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Hungarian Foreign Minister slams EU's sanctions on Russia

Detailed News On Page-08

Greek foreign minister to visit Türkiye

Detailed News On Page-07

Mountaineer Naila Kiani aims to ascend Cho Oyu

Detailed News On Page-06



PM seeks more time Countrywide protests against bloated bills

Power companies demand security; JI, other parties to hold demonstrations; demand emerges to end free units for all

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Countrywide protests against abnormal increase in the electricity bills continued on Sunday. People flocked to roads with bills in the hands and chanted slogans against the increase in power tariff. They also demanded of the government to immediately withdraw all taxes in order to provide relief to people. Various political parties have threatened to hold wide-spread protests in case the taxes were not withdrawn. They also demanded of the government to do away with free units to WAPDA and other government high ranking officials. Likewise, they also called for immediate measures to curb line losses and power theft. People were of the view that lavish lifestyle of the government high rankings officials has made lives of the common people miserable. It may be mentioned here that in the government offices the air conditioners start working at 7 or even before while



ISLAMABAD An old woman displays her electricity bill during a demonstration in the Federal Capital. - Online

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Govt announces ending free electricity units

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Power Division Secretary Rashid Langrial announced Sunday the ending facility of free electricity provided to grade 17 and above officers of power distribution companies (Discos). The summary related to the decision would be prepared soon, Secretary Langrial said whilst briefing journalists in Islamabad on a range of issues related to the power sector. In July, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) recommended ending free electricity facility to all government officers and employees from grade 16-22. Moreover, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar would convene an emergency meeting at the Prime Minister's House today (Sunday) to discuss the issue of rising electricity bills. The inflated power bills triggered nationwide protests, including Karachi, Rawalpindi, Multan, Gujranwala, and Peshawar. The demonstrators had burnt their

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'Utterly reprehensible' Attack on IHC rebuked

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ministry of Law and Justice on Sunday spoke out against the "social media attack" that it said the Islamabad High Court (IHC) has been the target of, terming it "utterly reprehensible".

"The social media attack by a Political Party on Chief Justice Islamabad High Court is utterly reprehensible," read the statement shared on social media, "Political parties should refrain from attacking the Institutions of the country."

It may be noted that senior lawyer and PPP's former Punjab governor Sardar Latif Khosa has hinted towards launching a lawyers' movement in response to the maltreatment and humiliation faced by the legal fraternity. Notably, Khosa is also PTI chief Imran Khan's lead counsel and the statement came only after he alongside 16 other lawyers was rescued from a malfunctioning elevator at the IHC earlier this week. The lawyers remained trapped for approximately 45 minutes before being rescued by the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) rescue officials on Thursday.

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing an emergency meeting regarding electricity bills at the PM's House. - DNA

Imran tells JIT May 9 arsonists not PTI workers

PTI Chairman confesses to losing cipher again during hour-long inquiry in Attock Jail

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan told the joint investigation team (JIT) that his party leaders were not involved in the May 9 riots but some other people participated in the event. The JIT, which comprises a five-member high-ranking team, is probing the May 9 rampage across the country after permission granted by an anti-terrorism court (ATC). The JIT visited the Attock jail to question the PTI chief - who is currently serving a three-year sentence after being convicted in the Toshakhana case - in different cases, for which he has been

Continued on Page 06

Imran wanted to bring 'revolution against army'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: In his latest salvo against his former political boss - Imran Khan - Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P) chief Pervez Khattak on Saturday accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman of hatching a conspiracy to bring about a "revolution" against the Pakistan Army.

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Briefs

'TTP operating in Afghanistan'

DNA

KABUL: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, has stated that TTP and other terrorist organizations are actively operating within Afghan territory. In an interview, Marriott warned if these groups are not suppressed, they could pose a significant threat not only to Pakistan but also to the global security landscape. Marriott highlighted the recent attacks against Pakistani military and security forces originating from across the Afghan border. This is as the Taliban adamantly denied any involvement of terrorist organizations within Afghanistan's borders.

CM for providing free medicines

DNA

KASUR: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday paid a surprise visit to Baba Bulleh Shah District Hospital Kasur and reviewed the medical facilities provided to the patients. According to the spokesperson here, he inspected the emergency, children ward and various wards. The Chief Minister also asked about the provision of free medicines to the patients and the doctors. The patients expressed their satisfaction on the facilities being provided in the hospital while the carers complained about the overcharging of the parking lot, on which Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi ordered MS Dr. Farooq Ahmed to immediately redress the complaints of overcharging.

Protests hike in power tariff MQM comfortable with delayed elections

Says although Karachi is in need of transparent elections at the earliest, if the delimitation of constituencies took weeks or months, it is not a bad deal



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Convener Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said Sunday that general elections should be held following fresh delimitation of constituencies in line with the census 2023. "Although Karachi is in need of transparent elections at the earliest,

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Sh. Rashid fears 'civil disobedience'

WEB DESK

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) president Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said the people of Pakistan, recently hit hard by inflated electricity bills and generally affected by inflationary pressures, are moving towards civil disobedience movement. Taking to X (formerly known as Twitter), he said the masses protesting power bills on roads could be more violent in the month of September if the caretaker rulers failed to rescue their economic woes.

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3 US Marines killed in Australia air crash

The US Marine Rotational Force in Darwin said there were "a total of 23 personnel on board" at the time of the crash and Australia's military said only Americans were involved

NEWS DESK

DARWIN: Three US Marines were killed Sunday when an Osprey aircraft crashed on a remote tropical island during war games north of the Australian mainland, US military officials said. Rescue workers toiled in fading light to evacuate survivors from the isolated crash site, with US officials saying five crew members had been flown to Royal Darwin Hospital in a "serious condition". The US Marine Rotational Force in Darwin said there were "a total of 23 personnel on board" at the time of the crash and Australia's military said only Americans were involved. Rescue efforts were complicated by the location of the crash - the remote and sparsely populated Melville Island about 60 kilometres (37 miles) north of the

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Pakistani doctor jailed for 18 years in US

FOREIGN DESK

Washington: Muhammad Masood, a 31-year-old licensed Pakistani doctor, living in the United States on a work visa, was sentenced to 18 years in jail for attempting to provide material support to a terrorist organisation, Daesh. "A Rochester man was sentenced today to 216 months in prison, equivalent to 18 years, followed by five years

Continued on Page 06

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New British HC makes trade push on first visit to Karachi

Says "Karachi is one of the best places in Pakistan to discuss business, the country's beating heart and home to some of the country's most pioneering industries"

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: newly appointed British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, will visit Karachi ahead of the expected arrival of the Royal Navy's HMS Lancaster. During her visit, she will be meeting with business, political and community leaders, with a focus on boosting UK-Pakistan trade links. Bilateral trade is currently worth over £4 billion, nearly doubling in 3 years. The British High Commissioner will also visit HMS

Lancaster, which is in Karachi on a routine bilateral Royal Navy-Pakistan Navy training exercise. These exercises are part of a range of 'Defence Diplomacy' activities, part of the UK's commitment to maintaining its well-established defence relationship with Pakistan. British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said: "Karachi is one of the best places in Pakistan to discuss business, the country's beating heart and home to some of the country's most pioneering industries. I am looking forward to hearing from UK and Pakistani businesses

on how we can support each other's ambitious trade goals. "In a demonstration of the breadth of the UK-Pakistan relationship, I am also looking forward to welcoming HMS Lancaster for a bilateral exercise." Earlier this year, Pakistan welcomed the British Army's Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Patrick Sanders KCB CBE, to strengthen senior relationships. Every year British Army Officers attend Quetta Staff College, whilst Pakistani Officers attend the UK's military academies to improve mutual understanding.



ISLAMABAD: Group photo of Saqib Rafiq, President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce, after meeting with Egyptian Ambassador Tariq Mohammad Dehroug. —DNA

Kohat Police arrest bike lifter gang

DNA

KOHAT: Police during a crackdown launched here on Sunday, arrested three members of the bike lifter gang along with the stolen motorcycles in the last 24 hours, informed District Police Officer (DPO) Farhan Khan. SHO Jangal Khel Police Station Roman Khan and his Police team arrested the members of the alleged bike lifter gang namely Majid Shah, resident of Pir Khel Jangal Khel, Naveed Khan, resident of Nai Abadi Jangal Khel and Aurangzeb, resident of Afghan Muhajir Camp during the successful operation and recovered the stolen bikes from their possession. A case has been registered against the arrested bike lifters in Jangal Khel Police Station. "The alleged bike lifters gang members have confessed to their involvement in the theft of motorcycles and more important revelations are expected," said Jangal Khel Police Station Official.

Protest sit-in, blocking Peshawar-Chitral highway

Talking to the people participating in the sit-in, the elders of the area said that the accused belong to the Gujjar community

CHITRAL: In Dodan village area Darosh of Chitral, the protesters blocked Peshawar-Chitral highway for the second time in a week with huge traffic jams demanding immediate arrest of the killers of two villagers of Shahnagar. Hundreds of passengers are facing difficulties as protesters staged a sit-in on the road at Kuldum Gol, blocking it for all traffic for seven hours, demanding immediate arrest of the killers of the two people who were brutally murdered in Shahnagar on Wednesday, last. According to the details, the people of Darosh Tehsil in Lower Chitral blocked Peshawar-Chitral main road as a protest and kept it closed for all types of traffic for seven hours. The protesters said that the Police failed miserably to arrest the accused, hence they were forced to protest again. A protest meeting was also held on this occasion, which was expressed by the leaders

of all political and religious parties. Speakers said, "The recent incident seems to be a deliberate conspiracy to disturb the peaceful atmosphere of Chitral." They said that after three days, the Police failed to arrest the killers of the innocent persons. The protesters also chanted and shouted slogans against the Police and the district administration. Later, the district administration, while negotiating with the protesters, assured that the accused would be arrested within two days and their houses would be demolished. The protesters ended the sit-in and opened the road for traffic. Talking to the people participating in the sit-in, the elders of the area said that the accused belong to the Gujjar community, who illegally occupied the public pasture and forest.—APP

their dead bodies on the road in Darosh Chowk and closed the Peshawar-Chitral highway for all kinds of traffic. Later, Sub-Divisional Police Officer Darosh Iqbal Karim assured that the accused would be arrested within forty-eight hours after the protesters cleared the way. Despite the deadline being over the accused were not arrested and the people of eighteen mosques once again gathered at Kuldum Gol Chowk on the call of Village Council Shahnagar Chairman Waqar Ahmed. Protesters once again staged a sit-in on the Peshawar-Chitral main road as a protest and kept it closed for all types of traffic for seven hours. The protesters said that the Police failed miserably to arrest the accused, hence they were forced to protest again. A protest meeting was also held on this occasion, which was expressed by the leaders

Citizens protest against sending heavy electricity bills continues

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Citizens' protest against the sending of heavy electricity bills continues for the second day with people of the inner city blocking the main circular road, causing problems and huge traffic jams on both sides. The protesters marched from various localities of the inner city gathered near Gunj Gate on main Circular Road, chanted slogans against PESCO and other concerned quarters for sending huge bills and demanded from the government to set up a probe committee to see the actual riding of the electricity bills. The protesters while recording their protest also set on fire their electricity bills. "It is injustice on the part of the concerned authorities wherein sending bills of thousands and millions of rupees to even very poor families, which is a gross abuse," the protesters said. "Along with increasing the cost of electricity, the government also added cruel taxes to the bills which have no justification," they said.

Need to adopt modern technology in agriculture

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHSA) Shahzad Ali Malik on Sunday urged the government to prioritize the integration of modern technology into our agricultural practices for bumper production to meet food staple needs of ever-growing population. Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers led by Momin Ali he said the integration of advanced biotechnology techniques can lead to the development of crop varieties that are more resistant to pests, diseases, and adverse climatic conditions, said a news release issued here. He said this not only ensures food security but also contributes to increased farmer incomes and reduced dependence on imports. He said modern technologies such as precision agriculture, remote sensing, data analytics, and biotechnology offer immense potential to enhance productivity, optimize resource utilization, and mitigate environmental impact. Utilization of modern technology is crucial for the sustainable growth and development of the agricultural industry,

he added. Agriculture plays a crucial role in the economy by contributing to food security, providing raw materials for industries, generating employment, and supporting rural communities. It's a significant source of export earnings for many countries and contributes to overall economic growth and stability. He said agriculture has been the backbone of our economy. However, we are faced with challenges such as fluctuating weather patterns, diminishing arable land, and increasing population pressure. To overcome these obstacles and achieve long-term agricultural sustainability, the incorporation of modern technology is imperative, he added. Shahzad Ali Malik Sitar-I-Imtiaz said by investing in research and development, providing incentives to farmers to adopt innovative methods, evolving new hybrid seed varieties and creating a conducive policy environment, we can revolutionize our agricultural sector and pave the way for a prosperous and sustainable future. He hoped that new caretaker leadership, can become a shining

example of how technology-driven agriculture can transform economies and livelihoods. His represents a strategic endeavor by Pakistan to strengthen economic ties with China and explore opportunities for collaboration and investment. "There are seven top firms participating in CIF-TIS, Special Technology Zone Authority (STZA), Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), NETSOL, ISBEI, National Bank of Pakistan, National Logistic Corporation (NLC) And Fb Enterprises would set up their booths to attract Chinese investors at CIF-TIS, scheduled to be held in Beijing from September 2 to 6", he stated. He further said that Two software giants specializing in asset finance and leasing solutions, NETSOL and ISBEI Technologies will demonstrate its expertise in the financial technology domain. In contrast, NBP would exhibit its banking and financial services, highlighting Pakistan's robust financial sector and its commitment to digital banking solutions.—APP

فیڈرل گورنمنٹ ایمپلائیز ہاؤسنگ اتھارٹی

پہلی مرتبہ اوورسیز پاکستانیوں اور جنرل پبلک کیلئے رہائشی پلاٹس

اسلام آباد کے منظور شدہ پرائم سیکٹرز G-12 اور F-12

اہلیت

- جنرل پبلک کو:- تمام پاکستانی شہری جو شناختی کارڈ کے حامل ہیں۔
- اوورسیز پاکستانی کو:- پاکستانی افراد جو POC/NICOP/ Dual Nationality/ Resident Permit کے حامل ہوں۔

خصوصیات

- جنرل پبلک کیلئے 20 فیصد اور اوورسیز پاکستانیوں کیلئے 15 فیصد رہائشی پلاٹس کا کوٹھن مختص کیا گیا ہے۔
- درخواست گزار ہر کیٹیگری میں ایک سے زیادہ درخواستیں جمع کرا سکتا ہے۔ بہر حال ایک سے زائد پلاٹس قرضہ اندازی میں نکلنے کی صورت میں درخواست گزار اپنی مرضی کا ایک پلاٹ لے سکتا ہے۔
- درخواست فارم بھرنے کا قابل واپسی فیس نیچے دیئے گئے ٹیبل کے مطابق عسکری بینک لمیٹڈ یا بینک آف پنجاب کی کسی بھی برانچ میں جمع کرا یا جاسکتا ہے۔
- اوورسیز پاکستانی/جنرل پبلک ان لائن Visa/Master کارڈز کے ذریعے بھی پلاٹ لے کر سکتے ہیں۔

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فہم جمع کرانے کی آخری تاریخ
10 اکتوبر 2023 ہے

درخواست دینے کیلئے FGEHA کی ویب سائٹ پر آن لائن اپلاٹ کریں

درخواست دینے کیلئے 5% خصوصی رعایت

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200	G-12	8,000	12,000,000	2,400,000	800,000
272	G-12 / F-12	10,000	16,320,000	3,264,000	1,088,000
356	G-12 / F-12	15,000	21,360,000	4,272,000	1,424,000
500	G-12 / F-12	20,000	30,000,000	6,000,000	2,000,000

مزید معلومات کیلئے ہمارے ویب سائٹ www.fgeha.gov.pk ملاحظہ کریں

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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/Bukino Faso
National Day
- Aug 09 /Singapore
- Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day
- Aug 15/India
Independence Day
- Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day
- Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day
- Aug 25/Uruguay
Independence Day
- Aug 30 /Turkey
Armed Forces Day
- Aug 31/Kyrgyz
Republic
Independence Day
- Aug 31/Malaysia
National Day

Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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
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Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
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

Addressing Pakistan's trade deficit

Unraveling factors influencing export competitiveness in Pak

Pakistan's share in global trade has dwindled from 0.15% in 2005 to a mere 0.12% in 2021 • Pakistan's export competitiveness has been waning, particularly when compared to peer countries like Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, and Malaysia • To overcome the challenges posed by our current economic crisis, we must collaborate across sectors – government, exporters, and economists

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In a recent address to a group of journalists, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor, and Dr. Durre Nayab, Pro Vice Chancellor, shed light on the pressing issue of Pakistan's widening trade deficit, emphasizing the critical role of export competitiveness in the country's economic landscape. Dr. Nadeem ul Haque began by acknowledging the paramount nature of the challenge at hand, stating, "Lowering exports has emerged as a significant contributor to Pakistan's persistent trade deficit, posing a multifaceted challenge that has plagued the country since the early 2000s. During the last two decades, the contribution of exports to our GDP has declined from 16% to 10%." Drawing attention to the international context, Dr. Durre Nayab highlighted, "Pakistan's share in global

trade has dwindled from 0.15% in 2005 to a mere 0.12% in 2021. This decline in export competitiveness places us at a disadvantage, especially when compared to economies like Bangladesh, India, and Vietnam, which have managed to expand their export capacities." This finding was made by PIDE researchers and economists in their recent brief titled "What Are the Factors Making Pakistan's Exports Stagnant? Insight from Literature Review."

The academic duo underlined key factors that have led to stagnancy in Pakistan's exports, including low productivity of firms, lack of value addition and innovation, complex incentive mechanisms, limited export destinations, and inadequate investment in research and development. Dr. Nadeem ul Haque added, "To address the ongoing economic crisis and pave the way for a more resilient future, it is imperative that we strategize rigorously to identify poten-

tial markets that align with our exportable products." In a comprehensive literature review, it was revealed that Pakistan's export competitiveness has been waning, particularly when compared to peer countries like Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, and Malaysia. "We have witnessed a decline in our export share on the global stage, a trend that is most concerning when measured against our regional counterparts," said Dr. Durre Nayab. The contrasting trajectories of economies like Bangladesh and Vietnam were discussed in the context of export growth. "Bangladesh, once among the poorest nations, has managed to outpace growth predictions with a robust export-driven economy," explained Dr. Nadeem ul Haque. "In contrast, our exports have remained stagnant at around 30 billion dollars, posing a significant challenge to our economic outlook." Dr. Durre Nayab pointed to his-

torical examples of countries like South Korea, which transformed from an agrarian economy to a tech-driven powerhouse. "Learning from these success stories, we understand that enhancing export competitiveness, improving productivity, and fostering innovation are central to breaking the cycle of stagnation." Dr. Nadeem ul Haque concluded, "To overcome the challenges posed by our current economic crisis, we must collaborate across sectors – government, exporters, and economists – to identify potential markets and align them with our export capabilities. A swift response is crucial in building a thriving economic environment." The scholars emphasized the need for a comprehensive firm-level survey to identify barriers to productivity and export competitiveness. By addressing these issues collectively, Pakistan can chart a course toward economic recovery and resilience.

Business community asks govt to withdraw rising taxes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The business community, including retailers and online businesses, has expressed its severe concern over the increasing restrictions and taxes on payments for International Digital Services through banking channels, including Debit/Credit Cards and Commercial Remittances. In addition, the Federal Board of Revenue has raised withholding tax (WHT) by 400% from 1% to 5% for active taxpayers on international transactions on debit/credit cards. Although this tax may be adjustable at the time of annual tax return filing, it temporarily increases the cost per transaction and funding requirements for persons making payments for commercial purposes. Similarly, 16% FED on bank charges also adds to the transaction cost of such transactions.



ISLAMABAD: People are buying books from vendor at G-8 Markaz as due to the modern technology such ambitions are now decreasing day by day across the country. —Online

FTO coordinator emphasizes regional collaboration

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday viewed the inclusion of Pakistan in the BRICS group would be a significant step towards fostering economic and diplomatic collaboration in the region. Speaking at a seminar on "Role of the Brics Bloc in region" held under the aegis of the Gold Economic Ring Forum he said Pakistan's expertise in sectors such as agriculture, technology, and energy could contribute to the bloc's overall growth and development, said a news release issued here. He said adding Pakistan to this group could further enhance the bloc's potential and influence, offering numerous benefits to all member nations. Furthermore, the inclusion of Pakistan could help foster stability and cooperation in the South Asian region. As we are all aware, regional stability is crucial for economic growth and security. He said by engaging Pakistan in a platform like BRICS, the bloc could actively contribute to peace-building efforts and facilitate dialogue among neighboring countries. He said Pakistan has a diverse economy, a strategic geographical location, and a population of over 224 million people. —APP

'Africa's \$4 trillion market key for Pak development'

ISLAMABAD: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SCCI) former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday stressed the need for fully exploiting the vast potential and investments in Africa, a \$4 trillion market, for sustainable socio-economic development of Pakistan. Chairing a round table conference on 'Vast Potentials of Africa and Pakistan', he said recognizing Africa's potential for exponential growth in the mining sector as a result of the global energy transition, he anticipated an influx of foreign investment within the continent which holds an estimated 30 percent of the planet's mineral reserves. He said, "Africa possesses an impressive range of minerals, particularly those vital to the energy transition," according to a news release issued here. He said, "We can not afford to sideline the continent that holds the key to many of the world's most pressing challenges."

He stressed the need to explore the significant opportunities that lie in harnessing the untapped potential of partnerships with African nations. "As Pakistan seeks to diversify its economic and diplomatic relations, Africa presents a rich landscape for collaboration and mutual growth," he added. He said, "Africa, with its diverse economies, vast natural resources, and growing consumer markets, holds immense promise for trade, investment, and cooperation." He said by strategically engaging with African nations, Pakistan could tap into sectors such as agriculture, energy, infrastructure development, technology, and education. Such partnerships would not only bolster our economic prospects but also strengthen diplomatic ties on the international stage, he added. Iftikhar Ali Malik said, "By taking proactive steps to explore and exploit the vast potential of African partnerships, Pakistan can position itself as a progressive global player committed to mutual growth, peace, and prosperity. He said, "Visionary leadership can lead Pakistan toward a brighter future through strengthened ties with the African continent." He urged the government to consider formulating a comprehensive Africa policy that outlines the key objectives and strategies for collaboration with African nations. This policy could prioritize sectors of mutual interest, encourage trade delegations and investment forums, and facilitate cultural exchanges, he added. Another speaker Rameen Kashif recipient of the Best CEO award said initiatives aimed at knowledge exchange, capacity building, and cultural ties between Pakistan and African countries could foster a deeper understanding and friendship between our peoples. Education and skills development programs could be established to empower African youth, leading to sustainable development, she added.—APP

Online shopping scams on rise with influx of platforms

ISLAMABAD: The influx of online shopping platforms during the last few years has undoubtedly made the lives of people much easier by making every essential item available to their doorsteps but their reliability is still questionable for many. It has been observed that a number of online shopping websites, social media pages and groups operating in the country were selling sub-standard stuff including dresses, shoes and other accessories to the customers, contrary to what is displayed and shown. A number of fake websites created in the names of famous brands are making buyers fool by showing original branded pictures of dresses and other items with original prices but delivering substandard stuff and replicas. "These fake websites are even using exact names and logos of the famous brands that anyone can hardly feel the difference between the original and the fake ones", Samina Naz, a regular online buyer said. Talking to APP, she said, "I placed the order of two dresses on a popular brand website after fulfilling all the requirements. The delivery man from a famous courier service company delivered a packet to my house after receiving payment." "When I opened that packet, both of the dresses were totally different to what I ordered and the poor quality of fabric, design and embroidery reflected that these were taken from some flea market. Even the phone number mentioned on the parcel cover was also a fake one", she said. "It is better to visit the branded stores for shopping instead of relying on the online shopping websites. I cannot understand why these brands do not take any action against the fake websites using their names and logos and spoiling their image", she observed. This has also been observed that some websites offering highly attractive discounted deals on different items are not offering the option of cash on delivery but demanding payment through credit cards in advance. Sajid Akber, a young boy said, "I liked a jacket through an online shopping website (local) and I got crazy to buy that urgently. Payment through a credit card was the only option to purchase that jacket so I paid the amount." "It has been two months now since I placed the order and the jacket never arrived. But I think it was my mistake that I blindly trusted on an online shopping website without checking the facts", he said. The tempting sale offers on the fake online shopping sites are attracting buyers like me and the relevant authorities must take action against these website owners who are looting the customers, he insisted. Kamran Khan, who is a web developer and an IT expert, "Checking the credibility of online shopping websites is not an easy task for a common man especially those who are not well educated and have very little knowledge of internet usage". He said, the buyers must check before placing an order on the website of any brand whether it is an official one or fake. About local websites, he said the buyers must go through the reviews about the shopping websites and try to avoid shopping from those websites that require initial payment through credit cards, except for one or two very reliable websites. While the reliability of social media pages and groups offering different items cannot be checked unless we buy something from them but the only way to prevent fraud is to check reviews and only go for proper shopping websites, not pages or WhatsApp groups, he added. —DNA

حکومت پنجاب کا کسان دوست اقدام

مشینی کاشت کے فروغ سے

فصلوں کی پیداوار بڑھانے کا منصوبہ

حکومت پنجاب کی طرف سے تمام اضلاع میں سبسڈی پر زرعی مشینری آلات کی فراہمی کیلئے کاشتکاروں سے درخواستیں مطلوب ہیں

کاشتکاروں کو مشینوں کی خرید کے لئے

60 فیصد

(زیادہ سے زیادہ 5 لاکھ روپے)

سبسڈی کی فراہمی

درخواستوں کی وصولی کی آخری تاریخ

30

ستمبر 2023

درخواست گزار کم از کم 50 ہارس پاور کے ٹریکٹر (خود چلنے والی مشینری کے علاوہ) کا مالک ہو۔

نہری علاقوں میں 25 ایکڑ تک اور بارانی علاقوں میں 50 ایکڑ تک زرعی زمین کا مالک/مزارع ہو۔

کاشتکار/سروں پر وہ زمین پر منصوبے کی مدت کے دوران دوسرے کسانوں کو کرایہ پر خدمات دینے کا پابند ہوگا۔

اس سیکم کے تحت مشینری آلات کے حصول کیلئے پنجاب کے کسی دوسرے مرکز/ضلع سے درخواست نہ دی ہو۔

الاعنت لیٹر کے اجراء کے 10 دن کے اندر منظور شدہ فرموں/کمپنیوں کے پاس بکنگ کرنا ضروری ہوگا ورنہ مالی امداد منسوخ تصور ہوگی۔ جسے کسی عدالت میں چیلنج نہیں کیا جاسکے گا اور یہ مالی امدادسٹ میں موجود اگلے اہل درخواست گزار کو دے دی جائے گی۔

پہلے 5 سالوں کے دوران کسی بھی شکل میں مشینری کسی دوسرے شخص کو فروخت یا منتقل نہیں کرے گا/گی۔

درخواست گزار کو متعلقہ ضلع کے اسسٹنٹ ایگریکلچرل انجینئر/اسسٹنٹ ڈائریکٹر ایگریکلچرل انجینئرنگ کے تحت آپریشن، خرابیوں کی دوری اور مرمت اور دیگر بحال کے متعلق ایک دن کی تربیت حاصل کرنا ہوگی اور الاعنت کمیٹی کے فیصلے کی پابندی کرے گا/گی۔

کاشتکار درخواست فارم بمعہ تفصیل زرعی مشینری/آلات تکمیلہ زراعت کی ویب سائٹ field.agripunjab.gov.pk سے ڈاؤن لوڈ کر سکتے ہیں

یا متعلقہ ضلع کے اسسٹنٹ ایگریکلچرل انجینئر (فییلڈ) سے حاصل کرنے کے بعد

درخواست فارم طلبہ کاغذات بشمول بیان صافی (100 روپے کے اسٹامپ پر) متعلقہ دفتر میں جمع کرائیں

محکمہ زراعت حکومت پنجاب

نظامت اعلیٰ زراعت (فییلڈ) پنجاب

Briefs

Graveyard committee holds first meeting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The first meeting of the Graveyard Development and Facilitation Committee convened today at the H11 Graveyard, with Imran Ghaznavi leading as the chairperson. This committee, composed of esteemed members including Imran Ghaznavi, Admiral Shahid SAIED, Advocate Tayyba Abbasi, and the Director of DMA, sets out with a clear mission to enhance the facilities available at Islamabad's graveyards, ensuring the highest level of convenience for the public. With a shared vision of raising graveyard facilities to international standards, the committee aims to create a transformative impact on these vital community spaces. The committee's approach prioritizes collaboration with both the community and the Capital Development Authority (CDA), reflecting a commitment to inclusivity and partnership. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Chairman CDA for their instrumental role in establishing this committee, a testament to their unwavering dedication to this important initiative. This collaboration is poised to usher in a new era of enhanced services and facilities, making a positive difference in the lives of the citizens of Islamabad. The inaugural meeting also included a touching moment as committee members paid a visit to the grave of late Arshad Sharif. This gesture emphasized the personal connection and sincere dedication driving their mission forward. As the committee begins its work, we invite the community to follow our progress closely and join us in celebrating the positive impact that this collaboration will undoubtedly bring. Stay tuned for updates on this exciting journey of enhancing community spaces.

NEPRA's Inaction Leaves Steel Industry in the Dark

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Association of Large Steel Producers (PALSP) has raised a poignant concern over the blatant discrimination faced by Karachi-based industries in the implementation of the Government's Incremental Units Consumption Subsidy. This subsidy, designed to provide relief to industries during post-COVID economic challenges, has exposed a disheartening disparity in its allocation, casting shadows on the commitment of state authorities towards equitable support. The Incremental Units Consumption Subsidy, which offers a fixed rate of 12.96 PKR per unit for energy consumption exceeding the reference period, has been a lifeline for industries across Pakistan. However, the situation takes a grim turn when viewed through the lens of Karachi industries. Since July 2021, these industrial units have been ensnared in a web of bureaucratic hurdles.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Fifty Pakistani students were awarded prestigious Chinese government scholarships. Their send-off ceremony held at the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The scholarships were awarded under prestigious Chinese Government Scholarship Program. Pang Chunxue, the Charge D'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy was the Chief guest on the occasion. During the event, she emphasized that the educational relationship, particularly the collaborative efforts in science and technology, pave the way forward and hold the potential to greatly benefit both nations. Speaking at the event, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of HEC, highlighted that the current count of Pakistani students in China exceeds 30,000. "Among them, some are recipients of Chinese government scholarships, while others have been directly awarded scholarships by various provinces and universities and even companies," he added. "Upon your departure, you won't just be students; you will be ambassadors of Pakistan. And upon your return, you will serve

Consumer protection is our priority: Chairman OGRA

Instructions have been passed that the cylinders may be placed in proper ventilated spaces i.e. away from confined spaces/basements and installations/fittings/changing of valves should be performed by trained staff

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Masroor Khan, Chairman-Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) along with his enforcement team visited the nearby areas of Islamabad. During inspection it has been found that LPG cylinders were randomly stacked in the basement of some commercial buildings and restaurants from where the LPG was being supplied to different floors through sub-standard rubber pipes having loose connections with poor quality endangering with serious threat to the lives and property of general public. 'Many innocent lives have been lost due to inappropriate usage of LPG; therefore, OGRA has set consumer safety as primary focus. Masroor Khan.' Instructions have been passed that the cylinders may be placed in proper ventilated spaces i.e. away from confined spaces/basements and installations/fittings/changing of valves should be performed by trained staff.



ICCI calls for revisiting PPAs with IPPs

FAISAL SHEIKH

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the root cause of the surging circular debt and rising power tariffs is the power purchase agreements (PPAs) signed with the IPPs to pay them in US dollar and called upon the government to revisit PPAs with IPPs to pay them in PKR. He said that IPPs are earning huge profits in dollars, but the businesses are badly suffering due to exorbitant power tariffs and rising cost of doing business. He stressed that the government should change the basic tariff of IPPs in PKR instead of US dollars as this change would save billions

of rupees of the national exchequer and provide electricity at affordable cost to the businesses making our export competitive in the international market. Similarly, the profits to the IPPs should also be paid in PKR instead of US dollars. He expressed these views during a media talk at ICCI. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that around 47 IPPs are working in Pakistan's power sector and they have already earned huge profits as compared to their capital investment. As per Power Policy 1994, 16 IPPs had invested around Rs.60 billion and earned over Rs.400 billion, which shows their huge profits in Pakistan. He said that PPAs in Pakistan have made energy cost highest in the region and stressed that to save the industry from closure, the

government should renegotiate PPAs with IPPs in the best national interest. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that the government has made massive hikes in the prices of electricity, gas and POL products to meet the IMF conditions, but these anti-business measures have endangered the survival of businesses. He stressed that the government should withdraw the massive hike in power tariffs and prices of POL products to save the businesses from further closure. He said that already the record high inflation has badly squeezed the purchasing power of the consumers causing great slump in the business activities while the unprecedented hike in the energy prices has made our industry uncompetitive in the world market. He stressed

that the government should engage the private sector in consultation to rationalize the energy prices in order to save the businesses from total collapse. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that due to significant depreciation of rupee, import of industrial raw materials has become very expensive which is pushing up the production cost. He stressed that the government should take urgent measures to stabilize the value of rupee in order to save the industry from further troubles. He said that instead of hiking the power tariffs, the government should focus on controlling the transmission & distribution losses and power theft besides improving the performance of power companies to save the consumers from further burden.

RMB 350,000 for Gwadar orphan students

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, Chinese Consulate General of Karachi, people's Republic of China has approved a plan for the orphan students of Gwadar. The Education Department of the Government of Balochistan has identified and put forth a list of 1201 orphans in Gwadar. A total of RMB 350,000 will be spent in the initiative. Two third of the amount will be used to purchase school bags and other stationary items for the students. Whereas, the rest will be disbursed among the orphans in the form of cash. China Overseas Ports Holding Company, District Administration and Education Department of Gwa-



dar have discussed the distribution mechanism, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. Gwadar District Administration official told Gwadar Pro that China's diplomatic missions in Pakistan with the support of Chinese enterprises working in Gwadar have stepped up socioeconomic and Human

Resources development projects in Gwadar. Moreover, upgradation of schools of Gwadar is also underway, he added. Recently, Chinese consulate doled out 10,000 free ration flour bags to deserving people of Gwadar. Each family received three bags, each 10 kg. Most recipients hailed from fishermen community.

Campaign for registration of house servants

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in full swing, a police public relations officer said. He said that, during this campaign various teams of Islamabad Capital Police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as to inquire about the problems faced by the citizens. In this regard, the CTD Islamabad has registered a data of 168 house servants of 294 houses from Sumbal Police Station jurisdiction. The purpose of this campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital adding that the registration of tenants.—DNA

Power sector is pushing country towards anarchy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Sunday that people across the country are protesting and committing suicides as a result of excessive electricity costs, which are pushing the country into chaos. The country is plunging into lawlessness and chaos as elites have turned an affluent country into a living nightmare for its citizens, he said. After the political and economic collapse, the power bills have become a nightmare for the masses; their household budgets have been destroyed, and their lives have become miserable, he added. In a statement issued here today, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that fights are taking place in the streets and in houses, violence has become the norm, and divorces are taking place due to the inflated electricity bills. People have been forced to take out loans, sell jewellery and other essential items to pay the bills, and compromise on food, health, and education. In various parts of the country, announcements are being made from mosques asking people not to pay electricity bills; traders are not allowing WAPDA officials to enter the markets; strikes, roadblocks, and attacks on WAPDA officials have become routine in many places, which is a perfect recipe for a civil war, he observed. He said that the security of the power officials, offices, and grid stations is facing severe threats, and if the situation is not controlled, a civil war may also break out across the country. Dr. Mughal said that while the cost of electricity is killing people, it is also destroying businesses. The country's elite and WAPDA officers have become white-collar criminals who only care about their own interests and have no interest in resolving the problems of the people. Elites are still getting free electricity and benefits worth billions of rupees, and their looting has turned a prosperous country into a hell for the people. He said that if immediate measures are not taken to provide relief to the people, there will be uncontrollable lawlessness and anarchy in the country, which will wash away everything. Inaugural Meeting of Graveyard Development and Facilitation Committee Marks Significant Progress in Elevating Islamabad's Graveyard Facilities

23 outlaws arrested

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 23 outlaws from different areas of the city and recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police have intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city. Following these directives, the Karachi Company police team arrested an accused named Akash Masih and recovered 80 liters liquor from his possession. The Shalimar police team arrested an accused named Haroon Zaheer and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is under way. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed all senior officials for an effective crackdown against the accused involved in drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons. He further said that the safety of the lives and property of the citizens is our prime responsibility and the performance of police officials in this regard would be reviewed on a continuous basis.

Pak received USD 18M Net FDI from China in July

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has secured a foreign direct investment (FDI) of USD 18 million from China during July 2023, the inaugural month of FY 2023-24. This substantial investment stands as a testament to the ever-strengthening financial partnership between the two countries and sets a promising tone for the fiscal year ahead. Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday quoting data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The total inflow from China in July 2023 amounted to USD 33.9 million, while the outflow stood at USD 15.9 million. This resulted in a net inflow of USD 18 million from China. In July 2022, the net inflow from China was USD 7.1 million, while in the same period this year, it is USD 18 million, reflecting a remarkable increase in FDI from China compared to the first month of the previous fiscal year. The SBP's data shows that in July 2023.

50 Pakistani students receive Chinese scholarships

DNA


ISLAMABAD: Fifty Pakistani students were awarded prestigious Chinese government scholarships. Their send-off ceremony held at the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The scholarships were awarded under prestigious Chinese Government Scholarship Program. Pang Chunxue, the Charge D'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy was the Chief guest on the occasion. During the event, she emphasized that the educational relationship, particularly the collaborative efforts in science and technology, pave the way forward and hold the potential to greatly benefit both nations. Speaking at the event, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of HEC, highlighted that the current count of Pakistani students in China exceeds 30,000. "Among them, some are recipients of Chinese government scholarships, while others have been directly awarded scholarships by various provinces and universities and even companies," he added. "Upon your departure, you won't just be students; you will be ambassadors of Pakistan. And upon your return, you will serve

as China's ambassadors in Pakistan. Hence, you are shouldering dual responsibilities now," he added. Mukhtar Ahmed assured the students that they would not only receive education but also gain insights into the successful practices that have propelled this Chinese nation's transformation into a global powerhouse over the past 25 to 30 years. Since 2019, the Chinese Government has been extending scholarships to aspiring Pakistani


students, covering a wide spectrum of educational pursuits including undergraduate, masters, and PhD programs. Over the course of the last five years, a noteworthy total of 243 Pakistani students have successfully secured these prestigious scholarships. This initiative stands as a testament to the robust educational collaboration between China and Pakistan, providing valuable opportunities for Pakistani scholars to pursue higher education in various





fields on an international platform. The scholarship offerings encompass an extensive array of disciplines, ranging across science, engineering, agriculture, medicine, economics, legal studies, management, education, history, literature, philosophy, and fine arts. This comprehensive selection underscores the commitment of the Chinese Government to support Pakistani students in their pursuit of academic excellence across a diverse spectrum of fields.





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Bans on Chinese buying land

Citing fears that Chinese entities are creating a national security risk by buying swathes of US farmland, some of which is supposedly near sensitive sites, State and federal lawmakers in the United States are pushing to regulate foreign ownership of US land. Yet after reviewing thousands of documents filed with the US Department of Agriculture, NBC News found that very few agricultural land purchases were by Chinese buyers in the past year and a half – “fewer than 1,400 acres (566.55 hectares) in a country with 1.3 billion acres of agricultural land”. And it pointed out that the total amount of US agricultural land owned by Chinese interests is less than three-hundredths of 1 percent. According to the National Agricultural Law Center, the states of Florida, Virginia, North Dakota, Montana and Arkansas are stepping up efforts to prevent foreign purchases of US agricultural land, and more than 20 states are considering similar measures. There is also a bill in the US Congress that seeks to “federalize” the issue. Claiming that the state was “taking action to stand against the United States’ greatest geopolitical threat”, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis for instance, signed a series of bills in May banning Chinese nationals from buying land in the state unless they are also US citizens or permanent residents. After the bill was passed, some Chinese citizens living in Florida sued the state to overturn the ban. However, on Aug 17, a US District Judge ruled against the plaintiffs on the grounds that since it was “based on citizenship, not race or national origin”, the ban did not constitute discrimination and did not violate the US Constitution. The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association begged to differ with that decision, calling the Florida law a “textbook example of unfair discrimination”. Such land purchase bans reveal how deep the cancer of “Sinophobia” has infected US lawmakers. Canadians have bought 30 times more land than Chinese, yet no US lawmaker has proposed a ban on land purchases by Canadians. The ban on Chinese buying lands is both a joke and a tragedy. In seeking to erect high walls around plots of land like castellated enclosures of old, the US lawmakers are showing the extent to which they have been emboldened to demonstrate their racial prejudices as badges of honor.



Golden era for China-Africa relations

China has proved to be a true and trustworthy friend of Africa, and the country remains committed to helping the continent address the major issues it is facing in its efforts to shake off poverty and realize economic and social development. At the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue on Thursday, China announced a number of new measures to promote China-Africa cooperation and help the continent with its economic integration and modernization efforts. To help promote the stability, development and prosperity of the continent and improve the well-being of the African people, China's latest pledges of assistance are aimed at helping Africa with the three key tasks of transforming its manufacturing sector, securing food self-sufficiency and training high-caliber talents. The concrete steps President Xi Jinping proposed include an initiative to support Africa's industrialization, as well as a plan to support Africa's agricultural modernization and a plan to support bilateral talent development. The industrialization initiative will channel more assistance, investment and financing to the continent. Under the agricultural plan, China will help Africa expand its grain planting and encourage Chinese companies to increase agricultural investment in Africa; while the talent plan seeks to train 500 principals and high-caliber teachers for vocational colleges in Africa every year, as well as 10,000 technical personnel with both Chinese language and vocational skills. Despite the vicissitudes of the times, China-Africa ties have emerged tall and strong. China has been Africa's largest trading partner over the past decade and the largest destination for African exports; statistics indicate bilateral trade grew 11 percent to \$282 billion in 2022. But in a world undergoing transformation and turbulence, both sides need stronger solidarity and cooperation more than ever. The developing world needs to join hands so as to safeguard their common interests and development space and amplify their voice in global governance. As members of the Global South, China and African countries share similar views on today's world order and global governance. During the dialogue on Thursday, China reiterated its pledge to support the African Union to gain full membership of the G20 and to support special arrangements for UN Security Council reform to meet Africa's modernization aspiration. Building upon the current strong momentum in bilateral ties paves the way for a golden era of China-Africa cooperation.

Reviving Balochistan: The imperative for change and progress

Qamar Bashir



Balochistan is often highlighted for its abundant mineral, oil, and gas resources, but it's crucial to recognize the plight of its people, who endure challenging living conditions. Throughout Pakistan's history, leaders have promised to utilize Balochistan's wealth for its people's betterment, but this intent has often resulted in the misappropriation of provincial resources, leaving its residents in difficult circumstances. Can we anticipate a shift in this pattern, or will the cycle persist, with blame directed at tribal leaders for the province's ongoing poverty? I have distinct memories from my time as a news producer. I had the privilege of accompanying Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti as a news producer in PTV during his visits to various regions in the provinces. Notably, his unwavering determination played a pivotal role in the inauguration of a metal road between Sui and Dera Bugti around 1988. Additionally, his persistent and compelling demands led to the construction of certain segments of the RCD highway connecting Quetta and Karachi. However, reconstruction efforts abruptly ceased following his removal as Chief Minister. This serves as a poignant example of the intricate interplay between regional leadership, development initiatives, and shifts in political dynamics. I have vivid recollections of a particular public rally in Sui where an interesting paradox unfolded. Despite the common narrative of blaming Nawabs and Sardars for obstructing road and highway construction, it is worth noting that it was often during their tenures in power that Balochistan's road network was established. One distinct memory involves Sardar Sanaullah Zehri addressing a public gathering, a moment I covered in my capacity as a news producer. He passionately expressed his hope that, within our lifetime, we would witness well-constructed roads in Balochistan. He humorously lamented that even his expensive vehicles wore out quickly due to the poor road conditions. Notably, another Sardar countered accusations by stating that while these leaders were seen as obstacles to school openings and the establishment of cantonment areas and FC Qila, the successful enforcement of these establishments begged the question of why schools couldn't receive the same attention. This paradox underscores the complex dynamics shaping development narratives in the region. Having Quetta as my birthplace and having shared companionship with Baluch, Pathan, and Hazara friends, my six-year tenure as a news producer allowed me to extensively traverse every nook and cranny of Balochistan. During this time, I found a consistent theme emerging in various public gatherings, in-

volving Governors, Chief Ministers, and Federal Ministers. Four distinct demands consistently resonated: the plea for water, roads, and schools, with a collective sentiment that beyond these necessities, the community would harness their own efforts to cultivate prosperity. I observed that Baloch, Pashtun, and Brahvi societies exhibit qualities of utmost purity, simplicity, industriousness, resilience, hospitality, and an intrinsic humane and benevolent nature. Their generosity knows no bounds; when approached for assistance, they readily offer whatever they possess, be it from their homes or pockets, without hesitation. In times of trouble, their response isn't a question of whether to help but a swift action to provide relief, expecting no recompense. Seeking refuge from them brings security without conditions. Even in the face of personal hunger, they willingly share the little they have to ensure you're nourished. However, there exist certain boundaries they rightfully uphold. Reflecting on our actions toward these innocent, virtuous, and compassionate individuals reveals a sobering truth about the state of affairs. In 1990, Dr. Mahbub ul Haq introduced a groundbreaking shift in development thinking with the publication of the inaugural Human Development Report. It introduced the Human Development Index (HDI), which moved beyond conventional economic measures to evaluate a nation's progress by the well-being of its citizens. The HDI measures various dimensions of human development, encompassing factors like health, education, and living standards. Each year, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), directed by the United Nations General Assembly, compiles an HDI ranking of countries based on these human development criteria. During the period of 2021-2022, Pakistan's standing on the Human Development Index (HDI) was 161st among 192 countries. This ranking positioned it lower in comparison to other South Asian nations. Notably, Bhutan secured the 127th position, Bangladesh the 129th, India the 132nd, and Nepal the 143rd, placing them in the medium human development category. Remarkably, despite facing challenges, Sri Lanka made significant progress, elevating its position by nine points to reach 73rd place on the index, thereby entering the high human development category. Pakistan stands at the 161st position on the Human Development Index (HDI), yet the focus narrows on Balochistan's distinct trajectory. Initially, the province boasted the second-highest per capita income, trailing only Sindh, as the century turned. However, today's landscape paints a contrasting picture. Balochistan, despite being Pakistan's largest province in terms of landmass, now holds the lowest population share and scores poorly on human development indicators. The province grapples with stark educational and living standard disparities. Equally, healthcare accessibility remains critically low for all its residents. UNDP's latest report exposes the harsh reality that 71% of Balochistan's populace dwells in multidimensional poverty, signifying a troubling 7 out of 10 families living in destitution. These disparities are underscored in the National Human Development Report, which reveals that 31 out of 32 districts in Balochistan are among the country's most underprivileged areas in terms of education, quality of life, and health access. Per capita gross regional product (GRP) has ascended in all provinces except Balochistan, which since 1999-2000 has plummeted from second to last place among Pakistan's provinces, witnessing a 7 per-

cent decline in real per capita income. Punjab leads the education front, boasting the highest net enrolment ratio and literacy rate, while Balochistan ranks fourth. While other provinces exhibit strides in human development, Balochistan's progress stands as the most meager among them. Over the period from 2006-2007 to 2018-2019, it registers the least improvement in HDI value. Adjusting HDI for inequality reveals a shift in provincial rankings. Punjab leads the pack, trailed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with Balochistan trailing behind. Given its dismal standing, one wonders about the significance of statements made by notable figures. For instance, the late Benazir Bhutto's assertion that “Balochistan is the backbone of Pakistan, and it is our duty to ensure its progress and development.” Similarly, Nawab Akbar Bugti's recognition that “Balochistan is rich in natural resources, and the Baloch people deserve to benefit from them,” and Imran Khan's call to “address the grievances of the people of Balochistan and ensure their rightful representation in national development.” Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai's recognition of Balochistan's potential as a source of regional prosperity echoes in stark contrast to the province's current reality. Even former Army Chief General Bajwa's affirmation that “Balochistan is the future of Pakistan, and it is our duty to fully assist its government and the people towards a peaceful and prosperous province” underscores the contrasting narrative against the backdrop of the province's current challenges. The narrative surrounding Balochistan often fixates on its abundant mineral, oil, and gas resources, overshadowing the dire living conditions of its people, among the most distressed globally. This pattern has persisted since Pakistan's inception, with leaders vowing to utilize Balochistan's wealth to elevate the province but often leading to resource misappropriation, leaving its inhabitants neglected. It is crucial for our leadership to recognize that Balochistan's genuine wealth isn't its natural resources, but its people. The realization should dawn that true progress doesn't entail siphoning off the province's riches but hinges on enhancing the well-being of its residents. Genuine development encompasses more than extracting oil, gas, and minerals; it necessitates investments in education, healthcare, and social well-being, empowering every individual to unlock their potential and contribute to the nation's advancement.” The selection of Mr. ANWAR Kakar as the interim Prime Minister, orchestrated by the previous administration with the opposition's unspoken support and establishment's backing, is a remarkable decision. This ushers in an unparalleled opportunity for Balochistan, a province long overlooked. The anticipation is for this marginalized region to finally receive the attention it rightfully merits. This encompasses a strategic shift in allocating national resources, concentrating on policy formulation, infusing expert guidance, and making data-driven choices. This juncture calls for a reinvigorated emphasis on advancing Balochistan's agriculture, bolstering the horticultural sector, and establishing downstream industries to amplify the value of the province's fruits and vegetables. Further attention is required for fostering industries, fostering small-scale businesses, ensuring mechanized mining with robust worker safety measures, and enhancing water resource management that includes rain and snowwater harvesting. A concentrated effort on providing electricity, bolstering gas transportation infrastructure, upgrading highway systems, ensuring clean drinking water access, fostering upscale urban centers, and streamlining

government and civic services via online accessibility for all residents of the province is imperative.

Of paramount importance is the establishment of world-class education accessible throughout the province, forming the bedrock for cultivating a high-quality human resource. In an era where our neighboring nations are venturing into uncharted cosmic territories, the significance of human resource cannot be overstated. Neglecting the development of Balochistan's human potential will impede progress and hinder the prosperity of its people. The appointment of Mr. ANWAR Kakar stands as a rare lifetime opportunity for Balochistan. With him steering the course, there's a glimmer of hope that this long-suffering and marginalized province will finally attract the rightful attention it deserves. The potential benefits entail a redirection of national resources, strategic policy formulation, the infusion of knowledge and expertise, aiming to pivot the province toward a more promising trajectory. My extensive engagement within the Federal bureaucracy across Lahore and Islamabad, spanning multiple roles encompassing Information services, Income Tax administration, Foreign Affairs, and the power corridors, left me profoundly disheartened. The stark truth emerged that Balochistan's presence was conspicuously absent from the Federation's discourse, judicial considerations, and bureaucratic operations. Throughout my experiences, an evident absence of political resolve was evident across successive administrations. This concerning reality underscored the struggle of this remarkable province and its extraordinary people to claim their rightful share in national resources. The potential of its hardworking, inherently robust, resilient, compassionate, and gracious inhabitants remained largely overlooked. In Balochistan, the intersection of limited education, entrenched poverty, and a prevailing sense of deprivation has provided fertile ground for external actors to exploit through fifth-generation warfare, fueling insurgency and undermining the government's positive efforts. However, the presence of Mr. Kakar at the helm brings a ray of hope. His adept negotiation skills, eloquence, profound comprehension of provincial politics, and societal dynamics might lead him to pursue a politically viable negotiated resolution. Internationally, it's acknowledged that Balochistan's nationalist movements are fragmented and feeble, with most Baloch favoring enhanced autonomy over outright independence. Given Mr. Kakar's understanding of Balochistan's people, he may opt for a political solution rather than resorting to force. Encouraging nationalist parties to participate in upcoming provincial and national elections on an equitable basis could be his strategy. This path may establish a legitimate and credible Baloch government, enabling local control restoration, violence reduction, and advocating for Balochistan at the federal level.

In closing, the designation of Mr. ANWAR Kakar as interim Prime Minister stands as a beacon of optimism for Balochistan, a province burdened by historical disregard and lack of progress. Armed with meticulous planning, all-encompassing policies, and resolute commitment, the province can transcend its past and evolve into a flourishing and dynamic segment of the nation. It is now imperative to rewrite Balochistan's narrative, shifting it from neglect to acknowledgment, and harnessing the latent potential that lies within its borders.

—The writer is the Former Press Secretary to the President Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

The real cliffhanger

I missed my flights thrice in my life at Dubai, Dushanbe and Islamabad airports. Flights were closed earlier than the scheduled time in all three instances. The Dubai incident cost me significantly, Dushanbe delayed for a few hours with a sad ending of the day because when we landed at Khujand airport my phone was flooded with messages from Pakistan about the assassination of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and expected eruption of riots in the Country. During early 1990s, after a hectic day I rushed from Abbottabad to catch a flight from Islamabad for Lahore to attend an important meeting, then roads were not that good to travel between Abbottabad and Islamabad. We were two at the counter trying to convince ground staff to help us aboard but all in vain. I instantly decided to travel through a coach from Moti Mahal Rawalpindi; when I boarded, I was a bit upset to notice only one passenger in the coach, the driver instantly guessed and convinced me that it will take a few minutes to depart, in the meantime I better enjoy the latest hit The Cliffhanger. I started watching inattentively but suddenly I stashed my seat and plunged into the film. Hero attempted to rescue a lady from a zipline but failed. Screaming of the character and leaving a glove in the hand of a lead for the depth of mountains was indeed engaging.

The same happened when I was watching the Battagram rescue operation. Hanging cable car with eight lives onboard, TV anchors giving update that when a helicopter approaches the cable car children start crying loudly. A commando attempting to approach was struggling due to the second string of the zipline, trying to handle strong wind and above all being extremely vigilant to avoid any tragedy during the rescue operation. It was so tense, that needed real nerves to absorb the pressures which even we were feeling hundreds of miles away from the scene through TV screens. Then a bit of relief with the news that one of the trapped persons has been rescued. When I observed an individual, later we came to know Sahib Khan, right in the center of the zipline attempting

to approach the cable car that reminded me of the same scene of the Cliffhanger but it was real while that was a drama. Finally, the arrival of the last four persons with Muhammad Ali Swati was also inspiring.

We certainly appreciated, but most of us have already forgot the heroic action of a driver taking a long vehicle filled with petrol caught in fire away from the population to make sure that no one is hurt. Viral video of the incident on social media was simply breathtaking and seemed like a scene from a film, a person is driving a huge vehicle engulfed in flames trying to save human lives putting himself in extreme danger. We also forgot a bus driver who saved the entire Sri Lankan team in a hail of bullets. We can only imagine the happening when escorts are already martyred, there are bullets hitting the bus from every direction and a brave person rescues a bus from the clutches of terrorists. It takes real determination and unwavering courage. I am penning down my impressions after observing comments on my Facebook post. I wrote, “A movie on successful cable car rescue operation can gain global popularity”. I was expecting appreciating comments for those who participated in the operation and also kudos to the idea. But majority of response were confusing e.g., a sarcastic comment, “Yeah, we are good in dramatizing”. Another comment says, “By the way, film is already in the progress”. I was surprised to notice a comment, “Too funny”, why it is too funny, it was indeed a difficult operation and it concluded successfully. We have all the right to celebrate and appreciate, which we actually did a day after the incidence and awarded certificates to all those who participated in the rescue operation. The most astonishing comment was, “In the proposed film it will be difficult to portray a villain, otherwise entire film will be censored”. There wasn't any villain in the entire episode, everyone had risked their lives to evacuate trapped in the cable car. We appreciate and recommend movies based on war stories like Black Hawk Down, Zero Dark Thirty, Lone

Survivor, American Sniper etc. We also admire heroic movies and dramas. Even Bollywood has started making movies based on fabricated stories of bravery during the Iraq war, so-called war against the terrorism and spying operations. Such movies secure very good business from around the globe only because of strong story and good cinematography. This medium has a significant impact on masses and influences coming generations. Why are we unable to develop movies and dramas on real life events that exhibited unmatched bravery and courage? Why are we hesitant to admire our own, visible and undeniable, instances of bravery and courage? Why are we skeptical about sincerity of our heroes? Why we fail to admit the genuineness of the courage our brave people exhibit during catastrophes? We have a long list of heroic deeds during disasters of last few decades including earthquakes, floods, accidents, terrorist attacks and so on. We certainly recognized them through national awards but that only earn a single statement in the media that these people have been presented with national awards for their brave undertakings. We need to promote actual events of bravery and courage through every medium from writing stories and books to making films and dramas to instill the sense of pride in our masses and coming generations. Irrespective of affiliations everyone who participated in the Battagram rescue operation is our hero. We can develop several independent dimensions of the operation, portraying importance of every segment of the society during challenging times. I hope we will learn from these incidents and will continue to help each other during calamities as we have been doing throughout our history and at the same time will not be stingy in praising those who exhibit bravery and courage during catastrophes.

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Dr. Abdus Sattar Abbasi

The same happened when I was watching the Battagram rescue operation. Hanging cable car with eight lives onboard, TV anchors giving update that when a helicopter approaches the cable car children start crying loudly. A commando attempting to approach was struggling due to the second string of the zipline, trying to handle strong wind and above all being extremely vigilant to avoid any tragedy during the rescue operation.

Briefs

Countrywide protests against bloated bills

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The office concerned comes to the office at 10 or 11 am or in some cases even never appears, but the AC remains in operation, thus causing huge loss to the national exchequer. Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq on Sunday announced holding countrywide protest demonstrations from Sept 2 against the inflated power bills. Addressing the foundation-day ceremony in Lahore, Siraj said the caretaker prime minister took oath and increased the petrol price by Rs20 per litre. He said people were burdened by imposing 16 types of taxes in the electricity bills. "We will go on strike across the country to withdraw the harsh decisions. The situation has gone from bad to the worst as we are seeking loans from country to country," he said. The Jamaat-e-Islami emir said when he went to see Rizwana, the victim of violence, the girl's mother said that they handed over their beloved daughter to the judge's wife for just Rs13,000.

Govt announces ending...

FROM PAGE 01
electricity bills, blocked causeways and surrounded power distributors' offices demanding relief for the masses. During the press briefing, Secretary Langrial also addressed the issue of flaws in the power system, asserting that they need to be fixed. He also highlighted the problem of electricity theft and circular debt, which currently stands at Rs2,300 billion. Officials of the power sector present during the press briefing also spoke about power theft, which was estimated to be worth approximately Rs250 billion in the country. "Net metering is a source of increasing capacity payments, but will have to be terminated at some point," officials further said.

3 US Marines killed in...

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nearest city, Darwin. The Osprey - a mix between a helicopter and a plane - was taking part in the Predators Run exercises, a series of warfighting drills involving thousands of soldiers from the US and Australia, as well as other militaries such as Indonesia and the Philippines. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Defence Minister Richard Marles extended their "deepest condolences" to the US military. "This incident is a reminder of the significance of the service undertaken by our personnel and those of our partner nations," they said in a joint statement. Albanese earlier described the crash as "tragic" and "regrettable" but stressed that authorities were still trying to piece together what had happened. "We want to make sure that any information that is provided is absolutely accurate," he told reporters.

Pakistani doctor...

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of supervised release for attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization," a press release issued by the US Department of Justice stated. The court documents showed that Masood was formerly employed as a research coordinator at a medical clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, under an H-1B visa. As per the official statement, Masood's activity from January 2020 to March 2020 showed his attempts to become a part of the militant outfit and provide material support in carrying out terrorist acts in the US. "Between January 2020 and March 2020, Masood used an encrypted messaging application to facilitate his travel overseas to join a terrorist organization," the statement added. It further stated that the Pakistani man made multiple statements about his desire to join Daesh and also pledged his allegiance to the designated terrorist organisation and its leader.

Pakistan in pool D of FIH Hockey Men's Jr WC 2023

Pakistan has been placed alongside Belgium, Netherlands and New Zealand. All 16 teams that have qualified for the event were placed into their respective pools earlier this year, on June 24, at the official launch ceremony of the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Malaysia 2023

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan was placed in Pool D of the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Malaysia 2023, scheduled to spring into action at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from December 5 to 16. Pakistan has been placed alongside Belgium, Netherlands and New Zealand. All 16 teams that have qualified for the event were placed into their respective pools earlier this year, on June 24, at the official launch ceremony of the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup Malaysia 2023. The pools were established on the basis of the very first FIH Junior World Rankings, said a press release. Pool B action between France and Egypt would get the tournament underway on the opening day, which will see 12 teams get their campaign underway.



Germany vs South Africa, Spain vs Canada, Argentina vs Australia and India vs Korea would follow the opening match. Hosts Malaysia would take on Chile in the final encounter of the opening day, with the hopes of making a perfect start in front of their passionate home fans. Malaysia has a rich relationship with the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cups, having hosted the event on three occasions in the past. The cities of Kuala Lumpur (1982), Ipoh (1989) and Johor Bahru (2009) hosted the second, fourth and ninth editions of the event respectively. The 13th edition of the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup would see Kuala Lumpur play hosts once again, 41 years since the event was last held in Malaysia's capital city. Pool A: Argentina, Australia, Chile, Malaysia; Pool B: Egypt, France, Germany, South Africa; Pool C: Canada, India, Korea, Spain; Pool D: Belgium, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan.

Pakistani mountaineer Naila Kiani aims to ascend Cho Oyu



SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Pakistani fast and only female mountaineer Naila Kiani after conquering all 8000-meter peaks within Pakistan, is now setting her sights on Cho Oyu ascending this September. Talking to APP here on Sunday, Naila Kiani said that Cho Oyu is the world's 6th tallest mountain standing at an impressive 8188 meters above sea level. Next month, "I will be traveling to China and Nepal to take on my next targets," she stated with conviction. She underlined that Cho Oyu is 8188 meters above sea level, Manaslu is 8163 meters above sea level and Shishapangma is 8027 meters above sea level. Addressing a tragic incident that occurred during the K-2 summit this year, Naila expressed that porter Muhammad Hassan might still be alive if climbers hadn't been solely focused on achieving summit records. She said that human life is more important than the records and climbers should have

halted the hike to save a precious life. Regarding the role of the Alpine Club, Naila noted its limitations saying that Pakistan urgently needs to enhance the rescue operation department for assisting mountaineers in difficult territories. Such developments would not only boost tourism but also promote sports in the region, she said. Sharing her ambitions Naila's expressed her determination to achieve high-altitude peaks without relying on supplementary oxygen. "It's easier for mountaineers from northern regions, as their lungs are adapted to low oxygen levels compared to those living in lower altitudes," she explained. Reflecting on her past experiences, Naila recalled her toughest climb - Gasherbrum-1 where unforgiving weather conditions made the ascent particularly challenging. Navigating narrow sections without a safety rope at 8000 meters was never an easy task, she added. She attributed her achievements to the unwavering backing of her family and the Bilquees and Abdul-ur-Razzaq (BARQ) Foundation.

Hockey Women Jr WC 2023 in November

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 10th edition of the FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup 2023 would run from November 29 to December 10 at the National Stadium Sports Park in Santiago, Chile. The 16 teams in the hunt for the gold medal know their pools and the opponents that stand between them and the ultimate glory. The officials were set and ready to ensure a smooth-running and fairly contested tournament, said a press release. All 16 teams that have qualified for the event were placed into their respective pools earlier this year, on June 22, at the official launch ceremony of the FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup Chile 2023.

Chief of Naval staff squash tourney ends

KARACHI: The final match and prize distribution ceremony of 2nd Chief of the Naval Staff Squash Championship 2023 was held at Pakistan Navy Roshan Khan Jahangir Khan Squash Complex, Karachi. The final match of Men Category of the tournament was played between Nasir Iqbal of WAPDA and Israr Ahmed of SNGPL and in women category between Noor-ul-ain of WAPDA and Zainab of Pakistan Army. After a tough and thrilling competition Nasir Iqbal of WAPDA and Zainab of Pakistan Army won the titles. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi graced the occasion as Chief Guest. While addressing the ceremony, the Naval Chief highlighted Pakistan Navy's long association with the game of squash. He stated that holding of CNS Open Squash Championship since two decades on regular basis is indicative of PN commitment to promote the game of squash in the country. He added that Pakistan Navy will continue to organize national and international level squash championships every alternate year with an aim to promote squash and provide a platform for talented national players who have the ability to reach grandeur of excellence. The Chief Guest expressed his gratitude to Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF), players, sponsors and the tournament organizers for impeccable conduct of the event. Later, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi gave away prizes to winners and runners up of the championship and congratulated them for their hard work and valued achievements. The ceremony was attended by civil and military dignitaries, sponsors, national sports personalities and senior players of squash and sports community. - DNA

Second PCB Management Committee meeting held

KARACHI: Zaka Ashraf chaired the second meeting of the Pakistan Cricket Board's Management Committee on Sunday at a local hotel in Karachi. Among the ten members of the committee, two members, Mustafa Ramday and Zulfiqar Malik joined the meeting online. Members of the committee from Sindh welcomed their fellow members and lauded Zaka Ashraf's initiative to hold the meeting in Karachi.

The following are the highlights of the meeting:

- The Management Committee was briefed on the Board's budget, where various work related to cricket operations, development, infrastructure, and other strategic initiatives to ensure the continued growth and success of cricket in Pakistan came into discussion. The members unanimously approved the 2023-24 fiscal year budget.
- Chairman Zaka Ashraf briefed the members on his recent participation in the ICC annual meeting. Mr Zaka Ashraf shared insights into the discussions around the ICC financial model and how he proficiently advocated for PCB's interests during the meeting. His representation of Pakistan's cricketing aspirations and strategic vision was lauded by the fellow committee members.
- The Management Committee congratulated the Pakistan Men's team for winning the series against Afghanistan and regaining the No. 1 position in the ICC ODI rankings. In this regard, chairman national selection committee Inzamam-ul-Haq was a special invitee and joined the meeting online. The members congratulated Inzamam-ul-Haq and his selection committee and wished the team luck for the upcoming Asia Cup.
- The committee approved a grant of PKR seven million each for the Wheelchair Cricket Association and Blind Cricket Association for their recent exceptional performances. This decision underscores the committee's dedication to providing opportunities for individuals with diverse abilities to excel in the game and recognises the recent achievement of the Pakistan Blind cricket team for clinching gold medal at the IBSA World Games 2023 in Birmingham.



IPS and RIO form network for Indian Ocean

IPS join hands with RIO to form network of think tanks on Indian Ocean Region

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) has become part of a pioneering effort by a Chinese institution to create a multilateral cooperative network of think tanks of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The development was a result of a bilateral MoU signed by IPS in Kunming, China with the Research Institute for Indian Ocean Economics (RIO), Yunnan University of Finance and Economics (YUFE). The initiative was launched during the 8th RIO international conference on 'Common Development of China and Indian Ocean Region' held with the theme of 'Challenges and Prospects of Blue Economy Cooperation in the Indian Ocean: from the Perspective of Security and Development', which was hosted by RIO-YUFE. Apart from IPS, the event

was attended by top officials of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (SIS), India, Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD), Myanmar, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh, and Pathfinder Foundation, Sri Lanka. The participating institutions

have also signed a letter of intent to become part of the network after necessary formalities. This network will work for the policy analysis and review of Indian Ocean's strategic issues, undertaking joint activities, promoting common development between China and Indian Ocean region

through research and discussion, and publishing research papers, articles, books, white papers, and reports as an outcome, all in a bid to strengthen various areas of cooperation such as investment environment in Indian Ocean economies, the foreign policy and economic relations of Indian Ocean

economies, and any other such issues having bilateral or multilateral implications for each country. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman IPS Khalid Rahman stated that the economies, livelihoods and cultural identities of the states and people around IOR are vitally linked to it. For continuous, coordinated and proactive growth of the blue economies, greater focus on maritime specific policies, research and education, knowledge and information sharing, establishing mechanisms and networks, integrated planning on regional scales as well as within the countries, and robust governance involving industry, community and other stakeholders including the governments themselves, is required. He stressed that developing a healthy competitive environment is inevitable to take benefit of the new opportunities appearing not only in the established sectors but in emerging sectors as well.



MQM comfortable with delayed elections

FROM PAGE 01

if the delimitation of constituencies took weeks or months, it is not a bad deal," the MQM-convenor said while addressing the presser alongside party leader Farooq Sattar. The MQM-P convenor said that in the previous elections, "fake representatives were imposed" on the city. "No one else was deprived of their right to representation the way we were," he said, adding that Karachi is the city that needs the earliest elections. However, he added that the elections needed to be fair, transparent, impartial, and acceptable to all. "Who are these people who are emphasising on old constituencies instead of new constituencies?" he asked.

Sh. Rashid fears 'civil...'

FROM PAGE 01

Taking jibe at former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the seasoned politician said those [PDM government] claiming to sell their clothes to provide relief to the masses after enjoying 16 months in power. He said the influential people are involved in power theft, but the poor bear the brunt of this theft, fearing nect bills of fuel and electricity would add fuel to fire. Rashid further was of the view that the most important challenge for the country is not holding elections in time, but how the masses would bear electricity and fuel costs for the month of September. The former minister said that all the power distribution companies have removed official number plates of their vehicles, fearing public.

Attack on IHC rebuked

FROM PAGE 01

The incident, occurring shortly after Khosa's appearance in the Toshakhana case against Imran, left the lawyers in a cramped space without lights or a fan. Naeem Haider Panjotra and Ali Ejaz Buttari were among the lawyers trapped in the elevator. Meanwhile, videos of the trapped lawyers quickly circulated on social media, sparking concerns and accusations of alleged "harassment". The controversy too had come after PTI chief Imran Khan had levelled serious allegations against the IHC Chief Justice Amer Farooq, accusing him of "deep and settled bias".

May 9 arsonists not PTI workers

FROM PAGE 01

booked under sedition and anti-terror laws. According to the well-placed sources, the PTI chairman once again changed his stance on the May 9 events. The entire JIT including Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Investigation Imran Kishore questioned Khan. During the interrogation, the team told the former premier - who was ousted from office after a no-confidence motion against him in April 2022 - that there was evidence against him of inciting violence on May 9. "I was arrested and did not provoke anyone by calling them," he replied. The JIT said they have video clips showing protesters taking Imran Khan's name. "I did not incite anyone, everyone went to the cantonment area on their own."

Imran wanted...

FROM PAGE 01

PTIP Chairman Khattak made the remarks during an interaction with the journalists. The newly-formed political party's vice chairman and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa former chief minister Mahmood Khan was also present during the interaction. Berating his former boss, Khattak - who launched his new political party last month - claimed that Khan was against the 18th Amendment. It is pertinent to mention here that the PTI, on July 12, terminated the basic party membership of Khattak after he failed to respond to a "show cause notice" issued to him. The notice was served on him for asking workers to quit PTI.

Briefs

Housing market gets policy boost

BEIJING : Chinese housing and financing regulators have left it to city-level governments to decide if families that own no property in the region, are to be treated as first-time homebuyers eligible for favorable mortgage conditions. Experts said the optimization of the housing mortgage policy would help actualize the potential of the domestic real estate market, besides meeting people's demand for a higher standard of housing. They also called for more supportive measures to revitalize the sluggish real estate market, which has been a drag on the Chinese economy. Their comments came as Xinhua reported that the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the National Financial Regulatory Administration and the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, issued a circular recently promoting the implementation of the mortgage policies. The circular said people who own no home now may be treated as first-time buyers for the purposes of favorable mortgage conditions, if the local-level governments so decide. In China, first-time home buyers usually enjoy lower mortgage rates and smaller down payments than others. As long as homebuyers and their family members have no house registered under their names in a region, regardless of whether they have taken a loan to buy a home in the past, financial institutions are required to treat them as first-time buyers and extend favorable terms when they buy homes there, the circular stated.—Agencies

Palestinians still struggle to get enough water

GAZA : It is easy to pick out the Israeli settlements – illegal under international law – that are encroaching on more and more of the occupied West Bank. They stand in stark contrast to the arid villages of the occupied West Bank, where an excruciating lack of water means farmers are forced to leave their precious date palms to die and desert their greenhouses. Palestinians say they can barely get enough water to bathe their children and wash their clothes – let alone sustain livestock and grow fruit trees. The Israeli settlements look like oases in comparison. Flowers grow, farmed fish swim in neat rows of ponds and children splash in community pools. In the herding communities of the northern Jordan Valley, Palestinian water consumption is just 26 litres (7 gallons) a day – well below the minimum requirement of 50-100 litres recommended by the World Health Organization, according to B'Tselem. In contrast, Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley consume 400-700 litres per capita a day, the rights group said. The 500,000 Jewish settlers who live in the West Bank are connected to the Israeli water grid through a network that provides water continuously, but Palestinian cities are not.—Agencies

Inflated bills

Trade industry warns of more protests if demands not met

Mian Anjum Nisar observes rising markup, uncertain rupee, soaring fuel prices escalate production cost

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The trade and industry has warned the government of more protests and demonstrations against the inflated and excessive electricity bills if hike in power tariff is not withdrawn, pointing out the main reason of soaring energy cost is the power purchase agreements signed with the power producers. The FPCCI's Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that the rising interest rates, the uncertain rupee value, soaring fuel prices, higher gas and power tariffs, and unabated food inflation were extremely serious issues that needed to be addressed by the government on a priority basis. He said that since the arrival of the caretaker government dollar has gone out of control. The new finance minister should call of the real stakeholders to finalize policies, suggesting the institutions which are

getting free electricity and petrol should be ended. FPCCI former president stressed that the government should change the basic tariff of IPPs in rupee instead of US dollars as this change would save billions of rupees of the national exchequer and provide electricity at affordable cost to the trade and industry, making our export competitive in the international market. Similarly, the profits of the IPPs should also be paid in local currency instead of US dollars, he said. Mian Anjum Nisar said that they cannot compete with the international market in the current price of electricity, it is impossible to do business in the current conditions and businesses are closing down, the government should focus on alternative sources of energy to provide cheap electricity, create a conducive investment environment for tax collection. He stated that the inflated power bills triggered country-wide protests, including Kara-

chi, Rawalpindi, Multan, Gujranwala, and Peshawar, demanding that the government to abolish imposed taxes on electricity, saying that increase in electricity bills is unbearable and demanded relief from the government. In July, the then federal cabinet gave its go-ahead to a massive increase in the base tariff of electricity by up to Rs7.50 per unit against the national average tariff determination of Rs4.96 by the power regulator National Electric Power Regulatory Authority. The regulator had hiked the tariff to increase revenue collection for the loss-making power distribution companies (Discos) during the current fiscal year. According to a Nepra statement, the revised national average tariff for the 2023-24 fiscal year has been determined at Rs29.78 per unit kWh, which is Rs.4.96 per unit higher than the previously determined national average tariff of Rs24.82. While the regulator cited the rupee's devaluation,

high inflation and interest rates, the addition of new capacities and overall low sales growth as reasons behind the increase, it was actually hiked to meet one of the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund of introducing structural reforms in the energy sector. However, the applicable tariff would be much higher after including surcharges, taxes, duties and levies, besides monthly and quarterly adjustments. He said that IPPs were earning huge profits in dollars, but the businesses were badly suffering due to exorbitant power tariffs and the rising cost of doing business. He said that PPAs in Pakistan had made energy cost highest in the region and stressed that to save the industry, the government should renegotiate PPAs with IPPs in the best national interest. He said that due to the significant depreciation of rupee, the import of industrial raw materials had become very expensive which was pushing

up the production cost. He stressed that the government should take urgent measures to stabilize the value of rupee in order to save the industry from further troubles. He said that instead of hiking the power tariffs, the government should focus on controlling the transmission and distribution losses and power theft besides improving the performance of power companies to save the consumers from further burden. The business community was of the view that the government could mobilize the required resources through increasing the number of taxpayers, reducing line losses and power theft, and ending exemptions to narrow the fiscal deficit instead of increasing the power tariff. He said the last increase in power tariff left the industrial sector, particularly the export industry like textile, uncompetitive in comparison to regional competitors. This may lead to the loss of more

export orders and render many more people jobless. Despite the tariff surge, he said, power companies would not be able to recover the targeted revenue loss of around 28-30%. At the same time, it will force many consumers to stop paying their bills, which have become unbearable. He asked the government to undertake fundamental reforms in the power sector to make electricity affordable. Besides, the government should launch a crackdown on the habitual power bill defaulters like putting them behind bars. He said the latest increase in power tariff would prove counterproductive as it has taken the cost of industrial production up by at least 30% or more in one month. He pointed out that a large number of industrial units had closed down in the past one year due to the government's strategy to cool the overheated economy. Not a single company is operating at 100% production capacity these days.

Zimbabwean president Mnangagwa re-elected

DNA

HARARE : Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa has been re-elected for a second five-year term, after garnering 52.6 percent of the total votes cast in the Aug. 23-24 elections, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) announced on Saturday. Mnangagwa beat 10 other presidential contestants after polling 2,350,711 votes, ZEC chairperson Priscilla Chigumba said. Mnangagwa's main challenger and opposition Citizens for Coalition Change (CCC) leader, Nelson Chamisa, got 1,967,343 votes or 44 percent of the valid votes cast, Chigumba said. According to Zimbabwean law, a presidential winner must get 50 percent plus one vote of the total valid votes cast. "Mnangagwa Emmerson Dambudzo of ZANU-PF party is declared duly elected president of the Republic of Zimbabwe with effect from Aug. 26, 2023," Chigumba said.—APP

Explosions at Romanian fuel station leave one dead

ROMANIA : At least one person died and dozens more were injured in two successive explosions at a liquid gas fueling station near the Romanian capital, Bucharest, the dpa reported. Fifty-seven people were injured, some of them seriously, in the blasts on Saturday evening in the village of Crevedia, 20 kilometers northwest of Bucharest, the Romanian Interior Ministry said Sunday morning. The only fatality so far died of a heart attack and not from burns, the ministry said. Among the injured were 39 firefighters, two policemen and two gendarmes. The fire brigades managed to extinguish the fire at the petrol station overnight. It was not initially known what had triggered the explosions. The Romanian public prosecutor's office has opened an investigation.—APP

Sudan urges US ambassador to revise position on conflict

KHARTOUM : Sudan has condemned comments made by US Ambassador John Godfrey in which he said neither side in the current conflict "is fit to govern." On Friday, Godfrey called on the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group to end their conflict and transfer power to civilians. "The belligerents, who have demonstrated they are not fit to govern, must end the conflict and transfer power to a civilian transitional government," he said in a statement. The Sudanese Foreign Ministry called on the US envoy to retract his comments and revise his position on the current conflict. In a statement, the ministry said Godfrey's comments "contradict the requirements of diplomatic courtesy.—Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan Visit The PIMS Hospital to Check the health facilities.—DNA

Algerian president urges civilian protection in Niger

ANKARA: Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune has called for the protection of civilians in Niger, where a military intervention ousted President Mohamed Bazoum last month. "To our Nigerian brothers, do not harm any civilian on Niger's territories," Tebboune said in statements during a TV interview late Saturday. "Do not touch any citizen who lives there, neither Nigerien nor foreigner," the Algerian leader said. "Protect people, regardless of their nationality. Don't allow those who want to crush you to intervene in your internal affairs." Niger was plunged into turmoil on July 26 when Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, a former commander of the presidential guard, led a military intervention that overthrew Bazoum. Bazoum was elected in 2021 in Niger's first democratic power transition since it gained independence from French colonial rule in 1960. Algeria opposes any military intervention in Niger and has campaigned against any military action in the West African country. "A military intervention could ignite the whole Sahel region and Algeria will not use force with its neighbors," Tebboune said. Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf visited Nigeria, Ghana and Benin, members of the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), this week to discuss a peaceful solution to the conflict in Niger. The bloc had earlier ordered the activation of its standby force on Aug. 10 to restore constitutional order in Niger. "Within ECOWAS, as in Algeria, we are working along the same lines, coordinating our efforts as much as possible to achieve a common objective.—APP

Florida gunman driven by racial 'hate' kills 3: Authorities

WASHINGTON: A white man driven by racial hatred shot dead three Black people in a Florida discount store Saturday before taking his own life after a standoff with police, authorities said. He targeted a certain group of people and that's Black people. That's what he said he wanted to kill. And that's very clear," Jacksonville Sheriff TK Waters told a news conference about the gunman, who was in his early 20s. According to the sheriff's office, the shooter, who has not yet been identified, entered a Dollar General store wearing a tactical vest, armed with an AR-style rifle and a handgun. Manifestos discovered by the gunman's family shortly before the

attack "detail the shooter's disgusting ideology of hate," Waters said, and at least one of the guns had hand-drawn swastikas on it. The shooting took place near Edward Waters University, a historically Black college in the southern US state. The university said in a statement that the shooter had been on campus earlier that day, though no one was harmed. "An on-campus Edward Waters University security officer engaged an unidentified male in the vicinity of the Centennial Library on campus," it said. "The individual refused to identify themselves and was asked to leave," it added, adding the individual – later identified as the shooter

– left "without incident." The FBI will investigate the shooting as a hate crime, said Sherri Onks, the bureau's special agent for Jacksonville, a city of nearly one million in the northeast corner of the state. There was no evidence the shooter was part of a larger group, officials said. "We know that he acted completely alone," Waters said. "Horrible" – Mass shootings have become disturbingly common across the United States, with easy access to firearms in most states and more guns in the country than citizens. Governor Ron DeSantis decried the "horrible" shooting and called the gunman a "scumbag." "He was targeting people based on their race, that is totally unacceptable," said

DeSantis, who is vying to be the Republican Party's presidential candidate for 2024. "This guy killed himself rather than face the music and accept responsibility for his actions and so he took the coward's way out." The shooting was part of a weekend spate of gun violence in the United States. Earlier Saturday, at least seven people were hospitalized after a shooting at a Caribbean festival in the northeast city of Boston, police said. Meanwhile, two women were shot at a baseball game in Chicago the night before. That same night, a 16-year-old was shot dead and four others hurt after an argument erupted at a high school football game in Oklahoma, police said.—APP

Hundreds of firefighters battle raging Greek wildfires

GREECE : More than 600 firefighters, including reinforcements from several European countries, backed by a fleet of water-dropping planes and helicopters, are battling three major wildfires in Greece, two of which have been raging for days. A huge blaze in the country's north-eastern regions of Evros and Alexandroupolis, believed to have caused the deaths of 20 people, was burning for a ninth day. The blaze, one of Europe's largest single wildfires, has destroyed vast tracts of forest and burned homes in the outlying areas of the city of Alexandroupolis. On Sunday, 295 firefighters, seven planes and five helicopters were tackling the blaze, the fire department said. The EU's Copernicus Emergency Management Service said on Sunday that the wildfire had scorched 77,000 hectares (190,000 acres) of land and had

120 active hotspots. Copernicus is the EU space programme's Earth observation component and uses satellite imagery to provide mapping data. A group of firefighters stand near a fire engine as flames light up the sky beyond a line of trees and shrubs. Firefighters in the Evros region. A massive blaze in the country's north-eastern regions of Evros and Alexandroupolis is believed to have caused the deaths of 20 people. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images On the north-western fringes of the Greek capital, another major wildfire has been blazing for days, scorching homes and burning into the national park on Mount Parnitha, one of the last green areas near Athens. The fire department said 260 firefighters, one plane and three helicopters were trying to extinguish the flames. A third major wildfire started on

Saturday on the Cycladic island of Andros and was still burning out of control on Sunday, with 73 firefighters, two planes and two helicopters dousing the blaze. Lightning strikes are suspected of having sparked the fire. Greece has been plagued by daily outbreaks of dozens of fires over the past week as gale-force winds and hot, dry summer conditions combined to whip up flames and hamper firefighting efforts. On Saturday, firefighters tackled 122 blazes, including 75 fires that broke out in the 24 hours between Friday evening and Saturday evening, the fire department said. With firefighting forces stretched to the limit, Greece has called for help from other European countries. Germany, Sweden, Croatia and Cyprus have sent aircraft, while dozens of firefighters from Romania, France, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria,

Albania, Slovakia and Serbia are helping on the ground. With their hot, dry summers, southern European countries are particularly prone to wildfires. EU officials have blamed climate breakdown for the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires in Europe, noting that 2022 was the second worst year for wildfire damage on record after 2017. The causes of Greece's two largest fires have not yet been determined. Officials have said arson or negligence is suspected for some of the smaller blazes, and several people have been arrested. Firefighters use a hose to tackle a blaze in a smoke-filled forested area. Firefighters tackle a blaze in a forest near Athens. Photograph: Nicolas Koutsoostas/Shutterstock. On Saturday, Greek fire department officials arrested two men, one on the island of Evia.—Agencies

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Briefs

Russia confirms Wagner chief's death

DNA

MOSCOW: Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin has been confirmed dead after genetic analysis of bodies found in Wednesday's plane crash, Russian officials say. The Investigative Committee (SK) said the identities of all 10 victims had been established and corresponded to those on the flight's passenger list. Prigozhin's private jet came down north-west of Moscow on 25 August, killing all those on board. The Kremlin has denied speculation it was to blame for the crash. The SK said it was continuing a criminal investigation. "Molecular-genetic testing has been completed," it said in a statement. "According to its results, the identities of all 10 deceased have been established, and they correspond to the list published in the flight manifest."

The victims include several senior figures in Wagner, a Russian mercenary group set up by Prigozhin and involved in military operations in Ukraine, Syria and parts of Africa. Among them was Dmitry Utkin, who managed Wagner's military operations. The others on the Embraer Legacy plane - flying from Moscow to St Petersburg - included Wagner members Valery Chekalov, Sergei Propustin, Yevgeny Makaryan, Alexander Totmin and Nikolay Matushev.

Trump campaign raises \$7.1m following mugshot

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's election campaign says it has raised \$7.1m (£5.6m) since his police mugshot was taken at a prison in Atlanta, Georgia, on Thursday. Much of the money comes from merchandise such as mugs, T-shirts and drink coolers bearing the former president's scowling face. Mr Trump was released on bail, charged with plotting to overturn the state's 2020 election results. He faces three other indictments as he campaigns for the 2024 US election. They include two related to his false claims that the election was stolen and the attack by his followers on the Capitol in Washington. Mr Trump denies all the charges and argues the cases against him are politically motivated because he is leading the race for the Republican nomination to challenge Democratic Party incumbent President Joe Biden. The attention seems to have galvanised his supporters, and he has raised almost \$20m in three weeks, since his indictments in the Georgia and Capitol riots cases. - Agencies

Caretaker PM Kakar wants regular research, innovation



QUETTA: A delegation of Vice Chancellors of Public Sector Universities of Balochistan called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in Quetta. - DNA

DNA

QUETTA: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Sunday stressed upon formulation of planning to ensure that higher education at the university level should become a regular base for the latest research and innovative achievements. He said that graduated students should be equipped with the professional skill sets to meet the require-

ments of industries. The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of vice-chancellors of public sector universities of Balochistan that called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release issued here. The delegation apprised the prime minister of the progress over higher education and the pertaining issues. The prime minister underscored the need to promote a culture of research and creativity as the lack of innovation was linked with the

deficiency in research and higher education. The caretaker prime minister further asked for setting up incubation centers for the students by the industrial sector in universities, so that they could get opportunities for contemporary research, adding that with these measures, trained manpower would be provided to the industries, thus paving the way for an industrial revolution. He shared that with the continuous facility of higher education, the improvement

could be brought in different sectors of life. The youth should be provided with ample opportunities to seek higher education so that the talented young lot could play their due role in the progress of the country, he said, adding the youth and manpower were the vital assets for a better future. The caretaker prime minister also underlined to remove all hurdles in the pursuit of higher education by bringing it to par with international standards.

Taliban ban women from visiting popular national park

KABUL: The Taliban have banned women from visiting the Band-e-Amir national park in the central Bamiyan province. Afghanistan's acting minister of virtue and vice, Mohammad Khaled Hanafi, said women had not been observing hijab inside the park. He called on religious clerics and security agencies to forbid women from entering until a solution was found. Band-e-Amir is a significant tourist attraction, becoming Afghanistan's first national park in 2009. It is a popular destination for families and the ban on women attending will prevent many from being able to enjoy the park. Unesco describes the park as a "naturally created group of lakes with special geological formations and structure, as well as natural and unique beauty". However, Mr Hanafi said going to the park to sightsee "was not obligatory", Afghan agency Tolo News reported. Religious clerics in Bamiyan said the women who were visiting the park and not following the rules were visitors to the area. "There are complaints about lack of hijab or bad hijab, these are not Bamiyan residents. They come here from other places," Sayed Nasrullah Waezi, head of the Bamiyan Shia Ulama Council told Tolo news. Afghan MP Mariam Solaimankhil shared a poem she had written on X, formerly known as Twitter, about the ban and wrote "we'll return,

I'm sure of it". Fereshta Abbasi, of Human Rights Watch, noted women had been banned from visiting the park on Women's Equality Day and wrote it was a "total disrespect to the women of Afghanistan". Band-e-Amir, seen here last year, was popular with female visitors, who have been banned from most education and work. Meanwhile Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan, asked why stopping women from visiting Band-e-Amir "is necessary to comply with Sharia and Afghan culture?". The Taliban have a history of implementing bans on women doing certain activities on what it insists is a temporary basis, including preventing them from attending schools in December 2022. The ban on visiting the Band-e-Amir national park is the latest in a long list of activities that women have been prevented from doing since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021. Most recently, the Taliban ordered hair and beauty salons in Afghanistan to shut and in mid-July stopped women from sitting the national university entrance exams. Since overthrowing then-president Ashraf Ghani's government in August 2021, the Taliban imposed a number of restrictions on women. It banned women and girls from pursuing high education at universities.

Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan resume talks over dam

CAIRO: Ethiopia and Sudan resumed their years-long negotiations Sunday over the controversial dam Ethiopia is building on the Nile River's main tributary, officials said. The resumption of talks came after President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi and Ethiopia Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said last month that they aim to reach within four months an agreement on the operation of the \$4.6 billion Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile. The Blue Nile meets the White Nile in Sudan's capital of Khartoum, before winding northward through Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. Egypt fears a devastating impact if the dam is operated without taking its needs into account. It called it an existential threat. The Arab world's most populous country relies al-

most entirely on the Nile to supply water for agriculture and its more than 100 million people. About 85% of the river's flow originates from Ethiopia. The Egyptian Irrigation Ministry announced the new round of talks in Cairo. Irrigation Minister Hani Sewilam said Egypt wants a legally binding agreement on how the giant dam is operated and filled. Sewilam said there are many "technical and legal solutions" for the dispute, without elaborating. Tensions have heightened between Cairo and Addis Ababa after the Ethiopian government began filling the dam's reservoir before reaching an agreement. Key questions remain about how much water Ethiopia will release downstream if a multi-year drought occurs and how the three countries will resolve any future disputes. Ethiopia has rejected binding arbitration at the final stage of the project. Ethiopia says the dam is essential, arguing that most of its people lack electricity. Sudan wants Ethiopia to coordinate and share data on the dam's operation to avoid flooding and protect its own power-generating dams on the Blue Nile, the main tributary of the Nile. The dam is located just 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the Sudanese border. - Agencies

5 Palestinians wounded in Israeli forces raid

OCCUPIED WEST BANK: At least five Palestinians were shot and injured after Israeli forces fired bullets during a raid on a refugee camp in the occupied northwestern West Bank city of Tulkram on Sunday, Palestinian media reported. The official Palestinian news agency Wafa, citing local sources, reported that Israeli forces stormed the camp in the early hours of the day, triggering violent clashes with young Palestinians. The report added that the confrontations were accompanied by heavy Israeli gunfire, which left five civilians injured as they were struck by live rounds. The five wounded Palestinians were transported to Martyr Dr. Thabet Thabet Government Hospital in Tulkarm for medical treatment. Their conditions have been described as stable. Israeli forces launch raids on various cities of the West Bank almost on a daily basis under the pretext of detaining what the regime calls "wanted" Palestinians. The raids usually lead to violent confrontations with residents. More than 200 Palestinians have been killed this year in the occupied Palestinian territories and Gaza. The majority of these fatalities have been recorded in the West Bank. At least 32 people have been killed in Palestinian retaliatory attacks against Israeli settlers during that time. Those figures indicate that 2023 is already the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since the United Nations began keeping track of fatalities in 2005. Previously, 2022 had been the deadliest year with 150 Palestinians killed, of whom 33 were minors, according to the United Nations. - Agencies

Iran says uranium enrichment continues

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's enrichment of uranium continues based on a framework established by the country's parliament, nuclear chief Mohammad Eslami said on Sunday when asked about reports regarding Tehran slowing down its 60% enrichment. "Our nuclear enrichment continues based on the strategic framework law," Eslami said, referring to a related legislation. Earlier this month, the Wall Street Journal reported that Iran had significantly slowed the pace at which it was accumulating near-weapons-grade enriched uranium and diluted some of its stockpile, moves that could help ease tensions with the U.S. and revive broader talks over Iran's nuclear work. In 2020, Iran's hardline parliament passed a law requiring the government to take measures such as stepping up uranium enrichment beyond the limit set under Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal if other parties did not fully comply with the deal. After Washington ditched the deal in 2018 and reimposed sanctions, Tehran began to violate the nuclear curbs set out in the pact. Iran, which under the nuclear agreement could only enrich uranium to 3.67%, started enriching it to 60% purity in 2021, a move bringing the fissile material closer to levels suitable for developing a bomb.

White shooter kills 3 Black people in Florida

WASHINGTON: A gunman killed three black people in a racially motivated attack then killed himself in Jacksonville, Florida, the city's sheriff said. The man, described as white and in his early 20s, entered a Dollar General store and opened fire, triggering a standoff with police. Sheriff T K Waters said two men and a woman were killed by the gunman, who wore body armour and left manifestos. Mayor Donna Deegan said it was a "hate-filled crime" driven by racist hatred. The sheriff said the shooter - who has not yet been officially named - carried a lightweight semi-automatic rifle and a handgun. - Agencies

'We are destroying Europe' Hungarian FM slams EU's sanctions on Russia

Sanctions against Russia are harming the EU and not bringing the end of the war closer, he added

NEWS DESK

BUDAPEST: Hungary's government has the strongest legitimacy in Europe, enabling it to conduct the most sovereign foreign policy in the continent and focus exclusively on national interests, Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto said at a festival in western Hungary, on Saturday. There is great uncertainty in world politics but despite this, Hungarian foreign policy's scope is broad, determined by geography and national aims, with the government able to look at these solely from its own standpoint, the ministry cited Szijarto as saying at the Tranzit Festival held in Thiany. Hungarians who elected the government voted for guaranteed security and for national interests to be enforced in the "new world order", he said. Its policies are also morally justified, as the government has never taken steps to prolong the war and has not contributed to a single death, he said. "The legitimacy of Hungarian foreign policy is unique in Europe, simply because the Hungarian government has the strongest mandate in Europe," he said. Szijarto slammed the EU for being dragged into a "spi-

ral of sanctions" against Russia. "We are having trouble finding a sector isn't subject to sanctions yet." Sanctions against Russia are harming the EU and not bringing the end of the war closer, he added. He also condemned weapon deliveries, saying they only caused more deaths and a risk of escalation. The financial, migration and health-care crises of the past decade, along with the war in Ukraine, have upended the previous global state of affairs, and are likely to bring about an era of "unrest, jostling and a fight for position" in international politics, he said. The elections of the past years have shown attempts to influence the results against every party that does not represent the globalist liberal side, he said. "The only country where those attempts failed is Hungary," he said. Meanwhile, the EU's competitiveness has plummeted, and it's losing out because "it has let itself be provoked into a race with the US for who gives more military support to Ukraine," he said. As a result, the price of gas in the US is now one-seventh of that in Europe, and electricity in China is by two-thirds cheaper, he said. The "remarkably misguided" policies of the EU are also leading to blocs being formed in the world, he said. "This may be good for the bloc leaders but not for the countries caught in the middle," he said, calling for "civilised" cooperation between East and West. The government does not follow this stance because they are "the agents of one force or the other",

but because this is in the nation's interest, he said. "Those now accusing us of being pro-Russia watched idly as half the continent suffered under Russian dictatorship for decades." Meanwhile, Hungary has managed to stay on its feet and even to grow economically, despite the recent crises, he said. Szijarto said it was "important" for Hungary to grasp the opportunities offered by the "revolutionary change in the car manufacturing industry". "We now have the fourth largest capacity for manufacturing electric batteries in the world, and will jump to second place once investments currently under way are completed. We will be second behind China, and this will mean a guarantee for the Hungarian economy to stay on a growth path in the coming years," he said. "Without plants coming to Hungary, the jobs of hundreds of thousands of Hungarians would be at risk, as the Hungarian car manufacturing industry employs 170,000 people directly employs three-and-a-half to four times as more indirectly," he said. Unfair practices are also employed in the battle for those investments, he said, citing attempts to mislead ordinary people and incite anxiety by making dishonest claims about the impact of such investments. "It is an extremely dishonest movement, and opposed to national interests, to mislead people ... resulting in such factories being built in Germany, France, the US and Sweden," he said.

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