggling amid rising inflation and facing a cost of living are forced to pay high prices of essential school items for their kids. e said that back-to-school shopping is really stressful for them but they have to pay as being parents they consider these items as an essential category in their shopping list. They are making some real sacrifices and leading uncomfortable life in these days due to soaring inflation, high-priced fuel, electricity, and gas. Prices of school items like shoes, uniforms, backpacks and lunch boxes, crayons, markers,

notebooks, chart papers, binders, papers, pens, erasers, and pencils have increased substantially due to the prevailing inflation. When contacted the owner of a prominent book and stationery shop in F-8, he said that the inflation has not only distressed the parents of the school-going kids but every section of life. He said that since our country import paper and the price of paper has increased due to which the prices of textbooks and notebooks have registered a 40 to 45 percent stationary increase this year which is very unusual. "We cannot less the price of stationery items on our own as we are getting these items on increased prices too. Ultimately, we are left with no option but to shift this burden on the customers", he said.

"Unpaid intership: Experience or Exploitation"

ISLAMABAD: The pursuit of internships remains a priority for thousands of students annually, a crucial step towards career success. However, a darker reality often lurks beneath the surface—many resort to unpaid positions, meeting university criteria but gaining little or no valuable learning, particularly those from far-flung areas. Maheen Mirza, a BBA student from Narowal University, currently undergoing her internship at a National Financial Institute here, candidly shared her challenges with this scribe. She expressed, "The financial burden I impose on my parents is substantial. They already shoulder the costs of my fees, accommodation, meals, and other necessities."—APP

ANF seizes 207 kg drugs in 15 operations

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 15 operations across the country managed to recover 207 kg drugs and arrested 18 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that operations were conducted in Islamabad, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Quetta, Peshawar, D.I.Khan, Hyderabad and Karachi and ANF recovered 24.2 kg heroin, 3.6 kg Ice, 151.7 kg charras, 7.2 kg opium and 20 kg intoxicated tablets. Six vehicles were also impounded during operations, he added. The spokesman said that in an operation at Islamabad International Airport, 39 drug-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Qatar-bound passenger. In another operation conducted in Faisalabad, 48 kg charras and 7.2 kg opium were recovered from a car. An accused was also rounded up.

Railways spends Rs.1862 mln for rehabilitation of track

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is spending Rs.1862.84 million for the rehabilitation of 518 kilometres of track between Kotri-Khanpur under the project of Immediate Track Safety Works (ITSW-I). Despite financial constraints, the management of Pakistan Railways is putting maximum efforts into improvement in infrastructure including tracks, bridges, stations etc, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. Under the project of rehabilitation of Karachi Port tracks, 24-kilometre tracks, 17 level crossings and seven bridges have been rehabilitated along with the replacement of turnouts. The official said that Railway Dry Ports at Lahore (Mughalpur), Badami Bagh and Azakhel have been upgraded. He said under the Immediate Track Safety Works (ITSW-II & IMTS W-III), the railway track between Tando Adam-Khanpur covering 456 kilometres would be rehabilitated at a cost

of Rs. 4830.437 million and Rs.4875.461 million respectively by replacing the US components of the track by ensuring the safety of train operation. A PCI amounting to Rs.4930.22 million for the rehabilitation of track machinery has been approved which would ensure quality of track maintenance work. Meanwhile, 11 stations has been upgraded including Peshawar, Hassan Abdal, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, Narowal, Nankana Sahib, Raiwind, Okara, Sahiwal, and Bahawalpur, under PSDP projects. The project of upgradation of Main Line-I at a cost of \$6.683 billion has been negotiated with the Chinese side for completing the ML-I in two phases consisting of four packages, he added. About the assets of Pakistan Railways are mainly related to the track (11881 kilometres), rolling stock (15699) etc and most of these assets have lived their useful life. Therefore, he said the department has taken several measures for efficient maintenance of these assets


which included an increase in fiscal space for maintenance through transfer of pension, reduce utility bills through solarization, improving procurement management through prioritized procurement and an efficient fuel management system. He said the department is gradually shifting from manual to a mechanized track maintenance regime for enhanced productivity and quality while improved governance of the maintenance system through the introduction of IT-related interventions (ERP, etc) and provision of professional human resources was also among the top priorities. Regional Connectivity is an important aspect of the Pakistan Railway development framework. Presently, Pakistan Railway has planned to improve its functional links with regional countries including India and Iran, he added. Furthermore, the official said the following new rail links would be established including Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railway.—APP

Current electricity prices, economy cannot go hand in hand


ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Tuesday welcomed the Caretaker Prime Minister Mr. Anwar Haq Kakar, and said that the current price of electricity will never allow industry, trade, and the overall economy to flourish. The cost of doing business is increasing due to the continuous increase in electricity prices; there is a continuous decline in output; and our manufacturers are not able to compete in the global market, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the high energy prices are closing businesses while the majority of people are unable to pay their bills. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that instead of increasing the price of electricity, reforms should be made in this critical sector. Electricity should be made cheaper by getting rid of the 800 billion in line losses, theft, inefficiency, and defaults in this sector, he added. The business leader noted that the solution of 71% capacity payments should be resolved and the production costs of industries should be reduced by providing cheap electricity during the winter. Solar power should be given priority for cheap generation of electricity; this sector should be encouraged, as presently only 1.4% of electricity is generated by solar. In Australia, 15% of electricity is generated through solar power. Nine to 14 percent of electricity in Italy, Spain, and Germany is derived from solar resources. For decades, the IMF has been assured by the authorities to improve the power sector, but these promises have never been implemented, and the disastrous process of raising the price of electricity has been considered the solution to all problems, he observed.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Ethiopia H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula along with Principal, Ms. Sobia Abid distributing shields to student in connection with 77th Independence Day Celebration at Roots International Schools & Colleges, H-8. —APP



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Hawaii's lethal wildfire

THE dreadful scale of the loss of life on the Hawaiian island of Maui has emerged day by day, as search and rescue teams scour ash and rubble. But it is already clear that the wind-fuelled blaze which last week ripped through the historic town of Lahaina was the deadliest wildfire in the United States for more than 100 years. Hundreds are still missing, and the sheer intensity of the fire means that the identification of bodies and the notification of relatives will be a difficult and slow process. The west Maui town itself, the former capital of the Hawaiian kingdom, is a charred wasteland in which close to 3,000 structures were burned to the ground at terrifying speed. Along with the grim process of recovering the dead, finding viable accommodation for the survivors is the immediate priority. In the weeks ahead, tourists will hopefully heed pleas from the Hawaii Tourism Authority and stay away from the rest of the island. Hotel space and Airbnb accommodation will be needed for first responders and evacuees, not holidaymakers. Reconstruction will then be a laborious process costing many billions of dollars. Lessons will also need to be learned in the wake of the worst natural disaster in Hawaii's history. As climate-related disasters become more frequent, more unpredictable and intensively destructive, a step change is needed in how governments and societies respond to the threat. In this regard, state authorities in Hawaii appear to have been badly behind the curve. Record-breaking temperatures in recent years, combined with forest loss and abandoned farmland featuring more combustible non-native grasses, had turned parts of Maui into a virtual tinderbox. A previous report stated that a 2018 brush fire, which forced residents to evacuate homes and burned more than 2,000 acres of land, should be a "real world wake-up call". Hawaiian Electric, the utility which oversees electricity provision to the vast majority of Maui residents, also has questions to answer. The immediate cause of the fire is still under investigation. But in states such as California, where a catastrophic wildfire destroyed a mountain town in 2018, electricity is now cut off altogether to areas where wind risks triggering a conflagration. Global heating has inaugurated an era of climatic instability and volatility. Proactively analysing and preparing for worst-case scenarios means acting to anticipate disasters that may not happen, and persuading the public that such caution is worth the cost – both financially and in terms of disruption. The rest of the world, not just Hawaii, needs to wake up to this new and deeply challenging reality.

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Lives lost in the Channel

THE tragedy of the deaths of at least six people on Saturday morning, as another overcrowded boat sank while trying to reach England's south coast, has focused attention on the plight of Afghans fleeing their homeland. Rightly so: in the almost two years since the Taliban seized control, it has carried out reprisals against opponents, while the independent legal system has collapsed and poverty and hunger have risen dramatically. Girls and women are living under a regime described by one UN official as "gender apartheid", and highlighted in this newspaper by Gordon Brown last week. Last year, Afghan was the second-most common nationality of people arriving in the UK on small boats – although the government deflected attention from this by focusing on Albanians, who constituted the majority of small-boat arrivals. With just 96 Afghans resettled in the UK in 2022, compared with 8,429 who arrived by small boat in the year to March 2023, the government is falling dramatically short of its pledge to resettle 5,000 Afghans. This is the context for last week's deeply offensive remark by Lee Anderson, deputy chair of the Conservative party, that if asylum seekers including Afghans and citizens of other war-torn countries object to being housed on the Bibby Stockholm barge, moored off Dorset, they should "fuck off back to France". Since then it has emerged that the previous day – the same day as the first of 39 people were transferred to the barge – a water sample tested positive for legionella bacteria, which can cause legionnaires' disease. On Thursday and Friday, they were removed to dry land. Rishi Sunak's team has rarely looked more cynical than it did last week, when closing ranks around Mr Anderson. The public use of expletives to refer to refugees is a new low for which his party should be ashamed. There is no question that chronic instability in countries including Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Eritrea is a grave problem, and irregular migration is a challenge for politicians around the world. But the UK government's retreat into populist aggression is dismal, when what is needed is a strong commitment to multilateral solutions, and pragmatic investment to enable the 160,000 claims backlog to be tackled. Instead, Tory strategy appears to be to stagger on until autumn, when the supreme court will rule on the legality of the scheme to deport asylum seekers to a "safe third country" (Rwanda). Then, presumably, Mr Sunak and his colleagues will make what political capital they can out of the issue, while stoking up public anxiety about arrivals and other parties' discomfort. There are legitimate differences of opinion about how to deal with small boats. The government has yet to publish impact assessments of its Illegal Migration Act. But with analysis suggesting that the law will result in almost 200,000 people being blocked from claiming asylum, but unable to be deported, with the system costing up to £10bn over three years, the current approach is indefensible.

Manipur, sexual violence and the 'least condemned war crime'

Nadine Sayegh

The disturbing video sheds light on the type of violence women have to endure in conflict zones. They are at a significantly higher risk of sexual violence, yet often times the issue receives little attention. Justice from the 'state' level doesn't come unless there's heavy local and international pressure. Today, as it was in the past, whenever a conflict breaks out, women become easy targets and are subjected to dehumanisation and humiliation. Though Manipur is far from what constitutes "war", the situation fits into the bigger picture of a dominant group turning rape into a weapon to brutalise enemy. In grim reality of armed conflicts, women are tragically treated as spoils of war

THE ethnic strife in the northeastern Indian state of Manipur escalated rapidly and forced the world to sit up and take notice, mainly due to the (sexual) violence perpetrated against women. One incident, in particular, gained widespread attention when a video surfaced on July 19 in which two women were stripped, paraded down a rural road and brutally assaulted by an armed mob. The women, who belonged to the ethnic Kuki tribe, later said they were raped. The video, filmed in May, was initially reported to the police, but no action was taken until the content went viral. The perpetrators of the violence reportedly belong to the Meitei ethnic community. Meiteis, who make almost two thirds of Manipur's population, face accusations of carrying out violent attacks under police protection. The incident occurred following a raid on several homes, during which three women managed to escape, but tragically, two men were killed, including the brother of one of the victims who tried to protect them. The ongoing clashes and raids since early May have resulted in nearly 150 deaths and displaced approximately 55,000 people. While it is a complex issue, the roots of the conflict in Manipur are deeply intertwined with historical 'ethnic' divisions that can be traced back to the time of British colonisation. The Meitei people, predominantly Hindu, largely reside in the capital city of Imphal, while the (mostly Christian) Kuki and Naga tribes inhabit surrounding hill areas. The disturbing video sheds light on the type of violence women have to endure in conflict zones. They are at a significantly higher risk of sexual violence, yet often times the issue receives little attention. Justice from the 'state' level doesn't come unless there's heavy local and international pressure. Today, as it was in the past, whenever a conflict breaks out, women become easy targets and are subjected to dehumanisation and humiliation. Though Manipur is far from what constitutes "war", the situation fits into the bigger picture of a dominant group turning rape into a weapon to brutalise the enemy. In the grim reality of armed conflicts, women are tragically treated as spoils of war. This is a disturbing phenomenon, one which is often repeated and witnessed in conflict, one which is still accepted as commonplace today.

Despite the legislative recognition of rape and sexual violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Rome Statute and various resolutions by organisations such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), at least seven UNSC resolutions, CEDAW, and countless other legislation, wartime sexual violence remains largely ignored and described as "the least condemned war crime." Others cite that the word "impunity" remains the most appropriate when it comes to wartime sexual violence. This horrifying tactic has a long and dark history. One such example is the incident that occurred in the Palestinian town of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem on April 9, 1948, during the establishment of the state of Israel. Some of the victims were mutilated and raped before facing death, and entire families were mercilessly slaughtered. Additionally, dozens of men were paraded through Jerusalem on trucks and then executed in a nearby quarry. In the Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict between 1992-1995, it is estimated that between 20,000 to 50,000 girls, women, and men, fell victim to sexual violence, with rape being consciously used as a brutal tactic by Serbian soldiers. Shockingly, to this day, no adequate punishment has been meted out for this large-scale sexual violence. One report cites, "The vast majority of those crimes have gone unpunished, despite decades of efforts by international prosecutors at the purpose-built International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. Between its first prosecution in 1997 and its final verdicts in 2017, the ICTY managed to convict over 30 people charged with committing sexual violence constituting as war crimes. In addition, Bosnian courts convicted 130 more individuals of wartime sexual violence and around 200 cases are still pending in Bosnia." However, it is disheartening to note that NGOs tracking such cases indicate around two-thirds of those convicted receive prison sentences ranging between three and five years, adds the report. The Central African Republic is yet another harrowing arena where targeted sexual violence perpetrated against women and related unpunished crimes took place with shocking frequency. Since the onset of the civil conflict in 2013, instances of rape have been alarmingly prevalent, even involving cases of UN peacekeeping troops as the perpetrators.

Despite a partial decrease in the conflict's intensity, the culture of rape continues to persist in this fragile environment. According to a report from Doctors Without Borders, the Tongolo Centre, an aid group founded by the not-for-profit organization in the capital of Bangui said it recorded more than 3,420 victims of sexual violence between January and November 2022. Tragically, a quarter of these victims were minors and around 10 percent were men. What is particularly concerning in CAR is that the protracted conflict and the prevalence of rape have led to the normalisation of this heinous crime to an alarming extent. It has even extended to a rise in familial rape crimes, further exacerbating the gravity of the situation. These crimes are often overlooked due to an overlay of factors; these crimes are never immediately addressed as they take place during conflict - there are no reporting bodies or safe havens to immediately turn to. The ability of the limited agencies to provide support may help the individual, but no ability to call for accountability due to their neutrality. Other war crimes are also often overlooked, so it is not a stand alone situation, there is a general lack of accountability from parties engaging in war as well as an extremely slow process of prosecuting crimes. For meaningful change to occur to prevent sexual violence, two crucial steps must be taken. First, there needs to be greater accountability from the international bodies created to protect individuals in conflict zones, particularly vulnerable, such as women and children. These bodies must ensure that perpetrators of sexual violence face appropriate consequences for their actions. Secondly, intersectional feminism plays an important role in addressing this issue. Women's movements in the West must place pressure on their respective governments to take meaningful action. The legislation necessary to address these atrocities already exists, now our focus must be on enforcing it rigorously to establish a crucial precedent for current and future conflicts, sending a clear message that sexual violence will have severe consequences. Furthermore, pushing for 'safe-zones' for vulnerable individuals may prevent these crimes from occurring at all. - Courtesy: TRT World

The reset in US strategy on engaging Taliban may work

Obaidullah Baheer

The State Department's logic behind this renewed effort for engagement seems to be that better relations between the US and the Taliban would create incentives for the latter to form an inclusive government and draft a constitution that can limit the more conservative voices within the movement. This would lead to internal consensus on repealing the bans on girls and women's education and work and tackling other human rights issues. The idea is that it is important to win on the fronts that can be won now and lay the ground for the Taliban's...

SINCE the Taliban took over Kabul in 2021, the United States has struggled to make progress in talks with the group. A common complaint among Afghanistan observers against the office of the US State Department's Special Representative for Afghanistan has been that it often does the right thing at the wrong time. Over the past two years, the US would often appear to increase its efforts to reach out exactly as the Taliban announce yet another decree restricting the human rights of Afghans. This supposedly has to do with the sluggishness of the State Department's machinery, which takes quite a lot of time to execute a decision to engage and disengage. But a recent meeting held in Doha seems to have broken this pattern of mismatched priorities and bad timing. On July 31, representatives of the Taliban and US officials met officially for the first time since August 2021 to discuss the way forward for their relations and steps towards the recognition of the Taliban government and unfreezing of Afghan state assets. The two-day talks indicate that a major barrier to cooperation may have been surmounted. Over the past two years, the issue of human rights violations by the Taliban stood in the way of engagement. The international community, including the US, demanded concessions on human rights issues before any other discussions could take place. This was based on the logic of the low-hanging fruit. The assumption was that the human rights issues, including the bans on women and girls' education and work, were the easiest to solve, and the Taliban would have to concede as a show of good faith. But the group never did and as a result, little progress was made on engagement.

But the July 31 meeting seems to suggest that this precondition has been reconsidered. Of note was the presence of US Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights Rina Amiri, who had previously refused to meet with the Taliban over their violations of women's rights. Amiri justified her presence in those meetings by saying that she had consulted with Afghans and human rights defenders who had advised her to join the US delegation. The State Department's logic behind this renewed effort for engagement seems to be that better relations between the US and the Taliban would create incentives for the latter to form an inclusive government and draft a constitution that can limit the more conservative voices within the movement. This would lead to internal consensus on repealing the bans on girls and women's education and work and tackling other human rights issues. The idea is that it is important to win on the fronts that can be won now and lay the ground for the Taliban's horrendous social policies to be addressed internally in the longer run. This reset in strategy is a positive development and there are already indications that it may work. First, the Taliban issued a statement about the meeting in Doha which somewhat aligned with the one released by the US State Department. This is significant as, usually, communiqués issued after formal and informal meetings between the Taliban and foreign delegations would read as if they were referring to two different engagements. The coherent message issued by the two sides in Doha reflected the constructive dialogue that had taken place. Second, confidence-building measures were dis-

cussed which had been absent from the one-off encounters held in the past. These measures are a chance to find noncontroversial avenues of cooperation and agree on monitoring mechanisms that help build trust between the two parties. These can include climate change, narcotics and others. Third, the meeting set the foundation for more frequent engagements to take place in the near future. The UN Assistance Mission for Afghanistan has already announced a meeting for the end of the year which could see a continuation of these efforts to engage the Taliban. Future meetings can benefit from the appointment of joint commissions that do the groundwork beforehand and reach an agreement on frameworks of discussion. This would ensure that the limited time the officials spend together is optimised and more ground is covered. Future iterations of these talks could also be a good chance to push the Taliban to include in these discussions prominent Afghan voices from outside their group. This could encourage the Taliban leadership to start a national dialogue and start thinking about a more inclusive government makeup. The stakes for both sides are quite high, which should motivate them to keep up the momentum. For the Taliban, this could lead to the international recognition it needs in order to join the international community and receive much-needed foreign assistance that can help rebuild the devastated Afghan economy and alleviate the humanitarian crisis. For the US, this could be a chance to redeem itself, at least partially, for its devastating failures in Afghanistan since 2001. - Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

ECP issues guidelines for caretaker govts

FROM PAGE 01
fairly and in accordance with the law and that corrupt practices are guarded against". "It has become imperative that the election commission shall take all necessary steps under the Constitution and prevalent law for the smooth conduct of general elections," the notification adds as it goes on to elaborate on guidelines for interim setups at the Centre and in provinces to ensure transparent elections and a level playing field for all contesting candidates and political parties. Besides asking them to assist in holding elections in line with the law, as provided under Section 230(1) (b) of the Elections Act, 2017, the ECP has instructed interim governments to ensure compliance with all notifications, directives and provisions of Section 230 of the election law, which pertains to the functions of a caretaker government. Recently, Section 230 of the law had come under heated debate in Parliament after an amendment to it was proposed to give additional powers to caretaker governments. The amendment, granting the caretaker government powers to take actions or decisions regarding existing bilateral or multilateral agreements and projects, was passed by a joint session of Parliament in late July and now needs the president's assent to become a part of the law.

Economic reform my govt's top priority: Kakar

FROM PAGE 01
caretaker setup. The prime minister chaired a meeting in which he was given a detailed briefing over the economic situation. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During the meeting, the prime minister said that work on the public welfare projects would continue and the government would ensure provision of international quality facilities in the health and education sectors. He also directed for expediting ongoing reforms in the power sector and strict implementation of measures for increasing tax revenues. Prime Minister Kakar said that the caretaker government would concentrate on deregulation and responsible autonomy for further improvement of the economy and expressed the resolve to focus their energies on economic reforms during their tenure. PM Kakar further expressly wished that his protocol be kept to a minimum, adding that he did not want to incur unnecessary expenses nor make people suffer. The sources also shared that the names of caretaker ministers under consideration include former foreign secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani, former civil servant Shoaib Suddle, former Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president Ahsan Bhoon, former senator Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti, and former police IG and acclaimed columnist Zulfiqar Ahmad Cheema. Moreover, former information minister Muhammad Ali Durrani is likely to be given the portfolio of the Ministry of Information, the sources said. A day earlier, Kakar — a former senator and a leader of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) — took oath as the eighth caretaker prime minister of Pakistan to see the country through to the general elections which are due in months.

Names of cabinet members emerge

FROM PAGE 01
the favorite candidate for the premiership, is now being considered for the role of interim Foreign Minister. Earlier, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar assumed his responsibilities after taking the oath of office on August 14. After assuming the responsibilities, the caretaker premier sought a detailed briefing from all ministries on important matters.

Women's World Cup
Spain beat Sweden 2-1 in a thrilling finish to reach final

They will face England or Australia in the final in Sydney on Sunday

WELLINGTON: Captain Olga Carmona scored an 89th-minute winner to spark wild scenes of jubilation among their supporters at Eden Park, Auckland. Sweden - who have now lost back-to-back World Cup semi-finals - had equalised through Rebecka-Blomqvist just 93 seconds earlier and it looked like the match would be going to extra time. A game of few chances had sparked into life when substitute Salma Paralluelo, 19, gave Spain the lead with just 10 minutes remaining. They will face England or Australia in the final in Sydney on Sunday. The semi-final between the Lionesses and the co-hosts is live across the BBC on Wednesday (11:00 BST). Reaction to Spain's dramatic win over Sweden Explosive finish after cagey 80 minutes While Spain's players celebrated wildly on the pitch at full-time, Sweden's dropped to the floor as their World Cup dream came to an end. There was little evidence of what was to come during a tight and cagey opening 80 minutes. Spain boss Jorge Vilda opted to recall two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas, whose minutes on the pitch have been limited as she returns from a serious knee injury. And it was Putellas who brought



WELLINGTON: Spain edge Sweden 2-1 in a tense semifinal at Eden Park to book their spot in Sunday's title decider in Sydney. — Agencies

the biggest cheer of the opening half from the sell-out 43,217 crowd when she nutmegged Manchester City's Filippa Angeldahl. It took until the 42nd minute for the first shot on target, Sweden's Fridolina Rolfö denied her third goal of the tournament by her Barcelona team-mate Cata Coll. Spain dominated possession but Sweden's defence, which has been solid and resolute for the past month, frustrated their op-

ponents for long periods, while the Swedes once again used a familiar weapon to try and find a breakthrough. Seven of their 11 goals at this tournament before the semi-final had come from set-pieces but Coll, who had not started a senior game for Spain prior to the World Cup, stood up well to Sweden's inswinging corners, which had caused havoc in previous matches. Then came the explosive finish.

Paralluelo, who scored the winner in the quarter-final against the Netherlands, kept her composure to fire Spain ahead before substitute Blomqvist poked home the equaliser. With extra time looming, Carmona sent Spain through with a shot which went in off the bar following a corner. Spain recover from squad turmoil Spain had only won one of their previous seven Women's World Cup matches before this tourna-

ment. They now head for the final after their fifth - and most dramatic - win in New Zealand. This historic win for Spain came just 15 days after they were beaten 4-0 by Japan in a group match. Boss Vilda said after that defeat "no-one should lose hope" and his players have responded by eliminating Switzerland, the Netherlands and Sweden. Spain had come into this tournament under a cloud after 15 players had threatened to quit the team as they were unhappy with Vilda's methods, and the coach initially exiled them from the squad. Three of the 15 - Mariona Caldentey, Aitana Bonmati and former Manchester United defender Ona Batlle - were eventually included in his squad for the World Cup. Spain appear to have put those differences to one side as all three players helped their country reach the final on a memorable night for La Roja. 'I hope Spain win' It was the same old story for Sweden as they lost for the fourth time in five World Cup semi-finals, having knocked out 2015 and 2019 winners the United States and Japan in their past two matches. Their players have been ruthless and efficient at this tournament but looked heartbroken after going so close to forcing extra time. — Agencies

Pakistanis slam 'shameful' PCB video omitting Khan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani cricket fans have slammed the country's cricket board for omitting former captain and Prime Minister Imran Khan from a social media video celebrating the national team's successes since the country's birth in 1947. On Monday, commemorating the country's 76th independence day, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) posted the video showing the country's growth and success in the sport. It was immediately criticised by fans who blamed the PCB for acceding to the country's governing alliance's "political agenda" and failing to include the World Cup-winning captain despite including video clips from the team's triumph at the 1992 global tournament. Khan was deposed as prime minister in April last year following a no-confidence vote in parliament. His political career has spiralled since, culminating in his ar-



rest earlier this month and the country's election commission barring him from politics for five years. In the last few months, a de facto ban has been placed on broadcasters mentioning Khan's name or showing his image. Pakistan's media regulatory authority has also banned his speeches and press conferences from being given any airtime. Khan represented Pakistan in international cricket for more than 20 years, retiring after leading Pakistan to the

World Cup title in 1992. He is widely regarded as one of the best cricketers in the sport's history. Reminiscing in Pakistan crickets history, 11 images of the 1992 World Cup win and not one pic or mention of the greatest that ever played the game for the country! "Reminiscing in Pakistan cricket's history, 11 images of the 1992 World Cup win and not one pic or mention of the greatest that ever played the game for the country!" former Paki-

stan women's captain Urooj Mumtaz Khan said. Pakistan cricket historian and journalist Osman Samiuddin said it must have taken "some effort" to make such a video without the "greatest Pakistani cricketer ever". British broadcaster and writer Peter Osborne termed the attempt to "airbrush" Khan from the history of Pakistan cricket "Stalinist". Stalinist. Imran Khan airbrushed from the history of Pakistan cricket. Khan holds several records in international cricket and is credited with the introduction of neutral umpires. In 1994, Khan opened a cancer research hospital in his mother's memory and with donations collected nationally and internationally, cementing his status as one of the country's leading philanthropists. The 70-year-old entered politics soon after his retirement and his biggest success came when his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party won the general election in 2018, propelling him to the country's prime minister's office.

Islamabad Timberwolves Triumph I-Day Basketball match

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: In a thrilling basketball match held as part of the Independence Day celebrations, Islamabad Timberwolves emerged victorious over their rivals, Islamabad Rockets, by a close margin of 52 points against 49 here at Hamidi Hall, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad. Ali Hamza Kazmi of the Timberwolves demonstrated remarkable skill and finesse on the court, leading his team as the top scorer with an impressive 19 points. He was closely followed by Raheel Gill, who contributed 9 points to the Timberwolves' victory. On the Rockets' side, Ramzee showcased his talent and determination, securing 12 points, with Ahmed putting forth a commendable performance as well, scoring 10 points. This match was officiated by a team of proficient referees as Umer Mahmood, Yasir Ghaffor, and Farhan (Navy) took charge as referees, ensuring a fair and unbiased contest. The distinguished gathering of sports enthusiasts and professionals witnessed Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shahid Islam, gracing the event as the chief guest while President of the Federal Basketball Association (FABA) Ejaz Rafi Butt, was present as the guest of honor. Alongside them, the notable attendees included National Coach Riaz Malik, Rana Nasrullah, Fitness Expert from Pakistan Sports Board, Azam Dar, Director Administration PBBF. Addressing the audience, General Secretary of FABA, Ouj E Zahoor, extended a warm welcome to all the esteemed guests and participants. Their presence not only added gravity to the occasion but also highlighted the significance of promoting basketball as a popular sport in Pakistan.

England to host Zimbabwe for Test in 2025

LONDON: England will host Zimbabwe in a men's Test match for the first time in 22 years in May 2025. The four-day Test will take place from May 28-31, with the venue for the one-off match to be confirmed at a later date. Jimmy Anderson, England's leading Test wicket-taker, made his debut the last time his country faced Zimbabwe in 2003. "We are delighted to be able to host Zimbabwe for a men's Test match for the first time in two decades," ECB chief executive Richard Gould said on Tuesday. "Zimbabwe has a proud cricket history and have produced world-class players and coaches who have enriched the game across the world. "We are committed to developing a closer relationship with Zimbabwe Cricket and the announcement of this Test against our England men's team is a step in that ambition." England have played three two-Test series against Zimbabwe, drawing in 1996 and winning in 2000 and 2003. "The significance and magnitude of this tour cannot be over-emphasised," Zimbabwe Cricket managing director Givemore Makoni said. — Agencies

Venus Williams stuns Kudermetova in Cincinnati Open

American veteran beats 16th-ranked Russian 6-4, 7-5 in US Open tune-up event

CINCINNATI: Venus Williams upset 16th-ranked Veronika Kudermetova 6-4, 7-5 at the Cincinnati Open on Monday, as her unseeded American compatriot Sloane Stephens overcame a sluggish start to beat Italy's Elisabetta Cocciaretto 7-5, 6-2. Williams had not beaten a top-20 opponent in four years but used all of her veteran composure as she overcame deficits in both sets and converted six of nine break points. The 43-year-old Williams initially appeared outmatched at the hard court

tournament as Kudermetova broke in the first and fifth games but mounted an extraordinary comeback to win the final five games in a row to claim the final set. Kudermetova flipped the momentum as she won the next four straight and nearly closed out the second set in the eighth game but instead helped Williams to break with a double fault and a pair of unforced errors. The Russian missed another opportunity to win the second set when Williams fended off a break point in the ninth game with an unreturnable serve. The



seven-time Grand Slam winner had the momentum as she converted a break point in the 10th game and a demoralised Kudermetova handed her the match with a pair of double faults - out of nine across the entire match - in the final game. Stephens, who along with Cocciaretto was unable to get a full warm-up due to rain that delayed the start of the match, broke the Italian five times and saved three of five break points en route to sealing the win in 76 minutes. — Agencies

Pakistan's Hamza Amin wins golf championship

"Psychologically, that birdie gave me good momentum heading into the final round. The putter was cold all day but I told myself to stay patient and keep at it

DNA

KARACHI: Overcoming the elements and a stiff challenge from European Tour winner Martin Wiegele, Pakistan's Hamza Amin — who is married to acclaimed actor Ushna Shah — claimed the Austrian National Open Golf Championship in Oberwaltersdorf, Austria, The News reported Tuesday. Making the win more memorable, Hamza's father — the legendary Taimur Hasan — was on the bag as the golfer made a series of birdies to win the championship by two strokes on Monday. With scores of 71, 70, 75, and 69 in challenging

conditions, Hamza — representing Rumanza Golf Club — emerged on top with a fantastic back nine on Sunday, birdieing holes 11, 13, 15, and 17 to win by two shots. "It's an amazing feeling to win the Open again, especially with my father on the bag. We created history and will have this memory forever. I was playing well but didn't have a good third round. "Conditions were extremely difficult and the wind was blowing hard. Thankfully I birdied the 18th on Saturday to stay 2 behind and remain in the hunt. "Psychologically, that birdie gave me good momentum heading into the final

round. The putter was cold all day but I told myself to stay patient and keep at it. That's when I started hitting putts and making birdies," he told The News.

Taimur, Pakistan's most celebrated amateur golfer, was over the moon. "It was a wonderful experience to caddy for Hamza and be part of his victory.



Great joy in the father and son combination," he said. The National Open Championship is the largest golf tournament in the Austrian Golf Association's calendar spanning over four days. The tournament was played at the magnificent Fontana golf club which has hosted multiple European Tour events in the past. The professionals competed for a total prize fund of 20,000 euros. Players were contending for the national championship title and the prestigious legacy left by some national stars like Markus Brier, Niki Zitzny, and Bernd Wiesberger. With its renowned championship course that extends

beyond national borders, Fontana Golf Club provided the perfect setting for an exciting and challenging championship this year, with 151 players participating in the Open, which is now in its 49th year. The National A and B teams, under the supervision of the Austrian Federation coaching staff, were also strong contenders for the title, but in the end, it was Hamza, who sealed the deal in dramatic style. While professionals vie for a winner's prize of 4,500 euros, amateurs are competing for the most prestigious title in Austrian golf: Austrian National Champion. — Agencies

Nawaz expected to return by September

FROM PAGE 01

The source said Shehbaz, who has now stepped down as the premier of Pakistan, will be reaching London within a week to meet Nawaz. PML-N stalwarts Rana Sanaullah, Khawaja Asif, Javed Latif, Saad Rafique, Parvez Rasheed, Irfan Siddiqui and many others are set to visit London over the next three weeks where discussions and planning will take place about Sharif's return.

Court throws out Khan's plea seeking...

FROM PAGE 01

imposed a Rs100,000 fine after he was found guilty of concealing proceeds of Toshakhana (state depository) gifts that he received from foreign dignitaries as the prime minister of the country from 2018 to 2022. Last week, a local court also cancelled the interim bail of the PTI chief in the illegal transfer of 190 million pounds in the Al-Qadir Trust case. Imran's wife Bushra Bibi's interim bail in the case was also disposed of.

China achieves world-first with latest satellite launch

ISLAMABAD: China has launched the world's first synthetic aperture radar satellite in high-altitude orbit, according to the China National Space Administration. Dedicated to natural disaster prevention and mitigation, the remote sensing satellite, Land Surveyor 4A, was carried into orbit on a Long March 3B rocket that blasted off from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province. It soon entered its preset geosynchronous orbit, the administration said. Remote sensing refers to the process of detecting and monitoring the physical characteristics of an area by measuring its reflected and emitted radiation at a distance, typically from aircraft or satellites, cns.cn reported. Developed by the China Academy of Space Technology, the Land Surveyor 4A will extensively improve China's space-based disaster monitoring system, it noted. The spacecraft is tasked with around-the-clock monitoring on Chinese territories and neighboring regions. In addition to disaster prevention and relief work, it will also be used in land and marine resources management, weather forecasting, environmental protection, and agricultural and forestry industries, the administration said. — Agencies

German minister axes trip over broken plane

BERLIN: German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock was forced on Tuesday to scrap her trip to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji after her plane suffered recurring technical problems, the latest in a series of incidents to hit the German fleet. "We tried everything but unfortunately it's logistically not possible to carry out my Indo-Pacific travel (plans) without the defective plane," the minister wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. "That is more than annoying," she added. Baerbock had left on Sunday for the week-long trip but her plane had suffered an outage after refuelling in Abu Dhabi. The minister was stranded for hours while the technical crew battled to fix a problem with the wing flaps. Her delegation sought to get underway again overnight to Tuesday but the 23-year-old Airbus A340 had to go back to Abu Dhabi when the defect resurfaced. "For security reasons, the plane had to return there," wrote the German air force on X. The aircraft had to dump fuel to land safely in Abu Dhabi again, it added. The mishap revived debate about the German government's ageing planes, with newspapers dubbing the latest incident "embarrassing" and a "fiasco". — Agencies

Briefs

Wildfire displaces 2,000, damages houses

PARIS: A wildfire on Monday evening swept through nearly 500 hectares (1,235 acres) of land in southern France, displacing over 2,000 people and damaging houses, authorities announced Tuesday.

The blazes spread through the touristic spots of the department Pyrenees-Orientales in the Mediterranean, the prefecture said on X, formerly known as Twitter. The towns of Sorede, Saint-Andre, and Argeles-sur-Mer were affected, the prefecture added, explaining that the fire hit mostly tourist areas.

Authorities evacuated 2,000 people from two residential sites and four camping areas in the town of Saint-Andre, where houses and other buildings were severely damaged.

The fire claimed no lives, the prefecture noted, adding that it was put out around 3.00 a.m. (0100GMT) with the efforts of over 650 firefighters.—DNA

UK's long-term sick pile pressure on economy

LONDON: The number of people not working in the UK due to chronic illnesses has soared since the pandemic, putting pressure on the British economy, analysts said on Tuesday.

The proportion of the population in the labour market peaked in early 2020 but "the pandemic saw a sudden and dramatic reversal of this trend", according to public budget forecasting body the OBR. This was driven mostly by people citing poor health as a main reason for their inactivity, it said.

At the start of 2023, 2.6 million Britons of working age (6.1 percent of the total) were out of the labour force for health reasons, the body said in a report published last month. In its latest figures published on Tuesday, in which it reports an unemployment rate of 4.2 percent at the end of June, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) notes that the number of people out of work due to ill health had "climbed to a new record".

Chris Thomas, researcher at the Institute for Public Policy Research, pointed to the Covid-19 pandemic and the preceding decade of economic austerity following the 2008 banking crisis. "It's an incredibly substantial drag on the economy," he said, adding that the UK was struggling more than other comparable countries. "It's not the sole factor but it's underpinning the vast majority of the biggest economic challenges the UK faces."—DNA

'Possibility of direct military clash with NATO obvious'

MINSK: Belarusian Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin on Tuesday called "obvious" the possibility of a direct military clash with NATO in the future.

Speaking at the Moscow Conference on International Security, Khrenin said the West has recently been actively investing in arms production, noting that "in the capitalist world" no one spends money if they do not expect profit. "Therefore, the conclusion can be unambiguous: the possibility of a direct military clash with NATO in the future becomes very obvious," he stressed.

The minister said the only thing that restrains the Western powers from unleashing a large-scale war is the threat of a nuclear response to their actions. "It is no coincidence that the Republic of Belarus considers the return of tactical nuclear weapons to its territory as an effective factor of strategic deterrence," he said.

In late May, Russia and Belarusian defense ministers signed an agreement on the deployment of Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus. Russian President Vladimir Putin said the move was in response to growing security risks, stressing that Moscow followed the US, which deployed its tactical nuclear arms.—Agencies



VANCOUVER: Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association PWCTA Celebrating Pakistan Independence day at Vancouver Club Vancouver BC with Janbaz Khan Consul General Pakistan in Vancouver.—DNA

Wang Yi to attend China-S. Asia expo ceremony in Kunming

"The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has brought investment of \$25.4 billion to Pakistan, created 192,000 jobs, added 6,000 megawatts of electricity, 510 kilometers of highways and 886 kilometers of the national core transmission grid

DNA

BEIJING: China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi will attend the opening ceremony of the 7th China-South Asia Exposition scheduled to be held in Kunming, Yunnan province of China from Wednesday. With the theme of "Solidarity and Coordination for Common Development", the expo will continue till August 20, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday. The exhibitors from Pakistan and other countries will display clothing, money clips and leather hats, etc in the expo. Over 60 countries and regions have signed up

for the expo, including all South Asian and Southeast Asian countries and RCEP member states. Around 1,000 enterprises signed up to participate in the exhibition, among which 50 are of the global 500 companies. The expo of this year has 15 pavilions with an exhibition area of 150,000 square meters, Li Chenyang, director of the Department of Commerce of Yunnan Province, China. "This year, we will focus on inviting more professional visitors according to the different needs of exhibitors. We will also help exhibitors match target buyers precisely so that more exhibits can be turned into commodities," Li Fei, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Commerce of



China recently revealed the highlights of this year's expo. "We will also fully adapt digital platforms to provide 'one-stop' services for exhibitors of the expo. Exhibitors and visitors who cannot attend

the event in person can participate, negotiate and purchase online." China-South Asia Expo has been successfully held six times and has gradually developed into an increasingly influential platform integrating trade, economic communication, commodity display, investment cooperation and e-commerce. "In 2013, when the first China-South Asia Expo was held, the total trade volume between China and South Asian countries was less than \$100 billion, the number increased to \$200 billion last year, representing an average annual increase of 8.3 percent," Li Fei said. "China is also the largest trading partner of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives

and other South Asian countries. Exports of aquatic products, tea and nuts from those countries to China keep increasing and gaining popularity among Chinese consumers," he added. Li also stressed the efforts that China has made in synergizing the Belt and Road Initiative with the development of South Asian countries especially mentioning its iron brother, Pakistan. "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has brought investment of \$25.4 billion to Pakistan, created 192,000 jobs, added 6,000 megawatts of electricity, 510 kilometers of highways and 886 kilometers of the national core transmission grid."

Rouhani faces cases

TEHRAN: Iran's former President Hassan Rouhani faces new cases in a special prosecutor's office for the clergy over his "interventions in foreign exchange and stock market," a judiciary spokesman said on Tuesday. Addressing a weekly news conference

in the capital Tehran, Masoud Setayeshi said Rouhani is a cleric, and cases against him have been filed in the special prosecutor's office in line with the relevant jurisdiction. He did not provide details of the cases filed against the former president. Rouhani, a reformist political figure,

served as the president of Iran for two four-year terms between 2013 and 2021. He was succeeded by Ebrahim Raisi, a former judiciary chief, in August 2021. During its second term (2017-2021), Rouhani's government was widely criticized for its interventions in the foreign exchange market as the value of Iran's rial tumbled against the US

dollar. During this period, Iran's currency saw more than 10-fold devaluation, fueling record inflation. In May last year, a senior lawmaker was quoted as saying by the semi-state Mehr News Agency that foreign exchange interventions during the Rouhani government "led to the increase in inflation and liquidity."—APP

Four Australian surfers rescued off Indonesian coast

JAKARTA: Four Australians paddling on their surfboards and two Indonesians were found alive in the sea off Indonesia's west on Tuesday, nearly two days after their boat was hit by bad weather. One Indonesian remains missing, an official said. Rescuers found some of the group "drifting at sea" using surfboards and Styrofoam, said local rescue agency head Octavianto, who like many Indonesians uses only one name. Video footage aired widely on Australian media showed the Australians, three men and a woman, waving and paddling on their surfboards as rescuers approached. The father of rescued surfer Elliot Foote was being interviewed by Australian media in Sydney when he received confirmation of the good news directly from his son by text message. "Hey Dad, Elliot here. I'm alive. Safe now. Love you. Chat later," said the message, read out by his father Peter Foote. Peter Foote had been told earlier that his son's three companions had been rescued but was still being filmed when he received the good news. No clear information was immediately available about how or where the two Indonesians were found. Two boats carrying a total of 17 people left Nias island for the private island of Pinang on Sunday. But one of the boats, which carried the four Australians and three Indonesians, failed to arrive, prompting authorities to launch a search-and-rescue operation Monday. Rescuers are still searching for the Indonesian who remains missing, said Octavianto. "At the moment, all victims have been evacuated to the Pinang resort to receive further medical attention," he said. "For the last victim, the search is ongoing by rescuers around waters near Tuangku island and Palawak island." Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese thanked "our Indonesian friends" for their help. "All of us are relieved that the four Australians who were missing in Indonesia have been found," he said.—Agencies

Japanese economic growth smashes expectations

TOKYO: Quarterly growth data for Japan smashed expectations on Tuesday as car exports rebounded and tourists flooded back, but economists cautioned that it may not last.

The world's third-largest economy expanded 1.5 percent quarter-on-quarter in the three months to June, preliminary government data showed, the fastest rate since the fourth quarter of 2020. This was almost double the average economist forecast of 0.8 percent, according to Bloomberg News, and followed revised growth of 0.9 percent in the previous quarter.

On an annualised basis, growth was 6.0 percent, more than double the market expectation of 2.9 percent, and giving Japan three-straight quarters of growth. "Japan's exports have recovered as the supplies crisis eased for the auto sector while the yen's depreciation provided support," Ryutaro Kono, chief economist at BNP Paribas, wrote in a note issued before the data.

Hiroyuki Ueno, at SuMI TRUST, also said pent-up demand from the pandemic and an increase in capital investment were boosting the economy. "The hospitality sector is expected to remain a driver of economic growth due to the increase in inbound tourism, as the pandemic is now in the rearview mirror," Ueno wrote ahead of the release.—Agencies



Glasgow: First Minister of Scotland, Hamza Yousuf cutting cake during the Pakistan's Independence Day celebration at Pakistan consulate.—DNA

ECOWAS leaders to discuss Niger crisis

ABUJA: The meeting on Thursday and Friday — originally scheduled for last weekend but then postponed — came after ECOWAS leaders last week approved deployment of a "standby force to restore constitutional order" in Niger, whose president was toppled on July 26. Their summit, held in the Nigerian capital Abuja last Thursday, also reaffirmed the bloc's preference for a diplomatic outcome. President Mohamed Bazoum's election in 2021 was a landmark in Niger's history, ushering in the country's first peaceful transfer of power since independence from France in 1960. His ousting unleashed a shock wave around West Africa, where Mali and Burkina Faso — likewise battered by a jihadist insurgency — have also suffered military takeovers. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) gave Niger's military rulers a one-week ultimatum on July 30 to restore Bazoum or face the poten-

tial use of force, but the deadline expired without action. Analysts say military intervention would be operationally risky and politically hazardous, given divisions within ECOWAS ranks and domestic criticism. In Benin, people living at Malanville — the country's sole border crossing with Niger — said Tuesday that a shipping container had been placed on the Nigerian side of the border to block the road, apparently to act as a barrier against invasion. Niger's military regime has sent mixed signals since the crisis erupted. At the weekend, the coup leaders said they were open to a diplomatic push after their chief, General Abdourahmane Tiani, met with Nigerian religious mediators. Those talks came after the ECOWAS military meeting in Ghana was postponed for "technical reasons". But on Sunday night, Niger's rulers declared they had gathered sufficient evidence to prosecute Bazoum for "high treason and un-

dermining internal and external security". The legal threat was angrily condemned by ECOWAS, which lashed it as a contradiction of the regime's "reported willingness" to explore peaceful means. Washington said it was "incredibly dismayed". The row overshadowed talks under African Union (AU) auspices that began on Monday in Addis Ababa, bringing together representatives from the regime and ECOWAS. Russian President Vladimir Putin called for a "peaceful political and diplomatic" resolution to the crisis in a phone call with Mali's junta leader, Assimi Goita, the Kremlin said on Tuesday. Mali has cemented an alliance with Moscow since its coup in 2020, acquiring Russian planes and helicopters and bringing in paramilitaries that the West says are Wagner mercenaries. A landlocked nation in the heart of the arid Sahel, Niger is one of the world's poorest and most turbulent countries. Bazoum, 63, sur-

vived two attempted coups before being ousted, in the fifth push in the country's history. His ousting dealt a huge blow to French and US strategy in the Sahel. France refocused its anti-jihadist operations on Niger after withdrawing from Mali and Burkina Faso last year following a bust-up with their juntas.

International concern is mounting for the state of Bazoum, his wife and son, who have been held at the president's official residence since the coup. Niger meanwhile is being hit by ECOWAS trade and financial sanctions, while France, Germany and the United States have suspended their aid programmes. The Sahel Alliance, an international platform to attract development assistance for the region, on Tuesday called for a return to civilian rule and expressed concern for the impact of the coup on vulnerable populations. The crisis has sparked fears for ancient cultural, social and com-

mercial links that bind southern Niger with seven border states in northern Nigeria — Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Jigawa, Borno and Yobe. Many people in the north are shocked by the threat from West Africa's regional bloc ECOWAS, which is chaired by Nigeria, to intervene militarily to restore Niger's elected president, Mohamed Bazoum. "What we had in the last one thousand years has been lost in a matter of few weeks," Sule Lamido, Nigeria's former foreign minister and ex-governor of Jigawa state, said in an article published on Sunday. Bazoum, 63, was detained on July 26 by members of the presidential guard, in Niger's fifth coup since independence from France in 1960. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) gave Niger's military rulers a one-week ultimatum on July 30 to restore Bazoum or face the potential use of force, but the deadline expired without action.—APP

Clashes in Libya capital kill two and shut airport

TRIPOLI: Gunfighting between the two leading armed groups in Tripoli killed two people and forced the closure of the Libyan capital's only civilian airport, officials said on Tuesday. The clashes between the influential 444 Brigade and the Al-Radaa Force, or Special Deterrence Force, erupted on Monday night and carried over into Tuesday, an interior ministry official said. "Tensions arose" soon after it was announced "the Al-Radaa Force had arrested the head of the 444 Brigade, without explaining whether this was on judicial orders or for other reasons", the official said. So far, two people had been killed and more than 30 wounded in the violence, a hospital source told AFP, as the fighting showed no signs of abating.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya said in a statement it was "following with concern" the security deterioration in the Libyan capital and its impact on civilians. "Violence is not an acceptable means to resolve disagreements," UNSMIL said. "All parties must preserve the security gains achieved in recent years and address differences through dialogue," it added.—APP

BD Islamist leader buried after violent protests

DHAKA: Around 50,000 people attended Tuesday's funeral for an influential Islamist leader in Bangladesh, police said, after news of his death while he was in prison for war crimes prompted violent anti-government protests. Delwar Hossain Sayedee, 83, was sentenced to death in 2013 for rape, murder and the persecution of Hindu Bangladeshis during the country's independence war decades earlier. He died on Monday after suffering a heart attack in a prison outside Dhaka, prompting protests in the capital that turned violent when police moved in to disperse them. Heavy police security guarded a funeral prayer at Sayedee's hometown in the coastal Pirojpur district where a huge crowd gathered to watch his body be laid to rest. "Some 50,000 people joined the funeral prayer," deputy district police chief Sheikh Mustafizur Rahman told AFP, adding that the burial took place without incident. Sayedee was vice president of the opposition Jamaat-Islami party, an Islamist political group with a huge following despite being banned for much of its history.—Agencies

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Briefs

37 Corona cases reported in one week: NIH

ISLAMABAD: Health officials on Tuesday said that 37 new Coronavirus cases were reported during the last week across the country. As per the data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the case positivity ratio was 0.43 percent while no patient was in critical condition. No death was reported from the Coronavirus last week while 8,673 Covid-19 tests were conducted. Meanwhile, the official of the Ministry for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination said that the government has strengthened the role of Border and Health Services in Pakistan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19. He said there was a surveillance system at all entry points of the country including airports. There will be rapid tests and screening of passengers at all airports. He added 90 percent of the country's population already got the Covid-19 vaccine. "An efficient system with a proper management team is fully functional in the country to remain vigilant and is ready to make an emergency plan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19," the official added. He said the Border and Health Services Pakistan was ensuring the implementation of international health regulations. He said that in case of any untoward situation, the health system was fully prepared to deal with any sub-variant of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 including BF.7 in the country. - APP

Belarus: Possibilities of clash with NATO 'Obvious'

MOSCOW: Belarusian Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin on Tuesday called "obvious" the possibility of a direct military clash with NATO in the future. Speaking at the Moscow Conference on International Security, Khrenin said the West has recently been actively investing in arms production, noting that "in the capitalist world" no one spends money if they do not expect profit. "Therefore, the conclusion can be unambiguous: the possibility of a direct military clash with NATO in the future becomes very obvious," he stressed. The minister said the only thing that restrains the Western powers from unleashing a large-scale war is the threat of a nuclear response to their actions. "It is no coincidence that the Republic of Belarus considers the return of tactical nuclear weapons to its territory as an effective factor of strategic deterrence," he said. In late May, Russia and Belarusian defense ministers signed an agreement on the deployment of Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus. Russian President Vladimir Putin said the move was in response to growing security risks, stressing that Moscow followed the US, which deployed its tactical nuclear arms in European countries.???? - APP

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA



ISLAMABAD: Director General South Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Ilyas Mehmood Nizami, Charge d Affaires of the Indian High Commission Dr. Suresh Kumar and Heads of Missions of the SAARC countries cutting the cake on occasion of 77th Independence Day of India. - DNA

Donald Trump indicted in Georgia election inquiry

The indictment refers to the defendants as a "criminal organisation", accusing them of other crimes including influencing witnesses, computer trespass, theft and perjury

NEWS DESK

GEORGIA: Former US President Donald Trump has been charged with attempting to overturn his 2020 election defeat in the state of Georgia. It is the fourth criminal case brought against him in five months. Mr Trump, who is the leading Republican candidate for president in 2024, was indicted along with 18 other allies. He denies all 13 charges against him, which include racketeering and election meddling. He has said they are politically motivated. Georgia prosecutor Fani Willis first launched an investigation in February 2021 into allegations of election meddling against Mr Trump and his associates.

In a 98-page indictment made public late on Monday, prosecutors listed 41 charges against the 19 defendants. Ms Willis announced she was giving defendants the opportunity to voluntarily surrender no later than noon on Friday 25 August. She said she plans to try all 19 accused together. The list of alleged co-conspirators includes former Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and former White House lawyer John Eastman. Others include a former justice department official, Jeffrey Clark, and Sidney Powell and Jenna Ellis - two Trump lawyers who amplified unfounded claims of widespread voter fraud. The indictment says the defendants "knowingly and willfully joined a conspiracy to unlawfully change the out-

come of the election in favour of Trump". The former president is accused of the following felony counts, including: Violating Georgia's racketeering act, Solicitation of violation of oath by public officer, Conspiracy to impersonate a public officer, Conspiracy to commit forgery in the first degree, False statements and writings and filing false documents. The indictment refers to the defendants as a "criminal organisation", accusing them of other crimes including influencing witnesses, computer trespass, theft and perjury. The most serious charge, violating the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) Act, is punishable by a maximum of 20 years in prison. The act - designed to help take down or-

ganised criminal syndicates like the mafia - helps prosecutors connect the dots between underlings who broke laws and those who gave them orders. In a statement, the Trump campaign described the district attorney as a "rabid partisan" who had filed "these bogus indictments" to interfere with the 2024 presidential race and "damage the dominant Trump campaign". "This latest co-ordinated strike by a biased prosecutor in an overwhelmingly Democrat jurisdiction not only betrays the trust of the American people, but also exposes the true motivation driving their fabricated accusations," said the statement. He is the first former president in US history to face criminal charges.

Putin calls for closer co-op with N. Korea

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday urged Moscow and Pyongyang to deepen ties, in a congratulatory message to the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un marking the country's National Liberation Day. Russia and North Korea - both increasingly isolated from the West and weighed with sanctions - have drawn closer since the Kremlin deployed troops to Ukraine and commenced large-scale hostilities last year. "I am sure that we will continue to build up bilateral cooperation in all areas for the benefit of our peoples, in the interests of strengthening stability and security on the Korean Peninsula and in the Northeast Asian region as a whole," Putin said in a statement distributed by the Kremlin. Putin said that it was during Korea's liberation from Japan and "harsh wartime" that groundwork was laid for close cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang. The Russian leader's statement came after his Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu last month hailed his country's partnership with North Korea during a meeting with his counterpart Kang Sun Nam in Pyongyang. Secretary of State Antony Blinken responded to the visit saying that the United States believed Shoigu was in North Korea to secure supplies of weapons to aid Russian forces fighting in Ukraine. - Agencies

Poland displays military might in huge parade

WARSAW: Poland's biggest military parade since the Cold War took place in Warsaw on Tuesday, as the NATO-member country flexed its military muscle in what the government hoped would be both a message to Moscow and to voters ahead of elections in October. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has made boosting the armed forces a priority for Poland's ruling nationalists Law and

Justice (PiS), and with the election campaign in full swing the immense display of military hardware provided a chance to burnish their security credentials. The Armed Forces Day parade, taking place on the 103rd anniversary of Poland's victory over the Soviet Union in the Battle of Warsaw, saw 2,000 soldiers from Poland and other NATO countries march through the capital accompanied by 200 items of military equipment and 92 aircraft. "August 15 is not only an opportunity to pay homage to the heroes of the victorious Battle of Warsaw and to thank contemporary soldiers for defending our homeland," Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak told troops and onlookers who had gathered near the Vistula river. - Agencies

35 dead after blast at Russian fuel station

"President Putin expresses his most sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the tragedy in Dagestan and wishes a speedy recovery to the victims"

MOSCOW: At least 35 people were killed in an explosion that created a huge fire ball at a fuel station in Russia's remote Caucasus republic of Dagestan, spurring condolences from President Vladimir Putin. Images distributed by the emergency ministry showed burnt-out cars silhouetted by the massive blaze and rescue workers in helmets attempting to put out the fire and clear rubble. Government ministries said 35 people had died and 80 had been injured. The Kremlin issued a statement saying: "President Putin expresses his most sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the tragedy in Dagestan and wishes a speedy recovery to the victims." The explosion in the city of Makhachkala happened at a fuel station after a fire broke out, the regional branch of the Investigative Committee, which probes major incidents, announced on social media. "A fire occurred during car maintenance work, followed by a bang, as a result of which people were injured and died," the committee said, adding that nearby buildings and cars were damaged. A criminal case has been opened to

establish the circumstances leading up to the fire, it added. State-run news agencies TASS and Ria Novosti reported that the fire had been extinguished, citing the ministry. Makhachkala, a city of over 600,000 on the Caspian Sea, is the capital of Dagestan, a Russian republic bordering Chechnya. The blast was heard shortly before 10:00 pm (1900 GMT) on Monday, Sergei Melikov, head of the Dagestan administration, announced on social media. A witness quoted by Russian daily newspaper Izvestia said the fire started in an area where cars were parked and spread to the petrol station. "After the explosion, everything fell on our heads. We couldn't see anything any more," said the witness, who was not named. Video footage released by Russia's emergency situations ministry showed firefighters trying to extinguish huge flames near burnt-out vehicles, as rescue workers examined the rubble of a building with flashlights. The fire had spread over an area of around 600 square metres (6,450 square feet), the ministry said, adding that 260 firefighters had been deployed to the blaze. - Agencies

Police stop Bushra, PTI lawyers from entering Jail

DNA
ATTOCK: Police have stopped Bushra Bibi along with the PTI legal team on Jail Road in Attock on Tuesday where she has gone to meet her husband and former premier Imran Khan who is imprisoned in the Attock Jail. The PTI chairman's wife is travelling in a black color vehicle and is waiting for police signal to let her go. A heavy contingent of police has closed the route after setting up a picket on the Jail Road. The security officials have sent back the PTI legal team. On August 10, Bushra Bibi held a meeting with her husband at Attock Jail. The former first lady entered the prison on Thursday along with the legal team, headed by Naeem Haider Panjutha. Personnel of police and elite force were deployed on all routes leading to the Attock Jail as there was security high alert outside the prison. The meeting ended after some time and Bushra Bibi had left without talking to the media men waiting outside the prison.

ECP bans media from conducting entry and exit poll surveys

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has banned the media from conducting entry and exit election surveys. The Election Commission has banned official digital media accounts of print and electronic media outlets as well as social media influencers from airing their opinion regarding polling for the upcoming elections. A complete ban has been imposed on the publication of related opinions. The ECP is required to hold general elections in the country within 90 days after the dissolution of the National Assembly. The former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif dissolved the National Assembly on August 9. New interim Premier Anwaarul Haq Kakar was sworn in yesterday. He would spearhead the caretaker setup which would be responsible for the smooth transition of power to an elected government which will come as a result of upcoming general elections.

Dollar jumps to Rs300 in open market

ISLAMABAD: The rupee on Tuesday tumbled against the US dollar by Rs4 in the open market due to prevailing political uncertainty and falling exports and remittances. The rupee closed at Rs300 in the open market while it lost Rs3.02 in its value against the greenback to close at Rs291.51 in the interbank market. Speaking to media, Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP) General Secretary Zafar Paracha said the fall in rupee value was expected after the caretaker government took charge. He said the interim government is expected to take all measures in line with the conditions of IMF that the elected regime avoided. - DNA

Taliban government marks two years since return to power

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban government on Tuesday marked the second anniversary of their return to power with celebrations and a public holiday, saying "no invader" would be allowed to threaten the country. Flags of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan - the Taliban's formal name for the country - fluttered at security checkpoints across the capital Kabul, which fell on August 15, 2021 after the US-backed government collapsed and its leaders fled into exile. In the two years since, Taliban authorities have imposed their strict interpretation of Islam, with women bearing the brunt of laws the United Nations has termed "gender apartheid". A statement from the authorities hailed a victory that was able to "pave the way for the establishment of the Islamic system in Afghanistan". "The conquest of Kabul proved once again that no one can control the proud nation of Afghanistan" and that "no invader will be allowed to threat-

en the independence and freedom" of the country, it said. Hundreds of Taliban supporters, from elderly men to young boys, gathered near the abandoned US embassy building, one of the many that now stands empty - the Taliban government is still not formally recognised by any other country. US-made military vehicles, claimed by the new Taliban rulers when they were left behind by international forces after a weeks-long chaotic withdrawal, rolled past the ajar gates of the fortified embassy walls. Some of the men in the crowd carried their weapons, while others snapped smiling selfies as anthems blared and vendors sold the Taliban movement's white flag inscribed with the Islamic declaration of faith. In the city of Herat in the west, a crowd of Taliban supporters chanted: "Death to the Europeans, death to the Westerners, long live the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, death to the Americans."

In Kandahar, the cradle of the Taliban movement and from where reclusive Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada rules by decree, a military parade was cancelled then moved to a military compound, officials told journalists. Kandahar resident Agha Sahib praised Akhundzada's leadership, saying he had unified the country. "When he issues a decree from (Kandahar), it is accepted in Panjshir, Kabul, Nimroz, Herat, Zabul, and all over 34 provinces of Afghanistan," said the 24-year-old who works for the interior ministry. The decrees have not been welcomed equally by all Afghans, however, nor by the international community, which is divided over whether to engage with the Taliban authorities. Restrictions on the rights of women - squeezed from public spaces, employment and education - have been key obstacles to recognition and aid, which was slashed as foreign nations were wary of dealing with Kabul's new rulers. - Agencies

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