



Islamabad POST

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US to support caretaker PM for free, fair polls

Detailed News On Page-01

Any attempt to sabotage CPEC will fail

Detailed News On Page-08



Wahab brings curtain down on int'l career

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Shehryar Afridi released

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The detention orders against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) politicians, Shehryar Afridi and Shandana Gulzar, were Wednesday suspended with the Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordering their immediate release. The two PTI leaders were held in custody by the Islamabad Police under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance, which was slashed by the court during the hearing of pleas filed seeking Afridi and Gulzar's release. Both politicians were held by law enforcement for their alleged involvement in the May 9 riots, which were triggered after the arrest of PTI chief Imran Khan earlier this year. Afridi was first arrested from his Islamabad residence under Section 3 of the MPO Ordinance, 1960, on May 16. Despite a release order, he was immediately rearrested under same section on May 30.

'US can help resolve IIOJK issue'

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Sardar Masood Khan has said that America can help resolve the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir. Talking to a private news channel, he said that Pakistan wants to hold dialogue with India for resolving all outstanding issues including the Kashmir dispute. To a question about CPEC, he said that the US did not have any objection to it. Meanwhile, State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel has said that US is looking forward to work with Pakistan's interim prime minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar and his team as they prepare to hold general elections. Briefing the newsmen in Washington, Vedant Patel said that the US will continue to partner with Pakistan on areas of mutual interest, including our interest on Pakistan's economic stability, and the conduct of free and fair elections and the respect for democracy and the rule of law.

PPP wants election date

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has demanded the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce the general election date. As per details, the PPP leader Faisal Karim Kundi said that PPP wants free and fair elections across Pakistan on one day. He said that ECP should not delay the announcement of election date and the election schedule must be issued immediately. The PPP leader said that transfer and posting before the election schedule and delimitation process is beyond their understanding. The caretaker government should hold free, fair and transparent elections so that no one can question their credibility, he added. Earlier, PMLN leader and former interior minister Rana Sanaullah said that the upcoming general election will be held in February 2024.

Blasphemy allegations Mob burns churches in Faisalabad

Dozens arrested; Police registers an FIR against the accused under sections and 295C

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: An enraged mob vandalised multiple churches in the Jaranwala tehsil of Faisalabad on Wednesday over blasphemy allegations, officials said. A Christian leader, Akmal Bhatti, said the crowd had torched at least five churches and looted valuables from houses that had been abandoned by their owners after clerics made announcements in mosques inciting the mob. Images on social media showed smoke rising from the church buildings and people setting fire to furniture that had been dragged from them. A Christian cemetery was also vandalised, as well as the local government office. Dozens of people blocked a nearby highway as well. Following the violence in Faisalabad's Jaranwala over blasphemy allegations, interim Punjab Information Minister Amir Mir said on Wednesday that "dozens of people who disturbed peace" in the area have been detained. In a statement, the minister said that the violence in Jaranwala was done under a "well-thought-out conspiracy". "There was a plan to disturb the peace by inciting public sentiments. After the desecration of the Holy Quran, the angry protesters reacted strongly," Mir said, adding that the situation in Faisalabad is fully under control now. Jaranwala pastor Imran Bhatti told media that the ransacked churches included the Salvation Army Church, United Presbyterian Church, Allied Foundation Church and Shehroonwala Church situated in the Isa Nagri area. He added that the mob also demolished the house of a Christian cleaner, accused of blasphemy.

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Caretaker govt vows to take action

PTI, Shehbaz also condemn incident

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday directed law enforcement agencies to apprehend culprits behind the vandalism of churches in Jaranwala, Faisalabad over blasphemy allegations. "I am gutted by the visuals coming out of Jaranwala, Faisalabad. Stern action would be taken against those who violate law and target minorities," said Kakar in a post on X, the microblogging website formerly known as Twitter. The interim premier also said that all law enforcement agencies have asked to "apprehend culprits and bring them to justice". "Rest assured that the government of Pakistan stands with our citizenry on equal basis," he added. Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) expressed deep concern and regret over the tragic incident of vandalizing multiple churches in Jaranwala tehsil of Faisalabad, demanding

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Guarded by Swedish police Swedish protesters again desecrate Holy Quran

CENTRELINE REPORT

STOCKHOLM: In yet another vicious incident that hurt the religious feelings of Muslims worldwide, a group of protesters burned a copy of the Holy Quran outside Royal Palace in Sweden's capital in the presence of a heavy police contingent. The heart-wrenching incident, which took place on Monday, was the second such incident within weeks in which individuals desecrated the holy book. It is to be noted that the desecration of holy books is legally permitted under Sweden's freedom of speech laws. The event unfolded at Mynttorget, a central square encircled by government edifices and the royal palace. They used a megaphone, used to provoke counter-protesters. However, on this occasion, the duo faced considerable resistance from the crowd, as numerous individuals arrived with their own megaphones, effectively drowning out the provocative act.

The geopolitical implications of such acts are far-reaching. Over the course of this year, multiple Quran burnings have taken place in both Sweden and Denmark, evoking strong reactions from Muslim nations. These countries have urged the governments of Sweden and Denmark to address these incidents. Moreover, security concerns have arisen from Swedish citizens abroad. Notably, the Swedish embassy in Iraq was stormed and set on fire last month by protesters. Additionally, the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office has issued a travel advisory, cautioning against travel to Sweden due to potential terrorist threats following these incidents. Despite the controversies, the Swedish government has opted not to make comprehensive changes to its freedom of speech laws. However, authorities have indicated a willingness to explore measures that would enable police intervention to prevent the public burning of holy books if national security is deemed at risk.

PTI urges interim PM to ensure timely polls

Qureshi says 'level playing field' should be provided to all the parties

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A day after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) failed to give the Supreme Court a final date for the upcoming general elections, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi urged caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar to ensure timely polls in the country. Speculations about the delay in holding polls sparked when Director General (Law) Muhammad Arshad failed to give the apex court a certain date for the polls. Hearing petitions against delimitations of provincial constituencies PS 7, 8, and 9 Shikarpur, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Tuesday inquired when were the general elections being held. To this, the director general shrugged his shoulders. "As yet, no date for the elections has been decided.

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FIA books Khan over cypher 'disappearance'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has registered a case against PTI Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan for allegedly "misplacing" the US cypher which he had blamed for initiating the ouster of his government. The FIA's Anti-Terrorism Wing had lodged the case on Tuesday and its officers of DIG rank will investigate the matter. Senior PTI leader and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was also nominated in

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. – DNA

Azerbaijan Airlines to launch Pak flights

Flights will start operating from September 20

DNA

BAKU: The national air carrier of Azerbaijan (AZAL) launches regular flights to Pakistan from September 20, 2023. Flights will be operated to the capital of

Continued on Page 06

Indonesian Supplement



Today's issue of Daily Islamabad POST carries a two-page supplement on the occasion of the Independence Day of Indonesia. – Editor

'Historical relations' Caretaker PM lauds Emirati, Saudi Arabian support for Pakistan

Saudi Ambassador congratulates the Prime Minister on assuming office

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in Islamabad on Wednesday. The Saudi Ambassador congratulated the Prime Minister on assuming office and conveyed best wishes on behalf of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, and the people of Saudi Arabia. Speaking on the occasion,

Another Picture on Back Page

the Prime Minister said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy historic and deep rooted ties. He emphasized that the recently-instituted Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would continue to work as before and would lay the foundations to fast-track foreign investments, particularly from Saudi Arabia. He highlighted energy, infrastructure, agriculture, IT and manpower as potential sectors of cooperation.

Continued on Page 06

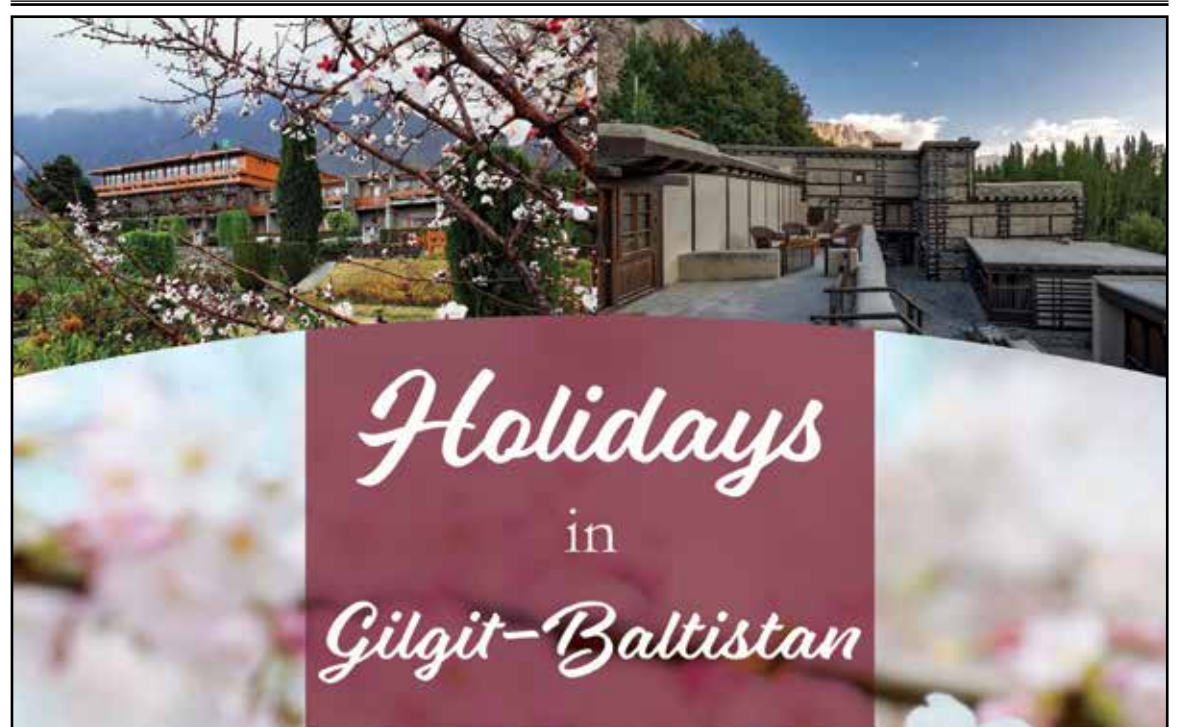
Dr. Shamshad, Gohar Ijaz to get portfolios



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The caretaker prime minister has finalized members of his cabinet. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar the former Governor of State Bank has been picked as the Finance Minister

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**MESSAGE FROM H.E. MR. ADAM M. TUGIO
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA**

The commemoration of the 78th anniversary of Independence of Indonesia this year is a fascinating journey of transformation and nation building marked by significant political, economic and social developments. On this auspicious occasion, I extend my warmest felicitations to all the Indonesians residing in Pakistan and across the globe. "Moving Forward for an Advanced Indonesia" is the theme of this year's independence celebrations reflecting the strong desire for a prosperous and resilient Indonesia as envisioned by our founding fathers. Freedom is the most important treasure of any nation together with stability, unity and continuing collective economic growth. Indonesia has strong commitments to upholding democratic values and protection of human rights to promote prosperity and social justice to all Indonesians. In celebrating this special day together, the whole Indonesian nation renews its dedication to move ahead together for more progress and unity.

At present, Indonesia is the world's third largest democracy and a progressive democratic country among the Muslim world where Islam, democracy and modernity coexist peacefully. Under the leadership of President Joko Widodo, Indonesia pursues an active foreign policy with an inclusive approach to promote fair and just international order, respect to national integrity and international law. This year Indonesia holds the ASEAN Chairmanship. This diverse region with a population of more than 650 million has achieved remarkable economic growth. ASEAN's combined GDP is now the fifth largest in the world. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) which entered into force on 1 January 2022 makes ASEAN, together with 5 dialogue partners, one of the world's biggest trade area that contributes to 30.2 percent of global GDP, 27 percent of global trade, and 29 percent of Foreign Direct Investment. RCEP will eventually strengthen regional integration and enhance a favourable environment for better trade relations in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

As regards bilateral diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Pakistan, it is heartening to note that both countries have achieved many significant milestones after gaining independence. Our bilateral relations are a fine example of multi-dimensional constructive engagement and productive cooperation. Economic progress and political stability have always been the priority of our top leadership. Both the countries have a combined Muslim population of around 500 million, strong democracies and enjoy important geo-strategic positions in their regions with a lot of religious and cultural similarities.

The story of our progressive bilateral relationship remains incomplete without highlighting the significant contribution of Indonesian founding father President Soekarno. President Soekarno laid the groundwork for strong bilateral ties with his four successive visits, warmth of goodwill and unconditional support for Pakistan. President Soekarno was also an active promoter of intensive cooperation among the developing countries and hosted the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955 which served as antecedent for the establishment of the Non Aligned Movement. UNESCO adopted in May 2023, archives of President Soekarno's speech at the 15th session of UNGA titled "To Build the World Anew" as a Memory of the World (MoW). This will complete the other two MoW previously adopted by UNESCO: the golden archives of the Bandung Asian-African Conference of 1955 and the First Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade of 1961.

History and tradition brings Indonesia and Pakistan closer together. The keen interest and efforts to promote bilateral ties by President Soekarno served as a profound basis for the advancement of close ties, supported by a number of bilateral agreements in all areas of mutual interests. Today, our partnership encompasses cooperation in a wide spectrum of areas including in the political, economic, education, defence, science and technology, culture and tourism realms. The Joint Ministerial Committee was established last year, paving the way to a more structural engagement to our bilateral relations. The two countries have been in close consultation to also revisit the 2013 Preferential Trade Agreement with the objective to expand trade and commercial activities.

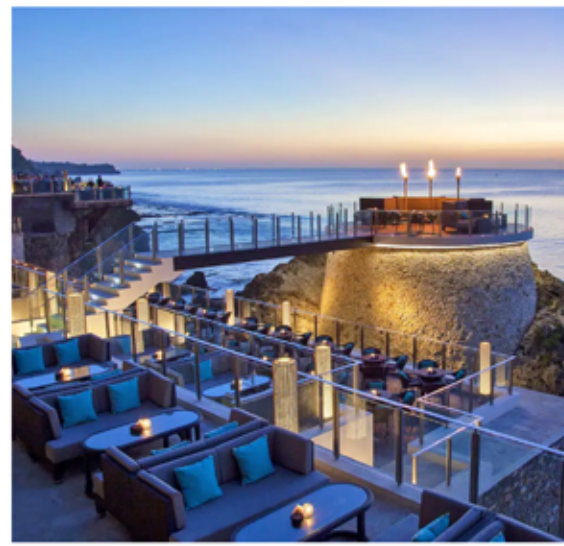
With these positive developments, I am certain that the future holds an expansion and deepening of our friendly bonds and collaboration, people-to-people ties and commitment to remain actively engaged at bilateral and multilateral levels. We look forward to working closely with the Government and people of Pakistan as well as the Indonesian-Pakistani diaspora on both sides towards meeting this objective. It is my sincere hope that Indonesia-Pakistan will harvest even more achievements, which can be achieved by maintaining this dynamic momentum cooperation across all fields.

Long Live Indonesia-Pakistan Friendship
Indonesia-Pakistan Dosti Zinda baad!



Borobudur

Borobudur is the largest Buddhist temple in the world located in the heart of Java island, Indonesia that you must visit at least once in your lifetime. It was built in the 8th and 9th centuries AD and stands as a testament to the spiritual devotion of ancient civilization. The monument is designed with 2,672 relief panels and 504 Buddha statues. Each stone reliefs narrate the stories of ancient life and spiritual teachings, which is a living example to the artistry and cultural significance of Borobudur as UNESCO's World Heritage Site. A visit to Borobudur temple enriches the journey of religious travelers, inviting them to immerse themselves in the tranquility and profound spirituality that emanates from this centuries old temple.



Bali

With its serene beaches, historical sites, famous rice terraces, and lush green forest, the Bali island is among the list of most visited destination by travelers seeking a harmonious fusion of relaxation and exploration. The island of Bali offers lot of fun activities for visitors such as snorkeling or scuba diving in crystal clear waters to visiting the rice terraces of Tegallalang or watching the sunset from the Uluwatu Temple; or strolling on the Semiyank Beach for an authentic Balinese massage to island's rich and vibrant cultural heritage, which is very visible in its intricate art forms, natural beauty and colorful festivals. The warmth of hospitality in Bali attracts the visitors from all over the world, where warm smiles, friendly interactions and a deep-rooted culture of welcoming make every guests feels like at home away from home. You can also easily find a good variety of artistic gifts and souvenirs for your loved ones from art markets in Bali.



Lake Toba

The Lake Toba is known as the world's largest crater lake, the biggest lake in Southeast Asia and one of the deepest in the world, which covers 1,145sq Km with a depth of 508 meters. It was formed due to volcanic eruption approximately 74 thousand years ago in North Sumatra. The mesmerizing beauty of Lake Toba with its scenic landscape provide exciting fun options to all the avid adventurers. They can enjoy traditional camping along the shores that offers a rustic connection to nature to make you fall asleep under a blanket of stars, luxurious glamping offering comfort and modern amenities with great outdoors allowing you to unwind in style while still enjoying the stunning vistas. In February, International racing sports F1 Powerboat Championship 2023 was also held for the first time in Lake Toba, in which many countries participated from all over the world.

Message from Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat, Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia



I extend my heartfelt felicitation to all the fellow Indonesian citizens living in Sindh province and across Pakistan on the auspicious occasion of the 78th anniversary of the Independence Day of Indonesia. The day of 17 August reminds us of the epic freedom struggle of our founding fathers to lay the foundation of a sovereign and progressive state for their future generations. This historic day inspires all of us to move ahead with renewed commitment to the path of national unity political stability and economic development. Today, Indonesia is the member of G20 as well as the biggest economy in Southeast Asia with promising economic indicators and tremendous investment opportunities.

I am very glad with the growing positive momentum of our mutually beneficial cooperation and hope that with this energy and determination, we will be able to create together better opportunities for the people of our two brotherly countries.

Message from Mr. Shamoan Zaki, President Pakistan - Indonesia Business Forum

As Chairman of the Pakistan Indonesia Business Council, I extend my warmest greetings to Indonesian people as they commemorate the 78th anniversary of their Independence Day on August 17th.



The economic cooperation between our countries promotes opportunities for talented entrepreneurs and business individuals from Indonesia and Pakistan to connect, do business and build prosperity for the two brotherly nations. I firmly believe that the expansion of trade between Indonesia and Pakistan, facilitated by a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), holds the potential to drive economic growth, job opportunities and enhanced bilateral relations. I also in the view that the existing PTA should be upgraded to Free Trade Agreement to boost the trade relation between the brotherly nation.

I look forward to the prospect of fostering a strong partnership with our brotherly nation, Indonesia, and further solidifying the connections between our countries, our business circles and our populations.

Message from Mr. Abid Nisar, Chairperson Pakistan - Indonesia Business Council

I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt felicitation to people of the Republic of Indonesia on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day of Indonesia.



Our two nations, Indonesia and Pakistan, share not only the joy of celebration but also similar values and a history of good relations. As we look ahead, I sincerely hope for a strong and fruitful partnership between Indonesia and Pakistan. I am optimistic that by further strengthening trade connections we can unlock new avenues for economic expansion, job opportunities and a more solidified bilateral economic relationship. By working hand in hand on fostering connections among our citizens, we can lay the groundwork for a future marked by cooperation, understanding and shared success.

Investing In Indonesia

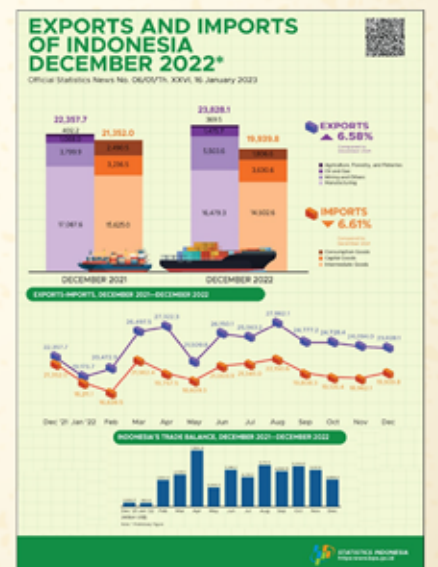
Soekarno, the first President of Indonesia, played a crucial role in promoting economic ties with Pakistan during his tenure from 1945 to 1967. As a prominent figure in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Soekarno advocated for maintaining neutrality and independence from the Western and Eastern blocs during the Cold War. He sought to strengthen politic and economic cooperation with developing countries, including Pakistan. Through bilateral trade agreements, and economic cooperation forums Soekarno aimed to foster economic growth and mutual benefits for both nations. He encouraged Indonesian businesses to invest in Pakistan and vice versa, creating opportunities for economic development in both countries. During his visit to Pakistan in 1963, he met with President Ayub Khan which further solidified the relationship between Indonesia and Pakistan, facilitating people-to-people connections and enhancing mutual understanding. Soekarno's efforts to promote economic ties between Indonesia and Pakistan exemplified his commitment to fostering solidarity among newly independent nations and establishing strong international relations. To further strengthen the trade ties, Indonesia and Pakistan took a significant step by signing a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) which came into effect in September 2013. Over the past few years, bilateral trade between Indonesia and Pakistan has shown a notable upward trend surging from \$0.7 billion in 2005, \$1.6 billion in 2012 to \$4.2 billion in 2022. The PTA is aimed to create a more favorable trade environment by reducing tariffs and offering preferential treatment for specific goods contributing to the enhancement of economic cooperation between the two countries. The Preferential Trade Agreement has successfully increased bilateral trade between Indonesia and Pakistan significantly since its implementation. The governments of both nations have agreed to expand the scope of the deal by developing it into Indonesia Pakistan Trade in Goods Agreement (IP-TIGA). With trade between the two countries being doubled since the PTA came into effect, there are bright prospects for expanding by diversifying traded goods beyond palm oil and coal for Indonesia and agriculture products for Pakistan. Indonesia's economy grew by 5.31 percent (year-on-year/yoY) in 2022 and GDP per capita reached US\$4,783.9. The positive growth of the country's domestic economy is contributed by the 5.01 percent increase of the growth in the fourth quarter of 2022. The constructive policies and strategies adopted by the Government including the COVID-19 handling and national economic recovery program were the keys in successfully driving the national economy.



Source : Graphic@Asia Briefing Ltd.

The value of Indonesia's exports in December 2022 reached US\$23.83 billion with an increase of 6.58 percent compared to December 2021. Imports of Indonesia in December 2022 were worth US\$19.94 billion fell by 6.61 percent compared with December 2021. Indonesia's balance of trade in December 2022 also experienced a surplus of US\$3.89 billion.

Indonesia's central bank, Bank Indonesia, predicts that the country's economy is expected to grow at between 4.5-5.3 percent in 2023 – one of the highest among G20 members – and will be supported by several important sectors, including commodities, infrastructure development, tourism, and manufacturing of high-value products, such as electric vehicle batteries. GDP had accelerated to 5.31 percent in 2022, bringing Southeast Asia's largest economy back to pre-pandemic growth. The pace of growth in 2022 was largely supported by Indonesia's large domestic consumption and further bolstered by the export of commodities as global prices of key shipments, such as coal, palm oil, and iron, rallied upwards. The government made various efforts to improve ease of doing business and to offer a favourable environment for investment in 20 Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and in Nusantara, the new Capital of Indonesia. According to the Indonesian Investment Coordinating Board, or the BKPM, Indonesia received US\$43 billion in foreign investment in 2022, the highest in the country's history and an increase of 44 percent from 2021. We welcome you to invest in Indonesia.



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

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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



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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Senator Ch. Tanveer assures support to ICCI

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Khalid Chaudhry, Akhtar Abbasi, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Madam Saima and others also spoke on the occasion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan said that he has provided land to many projects in the region including Bharia Town and Capital Smart City and assured that he would support ICCI in land acquisition for its industrial estate project. He said that ICCI should target industrial estate on the CPEC route or identify any other suitable place and he would cooperate in land acquisition for this project. He said that the business community is the backbone of an economy and its facilitation would help in strengthening the economy. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). His son Barrister Dania Chaudhry also accompanied him on the occasion. Ch. Tanveer Khan said that he would try to arrange a meeting of ICCI delegation with Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani for ICCI representation in



business related standing committees of the Senate. He said that the outgoing PM Mian Shehbaz Sharif has inaugurated the Rawalpindi Ring Road, which is very vital to ease the traffic issues of the twin cities. He said that ICCI should play a role for skills development of youth to prepare skilled manpower for industries. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that ICCI has been making efforts since long for the establishment of a state-of-the-art industrial zone in the region to boost industrialization, create jobs, attract investment, increase exports and said that Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan should cooperate in acquiring land for this important project. He said that Paki-

stan needs long-term economic policies to revive the economy and said that Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan should patronize the efforts of ICCI for convincing all major political parties to sign a charter of economy to set the country on the direction of sustainable growth. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that the Chamber is making efforts

for its representation as an Observer in business related Standing Committees of the Senate to present the voice of the business community in the policy making process and Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan should cooperate with ICCI in this regard. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI emphasized that the government should focus on the better development of agriculture and tourism sectors to revive the economy. He said that ICCI is also considering launching its own airline and co-operation of Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan was important for this innovative project. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that a new industrial zone in the region is of paramount importance for the future generations and hoped that the cooperation of Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan would help in early materialization of this project. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Khalid Chaudhry, Akhtar Abbasi, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Madam Saima and others also spoke on the occasion.

ANF seizes 185 kg drugs in three operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting three operations in different areas managed to recover 185 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that in an operation on Superhighway Jamshoro, 180 kg charras was recovered from secret cavities of a truck. Three accused residents of Shakarpur and Hyderabad were rounded up during the operation.

In another operation near Luck bypass Quetta, 1 kg Ice drug and 500 grams heroin were recovered from the possession of an arrested accused resident of Chagai going in a taxi vehicle. In third operation conducted near Hayatabad Toll Plaza Peshawar, 3.6 kg charras concealed in the seats of a Mehran vehicle were recovered. Two accused residents of Khyber who were trying to smuggle drugs from Bara to Peshawar were netted during the operation. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are underway.—APP

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Honoured with Hilal-e-Imtiaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has conferred Hilal-e-Imtiaz upon Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed for his outstanding services in the field of higher education. Every year, the Government confers Civil Awards to people from different walks of life for their exemplary contributions to their respective fields. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, who has been associated with higher education sector for last three decades, has played a key role to formulate and implement reforms in the higher education, be it increase in the access to university education, strengthening quality assurance systems, development of infrastructure, and promoting national and international collaborations. His experience at national and international level includes teaching, research, administration, policy development, linking educational research to industry/commercialisation.—APP

Comprehensive disaster risk reduction strategies stressed

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: 16 August 2023: A gathering of experts, officials, and stakeholders converged at the heart of Pakistan's capital city for the "Disaster Risk Reduction" Expo, orchestrated by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi, who was the Chief guest, inaugurated the expo by cutting the ribbon. In an inspiring keynote address at the opening ceremony of the expo, Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi lauded the collective efforts to engage universities in disaster risk reduction measures. He underscored

the pressing need for concrete and advanced technological measures to combat the ever-growing challenges posed by climate change and natural disasters. "Our response to the calamities that have shaken the world in recent years demands innovative solutions," Deputy Chairman Senate Afridi emphasized. "The youth possess invaluable ideas that can guide our path towards disaster resilience, and it is imperative that we adapt and integrate their insights." Acknowledging the essential role played by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Pakistan, Deputy Chairman Senate Afridi expressed his gratitude for their unyielding commitment to aiding calamity victims.

"The tireless efforts of these NGOs provide a beacon of hope and support to those affected by various catastrophes," he stated. Deputy Chairman Senate recognized the indomitable spirit of the NDMA team, praising their unwavering dedication even in the face of adversity. He reiterated the importance of collective support, asserting, "Every sector of society must rally behind the NDMA to fortify our nation against the impact of disasters." Offering the expertise and guidance of the parliamentary body, Deputy Chairman Senate Afridi affirmed, "The Senate is ready to provide the necessary guidance and collaboration that the NDMA requires." He applauded the accomplishments of Chair-

man NDMA and his team, highlighting their commitment to safeguarding lives and communities. The Deputy Chairman Senate drew attention to the cascading effects of disasters on infrastructure, citing the breakdown of roads, bridges, and communication channels. He paid tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while aiding others during natural calamities. "Climate change has cast its shadow on Pakistan, and it is our collective responsibility to transform our attitudes and behaviours to avert the impending disasters," Deputy Chairman Senate Afridi asserted. He underscored the necessity to prepare for and mitigate the challenges posed by climate-induced disasters.

Pakistan's exports to China surged by 35.1% in July

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the inaugural month of fiscal year 2023-24, Pakistan's exports to China surged by 35.1%, reaching a total of US\$ 168.5 million. This marked a substantial growth compared to the same period in the previous year, where exports amounted to US\$ 124.7 million. These figures, sourced from the Trade Development Authority Pakistan (TDAP)'s most recent monthly report, indicate a robust start to the new fiscal year in terms of trade between the two nations, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. According to the report, in July 2023, Pakistan's exports to global destinations totaled US\$ 2,057 million. This reflected a decrease of 8.57% compared to the same month in the preceding year, during which exports had reached US\$ 2,250 million. Nevertheless, China stands at the forefront of the list of countries to which Pakistan's exports have demonstrated remarkable growth. Additional nations that have witnessed a surge in Pakistan's exports encompass the United Kingdom 4.9%, Spain 7.2%, Italy 8.6%, Saudi Arabia 8.4%, Kenya 19.8%, Turkey 26.7%, Malaysia 9.7%, Oman 22.5%, and Qatar 32.3%. In July 2023, Pakistan's exports to the United States experienced a decline of 19.0%, amounting to US\$ 408.3 million. This contrasts with the corresponding month in July 2022, when exports had reached US\$ 506.6 million. Pakistan exports to the Netherlands decreased by 18.4%, Germany by 36.1%, UAE by 19.4%, Afghanistan by 4%, Belgium by 10.7%, Bangladesh by 41.3%, France by 5.9% and Poland by 14.3%. As per TDAP's report, Pakistan's overall exports for the fiscal year 2022-23 stood at US\$ 7,300.13 million, which is equivalent to \$7.3 billion. Concurrently, within the same timeframe, Pakistan's total imports amounted to US\$ 8,019.58 million (\$8.02 billion).

Any attempt to sabotage Sino-Pak friendship will fail: Chinese CG

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Chinese Consul General in Karachi, H.E Yang Yundong has emphasized that no attempt to undermine China-Pakistan friendship and the construction of CPEC will succeed. China has confidence, determination, and the capability to work together with Pakistan to overcome all difficulties and challenges, and to ensure that the development of our relations remains steady and moves forward in the long run. Chinese CG expressed these views during a meeting with a 51-member delegation from the Pakistan Chemicals and Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA) at the Chinese Consulate. This was the first instance in the country's history where such a large delegation of Pakistani traders had been invited to the Chinese Consulate. Na-deem Sheikh, Chairman



PCDMA, Shahid Bashir, Vice Chairman, Arif Balgamwala, Chief Advisor, Chaudhary Naseer, Nasser Hyatt Maggo, Amin Balgamwala, members and Chinese Consulate officials also attended the meeting. Chinese CG said, "We hope that the business community, especially PCDMA and Pakistan Philatelic and Numismatics Forum (PPNF), will play a greater role in the future, expanding the scope of our cooperation, promoting the success story of China-Pakistan

collaboration, further enhancing people-to-people connectivity between our two countries, and creating a broader and more profound impact." He noticed that not long ago, many members of PCDMA visited China and participated in Interdy Shanghai 2003. This should be your first visit to China after the pandemic, and he believes this trip has deepened and expanded the cooperative partnership with China, achieving satisfactory results. In the first half of this year, China's econo-

my grew by 5.5% year on year, significantly outpacing the 3% growth rate of last year, the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and have achieved a number of early harvests. This has added new impetus to the economic and social development of Pakistan and laid a good foundation for regional connectivity and integration. It is a vivid testament to the all-weather friendship between China and Pakistan and provides an important underpinning.

Chinese enterprise promotes Pak dragon fruit export

DNA

KARACHI, Aug. 16 (): An eye-catching array of red, white and yellow dragon fruit products artfully arranged on tables created a visually stunning display at Pakistan's first international food and agriculture exhibition titled FoodAg 2023 at Expo Centre Karachi. Fresh dragon fruits, carefully selected for their size and quality, invite visitors to experience their exotic allure. Setting up an impressive stand at the expo, S&Y Metals Pvt Ltd, a Chinese dragon fruit growing enterprise in Pakistan,

showcased a wide range of high-quality Pakistani dragon fruit products to build the image of Pakistan dragon fruit through the international platform set up by the Pakistani government, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. Through engaging displays and informative presentations, the Chinese enterprise highlighted the unique qualities of Pakistani dragon fruit, such as its vibrant colors, refreshing taste, and nutritional benefits. They highlighted the fruit's potential to meet the growing global demand for healthy produce. Visitors are interested in the fresh

fruit, processed goods and value-added products of dragon fruit. Dragon fruit has been cultivated in Pakistan for several years, primarily for domestic consumption. However, recent efforts to promote its export potential have shed light on the fruit's ability to captivate international consumers. Shan Ailin, general manager of S&Y Metals Pvt Ltd, expressed his enthusiasm for promoting Pakistani dragon fruit exports. He stated, "We firmly believe in the potential of Pakistani dragon fruit to captivate international markets. By participating in the Pakistani Food Expo, we aim to create awareness.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary Health Iftikhar Ali Shallwani presenting souvenir shield to German Ambassador Alfred Grannas.—APP

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Briefs

PSF announces funding to transform research

ISLAMABAD: In order to increase agricultural production and ensure socio-economic uplift of the farmers, the Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) has announced funding opportunities to transform research into commercializable product or services under the Natural Science Linkage Programme (NSLP). PSF is a premier funding agency striving for scientific development in the country through funding Research and Development (R&D) projects in different scientific fields. NSLP is an Endowment Fund of PSF which is aimed at increasing agricultural production and socio-economic uplift of the farmers. According to an official source, the PSF has invited concept papers under NSLP in line with the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy -2022 to support the use of emerging technologies in Agriculture, Drought Resistant Seed Production, Food Technology, Livestock, Animal Reproduction, Poultry, Aquaculture, Oilseed, Pulses, Environment, Water/Irrigation, Energy, Chemicals, Enzymes, Flavors and Additives. The emerging technologies included Artificial Intelligence, Block Chain, Biotechnology, Green Technologies and Nanotechnology. The concept ideas will be shortlisted and evaluated on the basis of expected outcomes including product/service development leading to import substitution, export enhancement and/or value addition of local raw materials which can be marketed to generate business and revenue. The ideas with ready-to-market proto-type will be given priority during the evaluation, the official source said.—APP

Police to take firm action against smuggled vehicles

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police have intensified efforts to clamp down on non-registered and smuggled vehicles operating within the city. In line with the directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, this campaign has been intensified to ensure road safety and proper vehicle documentation. The citizens have been strongly urged to adhere to travel regulations by possessing valid car papers and prominently displaying number plates sanctioned by the Excise and Taxation Department. Chief Traffic Officer of Islamabad reiterated that strict compliance with this mandate is paramount, and those found violating it will be subjected to appropriate consequences.—APP

Motorbikes, 3 wheelers' sale drops 23.75% in July

ISLAMABAD: The sale of motorbikes and three-wheelers in the country has witnessed a decrease of 23.75 per cent during the first month of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to sales of the correspond-

President stresses preventive measures to avoid diseases

The president said the people especially those with limited resources could easily avoid the chronic diseases such as breast cancer, hepatitis, and communicable diseases by adopting preventive measures

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday said adopting preventive measures could help people avoiding or minimizing intensity of diseases, and improving the overall health condition of population of the country. Health and education were two basic sectors which needed to be put on top priority because nations always build on these two areas, he said while addressing the "Med-Health Expo 2023 and Summit" here. The president said the people specially those with limited resources could easily avoid the chronic diseases such as breast cancer, hepatitis, and communicable diseases by adopting preventive measures. With regard to deteriorating health sector in the country, he highlighted that lack of decision-making, avoidance of merit and corruption in the past were the main reason behind limited health facilities in the country. The health sector exhibition was organized by Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) aimed at information exchange, learn-



ing, and cooperation opportunities for health professionals. The two-day event will showcase the latest research and developments in various medical fields through a series of sessions. President Alvi stressed universities and academia to promote research in the health sector that would bring tremendous improvement in human health. He urged the medical professionals to move along with the world that was doing advance research on human DNA to predict

the disease in people. He also called upon the industrialists to produce affordable medical devices to ensure access of people especially from all walks of society to the quality medical facilities. President Alvi said the industrialists and the exporters should explore big potential markets such as Africa to increase their exports of pharmaceutical and surgical instruments. He informed that some 9 million pregnancies occurred annually

in the country out of which 50% were unwanted which could easily be avoided by providing contraceptive facilities to the people. Similarly, he said doctors and hospitals should also use the latest technology to provide online healthcare facilities to save resources of both patients and the hospitals. This would also help reaching out to the maximum number of people, he added. The president also stressed the need to provide first aid and cardio-

pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training to common people from school levels to save lives of the people in emergencies. President RCCI Saqib Rafiq said President Dr Arif Alvi and First Lady Samina Alvi played vital role in creating awareness about different diseases especially breast cancer in the country. He said Pakistan's health sector was facing challenges which needed to be addressed. He said due to lack of awareness and health facilities, 10% of total population was suffering from hepatitis and 34% from stress. Similarly, he said maternal mortality was very high in the country. Chairman of the event Usman Shoukat called upon the government to focus on health sector and take special measures for uplift of the sector. Group Leader RCCI Sohail Altaf maintained that the government should provide subsidized land and equipments to the private sector to ensure affordable healthcare facilities to the masses. On the occasion, President Alvi also awarded shields to pharmaceutical companies, private hospitals, and medical laboratories for their services in health sector.

Power sector suffering from incompetence

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saifuddin Sheikh, Executive Director of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Wednesday that the most important sector of electricity is suffering from incompetence and corruption. This sector has become a big problem for the people and the business community, and the economy cannot be improved in the presence of a dysfunctional power sector, he said. Since 1994, such

policies have been introduced in the power sector, which made domestic and foreign investors happy, but the masses, traders, and industrialists were put to the axe, he added. Saifuddin Sheikh said in a statement issued here today that over the past decades, every government has made lofty claims to revive this sector but worsened the situation. He said that the agreements made since 1994 did not take into account the interests of the country and the nation, which never allowed the GDP to increase. Dur-

ing this time, reforms were not carried out, and several times the GDP was artificially inflated to achieve political ends, which further distorted the energy sector and the overall economy. He said that by the end of last year, the circular debt of this sector had increased to 2.31 trillion rupees, which continues to increase due to the absence of reforms. The reasons behind the fall of the electricity sector include dependence on imported oil, a lack of interest by authorities in solar and wind power, increased taxes on

Railways retrieve 1,007 acres land from illegal occupants

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has retrieved as many as 1,007 acres of its land worth millions of rupees from illegal occupants during various anti-encroachment operations across the country. "Around 491 acres retrieved in Punjab, 145 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 339 acres in Sindh and only 32 acres in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said that about 3,287 acres in Punjab, 832 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,180 acres in Sindh, and 687 acres of land in Balochistan were being encroached. The official said that in light of the directives of the Supreme Court, the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached railway land all over the Railway network were initiated and a joint procedure order was issued to all divisional superintendents for retrieval of Railways land from encroachment. "The anti-encroachment schedules, on a three months basis, are being prepared and sent to all concerned in line with the joint procedure order," the official added. He said Pakistan Railways had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups, and even business organizations who were using it for residential, commercial, and agriculture purposes for decades. "The encroachment operation will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the relevant provincial governments," he added. He said the organization was taking several steps to retrieve encroached land from the land grabbers including a detailed survey being carried out to identify the encroached land, occupied by the individuals and under illegal occupation by various government departments. The official said that First Information Reports (FIRs) were being lodged and cases were registered and sent to PR Judicial Magistrates for expeditious trial.

ICC celebrates Independence Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Citizens Committee (ICC) here on Wednesday celebrated the 76th anniversary of the Independence Day to recall the objectives of freedom movement. It highlighted the objectives of independence movement and paid rich tributes to those who sacrificed their lives in the freedom struggle. The event was attended by the members of the Executive Committee and distinguished guests from various walks of life. A cake was also cut to mark the Day. The gathering of the notables passed a unanimous resolution on the occasion, pledging to work for the bet-

terment of the motherland. The event was chaired by the ICC's President, Syed M. Siddiq Hasan. National Anthem was played and a cake cutting ceremony was held to mark the event in a befitting manner. The resolution says, "We were fortunate enough to get an identity of our own 76 years ago as Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This independence was achieved after countless sacrifices of our ancestors and as a result of which we can live freely in our own homeland. To have a home, identity, is one of the most privileged things that money cannot buy. Therefore, it is up to us to make this homeland prosperous and bring deserved glory to it."

It added, "This Independence Day, we pledge to make Pakistan proud by doing our part in our own capacity. We pledge to understand and stand by its principles, stay united and devote ourselves to the cause of working for Pakistan with dedication and sincerity. We hope to reaffirm our commitment towards our country and pray for its safety from all kinds of evils and disasters." It also called for upholding the golden principles, faith, unity and discipline, given by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. It was high time for the entire nation to think for the country, realizing the sacrifices rendered by our forefathers.

PPP aims to strengthen democracy

DNA

ABBOTTABAD: President PPP Hazara division Malik Farooq after assuming responsibilities at the Abbottabad Press Club on Wednesday said Pakistan Peoples Party's primary mission is to strengthen democracy and uphold the constitution. President People's Labour Wing Abbottabad district, former MMA Sajida Tabassum, Zulfikar Qureshi, Saeed Gul, former district president Sardar Abrar Ahmed, PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa General Secretary Sarfraz Khan, PPP Provincial Vice President Malik Farid Muhammad, Saeed Gul, Muhammad Saeed, Naeed Gul Abbas also addressed the occasion. Embracing the legacy of leaders like Founder Chairman Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto, the PPP has carved its mission to navigate the country through myriad challenges and lead it towards a brighter future, adding he said. President Malik Farooq expressed his belief that Bilawal Bhutto, a prominent figure within the party, is destined to be the nation's future Prime Minister.

Similarly, the sale of Yamaha motorbikes also went down from 1,261 units to 675 units witnessing a decline of 46.47 per cent while the sale of Road Prince motorbikes witnessed a sharp decline of 61.86 per cent from 2,932 units to 1,118 units. The sales of United Auto motorcycles witnessed a nominal decline of 0.11 per cent from 7,666 units to 7,657 units.—APP

SHO suspended on death of accused in police custody

PESHAWAR: The CCPO Peshawar Syed Asfaq Anwar on Wednesday taking notice of the death of an accused in alleged police custody suspended SHO Machni Gate and ordered an inquiry. The CCPO said that no one would be allowed to take the law into their hands and assured justice to the relatives of the deceased. Earlier, the relatives of the deceased accused including women and children put the dead body on the GT road under Suripul and blocked it for traffic. They said that the Machni gate police picked up the deceased along with his brother from his village on Saturday night and allegedly tortured him to death in police custody which was evidence from the signs of violence on the body, they added. The family members of the victim refused to unblock the road, however on the directives of CCPO, a police team negotiated with the protesters and convinced them to bury the dead body and end the protest. On the assurance of the police, the protesters dispersed peacefully and unblocked the road.—APP

BISP to start Mobile Registration Vehicle Centers

ISLAMABAD: In order to facilitate the registration process for intending beneficiaries in remote areas of the country, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has planned to launch the facility of Mobile Registration Vehicle Centers in various districts of Sindh and Balochistan. The first ever such facility has been inaugurated in Karachi this month by the former federal minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri. According to an official source, the mobile registration vehicle centres are being started in 25 districts of Sindh and Balochistan including Gothki, Umar Kot, Tharparkar, Sanghar and Jamshoro districts of Sindh province while Chagai, Khuzdar, Keach, Awaran, Lasbela, Sibi, Loralai and Qila Saifullah initially which can be extended to the other areas. The initiative of the Mobile Registration Vehicle Center has been started with the support of the German Government, GIZ and the Sindh Government. These centres will enable the beneficiaries in farflung areas to access the registration.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Former Provincial Minister Mir Sarfraz Chakar Domki and Agha Shakeel Durrani called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.—APP

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Trump's latest charges

EVEN close followers of the news could be forgiven for losing track of the criminal proceedings against Donald Trump. His indictment in Georgia is his second in a fortnight, and his fourth in total. The 13 new counts added to the scorecard bring the total – so far – to 91. What was once the precedent-shattering prospect of a former president facing trial on serious charges now seems oddly commonplace. That's without mentioning the two impeachments he survived in office, or the multiple civil cases against him.

Like the federal charges brought by the special counsel Jack Smith earlier this month, these are vastly graver matters than those relating to the payment of hush money to a pornography star, or even to the retention of classified national security documents. The federal case also addresses his attempts to overturn the 2020 election in Georgia. But Mr Trump would have less ability to interfere with a state-level case if re-elected, and would not be able to pardon himself. The use of Georgia's racketeering legislation, broader than the federal equivalent, is also striking, and not only because it is usually associated with the pursuit of mobsters.

Nonetheless, the pattern is well established. Prosecutors present detailed evidence against Mr Trump, enlarging on what was already in the public domain. He dismisses the charges as a "witch-hunt". Republicans who briefly shunned him after the storming of the Capitol now rally to his cause once more. The danger of overestimating the difference that these cases could make on next year's election is similarly well rehearsed. Most voters made up their minds on Mr Trump long ago. He claims each charge as further evidence of the grand conspiracy he falsely claims denied him victory in 2020 and, therefore, as mandating more support, including financial.

His favourability ratings fell among Republicans following his June indictment over illegally holding classified documents, and last year's midterms were a reminder of the differences between primary and general election voters. Still, the next election is more likely to be swayed by Joe Biden's ability to convince voters that the economy is thriving – something they are unwilling to believe as yet – and by campaigning on issues such as abortion. This month, citizens in Ohio overwhelmingly rejected the constitutional amendment that Republicans were trying to rush through to fend off abortion rights protections, demonstrating the continued commitment of voters to safeguarding access – and their growing awareness of Republican efforts to tilt elections. Many grow more determined as they see more such efforts. In contrast, the impact of each set of criminal charges, even if they are more serious than the last, is inevitably reduced somewhat as they accumulate. Democracy is not only about contests of popularity: it cannot survive without procedures of accountability.



New Delhi should show sense

IN his Independence Day speech on Tuesday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a special mention of the country's northern border with China. Speaking of the Vibrant Village Program that aims at the comprehensive development of select border villages, he said that "These villages were called the last villages of India. We have changed that mindset. That village at the border is not the last village. It is the country's first village." The program, which is sponsored by the Union budget 2022-23 and covers about 2,963 border villages, is apparently aimed at countering China's development of hundreds of xiaokang, or moderately prosperous, villages along the Line of Actual Control. It must be pointed out that the development of the xiaokang villages that the Modi government sees as a thorn in its side is by no means aimed at strengthening China's control of the border area. The villages are mostly home to ethnic Tibetans that have been living in these areas for generations. China's sovereignty over these areas is an indisputable historical fact. There is no need to strengthen its control over them by rebuilding these villages. The development of these villages has indeed been carried out under the xiaokang project, as New Delhi has noted. However, it is not a tactic targeting India but a comprehensive development strategy China proposed in 2012 for the whole nation, and the strategy was completed around 2020. What the Indian side cannot see in its satellite imagery is that these villages, along with all others in China, are now part of the rural vitalization project, which is being carried out nationwide following the success of the poverty alleviation project that concluded the xiaokang plan. The Vibrant Village versus xiaokang farce the Modi government has orchestrated epitomizes a major cause of the stagnation in relations between the two neighbors. Whatever it does, New Delhi always thinks of Beijing in relation to its own desires, and thus it has indulged the spread of anti-China nationalism in Indian society. It is also evidenced in the irresponsible way it has treated Chinese investments and journalists in India, as well as its obstruction to China-related agenda on some multilateral occasions. Yet on a more promising note, the 19th round of the China-India Corps Commander Level Meeting concluded on the same day as Modi's speech, and it is good to see that the two sides agreed to maintain peace and tranquility on the ground in the border areas. In the meeting, the two sides had a positive, constructive and in-depth discussion on the remaining issues along the LAC in the western sector, and they agreed to resolve these issues in an "expeditious manner" and to maintain the momentum of dialogue and negotiations through military and diplomatic channels. The border disputes are in essence historical issues intentionally left by the British colonialists. They should not affect the overall development of the relations between the world's two largest developing countries. The two nations should demonstrate foresight and wisdom to prevent the disputes from being exploited by any external force to sow discord between them.

Old Engagements Getting Stronger

Gul.i.Ayesha Bhatti



Western sanctions on Russia's Crimea and Ukraine policy since 2014 prompted it to increase its African alliances. However, through conditional support and lucrative economic ties with African elite, France is perceived as maintaining an imperialist policy in West Africa. Although China offered an alternative, many became disenchanted with it since it burdened African partners with loans while carrying out its projects with Chinese workers and specialists

NGŪGI wa Thiong'o, in "Secure the Base: Making Africa Visible in the Globe", revealed the four stages of Africa's exploitations by West. The first was African enslavement in Europe after which Africa lost its best workforce for economic growth. The second was African labor in European fields and mines, treated inhumanely. The third factor was colonization, where seven European powers—Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Portugal—fought and divided Africa for its natural and human resources. The fourth is "debt slavery," as this poor continent keeps providing developed states even after its independence. Global financial institutions, such as World Bank, IMF, and WTO govern debt servitude. Furthermore, the West has plundered Africa's natural riches, such as uranium, gold, diamonds, and other precious metals, leading to neo-colonialism. Africa's resentment towards the West is visible in last week's Niger coup, which shook the Sahel and the world. Niger was the final pro-Western country in Africa's "coup belt," raising concerns for US and Europe. Nigeriens displaying pro-Putin protest banners and Russian flags have startled them. The Western public has often been told that Russian President Vladimir Putin is a "pariah around the world." However, these photographs illustrate a stark contrast. The intriguing point is why African states like Russia? Russian involvement in Africa is not new. USSR, Russia's communist predecessor, partnered with African states after independence due to its decolonization ideology. Ideological conviction, pragmatic economic goals, and Cold War alliances drove its involvement. The newly independent African states required non-colonial trade partners to grow their economies. In this quest, a few eventually turned into battlegrounds for Cold War proxy battles, such as the Angolan civil war (1975) and the Ethio-Somali war (1977). USSR worked with numerous African regimes, including Modibo Keita in Mali and Sekou Touré in Guinea. Mali reduced its dependence on France in 1960 by signing trade, economic, and cultural cooperation agreements with USSR. It established cement factories and gold mines to help Mali industrialize. Malian

President Keita was deposed in 1968 by an administration that enhanced relations with France. USSR did, though, continue to provide Mali with military assistance, including pilot and artillery training. USSR also partnered with Guinea after it became the first former French colony in West Africa to reject French participation and declare independence in 1958. This caused France to withdraw. Guinean leader Sekou Touré allied with the USSR rather than the US. Guinea received military training, arms, and economic aid. USSR gave Guinea millions of dollars to build cement and leather mills and assist its industries. This relationship became stronger after the first decade of the 21st-century oil boom. Russia always envisaged a multipolar world in reaction to the unipolar US hegemonic design. Since then, Russia has expanded its regional partnerships. President Vladimir Putin visited Libya in 2008 to discuss energy and weaponry sales and pay off billions in Soviet debt. President Dmitry Medvedev visited Egypt, Nigeria, Namibia, and Angola with a 400-person business group, including Gazprom executives, on a four-day tour in 2009. The expedition focused on energy, mineral development, and Russian technology sales. Russia supported African states in industrial, military, economic, and educational spheres too. Western sanctions on Russia's Crimea and Ukraine policy since 2014 prompted it to increase its African alliances. However, through conditional support and lucrative economic ties with African elite, France is perceived as maintaining an imperialist policy in West Africa. Although China offered an alternative, many became disenchanted with it since it burdened African partners with loans while carrying out its projects with Chinese workers and specialists. This disappointment caused Ghana to cancel Chinese-led projects. Trump prioritized Iran, China, and American isolationism, so Russia's re-engagement coincided with US withdrawal. Early this year, Russia introduced a new Foreign Policy Concept that criticize "Western hegemony" and portrayed Russia and Africa as striving for a "more equitable polycentric world and elimination of social and economic inequality." The Ukraine conflict disrupted grain exports via Black Sea, which affected fifteen African states that

used to import more than half their grain from Russia and Ukraine. Later the termination of the Black Sea Grain deal makes the situation more critical. Rising energy prices due to Western restrictions on Russian oil and gas exports are also harming the African market and it has undermined financial stability and worsening economic situation. Some African states have had credit downgrades and high borrowing rates. Recently, President Putin at Russia-Africa 2023 summit, promised free grain shipments to Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Mali, Somalia, the Central African Republic, and Eritrea, portraying Russia as an ally of Africa and the Global South. Russia has wiped off US\$23 billion of African debt and is discussing an additional US\$90 million to reduce African debt. Russia has also promised to help Africa get a voice on the UN Security Council and propose full membership of the African Union at G20 scheduled in New Delhi later in September. Russia-led BRICS and SCO are also ready to discuss expanding their membership to a number of African states. Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, and Senegal have applied to join the BRICS New Development Bank, which Egypt already owns. With the help of Russia, Burundi, Egypt, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe are nuclear-ready to counter the energy crisis. These advancements will not only boost productivity but also allow neighboring African countries to import energy from them. Russia's influence in Africa has grown in recent years maybe more than any other superpower. These engagements include strengthening ties in North Africa, expanding its presence in the Central African Republic and the Sahel, and reigniting Cold War ties with southern Africa. This results in accelerating the Global South's disengagement from the European Union in particular, where lingering colonial views are widely despised throughout Africa. Russia is ready to align itself with other significant regional powers and further its interests during its ongoing conflict with the West. Nevertheless, Russia should address African states' concerns related to the economy, energy, and infrastructure to keep this alliance getting stronger further.

Unfolding the paradox of democracy in Bangladesh

Muhammad Sayed Anwar



The USA had sanctioned the 'Rapid Action Battalion' (RAB), an anti-crime and anti-terrorism unit of Bangladesh police, and seven current and former top officials of the elite force in connection...

THE history of Bangladesh's politics is drawn by the fragility of democratic institutions, weak governance, fractiousness of political leaders, volatility of the political process, and a culture of intolerance. The country had gone through a series of development processes toward democracy down from authoritarianism and military dictatorship to a semi-democracy. The country has been enduring violence and deaths in the subsequent years since its inception. One may paint a pessimistic picture of the country. But unpacking one side of the picture will not do justice to the history. Economic achievements and social developments claim that the nation is on the right track. However, the past of a nation was not predetermined but rather colored by people, their leaders, the institutions and practices they adopt and so is the future. Today, the country is facing a crisis moment for the deterioration of democracy. The global community shows concern for that democratic devaluation. What is democracy? It has a more comprehensive meaning than we think. Different scholars have defined it in their different perspectives and ways. Having the root in the view of Samuel Huntington, today I will try to unbox the paradox of democracy prevailing in Bangladesh. He outlines democracy as "a political system in which the most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair,

honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote." While the Bangladeshi people never retreated from demanding democracy, the leaders have either failed or were unwilling to build strong democratic institutions which will bring democracy to the country. The political impasse whether in 1996, 2006, or 2013 revealed the innate weaknesses of those institutions. Politicians of all parties have pulled the strings in favor of their immediate gains whether by controlling the electoral processes or by manipulating the constitution whenever they got that chance. Election Commission remained subservient to the ruling party. The people have lost credibility in the elections today. It created an environment where fundamental rights are neglected and a culture of impunity for the ruling elites and corporates has been normalized. Categorically, it indicates that a system of name-only democracy and, more specifically, a 'hybrid regime' emerged. The emergence of a two-party system and power alteration might be indicative for such a mindset of the citizens. The electoral polls didn't always yield good governance but rather the ruling party often failed to distinguish between 'mandate to govern' and 'license to rule'. The political parties and their leaders, in the past, took the state machinery as a 'license to rule' and used the resources for personal gains and maintenance of the party and activists practicing an unhealthy level of corruption. An innate practice of nepotism and clientelism characterizes the history of Bangladesh's politics. Each poll has become a 'zero-sum' game and all the political parties fight hard to win the elections, even creating a situation of violence and strikes. Democracy is, in the phrase of Abraham Lincoln, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. But there exists a huge gap between the government and the people in the country. The poll candidates don't rely on the masses but rather base their competition on the high commissions and embassies of foreign powers. Therefore, voters are reluctant to appear in the poll centers. In the recent by-polls of Dhaka-17, only 11.51% voters were seen turnout out of 3, 25,205 registered. It is very frustrating that about 90% voters didn't appear in the election. Hero Alam, one of the poll candidates was brutally beaten by his opponents before a poll center portrays a fearful image of politics of the country. About 13 western high commissioners and embassies including USA and EU condemned the violence in a joint statement. Political parties, after winning an election and holding power, use the state apparatus for reprisals against the opposition. They use the police forces, courts and laws, and other institutions as instruments of harassment. No political party and its members are willing to face this situation. That made the political parties views the elections as their existential struggle and a safeguard against post-poll adverse situations. This can

be identified as the 'cost of defeat'. Now the question is: what needs to be done to get away from the past and make a better future? The issues of democracy, corruption, inequality, good governance, and accountability remain the big challenges for the nation of Bangladesh. One cannot be achieved in the absence of the others. In the coming years, the citizens and leaders of Bangladesh should chart a course of action to create an inclusive and sustainable political and economic model which upholds the spirit of the liberation war articulated in the Declaration of Independence: equality, justice, and human dignity, which are the 'raison d'être' of Bangladesh. Furthermore, the countrymen, especially the political leaders, should attempt a degree of politics that shows the way for the establishment of an inclusive political system, economic equality, rule of law, and social justice. But the path toward the new positive mutation is not an easy task, nor can it be achieved overnight. "The USA and other powers who want democracy in the world should come forward and promote democracy in the non-democratic countries and help strengthen democratic values and institutions in the democratically immature countries." The champion of the 2008 election is still the incumbent regime of Bangladesh. During these long 15 years, the regime used to create a one-party authoritarian state, arranging flawed elections on the subsequent two polls in 2014 and 2018 respectively and repressing oppositions. The international community, especially the United States of America and the European Union, has started to raise their headchases regarding the authoritarian crackdown on free speech, arresting critics and censor media, human rights violations, and concern for free and fair polls. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations showed their earnest concern for extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations in the guise of anti-drug operations and other criminal offenses. The USA had sanctioned the 'Rapid Action Battalion' (RAB), an anti-crime and anti-terrorism unit of Bangladesh police, and seven current and former top officials of the elite force in connection with serious rights abuses and came out with a new visa policy to Bangladesh citizens who are responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the free and fair election process. Recently, observatory delegations from the United States of America and the European Union visited Bangladesh and met party leaders and others as well as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in respect of free and fair polls. "The EU encourages all parties and all citizens in Bangladesh to exercise their political rights and participate in the parliamentary elections," said one of the delegates. Bangladesh was not selected for Joe Biden's democracy summits held 2021 and 2023 respectively. Moreover, USA ambassador Peter D. Haas has been continuously speaking for democracy, human rights, and open and participatory election in Bangladesh. Apparently, the Western nations

seem very eager to the upcoming general election, viewing the incumbent skeptically considering its proximity to China. As a part of the 'indo-pacific strategy' and the 'pivot to Asia' policy of the USA and to contain China's emergence as a world power happened to make the superpower meddled in such domestic matters. The USA, likewise, wants Bangladesh in the Western clubs such as QUAD and IPEF. India, once a close ally and the eyes of the USA in South Asia, hasn't been impersonating as such, especially after the Ukraine-Russia war. Again, Dhaka's neutral stance in terms of Russia's act of aggression might be interpreted as tacit support to it by the West. The neighboring country has been backing the Hasina regime throughout her three terms. It could be projected that the India-China rivalry will not contradict between them apropos of the 2024 election. Again, the government seems to lean toward China after a long-term balancing approach. Such a move has been deemed a threat to the USA's hegemony. Along with the Western world, Russia, China, and even Iran are seen showing their interest with an anti-USA stance regarding Bangladesh's imminent election. World powers are divided into two pools in this 21st-century new cold war era, the Western world led by the USA and China, Russia, and Iran block led by China. Bangladesh's geopolitical location and emergence as a potential economic power persuaded those world powers to infringe on the country's internal affairs. The USA-China antagonism is showing a message that Asia, especially indo-pacific region, will be the tension hub of the new cold war, and countries like Bangladesh, with three important sea-ports, abutting the 'Bay of Bengal' and having a crucial geopolitical location, will never be able to escape the ripples. But one thing must be said that the Western stance regarding the upcoming poll as compared to the formers might deliver a positive change but it is a matter of regret that until now no amelioration is felt in the country as both the incumbent and opposition are showing no tolerance to each other. Again, the people of Bangladesh want the United States of America beside them to regain their voting rights as well as the other nations throughout the world who endure totalitarian rulers and democratic deterioration. The power alteration in Cambodia, after a mock election, from Hun Sen to his son following the USA's visa policy for the miscreants who were involved in perpetrating indicates the country's positive political transition. The USA and other powers who want democracy in the world should come forward and promote democracy in the non-democratic countries and help strengthen democratic values and institutions in the democratically immature countries. In this 21st century, democracy is a crying need for the world and the most suitable system that only may accomplish the will of the masses because it is not a medieval World where people will survive fighting one another under one military dictator.

Briefs

Mob burns churches in Faisalabad

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Meanwhile, the police registered a first information report against the accused under sections 295B (defiling, etc., of the Holy Quran) and 295C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet) of the Pakistan Penal Code. Speaking to media, Punjab police chief Usman Anwar said the police were negotiating with the protesters and the area had been cordoned off. "There are narrow lanes [in the area] in which small two to three marla churches are located and there is one main church ... they have vandalised portions of the churches," he said. The official stated that efforts were under way to contain the situation by engaging with peace committees and police across the province had been activated. "The assistant commissioner of the area, a member of the Christian community, has also been evacuated after people turned against him," Anwar added. On the other hand, Christian leaders alleged that the police remained silent spectators.

PTI urges interim PM to ensure...

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The election commission should resolve all issues before the polls," the CJP remarked. In a letter to the interim prime minister, Qureshi apprised Kakar that his party intended to challenge the decision made by the Council of Common Interests (CCI) in the court. On August 5, the CCI "unanimously" approved the 7th Population and Housing Census results, making it almost certain that the general elections - which were to be held in November after the dissolution of the National Assembly on August 9 - would not be held during the current year. "Time has come to put the country on the path of law and the constitution," he added. In his letter, the PTI leader also felicitated Kakar for being appointed as the caretaker prime minister and extended his party's cooperation to him in fulfilling the "great responsibility" assigned to him. Lashing out at the former government, Qureshi said: "The country is on the verge of complete destruction of the constitution." The previous government used the intuitions to escape from accountability, adding that the former rulers' behaviour caused massive damage to the foundations of the state. He accused the former PDM garment of using the state intuitions to oust the PTI from the election arena. "PTI chairman is kept in Attock prison in very inhuman conditions," Qureshi said, adding that he was deprived of the basic rights promised in the Constitution and jail laws.

Dr. Shamshad Gohar Ijaz to get portfolios

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while Gohar Ijaz has been appointed as the Minister for Industries. Tabish Gohar has been appointed energy minister. The development came as Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has reportedly intensified the consultation process for appointing individuals to the interim cabinet. According to sources, the caretaker prime minister has chosen to have a smaller cabinet and personally review the profiles of all potential candidates. According to sources, both PPP and PML N have withdrawn names of their candidates for caretaker minister positions. Efforts are being made to reach a consensus on the appointment of the caretaker ministers, among the stakeholders.

England reach first Women's World Cup final

It was England who controlled things early on - although both teams created a few chances - as they had 70% of the ball in opening 15 minutes

SPORTS DESK

SYDNEY: England reached the Women's World Cup final for the first time as they spoiled co-hosts Australia's party on a historic evening in Sydney. Silencing a sell-out crowd at Stadium Australia with their 3-1 victory, the Lionesses became the first England football team since 1966 to reach a senior final on the world stage. It caps a sensational two years under manager Sarina Wiegman as England, crowned European champions for the first time last year on home soil, showed their superiority and know-how to see off an Australia side spurred on by a nation who have been inspired by the Matildas' success. Ella Toone gave England the lead in the first half with a superb first-time strike which sailed into the top corner. The Lionesses controlled proceedings until the second half when Australia threw everything at them and star striker Sam Kerr - starting her first match of the tournament - struck a 25-yard stunner over goalkeeper Mary Earps' head to make it 1-1. But England, as they so often do, found a way back into the game when Lauren Hemp pounced on a defensive error to



restore their lead, before Alessia Russo made sure of victory late on to set up a final with Spain on Sunday. England chase glory after silencing 'Matildas Mania' Build-up to this semi-final has dominated every aspect of Australian life this week as cities across the country became ab-

sorbed in 'Matildas Mania'. Fans were queuing outside fan parks in Sydney five hours before kick-off, train stations were decorated in yellow and green balloons, shops sold out of merchandise, and newspapers had the players' faces plastered over their front and back pages. All focus was on the co-hosts' attempts to create history, but England quietly went about their business and arrived in Sydney ready to compete in their third successive Women's World Cup semi-final. Their experience of handling big occasions was evident from the first minute as they disrupted Australia's rhythm and made every attempt to frustrate the crowd, taking their time over throw-ins and breaking down dangerous counter-attacks. It worked for large parts, but when Australia fought their way back into the game through Kerr, England had to find another way - and they did. Backs against the wall, England's defence, who have been magnificent throughout the tournament, stepped up to make blocks, tackles and head away relentless balls into the box. Hemp and Russo's flourishing partnership up front ultimately decided the game when they combined late on, and England's celebrations at full-time were initially subdued. They have created history but this is a team of winners and they have not finished yet. Australia leave lasting impression as England show ruthlessness. England's plan to stifle Australia's intensity and quick counter-attacking football worked a treat.

Wahab Riaz brings curtain down on int'l career

Stepping off the international pitch. After an incredible journey, I've decided to retire from international cricket. Big thank you to PCB, my family, coaches, mentors, teammates, fans, and everyone who supported me"

LAHORE: Pakistan pacer Wahab Riaz announced his retirement from international cricket on Wednesday. The left-arm shared the development in a post on his official X, formerly known as Twitter, account. The 38-year-old will continue to play T20 leagues around the world. "Stepping off the international pitch. After an incredible journey, I've decided to retire from international cricket. Big thank you to PCB, my family, coaches, mentors, teammates, fans, and everyone who supported me," Riaz said. "Exciting times ahead in the world of franchise cricket!" he added. Riaz made his ODI and T20 debut in 2008, meanwhile, his first Test appearance came in 2010. The Lahore-born played 27 Tests, 91 ODIs and 36 T20Is for Pakistan over the course of his career. He claimed more than 200 wickets in international cricket. During his Test debut against England at The Oval in 2010, Riaz bagged figures of 5 for 63, becoming the ninth Pakistan bowler to claim five wickets on debut. His best performance in ODI cricket was against arch-rivals India, when he took 5 for 46 during the World Cup semi-final in Mohali. His scalps included the likes of Virender Sehwag, Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh and MS Dhoni. Riaz also bowled one of the most memorable spells in Pakistan cricket history, when he bamboozled Australia's Shane Watson with his pace and bounce during the 2015 World Cup clash in Adelaide. The pacer played his last international game in December 2020, which was a T20I match against New Zealand in Hamilton. - DNA

Neymar: superstar with a legacy unfulfilled?

RIYADH: Six years ago Brazil legend Neymar left Barcelona to join Paris St-Germain in a record-breaking £200m deal. Now aged 31, the forward is on the move again, this time leaving behind European football - at least for now - and joining a number of high-profile players in opting to play in Saudi Arabia. He will reportedly be paid 150m euros (£129m) a year at Al-Hilal - six times the amount he earned at PSG - having signed a two-year contract. Neymar made 173 appearances for PSG, helping them win 13 trophies, including five Ligue 1 titles. But it was to win Europe's elite prize - the Champions League - that Neymar was signed for, something he was unable to help the French giants achieve, coming closest when they reached the 2020 final. "It hasn't worked out in the eyes of many of his compatriots. He is abandoning the battlefield by leaving top-class European football," South American football expert Tim Vickery told the BBC World Service. "Neymar himself will not see this as anything other than an au revoir - not necessarily to Paris St-Germain, but with a view to coming back to Europe in two years' time - because at this moment it's hard to see what other option he had." It is the latest chapter in a career of highs and lows. Here, BBC Sport charts Neymar's journey from Santos to Saudi Arabia. Just over a year after making his professional debut, the teenage Neymar was called up by Brazil. His first game was a friendly with the USA on 10 August. It took him only 28 minutes to mark his debut with a goal, heading Andre Santos' cross beyond Tim Howard. Neymar has scored 77 goals in

124 appearances for Brazil, but his first remains one of the favourites of his career. Having helped Santos win the Copa Libertadores in 2011 - their first since 1963 - Neymar joined Barcelona after being linked with a string of top European clubs. Playing alongside Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez in a front three that became known as 'MSN', Neymar helped the Spanish giants win La Liga, the Copa del Rey and the Champions League in only his second season. Shortly after joining Barcelona, he also helped Brazil win the Fifa Confederations Cup and was named the tournament's best player. By now Neymar's star was shining brightly and, with Brazil hosting the World Cup in 2014, he was seen by many as the player to lead his country to glory. His image was everywhere before and during the tournament, but a nation held its breath when, in the quarter-final against Colombia, Neymar went down clutching his back after he was kneed by Juan Zuniga. Archive: Zuniga challenge ends Neymar's World Cup Brazil won 2-1, but it came at a huge cost as Neymar was ruled out of the rest of the World Cup with a fractured vertebra. It was to get worse in the semi-final as Brazil suffered a humiliating 7-1 loss to eventual winners Germany. Neymar, Messi and Suarez continued to be one of the most deadly strike trios in club football and in 2015-16 they combined to score 131 goals - the most in a season for an attacking trio in Spanish football history. Those goals helped Barcelona complete the domestic double of La Liga and Copa del Rey, before Neymar linked up with the Brazil team for the 2016 Olympics in Rio. - Agencies



Lionel Messi on target again

LONDON: Lionel Messi extended his remarkable goal-scoring streak as Inter Miami powered into the final of the Leagues Cup with an emphatic 4-1 victory over Philadelphia Union on Tuesday. The Argentinian superstar took his tally to nine goals in six appearances for Miami in an entertaining semi-final at Philadelphia's Subaru Park. Venezuelan international Josef Martinez, Messi's former Barcelona team-mate Jordi Alba, and substitute David Ruiz scored Miami's other goals, with Alejandro Bedoya the lone scorer for outgunned Philadelphia. The result leaves Messi preparing for the 42nd final of his career with Miami facing Nashville SC in Saturday's final of the World Cup-style tournament for teams from Mexico and Major League Soccer.

Nashville booked their place in the final later Tuesday with a 2-0 win over Mexican side Monterrey and will host the final this weekend. Miami meanwhile were left basking in a victory which also sees them qualify for the CONCACAF Champions Cup regional tournament next season - potentially opening up a route into FIFA's expanded Club World Cup in 2025. "Our goal was to qualify for international competition next season and we've done that tonight," said Miami head coach Gerardo 'Tata' Martino. "This most important thing was achieving qualification for Conca-caf Champions Cup, and now we have to prepare to win this tournament, which has us feeling very motivated and confident." Miami's

semi-final in Philadelphia was in theory supposed to be the toughest assignment yet faced by Messi since he made his debut for Miami on July 21 after joining from Paris Saint-Germain. Philadelphia are one of the strongest teams in MLS, and are third in the Eastern Conference standings while Miami are bottom of the table. The Union have also been practically invincible at home, losing only once in their previous 38 games at Subaru Park. But the home side were left in disarray just three minutes after kick-off as Miami took the lead. A long ball forward from Ukrainian defender Sergiy Kryvtsov sowed panic in the Union back line, and Martinez latched onto the pass before rifling a shot past diving Philadelphia goalkeeper Andre Blake. - Agencies

Seventeen troops killed in new Niger attack

NIAMEY: Seventeen troops died in a jihadist ambush in Niger, the government said, in a reminder of the nation's deep security crisis as its military rulers face off against neighbours determined to reverse last month's coup. An army detachment was "the victim of a terrorist ambush near the town of Koutougou" in the Tillaberi region near Burkina Faso on Tuesday, said a defence ministry statement published later that day. It added that another 20 soldiers had been wounded, six seriously, with all the casualties evacuated to the capital Niamey. More than 100 assailants, who were travelling on motorbikes, were "neutralised" during their retreat, the army said. A jihadist insurgency has plagued Africa's Sahel region for more than a decade, breaking out in northern Mali in 2012 before spreading to neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso in 2015. The so-called "three borders" area between the three countries is regularly the scene of attacks by rebels affiliated with Islamic State group and Al-Qaeda. - Agencies

FIA books Khan over cypher 'disappearance'

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the case, sources in the FIA said. The Joint Investigation Team (JIT) probing the cypher case already will conduct the investigation. Meanwhile, in the ongoing investigation into the cypher controversy, the former prime minister's principal secretary Azam Khan appeared before the joint investigation team at the FIA headquarters after he was summoned. It is pertinent to mention here that Azam Khan, ex-principal secretary to the PTI chairman and former prime minister made startling revelations and claimed that the former PM used US cypher for his 'political gains' and to avert a no-confidence motion against him.

Caretaker PM lauds Emirati, Saudi...

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Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar thanked the Saudi government for its consistent support to Pakistan's economic stability and development. He particularly mentioned the large number of Pakistanis working in Saudi Arabia and requested the Saudi side to continue to extend all possible facilitation to them. The Prime Minister lauded the vision of the Saudi leadership and said that Saudi Arabia could always count on Pakistan as its trusted and reliable partner. The Saudi Ambassador reiterated that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are bound together in a fraternal relationship characterized by mutual trust and close cooperation on all bilateral and regional issues of common interest. Separately, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that he looked forward to working with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on advancing bilateral cooperation in various fields, especially trade, investment and energy. The prime minister, in a meeting with the UAE Ambassador Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, who called on him here, expressed gratitude for the UAE's support for Pakistan's economic and financial stability. The ambassador conveyed the greetings of the UAE leadership to the prime minister on his assumption of office. Prime Minister Kakar thanked the UAE government for the warm congratulatory messages and said that Pakistan and UAE enjoyed historic and deep-rooted fraternal ties.

Azerbaijan Airlines to launch...

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Pakistan - Islamabad, as well as to its largest cities - Lahore and Karachi. These three cities are important historical and cultural centers of Pakistan which makes them very interesting to visit. Flights from Baku to Islamabad will be performed on Wednesdays and Saturdays, to Lahore - on Mondays and Fridays, and to Karachi - on Thursdays and Sundays. This flexible schedule provides convenient options for travelers. The opening of new AZAL flights promises to promote the development of ties between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, promote tourism, international transportation and strengthen diplomatic relations. Customers can get acquainted with the flight schedule and purchase tickets on the official website of the airline www.azal.az/en or via AZAL mobile application.

Caretaker govt vows...

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that the Punjab government should investigate the events from all aspects so as to bring the perpetrators of the violent acts to justice. In a strong reaction to the condemnable act, PTI Spokesperson strongly condemned the local administration, police and state machinery for their failure to maintain law and order. The PTI held the administration, state machinery and police responsible for the incident, as it was the basic duty of the state to protect the safety of life and property of citizens without discrimination of colour, race, sex and religion.

Balochistan stepped into the digital age
DC Nushki's polite behavior, attachment to forests

MUMAZ AHMED BHATTI

THE inauguration of Balochistan's Digital Media Cell is a visionary stride by the Information Department Balochistan, signaling a dynamic leap into the digital age. This strategic endeavor not only showcases progressive thinking but also underscores the pivotal role of modern communication channels in engaging citizens. The dedicated cell's establishment is a momentous leap toward effectively harnessing

the potential of social media for transparent and efficient government communication. At its core, the Digital Media Cell has a profound mission - to dispel any misconceptions surrounding Balochistan.

It is a well-known challenge that regions often suffer from inaccurate portrayals based on outdated or incomplete information. With this innovative initiative, the government aims to counter such misperceptions through timely updates and by showcasing tangible, on-the-ground progress. Through real-time updates and the vivid display of project implementations, the Digital Media Cell will significantly alter perceptions, presenting an accurate image of Balochistan's burgeoning growth and development. This pioneering effort is the culmination of dedicated teamwork within the Information Department Balochistan. Secretary Information Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, Director General Public Relations Kamran Asad, and their team have been instrumental in

the conception, planning, and execution of the Digital Media Cell. This holistic approach marks a paradigm shift in government communication strategies, leveraging the potency of digital media to bridge the gap between accomplishments and public understanding, fostering an informed and engaged citizenry. This initiative echoes the Information Department Balochistan's unwavering commitment to embracing change, promoting transparency, and forging a stronger bond between the government and the public. The establishment of the Digital Media Cell is a significant stride towards dispelling misconceptions about Balochistan. A prevailing misconception is that development projects exist solely on paper, rather than materializing on the ground. With the establishment of Digital Media Cell, it will be possible to eliminate the misperceptions spread about Balochistan. And government performance will reach the people quickly. Deputy Commissioner Nushki, Captain

(R) Raja Athar Abbas, sets himself apart with remarkable qualities that distinguish him as an exceptional public servant. His expertise in afforestation, coupled with his deep understanding of forest ecosystems, underscores his outstanding leadership. Notably, Capt. (R) Raja Athar Abbas has introduced the unique idea of celebrating independence by planting 1947 saplings on Independence Day and ensured its successful execution. Beyond his environmental advocacy, Capt. (R) Raja Athar Abbas excels in his people-centric approach to governance. By eschewing conventional bureaucratic style and welcoming visitors with genuine courtesy and respect, he fosters a culture of mutual understanding between the government and Balochistan's citizens. This ethical conduct resonates as a testament to his impactful engagement and underscores his principled character. Capt. (R) Raja Athar Abbas's holistic approach to public service transcends administrative protocols.

His tireless efforts to promote environmental responsibility and positive citizen engagement set an example for peers and future bureaucrats. His multifaceted contributions underscore the transformative potential of a public servant, integrating sustainable practices and fostering respect and empathy as guiding principles. His legacy not only shapes the administrative landscape but propels Balochistan toward a sustainable and harmonious future. The Independence Day program organized by Capt. (R) Raja Athar Abbas for planting saplings was a beautiful demonstration of his commitment. The event came to life with the participation of Commissioner Rakhshan, Tariq Rehman Baloch, District Police Officer Asif Aleem Baloch, Chairman District Council Mir Muhammad Ali Mengal, and Chairman Municipal Committee Yasir Hayat Jamaludini. The commendable efforts of DFO Nushki, Muhammad Riaz Dehwar, contributed to the successful completion of the event.

Remembering President Soekarno and His Legacy



to Build Strong Foundation for Indonesia-Pakistan Relationship

Soekarno, the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, was an internationally acclaimed world leader, who is still remembered and respected for his significant contribution in promoting world peace with his progressive views and vision. Soekarno's vision, determination and dynamic energy inspired not only Indonesians but people around the world. He was a born leader and legacy of his struggle for Indonesia's independence is still significant in the present era.



Recently, UNESCO has designated Soekarno's famous speech titled "To Build the World Anew" as the Memory of the World (MoW) because of its historic significance in May 2023. The speech was delivered at the annual session of the 15th UN General Assembly in 1960 and made a great impact on the global stage. Born in 1901, Soekarno was a founding father of Indonesia, who spearheaded his nation to independence and became the first President of the Republic of Indonesia. As a visionary statesman, revolutionary politician, staunch nationalist and freedom fighter, he earned huge respect and admiration both in Indonesia and among the international community. Soekarno was widely acknowledged by the world as a strong supporter of independence movements around the world and successfully challenged domination of colonial powers at that time. In that speech, President Soekarno underscored the importance of equality, respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity among states disregarding their size or their respective socio-economic development. He also urged the UN to undertake reform process for improving its functioning as a global representative institution and to create fair opportunities for the newly independent states to take part in contributing to the world's peace and security. Soekarno's bold statements were ahead of his time. Fast forward to today's world, the issue of the reformation of the UN as global institution remains relevant regardless of how the context and geopolitical circumstances have altered since 1960. It was the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who in 1997 launched a more consistent approach to initiate the reform of the organization through Track One and Track Two reform proposals.



In his statement at the 15th Annual Session of UNGA, President Soekarno also introduced the national philosophy and ideology of Indonesia known as PANCASILA which captures universal values: (1) Belief in one God (2) Just and civilized humanity (3) Unity of Indonesia (4) Democracy (5) Social justice.

Simultaneously, he reminded the international community to remain vigilant in addressing global injustice and respecting fundamental freedom and human rights.

Soekarno the founding father of Indonesia

Soekarno's dynamic leadership and oratory skills helped mobilize and unite the diverse Indonesian population in their quest for independence. His strong sense of nationalism and dedication to the cause of Indonesian independence inspired millions making him the country's first truly national figure. He was a graduate from Bandung Institute of Technology in civil engineering and his political activities began in his early years at the university. He was one of the prominent student leaders, who advocated independence from the Dutch occupation and a member of the Indonesian National Party. The late 1920s witnessed the rise of Soekarno to a position of prominence among political leaders. During his rise to power, Soekarno didn't fight with guns but with his brain, his writings, and most important of them all his charisma that manifested in his roaring speeches. Indonesia is a multicultural nation with over 17,000 islands and diverse ethnic and religious groups. Therefore, the founding father of Indonesia Soekarno wisely devised the state ideology of Pancasila that encompassed the country's diverse society. The principles enshrined in five principles of Pancasila also provided basis to Indonesia's National Motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika", meaning Unity in Diversity. Soekarno's vision of Indonesia as a democratic country with pluralistic communities was comparable to Quaid-i-Azam's vision of Pakistan as a democratic and inclusive country where people from all backgrounds and religions could live in peace. Both of the country's founding fathers strongly supported social justice, economic prosperity for all citizens, and the value of national unity and tolerance.

Soekarno and Non Aligned Movement (NAM)

At the international arena, one of Soekarno's most significant accomplishment was hosting Asian-African (Bandung) Conference held on 18-24 April 1955 in Indonesia. The Conference brought together leaders from 29 Asian and African countries to promote decolonization process and to raise voice against imperialism. The 1955 conference marked the first summit-level meeting of the leaders of Asia and Africa and served the antecedent to the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) - a movement advocating for decolonization and strengthening relations between newly independent countries by expressing their neutrality in light of the Cold War rivalries. The Asian-African Conference in Bandung produced fundamental principles governing interstate relations which are still considered important. 'The Ten Principles of Bandung' was a political statement containing basic principles that would guide the efforts of developing countries to promote peace and cooperation in the world. Even today, the Conference's intellectual and political legacy of Soekarno, holds great significance for developing countries, sparking and stimulating regional initiatives for solidarity of Asia and African Union and South-South cooperation. The leaders of the Joint Secretariat who played important role in the success of Asian-African Conference (KAA). From right to left: Prime Ministers Ali Sastroamidjojo of Indonesia, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Muhammad Ali Bogra of Pakistan, U Nu of Myanmar, and Sir John Kotelawala of Sri Lanka. This image was taken on July 9, 1955. Archive by ANRI.



Soekarno's commitment to the struggle for independence for countries in Asia and Africa was one of the main foundations that formed the basis of Indonesia's diplomatic strategy in achieving strong foreign policy goals. Asian-African Conference in Bandung (1955) is part of Indonesia's diplomatic strategy to strengthen its role and influence at the international level and help create a more just and equitable global political atmosphere. As a prominent figure in Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Soekarno advocated for maintaining neutrality and independence from the Western and Eastern blocs during the Cold War. Following the vision of Soekarno, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is central to Indonesia's foreign policy and focuses on issues such as disarmament, economic development and achieving Sustainable Development Goals, poverty alleviation, establishing a just world order and international peace and stability.

10 Principles of Bandung (Dasa Sila)

- Right of self defence
- Equality of all nations
- Peaceful dispute settlement
- Non intervention or non interference
- No use of force against the territorial integrity
- Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation
- Respect for justice and international obligation
- Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity
- Respect for the purposes and the principles of the UN Charter
- Non collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers



New momentum to galvanize Global South cooperation was seized during the 50th anniversary of the Bandung Conference of Asian-African by the adoption of the Declaration of the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) in 2005. Furthermore, the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference of Asian-African was held in 2016 hosted by President Joko Widodo.

Today, Non-Aligned Movement has become the largest forum worldwide after the United Nations consisting 120 member states and representing almost 55% of the world population. NAM continues to become a positive power amid global geopolitical dynamics. It guides member states to work together to promote unity and cooperation between the Global South (developing countries) based on mutual interest, to preserve international peace and security and to realize social-justice in international economic system.

Soekarno's active role in strengthening Indonesia-Pakistan ties



Indonesia and Pakistan cherish strong bonds of friendship marked with lot of historic, religious and cultural similarities. These fraternal relations even precede the birth of the two countries as both the nations stood with each other during their respective freedom struggles. Soekarno, as a charismatic figure and proclaimer of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, had a very significant role in forming and strengthening diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Pakistan. On 17 August 1945, when Sukarno proclaimed Indonesia's independence from the Netherlands, then-President of All India Muslim League, Quaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah called on the Muslim units of the British Colonial Army stationed in the Far East to unite with their Indonesian compatriots against the Dutch colonial aggression. The participation of some 600 Muslim soldiers from the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent in the Indonesian War of Independence remains a glorious chapter in the history of both countries. Around 500 soldiers gallantly sacrificed their lives during the war and they are remembered with respect by both nations as heroes. Later, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's personal connection to the Indonesian freedom struggle again manifested further when he ordered to restrain a Dutch plane at Karachi airport carrying supplies for the colonial army in Jakarta. The successive meetings between Soekarno and Pakistani leaders right after the independence had been the starting point of a productive relationship between the two countries. With progressive political views and an anti-colonial spirit, Soekarno sought to strengthen relations with Pakistan and other countries in South Asia. This successful effort was marked by the opening of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1950. This journey, from the period of the struggle for independence to the present day, is full of important moments that mark cooperation, solidarity, and friendship between the two nations.

On 17 August 1995, Indonesia celebrated the golden jubilee of its independence and honored Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with the highest Civil Award of "ADIPURA" and granted Independence War Awards to the living ex-Pakistani soldiers in recognition of their role and contribution to the independence of Indonesia.



President Soekarno visited Pakistan four times during his tenure in office, in 1950, 1953, 1958 and 1963. During this period, President Iskandar Mirza and President Ayub Khan visited Indonesia in 1958 and in 1960 respectively. President Soekarno was also the first Indonesian president to address the Pakistani Parliament on June 26, 1963.

The frequent interaction of President Soekarno with the top leaders of Pakistan has great historical significance for as it laid the foundation of close cooperation and strong bilateral ties based on shared history and values, mutual trust and common interests. Following the establishment of the Indonesian Embassy in Karachi on January 23, 1950, the two countries sealed the Treaty of Friendship in Jakarta on April 21, 1953 and signed the Protocol to the Trade Agreement between the Government of Indonesia and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Jakarta, January 11, 1965. Soekarno's efforts to promote economic ties between Indonesia and Pakistan exemplified his commitment to fostering solidarity among newly independent nations and establishing strong international relations.

Tributes to President Soekarno

Soekarno was considered by his fellow countrymen and global citizens as a progressive leader who was persistent in his pursuit of independence and justice, both on a national and international level. His pivotal role in founding the Non-Aligned Movement, which helped developing nations preserve their neutrality and fight against pressure from major blocs in international politics, earned him high honors. Many countries in the South have paid tribute to Soekarno for his efforts to promote independence and liberation from colonialism. Soekarno Streets in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Cairo, Egypt; Ankara, Turkey; Rabat, Morocco;

Following President Soekarno's visits to Pakistan, high-level visits between the two countries kept on increasing. With the exception of the third Indonesian President, B.J. Habibie, all successive Indonesian presidents had visited Pakistan reflecting the importance which Indonesia attaches to Pakistan as a trusted friend. In this connection, President Joko Widodo's state visit to Pakistan in 2018 was a historic moment that gave new momentum to the two countries' bilateral relations. More structural relationship is also envisioned with the establishment of Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) by Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi and Foreign Minister of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto in December last year. In recognition of his continuous efforts for freedom from colonialism and equal rights, many countries in the world have paid tribute to Soekarno in the form of different monuments. Soekarno Streets in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Cairo, Egypt; Ankara, Turkey; Rabat, Morocco; Soekarno Drive in Dili, Timor Leste; and Soekarno Crescent in Ottawa, Canada are just a few examples. Three monuments of Soekarno have also been built in Algeria, Mexico and Pakistan, as an expression of respect for Soekarno's role and contribution for the cause of developing countries in the South.

Soekarno Square in Khyber Bazaar in Peshawar, Soekarno Bazaar in Lahore and Soekarno Tower in Larkana are symbols of friendship and acknowledgment of his great contribution in developing exemplary fraternal ties between Indonesia and Pakistan. Moreover,

Indonesia-Pakistan historic connections and cultural similarities have further strengthened the growing bilateral ties.

Despite being geographically apart, there are many aspects of each culture that are closely related. The influence of Islamic faith and tradition, rich art and music, delicious food and unique customs are some of the elements that bring people of our two brotherly countries emotionally and spiritually together.



Today, Indonesia and Pakistan with their combined population of almost half billion are two emerging economies and rapidly expanding their cooperation in a multiple areas of mutual interest including political, economic, socio-cultural, educational and security affairs. Both countries will commemorate a significant turning point in their historic relationship in 2025 when they celebrate 75 years of establishment of diplomatic ties. The bilateral trade reached all time high in 2022 to USD 4.2 billion and number of visitors from both countries is on the rise for business, education and tourism.



The educational linkages are playing a vital role in cementing a more fruitful people-to-people contacts. And we are happy to note that there have been increasing numbers of Pakistani students in the last three years pursue high level education in many best universities in Indonesia. The interactions at grass root level will eventually help strengthening bilateral relation between our two countries.



Pakistani students recipient of fully funded scholarship from Indonesian Government.

Now, Indonesia and Pakistan stand firm among the comity of nations as vibrant democracies and resilient nations with progressive outlook. The contribution, vision and consistent struggle of Soekarno and Muhammad Ali Jinnah has always been the source of inspiration in pursuit of achieving prosperity and stability for the two nations. The people of the Indonesia and Pakistan truly recognize and acknowledge the inspirational roles of their respective founding fathers, Soekarno and Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in their struggle for national independence and laid the foundation of strong nation and established the principles of mutual development, friendship and respect that define Indonesia-Pakistan bilateral relations today. Their legacy will continue to guide Indonesia and Pakistan to become more prosperous countries and to contribute positively for global peace and justice and socio-economic betterment of the world.

Briefs

Any attempt to sabotage CPEC will fail: Chinese CG

DNA

KARACHI: The Chinese Consul General in Karachi, Yang Yundong has emphasized that no attempt to undermine China-Pakistan friendship and the construction of CPEC will succeed. China has confidence, determination, and the capability to work together with Pakistan to overcome all difficulties and challenges, and to ensure that the development of our relations remains steady and moves forward in the long run. Chinese CG expressed these views during a meeting with a 51-member delegation from the Pakistan Chemicals and Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA) at the Chinese Consulate. This was the first instance in the country's history where such a large delegation of Pakistani traders had been invited to the Chinese Consulate. Nadeem Sheikh, Chairman PCDMA, Shahid Bashir, Vice Chairman, Arif Balgamwala, Chief Advisor, Chaudhary Naseer, Nasser Hyatt Maggo, Amin Balgamwala, members and Chinese Consulate officials also attended the meeting. Chinese CG said, "We hope that the business community, especially PCDMA and Pakistan Philatelic and Numismatics Forum (PPNF), will play a greater role in the future, expanding the scope of our cooperation, promoting the success story of China-Pakistan collaboration, further enhancing people-to-people connectivity between our two countries, and creating a broader and more profound impact."

Rupee plunges to 294.93 against US dollar

KARACHI: The Pakistani currency extended losses against the US dollar on Wednesday as it plunged by more than Rs3 against the greenback in the interbank market. The rupee closed at Rs294.93 in the interbank market after it fell by Rs3.42 against the US dollar. A day earlier, 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. Currency dealers attributed the depreciation of the local currency mainly to the formation of a caretaker setup at the Centre as the interim rulers are expected to vigorously implement the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions for the \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA). The latest devaluation of the rupee came a day after caretaker government led by Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar approved a massive hike in the petroleum prices, taking petrol and diesel to historic high of 290.45 and 293.40 per litre, respectively.—APP

Dozens injured as Israeli forces storm Nablus camp

Israeli forces say they destroyed a bomb-making lab in Balata refugee camp, but Palestinians said homes were destroyed

NEWS DESK

NABLUS: A large contingent of Israeli soldiers accompanied by a military bulldozer raided the Balata refugee camp, forced families to evacuate a residential building and then blew it up at about 3am on Wednesday. The incident overnight was among several raids by Israeli forces in the city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank. The raids left one Palestinian man seriously injured and destroyed the Fatah party's offices in Balata, in addition to the apartment building owned by Raed Shallal, the Palestinian Red Crescent and officials said. "We were forcibly evicted, and we could not take anything out of the house, even ID cards and school bags," Shallal, a 40-year-old father of seven, said. "We are now homeless, my wife and our children, the oldest is 12 and the youngest, a year and a half old." Also in Shallal's destroyed building was the family home of a Palestinian man wanted

by Israeli forces. More than 80 Palestinians suffered from tear gas inhalation during the raids, the Red Crescent said. Earlier, Israeli soldiers fired tear gas canisters at Palestinians in the eastern part of the city where they were providing cover for Israeli settlers who had stormed Joseph's Tomb, a shrine located within an area controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Israeli settlers frequently storm Nablus to perform prayers at the shrine under the guard of the Israeli army, believing that it is the tomb of the Prophet Joseph, while Palestinians say the tomb is only 200 years old and a Muslim man called Yousef Dweikat lived there. One man, Mohammed Leila, was shot five times in the chest and twice in the legs near the tomb and was seriously wounded. He was transferred to Rafidia Hospital in Nablus, Ahmed Jibril, the director of the Emergency and Ambulance Center at the Red Crescent, said. In a separate incident, another Palestinian was shot in his car by the Huwara checkpoint after

allegedly firing at soldiers there, but Israeli forces prevented ambulance crews from reaching him and arrested him instead. "Our medics were attacked and prevented from providing first aid to the injured man in his car," Jibril told media. "He was kidnapped by the soldiers and taken to an unknown destination." Jibril said medics and first aid teams are often attacked, whether by verbal assault, physical beatings, or being targeted by live and rubber bullets, during Israel's near-daily raids into the occupied West Bank. Speaking to Arab media, Nablus Governor Ghassan Douglas, a Palestinian official who monitors Israeli settlements in the Nablus region, said these acts by the Israeli army are "clear evidence of the arrogance of the Israeli occupation." "We recorded the damages in the camp in the aftermath of the raid, and we will rebuild everything that was destroyed and return the residents to their homes," he said. "This is a message to the Israeli occupation that the Palestinian people remain, despite

the siege imposed on them, until the occupation is defeated." In a statement, the Israeli military said its forces "blew up two laboratories for the production of explosive devices in the camp" and that 15 makeshift bombs were found at the site. The statement also said Israeli forces "neutralised a number of explosives planted on the entrance road to Balata". But Douglas accused Israel of hiding behind claims of carrying out operations against "terrorists", and said the Shallal building had housed four families. Shallal, who had previously spent seven and a half years in Israeli prisons, said this is not the first time a family home has been targeted. "Two months ago, the house of my brother and my mother was bombed, with the aim of forcing my brother Abdullah to turn himself in," he said. His mother Jamila Shallal, 60, said Israeli forces have been trying to arrest Abdullah since last December after they targeted her home with an ENERGA anti-tank grenade.

Niger coup backers call for mass mobilisation

WEB DESK

NIAMEY: Supporters of the Nigerien junta are calling for the mass mobilisation of citizens against the threat of military action by a west African regional bloc that is calling for the restoration of the country's deposed president, Mohamed Bazoum. With a delayed meeting of military chiefs of staff of the Ecowas bloc scheduled to take place later this week, regional tensions over the July coup against Bazoum appeared to be deepening, despite the junta's efforts to suggest they were open to talks. Following the expiry of an Ecowas ultimatum after the coup against Bazoum, led by members of his presidential guard, the group activated a "standby force" to restore democracy in Niger but has yet to deploy it. The latest moves in the crisis in the country — and a wider Sahel region that has been rocked by coups and jihadist insurgency — come amid tightening sanctions against Niger, even as representatives of the coup try to recruit regional backing.

US supports caretaker PM for free, fair polls

DNA

WASHINGTON: State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel has said that United States is looking forward to work with Pakistan's interim prime minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar and his team as they prepare to hold general elections. Briefing the newsmen in Washington, Vedant Patel said that the US will continue to partner with Pakistan on areas of mutual interest, including our interest on Pakistan's economic stability, prosperity, and security, and the conduct of free and fair elections and the respect for democracy and the rule of law. Replying to a question regarding recent terrorist attacks, he said that Pakistan and the US have shared interests in counterterrorism and regional stability and remain ready to work with Pakistan to combat militant and terrorist groups. "We also support Pakistan government's own efforts to combat terrorism and ensure the safety and security of its citizens in a manner that promotes the rule of law," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, Caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan receives Hamad Obaid Alzaabi, the Ambassador of UAE, as the bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and ways to enhance bilateral cooperation and matters of mutual interest were discussed. — DNA

Death toll hits 106 in Hawaii wildfires, expected to rise

WEB DESK

LAHAINA: A week after wildfires ravaged Hawaii's resort town of Lahaina, search and rescue efforts on Maui island continue, with officials saying that the death toll has risen to 106. "Currently, we have identified three individuals who are pending next of kin notification. At the time of this release, there have been 106 human remains recovered, awaiting identification," the office of Maui County said in a statement on Tuesday. "We offer our deepest condolences to the families who are beginning to receive notifications about their loved ones," Mayor Richard Bissen was quoted as saying in the statement. State Governor Josh Green warned on Tuesday that the death toll from last week's inferno on the island of Maui — already the deadliest US wildfire in more than a century — would grow significantly, urging Hawaiians to gird for a number that could be two or three times its present level. The US Department of Health and Human Services deployed a team of coroners, pathologists and technicians along with exam tables, X-ray units and other equipment to identify victims and process remains. Officials said they had collected DNA samples from 41 people whose relatives were missing. The island's police chief has said many of the bodies are so badly charred that they are unrecognisable, such was the ferocity of the blaze. "It's going to be a very, very difficult mission," Greene said. "And patience will be incredibly important because of the number of victims." The county said in a statement that Robert Dyckman, 74, and Buddy Jantoc, 79 were among the dead, the first people to be named. A further three victims have been identified, the county wrote, and their names will be released once they are identified. Residents desperate to get back to check on the homes they fled have expressed frustration at bans that have prevented people from getting into the town of Lahaina.

2 terrorists killed in Razmak IBO: ISPR

The security operation comes as Pakistan faces an uptick in terror activities, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, after the outlawed TTP ended its ceasefire with the government in November last year

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Two terrorists were killed by security forces in an intelligence-based operation in the Razmak area of North Waziristan district, the military's media wing said on Wednesday. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation was conducted on the reported presence of terrorists on the night of August 14/15. While carrying out the operation, security forces surrounded the terrorists' location and after an intense exchange of fire, "two terrorists were sent to hell", the ISPR said. Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the slain

terrorists, the statement said, adding that they "remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as extortion and target killing of innocent citizens". Sanitisation of the area was being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area, it said. "Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism," said the army's media affairs wing. The security operation comes as Pakistan faces an uptick in terror activities, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, after the outlawed TTP ended its ceasefire with the government in November last

year. On August 12, two people were killed in what police described were targeted attacks in North Waziristan. On August 8, two policemen were among four people killed in separate attacks in North Waziristan and Peshawar. Last month, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police said 665 militant attacks, including 15 suicide bombings, were reported in the province between June 18, 2022, and June 18, 2023. A report released in July by think tank Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies said the first half of the current year witnessed a steady and alarming rise in terror and suicide attacks, claiming the lives of 389 people across the country.

Media bodies felicitate President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Media Joint Action Committee representing, PFUJ, CPNE, AEMEND, APNS and PBA issued a statement thanking the President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi for formally approving and signing the PEMRA amendment Bill 2023. The Joint Action Committee in the statement said that we appreciate President Alvi's understanding of the need for these amendments, which are a first step towards making PEMRA independent, defining the often misused term "Fake News", ensuring that electronic media workers get paid on time, appointment of Chairman PEMRA by the Parliament instead of the Government and partially addressing the long pending demands of electronic media to rationalise the terms of license. Although there is still a long way to go to ensure freedom of speech and a free media, the current bill is a step in the right direction.

Pakistan crucially mobilized support for Afghan interim govt: Speakers

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI) hosted a webinar titled "Interim Afghan Government in Power - Two Years On". The webinar was moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. The speakers at the webinar included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb, Charge d'Affairs/ Minister Counselor, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Ms. Nargis Nehan, Former Afghan Minister of Mining and Petroleum, Ambassador Ayaz Wazir, Former Pakistani Diplomat, Dr Malick Ceasey, Head of Office, UNAMA Liaison Office, Islamabad, Ambassador Omar Samad, Nonresident Senior Fellow Atlantic Council and Mr. Adam Weinstein, Research Fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. The concluding remarks were given by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood stated that completion of the two year since Kabul's fall and the establishment of

Interim Afghan Government's was an important juncture to take stock. He recalled the several unanticipated developments including short timeline of eventual U.S./NATO troop withdrawal, meek response of ANDSF to Taliban advances, and sudden departure of the then Afghanistan President that shaped the turn of events culminating in the transition of 15 August 2021. He underscored Pakistan's role in mobilization of international support for preventing a humanitarian crisis and crafting a regional response with Afghanistan's neighbors through the establishment of Six Neighboring Countries platform. He added that besides humanitarian assistance, unfreezing of Afghanistan's financial assets was pivotal for building a sustainable economy in Afghanistan. He noted that while territorial control had been established and security environment had improved, terrorist attacks by Daesh/ISKP had continued. While shedding light on other challenges, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood pointed out that inclusive governance and girls' education and women's rights faced restrictions, while terrorist entities targeting Pakistan

remained a concern requiring concrete steps by the Interim Afghan authorities. He stressed that a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan was in the vital interest of Pakistan, while regional economic integration and connectivity — including through CPEC — would benefit all. In the wake of prevailing challenges and opportunities, Ambassador Mahmood stressed the need for all actors to ensure a prudent response, constructive engagement, and win-win outcomes. Ms. Amina Khan stated that initially, there was lack of clarity regarding the Taliban's return to power, but the past two years have provided significant insights into the Taliban's approach, which can be described as a blend of authoritarian policies and pragmatism. Despite lacking formal recognition, the group has consolidated their position as the de facto and not de jure political authority. In spite of shortcomings in the Taliban's governance structure, they have achieved some semblance of stability and security, visible pragmatism regarding the economy, clamped down on corruption and reduced poppy cultivation. However, major concerns continue to persist

regarding political and social cohesion, denial of basic yet fundamental human rights, and discrimination against women, further exacerbated by humanitarian crisis and presence of terrorist groups. She said learning from past mistakes is crucial as this is a rare chance for all Afghans to unite and focus on a political system that is inclusive, accountable, and one that serves the Afghan people. Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb highlighted the Interim government's achievements in Afghanistan's security and economy. He noted a substantial 90% reduction in poppy production and highlighted the efforts regarding drug addicts rehabilitation, which included a vocational program for drug addiction recovery. While shedding light on other achievements, he said that the economic achievements include combating food insecurity and poverty, reducing inflation from 18% to 9%, and strengthening the Afghan currency against the US dollar. Security measures also included a dedicated ports committee and women's involvement in commerce. Diplomatically, he mentioned that there has been active engagement and high-level meetings between the current dispensation and representatives of various countries and international organisations.

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