



Islamabad POST

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Joe Biden ready to meet Kim 'without preconditions'

Detailed News On Page-07

Xi to attend China-Africa Leaders' dialogue

Detailed News On Page-07

Australia's Sam Kerr eyes 2027 World Cup

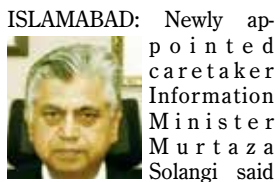
Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Govt to assist ECP in elections

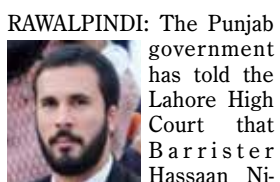
SAIFULLAH



ISLAMABAD: Newly appointed caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that the Election Commission of Pakistan was "solely" responsible for holding elections, not the interim government. "Elections are the responsibility of the ECP. Whether they choose to conduct them in 90 days or in February, we will not prolong our stay even by a single minute," he said during a press conference following the cabinet meeting. Solangi said the interim government was committed to providing "full cooperation" to the ECP in order to guarantee impartial and transparent elections throughout the country. He affirmed the commitment of the caretaker government to address the nation's challenges tirelessly, alongside its dedication to uphold the principles of "free and fair" elections.

Khan's nephew handed over to military

KHAYAM ABBASI



RAWALPINDI: The Punjab government has told the Lahore High Court that Barrister Hassaan Niazi who is the nephew of PTI Chairman Imran Khan has been handed over to the military. The LHC on Friday heard a petition filed for the recovery of the PTI lawyer Hassaan Niazi. During the hearing, the Punjab government submitted a report about Mr Niazi to the court. The provincial government informed that Mr Niazi was handed over to the military. The PTI lawyer and Imran Khan's nephew has been nominated as the main accused in the Jinnah House attack. The LHC has sought replies from the Punjab government and police on a habeas corpus petition challenging the alleged illegal detention of Mr Niazi.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.

- Editor

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Attack on minorities Kakar says Pak disowns perpetrators

Caretaker PM calls on nation to start envisioning 'Pakistani dream'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Two days after the Christian community in Faisalabad's Jaranwala was attacked over blasphemy allegations, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Friday said that the Pakistani state and society do not align and identify with the elements involved in attacks on the minority community. "They may be from us but they are divorced from our identity. We do not identify with them," he said while addressing the newly sworn in caretaker federal cabinet. The caretaker PM warned against any possible play between law and politics. "I know it is a polarised society and in this polarised environment we will try to differentiate between politics and law. There is a law and there is a rule of order. We would ensure that the rule of order is not compromised in any way. Rule of order would ensure and lead to rule of law," he said. In the same breath, he added that "if there is chaos and anarchy then no government system, secular or religious, could exist. So we know the sanctity of order and that would be kept at any cost". In a nod to the country's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his famous speech of August 11, 1947, Kakar said there would be "no identity-based rights" be prescribed. "Rights," he said, "will not be given to people on the basis of nouns, but rather on adjectives, on the basis of conduct, character and behaviour."

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Jaranwala: Indian agency's involvement traced

DNA

LAHORE: Agencies have detected alleged involvement of Indian intelligence agency in the Jaranwala incident, media reports said Friday. Startling revelations were made during the investigation of attack on churches in Jaranwala. Christian locality, churches and public property were put on fire in a tragic incident which took place in Jaranwala two days ago. According to the sources, the role of notorious intelligence agency of India was found in the unfortunate incident. It was a well-planned conspiracy to spread Muslim-Christian riots and concrete evidence has also been found. A heinous conspiracy was hatched to sow the seeds of discord and hatred among the minorities and Muslim population living peacefully in Pakistan. Some people were used against the Christian community under a well-organised plan hatched by the Indian intelligence agency. According to sources,

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NAB law amendments Justice Shah urges CJP for full court CJP remarked that the parties should present final arguments

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Justice Mansoor Ali Shah said on Friday that a full court should hear PTI Chairman Imran Khan's plea challenging amendments to the accountability laws. Justice Shah was part of a three-member Supreme Court (SC) bench, comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and Justice Ijazul Ahsan, that took up Imran's plea, which was filed last year in June. After coming to power in April last year, the then PDM government passed the National Accountability (Second Amendment) Act 2022 - a move that was heavily criticised by PTI, which termed the legislation an attempt to turn the anti-graft watchdog into a "toothless" organisation. At the outset of the hearing, Justice Shah said that the case concerning the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) law, the implementation of which was frozen by the apex court before it came into force, should



have been heard by a full court. "After the introduction of the law, [this] case should also be heard by a full court," Justice Shah said. He noted that the case had still not been decided, noting that the matter would have been different if it had. He urged the CJP to constitute a full court to hear the plea challenging amendments to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) law. Meanwhile, CJP Bandial remarked that the parties in the case should present their final arguments in the case at the next

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chauhdary calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. - DNA

Jalil Jilani assumes charge

Desires having cordial ties with int'l community



ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Amb Jalil Abbas Jilani has taken charge as Caretaker Foreign Minister of Pakistan. A former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Amb Jilani comes with extensive expertise in foreign affairs. He served as FS (2012-2013) & Amb to US, EU, Belgium, Luxembourg, & Australia. Jalil Abbas Jilani has said that Pakistan is desirous of having cordial relations with entire international community including China, the United States, European Union, Turkey and Arab countries.

In an exclusive talk with Radio Pakistan correspondent Ghazanfar Aziz, he said we want to strengthen our economic relations with these countries as well. Replying to a question about China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the Minister said he is proud of being a signatory of the CPEC in May 2013 during the Chinese PM visit to Pakistan. He said CPEC is a major flagship programme of the economic development of the country, and we have completed many development projects under the CPEC during the past ten years. Jalil Abbas Jilani said the next phase of CPEC will also be quite significant for Pakistan and accelerating pace of work on projects being carried out under the CPEC in IT, Agriculture, Railways, and in other sectors while utilizing Chinese expertise will be our foremost priority.

Cipher case Chairman PTI Imran Khan booked under Official Secrets Act The counter-terrorism wing of FIA had registered the case

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: After a first information report (FIR) against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, registered by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), invoked Section 5 of the Official Secrets Act 1923, the former prime minister has been booked under the said law in the cipher case, media reported. The counter-terrorism wing of the FIA had registered the case against the former prime minister - who was ousted from office after a no-confidence motion in April last year - after ascertaining his deliberate involvement in misusing the classified document following a probe. The government sources, on Thursday, also confirmed that the PTI chief has been booked under Section 5 of the recently-amended act. However, authorities displayed reluctance in

'Imran could be poisoned in jail'

DNA

LAHORE: Bushra Bibi, the wife of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan, has voiced concerns about her incarcerated husband's security and safety, saying he "can be poisoned" in Attock jail. In a letter written to the Punjab home secretary, the former first lady said the court had directed authorities concerned to shift his husband to Adiala jail in Rawalpindi. "My husband has been imprisoned in Attock jail without any justification. According to the law, my husband

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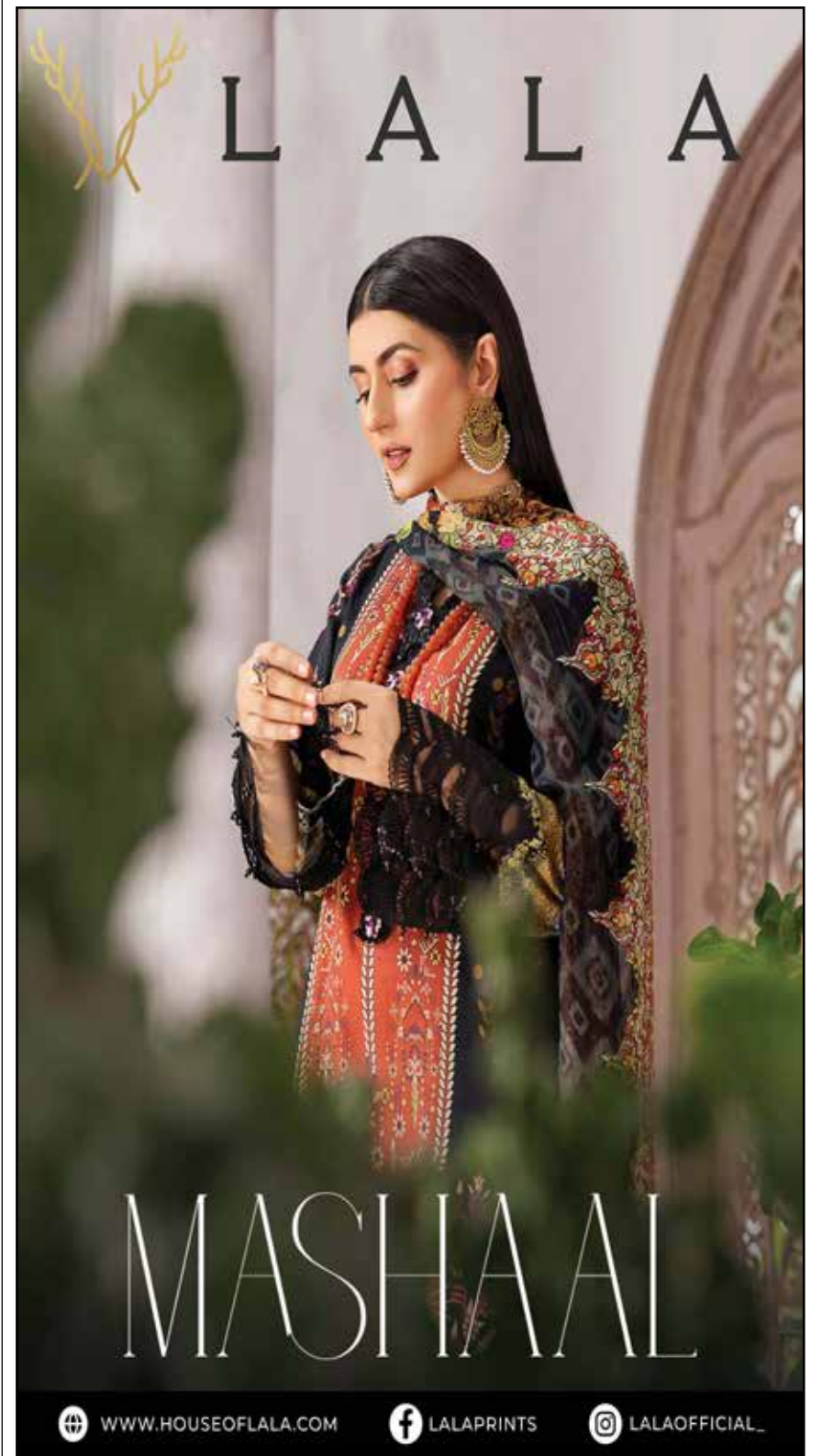
Netherlands says US has approved F-16s to Ukraine

WEB DESK

AMSTERDAM: The United States has given its approval for the Netherlands to deliver F-16s to Ukraine, the Dutch defence minister said on Friday, in a major gain for Kyiv even though the fighter jets will not have an immediate impact on the almost 18-month war. "I welcome the US decision to clear the way for delivery of F-16 jets to Ukraine. It allows us to follow through on the training of Ukrainian pilots," Dutch Defense Minister Kaja Ollongren said in a message on the social platform X, formerly known as Twitter. "We remain in close contact with European partners to decide on the next steps." Ukraine has long pleaded for the sophisticated fighter to give it a combat edge. It recently launched a long-anticipated counteroffensive against the Kremlin's forces without air cover, placing its troops at the mercy of Russian aviation and artillery. Apart from delivering the warplanes, Ukraine's allies also need to train its pilots. Washington says the F-16s, like the advanced US Abrams tanks, will be crucial in the long term as Kyiv faces down Russia. The Netherlands is part of a Western coalition that also includes Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom that in July pledged to train Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16s. Washington must give its blessing because the planes are made in US. Dutch FM Wopke Hoekstra said in a message on X that US clearance to send F-16s to Ukraine "marks a major milestone" in Ukraine's defence.

Drone attack hits building in Moscow

MOSCOW: Russian officials have accused Ukraine of launching a drone attack on a building in Moscow, causing an explosion that was heard across the city's business district. Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said air defences had shot down the drone with its debris falling on the city's Expo Center. It marks the latest in a series of such attacks on the Russian capital. Unverified footage on social media appeared to show thick grey smoke rising into the night sky over Moscow. There was no immediate comment from Ukraine, but officials in Kyiv have never formally acknowledged launching attacks on targets in Moscow. The attack occurred at around 04:00 local time (01:00 GMT). Russia's defence ministry said on Telegram. It said that, after activating the city's air defence systems, the drone had "changed its flight path", falling on a non-residential building on the Krasnopresnenskaya Embankment, an area of Moscow which hosts a number of government buildings. It added that there were no initial reports of casualties. The Expo Center is a large exhibition space used for conferences and conventions and is situated less than 5km (3.1 miles) from the Kremlin. - Agencies

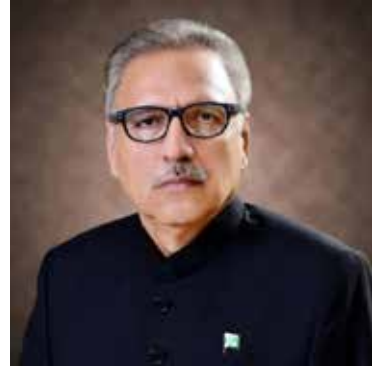


Alvi appealed for signing 'protection of family life' bill

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: More than 300 teachers working in Federal Capital's schools under wedlock have appealed to President Dr Arif Alvi to sign the much-awaited legislation titled "Protection of Family Life & Wedlock Bill 2023" passed by both Houses of the Parliament, the National Assembly and the Senate. After the President's signature the bill is destined to become an Act of Parliament and the wedlock teachers who have been working in Islamabad's schools for the last many years, would be settled once for all along with their families in the federal capital on a permanent basis. The National Assembly of Pakistan had passed the bill in the last week of May 2023 while the Senate passed it on August 7, almost 12 days ago. Recently, the president returned a number of bills raising some objections or on technical grounds but thankfully the Protection of Family Life bill was not among those 13 bills and according to a senior official of the President House, since there was no objection on the bill, the president would most probably sign it on Saturday (today). However, another official said the bill was not forwarded by the Prime Minister's

Office because the president never delays nor suspends a bill of public



interest. "As soon as he receives the bill, he will sign it," he assured. The delay is at the end of either the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs or the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and you need to check with them, he said. The bill was passed as a result of years of struggle by these wedlock teachers, majority of them are women whose husbands are working in Islamabad. Under wedlock policy, there was a 10pc quota for teachers working in Islamabad's schools and under that quota they are entitled to absorption but for the last many years this was not being implemented.

A couple of years ago, the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) had started sending repatriation letters to these teachers asking them to go back to their parent departments in Punjab, KP, Sindh, AJK and Balochistan, even GB. Having no one to come to their aid, they moved petitions in the Islamabad High Court and got temporary relief.

Meanwhile, they launched a campaign for absorption and approached different parties such as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Interestingly, in both the National Assembly and the Senate PTI members took up their case and presented the bill for House's approval. The PPP also supported them.

The bill is now at the president's table and we have great expectations from our president and the leadership to feel our hardships and sign the bill for one-time absorption, said one of the lady teachers on wedlock. She said in case the bill is not signed, the lady teachers would face hardships which are beyond one's imagination. The FDE too would relieve us without waiting for a single moment, she said and appealed to the President on behalf of all 300 teachers to sign it without further delay.

Bid to smuggle four leopard skins foiled

PESHAWAR: The Wildlife Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has foiled a bid to smuggle four skins of rare snow leopard and arrested four poachers on Hazara Expressway on Friday. "The seizure and arrest came in the wake of prior information about smuggling of skins to Islamabad from Hazara," informs Sardar Nawaz SDFO Wildlife Department Abbottabad. On receiving information, checking was started on Hazara Havelian road during which the four smugglers were arrested along with preserved skins of snow leopards. The recovered skins included one large and three small, apparently of a mother and three of her cubs, adds Sardar Nawaz. Initial investigation revealed that the smugglers were bringing these skins from Ghizer district of Gilgit Baltistan for taking it to Islamabad, SDFO told media men. —DNA

PTA, PITB inaugurate Lahore IXP

LAHORE: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) on Friday marked a historic milestone with the inauguration of the Lahore Internet Exchange Point (IXP). The inauguration ceremony was held at Arfa Software Technology Park (ASTP) with esteemed industry leaders, government officials, vital stakeholders and prominent Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in attendance. International stakeholders namely Internet Society (ISOC), Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC) and Japan Registry Services (JPRS) attended the event remotely. The launch event featured presentations and insightful speeches from key industry figures, emphasizing the IXP's potential to enhance digital infrastructure and support the growth of Pakistan's internet economy. —APP

Caretaker cabinet to be selected soon: Baqar

KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar on Friday said that he would select a small cabinet for which he has started meetings and consultation, but the effort is to induct the cabinet at the earliest. This he said while talking to the media at Mazare-Quaid where he laid a wreath and offered Fatcha. Caretaker CM said that he was grateful to Almighty Allah who gave him an opportunity to serve the people of the province for a short time. "I am keen to play my part to contribute to the realization of the dream of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah," he said. To a question, the caretaker chief minister said that he has started meetings to select his cabinet. "In the first phase a few names [for caretaker ministers] would be selected and then the process would be completed in the second," he said and add-



ed he was trying to select well-reputed people for his caretaker cabinet. Replying to a question, Justice Baqar said that rule of law, conviction, and commitment were prerequisites for the improvement of the governance and the government system. How it would be achieved is the question to which he replied 'by following the constitution'. To a question about delaying the general election, Justice Baqar said that we should avoid being sceptical. "It is premature to develop such an argument let the process start," he said and added it was the responsibility of the

election commission to determine to hold the general election, and the caretaker government was bound to facilitate them, but he assured that he would not be a part of any unconstitutional arrangement. To another question, the caretaker CM denied having any information about initiating the accountability process in the Center and the provinces. "As a matter of fact, there should be the accountability of everyone, including me, you - the media, and the government servant but it must be done within the parameters of the constitution and by those institutions which have the authority," he said. He said that accountability should not be conducted under mala fide intentions. "During the 76 years of history of the country, the accountability process has remained counterproductive and such gimmicks did not produce results," he said. —APP



ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmoos Chaudhary calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. —APP

Hassan Niazi handed over to military for trial, LHC told

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) was informed on Friday that Hassan Niazi, the nephew of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, had been handed over to the military for investigation and trial in a case of attacking the Jinnah House (corps commander's house in Lahore), during May-9 vandalism. It was stated in a report, filed by the police authorities through Additional Advocate General (AAG) Punjab Ghulam Sarwar Nihang before Justice Sultan Tanvir Ahmad, who was hearing a habeas corpus petition, filed by Hafeezullah Niazi for recovery of his son, Hassan Niazi. The AAG submitted that Hassan Niazi was nominated in the Jinnah House attack case and he was a key suspect. He submitted that the accused was arrested from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and he was handed over to the military on an application of the commanding officer, after fulfilling all legal requirements. The petitioner's counsel alleged Hassan Niazi was handed over to the military without adopting legal process, and pleaded with the court to issue directions for a meeting of his client with the accused. To which, the court asked the AAG whether he had any objection to the meeting of the father and son. —APP

Neelum-A picturesque bounty of Nature

NEELUM: Nature has bestowed mankind with countless bounties in the form of snow-covered mountains, gushing rivers and streams and above all soothing views of captivating lush green plains and tall pines. Amongst the rich tourism heritage of the country stands tall the Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir with its mountainous, semi-hilly terrain-oriented topographic picturesque views with its rivers, waterfalls, lakes, watercourses and valleys. One of the enchanting valleys of the AJK region usually symbolized by people as 'Paradise on Earth' is Neelum Valley - much famous, the most beautiful and soothing tourist spot in the hilly terrains of Kashmir. Named after the blue colored water river Neelum - flowing through the valley in snake curves,

the 1398 sq kilometer area Neelum Valley has the district Headquarter status in Muzaffarabad with a total population of over 200,000 inhabitants. Some historians also claim the reference comes from a precious stone Neelum. Located at North and North East of Muzaffarabad, the Neelum Valley is situated parallel to Kaghan Valley and has exceptional significance due to snow-clad mountains, the gushing Neelum river and the most favorite Trout fish. "This is really a bounty of Nature. Its enchanting views and soothing atmosphere tempts visitors to come here again and again," said an Islamabad based tourist Rashid Mahmood. "Although Northern Areas of our countries are world known for their beauty, the Neelum valley has its unique status amongst the

tourist spots of the country," he remarked. He also suggested to authorities for properly highlighting such beautiful tourists spots of the country also ensuring an easy access and affordable living in the valley to flourish the tourism business in AJK. Dipped in amazing beauty, the valley attracts hundreds of thousands local and foreign tourists every summer who enjoy their voyage to this region through adjoining Kaghan Valley or the Noori Top. There are also several minor passes to drive into the area. Around 43 kilometers from State capital Muzaffarabad, the area is also famous for fruits and precious mineral resources comprising series of mines at specific localities. The minerals extracted from here as well as fruits like apples, apricots

Pakistan needs environment friendly energy: Exports

DNA
ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH organized webinar on "Co-combustion of Coal and Biomass for Clean Electricity Generation", which was delivered by Prof. Dr. Shahid Munir, chairperson of Punjab higher education commission. Coordinator General, COMSTECH Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary welcomed the participants and introduced the speaker. He appreciated the contribution of Prof. Munir toward his field of expertise, academic excellence, and research productivity. Prof.

Munir said that the big challenge in the 21st century is to provide cheaper energy to everyone in environment friendly manner. He said that the energy need will increase by 300% by the end of the 21st century. He said that the electricity generation is linked with the environmental pollution. Prof. Munir mentioned that the global average surface temperature has increased by about 0.6 centigrade and this is projected to increase by 1.4 to 5.8 centigrade by 2100. Prof. Munir said that Pakistan generates 61% electricity from thermal (oil, gas and coal), 24 %

from hydel, 12% from nuclear, and 3% from renewable sources. He said that Pakistan is in the serious crisis of oil and gas shortages. He said the coal is a game changer for Pakistan. Pakistan has coal reserves worth about USD 30 trillion, and this reserve can provide 100,000 MW of electricity for more than 500 years. Prof. Munir said that co-combustion of coal with biomass is gaining popularity with the electric utilities producers because it is relatively cheaper, low risk, sustainable, and renewable way of generating green power in utility plants.



LAHORE: August 18 - Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad, Archbishop Sebastian, Bishop Azad Marshal addressing a press conference on Jordanvalla issue under the auspices of Majlis Ulema Pakistan at Press Club. —APP

Uzbek Envoy expects bilateral trade with Pakistan to touch \$1 billion in couple of years

KARACHI: Pak-Uzbek bilateral trade with consecutive annual growth of over 50 percent is expected to touch \$1 billion in the next two years owing to transit and preferential trade agreements between both countries. Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan Oybek Arif Usmanov said at a meeting during a visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) on Friday. He informed that trade between Uzbekistan and Pakistan has constantly grown at a pace of 50 to 55 percent annually during the last three years starting from US\$50 million to US\$240 million last year whereas. The Transit Trade Agreement signed in 2021 and Preferential Trade Agreement inked in 2022 facilitated growth while \$1 billion trade roadmap has also been signed by the joint ministerial commission on Fi-



nance, he stated and added "We, hence, expect trade volume to reach US\$400 million by the end of this year and hopefully, it would reach US\$1 billion in the next two years." Uzbek Envoy said that Liberalization of economy, business-friendly policies and facilitation of banking & finance have resulted in industrial and agricultural growth along with technology and innovation and Uzbekistan

has not just become an emergent economy of Central & South Asia but also in the global arena." He mentioned that Karachi was always dear to the hearts and minds of the Uzbek people which can be gauged from the fact that after Uzbekistan's independence, the first flight arrived in Karachi while the first Consulate General of Uzbekistan was also opened in Karachi. Regular flights between Tashkent and Karachi and the exchange of trade delegations helped to maintain good business relations, building trust and cooperation as well as diplomatic relations, he observed and assured: "Uzbek Government is always ready to adopt any model or mechanism which facilitates traders, industrialists and transport companies of both countries." Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan were likely to meet at

the ministerial level in October 2023 to discuss Trilateral Trade Agreement on transit trade, transport facilitation and tariff ease, he informed. President KCCI Mohammed Tariq Yousuf, while underscoring the need to explore new avenues between the two countries for trade and investment growth suggested expanding trade and investment ties and setting up a proper banking channel. Highlighting potential of import of cotton from Uzbekistan and undertaking joint ventures in the value-addition of textile products in Pakistan he said that dyeing, stitching and all other facilities for value-addition were easily available along with the expertise in Karachi while possibilities for enhancing trade and investment cooperation also exist in the agriculture, pharmaceutical, —DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

August

Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Syria
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Burkina Faso
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day

Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay
Independence Day

Aug 30 /Turkey
Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz
Republic
Independence Day

Aug 31/Malaysia
National Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
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

Serena Hotels Adventure Diplomacy

Services of mountaineers of Pakistan recognized

Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, mentioned Samina was the start of our sponsorship of the Adventure Diplomacy Initiative and since then, we at Serena Hotels have been actively promoting different high altitude adventure sports, through different activities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels under its Adventure Diplomacy initiative has always been active in supporting mountaineers and other high-altitude sports in Pakistan. Serena Hotels sponsored Samina Baig, the acclaimed young female mountaineer from Pakistan for her early summits when there was little to no support available to the mountaineering community. Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, mentioned Samina was the start of our sponsorship of the Adventure Diplomacy Initiative and since then, we at Serena Hotels have been actively promoting different high altitude adventure sports, through different activities. Samina went on to summit the world's top 7, starting from Mount Everest to K2, she was awarded the Pride of Performance in 2015 along with her brother Mirza Ali Baig.



Sirbaz Khan, another renowned high-altitude mountaineer who has summited 12 of fourteen of the eight-thousanders is another adventure sportsman who denotes his earlier achievements to Serena Hotels due to its patron-

age. He is among the very few who did so without the use of supplementary oxygen, which is an extraordinary feat. The evening was dedicated to celebrating all the skilled mountaineers of Pakistan such as Sirbaz Khan, Sajid

Sadpara, Samina Baig, Nazir Sabir, Ashraf Aman, Mirza Ali Baig, Abdul Joshi, Abdul Jabbar Bhatti, to name a few. Nazir Sabir and Ashraf Aman, veteran mountaineers shared their inspirational stories to motivate the aspiring

mountaineers in attendance. The attendees observed one minute of silence in honour of the precious lives lost in the pursuit of dreams for 'Ali Akbar Sakhi' who lost his life during his expedition to K2, the legendary 'Muhammad Ali Sadpara' and the recent loss of 'Muhammad Hassan'. The Nepalese Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Tapas Adhikari, also graced the occasion with his presence and exchanged insights with the guests as 8 of the of the Fourteen eight-thousanders are in Nepal. Also in attendance was the Canadian First Secretary for Political and Public Affairs at the High Commission of Canada, and an adventure sports enthusiast Ms. Amanda DeSadeleer. This event was meant to showcase the immense talent of Pakistan and present those whose dreams are accomplishing the impossible with the chance to meet others who can help, inspire them to keep climbing and aiming high.

Sugar mafia pushes country into another crisis

People are being charged Rs 60 more for a kg of sugar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Friday that despite the unbearable inflation in the country, the sugar mafia has created a new sugar crisis in the country for the sake of profit. The influential mafia has increased the price of sugar by ten rupees per kg. Now sugar is available at 160 rupees per kg in urban centres, while it is available for Rs 170 in villages, he said.

In a statement issued here today, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that the caretaker government should control the sugar mafia from stealing undue profits from the masses, as it can lead to the bankruptcy of many businesses relying on sugar. He said that the previous government raised a lot of slogans, but at the same time, the sugar mafia was given a free hand. The present government should completely stop the export and smuggling of sugar so that the price of sugar will be reduced in the market and provide

relief to the masses. Dr. Mughal said that even after adding all the expenses and profits of the sugar mills, wholesalers, and retailers, the price of sugar should not be more than one hundred rupees per kg. However, the people are being charged sixty rupees more per kg, which has no justification, he observed. The sugar mafia has stored hundreds of thousands of tonnes of sugar in warehouses for profit, and if a crackdown is launched, its price will drop to one hundred rupees per kg in a day. He said that the

price of steel bars has also been increased up to Rs. 10,000 per tonne, and now it is selling at Rs. 280,000 to Rs. 290,000 per tonne in cities and up to Rs. 300,000 per tonne in rural areas. The construction activities will be badly affected by this decision; therefore, something needs to be done in this regard, he demanded. He said that the first two days of the caretaker government have been very heavy on the people as their cost of living has jumped significantly.

Ali takes oath as caretaker Minister for Petroleum

ISLAMABAD: Former SECP chairman and expert auditor Muhammad Ali assumed the charge of caretaker Federal Minister for Energy, Power, and Petroleum on Friday. Muhammad Ali has over 30 years of domestic and international work experience in the public and private sectors, including as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan. He also chaired the Committee on Power Sector Audit, Circular Debt Resolution and Future Roadmap which prepared a detailed report for reforming Pakistan's power sector, and was a member of the negotiation team which successfully negotiated revised power tariff and signed the MoUs with private power producers, said a press release issued here. Ali is the founder of some of the leading companies in Pakistan including In-box Business Technologies, Converge Technologies, Elixir Securities, and Al-Shaheer Corporation (Meat One is the consumer brand). He has also worked and set up firms in the USA, Canada, and UAE, and served on Boards of leading Pakistani corporates, stock exchange, credit rating agency, Federal Board of Revenues' Tax Advisory Group, and Government of Pakistan's Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet. From 2011-2013, Ali served as the Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), the apex regulator for the corporate, insurance, and financial sector of the country other than banking, where he successfully revamped the capital market and corporate governance landscape of Pakistan by ensuring successful passage and implementation of various laws through the country's Parliament. —APP

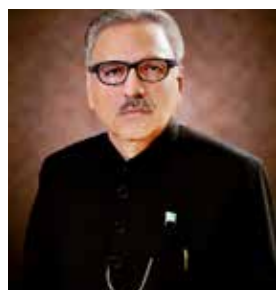
Caretaker govt to try its best to fulfill responsibilities: Minister

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Human Rights, Khalil George Friday reiterated his government's commitment to progress the country at a fast pace and would try our best to fulfill our responsibilities to hold a fair and timely general election. Talking to media, he said the caretaker government during its tenure would leave exemplary guidelines for the next government about the existing challenges in different sectors. The welfare of the people was a priority of the government and every effort would be made to serve the masses of the country, he added. He assured that the responsibilities of the government would be managed efficiently during his tenure. Minister affirmed his firm commitment to take all possible measures for the promotion and protection of human rights including the rights of women, children, and minorities in Pakistan.—APP

No Leniency! President enhances penalty upon woman harasser

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has enhanced the penalty for workplace harassment, imposed upon the Director for Human Resource Management (HRM) in NEPRA, to "dismissal from service". He held that sending text messages to a female colleague, asking her to stay in the office beyond office hours with an ulterior motive, making unwanted advances, and intimidating her to face dire consequences in case of her refusal to assent to his unethical demands constituted harassment, and warranted no leniency. While deciding upon a workplace harassment case, the President in his decision wrote that statements of the complainant,



witnesses, CCTV footage, WhatsApp messages, and the email fully established the factum of harassment. He said that the accused himself had also admitted his guilt by implication and his only grievance before the President was regarding the severity of punishment. "The principle of reasonableness and proportionality demands that the penalty is modified to dismissal as it is commensurate with the gravity of the offence", he added. The President rejected the representation filed by Mr Ahmad Nadeem (the accused), Director HRM in National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and changed the minor penalty of "withholding two increments" imposed by the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (FOSPWAH) to "dismissal from service". Earlier, a female Office Assistant (the complainant), had filed workplace harassment in NEPRA alleging that the accused used to call her into his office, discussed personal matters, passed comments on her looks, tried to physically approach her, invited her to have lunch and dinner, and used

to send unnecessary and inappropriate text messages. The Internal Harassment Committee (IHC) of NEPRA conducted a detailed inquiry and concluded that the allegations of harassment stood established against the accused and recommended imposing the major penalty of "reduction to a lower post" from Director to Deputy Director. Both the complainant and the accused filed representations with FOSPWAH, subsequent to which FOSPWAH reduced the penalty of "reduction to lower post" to "withholding of two increments for a period of three years". Later, both the accused and the complainant filed separate representation with the President against FOSPWAH's decision. The President held a personal hearing of the case, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

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Murtaza Solangi meets Marriyum Aurangzeb

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Friday met with former information minister and Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb. During a visit to the residence of former Member National Assembly Tahira Aurangzeb in Rawalpindi, the caretaker information minister discussed with the former information minister the overall situation of the country and the issues related to the Ministry of Information

and Broadcasting. Marriyum Aurangzeb congratulated Murtaza Solangi on assuming charge as caretaker information minister. She prayed for him to successfully perform national responsibility as caretaker information minister. The caretaker information minister Murtaza Solangi also met with the children and family members of Marriyum Aurangzeb. Murtaza Solangi congratulated former Information Minister Maryam Aurangzeb for running the Information Ministry in the best possible manner during 16 months of the PDM tenure. Appreciating Marriyum Aurangzeb, he said that the

enactment of the PEMRA (Amendment) Bill 2023 was a manifestation of democratic credentials and consultation skills. Solangi said that he would try to continue the standard of performance that she had established. Earlier on the arrival, Marriyum Aurangzeb along with her mother Tahira Aurangzeb and other family members welcomed the Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and also presented him with a bouquet of flowers. Murtaza Solangi thanked Tahira Aurangzeb, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Hasan Aurangzeb and other family members for their good wishes and congratulations.

WHD to be observed on Aug 19

No matter the danger or the hardship, humanitarians venture deep into disaster-stricken regions

ISLAMABAD: Like other parts of the world, "The World Humanitarian Day" would be observed on August 19 across the country. The Day is observed every year to honor humanitarian aid workers all over the world. Established by the UN in 2009, this day commemorates the anniversary of the bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Iraq in which 22 people lost their lives, including the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights. The day pays tribute to the thousands of humanitarian workers who gave their lives and suffered injuries in the course of their work. Did you know that at one point in 2021, 235 million people in 26 countries required humanitarian assistance? On one occasion of this holiday, people celebrated with the theme 'Human Race'. This holiday is a commemoration, but it can also be exciting and fun. Humanitarian aid workers provide life-saving assistance to suffering people all over the world. Those workers who live in conflict zones or in areas devastated by natural disasters are especially vulnerable. Anyone and everyone can be a humanitarian, so read on to learn more about the day and how you can help. On 19 August, we come together to honour humanitarians around the world who strive to meet ever-growing global needs. No matter the danger or the hardship, humanitarians venture deep into disaster-stricken regions and on the front lines of conflict, strive to save and protect people in need.—APP

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Briefs

Weekly inflation up by 0.78 percent

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.78 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on August 17, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 275.57 points as compared to 273.43 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 27.57 percent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, increased by 0.36 percent and went up to 280.67 points from last week's 279.66 points. The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased by 0.43 percent, 0.51 percent, 0.64 and 0.98 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 32 (62.75%) items increased, 07 (13.72%) items decreased and 12 (23.53%) items remained stable.—APP

ANF foils bid to smuggle over 2.5 tons drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has foiled a major international drug smuggling attempt and recovered over 2.5 tons of drugs. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, a large quantity of drugs was recovered during a grand intelligence-based operation conducted in the Basohli area in Turbat. During the raid, more than 2.5 tons of drugs including 2080 kg hashish, 290 kg heroin and 195 kg Ice drug were seized from a house. The decorative writing of Afghani products is visible on the drug packets which were stored in the house to smuggle abroad, by sea. The spokesman informed that ANF has started investigation against the drug smugglers.—APP

Minister ensure passengers' safety

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Captain (R) Shahid Ashraf Tarar on Friday vowed to ensure the safety of the passengers and the best facilities during train travels. The Minister shared the remarks after taking charge of his office said. Officials of the Ministry of Railways were present on the occasion. Federal Secretary Railways Syed Mazhar Ali Shah briefed the Minister on the administrative and operational functions of the Railways. He directed the Ministry staff to take all possible measures for the convenience of the passengers. Shahid Tarar instructed the department concerned to conduct an audit and assessment regarding the safety of passengers and submit a report within seven days.—APP

‘Emerging trends in aerospace power: Options for Pakistan’

The success of the aerospace programme hinges not only on recognizing the significance and utility of aerospace technologies in socio-economic and national security domains, but also on harmonizing national endeavours to attain these goals

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: A seminar titled “Emerging Trends in Aerospace Power: Options for Pakistan” was conducted by the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore. Aerospace power is the ability to use air and space capabilities to achieve wide-ranging civil and military objectives in economic, commercial and scientific domains. Pakistan stands at the threshold of numerous opportunities to capitalize on emerging trends like space exploration, satellite technology, unmanned aerial system, and electric propulsion of green aviation. The seminar focused on options for Pakistan regarding aerospace power. Air Commodore Khalid Iqbal (Retd), Director National Security, CASS, Lahore, delivered the introductory remarks. His speech was followed by a keynote address by Major General Ahmed Bilal (Retd), former Chairman Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), who highlighted the prevalent global aerospace trends. Dr Ali Sarosh, Associate Professor, Air University, focused on the evolution of Space power in South Asia, including its military and civil applications while Professor Dr Ahmed Saeed Minhas, DHA Sufia University elucidated on gaps in



international Space law and viable developmental strategy for Pakistan's Space programme. Following the guest speakers' remarks, an extensive question and answer session was held to delve into the depths of the topic. Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS Lahore, in his concluding remarks, said that Pakistan's national space policy should prioritize private sector participation in research and development, and encourage commercial sector involvement. He added that Pakistan should focus on space

technologies, infrastructure, industrial, technological potential, and human resource. He further said that the national security strategy of a country recognizes the importance of maintaining access to space, considering that space-related technologies are crucial for determining a nation's military strategy. The President also said that Pakistan must integrate space-related services in the mainstream setups for better governance, efficient functioning, sustainable development,

and social well-being. The most important takeaways from the seminar were: A three pronged National strategy be pursued as the ‘Way Forward’: Firstly, ensure full scale applicability of available Aerospace capability and resources for socio-economic development and national security; Secondly, achieve self-sufficiency/indigenization as far as possible in the short/ medium term, meeting the basic needs over complete spectrum of Aerospace; and Thirdly, synergize

The National effort for sustained growth of the Aerospace sector. The national space policy should be based on realistic objectives, considering ground realities, national ambitions, and the international environment. It should be a well-thought-out institutional mechanism that creates linkages between state-controlled and commercial activities, ensuring preservation of national priorities and safeguarding state interests. There is a need to rejuvenate the National Space Policy to generate a new vigor towards development of space capability and capacity for application in civil and military domains. At the international level, the space sector is growing exponentially, with public-private partnerships (PPP) in R&D aimed at acquiring next-generation capabilities. To ensure the success of Pakistan's space programme, it is crucial for the national leadership to set goals, allocate resources, and develop a credible infrastructure. The success of the aerospace programme hinges not only on recognizing the significance and utility of aerospace technologies in socio-economic and national security domains, but also on harmonizing national endeavours to attain these goals.

Three street criminals arrested

RAWALPINDI: In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police here on Friday arrested three street criminals and bike lifters and recovered Rs 35,000, four motorcycles, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Taxila police arrested three members of a gang including Yousaf, ringleader, Qudratullah and Asim, wanted in various cases. Police recovered Rs 35,000, four motorcycles, weapons and other items from their possession. Superintendent of Police, Pothohar Muhammad Waqas Khan appreciated the police team and directed them to accelerate operations against street criminals and other lawbreakers.—APP

Police arrest nine

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police have arrested nine accused for carrying illegal weapons and recovered nine 30-bore pistols and ammunition from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Friday. He informed that Sadigabad, Naseerabad, Race Course, Taxila, Dhiamal and Chontra police conducted raids and held nine accused, namely Muhammad Dawood, Zohaib, Sami, Waleed, Hamad, Asadullah, Khurram Shehzad, Noor Muhammad and Saqib and recovered nine 30 bore pistols.—

China, Pakistan sign MoU to establish Technology Transfer Center

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China and Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish China-South Asia Technology Transfer Center-Sub Center in Pakistan. Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque said that the Sub Center would help strengthen bilateral technology transfer, enhance cooperation among enterprises, research institutes, and universities, as well as support cooperation in the pursuit of science, technology, and innovation (STI) for sustainable development under Belt and Road Initiative between the two countries, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Addressing the 3rd China-Pakistan

technology transfer match-making workshop in Kunming, he said that Pakistan and China are now focusing on STI cooperation in areas of information technology and other emerging technologies, advanced and new materials, green transportation, renewable energy technologies, digital economy, smart cities, minerals and natural resources, biotechnology and modern agriculture. “The two countries have now included STI in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for high quality and sustainable development of CPEC. Pakistan has recently established Special Technology Zones Authority to build a knowledge ecosystem for entrepreneurial, innovative, and tech-driven Pakistan,” he said. “I hope that

the discussions and interaction being held today in the B2B matchmaking will enable the parties to propose a clear roadmap for developing cooperation for technology transfer in priority areas” the ambassador mentioned. Haque said he visited over 40 cities and headquarters of over 100 companies. In every city and within the halls of each company that he visited, the emphasis and focus on research and development was palpable. China's global leadership in cutting-edge technologies such as high-speed rail networks, electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, 5G, solar technology, data storage, and e-commerce is a testament to its dedication for bringing con-

stant improvement in the lives and living standards of its people, he added. Khan Muhammad Wazir, Science and Technology Counsellor at Pakistani Embassy in Beijing said that the MOU will connect the private sector of the two countries, the government R&D centers, and the universities of the two countries for technology transfers and enhance cooperation in STI. It is to be noted the 3rd China - Pakistan technology transfer matchmaking workshop with the theme of “Connecting STI Resources to Empower High-Quality Development of CPEC” was held on the sidelines of the 7th China-South Asia Expo which kicked off on Wednesday in Kunming, Southwest China's Yunnan province.

To promote business activities Business Leaders demand 10-Year Economic Policy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan, Chairman, Sardar Group of Companies and owner of Centaurus Mall Islamabad, said that continuity of economic policies is key for the development of business and investment in any country as it gives confidence to investors and enables business community to make future business plans for expansion, so he demanded that the government should announce at least a 10-year economic policy to promote business and investment activities in Pakistan, which should not be disturbed with the change of a government. He said this while addressing a ceremony organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce in his honour to present him as a role model for youth. All the important members of the Sardar family, representatives of market associations, university teach-



ers & students and a large number of the business community attended the ceremony. Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan said that Turkish President Tayyip Erdo an provided free electricity to SMEs for 3 years and issued diplomatic passports to the exporters who made exports of 10 billion, which showed his business-friendly approach. If the business class in Pakistan is given importance in the same manner, the country can soon get off its

debt burden and stand on its own feet while the economy can achieve sustainable growth. He said that the LCs issue, high electricity tariff and high interest rate of 22% are the major obstacles in the way of business and investment in Pakistan, so these issues should be addressed soon. He said that doing business in Pakistan in the current circumstances is a jihad, so the government should promote ease of doing business and provide one window facility to investors.

Sutlej River NDMA warns departments after high level of flows

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday issued an advisory to alert the national and provincial departments concerned to ensure proper measures to cope with any emergent situation as Sutlej River attained high level flows that would persist for the next 24-48 hours. The NDMA advisory underlined that as per the water flows data received from Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) and Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters (PCIW), the River Sutlej has attained high level of flows at Ganda Singh Wala, whereas the flows would be reflected and passed on downstream to Sulemanki and Islam Headworks in next 48 to 76 hours. In the light of the high flows and probable dangers and vulnerability of areas

astride the River Sutlej, the NDMA advised the Federal Flood Commission (FFC) to ensure implementation of elaborate coordination mechanism for preparedness and mitigation through management/ regulation of water reservoirs, barrages, headworks and irrigation canals. “The measures must ensure desynchronized releases from all reservoirs, regulating structures to preclude cumulative flooding in any regions. Plan immediate discharges from regulating structures to build capacity for likely heightened or increased flows,” it said. The PCIW was also directed to ensure that flows and discharge data of eastern rivers was updated regularly for necessary planning and preparations. The Met Office and FFD were directed that during the forecasted period share 6-hourly weather

forecasts to enable timely decision-making and coordinating response. Moreover, they would also share 3-hourly updates on river and nullah flows and reservoir levels to facilitate coordinated water management and regulation. The Punjab Irrigation Department was also instructed to take all necessary measures to manage water flow and mitigate flood risks. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab and respective district disaster management authorities (DDMAs) were directed to conduct extensive public awareness campaigns through multiple channels, including TV, broadcast, social, and print media etc., to ensure that vulnerable communities were well-informed about the anticipated flood situation and necessary precautions.—DNA

1600 private cameras installed in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Technical Team of the Safe City Islamabad Command and Control Center surveyed 1600 private security cameras installed in various areas of Islamabad. The technical team surveyed 1600 private security cameras installed at Koral Chowk, Khanna Pul, Express Highway, Aabpara, Melody, Poly Clinic, G-9 Center, F-10 Center, I-10 Green Belt near Sabzi Mandi, I-16 Center, and G-13 Road in Islamabad, a police source said. The survey aims to ensure access to Islamabad Police in urban as well as rural areas in order and enable effective handling and monitoring of incidents or events. Moreover, private security camera owners had been also asked to ensure the proper functioning of their cameras at all times and provide timely CCTV footage to the police when required in order to assist in crime prevention and investigation.—APP



ISLAMABAD: After assuming the responsibilities as the interim minister for National Heritage and Culture, Jamal Shah held meeting with Secretary Fareena Mazhar and other officers of National Heritage and Culture Division on Friday.—DNA



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Camp David meet makes no bones about intent

Despite the devastating wildfires in Hawaii, the focus of the Joe Biden administration is on the president's meeting with Republic of Korea President Yoon Suk-yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Friday at Camp David, Maryland, which has been a backdrop for signal moments in US foreign policy. All the indications are that a trilateral security alliance is in the works. It was the Yoon government's decision to reach out to Tokyo in March with a proposal to resolve their differences on historical issues that paved the way for Biden to merge the US' respective security alliances with the Republic of Korea and Japan into an integrated whole. Such a trilateral security framework means the ROK will be expected to switch much of its military posture to address a supposed "threat" from China rather than the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is a pity that such a precursor for a North Atlantic Treaty Organization-style security alliance in Asia can be formed, after the Cold War ended more than 30 years ago, simply because of an external force's political maneuvering. This year marks the 31st, 45th and 44th anniversary of the establishment of China's diplomatic ties with the ROK, Japan and the US respectively. All the bilateral ties are based on unequivocally clear and solemn political avowals of such principles as mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence, as well as the one-China principle. Be it the Taiwan card, the issues related to the South China Sea and the East China Sea or the technology and trade disputes instigated by the US, they are all manifestations of the US' shortsighted China containment strategy. The Camp David meeting is just the latest addition to the list. By being part of a trilateral security alliance, the ROK will no longer be an independent actor in regional affairs but an appendage of the US' "Indo-Pacific" strategy, expected to act as leverage to maintain the US' hegemony like Japan. Both Seoul and Tokyo should realize that it is the long-term regional peace and stability that have created a stable external environment for their economic development, and that it is China's development as the world's largest source of resources, market, manufacturing base and logistics center that has sustained the region's development. It is absurd that they are both choosing to bet their future on the US' shortsighted geopolitical game. In doing so, they will turn cooperation into rivalry, unity into division and friendship into hostility.

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Manila should be part of solution

That Manila is under the thumb of Washington was made clear on Tuesday when the government of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr released its national security policy document. In identifying cross-strait relations as a potential regional flashpoint and a major concern, Manila has simply parroted Washington's distorted narrative on the Taiwan question. Showing the extent to which Manila is in Washington's clutches, the 48-page document states that "sharpening strategic competition between the United States and China" and "heightened rivalries among the major powers" are creating a "more tense geopolitical landscape" and fueling concerns for the island. Given that the Philippines recognizes Beijing as the only legitimate government of China, of which Taiwan is an integral part, the wording of the Marcos government's security policy document bears all the hallmarks of collusion with the Joe Biden administration and a Faustian bargain to help the US advance its strategy in the region in return for US support for Manila's territorial claims in the South China Sea. In effect, it is sacrificing the country's cooperative relations with China for illegal gains. The Marcos government knows that the so-called tense situation in the Taiwan Strait is solely of the US' making. To exert strategic pressure on Beijing, the Joe Biden administration has tried every means to play up the Taiwan question through such tactics as constantly selling arms to the Chinese island and sending warships to frequently sail through the Taiwan Strait on disingenuously labeled "freedom of navigation" transits. Washington has also not put its foot down to stop high-profile visits to Taipei that create the impression of official contacts, something that it promised not to conduct as part of the historical commitments it made for the establishment of diplomatic ties with Beijing. In response to these blatant provocations, Beijing has made it clear to the separatist authorities on the island that they should not allow themselves to be emboldened or misled by their Washington backers into going too far. If Manila is really concerned about the tensions in the Taiwan Strait and the dire consequences that might befall if they are not reined in, it should seek to persuade the Biden administration and the China hawks in the US Congress to stop their provocations and cease stoking confrontation over the Taiwan question. Unfortunately, judging by the policy document and other recent moves Manila has taken, it has chosen to be a willing participant in the US' strategy to suppress China. Under Marcos, Manila has not only changed the policy of his predecessor, who sought to improve ties with Beijing, it is also working hand in glove with Washington by strengthening military ties between the two countries and stirring up trouble in the South China Sea. Manila should realize that Washington will sell it down the river for its own narrow end. It should focus on the larger picture of China-Philippines ties and change course so that it becomes part of the solution for regional peace and stability rather than part of the problem.

The new Federal Ministers, that I know personally..

Qamar Bashir



With a seasoned background in media, he has proven himself as a diligent worker and held the esteemed position of Director General Pakistan Radio (Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation) in the previous PPP government. I was working at that time as Director media and had frequent interactions with him. I found him a thorough gentleman, an intellectual and the one who has a greater understanding of the country's political landscape and its complexities. His efforts to enhance the radio's standing were well-received by employees, reflecting his dedication

In a significant development for Pakistan, a caretaker Cabinet has been sworn in by the President. This diverse assembly, composed of 16 ministers and three advisors, marks a departure from conventional political structures, instead favoring a blend of technocrats, retired bureaucrats, IT experts, business figures, a select few politicians, and eminent individuals. With a prominent mandate to uplift the nation's economic and financial landscape, enhance business appeal, attract trade and investment, and pave the way for forthcoming free and fair elections, this Cabinet's formation heralds a pivotal chapter in Pakistan's journey toward stability and progress. Mr. Murtaza Solangi, the newly appointed federal minister for the Ministry of Information and broadcastings, brings a wealth of experience and dedication to his role. A close friend of the former president and co-chairman of the Pakistan People's Party Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, his deep-rooted association with the party underscores his commitment. With a seasoned background in media, he has proven himself as a diligent worker and held the esteemed position of Director General Pakistan Radio (Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation) in the previous PPP government. I was working at that time as Director media and had frequent interactions with him. I found him a thorough gentleman, an intellectual and the one who has a greater understanding of the country's political landscape and its complexities. His efforts to enhance the radio's standing were well-received by employees, reflecting his dedication to progress. Serving as an advisor on Media Affairs to the former President and a prominent anchorperson on a national TV network, his analytical insights have earned him recognition as a commentator on both national and international issues. Mr. Solangi's profound understanding of the media landscape instills optimism that his leadership will yield positive outcomes for the Ministry of Information, broadcasting, and the broader media landscape. Mr. Jamal Shah, a distinguished artist, sculptor, educationist, and intellectual, has been rightfully appointed as a member of the newly sworn-in cabinet. His deep passion for art and culture in the country has been a driving force throughout his remarkable journey. I had the privilege of a personal connection. He is my city fellow. I was a student in the University of Balochistan in 1983-85 when in collaboration with his former wife, Faryal Gohar, he established an art section at the University. His elder brother was my colleague when I was news producer in PTV from 1986 to 1991 until I joined superior services of Pakistan. During this period, Jamal Shah was at the peak of his artistic career. His serious and contemplative nature, evident even

then, has carried forward to his role as Director General of the Pakistan National Council of Arts, where he made significant strides in elevating the arts community which further exemplifies his commitment to nurturing artistic talent. Later, I witnessed his artistic growth when he was sponsored by the French embassy to explore art and culture in Paris, France—an experience that enriched both his perspective and my own. During my tenure as part of the Pakistan embassy in France, our interactions were frequent, and we even travel together and me as a driver. He fostered artists of diverse genres, establishing an art gallery in the heart of F9 Park that attracts a steady stream of visitors who revel in the showcased paintings and sculptures. His altruistic spirit shines as he actively engages in philanthropy, raising funds to aid those affected by both human-made and natural crises. Mr. Jamal Shah's stellar reputation as an artist was solidified through his lead roles in numerous dramas and serials, contributing to their success. This appointment is a commendable choice, and I am optimistic that his visionary efforts will bring Pakistan's art and culture onto the international stage with resounding success. Mr. Saif's appointment as the Federal Minister of Information Technology appears to be a fitting choice, given his impressive track record. His notable contributions in establishing various IT institutions across Punjab, along with his leadership in government process automation, have been revolutionary. From enhancing sectors like education, agriculture, health, taxation, to innovating land management systems and public services, his initiatives have significantly benefited the public. His instrumental role in introducing Punjab and Islamabad city applications for mobile and desktop platforms, offering a wide range of services online, showcases his commitment to modernizing citizen services. Moreover, his success in establishing IT incubation centers and assembling a proficient team of experts has undoubtedly elevated service quality. My first interaction with Mr. Saif was him as a teacher and me as a student. He conducted a workshop during our training as Senior Management Course in Lahore where we got the chance to interact with this legend personally. During the short workshop he taught the trainees to develop applications on the smartphones and on desktops which further highlight his prowess. With his appointment by the caretaker prime minister, there is hope and anticipation for continued success and advancements in the field of information technology, which could lead the country to earn commendable recognition. Mr. Ahmad Irfan Aslam's appointment to the law portfolio in the newly sworn-in federal cabinet brings in a wealth of

experience and expertise. I know him personally as a colleague when he was serving as a Commercial Counselor at the embassy of Pakistan to France and me as a press minister. We used to have a lot of discussions about everything under the sun. His capabilities were recognized early on, even though he wasn't from the superior services of the country. His close association with the former Attorney General, Mr. Ashtar Ausaf, speaks to his credibility. His pivotal role in the Rezo Dik case, where he transitioned from his post in Paris to become a lead lawyer, demonstrates his commitment and adaptability. Even in capacity as a lead lawyer, he visited Paris several times and we exchanged notes on various issues of mutual interests. His relative youth and limited experience compared to seasoned lawyers, Mr. Aslam's creativity, ingenuity and deep understanding of the law, position him as a valuable asset. His contributions are poised to enhance the Ministry of Law and the pursuit of justice both nationally and on the international stage. His appointment stands as a testament to the caretaker prime minister's excellent judgment. Mr. Jalil Abbas Jilani's appointment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a testament to his exceptional leadership and experience in various capacities within the ministry. His journey, culminating in leading the ministry as secretary during challenging times, reflects his unwavering commitment. I recall a memorable encounter in London where I as director Media to the President and was a part of his entourage to attend the tripartite summit with former President Asif Ali Zardari, British Prime Minister and Afghan President, where Mr. Jilani's pivotal role ensured the success of the meeting held at the British Prime Minister's winter camp office. His flawless tenure as secretary and achievements therein are a source of pride for the foreign service of Pakistan. A seasoned and composed individual, he exudes authority on international and foreign affairs, an attribute accentuated by his think tank engagements. With burning foreign issues at hand, Mr. Gilani's profound understanding, seasoned diplomacy, and adeptness as a diplomat are poised to steer the country towards positive outcomes, making a remarkable global impact. His ability to foster business, trade, and investment will be instrumental in achieving Pakistan's diplomatic goals. An all-around remarkable choice, it's anticipated that Mr. Jilani's success will leave an indelible mark on the nation's foreign endeavors. His selection is indeed excellent, given his non-controversial nature.

Saudi Arabia and Israel put a high US price tag on diplomatic relations

James m. Dorsey

Saudi Arabia demands security arrangements with the United States, US support for its peaceful nuclear programme, and unfettered access to sophisticated US weaponry. Saudi Arabia has also made Israeli moves to resolve its conflict with the Palestinians a pre-condition. Like Israel, the kingdom wants a formalised security agreement, even if that accord may not target Iran as explicitly as

It's not just Saudi Arabia that puts a high US price on diplomatic relations with Israel. So does Israel. A confidante of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, strategic affairs minister Ron Dermer is in Washington this week for talks with senior officials, including President Joe Biden's national security advisor, Jake Sullivan. In a phone call last month, Mr. Netanyahu told Mr. Biden that he wanted a security treaty with the United States focused on deterring Iran as part of normalising relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia. US and Israeli officials may not want to admit it, but there is little doubt that the Israeli demand complicates Mr. Biden's already complex efforts to persuade the two Middle Eastern nations to formalise their substantial informal ties. Saudi Arabia has put a steep price on establishing diplomatic relations that cater to its security and geopolitical interests. Saudi Arabia demands security arrangements with the United States, US support for its peaceful nuclear programme, and unfettered access to sophisticated US weaponry. Saudi Arabia has also made Israeli moves to resolve its conflict with the Palestinians a pre-condition. Like Israel, the kingdom wants a formalised security agreement, even if that accord may not target Iran as explicitly as Israel's request does. Saudi Arabia will likely be more circumspect following the China-mediated agreement in March to reestablish relations with Iran. Relations ruptured in 2016 when mobs stormed Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran in protest against the execution of a prominent Saudi Shiite cleric. So far, from Saudi Arabia's perspective, the agreement has only partially paid off. To be sure, the agreement, alongside recent rapprochements between other Middle Eastern states, including Egypt, Turkey, Israel, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates, has dialled down regional tensions. The kingdom and Iran have exchanged ministerial visits, reopened diplomatic missions, spoken about security and economic cooperation, and invited each other's leaders to visit. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian visited Saudi Arabia this

week for the first time since diplomatic relations resumed. Most importantly, as seen in Riyadh, Iranian recent aggressive moves in Gulf waters target US and Israel-related vessels rather than Gulf state ships and exclude attacks on Saudi and Emirati oil and other infrastructure. An informal agreement between the United States and Iran, involving a prisoner swap and a release of frozen Iranian funds, could lead to Iran refraining from attacking US shipping. The deal does not signal a possible return to the 2015 international agreement that curbed Iran's nuclear programme, even though Iran has reportedly slowed the pace at which it accumulates near-weapons-grade enriched uranium and diluted some of its stockpiles. However, Mr. Netanyahu has made clear that nothing short of the complete termination of Iran's programme is good enough as far as he is concerned. "Arrangements that do not dismantle Iran's nuclear infrastructure do not stop its nuclear programme and will only provide it with funds that will go to terrorist elements sponsored by Iran," Mr. Netanyahu's office said. The statement contrasts starkly with a US position articulated in March by Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, Gen. Mark Milley. Mr. Milley told Congress the United States would not allow Iran to "have a fielded nuclear weapon." The key word here is "fielded." Saudi Arabia and Israel may be closer than meets the eye when it comes to Iran, but they strike different tones. Moreover, Israel is less inclined to deal with the current Iranian regime than Saudi Arabia is. Addressing a closed meeting in Europe with Middle East experts, a senior Saudi official recently said it was the kingdom's "hope" to resolve issues with Iran but cautioned that "it is too simple to think in that way—and also dangerous, because if you don't see results you will think that de-escalation is in vain or has no results." He likened Saudi Iranian relations to Europe's relations with Russia. Europe has "diplomatic relations with Russia, but you're at war with Russia," the official said. The official conceded that prospects for economic cooperation with Iran remained limited without reviving

the Iranian nuclear deal because of US sanctions. Phrased differently, Saudi Iranian relations depend as much on policies crafted in Riyadh and Tehran as on policies pursued in Washington. All this casts a different light on Mr. Netanyahu's demand for an Iran-focused security agreement with the United States. Mr. Netanyahu has made establishing diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia a crown jewel of his foreign policy. To achieve that, Israel has acquiesced in Saudi Arabia enriching uranium for research purposes as part of a US-Saudi deal. Mr. Netanyahu has also indicated he would be willing to gesture to Palestinians if a normalisation deal with Saudi Arabia depended on it. He suggested he would not let ultra-conservative religious and ultranationalist coalition members block an agreement. It's not clear that the prime minister could make gestures that would be minimally acceptable to the Saudis and avoid breaking up his coalition, the most headline in Israeli history. This month's appointment of Saudi Arabia's first ambassador to the Palestinians suggested the gap Mr. Netanyahu would have to bridge. Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen did not object to the move but asserted Israel would not permit the opening of diplomatic representations for the Palestinians in Jerusalem. Israel views united Jerusalem as its capital, while the Palestinians see the east of the city, captured by Israel during the 1967 Middle East war, as the capital of a future Palestinian state. As the custodian of Islam's holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, Saudi Arabia would be hard-pressed to make concessions on Jerusalem, the faith's third holiest city. As a result, the question is what Mr. Netanyahu wants to achieve with his demand for an anti-Iran security deal with the United States. Certainly, the deal would ensure Israel's seat at the table and bolster Israel's position vis a vis Iran. Mr. Netanyahu may also want to complicate US-Saudi talks about security arrangements in the belief that without a solid agreement with the United States, the kingdom would have a greater interest in formalising relations with Israel sooner than later. Either way, Israel remains a player with the potential to be disruptive rather than constructive, depending on how Mr. Netanyahu defines Israel and his political interests.

Briefs

Kakar says Pak disowns perpetrators

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He called upon the nation to start envisioning a "Pakistan dream" and to start working towards realising it. "We would strongly discourage rigidity be it any form in this society. We do not stand for the forces of darkness," he stressed. "Extreme attitudes" which he said included "secularism" and "religious" ones, would not only be "unwelcomed, but would be discouraged. They would be curbed and controlled by the law."
"The minorities, so help us Allah, will stay protected in this country. There may be an attempt to harm them by the marginalised and peripheral group of people but that will be responded to sternly by the state and society, both," he said.
"When you are in the majority, the minority must be protected," he added, "not on the basis that they would convert to your worldview. They can differ with you. But their human dignity and security and their provision and sustenance have to be ensured by this divinely inspired idea". Kakar said that the cabinet while not having a perpetual mandate "will try to lay some foundation where we have a sense of continuation of national and international commitments." He added that the cabinet will try to support new initiatives within the bounds of the law and Constitution. "I am hopeful that Almighty Allah would enable us to lead and steer this nation in this interim period," he said. Addressing the cabinet, Kakar said that his able team would work towards countering the "huge" economic challenges it faces through "financial discipline" and have a "sense of sanctity of the taxpayers' money".

Justice Shah urges CJP for full court

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hearing. "This case is pending since 2022. No one has challenged changes to the NAB law made in 2023," he observed. Justice Ahsan observed that each case had its own facts and merits. "The opinion given in one case is only for that case," he said. CJP Bandial then remarked when there is a difference of opinion, the decision is taken by the majority. He further said that the petitioner had presented their arguments over 22 hearings while the federal government had done the same over 19 hearings. "This case was not that long," he said. During the hearing, Justice Shah also noted that he had been asking since day one about which fundamental rights were affected. "In 47 hearings, it has not been told which fundamental rights have been affected," he said. CJP Bandial then asked the federal government lawyer Makhdoom Ali Khan why he was shying away from presenting arguments "on merit". To this, the lawyer responded that he was not shying away from doing so but raising the inadmissibility of the plea was his responsibility. "Why are you trying to leave the hearing," CJP Bandial asked, to which the counsel said that the court had the right to either accept or reject his argument. Furthermore, the PTI chief's lawyer Khawaja Haris did not appear for today's hearing with his assistant, Yasir Aman, appearing on his behalf. The latter told the court that detailed responses from their side had been submitted. CJP Bandial then said that the court would decide the case after conducting daily hearings. Justice Shah also sought arguments on whether the current bench could hear the case after the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) law. "My retirement is near," CJP Bandial said, adding that it would be a source of shame for him if the case was not decided. "It is an important case and is being heard for a long time. There was no debate over the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) law in the court," he said. The hearing of the case was then adjourned till August 28.

US, Japan and S. Korea leaders meet to bolster mutual security

NEWS DESK

CAMP DAVID: The United States, Japan and South Korea have agreed to a new security pledge committing the three countries to consult with each other in the event of a security crisis or threat in the Pacific, according to Biden administration officials. Details about the new "duty to consult" commitment emerged as President Joe Biden on Friday welcomed South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for a summit at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland. Before the three-way talks, Biden met separately with Yoon and then Kishida in mid-morning. The agreement is one of several joint efforts that the leaders are expected to announce at the daylong summit, as the three countries look to tighten security and economic ties amid increasing concerns about North Korea's persistent nuclear threats and China's provocations in the Pacific.
"Suffice it to say, this is a big deal," Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters on Friday shortly before the start of the summit. "It is a historic event, and it sets the conditions for a more peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific, and a stronger and more secure United States of America," Kishida, before departing Tokyo on Thursday, told reporters the summit would be a "historic occasion to bolster trilateral strategic cooperation" with Seoul and Washington. "I believe it is extremely meaningful to hold a Japan-U.S.-South Korea summit



where leaders of the three countries gather just as the security environment surrounding Japan is increasingly severe," he said. Before it even began, the summit drew harsh public criticism from the Chinese government. "The international community has its own judgment as to who is creating contradictions and increasing tensions," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters Friday. "Attempts to form various exclusive groups and cliques and to bring bloc confrontation into the Asia-Pacific region are unpopular and will definitely spark vigilance and opposition in the countries of the region," Wang said. Sullivan pushed back against the Chi-

nese concerns. "It's explicitly not a NATO for the Pacific," Sullivan said. "This partnership is not against anyone, it is for something. It is for a vision of the Indo-Pacific that is free, open, secure and prosperous." The "duty to consult" pledge is intended to acknowledge that the three countries share "fundamentally interlinked security environments" and that a threat to one of the nations is "a threat to all," according to a senior Biden administration official. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the coming announcement. Under the pledge, the three countries agree to consult, share information and align their messaging with each other in

the face of a threat or crisis, the official said. The summit is the first Biden has held during his presidency at the storied Camp David. The three leaders met for talks on Friday and were scheduled to hold a press conference later. Biden was hoping to use much of the day with the two leaders as a more informal opportunity to tighten their bond. The U.S. president planned to take Kishida and Yoon on a walk on the picturesque grounds and host them—and a few senior aides—for a lunch. The retreat 65 miles (104.6 kilometers) from the White House was where President Jimmy Carter brought together Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in September 1978 for talks that established a framework for a historic peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in March 1979. In the midst of World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met at the retreat — then known as Shangri-La — to plan the Italian campaign that would knock Benito Mussolini out of the war. Biden's focus for the gathering is to nudge the United States' two closest Asian allies to further tighten security and economic cooperation with each other. The historic rivals have been divided by differing views of World War II history and Japan's colonial rule over the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945. But under Kishida and Yoon, the two countries have begun a rapprochement as the two conservative leaders grapple with shared security challenges posed by North Korea and China.

Jaranwala: Indian agency's involvement traced

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derogatory remarks were written on the papers by the proxies of enemy forces. Those papers were thrown near the religious places with names and phone numbers of Christians written on them. The churches, residences of Christians and properties were damaged by involving the local Muslim population. It was a deep conspiracy by India to divert the attention from its atrocities in the Occupied Kashmir. The sources said that investigation is underway and all the suspects are linked with India.

Chairman PTI Imran Khan...

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sharing a copy of the FIR. Offences under Section 5, if proved in a court of law, involve punishment of imprisonment from two to 14 years, and in some cases even a death sentence.

'Imran could be poisoned in jail'

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should be transferred to Adiala jail," she added. Former PM Khan was jailed earlier this month after the court sentenced him to three-year in prison in the Toshakhana case related to the sale of state gifts that he received as prime minister from foreign dignitaries during his 2018-22 tenure. Consequently, he was also barred from politics for five years.

Canada's far north speeds up evacuations

EDMONTON: Residents of Yellowknife in Canada's far north raced Friday to evacuate ahead of a midday deadline as wildfires bear down on the remote city and other parts of the vast country. Since authorities in the Northwest Territories issued the city-wide evacuation order late Wednesday, long lines of cars have snaked along the lone highway connecting the area to Alberta province to the south ahead of the 12:00 pm (1800 GMT) limit. About 1,500 people have so far left Yellowknife, the regional capital, by plane, with an increased number of flights scheduled Friday to evacuate more of the city's 20,000 residents. The nearest evacuation center is 1,150 kilometers (700 miles) away, in Alberta, where several sites have been set up. "We're going to keep going until we have the population of Yellowknife out," emergency services official Jennifer Young told a briefing. Air Canada pilot Chad Blewett, who flew one of the first relief flights out of the lakeside city, told public broadcaster CBC that Yellowknife "is pretty empty already." - Agencies

Extreme heat is here to stay: UN agency warns

UNITED NATIONS: Heatwaves sweeping large parts of the world offer yet another reminder that extreme weather events — boosted by human-induced climate change — have become "the new normal", the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a Geneva-based UN agency, warned Friday. WMO Spokesperson Clare Nullis said that heat warnings have been issued by many weather services across Europe this week, including in France, Germany, Poland and Switzerland. Meanwhile, parts of the Middle East were expected to see temperatures over 50 degrees Celsius in the coming days and Japan was experiencing a "prolonged" heatwave which shattered temperature records. Speaking to reporters in Geneva about the recent massive wildfires fueled by the hot and dry conditions in Tenerife in Spain's Canary Islands, Ms Nullis highlighted "many evacuations and much devastation." - Agencies

Newcastle face early title test at City



LONDON: Newcastle face an early test of their Premier League aspirations this season when they take on Manchester City, while Chelsea's £115 million (£146 million) midfielder Moises Caicedo is set to make his debut at West Ham. Tottenham are looking for the scalp of Manchester United on Saturday in their first home game since the departure of Harry Kane. AFP Sport looks at the best of the action on the second weekend of the Premier League season: The Magpies head to the Etihad top of the table af-

ter a 5-1 demolition of highly-fancied Aston Villa last weekend. Sandro Tonali and Harvey Barnes scored on their debuts, while Alexander Isak's classy double was further evidence of the Swede's rise to becoming one of the Premier League's top marksmen. After qualifying for the Champions League for the first time in 20 years, there have been doubts over how Eddie Howe's men will balance the demands of domestic and European football. But they could be facing City at the

perfect time. Pep Guardiola sarcastically thanked the Premier League for scheduling his side to play just three days after a draining UEFA Super Cup win over Sevilla in the baking heat of Athens. City will be without Kevin De Bruyne, while Bernardo Silva, Ruben Dias and John Stones are doubts after playing no part in the Greek capital in midweek. Newcastle have not won away to City in the Premier League in 23 years. But their rise since a takeover from the Saudi sovereign wealth fund less than two years ago has been rapid. Beat the champions on Saturday and talk on Tyneside may turn to dethroning City come the end of the season. Tottenham began a new era last weekend without Kane up front and with Ange Postecoglou in charge in at 2-2 draw at Brentford. The heat will be turned up on chairman Daniel Levy as Spurs return home for the first time this season. Protests are planned by fans unhappy at Kane's departure despite a hike of up to 20 percent in ticket prices. "We are charged amongst the most expensive prices in the Premier League and Europe by one of the richest clubs in Europe. It is an exploitation of fan loyalty," said the Tottenham Hotspur Supporters' Trust. - Agencies

New boss Garcia plays down Napoli's title hopes

DNA

CASTEL VOLTURNO: New Napoli coach Rudi Garcia said on Friday his side were not "the favourites" for Serie A this season ahead of the start of their title defence against Frosinone on Saturday. The Frenchman replaced Luciano Spalletti in the dug-out after the Italian left Napoli having led the club to their first Scudetto in 33 years last term. Napoli fans will be hoping for another strong title challenge, especially as star forwards Victor Osimhen and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia have stayed at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona. "My goal — it's simple — is to bring this team to the level I know they're capable of playing," Garcia told a pre-match press conference. "I am calm, I am focused on my team to give them everything they need so that they can win matches. "As champions, a lot is expected of us. We are among the favourites but we are not the favourites." Garcia is back in Italy for the first time since being sacked by Roma in 2016, having previously led the capital club to successive runner-up finishes in Serie A behind Juventus. "I'm very, very happy to be back in Italy, it's a pleasure to be back in Serie A," he added. "I'm even quite impatient, because I want to see if there have been any changes (in terms of play and tactics). I think there have been and I'll see that. I think Serie A has become even more attacking." Napoli, who finished 16 points clear of second-placed Lazio last season, have signed forward Giacomo Raspadori from Sassuolo in the close season and given Giovanni Simeone a permanent deal following his successful loan from Verona. - Agencies

Sam Kerr eyeing 2027 World Cup

BRISBANE: Australia captain Sam Kerr said Friday the Women's World Cup had been the best weeks of her career and she planned to stick around for the next one in four years' time. The 29-year-old will lead her side out for one last game on Saturday when they face Sweden in the third-place playoff in Brisbane, with a bronze medal at stake. The talismanic striker said Australia were already winners regardless of the result after going further than expected and taking a home nation with them, with bumper crowds and record-breaking TV audiences. "I think for us all it has been the most amazing four weeks of our careers. Not only what has happened on the pitch, but what has happened off has been amazing," she said. "When we first started at this World Cup, we could have never dreamed this would happen, the way the country has got behind us, the way we have been playing. "But we have one more game where we can really end on a high. There's that extra motivation to ... really leave a legacy. Coming third place at a World Cup is something you can only dream of as a kid." - Agencies

UN says forced to cut Yemen rations, compounding food crisis

DUBAI: More than four million Yemenis will receive less food assistance as a result of funding shortages, compounding one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, the UN's food agency warned Friday. The World Food Programme said "a deeper funding crisis for its Yemen operations from the end of September onward... will force WFP to make difficult decisions about further cuts to our food assistance programmes across the country in the coming months." Without new funding, it expects more than four million people will receive less food assistance, many of them women and children already suffering from some of the highest malnutrition rates in the world. With major cuts an-

nounced across different programmes, the actual number of people affected could be higher. "We are confronted with the incredibly tough reality of making decisions to take food from the hungry to feed the starving," said Richard Ragan, WFP's Yemen representative. The UN agency was "fully cognisant of the suffering these cuts will cause", he said in a statement. Yemen, the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country, is already in the grips of one of the planet's worst humanitarian crises after eight years of war, according to the United Nations. The conflict broke out in 2014 when Iran-backed Huthi rebels seized the capital Sanaa, prompting a Saudi-led coalition to intervene the following

year to prop up the internationally recognised government. Although fighting has remained largely on hold since a six-month truce expired in October, the United Nations says current hunger levels are unprecedented. Seventeen million Yemenis are experiencing food insecurity, and one million women and 2.2 million children under five require treatment for acute malnutrition, the UN says. For the next six months, WFP said it requires \$1.05 billion in funding, only 28 percent of which has been secured. "Yemen will remain one of WFP's largest food assistance operations, but these cuts represent a significant reduction to the agency's programmes in the country," it said. - DNA

History beckons in Women's World Cup final

SYDNEY: A Women's World Cup that has broken records on and off the pitch will reach a suitable climax on Sunday when England or Spain are crowned champions for the first time. About 75,000 fans will pack Stadium Australia in Sydney for the final of a World Cup that began with 32 teams, compared to 24 four years ago, and saw many of the favourites fall early. Germany bowed out in the group phase together with Brazil, Italy and Olympic champions Canada, then holders the United States followed them out the trapdoor in the last 16 — their earliest exit ever. South Africa, Jamaica and Morocco all reached the last 16 for the first time, and Colombia made a maiden quarter-final appearance before a 2-1 defeat to England. The exploits of the lower-ranked sides are evidence that the gap has closed significantly in international women's football, but in the end, it is two of the leading sides who will contest the final. Sarina Wiegman's England are European champions and came into the World Cup as favourites along with the United States. But like Spain, England have never reached the World Cup final before. The two teams met in the quarter-finals of last year's European Championship, with Wiegman's Lionesses winning 2-1 in extra time and going on to beat Germany in the final for their first major title. On that occasion, England had the backing of fervent home support, a luxury they will not have this time. If anything, Australian fans at the

final are likely to cheer for Spain. The anticipated sell-out crowd at Stadium Australia will bookend a tournament that is the best-attended in Women's World Cup history. Wiegman has a world-class squad to call upon, but it is the coach herself who is arguably England's biggest asset. She is the standard-bearer for woman coaches, having won the Euros with her native Netherlands and then repeating the feat with England. Described by her players as calm but direct, Wiegman took the Dutch to the

World Cup final four years ago, where they lost 2-0 to the United States. "Having the chance as a coach or a player to make it to two finals is really special," the 53-year-old said after her side defied a partisan crowd to defeat co-hosts Australia 3-1 in Wednesday's semi-final. "I never take anything for granted, but it's like I'm living in a fairytale or something." Wiegman is already hugely respected in her adopted country but

now she is one victory away from joining Alf Ramsey, who took England to the men's title in 1966, in winning a World Cup for England. Spain have defied turmoil off the pitch to make their own history. Their preparations were clouded by a dispute with 15 players who last year said they no longer wanted to be considered for selection. Coach Jorge Vilda and his strict personality were chief among a litany of complaints, but here they are, missing 12 of the 15 but on the cusp of world domination. England have not been perfect in reaching the final and needed penalties to see off Nigeria in the last 16, before more convincing displays in defeating Colombia and Australia. But Spain have also had their challenges at this tournament. They were thumped 4-0 by Japan in their final group game, the caveat being that both teams had already qualified for the knockout rounds. Spain then thrashed Switzerland 5-1 and squeezed past the Netherlands and Sweden by identical 2-1 scorelines, the victory over the Dutch coming in extra time. Vilda says that the turmoil that once threatened to torpedo their World Cup "made all of us stronger". "Now we can file it away and put it behind us and think about the future, and think that we deserve to be where we are," he said after Olga Carmona's sumptuous 89th-minute strike propelled them past Sweden in the semi-finals. It is proof of Spain's depth of resources that they have hardly missed the players who refused to play under Vilda. - Agencies



Briefs

Baltic states reaffirm steadfast support for Ukraine

LONDON: The prime ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on Thursday backed a G-7 statement declaring their "steadfast support" for Ukraine's security and independence.

In a joint statement, Estonia's Kaja Kallas, Latvia's Krisjanis Karins and Lithuania's Ingrida Simonyte reiterated their support for Kyiv against Russia's "unprovoked and brutal aggression." "A strong, independent and prosperous Ukraine fully anchored in the Euro-Atlantic family is essential for European security. With this in mind, we join the G-7 Declaration of Support for Ukraine," said the statement. Noting Ukraine's role in strengthening security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region, the prime ministers said, "We recognise that Ukraine's courageous fight helps protect Euro-Atlantic security and the rules-based international order." "We will continue our steadfast support for Ukraine on its path to join the Alliance as soon as possible," added the prime ministers, recalling the NATO Summit Vilnius in which Allies agreed that "Ukraine's future is in NATO." The Baltic leaders also committed to working closely with Ukraine on its way to EU membership. —APP

Wildfire on Spain's Tenerife scorch 1.6% of island

OVIEDO: Spanish authorities said on Friday that the wildfire on the Canary Island of Tenerife continues to burn out of control and has now scorched around 1.6% of the island's surface. On Thursday, the raging flames had burned around 2,600 hectares (6424 acres) in less than 48 hours, and by Friday morning, the fire had affected 3,800 hectares in nine municipalities, according to Canary Islands emergency services.

Around 4,000 people have been evacuated from their homes, and another 3,000 ordered to stay indoors. Authorities said the fire had calmed down overnight compared to previous days when the fire was extremely unpredictable, spreading through convection and generating its own "microclimates." "We've seen a lot of things and behaviors [of the flames] that we had never seen before in any wildfire in the Canary Islands before," meteorologist and government adviser Vicky Palma told broadcaster Cadena Ser. The president of the Canary Islands called it the "most complicated" fire seen in the last 40 years. Temperatures are rising and the wind direction is changing on Friday, threatening to affect new areas. Damage has also been done to a canal, with residents in the north of Tenerife being asked to moderate their water consumption to ensure firefighters have enough to battle the blaze. While the flames have come extremely close to some towns, it is mostly burning in a forested area, partially in the Canary Islands' largest natural park.

Terrorists kill 25 military personnel in Nigeria

KANO: At least three military officers and 22 soldiers have been killed by suspected terrorists in Niger state, the Nigerian Defense Headquarters said Thursday.

Maj. Gen. Edward Buba, director of defense media operations, made this known when he gave a breakdown of casualties in the ambush. Buba said seven soldiers were also wounded by the suspected terrorists. "Insurgents ambushed troops in the Zungeru area of the state and some troops of the Nigerian army paid the supreme price," he added. Buba said an investigation of the incident is still underway. He also urged citizens to be wary of propaganda by terrorists. On Monday, a Nigerian Air Force MI-171 helicopter on a casualty evacuation mission crashed in the Shiroro local government area of the state. —APP

ECOWAS leaders continue talks on Niger intervention

Germany has also said it wants the European Union to impose sanctions on the coup leaders, saying that Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock had held talks with her French and US counterparts

NEWS DESK

ACCRA: West African military chiefs are holding a second day of talks in Ghana on Friday, preparing for a possible armed intervention in Niger after a coup removed President Mohamed Bazoum on July 26. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreed a day earlier to activate a "standby force" as a last resort to restore democracy in Niger after generals toppled and detained Bazoum. ECOWAS defence chiefs are having a two-day meeting in the Ghanaian

capital, Accra, to fine-tune details of a potential military operation to restore Bazoum if continuing negotiations with coup leaders fail. "Let no one be in doubt that if everything else fails the valiant forces of West Africa, both the military and the civilian components, are ready to answer to the call of duty," Abdel-Fataou Musah, an ECOWAS commissioner for political affairs and security, told the meeting on Thursday. "Meanwhile, we are still giving diplomacy a chance and the ball is in the court of the junta." Musah added that except for Cape Verde and

countries led by military governments, all other countries in the 15-member bloc are ready to contribute to the regional force. The defence chiefs are expected to announce any next steps at a closing ceremony at 4pm (16:00 GMT). Bazoum, whose 2021 election was a landmark in Niger's troubled history, has been held with his family at the president's official residence since the coup, with growing international concern over his conditions in detention. ECOWAS leaders say they must act after Niger became the fourth West

African nation since 2020 to suffer a coup, following Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea. The Sahel region is struggling with armed groups linked to al-Qaeda and ISIL (ISIS) and frustration over the violence has in part prompted the military takeovers. Details of the Niger operation have not been released and analysts say any intervention would be politically and militarily risky, especially for regional powerhouse Nigeria. Nigeria is already struggling to contain violence from several armed groups at home, and lead-

ers in the country's north have warned about spillover from Niger across the border if there is an intervention. ECOWAS troops have intervened in other emergencies since 1990, including civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Ivory Coast, Benin and Nigeria are expected to contribute troops to a Niger mission. Niger's coup leaders have warned against any military attacks and defiantly threatened to charge Bazoum with treason. But they have also said they are open to talks. The military-led governments in neighbouring Mali and

Burkina Faso have also said an intervention in Niger would be seen as a declaration of war against them. Russia and the United States have urged a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

ECOWAS has already applied trade and financial sanctions on Niger while France, Germany and the United States have suspended aid programmes. Germany has also said it wants the European Union to impose sanctions on the coup leaders, saying that Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock had held talks with her French and US counterparts.

Xi to attend China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue

BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping will attend the 15th BRICS summit and co-chair the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue in South Africa next week, Beijing said Friday. Hua Chunying, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, said in a statement that Xi will pay a state visit to South Africa from Monday to Thursday. The summit will be held in Johannesburg where South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa will host Xi, Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Aug. 22 to 24. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is facing an international arrest warrant over alleged war crimes in Ukraine, is not attending the meeting. The BRICS currently comprises five countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - and expansion of the group is expected to be high on the agenda. Hua said Xi will also co-chair with Ramaphosa the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue in the South African capital. This would be Xi's second trip out of China this year after he paid a state visit to Russia in March. —APP

US-Iran prisoner swaps: Key exchanges in history

WASHINGTON: The US and Iran last week reached a tentative agreement that will see the release of five Americans from a Tehran prison and several Iranians detained in the US.

The deal, announced last Thursday, will also transfer to Qatar \$6 billion of Iranian state assets frozen in South Korea. The White House confirmed that US dual nationals Siamak Namazi, Morad Tahbaz, Emad Shargi, and two others who wish to remain anonymous - who were "unjustly detained" by Iran, have been transferred to house arrest. The White House has maintained that talks to finalize the deal remain ongoing and delicate but said there will be restrictions on how Iran would be allowed to use the frozen funds. Iran said the frozen funds will be used for "non-sanctioned goods." State Department deputy spokesman Vedant Patel said the money had always been available to Iran for humanitarian use, adding that "allowing Iran to use such funds for humanitarian purposes is consistent with long standing US policy." Some Republican lawmakers criticize the Joe Biden administration's deal with Iran to free Americans. Tom Cotton of the Senate Armed Services Committee called the deal a "ransom" and a "craven act of appeasement," while Jim Risch of Idaho, the top Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said unfreezing the assets "provides a windfall for regime aggression." —APP

Majority of Germans against supplying cruise missiles to Ukraine

BERLIN: More than half of Germans are against delivering Taurus missiles to Ukraine, a new poll revealed on Friday.

The poll by public broadcaster ARD found 52% of the Germans oppose supplying cruise missiles to Ukraine as they can be used to attack targets in Russia.

Some 36% spoke in favor of delivering the Taurus missiles, which are jointly produced by Germany and Sweden, and have a range of more than 500 kilometers (310 miles). Despite growing pressure from Ukraine, Chancellor Olaf Scholz has been cautious so far about delivering Taurus missiles, fearing that this could make Germany a party to the conflict with Russia.

Der Spiegel weekly reported last week that the government is weighing several options, and may agree to send Taurus missiles after some technical modifications, to ensure that missiles will not be used to attack Russian territory. —Agencies



KUALA LUMPUR: Pakistan High Commissioner to Malaysia, Syed Ahsan Raza Shah inaugurated Pakistan Mango Fest. The event showcases Pakistani mangoes. - DNA

Fears for thousands as Sudan war spreads

WAD MADANI: Fighting between two rival generals has spread to cities in war-ravaged Sudan's south, witnesses said Friday, raising concerns for hundreds of thousands who have fled violence in the Darfur region. The vast western region has seen some of the worst bloodshed since the conflict erupted on April 15 between the army under General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commanded by Mohamed Hamdan Daglo. Battles resumed late Thursday in the North Darfur state capital of El Fasher, witnesses said, disrupting nearly two months of calm in the densely populated city that has become a shelter from the shelling, looting, rapes and summary executions reported in other parts of Darfur. "This is the biggest gathering of civilians displaced in Darfur, with 600,000 people in El Fasher," said Nathaniel Raymond of the Humanitarian Research Lab at the Yale School of Public Health. One resident told AFP: "As night fell, we heard battles with heavy

weapons from the city's east." Witnesses also reported fighting in Al-Fulah, the capital of West Kordofan state which borders Darfur. The conflict had already expanded to North Kordofan state, a commercial and transportation hub between Khartoum and parts of Sudan's south and west. Numerous rights groups and witnesses who fled Darfur have reported the massacre of civilians and ethnically driven attacks and killings, largely by paramilitary forces and their allied Arab tribal militias. Many have fled across the western border to neighbouring Chad, while others have sought refuge in other parts of Darfur, where the International Criminal Court is probing alleged war crimes. The region has long been the site of deadly fighting since a war that erupted in 2003 and saw the feared Janjaweed - precursors of the RSF - unleashed on ethnic minority rebels. On Friday, a rebel group that in 2020 signed a peace agreement with Khartoum announced it was aligning with the

RSF. The so-called Tamazuj Front said it aimed "to fight the remnants of the old regime that use the army to reinstate their totalitarian power". Several figures of former strongman Omar al-Bashir's regime, which was toppled in 2019, have escaped from prison in recent months, with some voicing their support for the army. Fighting in the latest conflict has concentrated on El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state, where the UN suspects crimes against humanity have been committed. Nyala, Sudan's second city and capital of South Darfur state, has been in the throes of recent fighting. The United States on Thursday urged the warring sides "to cease renewed fighting in Nyala... and other populated areas". "We are particularly alarmed by reports of indiscriminate shelling carried out by both" parties, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said. Further east, a resident of Al-Fulah said "the RSF are confronting the army and the police, and public buildings have been set on fire during their fire exchanges." —Agencies

British Nurse convicted of killing 7 newborns

LONDON: A British nurse was found guilty Friday of murdering seven newborn babies and trying to murder six others at the hospital neonatal unit where she worked, becoming the UK's most prolific killer of children. Lucy Letby, 33 - on trial since last October - was accused of injecting her young victims, who were either sick or born prematurely, with air, overfeeding them milk and poisoning them with insulin. The jury at Manchester Crown Court in northern England reached all of its verdicts after deliberating for 22 days. Letby was arrested following a string of baby deaths at the neonatal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital in northwest England between June 2015 and June 2016. Described by the prosecution as a "calculating" woman who used methods of killing that "didn't leave much of a trace", Letby had repeatedly denied harming the children. "Lucy Letby was entrusted to protect some of the most vulnerable babies. Little did those working alongside her know that there was a murderer in their midst," Senior Crown Prosecutor Pascale Jones said in a statement. —Agencies

EU accused of discriminating between refugees

GENEVA: The EU has been accused of implementing policies which discriminate between the refugees from Ukraine and those from Asia and Africa. The EU countries, which swiftly and comprehensively mobilized to help Ukrainian refugees following the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian War in February 2022, do not show a similar attitude toward those fleeing from other conflict zones, including Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, or Africa. Against this backdrop, numerous migrants froze to death or were pushed back while trying to cross the EU borders. This proves that the bloc violates the principle which entails the provision of humanitarian aid without discrimination. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi is among those who criticized this state of affairs. He reiterated that Black refugees who fled from wars and armed conflicts do not experience the same welcoming practices offered to their Ukrainian counterparts. This is the ugly truth, Grandi added. Moreover, Human Rights Watch (HRW) highlighted the double standards in Europe in treating refugees from Ukraine and refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Somalia. It also remarked that Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, and Poland continue with their violent policies across their borders against migrants. In response to Anadolu's questions on the matter, Muhammed Shehata, communications director of the Geneva-based Euro-Med Human Right Monitor, argued that the EU's discrimination between refugees and migrants is becoming obvious day by day. For example, brutal practices against migrants from Iran, Afghanistan and Syria by Denmark, Bulgaria, Greece, and Hungary are overlooked by the bloc, he said. These practices are even possible with funding from the EU, Shehata added. —Agencies

Biden ready to meet Kim 'without preconditions'

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden is open to having a meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "without preconditions" to talk about the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, said a senior official from the White House. "They (North Korea) have not responded positively to that offer, but it's still on the table. We are willing to sit down and negotiate without preconditions," White House National Security spokesman John Kirby told Japan's Kyodo News Agency. "We've got to make sure that we are ready in every other respect to defend our national security interests and those of our Korean and Japanese allies," Kirby. Biden will host a trilateral summit on Friday with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol in Camp David, the US. Issues that concern the three nations, including North Korea, will be discussed at the summit. Reacting to the scheduled Camp David summit, China urged Friday the participants "to uphold true multilateralism amid complex international security situation." "The security of one country should not come at the expense of that of others and of regional peace and stability," China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters in Beijing. "Who is creating conflicts and intensifying tensions? The international community has its own consensus," said Wang, according to Beijing-based Global Times. "Attempts to form exclusive small cliques and groups and bring camp confrontation and military blocs into the Asia-Pacific is unpopular and will prompt caution and opposition from regional countries," he added. —Agencies

US faces prospect of worsening disasters

HOUSTON: This year has seen wave after wave of extreme weather batter the US - from mass flooding in drought-stricken California to record-shattering heatwaves in the Southwest, and wildfires in Hawaii that have produced death tolls not seen in over a century. The climate change-induced disasters are only slated to accelerate, Zong-Liang Yang, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin's Jackson School of Geosciences told Anadolu. "We are entering a stage from global warming to global boiling," Yang said, echoing a warning from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. "The long-term trend of higher global temperatures over the next 10 years will be warmer than the temperatures of the current 10 years, which were higher than the temperatures of the previous 10 years." Yang said it does not come as a surprise to the scientific community that global warming and the effects of climate change have spawned more natural disasters. He explained that scientists over the past two decades had predicted greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide (CO2) which accounts for nearly 80% of greenhouse gases according to

the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), would continue to increase and further exacerbate natural disasters. "With carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases continuing to increase, the global temperatures will continue to increase," said Yang. "Therefore, there will be more heat waves, more wildfires, more hurricanes, and more intense storms." "Now, it's not just a hypothesis. We are actually witnessing this year after year." According to the EPA, 30 billion tons of carbon dioxide are released into the atmosphere every year due to the burning of fossil fuels. Methane and nitrous oxide are the other two gases that contribute to the degradation of the environment caused by greenhouse gas emissions. The US is the second worst carbon emitter worldwide, behind only China. Power plants, especially coal plants, are the main source of CO2 emissions throughout the world. However, other industries contribute to the greenhouse gas effect, including agriculture due to methane emissions from livestock and rice production, as well as nitrous oxide emissions from fertilizing crops. Carbon emissions from cars, airplanes, and

ships are also contributing factors, as are emissions from landfills, offshore drilling, fracking, and other forms of mining. "The natural disasters we have seen are all part of an intertwined and interconnected system," Yang explained. "The oceans, the atmosphere, the ecosystem - they're all connected. It's a dynamic global system and we are making this system more violent because we keep emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere which adds more warming year after year. It's a buildup." "That's what it means when people talk about climate change," he continued. "The climate is literally changing because of what humans are doing to the environment." Yang referred to the Canadian wildfires to demonstrate how the different atmospheric and environmental factors are connected. He said global warming has contributed to hotter temperatures and drier lands with those conditions making the weather and climate conducive for fire. But when the blazes spread across Canada, the effects were felt worldwide. "The Canadian wildfires were not limited to just Canada," said Yang. "The smoke and toxins in the at-

mosphere affected the US states of New York, Ohio, and Indiana. In fact, the smoke and pollutants spread around the world to Europe reaching Norway, Spain, and Portugal because they traveled in wind patterns and circulated in the atmosphere. What happened in Canada had a connection to other events going on elsewhere in different parts of the world." "It's a totality of humanity not just limited to one single place and the conditions keep getting worse." Yang added that the heat waves in the US and around the world are not just limited to land. They are affecting the oceans too. "We are seeing marine heat waves warming the equatorial Pacific Ocean," said Yang. "And this year is especially anomalous because the global oceans have reached their highest temperatures and the overall global temperatures have also reached their highest numbers with this being the hottest June, July, and likely the hottest August as well." Yang emphasized that the changing atmospheric and environmental conditions will lead to a more volatile system. "When we talk storms - tropical cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons - these are the

big storms that develop in the tropics," said Yang. "Overall, global warming and changing climate will create bigger, stronger, and more intense storms with higher frequency." The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released its latest hurricane season prediction last week, increasing the likelihood of an "above normal" Atlantic hurricane season to 60%, doubling its May prediction of 30%. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Weather Service, said the chance of greater storm activity is due to the "current ocean and atmospheric conditions, such as record-warm Atlantic sea surface temperatures." The updated 2023 NOAA storm outlook now calls for 14 to 21 named storms of which 6 to 11 could turn into hurricanes, and of those, 2 to 5 could become major Category 3 to Category 5 hurricanes with wind speeds of 111 miles per hour (178 kilometers per hour) or greater. Yang said not only are more storms being predicted annually, but they are becoming more powerful, more destructive, and more expensive. —Agencies

Briefs

Governor approves Domki as caretaker Chief Minister

DNA

QUETTA: The appointment of Balochistan caretaker Chief Minister Ali Mardan Khan Domki was approved by Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar on Friday, said a statement released by the governor's office. Kakar gave approval on the recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee which had forwarded the name to the governor on Thursday night. Earlier, outgoing Chief Minister Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and Leader of the Opposition Malik Sikandar Kakar reached a consensus as they nominated Domki as the caretaker chief minister of the province. The nomination came on the heels of a meeting between caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, Balochistan former CM Jam Kamal and Domki. Kamal and Domki called on the newly-appointed interim PM in Islamabad earlier on Tuesday. On August 12, Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar dissolved the provincial assembly on the advice of CM Bizenjo. Bizenjo has been performing duties until a new chief minister comes in.

China's Vice FM meets with OIC delegation

BEIJING: China's Vice Foreign Minister Deng Li met with the visiting delegation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and said that the Chinese side attaches great importance to growing its relations with Islamic countries and the OIC. Deng Li said that the OIC symbolizes the unity and independence of Islamic countries and functions as the bridge for China to develop its relations with Islamic countries, according to the Chinese Ministry of foreign affairs. He said that China stands ready to work with the OIC to enhance mutual trust, step up exchanges, jointly uphold the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, and safeguard international fairness and justice. The members of the delegation said that China is a great country that has scored remarkable achievements in its economic and social development. The OIC appreciates China's contribution to supporting the economic and social development of Islamic countries and expects to further expand its cooperation with China. - APP

'Unhappy' PPP mulls opposing poll delay

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party which bemoans the decision to delay the general election has decided to hold a high-level meeting of its senior leadership. According to sources, the PPP has decided to hold a huddle in the wake of the vote postponement decision by the Election Commission of Pakistan. The party has started mulling charting out a strategy during a high-level meeting to be summoned soon of its senior leadership. Sources said that the PPP is pondering supporting the Supreme Court Bar Association over its demand to hold timely elections in the country. The party is also considering making contacts with its allied parties on the issue of holding elections on time. The important leaders of the PPP have conveyed their reservations vis-à-vis delay in the polls to their superior leadership.

Clerics say Jaranwala violence 'against Islamic teachings'

"If someone has committed an unlawful act, no one is authorised to take law in his hand and burn the church or assault any peaceful Christian citizen," he stressed. Mufti Taqi further stated that the incident was "totally against the basic and classic Islamic teachings"

DNA

LAHORE: Clerics on Friday said the Jaranwala rampage was against the teaching of Islam and called on the government to take strict actions against perpetrators. On Wednesday, a mob targeted the Christian community in Jaranwala tehsil of Faisalabad, leaving over 20 churches and over a dozen homes in ruins. As per police and local sources, the violence erupted after some locals alleged that several desecrated pages of the Holy Quran had been found near a house at Cinema Chowk in Jaranwala, where two Christian brothers resided. A day earlier, Punjab police had arrested at least 140 alleged miscreants, including two prime suspects, and registered five cases. The first information reports (FIRs) registered with the Jaranwala City po-

lice included Section 295 (desecration of a worship place) and Section 295-A (hurting religious feelings) of the Pakistan Penal Code. Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act had also been inserted in the FIRs besides other sections related to attacking, burning and damaging properties of the Christian community. Those arrested by the police included main suspect Muhammad Yasin, identified through a video in which he was seen making an announcement on loudspeakers of mosques to incite Muslims against the religious minority, urging the former to come out of their homes to participate in riots. He reportedly made announcements from five mosques. Meanwhile, the Punjab government has vowed to restore all the churches and homes of the Christians destroyed by the mob within the next three to four days.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter) today, prominent religious scholar Mufti Taqi Usmani called the Jaranwala incident "shameful" and "highly condemnable". "If someone has committed an unlawful act, no one is authorised to take law in his hand and burn the church or assault any peaceful Christian citizen," he stressed. Mufti Taqi further stated that the incident was "totally against the basic and classic Islamic teachings" and "is tantamount to defacing Islam and Muslims". He also called on the government to take action against it. Separately, in a press conference, Central Ruet-i-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad said a high-level commission should be constituted to probe the Jaranwala rampage. "We should remember that Pakistan is a state and will take action against anyone doing anything wrong. But not everyone has permission to set up

their own courts and set houses on fire," he asserted, recalling the times when the Christian community stood with Muslims and protested against the desecration of the Holy Quran. "We have been ashamed in front of the entire world," he said. "We have always, from Karachi to Khyber, Azad Jammu and Kashmir to Gilgit-Baltistan, propagated interfaith harmony." Pakistan, Maulana Azad continued, belonged to everyone. "Whether it is the Holy Quran, Torah or Zabur ... their respect and honour is a part of our faith." The scholar then read out a verse from the Holy Quran and said that the murder of one person was the murder of humanity while saving one life was equivalent to protecting humanity. "Today, our hearts are surely agrieved [...] I just arrived from Medina today but when I received reports about this incident I was in extreme pain."

All parties will move SC for elections: Rashid



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Friday the PPP had created a stir in politics by demanding that elections should be held within 90 days. In his statement on social media website X (formerly Twitter), Rashid said a declaration of the two-hour long meeting between the chief election commissioner and the chief justice of the Supreme Court was not issued, but the Election Commission said the general election would not be held within 90 days and these would be held next year. He said the PPP had created a stir in politics by demanding elections within 90 days. Rashid said it seemed that only the PML-N would favour delay in elections. All other parties would unite to demand elections within 90 days and for that purpose, they would move the Supreme Court as well, he said. The former federal minister said he did not know anyone, except Sarfraz Bugti, in the caretaker cabinet and the caretakers were there only to oversee the elections. They had no mandate to make long-term policy decisions. He said people had no money to buy flour and pay electricity bills. They were poisoning their children and committing suicide, he said.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott calls on Interim Foreign Minister Jilani. - DNA

Pak, UK vow to enhance cooperation

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commissioner to Pakistan Ms Jane Marriott, called on Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani in Islamabad on Friday. During the meeting, the High Commissioner congratulated Jilani Abbas Jilani on assuming the office of the Foreign Minister. The two leaders discussed ways to promote bilateral cooperation between the two countries. They also discussed enhancing bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, climate change and people-to-people contacts. The two sides also exchanged views on promotion of bilateral cooperation between the two countries. Speaking on the occasion, Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani expressed his best wishes to the British High Commissioner over his appointment in Pakistan. - DNA

PBC condemns ECP's decision on delimitation

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) on Friday "strongly condemned" the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to conduct fresh delimitation and "delay elections" beyond the constitutional limit of 90 days. On Thursday, the electoral watchdog released the schedule of delimitation for provincial and national constituencies. According to it, the ECP expects to complete the delimitation exercise by December 14. The announcement of the schedule, necessitated by the recent approval of the census results by the Council of Common Interests, effectively means that elections cannot be held in 2023. The decision came 10 days after the official results of the census were notified and a week after the dissolution of the National Assembly. Article 224 of the Constitution binds the watchdog to conduct the general elections within 90 days of the assembly's dissolution. Section 17(2) of the Elections Act, on the other hand, reads, "The commission shall delimit constituencies after every census is officially published." - DNA

US warns space companies about foreign spying

WASHINGTON: U.S. counterintelligence agencies on Friday warned the American space industry to guard against efforts by foreign intelligence entities to steal research and trade secrets as they try to boost their own countries' space programs. "We anticipate growing threats to this burgeoning sector of the U.S. economy," a U.S. counterintelligence official told a news agency, adding that "China and Russia are among the leading foreign intelligence threats to the U.S. space industry." The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC) and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) issued a two-page bulletin, saying unspecified foreign entities were using cyberattacks and techniques such as strategic investment through joint ventures and acquisitions to gain access to the U.S. space industry. The move is the latest push by Washington to raise awareness about an issue that has long vexed counterintelligence officials and has become a higher priority as the U.S. space industry spends billions of dollars developing new rockets and other technology. - Agencies

Leaders of US, Japan, South Korea to meet at Camp David

US President Joe Biden, his South Korean counterpart Yoon Suk-yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will hold an official joint summit

Korean counterpart Yoon Suk-yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will hold an official joint summit - beyond the less formal talks that have been held on the sidelines of international gatherings. It comes amid a flurry of recent diplomatic breakthroughs between Japan and South Korea, which have had fraught relations since the 1910-1945 Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula. White House National Security Adviser John Kirby on Wednesday hailed the "political courage" of Kishida and Yoon, saying the two leaders were laying the groundwork for stronger security, economic and other forms of coordination. - Agencies

WASHINGTON: The leaders of South Korea, Japan and the United States are set to meet at the US presidential retreat Camp David later this week for a summit that officials from the three countries say aims to usher in a new era of trilateral relations. The event on Friday represents the first time that US President Joe Biden, his South

Tajikistan to host Int'l investment forum next month

ISLAMABAD: Tajikistan is hosting an international investment forum titled "DUSHANBE INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT FORUM '2023" with participation of President of Tajikistan Mr. Emomali Rahmon, all the Ministers and all Business community of Tajikistan. The interested Companies, Business associations from Pakistan have been encouraged to register to take part in the forum. Topics of the forum include, Achievements of the Dushanbe city in the period of independence • Investment opportunities in the fields of education, health, tourism, communal services, as well as in the development of rapid industrialization in Dushanbe city • Presentation of joint

projects with the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation and the United Arab Emirates • The role of information and communication technologies in the development of the economic and social spheres of the capital • Questions and answers • Signing of documents. The participants for the Forum shall also be taken to the Dushanbe Industrial Zone. It may be mentioned here that in September 2018, the founder of national peace and unity, leader of the nation, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, laid the foundation stone for the construction of the Dushanbe Industrial Zone. The industrial zone of Dushanbe city was put into operation in two stages with the opening of industrial enterprises, and currently there are 13 companies in this region, including "Vahdat Textile" LLC, "Asrori Sang" LLC, "Stone" LLC, "GreenGold" LLC, JSC "Shahzoda", JSC "Dushanbe Carpets", JSC "Huria", JSC "Electrical Technology and Safety", JSC "Firuz Binokor", JSC "Favora", JSC "Ravgan", JSC "Sharapov" and JSC "Lazza". They are steadily making their contribution to providing the domestic market with competitive domestic products. - DNA

MBS holds 'frank, productive' talks with Iranian top diplomat

Prince Faisal visited Tehran in June and said he hoped Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi would visit the kingdom at the "appropriate time"

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) Friday held discussions with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, marking the most significant level of bilateral talks since their reconciliation in March, media reported. Taking place unexpectedly in Jeddah, this meeting occurred a day subsequent to Amirabdollahian's arrival in Saudi Arabia. Amirabdollahian had previously engaged in discussions with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, and expressed his belief that the relations between the two countries were "on the right track." "Discussions were frank, beneficial and productive," Amirabdollahian said in a social media post after meeting MBS, adding that the countries "agree on the security and development of all in the region". Footage of the meeting on Iranian state media showed MBS and Amirabdollahian smiling as they spoke, while Prince Faisal and the Iranian delegation looked on. Saudi state news agency SPA said they discussed international and regional developments. The rivalry between Iran's revolutionary leaders and Saudi Arabia's ruling family dominated the Middle East for years as they competed for influence in Iraq, Syria,

Lebanon, Yemen and Bahrain amid a wave of sectarian bloodshed. However, China brokered a rapprochement in March leading to a resumption of full diplomatic relations, which Saudi Arabia had broken off in 2016 when protesters attacked its Tehran embassy over Riyadh's execution of a prominent Shi'ite cleric. Prince Faisal visited Tehran in June and said he hoped Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi would visit the kingdom at the "appropriate time". After years of competition, and with some of the main regional arenas for their competition more stable than in previous years, both sides have reason to change tack. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei wanted to end political and economic isolation pushed by the United States and saw new relations with Saudi Arabia as a way to do so, Iranian officials have said. Saudi Arabia had meanwhile lost confidence in the US commitment to shared regional security concerns and wanted to bolster ties with China, which has retained good relations with Iran. This month it succeeded in getting China to attend a diplomatic meeting on Ukraine that Beijing had earlier avoided. Prince Faisal also spoke by phone with US Secretary General Antony Blinken, with the pair discussing more coordination to boost "security and stability in the Middle East region," Saudi state media reported on Friday.

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